Positive Bias in Positive Psychology

Brandy R. Hutton  
*Eastern Washington University*, bhutton1@eagles.ewu.edu

Max Barham  
*Eastern Washington University*, mbarham@eagles.ewu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2019](https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2019)

Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2019/)

Recommended Citation

[https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2019/19](https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2019/19)

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the EWU Student Research and Creative Works Symposium at EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2019 Symposium by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.
**Purpose**

To investigate the distribution skew of commonly used positive self-report measurements for possible negative skew.

**Background and Significance**

- Most research on positive emotions are conducted through self-report measures which can be subject to biases such as self-presentation bias.
  - **Self-Presentation Bias**: We tend to view ourselves in a positive light and therefore rate ourselves more positively on self-reports.
- If most participants are scoring the max score on these scales, then it is hard to create effective treatment plans, as there is no room for improvement.

**Method**

- Frequency distributions were ran on five studies (N = 900) consisting of positive emotion self-report questionnaires.
- Measures:
  - GQ-6: Gratitude Questionnaire
  - IGRAT: Gratitude, Resentment, and Appreciation Test
  - GAS: Gratitude Adjective Scale
  - GTG-T: Gratitude To God Test
  - SWLS: Satisfaction With Life Scale
- Questionnaires were analyzed for a significant skew by dividing the skew value by the standard error of the skew.

**Implications/Future Directions**

- How confident are we on the accuracy of self-report measures?
- What other biases or factors play a role in creating this negative skew?
- What measures can we use to prevent this problem?

**Conclusions**

- Negative skew is common with positive emotion self-report questionnaires.
- Factors such as self presentation bias and disposition to positive emotions may contribute to negative skew and should be further investigated.
- Controlling for self-presentation bias may give us more accurate results of participant’s true score.