The Love Consortium
NEWSLETTER

As our academic year comes to a close, so does our time with the Global Gratitude Project Advisory Board. We are proud of all that we have accomplished together in our shared goal of advancing the scientific understanding of gratitude. Thank you so much to our board members for your hard work and dedication. Read on to learn more about what we have accomplished with the Global Gratitude Project and stay tuned to see what we have planned for the future.

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TLC Updates

Here's what The Love Consortium team has been up to since our last newsletter:

Global Gratitude Summit

Uncovering the Cognitive and Cultural Foundations of Gratitude

Michael McCullough
"New measures of gratitude" and "Variances and invariances in how gratitude is experienced and expressed in 360 world societies"

Nicholas Coles
"The Global Gratitude Study: A cross-cultural examination of the effects of multiple gratitude interventions on subjective well-being"

- With 250 registrants from 30 countries, our second Global Gratitude Summit brought together a worldwide network committed to advancing the science and study of gratitude.
- The summit featured presentations and posters from over 35 experts, including members of the Global Gratitude Advisory Board and TLC Advisory Board, as well as the TLC Gratitude Fellows. View the program here.

Global Gratitude Dataverse

- Since its launch in 2023, the Global Gratitude Dataverse has amassed dozens of datasets with samples from around the world, covering a wide range of methodologies and constructs.
- We invite you to explore the customized metadata to find datasets and collaborators for your next empirical contribution, or you can open the door to others by describing your own datasets that are ripe for discovery.

Data Management for Psychological Science Virtual Symposium
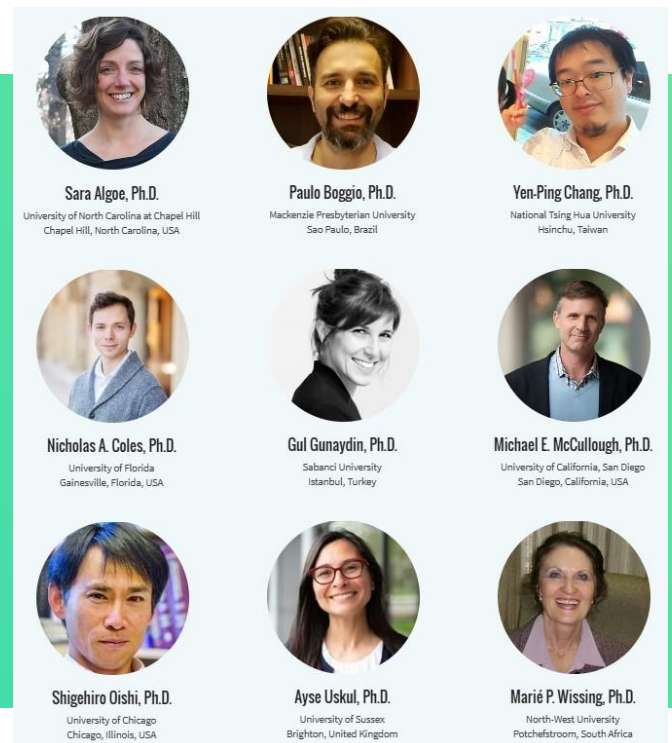
Matthew Johnson
University of Alberta

John Sakaluk
Western University

Rob Gommans
Radboud University

- TLC Advisory Board Members Dr. Emily Impett and Dr. Jessica Stern hosted our first virtual Data Management Panel, drawing 470 registrants from 34 countries.
- The event featured talks and a panel discussion with three experts on best practices in data management. View the program here.
- We look forward to sharing additional data management resources with you soon!

Connect with TLC on social media for more frequent updates!

Behind the Data

In this next installment of "Behind the Data," TLC Director Sara Algoe spoke with Bonnie Le about the Toronto Couples Study, 2017 dataset, described on The Love Consortium Dataverse. This rich dataset includes information from 111 romantic couples from the community who participated in background questionnaires, lab sessions involving video and physiological data, a 14-day daily diary, and a follow-up questionnaire. To be eligible, couples were required to have been in a relationship for at least three years.

Dr. Bonnie Le
Assistant Professor
University of Rochester

"The original purpose of this study was to look at emotion processes, perceptions, and relationships, but there are so many different variables in this dataset. For instance, we haven't looked much at how individual differences or demographic factors play a role in shaping relationship processes. There are a lot of other variables that researchers can examine to see how the quality of relationships is impacted."

Watch the conversation with Bonnie here, and visit The Love Consortium Dataverse to learn more about this dataset and others from Bonnie's lab!

Dyadic Longitudinal Data Analysis Workshop + New Synchrony Workshop

Kate Thorson and Amie Gordon will be teaching a dyadic longitudinal data analysis workshop plus a new 2-day intro workshop on measuring and analyzing interpersonal synchrony through SMaRT Workshops:

TLC Community Member Announcement

1) **July 21st-22nd**: A 2-day virtual workshop covering advanced topics in dyadic longitudinal data analysis.
Information and Registration

2) **July 28th-29th:** A 2-day virtual workshop on interpersonal synchrony covering fundamental methodological and analytic decisions.
Information and Registration

The workshops are taught from a researcher's perspective, providing you with the information you need to be able to understand dyadic and longitudinal data and to think through all of the different issues with your data and analyze it correctly.

Please email amiemg@umich.edu and/or kthorson@barnard.edu with any questions!

Statistics Support Program

Have you taken advantage of our statistics support program yet? Anyone analyzing data posted to The Love Consortium Dataverse or Global Gratitude Dataverse is eligible for this free resource!

Book one-on-one time with Dr. Amie Gordon to ask her perspective on different analytical approaches for testing your research question, get feedback on your selected analyses and/or code, or tap her expertise for tackling tricky data structures or interpreting findings. Wherever you are in the data analysis process, Amie will help point you in the right direction.

New slots are added on a monthly basis, so if you don't see a time that works for you now, be sure to check back next month!

The development and socialization of gratitude

Guest contributor: Amrisha Vaish, PhD; University of Virginia

Gratitude is a positive emotion that arises from the perception that one has benefited through the kindness or good intentions of another[1].

Experiencing and expressing gratitude is associated with numerous mental and physical health benefits[2]. Gratitude also serves critical functions in establishing, sustaining, and enhancing cooperation[3]. For instance, feeling grateful motivates adults to pay back our benefactors and pay forward to other individuals, even those who did not benefit us[4]. The display of gratitude also indicates one's commitment to one's relationships and thus elicits affiliation and increased cooperation from others[5].

Early gratitude

Remarkably, nascent gratitude seems to emerge early in life[6]. For instance, like adults, 4-year-olds who received benefits pay it back and pay it forward, motivated by a sense of gratitude[7,8,9]. By 4-5 years, children affiliate and cooperate more with recipients who show gratitude versus no gratitude[10]. During the early school years, children begin to express gratitude through verbal phrases ("thank you") and concrete gratitude (expressing the desire to repay). With age, children's knowledge about gratitude matures[11,12] and they begin expressing connective gratitude–a more advanced form of gratitude aimed at engaging with the benefactor[13]. Thus, children develop the capacity to feel, express, and value gratitude quite early in development.

Parental socialization of gratitude

Researchers are also exploring how parents socialize children's gratitude over development[14]. For example, parents perceive their children's gratitude to be multi-faceted, elicited by both tangible and intangible gifts, and maturing over development[15]. There also appear to be some associations between mothers' and children's gratitude[16]. Further, parents who self-report greater gratitude are more likely to select gratitude-related activities for their children, which in turn predicts more gratitude expression by the children[17]. Caregivers thus seem to play a vital role in socializing gratitude among children.

Looking ahead: The role of culture

Most existing work on gratitude stems from Western societies, which are a narrow, unrepresentative slice of the world's population[18]. To fully understand this virtue, we must root the study of gratitude and its development within the cultural context. Efforts have begun in this direction. Research shows that although gratitude expressions show similar age-related advances across cultures, they also show variation: more connective gratitude is expressed by Chinese and South Korean children than children in the US, Guatemala, and Brazil, while more concrete gratitude is expressed by children in the US than in other cultures[19]. Cultures that place greater emphasis on harmony, honoring others, and connecting with others may thus be more likely to emphasize connective gratitude[11,20]. In other work, mothers in Germany and India scaffolded toddlers' responses to receiving a gift differently, with German mothers focusing on the gift itself and maximizing positive affect while Indian mothers emphasized the social dimensions and acknowledging the gift giver[21]. These results point to the role of culture-specific socialization of gratitude.

Our own ongoing work in the US and India is examining children's expressions, expectations, and responses to gratitude, parents' own gratitude and their socialization of gratitude, and associations between parents' and children's gratitude. The US and India vary on some important dimensions, such as an emphasis on individuality and self-reliance and de-emphasis on social hierarchy in the US, and an emphasis on connectedness, interpersonal responsibilities, and social hierarchy in India. Our project is concerned with whether such cultural differences impact the socialization and development of gratitude. We will also conduct experimental studies to assess whether gratitude motivates prosocial behavior similarly in both cultures. This kind of theoretically informed, multi-pronged approach will be vital to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the shared and divergent aspects of gratitude in diverse cultures and elucidate the underlying socialization mechanisms, ultimately shedding light on the forms, functions, and development of this positive emotion that is so important to our social lives.

Spotlight Researcher: Dr. Qiao Chai

Dr. Qiao Chai is a postdoctoral researcher in the Early Social Development Lab at the University of Virginia, where he leads a cross-cultural project on the development of gratitude in childhood. His research focuses on children's social and moral development, particularly the development of prosocial behavior.

What originally sparked your interest in conducting research in this field?

I have long been fascinated by the uniquely altruistic nature of human beings and am deeply motivated to uncover the psychological mechanisms underlying altruism through empirical research and an evolutionary psychology approach. Studying the early development of altruism offers valuable insights into its origins and developmental pathways, which is why I have been committed to understanding why children engage in prosocial behaviors. Among the various factors involved, emotion stands out as a particularly important domain. Exploring emotions closely tied to prosociality, such as gratitude and indebtedness, can help us understand how individuals perceive others' altruistic acts and how these perceptions elicit emotional responses that, in turn, motivate reciprocal behavior.

We're particularly interested in your current project examining "The Development of Gratitude Across Cultures." Could you tell us what you set out to investigate with this work?

The early development of gratitude is a crucial area of study that has received increasing attention in recent years. However, much of the existing research has focused on Western samples and is grounded in Western theoretical frameworks. As a result, it remains unclear whether the understanding and expression of gratitude are culturally universal. For example, people from different cultures may differ in what kinds of actions they perceive as gratitude-worthy, and how they express gratitude may also vary. To investigate these important theoretical questions, our PI, Dr. Amrisha Vaish, initiated this cross-cultural project. Through a developmental and cross-cultural lens, we aim to examine how culture shapes the development of gratitude in children and how parental socialization practices contribute to this process.

What are your most interesting findings so far? Has anything surprised you?

One of our most interesting findings is that, as children grow older, striking cross-cultural differences begin to emerge in their understanding of gratitude. Gratitude is typically defined as a positive social emotion that alerts us to having benefited from another person's goodwill—meaning that the helper's benevolent intention plays a central role. However, in societies where interpersonal interactions are more deeply shaped by social structures and role-based obligations, the role of intention may be less central in eliciting gratitude or motivating reciprocal behavior. Remarkably, our preliminary findings support this hypothesis. We found that American children increasingly expected more gratitude when help was offered voluntarily rather than nonvoluntarily. In contrast, Indian children showed little sensitivity to the helper's underlying motivation, expecting similar levels of gratitude regardless of whether the help was voluntary. Although these results aligned well with our theoretical expectations, seeing the patterns so clearly emerge in the data was still quite striking and thought-provoking.

Our deep dive for this newsletter is all about the development of gratitude. What takeaways or implications might one draw from your work with regards to gratitude development?

Our preliminary findings suggest that while gratitude plays an important role in interpersonal interactions across cultures, the specific social functions it serves can be shaped in meaningful ways by cultural context. This, in turn, gives rise to distinct patterns of social behavior across cultures. We also observed that parents in the U.S. and India use different strategies and have different goals when it comes to socializing gratitude in their children. Interestingly, even similar parenting practices may lead to different outcomes depending on the surrounding cultural values and expectations. These findings highlight the importance of considering both cultural context and developmental processes when studying gratitude. In the future, it will be essential to examine gratitude development in a wider range of cultural settings in order to build a more holistic and nuanced understanding of how gratitude emerges and functions in human social life.

What's next for this line of work? Is there any particular aspect you're excited to pursue further?
Moving forward, we plan to continue collecting data from both parents and children regarding their understanding of gratitude. Once we have a sufficiently large dataset, I'm particularly excited to apply machine learning methods to explore whether—and how—parents' responses can predict their children's understanding of gratitude, and to examine the relative weight of different types of parental input. In addition, we are designing experimental studies to further investigate how children in the U.S. and India respond to different types of helping behaviors under controlled conditions, and how they express reciprocal behaviors in response.

The Love Consortium is currently seeking guest contributors for future newsletters!

If you are interested in writing a deep dive about a topic related to social connection, want to suggest a researcher for us to spotlight in future newsletters, or would like to learn more about other science writing opportunities with TLC (e.g., our social media ambassadorship), click the button below!

BECOME A TLC GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

What's Next for TLC

The Love Consortium team is heading to Brisbane, Australia for two exciting events this summer: the joint IACCP and IAIR Conference (June 28th-July 1st) and the IPPA World Congress on Positive Psychology (July 2nd-5th).

We'd love the chance to connect in person! If you're attending either conference, drop us a note at theloveconsortium@unc.edu to let us know.

iaccp
International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology

International Academy for Intercultural Research

ippa
World Congress on Positive Psychology

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