



## Research Article

# Fostering Psychological Well-Being and Igniting Work Motivation in Employees: Gender as Moderator

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## Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving work environments, organisations recognize the critical importance of fostering psychological well-being and igniting work motivation among their employees. This study aims to explore the role of gender as a buffering effect in the association between employees' psychological well-being and its work motivation. The study comprised 385 Malaysian public sector personnel as participants. While psychological well-being and work motivation are universal concerns, gender differences may shape the ways in which individuals perceive and respond to various organisational strategies and practices aimed at enhancing these outcomes. The study's results reveal a significant relationship between psychological well-being and employees' motivation, indicating that individuals with higher levels of environmental mastery exhibit greater drive and enhanced performance in the workplace. Interestingly, the study finds that female employees tend to have slightly lower levels of motivation compared to their male counterparts, although the difference is not statistically significant. These findings hold valuable implications for professionals and policymakers, shedding light on the intricate interplay between work motivation, individual performance, and well-being, particularly in the public sector. Furthermore, the study delves into the practical applications of human capital and organisational behaviour, offering actionable insights for leveraging these concepts to optimize employee motivation and productivity.

*Keywords:* psychological well-being; work motivation; gender; performance; public sector personnel.



## Table of Contents

Method  
Results  
Discussion  
Conclusion  
References

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The idea of employees' psychological well-being is one of the most important issues that Western scholars have discussed for several decades. The notion of psychological well-being encompasses various aspects, including behaviours that promote health and subjective, social, and psychological dimensions. In recent times, there has been a growing interest in the concept of well-being, both in academic research and mainstream publications. As a result, governments worldwide frequently highlight well-being as a prominent concern in their policy agendas, as evidenced by its inclusion as a national priority in various countries ([Beddington et al., 2008](#)). Thoughts of psychological well-being, however, can have a wide range of meanings based on an individual's professional and personal perspectives. In particular, the antecedent is typically framed as a reflection of an individual's level or experience in behavioural studies, reflecting the individual's personal, experienced, and phenomenological sense of happiness and engagement with their families, places of employment, and communities.

Psychological well-being significantly contributes to employee work motivation by providing employees with a positive mindset, emotional resilience, and a sense of purpose and fulfilment in their work. When employees experience a positive mental state, they are more inclined to exhibit motivation, engagement, and wholehearted dedication towards their assigned responsibilities. ([Bashir et al., 2022](#); [Kim & Beehr, 2022](#)). Emotionally resilient employees are better equipped to handle stress and challenges, which can help them maintain motivation even in the face of difficulties ([Baker et al., 2021](#)). Furthermore, when employees experience a sense of purpose and



fulfillment in their work, they are inclined to exhibit intrinsic motivation, resulting in heightened levels of effort, dedication, and performance. Overall, psychological well-being plays a crucial role in shaping employee work motivation, leading to increased productivity, job satisfaction, and organisational success.

Based on the recent study conducted via the Malaysian Psychological Well-being Index in 2018 revealed that the composite value of psychological well-being of Malaysian public sector personnel was rated at 6.9 from the maximum of 10 which implies that the level of psychological well-being among employees was moderate ([The Sun Daily, 2018, 9 October](#)). This indicated that approximately half of them were not happy in their jobs. In fact, the Malaysian public sector confronts renewed and complicated challenges in maintaining a high level of psychological well-being among public sector personnel in order to deliver better service to the citizens. Moreover, as stated by Bank Negara Malaysia, a significant portion of the monthly earnings of public sector personnel is allocated towards loan repayments, surpassing fifty percent of their income. Further, more than 50,000 Malaysian public sector personnel encounter bankruptcy because of debt issues ([Bank Negara Malaysia, 2018](#)). Thus, accumulated debt on public sector personnel generates stress and depression upon them which can disrupt their purposes and slash their self-acceptance due to their inability in attaining their desired needs. This can cause them to lose concentration at work and suffer from deteriorating psychological well-being.

Consequently, employees' work engagement will be low which resultantly diminish the work motivation among them ([Mohd Kamil et al., 2022](#); [Wood et al., 2020](#)). On top of that, findings from the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace AIA Vitality Survey (2019) indicate that Malaysian employees face the challenges of excessive workload and insufficient sleep, highlighting the prevalence of overwork and sleep deprivation among them. Based on the survey, 51% of Malaysian employees' experiences stress at work, and 53% get less than seven hours of sleep per night. In addition, there is robust competition among peers, long working hours, fear of job loss after the government announcement of its intention to reduce public sector jobs, organisational change, inability to balance work and life due to lack of time, constant technological progress, and growing demand from management. Based on the above-mentioned conditions, psychological disorder, mental health instability, anxiety, severe stress, laziness, lack of focus and control will be experienced inevitably. Therefore, psychological well-being will be affected passively which reduces their engagement in the organisational endeavours and decreases their work motivation.

Besides that, the public sector in Malaysia is based on bureaucracy which is constructed on hierarchical structure. Thus, the notion of a "top-down" is related to vertical style which minimizes the autonomy of employees in creating decision making specifically and taking initiatives in the workplace generally. Additionally, employees at the bottom of a vertical pyramid perhaps feel that they are less valued than those in the higher positions which can discourage employees to exert their best efforts in the workplace and become dependent on others. Thus, lack of autonomy affects the psychological wellbeing adversely which makes them automatically disengaged with their workplace and lessen the work motivations.

Work motivation is committed as a primary cause of behaviour. The arousal, direction and persistence of behaviour are all psychological processes that are strongly associated with work motivation (Ilgen & Klein, 1988). Motivation is also sometimes referred to as "enthusiasm" or "preference" of an individual as a factor which influences an individual's behaviour. Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) posits that psychological well-being, work engagement, and employees' work motivation are closely interrelated. According to the theory, when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their work environment, it fosters their psychological well-being. Hence, psychological well-being, in turn, is significantly associated with work engagement, which reflects a high level of motivation, energy, and dedication towards work tasks. When employees are engaged in their work, it can further enhance their overall work motivation, leading to increased effort, persistence, and performance. Thus, self-determination theory implies that creating a work environment that supports employees' psychological well-being can foster work engagement and work motivation, ultimately contributing to their overall job satisfaction and performance (Deci et al., 2017).

Previous scholars (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2011; Kanat-Maymon et al., 2020) demonstrated that individuals who are highly motivated through intrinsic factors were able to perform and handle various types of difficult tasks smoothly and achieve organisational goals successfully. This feeling and behaviour will influence their psychological well-being, particularly in the workplace, thus the conducive work environment will benefit themselves, fellow workers, customers, and the organisation with positive and agreeable consequences. This is in tandem with scholars (Ismajli et al., 2015) demonstrating that individuals with a higher degree of work motivation play a significant role in improving service quality, particularly in the public sector.

### **Psychological Well-being and Employees' Work Motivation**

Psychological well-being is one of the crucial elements that explains perceptions, behavioural, and actions of individuals to continually provide better service performance in organisation. Positive mental health refers to the comprehensive well-being of an individual encompassing their emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions. Work motivation, further, involves the internal processes that energize, direct, and sustain an individual's behaviour towards achieving work-related goals. When employees experience high levels of psychological well-being, such as positive emotions, a sense of purpose, and a healthy work-life balance, it can positively impact their work motivation (Wood et al., 2020). Psychologically positive employees frequently exhibit higher levels of commitment, engagement and intrinsic motivation at work. They are likely to approach their tasks with enthusiasm, take initiative, and persist in their efforts to achieve their work-related goals. On the contrary, employees who experience low psychological well-being, such as stress, burnout, or negative emotions, may have lower work motivation, resulting in reduced effort, disengagement, and decreased job satisfaction. Consequently, psychological well-being has become a main key of success for organisations and a robust factor in creating a healthy workplace environment.

Moreover, psychological well-being signals to employees' emotional health which encompasses happiness, contentment, positive thinking, and self-confidence. Ryff (1989) proposed a framework consisting of six dimensions of psychological well-being, which offers insights into how each dimension can influence the work motivation of employees in the public sector. Employees who experience a sense of autonomy and independence in their work are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and motivation (Kanat-Maymon et al., 2020). This dimension involves a sense of self-determination and independence in decision-making, which can lead to greater job satisfaction and commitment. Further, environmental mastery, or the ability to adapt to changing work environments, can positively impact employees' resilience and work motivation in the face of organisational change. Such a scale involves the ability to adapt to and manage changing work environments, which is essential for employees in the public sector who may face frequent changes in policies and procedures. Additionally, employees who have opportunities for personal and professional growth are more likely to be motivated to improve their skills and contribute to their organisations, which is reflected in the Ryff psychological well-being personal growth dimensions. Moreover, the dimension of positive relations with others elaborates how positive social interactions and relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and clients.

Employees who get along well with others are bound to feel encouraged and important, which can increase their motivation to work hard and job satisfaction (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Subsequently, the concept of life purpose pertains to the perception of meaning and significance in one's existence, which can extend to a sense of purpose within a chosen profession. Employees are more motivated and engaged if they feel their work has a greater purpose and contributes to society. In the end, Self-acceptance includes embracing oneself and feeling good about one's own strengths and weaknesses. Employees with a favorable self-image and acceptance of themselves are more likely to be self-confident and self-motivated at work.

Ruini et al. (2003) revealed that there are correlations between psychological well-being, extraversion, and neuroticism. Extraversion includes high sociability and assertiveness while neuroticism comprises high anxiety, fear, and tension. For instance, employees who have an elevated sense of psychological well-being are mentally healthy and able to engage in a positive relationship with others and optimistic in life. Therefore, employees that oversee psychological well-being significantly are more probable to be motivated to perform harder. Hence, the following hypotheses are posited:

*Hypothesis 1:* Psychological well-being (in the form of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose of life, and self-acceptance) has a positive relationship with employees' work motivation.

### **Gender as a Moderator**

Each employee has distinct work values and demands, which have an impact on how they manage their psychological well-being and boost work motivation. Hence, there are disparities in the demographic characteristics of employees, particularly when it comes to gender, where it is feasible to observe differences between men and women that will affect the need or level of work motivation. Gender differences in job roles and increased job performance have frequently been noted in relation to work motivation (Kelchtermans & Veugelers, 2011). Moreover, Hobfoll (1998) developed the concept of caravan resources, which postulates that demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, educational background and tenure within the organisation give a net of potential resource backgrounds that aid in coping and adaptation to individuals. Most studies frequently make use of gender variables which are thought to be connected to psychological well-being in identifying either men or women will boost employee work motivation. This is supported by earlier research from Wright and Staw (1999) and Cropanzano and Wright (1999), which

demonstrates that gender significantly moderate psychological well-being, which has a significant relationship with employee work motivation. In essence, it has been discovered that male employees have more psychological well-being and higher levels of work motivation than female employees. The most important drivers of motivation for male employees were “need for achievement” and “self-control” (Srivastava & Krishna, 1994). Therefore, the following hypothesis posited that male employees could affect their psychological well-being and work motivation:

*Hypothesis 2:* The impact of employees’ psychological well-being and work motivation will be stronger among males than females.

The study model depicted in Figure 1 was constructed as an outcome of the aforementioned literature review.

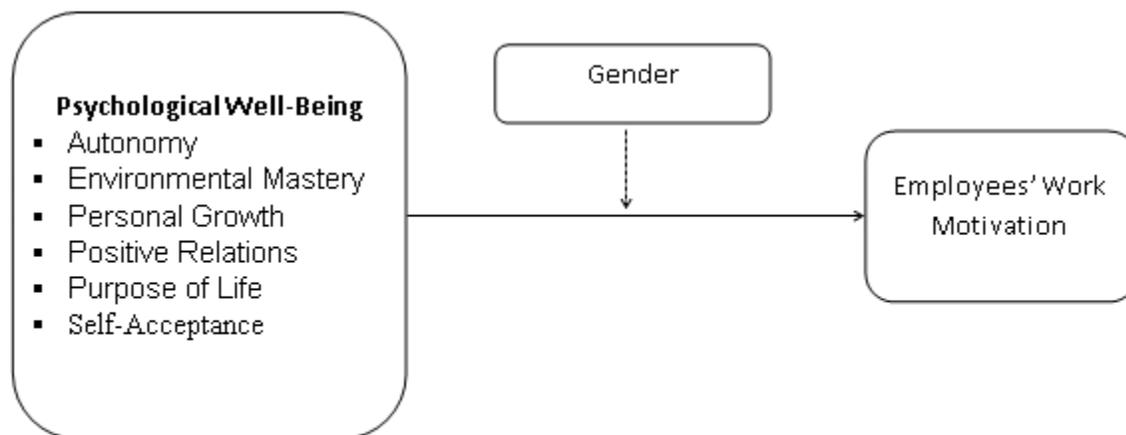


Figure 1. Research Model.

## Method

### Participants

This research employed a quantitative method in gathering the data. The respondents of this research are public sector personnel from federal agencies, state government, and local government in Malaysia. As a result, 385 completed questionnaires were received after the designated time, yielding a response rate of 83.1%. This response rate is regarded as acceptable given that the minimum sample size was 103, which is a relatively low response rate for this kind of correlational study in Malaysia. As a result, in accordance with the foregoing, a self-rating report was employed in the research, with individuals serving as the unit of analysis. According to Organ

(1988), a supervisory report or self-report could record how the individual (in this case, public sector personnel) behaved in connection to their own job-related motivation.

### Instruments

All the instruments used in this study underwent back-translation into Malay using the back-translation technique (Brislin, 1970), unless otherwise stated. The first translator rendered the original English phrase into Malay. Subsequently, the Malay version was translated back into English by a second translator who was unaware of the original English version. Both translators involved in the process were Malaysian individuals with business and management backgrounds, possessing fluency in both Malay and English languages. The measurement items in this research were adopted and modified to match the research context. Two experts from human resource management and public administration pre-tested the items, and the other two actual respondents evaluated the proposed questionnaire.

The main dependent variable in this study is work motivation, which is assessed using six items proposed by Wright (2004) based on a scale with five items designed by Baldwin (1987, 1990). Each item is rated by respondents on a 7-point scale, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 7 representing “strongly agree”. The six items are: (i) “I put forth my best effort to get my job done regardless of the difficulties”; (ii) “I am willing to start work early or stay late to finish a job”; (iii) “It has been hard for me to get very involved in my current job”; (iv) “I probably do not work as hard as others who do the same type of work”; (v) “I do extra work for my job that isn’t really expected to me”; and (vi) “Time seems to drag while I am on the job”. In addition, three items are reverse-coded to ensure consistency in the response direction, namely the third, fourth, and sixth items.

Wright (2004) found the six-item work motivation measure reliable, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71. However, Cronbach's alpha for this study was only .401, below the adequate level. Therefore, different combinations of items are tested to improve internal consistency. Table 1 shows the item-total statistics for the work motivation measure. After removing the fifth and sixth items, Cronbach's alpha increased significantly, indicating adequate internal consistency. As a result, a total of four scores that measure work motivation are created from the first four items. The total score is between 4 and 28. A better score denotes greater work motivation.

**Table 1.***Item-total statistics for work motivation measure*

Work motivation	6 items	5 items	4 items
Cronbach's alpha	0.401	0.496	0.575
	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted		
Item 1	0.320	0.406	0.532
Item 2	0.349	0.414	0.566
Item 3	0.219	0.430	0.453
Item 4	0.166	0.351	0.424
Item 5	0.494	0.575	-
Item 6	0.496	-	-

The 21-item psychological well-being scale, which Ryff (1989) modified from the original 42-item psychological well-being, serves as the main independent variable in this study. The measurement of psychological well-being utilizes a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). As outlined by Ryff (1989), the 21 items can be categorized into six dimensions, namely autonomy (items 1, 7, 13, 19), environmental mastery (items 2, 8, 14, 20), personal growth (items 3, 9, 15, 21), positive relations (items 4, 10, 16), purpose in life (items 5, 11, 17), and self-acceptance (items 6, 12, 18). In addition, in order to verify the item responses are in the same direction, items 3, 5, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are also reverse-coded.

This study's internal consistency of the psychological well-being measure is .840 (Table 2), indicating a good level of reliability. However, Cronbach's alpha for each dimension of the psychological well-being measure ranges from as low as .062 (environmental mastery dimension) to 0.631 for the personal growth dimension. To increase the psychological well-being measure's internal consistency, this study removed item 8 from the environmental mastery dimension and item 4 from the positive relations dimension. Following these modifications, Cronbach's alpha for the environmental mastery dimension increased to .512, while for the positive relations dimension it increased to .651. The 19 items are added up to create a total score that represents psychological well-being. An increase in score corresponds to an increase in psychological well-being; the score ranges from 19 to 133.

**Table 2.**

*Cronbach's alpha test assessed the reliability of the psychological well-being measure*

	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha (after removing)
Psychological well-being (21 items)	.840	.868 (items 4 and 8)
(i) Autonomy (items 1, 7, 13, 19)	.519	
(ii) Environmental mastery (items 2, 8, 14, 20)	.062	.512 (item 8)
(iii) Personal growth (items 3, 9, 15, 21)	.631	
(iv) Positive relations (items 4, 10, 16)	.482	.651 (item 4)
(v) Purpose in life (items 5, 11, 17)	.533	
(vi) Self-acceptance (items 6, 12, 18)	.592	

### Data Analysis

SPSS version 28.0 is used to conduct all of the analyses. The overall psychological well-being score is used to examine the individual effects of each independent variable on work motivation and the collective effects of each psychological well-being dimension on the dependent variable through simple and multiple linear regressions. The psychological well-being score incorporates the dimensions of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The association between psychological well-being and work motivation of employees is then investigated using a moderation study to see how gender (males vs. females) moderates this relationship. In this study, moderation analysis is conducted using Process Macro (Model 1), based on the bootstrap method with 5,000 samples.

## Results

To account for potential common method variance (CMV), which arises from collecting both variables from the same respondents, an assessment was conducted to better understand the data (Podsakoff et al., 2012). To mitigate the potential impact of common method variance, various procedural measures were implemented in this study, including (i) using different types of scale when designing the questionnaire, (ii) joining a set of questionnaires with a cover letter to protect respondents' anonymity, and (iii) Harman's single-factor analysis was employed to assess the extent of common method bias in the research. The findings of the study revealed that the first factor, representing the principal component factor in the unrotated analysis, explained 29.12% of the total covariance of 49.045%. The evidence, therefore, shows that the first factor

accounted for less than half of the total variance, indicating the absence of a significant common method variance issue in the data.

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and inter-correlations between psychological well-being, its dimensions, and work motivation, which serves as the primary dependent variable in this study. Based on Hair et al., (2010), data is considered to be normally distributed when the skewness values fall within the range of -2 to +2, and the kurtosis values fall within the range of -7 to +7. The correlation coefficients show that the overall psychological well-being and each dimension of psychological well-being are positively and significantly correlated with work motivation. The strongest correlation is observed between work motivation and personal growth (.579), while the weakest relationship is reported between work motivation and autonomy (.309).

**Table 3.**

*Descriptive statistics of all variables and correlation coefficients of psychological well-being and its dimensions with work motivation*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Correlation with work motivation
Work motivation	22.17	3.71	10.00	28.00	-0.22	-0.62	1
Psychological well-being	100.10	14.42	46.00	133.00	0.01	-0.32	.572***
(i) Autonomy	19.00	3.80	8.00	28.00	0.20	-0.42	.309***
(ii) Environmental mastery	16.81	2.60	8.00	21.00	-0.42	0.03	.484***
(iii) Personal growth	21.88	3.63	8.00	28.00	-0.11	-0.47	.579***
(iv) Positive relations	9.96	2.85	2.00	14.00	-0.57	-0.17	.416***
(v) Purpose in life	16.49	2.92	9.00	21.00	-0.21	-0.73	.469***
(vi) Self-acceptance	15.97	3.06	4.00	21.00	-0.38	0.31	.374***

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

The outcomes of simple and multiple linear regression analysis for work motivation are presented as well in Table 4. Model 1 shows the individual effect of each independent variable on work motivation, while Model 2 shows the net effect.

The simple linear regression analysis in Model 1 shows that psychological well-being is significantly related to work motivation, with a 1-point increase in employees' psychological well-being raising work motivation by 0.15 point. A strong association between psychological well-being and work motivation shows that employees who have higher degrees of psychological well-being are more motivated at work. Each of the psychological well-being dimensions is significantly

related to work motivation. The beta coefficients suggest a positive relationship, with environmental mastery having a stronger relationship with work motivation ( $B = .69$ ).

After controlling for other variables in Model 2, only environmental mastery and personal growth remain significantly associated with employees' work motivation. Moreover, the significance of the association between personal growth and work motivation has surpassed that of environmental mastery. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported.

**Table 4.**

*Regression Results for Work Motivation*

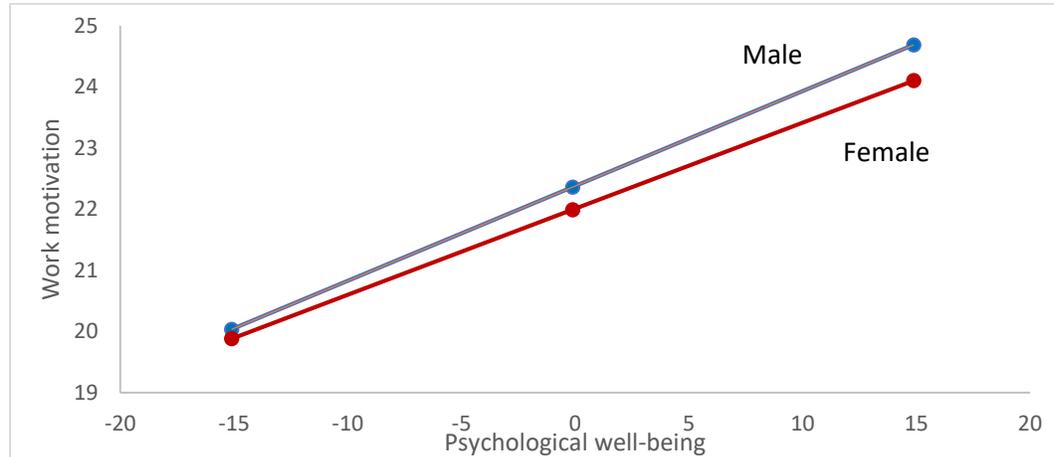
	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE	t	<i>p</i>	B	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Psychological well-being	0.15	0.01	13.63	< .001	-	-	-	-
(i) Autonomy	0.30	0.05	6.37	< .001	0.04	0.05	0.82	.413
(ii) Environmental mastery	0.69	0.06	10.83	< .001	0.18	0.08	2.17	.030
(iii) Personal growth	0.59	0.04	13.92	< .001	0.39	0.06	6.12	<.001
(iv) Positive relations	0.54	0.06	8.96	< .001	0.09	0.07	1.29	.199
(v) Purpose in life	0.60	0.06	10.39	< .001	0.12	0.07	1.56	.119
(vi) Self-acceptance	0.45	0.06	7.89	< .001	0.00	0.07	0.04	.972
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.36							
F test statistic ( <i>p</i> )	36.77 (<.001)							

Notes: Model 1: Simple linear regression analysis. Model 2: Multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 5 illustrates the moderating effect of gender on the correlation between psychological well-being and work motivation. An interaction term between psychological well-being and gender was generated. Additionally, the variables in the moderation analysis were centered on preventing problematic multicollinearity with the interaction term. Female employees have lower work motivation than male employees ( $B = -.37$ ), but the difference is insignificant ( $p = .239$ ). The interaction term of psychological well-being and gender shows that the impact of psychological well-being among female employees is not significantly different from that of male employees. Figure 2, the interaction plot, provides evidence suggesting that gender does not exert a significant moderating influence on the relationship between psychological well-being and work motivation. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is not corroborated by the findings.

**Table 5.***Moderation analysis*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Psychological well-being	.16	0.02	9.37	<.001
Gender (Ref: Male)	-.37	0.31	-1.18	.239
Psychological well-being *Gender	-.01	0.02	-0.66	.508

Figure 2. *Interaction plot*

## Discussion

The current study explored the connection between employees' psychological well-being and their work motivation. The analysis of direct relationships revealed that each dimension of psychological well-being, including autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance, significantly influenced work motivation. The findings generally indicate that the psychological well-being of employees is crucial to understanding how they can affect their work motivation. On the one hand, when employees experience positive psychological well-being, such as high levels of emotional resilience, positive emotions, and a sense of purpose, they are prone to be motivated, engaged, and committed to their jobs (Bashir et al., 2022). Psychological well-being can influence employees' attitudes and behaviours towards their work, shaping their motivation to put in the effort, take initiative, and persist in achieving their work-related goals. Consequently, employees with poor psychological well-being, such as stress, burnout, or negative emotions, may have reduced work motivation,

leading to decreased job performance and productivity (Baker et al., 2021). Therefore, the organisations must fully comprehend the relationship between psychological well-being and work motivation to develop a supportive work environment that fosters employees' well-being, which in turn can positively affect their motivation and job performance.

Furthermore, the moderation study found no statistically significant difference between genders in the relationship between psychological well-being and work motivation. This finding demonstrated that gender differences do not impact on the level of psychological well-being of employees in influencing their work motivation on the jobs assigned to them. Psychological well-being is related to internal factors, such as individual perceptions, emotions, and mental states, which are not inherently dependent on gender. Regardless of gender, both male and female employees can achieve comparable levels of psychological well-being, which includes positive emotions, a sense of purpose, and a balanced approach to work and life (Mousa et al., 2020).

Similarly, work motivation is driven by individual traits, including personal values, interests, and goals, which are not necessarily influenced by gender. Therefore, gender differences are unlikely to influence a considerable impact on how psychological well-being and work motivation relate to one another among employees because they are essentially individual and subjective experiences that are not solely influenced by gender. The theoretical tenets of the self-determination theory, which hold that motivational factors have a considerable influence on how employees interact with their work in an organisation, are in contrast, yet these findings are consistent with them. The results also lend further credence to the theoretical argument underlying the concept of psychological well-being, which asserts that individuals who have a high level of intrinsic factors have the ability to influence their psychological well-being in relation to their work environment (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2011). This study provides significant theoretical value to the models that currently define the function of individual well-being characteristics as predictors of employee motivation by advancing our understanding of the mechanisms through which psychological well-being affects work motivation. The theoretical and practical implications of the study must be highlighted.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The public sector is expected to continuously provide higher-quality services given the reforms from time to time. As mentioned earlier, psychological well-being plays a significant influence in affecting work motivation. This finding reinforces the direct effect that exists in this relationship,

confirming that the differential dimensions of psychological well-being (in the form of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, the purpose of life and self-acceptance) significantly affect employees' work motivation. Although the assumptions of the self-determination theory and motivator-hygiene theory are supported, for a thorough understanding of the nature and function of work motivation, more research is still required. Furthermore, the results revealed that men and women experience psychological well-being at similar levels, which may influence employees' work motivation. The findings suggest that other models of psychological well-being and work motivation that incorporate related variables as significant mediators or moderators should be used.

Practically, managers and supervisors should emphasise the value of psychological well-being in hiring decisions, planning strategies and initiatives for training and development, and the entire performance management systems if they want to improve and maximise the motivation of employees, particularly the public sector personnel, to achieve their job performance. This approach is crucial for them to realise what motivates them to do their best at work. Furthermore, the government should implement counselling programs in each public sector so that public sector personnel would receive the support they need to manage the various demands and stresses at work. This program can evaluate and minimise the risks in order to boost the psychological well-being and re-motivate the employees.

### **Limitations and Future Research Suggestions**

Future research should take various aspects into consideration while addressing the limitations of this study. In this study, self-report measures are used in a cross-sectional approach. This design is likely to introduce common method variance in the data and does not allow for an adequate exploration of the causal temporal nature of the variables in the relationships investigated. It is advised to conduct further study on these types of models and hypotheses utilising designs that can be assessed and studied across multiple time waves. Finally, future studies should explore the mediation process (such as job stress or commitment) that are modelled to explain how psychological well-being factors affect employee work motivation both directly or indirectly.

## Conclusion

The public sector should be capable of achieving critical quality within the organisation, particularly among employees, in order to provide high-quality service to stakeholders. Therefore, the current adds to our understanding of the significance of psychological well-being in affecting employees' work motivation, particularly in the national context of Malaysia, and as a result, it lends to the body of knowledge on motivation for work, particularly in the public sector. Organisations may cultivate a motivated and engaged workforce by prioritising employees' psychological well-being, which leads to strengthened overall organisational performance.

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## Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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