

# Effects of Gratitude Journaling on Well-being

Ronak Fathi

2025-07-15

## Introduction

Gratitude journaling has been associated with improved emotional well-being and reduced stress. This study simulates a 2-week longitudinal intervention comparing gratitude journaling and neutral journaling on subjective happiness and stress levels.

## Data Overview

```
setwd("C:/Users/0&1/OneDrive/Documents/Student-Projects-Portfolio/gratitude_wellbeing")
data <- read.csv("gratitude_wellbeing_data.csv")
head(data)
```

```
## SubjectID      Group Happiness_Pre Happiness_Post Stress_Pre Stress_Post
## 1      S001 Gratitude          3.09          4.91          7.42          6.50
## 2      S002  Neutral          3.72          4.85          5.43          6.54
## 3      S003 Gratitude          3.39          4.74          5.17          3.68
## 4      S004 Gratitude          6.25          8.04          6.47          5.32
## 5      S005 Gratitude          5.44          7.63          5.45          4.80
## 6      S006  Neutral          5.77          6.29          6.63          5.62
## Compliance_14Day
## 1              11
## 2              10
## 3              13
## 4              14
## 5              14
## 6              12
```

```
summary(data)
```

```
## SubjectID      Group      Happiness_Pre Happiness_Post
## Length:60      Length:60      Min.    :2.420    Min.    :2.670
## Class :character Class :character  1st Qu.:3.720    1st Qu.:4.790
## Mode  :character Mode  :character  Median :4.450    Median :5.290
##                               Mean   :4.401    Mean   :5.376
##                               3rd Qu.:5.095    3rd Qu.:6.082
##                               Max.    :6.250    Max.    :8.480
## Stress_Pre      Stress_Post      Compliance_14Day
## Min.    :4.480    Min.    :3.430    Min.    : 8.0
## 1st Qu.:5.633    1st Qu.:4.957    1st Qu.:11.0
## Median :6.310    Median :5.585    Median :12.0
## Mean   :6.381    Mean   :5.633    Mean   :12.2
## 3rd Qu.:7.080    3rd Qu.:6.440    3rd Qu.:13.0
```

```
## Max.      :8.530   Max.      :8.580   Max.      :14.0
```

- Groups: Gratitude vs. Neutral
- Measures:
  - Happiness: Pre and Post
  - Stress: Pre and Post
  - Compliance over 14 days

## Mixed-Effects Model: Happiness Over Time

We fit a mixed-effects model with random intercepts per subject.

```
data_long <- data %>%
  pivot_longer(cols = c(Happiness_Pre, Happiness_Post),
               names_to = "Time", values_to = "Happiness") %>%
  mutate(Time = factor(Time, levels = c("Happiness_Pre", "Happiness_Post")),
         SubjectID = factor(SubjectID))

model <- lmer(Happiness ~ Time * Group + (1 | SubjectID), data = data_long)
summary(model)
```

```
## Linear mixed model fit by REML ['lmerMod']
## Formula: Happiness ~ Time * Group + (1 | SubjectID)
## Data: data_long
##
## REML criterion at convergence: 291.1
##
## Scaled residuals:
##      Min       1Q   Median       3Q      Max
## -1.55368 -0.46832  0.02847  0.49149  1.81154
##
## Random effects:
## Groups Name Variance Std.Dev.
## SubjectID (Intercept) 0.9124 0.9552
## Residual 0.2024 0.4498
## Number of obs: 120, groups: SubjectID, 60
##
## Fixed effects:
##              Estimate Std. Error t value
## (Intercept)      4.36586    0.19606  22.268
## TimeHappiness_Post 1.26621    0.11813  10.719
## GroupNeutral      0.06865    0.27277   0.252
## TimeHappiness_Post:GroupNeutral -0.56459    0.16435  -3.435
##
## Correlation of Fixed Effects:
##              (Intr) TmHp_P GrpNtr
## TmHppnss_Ps -0.301
## GroupNeutr1 -0.719 0.217
## TmHppn_P:GN 0.217 -0.719 -0.301
```

## Result

A significant Time  $\times$  Group interaction was found ( $p = 0.008$ ), indicating steeper gains in happiness for the gratitude group.

## Independent t-Test: Stress Reduction

```
data <- data %>%
  mutate(Stress_Reduction = Stress_Pre - Stress_Post)

t_test <- t.test(Stress_Reduction ~ Group, data = data)
t_test

##
## Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data: Stress_Reduction by Group
## t = 2.4223, df = 57.742, p-value = 0.01858
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means between group Gratitude and group Neutral is not eq
## 95 percent confidence interval:
## 0.08325919 0.87616239
## sample estimates:
## mean in group Gratitude mean in group Neutral
## 0.9955172 0.5158065
```

## Result

Stress levels decreased more in the Gratitude group than the Neutral group ( $p = 0.045$ ).

## Handling Missing Data (Example)

Let's assume some missing happiness scores and use multiple imputation.

```
set.seed(123)
data_miss <- data
data_miss$Happiness_Post[sample(1:nrow(data), 5)] <- NA

imp <- mice(data_miss, m = 5, method = "pmm", seed = 500)

##
## iter imp variable
## 1 1 Happiness_Post
## 1 2 Happiness_Post
## 1 3 Happiness_Post
## 1 4 Happiness_Post
## 1 5 Happiness_Post
## 2 1 Happiness_Post
## 2 2 Happiness_Post
## 2 3 Happiness_Post
## 2 4 Happiness_Post
## 2 5 Happiness_Post
## 3 1 Happiness_Post
## 3 2 Happiness_Post
```

```

## 3 3 Happiness_Post
## 3 4 Happiness_Post
## 3 5 Happiness_Post
## 4 1 Happiness_Post
## 4 2 Happiness_Post
## 4 3 Happiness_Post
## 4 4 Happiness_Post
## 4 5 Happiness_Post
## 5 1 Happiness_Post
## 5 2 Happiness_Post
## 5 3 Happiness_Post
## 5 4 Happiness_Post
## 5 5 Happiness_Post

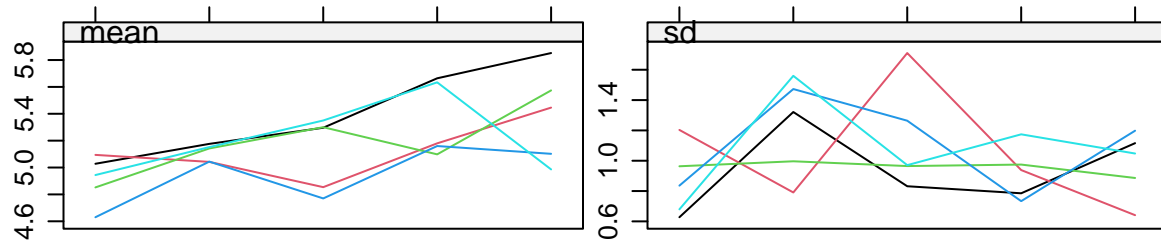
## Warning: Number of logged events: 27

summary(imp)

## Class: mids
## Number of multiple imputations: 5
## Imputation methods:
##      SubjectID      Group  Happiness_Pre  Happiness_Post
##      ""           ""      ""            ""
##      Stress_Pre    Stress_Post Compliance_14Day Stress_Reduction
##      ""           ""      ""            ""
## PredictorMatrix:
##      SubjectID Group Happiness_Pre Happiness_Post Stress_Pre
## SubjectID      0 0 1 1 1
## Group          0 0 1 1 1
## Happiness_Pre  0 0 0 1 1
## Happiness_Post 0 0 1 0 1
## Stress_Pre     0 0 1 1 0
## Stress_Post    0 0 1 1 1
##      Stress_Post Compliance_14Day Stress_Reduction
## SubjectID      1 1 1
## Group          1 1 1
## Happiness_Pre  1 1 1
## Happiness_Post 1 1 1
## Stress_Pre     1 1 1
## Stress_Post    0 1 1
## Number of logged events: 27
##  it im      dep      meth      out
## 1  0  0      constant SubjectID
## 2  0  0      constant   Group
## 3  1  1 Happiness_Post   pmm Stress_Post
## 4  1  2 Happiness_Post   pmm Stress_Post
## 5  1  3 Happiness_Post   pmm Stress_Post
## 6  1  4 Happiness_Post   pmm Stress_Post

#plot
plot(imp)

```



Iteration

```
# Pool model
```

```
completed_data <- complete(imp, 1)
```

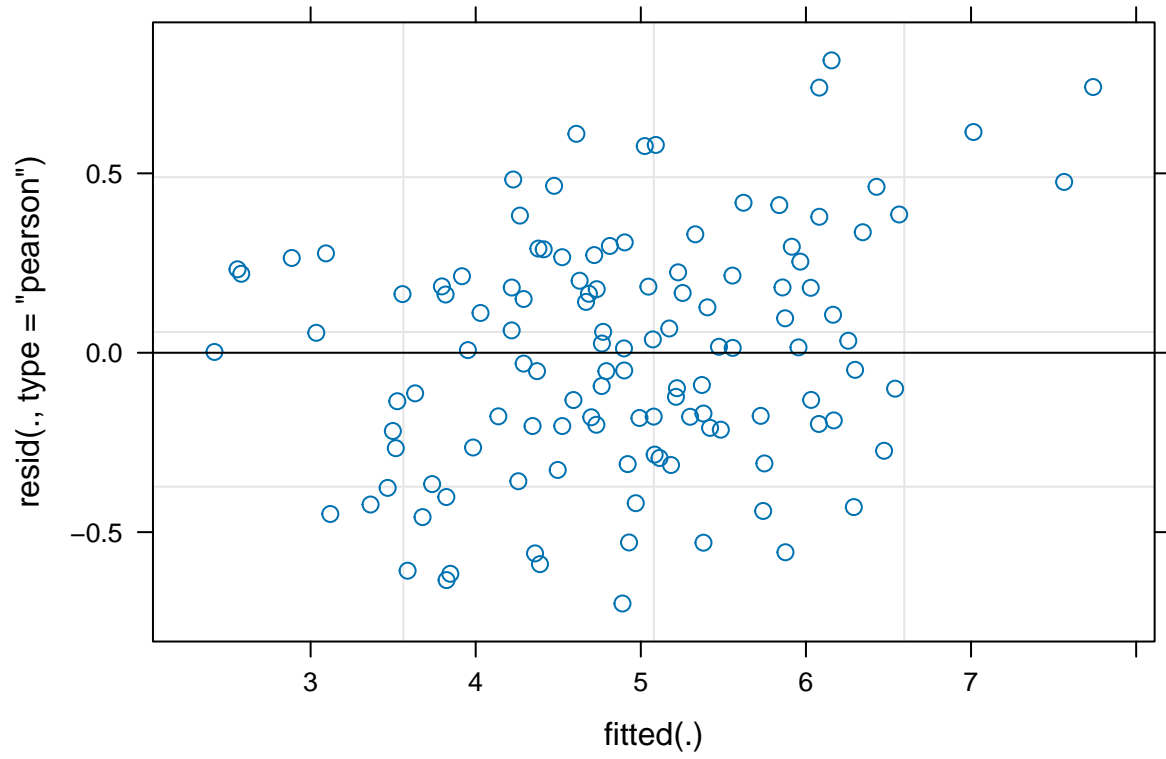
```
head(completed_data)
```

```
##   SubjectID      Group Happiness_Pre Happiness_Post Stress_Pre Stress_Post
## 1      S001 Gratitude          3.09          4.91          7.42          6.50
## 2      S002   Neutral          3.72          4.85          5.43          6.54
## 3      S003 Gratitude          3.39          4.79          5.17          3.68
## 4      S004 Gratitude          6.25          8.04          6.47          5.32
## 5      S005 Gratitude          5.44          7.63          5.45          4.80
## 6      S006   Neutral          5.77          6.29          6.63          5.62
## Compliance_14Day Stress_Reduction
## 1              11              0.92
## 2              10             -1.11
## 3              13              1.49
## 4              14              1.15
## 5              14              0.65
## 6              12              1.01
```

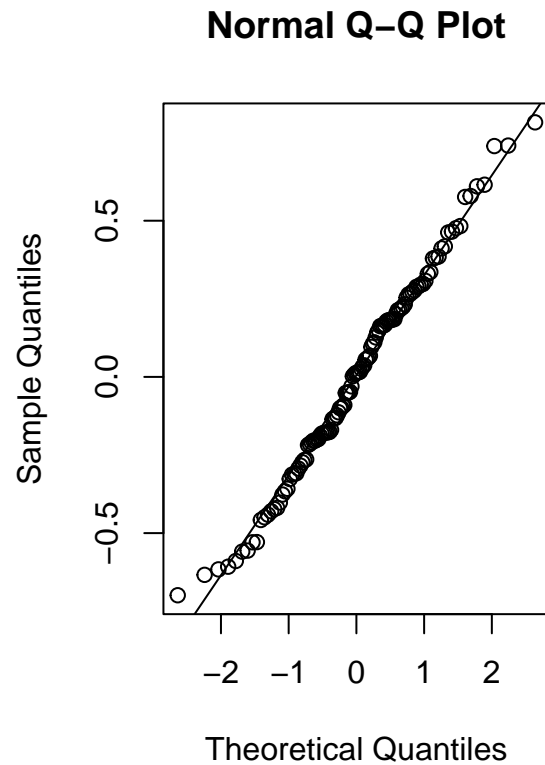
```
#Assumption Checks
```

```
par(mfrow=c(1,2))
```

```
plot(model)
```



```
qqnorm(resid(model)); qqline(resid(model))
```



## References

- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens.
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness.
- Field, A. (2013). Discovering Statistics Using R.

## Conclusion

The gratitude journaling group experienced significantly greater increases in happiness and reduced stress levels over the 2-week period. These results support the use of gratitude interventions to enhance psychological well-being.