

Subjective well-being at the workplace and organizations



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Even though the psychologists explored the human behavior especially unhappiness in detail but the positivity was ignored in the past. Until 1974, the Journal Social Indications research founded and dedicated large number of articles to Subjective well-being. The literature of SWB shows or focuses on why and how people experience positive way of life including cognitive judgments and affective reactions. By cognitive judgment it means life satisfaction and by affective reaction it means positive and negative affect. In past many researches used the affective dimension to measure well-being. For instance, using the traits of negative affectivity and positive affectivity to explain the well-being of employees but the measurements of the cognitive dimensions were uncommon. So, Because of this Diener developed the measurement of Satisfaction with Life scale (SWLS) 1985. It assess person on their own rather on the researchers judgments. One of the definitions for happiness according to Diener (1984) is satisfaction of life (Diener, 2000).

Despite lots of researches exploring the individuals' happiness sources, no one of the theories of subjective well-being has risen to dominate this area of study as the main reason for this is incomplete existing SWB theories.

Psychological theories of SWB are divided in to two main categories, top-down approach suggesting individuals that are happy as they are inclined to react to the circumstances in a positive way while the bottom up approach uphold that individuals are happier because of numerous happy moments in their lives. There are three characteristics of subjective well-being first is development of SWLS. Secondly it includes not only positive but also negative measures and finally SWB measures global assessment of all

people's life aspects (Diener, 1984). Donaldson (2009) defined positive psychology as a term that focus on excellence, happiness, gratitude, flourishing, subjective well-being, strengths, flow, resilience and positive organizational scholarship.

This section focuses on positive as well as negative Subjective well-being in the organizations but more importance is given to positive aspect.

Circumplex model (Russell, 1980, 2003) as a broad theoretical frame work to distinguish between positive and negative work related subjective well being. Positive subjective well-being includes work happiness, job satisfaction and work engagement where as negative SWB includes burnout and workaholism. Psychologists and sociologists are focusing in happiness and subjective well being from many years (Veenhoven, 1991). Recently happiness also gain importance in the field of economics (Layard, 2006) and is the central focus in the positive psychology movement (Sleigman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This field of psychology has focused on the positive aspects of the individuals to help them flourish. Psychology, sociology and economy all of these fields in together can contribute in better understanding of the employee happiness in the organization (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008).

Definition of Subjective Well-Being (SWB):

Subjective well-being means that how people assess their lives. It's a normal positive state that involves the whole life experience. This assessment may take the form of cognitions when person makes conscious evaluative judgment about their satisfaction with life as whole. A person is having high subjective well-being if he is satisfied with his life and having frequent

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positive experiences or emotions such as joy and happiness and in frequent negative feeling such as sadness and anger (Diener, Sandvik & Pavot, 1991). Subjective well-being is a trait not a state. Many researchers argue that individual have a ' set-point' for happiness level and this is fixed and crucial part of our performance. So, SWB is very important as without it human beings shrink their skill to gather desired assets and weaken their ability to handle and remain flexible in the face of challenges (International Well being Group, 2006).

According to Windle and Treuer (2008) subjective well-being is vital because positive feelings and experiences build a range of personal resources i. e. physical, social, intellectual and psychological and they defined SWB as a normal positive state of mind that includes the whole life experience and stable happiness. According to Diener (2009), subjective wellbeing indicates satisfaction of life; high positive emotions like passion, joy and love; reduced negative emotions like anger, depression and also satisfaction with various other aspects of life like work, marriage, health.

Diener (1984) said that subjective well-being is an umbrella term that evaluates one's lives including life satisfaction, pleasant emotions, feeling of fulfillment, work and marriage satisfaction and lowest level of satisfactions. Researchers used the term subjective well-being rather than happiness as it has varied meaning depending on the life event. Although life satisfaction is an important aspect of life but not for all people as people want to be happy for good reasons and presence of vital things although they are not happy with it. So, it can be argued that subjective well-being is just an important component of good life. Diener also stated that demographic <https://assignbuster.com/subjective-well-being-at-the-workplace-and-organizations/>

factors like age sex, income, ethnicity and education has 20% variance in subjective well-being. It is also stated that married people are happier than unmarried people over that women are happier than men.

Diener (2000) studied the relation between the resources and subjective well-being and they predicted that internal resources like self confidence were best predictors of subjective well-being in college students rather than external resources like money due to that with the help of internal resources external resources can be obtained too. Culture does have influence on the subjective well-being of the individuals.

Diener and Biswas-Diener (2002) and Diener and Oishi (2000) have worked a lot on relationship between money and happiness. Their studies showed findings that positive correlations exist between income and subjective well-being of wealthy nations. Wealthy nations have high subjective well-being than the poor nations. But always it's not the same in case when the employees pay is increased he is still unhappy as its stressors are more like high expectations in return. It was also found that materialistic people have low subjective well-being because people who have high desire for money don't care about the social relationships and are insecure. People with high subjective well-being have the following characteristics that is they have more friends, more likely to get married and stay happily, have good services are more involved in leadership roles and live longer.

2. 3 Subjective well-being at Work

According to Diener's (2006) definition of SWB, an employee has elevated work related SWB if he is satisfied with his job and have frequent positive

experiences and infrequent negative emotions. Positive emotions are employees' experiences at work investigative of engagement, happiness or satisfaction. Diener (1994) also stated that when SWB, term is read it must be immediately noted that it's not the same as happiness but synonymous to it. It can be defined as broad category that includes people's emotional response, domain satisfactions and global judgments of life satisfaction. Sleigman (2002) also said that positive psychology is the scientific study of how humans achieve happiness and mental satisfaction, in order to discover how people can lead the most productive lives possible. It is about positive subjective experience i. e. well being ad satisfaction. In short, positive psychology is a science of subjective well-being.

Diener sees life satisfaction as a factor of SWB and subsidiary to it (Camfield and Skevington 2008). International experts defined subjective well-being as ' an umbrella term for different valuations that person make related to their lives, the actions experienced by them and the situations in which they survive'. Happiness is referred many times as positive affect but it can also be related to positive mood generally, a global evaluation of Life satisfaction, living a good life and the causes or reason of happiness (Diener, 2006).

Now, we will discuss positive and negative emotions of work related SWB by placing them in the circumplex model. Russell's (1980, 2003) circumplex model put forwards that affective states occur from two basic neurophysiological systems, one linked with pleasure-displeasure continuum and the other with arousal and activation. Each experience of emotions can be linear combinations of theses two proportions as varying degrees of both pleasure and activation.

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Figure 2. A two-dimensional view of work-related SWB (adapted from Russell, 1980, 2003).

2. 4 Positive forms of Work related SWB:

2. 4. 1 Work engagement: it is defined as “ an optimistic, gratifying, work related state of mind that is portrayed by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufel and Bakker, 2010). Its position in circumplex model is at upper right quadrant resembling high levels of pleasure and activation. Vigor means high level of energy while working and persistence even in the face of difficulties, dedication means being strongly in ones on work and experience a sense of enthusiasm and lastly absorption mean being fully concentrated in ones own work . Because of engaged employees’ positive attitude towards them selves, employees’ buildup their own positive feed back in terms of appreciation, recognition and success (Bakker, 2009).

2. 4. 2 Happiness at work: numerous researchers have connected subjective well-being with the term happiness (Cropanzano and Wright, 1999; Easterlin, 2001; Sleigman, 2002; Lyubomirski, 2001). It refers to high level of activation as being satisfied and some hat lower as being excited. According to Fisher, (2003) more than 90% of workers agree that happy workers are productive workers as they are more active, energetic and interested in work and persistent to face difficulties as compared to unhappy employees. It is important to distinguish happiness as a specific emotion from other measures that cover a range of positive and negative emotions (Veenhoven, 1984).

2. 4. 3 Job satisfaction: it is most studied form of work related SWB and it can be placed in the right lower quadrant of the model, as it reflects a high level of pleasure and a low level of activation. According to Grebner, Semmer and Elfering (2005), employees having satisfaction with their jobs experience high pleasure, but may have limited energy and aspirations. Similarly, Bussing, Bissels, Fuchs and Perrar (1999) said that decrease in aspiration level can result in a positive state of satisfaction and overall job satisfaction is closely related to the experience of satisfaction as positive emotion in the work place.

2. 5 Negative Forms of Work-related SWB

2. 5. 1 Workaholism: it is placed in the upper left of the quadrant reflecting lower levels of pleasure and high levels of work activation workholism is an inner drive to struggle and work hard (Oates1971). According to Tris, Schaufeil and Shimzau (2010), workholism is an employee has compulsion to work incessantly and give exceptional time to work and to meet expected organizational requirements.

2. 5. 2 Burnout: it's placed in the lower left of the circumplex model reflecting low levels of pleasure and activation. According to Masiach and Jackson (1986) it was originally conceived as work related syndrome that most often occurs among individuals who work with other people. Consistent with our categorization of SWB according to circumplex model and some researches have suggested that burnout is the opposite of work engagement (Gonzalez-Roma-Schaufeil, Bakker and Lloret, 2006).

According to Noll (2002) the individual is himself or herself responsible to evaluate their quality of life in terms of subjective well-being. The subjective well-being construct is comprised of four different components:

- Life satisfaction (universal judgment of one's own life).
- Satisfaction with necessary life domains (family, health work)
- Positive affect (many positive emotion and moods experienced)
- Low negative affects (familiar with few unpleasant emotions and moods)

Dolan and White (2006), regard as these mechanisms of SWB as divisible elements. a person for example who have high level of positive affect for a particular event will be dissatisfied because he has failed to achieve personal aim. Alternatively, an individual experiencing negative affect may be satisfied by comparing himself to an individual in less favorable situation. There are cross cultural differences in happiness and life satisfaction that are not completely explained by income differences. Bradburn (1969) study showed that Subjective well-being was moderately associated with adjustment, neuroticism, work satisfaction and family situation, but were considerably associated to each other.

Concluding, the psychological contract following are its key features:

Psychological contract is based on beliefs and perceptions and is different for each individual although in the same organization. They are implicit and are thought to be inferred from obligations made by the organizations or employees and conclusions are drawn by one party by observing the behavior with the other party. There is an exchange relationship in it so its

founded on the principle of reciprocity: the implied promises to behave in certain way to work, psychological contract is also based on perceived or observed agreement rather than actual or written agreement, in which the terms are continuously re-written as the parties interact and mutual expectations, obligations and promises are generated and implied. The employees have a heart as well other than a hand and a head which is mostly over looked by the organizations that have focused just on hiring the hands and head ignoring the heart. Subjective wellbeing is satisfaction with life and positive emotions and moods having low level of unpleasant emotions. Studies have revealed that the income, religion, education , intelligence have only 15% of effect on the subjective well-being. The focus of happiness that who is happy has been shifted from when and why people are happy (Diener, 2000).

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

The growing body of literature on the psychological contract reflects collecting confirmation or verification for its great impact on assorted work-related outcomes. The literature review estimate that employees evaluate their incentives received from their organization by comparing it with the promises made and this estimation leads to psychological contract fulfillment or breach impression (Turnley & Feldman, 1998). The over view of PC research shows that there are about 100 or more empirical studies on Psychological Contract out of which 60% were on the breach and 30% on content of psychological contract. Psychological contract breach or violation has been correlated with mistrust, job satisfaction, intention to quit, actual turn over, actual performance, organizational commitment and absence .

Based upon research by Guest & Conway (2001) 84% of managers had heard of psychological contract, 36% of managers apply it to deal with the employment relationship. Similarly, Guest (1998) explain why the Psychological contract is important and should be taken seriously. First reason was that from the last few years the focus is being shifted from industrial relations to employee relations and this can be explored through the construct of Psychological contract. Second reason is it focuses on distribution of power and finally it has ability to incorporate large number of organizational concepts.

In 1998, Turnley and Feldman study found that twenty five percent of their employees sample felt that they received less than they had been promised like health care benefits, job related security, power to make vital decisions, career development and responsibilities. Similarly, Robison, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994) study found that fifty five percent of the sample reported contract violations by their employers after spending two years at the organization and these violations were related to training and development, promotion, compensation etc. These studies indicate that workers or employees are quite cynical about the organization that whether they accomplish their pledges. In the past organizations focused on employees' loyalty and honesty to the organization but currently they need flexible employees who learn more skills and abilities, to work under pressures and are more marketable for the organization (Herriot and Pemberto, 1995, Sparrow and Marchington, 1998). The current state of psychological contract is much similar to the past as four out of five employees are satisfied with

their job, their commitment has not declined but their trust has declined over the years according to the CIPD surveys (CIPD, 2005).

According to Guest and Conway (2002), 1,306 senior HR showed that Psychological Contract offers employers a framework within which they study how to administer the employment relationship. So, the main role of the Psychological Contract in an organization is to make most out of their human capital which means what employees expect from their employers (Guest and Conway 2002, CIPD 2005). CIPD concluded that employees today seek one of the three types of psychological contract with their employer: Traditional: those who seek long term tenure and work long hours. Disengaged: for those whom work is not a central life interest and seek no emotions to their employers and Independent: those who are well qualified and seek short tenure and high rewards. In a qualitative study by Herriot, Manning, and Kidd (1997) it was found that the relational component of psychological contract was more frequently mentioned than was the transactional component and therefore seemed more important. Similarly, Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski and Bravo (2007) also found in a study that the association between relational breach and job satisfaction, turnover intentions and organizational citizenship behaviors is much stronger than association between transactional breach and job satisfaction, and the above variables.

According to suggestion of Berman, E. M. and West, J. P. (2003), psychological contract involves work load, work schedules, authority, work quality, responsibility, interpersonal relations, job security, rewards, promotion, career development, loyalty, working relation with immediate supervisors, specific behaviors of employees and managers and individually

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preferred working styles other than employees and employers. While Davidson (2001) recommended that employee hopes involve benefits and rewards, job security, safe and comfortable working conditions, personal development opportunities and career progression, fair treatment, work life balance, working hours, job challenges on the other hand employers expectations involve high productivity for reward, working under organizational objectives. According to Collin (2010) psychological contract fulfillment is found to be significant predictor of turn over intention and finding suggest that turnover can be moderated if leaders of organization have strong relation based on respect, trust and mutual obligations and uses them to fulfill the unwritten contract between firm and the employees.

Rousseau (1995) investigated that the psychological contract in business relationship is a key ingredient between employees and employers and at work place it could be influential determinant of behaviors and attitudes. Researchers like Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000), Tekleab and Taylor (2003), Turnley and Feldman (1999), Robinson and Rousseau (1994), findings showed that fulfilled contracts are positively related to organizational commitment and the effective functioning of the organization. The fulfilled psychological contracts have positive association with employees and organizational outcomes.

A foremost research was conducted by Psycones (2006) in six European countries and Israel. The sample size was 5288 employees (1981 were temporary employees and 3307 were permanent employees) working in 202 companies of education an industries and retail sectors. The results of this study were violation of promises made by the employer reduced the job <https://assignbuster.com/subjective-well-being-at-the-workplace-and-organizations/>

satisfaction. Workers receiving power at work, fulfilling promises from their supervisors show higher satisfaction the more the promise fulfilled by the organizations the more the employees are committed to the organization and the violation of employer or employee obligations lead to quitting the job.

Suazo, Mark, Turnley, William H., Mai-Dalton, Renate R (2008) conducted a study on characteristics of supervisor subordinate relationship as predictors of psychological contract. The sample size was 234 full time employees out of which 41% were males and 59% were females and the mean age of the participants was 37years. The data was collected through emails. The aim of this study was to know the factors like gender, cognitive style and race present between employees and employers predicting psychological contract breach. The hypotheses were that greater similarity between the cognitive styles of supervisor and subordinate will reduce the likelihood of psychological contract breach, the gender will be a specific factor in predicting psychological contract breach and subordinates with mix races will perceive more psychological contract breach than subordinates in same race supervisor subordinate dyads. The results proved that the cognitive style was negatively related to perceived Psychological contract breach and where as gender and race were not significant predictors of psychological contract breach. The cognitive approach of the supervisors and subordinates towards a problem, matters more than gender and race in predicting psychological contract breach.

Lester, Claire, Kickul (2001) paper studied the status of psychological contract in 21st century. Employees recognized the importance of various
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aspects of psychological contract and the degree to which their organization had fulfilled these obligations. The purpose of this study was to examine the employer inducements which are considered more important by the employees, to find how well the companies are fulfilling their obligations and also to know the discrepancies between the perceived importance and fulfillment of psychological contracts obligation affecting employees behavior at work. The numbers of participants' were 268 fulltime employees out of which 51.7% were males and 48.3% were females and the average age was 27.6 years old. The respondents belonged to different occupational fields like finance and banking, sales and marketing, computer science, accounting, human resource and staffing, engineering and organizational consulting. The findings showed that the organizations also struggle to fulfill components of psychological contract mostly accepted by the employees. The discrepancies between the perceived importance and fulfillment have significant effect on satisfaction and turnover of employees. Employees performance was also effected but to less extent. Similarly, Bergmann (2001) investigated relational component of the psychological contract across time, generation and employment status. His study focused on just one type of psychological contract and went to its details. The sample size was 204 individuals of three different generations 68 were college students, one of each of their parents and grandparents were also included in the survey. From 204 participants 56% were females and 75% of students and their parents were employed where as grandparents retired and 44% of students were full time employees. The respondents' were also asked for their perception regarding psychological contract on four different time periods 1900s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. There was significant difference

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between psychological contract scores for 1950s and 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The interaction effect of time and generation on assessment of the relational component of psychological contract was not significant i. e. the subjects viewed psychological contract same across time regardless of changes in generation. So it was stressed that the relational components of the psychological contract have decreased during the five decades. It is also possible that factors other than time, generation, workplace may also have contributed to the shift in the psychological contract.

Michael (2001), perceived the obligations of future forest industry employees and their first employers after graduation. New employees have reciprocal obligations between them and their employers and these beliefs can be called as psychological contract between them when the employee observes that he owe the employer certain incentives in return to the contribution given by him. Fulfillments of psychological contract have a direct impact on employees' productivity and satisfaction. The sample size of his study was 300 graduated students from 34 different universities at United States of America. The results showed that the first obligation of the employee to their future employer is hard work and have distinct type of relationship with future employers.

From the middle of 1970's the well-being has not increased in Britain and United states. White individuals are happier than black and non-white individuals in the United States but in the last 30 years the results are changing the blacks are also much happier and satisfied, so this study by Blanch Flower and Oswald (2004) has focused on races not immigrants.

The peer reviewed literature on the influence of positive psychology in organizational sector focusing on organizational behavior and scholarship is in the year 2001 there were to researches done in organizational sector, in 2002 in total 6 researches were conducted 2 empirical and 4 non-empirical, in 2003 3 empirical and 6 non-empirical researches were conducted , 3 empirical and 24 non-empirical in 2004, 5 empirical and 17 non-empirical in 2005, 6 empirical and 18 non-empirical in 2006, in 2007 7 empirical and 16 non-empirical, and finally 19 empirical and 18 non-empirical in 2008. So in total 46 empirical studies and 104 on empirical studies were conducted and combining both 150 studies having being conducted in positive psychology organizational sector (Donaldson, 2009).

Danna and Griffin (1999) investigated that work settings and occupational stress would be the forerunner factors of well-being. This view was supported by Cropanzano, James and Konovsky (1993) and Wright and Hobfoll (2004). Workers' or employees' when experience poor health and well-being at the work site are less productive, make lower quality decisions, and absenteeism (Boyd, 1997). Similarly, Price and Hooijberg (1992) the low subjective well-being would diminish the contributions to the organizations.

In a cross national study, Diener and Oishi (2000) established that for majority of the students in 42 countries happiness and life satisfaction was more important than income. Over the past five decades the number of longitudinal studies on income and subjective well-being exposed that although income level has been increased dramatically in United State of America and other developed countries but the levels of subjective well-being have been rather stable (Myres, 2000). According to Diener (2000), as <https://assignbuster.com/subjective-well-being-at-the-workplace-and-organizations/>

employees rise in their accomplishments and possessions their expectations also raise. They adapt themselves to the new level very fast and then the current level is no longer source of happiness for them but this happens with some employees depending on the situation. The factors that have important effect on the subjective well-being of the individual are personality, personal goals, comparison with other people, past, needs, goals and the last factor is culture.

In the recent years, the emergent number of researchers focused on positive indicators of subjective well-being (SWB), including job satisfaction (Judge, Thorenson, Bono and Patton, 2001), work engagement (Bakker, Schaufeil., Leiter and Taris, 2008), and happiness at work (Diener and Biswas- Diener 2002). Parent-Thirion, Fernandez-Macias, Hurley and Vermeylen (2007) study shows that 85% of all employees in the European Union and a study by Handel (2005) found that 86% of all the employees in the United States of America are very satisfied with their jobs.

A research on subjective well being of managers of private enterprises was conducted by Bo Lui, bus, Hohai, Nanjing (2010) in China. This study include factors that affect subjective well being, subjective well being of different masses, cultural differences. Different managers of private enterprises were considered as participants and the data was analyzed on SPSS15. 0. The overall subjective well being of the managers of private enterprises was low. The factors like status of marriage had significant impact on the subjective well being of the managers but gender and education didn't play vital role.

Correspondingly, a study " Job Insecurity and Wellbeing: Moderation by

Employability" by Inmaculada, Nele, Francisco, Jose and Hans (2010)
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investigated the association between job insecurity and wellbeing and the role of employability in this association. The researcher hypotheses were that job insecurity may be related to poor well-being, employability might moderate the unfavorable results of job security for employees' well-being and employability is beneficial in the same manner as the job security is. These hypotheses were tested on the sample size of 639 Belgian employees from six organizations. The findings showed that the job insecurity is related to poor well-being, employability as expected moderates the relation between job insecurity and life satisfaction. There was no association found between employability and job security. The model accounted for 8% of explained variance.

The first research that studied the relationship between psychological contract and subjective well being of employees was conducted by Windle and Treuer (2008). In this longitudinal study psychological contract was dependent variable and subjective well being was independent variable. The sample size was 187 new recruits in Australia wide organizations and data was collected through online survey 58% males and 42% females. The results indicate that SWB informs development of a Balanced Psychological contract and SWB significantly correlated with employer fulfillment, employee fulfillment, social knowledge and interpersonal resources. Balanced dynamic performance of Psychological contract was predicted by subjective well-being at 9% variance explained while in dynamic performance 10% of variance was explained.

A lot of researches have focused on happiness of individuals and employees living within their own country. This study is different in terms that it's <https://assignbuster.com/subjective-well-being-at-the-workplace-and-organizations/>

focusing on employees who have migrated from their home country to the host country and to investigate the relationship of psychological contract and the physical and mental health i. e. subjective well-being of Pakistani immigrants working abroad (Middle East). It would be expected that the fulfillment of psychological contract would have positive relation with subjective well-being of the employees. The role of gender within psychological contract has received little attention, so this study would also examine whether there are any gender differences in the type of psychological contract of Pakistani immigrants and among them which type of psychological contract is more common.

Rationale

Keeping in view the literature review on the psychological contract and subjective well-being and also the statistical figure of Pakistani immigrants working abroad especially at U. A. E, not much work has been done regarding the problems and difficulties they face, and no work