

Workplace Happiness and Positivity: Measurement, Causes and Consequences

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Abstract: Happiness is an expression of pleasant forms of emotions, moods, optimistic attitude and wellbeing are growing importance at workplace. This paper is an attempt to explore literature to define happiness, identify current practices, causes, consequences of happiness. And also, to measure happiness at workplace to come up with suggestions to improve happiness at workplace. The literature reveals and provides with a scope of arguments and further search that happiness leads to success precisely through effects of positive outcomes. It was found that Happiness at work includes more than job satisfaction. Individual happiness can be measured through work engagement, organizational commitment. Happiness can be measured at multiple levels, including job experiences, attitude towards work. There is also an evidence that happiness has positive consequences. The companies can be supportive with employees, fairness, creating challenging work environment, promoting good health among employees, career growth opportunities, flexible work options, safe work environment, socialization practices and employee development can enhance happiness at work. There is literature to support correlation between employee happiness, workplace performance and work productivity. And happiness is not ultimate resource to achieve success in career, the other supporting resources are intelligence, perseverance, positive mindset and affluence. It was also found that measuring happiness is too subjective as it is difficult to measure the dynamic nature of emotions. This aspect can be explored through further research on this topic

Keywords — *Happiness; Positivity; Workplace; Job satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Engagement, Motivation*

I. INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a central theme of life most people and it is extremely important for the organizations to make sure the people who are working are happy. Happiness is our emotional state and experience of our positive emotions as enthusiasm, love, optimism and delight. We are happy when we have more positive emotions compared to negative emotions and also the effect of past emotions or feelings of happiness on current situation and satisfaction (Kahneman, Daniel, and Jason Riis, 2005). Positivity is also a state of mind to be optimistic that we would like to achieve. Considering the research study conducted by Prabhakar et al., (2013), happiness is referred to as a holistic ideal which is a collective form of satisfying emotions and moods, having a positive as well as constructive attitude towards life including well-being. On the other hand, Fisher (2010) defined the term positivity as a tendency of an individual to think in an optimistic way. Today, subjective well-being and contentment are becoming an interesting topic to the numerous policymakers (Egan, Chan and Shorter, 2014) and researchers (Coffey, Warren and Gottfried, 2015) as well as became the key topic regarding the movement of positive psychology movement. Straume and Vitterso (2012) stated that the concept of subjective well-being has

diverse characteristics that suggest how an individual evaluates their own attitude and behaviors. Generally, the concept of well-being at work is defined as a condition in which an employee: 1) experiences positive emotions frequently such as happiness and joy along with downgrading feelings including anger and sadness, 2) is satisfied with the job.

Over the course of a decade, the concept of happiness and positivity at workplaces has gained significant importance including job satisfaction, work engagement, work enjoyment and positive emotions at work (Slemp and Vella-Brodrick, 2014). These construct types define the form of happiness which are unique in them and may also consist of conceptual, definitional and measurement overlaps between them which is needed to be studied from the reviews. Interest in happiness and positivity has also extended to workplace experiences of employees. It is important to explore how happiness is measured at the workplace, what causes happiness and positivity, what are the causes and consequences of happiness and positivity at the workplace and develop employee happiness models for the organizations to implement.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- A. To study the current practices of happiness and positivity at workplace.
- B. To know the causes, consequences of happiness and positivity at workplace.
- C. To know how the employee happiness and positivity is measured at workplace
- D. Measuring happiness at work-job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, engagement, intrinsic motivation, affect at work.
- E. Suggest various measures for organizations to improve workplace happiness and positivity.
- F. Developing employee happiness model for organizations.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Exploring Happiness at workplace: An analysis of employee happiness and positivity

Xanthopoulou, Bakker and Schaufeli (2012) state that happiness can be defined as an experience of an individual regarding infrequent negative affect, frequent positive affect as well as an entire sense of satisfaction in whole life. To win the hearts of customers, businesses need to engage employees who possess the tendency to transmit their energy as well as enthusiasm to customers. In the recent contemporary trading surrounding, businesses should satisfy their customers since there is a greater connection that links the higher profits with happy and satisfied customers. Sageer, Rafat and Agarwal (2012) stated that satisfying employees itself is a worthwhile aim for various reasons. It is essential for businesses to employ their workers in pleasing their customers by using various methods, then rewards and acknowledge their appropriate behaviour. A workplace is considered as good when the feelings of employees are appreciated by the management, the level of stress is low and when the employees do not feel helpless at the place of their work (White, Alcock and Depledge, 2013). There are many multinational companies that are focused towards the well-being of employees and have designed employee-friendly practices as well as policies based on the assumption of causal and constructive association amid productivity and happiness (Van De Voorde, Paauwe and Van Veldhoven, 2012). The relation amid productivity and happiness has been studied by numerous researchers who have conducted their researches in past and it still remains a key area of research for many organisations operating across the globe.

In the last 10 years, researches have been conducted extensively on the link between satisfaction and performance of employees (Wong and Laschinger, 2013; Ziegler, Hagen and Diehl, 2012; Bowling, Khazon, and Burrus, 2015). In light of research study conducted by Vroom (1964) it has been found that the relationship of satisfaction and performance is mid-ranged but unfortunately, interpretations to the study are subjected to speculations as for the researcher mixed up the studies conducted on employee level as well as workgroup level. In this context, studies revealed that the conclusions were

different when studies pertaining to the group were removed. From the study of Khalid, Irshad and Mahmood (2012), it can be discussed that job performance and satisfaction was mediocorely correlated but the factors affecting satisfaction including pay, co-worker, promotion etc. and performance were moderately correlated.

Assumptions were also made on the ways in which the satisfaction was measured in the domain of social science researches. Gubler, Arnold and Coombs (2014) suggested that though job satisfaction is measured through different metrics, yet is an attitude. Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2012) also argued on the contradicting criteria that in job satisfaction, it has been considered vital to separate out an emotional/affective component from belief or cognitive component. Thus, job satisfaction is a vital component of what one thinks and feels.

B. Going beyond job satisfaction to achieve happiness and positivity at workplace

Employees' satisfaction and happiness is a major contributor towards the achievement and success of an entity. Thus, recent studies provide some of the ways to measure employees' happiness and satisfaction like a) Employee performance reviews. b) Employee suggestion box. c) Anonymous employee surveys. The management of any work needs to perform routine analysis to bring up certain related issues by them at the right time. It has been discussed by Fisher (2010) that the happiness constructs content and measures vary considerably.

Job Satisfaction: Faragher, Cass and Cooper (2013) state that satisfaction achieved on the job, also known as a manner or approach of the individual that contains both affective and cognitive components. Moreover, it is also considered as a positive as well as pleasurable feeling or condition which is an outcome of the encouragement of the employee and the experience with the job. When satisfied with their job, the performance of employees is improved and enhanced, enabling them to work effectively as well as efficiently which ultimately affects the overall performance of the business.

Organizational Commitment: Aydin, Sarier and Uysal (2013) stated about commitment shown towards an organization be a hypothetical relation of the individual towards the organization. Various research studies conducted in past have revealed different components of organizational commitment based on the factors they intended to study. Huang, You and Tsai (2012) stated that the commitment based on personal identifications with the values and goals of the organization, effective attachment is considered as part of a workplace where the employees feel happy.

Engagement: Alfes, Shantz and Soane (2013) defined engagement in relation to a state in which individual's mind is which is work-related, fulfilling, positive and characterized by absorption, dedication and vigour. A concept proposed by Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014), regarding psychological presence as well as personal engagement that reviews the extent of emotional, cognitive and physical self which is devoted to working by individuals as well as the feelings of focus, integration, connection and attentiveness that accompany with

engagement moments. Furthermore, Saks and Gruman (2014) defined personal engagement as a constructive effect that is linked with work and job settings, signifying the feelings of individuals regarding pride, enthusiasm, dedication, energy, vigor and persistence.

Intrinsic Motivation: Cerasoli, Nicklin and Ford (2014) defined intrinsic motivation as an enjoyment degree which the individual experience while getting involved in a task or responsibility. According to Gillet, Vallerand and Lafrenière (2012), intrinsic motivation is dependent on the self-determination as well as perceptions of competence. Different levels amid extrinsic and intrinsic motivation have been delineated suggesting that entities may choose to perform activities that are self-determined as they are considered right, however without being motivated intrinsically by the enjoyment of activity and self-interest (Jõesaar, Hein and Hagger, 2012).

C. Proposing measures for organizations to improve workplace happiness and positivity

The literature mentioned that the procedure to achieve contentment at workplaces does not remain consistent as the employee would sometime feel happy and not at other time Simmons (2014). The works of various authors have made their focus on employee supporting activities, while the same shall priorities averting negativities than inculcating positives at the formal workplaces as per Amabile & Kramer (2011). Creating a balance between relaxed and active happiness on workplaces is always encouraged, especially for individuals and organizations as per the literature of Warr (2009). Individuals who are committed to their work, who aim for their goals with enthusiasm and energy, try to remove monotony from their work and encourage others to follow suit are generally more satisfied with their working and domestic lives.

The literature by Fisher (2010) discussed that there were many existing constructs which has relation to happiness in the workplace. It may be fleeting, within-person, stable and personal level or collective. Organizations are investing time and resources now- a- days to monitor the moods of their workforce as it will have a major impact on the business. Contented employees are less probable to part ways with the company and are more proficient and involved in official activities. Thus, some of the measures which studies reveal can improve happiness, positivity and commitment at workplaces which can further help in decision making are:

- Make the culture of the organization supportive, healthy and respectful.
- Provision of effective leader at various levels
- Employees to be treated fairly provided recognition and security.
- The jobs that are created shall be challenging, interesting, autonomous and should contain feedback.
- Enhance competence of employees by supporting the development of skills and provide growth.

- By using previews of the job and the socialization practices, choose the appropriate person-organization fit.
- Convince the employees that the environment in which they are working is not ideal and it needs to be reconfigured.
- Apply the efficient work performance systems.
- Decrease the number of hassles and perform daily enhancements

There exists considerable variation in the content of happiness constructs and measures, although there is a common core of acceptance. Many of the work-related constructs focus on the experiences on the employees having experiences of positive beliefs, likings etc. about the workplace or any other objects like job satisfaction, commitment, positive emotions while working etc. (Fischer, 2010). Further the measures and constructs alteration in reference as to their targets. The definition mood is that it's a state which floats freely and has no understood target or cause, whereas emotions have known targets. On the other hand, attitudes are estimates about attitude objects.

Organization should foster employee satisfaction: Different organizations must implement activities to foster satisfaction of employees by concentrating on making a constructive working condition and employee's encouragement not regarding the strain due to evolving financial conditions in accordance with the society containing Human Resource Management (Financial Times, 2013). Employees, therefore, need to master their skills and provide value to their organization, thus making their own happiness.

To promote Good Health among the employees: Poor health is detrimental to business along with its damages caused to employees. The organization in which employees work must take measures to educate them about health and safety through seminars and reading materials. It would help employees to make changes in their lifestyles in a positive manner.

Provide Career growth opportunities: Career development in employees would enhance their skill sets thus enriching the organizational business. It would also help tell the employees about their being a vital part of the team and they are expected to improve their learning and reach their goals.

Offer flexible work options: Organizations to provide flexible work options to employees which would be part of the telecommunication to compacted workweeks and to take extended leaves time to attend their community or family get-togethers. Nowadays both Wi-Fi networks and mobile devices enable the workers to work virtually anywhere without being physically present at the office. These work options within employees would further contribute to employee happiness and improved work productivity

D. Developing models to gauge the level of employee happiness effectively

The need of effective measurement of employee happiness and positivity at workplace are addressed by developing employee happiness models for organizations. Studies reveal that competing models on employment engagement to provide a deep knowledge on the precursor and outcomes related to the concept of employee happiness.

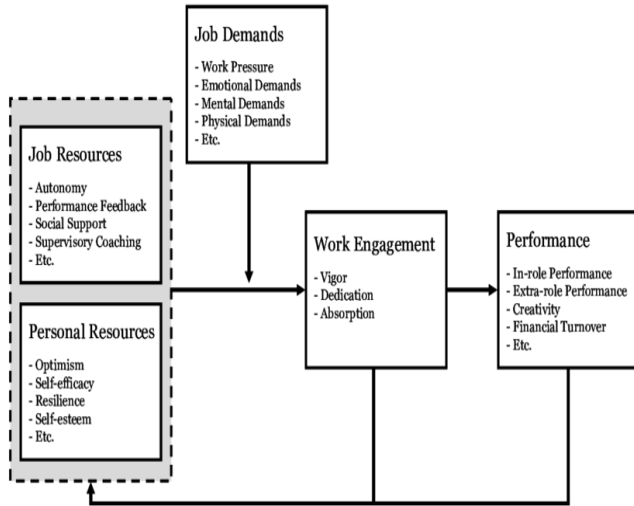


Figure 1: The JD-R Model of work engagement

Based on Bakker & Demerouti, (2007, 2008), was extracted from Bakker & Leiter (2010)

From the researches, ideas have been developed to study occupational stress models for employees work engagement. The precursors and results of engagement pertaining to work is majorly analysed with the help of Job Demand Resources model (Koyuncu, Burke, & Fiksenbaum, 2006; JD-R; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Parker; Meyer & Gagne, 2008; Jimmieson & Amiot, 2009; Van Heck & De Vries, 2002; Allen & Mellor, 2002; Llorens et al., 2007; Kim, Shin, & Swanger, 2009; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007; Hakonen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Langelaan et al., 2006). From literature, it has been found that the significance of Hackman and Oldham's JCM (JCM; 1975, 1980) is that it is highly adjustable for various groups of employers and organizations. JD-R model aligns with the theory of conservation resource (COR) (Freedy and Hobfall, 2017). The model mentions about energy in humans that it depends upon resources collection and its retention. It is also discussed in the literature that through the ERI model (Siegrist and Wahrendorf, 2016) job demand lacks when the resources related to the job such as salary, career opportunities and monetary rewards leads to job strain.

The model abbreviated as JD-R, full form Job Demands-Resources of Bakker & Demerouti (2007) predicts employee overdo, engagement and consequently performance. According to the said model, every activity contains needs in addition to its providers. Considering the reality of the above referred model initially combines two activities of psychology.

a) *Process leading to strain:* This process leads to a glint of increased work pressures and lack of capabilities which shall further result in lead to outcomes that are not positive which include absence, sickness and sluggish performances, obstructed workability and decreased commitments pertaining to organization. Employees' energy gets deprived when the work-related pressures may be consistently increased and shall not be fulfilled by better resources capable of carrying out the job.

Motivational process: These processes are triggered by the presence of abundance in job resources. Through work engagement positive outcomes can be drawn such as organizational commitment, employee safety, and superior work performance. Employee's energy is flint through this process which keeps them engaged and lead to better outcomes for the organization

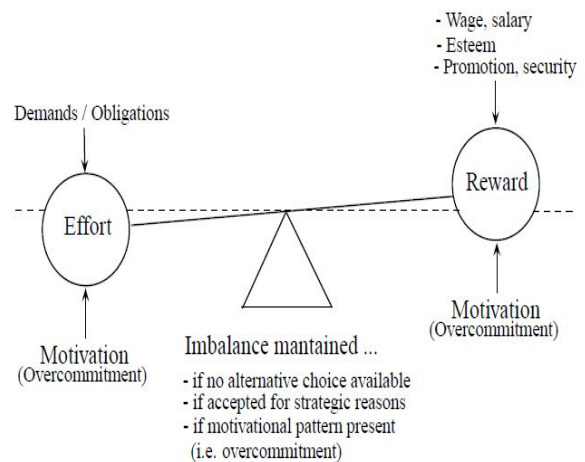


Figure 2: Schematic representation of the ERI-model

This concept of ERI, also known as effort-reward imbalance professes about the unsuccessful reciprocity with reference to increased work done and decreased offerings due to generation of non positive emotions again and again and bear further strain response among people who have faced it while reversely enhanced feelings summons rewards socially to encourage survival, health and well-being. The graphic representation belonging to the ERI-model (Figure 2) states that: having no balance in more effort and less output (non-reciprocity), the possibility of health being reduced exceeds the associated risks pertaining to every component. The risk pertaining to reduced health is high for overcommitted people. People with features a and b are more prone to reduced health.

The psychological wellbeing and happiness of employees depend on few elements which were discussed by psychologist Seligman through the PERMA Model (Figure 3) which can help employees in any workplace to attain a life of fulfilment, happiness and meaning. Positive emotions include peace, hope, love etc. To focus in their work and incorporate it to their daily lives, people need to take out time and identify those places, people and events that give them pleasure. It also explains that people should be engaged in the work or tasks in which they take part. To

maintain a proper workflow, it is necessary to keep concentration in one's work. Therefore, according to this work model, it is necessary to increase engagement in work by decreasing the distractions and interruptions which would keep the employee motivated and alert by being on task. There must be a positive relationship with the people in the surrounding work environment to generate happiness.

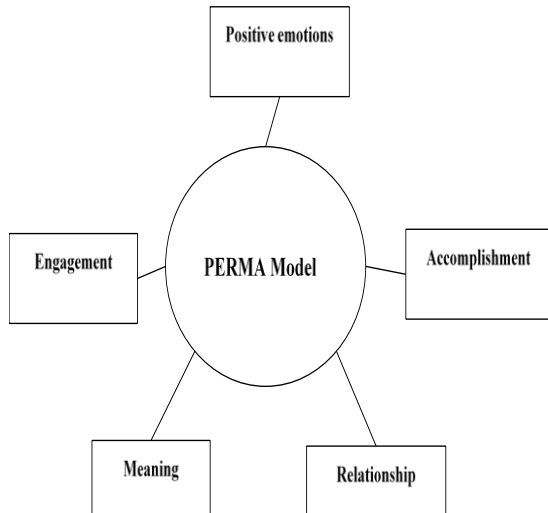


Figure 3: Seligman's PERMA Model

IV. METHODOLOGY

This literature review was attained by thorough analysis, condemnatory evaluation and prediction made on the literature, the secondary data sources attaining requisites belonging to the objectives of the study. Articles pertaining to the research along with other related journals were downloaded by using search engines like Research Gate, Elsevier, Science Direct, Google Scholar, Wiley InterScience etc. Upon comprehensive study, the irrelevant papers for the study were excluded from the review, and in general, a total of around 25 literature were considered for information pertaining to the paper. Reviews were based on detailed analysis of research papers and journals where different examples of happiness models were discussed based on correlation with resource availability with employee performance further providing satisfaction in workplaces. All these analyses were based on secondary data sources. Therefore, in order to draw an overall idea as how variations in happiness among the employees can affect the performance of an organization, was the utmost goal for this review of research literature and present the view. From these available resources, an idea could be gathered and also suggest for future studies on the missing criteria.

V. FINDINGS

The literature review provided with a glimpse of a variety of issues that can be further addressed for better understanding well-being at work. Through the review of the literature, it was found that contradictions existed amid the factor of correlation between employee happiness and work

productivity. Some literature strongly supported that organizational or the job success is linked closely to a positive mindset and/or happiness surrounding an employee. In contrast, it has been illustrated by other literature that happiness is not the only resource to attain success. There are also other resources that are responsible for a successful career like intelligence, perseverance, affluence etc. Review of literature also showed that unhappy people can also be successful. For example, Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill were considered to be clinically depressed but are successful. Further, the literature suggested that the variable job satisfaction is only an attitude and the exact factor on which it depends is still unclear. Thus, further reviews and studies can be done to draw a better conclusion on this employee attitude. Hence, it can be stated that happiness and workplace positivity is strongly related to the satisfaction of the job as well as employee productivity.

Happiness is dispositional in nature rather than being circumstantial. From (Figure 4: Conceptual Model of Workplace Happiness), findings suggest a direct relation between workplace happiness and work performance, where different factors directly as well as indirectly contributes to the happiness of an individual at the workplace. These factors are work behaviour like employee attitudes, value and ethics, organizational effects like health and safety, concentration, reputation, motivation and personal indicators like vitality, good health, positive work environment of employees which are directly related to the happiness of employees at work to promote performance and few other indicators like intelligence, perseverance, affluence etc. on which the work performance and success of an organization depends without an employee being happy. From the literature review, some of the limitations or gaps identified are:

- a) A specific quantum of researches is available on workplace happiness and positivity: Measurement, Causes and Consequences.
- b) It is argued that the term "happiness" has no meaning in reality and therefore cannot be studied (Salerno, 2010). Researches have discussed happiness of employees at the workplace. But, contradictions lie on the measurement of happiness as it is a human emotion which can be felt. Therefore, further research is needed to get in-depth knowledge on existing employee happiness at the workplace more in details.
- c) Measuring happiness was also said to be too subjective, hence it cannot be compared among individuals (Ojanen, 2009).
- d) The concept of work satisfaction and positivity may vary from organization to organization and also within the same organization (Manka, 2011)

VI. CONCLUSION

Happiness at workplace is a very wide topic, that includes various constructs such as transient emotions and moods. At workplace, happiness is influenced by short- and long-term events, job itself, working conditions. At the individual level it is influenced by the personality, individual expectations, needs and wants. Understanding these factors can help organizations to improve its environment.

The evidence from literature also suggests that improving happiness at workplace can improve productivity, job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, customer satisfaction, attendance, retention and work performance.

The importance of happy workplaces is increasing, the employment relations are changing and becoming

significant towards the objective of making employees happy at workplace. Happiness at workplace is likely to contribute in high employee retention.

There is the further scope of research on happiness at workplaces as the concept of happiness is unclear. By analysing the work done by different researchers on the literature it is quite clear that we are at a very early stage of understanding the characteristics of happiness at workplaces further providing a good reason for future studies in this area and to believe that happiness at workplaces provides a competitive edge. Further, this review can be more revised and more studies can be conducted on literature to get a better grasp on the measures required to understand

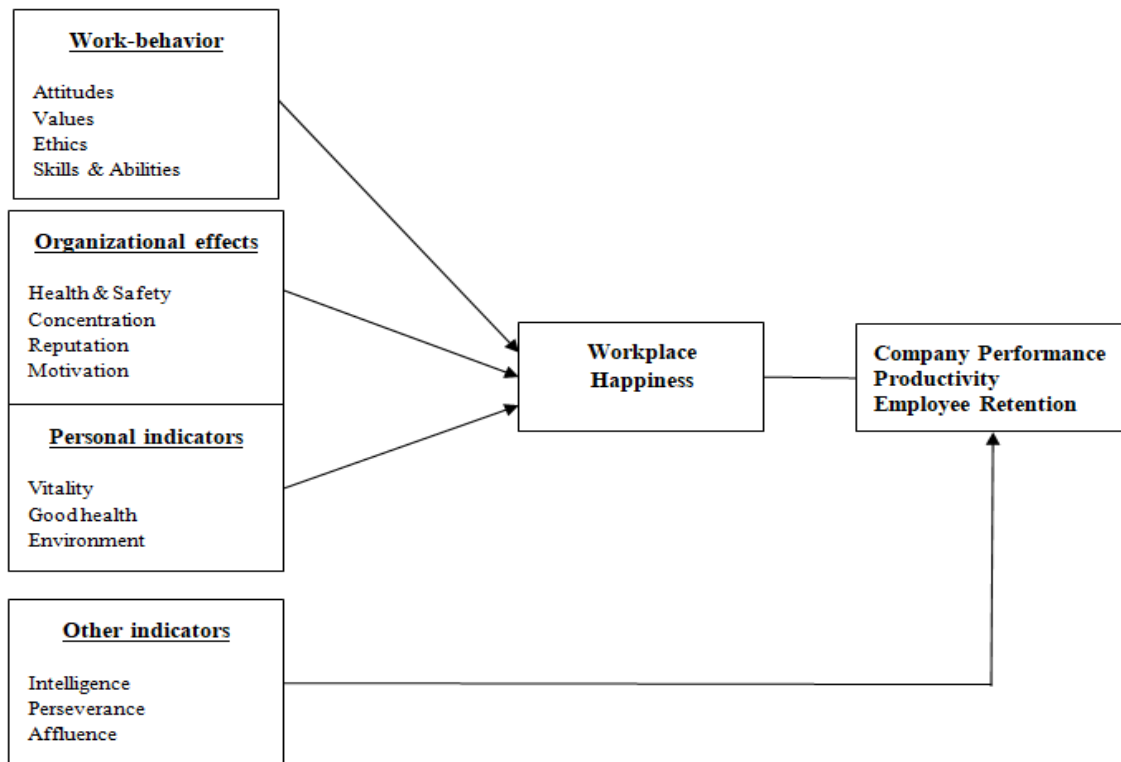


Figure 4: Conceptual Model of Workplace Happiness

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