

The Meaning of Gratitude in Civil Servants

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ABSTRAK

Syukur mengacu pada emosi subjektif berupa rasa kagum, penghargaan, dan pengakuan atas segala sesuatu yang telah diperoleh. Bentuk rasa syukur juga terdapat pada kepuasan seseorang dalam bekerja dan kepuasan kerja juga merupakan salah satu indikator sikap kerja yang mengacu pada pandangan dan perasaan karyawan secara keseluruhan terhadap lingkungan kerja dan kondisi kerjanya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis makna rasa syukur pada PNS dan bagaimana sikap tersebut dapat mempengaruhi kepuasan kerja PNS pada Badan Kepegawaian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia Kabupaten Sanggau. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif fenomenologis, yaitu pendekatan yang berfokus pada pengalaman dan persepsi individu terhadap fenomena yang diteliti. Pengumpulan data pada penelitian ini menggunakan 3 metode pengumpulan data yaitu observasi langsung, wawancara, dokumentasi lapangan. Sedangkan proses analisis data dalam penelitian kualitatif ini terdiri dari tiga tahap, yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Berdasarkan penelitian disimpulkan bahwa rasa syukur sangat mempengaruhi PNS dalam bekerja dan juga mempengaruhi tingkat kepuasan kerja. Rasa syukur tidak hanya sekedar perasaan tetapi juga merupakan sikap, sifat moral, kebiasaan, sifat, dan kepribadian, hal itu dapat mempengaruhi respon seseorang terhadap suatu keadaan.

ABSTRACT

Gratitude refers to the subjective emotions of awe, appreciation, and recognition for everything that has been obtained. Forms of gratitude can also be found in one's satisfaction at work and job satisfaction is also an indicator of work attitude, which refers to employees' overall views and feelings about their work environment and working conditions. The purpose of this study is to analyze the meaning of gratitude in civil servants and how this attitude can affect the job satisfaction of civil servants at the Civil Service Agency and Human Resources Development of Sanggau Regency. This research uses a phenomenological qualitative research method, which is an approach that focuses on individual experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon under study. Data collection in this study used 3 data collection methods, namely direct observation, interviews, field documentation. While the data analysis process in this qualitative research consists of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Based on the research, it is concluded that gratitude greatly influences civil servants at work and also affects the level of job satisfaction. Gratitude is not only a feeling but also an attitude, moral trait, habit, nature, and personality, it can affect a person's response to a situation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gratitude is a powerful emotion that can have a huge impact on life, the Latin term for gratitude is gratia, which means kindness, gentleness, and thanks, the English word gratitude means gratitude. The word "gratia," which comes from Latin, has connotations of generosity, kindness, and giving. It also refers to the beauty of receiving, although it can also mean getting something for no reason at all (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Prabowo, 2017).

Conceptually, there are two levels of gratitude: state and trait. As a state, gratitude refers to the subjective emotions of awe, appreciation, and acknowledgment for everything that has been gained. As a trait, gratitude is defined as a person's tendency to experience gratitude in life, this tendency is not always present, but those who have this tendency will tend to be appreciative in certain situations. Gratitude is a personal trait that encourages optimistic thinking and a more optimistic outlook on life (Kaufman, 2015;

Wood, 2009). Gratitude is also one of the traits of positive psychology, gratitude is the most effective predictor of individual well-being. In recent years, gratitude is associated with a variety of positive social-psychological adaptations such as a sense of belonging, quality of life, and life satisfaction, and gratitude is negatively associated with stress, depression, and self-harm (Fabio et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2022).

While gratitude is generally considered important for human relationships and well-being, it also uniquely shapes work attitudes (Cortini et al., 2019; Lanham et al., 2012). Employees with higher levels of gratitude tend to focus on positive events or positive aspects of workplace events, and employees also tend to adopt positive strategies to overcome workplace challenges (Chen et al., 2023; Fehr et al., 2016). Such a positive work attitude can buffer negative feelings at work, and help employees deal with risks and challenges in a positive way, which is important for work. Based on preliminary interviews conducted by the author with the Personnel Analyst as the Head of the Performance Assessment and Evaluation Team of the Sanggau Regency Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency, so far many civil servants have not been disciplined at work, such as arriving late, leaving early from a predetermined time, and even missing work without reason. According to data from the Sanggau Regency Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency, in 2022 there were 6 civil servants in Sanggau Regency who were subject to disciplinary punishment. Before these civil servants were sentenced to disciplinary punishment, they were first tried by the Sanggau district disciplinary team. Based on the results of the hearing, it is known that the reason for their indiscipline is the civil servants' dissatisfaction with the workload, income received, and incompatibility with superiors or leaders in the workplace. Discipline is a key component of an organization's operations as it enables better work performance and the development of employee quality. Discipline is the level of obedience and compliance with applicable regulations (Lie et al., 2019; Rangkuti et al., 2022; Vennila, 2018).

Civil servants (PNS) are an occupational group that has very important duties and responsibilities in government and public services. Civil servants also have high workloads and pressures, so gratitude can be a very important attitude in helping them deal with these pressures. According to research conducted by previous study gratitude in employees can help them cope with stress and pressure in their work (Fabio et al., 2017). This is because gratitude can help them to stay focused on the positive things in life and appreciate every blessing received, even in difficult situations. However, some studies also show that gratitude in civil servants is not always easy to do, especially when they are faced with high work demands and a less conducive work environment. Research conducted by other study found that many civil servant teachers have difficulty expressing gratitude because they feel underappreciated and burdened with heavy tasks (Ayudahlya, 2019).

The concept of gratitude proposed there are several important components (Watkins, 2003). First, there is the Sense of Appreciation which involves how individuals view themselves and their social interactions with others. It consists of three dimensions, namely self-esteem, social appraisal, and achievement. Self-esteem includes an individual's belief in their abilities and self-worth (Bhaskar et al., 2014; Odeleye & Santiago, 2019). Social appraisal refers to the appreciation and recognition received from others. Meanwhile, achievement reflects an appreciation for the achievements that individuals have made (Doley, 2023; Webb-Williams, 2018). This Sense of Appreciation has a significant influence on psychological well-being and individual success in various aspects of life, including mental health, happiness, motivation, and academic and career achievement. The next component is the Sense of Abundance, which reflects a positive attitude toward life and a lack of deprivation. When a person does not feel deprived, they tend to feel happy and satisfied with the life they have. The last is the expression of gratitude, which involves positive actions to show feelings of appreciation (Chan, 2011; Witvliet et al., 2019). This includes good intentions and actions that match the feelings of appreciation and good intentions. Grateful people also have an awareness of the importance of expressing gratitude as part of their attitude.

A form of gratitude can also be found in one's satisfaction at work and job satisfaction is also an indicator of work attitude, which refers to employees' overall views and feelings about their work environment and working conditions, and job satisfaction is related to burnout, and is a predictor of turnover intention (Lai, 2019; Wood, 2009). As job satisfaction has been shown to provide benefits to individuals, businesses, and society as a whole, it is an interesting and important topic to study. Research into the factors that influence employee job satisfaction helps people make efforts to increase their happiness at work (Khattak et al., 2011; Saepudin & Djati, 2019). Through changes in employee attitudes and behaviors, industries conduct research into employee job satisfaction to increase production and lower costs. Of course, society will benefit from industries operating to their full potential and from the increased value of people working for businesses and organizations (Azhari & Wicaksono, 2017; Octaviannand et al., 2017; Wahyunianti Dahri & Aqil, 2018). The purpose of this study is to analyze the meaning of gratitude in civil servants and how this attitude can affect the job satisfaction of civil servants at the Sanggau Regency Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency.

2. METHOD

This research uses a phenomenological qualitative research method, which is an approach that focuses on individual experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon under study (Sugiyono, 2019). The focus of this research is to understand the meaning of gratitude in civil servants, and how civil servants interpret, and practice gratitude at work. This research was conducted on April 12 - June 6, 2023, at Sanggau Regency Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency. Data collection in this study used 3 data collection methods, namely direct observation, interviews with key informants, interviews with civil servants with a range of position classes 5-14 with purposive sampling, field documentation, and secondary data collection in the form of profile documents, vision and mission, RPJMD, Strategic Plan and Work Plan of the Sanggau Regency Human Resources Staffing and Development Agency. The identity of the participants in the study can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Identity of the subject

Name	Age	Position Class
HHP	52	14
YKP	38	11
DMK	30	9
N	39	6
AJR	39	5

While the data analysis process in this qualitative research consists of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data was obtained from simplified interviews using verbatim techniques and formed into narratives. Furthermore, the data in narrative form is checked for data validity using triangulation techniques. The instruments used in data collection were interview questions. The instrument design can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Instrument layout

No.	Aspects	Indicator
1	Sense of Appreciation	1. What does gratitude mean to you?
		2. Have you noticed any changes in your relationship with colleagues after you started applying gratitude in your life?
		3. How does gratitude affect your personal life?
2	Sense of Abundance	1. What makes it easier for you to feel grateful?
		2. How do you implement gratitude in your work as a civil servant?
		3. What efforts do you make to increase your sense of community?
3	Expressions of gratitude	1. How does gratitude affect your work?
		2. Do you always give thanks every day?

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Job satisfaction and gratitude are significantly related to the nature and performance of a person at work. Based on research that has been conducted on employees at the Sanggau Regency Human Resources Staffing and Development Agency, it was found that gratitude affects employee performance. There are 3 aspects measured in this study and 5 subjects to see the meaning of gratitude in civil servants (tables 3-7).

The findings showed that five subjects seemed to agree that that gratitude is influenced by various external factors such as income, family support, and health conditions. Additionally, personal practices and attitudes, such as comparing oneself with others, relying on spiritual beliefs, recognizing achievements, and cultivating a positive outlook, play a significant role in fostering and maintaining gratitude. Acceptance of situations, avoidance of negativity, and a willingness to adapt one's mindset also emerge as key components in sustaining a grateful outlook. The result of five subject is show in Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7.

Table 3. The meaning of gratitude of civil servants by subject 1

Aspects	Subject 1 (Position Class 5)
Sense of Appreciation	(1) Income, (2) ability to provide regular support to the family, (3) never any obstacles in being grateful
Sense of Abundance	(1) enjoying work, (2) thanking God
Expressions of gratitude	(1) providing sustenance to others, (2) gratitude greatly affects work

Table 4. The meaning of gratitude of civil servants by Subject 2

Aspects	Subject 2 (position class 9)
Sense of Appreciation	(1) Health conditions, (2) always praying and thanking God, (3) always comparing yourself with people who have not worked to foster gratitude.
Sense of Abundance	(1) always feel enough, (2) always see the positive side of every that happens
Expressions of Gratitude	(1) gratitude greatly affects work

Table 5. The meaning of gratitude of civil servants by Subject 3

Aspects	Subject 3 (position class 14)
Sense of Appreciation	(1) always being grateful to people around, (2) career achievements
Sense of Abundance	(1) always being grateful to people around, (2) career achievements
Expressions of Gratitude	(1) always feeling enough and not comparing oneself with others, (2) giving support to people in need, (3) gratitude greatly influences work

Table 6. The meaning of gratitude of civil servants by Subject 4

Aspects	Subject 4 (position class 11)
Sense of Appreciation	(1) always be grateful, (2) always motivate yourself and be enthusiastic at work, (3) make failure a spirit
Sense of Abundance	(1) always pray and do good, (2) limit yourself from negative environments, (3) always see the positive side in every work challenge
Expressions of Gratitude	(1) doing good with others, (2) gratitude greatly influences work to be more idealistic

Table 7. The meaning of gratitude of civil servants by Subject 5

Aspects	Subject 5 (position class 6)
Sense of Appreciation	(1) always accept the situation, (2) avoid negative thoughts, (3) change mindset
Sense of Abundance	(1) always comparing oneself with those below, (2) developing oneself, (3) sharing with others
Expressions of Gratitude	(1) gratitude greatly affects work and appreciates coworkers more.

Base on the result of table above the data from the five subjects indicated the holistic nature of the sense of abundance, which encompasses various aspects of life, including work satisfaction, personal practices, and self-reflection. Enjoying work and feeling content in various life circumstances contribute to a feeling of abundance. Spiritual practices, such as gratitude, prayer, and doing good deeds, are linked with cultivating an attitude of abundance. Embracing positivity and personal development, while avoiding

negativity, play a role in nurturing this sense. The theme of comparison underscores the importance of self-awareness, appreciation of personal achievements, and recognizing opportunities for growth. Additionally, sharing with others reflects a desire to spread abundance and positivity. Furthermore, Respondents vividly express how gratitude significantly affects their professional realms, injecting a sense of purpose and enthusiasm into their endeavors. This impact extends beyond mere job satisfaction, transcending into the realm of work quality and dedication. A central thread underscores the value of contentment and benevolence. Participants consistently articulate a sense of sufficiency, steering clear of the trap of comparisons with peers. This sense of fulfillment intertwines with a wider perspective of abundance, propelling participants to generously provide sustenance and support to those in need. In these gestures of kindness, gratitude truly comes alive. Furthermore, the expressions of gratitude seamlessly mesh with interpersonal dynamics. Participants openly voice their heightened appreciation for coworkers, crediting this newfound awareness to their cultivation of gratitude. This aspect emphasizes how gratitude fosters a harmonious work environment and nurtures robust team relationships.

Discussion

Subject 1 explained that for the appreciation aspect, subject 1 is included in the achievement dimension because based on the results of this interview, it refers to the appreciation obtained by individuals as a result of the achievements achieved in the form of income and achievements in the form of being able to provide for their families permanently. This Sense of Appreciation aspect affects psychological well-being and individual success, including at work. In the aspect of the sense of abundance, the subject feels that he enjoys work and there is a sense of lack, especially in terms of work, and thanking God is a form of expression of satisfaction with achievements at work. The last aspect is the expression of gratitude, subject 1 mentioned that a good act of gratitude is shown by sharing happiness with others, in this case in the form of giving a little of the sustenance obtained to people in need. Gratitude based on subject 1 mentioned that it greatly affects the work of civil servants because this gratitude affects a person's emotions, prosociality, and religiosity (McCullough & Emmons, 2002; Rachmadi et al., 2019). This is also in line with one of the studies which states that gratitude helps to focus on the positive things in life and appreciate whatever is obtained (Fabio et al., 2017).

Subject 2 explained that for the sense of appreciation aspect, subject 2 is included in the self-esteem dimension because based on the results of this interview, it refers to the way individuals value themselves, which in this case is the condition of their health. This aspect of a Sense of Appreciation affects psychological well-being and success at work. In the aspect of sense of abundance, the subject always feels enough for what is achieved and always sees the positive side of what happens and this is a form of expression of subject 2's satisfaction at work. The last aspect is the expression of gratitude, subject 1 mentioned that a good act of gratitude is shown by sharing happiness with others, in this case in the form of giving a little of the sustenance obtained to people in need. Gratitude based on subject 2 mentioned that it greatly affects his work as a civil servant, this gratitude affects a person's emotions, prosociality, and religiosity (McCullough & Emmons, 2002; Rachmadi et al., 2019). This is also in line with one study which states that forms of expression of gratitude in the workplace through actions such as saying "thank you" consistently, reflecting on events, and carrying out all tasks sincerely (Lambert, 2010).

Subject 3 explained that for the appreciation aspect, subject 3 is included in the achievement dimension because based on the results of the interview with subject 3, this refers to the appreciation received by the individual for what he has achieved, this refers to subject 3's answer, namely achievement towards career and also always thanking those around him. In the aspect of a sense of abundance, the subject feels satisfied with what has been achieved and forms other positive traits in the form of not discriminating someone against his level of position, and this form of gratitude satisfaction is also shown by always seeing the positive side of every incident at work. The last aspect is the expression of gratitude, subject 3 mentioned that one of the expressions of gratitude is by encouraging colleagues in need. Gratitude based on the answer of subject 3 mentioned that it greatly affects his work as a civil servant and the achievements he has achieved, this gratitude affects one's emotions, prosociality, and religiosity (McCullough & Emmons, 2002; Rachmadi et al., 2019). This is also in line with one of the studies which state that the practice of gratitude affects health, and social relations, and improves performance and individual performance including one's achievements at work (Fabio et al., 2017).

Subject 4 explained that for the appreciation aspect, subject 4 is included in the self-esteem dimension because based on the results of the interview with subject 4, it refers to the way the subject views and appreciates himself, such as always motivating himself in the spirit of work, always being grateful, and making failure an encouragement. This Sense of Appreciation aspect affects psychological well-being and success at work. In the aspect of a sense of abundance, the subject feels satisfied with what has been achieved by always praying and doing good, besides that subject 4 also feels that after getting satisfaction,

he must protect himself from negative environments to maintain positive energy in his environment. The last aspect is the expression of gratitude, subject 4 mentioned that one of the expressions of gratitude is always doing good to others. While subject 4 mentioned that gratitude greatly affects his work as an employee, this gratitude affects a person's emotions, prosociality, and religiosity (McCullough & Emmons, 2002; Rachmadi et al., 2019). According to one study on Gratitude at Work Works! A Mix-Method Study on Different Dimensions of Gratitude, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance (Cortini et al., 2019).

Subject 5 explained that for the appreciation aspect, subject 5 is included in the self-esteem dimension because based on the results of the interview with subject 5, it refers to the way the subject thinks to always accept every situation and change his mindset by avoiding negative thoughts that affect his work. This Sense of Appreciation aspect affects psychological well-being and success at work. In the sense of abundance aspect, the subject feels satisfied with what has been achieved by comparing themselves with others who are less fortunate and the impact of this satisfaction by continuing to develop themselves and share with others. The last aspect is the expression of gratitude, subject 5 mentioned that one of his expressions of gratitude is to be more respectful of his coworkers. Subject 5 said that gratitude greatly affects his work as an employee, this gratitude will affect one's emotions, prosociality, and religiosity (Caragol et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2023). In addition, the comparison between someone grateful and not grateful is seen in how they are more empathetic, have a helpful attitude, and provide support to others (Fehr et al., 2016).

Based on the results of the analysis of 5 subjects who are civil servants, it was found that the level of position class does not affect gratitude for each employee, both with low to high levels of position found that gratitude greatly affects employee performance at work. Previous study also suggested that gratitude is not only a feeling, but also an attitude, moral trait, habit, personality trait, and affects a person towards a situation (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Gratitude can provide happiness, and comfort, and increase motivation. Several studies found also reveal that gratitude has a positive relationship with job satisfaction and social support and job adjustment can mediate the relationship (Chan, 2011; Fauziyyah & Luzvinda, 2017; Madrigal, 2020).

The analysis's findings as a whole highlight the significance of thankfulness in the workplace, where it can influence worker performance and possibly have a favorable effect on job satisfaction, social support, and work adjustment. The conclusions have significant ramifications for staff development and human resource management in government organizations or institutions. The limitation of this study is that this research was conducted using a limited sample, which only involved five civil servant subjects. This may limit the generalization of the research findings to the overall population of civil servants. Research involving a larger sample can provide a more comprehensive picture of gratitude and employee performance. This study also suggests that gratitude can help civil servants cope with stress and job dissatisfaction. Implementing strategies or interventions that cultivate gratitude, such as achievement recognition practices, reward programs, and building social support in the workplace, can help reduce stress levels and increase job satisfaction.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research, it is concluded that gratitude greatly affects civil servants at work as well as affecting the level of job satisfaction. Gratitude is not only a feeling but also an attitude, moral trait, habit, nature, and personality, it can affect a person's response to a situation. Gratitude can provide happiness, and comfort, and increase one's motivation, gratitude is also a positive recognition of the benefits received or the added value provided by others. Some of the meanings of gratitude that arise include gratitude for the opportunity to provide services to the community, gratitude for the support of coworkers, and gratitude for the ability to make ends meet through work. In addition, the results also show that these meanings of gratitude can help civil servants to cope with stress and dissatisfaction at work, as well as strengthen social relationships in the work environment.

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