

**MUSLIM AND BUDDHIST GRATITUDE
PRACTICES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS FOR
CULTURALLY SENSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH
INTERVENTIONS**

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Abstract

Gratitude practices in religious contexts have been shown to improve psychological well-being, but little is known about these practices among a variety of cultural and religious groups. The objective of this systematic review is to fill in this gap by examining the gratitude practices within two distinct religions Muslim and Buddhism. This is the first review comparing gratitude practices in these two religions and examining their psychological benefits, while providing recommendations for mental health professionals that are culturally sensitive. We carried out literature search in the databases of PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science from years 2015 to 2024. Search terms were "Buddhist gratitude practices," "Muslim gratitude practices", "psychological benefits", and "gratitude interventions." Out of 480 identified records, 23 studies met the inclusion criteria. Results indicate that Buddhist practices involving thankfulness, which in turn are related to mindfulness and meditative aspects, significantly improve the emotional stability, strengthens personality and reduce stress. Muslim gratitude practices are instrumental in reinforcing mental health, elevating happiness, and building resilience. These findings provide a schema for the implementation of culturally informed gratitude interventions into therapy, particularly within multicultural contexts where Western approaches may be less effective. Future research should explore gratitude practices across broader cultural contexts including comparisons between secular and religious approaches.

Keywords: Gratitude Practices, Systematic Review, Muslim, Buddhism, Psychological Benefits

1. Introduction

Research shows that gratitude can help improve mental health, aid in psychological well-being as well as reduce stress and anxiety thus the overall quality of life. It is also believed that gratitude stimulates the areas of our brain to which moral cognition associates and activates regions associated with rewards such as anterior cingulate cortex, medial prefrontal region. Reducing overall stress which leads to better mental health and quality of life.¹ Gratitude can continue to bend the arc of your subjective well-being towards improved mental health and increased happiness living a more satisfying life.² In treatment settings, interventions that foster gratitude are more successful than any other in alleviating the symptoms of depression and anxiety,³ as well as reducing stress levels among medical staff.⁴ In addition, gratitude has been related to several major health benefits including psychological well-being, healthy behaviours and a greater likelihood of seeking medical help in the face of serious illness; lower levels of inflammation domestically and improve cardiovascular risk,⁵ even substantially better sleep.⁶ Religious efficacy and having friends who are religious each independently predict gratitude.⁷ It also takes forgiveness and altruism as pathways linking religiosity, spirituality to well-being via gratitude.⁸ Considering gratitude in a religious context emphasizes the role of humility and compassion as virtues that can lead to greater wellbeing.⁹

Gratitude is considered a cardinal virtue in Muslim, encompassing behaviours such as wholehearted acknowledgement of the blessings or favours endowed by Allah Almighty. It's ingrained in daily deeds & preaching, teaching to never forget or overlook the grace of Allah Almighty. Muslim teaches expressing gratitude through prayer, good deeds and most importantly constant remembrance of the Allah Almighty's favours to inculcate a sense of contentment and humility.¹⁰ When a Muslim is being grateful he/she acknowledges that Allah Almighty has a role in all aspects of their life and they are humble to serve others.¹¹

Buddhism, also teaches to be grateful as a spiritual practice. In Buddhist practice, gratitude is woven into the teachings of mindfulness and compassion – it helps practitioners to be aware that all existence are interconnected beings.¹² All Buddhist teachings call for cultivating gratitude though practicing mindfulness meditation, daily reflections

and acts of kindness that affirm well-being.¹³ In Theravada Buddhism, historical narratives tell stories that are used to inculcate followers with a spirit of gratitude: Religious practices of gratitude are a powerful way to produce spiritual, mental and emotional well-being.¹⁴

This systematic review addresses a growing need to understand the psychological benefits of gratitude practices within religious and cultural contexts. While gratitude has been widely recognized for its role in enhancing mental well-being, there is limited research comparing how it is practiced and experienced across distinct religious traditions. This review focuses on Muslim and Buddhist contexts, which offer contrasting worldviews, rituals, and cultural frameworks for expressing gratitude. Muslim and Buddhist gratitude practices were selected due to their rich spiritual traditions and their increasing relevance in multicultural therapeutic settings. Despite the expanding literature on gratitude and mental health, no comprehensive review has yet compared these two traditions in terms of their psychological outcomes. By examining how gratitude is expressed and experienced within each religion, this study aims to identify both shared and unique psychological benefits.

The primary objective is to compare gratitude practices in Muslim and Buddhist contexts and assess their contributions to psychological resilience and well-being. A secondary objective is to offer culturally sensitive insights and recommendations for mental health professionals seeking to incorporate spiritually grounded gratitude practices into therapeutic interventions.

To achieve these objectives, this research addresses the following key questions:

1. What are the common gratitude practices in Muslim and Buddhism, and how are they performed within each religious context?
2. What psychological benefits do these gratitude practices offer in both Buddhism and Muslim?
3. How do cultural perspectives influence the expression of gratitude in Muslim and Buddhism?

Our study seeks to address these questions in order to provide a foundation for culturally competent interventions and expand our knowledge of the universal elements of gratitude that contribute to mental health. The results will help guide mental health professionals to include these practices in therapy, making sure that it is culturally appropriate.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1 Theological Roots and Psychological Impact of Gratitude in Muslim and Buddhist Traditions

Gratitude holds significant theological and psychological importance in both Muslim and Buddhist traditions. In Muslim contexts, gratitude (shukr) is deeply embedded in spiritual and moral life, where it is not merely a feeling but also expressed through verbal affirmations (e.g., “*Alhamdulillah*”), charitable acts (*Ṣadaqah*), and supplication (*du‘ā*).¹⁵ It is considered an essential trait that reflects trust in Allah Almighty, humility, and spiritual growth. Studies have shown that Muslim religious gratitude is linked to reduced anxiety and greater life satisfaction.¹⁶ Moreover, it enhances emotional resilience and self-efficacy, contributing to individuals’ ability to cope with adversity.¹⁷ Religious gratitude is also integrated into daily life and educational contexts, promoting emotional awareness and psychological well-being.¹⁸ Additionally, it supports moral development and social cohesion through shared communal practices.¹⁹ These findings underscore the multifaceted benefits of gratitude in Muslim populations.

In Buddhist traditions, particularly Theravāda Buddhism, gratitude is also emphasized as a core virtue. Unlike the theocentric model in Muslim contexts, Buddhist gratitude is more relational and less deity-centered. It is connected to karmic understanding, moral cultivation, and compassion toward all sentient beings. Previous research suggests that gratitude in Buddhism contributes to enhanced emotional strength.²⁰ It also serves as a coping mechanism for managing personal suffering and promoting positive emotions.²¹ Although the framework in Buddhism is less prescriptive in terms of verbal expressions, it emphasizes internal mindfulness and relational harmony, which fosters a general sense of peace and psychological balance.²² Buddhist gratitude also supports long-term moral development through habitual reflection on interdependence and kindness received from others.²³

2.2 Review of Previous Studies

A number of empirical studies have explored the effects of gratitude on mental health within both traditions. In Muslim populations, gratitude interventions have been associated with improved sleep quality,²⁴ and reduced psychological distress.²⁵ Other studies indicate a correlation between gratitude and increased

subjective well-being.²⁶ However, many of these studies emphasize general associations rather than causal mechanisms, and relatively few have examined specific therapeutic applications within clinical settings.²⁷

In Buddhist contexts, gratitude practices have been linked with increased emotional regulation.²⁸ Research also suggests a reduction in stress and anxiety symptoms through gratitude-based meditation.²⁹ Still, there is a lack of rigorous clinical trials evaluating these practices in managing depression and other mental health challenges.³⁰ The literature predominantly examines gratitude as a philosophical or ethical ideal, with less focus on its direct therapeutic utility.³¹

While both traditions highlight the transformative power of gratitude, existing studies often focus on one tradition in isolation. Comparative studies are rare, and those that exist tend to generalize findings across cultural boundaries without sufficient contextual sensitivity.

2.3 Research Gaps and Rationale for the Review

Despite growing interest in culturally grounded mental health practices, few systematic reviews have compared gratitude between Muslim and Buddhist traditions in terms of psychological outcomes. Existing literature also lacks specificity in addressing how these practices may be integrated into therapeutic interventions tailored to culturally diverse populations.

This review aims to fill that gap by synthesizing evidence on how gratitude is understood, practiced, and experienced in Muslim and Buddhist contexts and by evaluating their distinct psychological impacts. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing culturally sensitive mental health interventions that respect religious frameworks and spiritual values.

3. Methodology

A systematic search was conducted using PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science to identify studies on Buddhist and Muslim practices of gratitude, targeting literature published between 2015 and 2024. The search terms included combinations of keywords related to "Buddhist gratitude practices," "Muslim gratitude practices," "psychological benefits," and "gratitude interventions." Studies were included if they were published in peer-reviewed journals, written in English, focused on Buddhist or Muslim practices of gratitude, and

examined psychological benefits of these practices. Exclusion criteria were duplicate records, non-English publications, conference proceedings, studies published outside the years 2015-2024, studies not focused on gratitude practices, and those lacking a clear research design.

A total of 480 records were identified from the databases: PubMed (n = 175), Scopus (n = 140), and Web of Science (n = 165). After removing 85 duplicate records and 60 records for other reasons (19 non-English publications, 27 conference proceedings, and 14 outside the publication years), 335 records remained for screening. Of these, 255 records were excluded due to irrelevance. The remaining 80 reports were assessed for eligibility, resulting in the exclusion of 57 reports for reasons including irrelevance to gratitude practices (n = 23), lack of focus on psychological benefits (n = 27), and lack of clear research design (n = 7). The study selection process is detailed in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

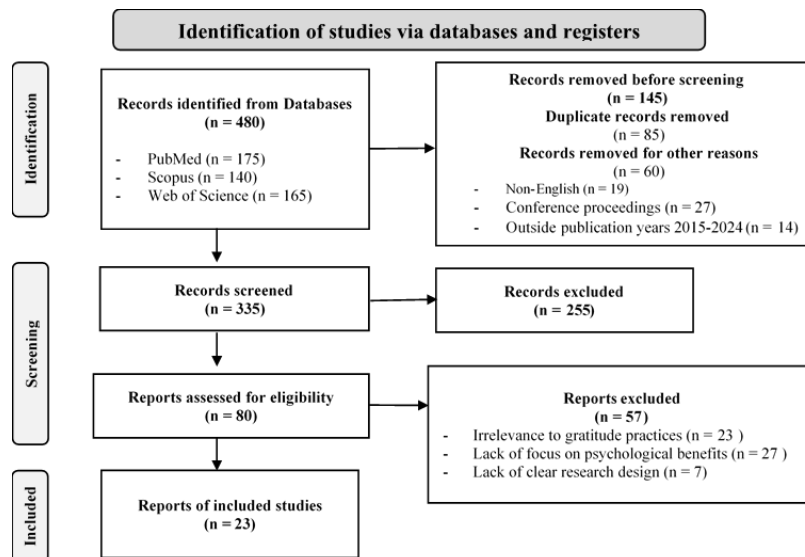


Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram

Data extraction from the 23 included studies was performed independently by two reviewers to ensure accuracy, capturing study characteristics, participants, interventions, outcomes, and findings related to gratitude practices and their psychological benefits. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion. A narrative synthesis summarized the findings from the included studies, highlighting common themes, differences, and unique aspects of Buddhist and

Muslim gratitude practices and their psychological benefits. Quantitative data were tabulated and descriptively analyzed to support the narrative synthesis.

4. Results

The following (Table 1) summarizes the key findings from the 23 studies included in this review. The table provides an overview of the study author, country of the study, methodology, sample size, and key findings.

Study	Author	Country	Methodology & Sample Size	Key Finding
1	Khan et al. (2021)	China	Mixed-methods study, 150 participants	Gratitude in Buddhism is a spiritual practice that cultivates constructive emotions and personal strengths, aligning with positive psychology. ³²
2	Lee, S. (2020)	South Korea	Randomized controlled trial, 80 caregivers	Mindful gratitude practices in Buddhism promote emotional stability and reduce stress, benefiting caregivers by enhancing their well-being. ³³
3	Ambros, B. (2019)	Japan	Qualitative study, 100 participants	In Japanese Buddhism, gratitude is linked to life and food, promoting consumption with gratitude rather than abstinence. ³⁴
4	Zaidi et al. (2021)	Saudi Arabia	Survey study, 120 participants	In Muslims, gratitude significantly contributes to well-being and mental

Study	Author	Country	Methodology & Sample Size	Key Finding
				health through Islamically-integrated positive psychology interventions. ³⁵
5	Fadhlan et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Case study, 50 participants	Traditional rituals like Kenduri Sudah Tuai express gratitude for harvests, strengthening social bonds and community thankfulness. ³⁶
6	Chalmers et al. (2023)	Various Muslim contexts	Systematic review, Reviewed 25 studies	Gratitude to Allah Almighty improves mental health and happiness among Muslims, fostering thankfulness and spiritual fulfillment. ³⁷
7	Pasha-Zaidi et al. (2021)	Not specified	Literature Review, 150 participants	Islamically-integrated positive psychology interventions reduce psychological distress, improve sleep and relationships, and enhance overall well-being. ³⁸
8	Al-Seheel & Noor (2016)	Malaysia	Experimental Study, 120	Practicing Muslim-based gratitude exercises significantly increased happiness levels among Muslim students compared to secular gratitude exercises or control conditions. ³⁹
9	Wilson (2016)	USA	Experimental Study, 120 participants	Practicing gratitude enhances focus and resilience in learning,

Study	Author	Country	Methodology & Sample Size	Key Finding
				improving cognitive and emotional aspects of learning. ⁴⁰
10	Lantz et al. (2021)	USA	Cross-sectional survey, 407 undergraduate students and 208 adults	Gratitude mediates the relationship between religiosity and well-being, suggesting that higher levels of gratitude associated with religiosity contribute to better well-being. ⁴¹
11	Deichert et al. (2019)	USA	Longitudinal study, 200 participants	Gratitude enhances the positive impact of social support on psychological well-being, indicating that grateful individuals benefit more from their social connections. ⁴²
12	Cregg & Cheavens (2020)	Multiple countries	Meta-analysis, 3675 participants across 27 studies	Gratitude interventions significantly reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, proving effective as a self-help strategy. ⁴³
13	Boggiss et al. (2020)	Multiple countries	Systematic review, 19 studies	Gratitude interventions positively impact physical health and promote healthier behaviours, including better sleep and increased physical activity. ⁴⁴

Study	Author	Country	Methodology & Sample Size	Key Finding
14	Rosmarin et al. (2016)	USA	Cross-sectional survey, 116 participants	Religious coping helps individuals maintain a grateful disposition during distressing times, supporting the role of spiritual practices in fostering gratitude. ⁴⁵
15	O'Connell et al. (2016)	Ireland	Cross-sectional survey, 243 participants	Loneliness mediates the relationship between gratitude and health, with gratitude reducing loneliness and thereby improving health outcomes. ⁴⁶
16	Xiang et al. (2018)	China	Cross-sectional survey, 230 participants	Gratitude decreases both benign and malicious envy by enhancing social support, highlighting its role in fostering positive social emotions. ⁴⁷
17	Floyd et al. (2018)	Multinational	Cross-cultural comparative study, Episodes from eight languages across five continents	Gratitude expressions in Western European languages like English and Italian show higher verbal expressions compared to other cultures. ⁴⁸
18	Shin et al. (2020)	India, Taiwan, USA	Randomized controlled intervention, 850 participants (India: 431,	In individualistic cultures like the U.S., gratitude is often expressed verbally through words like "thank you" and through physical

Study	Author	Country	Methodology & Sample Size	Key Finding
			Taiwan: 112, USA: 307)	gestures such as hugs or handshakes. ⁴⁹
19	Naito et al. (2018)	Japan, Thailand	Survey-based study, 496 university students (Japan: 212, Thailand: 284)	Japanese people may express gratitude through both verbal acknowledgments and feelings of indebtedness, which motivate prosocial behaviours. ⁵⁰
20	Poelker & Gibbons (2018)	Guatemala	Survey-based study, 104 Guatemalan youth (M = 10.85, SD = 2.28, 53.8% girls)	Among Guatemalan youth, gratitude is deeply embedded in social interactions and is often expressed verbally. ⁵¹
21	Yoosefvand & Rasekh (2015)	Iran, USA	Discourse completion test (DCT), Sample size not specified	In Persian culture, gratitude expressions often include positive feelings and a recognition of the effort made by the benefactor. ⁵²
22	Chang & Algoe (2019)	Taiwan, USA	Comparative cultural study, Sample size not specified	Taiwanese individuals prioritize self-improvement as a way to show gratitude. ⁵³
23	Naito & Washizu (2015)	East Asia	Review of cross-cultural studies, Sample size not specified	Gratitude rituals vary significantly across cultures, but certain aspects, such as the positive emotions and social benefits of expressing gratitude, are universal. ⁵⁴

Table 1 - Summary of Key Findings from Reviewed Studies

5. Discussion

5.1 Comparative Gratitude Practices in Buddhism and Muslim

5.1.1 Common Gratitude Practices in Buddhism

Gratitude as a Spiritual Practice

In Buddhism, gratitude is fundamentally a spiritual practice aimed at achieving life's ultimate purpose. This aligns with positive psychology principles, where fostering constructive emotions and personal strengths is crucial. Integrating gratitude into daily life enhances emotional well-being and personal growth.⁵⁵ This discussion is consistent with the existing literature, which emphasizes the role of gratitude in cultivating positive emotions and reducing psychopathological symptoms.⁵⁶ Mental health professionals can incorporate mindfulness-based gratitude exercises in therapeutic settings to promote emotional stability and personal growth among clients.

Mindfulness and Gratitude

Mindful gratitude practices in Buddhism are effective in promoting emotional stability and reducing stress, particularly for caregivers. These practices help individuals manage their responsibilities with compassion and self-care, thus improving overall well-being.⁵⁷ The benefits of mindfulness and gratitude in reducing stress and enhancing mental health align with the literature, indicating that gratitude practices improve subjective well-being and reduce stress.⁵⁸ Incorporating mindfulness and gratitude practices into caregiver support programs can help reduce burnout and improve emotional well-being among healthcare providers.⁵⁹

Cultural Expression of Gratitude

In contemporary Japanese Buddhism, gratitude practices are deeply connected to life and food, emphasizing the importance of consuming food with a sense of gratitude. This cultural practice shapes dietary habits and attitudes towards food.⁶⁰ This discussion complements the literature on cultural expressions of gratitude, highlighting how gratitude is integrated into daily rituals and practices.⁶¹ Encouraging clients to adopt culturally relevant gratitude practices can enhance their emotional and mental well-being, fostering a deeper appreciation for daily experiences.

5.1.2 Common Gratitude Practices in Muslim

Gratitude and Wellbeing

In Muslim, gratitude is a fundamental virtue that significantly enhances well-being alongside patience. Islamically-integrated positive psychology interventions have shown an increase in gratitude and overall well-being among Muslims.⁶² This aligns with the literature that demonstrates the positive effects of gratitude on mental health and quality of life.⁶³ Integrating Muslim gratitude practices into positive psychology interventions can be an effective way to enhance well-being and mental health among Muslim clients.

Gratitude to Allah Almighty

Expressing gratitude to Allah Almighty for all blessings is a prevalent practice in Muslim contexts, linked to improved mental health and happiness among Muslims.⁶⁴ This mirrors the existing literature which indicates that religious gratitude practices are effective in enhancing mental health and fostering spiritual fulfillment. Mental health practitioners working with Muslim clients can emphasize the importance of gratitude to Allah Almighty in their therapeutic approaches to enhance happiness and mental well-being.

Muslim Gratitude Practices

Specific rituals and exercises in Muslim gratitude practices connect blessings to Allah Almighty, with research indicating these practices are more effective in increasing happiness than secular gratitude practices.⁶⁵ This supports the Cheng findings that highlight the effectiveness of religious gratitude practices in enhancing life satisfaction and reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety.⁶⁶ Therapists can integrate religious gratitude exercises into their interventions for Muslim clients to maximize the psychological benefits of gratitude practices.

5.2 Psychological Benefits of Gratitude in Muslims

5.2.1 Mental Health Improvement and Enhanced Well-Being

A systematic review by Chalmiers, Istemi, and Şimşek⁶⁷ emphasized the theological significance and empirical findings on religious gratitude within Muslim doctrine. This comprehensive review of 125 scholarly articles revealed that gratitude practices in

Muslims notably improve mental health and are linked to reduced psychological distress, improved sleep, better relationships, and enhanced overall well-being.⁶⁸ Additionally, Al-Seheel and Noor study demonstrated that Muslim-based gratitude exercises significantly boost happiness levels among Muslim students.⁶⁹ Integrating Muslim-based gratitude exercises into therapy can enhance well-being, reduce distress, and improve overall mental health. Gratitude holds a central place in Muslim life, reflected in daily practices such as saying *Alhamdulillah*, offering prayers, and giving charity. These expressions, while rooted in religious tradition, also promote emotional well-being, social connectedness, and psychological resilience.

Enhanced Focus and Resilience in Learning

The study revealed that gratitude practices considerably enhance cognitive and emotional aspects of learning, thereby improving students' ability to concentrate and maintain resilience when facing challenges.⁷⁰ Implementing gratitude exercises in educational settings can improve focus, resilience, and overall well-being among students. Research indicated that gratitude significantly mediates this relationship, leading to reduced depression symptoms and increased life satisfaction.⁷¹ Community programs that promote gratitude practices can strengthen social relationships and support networks. These programs can be tailored to address the specific cultural and religious contexts of the community.

5.3 Psychological Benefits of Gratitude in Buddhism

5.3.1 Enhanced Well-Being and Emotional Support

Research supports the notion that gratitude, particularly in Buddhist contexts, significantly enhances psychological well-being and life satisfaction. In Buddhism, gratitude is often cultivated through mindfulness and reflection on interdependence, which fosters a deep sense of appreciation and contentment. Such practices strengthen positive mental states and reduce negative emotions like envy and resentment, thus contributing to improved emotional regulation and resilience.⁷² Moreover, Buddhist gratitude encourages individuals to recognize the support and kindness of others, reinforcing social bonds and support networks that are critical for emotional well-being. This emphasis on interconnectedness promotes a sense of belonging and reduces feelings of isolation.⁷³ Evidence also shows that gratitude practices in Buddhist traditions support mental health by reducing

symptoms of depression and anxiety, indicating their therapeutic potential.⁷⁴ Mental health professionals are thus encouraged to integrate culturally sensitive gratitude practices such as Buddhist mindfulness and compassion exercises into therapy, as these can provide substantial emotional support and strengthen coping mechanisms during times of distress.

5.3.2 Improvement in Physical Health and Social Relationships

Regular gratitude practice, including forms rooted in Buddhist traditions, positively impacts physical health, such as improved sleep quality, lower blood pressure, and better glycaemic control.⁷⁵ These physical improvements contribute to overall well-being and life quality. Buddhist gratitude, often expressed through mindful reflection and compassion-based practices, aligns with holistic health by emphasizing the balance between body and mind.

Moreover, gratitude in Buddhist contexts promotes prosocial behaviour and strengthens interpersonal relationships.⁷⁶ Individuals engaging in such gratitude practices often experience higher levels of social support, a core component of Buddhist communal ethics, which improves psychological resilience and overall well-being. Consistent appreciation routines, particularly those guided by Buddhist principles like interdependence and compassion can foster enhanced psychological and social connections.

5.4 Comparative Analysis of the Psychological Benefits of Gratitude in Muslim and Buddhism

5.4.1 Similarities

Both Islam and Buddhism emphasize the psychological benefits of gratitude, linking it to improved mental health and enhanced emotional well-being. In Islam, gratitude is practiced through regular expressions such as “*Alhamdulillah*” (Praise be to Allah), fostering mindfulness of blessings and emotional stability; studies have shown that such practices are associated with reduced symptoms of depression and greater life satisfaction. In Buddhism, gratitude is often cultivated through mindfulness and loving-kindness meditation (*metta bhavana*), which promotes compassion and emotional regulation. These practices help individuals develop a positive outlook and manage distress more effectively. Furthermore, both traditions connect gratitude with strengthened social relationships: Muslims express thankfulness in communal prayers,

while Buddhists express appreciation toward the Sangha (monastic community), both enhancing a sense of social support and psychological resilience.

5.4.2 Differences

The psychological benefits of gratitude vary across religious traditions and are reflected in specific spiritual practices. In Buddhist contexts, gratitude is cultivated through rituals like *metta* (loving-kindness) meditation and morning chanting, which are linked to improved physical well-being such as better sleep quality and glycemic control. These practices foster emotional regulation and compassion, enhancing overall psychological resilience. In contrast, Muslim traditions emphasize expressions of gratitude such as reciting "*Alhamdulillah*" (All praise is due to God), making daily *duās* (supplications), and engaging in the five daily prayers, which help reduce psychological distress and promote mindfulness, patience, and emotional strength. These practices reflect Islam's focus on inner peace, self-awareness, and spiritual submission, contributing to enhanced mental clarity and well-being.

5.5 Cultural Perspectives on Gratitude

The way gratitude is shown and felt differs greatly among various cultures. Table 2 provides an overview of important discoveries from different researches that emphasize these cultural distinctions.

Region/Country	Key Findings
Western Europe (English, Italian)	Gratitude expressions in Western European languages like English and Italian are characterized by higher verbal expressions compared to other cultures, reflecting a preference for verbal communication of gratitude. ⁷⁷
United States and Individualistic Cultures (USA)	In individualistic cultures like the U.S., gratitude is often expressed both verbally, using phrases like "thank you," and through physical gestures such as hugs or handshakes, indicating a more demonstrative approach to showing appreciation. ⁷⁸

Region/Country	Key Findings
Japan and Thailand	In Japan and Thailand, gratitude is expressed through verbal acknowledgments and feelings of indebtedness, which motivate prosocial behaviours and reflect cultural norms of reciprocity and social harmony. ⁷⁹
Guatemala and Persian Culture (Iran)	Among Guatemalan youth, gratitude is deeply embedded in social interactions and often expressed verbally, reflecting the importance of gratitude in maintaining social bonds and communal relationships. ⁸⁰ In Persian culture, expressions of gratitude often include positive feelings and recognition of the benefactor's effort, emphasizing appreciation of contributions and fostering mutual respect. ⁸¹
Taiwan	Taiwanese individuals prioritize self-improvement as a way to show gratitude, indicating that expressions of gratitude are closely tied to personal development and efforts to better oneself. ⁸²
East Asia	Gratitude rituals vary significantly across East Asia, but certain aspects, such as the positive emotions and social benefits of expressing gratitude, are universal, underscoring the fundamental role of gratitude in fostering social cohesion and emotional well-being. ⁸³
Turkey and Middle Eastern Countries	In Muslim-majority cultures such as Turkey and various Middle Eastern countries, gratitude is often rooted in Islamic teachings and expressed through both religious phrases (e.g., “ <i>Alḥamdulillah</i> ,” “ <i>Jazāk Allah Khair</i> ”) and acts of social respect and hospitality. A study by Göcen emphasized that in Turkish-Muslim culture, gratitude is God-centered (şükür) and linguistically distinct from interpersonal thanks (teşekkür). ⁸⁴ Similarly, Alamri found that in Saudi Arabia and Egypt,

Region/Country	Key Findings
	gratitude significantly predicts prosocial behaviour and resilience, highlighting its spiritual and psychological role. ⁸⁵

Table 2 - Cultural Variations in Gratitude Practices

Gratitude is a shared value that everyone has the potential to utilize in being more inclusive and conscious of global communication. Western Europe offers verbal thank you, the U.S. requires physical and East gathers thanks down in non-verbal hues In Taiwan, gratitude goes hand in hand with self-betterment whereas Guatemala or Persian cultures may associate it more to their closeness of community. Recognizing these differences can improve mental health approaches and inclusiveness to schools, universities, organizations.

6. Conclusion

This systematic review provides an extensive insight into the psychological benefits of Buddhist and Muslim gratitude practices. Our primary research result is that Buddhist gratitude rituals located within the triple practices of mindfulness and meditative (*Bhavana*) enrichment, are uniquely effective for increasing emotional stability, personal growth and compassion as practiced by caregivers. Mindfulness-based techniques go a long way to reduce stress and promote mental health through present-moment awareness focusing on what the person is experiencing while also balancing emotional engagement. On the other hand, Muslim practices of gratitude, (gratitude to Allah Almighty) was observed greatly supportive for mental health as it nurtures satisfaction in life and reinforces a sense happiness while aiding against adversities of life. The act of feeling grateful, as expressed in our contemporary versions of saying grace or daily reflections, keeps one connected to their faith and supports psychological health.

The importance of this work is highlighted by the potential to help build culturally-informed mental health interventions. Incorporating these spiritual practices into therapeutic approaches allows mental health professionals to provide more specific and comprehensive solutions, especially among diverse societies where a traditional Western approach might not entirely work. Not only is there academic value in this research, but it also has direct clinical

application to bridge the gap between modern therapeutic techniques and traditional cultural practices.

The review does come with limitation. Potentially not all diverse cultural variations in gratitude practices are captured, as this is a limited review to the literature and based on studies from not all regions. It is easy to see how these findings can be applied, mental health professionals may want to draw upon gratitude practices from Muslim and Buddhism that could make the treatments culturally more attuned and effective for broader groups. Future research should take into consideration the perspective of a global society and extending to other cultural contexts and explore the comparative effects of secular versus religious gratitude practices. Relevant studies would deepen the understanding of how distinct spiritual traditions uniquely serve psychological health and could help to open pathways for integrating these practices more fully into modern mental health care.

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