

Individual happiness and well-being as a strategy to increase productivity

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Abstract: This research aims to examine the role of happiness and well-being as key factors in enhancing individual productivity. With the growing body of research on mental health and well-being, a new understanding has emerged regarding the strong connection between emotional well-being and productive performance. Through a literature review, this study identifies and analyzes various empirical studies that explore the impact of happiness and well-being on productivity in different contexts, both in the workplace and in everyday life. The review process employed a systematic literature review method, with inclusion criteria encompassing studies published within the last four years and written in English or Indonesian. The findings indicate that happiness and well-being not only contribute to improved performance but also play a pivotal role in fostering an environment that supports sustainable productivity growth.

Keywords: happiness, achievement, productivity.

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INTRODUCTION

Optimal mental health plays a significant role in determining an individual's quality of life. According to the definition by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), a good mental state is reflected in an individual's ability to manage life's stressors, function productively in their work, and contribute constructively to society. Not only in mental health, physical health also has an influence. Physical health can be improved through proper nutrition, exercise, and adequate sleep, while mental well-being can be enhanced through stress reduction techniques (Kumar et al., 2020; Natalina et al., 2022). This demonstrates that physical and mental health are interrelated components, both of which are essential for an individual's success.

Physical and mental health will lead to happiness in an individual. Happiness is also a key factor in achieving global excellence, encompassing not only feelings of pleasure but also overall life satisfaction and well-being. There is a positive correlation between happiness and productivity, creativity, and the ability to innovate in individuals (Diener et al., 2018). Happy individuals tend to exhibit a positive attitude, which can enhance the quality of their work and interpersonal relationships. Moreover, happiness plays a role in improving resilience to stress and illness, ultimately supporting the attainment of higher achievements.

The happiness felt by individuals is also inseparable from the social environment, one of which is social support. Social support is also a crucial factor in achieving health and happiness.

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It can mitigate the negative impacts of stress and enhance mental well-being (Cohen, 2017). Support from family, friends, and colleagues provides a sense of security and boosts self-confidence, which can enhance productivity and performance. Research indicates that social support from family, community, and the workplace significantly affects individual well-being and performance. Family and community social capital are essential in fostering educational achievement (Israel et al., 2001). Workplace well-being, shaped by psychosocial relationships and job satisfaction, influences employee health, productivity, and organizational success (Putra et al., 2024).

Happiness, well-being, and productivity are interrelated concepts. To achieve optimal productivity, individuals must possess happiness and well-being within themselves. Research suggests a positive relationship between employee happiness and productivity. Noting that happy employees are more productive, grateful, and committed to their organizations (de Pelekais & El Kadi, 2019). Further explored this "happy productive worker" hypothesis, examining the effects of job satisfaction and well-being on individual job performance. Their study revealed that age, well-being at work, job satisfaction, and components of organizational structure explained 64% of the variance in individual job performance (Fogaça & Junior, 2016). To achieve optimal productivity, individuals must possess happiness and well-being within themselves. Therefore, the aim of this article is to explore the continuity between happiness and well-being, and how these factors contribute to enhancing productivity.

METHODS

The research adopted in this study utilizes a literature review method, which is a systematic strategy for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting research relevant to a specific topic. This approach is comprehensive and methodical in synthesizing research on a given subject (García-Peña, 2022). The literature review begins by establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria to select relevant studies. The criteria used are studies from the past four years, specifically from 2020 to 2024, focusing on issues related to happiness, well-being, and individual performance. This criterion ensures that the review encompasses current and relevant research, providing a thorough understanding of the discussed topic (Kitchenham & Brereton, 2013).

Subsequently, the literature search was conducted using academic databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. The use of PubMed, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect in this study was carried out to access relevant and high-quality scientific literature. The types of manuscripts to be used include empirical research, literature reviews, or case studies related to the topic of this research. The manuscripts must originate from credible sources such as peer-reviewed journals indexed in PubMed, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, with a preference for publications from the last five to ten years. Additionally, the research methodology should be valid and clearly articulated, and the manuscripts must cite key literature that supports the theoretical framework. The search keywords were refined to include terms such as "happiness," "productivity," "achievement," and "well-being strategies." This search resulted in a substantial number of articles, which were then filtered based on titles and abstracts to determine their relevance to the topic. Articles meeting the inclusion criteria were read in full for further assessment (Booth, 2016).

Data analysis in the literature review involves synthesizing findings from various selected studies. This synthesis aims to identify common patterns and relationships between variables and to uncover research gaps that warrant further exploration (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). Additionally, involving multiple researchers in the review process helps mitigate bias and enhance objectivity in study evaluations (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). Throughout the literature

review process, researchers ensure that the sources used are from reputable journals and peer-reviewed articles to guarantee the quality and credibility of the information obtained. Consequently, the results of this literature review provide a solid foundation for developing effective strategies to achieve global health, happiness, and performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal a complex yet significant relationship between happiness, well-being, and individual performance. Data obtained from various studies indicate that good physical and mental health is a crucial foundation for both happiness and achievement. This section will further discuss the findings from the reviewed literature to provide a deeper understanding of the topic. Table 1 of the findings of several studies related to the topics discussed.

Table 1. Results of previous research

Relationship between happiness and productivity		
No.	Title	Results research
1.	Relación entre felicidad y productividad. Un análisis empírico	Econometric analysis also demonstrates that happiness, along with investment in research and development, significantly explains labor productivity (Castellanos, 2022)
2.	Mindfulness and happiness and their impact on employee creative performance: Mediating role of creative process engagement.	Awareness and happiness positively and significantly impact the creative performance of employees (Khan & Abbas, 2022)
3.	The Impact of Employee Motivation on Productivity.	The quality of work often exceeds company expectations. Employee productivity can be realized when human resources are accountable for completing tasks, with employee motivation being a key factor influencing productivity (Theng, 2023)
4.	Happiness Management: Theoretical, Practical and Impact.	Companies should foster a positive work environment by prioritizing communication, collaboration, openness, and support for creative and innovative thinking. This, in turn, enhances employee engagement, emotional labor, and valuable social relationships, while considering ethics, beliefs, and spiritual values, linking true happiness with gratitude and the relative achievements and successes among individuals (Firmansyah & Wahdiniwaty, 2023)
5.	Ambidextrous leadership and academic staff innovative behavior at Debre Berhan University, Ethiopia: the mediating role of workplace happiness.	Creating happiness in the workplace plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and innovative behavior among academic staff (Kebede et al., 2024)
6.	The dual impact of job variety on employee happiness and stress: the mediating role of employee engagement and burnout.	High job variety can increase employee burnout, ultimately exacerbating work-related stress. Employee engagement serves as a mediator between job variety and employee happiness, while burnout acts as a mediator between job variety and work stress (Hafeez et al., 2024)

Strategies to improve well-being and performance

No.	Title	Results research
1.	A Group-Facilitated, Internet-Based Intervention to Promote Mental Health and Well-Being in a Vulnerable Population of University Students: Randomized Controlled Trial of the Be Well Plan Program.	The Be Well Plan program has proven effective in enhancing mental health and well-being, including mental wellness, resilience, depression, and anxiety. Participant satisfaction scores and attendance indicate high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the program (Fassnacht et al., 2022)
2.	Centering mental health in society: A human rights approach to well-being for all.	Integrating mental health into institutions and systems should be a priority to facilitate transformation. The key strategies are: 1) Embedding mental health throughout the system; 2) Prioritizing prevention and health promotion through individual-focused and community-based strategies; 3) Expanding the diversification and training of mental health professionals across various sectors to ensure more inclusive and effective services (Lomax et al., 2022)
3.	An integrated model of school students' academic achievement and life satisfaction. Linking soft skills, extracurricular activities, self-regulated learning, motivation, and emotions.	The relationship between soft skills and students' performance emotions, self-regulated learning, motivation, and life satisfaction is positive. This relationship indirectly influences academic performance through self-regulated learning and motivation. However, only soft skills and performance emotions are directly associated with life satisfaction (Feraco et al., 2023)
4.	Positive psychology to flourish professional well-being: A qualitative study of Indonesian English teachers' perspective	This research indicates that although achievement and meaning have not been fully realized, positive emotions, engagement, and relationships are strong predictors of professional well-being. These factors are more influenced by collective and social aspects than by the learning environment, teaching experiences, or institutional policies (Nadlifah et al., 2023)
5.	Relations between students' well-being and academic achievement: evidence from Swedish compulsory school	Cognitive well-being is positively correlated with academic performance. The decline in well-being may be attributed to changes in the education system and assessment methods, suggesting that the 2004 cohort experienced mandatory schooling with a stronger focus on outcomes and grades compared to previous cohorts (Klapp et al., 2024).
6.	University students' academic grit and academic achievements predicted by subjective well-being, coping resources, and self-cultivation characteristics	The importance of well-being for students encompasses resources to address challenges and characteristics for personal development, particularly related to personal growth for optimal performance in university studies, both academic and non-academic (Harpaz et al., 2024).

Relationship between happiness and productivity

Happiness and productivity are often considered two sides of the same coin. Research shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the two. That is, the happier a person is, the higher their productivity. Other research has also shown that strategies to improve health, happiness, and achievement span individual, organizational, and societal levels. At the

individual level, mental health interventions and subjective well-being practices can increase happiness by up to six months (Tay & Kuykendall, 2013). The relationship between happiness and health operates through neurobiological processes, health behaviors, psychosocial resources, and stress buffering effects (Mendes et al., 2023). A transdisciplinary approach that integrates occupational, organizational and community health can address psychosocial factors in the workplace and broader societal issues (Bauer et al., 2014).

Studies have shown that employee happiness is closely related to employee engagement, which is a key indicator of organizational productivity (Harter et al., 2003). Engaged employees tend to work harder, come up with innovative ideas, and be more committed to their organization. Individuals who are happy on the inside will increase productivity or other positive things at work. Research shows that good mental health is positively correlated with high levels of happiness (Diener et al., 2018). Individuals with good mental health tend to be better able to cope with pressures and challenges, and have better social relationships.

The extant literature demonstrates a robust correlation between health, happiness, and achievement. A number of studies have identified a significant correlation between happiness and academic achievement among students (Hassanzadeh & Mahdinejad, 2013; Tabbodi et al., 2015). Happiness may not only result from success but also contribute to it in various domains, including social relationships, work, and health (Jacobs Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2013). These findings underscore the significance of fostering happiness and positive affect for overall well-being and success. Happiness and productivity are two things that are interrelated. By creating a positive work environment and providing support to employees, companies can increase employee happiness and ultimately increase productivity.

Strategies to improve well-being and performance

A supportive work environment is crucial for employee happiness. At the organizational level, companies may choose to implement comprehensive employee well-being programs. As demonstrated by Bakker and Demerouti (2018), a positive work environment, characterized by a sense of value and support, can enhance employee happiness and engagement. Moreover, the flexibility of work and the existence of a good work-life balance contribute to the happiness of employees (Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, 2017).

A growing body of research indicates that higher levels of physical fitness are associated with enhanced academic performance (Teferi, 2020). Mental health is also a significant factor. As stated by the World Health Organization (2019), individuals who possess good mental health are better equipped to cope with stress, perform their duties in a productive manner, and contribute to their communities. This finding is corroborated by a study conducted by (Cohen & Wills, 2019) which demonstrated that social support can mitigate the adverse effects of stress and enhance mental well-being. Mental health is inextricably linked to happiness and optimal psychological functioning (Zulkarnain, 2019). Therefore, it can be posited that good mental health is a prerequisite for achieving happiness and success.

Happiness is a significant predictor of productivity and innovation. Individuals who are happy tend to exhibit higher levels of productivity and creativity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Such individuals exhibit a positive attitude that enables them to maintain heightened levels of focus and energy in their work. This also affects the quality of interpersonal relationships at work, which in turn improves collaboration and teamwork. The extant literature demonstrates that happiness is a significant predictor of increased productivity and innovation within organizational contexts. The study found that randomly selected individuals who were made happier exhibited approximately a 12% increase in productivity (Oswald et al., 2015).

The causal relationship between well-being and performance can be enhanced through a "Happiness Management" approach, which has the potential to improve corporate well-being, workforce productivity, and organizational performance (Ravina Ripoll et al., 2017). These findings collectively underscore the significance of prioritizing employee happiness and well-being as a strategy to enhance productivity, innovation, and overall organizational success. It can be reasonably assumed that the four variables of job satisfaction, mental health, satisfaction with relationships with others, and the size of the social support network have a direct effect on happiness and life satisfaction (Badri et al., 2022).

Research consistently shows that happiness at work positively influences employee performance. Demonstrated that work happiness positively affects employee performance, innovative behavior, and organizational commitment (Yasa et al., 2021). Similarly, happiness influences work engagement and innovative behavior, which in turn affect performance (Ramadhani et al., 2022). These studies highlight the importance of fostering happiness in the workplace to enhance various aspects of employee performance, including work engagement, innovative behavior, and organizational commitment

CONCLUSION

Happiness has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on the enhancement of productivity and the capacity for innovation. Individuals who are happy tend to exhibit a positive attitude, demonstrate greater creativity, and are more adept at cooperating with others. Furthermore, happiness contributes to an enhanced overall quality of life, which has a beneficial effect on both mental and physical well-being. Furthermore, a supportive and harmonious work environment is also a significant factor in employee happiness. In conclusion, the findings substantiate the assertion that health, happiness, and achievement are three interrelated aspects that are pivotal to the quality of life and success of individuals and society. Improved physical and mental health, happiness, and achievement can be achieved through a comprehensive and integrated approach that involves efforts at multiple levels. By concentrating on these three elements, it is possible to establish a happier and more successful society, capable of attaining its full potential.

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