

Gratitude and Employee Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract: It is important to consider employee psychological well-being to maintain the stability of an employee's performance and create a company that has good competitiveness. One of the things that can affect psychological well-being is religiosity, where gratitude (syukr) is an example of religious activity. This study aimed to determine the relationship between gratitude and employee well-being. The research used a qualitative method based on a literature review. Dimensions of psychological well-being include autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, life purpose and self-acceptance. The result of this research showed that there is a relationship between gratitude and employee psychological well-being. Gratitude interventions can be applied in a corporation to improve employee well-being by improving happiness and employee satisfaction.

Keywords: gratitude, syukr, psychological well-being, gratitude intervention

1. Introduction

Manpower is one of the most important things in corporation. In two decades ago, there are many discussions about the management of manpower, one concrete solution that can be applied in an organization to create or improve prosperity and employee well-being, to increase efficiency, and to improve the financial condition in organization (Mihail & Kloutsiniotis, 2016). In fact, with the current Covid-19 pandemic, an organization or corporation faces uncertainty that forces employee to be prepared for facing future-arisen problem, such as economic and political instability, etc. Organization has to make adjustment in relation to manpower management in facing the Covid-19 pandemic to maintain a high level of employee well-being (Perdana et al., 2020).



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Maintaining a high level of employee well-being will make employee performance stable. Compared with employees with a low level of psychological well-being, those with a high level of psychological well-being will have a good performance (Kundi et al., 2020). It is important for a corporation to consider employee well-being because it is significantly related with employee productivity that has an impact on the company's overall performance. When a corporation can offer employee well-being, it shows that the corporation has given a good work experience to its employees, has encouraged its employees to have high morale, loyalty, and performance to the corporation, and has created employee satisfaction (Wijayanto, et al., 2017).

Corporation has to fulfil employee well-being in return for the energy and thought that employees have given to the corporation. It has been regulated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia no. 13/2003 Article 1 section (31) concerning manpower (Law of the Republic of Indonesia No 13, 2003).

Employee well-being contributes to creating a positive attitude towards organization such as commitment, interest on organization, performance, etc (Akhbar et al., 2020; Maula et al., 2020). Improvement of employee well-being has an impact on corporation productivity and also will make the corporation profitable and competitive (Merisa et al., 2017).

Employee well-being absolutely brings positive impacts for employees. Improvement of productivity or individual performance, caused by employee well-being, will make the organization pay them higher, according to the performan that they have given, thus improving employee satisfaction (Pradhan & Hati, 2019). Furthermore, employee well-being in an organization will improve employee's mental health. Well-being significantly impacts individual stress coping, mental and physical health, along with work and life satisfaction (Pradhan & Hati, 2019). However, employees with workplace insecurity have low employee well-being (Rizky & Sadida, 2019).

Some factors that can affect the level of individuals' psychological well-being are demographic factors such as socio-economic condition, culture, education, age, marital status, and gender; social support; personality; evaluation of experience; and religiosity (Ryff, 1989; (Fitriani, 2016). Religiosity is a process to find the right way that is related with sacred things. One of religious activities is being grateful.

There are many ways to enhance employee psychological well-being. One of which is the expression of gratitude because gratitude has a significant relation with psychological well-being components e.g. accepting ourselves, positive relation, personal growth, environmental mastery, and life goals (Dewanto & Retnowati, 2015). A low level of gratitude will make individuals feel they have a heavy burden and cause some negative emotions such as frustration, disappointment, and dissatisfaction (Sari & Monalisa, 2021). Gratitude is an important thing for every employee. Employee gratitude is expected to improve employee psychological well-being in a corporation.

In this study, the researchers wanted to see the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being in employees. In addition, this study wanted to find out if there is a way to improve employee well-being.

2. Literature Review

Psychological well-being is one of the dimensions of employee well-being (Zheng et al., 2015). Psychological well-being is a concept when individuals have positive attitude towards themselves and can adapt their attitude according to the environment (Prameswari & Ulpawati, 2019). Psychological well-being is a concept that has a relation with what individuals feel about daily activity and leads to the disclosure of personal feelings on what is felt by the individuals as a result of their life experiences. Psychological well-being can also be interpreted as obtaining happiness, life satisfaction, and the absence of depressive symptoms in individuals (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). According to the definitions of psychological well-being, the researchers concluded that psychological well-being is a condition where individuals get happiness, life satisfaction, self-acceptance, and ability to adapt to the environment in everyday life.

Some of the factors that can affect psychological well-being are social support from an organization and demographics such as individual, affective, and personal characteristic (Cho, 2018). The main dimension of psychological well-being is life goals and positive relationships with others (Izzati et al., 2021).

The basis for achieving psychological well-being is individual psychology that can be used positively, where the individual components with positive psychological functions are as follows (1) Autonomy, namely ability to self-rule or be independent; (2) Environmental mastery, namely ability to adapt with the their environment; (3) Personal growth, namely ability to grow or develop their potential; (4) Positive relations with others, marked with a warm and trustful relationship with others; (5) Purpose in life, namely ability to achieve their life purpose; (6) Self-acceptance, marked with ability to accept who they are (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

2.1. Gratitude

Gratitude in the Islamic perspective shows a vertical relationship between human and Allah SWT. Gratitude is an expression of being thankful and appreciation by behaving positively caused by grace and favour of God, human, other creatures, and environment (Listiyandini et al., 2020). Gratitude in the Islamic perspective is having satisfaction from the heart for the blessings given by Allah SWT, knowing with knowledge, and expressing it with words (verbally) and with actions (Rusdi, 2016). According to the definition of gratitude, the researchers concluded that gratitude is to be wholeheartedly thankful on the favour of God and to appreciate it by behaving positively with either words or actions.

Dimensions of gratitude according to the Islamic psychological are divided into two as follows (1) *Asy-syukr al-dakhiliyah*, which consists of wholeheartedly sincerity or belief and knowing with knowledge; (2) *Asy-syukr al-kharijiyah*, which consists of grateful expression either with words or with actions (Rusdi, 2016).

Quranic verses and hadith which describe gratitude (syukr) as follows (Rachmadi, 2019).

1. Gratitude can make a grateful person get additional blessing, as explained in Surah Ibrahim verse 7, which translates as follows:

“And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you (in favour); but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.’”

2. One of the gratitude acts is to work gratefully, as explained in Surah Saba’:13, which translates as follows:

“They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. [We said], “Work, O family of David, in gratitude.” And few of My servants are grateful.”

3. Grateful activities can save people from the torment of Allah, as clarified by Surah An-Nisa:147, which translates as follows:

“Why should Allah punish you if you are grateful and faithful? Allah is ever Appreciative, All-Knowing.”

4. Being happy should make people be grateful, as clarified by hadith Sahih Muslim no. 2999, which translates as follows:

“Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.”

2.2. Gratitude and psychological well-being.

A study entitled “psychological well-being karyawan studi literatur” discussed organizational culture, gratitude, and psychological well-being. The result of this research showed that there is a significant positive relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being. Grateful individuals have positive behaviour towards themselves and can accept every positive and negative aspect on themselves and their past that they have been through (Sari & Monalisa, 2021).

Another study entitled “Rasa syukur kaitannya dengan kesejahteraan psikologis pada guru honorer sekolah dasar” or “Gratitude in its relation with psychological well-being of honorary teachers in elementary school” mentioned that there is a significant positive relation between gratitude and psychological well-being of honorary teachers in elementary school (Aisyah & Chisol, 2018).

2.3. Gratitude interventions on improving employee well-being

A study entitled “Kebahagiaan di tempat kerja: efektivitas intervensi psikologi berbasis online ‘latihan tiga hal baik’” or “Workplace happiness: effectiveness of online psychological intervention practice three good things” is about the effectiveness of gratitude training of three good things on improving workplace happiness. The respondents were asked to write three good things that they went through at work and the reason why these occurred and their role in those events. The result of this study showed that the gratitude training of three good things is effective to improve employee workplace happiness (Laba & Kusumaputri, 2020). Workplace happiness is an important thing to create psychological employee well-being.

3. Method

The study used a qualitative literature review-based method. A literature review is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible study method by identifying, evaluating, and doing synthesis to the literature from research results and ideas that have been published by researchers and practitioners. A literature review contains reviews, summaries, and author’s thoughts on several library sources on the topics studied that are relevant, up-to-date, and adequate (Simbolon, 2021).

The data collection method used in this study was by reading several scientific works, namely scientific journals relevant to this study. The keywords used by the researchers to collect the published scientific papers were gratitude and employee psychological well-being. The researchers reviewed and concluded the data contained in the included scientific works.

4. Results and Discussion

The result of the literature review showed that gratitude has a relation with employee psychological well-being. This is in line with a study conducted by Prameswari and Ulpwati (2019) which involved medical workers in a Camantha Sanidya Hospital in Batam, showing that gratitude is one of the positive factors for increasing psychological well-being because medical workers can be still positive and create positive atmosphere in workplace even though they have high workloads, long working hours, and so on (Prameswari & Ulpawati, 2019).

Wood, Joseph, and Maltby also described that there is a relation between gratitude and psychological well-being. Gratitude is one of the factors that affect psychological well-being because being grateful is a form of personality of someone who is able to think positively, be happy, have life satisfaction, and have passion of life (Wood et al., 2009). The presence of these three things shows the presence of individual psychological well-being.

Improvement of employee well-being in a corporation can be done by applying gratitude interventions. One of the gratitude interventions is the three-good-things technique. This is in accordance with the results of a study which revealed that the gratitude intervention positively influenced employee well-being and reduced absenteeism (Kaplan et al., 2013).

5. Conclusion

According to previously published scientific works, it can be concluded systematically that there is a relation between gratitude and employee psychological well-being. It can be interpreted that the higher the level of employee gratitude, the higher the level of employee psychological well-being. The high psychological well-being of employees can have an impact on the stability of the employee's performance and company's productivity. Gratitude interventions can be applied in a corporation to improve employee well-being by improving happiness and employee satisfaction.

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