

Happiness of Leaders at Workplace: A Study on SDG 3 in Open Distance Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

For the promotion of healthy lives and the well-being of all, as provided in Sustainable Development Goal 3, SDG 3, it is essential to measure the impact and understand workplace happiness in higher educational institutions. Many institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of employees' well-being in the achievement of organizational goals. However, there is limited research on the relationship between workplace happiness and SDG 3, particularly among non-academic staff. The current research aimed at the measurement of workplace happiness using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, which was administered during seminars conducted across all 54 regions and main campus of Open University. Participants of the study included non-academic staff above grade 17 working in the regional offices and main campus. In addition to OHQ, a survey questionnaire was also used to gather demographic information about the participants and capture participants' views on emotional well-being that is currently practiced at their workplace. This study significantly explored the relationship between workplace happiness and factors such as work environment, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. A detailed analysis was used to track changes in happiness and well-being over time after the implementation of happiness strategies that were provided to the participant during a seminar conducted both in-person as well as online through Microsoft Teams using a university link, where psychology experts provided their views and highlighted the importance of well-being at workplace, along with suggesting the attendees with different techniques that they may adopt in their daily lives to decrease the stress and anxiety-related issues for better well-being at workplace. The findings of the study contribute to a deeper understanding of how workplace happiness impacts mental health and well-being, aligning with the broader objective of SDG 3 and sustainable development.

Keywords: Workplace Happiness, Sustainable Development Goals, work environment, job satisfaction, work-life balance

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a very fundamental aspect of human mental health and well-being and its significance in personal and professional contexts cannot be ignored. Various studies have shown that individuals who report higher levels of happiness tend to endure great resilience along with lower rates of depression and anxiety and overall improved mental health outcomes (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). In the workplace, these benefits extend further, contributing to increased job performance, enhanced productivity, and better job satisfaction. As a result of this, measuring workplace happiness has become a critical element in understanding and promoting mental health in professional environments. To address the growing concerns of workplace well-being, the Oxford Happiness Scale has emerged as a widely validated and reliable tool for the assessment of subjective well-being in various settings (Hills & Argyle, 2002). The OHQ evaluates individual happiness across multiple domains,

including but not limited to social life, personal relationships, work satisfaction, and professional growth, providing a holistic view of well-being. By the application of OHQ within the context of higher education institutions, the current study aimed to assess workplace happiness among non-academic staff and explore its relationships with Sustainable Development Goals SDG 3, which focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promotion of well-being for all, at all ages (United Nations, 2015).

The current study addressed these challenges by measuring workplace happiness through the OHQ and identifying factors that contributed to or detracted from employee well-being. By focusing on non-academic staff in higher educational institutions, the study aimed to explore the specific conditions that affect workplace happiness in this population and to provide data that can inform interventions aimed at the promotion of mental health and well-being. The Oxford Happiness Scale is a widely used instrument for the assessment of subjective well-being and has been validated in multiple studies across different populations (Hills & Argyle, 2002).

The OHQ consists of a series of questions that ask respondents to rate their happiness in various aspects of life including social interactions, work satisfaction, and personal relationships. By using this comprehensive measurement tool of well-being, the OHQ enables researchers to identify specific areas where intervention may be necessary for the improvement of happiness. In the context of the current study, the OHQ was administered to non-academic staff members in higher educational institutions across all 54 regions of Open University. The participants who held positions above grade 17 were asked to complete the OHQ during multiple seminars using Google Forms, WhatsApp groups, and other social media platforms. In addition to OHQ, a survey questionnaire was also used to gather demographic information and capture participants' views on emotional well-being practices currently implemented at their workplace. This combination of tools provided a robust dataset for analyzing the factors that influence workplace happiness and mental health in this context.

Sustainable Development Goals or SDG 3 is one of the 17 goals set by the United Nations for the promotion of global sustainable development (United Nations, 2015). It specifically aims to ensure healthy lives and promotion of well-being for all at all ages. While SDG 3 primarily focuses on physical health, it emphasizes well-being extended to mental health. This recognizes the critical role that happiness and emotional well-being play in overall health outcomes (World Health Organization, 2013). By aligning the measurement of workplace happiness with SDG 3, this study contributed to a broader understanding of how workplace conditions impact employees' mental health and well-being. In higher education institutions, particularly among non-academic staff, factors such as work environment, job satisfaction, and work-life balance are closely linked to well-being.

This study explored these factors in the context of SDG 3 by a measurement of the effects of workplace happiness on mental health outcomes and identifying areas where improvement can be made. By promoting mental health through workplace intervention, institutions can contribute not only to the well-being of their staff but also to the broader goals of sustainable development.

The preliminary analysis of the data collected through the OHQ survey questionnaire revealed several key insights into the state of workplace happiness among women. The data collected from the OHQ survey questionnaire revealed several key insights into the state of workplace happiness. This data is crucial for understanding the current scenario and status of mental health among individuals for better alignment of practices advised during the study period to positively affect the mental health of individuals.

Objectives, Research Questions, Research Hypotheses

Mental health and emotional well-being are the two less discussed topics in the field of research, especially concerning higher education and particularly to the one providing distance and non-formal education. It is important to gather information through research on how and where the institution stands in the current scenario concerning mental health, emotional well-being, and workplace happiness. For this, the following research objectives, research questions, and research hypotheses were curated.

Research Objectives

1. To measure workplace happiness and subjective well-being using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) in open distance higher education institution.
2. To explore the relationship between workplace happiness and mental health outcomes, such as job satisfaction, stress, and burnout, in open distance higher education institution.
3. To measure the workplace happiness and various demographic and occupational characteristics, such as age, gender, job title, and work experience.

Research Hypotheses

- H¹: Higher levels of workplace happiness are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of stress, and lower levels of burnout in higher education institutions.
- H²: Demographic and occupational characteristics, such as age, gender, job title, and work experience, are predictors of workplace happiness in higher education institutions, with younger employees, female employees, and those with lower job titles or less work experience having higher levels of workplace happiness.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations provide a global blueprint for the achievement of a more sustainable and equitable world by 2030. Among these 17 goals, Sustainable Development Goal 3 specifically focused on the promotion of good health and well-being for all. The goal highlighted that well-being is not limited to physical health but also mental health and emotional well-being which are critical aspects of a person's overall quality of life. In a workplace environment, this is like the creation of an environment that forces employee happiness and supports mental well-being. Given the importance of mental health in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3, organizations need to measure and promote workplace happiness for the creation of a healthier, productive, and sustainable work environment. Higher educational institutions play a great role in shaping future leaders, professionals, and innovators. Higher educational institutions are responsible for the provision of not only quality education but also for ensuring that their internal workplace environment fosters employee happiness and well-being.

As educators, administrators, and support staff work under significant stress, it is crucial to create an atmosphere that promotes positive mental health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Employee happiness has been positively linked to increased productivity, better job satisfaction, and an enhanced sense of overall well-being (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). This shows that measuring happiness at the workplace is an essential step in the identification of areas for improvement and implementation of strategies for the promotion of employee well-being in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 3. For the past two decades, workplace happiness and employee well-being have emerged as a popular topic among researchers in both academic and business contexts (Fisher, 2010). This interest has

been driven by the understanding that happier employees are more productive, more engaged, and less likely to experience burnout or job dissatisfaction. The field of positive psychology has contributed significantly to our understanding of what makes working environments engaging, motivating, and conducive to happiness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Although most of the research on workplace happiness is focused on corporate environments and private sector organizations, few studies have examined happiness and well-being in the educational sector (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Higher educational institutions in particular present a unique challenge in terms of stress, workload, and employee burnout, which are often compounded by administrative demands and student needs. The distance non-formal learning environment also creates great challenges for the staff of the institution as usually there is not a direct link between different departments and the students. Non-formal ways of communication are used for communication between the teachers, administration, the post staff, and the students. This creates additional stress as individuals are usually not used to new techniques and ways of working that are coming out every day. Addressing workplace happiness in these environments is critical, given the influence these institutions have on the broader societal development and future leaders. As distance learning education institutions at higher educational levels have a high quantity of students due to their broad spectrum and wide coverage, it becomes essential that without conventional techniques, all the stakeholders are working in a stress-free environment, making things better at their workplace.

In one of the recent studies, the researchers investigated the relationship between teachers' psychological resources, workplace well-being, and perceived workplace happiness. This study used both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the qualitative research analyzing open-ended questions for the identification of the main pillars of workplace happiness. The results highlighted four key factors contributing to happiness, goal realization, meaningful feedback, finding purpose in work, and social relationships among colleagues. These factors are crucial in fostering a sense of accomplishment and community in the workplace. The quantitative data further supported the idea that workplace happiness and well-being are strongly correlated with internal psychological resources, such as hope and optimism. This study suggests that future efforts to improve employee well-being must be adopted for a positively oriented approach that emphasizes these positive psychological factors (Kun & Gadanecz, 2022).

In another study conducted by Panda and colleagues, the researchers focused on the mediating role of workplace happiness in the enhancement of employee engagement within the Indian IT sector. The researchers collected quantitative data from 104 employees, analyzed it using a structural equation and modeling approach, and concluded that workplace happiness positively mediated employee engagement, meaning that happier employees were more engaged in their work, which in turn led to better job performance and higher levels of job satisfaction. These findings align with previous research that has demonstrated the importance of workplace happiness in the promotion of employee engagement, particularly in high-stress sectors like IT (Panda et al., 2022).

OHQ has been extensively validated and used in numerous studies for the assessment of happiness across various populations, including employees in different work environments. The questionnaire asks respondents to rate their happiness in different areas of life, such as social relations with personal well-being and work satisfaction, allowing the researchers to get a comprehensive picture of overall happiness level. In the context of the current study, the OHQ was used for measuring happiness levels among employees working in higher educational institutions at grades 17 and above. Given the high levels of stress and burnout often experienced by employees in these environments, it is critical to assess their happiness and identify areas where interventions may be needed for the improvement of well-being. The OHQ

has shown and proved to be a reliable and valid tool for the measurement of happiness and well-being in various populations, making it an ideal instrument for this study (Hills & Argyle, 2002).

A study conducted by (Galvão, de Jesus, & Henriques, 2020) applied the OHQ to a sample of 1032 individuals from several higher educational institutions in Portugal, including students, faculty members, and non-teaching staff. The researchers used principal component analysis and a structural equation model for the identification of three key dimensions of happiness, joy, positivism, and reliability. These findings suggest that the OHQ is a valuable tool for understanding the factors that contribute to happiness in the workplace, and the three-factor model can serve as a basis for future studies exploring workplace happiness in different populations.

The OHQ has also been validated in other studies. For example, (Robbins, Francis, & Edwards, 2010), the researchers examined the internal consistency, reliability, and construct validity of the OHQ in a sample of 131 undergraduate students. These findings demonstrated that the OHQ had good internal consistency, and reliability, and was positively associated with extroversion and negatively associated with neuroticism. This suggests that individuals with more extroverted personalities may be more likely to report higher levels of happiness, while those with neurotic tendencies may be less likely to express happiness. In a separate study (Cruise & Lewis, 2006), the researchers evaluated the internal consistency and retest reliability of the OHQ short form, which consists of eight items. The study was conducted among 5500 graduate students in Northern Ireland and found satisfactory internal consistency and stability across two administrations of the questionnaire over two weeks. These findings support the reliability of the OHQ as a tool for measuring happiness over time, making it an ideal instrument for assessing workplace happiness in various settings.

Workplace happiness is an important component of mental health and well-being, both of which are essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3. Higher educational institutions act as a key contributor to societal development, and they must prioritize the well-being of their employees by creating an environment that promotes happiness, satisfaction, and overall mental health. The current study aimed to measure workplace happiness using OHQ along with a survey questionnaire and identified key factors influencing happiness in a higher educational institution providing education through distance learning mode.

Current research demonstrates that workplace happiness is strongly correlated with positive psychological resources such as hope, optimism, and resilience. As organizations continue to recognize the importance of employee happiness, it is essential to implement practical strategies for the promotion of mental well-being aligned with the product goals of sustainable development. Measuring happiness and identifying areas of improvement are critical first steps in this process. With validated tools such as OHQ, higher educational institutions can gain valuable insight into employee happiness and work towards creating healthier and more sustainable work environments that contribute to the achievement of SDG 3.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In alignment with the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 3, the promotion of good health and well-being, the current research aimed to elevate happiness and mental health among non-academic staff members above grade 17 in Open University. The study utilized survey tools including Google Forms, Zoom meetings, Google Teams, and WhatsApp polls along with online video conferencing and QR codes for gathering data effectively and efficiently. The methodology for gathering data was carried out in multiple phases, ensuring a comprehensive

approach that addressed the study's objective. Each phase has been designed to provide a structured and efficient approach for gathering and analyzing the data.

Phase I: Population Identification and Sampling

The first step in the research is to identify the target population of non-academic staff members above grade 17 from all regions of open university. The Registrar Department of open university has been provided a list of the total population of employees working at grade 17 or above, including all regions on request. The official permission was taken from the Head of Department to utilize this information. The table below presents the total population of the study.

Table 1

Population of the study (2023-2024)

BPS	Administration/Services (Campus)	Administration/Services (Regions)	Total
17	100	37	137
18	45	19	64
19	23	9	32
20	7	6	13
21	0	0	0
Total	175	71	246

Using the multi-stage sampling technique, a sample size of 152 participants were selected from this population. The sample was proportionately representative of the different grades, regions, and gender distribution. The determination of the sample size followed the guideline presented by L.R Gay 2009 in his book “Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Application” ensuring a statistically valid and representative sample.

Phase II: Survey Questionnaire Design

In phase 2, the research focused on the development and adaptation of a survey questionnaire. This instrument was primarily based on the Oxford Happiness Scale developed by Hiltz and Argyle, 2002, which is a well-validated tool for assessment of subjective well-being and happiness. The OHQ was supplemented with additional questions covering various aspects related to job satisfaction and work, related stress, psychological well-being, and socio-demographical variables, including age, gender, marital status, and years of service.

The survey included closed-ended questions for capturing quantifiable data and allowing for ease of statistical analysis. Questions were explored using various dimensions of workplace happiness, including overall happiness and well-being at work, levels of job satisfaction, stress levels and sources of stress in the workplace, support systems available to employees, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, work-life balance, and flexibility. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 10 was used for the measurement of responses providing a detailed understanding of the factors contributing to workplace happiness.

Phase III: Distribution of the Survey Using Modern Tools

Once the questionnaire has been finalized, the next step involves the distribution of surveys to the selected participants spread across Pakistan in 54 regions of Open University. This phase employed a variety of latest soft tools to ensure broad reach and ease of access to the participants. These tools included Google Forms, WhatsApp group, invitation and updating through emails, online video conferencing and recording sessions through Open University Microsoft Teams account and QR codes for ease of access to the survey by scanning the code on the smartphone by the participants. These digital tools not only streamlined the data collection process but also ensured that participants across all regions of Open University could engage with the surveys regardless of their geographical location. By

using these platforms, this study aimed to achieve a higher response rate and ensure that data is collected efficiently from all the selected participants.

Phase IV: Pre-Test Seminar and OHQ Implementation

In phase 4 of this research study, a seminar was organized to further engage participants and gather pre-touched information using the OHQ. This seminar provided an opportunity for the participants to learn about best practices for the promotion of happiness in the workplace. Expert speakers were invited to share insights into how organized cultural work like finance and interpersonal relationships contribute to employee well-being. Participants were also introduced to specific practices and strategies that they can implement in their daily work environment to improve their overall happiness and mental health.

These practices included mindful exercises, trust management techniques, and strategies for the enhancement of workplace communication and collaboration. Following the seminar, a pre-test survey using the OHQ along with a generic survey was administered for capturing baseline data on the participants' happiness and mental health levels.

Data Analysis

For the current research, a survey method questionnaire was used to gather demographical information about the participants as well as to gather generic information concerning well-being knowledge and support available to the participants in their organization.

Table 3

Demographic Data of the Participants of the Study.

Demographic Variables	Percentage
Age (31-40 years)	39%
Age (41-50 Years)	35%
Male participants	70%
Full time regular employees	89%
PhD degree holders (Participants of the study)	10%
M.Phil degree (Sample of the study)	50%
Master's degree holders	30%
More than 10 years of work experience	60%
5-7 years of work experience	20%

The demographic information showed that 39% of the participants of the study were from the age range of 31 years to 40 years of age, followed by 35% of participants from the age range of 41 years to 50 years. The demographical information showed that almost 70% of the participants were male and the rest were female. 89% of the participants are full-time regular employees of the university. 50% of the sample participants have M.Phil. level degrees followed by 30% of participants having master's degrees with almost 10% having P.hD degrees. Almost 60% of the participants have more than 10 years of working experience followed by 20% having 5-7 years' experience in total.

Table 4

Analysis of Data Related to Workplace Happiness and Mental Health Variables

Workplace Happiness and Mental Health Variables	Percentage
Job satisfaction	60%
Felt Stressed at workplace sometime to rarely	83%
Workplace supports mental health and well-being often or rarely	77%
Work-life balance activities	50%
Discussing mental health issues discussion with colleagues	72%
Discussing mental health issues discussion with Head of the department	80%
Felt unable to cope with work-related stress in the last 6 months	60%
Morale and spirit at the workplace to be moderate	50%

Morale and spirit at the workplace to be high	40%
Opportunities for growth and advancements in their current role	58%
Opportunities for growth and advancements unsure in their current role	27%
Felt their work is valued and appreciated from sometimes to always	70%
Agreed Workplace promotes healthy work-life balance	30%

Table 4 concerning workplace happiness and mental health, 60% of the participants felt satisfied with their current job. Almost 83% of the participants said that they feel sometimes or rarely stressed at their work. 77% of the participants provided their views that from often to rarely their workplace supports mental health and well-being. Nearly 50% of the participants if they sometimes engage in activities that promote work-life balance. In an open-ended question, the participants if they feel that their organization has no or very low mental health resources at their workplace. Nearly 72% of the participants said that they sometimes or rarely feel comfortable discussing mental health issues with their colleagues. 80% of the participants were of the view that they sometimes never feel comfortable discussing mental health issues with department heads. An alarming 40% of the participants stated that they felt unable to cope with work-related stress in the last 6 months. Nearly 50% of the participants rated their morale and spirit at the workplace to be moderate followed by almost 40% with a rating high. Nearly 58% of the participants felt that there were opportunities for growth and advancements in their current role, followed by 27% who felt unsure. Nearly 70% of the participants felt their work is valued and appreciated from sometimes to always. 30% of participants provided that their workplace promotes healthy work-life balance and a similar quantum of 30% offered neutral responses concerning this question.

The descriptive statistics provide additional insights into the distribution and central tendencies of the happiness score before and after the practices and interventions. The mean happiness score for both the pre-test and the post-test phase was 3.38, which indicates that participants reported moderate levels of happiness before and after the interventions. The median for the pre-test was 3.36, which closely mirrors the mean, suggesting that the distribution of happiness scores was relatively symmetric. For the post-test, the median was 3.38, which is identical to the mean, further reinforcing the consistency in the distribution of scores. The mode of pre-test was 3.31, reflecting the most frequent reported happiness score, while the mode for the post-test was 3.41, indicating a slight shift in the most common scores after the intervention. This shift in the mode suggested that while there was no change in the overall average happiness level, the distribution of individual scores shifted slightly though this change was not significant enough to affect the overall mean. The standard deviation for the pre-test was 0.3061, indicating a moderate amount of variability in happiness level before the interventions. In contrast, the standard deviation for the post-test was 0.0921, which is substantially lower. This reduction in variability after the intervention suggested that participants' happiness score became more concentrated around the mean, with less dispersion in responses. This could indicate that while the interventions or practices did not increase the overall happiness, it may have led to a more consistent experience of happiness among participants with fewer extreme or lower scores. The standard error for the pre-test and post-test happiness scores were 0.02348 and 0.00706 respectively. The lower SE in the post-test indicates that the happiness scores became more tightly clustered around the mean reflecting the reduction in variability noted in the standard deviation. This clustering further suggested that the participants' happiness level became more uniform after the interventions, though the overall level of happiness did not increase significantly.

Table 5
Descriptives analysis of Pre and Post Test Happiness Score

	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Pre-Test Happiness Score	170	3.38	3.36	0.3061	0.02348

Table 5
Descriptives analysis of Pre and Post Test Happiness Score

	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Post Test Happiness	170	3.38	3.38	0.0921	0.00706

Comparison of results of pre-test and post test data

Table 6 the paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean happiness scores before and after the interventions. The test is useful for determining whether there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores which would indicate whether the interventions affected workplace happiness. The results of the t-test provided a t-value of 0.0847 with 169 degree of freedom and a p-value of 0.933. Since the p-value is much larger than the commonly accepted significant value of 0.05, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis which means that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. This proves that the practices did not lead to any substantial changes in workplace happiness as reported by the participants. The mean difference between the pre-test and the post-test score was 0.00203 which is nearly a negligible value. This extremely small mean difference indicates that on average the level of happiness reported by participants remained unchanged after the interventions or giving knowledge about certain practices that can help in the betterment of workplace happiness. The standard error of the difference was 0.0240 which shows a small amount of variability in the difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -0.0453 to 0.0493 and since the confidence interval includes 0, this supports in detail the conclusion that the practices had not been adopted by the participants of the study with no effect on happiness. Also, the effect size as measured by Cohen's d was 0.00649 which is extremely small. An effect size close to 0 indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the pre-test and the post-test is particularly insignificant. This finding reinforces the conclusion that the interventions had little to no effect on workplace happiness.

Table 6

Paired Samples T-Test										
						95% Confidence Interval		95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower	Upper	Effect Size	Lower	Upper
Pre Test Happiness Score	Post Test Happiness	Student's t	statistic	Df	p	Mean difference	SE difference			
			0.0847	169	0.933	0.00203	0.0240			
						-0.0453	0.0493	Cohen's d	0.00649	-0.144 0.157

Note. $H_0: \mu_{\text{Measure 1} - \text{Measure 2}} = 0$

Inferential statistics were performed to explore the relationship between workplace happiness and variables related to job stress, job satisfaction, and burnout. Pearson's correlation was used for the identification of the strengths and significance of these relationships. All the inferential statistics were conducted using JAMOVI software which allowed for clear and accurate computation of correlation coefficients and p-values.

Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Workplace Happiness

The table below shows the correlation results between job satisfaction variables and workplace happiness. Statistically significant correlations were found for "Life is good" ($r = 0.255$, $p < 0.001$) and "I am well satisfied about everything in my life" ($r = 0.313$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that employees who

perceive life positively and are generally satisfied with their lives tend to report higher levels of workplace happiness. The correlation between “I usually have a good influence on events” ($r = 0.150$, $p = 0.051$) was marginally significant, suggesting a trend where employees who feel influential might experience slightly higher happiness, though the result is not conclusive. The relationship between “I find most things amusing” ($r = 0.140$, $p = 0.069$) was not statistically significant.

Table 7

Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Workplace Happiness

Correlation Matrix		Happiness Score	Life is good.	Satisfied about everything in my life.	I find most things amusing.	Good influence on events.
Happiness Score	Pearson's r	—				
	df	—				
	p	—				
Life is good.	r	0.255	***	—		
	df	168	—			
	p-value	< .001	—			
Satisfied about everything in my life.	Pearson's r	0.313	***	-0.029	—	
	df	168	168	—		
	p	< .001	0.705	—		
I find most things amusing.	r	0.140	-0.092		0.059	—
	df	168	168		168	—
	p	0.069	0.233		0.442	—
Good influence on events.	r	0.150	0.096		0.046	0.057
	df	168	168		168	168
	p	0.051	0.212		0.551	0.464

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Correlation between Stress and Workplace Happiness

The table below presents the correlation between stress-related variables and workplace happiness. Significant positive correlations were found between “I am not particularly optimistic about the future” ($r = 0.277$, $p < 0.001$) and “I feel that I am not especially in control of my life” ($r = 0.338$, $p < 0.001$) and workplace happiness. Since these variables were reverse-coded, this implies that greater optimism and a sense of control in life are associated with higher workplace happiness. The remaining variables, such as “I rarely wake up feeling rested” ($r = 0.092$, $p = 0.233$) and “There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done” ($r = 0.079$, $p = 0.304$), were not significantly related to happiness.

Table 8

Correlation between Stress and Workplace Happiness

Correlation Matrix		Happiness Score	I rarely wake up feeling rested. (R)	I am not particularly optimistic about the future. (R)	There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. (R)	I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. (R)
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Happiness Score	r	—					
	df	—					
	p	—					
I rarely wake up feeling rested. (R)	r	0.09	—				
		2					
	df	168	—				
	p	0.23	—				
		3					
I am not particularly optimistic about the future. (R)	r	0.27	***	0.029	—		
		7					
	df	168	168	—			
	p-value	< .01	0.703	—			
There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. (R)	Pearson's r	0.07	-0.077	-0.021	—		
		9					
	df	168	168	168	—		
	p	0.30	0.317	0.786	—		
		4					
I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. (R)	r	0.33	**	-0.076	0.024	0.024	—
		8	*				
	df	168	168	168	168	—	
	p	< .01	0.325	0.755	0.760	—	
		01					

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, * p < .001**

Correlation for Burnout and Workplace Happiness

The table below displays the correlations between burnout-related variables and workplace happiness. Significant positive correlations were observed between “I don’t have fun with other people” ($r = 0.216$, $p = 0.005$) and “I don’t have particularly happy memories of the past” ($r = 0.247$, $p = 0.001$) and happiness. These reverse-coded items suggest that enjoying social interactions and having positive memories of the past are linked to greater workplace happiness. Conversely, the variables “I feel I have a great deal of energy” ($r = 0.104$, $p = 0.176$) and “I don’t feel particularly healthy” ($r = 0.078$, $p = 0.312$) were not significantly correlated with workplace happiness.

Table 9
Correlation for Burnout and Workplace Happiness

Correlation Matrix		Happiness Score	Great deal of energy.	Don't feel particularly healthy. (R)	Don't have fun with other people. (R)	Don't have particularly happy memories of the past. (R)
Happiness Score	r	—				
	df	—				
	p	—				
Great deal of energy.	r	0.104	—			
	df	168	—			
	p	0.176	—			

Don't feel particularly healthy. (R)	r	0.078	-	0.090	—	
	df	168	168	168	—	
	p	0.312	0.246	0.246	—	
Don't have fun with other people. (R)	r	0.216	**	0.122	-0.056	—
	df	168	168	168	168	—
	p	0.005	0.113	0.465	0.465	—
Don't have particularly happy memories of the past. (R)	r	0.247	**	-	-0.002	0.071
	df	168	168	168	168	168
	p	0.001	0.256	0.979	0.359	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The results from the correlation analysis revealed several key inserts into the factors influencing workplace happiness in higher education institutions. Job satisfaction variables are significantly associated with workplace happiness, suggesting that employees who work content with their lives are generally happier at work. Workplace stress-related variables also positively correlate with workplace happiness, indicating that mental resilience and control are important for having happiness in the workplace. Burnout factors further contribute to happiness, highlighting the importance of social engagement and life situations for removing burnout. The findings of the study suggested that interventions and practices aimed at enhancing optimism, control over life, and social engagement could significantly improve workplace happiness. Further research could focus on development-targeted strategies for the enhancement of these aspects and further explore the dynamics between stress, burnout, and happiness.

FINDINGS

The findings of the current study provide valuable insight into complex relationships and connection between the workplace happiness, mental health and organizational support system into open distance education institution.

1. Participants reported moderate level of happiness, and they were introduced to interventional practices designed for the promotion of well-being and reduction of stress at workplace. However, the results of the study show that there is no significant improvement in the happiness level of the participants which may be due to the factors as non-application of advised practices in daily life and at workplace.
2. Despite receiving training and support from specialists through seminars, workshops and other engagement through social media, the average happiness score remained unchanged. This suggests that the knowledge gained during these sessions had not yet been fully integrated by the participants and their daily routines, which explains why no substantial changes were observed.
3. The findings of the study point to several areas for improvement in promotion of workplace happiness in open distance higher education systems. The first was that a more practical and action-oriented interventional practice approach is needed for helping employees incorporate stress management techniques and well-being practices into their daily life routines. Secondly, organizations should enhance mental health resources and create a more open, supportive culture where employees feel comfortable discussing their mental health issues. Lastly, fostering a sense of control and optimism along with improving opportunities for social engagement will be important for enhancing workplace happiness in the long term. Although due to the limited nature and constraints of this study, the results did not demonstrate significant changes in workplace happiness after the introduction of practices

and interventions. Still, the study identified key factors that influence happiness and provided a foundation for further research and organizational improvement in having better well-being at workplace, especially in a higher education institution.

4. The current research on workplace happiness and well-being used the OHQ in higher education institutions and offered great insight into the subjective well-being of non-academic staff, within the context of SDG 3. Findings from the quantitative view of how workplace happiness conditions affect happiness and mental health. The findings from the OHQ survey revealed that the employees generally reported a moderate level of happiness during the research phase consistently.
5. However, stress-related variables such as lack of optimism about the future, uncertainty about the future, concerns about the future, etc. showed a negative correlation with happiness. Employees who felt less optimistic and more out of control in their roles reported low levels of well-being. In terms of mental health, a large proportion of respondents reported feeling stressed at work, although only 40% indicated that the stress was severe enough to fight their ability to deal with it.
6. The interventions provided during the initial seminar, such as mindfulness exercises and stress management techniques, along with a detailed theoretical session providing great insight into the importance of mental well-being by keynote speakers, did not significantly impact the participants' happiness scores. This lack of improvement may be due to the failure of participants to integrate of these practices into their daily routines.

CONCLUSION

In the current research, factors that contribute to workplace happiness in higher educational institutions using the OHQ were set as research objectives to get a rich insert into the complex variables that influence the well-being of non-academic staff. Many key factors emerged from the qualitative analysis showed that the multi-dimensional nature of workplace happiness makes it a challenging domain in higher education settings. Quantitative data analysis revealed that workplace happiness is closely linked to job satisfaction, work-life balance, and perception of support from leaders. Employees who felt satisfied with their jobs had a great sense of control over their tasks and perceived that their work was appreciated when reported to the higher management, which leads to more happiness.

1. A significant positive correlation was found between happiness and variables, indicating that personal contentment significantly impacts workplace well-being. On the other hand, stress-related factors such as feelings out of control in one's working environment or getting pessimistic about the future were negatively associated with happiness.
2. This suggests that uncertainty and stress are determinants of employee well-being. The qualitative data analyzed provided that one of the most critical factors highlighted by participants of the study was the role of leaders. Respondents consistently mentioned that effective and supportive leadership plays a critical role in making a positive working environment.
3. Emotionally intelligent leaders, involve staff in decision-making processes and maintain a balance between professional and personal relationships among people contributing significantly to workplace happiness. Participants expressed that when they felt valued and heard by their leaders, their sense of happiness and job satisfaction increased. Work-life balance emerged as a major theme and was identified by all the participants as a significant contributor to workplace happiness. Most of the participants recognized the importance of balancing their responsibilities with their personal lives, and professional lives, and those who managed to maintain this balance reported higher levels of happiness. However, in the current study, it was also revealed that many employees struggled with achieving this balance due to the heavy workload and institutional demands which often lead to stress and dissatisfaction.
4. Relationships among colleagues were another important factor that influenced workplace happiness. Participants provided that positive collaborative relationships within the co-working space contribute to a sense of belongingness and support. This in turn enhances their emotional well-being. On the other hand, those who experienced conflict or isolation

in their workplace environment reported lower levels of happiness, highlighting the importance of a supportive social environment in fostering workplace well-being. Other factors including opportunities for professional growth and advancement were also highlighted by the participants. Employees who felt that their work was valued and that they had the chance and opportunities to grow within their workstations reported higher levels of workplace happiness. On the other hand, employees who felt stuck in their positions or lacked professional development opportunities expressed low levels of satisfaction.

5. The current research investigated the relationship between workplace happiness and various demographical traits and occupation characteristics such as age, gender, job title, and work experience in higher education institutions providing valuable insights into how these factors influence employees' well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A more supportive work environment may be made in the institution where leaders are involved and maintain emotional control, which significantly contributes to their well-being. Work-life balance was identified as a critical factor for happiness, though many respondents struggle to maintain it due to their hectic routines and provided that institutional demand and workloads are a barrier to their better mental well-being. Relationships among the colleagues and emotional well-being were also highlighted, with the participants noting that positive relationships fostered a supportive work culture environment while conflict and isolation decreased the well-being.

The correlation analysis revealed important factors that contribute to workplace happiness. Self-satisfaction plays a significant role in shaping employees' well-being and participants who felt satisfied with their lives were generally happier at work. Other factors such as lack of optimism and control were shown to negatively affect happiness. This provides a light on the importance of resilience and personal urgency in managing work distress. Also, social interactions and positive memories of the past emerge as key factors in promotion of happiness and well-being, which highlights the need for a supportive working environment.

The lack of significant change in happiness after the intervention pointed to the need for more actionable and sustainable strategies for the promotion of well-being in higher educational institution. These findings suggested that institutions are taking steps to address employee well-being. Still, with the lack of targeted efforts, especially in mental health, support, and workload management, there is a need to create a lasting improvement in workplace happiness.

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