Organization and Positive Psychology with Diversity

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Abstract

Positive Psychology - a ground breaking study of what makes us feel good, function well and flourish. Pearson (2006) has remarked that Positive side of human nature has been of long – standing interest of both philosophers and psychologists, but it is only recently that the positive side of human behaviour has attracted serious and more widespread empirical study. We intend to familiarize with the Literature and professional associations' findings and also understand the comprehensive perspectives of Positive Psychology with gender diversity as applied in the changing world of work. The subject matter here is of high intrinsic interest as the dynamics include an amalgamation of western and eastern Concepts of wellbeing. An effort is made to recognize and provide a basis for social change in education, work, families and societies in particular for they are the institutions where individuals assumes happiness lies in. The issues and questions addressed have been largely unexamined especially at the workplace, our material affluence is dramatically rising, measures of our psychological wellbeing are declining. The development of Positive Psychology is connected to the broader culture which it is a part, to the apparent paradox of this country. There needs to be progress in the rationalization of the workplace and the Management by tradition has to yield to Management by scientific observation and measurement. To be successful in other words, a Scientific Organizational Psychology needs to take the mental structure of the worker as seriously as it takes the Mechanics of work.

Keywords: Happiness, Organizational Behavior, Productivity Positive Psychology, Well Being, Workplace

1. Introduction

The earlier study one had been made in the same organization regarding the positivity of the employees in the organization and the workplace culture.

Now the study two reflects the specific gender importance with the organization analyzing the women employees and their work stress and their experience which counts for the women's positive approach.

Today's organisations face new challenges thrown by changing demographics and increasing diversity in the workplace. Differences generate conflicts and are manifested as discriminatory practices that reduce both individual and organisational effectiveness. Existing literature highlights several factors including gender and caste as discriminatory factors operating in Indian workplace. An exploratory study using Critical Incident Technique was conducted to identify discriminatory factors that are prevalent in Indian workplace, nature of their interactions and their influence on organizational decisions. The study revealed gender, region of origin, education, marital status, age and caste as discriminatory factors that affect a number of organizational decision events, viz., recruitment.

An average individual works for 10 – 12 hrs, that means most of the waking hours are spent at work, outside home. Positive psychology in the workplace is about shifting attention away from negative aspects such as work violence, stress, burnout, and job insecurity. Positive psychology can help create a working environment. Fun should not be looked at as something that cannot be achieved during work but rather as a motivation factor for the staff. These same lines it is important to examine the role of: helping behaviors, team building exercises, job resources, job security and work support. The field of Positive Psychology helps, also to creatively manage organizational behaviors and to increase productivity in the workplace. In the broad sense traditional psychology has not specifically focused on the implementation of

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positive psychology methods in the workplace. The recent researches on work satisfaction and employee retention has created a greater need to focus on implementing positive psychology in the workplace.

Diversity and discrimination have drawn the attention of organization. Although a diverse workforce and work-place diversity management is often thought to be critical to organizational competitiveness, little is known about how organizations are reacting[1–4].

2. Precursors to Positive Psychology

Martin E. P. Seligman (The father of modern Positive Psychology Movement) and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi are the pioneers in mainstreaming the idea of positive psychology.

Several Humanistic psychologists – Like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, developed theories and practices pertaining to human, happiness and flourishing.

Different westerners have their own individual views of what positive psychology actually is. Hedonism focuses on pleasure as the basic component of a good life. The Early Hebrews believed in the divine command theory which finds happiness by living according to the commands or rules set down by a Supreme Being.

The New Thought, Positive Thinking theories, Needs and Motives theories of Henry Murray too form a part of Positive Psychological aspects.

2.1 Eastern Perspectives of Psychology

The highlights of the basic tenets of the four influential Eastern disciplines of Confucianism, Taoism (traditions generally associated with china) Buddhism and Hinduism (rooted in traditions of Southeast Asia). The concept of good life has existed within the traditions for many centuries. The five virtues deemed central to living a moral existence are Humanity, Duty, Etiquette, Wisdom and Truthfulness. Hinduism differs somewhat from the other three philosophies discussed, in the sense it does not have a specific founder. The main teachings of the Hindu tradition emphasize the interconnectedness of all things. Ones goal within this understanding is to live life fully and so correctly that one would go directly to the afterlife without having to repeat life s lessons in a reincarnated form.

Each of the eastern philosophies incorporates ideas about the importance of Virtue, along with human strengths, as people move toward the good life (Transcendence).

A common idea in the work environment theories is that demands exceeds resources. In regard to the research regarding positive outcomes within the employment settings several models exist, like those of Demand control model, Job demand resources and Job characteristics model.

According to Social Identity Theory, discrimination between groups is a function of inter-group social comparison. Social Identity Theory (SIT) so far offers most fitting approach to explaining differences in work performance outcomes. Social identity theorists assume that the social environment is organised into meaningful categories that result in inter group discrimination. According to SIT, people classify themselves into multiple hierarchically organised social categories[5]. The classification of the social-world as "us" or "them" results in discriminatory behaviour and negative attitudes toward out-group members. This discrimination is triggered by self-serving motives. To maintain and enhance a positive self-regard, individuals dispose themselves positively toward members of their own group and discriminate against members of other groups. It is a view that people are motivated to maintain or enhance a positive self-image by comparing themselves with others in a manner that favours the self[6]. According to SIT, this motivation can also be satisfied by favouring one's in-group over the out-group, a process that results in in-group favoritism[7]. Studies show that members of in-group engage in self-enhancement not only by praising their own groups but also by derogating out groups[8] Discriminatory Practices.

The report shows that by 2016
81% of employees don't age of 65; but a majority of Employers want them to do as per their need (52%).

- A clear majority of employers expect to measure their staff on productivity (68%) and for those staff to develop more skills (72%) but only a minority of employees believe this will be the case (22% and 49% respectively).
- The vast majority of employers think that IT will have a greater impact on work are major compared with less than half of workers moderate.
- Home-working will not significantly increase because of lack of demand from Employers and employees below 30%.

- Workers want to work flexibly and employers Recognize this as a significant benefit in terms of retention majorly.
- Employers believe more men will stay at home to bring up the family (41%) and women will continue to break through the glass ceiling playing an increasingly important role.

3. The Challenges in the World of Work

Challenges in the changing world:

a) Generation Gap.
b) Information overload.
c) Increasing emotional Breakdowns.
d) Susceptibility to Disease.
e) Consumerism, Liberalization and Other Global forces.
f) Changing Education systems.

3.1 Conceptual Contributions: Professional Research Associations' Finding

3.1.1 Father of Modern Positive Psychology

Dr Martin Seligman ' AuthenticHappiness' Discussed three areas in which one could infuse Positive Psychology into work environment: Job Design, Team Work and Transformational Leadership.

'The Glass Hammer' Smart Women in Numbers. A Newsletter August 2012

Alexia Thomson – Manage your team with Positive Psychology'

One application of positive psychology is in the workplace environment. An employee feels valued and cared for by her employer is likely to be content, which in turn can lead to increased productivity, greater interest in teamwork, and fewer sick days. The feeling is contagious. Departments that work cohesively spread to divisions, floors, and units: before long, an entire company is in more successful than ever before.

Most of the foundational work was done by a late Positive Psychologist and Social Scientist Harry Levinson, Whose contributions are considered instrumental by many Management Schools and Organizations. Levinson's plan for corporate psychology involves mostly around incentives and motivation schemes. Rather than pay raises and assignments to boost work, use positive rein-

forcement, he said. Managers who take a personal interest in their employees - in their families, their hobbies, and their business strengths - can often achieve increased productivity simply by making staff members feel valued as individuals. Offering well-timed rewards or remembering important dates like birthdays or workplace anniversaries can be part of this.

Companies that embrace positive psychology as a workplace motive tend to benefit greatly from their investments. Transforming the paradigm from a productivity-centered to a feelings-centered workplace is often the toughest hurdle. The commitment need not be extensive, however, and there is no reason that caring for employees as individuals should in any way detract from the overall corporate goals of success, profits, and outward image. When done properly, small investments in people usually lead to improved financial benefits, which ss a great gain for everybody.

- **Psychology and Industrial Efficiency** - Munsterberg Hugo

The considerable importance stems for the fact that it serves not only to systemize the newly emerging field of industrial psychology had the potential to make a significant contribution to the betterment of everyday life.

❖ The Best Possible Man

- Vocation choice and Guidance.
- Scientific Management and Experimental Investigations.
- Contributions from individuals and groups.

❖ The Best Possible Work

- Psycho technical Training For work Efficiency.
- Economy of movement and problem of monotony.
- Physical and Social Influences on the Working Power.

❖ The Best Possible Effect.

- Better Interests.
- The future development Psychology.

4. Methods

The psychosocial factors at workplace and the positive psychology.

Key findings of ESENER.

Edina Gabor (European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks) 28.09.2012.

More formalized procedures to manage psychosocial Risks appear widespread in very few countries, such as Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and in large establishments and in the public, financial intermediation, education, and health and social work sectors.

Establishments generally tackle with psychosocial risks by Providing training and by implementing changes in work organization, rather than establishing policies or procedures. Only about half of the respondents inform employees about psychosocial risks and their effect on health and safety.

Fulfilling legal duties and requests from employees appear to be the main drivers for addressing both OSH in general and psychosocial risks.

The most important barriers to track psychosocial risks in establishments are the perceived sensitivity of the issue, together with lack of awareness and lack of resources.

An application of the evidence based approaches of PP, specially the works of Sonja Lyubomirsky - 'The How of Happiness' to develop a new training and team coaching method for improving client's subjective wellbeing.

Training methods involves gratitude, optimism, coping, flow, savoring. The training method for happier workplaces

- Responding in active constructive ways.
- Learning things about one's coworkers.
- Letting someone else shine.
- Being a good teammate.
- Opening doors for others.
- Secret good deed.

Knowing one's own strengths

- Knowing the strengths of one's coworkers.
- Giving the gift of time.
- Writing a gratitude/appreciation letter.
- Letting go of grudges.
- Being zestful.
- Redrafting one's job.

Happiness Trainers.
Workshops and Interventions could stimulate various employees to recognize the Employers attitude towards them.

CNBC 2012 Report on Workplace wellness Program found that of employees who regularly participated over ½ sounded productive and 40% likely to stay there for long, 30 % took few less leaves especially when they involved themselves in Performing Exercises. Ohio State University Benefits of Low impact Yoga.

- Adopting PERMA framework and mainstreaming psychology of gainful employment. (Flexible work, me – we balance approach, work guidelines for behavior)

The Father of modern Positive Psychology Martin Seligman, referred to something called PERMA Framework:

- Positive Emotions
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment

Imbibing personal mini experiments and life enhancement strategies from Elite Organizations.

(Pro social behavior, cross cultural counseling, EQ and resilience building).

WORKPLACE INFO News and info for Australian HR Professionals.

'Positive Psychology at workplace : Get The Strengths'

The current state of play with positive psychology was summarized at a seminar conducted by the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) held in Sydney on 3 July 2007. According to Dr. Suzy Green people should be encouraged to find a state of fulfillment and their issues addressed

- Engagement of certain commercial Questionnaires that address few issues.
- Conduct areas of research to have findings to work on.
- Positive psychology works on the basis that increased happiness, psychological wellbeing, quality of life, resilience, engagement, creativity, meaning of work and better relationships will all lead to improved productivity and profitability.

Harvard Business Review
HBR Blog Network
The Happiness Dividend: by Shawn Achor June 23, 2011

Given the unprecedented level of unhappiness at companies and the direct link between the employees' happiness and business outcomes, the question is NOT whether happiness should matter to companies. Given this research, it clearly should. The real question is: Can

a company do anything to raise the happiness level of an employee?

Individuals can begin to do things on their own. First, recognize that happiness is an advantage at work. This will encourage you to seek happiness in the present instead of waiting for a future success. As a result, your brain will have more resources necessary to accomplish your work. Second, you can literally train your brain for higher levels of happiness at work by creating habits shown to increase job satisfaction. In the training five suggestions were given:

- Gratitude.
- Exercise.
- Meditate.
- Praise Mail.
- Positive Experience Description.

Emotional Intelligence: A construct of health promoting behavior in Organization. Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Motivation, Emotion, Social Skill and Empathy need to be connected to Performance and Organization Effectiveness.

Concepts of Cross Cultural Counseling and Psychological Resilience have to be Embarked upon as one of the major contribute to the Human Engineering

Transformation Leadership - Transcribing and reviewing of positive thinking literature. Books like: The power of letting go, The Secret and The happiness project.

Enabling other institutions at grass root levels: LONG TERM

- ➢ Positive Schooling.
- ➢ Good Work: Psychology of Gainful Employment.
- ➢ Balanced conceptualization of mental health and behavior.
- ➢ Interceding to prevent the bad and enhancing the good.
- ➢ Seeing our futures through Self Efficacy, Optimism and Hope.

- Living Well in every stage of life.
- Life Enhancement religious confirmations.
- Developing Strengths and living well in Family and cultural contexts.
- Humor.

5. Method and Data Collection

In the sample organization Akzonobel with around 300 employees, with 20 percent of women employees, a random group of 15 percent were selected for the interview method.

There were series of personal interview questions including the personal history of the individual female employees.

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with each of the chosen respondents by either of the researchers. The respondents were briefed about the purpose of the interview before the start of the interview. They were asked to describe their experiences regarding discriminations that operate in their organizations. The choice of discrimination factor was left to the respondents. The most frequent dialogue is described below: Researcher: Will you please tell us about your organizational experiences regarding discrimination? Does it exist? Respondent: Discrimination? Do you mean gender discrimination? Researcher: It could be gender; it could be due to other reasons as well. Of the seventy-five respondents, seven respondents claimed that they had not encountered discrimination in their organizations. When the respondents answered affirmatively, they were asked to describe specific incidents when employee

Grounded theory involves progressive identification and integration of categories of meaning from data resulting in a theory as a result. Grounded theory methods provide a framework from deriving categories from data and to arriving at a final theory or mode (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The transcripts of the interviews were content analyzed with the following objectives: To identify factors of discrimination that were prevalent in Indian organizations. To identify significant organizational events that are affected by discriminatory practices. To understand the patterns of discrimination that hinder a person's career progression.

6. Results and Discussion

The results of the study indicate that discrimination is a prevalent organizational reality in Indian context. The study further provides reasons to propose that discrimination is a complex phenomenon governed by several factors that are simultaneously operating in the organizational context. Summary of results are presented and discussed below. Tables 2, 3 and 4 provide the percentages of responses described by the respondents and are clustered sector wise, gender wise and event wise. Some respondents narrated more than one incident, where they

Table 1. Positive psychology

Age group	25 yrs to 54 yrs	The group results reveal the positive D&I in the organization.
Employees grade	Executives and middle management level	
Experience	2 yrs to 18 yrs	

perceived discrimination. Some also attributed more than one factor as cause of discrimination.

But in the chosen organization with the positive traits present as a culture has resulted in the efforts by the employer to reduce such high level of discriminations resulting in positive organizational culture. This is the outcome of the study 2 of this organization and positive psychology Table1.

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