

The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6)
McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2001)

The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6) is a six-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life.

We originally developed 39 positively and negatively worded items that assess experiences and expressions of gratefulness and appreciation in daily life, as well as feelings about receiving from others. Items reflected the gratitude intensity facet (e.g., “I feel thankful for what I have received in life”), the gratitude frequency facet (e.g., “Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone”), the gratitude span facet (e.g. “I sometimes feel grateful for the smallest things”), and the gratitude density facet (e.g., “I am grateful to a wide variety of people”). Respondents endorsed each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

Factorial Structure

Through a series of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, a robust one-factor scale was developed. Confirmatory factor analyses specifying a one-factor congeneric measurement model typically yield goodness-of-fit indexes that are typically considered to be within acceptable ranges (i.e., Comparative Fit Indexes range from .90 to .95, and Standardized Root Mean Residuals typically range from .05 to .10).

Inter-Item Consistency

Cronbach’s alpha estimates for the six-item totals have ranged from .76 to .84 (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002; McCullough, Tsang, & Emmons, 2002).

Correlation with Other Measures of the Same Construct

Scores on the GQ-6 correlate substantially with other measures hypothesized to assess the extent to which people experience gratitude in daily life. McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang (2002) correlated the GQ-6 with a self-report measure that instructed participants to indicate how well each of three gratitude-related words (i.e., grateful, thankful, appreciative) described them. Scores on the two measures were correlated at $r(N = 1182) = .65, p < .001$. Using structural equation modeling to control measurement error, the correlation increased to $r(N = 1182) = .75, p < .001$. Scores on the GQ-6 also correlated with peers’ ratings of targets’ amounts of dispositional gratitude at $r = .33, p < .01$. Finally, people with high scores on the GQ-6 report feeling more “grateful,” “thankful,” and “appreciative” for benefits or gifts they have received than do people who score below the median on the GQ-6 (Gray, Emmons, & Morrison, 2002).

McCullough, Tsang, and Emmons (2002) also correlated scores on the GQ-6 with the typical amount of gratitude that people experienced in daily life, as expressed in mean ratings of their moods (viz., the extent to which they felt “thankful,” “grateful,” and “appreciative”) during the course of either a 21-day or 14-day diary reports of their daily mood. Effect size correlations in two studies were $r = .37$ and $.49$, respectively, $ps < .01$. Scores on the GQ-6 were also correlated significantly with how much gratitude people typically reported feeling in response to individual events that caused them to feel grateful ($r = .25$), and with how many people they perceived to be responsible for the benefits they received in everyday life ($r = .21$). However, scores on the GQ-6 were not substantially correlated

with the number of gratitude-eliciting events that people encountered in the course of a 14-day diary period.

Other Correlates of Scores on the GQ-6

Affective Traits

High scorers on the GQ-6 report more frequent positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality, optimism, and hope. Correlations with these positive affective variables typically range from .30 to .50 (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Correlations with measures of negative affective traits such as negative affectivity, depression, and anxiety typically are negative, but rarely are larger than $-.40$ (McCullough et al., 2002).

Prosocial Traits

High scorers on the GQ-6 typically score higher on measures of empathic affect and perspective taking than do low scorers. They are also viewed by their peers as being more generous with their time and resources. In addition, high scorers on the GQ-6 place less importance on material goods; they are less likely to judge their own and others success in terms of possessions accumulated; they are less envious of wealthy persons; and are more likely to share their possessions with others relative to less grateful persons. They also score higher on self-report measures of forgiveness (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

Spiritual and Religious Traits

Those who regularly attend religious services and engage in religious activities such as prayer and the reading of religious material are more likely to score high on the GQ-6. High scorers, relative to low scorers, also tend to have higher scores on measures of spirituality that tap a belief in the interconnectedness of all life and a commitment to and responsibility to others. In addition, people with relatively high GQ-6 scores are more likely to cite religious or spiritual causes as responsible for the positive life events that they experience (McCullough, Tsang, & Emmons, 2002).

The Big Five

Measures of the “Big Five” personality dimensions typically account for 20-30% of the variance in GQ-6 scores. McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) reported that Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism predicted unique variance in GQ-6 scores. Even after controlling for these “higher-order” personality traits, scores on the GQ-6 typically maintain their associations with other variables.

Social Desirability

Correlations with self-deceptive tendencies have ranged from $r = .19-.34$. Correlations with tendencies toward impression management have ranged from $.21-.29$ (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). However, scores on the GQ-6 typically maintain at least modest correlations with the affective, prosocial, and spiritual/religious traits mentioned above after controlling for socially desirable response tendencies (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

Location

McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 112-127.

Additional References Using the GQ-6

Gray, S. A., Emmons, R. A., & Morrison, A. (2001 August). *Distinguishing gratitude from indebtedness in affect and action tendencies*. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA.

McCullough, M. E., Tsang, J., & Emmons, R. A. (2002). *Gratitude in intermediate affective terrain: Links of grateful moods to individual differences and daily emotional experience*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

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

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = neutral

5 = slightly agree

6 = agree

7 = strongly agree

___ 1. I have so much in life to be thank ful for.

___ 2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.

___ 3. When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.*

___ 4. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.

___ 5. As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.

___ 6. Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.*

Scoring Instructions:

1. Reverse scores for items 3 and 6.
2. Add scores for items 1-6, using reversed scores for items 3 and 6.