

FACTORS OF HAPPINESS AT WORKPLACE – A REVIEW OF STUDIES FROM 1999 TO 2021.

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Abstract

The role of happiness in our life is a well-known fact. Happy employees are also very productive and less prone to accidents, burnout and absenteeism. However, what is factors of happiness at the workplace are lesser known. Hence, the present paper is devoted to finding out the various factors of happiness in the workplace. The author reviews the research papers published from 1999 to 2021 in the relevant field. The different research databases of Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ScienceDirect and Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) through Google Scholar have been searched. A total of 296 studies have been found after hitting the keywords. However, only 29 studies were entirely related to the topic. After analysing the papers, 109 factors of happiness at the workplace have been found. These happiness factors were grouped into three categories: personal characteristics, organisation factors, and supervisors'. Individual elements were more significant than the other two factor categories among all three categories. Job satisfaction, social relationship, social capital, work involvement, work engagement and meaning in work and life were predominant personal factors of happiness at the workplace. Organisational trust, organisational commitment and a healthy organisation environment were essential factors under organisational factors. Supervisor support and reward were the most crucial factors related to supervisors.

Introduction

Happiness can be loosely defined as the state of mind in which one feels joyful, contented, satisfied and fulfilled. The person enjoys the moment and is not preoccupied with problems. It can also be said as a sense of pleasure. Primarily, it has been understood as good luck and favourable external conditions across cultures and times. Still, in American English, this word carries the meaning of internal states of favourable feelings (Oishi et al., 2013).

Happiness is often used interchangeably with subjective well-being and psychological well-being. According to *Diener, Lucas, & Oishi (2002)*, subjective well-being refers to one's evaluation of their life as a whole and its different domains (work, relationship etc.). Such evaluation includes two aspects cognitive and affective. Cognitive evaluation means one's knowledge about their life and its various parts. How one feels or experiences their life and domain is an affective evaluation. The components of subjective well-being are (i) life satisfaction, (ii) positive affect and (iii) absence of negative affect.

Psychological well-being is defined as satisfaction with life and its domain coupled with a good feeling in terms of worldly pleasure and having a sense of purpose and meaning in life (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Diener, 1984).

In a limited sense, subjective well-being can be one aspect of psychological well-being. Happiness is one of the few things that have remained a priority since the beginning of human history (McMahon, D. M. 2008), but medical science has proved that happiness plays a crucial role in an individual's overall health, physical or mental. Happiness has been found to cause longevity in healthy persons and protects the human body from various diseases through a robust immune system (Cohen et al., [1995](#)).

An abundance of studies, summarised in the World Database of Happiness, support the positive relationship between happiness and physical health (Veenhoven, [2006b](#)). Even in a very restricted sense, happiness leads to longevity for healthy persons if it cannot cure serious illnesses (Veenhoven, 2008).

Happiness or well-being is equally important in an organisational setting. Every organisation or institution wants its employees to be productive enough to meet the ends of the organisation or institution. Studies show that a positive and significant causal link exists between happiness and employees' productivity (Oswald et al., 2015; Sgroi, 2015; Bellet et al., 2019)

The role of happiness or subjective well-being has also been found significantly crucial in a country's economic development through enhanced productivity of its citizens (DiMaria et al., 2020)

Happiness plays a moderating role in employees' job burnout and turnover intention through their engagement at the workplace (Santhanam & Srinivas, 2019). Symptoms of burnout behaviour in employees at the workplace harm customer satisfaction (Söderlund, 2017). This will surely hamper the organisation's performance in the long run.

Given the role of happiness in our life in general and in organisational settings in terms of productivity, job satisfaction and burnout in particular, the present paper tries to review the available research literature to date to find the relevant factors which affect the level of happiness of the employee at the workplace.

While there is ample research in workplace happiness or well-being and its factors, few studies have been conducted so far to find out the most critical factors

influencing workplace happiness. Review studies are a great source to find relevant information in one place.

The objective of the Review

This comprehensive review aims to examine empirical studies that focused on the finding out of significant factors of happiness at the workplace in any organisation or institution. Thus, in our review, we were guided by the following three research questions:

- (i) What are the critical factors affecting happiness in the workplace?
- (ii) Among the three categories of factors of happiness, namely personal factors, organisational factors and supervisory factors: Which category has the highest numbers of factors of happiness?
- (iii) Among three factors of happiness, which factor are the most important factor of happiness at the workplace?

Methodology

To find out the significant factors of happiness at the workplace relevant, studies have been searched in the database of Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ScienceDirect and Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ) through Google Scholar. The keyword 'factors of happiness at the workplace' was used to search the studies. Two hundred ninety-six studies related to 'factors', 'happiness', or 'workplace' have been found. That was further narrowed down to 93 studies after excluding primarily selected studies but not relevant. These studies ranged from 1999 to 2021. As such, 93 studies have been reported to have used the proper keyword 'factors of happiness at workplace'. Among these, only 29 studies were found eligible for a

thorough examination. Several factors of happiness in the workplace have been found in these studies. Factors of happiness in the workplace are shown in table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Serial No.	Title of the study/Author & Year of publication	Factors of happiness in the workplace
1.	What makes your day? A study of the quality of work life of OR nurses/ Donald(1999)	Collaborative Decision-Making, Multiskilled Workers, Change, Organizational Culture, Locus of Control; and the Teamwork
2.	Job satisfaction of Malaysian registered nurses: a qualitative study/ Atefi et al., 2004	Social capital, as measured by the strength of family, neighbourhood, religious and community ties, is found to support physical health and subjective well-being through their impact on health.
3.	Beyond Money: Toward an Economy of Well-Being/Diener & Seligman, 2004	Social relationships and enjoyment at work, social capital, democratic governance, and human rights
4.	Occupational Well-being among Aging Teachers in Finland / Kinnunen et al., 2006	Job anxiety and depression, burnout, job competence and aspiration and health
5.	Orientations to happiness and subjective well-being among Chinese prospective and in-service teachers in Hong Kong / David, 2009	A life of meaning, a life of pleasure, and a dash of engagement
6.	Gratitude, gratitude intervention and subjective well-being among Chinese school teachers in Hong Kong / David, 2009	Dispositional gratitude
7.	Feeling good and doing great: The relationship between psychological capital and well-being. / Culbertson et al., 2010	Psychological capital
8.	Happiness, quality of working life, and job satisfaction among nurses	Job engagement/job satisfaction

	working in emergency departments in Iran / Javanmadnejad et al., 2010	
9.	What is Psychological Well-Being, Really? A Grassroots Approach from the Organizational Sciences / Veronique et al., 2012	Interpersonal Fitness at Work, Thriving at Work, Feeling of Competency at Work, Desire for Involvement at Work, and Perceived Recognition at Work.
10	Organisations and social worker wellbeing: the intra-organizational context of practice and its impact on a practitioner's subjective well-being / Shier & Graham, 2013	Interpersonal workplace relationships, decision-making processes, management/supervisory dynamics, workload and workplace expectations, access to resources and infrastructure support, and inter-organizational relationships
11	A meta-analytic examination of the relationship between job satisfaction and subjective well-being / Nathan et al., 2011	Job satisfaction
12	Life satisfaction and risk of burnout among men and women working as physiotherapists / Sliwinski et al., 2014	Satisfaction with children, marriage and partnership, with one's work and occupation, interactions with friends, relatives and acquaintances and sexuality may reduce burnout among men. Women who are satisfied with their children, family, health, free time and contact with friends, relatives and acquaintances are less prone to burnout. The weak financial situation among women and the deficiency of free time among men can induce burnout.
13	Workplace mental health: developing an integrated intervention approach / Anthony et al., 2014	Mental health literacy, and job quality, organisational commitment, support, and time to achieve organisational Change.
14	Resilience training in the workplace from 2003 to 2014: A systematic review / Ivan et al., 2015	Resilience training

15	Analytical of Factors Determinants of Happiness at Work Case Study on PT. PLN (Persero) Region Suluttenggo, Sulawesi, Indonesia / Santoso, 2015	(1) Vocational skills, seriousness, responsibility, punctuality, and productivity, (2) Organizational Culture (harmonisation in the workplace, employees of the most essential assets, mutual trust with co-workers, mutual trust between superiors and subordinates, honesty), (3) Organizational Trust (commitment, capability, ability, consistency of human resources), (4) Job Satisfaction (promotions, motivation, salary, support colleagues), (5) Leadership Behaviour (trustworthy leader, the leader as co-workers, leaders as subordinates, leaders as what to say), (6) Individual Characteristics (enjoys the work, carries out the work without objection, feels comfortable with The job, a dream job).
16	Happiness at workplace : Building a conceptual framework / Zerin, 2016	Job satisfaction, engagement, workplace safety, freedom, valued social position, stress management, work-family conciliation, positive psychology, and self-esteem.
17	A study on factors of workplace happiness / Gudivada et al., 2017	The age as A factor of happiness in the workplace is a significant factor. Work-life issues are essential during the early. Periods of employment and extrinsic are more critical at advancing age—the choice of faculty as a profession. The flexibility and happiness of faculty can be improved by providing flexible timings in the Organization.
18	Happy to help/happy to be here: Identifying components of successful clinical placements for	Happy to help and have a positive attitude

	undergraduate nursing students / Doyle et al., 2017	
19	Happiness among South African private sector physiotherapists / Elliot et al., 2018	Influence, social relations, life balance, optimism, work and leisure
20	Daily strengths use and employee well-being: The moderating role of personality / Arnold et al., 2018	Daily strengths use
21	Workplace happiness, well-being and their relationship with psychological capital: A study of Hungarian Teachers / Agota and Peter, 2019	The realisation of goals, feedback, finding meaning in work and social relationships, inner Psychological resources, hope and optimism.
22	An Evaluation on the Factors Influencing Happiness in Working Environment in UAE Government Entities: A Literature Review / Essa, 2019	(organisational virtuousness) integrity, trust and compassion. Aspects of perceived organisational climate,i.e. affective; interpersonal and social relationships, including participation, cooperation, warmth, social rewards, cognitive growth, innovation, autonomy and intrinsic rewards and instrumental: achievement, hierarchy, Structure and extrinsic rewards have been shown to result in employee happiness In the form of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Perceived corporate support, including fairness, both procedural and interactional, supervisor support and rewards/ Job-related positively with affective commitment, and the positive mood at work. Healthy workplace practices, including work life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety and employee involvement has been noted to

		cause organisational commitment and well-being at work.
23	In pursuit of job satisfaction and happiness: Testing the interactive contribution of emotion-regulation ability and workplace social support. / Merida-Lopez et al., 2019	Emotion-regulation ability and perceived workplace social support
24	Happiness, quality of working life, and job satisfaction among nurses working in emergency departments in Iran / Javanmardnejad et al., 2021	Economic status
25	Role of Happiness: Mediating Digital Technology and Job Performance Among Lecturers / Bangun et al., 2021	Positive attitude toward digital technology and higher job satisfaction
26	The seat of happiness? The effect of seat comfort on the achievement of psychological flow during transactional work / Clapp et al., 2021	Seat comfort, coupled with participants' perceptions of their ability to concentrate on the simulation's set of tasks
27	Investigating the factors that influence Iranian nurses' workplace happiness / Babamiri et al., 2021	Psychological capital, interactional justice and supervisor support, trust in the supervisor
28	Factors of feelings of happiness at work among staff in geriatric care facilities / Tej-Tominaga & Nakanishi, 2021	Social capital in the workplace, ethical leadership
29	Can supervisor support improve daily employee well-being? Evidence of supervisor training effectiveness in a study of veteran employee / Cynthia et al., 2021	Supervisor support

The above happiness factors were further grouped under three broad categories: personal, organisational, and supervisory. These factors are not very strictly different from each other's classes. Some of them can be put in any one of the categories. These factors are presented in table 1.2.

Table 1.2

Srl No.	Personal Factors
1.	Goals
2.	Meaning in work
3.	Social relationship
4.	Inner psychological resources
5.	Hope
6.	Optimism
7.	Age
8.	Seriousness
9.	Responsibility
10.	Punctuality
11.	Productivity
12.	Mutual trust
13.	Honesty
14.	Job satisfaction
15.	Motivation
16.	Support colleagues
17.	Enjoys the work
18.	Carry out the work without objection
19.	I was feeling comfortable with the job.
20.	A dream job
21.	The upbeat mood at work
22.	Involvement
23.	Mental health awareness
24.	Minimum job anxiety, depression and burnout
25.	Job competence
26.	Aspiration
27.	Health
28.	Interpersonal fitness at work
29.	Thriving at work
30.	I feel competent at work.
31.	The desire for involvement at work
32.	Perceived recognition at work
33.	Psychological capital
34.	Dispositional gratitude
35.	A life of meaning
36.	A life of pleasure
37.	A life of engagement
38.	Job engagement
39.	Positive attitude
40.	Self-esteem
41.	Daily strengths use
42.	Social capital

43.	Emotion regulation ability
44.	Perceived workplace social support
45.	Psychological capital
46.	Balanced life
47.	Perceived ability of the person
48.	Positive attitude
49.	Economic Status
50.	Social relationship
51.	Enjoyment at work
52.	Satisfaction with children, marriage and partnership
53.	Satisfaction with work and occupation
54.	Interactions with friends, relatives acquaintances
55.	Sexuality in men
56.	Financial situation
57.	Availability of free time
58.	Multiskilled workers
59.	Locus of control
Organisational Factors	
1.	Feedback
2.	The flexibility of working hours
3.	Vocational Skills
4.	Homogenisation in the workplace
5.	Mutual trust with co-workers and subordinates
6.	Organisational trust
7.	Organisational commitment
8.	Promotion
9.	Salary
10.	Organisational integrity
11.	Organisational trust and compassion
12.	Organisational climate (affective, interpersonal and social relationship)
13.	Perceived organisational support
14.	Fairness in organisation
15.	Healthy workplace practices (work-life balance, employee growth and development, health, and safety)
16.	Improved working conditions and job quality
17.	Organisational commitment and support
18.	Safety at workplace
19.	Freedom
20.	Ways of stress management at work
21.	Work-family conciliation
22.	The facility of Resilience training at work
23.	Interactional justice
24.	Influential work
25.	Work and leisure
26.	Seat Comfort
27.	The democratic structure of the organisation
28.	Human rights

29.	Collaborative decision-making process
30.	Organisational culture
31.	Teamwork
32.	Healthy decision-making process
33.	Management dynamics
34.	workload
35.	Access to resources and infrastructure support
36.	Feedback
37.	The flexibility of working hours
38.	Vocational Skills
39.	Homogenisation in the workplace
40.	Mutual trust with co-workers and subordinates
Supervisory Factors	
1.	Mutual trust between superiors and employee
2.	Leadership behaviour
3.	Trustworthy leader,
4.	Supervisory support/rewards
5.	Supervisory support
6.	Ethical leadership
7.	Trust in supervisor
8.	Helpful nature of the supervisor
9.	Supervisor's positive attitude
10.	Supervisory dynamics

Conclusion

After closely looking at the above factors of happiness at the workplace, the following points have been concluded:

- (i) Personal factors are most important in keeping employees of any organisation or industry happy.
- (ii) Social relationships, job satisfaction, social capital, meaning in work or life, positive attitude, engagement with work and optimism are predominant factors under personal factors responsible for keeping employees happy at the workplace.
- (iii) Factors related to supervisors are least important for employees' happiness at the workplace.

- (iv) Supervisory support, supervisory trust and the helpful nature of the supervisor are found to be the most important factor of happiness in the workplace.
- (v) Factors related to the organisation and its functioning are essential in keeping its employees happy but not as important as the personal factors of the employees themselves.
- (vi) Organisational support, organisational trust, organisational commitment and a healthy environment are reported as the most crucial factors of happiness at work.

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