Research Paper

Happiness at the Workplace

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A Study of Happiness at Workplace in an Organisation in Manufacturing segment

Abstract
Happiness is a state of mind, a choice, a way of living; it is not something to be achieved, it is something to be experienced. (Steve Maraboli). Happiness may be described as consisting of positive emotions and positive activities. There may be three kinds of happiness: pleasure, engagement, and meaning. Happiness is often derived as an ingredient that is churned out from Change. It is commonly said Change is the only constant and so true it is as the purpose of a Happiness of this study is to better understand the quality of life or the level of happiness of the employees and the impact it has on the employee's performance at the workplace which has "Change" as one of the ingredients. The objective of the study includes the efforts being taken by the human resources team of the large organization in creating an environment which makes the employees happy while they undergo change in Management, Culture, Work Processes and Leadership at large. The findings suggest that most employees are happy with their work life, barring a few members belonging to the older generation who are a little defiant in accepting the Change. The study aims at providing a view of the perceptions of the employees, so that the Human Resource teams may utilize their resources and reach out in their efforts to address the concerns of all employees at large and integrate the efforts towards overall achievement of goals and vision with a larger impact on business transformation.

I. Introduction

In an era where everybody is running a race without realizing that there is no end to this race, the stress levels on individual performance and the onus to prove oneself has been tremendous. The genuine smile on the face has become a rare occasion to witness ,only to realise that most of us have mastered the ability of plastic smile. Stress does not differeniate on the parameters of gender or age. The ability to maneovour the thin line between productive stress and unproductive stress is a task that most of us want to excel in .On the Workfront, professionals have been witnessing enhanced post Pandemic stress to prove themselves, their vision for the business and the growth to be achieved. Businesses have become very competitive and hence expectations of the organizations from its employees have been on the rise thereby putting a lot of stress on the employees. Some of the organizations have realized that there is need to do much more for their employees, to create a perception in the minds of the employees that they are happy thereby improving the productivity of the organization. As Human Resource Managers expand their understanding of Human Beings and Organizations start relying on their employees to provide them with sustainable competitive advantage, studies on previously ignored aspects, like Happiness are rising.

What makes understanding "Happiness with Changing scenario" so important for organization is a key question?

The study of Happiness is required because most people believe that happiness is every person's greatest desire, cherished goal and because happiness yields numerous rewards for the individual. Happy citizens are not only individually benefitted but the society benefits as well. There is also a need for the study as to what makes people unhappy. Efforts have been made by the researcher to understand the role of human resources in large organization and what they are doing to improve the happiness of the employees of the organization.

II. Literature Review

Traditionally, literature in Psychology has been focussed on Psychopathology. However, in the last decade or so, researchers and psychologists are attempting to harness and understand the potential of positive psychological perspective (Joseph & Linley, 2004). Positive Psychological perspective may be described as being concerned with "the alleviation of psychopathology, but also with the promotion of well-being" (Linley & Joseph, 2004; Lopez & Snyder, 2003). This domain is mainly concerned with the use of tools to improve the well-being of the individuals and understanding the requirements for creating a positive change in the person. One such dimension that has gained importance over the years is Happiness and studies attempting to measure and evaluate Happiness levels, identify and understand the antecedents and consequences of happiness are on a rise.

Positive Psychological perspective also looks at the role of these variables in the different aspects of one's life. One key aspect that takes up a majority of ones' time and plays an important role is Work (Dulk, Groeneveld, Ollier-Malaterre, &Valcour, 2013). While traditionally, it was believed that people work in exchange for only monetary or tangible benefits, recently it has been accepted that employees also value the intangible benefits of their work equally, if not more. (Stiglbauer&Batinic, 2012). With increasing globalisation, dependency on technology and new organizational practice, the nature of the workplace has changed, drastically. Add to this the introduction of a new generation, demanding a newer set of benefits and seeking different goals (Connell, Gough, McDonnell, & Burgess, 2014; Koukoulaki, 2010).

From the perspective of the human resource management domain, HR practices, which include downsizing, outsourcing, and temporary employment, play a major role in influencing the nature and scope of work (Colakoglu, Lepak, & Hong, 2006). Corporate restructuring and downsizing aim at improving the organizational performance through a leaner workforce but tend to end up making the employees insecure and dissatisfied with their job (Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2011). Employees who perceive job insecurity also have lower commitment to their organizations and it becomes extremely difficult to retain them (Silla, Gracia, Maňas, &Peiró, 2010).

While these factors of engagement, loyalty and attrition may not appear to be matters of concern to the organization, directly, their indirect impact on the organization's performance are empirically proven. Job satisfaction level have been found to have an impact on organizational performance (Dalal, Baysinger, Brummel, &Lebreton, 2012). Satisfied employees are found to be more productive (Barmby, Bryson, & Eberth, 2012). In turn, Employee productivity will impact the performance of the organization and the key to achieving the organizational goals is to ensure satisfied employees. (Chong &Eggleton, 2007).

A common practise is to use managerial tools for increasing employee productivity. A study by Salis and Williams (2010) considered HRM practices and their impact on Employee productivity.Their study found that the knowledge sharing practices of the organisation were key to predicting the productivity levels of the employees. Additionally, Quick & Quick, (2004) found that maintaining a happy environment and ensuring happiness at the workplace was crucial in order to increase employee productivity.Similarly, Rego& Cunha (2008) also found that happy employees were more productive employees. The converse of the statement was also found to be true; i.e. unhappiness at the workplace reduced productivity (Fereidouni, Najdi, &Amiri, 2013).

Happiness and related constructs have been studied in various fields such as philosophy, religion, psychology, sociology, and economics (Aydin, 2012). The term "happiness" has been widely discussed and attempts have been made to define the concept and develop characteristics.One unique characteristic of any emption is that it is universal. Similarly, "Happiness" is universal to all people in every culture because everybody searches for happiness (Aydin, 2012). It is related to an individual's subjective well-being (Jiang, Lu, & Sato, 2012) or life satisfaction (Van Praag, Romanov, & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2010). Saari& Judge, (2004) also found that Life Satisfaction was highly correlated to Job Satisfaction. In fact, the two concepts were found to be mutually dependent. Thus, keeping in mind, the crucial role of Happiness in the workplace, the researcher attempts to evaluate the happiness levels of employees at EAIC. The objective of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the quality of work life and to identify areas in which the employees felt there was a need to change.

III. Methodology

This project was undertaken as part of the curriculum of a **Management Development program** conducted by **Synergy Talent Managers** with the aim of understanding happiness at the workplace and to define the index in the Electrical and Automation Independent Company. The sample respondents were from PAN India covering a sample respondent from multiple Manufacturing and Commercial divisions in Mumbai and Other cities. The team had conducted this research in a systematic and planned manner. The data was collected through a survey for team members. The questionnaire was validated by Academic and Industrial experts. The final sample consisted of around 100 employees of the Company. Judgemental sampling was used to limit the sample to the discussed locations. Final analysis was conducted on 81 of the responses. **The tool**

used for the study was the Subjective Happiness Scale or SHS. The SHS is a 4-item scale of global subjective happiness. Two items ask respondents to characterize themselves using both absolute ratings and ratings relative to peers, whereas the other two items offer brief descriptions of happy and unhappy individuals and ask respondents the extent to which each characterization describes them (Lyubomirsky& Lepper,1999).Measuring Happiness at Workplace is essential and important keeping in view its direct and indirect impact on per person productivity leading to scaling up of business.

Objectives:

There are
07 objective categories mentioned in the INDEX. They are as under:
1. Happiness by giving – Support system at work (Group)
2. Work culture with trust of IS (Interesting job)
3. People enjoy working with Company (Group with interesting job)
4. Team strength and well knit (Group)
5. Personal health and energy (Work Life Balance)
6. Happy family life of individuals (Work Life balance)
7. Overall happiness of individuals

Discussion ,Analysis and Interpretation:

A simple self interospection of self amongst 81 of the respondents gave the below mentioned responses . Generally, people wear facade at workplace. However we observed that out of the 81 respondents we connected with for this study, less than 3% have opined that they are unhappy at workplace and largely the 34.6% employees have been more happy at their workplace. This analysis proves that post pandemic, employees have been happy coming back to the workplace ,rebonding with their colleagues and thus paving a way for happiness at workplace.

**In general I consider myself on a scale of 0-7 Unhappy to Very Happy**
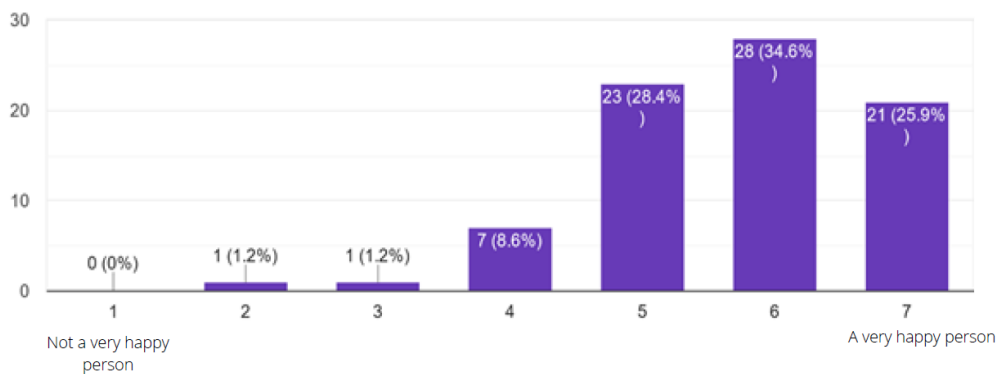
Compared to my peers,I consider myself on a scale of 0-7 Unhappy to Very Happy

It has been observed that the individual perception of themselves compared to their peers has been on a scale of 0-7 ,6.2% have taken a neutral stance as against 34.6% respondents saying they are very happy . We observe corelation between the questions hereto responded by the participants.
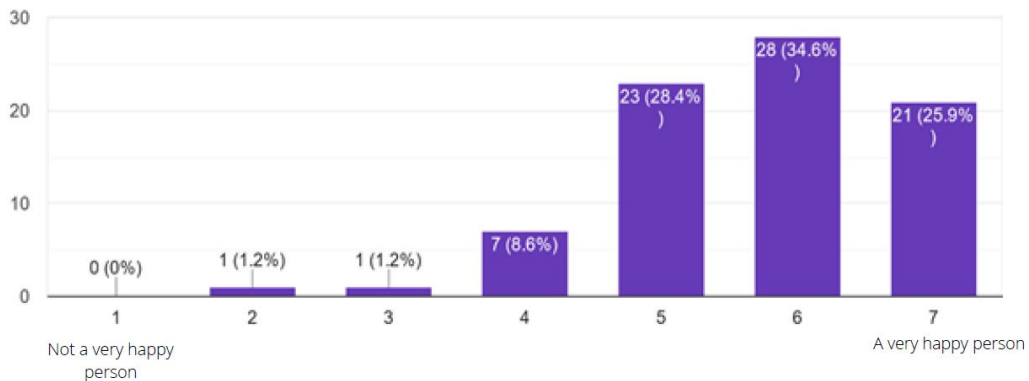
These responses very clearly indicate majority of the respondent population seems to be happy at the workplace post pandemic and have been productively engaging themselves in teamwork. A team can function to its full capacity only if they have an Immediate Superior whom they can trust with their career growth and peers within the team whom they can trust and vice versa. Therefore, we had asked all respondents various questions like how much they trust their respective reporting manager for career growth and if they can work freely to implement new ideas if they can put in their best in new projects without any fear of failure.

Moving ahead ,it was observed that **Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. We questioned to the 81 respondents to what extent does this characterization describe them individually?**
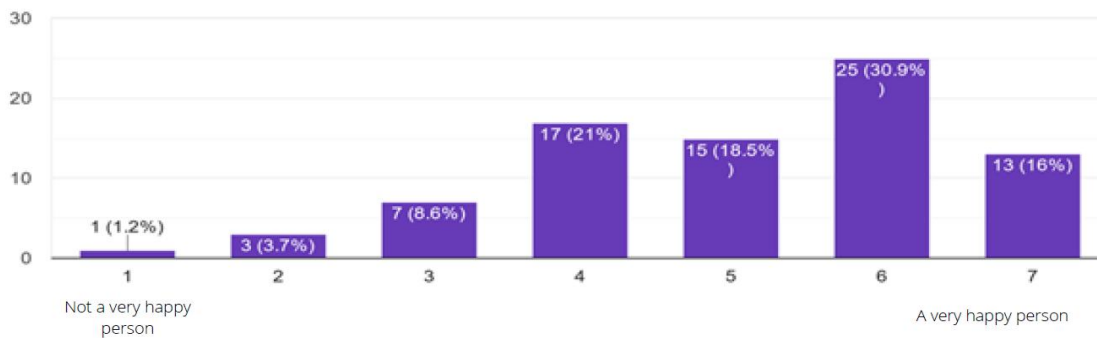
It has been observed that 21% are neutral in their responses as against 30.9% respondents claim to be happy and are able enjoy life regardless of what is happening at workplace around them implying that they are focussing on the job at hand .

Happiness by giving – Support system at work (SELF – OTHERS): The more you give, the happier person that you are. If you support others, they will come back to you for more support whenever they again need it and will reciprocate whenever you need their support.

Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe them?

Although it was observed in earlier parameters ,the respondents were apparently happy at the workplace however they are not depressed and not very happy choosing to be neutral .

People Enjoy Working with Company: It is very important to know why people work and whether their current job provides them with their required needs. The motivation points are important. Every person works for money. But, is money the only need which is being fulfilled. Maslow's need hierarchy provides us the range from basic needs to psychological needs of people. Therefore, we had asked respondents questions regarding their fulfilment in the company if they feel that they are able to fulfil their psychological needs with basic needs.

Team Strengthens: Human beings are social animals and function as a team. In mathematics we say One Plus One is equal to two. But when it comes to people, it is only partially true. Most of the times two people can carry out much bigger tasks than the sum of the tasks they carryout individually. This is known as the synergy effect. Goal setting is done for teams, not for individuals. Recognition is also carried out in teams. This will make people to think in teams. As an organization, at the end of the day what is important is the final outcome, not the individual performances. A good winning team creates happiness in the minds of all individuals.

Personal Health and Energy: People feel healthy and energetic when they are happy. Health and happiness are synonymous. Being in good health is the greatest indicator of people's spiritual, mental, physical well-being, and happiness.

The health and energy levels as felt by respondents are as above. Surprisingly, majority of the younger generation do not feel healthy at all. Similar is the case with Energy levels of respondents wherein 76% respondents feel energetic and those who don't feel energetic are mostly of the younger generation.

Across all age groups, just 59% of respondents celebrate their achievements with family and only 55% of respondents feel that they have a balance personal and work life.

Overall Individual Happiness: It is most important that though above indicators provide a good data about individual happiness, whether the individual respondent also feels happy or not. Thus, the last question pertains to their feeling happy and the graph is as under:

Limitations of the study:

The survey was voluntary for all employees in the above locations. The overall participation was sufficient to get representation from all age groups and service lengths. While there have been important insights drawn from this exercise,the researchers accept that it is difficult to ascribe any metrics directly to happiness at work. However, the benefits to be gained from the exercise and from the understanding of how the happiness of employees contributes to various parametersof organisational success; provide sufficient argument for the use of such tools. Further analysis through a qualitative study would validate the findings of this research and also provide deeper insights.

Implications

While the study has obvious and immediate practical implications for the organization in the study, it also provides a methodology that may be adopted by other organization. The wealth of information that may be collected from a simple exercise like this, is support for the adoption of a similar exercise. Theoretically the study adds to the argument of using tools and instruments to evaluate the perception of the employees in the organization. Thus, allowing the Human Resource function to have a sense of the pulse of the organization.

IV. Conclusions

If one was to draw a corollary between the happiness of employees and signs of it in theorganisation, then it may be seen that in a happy workplace one can clearly see employees stretching to deliver on goals, the employees go beyond the expected hours of work to complete the tasks in time people don't look at the watch. The very presence of watch on wrist is sometimes ignored and employees are engaged with the work even beyond working hours and days. They derive happiness andpurpose in the work they do. Happy workplaces are also less political with fewer employees indulging in gossip leading to unproductive conflicts. This may be attributed to mutual trust amongst people, satisfaction with thecollective impact they create and mature culture. Happiness comes from 'accomplishments' and to ensure that, every employee needsto have superior quality and quantity of work with the right mix of variety.Employees are happy to do more work and go back home happily rather than havingless work and spare bandwidth to engage in so-called extra-curricular activities at the workplace and outside. It has also been said that employees spend most of their waking hours at workplace and the inter and intradepartmental relationships that get weaved here go a long way in the personal lives of many making it true investment in relationship. Thus, it becomes extremely essential for the success of the organization, to ensure that the employees are happy. The current study evaluated the happiness levels of the employees at one organization and the insights gained would help direct the future actions of the Human Resource team. In other words, this study was an attempt at measuring the perceived quality of the work life of the employees and what needs to be done to improve the same.

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