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## IMPACT OF THANKSGIVING ON IMPROVING THE PARTICIPANTS' QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE THANKSGIVING WORKSHOP

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### ABSTRACT

Thanksgiving can be defined as attention to the positive aspects of life. Noting that improve the quality of life is the most important elements to promote physical and mental health of the population; the researchers went on to examine the impact of their gratitude and optimism on improving the quality of life of the participants. This is a pilot quasi-experimental study. In this study, 16 participants who had inclusion criteria were selected by the convenience sampling method. A workshop was held in nine two-hour sessions, three times a week. Major titles were in the areas of thanksgiving for financial, physical and mental health, wealth, serving people in society, nature, family, friends and co-workers, self-concept, the talents and skills and achievements. The instrument in this study was 26-item Quality of life questionnaire that its validity and reliability have been confirmed in the country. In this questionnaire, minimum and maximum scores were 26 and 100. The average age of the samples was  $38.31 \pm 8.89$ . Most participants were in the age more than 40 years (43.8%). Mean QOL of patients before the intervention was 64.98 that increased to 76.03 after the intervention. Wilcoxon test was used for the mean comparison before and after the intervention. The difference was statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ). According to the findings of this study, gratitude and appreciation skills can be used as a method that affects the quality of people's lives to be raised. The researchers also suggest that studies be done with more samples size for further investigation.

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### Introduction

Thanksgiving can be defined as attention to the positive aspects of life. Noting that improve the quality of life is the most important elements to promote physical and mental health of the population. The Researches show there is a relationship

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between gratitude and mental health (1, 2). In this context, it can be said, Worship the God has a positive effect on the mental health of individuals (3-5). However, a review of the literature shows the effectiveness of different types of worship on physical and mental health of patients has not been studied (6). Worship behavior is complex and multi-dimensional (7). Worship divided into various kinds, such as worship to the inside, worship and pray to God and worship to communicate with another person, and in general this type of worship is divided into 21 types (6, 3). Gratitude of God for the course of life is one of the worships (6). Different studies show that different types of worship can have different effects on individuals' mental health and their quality of life (6). For example, results of O'Laoire (1997) study showed more frequent grateful predicted greater increases in self-esteem and greater decreases in negative affect such as state and trait anxiety and depressive sign and symptoms (8). In other research, participants who involved in more religious helping experienced fewer mental symptoms (9). Therefore, the researchers went on to examine the impact of their gratitude and optimism on improving the quality of life of the participants.

### Material and Method

This is a pilot quasi-experimental study. In this study, 16 participants who had inclusion criteria (Lack of acute psychiatric disorder and physical disease, able to read, not involved in other similar programs, present in all group meetings) were selected by the convenience sampling method. A workshop was held in nine two-hour sessions, three times a week. Major titles were in the areas of thanksgiving for financial, physical and mental health, wealth, serving people in society, nature, family, friends and co-workers, self-concept, the talents and skills and achievements. The instrument in this study was 26-item Quality of life questionnaire that its validity and reliability have been confirmed in the country. In this questionnaire, minimum and maximum scores were 26 and 100. The World Health Organization's Quality of Life program was implemented for the first time in 1991. The project an aim was to create an international instrument to assess quality of life without being dependent on culture. This tool assesses the perceptions of patients about value and cultural systems, individual purpose, standards and their concerns. The questionnaire measure 4 wide ranges, which include: physical health, mental health, social communication, and environmental relationship. Moreover, it can also evaluate the general health of individuals. Items of the questionnaire will be evaluated on a scale of 5 options. Higher scores show the better quality of life. Researches on the psychometric properties of the short form of this questionnaire show the validity and reliability of the questionnaire (10).

### Results

The average age of the samples was  $38.31 \pm 8.89$ . Most participants were in the age more than 40 years (43.8%) (Figure 1), and More of them had high school education (Figure 2). Mean QOL of patients before the intervention was 64.98 that increased to 76.03 after the intervention. Wilcoxon test was used for the mean comparison before and after the intervention. The difference was statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $<0.05$ ) (Table 1).

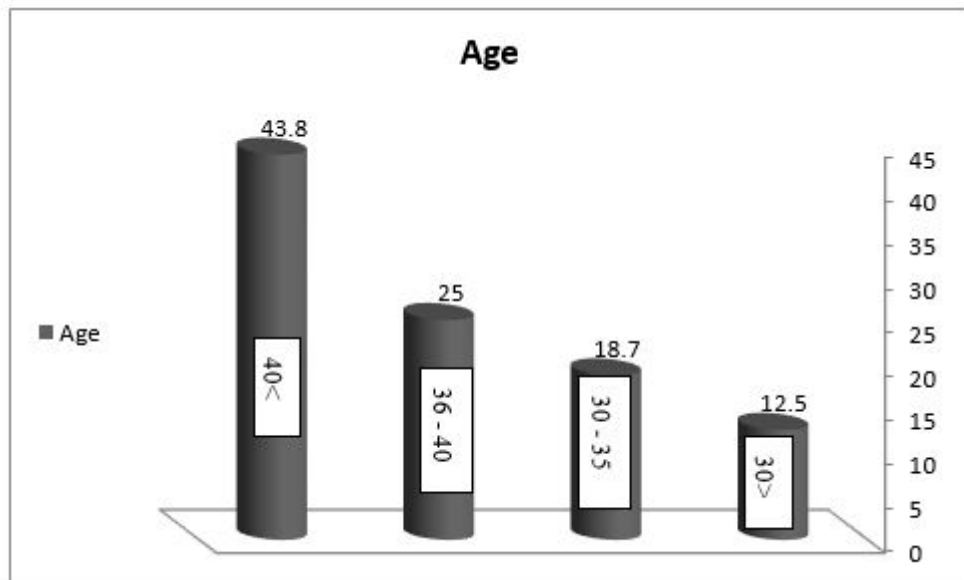
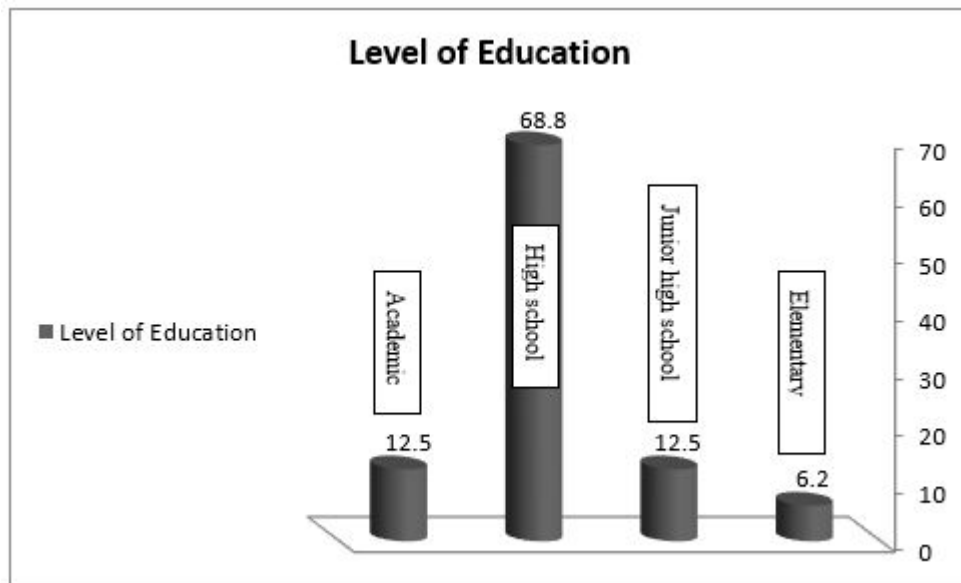


Figure 1: Distribution of cases by age

Looking at the chart above, 12.50% of individuals had aged less than 30 years, 18.7% had 30-35 years, 25% had 36 – 40 years, and 43.80% had aged more than 40 years.



**Figure 2:** Distribution of cases by level of education

Looking at the chart above, 6.2 % of individuals had elementary education, 12.5 % had Junior high school education, 68.8 % had a high school education, and 12.5 % had academic education.

**Table 1.** Comparison rank the quality of life of the subjects before and after participation in the gratitude workshop

		Number	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Z value	significance
Before and after intervention	Negative ranks	1	1	1	3.574	P value<.05
	Positive ranks	16	9.50	152		
	total	17				

Looking at the chart above, Wilcoxon test showed a significant relationship between the quality of life of participants before and after the intervention (P Value<.05)

### Discussion

In this study, gratitude had a positive impact on improving the participants' quality of life. In this regard studies show a link between gratitude and a feeling of health (11-18). For example, the results of studies indicate a link between gratitude and a sense of safety in patients with arthritis (6). Also, Galeba and Bajurna Studies (2015) with title "the impact of belief in God and providence on happiness and quality of life of patients treated with asthma drugs in Poland showed Belief in God can have a positive impact on the quality of life of these patients (19). The relationship between spirituality and belief in God has been confirmed in several studies (20-30). For example, the results of a study by the Jahani et al (2013) on patients with coronary artery disease, and a study by Moeini et al (2016) Carried out on elderly patients with high blood pressure, a significant relationship was observed between spirituality and quality of life there (31, 32). The results of studies show that gratitude improves people mental status by reducing the amount of rumination about problems (6, 33-38). For example, cancer patients with gratitude and focus on the positive points of life may be less opportunity for rumination about their problem, which can reduce symptoms of depression. Also, gratitude also enhances the experience positive emotions, which can reduce the amount of rumination and negative issues (6, 39-44). People by using the techniques of gratitude and blessings on your life will be able to create positive emotions that these emotions can create barriers to mental and psychological problems such as depression, especially for people who suffer from chronic stress (12, 42-48). Researches showed the positive impact of gratitude for the emotional health of both patients and healthy people (6, 16, 34, 49, 50). Thank others reduced concern feels in patients, which this will be accompanied by improvements in mental status (6). So as researches shows, individual can improve their mental and emotional health by using grateful techniques and the spiritual advices. In this regard, sick people who know their disease punishment from God, with Clergymen help can strengthen their health, and improve mental health status. Especially in people with diseases that haven't good prognosis and associated with high mortality rates (6, 51-56). So we can say thanks and appreciation skills can be used as an effective method to improve the quality of people's lives. Considering the number of samples in this study, the researchers suggest for more exact study, future studies done with larger sample size and a control group.

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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