

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING AND EMPLOYEE'S HAPPINESS: A STUDY OF AN INDIAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

In today's business environment, management of employees of university setup has become one of the most challenging elements to consider. To sustain a competitive advantage, highly skilled employees who are perfectly aligned and motivated in the institute are essential. However, happiness becomes essential for these types of employees. Research on measuring the happiness and general wellbeing of faculty at university setup has become an important component for the management team when introducing new plans and future policies related to cultivating a positive teaching and learning environment. It is a well-established practice to measure the happiness of people of the country but use of happiness index to measure the happiness at work place in university setup is rare.

In this study we have measured happiness amongst employees of the Ganpat University using the validated scale of employee happiness. The dimensions of employee happiness at the university are used as independent variables for explaining the employees' happiness with respect to their nature of work. Therefore, we have investigated the factors which are contributing in employee's happiness at a university, such as life satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, self-affirmation and physical and mental health. All the measures were taken from validated studies and found reliable.

Survey approach was adapted using self-administered questionnaire to achieve the research objective. 362 participants were selected by convenient sampling technique. Data collected by personal (face to face) interview and online survey (email) method. Analysis included hypothesis testing regarding which constructs explains the most in defining employee happiness with the help of multiple regression and subsequent multivariate analysis. Research findings illustrate the important factors contributing in increasing employee happiness at work place. Findings also help the top management of the university in policy making. Specifically, for the Indian university, the concept is in infant stage so there is huge scope for further research in this knowledge domain.

Keywords: Employees' Happiness, Employees' Wellbeing, University, Life Satisfaction, Physical and Mental Health, Interpersonal Relationship, Self-Affirmation

INTRODUCTION

Today in the era of competitive business environment, workforce becomes most difficult task. To be sustaining in this challenging environment motivated and skillful employees are essential. Herzberg's model is also explaining the relationship between happiness and employee's motivation. Happiness in the work place is also influencing the employee's productivity (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001) and can also effect on OCB (Organisation Citizenship Behaviour) (Rego et al., 2011). In the competitive work environment employees are continuously been brought under the tremendous work pressure and ultimately it leads to job stress and depression. Al Suwaidi (2019) started that Conducive work environment motivates employees to work hard to achieve their stated goals and objectives.

This day's happiness and life satisfaction is a prominent domain of research. Research on finding factors affecting on stress and decreasing stress becomes important to cultivating a positive work environment (Abbas & Raja, 2015). Employees without happiness might suffer from stress, depression or hyper anxiety. Ultimately it results in low productivity, lack of motivation and commitment, absenteeism and termination. To reduce the turnover ratio and decrease the rate of resigns companies are constantly searching for the ways. It is stated by Nell Nodings (2005) that education and happiness are related with each other. It is further studied by Selignan (2002) and he found that happy faculties can teach students well compared to unhappy faculties. Selignan (2002) also stated that happy faculties are highly motivated towards their goal and ready to accept the changes. Hence they can assist the students in better way.

For the universities in this competitive situation, it is become an important to do research on measuring employee's happiness or wellbeing (both teaching and non-teaching). It would help the management and administrative department in making right decisions when introducing new HR policy and plans. Happiness of employees is essential for the success and better future of a university. Employee's happiness is positively influencing performance of the employees (Huang et al., 2016). The same thing is been explained by broaden and build model developed by Fredrickson (2001). According to the model happy employee are more easily able to broaden and build themselves, more resilient, creative, socially connected and physically and mentally healthy. Moreover, Jain & Kaur (2014) revealed that happiness at workplace can help the employees to realize their career goals, increase level of job satisfaction and make the employee a team member. Jain & Kaur (2014) added that employee's happiness can positively impact on organizational productivity and return.

Past researches reviled that there are many factors affecting on happiness at workplace, but the main factors influences are higher purpose, autonomy, people and impact. So organization interested to create happy work place environment should focus on including and implementing all the above factors in their HR policy. Researches also indicate that two way communication positively influencing employee's happiness (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Anchor, 2010). Organizations that encourage positive work environment to make their employees happy treat the employees with respect and trust. Moreover past studies shows that managers who involve employees in making organizational decisions, goal setting, policy framing, and in day to day work have more happier employee with high efficiency and productivity (Froman, 2010; Peters & Austin, 1985).

In this study we are taking Employee happiness as subjective wellbeing. We have taken two perspective to measure the employee's happiness, one is organizational perspective (Workplace happiness/Employee's wellbeing) and second is individual perspective (Individual happiness). The factors contributing to Employee's wellbeing or Employee's workplace happiness are economic wellness, environmental wellness, infrastructural wellness, social and academic wellness and democratic wellness. The factors contributing to individual happiness are life satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, self-affirmation and physical and mental health.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Wellbeing

Life Satisfaction

Enkvist, et al., (2012) defined Life satisfaction as an Individual's cognitive judgment about his own life. Veenhoven (2012) stated that mostly "life-satisfaction is used as overall happiness", and can be used synonymously with containment. Dockery (2003) described happiness, wellbeing and life satisfaction as similar constructs. In the literature often life satisfaction and happiness are taken as quality of life though they are inherently distinct and represent component of wellbeing (Saperia et al., 2018). The most elementary use of life satisfaction data is to estimate apparent quality of life within a country or a specific social group.

Chia-Hao & Ting-Ya (2018) defined life satisfaction as “the degree of consent to life needs, goals, meanings and safety”.

From the past literature (Emmons & Diener, 1985) it can be infer that well-being comprise of life satisfaction (cognitive factor) and happiness (affective factor). Selim (2008) revealed that income, employment and health have positive influence on happiness and life satisfaction. Further he added married people and female are more happy and satisfied with their life. Moreover, Numbers of children have negative influence on happiness and life satisfaction. Lee, et al., (2018) in his study found that quality of work life have positive influence on employee’s life satisfaction and happiness.

Interpersonal Relationships

According to the fundamental interpersonal relationship orientation theory interpersonal relationship is individual’s intention to interact with each other (Schutz, 1958). According to (Stoetzer, 2010), In the research domain of psychology interpersonal relationship considered as a key factor that have influence on employees’ wellbeing, job satisfaction, productivity and performance. Further, social exchange theory indicates that people in interpersonal relationship involve in social and economic exchanges. Social exchange encompasses exchange of both tangible and intangible resource, which includes “needs for esteem, approval and care, support, friendship and respect” (Shore et al., 2009).

Fine (1986) stated that interpersonal relationship is important for both individual and organisation. Further, he added that it helps employees in doing his job; it reduces stress level and improves cooperation and synergy. Those employees who are having good friends, feels more comfortable at their work place. Moreover, Riordan & Griffeth (1995) and Lyubomirsky & Ross (1997) suggested that interpersonal relationship can have influence on employee’s attitude towards the job, intentions to do job, employee’s performance, employee’s absenteeism and turnover and organization citizenship behavior.

Self- Affirmation

Self-affirmation can be defined as “an act that manifests one’s adequacy and thus affirms one’s sense of global self-integrity” Cohen & Sherman (2014). Here, self-affirmation taken as positivity and linking of an individual about his/her own life. According to (Sherman & Cohen, 2006) it is a receiving positive feedback about one’s own self from others. Self-affirmation may be low in the Indian context, specifically where there is a system of bureaucratic organisational norms.

According to the self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988; Aronson et al., 1999) “people are motivated to maintain their individual’s sense of self-integrity, which could be described as a sense of global efficacy”. In addition it is also related with the wellbeing (Howell, 2017). The self-affirmation theory also indicates that employees always motivated to retain their integrity. Negative feedback from the superior can threaten their integrity and it can have impact on employee morale and performance.

Physical and Mental Health

Research interest in physical and mental health is emerging in the area of wellbeing. Wellbeing defined by Warr (1987) as “a broader and more encompassing concept that embraces the “whole person” and factors in his or her emotional state as well as specific physical or psychological symptoms”. Physically and mentally fit individual are essential for any organisation to be profitable as they are more productive. Contrariwise unfit and less healthy individuals are less productive. According to (Bevan, 2010) Individual’s health issues are affecting on their wellbeing. In past literature many times, wellbeing and individual’s health

have taken interchangeably. Health particularly study in medical context but here is a need to study this variable in psychological and organisational context Danna & Griffin (1999).

According to Keyes (2007) wellbeing can be considered in different context. In physiological context it is psychological wellbeing, in social context it is social wellbeing and in mental health context it is subjective wellbeing. In organisational and employers' perspective health is refer to the organisational health and safety. But nowadays, it is important that employer take care about physical and mental health of the employees. An organisation has to think about increasing physical as well as psycho-emotional capacity of the employees which ultimately results in increasing happiness and productivity.

Employee Wellbeing and Happiness

Employee wellbeing and Employee happiness have been used interchangeably in the positive psychology literature (Diener, 1984). Veenhoven (2012) considered happiness as life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing. In simple words, happiness can be categorized in three ways. First, it is subjective experience, means; it is individuals' belief about themselves. Secondly, it is relative, means individual would be happy or sad depends in relative presence of positive and negative emotions. Thirdly, it is a global judgment and related with one's own life. According to (wright, 2006) Employee well-being is different from job satisfaction as not tied with any particular situation. Overall Happiness can be divided in to two broad orientations, one is SWB (Subjective wellbeing) and other is PWB (Psychological wellbeing).

Past research suggest that happiness and wellbeing are related, further, happiness is "emotional state of wellbeing" (Diener, 2000). Some of the researchers described happiness as a dimension of wellbeing (Ravindra & Ruchi, 2014; White, 2010). Happy employee lives long and healthy life by tapping all their personal strength and abilities towards their respective wellbeing. Here, we have considered happiness and wellbeing as a similar construct, as taken by Veenhoven (2012) in his study. In this study, we have studied organizational and individual factors affecting to the employee's wellbeing and employee's happiness.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

Influential Effect of Employee Wellbeing (Individual Factors) on Employee's Happiness

Hypothesis Proposed

H6: Life Satisfaction is positively related to Employee Happiness.

H7: Interpersonal Relationships is positively related to Employee Happiness.

H8: Self-Affirmation is positively related to Employee Happiness.

H9: Physical and mental health is positively related to Employee Happiness.

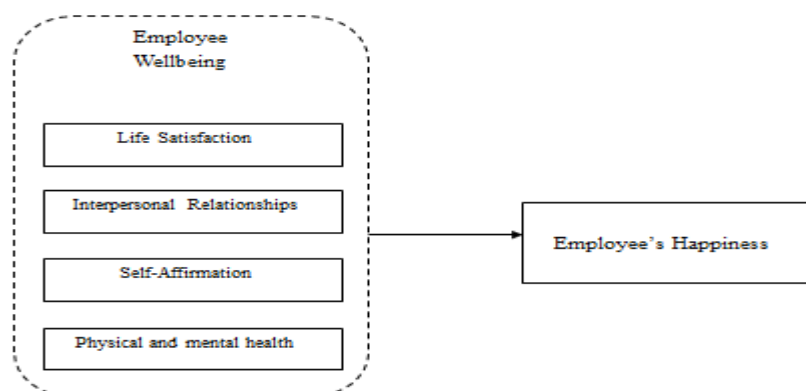


FIGURE 1
RESEARCH MODEL TO MEASURE EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This present study tests the influences of various dimensions of happiness on employee's happiness and also investigated the role of various factors contributing in determining employee's happiness at a university. The factors taken in this study are life satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, self-affirmation and physical and mental health.

Sample

Sample was taken from employees of one state private Indian university which is one of the leading private universities in Gujarat, India. 362 participants were selected by convenient sampling technique. Data collected by personal (face to face) interview and online survey (email) method through structure questionnaire. Of participants, 73.1% were male and 26.9% were female. Majority of the participants (n=166, 46.9%) fall into age category of 31-40 years, 27.8.0% (n=109) of the participants in the age group of 21-30 years. 26.4% (n=96) of the participants fall in to Rs. 15,001 - Rs. 25,000 income category and 26.2% (n=91) of the participants fall in to Rs. 50,000 – Rs. 75,000 income category. Moreover, 54.1% (n=200) no of participants were studied up to post graduation level, 15.9% (n=56) were doctorate. Nature of work is also categorized and there were 66.4% (n=240) participants from Teaching field and 33.6% (n=122) were from non-teaching field.

Scale Measures and Reliability Statistics

Two structured questionnaire were made to measure the dependent variable in the study. Questionnaire was divided in to five sections: first, Demographic details, and then life satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, self-affirmation and physical and mental health.

For this study, measures were taken from previous study of Chia-Hao & Ting-Ya, (2018). Study taken employee happiness as a measurement variable so overall happiness of an individual is measured with one item five point likert type scale by asking "Overall I consider myself a happy person". All the scales meet satisfactory reliabilities ranging from 0.654 to 0.795, well above than the threshold of 0.6 (Nunnally, 1978). Coefficient alpha was used to establish internal consistency of the items on the scale. Table 1 refers to all constructs, source, specific items and Cronbach alpha for reliability.

Variable	Specification	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Life satisfaction	Seven-item, five point likert type scale	1. There are no shortage of my daily needs 2. I think my daily life interesting 3. I think the world is wonderful 4. My life is purposeful and meaningful 5. I love my life 6. I am optimistic about my future 7. I feel my life is secured and in safety	0.662
Interpersonal Relationships	Six-item, five point likert type scale	1. I have good friends 2. My friends care about me 3. I think friends are essential for my daily life 4. I am willing to make efforts and	0.746

		help others 5. I feel happy accompanying with my friends 6. My family and friends would help me when I have difficulty	
Self-Affirmation	Six-item, five point likert type scale	1. I can arrange my own life 2. My engagement will result in better outcome 3. I can solve problems in my life 4. I like myself 5. I think I am attractive in the group 6. I am willing to express my thoughts	0.654
Physical and Mental Health	Six-item, five point likert type scale	1. I am healthy 2. I have good eating habits 3. I think I am happy 4. I do sports regularly 5. I sleep enough 6. I feel energetic every day	0.795

RESULTS

Regression Analysis for Employee's Happiness

Variables	B	t	Sig.	VIF
life satisfaction	0.872	9.552	0.000***	1.855
Interpersonal relationship	-0.132	-1.226	0.221	1.804
self-affirmation	-0.193	-1.849	0.065	2.102
Physical and mental health	0.167	1.981	0.048*	1.512

Model Summary: Adjusted R²=28.7%; F (4, 357)=37.24, p<0.001
 Dependent variable: Employee's Happiness (Individual perspective)
 Independent variables: life satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, self-affirmation and physical and mental health
 *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

The model for, Employee's happiness (Individual perspective) is made up of four independent variables and was found to be significant (F=37.24, p<0.05). Employee happiness for all the dimensions of happiness was explained up to 28.7 per cent of variance. The findings from the regression analysis suggested that the model provides sufficient support for predicted relationships. Out of four variables, two variables namely life satisfaction (***p<0.001), Physical and mental health (*p<0.05) found to be significant predictors of Employee's happiness (Thus, H6 and H9 are supported respectively).

Result suggested predictability of the variables as follow. Life satisfaction ($\beta=0.872$) and Physical and mental health ($\beta=0.167$). On the other hand, variables like interpersonal relationship (p=0.221) and self-affirmation (p=0.065) found to be insignificant predictors of Employee's happiness. (Thus, H7 and H8 are not supported). Moreover, No issues of multicollinearity were evident as all displayed VIF (variance inflation factor) statistics were not more than 10 (Myer, 1990). No variables indicated the problem of multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996) (Refer Table 2).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study aimed to understand the formation of Employee's happiness and its relationship with Employee wellbeing (Individual factors) which are life satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, self-affirmation and physical and mental health.

After analysis we can conclude that the employees of this Indian university are happy. Their happiness level varies with different factors as follows. Result that there is positive relationship between life satisfactions, physical and mental health and employee's happiness (individual perspective). Results also confirmed non-significant relationship between interpersonal relationship, self-affirmation and Employee's happiness.

The factors that affect employees' well-being are differently related with employee's overall happiness, mainly in the following aspects;

Life satisfaction has significant influence on employee's happiness. Employees are giving highest importance to life satisfaction for their happiness. The possible reasons could be employees have no shortage of their daily needs. Employees are earning good salary, so they are easily fulfilling their most of the needs. Hence, they think that their daily life is interesting and wonderful. Further they feel safe and secured at the workplace which leads higher life satisfaction and ultimately happiness.

Interpersonal relationship is non-significant in influencing employee's happiness. Interpersonal relationship is not so important for the employees in determining their happiness. The possible reasons are the employee's not having good friends in the organization. The colleagues are not so helpful with each other and not having good relationship. Because of having workforce diversity the employees are divided in small groups and making friendship with limited group of people. So it's resulting in less harmonious interaction with friends and colleagues and can adversely effect on interpersonal relationship.

Self- Affirmation is non-significant in influencing employee's happiness. Employees are not giving much importance to self-affirmation in determining their happiness. The possible reasons are academicians generally got more chances to express their thoughts in their class room. Teachers are also good at organizing themselves and solving their problems. So, these things are not really contributing in increasing their happiness.

Physical and mental health has significant influence on employee's happiness. Physical and mental is contributing high in determining the individual happiness. For the employees physical and mental health is important to be happy. Employees are also giving high importance to sports and sleep in their life. They understand that eating healthy food is essential to feel energetic at workplace. Hence, employees consider physical and mental health more to be happy.

Overall, results revealed that employees of this university are happy employees. In total life satisfaction and physical and mental health are contributing more in determining employee's overall happiness.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY

Life satisfaction is the most important factor contributing to employee's wellbeing happiness and happiness at individual level. Employees always transfer their happiness from home to office and office to home. It is important for an organization that employee be happy in their individual life as ultimately it would affect to the performance of an individual as well as organization. At this University most of the employees believes that their life is purposeful, wonderful and interesting. The university must ensure that employees feel their life is secured and safe. In addition it should be purposeful, wonderful and interesting. At institute level employee's birth day and anniversary could be celebrated. University should design and conduct more events that employees can participate with their family, such as family kitchen, rural tourism, and picnic and tours.

Physical and mental health is an important factor in determining employee's happiness. An individual must give due attention to physical fitness as the healthy minds lives in a healthy body. If one is high on physical well-being it is expected that he would be high on emotional, social and cognitive well-being. For this one must have a better life style, must do regular exercises, yoga, or meditation, and must have healthy food habits and sound sleep. The university should conduct more brain storming activity with employees to find ways to enhance employee happiness, such as providing tickets of sports center, yoga center and fitness center to employees for them to relax and improve their fitness through sporting and yoga.

Self-affirmation is also not significantly contributing in employee happiness. Still the university could improve it by considering the following points. The university should design and conduct more events where employees can participate and express themselves, Like, parties, get to gather, or can conduct social welfare events such as campus cleansing, tree plantation and community care to improve the social status and identification of employees, and help to improve the self-affirmation of employees.

Interpersonal relationship is also not significantly contributing in employee happiness. Still the university could improve it by build friendship among staff irrespective of the cadre. If possible, employees should be frequently changed from one section to the other to promote interpersonal relationship. Demographic homophily lead to trust and that, in turn, increases the quality of relationships among employees and their commitment to one another. University should focus on demographic homophily while recruitments. In addition, we recommend that university should promote informal communication processes between employees, which, in turn, results in higher levels of interpersonal trust, relationship commitment and perceived relationship quality.

The university should focus more on the variable which enables happiness to make the employee happier. The university should find out the reasons for less happiness level of some employees and make the action plan to resolve their problems and increase their happiness level. University can arrange a meeting with the employees of department where happiness level is less to understand their specific problems.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study has following limitations: First, the data has been collected only from only one Indian university employees therefore there are chances of systematic bias in responses. Second, possibly responses may differ with the different campus culture, policy and norms thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Third, the study utilized convenience sampling technique and therefore limitation associated with this sampling technique is applicable here. Forth, sample size taken for the study is very small, for the larger sample or enumeration, the results may differ. In future the study could be done with different university setups like, Public and private universities.

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