

## Subjective Well-Being: Efforts to Improve Through Gratitude Training on Millennial Employees

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Millennial employees who have subjective well-being will positively respond to events or incidents in the surrounding environment. Subjective well-being is defined as an assessment of the subjective well-being of an individual to view past experiences. Individuals who have high subjective well-being will be able to recognize and acknowledge the goodness that occurs in every problem they experience to generate positive feelings when addressing these problems. This study aims to see whether gratitude training can improve subjective well-being in millennial employees. The subjects used in this study were millennial employees at Company X. The samples taken were 20 millennial employees who fall into the category of low to moderate subjective well-being. The research method used was a quasi-experimental method with a scale as a data collection tool. The scale used in this study was a subjective well-being scale (SWLS and SPANE) and used a gratitude training intervention. Data analysis used was independent sample t-test and paired sample t-test. The independent sample t-test analysis showed that the Mean post-test of the experimental group was 76.60, and the Mean post-test of the control group was 23.30 with a t-value 19.625 ( $p < 0.01$ ). It means that there were differences in subjective well-being in the experimental group and the control group. While the paired sample t-test analysis showed the results of the Mean pretest value of the experimental group was 51.10 and the Mean post-test value of the experimental group was 76.60 with a t-value -10.218 ( $p < 0.01$ ), which means that there were differences in subjective well-being in the pretest and post-test of the experimental group. This finding can provide evidence that gratitude training can increase subjective well-being in millennial employees.

*Keywords:* subjective well-being, gratitude training, millennial employees, company

Organizations can be said to be groups of people who have certain goals (Sobirin, 2015). In an organization, the people in it are referred to as human resources. Human resources are not only a means of production but are also an important indicator in achieving organizational goals (Wulandari & Irmawati, 2017).

Human resources are vital organizational assets; therefore, their

roles and functions cannot be replaced by other resources. Even though the technology used in modern or the funds provided are more than sufficient, without professional resources, everything becomes meaningless (Tjutju & Suwatno, 2008).

According to Dessler (2010), employees are one of the important company assets and need to be developed to support the continuity and

success of an organization or company. Employees are managers of the organization, where the good and bad of an organization will be seen from the employees' performance. The majority of human resource fillers in the current situation are millennial generation employees.

Millennials currently dominate the world's job market. The millennial generation workforce will dominate up to 75% starting in 2020 (Mulyati, 2019). When the demographic bonus occurs, the millennial generation, which is the largest population of productive age, plays an important role through its potential to contribute to the organization.

The millennial generation prefers to do something that gives them satisfaction and happiness. Still, the millennial generation tends to be more challenging to manage than the previous generation (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). It is supported by the phenomenon that occurs in the millennial generation, which is happy to change places of work (Novisari & Dahesihsari, 2019). It makes the happiness, and subjective well-being of employees at the millennial age has not been achieved. Diener (2009) stated that subjective well-being includes an individual's assessment of their own life, in which he divides subjective well-being into two components, namely cognitive and affective.

Different thinking patterns among employees and the emergence of negative emotions can indicate that subjective well-being is low. Subjective well-being is an individual's subjective assessment of his life (Lubis & Agustini, 2018). Diener (2009) stated that subjective well-being includes an individual's evaluation of their own life, in which he divides subjective well-

being into two components, namely cognitive and affective.

The cognitive component includes life satisfaction, while the affective component includes positive and negative moods. A positive mood indicates pleasant emotions, such as joy and affection. In contrast, negative moods include unpleasant emotions and represent negative experiences reacting to their life, health, events, and circumstances. Its main forms include anger, sadness, anxiety and worry, stress, frustration, guilt and shame, and envy (Diener, 2009).

A person has high subjective well-being if he experiences life satisfaction and experiences joy more often, and experiences less unpleasant emotions, such as sadness and anger. Conversely, if not satisfied with his life, someone with low subjective well-being experiences less affection and joy and experiences more negative emotions such as anger and sadness (Diener, 2009).

According to Sahrah and Yuniasanti (2020), subjective well-being is one of the important factors that can determine and improve individual well-being. The antecedents of subjective well-being are divided into four categories: physical, psychological, social, and religiosity. Having dissatisfaction with all job achievements is considered an unpleasant experience because these achievements are not in line with expectations.

Subjective well-being conditions in each individual are not always the same, based on the results of research conducted by Lestari (2019), showing that each person's subjective well-being varies. The problem of subjective well-being (SWB) needs to be investigated because subjective well-being in individuals affects the condition of

employees, which can also affect the work environment in the company to create a good organizational climate. Especially for the millennial generation who work in companies today.

The demographic bonus experienced by countries worldwide makes many workers, both in public and private institutions, come from the millennial generation. Employee performance in the company can be determined by satisfaction in the workplace (Lestari & Mujiasih, 2020). When the individual's subjective well-being is low, the employee's performance is also low, resulting in a decrease in company profits. Therefore, the researcher raised this research to add to the contribution of psychological science, especially in the setting of Organizational Industrial Psychology.

Subjective well-being has an important role in increasing optimism, life satisfaction, and hope for a better future (Diener, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). In the work context, subjective well-being becomes important to study because employees who have life satisfaction and good hope for the future will have good optimism in work.

Millennial employees need to increase their life satisfaction. This life satisfaction is part of the achievement of subjective well-being. One of them is

that gratitude training is more effective in increasing a person's subjective well-being (Khoiriyah, 2016).

Gratitude training is a form of individual gratitude for everything that happens in his life, both events and receiving from other parties (Emmons & McCullough, 2004), including the response of joy and the tendency to see life as a gift. In addition, the results of gratitude training can bring up positive emotions, positive cognitive, and positive memories in individuals. It will bring up positive things when individuals evaluate their lives (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

Gratitude training will lead to grateful behavior so that people can see the positive things they have in all situations of lack they feel about fostering positive feelings about their lives, a sense of optimism, productivity, and increasing gratitude to feel enough with their lives (Emmons, 2007). According to the results of research conducted by Anggraini (2017), an increase in balance occurs to increase the positive effect. Therefore, gratitude training allows people to experience more positive influences than negative influences.

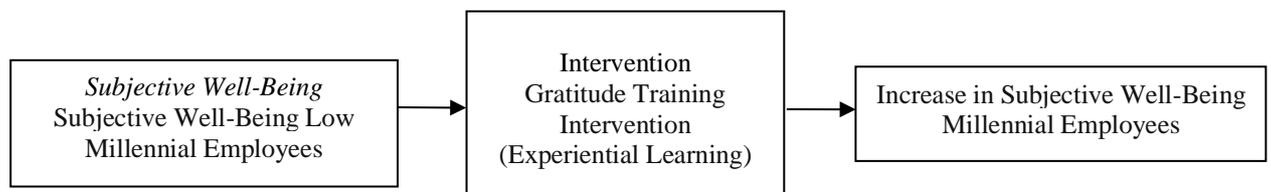


Figure 1 The research framework

## **Theoretical Background**

### ***Subjective Well-Being***

Subjective well-being is defined as an evaluation of life, which explains the relationship between personal experience and the individual's quality of life to explain why and how individuals experience life in a positive way (Diener & Diener, in Pattihahuan, 2012). This life evaluation will apply to current and past lives (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). This evaluation includes an individual's emotional experience of an event, mood, and the form of their assessment of life satisfaction, fulfillment of needs, and satisfaction in certain areas.

According to Robbins (in Lopez, 2009), subjective well-being focuses on a person's assessment of life satisfaction and the frequency of positive and negative emotions experienced by individuals during their lives. According to Diener and Chan (2011), subjective well-being is also defined as an individual's evaluation of life satisfaction based on feelings (including moods and emotions). According to Linley and Joseph (2004), subjective well-being combines life satisfaction with positive affect minus negative affect.

Based on some of the definitions described above, it can be concluded that subjective well-being is an individual's subjective evaluation or assessment of the overall happiness experienced by the individual. Therefore, it means that individuals have positive feelings about their lives due to cognitive, affective evaluations and have life satisfaction for what has been achieved globally and regarding certain areas resulting from their cognitive assessment.

### ***Gratitude Training***

According to Alwi (2005), training is a process of practice, activity, or work. Training participants are prepared to take specific action steps and assist participants in improving their understanding and skills related to the training they are participating in. Therefore, training is practical, specific, and immediate (Samsudin, 2005). It means that training is carried out to improve the mastery of various skills of the trainees in a relatively short time.

Ibn Manzbur (in Al-Fauzan, 2007) said that gratitude is repaying the pleasure or kindness of others with words, deeds, and intentions. Al-Fauzan (2007) also explains that a grateful person is a person who recognizes Allah's favors and acknowledges Allah as the giver, submits to Him, loves Him, is pleased with Him, and uses those favors in things that Allah likes to obey Him.

According to Bono and McCullough (2006), gratitude is a moral that regulates human behavior in life. The same opinion was conveyed by Emmons and McCullough (2003) that gratitude is a form of feeling or emotion, which can develop into an attitude, good moral character, habit, personality trait, and will ultimately affect a person in responding to something or a situation.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that gratitude training is an activity to provide understanding and skills to recognize the goodness or favors that have been received in life and be aware of the external source of the goodness. So that participants can apply it in daily life to increase their gratitude ability.

### **The Effect of Gratitude Training on Subjective Well-Being on Millennial Employees**

The subjective well-being of millennial employees is important to note because it is related to the psychological condition of employees, which then has an impact on the performance capacity of these employees. Therefore, subjective well-being has several factors that can affect the level of the category.

According to Fitrihanur (2018), the factors that affect subjective well-being consist of five things, namely income, religiosity, gratitude, personality, and social support. In line with this, according to. It is based on a study conducted by Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith in 1999, which found that the most powerful factor influencing subjective well-being is the personality factor. Furthermore, Watkins (in Emmons & McCullough, 2004) explains the relationship between gratitude and subjective well-being as an affective trait and an affective state.

The gratitude training intervention can also increase positive affect, a component of subjective well-being, thereby increasing subjective well-being (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). It is explained through several processes in the training stages using experiential learning training methods. There are five steps proposed by Lawson (2006) in the experiential learning stage, namely, the first is experiencing, which is the beginning of a process that involves training participants in activities. This stage is the basis for the whole process because the experience revealed later correlates with the next stage.

In the second stage, namely publishing/sharing, after experiencing

the participants directly, participants share their experiences. Third, processing/interpreting is part of the cycle in training. The trainer assists participants in discovering the dynamics of the shared experience so that participants can explore and analyze what happened to themselves during the training activity.

Then the fourth stage, namely generalizing, after the entire training activities, then participants connect the training activities with real-world situations that occur in events experienced by participants based on their respective experiences. Participants explore more deeply and discover how they relate. At this stage, the participants can reach a deeper level of understanding and insight.

The fifth and final stage, namely applying, this last step requires participants to think about what to do with the new learning received in this training, then how to apply it in everyday life. After the participants have passed these five steps, the participants can make any action plans that will be applied in their lives to obtain better subjective well-being.

Someone who applies the results of gratitude training will feel happier because they enjoy all the benefits obtained in life and positively accept every event. The positive effect that arises will make someone think of his life as something good and fun, and happy people will recognize the good things obtained from other people. This is referred to as a gratitude response to life situations, and happy people will easily accept everything that comes in life as a favor or favor (Watkins in Emmons and McCullough, 2004).

Based on the explanation above, it proves that gratitude can be increased in

a person through training that uses experiential learning methods, which will later foster a positive effect on the experiences that occur in life, global life satisfaction, and life satisfaction in the realm of life in certain areas of life so that it will increase subjective well-being, especially on research subjects, namely millennial employees. Increasing subjective well-being will make millennial employees able to improve performance in the company.

## Method

### Participants

The subjects used in this study were millennial employees who were selected using a purposive sampling technique with the characteristics of employees born between 1982-2004 according to Strauss and Howe (in Howe & Nadler, 2012), having a gratitude category between 18-26 based on the QG scale. -6, and has a low to moderate level of subjective well-being based on SWLS and SPANE.

The study was a quasi-experimental that uses a control group pre-test and post-test design. Participants who have been selected according to predetermined characteristics are then divided into two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The determination of participants into the experimental and control groups was carried out by randomization using even and odd serial numbers. Participants who received even serial numbers were included in the experimental group, and participants who received odd serial numbers were included in the control group.

### Instruments

This study uses instruments in the form of a psychological scale, observation, and interviews. The psychological scale used is the subjective well-being scale and the gratitude scale. The subjective well-being scale consists of two scales, namely the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and the Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) proposed by Diener (2009), as well as the gratitude scale, namely the Gratitude Questionnaire-six item form (GQ-6) proposed by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002).

The results of trials conducted on each of these scales show a fairly good level of validity and reliability, namely the reliability coefficient is 0.621 for SWLS, reliability coefficient is 0.890 for SPANE, and 0.893 for GQ-6. The subjective well-being variable has two sub-scales, so that the reliability coefficient uses a stratified alpha coefficient. Based on the calculation of the stratified alpha formula, the results of the SWB scale reliability are 0.753, which indicates that the scale is good for use in research. Then the validity of these three scales is above 0.03, indicating a fairly good validity level.

To test the hypothesis in this study, the researchers conducted a statistical analysis using SPSS for Windows version 21. The data analysis techniques used were independent sample t-test and paired sample t-test.

On the SWLS scale, there are five items with the lowest score of 1 and the highest being 7 for the favorite items, while the unfavorable items have the opposite; namely, the lowest score is seven and the highest is 1. Then on the SPANE scale, there are 12 items with the lowest answer score of 1 and the highest 5 for items on SPANE. - P/Positive Experience, while the lowest

answer score is five and the highest is 1 for items in SPANE-N/Negative Experience. Because SWLS and SPANE have different assessments, it is necessary to calculate the z score and t score first before statistical analysis. After calculating the z score and t score on the SWB, statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS. After completing the analysis, it is categorized into low, medium, or high categories.

While the scoring system in GQ-6 starts from a score of 1 (very inappropriate) to a score of 7 (very appropriate), the calculation of the assessment of GQ-6 is to add up the existing scores except for item numbers 3-6, which are calculated in reverse.

In addition to using the scale, the researcher also uses non-participant observation as a data collection tool. Observations were made during the initial data mining and the post-intervention evaluation. Similar to observations, interviews were also conducted in two conditions, namely before and after the intervention. The implementation of these observations and interviews is used to be additional data in research.

## Results

Based on the data shown in table 1 regarding the independent sample t-test, it can be seen that the p-value  $<0.01$ , i.e., the p-value was 0.000. This shows a very significant difference between the post-test value of the experimental group and the post-test value of the control group. These data also show the results of the t-test that gratitude training affects subjective well-being in the experimental group. The post-test Mean value in the experimental group shows the number 76.60. In contrast, the post-test Mean value in the control

group shows the number 23.50, which means that the post-test value of the experimental group was higher than the post-test value of the control group. Therefore, it can be proven that there was a very significant difference in the value of the experimental group who was given gratitude training than the control group who was not given gratitude training according to the complete intervention module.

Based on the data shown in table 2 regarding the results of the Paired Sample T-Test, it can be seen that the p-value  $<0.01$ , i.e. the p-value was 0.000. This shows a very significant difference between the scores of the subjective well-being pretest and the subjective well-being post-test of the experimental group. The mean value of the pretest in the experimental group was 51.10, while the Mean value of the post-test in the experimental group is 76.60, which means that the post-test value is higher than the pretest value of the experimental group. It proves a significant difference in values in the experimental group before and after the gratitude training intervention. In other words that gratitude training has an effect on subjective well-being in the experimental group.

The findings made by the researcher are in line with the results of research from several previous kinds of literature, including the results of a study reported by Anggraini and Andayani (2017) that the higher the gratitude, the higher the level of subjective well-being. Gratitude has a role in influencing subjective well-being through the emotional benefits that are obtained when an individual views everything he experiences as a good thing, and expressing gratitude can increase the individual's awareness of the goodness (Watkins, 2003).

Table 1

Test results of independent sample T-Test and descriptive statistics

Measurement	t	Sig.	Mean Posttest KE	Mean Posttest KK
Equal variances assumed	19.625	0.000	76.60	23.50

Table 2

Test results paired sample T-Test and descriptive statistics

Measurement	t	Sig.	Mean Pretest KE	Mean Posttest KE
Subjective well-being pretest KE and posttest KE	-10.218	0.000	51.10	76.60

The function of gratitude makes individuals more accepting of the conditions that occur, so they do not compare them with other people's conditions which can make them stressed. Moreover, for individuals who work, as research conducted by Sahrah and Yuniasanti (2020) on paramedics, it was found that work stress can affect subjective well-being. So the way of thinking to respond to the conditions around it is important to pay attention to.

Based on the research data described above, it can be concluded that Gratitude Training positively affects Subjective Well-Being in millennial employees. It is because millennial employees psychologically use their roles to think positively, behave positively in dealing with problems, and appreciate the kindness of co-workers in the team.

Gratitude Training in this study was proven to improve Subjective Well-Being in millennial employees. The behavior of millennial employees showed after attending gratitude training, namely that millennial employees can implement and implement a gratitude strategy in the work environment of the company's organization. Millennial employees are becoming more capable of appreciating

what is happening and becoming more motivated to complete work responsibly.

### Discussion

Researchers found other studies that used interventions to improve subjective well-being, the majority applied to individuals who had the disease. The hope is that individuals who have the disease can be more enthusiastic and hope to recover. However, research that discusses subjective well-being in working individuals is still rarely done.

The majority of research conducted on working individuals (employees) focuses more on the productivity, performance, and profit of the organization. However, it is still physically visible for visible results. Even though it is not only physical, that is needed to contribute, and there are also psychological aspects that can affect daily behavior in the process when working in the office.

The implementation of gratitude training carried out in groups can make each participant share the results of the simulation practice during the training. The worksheets given refer to events or events experienced by each of these participants. Things that are actually experienced in everyday life make the

process of accepting, acknowledging, and returning kindness more deeply embedded because the events that are written and conveyed are truly embedded in the participants' memory. Group activities by telling this story can make participants feel open to the current conditions, things to be grateful for, and the expectations of each.

The gratitude training intervention process carried out in each session made the participants find insights about what things should be accepted, grateful for, and good things that need to be returned to others. This process can help participants deal with and respond to all events that occur in everyday life, both good and bad events.

The learning results obtained during the training can also be applied in the future, especially when working. For example, uncertain working conditions, co-workers, and work environment can lead to the emergence of negative affect. At that time, the individual can apply the gratitude process that has been obtained through training so that the reactions raised by the individual can be a positive effect that will not interfere with processes and routines at work.

Subjects who have a good positive way of thinking tend to recognize the goodness and blessings of God that exist in everyday life. The subject can realize other conditions under the conditions experienced so that the subject can realize the source of pleasure from God worthy of gratitude. The awareness experienced by this subject can create enthusiasm to be able to delimit targets in life, including in work and organizations. The organization's success within the company will be the goal of an

employee in setting the goals to be achieved.

The basis for thinking gratitude training is the role of popular psychology, namely positive psychology. According to Seligman (2013), positive psychology has a goal for individual well-being by building positive emotions and focusing on individual strengths. Then according to Emmons and McCullough (in Diener, 2009), gratitude is a form of positive psychological intervention that can increase subjective well-being. Through cognitive and affective work, positive psychology will form a concept in a person to view events that have been experienced, namely events that are not following expectations from the positive side so that it will not make an individual dissatisfied and disappointed when experiencing events or events that are not fun in life.

In addition, someone who applies gratitude in their daily life will appreciate whatever they get and have because they think everything is goodness and a blessing given by God, including millennial employees who can work in a company, is also a blessing.

### **Benefits and Suggestions**

This research is expected to provide information for organizations to implement gratitude training as a reference for soft skills training and to improve the subjective well-being of millennial employees in the workplace. The limitation of this study was that changes that occur in the organization should be viewed from various fields and perspectives, so gratitude training was not the only intervention to improve the subjective well-being of millennial employees. For further researchers interested in subjective

well-being, this research is expected to be used as a basis for involving the study's limitations for better future research

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