

Employee Happiness and its Relationship with Job satisfaction: An Empirical Study of Academic staff in a Selected Sri Lankan University

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ABSTRACT: An empirical knowledge gap has been observed regarding the relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction in higher education sector of Sri Lanka. Hence, in order to fill this empirical knowledge gap, this study was carried out with the objectives of find out the levels of employee happiness and job satisfaction among the academic staff and explores the relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction of academic staff in selected state university in Sri Lanka. The data of this study have been collected from 57 academic staff in selected state university in Sri Lanka through the structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed with univariate and bivariate analyses. The findings of the study revealed that happiness and job satisfaction are in high level among the academic staff in surveyed university. And also, findings of the study stated that there is a significant and positive relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction. This study suggested that degree of employee happiness can improve the job satisfaction.

Keywords: *employees, job satisfaction, happiness, academic, university*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this ultra-competitive business environment, employees are considered as the unique resource and significant source of sustainable competitive advantage due to the reason, it cannot be imitating like other resources other resources such as financial, physical, information resources and etc. Human resources in an organization are the type of resources that possess the ability to make decisions, the ability to create and innovate (Sanjeevanie et al., 2020) [1], which are treated as the essential factors to enhance the organizational sustainability. Further, treating human beings as a resource to be used or manipulate like any resource is demeaning. In this context, organizations focus more on improving employees' commitment, satisfaction, and engagement to enhance their individual contribution toward organizational success. Several studies suggested that, employees' job satisfaction plays a pivotal role in determining the overall organizational performance (Othman et al., 2018 [2]; Satuf et al., 2016 [3]; Lange et al., 2010 [4]). Satisfied employees are likely to be inspired to go the extra mile in providing quality service, being more productive and being more committed (Naudé et al., 2016) [5].

In this sense, employee happiness plays a significant role in determining the job satisfaction of employees (Opatha, 2019 [6]; Satuf et al, 2016 [3]). Happiness is the state of being happy (Othman et al., 2018) [2]. Happiness is always linked with positive life and work outcomes such as life satisfaction, good health conditions, high work performance and commitment. Employee happiness tends to be positively associated with productivity (Oswald, Proto, and SgROI 2014) [7]. Happiness of employee can affect his or her job

performance. In this sense, organizations are in a strong necessity to uplift the employees' happiness in order to enhance their job satisfaction and engagement which lead to foster the employee's individual performance. Beyond the organizations, countries also startup to measure their economic well-being through their gross national happiness. For instance, Bhutan reveals that "gross national happiness is more important than gross national product" (Montes and Bhattarai, 2018) [8].

In this context, many scholars contributed to the understanding of employee happiness (Shin and Irvine, 2015 [9]; Tay, Kuykendall and Diene, 2015 [10]; Pryce-Jones and Lutterbie, 2010 [11]; Bataineh, 2019 [12]; Opatha, 2019 [6]). However, only few organizational behavior scholars (Opatha, 2019 [6]; Othman et al., 2018 [2]; Saari and Judge, 2004 [13]) linked the employee happiness with the job satisfaction of employees. There is no empirical evidence on the relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction in Sri Lanka context. Further, it reveals that little research has been done with regards to employee happiness in Sri Lanka. In particular, it reveals a gap in the empirical knowledge regarding the relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction in higher education sector in Sri Lanka indicating a contextual gap in research at higher education sector too. The university academicians who form the backbone of the higher education. Students' satisfaction has become an important concept in higher education owing to the reason that students are paying higher tuition fees and increasingly seeing themselves as customers (Xiao and Wilkins, 2015) [14]. Student satisfaction and lecturer satisfaction are considered as the interrelated concepts in the context of higher education sector. Teaching is a profession that attracts individuals drawn by other factors than pay (Stevens, 2005) [15]. Low job satisfaction has been reported for teachers around the world (Machado, Soares, and Gouveia, 2010 [16]; Munyengabe, He, and Yiyi, 2016 [17]; Oshagbemi, 1996 [18]; Pepe et al., 2017 [19]; Thadathil, 2017 [20]). In considering above reasons, the researchers would like to conduct this research study in order to fill the empirical knowledge and contextual gaps with regards to relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction.

Therefore, it necessitates a systematic research study to explore and highlight above aspects. Based on above research background and generally observed empirical knowledge gap two research objectives were formulated:

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the levels of employee happiness and job satisfaction among the academic staff in selected state university of Sri Lanka
2. To examine the relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction of academic staff in selected state university of Sri Lanka

Rest of this article is structured as follows. The next section presents the review of the relevant literature about employee happiness and job satisfaction proposes the hypotheses; the third section provides the methodology of this study. Lastly, we present the findings and discussion of the study and it ends up with the conclusion.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of this paper consists of four sections such as definitions of job satisfaction, definitions of employee happiness, recent key studies related with employee happiness, and relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction.

3.1 Successive Definitions of Job Satisfaction

Table 1 shows the successive definitions of job satisfaction

Table 1. Successive Definitions of Job Satisfaction

Author	Year	Definition
Locke [21]	1976	Job satisfaction defined as the pleasant and aggressive mood a worker experienced in his work.
Davis and Nestrom [22]	1985	Job satisfaction defined as the extent to which expectations are and match the real awards.
Cranny, Smith, and Stone [23]	1992	Job satisfaction is defined as the combination of affective reactions to the differential perceptions of what he/she wants to receive compared with what he/she actually receives.
Bhuiyan [24]	2002	Job satisfaction is defined as the measurement of an individual's positive or negative feelings about intrinsic and/or extrinsic conditions regarding his/her job.
Statt [25]	2004	Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which a worker is content with the rewards he or she gets out of his or her job, particularly in terms of intrinsic motivation.
Armstrong [26]	2006	Job satisfaction is defined as the attitude and feelings people have about their work. Positive and favorable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction. Negative and unfavorable attitudes towards the job indicate job dissatisfaction.
Kaliski [27]	2007	Job satisfaction is defined as worker's sense of achievement and success on the job.
George and Jones [28]	2008	Job satisfaction is defined as the collection of feeling and beliefs that people have about their current job.
Aziri [29]	2008	Job satisfaction is defined as the appears as a result of the perception that the job enables the material and psychological needs.

3.2 Successive Definitions of Employee Happiness

Table 2 displays the successive definitions of Employee Happiness.

Table 2: Successive Definitions of Employee Happiness

Author	Year	Definition
Seligman [30]	2002	Employee happiness defined as consisting of pleasure, engagement, and meaning.
Diener and Seligman [31]	2002	Employee happiness, in the form of joy, appears in every category of basic human emotions.
Bhattacharjee and Bhattacharjee [32]	2010	Employee happiness refers to an individual's work and life satisfaction, and subjective well-being at the work.
Raibley [33]	2012	Happiness can be defined as the property of feeling happy at a time and is considered an emotional experience.
Shin and Irvine [9]	2015	Happiness means that a person is satisfied or content with his/her life; it is not the presence or Absence of certain feelings, but positive outcomes of one's evaluation when he/she looks at certain standards.
Tay, Kuykendall and	2015	Happiness that is subjectively experienced is intrinsically valuable for the

Diener [10]		individual; it is then evaluated and pursued as an end in itself throughout one's whole life.
Pryce-Jones and Lutterbie [11]	2010	Workplace happiness as happiness at work is about sanely making the optimum use of resources, overcome the challenges, actively appreciating the highs and preserving the lows that will maximize your performance and achieve the potential.
Bataineh [12]	2019	Happiness relates to how people experience and appraise their lives in total.
Opatha [6]	2019	Employee happiness is defined happiness as a feeling of pleasure, satisfaction, or becoming pleased.

3.3 Recent Key Studies on Employee happiness

Table 3 displays the recent key studies on employee happiness.

Table 3. Recent Key Studies on Employee happiness

Author	Year	Description
Arampatzia, Burgerb & Veenhov [34]	2015	This study indicated that financial distress significantly impacts on happiness of employees in times of economic crisis.
Lee, Yu, Sirgy, Singhapakdi, and Lucianetti [35]	2015	This study aims to examines the relationships among explicit and implicit ethics institutionalization, employee Experiences in work Life, work–family life conflict and employee life satisfaction and happiness.
Wok and Hashim [36]	2015	This study examines the moderating effects of employee relations in enhancing the workplace happiness.
Moynihn, DeLeire, and Enami [37]	2015	This study revealed the relationship between prosocial values and happiness.
Naudé, Kruger, Saayman, Jonker and Uysal [5]	2016	This study attempts to examine the relationships among employee's benefits, feeling about the company and employee happiness.
Satuf, Monteiro, Pereira, Esgalhado, Afonso and Loureiro [3]	2016	This study examines the relationship between job satisfaction and employee happiness.
Park, Min and Chen [38]	2016	This study investigates how personal income influences on happiness in public and private sector.
Andujar, Nijholt and Gilbert [39]	2017	This study revealed that adapting humorous smart technologies to the workplace leads to enhance the employee happiness.
Othman, Mahmud, Noranee, and Noordin [2]	2018	This paper is meant to examine the dimensionality of engagement construct and to investigate its influence on employee happiness.
Janus and Smrokowska-Reichmann [40]	2018	The aim of this paper is to present the level of happiness perceived by women aged over 60 years to indicate the factors that determine the perception of happiness, and to determine the possibilities for strengthening the feeling of happiness.
Kawalya, Munene, Ntayi, Kagaari, Mafabi and Kasekende [41]	2019	The aim of this study is to report on the results of the study to establish the mediating role of flow experience on the relationship between psychological capital and happiness at the workplace.
Guerci, Hauff and Gilardi [42]	2019	This study examines the relationship between high performance work practices and employee happiness.

Opatha [6]	2019	The book titled “Sustainable human resource management practices” explains the role of HRM in creating and retaining happy workforce.
Thompson and Bruk-Lee [43]	2020	This study examines the positive outcomes of employee outcomes.
Kim [44]	2020	This study explains the factors which impact on employee happiness in American context.
Opatha and Uresha [45]	2020	This study examined the impact of HRM practices on employee happiness in Sri Lankan context.

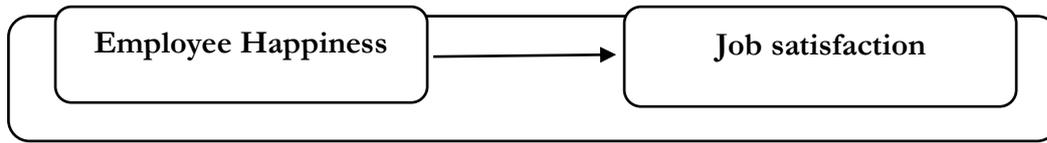
3.4 Relationship between Employee Happiness and Job Satisfaction

Previous researchers revealed that job satisfaction always linked with positive work outcomes such as productivity, organizational commitment, and reduced absenteeism, and turnover, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance (Opatha, 2009;2019 [46], [6]; Stoilkovska et al., 2015 [47]; Jernigan et al., 2002 [48]; Folami et al., 2014 [49]; Wegge et al., 2007 [50]). In other words, the absence of job satisfaction will result to deeper consequences such as low job performance and failure to achieve organizational goals (Rast and Tourani, 2012) [51]. In considering the immense value of job satisfaction of employees, contemporary organizations are paying more attention on creating and retaining the satisfied workforce to ensure the organizational sustainability. In this context, researchers indicated that, employee happiness is more important factor to ensure their job satisfaction. Happy people are those who experience frequent positive emotions such as joy, interest and pride and infrequent negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety and anger (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) [52]. Thus, happiness is always linked with life satisfaction and job satisfaction of employees. Fisher (2003) [53] found that happy workers tend to exhibit more satisfaction and are more productive in terms of their jobs.

Happy individuals will foster closer social relationships and will be more agreeable and less neurotic (Diener and Seligman 2002) [31]. Additionally, happy people will be more optimistic, have higher self-esteem, and use more positive humor (Ford et al. 2016) [54]. Further, longitudinal evidence demonstrates that happy individuals spread happiness to those around them (Fowler and Christakis 2008) [55]. Employees that experience happiness frequently in and outside of work will be satisfied with their job and extends more efforts to achieve the organizational goals (Thompson and Bruk-lee, 2020) [43]. Prior work suggests that life satisfaction and job satisfaction are closely related to happiness at work (Saari and Judge, 2004) [13]. According to Opatha (2019) [6], when employees is happy with his or her life it will influence his or her job satisfaction. Further, Andujar et al (2017) [39] revealed that, happiness can be the independent variable while job satisfaction becomes dependent variable. Job stress works as the mediating variable. Happiness is basically two types such as hedonic (which refers to feeling well internally, subjective experiences, job satisfaction and pleasure) and eudemonic (which refers to functioning well, expression, work syndromes, stress, burnout, fulfilment, thriving and self-actualization) (De Beer, Pienaar and Rothman, 2013 [56]; De Sousa and Porto, 2015 [57]; Shin and Irvine, 2015 [9]).

In this sense, number of organizations are creating and implementing the several practices and initiatives to uplift the happiness of employees to ensure their job satisfaction in order to enrich the overall organizational performance. For instance, Google let their employees bring their dogs to revealed that work. They understand people treat their dogs as family and they would feel at home if they bring their “family” with them. The company also contains sleeping pods, laundry free of charge, free food, game rooms, and other amenities that allow their employees to keep a positive attitude or emotional state (Andujar et al., 2017) [39]. These practices are really fruitful in creating and retaining the happy and satisfied workforce. Thus, based on the above, theoretical arguments, empirical findings and logical beliefs, it is possible to concluded that employee happiness is an important source of their job satisfaction.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



(Source: adapted from Opatha,2019)

4. METHOD

4.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The empirical data for the current study were collected from selected state university in Sri Lanka. The total population of this study was all academic staff in selected state university in Sri Lanka. Out of these, 57 academic staff were selected as sample to conduct this research by using stratified random sampling method, because to assure representation of employees belonging to different groups in the selected state university.

4.2 Measures

Table 4: Measures

Variable	Source	Reliability (Cronbach’s alpha value)
Employee Happiness	Opatha (2019) [6]	0.878
Job Satisfaction	Bas and Ardic (2002) [58]	0.809

The Cronbach’s alpha value above 0.70 is considered as good reliable instrument and high level of internal consistency of data and scale. Based on that, employee happiness result is 0.878 and job satisfaction result is 0.809. Therefore, it is indicated that the measurement which was used in this study is also a good instrument.

4.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables (Jahangir & Begum 2008) [59]. According to Sekaran (2000) [60], the correlation coefficient value (r) ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 is considered weak, from 0.30 to 0.49 is considered medium and from 0.50 to 1.0 is considered strong. However, according to Field (2005) [61], correlation coefficient should not go beyond 0.8 to avoid multicollinearity. The correlation matrix shows that multi-collinearity does not threaten the validity of the data

4.4 Findings of the Study

The first research objective of the study is: **Find out the levels of employee happiness and job satisfaction of academic staff in selected state university of Sri Lanka.** Table 5 presents descriptive statistics of the construct of employee happiness and job satisfaction

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employee Happiness	Hedonic happiness	3.84	0.883
	Eudemonic happiness	4.01	0.745
Job Satisfaction		3.58	0.888

Source: Survey data

The descriptive statistics of the study suggest that there are high levels of hedonic and eudemonic happiness exist among the academic staff in the selected state university. The results also imply that, job satisfaction of academic staff is in high level with mean scores from 3.84 to 4.01 out of 5.

The second research objective of the study is: **Examine the relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction of academic staff in selected state university of Sri Lanka**. Table 6 presents the findings of correlation analysis.

Table 6. Correlation Analysis

	Job satisfaction	
Employee Happiness	Pearson Correlation	0.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006

Source: Survey data

Correlation analysis explained a medium positive relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction of academic staff ($r = 0.361$, $p = 0.006$) at the 99% confidence level.

Decision: There is evidence that the higher level of employee happiness leads to higher level of job satisfaction of academic staff at 99% confidence level.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the study have shown a significant and positive relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction. The university while nurturing the employee happiness will provide a supportive environment to achieve higher academic performance in the long run. Further, Opatha (2019) [6] suggested that, universities can enhance the happiness of academic staff by adapting certain practices such as providing happiness education, providing happiness counselling, promoting job satisfaction, generating and enhancing job involvement and organizational citizenship behavior, promoting personal character, adopting Maslow's theory of motivation and promoting appropriate personality traits. In addition to that universities can adapt certain practices to enhance the happiness of academics such as (1) setup and maintain yoga and spiritual centers within the organization (2) playing the relaxation music in the workplace (3) improving the quality of work life among employees through participative decision making (4) setup and maintain the pleasant (green) working environment and etc (5) taking necessary steps to reduce the bullying and psychological harassment (6) creating the flexible working schedule (7) improving team unity, cohesion (8) establishing and maintain corporate fitness and recreational centers within the organization (9) constructing and maintain an in-house medical facility and check the health status of employees monthly or frequently and etc. Ultimately, this trend leads to uplift the job satisfaction of academic staff. Generally, it has been accepted that satisfied customer service providers can customers happy. Therefore, universities consider more on improving the happiness of academic staff in order to enhance their job satisfaction which leads to uplift their overall job performance. The findings of the study consistent previous researchers (Saari & Judge, 2004 [13]; Othman et al., 2018 [2]) which suggested that employee happiness is a powerful predictor of the job satisfaction. Further, universities need to consider happiness index of academic staff as the key performance indicator to measure the overall university performance.

6. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between employee happiness and job satisfaction. According to the empirical findings from this study, it is possible to conclude that employee happiness is an important element of job satisfaction of academic staff. Other conditions being equal, the fostering happiness among the academic staff leads to improve their job satisfaction. The present study concluded that, there is positive and significant relationship exist between employee happiness and job satisfaction. Empirical findings should help practitioners to understand the how enhancing happiness of academic staff contribute to the job satisfaction.

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