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**Impact of Quranic Verse on Gratitude and Stress Reduction among University Teachers and Students**Ayesha Sagheer<sup>1</sup>, Sehrish Wazir<sup>2\*</sup>**Abstract**

The Holy Quran has a property to improve both physical and psychological well-being. In Muslim communities, reciting the Holy Quran is highly important and is viewed as a sort of religious treatment. This study was investigated whether reciting a verse of Holy Quran (Verse 11, Surah Zuha) on daily basis brings reduction in stress level by enhancing gratitude among teachers and students. An experimental research design was used to conduct the study. A total of ( $N=90$ ) voluntary teachers and students were selected by using voluntary response sampling technique. Study was carried out in three phases. Phase 1: At Pre-Assessment level by using the six-item Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ6) and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) were used to assess the participants' gratitude and stress. Voluntary teachers and students were divided into three groups. Phase 2: Implementation of Quranic Verse and daily blessings journaling assigned to group A for a period of three weeks. Group B was given only verse reading and group C was control group. Phase 3: Post Assessment level by using the (GQ6) and (K10) to see the gratitude and stress in participants. Pre and post testing data were analyzed through SPSS by using the paired sample *t*-test. Findings revealed the significant results of reading Quranic verse and writing blessings of the day but on control group having no effect. This indicates that verse 11 of Surah Zuha directly linked with gratitude enhancement. The conclusion of this study is that Quran having a positive effect on people mental health.

**Keywords:** Gratitude, Quranic Verse, Stress Reduction, University Teachers and Students

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**Introduction**

Thankfulness comes from the perception that anything pleasant happened for you, arise by an appraisal that get from any person, whether it could be attributed to another individual or any external source, like nature or a heavenly force, is to be accountable for it (Emmons & Shelton, 2002; Watkins et al.,2009) Gratitude

is an emotion of appreciation for all the wonderful things in life. Benefits might be assets or exchanges of value that lack relational engagement or they can be personal things offered generously by benefactors. Gratitude is an aspect of the more comprehensive, multifaceted idea of recognition (Adler & Fagley, 2005; Rusk et al.,2016), although both Contribute to one's sense of purpose, longevity, and clarity.

A person's life nowadays has progressed to the point where they try to reduce their stress, while they subsequently express gratitude to somebody for contributing to an effort and providing a means to accomplish it. The activities of humans have recently increased by researchers more anxious to comprehend how stress and thankfulness are related as well as how expressing thanks might reduce stress (Krejtz et al., 2016). The findings of Wood et al. (2008) who noticed that people who express

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recognition in their lives—that is, those who express being grateful for their depression, anxious satisfaction, etc.—are more pleased than those who do not. Gratitude has a tendency to reduce stress and anxiety.

Having gratitude expression and experience are the two primary concepts that identify a concept of appreciation (Wood et al., 2008). It has been indicated that there are different ways to express thankfulness, encompassing actual feelings of thanks after gaining something useful or worthwhile and feelings of thanks for more spiritual, beneficial developments in life. To make someone acknowledge them for what they've given throughout mankind or for something for which they express thankfulness. Therefore, a broader perspective on life to the positive aspects of this world could be interpreted as an expression of gratitude (Wood et al., 2008).

The concepts of "trait" and "state" are both helpful to comprehend and evaluate gratitude. Trait gratitude indicates ongoing feelings of appreciation that a person encounters entire life. It can be measured by means of the thankfulness criticism and evaluation of recognition (McCullough et al., 2002) in which examines the level of emotion, duration, dimension, and level of gratitude feelings. Gratitude is a multidimensional behavioral framework that can be either sacred or materialistic. Frequently thankfulness is required place in a social situation, involving an illustration of affection for others and an eagerness to acknowledge those who do good. According to Petrocchi and Couyoumdjian (2016), gratitude may work as a defense against unfavorable emotions and stress.

Gratitude, possibly the most significant positive personality attribute is a crucial predictor of happiness. A vast body of existing research on the role of thankfulness in well-being has virtually entirely focused on general gratitude. There has been minimal research into religious gratitude, with a few significant exceptions. Krause (2006) discovered that older persons who are grateful to God have

lower stress levels. However, after adjusting for church attendance and demographics, he writes that thankfulness towards God had no statistically significant additive effect on health, implying that religious appreciation, unlike general gratitude had minimal impact on health. According to Krause (2006), there may be a bi directional connection between appreciation and happiness. Many studies indicate a negative relationship between people's reported measures of gratefulness and stress (Deutsch, 1984; Krause, 2006; Lee et al., 2018), thankfulness gradually mitigates stress over time. The research of Krause (2006), women are potentially influenced more than men by the benefits of admiration on their mental health. Although this particular experiment focused on older persons and was restricted to those with religious beliefs.

However, further studies have found that the negative correlation between thankfulness and stress is similar in female (Rohda, 2009). Women, who show the most gratitude, in instance, tend to exhibit much less stress compared to men. According to a direct model created through Wood et al. (2008), expressing grateful makes young people feel more socially engaged and less anxious. (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005) Gratitude has an immense impact on society and morals. Credibility is a result of thankfulness and being admired by others encourages prosocial behavior in others (Grant & Gino, 2010). Gratitude provides a moral yardstick, and moral inspiration has uses for young people as well. As early as age 8, Froh et al. (2014) demonstrated the advantage and evaluates (i.e., personal worth of advantages, value of generous individuals, and sympathetic intentions of benefactors) may be scaffold, and that such a curriculum strengthened thankful sentiments and psychological well-being five years after. The religious motivation factor was shown by Bono et al. (2019) in longitudinal research on teenagers aged 11 to 14. Increases in flexible behavior (such as assisting a classmate with their homework or standing up for a friend in trouble) and reduction in

antisocial conduct (such as bothering a peer through intervening or expressing threats against another to get their way) were correlated with gratitude growth over a course of four years.

According to a longitudinal study (Wood et al., 2008), appreciation indicated that lessened anxiety and sorrow 3 months later as well as greater perceived social support, independent of the Big Five personality traits. Another study by Sirois and Wood (2017) investigates the long-term relationships between gratitude and disappointment in samples with osteoarthritis and bowel dysfunction. The gratitude protects teenagers against stress. It consequently helps young people also develop resilience, self-improvement and coping skills. Writing exercises that express thankfulness is among expressive writing therapies have been increases and promote emotional well-being (Cregg & Cheavens, 2021).

Al-Fatihah Psychology is a recently introduced Islamic psychological approach. Based on Surah Al-Fatihah, this discipline investigates human psychology as a system for achieving true happiness. Ansyah and Hadi (2017) also claimed that this notion can be utilized to describe, maintain, or improve mental problems and can be evolved into a counseling method. Several researches have revealed efforts to address academic stress, indicating that treatment can positively decrease the level of stress among students (Goff, 2011; Zhang et al., 2020). These consist of effective psychotherapy and the manner to organize services for counseling therapy (Reddy et al., 2018).

A less effective counseling application usually occurs by the absence of an Islamic intellectual base. According to Wolff & Boama (2018), a man's religious views, particularly there are persuasive variable that incorporated into psychological treatment. Several exploratory researches suggested that adopting an Islamic attitude was useful in reducing psychological disorders or increasing one's potential. This includes using tadabbur to lessen academic stress or grasping the meaning of the Quran

surah. Al-Insyirah (Ansyah & Hadi, 2017; Zahra & Saidiyah, 2013). Muslims are encouraged to express thankfulness for everything they have in their lives. Being grateful for what you have is a stress-reduction technique. Showing appreciation to Allah for everything He has provided us makes us happy and liberates us from the stress (Mead, 2020). Research Gratitude also reduces the adverse psychological outcomes of hazard like long-term diseases (Jiang, 2022; Sirois & Wood, 2017) further more researches directly measuring the stress buffering effects of thankfulness have indicated that appreciation lowers the effect of stress on negative health consequences (Deichert et al., 2019). Recent meta-analyses indicated that therapies aimed at increasing thankfulness enhance psychological wellbeing and reduced the symptoms of stress, tension and depression. (Cregg & Cheavens, 2021; Davis et al., 2016; Dickens, 2017). Women with breast tumor, who engaged in a two weeks regularly blessing dairy making intervening, manifested improvement in everyday psychosocial functioning, better perception of assistance and wider implementation of adaptive coping methods. People who are grateful are happier because being grateful helps the people build long term resources like social connections and self-confidence (Alkozei et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2008).

Few researches on the other hand, have looked at the impact of appreciation intervention on psychological diseases (Davis et al., 2016). The good feeling of appreciation, accordance with expand and construct theory, may have "overturning impact" on the unfavorable feelings of anxiety (Fredrickson, 2001). Many research surveys involving adolescents have showed that thankfulness is link with lower sign of anxiousness and psychological issues. (Rassool, 2016) Religious and spiritual practices are inextricably linked in Islam for Muslims, faith and religion can be viewed as a link between the human and spiritual spheres, and both imply a desire for this life and the afterlife According to the American

psychological association APA, stress is a physiological or psychological reaction.

The Qur'an established and upheld the notion that by engaging in specific qualities and activities, a person might maintain exceptional psychological and mental health while also feeling pleased and at peace (Zaman et al., 2022). prayer is an effective strategy for dealing with stress and anxiety. It is similar to a spiritual relationship to Allah. Allah listens to modest prayer and bestows His bounties on His people. Mercy and forgiveness are always present in prayer. Allah's mercy extends to everything. Muslims should pray to Allah constantly in order to earn His mercy and forgiveness (Utz, 2011). After reading the Qur'an, the body, mind, and inner self are all soothed. This soothing effect reduces tension, worry and anxiety (BaHammam, 2011).

According to psychological study, the condition of bodily purity is related with alleviation from mental pressures. It is also commanded in Islam to maintain cleanliness (Zaman et al., 2022). Dealing with stress for teachers is a crucial area of research and its impact on their psychological, wellbeing, and upholding professional in the field of teaching. Encouraging teachers to cope is essential due to the link between it and juvenile consequences (Ramberg et al., 2020). Teachers, who practice adaptability decreases in job turnover, promoting flexible coping improve psychological and behavioral well-being for students, particularly when combined with efforts to enhance the educational institute environment through lessening the load and barriers faced by too many educators (Herman et al., 2020). Numerous of researches have been conducted to investigate tradition practice

and devotion that can assist Muslims in dealing with stress and burden, like tahajud (Sholeh, 2017), Duha and tadabbur al Quran (Bakar, 2015; Deuraseh & Tohar, 2008).

### **Rationale**

There is a gap in the literature of reading Quranic verse on gratitude and stress reduction among teachers and students. These research variables are one of a kind that is not studied together in any of the previous researches as well as none of them is directed to involve the Pakistani university teachers and students.

### **Objectives**

This study aims to explore whether reciting a verse of Holy Quran (Verse number 11, Surah Zuha) and writing blessings on the daily basis brings any reduction in stress level by enhancing gratitude among students and teachers.

### **Hypotheses**

H 1: Reading of Quranic verse and writing blessings on the daily basis will increase gratitude among the university students and teachers in the post assessment level.

H2: Reading of Quranic verse and writing blessings on the daily basis will decrease the level of stress among the university students and students in post assessment level.

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

An experimental research design was used to conduct the current study. Pre-test, Post-test analysis was carried out.

#### **Participant Characteristics**

This study recruited 90 participants from the higher educational institute students and teachers have been selected of the government Sadiq College Women University Bahawalpur and the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

**Table 1***Socio-demographic Characteristic of Student Participants (N=45)*

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
17-19	26	57
20-22	19	42
<b>Education</b>		
Bachelor	43	96
M.Phil	02	04
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	01	02
Unmarried	44	97
<b>Perceived Social Class</b>		
Upper class	02	04
Upper middle Class	19	42
Middle Class	24	53

**Table 2***Socio-demographic Characteristic of Teacher Participants (N=45)*

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	5	11
Female	40	88
<b>Age</b>		
20-30	13	28
31-40	29	64
41-50	02	4
51 +	01	2
<b>Education</b>		
MPhil	14	31
Doctorate	31	68
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	30	66
Unmarried	15	33
<b>Perceived Social Class</b>		
Upper class	01	2
Upper middle Class	33	73
Middle Class	11	24

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Pass out students were not included in this sample. Physically and mentally unhealthy individuals were not included. Retired teachers were not involved in this study.

### Sampling

A voluntary responses sampling technique was used. A total ( $N=90$ ) voluntary students and teachers were selected to participate in this study. All participants were pre tested for their level of gratitude and stress.

### Measures

#### Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

Ten questions about psychological states are included in the K10 scale, each with a five-level answer scale. The measurement can be used as a quick screening tool to identify distress levels (Kessler et al., 2003).

#### Gratitude Questionnaire

The six-item Gratitude Questionnaire is an instrument for self-reporting used to determine among individual in the probability of feeling grateful on a regular basis McCullough et al., (2002).

### Procedure

This experimental study was conducted systematic manner. It is divided into three phases. First participants completed an initially survey containing consent form and

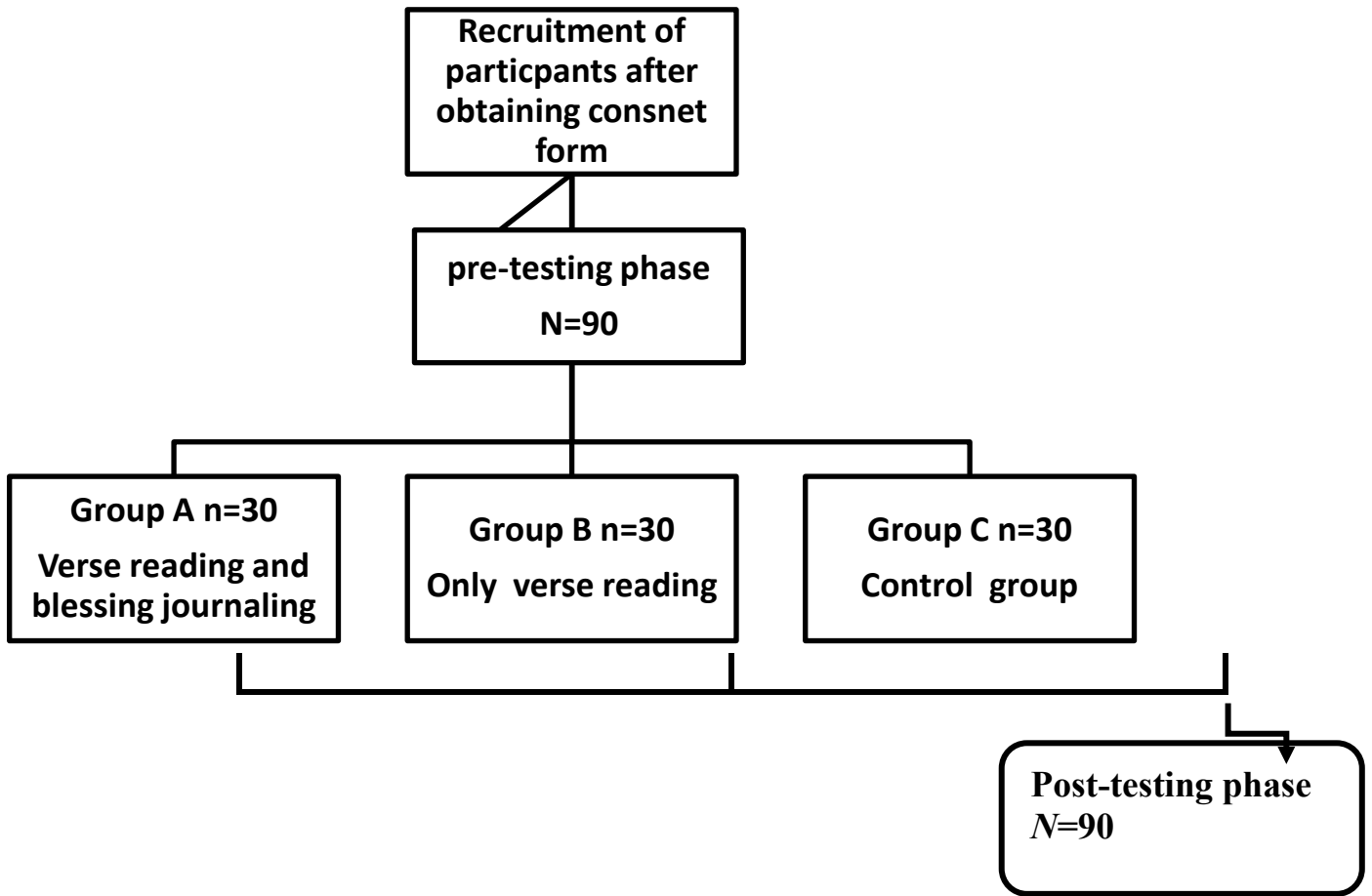
demographic measure after that all participants were given questionnaire to fill the gratitude questionnaire (GQ6) and Kessler psychological distress scale (k10). Second participants randomly divided into three groups. From in these groups two groups were consisted of intervention groups and third group was control group.

First group A was given printed form of verse with Arabic and translated text. Participants of this group like teachers were instructed to display this verse on their office tables, while for students of this group were directed to display verse on their study tables. Participants were mandated to read verse daily in the morning time along with it write the blessing in their lives that they felt grateful for at that moment. At the start of blessing journaling had given the printed sheets having a titled of "Weekly Blessing Activity" distributed each participant. Every week, journaling sheets were checked. This blessing journaling exercise was done in three weeks. Second group B was given similar intervention but difference is that only Quranic verse reading assigned for students and teachers. Third group C is control group not any intervention had given.

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ  
اور اپنے پروردگار کی نعمتوں کا بیان کرتے رہنا

And proclaim the blessing of your Lord. (93:11)

**Figure 1**  
*Experimental Study Design and Procedure*



**Ethical Considerations**

While conducting the research ethical issues were kept in mind. Permission for using the scale from the relevant author Participants was given a signed consent form that informed them about the study. They were informed that they could drop out the study at any time. Participants were also informed that their information would be kept confidential and

private. No participants were forced to fill the questionnaire.

**Statistical Analysis**

The study was Quantitative; IBM SPSS (Version 20) was used to analyze the pre- and post- testing data. Paired sample t test was used to compare the mean of pre and post testing response.

## Results

**Table 3**

*Mean Comparison of Students' Level of Gratitude and Stress (N=45)*

Variables	Pre-testing	Post-testing	<i>t</i> (44)	<i>p</i>	R	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )				
Gratitude	32.11(2.81)	31.0(5.95)	5.84	.000	-.28***	0.06
Stress	24.66(6.63)	24.40(8.04)	3.82	.000	-.35***	0.03

Note: *M*=mean, *SD*=standard deviation, \*\*\**p*<.001

Table 3 revealed paired *t*-test and mean comparison of student's pre and post testing on gratitude and stress reduction. Findings indicate the significant mean differences on gratitude and stress were in pre-testing (*M*=32.11, *SD*=2.81) and (*M*=24.66, *SD*=6.63) with *t*(44)=5.84, *p*<.001. The set of score was significantly negative correlated (*r*= -.28),

(*p*<.001) the value of Cohen's *d* was (0.06) that indicated small effect size. Subsequently the mean difference slightly decreased in the post-testing phase on gratitude and stress (*M*=31.00, *SD*=5.95) and (*M*=24.40, *SD*=8.04) with *t*(44) = (3.82, *p*<.001). The post-testing findings significantly negative correlate (*r*= -.35, *p*<.001). The value of Cohen's *d* was (0.03), which indicated that very small effect size.

**Table 4**

*Mean comparison of Teachers' Level of Gratitude and Stress (N=45)*

Variables	Pre-testing	Post-testing	<i>t</i> (44)	<i>p</i>	R	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )				
Gratitude	31.84(4.61)	32.51(5.24)	6.64	.000	-.08***	0.99
Stress	23.07(7.16)	21.16(6.38)	8.44	.000	-.19***	1.26

Note: *M*=mean, *SD*=standard deviation, \*\*\**p*<.001

Table 4 shows the paired *t*-test and means comparison of teachers. Results of this table indicated the second set of score was significant negatively correlated (*r*= -.08\*\*\*), (*p*<.001). The mean score of gratitude and stress were in pre-testing (*M*=31.84, *SD*=4.61) and (*M*=23.07, *SD*=7.16). The value of (Cohen's *d* = 0.99) that indicated treatment has large effect size. Consequently, the mean

difference slightly increases in the post-testing on gratitude and stress (*M*=32.51 *SD*=5.24) and (*M*=21.16, *SD*=6.38) with *t*(44) = (6.64, *p*<.001). The post-testing findings significantly negative correlate (*r*= -.19\*\*\*, *p*<.001). The value of (Cohen's *d*=1.26) which indicated that greater effect size at post testing level of the treatment.

## Discussion

The Quranic verse on gratitude was effective in reducing participant's stress. The present study explored the impact of Quranic verse among teachers and students. Previous researches indicated that connection between gratitude and reduction of stress level is

significant (Wood et al., 2008). This study was interested to find the benefits of Quranic verse on individuals' psychological as well as physical health. This research idea had generated through the literature, it contains inconsistency in literature and these variables did not study together. Hypothesis 1



was confirmed in this study; gratitude increases at the post assessment level of this research has significant result. Objective of this specific verse using for stress as tool in this study is that it directly related to gratitude enhancement with blessing journaling. By reading this specific verse in this study was noticed on the daily bases reading this verse created positive outlook of the brain. After which they had to write the blessings they felt given by Allah so that they have maximize positive things in their lives. The findings support the research by (Putri & Nashori, 2018) they concluded that Al-Fatihah is a form of treatment it assists in alleviating psychological issues. Furthermore, involves paying attention to the Murottal (reciting the Quran in a slow mannered pace) Al-Quran to lessen the client's stress before surgical treatment (Faridah, 2015). AL-Fatihah psychology –based counseling is very successful because the client engages in reading or listening to Surha AL-Fatihah and obtains an understanding of its contents. Generally, they come to better understand themselves through psychological perspective. The participants are in a condition to handle and regulate their own safety, as a result of this perception of oneself. According to Markus & Nurius (1984) there may be some consequences for lessening academic stress. Hypothesis 2 was accepted in this study; stress reduction has been seen among teachers and students at post-testing phase. Furthermore, the first element of this study is that the category of people having greater beliefs embrace from religion, secondly other people those who having stronger faith on their religion and implement religious practices when they are facing more stressful situation. Third is religion and religious society facilitating individuals to find the more spiritual practices to cope in difficult time of life. Elkadi (1985) draws the following conclusion from the research findings: “based on the study results it is evident that the Quran has a significant and positive stress- reducing impact on all organs of the body, likely involving both

the autonomic and central nervous system. In addition, several of Quranic verses contain guidance to attain psychological health and decreases stress. Furthermore, studies indicates that reciting the Holy Quran can help players to reduced stress level (Mottaghi et al., 2011). The other studies show that the benefits of Quran learning had improved mental health, especially in the field of stress, difficulty in sleeping, mood disorders and interaction with other. According to Badri's (2000) and Alkedi's research findings indicated that listening to the verses of the Holy Quran for a Muslim regardless of their ability to speak Arabic could noticed significant changes in their body. Due to listening Quran verses manifest a 95% reduction in stress and depression.

The gratitude practice was beneficial in decreasing individuals' tension and adverse consequences. Increased positive cognitive states are another way that gratitude improves satisfaction. Gratitude is a regular activity that can help people move toward positive cognitive styles. One method to do this is by writing down things for which one is thankful every day (Alkozei et al., 2018). Positive cognitive styles allow people to see, focus on, and recall experiences in a more positive way. Moreover, studies have shown that a reduction in negative cognitive processes like intrusive rumination is associated with appreciation (Kim & Bae, 2019; Çolak & Güngör, 2021). Taking a Quranic verse when it is applied to people's lives the best results come ahead.

#### **Limitations and Recommendations**

There have few limitations in this study. The findings of the study cannot be generalized in non-Muslims. This study was limited for teachers and students. Quranic verse on gratitude and blessing journaling can be used in clinical setting with clients to reduce their stress. Quranic verse reading and listening both can be applied in other domains instead of teachers and students. Gratitude practice can be used for other professionals for the sake of increasing gratitude and decreases stress. Moreover, we can explore these variables in

non-Muslim community for different results.

### Conclusion

These findings lead to the conclusion that reading of Quranic verse impact was seen in the reduction of stress among teachers and students. Reading of the Quran is an antidote for stress. Gratitude intervention and stress reduction has significant relationship. Quranic verse has brought positive effect on participants.

### Contribution of Authors

Ayesha Sagheer: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft  
Sehrish Wazir: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision

### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the author.

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### Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [S.W.] upon the reasonable request.

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