

## Investigating the Effect of Positive Thinking Training on the Job Satisfaction of Shatel Company Employees

### Abstract

The present study investigated the effect of positive thinking training on the job satisfaction of Isfahan Shatel Company employees. The present study method is quasi-experimental with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group and an experimental group. The statistical population of this study included the employees of Isfahan Shatel Company. Accordingly, 30 employees of the daytime shift sales unit were selected using a purposeful sampling method. The inclusion criteria included being in an age range of 22 to 38 years and having a bachelor's degree or higher, not suffering from physical diseases (such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, etc.), and having a willingness to cooperate. Then, they were randomly divided into two experimental (15 people) and control (15 people) groups. Subjects participated in 9 sessions of 60 minutes (twice a week) in positive thinking training sessions. However, subjects in the control group did not receive any pharmacological or psychological treatment during this period. One week after completing the training session, both groups underwent post-tests and follow-ups simultaneously and separately. SPSS software and analysis of covariance were used to analyze the data. The results of the analysis showed that positive thinking training significantly increased the subject's job satisfaction ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Keywords:** *Positive thinking, Job satisfaction, Mental happiness, Isfahan Shatel Company*

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### Introduction

Human resources, especially employees who are in direct contact with customers, play a more significant role in service organizations in providing high-quality service compared to manufacturing companies since employees interact with customers to provide services. The quality of this interaction distinguishes superior organizations from other organizations (Najdi, 2015). An unfavorable working life caused by inadequate work results in an unbalanced psychological and social condition among the organization's employees. This issue leads to neglecting the goals of the organization, reducing productivity, and increasing absenteeism, and turnover. It also results in the alienation of the labor force in the organization. As a destructive factor, it will destroy the organization if a solution is not considered for it. Paying attention to the adaptability of work with human resources in organizations and improving the quality of work life will bring growth and development to the organization (Ahmadinejad, 2012). An organization will more likely achieve its goals and its overall performance will increase if it creates feelings of loyalty and commitment in the majority of its employees. Job satisfaction is among the variables related to organizational commitment (Najdi, 2015).

Job satisfaction refers to a feeling of satisfaction that an individual gets from his or her work and thus he or she finds encouragement and dependence on his or her job. It is a pleasant, emotional, and positive state resulting from job evaluation or job experiences. High job satisfaction indicates that the organization is managed well and is the result of effective behavioral management. Job satisfaction is a part of life satisfaction. The nature surrounding the human work

environment affects human feelings at work. Accordingly, since a job is a major part of life, job satisfaction affects the overall human satisfaction with life. Darvish (2007) examined the factors affecting the job satisfaction of employees and concluded that job satisfaction is primarily a cognitive process and it originates from factors such as individual factors and individual personalities of employees, factors related to working conditions, and organization policies.

Janosz et al. (1987) found that people who experience positive emotions exhibit markedly altered, flexible, and creative thought patterns. He showed that positive affect increases one's desire for diversity and creates multiple behavioral options for him or her. He showed that positive affect causes a flexible and broad cognitive organization and provides the ability to integrate broad issues for the person. He also found that when people are calm and happy, their thinking expands and they become more creative, and their imagination expands. Smith and Troth (1975) showed that teaching positive thinking is effective in motivating progress (Farahmandian, 2018). Staw and Ross (1985) investigated job satisfaction in people who had changed their jobs and employers. They proved that job satisfaction was relatively stable in people who had changed their jobs. They concluded that job satisfaction is a part of personality and some people like their jobs and others do not. Some [researchers](#) proved that job satisfaction increases when the job is adaptable to the personality, and up to 30% of job satisfaction is a genetic trait, and the characteristics that affect job satisfaction are the control center, negative attitude, and job adaptability with personality (Poursoltani, 2012).

Studies suggest that the organizational behavior of people is strongly affected by the individual's job satisfaction and the

atmosphere in his or her family. Positive thinking is paying attention to the positive aspects of people. It emphasizes people's strengths. Job adaptability is created in employees when they have more healthy behavior and job success by having positive thoughts [about](#) the workplace. Positive psychology is one of the newest branches of psychology that focuses on human success. However, many branches of psychology focus on abnormal behaviors. Instead of paying attention to human inabilities and weaknesses, this branch focuses on abilities such as living happily, enjoying, problem-solving, and optimism (Kaviani and Panahi, 2014). Positive psychology was conceptualized to improve and develop people's abilities and develop resilience, increase the quality of life, and create a shield against the relapse of symptoms. The existing studies in the field of interventions based on positive psychology indicate the effect of these interventions on increasing the level of life satisfaction in people. These interventions [help](#) people to learn skills that improve their mood and reorganize their personality, thus increasing their level of life satisfaction (Cohn and Fredrickson, 2010).

Teaching positive thinking is the beginning of a change in the type of psychology. It ranges from being preoccupied with the worst things in life to dealing with positive situations (Seligman and Csikszentmihaly, 2000). Positive thinking is the scientific study of optimal and desirable human functions. They assisted the people in obtaining more knowledge about the factors that could help both individually and as a group, also to grow and mature and use them better. They plan for goals and act rationally, that is, in a way that stimulates certain futurism and future-thinking in the members of society and forces them to make extra efforts to achieve higher goals. will take. It will bring many positive results. Although positive thinking starts from the person its manifestation is seen in him or her, the result is seen in his or her collective experience formed in the process of social interaction. An example of this experience is seen in the society and the culture governing it. Flexible and dynamic societies are more ready for positive thinking in comparison to rigid and static and closed societies since closed societies and cultures have more criminal-based characteristics, most of which create a kind of pessimism. (Alipour, 2008).

Cheraghian (2015) examined the effectiveness of positive thinking training in increasing the sense of belonging to school and relationships with others among high school students in Tehran. He found that positive thinking training significantly increases the sense of belonging to the school. Using the positive thinking method in psychotherapy by Khodayari Fard (2000) showed that the intervention based on strengthening personal positive perceptions increased positive self-descriptions and self-confidence of the clients, reduced family incompatibilities, and reduced the clients' depression.

Ebrahimi, Arjamandania, and Afrooz (2017) examined the effectiveness of an [educational](#) program based on positive psychology in increasing the job satisfaction of teachers in special schools. They found that positive psychology can improve emotions, and increase positive behaviors and cognitions in people. They also found that this training is useful in the job satisfaction of teachers of exceptional schools. Jafari Khorram (2014) concluded that teaching positive thinking skills as part of interventions based on positive psychology can significantly increase the level of job satisfaction of employees. Sohrabi and Javanbakhsh (2009) indicated that teaching positive thinking skills was effective in changing the locus of control. Shafiabadi (2005) evaluated the relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health of university employees. The results showed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health of employees and its dimensions, physical symptoms, anxiety, social function disorder, and depression. Given what was stated above, the present study investigates the effect of positive thinking training on the job satisfaction of employees of Shatel Company.

### **Methodology**

The present study was applied research in terms of method. The present study was quasi-experimental with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group. The independent variable of the study was positive thinking training and the dependent variables were job adaptation and job satisfaction. The statistical population of this study included employees of Isfahan Shatel Company working in the fall of 2018. To select the sample, the employees who were working daytime shifts were selected by the management team of the company. Since a sample size of at least 15 people in each group is suitable for interventional studies (Delavar, 2016), 30 people were selected as the sample of the study by the purposeful sampling method and randomly assigned to two experimental (15 people) and control (15 people) groups.

The inclusion criteria of the study included the age range of at least 22 to 38 years, having a bachelor's degree or higher, not suffering from physical diseases (such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, etc.) and chronic psychological disorders (such as major depression, personality disorders, etc.) and having a willingness to cooperate. The exclusion criteria if the study included suffering from physical diseases (such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, etc.) and chronic psychological disorders (such as major depression, personality disorders. etc.), failure to answer the questions properly, and not participating in the training sessions for the subjects of the experimental group.

### **Research tool**

## Standard job satisfaction

## Educational package

The first session: Familiarity with people, determining the frameworks and rules of the group, general statement about the training goals
The second session: Familiarity with the meaning and concept of positive thinking through the definition of basic principles, explanation, and related examples
The third session: writing positive points in the workplace and life, and strengths in communication with others
The fourth session: learning to be positive, writing the titles of experiences and positive memories related to the workplace
The fifth session: Institutionalizing being positive, adapting to insolvable problems
The sixth session: Living positively, establishing good relationships with others
The seventh session: mind control in line with thinking positively
The eighth session: Living positively and purposefully, establishing good relationships with others
The ninth session: Summing up and reaching the primary positive points

Moghimi's (2013) standard job satisfaction test was used in this study. It included 30 questions that measure job satisfaction in both internal and external dimensions. This questionnaire was designed based on the theory of human relations. Its scores are in a range between 30 and 195. A higher score indicates more job satisfaction. In Moghimi's study (2011), the reliability of the questionnaire based on Cronbach's alpha test was obtained at 0.86. The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by Moghimi and Ramazani. A score between 30 and 50: This score indicates very low job satisfaction. A score between 51 and 84: This score indicates low job satisfaction and shows that the job may not be suitable for the person. It indicates that the person is not happy with jobs in general. A score between 85 and 144: Indicates moderate job satisfaction. Most people find a job that suits their mood even though they may feel they are not getting paid enough and may have a better position in another job. A score between 145 and 175: Indicates high job satisfaction. It shows that the job is significant for the subject and he or she enjoys working at this job. In other words, the subject gets most of his or her identity from his or her job. A score of more than 175 indicates abnormal job satisfaction. This score is a cause for concern and it seems that job has overshadowed all aspects of the subject's life and has taken them under its control. The subject should reflect for a moment and ask the following questions. Has his or her job become so significant for him or her? Has he or she sacrificed everything? If the subject was not so immersed in his or her job, wouldn't it be possible to experience real satisfaction?

In this study, the training package was based on Quilliam's optimism package, taken from the [book](#) entitled "Positive Thinking and Applied Positivism" written by Susan Quilliam, [translated](#) by Barati and Sadeghi (2011). It was implemented in 9 sessions of 60 minutes in the form of regular discussions and organized assignments, including writing positive points in the workplace and the strengths in communication. It helps employees to make positive changes in their satisfaction. The summary of its sessions is as follows.

Table 1: Positive thinking (optimism) training package

The first session: Familiarity with people, determining the frameworks and rules of the group, general statement about the training goals

SPSS-24 software was used for data analysis.

## Results

The results showed that in the positive thinking training group, 10 (66.6%) employees had bachelor's degrees and 5 (33.3) had master's degrees. Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test scores of job satisfaction for two experimental and control groups.

Table 2: Descriptive results of job adaptability and job satisfaction separately for two experimental and control groups

Scale	Stage	Experimental		Control	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Job satisfaction	Pretest	94.80	9.87	98.60	6.51
	Posttest	109.33	7.47	100.06	9.21

Based on Table 2, the pre-test mean of job satisfaction for the experimental group was 94.80 and the post-test mean was 109.33.

Table 3: Shapiro-Wilk's test to examine the normality of the pre-test-post-test scales

sig	Value	Test type	Scales
0.14	0.911	Pretest	Job satisfaction
0.29	0.935	posttest	

Table 3 showed that P values in the Shapiro-Wilk test are greater than 0.05. Based on the results, the data distribution is consistent with the normal distribution and the second hypothesis of the analysis of covariance analysis has been fulfilled.

Table 4: Levene's test to examine the homogeneity of variance of covariate and dependent groups

sig	df 2	df 1	F	Homogeneity of the covariate and dependent groups of scales

Table 6: Analysis of covariance of positive thinking training on increasing job satisfaction

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F value	sig	Eta coefficient	Test power
Job satisfaction	1301.32	1	1301.32	52.52	0.01	0.66	1.00
Group	1026.59	1	1026.59	41.43	0.01	0.60	1.00
Error	668.94	28	24.77				

Based on Table 6 and the values obtained for the F-statistic for the group resource which is significant at the level of  $P < 0.01$ , it can be stated that positive thinking training is effective in increasing job satisfaction and can improve job satisfaction of employees. Based on the Eta coefficient, it can be stated that 60% of the changes in job satisfaction of employees were due to the independent variable of positive thinking training. It also confirms the data volume adequacy test. Based on the obtained results, the effect of positive thinking training on increasing job satisfaction of employees was confirmed.

## Conclusion

The study results indicate that positive thinking training is effective in increasing the job satisfaction of employees since the significance level is much smaller than 0.05 ( $P < 0.0005$ ). In other words, there is a significant difference between the control and the experimental groups regarding the effect of the positive thinking training course on the dependent variable (job satisfaction). The difference between the scores of the two control and experimental groups shows that 60% of the changes in job satisfaction of employees were due to the independent variable of positive thinking training. Past studies

0.21	28	1	1.66	Job satisfaction
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As shown in Table 4, based on the significance level of the scales, none of them is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis of Levene's test on the homogeneity of covariate and dependent groups was confirmed, and all these pairs of groups are homogenous.

Table 5: Examining the regression slope of the studied scales

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F value	sig
Job satisfaction	118.86	2	59.43	2.41	0.11

Based on Table 5 and the non-significance of the model of the studied scales, it can be stated that the null hypothesis of the inequality of the regression slope was not confirmed. Thus, the equality of the regression slopes of the studied scale is confirmed.

Analysis of covariance was used to investigate positive thinking training on increasing job satisfaction of employees. Table 6 presents the results of the analysis of covariance analysis.

have confirmed the effectiveness of positive thinking training in increasing the job satisfaction of exceptional school teachers (Ebrahimi, Arjamandnia, and Afrooz, 2017) and increasing the level of job satisfaction of employees by teaching positive thinking skills (Jaafari Khorram, 2014). The present study results are in line with the results of the mentioned studies. Chan (2010) reported that people with positive thinking do not only enjoy both the outcome of achieving the goal and the process.

In addition, this position is associated with a high desire for progress, a sense of satisfaction, positive emotions evoked by effort, and anticipation of success in achievement-related endeavors. In contrast, the position of low need for progress is associated with defensive feelings and fear of failure due to the prediction of poor performance (Reeder, 2010). Rodriguez (2006, quoted by Rayat Ebrahimabadi et al., 2015) revealed a relationship between explanation style, life satisfaction, and happiness. In this regard, people who have a positive explanation style generally have more happiness and satisfaction with life. Additionally, Arianejad (2015) proved that positive psychological capital is an effective predictor in

increasing employee job satisfaction using intervention methods.

Human resources management involves taking thoughtful and coordinated measures in the field of providing, maintaining, improving, and using effective human resources. In this type of management, human resources are considered the most effective factor of organizations, and its significant goal is the efficiency of people. Motivational programs aim at creating satisfaction in employees, increasing work morale, increasing efficiency, reducing costs, better and more effective maintenance of material facilities, and lowering expectations of managers and decision-makers of organizations are particularly attractive in this regard. Organizations have increasingly found out that employees who keep a balance in their lifestyles are more satisfied in the work environment. Hence, they will have more productivity and less absenteeism. Employee satisfaction is one of the long-term goals of any organization for its employees (Sadeghian, 2011).

An association exists between job satisfaction and productivity. Studies have validated that satisfied employees have better physical and mental health, while dissatisfied people show more turnout. Job satisfaction is a phenomenon that goes beyond the boundaries of the organization and affects the private life of the person outside the organization (society) (Robbins, 1943; quoted by Parsaeian and Arabi). Sometimes a job causes so much joy and happiness that overshadows the daily salary and working hours. In contrast, in some jobs, the workload is so high that a person decides to [leave](#) it. Positive thinking is a way to turn attention from unpleasant issues toward pleasant ones. Accordingly, the affairs and issues that can be joyful enter the mental space of a person and thus the severity of his or her pain and suffering decreases. A positive mind predicts happiness, pleasure, health, and the positive results of any situation or work. Positive thinking makes a person actively involved in his or her destiny and thus feel happy (Seligman and Csikszentmihaly, 2000). In contrast, negative thoughts and attitudes create negative feelings and behaviors. When the mind thinks negatively, toxins are released in the blood, causing more discomfort, a sense of failure, anger, and hopelessness (Ellis, 2005; Sassoon, 2010). Considering the ultimate goal of positive psychology and the need for organizations to have more motivated and satisfied employees, this study examined the effectiveness of positive thinking training on employee job satisfaction at Isfahan Shatel Company. The present study examined the effect of positive thinking on factors such as institutionalizing positive thinking, the meaning and concept of positive thinking, positive thoughts at work and communication, and living positively and establishing good relationships with others. Accordingly, we expect that participants in positive thinking training sessions will have higher positive relationships than other employees.

The results suggest that positive thinking training significantly affected job satisfaction. The limitation of the statistical population to only one company in Isfahan and the lack of possibility of generalizing its results to other companies and regions are among the limitations of the study.

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