

Relationship of Dental Practice with Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Quratul-Ain Mariam, Asima Faisal, Muhammad Yahya Noori

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: To determine association between subjective happiness and life satisfaction with the dental practice among dentists working in Karachi.

METHODOLOGY: This cross-sectional study was conducted at the Health Management Department, Institute of Business Management, Karachi on the dentists working under supervision in private and government dental hospitals in Karachi from February - December 2018. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used and data were collected from 384 dentists. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was used to assess work engagement; satisfaction with life was recorded using Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), while subjective happiness was assessed by Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) Cronbach's Alpha determined the reliability of the scales used. SPSS Statistics Version 23 (IBM Corp. 2015) was used to analyze the data by applying correlation and multiple linear regression.

RESULTS: Majority of the respondents belonged to a younger age group (23-27 years) and the findings showed significantly positive impact of life satisfaction ($B=0.98$; $p < 0.05$) and happiness ($B=2.32$; $p < 0.05$) on work engagement. Work engagement was found to be positively correlated with life satisfaction and happiness.

CONCLUSION: The study concluded that dentists who are satisfied and happy with their lives are found to have a better Work engagement as work engagement was found to be positively correlated with life satisfaction and happiness. However, the impact of life satisfaction on work engagement was relatively found to be greater than the impact of happiness on work engagement.

KEY WORDS: Work engagement, Satisfaction with Life, Subjective Happiness, Dentists.

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INTRODUCTION

Work engagement is known to be a popular concept both in business and academia¹. It is a positive state related to health and mental well-being, which is experienced at work². It involves working with vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor is not only represented as higher levels of energy at work by an individual but also as mental resilience of the individual, dedication means being intensely involved in work whereas, absorption means that the individual is so deeply occupied and involved in work that the time passes by very quickly while working³.

Dentistry being a stressful occupation at one hand also possesses many positive qualities⁴. The well-being of dentists is significantly impacted by an enormous variety of the occupational factors⁵.

Happiness is a meaningful and pleasant feeling of life and does not only play an essential role in assessing the quality of life of an individual but is also an important indicator in determining an individual's life satisfaction⁶. Dentists who are happily involved at work typically exhibit high levels of energy and this justifies their work engagement. Job resources such as skill variety, clinical autonomy, professional contacts as well as cooperation with dental nurses and staff boosts their work engagement⁷.

Individuals have more positive social and personal relationships and receive greater social support when they are satisfied with their lives⁸.

Occupational success is high in individuals with high life satisfaction; they are found more satisfied with their career, deliver better performance on job and show increased organizational commitment with lower turnover intentions⁹.

The current study was therefore carried out to assess the impact of Life satisfaction and Happiness on Work engagement of the practicing dentists in Karachi. This might help the administration and Human Resource management of Dental institutes and hospitals to extend their employees retention and provide better dental care to the patients by not only focusing on their employee's skills but also their well-being.

METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study was conducted as a part of thesis requirement for MBA Health and Hospital Management at the Health Management Department of Institute of Business Management (IoBM) from February – December 2018. Dentists working under supervision at different private and government dental hospitals in Karachi including the resident trainees, demonstrators, lecturers and house officers were

approached; however, senior faculty such as the heads of departments, Assistant professors, Associate professors, those running their private practice were excluded. Undergraduate students and other dental staff were also excluded from the study. The sample size of 384 was calculated by using an online calculator with 5% margin error, 95% confidence level and 50% response rate for an unknown population. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used and data were collected from 384 dentists. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire using both, the hard-copy of the questionnaire as well as the online google form link that was made and shared through e-mail, comprising of 26 closed ended questions. UWES (Utrecht Work engagement Scale) that is a 17-item scale was used to assess Work engagement¹⁰, Satisfaction with life was assessed using SWLS¹¹, that is a 5-item scale and Subjective Happiness was assessed using a 4-item subjective happiness scale¹². Cronbach's Alpha determined the reliability of the scales used and the reliability coefficients were found to be within acceptable limits. SPSS Statistics Version 23 was used to analyze the data by applying Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression.

RESULTS

Among the 384 respondents, 286 were females and 98 were males; majority belonging to younger age group (23-27 years). Most of the responses were filled by the house officers (n=177) and residents (n=85). Responses were received from both Private (n=273) and Government (n=111) dental hospitals.

As shown in Table I, Work engagement and Satisfaction with Life are positively correlated since correlation coefficient for these two was found to be 0.47 and the relationship was statistically significant (p < 0.05); correlation between Work engagement and Happiness was also found positive with correlation coefficient as 0.37 and was statistically significant (p < 0.05).

Regression Model (Table II) shows R² is .23 which means that 23.3% variation in Work engagement was accounted for by the predictors SWL and Happiness. The adjusted R² is .229 which is an index of accuracy of the model.

Table III shows significance value as .000 i.e. p < 0.05, hence the results are statistically significant. A large enough F value greater than 4, (F=57.89; df: 2) suggests that the regression model successfully predicts the criterion variable i.e. Work engagement. Furthermore, Beta Coefficients provided comparison of the strength of the effect of both, SWL and Happiness on Work engagement as shown in Table IV.

The unstandardized Beta Coefficients obtained for the variables SWL and Happiness are .98 and 2.32 respectively. This suggests that for each unit of

change in SWL, there is a .98 change in Work engagement, keeping Happiness as constant; however, for each unit of change in Happiness, there is a 2.32 change in Work engagement, keeping SWL as constant.

The standardized beta coefficients obtained for SWL and Happiness are .38 and .15 respectively. This shows that among the two independent variables, SWL with a β as .38 is a more efficient predictor of Work engagement. SWL significantly impacted Work engagement (Sig.=.00; p< 0.05); similarly, Happiness significantly impacted Work engagement (Sig.=.01; p< 0.05). T values obtained are greater than 2, hence the findings support the hypothesis.

TABLE I: PEARSON'S CORRELATION BETWEEN WORK ENGAGEMENT, SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AND HAPPINESS AMONG JUNIOR DENTISTS IN KARACHI

	WE	SWL	Happiness
Work Engagement	1	.47**	.37**
SWL	.46**	1	.59**
Happiness	.37**	.59**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

TABLE II: REGRESSION MODEL SUMMARY: EFFECT ON WORK ENGAGEMENT, SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AND HAPPINESS AS PREDICTORS

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
.48	.233	.229	16.14

TABLE III: ANOVA: EFFECT ON WORK ENGAGEMENT, SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AND HAPPINESS AS PREDICTORS

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	30141.31	2	15070.66	57.89	.00
Residual	99189.21	381	260.34		
Total	129330.52	383			

TABLE IV: REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS: EFFECT ON WORK ENGAGEMENT, SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AND HAPPINESS AS PREDICTORS

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	34.36	3.60		9.70	.00
SWL	.98	.14	.38	6.98	.00
Happiness	2.32	.89	.15	2.62	.01

DISCUSSION

Employees with greater work engagement are found to have effective connection with job activities are able to deal with job demands better¹³. Work engagement is an essential aspect for dental staff; however, lack of work engagement is known to be causing burnout¹⁴. In the field of medicine and dentistry, greater the work engagement lesser are the medical errors, as a study reported that highly engaged resident doctors were found to report lesser errors than those who were less engaged¹⁵. This study was conducted on the dentists working under supervision in private and government dental hospitals with a work experience of at least 2 months to assess Work engagement among them.

Dentists working in hospital setup under supervision were only targeted because their work engagement and satisfaction levels would differ from the dentists who work on their own as private practitioners, because smaller the clinical setup (such as small hospitals, clinics etc), higher is the percentage of engaged employees as compared to larger community and teaching hospitals³. A study also indicated that work environment influences psychological wellbeing of the employees which in turn affects their work engagement and productivity¹⁶.

Another study on Dentists show that the levels of subjective happiness, contentment with life and a stable affect was strongly associated with the country of residence, and was the lowest amongst the war-torn countries such as Iraq, Syria and Yemen¹⁷. Likewise, another study found difference in contentment of the dentists who were pursuing their career in teaching along with the dental practice as compared to those who were engaged in one of these only¹⁸. Hence, senior dentists such as the Consultants, Professors and those running their private practice only were excluded from this study. The level of happiness has been shown to be a predictor of performance right from the beginning of the medical and dental schools¹⁹, and it may be thought of an indicator of the level of excellence one can achieve.

Work Engagement has several antecedents and their association has been observed in several studies. In a study, it was found that surgeons' work engagement was significantly correlated with their life as well as job satisfaction²⁰. Internal consistency and reliability of Satisfaction with Life Scale was found to be high¹¹. In another study, Psychological well-being had a significant and positive influence on work engagement but the magnitude of the relationship was found to be low²¹. However according to a study on Italian social workers, with high job demands, the psychological well-being was found to be strongly related to lowest levels of work engagement²².

In order to retain the top talent, organizations need to foster a positive work environment that may contribute to employees' work engagement and happiness²³. A

study on support Staff was conducted to find out the relationship of work engagement with organizational commitment and happiness and it was found that work engagement and Happiness were significantly and positively related; furthermore, the predictive value these two had for organizational commitment was affective²⁴.

Work is an important factor that influences life satisfaction²⁵. This study shows that satisfaction with life and happiness accounts for only 23.3% of the variance in work engagement among dentists, thus with more researches we can find out how other predictors can impact work engagement. However, in a study, relationship among different human resource concepts was explored and it was found that job satisfaction caused 45% of the variance in work engagement of the employees and 17.6% of the variance in loyalty of employees²⁶. A study in Finland also found work engagement positively predicting life satisfaction during young adult's third decade of life²⁷, whereas a study on work engagement of Chinese nurses revealed that higher work engagement was associated with greater job satisfaction²⁸.

Through this study it was found that a significant relationship exists between the work engagement and satisfaction with life and between work engagement and happiness. The respondents of this study were all associated with a teaching dental hospital or institute and it was found that their life satisfaction significantly impacted their work engagement.

CONCLUSION

Satisfaction with Life and Happiness both showed a significantly positive impact on work engagement, however, the impact of Life Satisfaction was relatively found to be greater than the impact of Happiness. Dentists who were satisfied with life and had higher subjective happiness were found to be more engaged in their work.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Mariam QA: Data collection, statistical analysis, executed the project, wrote first draft & manuscript
Faisal A: Managed the logistics, conceived the idea, contributed to the draft
Noori MY: Conceived the idea, supervised the project, contributed to the draft

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AUTHOR AFFILIATION:

Dr. Quratul-Ain-Mariam

Department of Health Management,
Institute of Business Management | IoBM.

Dr. Asima Faisal

Department of Health Management,
Institute of Business Management | IoBM
Email: asima.zahid@iobm.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Yahya Noori (*Corresponding Author*)

Department of Pathology,
Dow International Medical College
Dow University of Health Sciences | DUHS.
Karachi, Sindh-Pakistan.
Email: yahyanoori@gmail.com