

**Thank you very much for your work!**

The impact of expressing gratitude on job satisfaction.

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## **Abstract**

In industrialized countries, job satisfaction is a key factor in maintaining a low employee fluctuation rate, providing a healthy work environment and increasing productivity. The expression of gratitude seems to have a big impact on job satisfaction. This study aims to investigate the impact of the expression of gratitude on job satisfaction and the most effective way of expressing it. A sample of 103 participants working in the Netherlands, executed a national flag- country matching task and received differently expressed gratitude messages. An examination of written and spoken gratitude disentangled the more effective way of expressing gratitude, showing that spoken gratitude is a more beneficial manner than written. This study represents a first step of using gratitude as a tool to increase job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** gratitude, job satisfaction, way of expression, work environment

Gratitude is a concept humanity does not understand to its fullest yet. We seem to know that it can either be dispositional or developed. McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang (2002) define it as being conscious and responsive with a sense of gratitude for others' experiences and the positive outcomes one possibly gets. Peterson & Seligman (2004) added that gratitude can either be part of a being's nature (dispositional gratitude) or learned over time, through for instance journaling or meditation (developed). Gratitude is a positive emotion that has multiple benefits on individual and relationship levels. Aristoteles has said that humans are social animals, which are in need for other human beings. For the survival of our species, we need each other, and gratitude plays a major role in maintaining social relationships. Expressing gratitude has become part of the rules for social conduct. We say "thank you" or "please" to be polite, to avoid offending others or embarrassing ourselves, or in other words, to save our and others' faces. The term "face" is coined by Goffman (1967). He claimed that every human being is concerned, to some extent, with how others perceive them. We strive to maintain the identity we have created for others to see. When we interact socially, this identity is what we project. In this sense, to lose face would mean to publicly suffer a diminished self-projection.

Brown & Levinson (1987) used Goffman's concept to explain social behaviour regarding politeness. We as human beings developed positive and negative politeness strategies to maintain our image of self in social occasions. In their model, they further develop the concept of face and distinguish between a positive face, human's desire to gain approval of others, and a negative face, human's wish to be unimpeded by others in one's actions. Brown and Levinson linked these two types of face to the politeness strategies that people employ in interaction. Positive politeness

strategies address the positive face and are performed to avoid offense by emphasizing friendliness, whereas negative politeness strategies refer to the negative face and are performed to avoid offense through deference. Therefore, politeness is the capability of creating a positive self-image or expanding one's personal space within social interactions (Holmes J. 2006). Interaction settings expressing gratitude are used to enable and create a comfortable environment for communication, as well as to amplify a stronger bond between interlocutors. Thus, ultimately our goal is to be an appropriate social agent, get accepted and get what you need and desire from your community.

Showing appreciation and expressing gratitude positively affects the perception of one's life on multiple levels. The expression of gratitude is a multifaceted phenomenon that has been defined as "the active and conscious practice of giving thanks" (Howell, 2007). On an individual level, McCullough et al. (2002) show that people with a higher level of dispositional gratitude are more likely to have positive emotions, be satisfied with their lives and have a lower risk of stress and depression. Also, Seligman et al. (2005) indicate that people who wrote a gratitude diary and report on a daily basis experienced an increase in happiness which lasted for at least six months. These benefits of gratitude have also been recognized in clinical settings for use in therapy (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010).

As previously mentioned, gratitude also plays a major role and has multiple benefits in informal social settings. Humans act politely as part of our social conduct, and to help form and maintain social relationships. We interact using politeness strategies to gain our desires within the community. Moreover, if someone uses positive or negative politeness strategies addressing our positive or negative face, respectively, we tend to act similarly towards the same person. This is known as reciprocity, which is defined as "returning something fitting and of proportionate value for benefits received" (Von Tevenar, 2006). Thus, reciprocal gratitude means treating others gratefully in a way we would like to be treated. It has a variety of positive effects; for instance, showing appreciation and expressing gratitude positively affects the perception of partners and leads to more relationship maintenance behaviour both in romantic relationships (Lambert & Fincham, 2011) and friendships (Algoe, Haidt & Gable, 2008). Additionally, expressing gratitude seems to lead to a higher communal strength within the relationship (Lambert, Clark, Durtschi, Fincham, & Graham, 2010). The partners who were more appreciative of their counterpart reported being more compassionate to their partners' wishes and needs, and more dedicated and likely to maintain their relationships over time (Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis & Keltner (2012). Hence, expressing gratitude seems to play a crucial role in successfully maintaining intimate bonds. Thus, whether it is a friendship or a romantic relationship, being grateful and showing appreciation seems to create a stronger relationship.

While informal settings are more investigated, the influence of expressing gratitude on an organizational level, in other words within companies, is not thoroughly researched. Institutionalized gratitude is defined as “gratitude that is culturally embedded within the organization, through its people, policies and practices, such that thankfulness and appreciation are customary features of daily work life” (Cameron, 2012). Different organizational aspects have been investigated. For instance, a positive relationship between gratitude and corporate social responsibility has been found; (Andersson, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2007) employees with a higher level of gratitude tend to have a greater sense of responsibility towards other employees and societal issues. Also, in relationship marketing, the expression of gratitude seems to lead to increased customer bonding behaviour due to a more positive attitude towards the company (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff & Kardes, 2009). Thus, institutional gratitude facilitates a beneficial organizational environment.

Expressing gratitude does not only benefit financial gains of a company through their customers, it also seems to impact bonding behaviour between managers and employees and facilitate general stress prevention. An inverse relationship between gratitude and workplace burnout in teachers has been found (Chan, 2010); it suggests that the development of gratitude interventions help teachers cope with negative emotions and facilitate and enhance their sense of self-efficacy and competence. Furthermore, managers and patients expressing gratitude to employees working in career roles for HIV/AIDS patients buffered them from burnout (Bennett, Ross & Sunderland, 1996). Thus, the expression of gratitude might help provide a healthier job environment which leads to less absences and more financial benefits on a long-term basis.

Positive effects of gratitude expression on employees’ mental health might be due to its effect on job satisfaction. It is defined as “the degree of pleasure an employee derives from his or her job” (Muchinsky, 2003). Waters (2012) related reciprocal gratitude, as defined above, to job satisfaction. For her study, she tested employees of the teaching and finance sector before giving a workshop in their institution to assess the employees’ perception of their personal wellbeing and organizational environment. Her results show that institutional gratitude might have a unique effect on job satisfaction beyond dispositional gratitude. This has also been confirmed within the healthcare sector. Stegen & Wankier (2018) executed at a nursing school a pre-survey on perceived gratitude and job satisfaction at a nursing school, several gratitude interventions the following year, and a post-survey at the end. They concluded that consistent reciprocal gratitude led to a higher job satisfaction within the entire organization. This was further confirmed by Lanham, Rye, Rimsky & Weill (2012), who assessed using questionnaires how mental health professionals perceived gratitude and job satisfaction. Furthermore, expressing and showing gratitude by managers towards employees seems to have a positive effect on employee satisfaction and job attitude (Ritzenhöfer, Brosi, Spörrle, &

Welpel, 2019). Fisher (2010) assessed literature on positive psychology and happiness, and concluded that in industrialized countries, job satisfaction is a key factor to maintaining a low employee fluctuation rate and to provide a healthy work environment. Additionally, a higher job satisfaction leads to increased productivity (Böckerman & Ilmakunnas, 2012; Danish & Usman, 2010). For their study, Böckerman & Ilmakunnas (2012) used matched data on job satisfaction from the European Community Household Panel and information on establishment productivity from longitudinal register data to evaluate the correlation between job satisfaction and productivity. Generally speaking, institutional gratitude seems to foster an organizational culture of satisfaction and well-being (Riordan, 2013). It can also be used as a conceptual tool to facilitate a more productive and healthier environment with higher job satisfaction overall.

Even though researchers have started disentangling the importance of gratitude in the work place, companies still do not have a consistent method of how to show appreciation in the workplace (this is based on interviews held with five different people with working experience, see Appendix and Methods section for further information). Thus, it remains a question how to express gratitude in the work place in the most effective way. In institutional settings it is generally harder to have a consistent way of expressing gratitude compared to casual settings, since, for instance, face-to-face interactions are not always possible, or a group instead of just one person needs to be addressed. The larger a company is, the more convenient it is to write expressions of gratitude. The more people who work in a company, the harder it is to address everyone personally and specifically. Hence, written gratitude is often the most convenient way to address employees.

Research by Grant & Gino (2010) as well as Toepfer, Cichy & Peters (2012) suggests that written gratitude messages by managers towards their employees are an effective way to convey appreciation. Both studies indicate that receiving letters of gratitude lead to a significant increase in wellbeing within an organizational context. Kerns (2006) and Fehr, Fulmer, Awtrey & Miller (2017) on the other side showed that spoken expressions of gratitude by professors have a similar impact on the wellbeing of their students as the written form.

Most companies express their gratitude both written and spoken. This can be done either through periodical face-to-face meetings or by valuing comments about one's work (Men, 2014). Written gratitude is often expressed through vacation or periodical appreciation letters, such as Christmas cards or a feedback message about the impact of employees' work every half a year for instance. Especially for bigger companies and organizations, it is hard to reach out to every employee personally, this stresses the importance of an efficient expression of gratitude. Written gratitude, as previously mentioned, seems to be the most convenient, since a general "thank you" card is time and cost efficient. However, non-personalized messages might have a reverse effect. Employees would

like to be recognized for their personal achievements, and not be treated all the same (White, 2014). Moreover, some employees have preferences towards spoken expression (this is again based on the preliminary interviews, see Appendix and Methods section for further information). Companies have started implementing the expression of gratitude in their organizational framework, but still do not have a consistent, effective and cost-efficient manner of doing so.

This consistency is important to efficiently use gratitude as a tool to increase job satisfaction and create a healthy work environment. As previously elaborated, job satisfaction seems to have a major impact on productivity, and prevention of mental health issues of employees. Job satisfaction also leads to a lower employee fluctuation rate which is generally desired by companies, since the effort of searching for and training new employees is cost-intensive and time consuming. By creating a “positive institution” (Seligman & Csikszentmihlyi, 2000) with gratitude as one of the main tools, companies can create a fruitful, steady and healthy working environment, which emphasizes the necessity of an in-depth research of this field. With this study, we aim to provide companies with an effective way of using gratitude as a multifaceted tool to facilitate an increased job satisfaction as well as to further disentangle the different ways of expressing gratitude. This leads to the main research question:

Does the way of expressing gratitude (spoken vs written) impact the degree of job satisfaction?

Literature research enables hypothesizing that both spoken and written expression of gratitude will lead to an increased job satisfaction (Waters, 2012). Additionally, literature addressing the value of spoken expressed gratitude indicates that the spoken expression of gratitude might be more impactful than written one, due to the tone and intonations of one’s voice (White, 2014).

## **Methods**

With this study we aimed to find whether spoken or written expression of gratitude was more efficient. We conducted 5 preliminary interviews to see how gratitude was mostly expressed within an organizational setting, the results of these interviews are not going to be part of the results of this study. After a literature review, we used the interviews to further explore the field and to narrow down our research concept. These interviews were held with five people who work or have worked in different fields of different ages and gender (the exact description of the interviewees can be found in the appendix). All of them answered questions regarding the perception of the expression of gratitude within their companies. The interview results and literature reviews indicated that most companies use spoken or written ways of expressing their gratitude. Furthermore, employees indicated that spoken expression is their preference. This study is executed under the assumption that

task satisfaction equals job satisfaction (further information can be found in the instruments section). The survey designed for this experiment and our preliminary questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

## Subjects

To generate the sample, a random convenient sampling was used. The sample consisted of 103 people who are or were working in the Netherlands, seven of them have been outliers and have been excluded for further analysis. The participants were assigned to one of the groups at random: 31 (32.3%) participants in the control group “no gratitude”, 31 (32.3%) in the “spoken gratitude” group and 34 (35.4%) in the “written gratitude” group. 40 (41.7%) of the subjects were women and 56 (58.3%) men. The participants comprised of 22 different nationalities, most of them originally from the Netherlands (53; 55.2%) or Germany (11; 11.5%). The age of the subjects ranged from 19 to 56 with an average of 25.95 years ( $SD= 8.20$ ). 3 (3.1%) of the participants had a doctoral degree, 21 (22.9%) a master’s degree, 54 (52.4%) bachelor’s degree, 4 (4.2%) an associate’s degree and 18 (18.8%) participants had a high school degree.

Three chi-squared tests showed no differences among the three conditions and gender ( $\chi^2 (2) = 0.32, p = .852$ ) or educational level ( $\chi^2 (8) = 10.03, p = .264$ ) A one-way ANOVA showed no differences among the three conditions and age ( $F (2, 93) < 1$ ).

## Procedure

Each of the five researchers approached 21 subjects (7 per group). Every participant was approached online via the researcher’s social network. The experiment was executed online via Qualtrics. After subjects agreed to participate, the researchers used an online randomizer ([www.random.org](http://www.random.org)) to assign their group and sent the corresponding link to the experiment. The introductory explanation was intentionally vague to not show the actual research goal. Participants were required to give their consent, confirm that they were over 18 and were working or had worked in the Netherlands. Then the main task, which consisted of a flag-country matching game where participants had to find the correct flag for a country or continent 15 times, began. After completion, depending on the group the participant was in, he or she would receive either a written or spoken gratitude message or no message at all. The message was, “Thank you very much for your participation”. After this, the participants were asked a question regarding their enjoyment of the task, more specifically, “in my opinion, the experiment was...,” which was then answered with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from very enjoyable to very un-enjoyable. After answering questions about the

general demographics, all participants received a “thank you for your help” message, including a “thumbs up” emoji. The average duration of the experiment was 5 minutes and 56 seconds (SD=8.92).

### Design

The experiment used a 1x3 between-subject design with the independent variable as gratitude (written, spoken, no gratitude), and dependent variable as job satisfaction (quantitative). In addition to gratitude as an independent variable, age, gender, religion and the educational level were descriptive variables to check the sample distribution.

### Materials

As mentioned earlier, gratitude is defined as being conscious and responsive with a sense of gratitude for others’ experiences and the positive outcomes one possibly gets (McCullough et al., 2002). The variable gratitude was divided into three different forms: written, spoken and no gratitude, with a separate survey for each. For the spoken and written gratitude messages the following text was used, “Thank you very much for your participation”, thus gratitude was operationalised by using the signal phrase “thank you” and the intensifier “very much”. The spoken gratitude message was spoken and recorded by an English native who has naturally an unusually high-pitched voice and is generally familiar in the field of gender-neutral language. Upon completion of the same country-flag matching task consisting of 15 questions, the participants of the groups spoken and written gratitude, received the gratitude message immediately thereafter. The assessment of job satisfaction came after so as not to distort the effect of the gratitude message. The third condition, no gratitude, did not receive any gratitude message and right after completing the country-flag matching task, the enjoyment assessment was presented.

### Instruments

A meta-analysis investigating job satisfaction supported the measurement of job satisfaction with task enjoyment (Wanous, Reichers & Hudy, 1997), enabling the equation of task satisfaction and job satisfaction. Task enjoyment was measured with the question, “In my opinion, the experiment was...” derived from Spector’s job satisfaction survey (1985). Following previous findings on the empirical usage of the Likert scale (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011), a 7-point Likert scale was used with the extreme poles 1 = “very unenjoyable”, and 7 = “very enjoyable”.

### Statistical treatment

A One-way ANOVA was used to see the effect of the expression of gratitude on job satisfaction.



## Results

A boxplot graphic showed 7 outliers which were excluded from further analyses. A Welch one-way ANOVA showed a significant effect of expressing gratitude on task enjoyment ( $F(2, 57.908) = 4.43, p = .016, \eta^2 = .063$ ). A Games-Howell post hoc test showed that spoken gratitude messages ( $M=5.87, SD=.72$ ) had a bigger impact on task enjoyment than the written ( $M= 4.97; SD= 1.73$ ). However, participants' Likert scale scores on receiving written or spoken gratitude did not differ significantly from participants who did not receive a gratitude message ( $M= 5.48, SD=1.03$ ). Thus, interestingly, whether a participant received no gratitude message or written/ spoken one did not influence the enjoyment of the task.

Table 1: Task enjoyment

	Written gratitude n = 34 <i>M (DE)</i>	Spoken gratitude n = 31 <i>M (DE)</i>	No gratitude n = 31 <i>M (DE)</i>	Total N= 96 <i>M (DE)</i>
Task enjoyment	4.97 (.1.73)	5.87 (.729)	5.48 (1.03)	5.43 (1.3)

## Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate the influence of different ways to express gratitude on job satisfaction. In this study, there was no overall effect of gratitude messages on job satisfaction. If one has to choose between written or spoken, this study showed that spoken gratitude messages have a bigger effect. However, both groups scored equally high on the enjoyment task when compared to the control group. Therefore, the answer to the main research question is that spoken gratitude messages are the more effective way of expressing gratitude, confirming White's (2014) original hypothesis. The overall effect of gratitude messages compared to the control group was not significant, thus contradicting Waters' (2012) idea that gratitude messages in general lead to a higher job satisfaction than without any gratitude expression.

## Discussion

The results showed further evidence for Naito, Wangwan & Tani (2005), that spoken gratitude messages seem to have a bigger impact on job satisfaction than written ones. To use the expression

of gratitude as an efficient tool within an organization, employers and managers can use this information to implement a more efficient way of expressing gratitude.

However, generally the expression of gratitude did not lead to a higher job satisfaction when compared to the control group without any expression of gratitude. There is a range of possible explanations for the effect of the study. The similar results in enjoyment of the two conditions in comparison with the control group could be explained by White (2014). He states that non-personalized gratitude messages might have a reverse effect on job satisfaction. In this study, both the written and the spoken messages were standardized responses. The standardized gratitude messages may have led to a reverse effect on job satisfaction causing an equally high score throughout all three conditions, implying that having an impersonal gratitude expression has a similar effect on task enjoyment as no gratitude message.

Related to the impersonality, another factor potentially causing this effect might be the anonymity of the execution of the experiment itself. From being approached to receiving a gratitude message, participants have not interacted personally with the researcher. A face-to-face situation, in which subjects have a clear picture of the person they are working for, could have elicited a stronger effect, since interpersonal face-to-face interactions seem to lead to a higher understanding and commitment between the interlocutors in the beginning of a relationship (Chan & Cheng, 2004). Also, the preliminary research conducted before the execution of this experiment indicated preferences for face-to-face interactions. Thus, executing the experiment offline or adding pictures of the researcher could have increased the interpersonal bonding mechanisms and might have improved the impact of the gratitude messages.

Furthermore, the difference between written and spoken gratitude messages might be attributed to a more authentic expression in spoken messages. Even though the spoken message was as much standardized as the written one, a person's tone, intonation and prosody already conveys a higher degree of intimacy and indicates a more interpersonal relation than the same words on a paper (White, 2014). Thus, in general, the expression of gratitude has to be more specific and especially so if written expression is chosen in e.g. Christmas cards, a more elaborate and specific way of approaching each employee is recommendable and might be more beneficial.

Furthermore, this study was executed under the assumption that task satisfaction equals job satisfaction. To see whether a manipulation of the task satisfaction could lead to a more significant outcome, the task itself could be changed. According to Cano & Castillo (2004), factors for job satisfaction, *inter alia*, are, recognition, possibility of growth, working condition and work itself. We did not do any preliminary testing on how enjoyable the task was (compared to Cano's & Castillo's work), without using any gratitude messages. The participants who did not receive any message

afterwards enjoyed the task on a similar level as the other groups. Thus, the nature of the task itself seems to be satisfying. Since the main idea of this study was the influence of showing gratitude, or in other words recognition, the expression of gratitude cannot be the factor explaining the outcome.

A reason for the high task enjoyment might also have been the personal growth gained during the game. Participants could have acquired knowledge or were intrigued to gather information about national flags which they did not have before. The surveys themselves did not give any feedback about the quality of the performance. However, given that the majority of the sample consisted of higher educated participants more likely to have a broader common knowledge (see Methods), they could have known the results by exclusion or obviousness. To avoid any growth and also to lower the enjoyment of the work itself a more monotone task could be used, since work monotony leads to a lower job satisfaction (Melamed, 1995). An example task could be “finding the 1 between I’s” (Figure 1, see appendix), in which, as the name suggests, participants have to find the number 1 between many capital I’s. This task does not offer any potential knowledge acquisition nor enjoyment. Also using a long-lasting exercise could decrease the enjoyment, since the combination of monotone task and a higher task duration amplifies the negative effects on job satisfaction (Burke & Cooper, 2008) To ensure the task is not too boring and thus potentially having negative effects on the job satisfaction, a pre-testing could have been executed for a variety of games on task enjoyment to choose the most adequate one.

Furthermore, the working conditions could have been manipulated to generate an overall lower enjoyment, for instance by playing a loud sound the entire duration of the study. Also, a variety of different tasks (short, long, monotone, interesting, etc.) could have elicited a more significant effect since it could neutralise advantages and disadvantages of each task.

In addition, the surpassing of expectations for the experiment may have also been a factor leading to a higher enjoyment. Studies of different fields showed a relationship between expectation and satisfaction (Del Bosque, San Martín & Collado, 2006; Prakash & Lounsbury, 1984; Haas, 1999). Whether high or low, expectations have to be met to satisfy someone, but if expectations are surpassed also the level of satisfaction is higher. Often when subjects are approached to participate in a study, they have to answer various questions and read a lot; as a result, they probably expect a low level of enjoyment. This study however, had a game-character, multiple app-stores offer similar games just for the sake of enjoyment. Although the survey did not give any score or feedback after the task, which generally decreases the game character value, considering that many games are constructed in a similar way, it could have been like a game setting for participants. Hence, participants might have enjoyed the task more, since they initially expected something more monotone. The study could have

been constructed like a long-lasting standard survey in which participants have to answer with a high number of questions or execute a variety of different tasks to neutralise advantages of the task itself.

The question asked in this paper is a very important one, and literature shows it has its justification to be asked. However, the equation of task and job satisfaction does not make the results of this study directly applicable for managers and employers within an organizational setting. As previously mentioned, this study was executed online, which also limits the informative value for a real-life work setting. To increase the validity, pictures could have been added, the study could have been executed in person or even within multiple companies. Moreover, the sampling method chosen in this study makes this study less representative of the actual population, and thus less reliable. The researchers did not distinguish between the type of working experience, for example, an unpaid intern was treated the same as an employee at managing level, thus the comparability of the participants can be doubted. Also, the data gathering can be put in doubt, since students approached participants, therefore a legitimate question could be whether all of the participants actually met the criteria.

Gratitude plays an important role within a company and the most beneficial way of expressing it needs further research. Therefore, future studies should focus on more ecologically valid studies within companies or should focus on the cooperation with employees of certain companies like Waters (2012). Moreover, influential factors of enjoyment could be investigated more, to see whether potential changes of the enjoyment of the work itself might increase general job satisfaction. Additionally, other potential determinants of the perception of gratitude, like age and educational level, deserve to get more attention. This study was conducted with participants of a wide range of ages, according to Lee & Wilbur (1985), younger employees are more satisfied with their jobs than older ones. Given how long ago their findings were, future research could focus on repeating and reviewing the validity of these results. Regarding educational level, the sample of this study is equally distributed, but had more participants with university degrees in comparison to the ones without. Hence, it might be beneficial to consider the influence of educational on job satisfaction, since a higher educational level generally leads to a higher job satisfaction (Metle, 2001). Also, a cross-cultural perspective could be interesting to see cultural impact. Even though this study was conducted with participants who work or had worked in the Netherlands, there were many different nationalities. To further disentangle the influences on job satisfaction and exclude other impacting aspects, a consideration of the influences of culture and nationalities could be beneficial.

An examination of written and spoken gratitude disentangled the more effective way of expressing gratitude, showing that spoken gratitude is a more beneficial manner than written. All in all, as shown by the results, it is advisable to use personalized messages. Whether spoken or written, there was similar effect on job satisfaction as no gratitude message. This study is the first step towards

opening the domain of using gratitude as a multi-faceted, efficient tool to be implemented by employers and managers within organizations.

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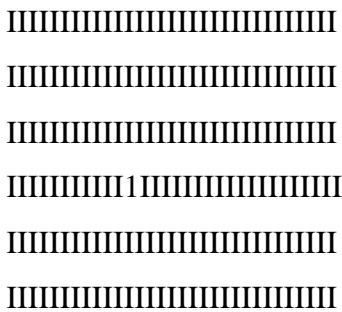


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## Appendix

Figure 1: “Finding the 1 between the I’s”



### Questionnaire preliminary research:


1. What’s your personal experience with gratitude in your environment?
2. Do you know what gratitude means? / How would you define gratitude?
3. How should gratitude be expressed to you as / how do you express gratitude to others?
4. Do you feel valued at work?
5. How often do you receive compliments/ appreciation from your superiors?
6. What do you think is the best way to create satisfaction in terms of gratitude?
7. When was the last time your manager expressed their gratitude towards you?
8. What is more frequent; verbal or non-verbal forms of gratitude in your work environment?
9. Does your manager let you know when you are doing a good job at work?
10. Would you like to hear ‘thank you’ more frequently?

### Interviewees:

Woman, 27 years old, waitress  
Woman, 28, years old, PhD candidate  
Woman, 53 years old HR advisor  
Man, 53 years old, teacher  
Man, 62 years old, former banker

### Survey experiment

#### All three surveys:

**Radboud University** 

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project about cognitive mechanisms of perception in a working environment for which you are asked to complete a cognitive task and follow-up questionnaire. This research project only requires participants working or that have worked in the Netherlands and is being conducted by International Business Communication students from Radboud University. Completing this questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes.

The data collected during this study is anonymous and cannot be traced back to you. Such data will be used as part of datasets, articles and presentations exclusively for the purposes of this research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You can withdraw your participation and consent at any time without giving a reason, and all of the collected data from you will be permanently deleted.

Should you want more information about this research, or in case you have any questions / complaints, please send an email to [l.botcher@student.ru.nl](mailto:l.botcher@student.ru.nl).

Note: If you do not meet the following criteria, we kindly ask to quit the survey.

I am at least 18 years old.

Yes

No

I am currently working or have worked in the Netherlands.

Yes

No

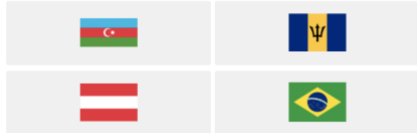
I have read the information text and give consent to participate.

Yes

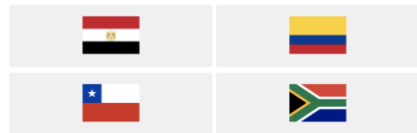
No



Brazil



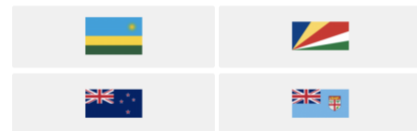
South Africa



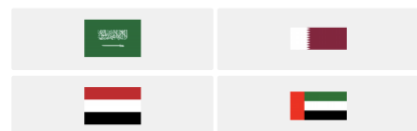
China



New Zealand



Qatar



In the following part, you will complete a task, in which you will be asked to match countries with their corresponding flags. You will be presented with a country / continent name and 4 possible answer options. Please indicate which flag fits the country / continent.



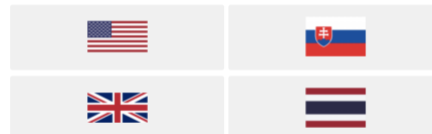
Antarctica



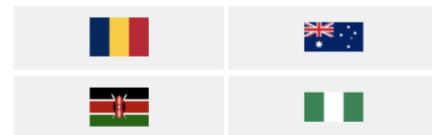
Spain



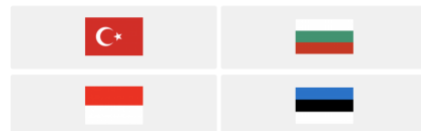
USA

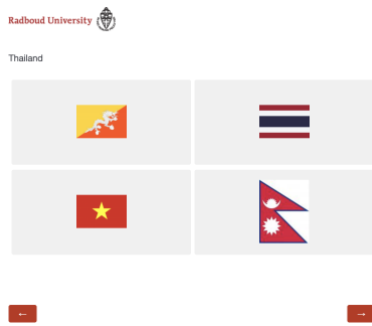


Kenya



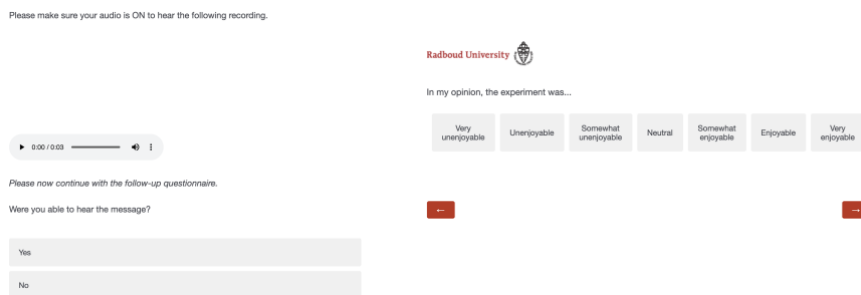
Turkey



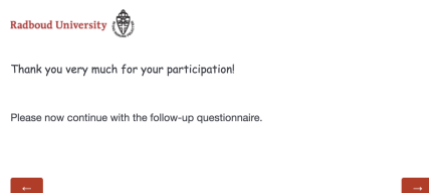


Difference between all three surveys:

After completion the spoken gratitude survey continues like this:



After completion the written gratitude survey continues like this:



After completion the no gratitude continues directly with the follow up questionnaire.

All surveys continue with the following:



My gender is:

Male

Female

Other



My nationality is:



How religious do you consider yourself to be?

Not religious

Neutral

Religious



My age is:



My highest education degree is:

Less than high school degree

High school degree

Associate degree (2-year)

Bachelor's degree HBO & WO (3- or 4-year)

Master's degree HBO & WO

Doctoral degree



Thank you so much for taking your time to complete the survey! You really helped us a lot!



## Statement of own work

Student name: Lucas Böttcher

Student number: s4760905

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- a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (<http://www.ru.nl/stip/english/rules-regulations/fraud-plagiarism/>) and with Article 16 "Fraud and plagiarism" in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's programme of Communication and Information Studies.
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