International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Role of Communication in Enhancing Workplace Happiness: A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: In today's cutthroat competition where stress is rampant and damaging the workplace environment some organisations are still able to create that culture where people are happy and enjoy their work. It has been agreed by many researchers that if workers are happy it leads to productivity, but it is still non-conclusive to prove direct relation between happiness and performance.(Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2008[1]; Wright et. al., 2004[2]; Zelenski et al, 2008[3]. Great business leaders very well understand that happy workers are high performers and will ultimately contribute to achievement of organisational goals (Waggoner, 2013[4]). Many studies in the past have foundthat the various factors like environments, commitment, leadership, career development,job characteristics, pleasant experience and person environment fit contributes to workplace happiness.(Erdogan et al. 2012[5], Fisher 2010[6], Harrison et. al. 2006[7]). Workplace happiness is the key indicator of employee experience. Past literature had also concluded that communication is key driver for job satisfaction which is also a state of happiness.

Methodology:Present study is an in-depth review of literature to understand role of communication in improving overall climate of the organization and resulting in workplace happiness. Attempt has been made to understand role of different channels of communication in enhancing workplace happiness. This paper will also focus on how non-violent communication can contribute to employee's happiness.

Keywords: Communication, Happiness, Workplace, Channels of Communication

1.PRELUDE :

Role of communication in any organization is very crucial as it boast the moral,productivity and commitment of the employee to a greater extent.if the leaders invest their time and energy to create a culture of open communication among employees where they can free communicate to their peers,subordinates and supervisors,it will lead to happy and productive workforce. organizations where there Is smooth flow of communication among workers, they can prove to be the valuable asset to the organization.

Contrary to that the organizations where there is lack of open communication channels or poor communication will automatically results in experiencing unhappy and non-productive employees.

According to Harter and Adkins (2015)[8]Good communication makes the foundation for cordial relationship amongst employees at all levels. This study furthers comments that companies where there is a regular flow of communication may be in person or over phone or electronically are more engaged. results are three times better where managers hold regular meeting than not talking it in to account.

Generally happy employees are more satisfied and highly engaged. Happiness can be defined differently by different researchers.

2.HAPPINESS :

Pascal, B. (1995)[9], opined that happiness is "the motive of every act of every man, including those who go and hang themselves. "Generally, people are less happy where as happiness is the basic requisite of every human being.

Kesebir and Diener (2008)[10] have categorized happiness into two views, such as One is hedonic view means soothing and happy feelings without any pain. and **Eudaimonic** views of happiness meaning just doing what is ethically right,morallytrue,and significant and (Ryan and Deci 2000;[11]Ryff and Singer 2008)[12].

AS per Myers & Diener (1995)[13] the subjective Idea of being happy,gives people authority to feel the experience of happiness themselves.

As mentioned by Lyubomirsky et al. (2005)[14] past studies guides that biologically defined points contributes to around 50% in happiness,life situations contribute to 10 %,and intentional happening contribute to the remaining 40%,happening

According to Diener E., Kesebir P., Tov D. (2016)[15], the antecedents of happiness are Genes, Personality, Age, Gender, Emotional Intelligence & education, Wealth, Religion,*Societal conditions & culture,* Health, *Social relationships & friends*, *Marriage & children,Goals & sense of meaning,* Leisure.

There is adeepconnection between the terms SWB (Subjective well-being) and "happiness" (Cropanzano and Wright, 1999;[16] Lyubomirsky, 2001;[17] Seligman 2002[18]). Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) [19]suggestedthat a there are three factors which measures the happiness of any person e.g., gender, education, culture. As per Jain (2012)[20], Good emotions,happy feelings and positive approach towards anything leads to happiness.

From the above it can be proposed that happiness is a pleasant feeling which means absence of pain and many factors define happiness level such as age, gender, etc.

The point is whether happiness in general and happiness at workplace are different concepts or just an extension?

3.WORKPLACE HAPPINESS :

(Fisher 2010)[6] According to (Fisher 2010)[6] having a pleasant observation (positive frame of mind or positive experiences at workplace can be defined as happiness. Leadership,environment satisfaction,career development,job characteristics and person environment fit are the factors can be defined as measures to workplace happiness as suggested by Erdogan et al. (2012) [5]

(Fisher 2010) proposed happiness related constructs at workplace:

1. Transient Level: e.g. Task enjoyment, emotion at work
2. Person Level: e.g.Satisfaction at work,commitment to organisation,involvement in job,engagement.
3. Unit Level: e.g. Morale, involvement at unit level,affective tone in group, group collective mood.

According to Forbes staying happy is all about psychological well-being, satisfaction, optimism, emotion, mood, morale and engagement.

4.ANTECEDENTS OF WORKPLACE HAPPINESS :

Sirota *and Klein*(2014)[21]opines that to get happy and motivated workforce following three factors play crucial role

1. Equal (justified treatment,fair treatment,and sense of security)
2. Accomplish (challenge at work,honest feed-back,proud to be part of company.empowerment)
3. mutual trust among coworkers..

As suggested by (Huselid 1995;[22] Lawler 1986;[23] Pfeffer 1998[24])work habits that lead to achieve high results,also considers better engagement and dedicated approaches,involves restructuring work which team performs,selective at the time of hiring,commitment of job security,helping ion training and development, disseminating all important information with employees,creating lean organisation structure,and performance or results-based incentives all contributes to happiness at workplace.

According to Harrison *et al.* (2006)[7]happiness at workplace is a result of two drives such as satisfaction at job and commitment in organization when put together.

Employees having higher POS and PsyCap were found to be highly engaged worker who are satisfied with their careers and feeling of well-being.

(Joo and Lee, 2016)[25] also opined that happy employee are quite engaged workers who are satisfied with their careers.

As per organizational support theory, (Eisenberger et al., 1986;[26] Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002[27])workers start believing positive about their organisations perception about their contribution and their care for them.

Openness in sharing information which leads to workplace happiness but how is that possible without effective communication.

5. COMMUNICATION AS A MAJOR DRIVER FOR WORKPLACE HAPPINESS:

Supervisory communication, communication among colleagues at the same level and informal communication contribute to job satisfaction andorganizational identification. (Turulja&Bajgoric, 2018) [28]. Morrison (2011) [29] opined that if employees at the same levels communicate effectively play a very impactful role in survival and make the organisation grow.

Not only downward flow of information, but the information also which flow from subordinates to immediate supervisor termed as upward communication paly crucial role to happiness at work.

Several studies in the past have stressed on the critical role of communication between superior and subordinate to help in effective decision making,improved productivity and organizational learning. Learningimportance of subordinate superior communication for effective decision making (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), organizational learning (Detert& Burris, 2007; [30] Tangirala&Ramanujam, 2008) [31], and enhanced productivity (Clampitt& Downs, 1993) [32]. Free flow of communication among workers at same level and different level makes stronger connects in the organization,enables them to handle stress at work and lead to overall productivity.

As per (Richmond & Roach, 1992 [33] it could be a scenario that subordinates are reluctant to pass information to their seniors because of their introvert nature. (Wei, Zhang, & Chen, 2015) [34], it is also opined that they feel shy and non-willing to communicate upward because of different reasons just try to speak up in case of non-acceptablebehaviour from superior or only at the time when there is positivity from the same.

Kumar & Mishra (2017) [35] suggested that workers who are passionate to communicate effectively are more inclined in upward communication

As suggested (Majerčáková2015) [36] in organisations where there is sufficient flow of informal communication are effective organisations because there are open channels of communication.Adequate informal communication can havea positive impact on organisation, as it can reveal channels which are covered but necessary (Majerčáková2015) [36]. People have the inbuilt desire to communicate informally as it is honest and impactful leaders need to make it more effective by ensuring conciseness and smooth flow of information (Šujanová et al. 2012) [37].

Mishra et. al. (2014) [38] opined that Public relations officers in various organisations are understanding the fact that there should be strong internal communication among employeesfree flow of internal communication is critical factor to build a strong culture of openness between management and employees,and it can involves employees towards achieving organizational goals.

Transparent culture leads to happy workplace. Earlier researches concluded that if superiors takes care of communicating openly and honestly with subordinates lead to motivate them to serve better to the customers. (Lowenstein, 2006) [39].

To communicate effectively can act as an antecedent of organisational identification (Bartels et al., 2007) [40]. Carrière and Bourque (2009) [41]argued that there is a strong connection between job satisfaction and communication means employee who have achieved a satisfaction level in communication tend to be satisfied with their jobs as well.

As per (Chapman & White, 2011) [42] 70 % of employee claims that they don't receive any appreciation and recognition at work.But their perception can be changed to a greater extent with the ability of leader who can communicate effectively on an interpersonal level. There has been a change in the thinking of people(used to work to get paid for) over a period of time as today they value the sense of appreciation and recognition over only limiting factors only salary and bonus.(Fagley& Adler, 2012) [43].

Employee job and communication satisfaction largely depends upon their leader's ability to communicate effectively. (Madlock, 2008) [44]. As per Madlock's findings, employees' outcomes have a greater influence of their supervisors' communication competency than their leadership style.

 (Eisenberg et al., 2009) [45] opined that adopting communicationstyle that is inspiring,open,empowering and open by leaders inspires worker to a great extent.

Madlock (2008) [44]tried to establish connection between style of leadership competence of communicator,which results in to depiction of strong connection between supervisor communication style and communication satisfaction of employee.

Potoski and Callery (2017) [46] argued that peer communication generally effective at improving employee engagement.

Communication is tough to separate from relationship formation among people (Spitzberg, 1993) [47] and from organizations themselves (Putnam, Phillips, & Chapman, 1996) [48], job performance and performance evaluation is largely impacted by communication majorly How supervisors' perceives of employee communication and employees' perceives of manager communication.

Payne (2005) [49] found that supervisors were more inclined to   communicate and try to understand than subordinates.

In 1960s Dr. Marshall Rosenberg's [50] first time coined the term Non-Violent Communication. Which can be quite useful if it is used in the organisations to improve interpersonal relations at all levels as it is a language of compassion.

NVC can be a new way of communication by not just going with one's feelings, needs and opinions but also feel the need, feelings of others as well. This will result in workplace happiness and thus higher productivity.

Nonviolent Communication is a tool that help employees communicate more effectively at all levels. Supervisor, subordinate and peer. Once employees at all levels are familiar with these NVC tools and how to use them, (s)he will be in a position to shift your communication dramatically.

6.DISCUSSION :

There is a strong connection among communication and happiness at workplace. Though researchers have found many drivers to happiness but open channels of communication can be considered as major driver or an effective driver. Literature suggests that it is not only downward communication from top leaders and immediate supervisor is important but also upward (originated from subordinate) and horizontal communication (peer to peer) equally contributes to subjective well being of the employees.

Supervisor who keeps informal channels of communication open can win the trust of the employees which ultimately make employees more satisfied and committed to the organisation.

Studies have also suggested that appreciation by leaders and supervisor are more valued by the subordinates rather than compensation which they get from the company.

Therefore, from above it can be concluded that if organisation concentrate more on improving effective and open communication channels, it may be able to create a vibrant culture which can lead to workplace happiness resulting into higher productivity.

7.FUTURE RESEARCH :

Further research can be done on empirically testing the impact of each channel of communication contributing to employee happiness. Also, longitudinal study can be conducted on effectiveness of non-violent communication in organisation.

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