

Mediating Effect of Social Support Between Existential Gratitude and Life Satisfaction Among Young Adults

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Abstract. This study determined the impact of social support and existential gratitude on life satisfaction among young adults affected by parental substance use and whether social support mediates the relationship between existential gratitude and life satisfaction. It utilized a quantitative research design, specifically mediation analysis, to address its objective. The study was conducted in Calamba City and used simple random sampling to gather individuals aged 18-25 affected by parental substance use. The study used three adopted survey questionnaires, namely the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), Existential Gratitude Scale (EGS), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Regression analysis discovered that existential gratitude has a calculated r-square of 0.386 that predicts social support; a computed r-square of 0.340 indicates that social support predicts life satisfaction; a computed r-square of 0.334 indicates that existential gratitude predicts life satisfaction. Moreover, the bootstrap method and Sobel test were employed to determine whether social support mediated between existential gratitude and life satisfaction. After data analysis, it was found that social support only partially mediated the relationship between existential gratitude and life satisfaction by 39.2%. Existential gratitude still affected life satisfaction, with or without the presence of social support. This implies that existential gratitude directly impacts life satisfaction and can indirectly enhance it by fostering social support. With this, future programs aiming to enhance the life satisfaction of young adults affected by PSU may focus on enhancing existential gratitude and life satisfaction, as both were found to improve life satisfaction.

Keywords: Existential gratitude; Life satisfaction; Mediation; Parental substance use; Social support; Young adults.

1.0 Introduction

Substance use, drug abuse, or addiction, as others might call it, has long been a global problem affecting millions of people and has consistently been an issue across generations. According to the UNODC World Drug Report (2023), an estimated number of 296 million people used drugs in 2021, which was higher compared to 240 million in 2011. Population growth could partly account for this increase throughout the last ten years. From the same report, cannabis remained the most widely used substance in the world. In contrast, opioids remained to be the ones that caused the most significant amount of drug-related severe damage, including overdose deaths.

Substance use led to the development of physical health problems. However, more importantly, as mentioned by Eske (2023), substances might also affect one's mental health—which alters one's behavioral and cognitive processes. Although one experiences positive effects, such as euphoria or relaxation, upon taking certain drugs,

adverse effects take a toll on one's functioning. These adverse effects include paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, anxiety, difficulty focusing, difficulties with memory and learning, increased alertness, social problems, depression, disorientation, problems with mood, difficulty sleeping, aggressive behavior, and many more. These cognitive and behavioral alterations pose a danger to people surrounding the person who abused substances. Hallucinations, for instance, make a person behave recklessly and violently, causing them to hurt people surrounding them. To some extent, the abuser's violent actions and hallucinations can lead to someone being killed.

Accordingly, the National Household Survey on the Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse (2019) found that there were 1.7 million Filipinos aged 10 to 69 years old who used illegal drugs (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2019). A much later data set from the Dangerous Drug Board (2022) revealed that 3,865 admissions to treatment and rehabilitation institutions were documented for 2022, representing a 42.73% increase over the previous year. Moreover, inconsistent with the global report, cannabis was only second to Methamphetamine Hydrochloride or "Shabu" as the most abused drug in the Philippines.

To reduce the nation's rising drug-using population, the Philippine government responded by launching various initiatives through its agencies. However, aside from the individual affected by substance abuse, the effect also extends to their immediate family members. According to Thatcher (2020), children with parents who abused substances experienced neglect, which could have long-term impacts on the children's emotional and behavioral aspects.

Given all these, it was essential for an individual to have a vital source of social support when going through that challenging time in their life. Social support could come from family, friends, special someone, or any other social network to whom they could turn for assistance, care, or comfort. Meulewaeter et al. (2022) mentioned that for individuals who experienced parental substance use, social support acted as a buffer to protect their mental health and helped hinder substance misuse from continuing between generations.

On the other hand, applying life satisfaction to the experience of parental substance use, it was reported by Mosley-Johnson et al. (2019) that those who experienced household dysfunction in childhood, wherein parental drug use was one, had relatively lower life satisfaction – proving the negative effect of parental substance use on life satisfaction. It is crucial to avoid deterioration of one's life satisfaction as across different kinds of literature and previous studies conducted; it was found that low levels of life satisfaction were related to negative consequences such as depression, whereas higher levels led to more positive outcomes.

Lastly, existential gratitude is the inclination to count blessings throughout happy and challenging situations (Jans-Beken & Wong, 2019). According to Harris et al. (2023), the development of the existential gratitude scale by Jans-Beken and Wong in 2019 supported the conclusion that existential gratitude had a unique explicable significance in evaluating resilience in times of suffering. This claim showed the vitality of fostering existential gratitude in individuals who experienced parental substance use, as this might assist them in making sense of their experiences, finding purpose in the face of hardship, and developing a positive attitude in life.

Based on the literature, it was evident that substance use was a global issue not only affecting millions of individuals abusing substances but also their families. Existing literature also pointed out the detrimental effect it has on their offspring. In particular, parental substance use might have negatively affected their life satisfaction, which could have a spillover effect on other areas of their psychological functioning. Currently, few studies are exploring the mediating role of social support in the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction. However, these variables were not yet explored in the context of young adults experiencing parental substance use. With this in mind, the study deemed it imperative to conduct the study to understand how social support and existential gratitude would help improve a person's life satisfaction amidst parental substance use. More so, this study aimed to serve as a guide for future interventions and programs that would help individuals experiencing such phenomena to foster resiliency and not merely survive but thrive in life. The results of this study will help the readers understand the relationship between social support, existential gratitude, and life satisfaction of young adults whose parents were affected by illegal substances. Additionally, this will give insight into the factors enabling these young adults to cope and thrive.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative approach. According to Mohajan (2020), quantitative research is a design that uses structured data collection instruments and obtains numerical results that establish a link between variables across a substantial population. Compared to qualitative data, numerical data is simpler to comprehend and read and may be used to conclude quickly. Moreover, quantitative results can be generalized to a wider demographic. Specifically, mediation analysis was employed in this study to test the effect of social support as a mediator. According to Sidhu et al. (2021), mediation analysis in research examines the relationship between the independent and outcome variables when there is the presence of an intervening or mediating variable. Additionally, Ballen and Salehi (2021) indicated that mediation analysis was an effective method for investigating intricate and multifaceted relationships in which multiple factors may affect the result of interest. Thus, the use of mediation analysis was deemed appropriate as life satisfaction is one of the constructs that were affected by many factors—more so with individuals in undesirable circumstances such as parental substance use.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was carried out at Calamba City, Laguna. The locale was chosen as, according to Dangerous Drugs Board (2022), the place of residence of drug abusers was mostly in urban areas. Considering this, Calamba City was chosen as the locale because, according to the Cities and Municipalities Competitive Index from the Department of Trade and Industry (2023), Calamba City has a population of 454,486—the largest population among the cities of Laguna.

2.3 Research Participants

Due to the belief that individuals who had firsthand experience with parental substance use played a crucial role in offering unique insights into the mediating role of social support between existential gratitude and life satisfaction, the study involved 80 young adults aged 18 to 25 years old living in Calamba City who had experienced or was experiencing parental substance use. Simple random sampling was used to gather respondents for the study. According to Noor et al. (2022), simple random sampling was a popular technique for studies with substantial participants. Because data selection in simple random sampling relied on chance, the research's data could produce exact, broadly applicable findings.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study utilized three adopted questionnaires to measure the respondents' social support, existential gratitude, and life satisfaction. First was the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) developed by Zimet et al. (1988, as cited in Laksmi et al., 2020). It was a 12-item scale with items measuring social support experienced by the respondents from different sources, namely family, friends, and significant other. Second, the Existential Gratitude Scale by Jans-Beken and Wong (2019) was used to measure the respondents' level of existential gratitude. It was a 10-item scale that measured gratitude even during challenging times. Lastly, the Satisfaction with Life Scale by Diener et al. (n.d., as cited in Yun et al., 2019) was also utilized to measure the respondents' life satisfaction level. SWLS is a 5-item, 7-point Likert scale wherein respondents were asked to rate their agreement on the statements about satisfaction with life.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Call-for-respondents posters were uploaded online to recruit individuals willing to participate in the study. They displayed a link to the Google form and the qualifications needed for the respondents. Upon accessing the Google form, participants were presented with an informed consent document, which they were asked to read before confirming their willingness to participate in the study. After consenting to take part, individuals were asked to respond to the three questionnaires used in the study: the MSPSS, EGS, and SWLS.

To achieve the required number of responses, questionnaires with consent forms were disseminated through selected barangays, namely Pansol, Bañadero, Lecheria, II, and VI. Upon retrieving the completed questionnaires, the gathered data were encoded and merged with the data collected through the Google form. Once the target number of respondents was reached, the responses were cleaned and forwarded to the statistician for analysis. Moreover, to ensure confidentiality and data privacy, Google Forms, laptops, and other mediums containing the

respondents' data were accessed only by the researcher. Physical copies of the questionnaire contain no identifying information, therefore maintaining anonymity.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations stipulated in the institution's research manual and Code of Ethics for Philippine Psychologists and Psychometricians were adhered to in conducting this research. Moreover, respondents' well-being, rights, and dignity were ensured and prioritized. The study accommodated individuals who wished to participate as long as they met the conditions required by the study. Informed consent indicating the objectives, methods, and possible risks and benefits of the research was secured at the beginning of the study to ensure that the respondents were well-informed of their participation. One of the potential risks includes the resurfacing of unpleasant or painful memories related to parental substance use. In contrast, possible benefits include contributing to the body of knowledge on parental substance use and later using it to develop interventions. They were also reminded that their participation was voluntary and informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, this research was aligned with Republic Act 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, which emphasizes individuals' rights to privacy and responsible handling of their data. The research ensured that the respondents' anonymity was maintained. Personal data collected from the respondents were treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for the study.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Social Support

As shown in Table 1, the Social support level among young adults affected by parental substance use had a general assessment of 5.40 (SD=0.90), which indicates that young adults affected by parental substance use experienced high social support. Among the three sub-variables, social support given by the family had the highest mean of 5.51, verbally interpreted as High Social Support. On the other hand, while still verbally interpreted as High Social Support, the lowest mean was derived from the sub-variable of social support from friends, with a computed mean of 5.32.

Table 1. Social support level among young adults affected by parental substance use

Indicative Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Social Support from Family			
1. My family is willing to help me make decisions.	5.69	1.09	High Social Support
2. My family tries to help me.	5.51	1.41	High Social Support
3. I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	5.43	1.28	High Social Support
4. I can talk about my problems with my family.	5.40	1.46	High Social Support
Mean	5.51	1.31	High Social Support
Social Support from Friends			
5. I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	5.51	1.02	High Social Support
6. I can talk about my problems with my friends.	5.38	1.26	High Social Support
7. I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	5.34	1.16	High Social Support
8. My friends try to help me.	5.04	1.13	Slightly High Social Support
Mean	5.32	1.14	High Social Support
Social Support from Significant Other			
9. A special person in my life cares about my feelings.	5.64	1.21	High Social Support
10. I have a special person who is a real comfort source.	5.47	1.23	High Social Support
11. a special person is around when I am in need.	5.37	1.53	High Social Support
12. There is a special person with whom I can share joys and sorrows.	5.05	1.12	Slightly High Social Support
Mean	5.38	1.25	High Social Support
Overall Mean	5.40	0.90	High Social Support

The results imply that young adults affected by parental substance use experience high social support from all of the three sources, which are family, friends, and significant other. However, there are minimal differences between the three sub-variables, with family support being the highest and friend support being the lowest. The reason for this could be due to the nature of the issue. Parental substance use is a topic more comfortably discussed among the involved family members because of the stigma and shame that comes along with it. It was as if those affected had to suffer in silence to hide it from others, rarely disclosing the issue to uninvolved individuals, such as friends. With this, young adults affected by PSU may more likely seek support from their family rather than friends.

The findings from the study of Kane (2020) can support this claim wherein they found that the family members afflicted by substance use disorder experienced emotions of shame, embarrassment, and stigma. To avoid experiencing these emotions, they limit their access to social support networks, exacerbating their social isolation. Moreover, as stated by Lee et al. (2020), relationships with friends and romantic partners grew increasingly crucial for companionship, positive relationships, and intimacy during adulthood. However, they also found in their study that the link between personal well-being and social support for emerging adults differed depending on the source of support. Specifically, they found that only the support of friends enhanced students' social relationships by reducing feelings of loneliness; support from romantic partners enhanced psychological functioning by lowering depressive symptoms; and support from family members significantly improved students' self-rated physical health. It can be observed that social support impacts specific areas related to the source of support (e.g., support from friends helps alleviate loneliness). Therefore, the higher level of social support from family compared to friends, as experienced by young adults affected by parental substance use, may be attributed to this reason. Since parental substance use is a family issue, support from the family remains their primary source of support.

3.2 Existential Gratitude

As shown in Table 2, the existential gratitude level among young adults affected by parental substance use had an overall mean of 5.50 (SD=0.83), which is verbally interpreted as high existential gratitude. *"I am grateful that every crisis represents an opportunity for me to grow"* got the highest mean of 6.03, verbally interpreted as high existential gratitude. Conversely, *"I wish I had never been born"* got the lowest mean of 4.09, verbally interpreted as neither low nor high existential gratitude.

Table 2. Existential gratitude level among young adults affected by parental substance use

Indicative Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. My life is full of hardships and suffering, but I can still count my blessings.	5.95	1.21	High Existential Gratitude
2. I am grateful for my life, even in times of suffering.	5.82	1.33	High Existential Gratitude
3. I am resentful that life has treated me unfairly.	4.85	1.57	Slightly High Existential Gratitude
4. I am grateful that my inner resources have increased due to overcoming adversities.	5.11	1.33	Slightly High Existential Gratitude
5. I wish that I had never been born.	4.09	1.98	Neither Low or High
6. I am grateful for the people in my life, even those who have caused me much pain.	5.26	1.32	High Existential Gratitude
7. I still feel bitter for all the bad experiences I have had.	5.02	1.59	Slightly High Existential Gratitude
8. I am thankful that I have something to live for, even though life has been very hard for me.	5.97	1.20	High Existential Gratitude
9. I am grateful that every crisis represents an opportunity for me to grow.	6.03	1.08	High Existential Gratitude
10. I give thanks at the end of each day, even when nothing goes my way.	5.91	1.09	High Existential Gratitude
11. I have learned the importance of gratitude through suffering.	5.75	1.18	High Existential Gratitude
12. I am grateful that suffering has strengthened my faith and character.	5.76	1.18	High Existential Gratitude
13. In desperate times, I am grateful for my faith that I will overcome.	5.98	1.15	High Existential Gratitude
Overall Mean	5.50	0.83	High Existential Gratitude

These findings suggest that, despite experiencing challenging circumstances such as parental substance use, young adults remain grateful and view these experiences as opportunities for personal growth. The circumstance did not hinder them; instead, they used this as an opportunity for them to thrive and achieve greater heights. However, on the statement *"I wish that I had never been born,"* young adults affected by PSU expressed a neutral outlook. While it does not necessarily indicate low existential gratitude, the findings reveal conflicting views. Some individuals may wish they had never been born, while others remain grateful for their existence.

Children affected by parental substance use are often expected and seen to be negatively affected by the circumstance, so it is surprising to discover that they are still grateful despite what they have experienced, as this led to their personal growth. One example can be found in a systematic review by Muir et al. (2023), which explored the lived experiences of young people and children with parents who used substances. It highlighted

that those children and young individuals who witnessed their parents abusing drugs are attempting to control and reduce their vulnerabilities and develop resilience in the face of unforeseen, unfavorable, and frequently stigmatizing events. These children's ability to recognize and manage dangerous situations exercised their agency by ensuring their safety and well-being, taking charge of their surroundings, and establishing safe havens when homes were potentially harmful.

A similar observation was made by Maina et al. (2021), where individuals who grew up witnessing a family member abuse substances demonstrated remarkable resilience. This resilience enabled them to turn their lives around and focus on healing and rehabilitation despite the early trauma they experienced. They showed that they could make suitable adjustments even in the face of adversity. Despite the risks associated with parental substance use, these young adults used their agency and took it as an opportunity to take control of their lives.

3.3 Life Satisfaction

As shown in Table 3, the Life satisfaction level among young adults affected by parental substance use had an overall mean of 5.45 (SD=1.04), which was verbally interpreted as extremely satisfied. The indicative statement *"In most ways, my life is close to my ideal"* had the highest mean of 5.65 (extremely satisfied). Whereas *"If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing"* had the lowest mean of 5.18, which was verbally interpreted as slightly satisfied.

Table 3. Life satisfaction level among young adults affected by parental substance use

Indicative Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	5.65	1.25	Extremely Satisfied
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	5.44	1.38	Extremely Satisfied
3. I am satisfied with my life.	5.60	1.37	Extremely Satisfied
4. I have gotten the important things I want in life.	5.36	1.41	Extremely Satisfied
5. If I could live over, I would change almost nothing.	5.18	1.69	Slightly Satisfied
Overall Life Satisfaction	5.45	1.04	Extremely Satisfied

The result implies that these young adults perceive that their current life is close to their ideal life, significantly contributing to their high life satisfaction. However, it is important to note that the indicative statement "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing" received a slightly lower mean. This indicates that although they may see their life as close to their ideal, there might still be desired improvements if they could live their life over. In a study done by Li et al. (2021), they looked at how internalizing issues and social support affect life satisfaction in emerging adults who have experienced psychological abuse as children, as well as the mediating and moderating roles these factors play. The results indicated a negative link between life satisfaction among young Chinese adults and psychological abuse experienced as children, which was consistent with what they hypothesized. This discovery offered more proof that psychological abuse throughout childhood compromises Chinese young adults' life satisfaction.

However, their findings were contrary to the results of the present study. Here, although the young adults experienced parental substance use, they were still able to be extremely satisfied with their lives. One probable reason is the personal agency utilized by these young adults. Veronese et al. (2020) conducted a study with Bedouin children chronically exposed to military violence. Their investigation found that younger children and girls could utilize their agency, which helped increase their life satisfaction. They discovered a direct relationship between the predictor, agency, and life satisfaction. This discovery shows that in situations where trauma is still present, this direct effect appears to support the role that agency plays in triggering life satisfaction. Thus, the agency was a short-term enhancer of life satisfaction and, over time, a protective factor against trauma. These young people may be comparable in that they could exercise their agency and maintain a sense of fulfillment despite being placed in such difficult circumstances.

3.4 Impact of Existential Gratitude to Social Support

As shown in Table 4, existential Gratitude ($\beta=0.677$, $p<.001$) influenced or impacted Social Support. The r-square $r= 0.386$ signified that about 38.6% of the variability of Social Support can be explained by Existential Gratitude. Other variables can explain the 61.4%. The results show a significant positive association between social support and existential gratitude. That is, an increase in existential gratitude predicts increased social support. This

relationship may be attributed to the fact that as young adults experience positive emotions, such as existential gratitude, are more likely to seek out and perceive social support.

Table 4. Regression analysis on the impact of existential gratitude level to social support level among young adults

Model	Unstandardized B Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	p-value	R-square
1 (Constant)	1.731		0.002	0.386
Existential Gratitude	0.677	0.621	< 0.001	

These findings can be supported by a study conducted by Kardas and Yalcin (2021), wherein they also cited the works of Fredrickson in 2004. They stated that gratitude broadens one's perspective, enabling new ideas and activities to be adopted. This, in turn, enhances well-being and helps build personal resources. After careful analysis, they discovered that gratitude boosts one's sense of perceived social support, strengthens interpersonal ties, increases self-worth, and promotes self-mastery. Furthermore, the association between gratitude and social support was also established by Chang et al. (2023). During the COVID-19 pandemic, they examined the link between college students' gratitude and leisure social support. Upon investigation, they found that the two have a positive relationship, which supports the association between existential gratitude and social support in this study.

3.5 Impact of Social Support on Life Satisfaction

As shown in Table 5, Social Support ($\beta=0.676$, $p<.001$) influenced or impacted Life Satisfaction. The r-square= .340 signified that about 34.00% of the variability of Life Satisfaction can be explained by Social Support. Other variables can explain the 66.00%. The results suggest that social support is a significant predictor of life satisfaction among young adults affected by parental substance use. Therefore, increased social support experienced by these young adults may lead to higher life satisfaction. Although other factors affect life satisfaction, social support accounts for 34% of the cases.

Table 5. Regression analysis on the impact of social support level on life satisfaction level among young adults

Model	Unstandardized B Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	p-value	R-square
1 (Constant)	1.796		0.003	0.340
Social Support	0.676	0.583	<0.001	

This finding was consistent with previous studies. A study by Evans et al. (2022) found that having an adult family member as a social support system was associated with fewer mental health symptoms and higher levels of life satisfaction. One-third of those surveyed said they would most likely turn to their biological parent for assistance when needed, and this type of support was associated with higher levels of life satisfaction than other forms and sources of support. Also, this result was in line with the research by Bi et al. (2021), which looked at the connections between life satisfaction and perceived social support from different sources in early adolescents' social contexts (friends, family, classmates, and teachers, for example). A positive correlation was found between adolescents' perceived social support and their life satisfaction. The association was highest for family support, followed by instructors and classmates, and poorest for friend support – suggesting how essential parent support is.

3.6 Impact of Existential Gratitude on Life Satisfaction

As shown in Table 6, existential Gratitude ($\beta=0.720$, $p<.001$) influenced or impacted Life Satisfaction. The r-square $r=0.334$ signified that about 33.4% of the variability of Life Satisfaction can be explained by Existential Gratitude. Other variables can explain the 66.6%. Existential gratitude significantly predicted life satisfaction. This suggests that an increase in existential gratitude would lead to higher life satisfaction, while a decrease in existential gratitude would result in lower life satisfaction. Although existential gratitude accounted for only 33.4%, it was significant.

Table 6. Regression analysis on the impact of existential gratitude level on life satisfaction level among young adults

Model	Unstandardized B Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	p-value	R-square
1 (Constant)	1.487		0.023	0.334
Existential Gratitude	0.720	0.578	<0.001	

Although limited studies have directly examined the relationship between existential gratitude and life satisfaction, much previous research has explored general gratitude and its connection to life satisfaction. The findings of these studies were consistent with the results found here. Unanue et al. (2019) claimed that there was a spiral relationship between life satisfaction and gratitude. Their longitudinal study revealed that, after a few months, individuals who initially displayed higher levels of gratitude subsequently exhibited better life satisfaction when reassessed. The results were similar when conducted in reverse, showing that people who initially had higher life satisfaction also displayed increased levels of gratitude over time. This observation led to the conclusion that, in the same way that life satisfaction predicted gratitude, gratitude predicts life contentment.

Furthermore, Cunha et al. (2019) demonstrated both the causal link and the association between gratitude and life satisfaction. Participants in their experiment were randomly assigned to different groups: the hassles group, the neutral events group, and the gratitude group. Each group was exposed to specific treatments and asked to respond to a life satisfaction scale. The study's conclusions revealed that the gratitude intervention significantly improved life satisfaction while reducing depressive symptoms and negative effects.

3.7 Mediation of Social Support to Existential Gratitude and Life Satisfaction

A mediation analysis was performed to assess the mediating role of social support in the linkage between existential gratitude and life satisfaction. The results revealed that the total effect of Existential Gratitude on Life Satisfaction was significant ($\beta=-0.438$, $z=2.57$, $p=0.010$). With the inclusion of the mediation variable (Social Support), the impact of Existential Gratitude on Life Satisfaction was significant ($\beta=0.438$, $z=2.57$, $p=0.010$). The indirect effect on Life Satisfaction through Social Support was significant ($\beta=0.282$, $z=2.98$, $p=0.003$). The bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect was based on 1,000 bootstrap samples and was entirely above 0 (0.101 to 0.472). This showed that the relationship between existential gratitude and life satisfaction was partially mediated by social support, accounting for 39.2%.

Moreover, to further verify the results, the Sobel test was performed. The Sobel test was a simple test statistic proposed by Sobel (1982). It was used to test the hypothesis that the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) was mediated by a third variable (Z), indicating an indirect relationship between X and Y through Z. In other words, it examined whether the inclusion of a mediator (M) in the regression analysis considerably reduced the effect of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Preacher, 2020). With a calculated score of 2.89, the results indicated that social support significantly mediated the relationship between existential gratitude and life satisfaction. If the z-score was more significant than 1.96, then the mediating variable significantly mediated between X and Y.

The results suggest that social support only partially mediated the relationship between existential gratitude and life satisfaction among young adults affected by PSU. This implies that young adults with high levels of existential gratitude tend to experience strong social support, positively impacting their life satisfaction. Simply put, those with high existential gratitude are more likely to perceive and seek social support, and this social support helps them achieve life satisfaction amidst being affected by parental substance use. However, existential gratitude may still affect life satisfaction, with or without the presence of social support. That is, a young adult affected by parental substance use may still be satisfied with life by practicing gratitude and with or without support from other people.

This was somewhat inconsistent with the findings of Zhou et al. (2019), who found that social support mediated the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction. Here, they investigated adolescents' life satisfaction and gratitude after a tragedy and discovered a direct and positive correlation between life satisfaction and gratitude. The direct relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction was insignificant. However, social support—one of the study's mediating variables—had a significant indirect relationship with gratitude and life satisfaction. This suggested that cultivating gratitude enhances life satisfaction by fostering the long-term development of social and psychological resources. This research also emphasized how crucial social support was for adolescents' life satisfaction following natural disasters like earthquakes. El Keshky et al. (2023) found similar results in their study exploring the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction among older individuals. Their study suggested that individuals who expressed more gratitude also reported higher levels of life satisfaction. Additionally, it was found that social support mediated the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction.

3.8 Proposed Program

After analyzing the study results and identifying the indicators where young adults needed intervention, the study led to the development of the S.U.B.S. program (see Table 7). This program aims to enhance social support, existential gratitude, and life satisfaction among young adults affected by parental substance use. S.U.B.S. is a feasible and cost-effective initiative utilizing support groups and seminars to achieve its goals. The program can be utilized by government agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or non-government organizations aiming to address the effects of parental substance use on families. Implementation could involve identifying individuals currently affected by substance abuse within their families and inviting them to participate in the program. To ensure the program's effectiveness, participants' social support, existential gratitude, and life satisfaction levels should be assessed before and after each session. As an outcome, at least 75% of young adults are expected to show improvement in these areas.

Table 7. Action plan for S.U.B.S. (Support Using Basic Sources) Program

Area of Concern	Goals and Objectives	Activities	Person Responsible	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Social Support Level among Young Adults Affected by Parental Substance Use	To be able to form a support group for young adults affected by parental substance use where they encourage the sharing of personal experiences, acquire applicable coping mechanisms, and establish a secure and encouraging environment to whom young adults can go for support.	We Got Us: A Support Group for Young Adults Navigating through Parental Substance Use.	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or other non-government agencies	Seminars may be conducted at least once a year, whereas social support groups may be gathered at least once a month.	75% of young adults experiencing parental substance use have experienced improved social support from friends.
Existential Gratitude Level among Young Adults Affected by Parental Substance Use	To educate young adults about existential gratitude and its benefits and promote its practice in the context of parental substance use.	Grateful through Pain: A Journey of Continuing Life Amidst Parental Substance Use	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or other non-government agencies	At least once a year	75% of young adults experiencing parental substance use have attained a higher level of existential gratitude.
Life Satisfaction Level among Young Adults Affected by Parental Substance Use	This will enable young adults to embrace unfavorable life situations, encourage self-regulation to heal emotionally and value both the good and bad aspects of life.	Contentment and Regret: Accepting Life's Adversities Brought by Parental Substance Use	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or other non-government agencies	At least once a year	75% of young adults experiencing parental substance use have acquired a higher level of life satisfaction.

The proposed program consists of three components. The first component, "We Got Us: A Support Group for Young Adults Navigating Parental Substance Use," aims to enhance social support. Through this support group, young adults can increase their social support by connecting with peers facing similar challenges. The findings indicate that social support from friends is perceived as the lowest, highlighting the need for expanded networks. This support group will help young adults build relationships with others who understand their experiences, providing a safe space for sharing and confiding. Consequently, this can enhance their overall social support levels.

The second component is "Grateful through Pain: A Journey of Continuing Life Amidst Parental Substance Use." This seminar targets young adults affected by parental substance use, educating them about existential gratitude, its benefits, and practical ways to incorporate it into their daily lives. Participants will learn various gratitude activities they can practice regularly. This component, which focuses on psychoeducation, operates on the principle that individuals can begin to heal from trauma or suffering when they understand what they are experiencing and learn effective coping strategies.

Lastly, the component “Contentment and Regret: Accepting Life’s Adversities Brought by Parental Substance Use” will be implemented to enhance life satisfaction. Similar to the second component, this program uses seminars and activities that focus on accepting the negative circumstances that these young adults face. The aim is to increase their life satisfaction by helping them come to terms with and accept these adversities.

4.0 Conclusion

After analyzing the data gathered, the study concluded the following: Young adults affected by parental substance use experience high social support, with slightly higher support from family than friends due to the stigma and shame associated with parental substance use, which often leads them to seek support from family rather than friends. Despite their circumstances, these young adults still exhibit high existential gratitude, viewing their crisis as an opportunity for personal growth. They also perceive their current lives as close to their ideal, contributing to high life satisfaction, although they may still desire improvements if given the chance to live their lives over. The study found that existential gratitude influences social support, predicting increased social support with increased gratitude. Additionally, social support predicts life satisfaction among these young adults, suggesting that increased social support can lead to higher life satisfaction. Furthermore, existential gratitude also predicts life satisfaction, implying that changes in gratitude levels directly impact life satisfaction. While social support positively affects life satisfaction and partially mediates the relationship between existential gratitude and life satisfaction, existential gratitude can still influence life satisfaction independently of social support. Lastly, the study suggests that young individuals affected by parental substance use would benefit from a program designed to enhance their levels of existential gratitude, social support, and life satisfaction.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The sole author initiated and completed this research.

6.0 Funding

This is a self-funded research.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest about the publication of this paper.

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