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Shukr (Gratitude) in the Qur'an and Its Impact on Human Well-Being: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

Gratitude (shukr) is an essential ethical and spiritual principle in the Quran and in Islamic teachings, which is stressed several times as a way of self-development and Godly grace. According to the Quran, gratitude is a way of gaining more blessings and spiritual prosperity (Qur'an 1; 2; 3). This review focuses on gratitude in terms of the Quranic perspective and its effects on the psychological, social, and spiritual on the basis of the current research. According to classical Islamic thinkers like Al-Ghazali, gratitude was a holistic process which involved the heart, the tongue and deeds, which means that being thankful goes beyond words to good living. These teachings have been largely confirmed by modern-day studies of psychology and are found to have a positive association with life satisfaction, less stress and depression, and better emotional well-being (4;5). Another strength of character that has been identified to increase resilience, optimism, and positive social relationships is gratitude. Moreover, thankful people are more likely to feel happier and psychologically wealthy, which helps to improve the well-being of a person and society. Such intersection of Quranic direction and scientific proof indicates that gratitude is a holistic instrument of the need to treat contemporary mental health issues and promote moral and social harmony.

Keywords: Gratitude; Shukr; Qur'anic Ethics; Mental Well-Being; Spiritual Psychology

Introduction

Gratitude is an emotion and moral virtue and is positive, which affects an individual thoughts, feelings, and actions. Gratitude (shukr) is a significant spiritual and ethical idea in Islamic teachings. The Quran and Sunnah state that it must be practiced by believers in every area of life and not only in words but the inner feeling and outward activity(6).

Gratitude benefits mental and emotional well-being, according to psychological research. Gratitude has been associated with higher life satisfaction, better mood, and fewer symptoms of stress and depression, according to research. Positive feelings, good

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psychological health, and positive social relationships are all linked to gratitude practices, such as the capacity to write down things for which we are thankful. Academic research and meta-analyses of gratitude programs across various demographics show these benefits (systematic evidence shows an increase in positive mood and a decrease in anxiety and depression) (7).

Gratitude generally improves one's subjective well-being and life satisfaction. According to the scientific literature, gratitude is a general attitude of appreciation that helps people focus on important aspects of life that promote mental toughness and emotional stability. We can gain a better understanding of the role that gratitude plays in human behaviour and health by combining scientific findings with the Islamic emphasis on shukr. The notion that Islam is thankful to Allah for his blessings is in line with research showing that gratitude has positive effects on social and mental well-being. With the two perspectives, we can think of gratitude as a holistic concept that enables us to develop both psychologically and spiritually (8).

Literature Review

One of the most significant concepts in both modern psychology and Islamic teachings is the appreciation of gratitude. In Islam, being grateful (shukr) is more than just saying "thank you." It is a profoundly spiritual act. It encompasses actions in life, words spoken, and feelings in the heart. According to a number of scholars, shukr is a component of worship. A happy life and good faith are established with the help of Shukr. In psychology, gratitude is taught as a positive emotion.

It decreases stress and helps to make one happier and happier. This overview examines studies about gratitude, both in terms of Islamic and psychological aspects. It demonstrates the way both worldviews perceive gratitude. It also explains the impact of thanksgiving on human existence particularly well-being and mental health. Islamic Idea of Thankfulness.

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Islamic Concept of Gratitude

Qur'anic and Prophetic Foundations

The Quran and the Sunnah instruct Islam about gratitude. Quran insists that Allah blesses man everyday. Muslims are ordered to remember and show gratitude to Allah because of these favors. The Quran does not just talk about gratitude but benefits of the same. Real gratitude is not verbal only. It involves having the heart thankful and expressing it by doing good. It is a three-part format which is a key theme in Islamic literature. The Islamic idea comprises shukr bil qalb (gratitude by heart), shukr bil lisana (gratitude by tongue) and shukr bil aa mala (gratitude by action). This is attributed in numerous Quran studies and hadith books (9).

The Quran emphasizes that gratitude results into additional blessings. It claims that Allah will multiply the destiny of grateful people. In addition, ungratefulness results in loss. Islamic teaching reveals that faith and good moral character are related to thankfulness. A lot of researchers state that gratitude is a constant process. It should be done daily by praying, reminded of Allah and committing good deeds.

Sufi and Ethical Views on Gratitude

Gratitude is not merely an affective reaction in the Islamic philosophy, particularly in the Sufi writings. It is a duty and a moral state. In one of the Sufi opinions, thankfulness should be practiced on three levels of an individual: heart, tongue, and body. An appreciative individual does not just feel thankful in his or her heart but also demonstrates it. Gratitude is instilled in the character and routine of a person. As expounded in this paper, gratitude is a combination of attitude, words, and actions in order to be complete. This represented gratitude which connects faith and everyday practice. (10) According to Sufi ethics, gratitude is related to justice and moral responsibility. Gratitude turns out to be a moral practice which is influencing the way a human being lives. It is applicable to all the blessings that an individual is getting. It also defines the association with Allah and other people.

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Islamic vs Western Concepts

The Islamic gratitude is not similar to Western psychology in a few aspects. Shukr is a spiritual and moral aspect in Islam. It is related to the belief in Allah and submission to the will of Allah. On the contrary, gratitude can be contributed to as a positive emotion and attitude of Western psychology. Gratitude is a means of feeling better, being happier and enhancing social relationships in many studies of the Western world.

In Western psychology, gratitude is regularly assessed as a manifestation and a feeling. In Islam, the gratitude comes with following Allah and being ethical. Other comparative studies indicate that both viewpoints have learnt to appreciate gratitude but Islam has introduced the spiritual, ethical and worship aspect. This implies that Muslims can show thanksgiving through obedience to the orders of Allah, making worship, and assisting others in order to express thankfulness. Gratitude as a Psychological Research.

Psychological Research on Gratitude

General Psychological Findings

The subject on gratitude has been extensively studied in psychology. It is demonstrated that gratitude has a connection with emotional well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction (Sunderman, 2016). Individuals who exercise gratitude measures on a daily basis tend to have pleasant feelings. They complain of stress as well as fewer depressive symptoms. Other researchers conclude that gratitude practices such as journaling and gratitude letters make people feel in a better mood. Gratitude is also regarded as cognitive-emotional practice in psychology. It implies that an individual is working on the good things in life and blessings. This optimistic thinking can decrease the negative thinking. It assists individuals to deal with stress and deal with difficulties. Appreciation interventions are also used by researchers in schools and within communities. These interventions usually result in better mood and better relations.

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Psychological and Islamic Perspective Combined

Combined Psychological and Islamic perspective: Certain new studies have attempted to reconcile psychological studies with Islamic teachings. An example is that thanksgiving is associated with the psychological health of adolescents. These papers focus on the fact that gratitude promotes good feelings, resiliency, and coping abilities. They further demonstrate that Islamic gratitude can assist youths to grow into resilient minds and religious individuals. Gratitude interventions such as gratitude journals and gratitude letters have been demonstrated to take stress and anxiety away, and enhance emotional control. (11)

Empirical Findings in Muslim Contexts

Empirical studies have proved that religiosity has a positive relationship with gratitude. Indicatively, intrinsically religious-oriented people tend to be more appreciative. They are also emotionally well-adjusted. On the other hand, extrinsic religiosity (religion due to external causes) is in some cases associated with a reduction in the levels of gratitude. It is also discovered that prayer makes one become more grateful since upon praying a person bonds himself with Allah and becomes more aware of the blessings. This relationship will assist in alleviating depression and forming positive relations with other people. (12)

Islamic and Positive Psychology Comparison

The article of SID.ir named The Nature and Constituents of Shukr and Gratitude takes a look at both the Islamic and positive psychology perspectives. It states that sukr in Islam and psychological gratitude differ but are close to each other. Gratitude is an active emotional state in psychology. Gratitude in Islam has transcendental nature, which is identified with the blessings of Allah. This adds another significance to it other than feelings. Positive feelings are not the only ones in the Islamic gratitude. This analogy emphasizes the fact that Islamic thankfulness has a broader meaning. (13)

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The research concludes that the two schools of thought are in agreement that gratitude is good in enhancing well-being. But Islam provides the spiritual layer which provides the meaning of life. It is a layer that leads a person to Allah in the directness of worship, obedience and gratitude.

Role of Gratitude in Education and Happiness

Other studies indicate that gratitude may be included in education. Take the case of enhancing the spiritual intelligence and moral character among the students by incorporating gratitude in the Islamic education. Gravity aids in enhancing mental well-being and happiness among the youths. The other literature review indicates that gratitude has a positive effect on happiness.

Individuals who are thankful are happier in life and more fulfilled. This is evident in psychological and Islamic education. When gratitude principles are incorporated in everyday life (such as prayer and thanksgiving), they enhance spiritual and psychological wellbeing. Thematic Areas of Literature. However, in various studies, a number of themes become apparent:

Key Themes Across Literature

Across different studies, several themes emerge

Gratitude Improves Mental Health:

Numerous researches indicate that gratitude has a powerful positively influencing impact on mental health. Individuals who engage in the habit of gratitude have fewer negative feelings. Their stress, anxiety and depression level reduces. The aspect of gratitude makes people think about positive things in life rather than issues.

Gratitude Connects Spiritual and Psychological Well-Being

In the long run, gratitude enhances happiness, satisfaction with life and general psychological well-being. Appreciation Relates the Spiritual and the Psychological Well-Being: The concept of thanksgiving in the Islamic teachings has a close written linkage with faith and worship. Gratitude is regarded as a submissiveness to Allah. It is a spiritual

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bond that adds an additional significance to the act of thankfulness. It teaches human beings to be patient and trusting towards challenges in life. Because of this, gratitude enhances spirituality and psychological tranquility. This relationship helps to be emotionally stable and calm.

Gratitude Strengthens Social Relationships

The studies indicate that gratitude is a significant part of social life. Appreciative individuals will tend to be kind and grateful to others. Such a practice increases trust and cooperation. Appreciation promotes compassion and empathy in the relationships. This leads to the strengthening of social bonds and reduction of conflicts. Grateful people tend to have better and more favorable relationships.

Cultural and Contextual Differences

There are religious, moral, and spiritual components to Islamic thankfulness. It entails living an ethical life and being grateful. Western psychology frequently studies gratitude as a feature of emotion or psychology. This distinction shows how culture and religion have an impact on how gratitude is understood and practiced. As a result, studies on the subject of thankfulness that ignore cultural background may only produce partial results. Cultural and religious values should be taken into consideration in order to better understand gratitude. Gratitude is a powerful tool for wellbeing, according to Islamic and psychological research.

In Islam, thankfulness (shukr) is more than just a sentiment. It includes thinking, speaking, and acting towards Allah and other people. Gratitude improves relationships and mental health, according to psychological research. There is ample evidence that gratitude can improve our spiritual and emotional lives when we combine Islamic teachings with psychology. Islamic concepts like shukr provide a deeper understanding of thankfulness. This promotes a balanced and healthy way of life for both individuals and society as a whole.

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Research Objectives and Questions

- To review the concept of gratitude (shukr) in Islamic teachings.
- To examine how gratitude is explained in the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic scholarship.
- To review psychological studies on gratitude and mental well-being.
- To compare Islamic and psychological perspectives on gratitude.
- To analyze the effects of gratitude on mental health and happiness.

How is gratitude (shukr) defined in Islamic teachings?

How do psychological studies explain gratitude and its effects?

What impact does gratitude have on mental health and well-being?

What similarities exist between Islamic and psychological views of gratitude?

What differences exist between Islamic and psychological concepts of gratitude?

Research Methodology

This study used a narrative and thematic literature review approach. The purpose was to understand the concept of gratitude (shukr) from Islamic and psychological perspectives. A review method was chosen because it allows the comparison of ideas, themes, and findings from different studies (14).

Search Strategy

Using online academic databases including Google Scholar, SpringerLink, Brill Journals, and the SID (Scientific Information Database) as well as Islamic psychology journals to search organizations, the author was able to acquire relevant literature out of which the author also selected the keywords for this project. The these keywords were as follow: gratitude; shukr; Islamic perspective of gratitude; psychology of gratitude; religion and well being; and positive psychology. These terms were important in identifying studies that explored both the religious and psychological dimensions associated with gratitude.

Inclusion Criteria

Only peer-reviewed articles were included in this review. Studies were selected if they focused on:

- Gratitude or shukr
- Islamic teachings related to gratitude

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- Psychological effects of gratitude
- Well-being, happiness, or mental health

Both theoretical and empirical studies were included. Articles written in English were preferred. These criteria helped ensure the quality and relevance of the literature (15).

Exclusion Criteria

Articles were excluded if they:

Did not focus on gratitude as a main concept

Were opinion pieces without academic references

Lacked clear methodology or scholarly discussion

This helped maintain academic rigor and clarity.

Data Analysis

The selected studies were read carefully and analyzed using thematic analysis. Key themes were identified, such as:

Definition of gratitude

Components of shukr in Islam

Psychological benefits of gratitude

Similarities and differences between Islamic and Western views

Themes were grouped and compared to identify common patterns and differences. This method is widely used in qualitative review studies .

Ethical Considerations

This study did not involve human participants. All data were taken from published sources. Proper citation and referencing were used to avoid plagiarism. Ethical guidelines for academic writing were followed throughout the review.

Discussion

The purpose of this review was to learn about gratitude (shukr) both in the Islamic and psychological perspectives. The results demonstrate that the concept of gratitude is quite potent in the two traditions. Nevertheless, there are few aspects of its meaning and application that are different. The Islamic teachings define gratitude as a moral, spiritual

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and practical obligation. Psychology defines gratitude as a positive attitude and feeling that enhances well being.

Gratitude in Islamic Perspective

It is in the Islamic literature that thanksgiving does not simply have to be a mere word. It comprises gratefulness in the heart and doing things as guided by Allah. Research on Islamic psychology highlights the fact that shukr consists of three elements namely: heart, tongue and action. This renders Islamic gratitude more than an emotional condition as it is a whole way of life. It is also provided by the Sufi ethical approach according to which gratitude should be enacted in everyday practice and ethical duty (16).

This review supports earlier findings that gratitude in Islam is directly linked to faith. A grateful person is seen as someone who recognizes Allah's blessings and uses them responsibly. This spiritual connection gives gratitude a deeper meaning than simple appreciation.

Gratitude in Psychological Research

The positive impacts of gratitude have their greatest influence supported by psychological research. Studies indicate that gratitude increases happiness, life satisfaction and emotional well being. It also minimizes stress, anxiety and depression. These were findings that were consistent with a number of studies that were used in this review. Gratitude interventions like gratitude journaling were observed to be effective when it comes to enhancing mental health. Nevertheless, gratitude has been the subject of most psychological research as an experience that is human centered. Rarely do they incorporate spiritual or religious aspects. This can restrict their usage in religious societies where people strongly believe in faith and it forms a significant part of life.

Comparison of Islamic and Psychological Views

Similarities are numerous when the Islamic and the psychological perspectives are compared. They both concur that gratitude makes people healthier in the mind and social life. They both are aware of gratitude as a positive power in human life. But Islam

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provides a spiritual and moral dimension which is typically not discussed by psychology. According to the SID.ir study, the concept of Islamic shukr involves compliance with Allah and living in harmony, whereas psychological gratitude is based primarily on emotional gains (17). According to this difference, Islamic gratitude can be more enduring in its effects since it is related to belief and purpose.

Implications for Mental Health and Well-Being

The results imply that psychology together with Islamic teachings can be more effective in mental health. In the case of Muslim communities, interventions with a gratitude component like spiritual ones could be more effective. The integration is able to help solve some of the contemporary issues like stress, dissatisfaction, and emotional instabilities. Gratitude may also have a significant role in education, counseling, and development of a community. Educating people on the importance of being thankful as a spiritual responsibility and a psychological ability can enable them to become resilient and peaceful.

Results

The literature review demonstrates that gratitude (shukr) is an important idea in the Islamic teachings and psychology. Gratitude in Islam entails the thankful feelings in the heart, gratitude through words, and right conducts. In psychological literature, it is common to define gratitude as a positive feeling or disposition that enhances life contentment and happiness. In the literature, an appreciation of gratitude is always associated with a better mental condition. Individuals practicing gratitude are less stressed, less anxious, less depressed and emotionally well. Islamic literature underlines that gratitude also empowers spiritual life, faith and patience that give meaning of deeper life and stable emotions. It is also true that gratitude has an impact on social behavior. Appreciative people are more empathetic, kind and cooperative, and this enhances relations and social peace.

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The result of the comparison between the Islamic and the psychological viewpoint is that there is consensus of the advantages of being thankful but there is the moral and spiritual aspect of the Islamic teachings that are not just limited to the emotional impacts. Nevertheless, there are research gaps even with such findings. Experimental studies on Islamic form of gratitude intervention are limited, longitudinal studies are also limited and there is less research that incorporates spiritual and psychological viewpoint.

Despite these findings, research gaps remain. There are limited experimental studies on Islamic gratitude interventions, few longitudinal studies, and little research integrating spiritual and psychological perspectives. Overall, the literature indicates that gratitude is a powerful tool for enhancing well-being, mental health, and social functioning.

Conclusion

In this review, we have seen that gratitude (shukr) plays a significant role in Islam or in the field of psychology. Gratitude is a religious, ethical and practical act in Islam. It encompasses gratitude in the heart, words and deeds. Psychology perceives the gratitude as a positive feeling that enhances well-being and happiness. Gratitude has many benefits. It enhances mental wellbeing, decreases stress and anxiety and elevates life contentment. It also enhances social bonds and social conduct. Gratitude also helps in Islam in terms of faith, patience and peace of mind.

By comparing the two different schools of thought on gratitude, we can see that both are in agreement that gratitude is a positive attribute. However, the teachings of Islam add a deeper, more spiritual and moral layer. By merging these two different approaches (spiritual and psychological), we are able to create a better result for our mental, social and spiritual well-being. Future research should be focused on testing real-life examples of Islamic gratitude interventions, as well as completing more experimental and longitudinal studies to explore gratitude within different cultural and religious contexts. Overall, gratitude is a powerful tool for creating personal health and mutual peace.

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