



## Workplace happiness and employee performance: Mediating role of work-life balance in Indian service industry

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of the study is to find out the effect of workplace happiness on employee performance in service industry in India. It also aims to find out the mediating effect work life balance in the link between workplace happiness and employee performance.

**Methodology:** A cross-sectional study approach was used, and data were gathered from 336 service managers and executive grade employees, employed in service sector (hospital services) in India. Judgemental sampling method was used in the study with inclusion criteria of experience more than five years for the employees. Structural equation modelling was conducted to test the direct and mediating effect of variables under the study.

**Findings:** The findings demonstrated that workplace happiness significantly predicted employee performance in organisation whereas work life balance was found to be a partial mediator in predicting the relationship between happiness and performance among the service sector employees.

**Keywords:** happiness, Mediating, service industry, Workplace

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### 1. Introduction

The importance of a highly effective and productive employee cannot be overstated in today's complicated and competitive global corporate scene. There has been a growing corpus of study on the different organizational and individual elements that affect employee performance as a result of this drive to increase productivity. Among them, the idea of employee satisfaction in the workplace has emerged as a critical factor affecting not just individual productivity but also the organization's overall success. Employees' positive emotional reaction to their jobs is a complex construct that includes their feelings about their roles, their relationships with coworkers and superiors, and their impressions of the company's culture and values (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001) <sup>[18]</sup>. Studies routinely demonstrate favorable relationships between workers' happiness at work and their job performance (e.g., Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2003) <sup>[5, 16]</sup>, lending belief to the idea that a happy workforce is a productive one.

Recent research has shown a correlation between employee satisfaction in the workplace and a number of positive outcomes for both workers and their employers. Benefits include enhanced productivity, lower absenteeism, better employee and customer health (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011; Oswald, Proto & Sgroi, 2015) <sup>[3, 23]</sup>, and higher staff retention. Positive work environments that encourage teamwork, creativity, and stress resistance have been linked to higher levels of organizational performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000) <sup>[26]</sup>.

Understanding what motivates employees to work well is crucial in India's fast developing economy and fiercely competitive service industry. High rates of employee turnover, stress, and burnout, as well as the ongoing need for upskilling in light of technology developments, are all issues that Indian businesses must contend with. Employee motivation, engagement, and output may all be boosted by creating a positive work environment, which in turn helps businesses remain competitive and viable.

This study seeks to fill a number of gaps in the literature by investigating the relationship between workplace pleasure or happiness and productivity. To begin, the majority of studies in this area have been undertaken in Western countries, with much fewer studies examining similar dynamics in developing nations like India (Bhatnagar, 2012) <sup>[4]</sup>. There is a need for context-specific study on the elements that contribute to workplace happiness and its effect on performance because of cultural, economic, and social disparities.

The second issue is that there is a lack of information on the possible mediating elements between workplace happiness and employee performance, despite the fact that the direct link between the two has been well-established. In particular, the importance of a healthy work-life balance has been underappreciated despite growing recognition (Haar, Russo, Sune, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014) <sup>[15]</sup>. Understanding the role of work-life balance in the connection between workplace satisfaction and employee performance is vital in light of the changing nature of work and the growing difficulties workers face in maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to add to the current literature by investigating the connection between employee satisfaction and productivity in the Indian service industry and the mediating function of work-life balance. In doing so, it offers helpful information for businesses that want to boost their productivity and competitiveness by creating a healthy and pleasant workplace environment for their employees.

## 2. Review of Literature

Many researchers in the fields of organizational behavior and human resource management have shown that improving workplace satisfaction, fostering a healthy work-life balance, and boosting productivity all have positive effects on organizational outcomes. The key to creating a healthy and effective workplace is knowing how these factors interact with one another.

### 2.1 Employee satisfaction and productivity in the workplace

Numerous empirical research has shown a positive correlation between employee satisfaction and productivity in the workplace. Job satisfaction is an important part of workplace happiness and has been shown to correlate strongly with performance in a meta-analysis by Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton (2001) <sup>[18]</sup>. Moreover, Wright and Cropanzano (2000) <sup>[26]</sup> discovered that job success is positively correlated with psychological well-being, a wider measure of satisfaction in the workplace.

Researchers have also looked at the ways through which a positive work environment boosts productivity. Positive emotions, according to the Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2001) <sup>[11]</sup>, allow people to develop their thought-action repertoires, which in turn allows them to amass personal resources that ultimately lead to improved performance. Workplace happiness has been shown to have several positive effects, including higher productivity and satisfaction on the workplace (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005) <sup>[2, 22]</sup>.

### 2.2 Job Satisfaction and a Healthy Work-Life Balance

Another important aspect of professional satisfaction is the ability to strike a healthy balance between work and personal life. To get a whole picture of work-life balance, it's important to look at how content workers are in both their

paid and unpaid positions (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007) <sup>[14]</sup>. Finding a happy medium between work and personal life has been shown to largely benefit employees.

Employees who have trouble striking a balance between their personal and professional lives tend to be less happy at work (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000) <sup>[1]</sup>. Employees are more likely to report being happy and satisfied with their jobs in companies that promote work-life balance via family-friendly policies or flexible working hours (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000) <sup>[24]</sup>.

### 2.3 The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Productivity

Employee productivity is also impacted by their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. There is a correlation between a healthy work-life balance and increased productivity in the workplace. According to research by Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) <sup>[13]</sup>, job satisfaction acts as a mediator between work-life balance and productivity.

In addition, research has shown that companies whose workers report a healthy work-life balance have reduced absenteeism and turnover rates, as well as greater levels of dedication and engagement, which may boost business results (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) <sup>[20]</sup>.

### 2.4 Work-life Balance as a Mediator

Workplace happiness and employee performance both have well-established direct correlations, but the mediation function of work-life balance in this relationship has received less attention. Researchers Haar, Russo, Sune, and Ollier-Malaterre (2014) <sup>[15]</sup> discovered that a healthy work-life balance modulates the connection between occupational and existential happiness. Therefore, it is possible that the link between workplace happiness and employee performance is also mediated by work-life balance.

There is a need for more research to understand the complex interplay between these variables, especially in cultural contexts like the Indian service industry, despite the well-documented positive effects of workplace happiness and work-life balance on employee performance. This research aims to close this knowledge gap by exploring the link between workplace happiness and productivity and the role that work-life balance plays in facilitating this connection. In the lights of the above the first hypothesis of study is stated as:

#### Hypothesis 1

**H1:** There is a significant positive relationship between workplace happiness and employee performance.

This theory is based on studies that have shown a correlation between happiness in one's employment and productivity on the job. According to studies (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005) <sup>[18, 22, 26]</sup>, contented workers are more likely to be efficient, enthusiastic, and committed to their jobs. Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw (2005) <sup>[2]</sup> and Frederickson (2001) found that when people are happy, their thought-action repertoires expand, which in turn improves their creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, all of which led to better performance on the job.

#### Hypothesis 2

**H2:** There is a significant positive relationship between workplace happiness and work-life balance. According to research (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000) <sup>[24]</sup>, if

workers are able to strike a good balance between their professional and personal lives, they are far more likely to be happy and fulfilled in their jobs. There is a correlation between firms that promote work-life balance and better levels of employee satisfaction and happiness (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Dubey; Pathak & Sahu, 2020; Dubey; Pathak & Sahu, 2022; Pathak, Dubey & Singh, 2019) <sup>[1, 6, 7, 8]</sup>, with the former reporting lower levels of job satisfaction and the latter reporting higher stress levels.

### Hypothesis 3

**H3:** There is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) <sup>[13]</sup> found that workers who successfully managed their work and home life were more engaged and productive at their employment. As stated by Kossek and Ozeki (1998) <sup>[20]</sup>, improved work-life balance is linked to fewer absentees, more satisfied workers, more dedication to the company, and better productivity.

### Hypothesis 4

**H4:** Work-life balance mediates the relationship between workplace happiness and employee performance.

There is little research on the mediating role of work-life balance, despite the fact that the direct links between workplace happiness, work-life balance, and employee performance are well-established. According to research by Haar, Russo, Sune, and Ollier-Malaterre (2014) <sup>[15]</sup>, a happy workplace may lead to a better work-life balance, which in turn can boost productivity by decreasing stress, improving morale on the job, and boosting morale and enthusiasm among workers.

### 3. Scales used in the study

To verify the reliability and validity of assessment, a well-established and validated scales to assess the dimensions of interest in this research, including job satisfaction, work-life balance, and productivity is done in the study.

#### 3.1 Workplace Happiness

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) created by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) <sup>[21]</sup> was used to assess individuals' levels of contentment in the workplace. The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) is a 4-item instrument for gauging an individual's state of mind on a global level. Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) <sup>[21]</sup> cite a plethora of research that use it, all of which attest to its high reliability and construct validity across a variety of sample types.

#### 3.2 Work-Life Balance

The Work-Life Balance was evaluated with the use of the WLBM, which was created by Grzywacz and Carlson in 2007. The Work-Family Balance Measure (WLBM) is a 16-item scale that evaluates how well people balance their various responsibilities at work and home. It has been shown to have high psychometric qualities in a number of studies (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007) <sup>[14]</sup> and hence offers a thorough measurement of work-life balance.

#### 3.3 Employee Performance

The IWPQ, created by Koopmans *et al.* (2013) <sup>[19]</sup>, was used to evaluate workers' efforts on the job. The 18-item Inventory of Workplace Performance and Quality (IWPQ) evaluates efficiency in three areas: specific tasks, overall workplace

conditions, and disruptive conduct. Several occupational contexts (Koopmans *et al.*, 2013) <sup>[19]</sup> attest to its validity and dependability.

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional research design was used in this study. This design is suitable for studies where the purpose is to establish relationships between variables at a particular point in time.

### 4.2 Sampling

The participants in this research were executives and managers working in the healthcare industry in India. Respondents with more than five years of expertise were chosen using a judgemental sample technique. The selection criteria were made to guarantee that the respondents had enough professional background to deliver meaningful replies. A total of valid 336 employees' responses was included for data analysis in the survey.

### 4.3 Data Collection

A systematic questionnaire was sent out via google forum to gather information from participants. Employee satisfaction, work-life balance, and productivity were among the areas covered in the survey's in-depth questionnaire. These scales were derived using previously established measures (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Koopmans *et al.*, 2013) <sup>[14, 21, 19]</sup> of the respective constructs.

## 5. Data Analysis

In order to offer a broad overview of the sample, descriptive statistics were calculated. In order to investigate the influence between the variables, a correlation analysis was performed. Workplace satisfaction, work-life balance, and employee performance were all directly correlated with one another and the mediating influence of work-life balance was also investigated using structural equation modeling (SEM). Structured equation modeling (SEM) is a multivariate statistical method that probes intricate interrelationships between observable and latent variables.

Several goodness-of-fit indices were used to evaluate the model fit, including the Chi-square statistic, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Model fit was deemed satisfactory if CFI and TLI were both larger than 0.95 and RMSEA was less than 0.06, as suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) <sup>[17]</sup>.

It is crucial to the technique that the scales used to assess the constructs are both valid and reliable, which is why scale validation is included.

### 5.1 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha, a measure of the internal consistency of the items within a scale, was used to check the reliability of the scales. Values of Cronbach's alpha over 0.70 are generally accepted (Nunnally, 1978).

### 5.2 Validity

We determined the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the Composite Reliability (CR) to evaluate the reliability of the constructs. Values greater than 0.5 for the AVE, which assesses the proportion of measurement error to variation captured by the concept, are generally accepted. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) <sup>[10]</sup>. Values of the CR over 0.70 are considered

acceptable (Nunnally, 1978), and it is another indicator of internal consistency dependability. The results of the scale validation are summarized in the following table:

**Table 1:** Reliability and Validity of Scale

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Workplace Happiness	0.85	0.56	0.87
Work-Life Balance	0.81	0.52	0.82
Employee Performance	0.89	0.57	0.9

A construct's discriminant validity is established by testing it against other similar constructs and making sure it stands alone. The Fornell-Larcker criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)<sup>[10]</sup> is often used to evaluate this, and it specifies that the square root of the AVE for each construct should be greater

than the correlations between the construct and any other construct.

The correlation matrix is provided in the table below:

**Table 2:** Correlation matrix

Constructs	Workplace Happiness	Work-Life Balance	Employee Performance
Workplace Happiness	√0.56	0.4	0.52
Work-Life Balance	0.4	√0.52	0.47
Employee Performance	0.52	0.47	√0.57

Table shows, discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker criteria is supported by the fact that the square root of the AVE for each construct (values on the diagonal) is greater than the correlations involving that construct (values off the diagonal).

**5.3 Analysis and Result**

**Table 3:** Analysis and Result of SEM

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	p-value	Result
H1	Workplace Happiness -> Employee Performance	0.35	p < .001	Supported
H2	Workplace Happiness -> Work-Life Balance	0.42	p < .001	Supported
H3	Work-Life Balance -> Employee Performance	0.31	p < .001	Supported
H4	Workplace Happiness -> Work-Life Balance -> Employee Performance (Mediation Effect)	0.13	p < .001	Supported

**Hypothesis Testing and Data Analysis**

The SEM model was run using AMOS. The proposed model demonstrated a good fit to the data:  $\chi^2$  (df) =, p < .05, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .05.

**H1: Workplace happiness positively influences employee performance**

The path coefficient for the relationship between workplace happiness and employee performance was .35, p < .001, suggesting a significant positive effect. Therefore, H1 is supported.

**H2: Workplace happiness positively influences work-life balance**

The path coefficient from workplace happiness to work-life balance was .42, p < .001, indicating a significant positive effect. Thus, H2 is supported.

**H3: Work-life balance positively influences employee performance**

The path from work-life balance to employee performance was significant (.31, p < .001), supporting H3.

**H4: Work-life balance mediates the effect of workplace happiness on employee performance**

The indirect effect of workplace happiness on employee performance through work-life balance was significant ( $\beta$  = .13, p < .001). Thus, work-life balance partially mediates the relationship between workplace happiness and employee performance, supporting H4.

**6. Discussion**

The results of this research provide significant additions to knowledge of the links between job satisfaction, work-life balance, and performance in the Indian service industry. In particular, they provide credibility to the theoretical claims

that underlie these concepts and their interconnections.

Our findings support the first hypothesis, which postulates a favorable connection between job satisfaction and productivity. This finding is consistent with the findings of other research (e.g., Pryce-Jones & Lindsay, 2014; Fisher, 2010)<sup>[25, 9]</sup> which have shown that contented workers are more likely to be successful in their roles. These results may be understood via the lens of positive psychology, which argues that experiencing a variety of good emotions increases one's capacity for creativity and resilience (Fredrickson, 2001)<sup>[11]</sup>. Thus, in a business setting, content workers are more likely to be motivated, resourceful, and creative, all of which contribute to greater organizational success.

The second hypothesis, that contentment in the workplace has a beneficial effect on work-life balance, was similarly confirmed. When workers are content in their jobs, they are better able to balance their professional and personal lives (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011)<sup>[12]</sup>. They are more likely to like their jobs, have positive mental health, and strike a good work-life balance. The research shows that creating a cheerful workplace may help workers manage their personal and professional responsibilities.

Grzywacz and Carlson's (2007)<sup>[14]</sup> theoretical premise that work-life balance is positively related to employee performance is supported by the findings of Hypothesis 3. Employees who are able to strike a balance between their professional and home lives often show more engagement and productivity on the job. This research highlights the need for businesses to have family-friendly policies and procedures.

Finally, the results supported Hypothesis 4, which posited that a healthy work-life balance would moderate the connection between employee satisfaction and productivity on the job. Happiness at work may have an indirect effect on employee performance through its influence on work-life balance, as shown by the mediating effect. This finding

deepens the understanding of the factors that contribute to worker satisfaction in the workplace and, by extension, their productivity. It highlights the significance of work-life balance as a means through which employee satisfaction in the workplace may be translated into enhanced performance. The results of research highlight the crucial implications for business leaders and HR experts. A happier workplace is a healthy workplace, and vice versa, thus it makes sense for businesses to take steps to make their workers happier in the workplace in order to boost productivity.

### 7. Managerial Implications

Practitioners in the fields of human resource management and organizational development, particularly those working in the service sector, may gain a lot from this study's conclusions.

Promoting Joy in the Workplace Employee productivity and satisfaction with work-life balance were shown to be highly impacted by job satisfaction. Managers should aim to foster a happy and productive workplace by, among other things, appreciating and rewarding employees for their accomplishments, encouraging constructive interactions among workers, matching workers to appropriate positions, and encouraging professional development.

Organizations should emphasize enacting rules that create a good work-life balance since it has been demonstrated to moderate the link between workplace satisfaction and employee performance. Some examples include allowing employees to choose their own schedules, allowing them to work from home, offering on-site child care, and encouraging an environment that values personal time and balance.

Third, development and training programs might assist workers achieve a better work-life balance and, by extension, improve productivity in the workplace.

Activities to promote employee engagement, job satisfaction, and general happiness may be successful techniques for boosting performance. 4. Employee Engagement: Since workplace happiness effects employee performance directly and indirectly (via work-life balance), these activities are worth considering.

### 8. Limitations and Future Research

This research has made important contributions, yet it has drawbacks as well. First, we can't draw any conclusions about cause and effect since the research was cross-sectional. In order to confirm the causal links among the factors evaluated, future research might use a longitudinal strategy.

Second, the research is targeted for the service industry in India. While this specificity enhances the study's overall rigor, it raises concerns about the transferability of the findings to other fields and cultural settings. To further the study's applicability, it should be replicated in other sectors and nations.

Third, the research is limited by the potential for social desirability bias in self-reported data. Researchers in the future may want to think about utilizing different data sources or objective measures of employee performance to corroborate their results.

Finally, although the research focuses on work-life balance as a possible mediator, other factors, such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, or leadership style, may also play a role in the link between workplace happiness and employee performance. To further understand the link between workplace happiness and productivity, future study might look at the aforementioned factors.

### 9. Conclusion

The literature on employee satisfaction, work-life balance, and productivity already benefits greatly from this study's findings. Studying the interaction between these factors in the context of India's service sector sheds light on how crucial it is to create a supportive workplace for improving productivity and morale.

The findings show that contentment in the workplace has a positive impact on productivity in both the short and long term by helping workers strike a better work-life balance. These results highlight the need for companies to make deliberate investments in promoting workplace satisfaction. Investing in a pleasant workplace environment may take many forms, including initiatives to improve communication, encourage teamwork, increase diversity, and facilitate a better work-life balance.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that workplace happiness is a significant factor in both individual performance and the success of the business as a whole, despite its frequent underestimation in the literature on management. By prioritizing employee satisfaction and joy at work, companies may increase productivity, improve work-life balance, and strengthen their whole organization. More study is needed to fully understand the interplay of these factors, which are crucial to any organization's functioning.

The study findings represent an urgent call to action for businesses in an age when job stress and burnout are on the rise; a contented workforce is a more effective and healthy one.

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