

## The Effectiveness of Teaching Mindfulness on Positive Thinking and Job Satisfaction

Ghasem Ghojavand<sup>1</sup>  
Tahereh Lotfizadeh\*<sup>2</sup>

Received 19 April 2021, Accepted 16 March 2022

### *Abstract*

The present study was an attempt to determine the effectiveness of teaching mindfulness on positive thinking and job satisfaction of Refah Bank Foreign Affairs Department staff in Tehran. The study was experimental and included a pilot study conducting pretest-posttest on the control group. The statistical population of the research included 56 individuals who were the staff of Refah Bank Foreign Affairs Department in Tehran in 2019-20. The research sample included 30 volunteers selected through simple random sampling, who were divided randomly into two groups: experiment group (15) and control group (15). The research instrument comprised of Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (2009), and Ingram and Wisnicki's (1998) Assessment of Positive Automatic Cognition (ATQ-P) (1998). The data analysis used in the descriptive part included frequency, percentage, central tendency (mean) and dispersion indices (standard deviation) and in the inferential part, Shapiro test was used for data normalization and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

The results of data analysis showed that teaching mindfulness is effective on employees' job satisfaction at the level of 0.05 with a coefficient of  $f=18.85$ ; and that teaching mindfulness in groups is effective on positive thinking of employees at the level of 0.05 with a coefficient of  $f=17.06$ . Therefore, teaching mindfulness has proved to be effective on positive thinking and job satisfaction of employees. Teaching mindfulness affects positive thinking and job satisfaction of the Staff of Foreign Affairs Department of Refah Bank.

**Keywords:** Teaching mindfulness, Positive thinking, Job satisfaction, Staff

### **1. Introduction**

Human resources are the worthiest organizational resource and considered the core of organizational approaches and activities and play a fundamental role in advancing its purposes and ambitions. Human resources make the organization significant and give concept to it and provide the essential

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1. Assistant Professor Department of social work , Member of Faculty of Social Work, Hekmat Razavi Institute of Higher Education, Khorasan Razavi, Mashhad, Iran.

2 . M.Sc. Student Career Counseling, University of North Tehran, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author) tahereh57fm@yahoo.com

grounds to achieve organizational objectives (Nazari, 2018). Experts believe that job satisfaction is a description of attitude. They state: Job satisfaction is a person's attitude towards his/her job and its various features, job satisfaction represents a person's attitudes about his/her job. When a person's profession is in agreement with his/her values and requirements and when a person accomplishes objectives and activities that are essential to him/her, his/her job satisfaction increases (Ismaili, 2016), on the other hand, the high level of employees' job satisfaction in their field of the profession has positive effects on their family life. According to managers, employees' job satisfaction is paramount because it directly influences their profitability and efficiency (Hong, 2016).

Boamah (2018) declares that the features of the work environment, speed, balanced workload, relationships with co-workers, professional opportunities, and the capacity to satisfy necessities have affected job satisfaction. The quality of the work environment affects Job satisfaction that is an essential consequence. Mir Kamali views job satisfaction as a description of the satisfaction feeling and person's satisfaction with his/her job in the organization, which is relevant to operate in agreement with talents, the success rate in the job, satisfying logical requirements, talent improvement, career advancement, successful experiences, and organizational environment. According to Hopack, job satisfaction is a complicated concept and is explained by psychological and physical factors.

Only one factor cannot generate job satisfaction, but a specific combination of various factors enables the employee to enjoy his/her job at a particular moment and tell him/herself that he/she is satisfied with his/her job (Eshaghi, 2019) Positive thinking is another variable that is estimated in this study. Positive thinking is learning to think properly, change negative attitudes, and how to analyze events that a person creates and maintains a positive attitude by considering all aspects of an issue. Positive thinking is beneficial for all people, particularly employees to strengthen and promote positive relationships with others, improve positive emotions, positive behaviors, increase well-being, self-esteem, and job dependence, hence, people with positive thinking abilities can change the self-regulation or self-organization processes through hard

work, determination, adopting the right strategy, and acquiring help from co-workers and friends. Employees who believe in their competence and proficiency, with more confidence, try more comprehensively to accomplish the objective and will not be disheartened promptly (Sadeghi, 2017).

Positive thinking aims to instruct people who have a life full of love and superior actions, are interested in learning and dealing with problems, and are proud of their achievements. It is possible to expect that employees have a more positive attitude and interpretation of themselves in this case, through positive thinking skills, on the one hand, trust in their abilities to accomplish success, defeat the challenges and problems of life with more strength and resist achieving their purposes, and on the other hand, interpret better their social relationships with others, and strengthen positive communication skills to improve their relationships with others and adapt to their lives using more effective strategies (Dehghannejad, 2017).

Mindfulness is one of the treatments that can affect job satisfaction and positive thinking. Mindfulness is a notion associated with awareness and consciousness that is restricted to the here and instantly and covers non-prejudgment in attitude and needs attentiveness, constant concentration, and openness of mind. Moreover, mindfulness will provide non-painful and impersonal perspicacity; because adequately conscious experiences will result in the stability to achieve basic experiences, Kabat-Zain has defined mindfulness as a state of excited attention and awareness of what is occurring instantly; of course, attention in this definition is purposeful attention, along with accepting without judgment about the experiences occurring instantly (Kurd Bahman, 2018). Mindfulness can be recognized as a different mental capacity between various people, and there are different methods to strengthen it (Marusk, 2018). This therapeutical method helps people understand the moment-by-moment experience and decrease spontaneous and normal responses to negative incentives (Leo, 2018).

Mindfulness is a new therapeutic technique that is a combination of relaxation elements with a unique cognitive component. In its simplest form, mindfulness is every second's consciousness as it occurs as scholars such as Kabat-Zain and Buddhist monks such as Thich Nhat Hanh conceptualized it.

According to ancient Asian Buddhist traditions, mindfulness is not a new therapeutic technique; but its systematic application in treating various psychological and physical diseases is a comparatively new phenomenon. Regrettably, the interest in mindfulness has expanded faster than its empirical support, and there is no same public opinion that why mindfulness is effective (Zolfaghari, 2019). Job satisfaction is one of the most challenging organizational concepts and the foundation of many policies and management policies to increase the organization's productivity and efficiency.

Job satisfaction is a rate of positive feelings and attitudes that people have about their job and progress at work. It seems that acquiring positive thinking skills increases the individuals' capacity to establish effective social relationships, and gaining social support increases the individuals' capability to cope with everyday life challenges. Consequently, it is essential to conduct studies in this field. Reviewing foreign and domestic research enables us to recognize that although the variables of mindfulness, positive thinking, job satisfaction were each examined independently in different studies, no particular study comprehensively analyzes all three variables in the statistical population. According to the mentioned cases and the range of today's societies and various problems, this study tries to clarify the question: Does mindfulness training affect employees' positive thinking and job satisfaction?

## **2. Review of Literature**

The purpose and Objectives of this research are: 1- Identifying the efficiency of mindfulness education on employees' job satisfaction of the Foreign Office of Tehran Refah Bank. 2- Identifying the efficiency of mindfulness education on the employees' positive thinking of the Foreign Office of Tehran Refah Bank

The Theories of this research are: 1- Mindfulness group education affects employees' job satisfaction in the Foreign Office of Tehran Refah Bank. 2- Mindfulness group education affects the employees' positive thinking of the Foreign Office of Tehran Refah Bank.

### 3. Methodology

This study was applied and quasi-experimental (pre-test-post-test with experimental and control groups). The pre-test was concurrently taken from both groups before performing the training interventions on employees, and independent variables were then applied to the experimental group. The control group did not receive any intervention.

One session was retested from both groups after 8 sessions of 90 minutes per week. 56 employees of the Foreign Office of the Refah Bank of Tehran included the statistical population in 2018-2019. The statistical sample was a simple random sampling method and was distributed randomly to two experimental groups (15) and a control group (15).

The Research instruments are:

**1. Job Satisfaction Questionnaire:** Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (2009) and Ingram Positive Thinking Questionnaire (1998) were completed in this study. Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (2009) included 19 items and 6 subscales of the payment system (3 questions), variety of job (4 questions), opportunities for progression (3 questions), organizational environment (2 questions), leadership style (4 questions) and physical conditions (3 questions) and was used to measure job satisfaction. The method to score Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, is scored in a Likert scale for the "completely disagree," "disagree," "no idea," "agree," and "completely agree" options, respectively, and scores 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were considered. The reliability of the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire was achieved by 0.86 using the Cronbach's alpha test (Mohammadi, 2011). University professors confirmed the validity of the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire was achieved 0.92 through the Cronbach's alpha formula in the research conducted by Bakhtiar Nasrabadi et al. (2009), which indicates the high reliability of the measurement employed in this study. The reliability coefficient has been achieved by 0.89 in this study. The Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire was provided with supervisors and consultants and other experts in the field of management and psychology of educational sciences at the University of Isfahan and managers,

engineers, supervisors, and senior workers working Zob Ahan Company of Isfahan in the research conducted by Bakhtiar Nasrabadi et al. (2009) to measure its face and content validity. The questionnaire was implemented after receiving comments and correcting some cases.

**2. Positive Thinking Questionnaire:** Engram and Wessniki have designed the positive thinking questionnaire as an instrument with 30-items designed in 1998. This questionnaire holds 5 subscales of daily positive functioning, positive self-assessment, self-evaluation of others, positive expectations for the future, self-confidence. The Engram and Wessniki Positive Thinking Questionnaire is a standard instrument to measure the frequency of positive automatic thoughts. The Engram and Wessniki Positive Thinking Questionnaire scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale from never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4), and always (5). Subjects answer questions based on how many positive thoughts they have experienced in the past week in the Engram and Wessniki Positive Thinking Questionnaire. Engram and Wessniki positive thinking questionnaire are interpreted so that as the subject achieves more scores, he/she expresses more positive thinking. This test's reliability was calculated based on Cronbach's alpha in a study conducted by Yadalah Pour and 0.95 based on the bisection method. Karimi (2012) also calculated the reliability of the positive thinking questionnaire by 0.89 using Cronbach's alpha, and experts confirmed the validity of this test. In this study, the reliability coefficient was achieved by 0.92.

**Table 1. Mindfulness education package**

Sessions	The title of the session	Objectives	Educational issues	Tasks	Time to minutes
First session	Introduction	Introduction and getting familiar,	Introducing research and pre-test purposes, meditation.	Exercise of recording three minutes of thoughts	90
Second session	Challenging obstacles	Last week's assignment,	Practice body checking, giving feedback, and discussing body checking	Breathing mindfulness meditation exercise.	90
Third session	The presence of the mind from breathing	Self-meditation training	A survey of the exercises of the last session, training conscious mindfulness meditation (sitting) and the logic of its implementation, and then analyzing the task.	Attention transformation exercise.	90

Fourth session	Being at the present time	Sitting meditation	Training for body stretching and breathing meditation (Sitting Meditation) - Group discussion on daily negative moods and judgments, then a survey of last session exercises. Task review, "See or Hear" exercise for seven minutes	Re-training of mindfulness, breathing, and body check.	90
Fifth session	Permission / Attendance:	Awareness of breathing, body, voice, thoughts	Analyzing last week's task, breathing exercises, sitting meditation, explaining stress and its relationship to pain,	Exercising the awareness of pleasant and unpleasant events on feelings, thoughts, and senses	90
Sixth session	Thoughts are not facts:	Conscious yoga	Examining last week's tasks, discussing seeing thoughts or alternative thoughts differently, sitting meditation	Presence of mind from sounds and thoughts	90
Seventh session	Managing problems	Solving care and meditation problems	Evaluation of last week's tasks, how I can best take care of myself for problems, sleep hygiene, repeat the exercises of the last session.	Make a list of enjoyable activities of the session	90
Eighth session	Acceptance and changing:	Summary of sessions	Examination of last week's tasks, body check, monitor, and discuss plans and follow up.	Exercises of the tasks. Ready to end	90

Motiei (2019)

#### 4. Findings

Findings show that 17 subjects were female, equivalent to / 56, and 13 were male, equivalent to / 44 among 30 participants in the study. Also, 5 subjects have an Associate degree, 10 have a bachelor's degree, 12 have a master's degree, and 3 People have a doctorate among 30 participants. Also, 10 subjects are between 20 and 30 years old, 8 are between 31-40 years old, and 12 are between -41 and higher among 30 participants.

**Table 2. Descriptive information of job satisfaction and positive thinking variables**

job satisfaction	experiment	Pre-test	15	54	7.45
		Post-test	15	26.13	9.24
positive thinking	experiment	pre-test	15	74.26	10.45
		Post-test	15	95.33	13.92

As Table 2 shows, the mean and standard deviation of job satisfaction in the pre-test experimental group were 54.00 and 7.45, respectively. They were 62.13 and 9.24 in the post-test, respectively, and the mean and standard deviation of positive thinking in the experimental group are 74.26 and 10.45 respectively in the pre-test and are 95.33 and 13.92 in the post-test.

**Table 3. Descriptive information of job satisfaction and positive thinking variables in the control group**

the control group					
<b>job satisfaction</b>	<b>Control</b>	Pre-test	15	44.93	10.82
		Post-test	15	45.86	6.39
<b>positive thinking</b>	<b>Control</b>	Pre-test	15	81.53	8.88
		Post-test	15	76.13	17.21

As Table 2 shows, the mean and standard deviation of job satisfaction in the control group in the pre-test are 44.93 and 10.82, respectively, are 45.86 and 6.39, respectively in the post-test, and the mean and standard deviation of positive thinking in the control group in the pre-test, are 81.53 and 8.88, respectively, and are 76.13 and 17.21 in the post-test.

Assumptions of univariate analysis of covariance (ANCO) in this research is important. The assumption that the relationship between the variables is linear.

**Table 3. Summary of test results for linearity of the relationship between dependent and covariate variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>sig</b>
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	2264.54	1	1132.27	20.551	0.001
<b>Positive thinking</b>	3803.12	1	1901.56	8.81	0.001

**df= Degree of freedom, ss= sum of squares , ms= mean squares , test F , sig=significance level**

As the results of Table 3 explain, there is a linear relationship between the studied variables because the significance level of the F-statistic is linear, the relationship is less than or equal to 0.05

This assumption(Homogeneity of regression slope) denotes that the dependent variable's regression coefficient from the pre-test variables is the same in the groups. The test of analysis of variance (F test) was used for each component to examine this hypothesis.



**Table 4. The test of regression slope homogeneity**

Statistical index and variables	Sum of squares	Freedom degree	F	Significant level
Group * Job satisfaction pre-test	329.980	2	3.018	0.066
Group * Positive Thinking Pre-Test	1039.716	2	2.32	0.118

Due to the Table results, according to the calculated F coefficient, group interaction and pre-tests are not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Consequently, there is no significant difference between the coefficients, and the assumption of homogeneity of regression coefficients in all variables is established. Due to the set of assumptions, it is recognized that this study's data can enter the analysis of covariance, and it is possible then to examine the differences between the two groups in the dependent variables.

**Table 5. Shapiro–Wilk test**

Positive thinking	Job satisfaction	test
<b>0.560</b>	0.964	Shapiro–Wilk test
<b>0.306</b>	0.062	Significant level

Due to Table 5 and considering the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results, the null hypothesis is confirmed, and the opposite hypothesis is rejected ( $p > 0.05$ ). Consequently, it is possible to conclude that all variables participating in the study are distributed normally.

**Table 6. Levin F test to examine the homogeneity of variances in control and experimental groups**

Positive thinking	Job satisfaction	Index variables
1	1	Freedom degree 1
28	28	Freedom degree 2
2.18	1.44	F
0.150	0.239	Significant level

As Table 6 shows, the experimental and control groups' variance error in the dependent variables at the significance level of 0.05 has no significant differences with each other. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variance concerning the groups is accepted ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Hypothesis: Mindfulness group instruction affects employee job satisfaction.

**Table 7. Results of analyzing the covariance of positive thinking post-test scores in experimental and control groups**

Statistical index	SS	Df	F	Sig	Effect degree
Pre-test	279.921	1	5.08	0.033	15.8
group	1038.599	1	18.85	0.001	41.1
error	1487.546	27			
total	91232	29			

Due to Table 7, eliminating the effect of the pre-test variable and analyzing the calculated F coefficient indicates that there is a significant difference between the adjusted means of job satisfaction scores concerning participants in terms of group membership "experiment and control" in the post-test stage ( $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it is concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected and mindfulness group education affects employee job satisfaction.

**Table 8. Results of analyzing the covariance of positive thinking post-test scores in experimental and control groups**

Statistical index	SS	Df	F	sig	Effect rate
<b>Pre-test</b>	1039.319	1	4.81	0.037	15.1
<b>group</b>	3681.146	1	17.06	0.001	38.7
<b>error</b>	5824.748	27			
<b>total</b>	230134	29			

The second Hypothesis is Mindfulness group education affects employees' positive thinking. Furthermore, as Table 8 shows, excluding the effect of the pre-test variable and analyzing the calculated F coefficient indicates that there is a significant difference between the adjusted means of participants' positive thinking scores in terms of group membership "experiment and control" in the post-test phase ( $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it is concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected and mindfulness group education affects employees' positive thinking.

## 5. Conclusion

The results concerning analyzing the data indicated that excluding the effect of the pre-test variable and according to the calculated F coefficient indicates that there is a significant difference between the adjusted means of job satisfaction and positive thinking scores of participants in terms of group membership "experiment and control" in the post-test stage ( $P < 0.05$ ).

Moreover, it is concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected, and mindfulness group education affects employees' job satisfaction and positive thinking.

It is possible to state to explain the above case that mindfulness reduces the magnification related to the person by focusing on the facts and considering the here and now, and not rejecting or denying various issues and problems and in contrast to her/his experience, and consequently, the person perceives the problems as they are; not as he/she considers in the influence of different, therefore, if people clearly see the problems with a correct and realistic understanding and instead of ignoring their weaknesses, it will lead to a more positive approach and an optimistic viewpoint on life, thereby a person encourages him/her self for life changes and improves harmful and undesirable models of behavior.

A person experiences a state of awareness and acceptance when facing adverse situations instead of reactions that worsen the situation, and he/she can face consciously and endure difficult situations. He/she can maintain his/her balance and find a logical solution to it and prevent job dissatisfaction in the workplace. Mindfulness helps understand that those negative emotions may occur but are not a constant part of the personality and enable the individual to respond to events thoughtfully rather than involuntary responses. In this case, the ability to observe states such as positive thinking increases and is related to perceiving the attendance in the present, being qualified to manage the current situation by being completed by emotions, and not judging them instead of automatic behavioral models.

A person informs of his/her daily activities, informs of the automatic functioning of the mind in the past and future worlds through mindfulness-based exercises and techniques, and controls them through moment-to-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, and physical states and separates his/herself from every day and automated mind focused on the past and future. Mindfulness is a technique that is not to understand the past or correct the wrong ways of thinking of the past and does not directly treat problems, but consciously examines the underlying stimuli of cognition and emotions and reveals the hidden themes of life and better controls anxiety and emotions. So, people realize that they not only think, but can observe their thinking and

increase positive thinking. Mindfulness teaches attention to the body and breathing, and the people being treated are informed of the different sensations they experience in the body and even while breathing. They also learn that when the body heats up with anger or fear, the heart rate increases, and the rhythm of breathing changes and shortens and slows down. And consequently, mindfulness exercises increase attention to the body and clarify the way for subsequent control. This hypothesis's results are in agreement with the results of the following research conducted by Amiri (2018). He conducted a study entitled the effectiveness of counseling based on choice theory on students' mindfulness and positive thinking.

The results concerning statistical tests revealed that: Counseling based on choice theory on positive thinking, mindfulness and its components (observation, practice with awareness, non-judgmental on internal experience, description, and non-reaction) affect positively female high school students ( $P = 0.001$ ), which concludes that counseling based on choice theory improves mindfulness and positive thinking in female high school students. Mehr Afarid et al. (2015) conducted a study entitled "Evaluation of the effectiveness of positive thinking training on hardiness, resilience, and burnout of nurses. The results concerning the t-test revealed the rate of burnout in nurses has a significant difference based on marriage, working conditions, age, and formal or contractual" state ( $p < 0.001$ ). Also, the results of analyzing the covariance confirmed that positive thinking training increased the hardiness and resilience significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) and reduced burnout significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) in nurses, which suggests that training Positive thinking affects hardiness, resilience significantly, and burnout in nurses ( $p < 0.001$ ). (Vinothkumar & et al. 2016) conducted a study to examine the effect of mindfulness on perceived stress and job satisfaction in medical interns.

This research is a cross-sectional descriptive study that has collected 120 forms of medical internships related to different medical schools in Mangalore and assessed mindfulness, cognitive-emotional regulation, perceived stress, and job satisfaction in doctoral interns. The results achieved by analyzing the initial correlation indicate that job satisfaction and stress are significantly more related to mindfulness and can be predicted by mindfulness. (Van 2016)

conducted a study on the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on nurses' stress tolerance and burnout. In this study, mindfulness education positively affects reducing nurses' anxiety tolerance, and burnout (Botha 2015) conducted a study entitled the effectiveness of mindfulness-based programs in reducing nurses' stress in adult hospitals. This study was an experiment with two experimental and control groups.

The results achieved by analyzing data indicated that mindfulness education reduced the stress of the experimental group compared to the control group. In general, as the study results show, it is possible to state that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in this study is effective because that mindfulness therapy results in a cognitive change in thinking and behavior. Additionally, it is possible to state that because mindfulness modifies emotions without judgment and increases awareness of psychological emotions, particularly negative emotions, and helps to clearly observe and accept emotions and physical phenomena as they happen, it can affect positive thinking and job satisfaction. Mindfulness therapy modifies negative behaviors and thoughts into positive behaviors because one of the most significant dimensions of mindfulness therapy is that people acquire the ability to deal with negative emotions and thoughts and experience mental events positively.

It is recommended by paying attention to the effectiveness of group mindfulness education in order to increase the level of job satisfaction and positive thinking, to provide the ground to hold various workshops and training courses. It is recommended that mindfulness training increases job satisfaction that counselors and experts, therapists active in the field of psychology, and family hold specific education courses to improve these variables. This research, like other researches, has limitations such as 1- This research has been conducted among bank employees, and it is essential to be careful in generalizing it to other groups 2- Lack of Persian and Latin resources in this research field 3- Some issues and problems caused by COVID-19 disease.

The Useful suggestions of this reasearch are:

1 -It is recommended by paying attention to the effectiveness of group mindfulness education in order to increase the level of job satisfaction and

positive thinking, to provide the ground to hold various workshops and training courses.

2- It is recommended that mindfulness education increases job satisfaction that counselors and experts, therapists active in the field of psychology, and family hold specific education courses to improve these variables.

3 -Holding education workshops and interpersonal skills can inject peace of mind and security into the employees.

4- It is essential to develop training programs to promote mindfulness skills and is very effective in personnel effectiveness.

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