



PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AT WORK: A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY STUDY OF LEVEL OF HAPPINESS AND GRATITUDE AMONG WORKING PROFESSIONALS

Rajni Mishra¹

Research Scholar & Psychologist
Sam Global University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Dr. Meenakshi Sharma²

Professor & Head Of The Department
Sam Global University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

The psychological well being is a crucial aspect of professional life and is strongly linked to positive psychological experiences like happiness and gratitude. This paper explores the happiness, gratitude, and psychological well-being of working professionals, explores the relationships between happiness/gratitude and psychological well-being and compares the psychological features of happiness, gratitude, and psychological well-being between those in the Government sector and those in the Private sector. The study uses quantitative, cross sectional design, and working professionals' data is analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The results show that the overall psychological well-being, happiness and gratitude for working professionals is favourable. The findings also show strong positive correlations between happiness, gratitude and psychological well-being, with gratitude having a relatively stronger relationship with psychological well-being. However, no differences are seen between the psychological characteristics studied in government and private sector employees. The findings lend credence to the positive psychology approach and emphasize that happiness and gratitude are positive psychological resources that are linked with well-being for working professionals as a whole.

Keywords: Psychological Well-being; Happiness; Gratitude; Positive Psychology; Working Professionals; Workplace Well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being at work is another significant aspect of the quality of professional life of the employees. It indicates a positive mindset of a person, such as self-acceptance, appropriate interpersonal

relations, adjustment to physical environment and life direction. Those employees who have high levels of psychological well-being have much better ability to cope with working pressure, deal properly with their colleagues, and feel satisfaction and fulfillment. The positive psychology that concentrates on positive experiences of people provides a good basis for studying this issue.

Happiness and gratitude are two positive psychological phenomena that can be specifically practised in the workplace. Person-centred view of happiness is how one feels about oneself as a happy person. Gratitude is the act of being thankful for what has been given by people and the world in general. Both happiness and gratitude should be linked to psychological well-being since people who are happy and grateful will see things in a positive manner and people who are psychologically well-off will be happy and grateful.

There may be plenty of studies that focus on happiness or gratitude alone, but very few studies have made comparisons between the correlation of happiness and gratitude to psychological well-being of working professionals, and whether such levels of these constructs differ between government workers and those from the private sector. Given this, the present work employs secondary data to analyse the level of happiness, level of gratitude and psychological wellbeing of the working professionals and the relationship among these and to compare the working professionals in both sectors.

1.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To assess the levels of happiness, gratitude and psychological well-being among working professionals.
- To examine the relationship of happiness and gratitude with psychological well-being among working professionals.
- To compare the levels of happiness, gratitude and psychological well-being between government and private-sector employees.

1.2 Hypotheses

- **H₁:** Working professionals will exhibit significant levels of happiness, gratitude, and psychological well-being.
- **H₂:** Happiness and gratitude will have significant positive relationships with psychological well-being among working professionals.

- **H₃:** There will be a significant difference in the levels of happiness, gratitude, and psychological well-being between government and private-sector employees.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Behzadipour, Sadeghi and Sepahmansour (2018) studied the influence of gratitude on the levels of happiness and well-being of 72 participants from five hospitals in Shiraz, Iran, by means of pre-test and post-test designs with an intervention and a control group. The intervention group had been in 10 group sessions of gratitude training each 90 minutes. It was found that gratitude training had a positive impact on happiness and most of the psychological well-being dimensions, and did not affect autonomy.

Sadeghi and Behzadi Pour (2015) examined the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being and subjective well-being in 70 health care professionals from Shiraz, Iran. Following 10 sessions of 90 minutes' gratitude training, there were statistically significant differences in all components of psychological well-being except for autonomy as well as subjective well-being between the experimental and the control groups. The results indicate that expressing gratitude could help to manage work-related psychological stresses.

Adair et al. (2020) performed one web gratitude letter writing task for approximately seven minutes with health-care employees. In the follow-up study, 277 of the 1575 employees who participated responded after 1 week. When it comes to happiness scores, it was observed that the scores have increased from 67.34 to 72.43 on a 0-100 scale and emotional exhaustion score decreased from 60.67 to 52.79 on a 0-100 scale. This research showed that just a short period of gratitude boosting happiness in workers

Harty et al. (2025) designed an intervention on gratitude in which the first-level supervisors conducted five sessions of discussion with their employees regarding gratitude. The intervention was found to be effective in raising psychological well-being and work engagement, job satisfaction of the participants compared to the control group, pre- and post-test and at 6 months after the end of the program.

Garg, Mahipalan, Poulouse and Burgess (2022) carried out a study in which 726 university teachers in Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) of India participated. Gratitude had a positive relationship with workplace happiness ($r = 0.298$), as well as predicting the same ($\beta = 0.472$). Such a relationship works indirectly through social capital (indirect effect = 0.212) and psychological capital (indirect effect = 0.104). According to the study, gratitude is seen to help employees be happy at their work in India.

Overall, the literature reviewed indicates that there is a positive relationship between gratitude and happiness, and that the correlation coefficient for the relationship is between $r = .30$ and $r = .53$ and that there is an improvement in psychological wellness following intervention with gratitude. However, majority of the reviewed literature describes only single variable and have been conducted in countries other than India, or in a single industrial sector and have not compared government and private employees. The aim of the present study is to fill the gaps identified in the above research.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method was developed to research in a systematic way the happiness, the feeling of being thankful and psychological well-being among working professionals. The study employed research design, participants, measurement instruments, data collection, data analysis and ethics.

3.1 Research Design

The research design was quantitative, cross sectional and correlational and the subjects were working professionals. The study also explored the connections between these variables as well as comparison of the government and private sector employees. The primary data have been obtained from the respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

A total of 150 work-life balance professionals, with a split of 75 government and 75 private sector were included in the study. The study adopted purposive sampling and only those who indicated their willingness to participate and they were employed were selected. The parity of representation of the two sectors enabled comparisons to be made between staff in the public and private sectors.

3.3 Research Instruments

Standardised psychological measures were used to assess the study variables. Psychological well-being was measured using the Psychological Well-Being Scale (18-item version), happiness was measured using the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) and gratitude was measured using the Gratitude Questionnaire–Six Item Form (GQ-6). The instruments were based on the seven-point response scale.

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data were gathered from the working professionals from the selected areas after taking permission for the purpose of the study. The respondents were given informed consent and participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to and data gathered was only used for research.

3.5 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysing the data. Mean and standard deviation were used to assess the levels of psychological well-being, gratitude and happiness. One sample t-test used with reference value 3.00. Pearson's correlation was used to investigate correlations between the items in the study, and an independent-samples t-test was performed to compare employees in the government and private sectors. A level of 0.05 was used for statistical significance.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards of research with human subjects. This study was conducted on a voluntary basis, both informed consent and confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were preserved. The data used for the primary purposes were only for academic research and reported in aggregate.

4. RESULTS

The results of the study are reported as per the objectives and hypotheses of the study. The results emphasize the profile of the respondents, their psychological well-being, happiness, gratitude, and how these variables are related, as well as comparisons between different sectors.

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

A total of 150 working class were selected, representing equal number from Government and private sectors. As shown in Table 1, 75 respondents (50.0%) were employed in the government organisations and 75 respondents (50.0%) were employed in the private-sector organisations. Therefore, there were about equal numbers of participants in both sectors of employment, 50% in each. The balanced distribution was suitable to compare the happiness, gratitude and psychological well-being levels between the two groups of employees.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Employment Sector

Employment Sector	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
-------------------	---------------	----------------

Government sector	75	50.0
Private sector	75	50.0
Total	150	100.0

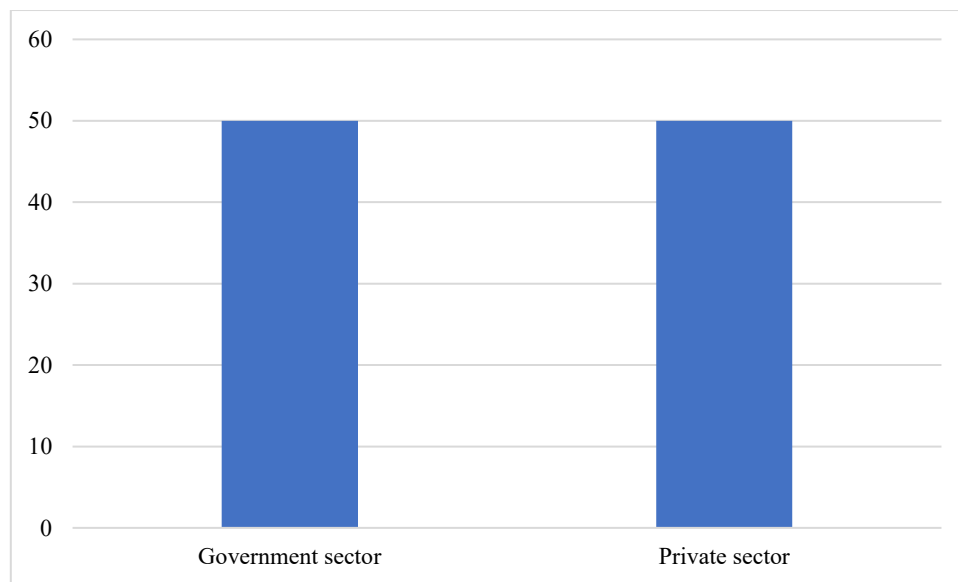


Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Distribution of Respondents by Employment Sector

The equal representation of government and private-sector employees indicates that neither employment sector was disproportionately represented in the study. The sample was made up of 50% from each sector, which allowed for a balanced framework to compare the psychological well-being, happiness, and gratitude of the government and private-sector professionals. This distribution enhanced the comparability of the two groups and enabled the researchers to compare the psychological variables for the third aim of the study, which was to determine if significant differences were found between them regarding employment sector. This is supported by the graphic in Figure 1, which shows the number of respondents in each group in both categories.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

H1: Levels of Psychological Well-being, Happiness and Gratitude

In Table 2, descriptive statistics for psychological well-being, gratitude and happiness are presented, along with results for the one sample t-test conducted with the 150 working professionals. The mean score for

psychological well-being was 4.70 (SD = 0.86), followed by gratitude with a mean of 4.66 (SD = 1.27) and happiness with a mean of 4.57 (SD = 0.90). The one-sample *t* test was carried out with respect to the reference value 3.00. The results showed statistically significant differences for psychological well-being ($t = 24.109$, $df = 149$, $p < .001$), gratitude ($t = 16.024$, $df = 149$, $p < .001$), and happiness ($t = 21.312$, $df = 149$, $p < .001$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and One-Sample *t*-Test for Psychological Well-being, Gratitude and Happiness

Variable	Mean (M)	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.
Psychological Well-being	4.70	0.86	24.109	149	< .001
Gratitude	4.66	1.27	16.024	149	< .001
Happiness	4.57	0.90	21.312	149	< .001

Note: Test value = 3.00.

The results suggested that the working professionals experienced significantly positive psychological well-being, gratitude and happiness as the mean scores for all three exceeded the reference value of 3.00. Psychological well-being had the highest mean score ($M = 4.70$), meaning the positive psychological variable that was looked at had the highest score, followed by gratitude ($M = 4.66$) and happiness ($M = 4.57$). The mean levels observed were significantly below the specified mean level only when values are statistically significant and have a *t* value below .001 with a *p* value. Thus, the results supported H_1 suggesting that working people would have high levels of happiness, gratitude and psychological well-being.

H2: Relationship between Happiness, Gratitude and Psychological Well-being

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients examining the relationships among psychological well-being, gratitude, and happiness among the working professionals. This is shown as a positive and statistically significant relationship between psychological well-being and gratitude ($r = .667$, $p < .01$). Happiness was also positively and significantly related to psychological well-being ($r = .296$, $p < .01$). Gratitude was also found to be positively and statistically significantly related to happiness ($r = .178$, $p < .01$). Both sets of variables were therefore positively related to each other and all three variables showed significant positive relations.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation among Psychological Well-being, Gratitude and Happiness

Variable	Psychological Well-being	Gratitude	Happiness
Psychological Well-being	1	.667**	.296**
Gratitude	.667**	1	.178**
Happiness	.296**	.178**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results suggest that psychology well-being was higher among the working professionals who experienced more gratitude or happiness. The strongest association was found between psychological well-being and gratitude ($r = .667$), which signified a relatively strong positive association, while the correlation between psychological well-being and happiness was relatively weak ($r = .296$). There was a positive (but weak) correlation between gratitude and happiness ($r = .178$). Results indicate that there is a positive relationship between gratitude and happiness with psychological well-being, with gratitude having a stronger relationship. Thus, the findings support H_2 which hypothesized that happiness and gratitude would be positively related to psychological well-being among working professionals. Correlations should be seen as associations only and do not mean that one caused the other.

H3: Comparison of Government and Private-Sector Employees

The results obtained from the independent-samples t-test between the government employees and private-sector employees on gratitude and psychological well-being and happiness are presented in Table 4. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, $t(298) = -1.281$, $p = .201$. Likewise, there was no statistically significant difference found in psychological well-being: $t(298) = -0.795$, $p = .427$. The comparison was not statistically significant for happiness either, $t(298) = 1.404$, $p = .161$. All three p values were above the conventional significance level of .05, so none of the differences in the observed groups was found to be statistically significant.

Table 4: Comparison of Government and Private-Sector Employees

Variable	Comparison	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>
Gratitude	Government vs. Private	-1.281	298	.201

Psychological Well-being	Government vs. Private	-0.795	298	.427
Happiness	Government vs. Private	1.404	298	.161

The results revealed that there was no significant difference between the level of gratitude, psychological well-being, and happiness of employees from government and private sectors. The t-values of the three variables varied, but the p-values were all greater than .05 and the differences between the two groups of employment were not statistically significant. The findings indicated therefore, that there was no significant difference between the psychological characteristics studied and the employment sector. Thus, the results do not confirm H₃, which had hypothesized that there would be notable differences between government and private job satisfaction, gratitude, and psychological health.

4.5 Discussion

This current study has revealed positive results for psychological well-being, gratitude, and happiness among working professionals. This research is supported by the work of Behzadipour et al. (2018), wherein it was found that interventions based on gratitude increased happiness and aspects of psychological well-being. Similar observations have been made by Sadeghi and Behzadi Pour (2015), wherein gratitude training helped improve psychological and subjective well-being of health-care professionals. Adair et al. (2020) also observed happiness after gratitude intervention in health-care employee.

Strong positive correlation was seen between gratitude and psychological well-being, while happiness was also correlated with psychological well-being positively. Correlation of gratitude with psychological well-being was more compared to happiness because of findings that indicate positive correlation between gratitude and workplace happiness by Garg et al. (2022) and Cho (2019), where the authors state that there is an association between gratefulness and psychological well-being of employees. Arnout and Almoied (2021) found a relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being. These studies can be considered as evidence that gratitude is a resource for professionals.

The results of this research revealed that there exists a positive relationship between happiness and psychological well-being, in line with Kun and Gadanecz (2022), who indicated a positive relationship between workplace happiness and well-being. Nevertheless, there were no statistical differences found regarding the levels of psychological well-being, gratitude, and happiness among government and private

organization employees. It seems that such positive psychological factors are universal and are not limited to any specific sector. The results obtained provide the support for the positive psychology approach.

5. CONCLUSION

The study finds that working adults have positive psychological outcomes such as psychological well-being, happiness and gratitude, and that the psychological outcomes have positive relationships with each other. Happiness and gratitude is a positive correlation with psychological well-being and gratitude had a special relationship, showing that gratitude is very important as a positive psychological resource in the workplace. The results also show that there is no significant difference between government and private-sector employees in these psychological characteristics, which is encouraging as positive psychological functioning is applicable to all workplaces. On a general level, the study affirms the positive psychology point of view and accentuates its significance in the comprehension and support of wellbeing in the working professionals.

REFERENCES

1. Behzadipour, S., Sadeghi, A., & Sepahmansour, M. (2018). *A study on the effect of gratitude on happiness and well being. Iranian Journal of Health Psychology*, 1(2), 65–72.
2. Adair, K. C., Rodriguez-Homs, L. G., Masoud, S., Mosca, P. J., & Sexton, J. B. (2020). *Gratitude at work: Prospective cohort study of a web-based, single-exposure well-being intervention for health care workers. Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(5), e15562.
3. Harty, B., Gustafsson, J. A., Thorén, M., Möller, A., & Björkdahl, A. (2025). *Development of a gratitude intervention model and investigation of the effects of such a program on employee well-being, engagement, job satisfaction and psychological capital. Work*, 80(1), 233–246.
4. Sadeghi, A., & Behzadi Pour, S. (2015). *The effect of gratitude on psychological and subjective well-being among hospital staff. Health Education and Health Promotion*, 3(4), 51–62.
5. Velásquez, N. R. P. (2024). *Positive psychology and the search for happiness at work. Majalah Kesehatan Indonesia*, 5(1), 1–8.
6. Townsley, A. P., Li-Wang, J., Katta, R., Townsley, A., & Li-Wang, J. (2023). *Healthcare workers' well-being: A systematic review of positive psychology interventions. Cureus*, 15(1).

7. Komase, Y., Watanabe, K., Hori, D., Nozawa, K., Hidaka, Y., Iida, M., ... & Kawakami, N. (2021). *Effects of gratitude intervention on mental health and well-being among workers: A systematic review. Journal of Occupational Health*, 63(1), e12290.
8. Cain, I. H., Cairo, A., Duffy, M., Meli, L., Rye, M. S., & Worthington Jr, E. L. (2019). *Measuring gratitude at work. The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 14(4), 440–451.
9. Garg, N., Mahipalan, M., Poulouse, S., & Burgess, J. (2022). *Does gratitude ensure workplace happiness among university teachers? Examining the role of social and psychological capital and spiritual climate. Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 849412.
10. Shaghaghi, F., Abedian, Z., Forouhar, M., Esmaily, H., & Eskandarnia, E. (2019). *Effect of positive psychology interventions on psychological well-being of midwives: A randomized clinical trial. Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 8, 160.
11. Kun, A., & Gadanez, P. (2022). *Workplace happiness, well-being and their relationship with psychological capital: A study of Hungarian teachers. Current Psychology*, 41(1), 185–199.
12. Cortini, M., Converso, D., Galanti, T., Di Fiore, T., Di Domenico, A., & Fantinelli, S. (2019). *Gratitude at work works! A mix-method study on different dimensions of gratitude, job satisfaction, and job performance. Sustainability*, 11(14), 3902.
13. Cho, S. (2019). *Effects of social support and grateful disposition on employees' psychological well-being. The Service Industries Journal*, 39(11–12), 799–819.
14. Mukhtar, A. H. (2018). *Gratitude intervention at work: Its impact on well-being, job satisfaction & organisational commitment. IJASSH*.
15. Basit, A., Ali, R., Rahman, S., & Shah, A. A. (2024). *Exploring how the practice of gratitude can strengthen interpersonal relationships, enhance mental well-being, foster emotional resilience, and promote greater social connectedness and cooperation. Review of Education, Administration & Law (REAL)*, 7(4), 427.
16. Nadlifah, K., Setiawan, S., & Munir, A. (2023). *Positive psychology to flourish professional well-being: A qualitative study of Indonesian English teachers' perspective. JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 8(1).

17. Arnout, B. A., & Almoied, A. A. (2021). *A structural model relating gratitude, resilience, psychological well-being and creativity among psychological counsellors. Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 21(2), 470–488.
18. García-Álvarez, D., Soler, M. J., & Achard-Braga, L. (2021). *Psychological well-being in teachers during and post-COVID-19: Positive psychology interventions. Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 769363.
19. Anlı, G. (2025). *Positive psychology practices in Muslim communities: A systematic review. Journal of Religion and Health*, 64(5), 3448–3470.
20. Deichert, N. T., Fekete, E. M., & Craven, M. (2021). *Gratitude enhances the beneficial effects of social support on psychological well-being. The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 16(2), 168–177.