Abstract:

Optimistic employees create positive synergy, vitality and proactiveness. Optimism is all about positive, can-do beliefs, and having sense of responsibility towards oneself and others. It guides us to maintain higher subjective well-being. It is an attributional style which explains positive events in terms of personal, permanent & pervasive causes. Subjective Well-Being (SWB) on the other hand is cognitive and affective evaluations of a person’s life.

To study the relationship between Optimism and Subjective Well-Being (SWB), a sample of 300 educationists from Private Universities of Delhi/ NCR region were taken. For this purpose, Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) given by Scheier, M.F, Carver C.S and Bridges, M.W.(1994) and Subjective Wellbeing Scales- the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) and Flourishing Scale (FS by Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener, 2009) were used. Findings show significant relationship between Optimism and Subjective Well Being. This study will not only help in promoting optimistic behavior in work settings but also contribute in creating happy workforce and that happy people tend to volunteer more, have more positive work related attitude and behavior.

Key words: Optimism, Subjective Well-being, Positive affect, Negative affect

Corresponding Author
Introduction

As being rightly said by Winston Churchill that “pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” To substantiate this many research report that on an average, human beings are hardwired to be more optimistic which is a commendable quality and as a consequence it can positively affect a person’s overall health.

It decreases a person’s stress and consequently increases longevity. Its relevance was highlighted long back during the time of Scheier and Carver (1985). They stressed that Optimism is the propensity of an individual to look after the outcome even if the problems are associated with it.

Optimism helps in creating cooperative climate in the organization by increasing the citizenship behavior of the employees and with this a sense of belongingness is established towards work setting. Recent research in the area of organizational psychology has highlighted the importance of optimism and leadership effectiveness and its relevance in today’s scenario.

There are many advantages of being an optimist. First and foremost is looking failure as a new start and often the beginning of something great as thoughts guide our actions.

Secondly, Optimism make us expand and grow beyond boundaries whereas Pessimism makes us contract. Thirdly, optimism is directly linked to better mental and physical health conditions and less of stress. In a research of more than five thousand adults in the University of Illinois, it was found that those who were most optimistic had significantly better blood sugar and cholesterol levels. They exercised more, and had healthier body mass indexes. This as a result discourages smoking and other self-destructive behaviors.

Fourth and the most important is that optimistic frame of mind helps in spreading positive vibes which makes one more approachable and hence better outcome at personal and professional front. Thus, it had been seen that there is no better alternative to optimism. Some contradictory researches do not agree with the very idea of being optimistic. They believe that little pessimism is essential to maintain competitive edge in real life.

Carver and Scheier coined optimism as dispositional. Findings of their research suggest that optimists report fewer physical symptoms and better coping strategies even when diagnosed with breast cancer. They experienced less distress and engaged less in denial of reality as a defense mechanism.

In 1970 s and 1980 s Seligman’s concept of “learned helplessness” became famous which was based on the analysis and patterns of people’s explanation of events. He quoted that, “An optimistic explanatory style stops helplessness, whereas pessimistic explanatory style spreads helplessness”
Later he went on to develop the term called attributional retraining in order to make people “learn optimism”. It helps in reducing helplessness/depression through the cognitive therapy models developed by Beck (1967, 1979)

**Subjective well-being (SWB)**

It refers to an evaluation of the individual’s life from his or her own viewpoint which is different with evaluations made from the point of view of external observers. For e.g. Researchers).

These evaluations which an individual makes can be either in terms of cognitive reflections and representing reflective appraisals of life which includes domains of life such as work, or home.

Positive affect are feelings people experience when things go well in people’s life.

Negative affect is the experience that things are not going well. Positive affect includes both momentary emotions such as enjoyment, and more chronic longterm moods such as contentment. Negative affect includes momentary or “state” emotions such as feelings of anger, sadness, stress, and worry, and also longer-asting mood such as depression that occurs over time.

**Literature Reviews:**

Rotondo et al., (2010) did a study to assess the effectiveness of Optimism on mental and physical wellbeing. Results indicate that Optimism significantly impact mental and physical well-being by the promoting healthy lifestyle as well as by adaptive behaviors and cognitive responses associated with it.

Niyogi(2017) did a research to see the impact of optimism on leadership effectiveness. It was found that optimism was linked with sentimental and behavioral dimension.Further, Optimistic leader will not be troubled in uncertain situations and events. Optimistic leader has the capability to see the opportunity in the difficult situation and balances between odd and even perfectly. Optimistic leaders tend to create cooperative climate and enhances the citizenship behavior.

Cecilia Cesa Schiavon et al., (2017) did systematic review to understand the role of optimism and hope in chronic diseases. Study indicates that individuals with greater optimism and hope seek to engage in healthy behaviors, regardless of their clinical status and this contributes positively to their treatment.

Further, there are evidences that optimism motivates the individual to take proactive measures to improve their wellbeing whereas pessimism is associated with those behaviors that are unhealthy and lethargic.
Segerstrom (2005) found that when stressors are short-lived, optimism appears to heal it but when it becomes chronic reverse effect can be seen. Therefore according to him, optimism has some limitations as well.

Several other researches show that optimism is correlated with positive life outcomes including increased life expectancy, good mental health, increase ratio of success and better recovery from illnesses.

Hongfei Du, Ronnel B. King, Peilian Chi (2018) did a review paper on self-esteem and subjective wellbeing to establish significant that the roles of personal, relational and collective self-esteem are clearly linked with the Subjective wellbeing. Similarly, Ferring and Boll (2010) proposed to do research in order to establish the influence of aging on one’s level of Subjective Wellbeing.

The Relationship between Resilience, Psychological Distress and Subjective wellbeing was found to be normal. Well-Being when studied was found to be negative in relationship with psychological distress and resilience.

Yuen & Jenkins (2019) did a study to explore the factors contributing to the improvement in subjective well-being (SWB) immediately after a short-term visit to an urban park. Results indicate there was considerable improvement in SWB scores of park visitor when compared before and after visit. Although it had few limitations like it did not take individual differences into consideration.

Joan & Montserrat (2019) did a research to see the role of factors influencing the Subjective Well-Being of adolescents in out-of-Home Care. Findings were very interesting that adolescents in foster care had better SWB in all life domains than those in residential care.

**Methodology**

**Aim:** To assess Optimism and Subjective Well Being (SWB) of employees.

**Objective:** To study the relationship between Optimism and Subjective wellbeing of employees

**Hypothesis:** Optimism is expected to be significantly related to Subjective wellbeing.

**Locale of study:** The data for this study was collected from employees working in NCR region

**Sample**

The sample consisted of male (n=150) and female (n=150) working in private educational sector between the age group of 30-40 years.
Tools used:

1. Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) given by Scheier, M.F, Carver, C.S and Bridges, M.W. (1994) to measure the level of optimism. This is a 10-item questionnaire and scoring ranges from 0 to 4. Here 0 refers to strongly disagree, 1 is disagree, 2 is neutral, 3 is agree and 4 is strongly agree.

   First is The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The SWLS is a short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life.
   Second is Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE). The SPANE is 12-item questionnaire which consists of six items to assess positive feelings and six items to assess negative feelings.
   Third is Flourishing Scale (FS) which measures important aspects of human functioning.

Statistical Analysis

The following Table-1 shows the mean and standard deviation of variables understudy, where n = 300

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no.</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Optimism (LOT-R)</td>
<td>29.84</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Satisfaction with Life (SWL)</td>
<td>24.21</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (SPANE)</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Flourishing Scale</td>
<td>40.12</td>
<td>5.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The following table shows Correlations between the variables and their significance at 0.01 & 0.05 levels (2-tailed test).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Optimism (LOT-R)</th>
<th>Flourishing Scale (Fs)</th>
<th>Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWL)</th>
<th>Scale Of Positive And Negative Experiences (Spane)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism (LOT-R)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.(2tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
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</table>
Table 1: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FLOURISHING SCALE</th>
<th>SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE</th>
<th>SCALE OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.553**</td>
<td>.584**</td>
<td>.68**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.(2tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Discussion & Conclusion**

This study was conducted with an aim to assess the relationship between Optimism and Subjective Well Being (SWB) of employees. Statistical analysis substantiated that Optimism is positively correlated with Subjective Well Being.

Table 1 shows mean and standard deviation scores whereas Table 2 is of Correlation between variables under study shows positive relationship between the variables at the 0.01 & 0.05 levels (2-tailed).

Happiness among employees for good governance is the need of the hour today. Employees' wellbeing is the most sought after and widely researched topic in organizations. Reason being that employee’s performances and organizational goals are directly and indirectly aligned. Work style and level of motivation towards work can only be improved with a healthy Subjective Well-being which is indicative of mental and physical wellbeing.

Ed Diener (1984) developed a tripartite model of subjective well-being which explains people experience, their quality of life that includes both emotional reactions and cognitive judgments. Several researches report that when subjective wellbeing is high it leads to better decision making and self-growth of an individual. Hence, a step towards personal and professional excellence.

According to the self-discrepancy theory, there are three domains of the self: the actual-self, the ought-self, and the ideal-self. Individuals high on subjective wellbeing will clearly be able to understand the difference and ways to identify and balance all three domains of self effectively.

Seeking happiness is a global desire and the same can be cited from the early times where humans felt great accomplishment when they succeeded in achieving their objective like related to survival which was hunting. That sense of achievement made them return each day to hunt. Similarly the desire to attain happiness and life satisfaction can only be fulfilled
when efforts are directed and channelized towards it.

In present times when private sectors be it education or non-education put lot of work pressure on its employees an initiative to inculcate the relevance of optimistic outlook in all domains of life can be useful in not only improving the subjective well-being but also a step towards creating happy and healthy work force.

Workshops and conferences in organizations can be arranged for employees to have better understanding and experience the advantage of being optimistic and resilient. Role plays can also be done to have a better understanding of the situation and that being optimistic is wiser. Counselling sessions for all and specifically for those who have requirement can be scheduled for at least twice a week. Such measures encourage awareness towards being optimistic and high Subjective Wellbeing.

Thus, Subjective well-being and optimism are positively correlated to each other.

References


