

## Positive Psychology: An Innovative Approach for Managing Well-Being at the Workplace

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### Abstract

The current economic tumult of recession, job compression, layoffs, and other cost-cutting measures may escalate job insecurity and stress among workers. These stress-related factors result in fallouts of extended shift hours, lack of rest, and work overload, and ultimately lead to job dissatisfaction among employees. Employees; facing work pressure, unexpected job demands, extended working hours, and job insecurity, which adversely affect their well-being and impacting job satisfaction. Such stressful disruption in Job may have an adverse effect on the health of employees which eventually effect the organisation as a whole. This paper explores the role of Positive Psychology, focusing on strengths, engagement, and meaningful work to create positive and congenial working environment that satisfy organisational and individual goals. This paper reviews the definition and consequences of implementing positive psychology for generating happiness through insights from the literature The PERMA model is being used as a theoretical framework in the research to assess its impact on employee satisfaction and subjective well-being. Furthermore, practical applications and research gaps are discussed, with future studies to explore the impact of Positive Psychology interventions in workplace settings.

**Keywords:** Positive psychology, Happiness at work, Positive emotions, Meaningfulness in work

### Background:

The business environment has been changing astonishingly over the last few decades. Economic pressures, the impact of globalization on the workforce, overseas job movements, managing a diversified workforce, and improving individual skill sets are the common, incessant changes impacting the business environment. These contemporary business trends anticipate creativity, innovation, expansion, and advancement in business processes. Further, current jobs become more challenging and critical than ever before, and have impacted various aspects of human life. Managing employees during difficult times is furthermore exigent and requires effective management. Besides, organizations are trying to cope with aggressive business pressures by fostering positivity at the workplace (Luthans, 2002). The aspects of happiness and its impact on individual and organisational success have been conceptualized from 'positive psychology' highlighted by Fredrickson (2009) for managing health and creating the feeling of contentment among employees. The concept of positive psychology is based on fostering positivity at workplace to cope with feeling of dissatisfaction, stress, anxiety and work overload. Further the concept of positivity proposes developing feeling of joy and happiness for improving mental and physical health and wellbeing at workplace through follow their hearts and minds which results in developing receptivity, productivity, and creativity at workplace (Fredrickson, 2009). Fred Luthans identified the need of implementing positive approach with the intention to leverage strength, developing positive inclusion for self, job designing and redesigning which promotes collaborative working which further creates happier healthier work environment. The purpose of this article is to explore the factors which lead to create joy through integrative analysis of different theories of happiness

and its behavioural outcomes such as developing emotional intelligence, generating positive emotions, engender meaningfulness in work, developing individual strength for educational and professional development. Positive work environment may be created through positive reinforcement such as distributing rewards, appreciating efforts, credibility of hard work. Further, people generally respond to positive reinforcement, resulting in changing the behaviour, perception, and attitude of individual toward job.

### **Positive psychology: An Introduction**

Traditional psychology is an intrinsic, action-oriented stream that emphasizes identifying and rectifying problems. In contrast, positive psychology adopts a more extrinsic approach, focusing on creating and maintaining a positive mindset. However, positive psychology does not suggest that the traditional psychological approach is outdated or without value. Traditional psychology continues to focus on problems, illness, distress, and dysfunctional outcomes (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Positive psychology, to a certain extent, has emerged as a complementary dimension—effective in strengthening individual strengths, sharpening existing competencies, and enhancing productivity. The application of positive psychology practices has shown promise in neutralizing negative emotions such as dissatisfaction, anxiety, and stress. It fosters positive human experiences and cultivates positive traits, ultimately contributing to a happier and more constructive society (Gable & Haidt, 2005). This approach is particularly beneficial in developing and nurturing high-potential talent. Martin Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology, posits that individuals seek to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. Positive psychology, according to him, promotes contentment by encouraging individuals to focus on their strengths and interests, thereby enhancing their experiences of satisfaction and meaningfulness. To understand the role of positive psychology in the workplace, it is essential to identify the factors that contribute to job satisfaction and explore how satisfaction can be achieved. Supporting this perspective, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) emphasize that individual experiences, work interests, and a positive working environment are key contributors to improving the quality of work life and fostering meaningfulness and satisfaction in the workplace. Furthermore, the implementation of positive psychology is essential for developing interventions that lead to desirable outcomes, rather than merely accepting negativity as an inevitable aspect of work life. Research suggests that positive characteristics can be developed through positive thinking patterns and emotional experiences. Achieving positivity in the workplace may involve engaging in meaningful work, effective job design, job crafting, and the pursuit of self-esteem, all of which contribute to building healthier institutions. It is a common misconception that pay is directly linked to job satisfaction. In reality, pay is associated more with material benefits than with the deeper sense of fulfilment that comes from meaningful work and a positive organizational environment. Martin Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology, posits that individuals seek to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. Positive psychology, according to him, promotes contentment by encouraging individuals to focus on their strengths and interests, thereby enhancing their experiences of satisfaction and meaningfulness.

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contribute to building healthier institutions. It is a common misconception that pay is directly linked to job satisfaction. In reality, pay is associated more with material benefits than with the deeper sense of fulfilment that comes from meaningful work and a positive organizational environment. Despite the monetary assessment, one may not be satisfied with job. The actual satisfaction lies in work and role satisfaction. Role satisfaction is the eventual satisfaction, that drives from work. If you have a work motivation, it may increase commitment to work in an organisation. "Satisfaction lies in positive employee role perception of work rather than income or designation. Stew and Ross (1985) proposed the ration of work life and family life and discovered as work constitutes a major life span, which probably more than one-third of the life duration, thus it reasonable to find a relationship between work and happiness. Thus, it is only appropriate to draw the correlation between work and happiness engenders. Work plays a powerful role in identifying psychological needs, strength or interest associated with work, outcome of work and satisfaction or fulfilment. Positive role perception is essential to generate the feeling of satisfaction or meaningfulness and motivation to perform task. Luthans identify different elements of positive psychology such as confidence, hope, optimism, subjective wellbeing and emotional intelligence. Further positive approach may be developed through internality, self-management, optimism, appreciative inquiry, trust and collaboration among individuals. For understanding the role of positive psychology, one must understand the significance of mindfulness and role efficacy and how individual working toward achieving role efficacy. Courtney E. Ackerman (2020) discovers that positive psychology helps in constructing positive psychological health assets (e.g., positive emotions, life satisfaction, optimism, positive relationships, and meaningfulness in life). These psychological health assets are effectual in developing positive experiences (like happiness, joy, inspiration, and love), positive states and traits (like gratitude, resilience, and compassion) Positive institutions (applying positive principles within entire organizations and institutions).These framework is significant for understanding and flourishing individual life .The framework consisted of three components: major positive experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions. Understanding positive emotions highlights the positive notions that prevailed in the past, present, and hope for the future. Understanding positive psychology may result in cultivating a better society as a whole, by imposing justice, ethics, and integrity for nurturing happiness and wellbeing. This paper synthesizes literature from academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and PubMed, selecting studies spanning from 2000 to 2024 that focus on Positive Psychology in the workplace. The theoretical frameworks reviewed Seligman's PERMA model. Leadership, engagement, and gratitude practices were also considered due to their significant impact on workplace well-being (Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Clifton & Harter, 2003).

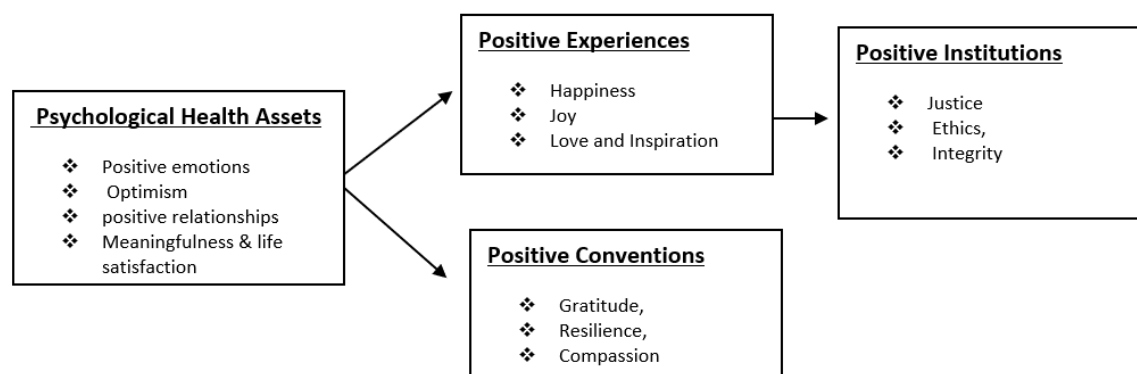
### **Literature Review:**

Studies have simulated the role of positive emotions such as gratitude and joy spread through social interactions, drawing on the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001). Further, research demonstrates that positive emotions encourage resilience and collective well-being in agent populations. Schlesinger et al. (2017) highlight the impact of positive intervention at a broader level and showcase the intervention of gratitude journaling or other acts of kindness are primitive practices and influence long-term well-being outcomes at a community level.

The majority of the research has focused on the psychological effects on individuals, but institutional and organizational levels are beginning to recognize the significance of upsetting growth and collective well-being. The research further focuses on knowledge and experiences regarding practicing resilience in organisational structural settings. These interventions strengthen mindfulness, foster positive relationships, and enhance employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Societal phenomena like arts and culture, eco-connection, and wellbeing literacy are key to managing wellbeing, enhancing employees' emotional and psychological resources, and

promoting a holistic work environment, particularly in high-pressure environments. The previous researches further accentuate on implementing positive systems approach that enhances understanding of employee wellbeing during crises, emphasizing interconnectedness, collaboration, and adaptive functioning in workplace dynamics. Further, positive psychology is increasingly recognized for its role in supporting marginalized workforce groups, promoting inclusivity, and fostering long-term employee wellbeing. This approach can bridge wellbeing discrepancies and enhance organizational effectiveness by shifting focus from individual wellbeing to managing collective wellbeing at workplace. Positive psychology has been shown to contribute to the development of psychological health assets, such as positive emotions, optimism, positive relationships, meaningfulness, and life satisfaction, which enhance mental and emotional well-being (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), build enduring personal resources, and enhance happiness (Fredrickson, 2001). Positive psychology studies show that optimism, a general expectation of good things, leads to better psychological health, persistence in adversity, and reduced depression and anxiety (Carver & Scheier, 2014). Positive relationships, characterized by trust, empathy (Diener et al., 2003), and mutual support (Ryff & Singer, 2000), Social connectedness predictors serve as an instrument for life satisfaction and facilitate managing stress and emotional disorders (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Since meaningfulness and life satisfaction improve motivation, purpose, and identity, they are essential for eudaimonic well-being Steger (2012). Positive psychology therapies, for instance, mindfulness-based practices and gratitude exercises, can be helpful in various professional environments, such as educational, clinical, and organisational settings, greatly improve these resources, and have transformative potential (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009) and experience. Flow experiences, as conceptualized by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), represent a state of engagement and immersion in challenging yet likable activities that match with individual's skills and provides intrinsic motivation. Flow experiences involve intense concentration and challenging tasks, enhancing focus, self-consciousness, and internal drive, leading to life pleasure and purpose. Flow is considered the pinnacle of happy experiences. Gratitude and amazement (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), sparked by nature, art, or admirable deeds, can lead to happiness, better physical health, and increased life satisfaction (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). Positive psychology interventions, like savouring, mindfulness, and acts of kindness, are effective in increasing well-being and decreasing depression and anxiety symptoms (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009; Bolier et al., 2013). These experiences are crucial for psychological well-being, resilience, and a fulfilling life. Further research will expand applications across various life domains including education, healthcare, and organizational development. Positive psychology is gaining influence beyond mental health and education, influencing cultural and philosophical domains (Haidt, 2006). Positive Conventions and Positive Humanities are interdisciplinary branches that integrate psychological science with arts, literature, history, and moral philosophy (VanderWeele, 2017). These practices promote well-being, moral behaviour, and collective harmony, transmitting cultural knowledge and emotional wisdom, and institutionalizing positivity and resilience across generations. Tay and Pawelski (2022) highlighted, Positive Humanities bridges positive psychology with humanities, focusing on how cultural expressions like literature, art, music, philosophy, and history can enhance well-being by fostering virtues like empathy, awe, hope, compassion, and purpose. (Mar & Oatley, 2008), discussed reading literature promotes emotional insight, visual arts and music reduce stress, and philosophical reflection on virtue ethics aligns with psychological well-being dimensions like meaningfulness and life satisfaction (Creech et al., 2013). Culturally sensitive approaches to well-being are offered by Positive Humanities and Conventions, which recognise ethical traditions, shared narratives, and communal memory (Kristjánsson, 2020). By valuing both subjective experiences and objective data, this pluralistic viewpoint expands the field of well-being science and promotes a comprehensive strategy for comprehending and fostering the good life.

## ***Integrating a Positive Psychological framework for understanding the impact of psychological health on developing positive human values, conventions, experiences, and positive institutions.***



### **Creating Positive Inclusion through the PERMA Model**

Seligman proposed the PERMA Model for pursuing a happy and meaningful life. The mnemonic for the five elements of Martin Seligman's well-being theory is PERMA: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and purpose, and Accomplishments.

- **P – Positive Emotions:** Positive emotions are the intense positive feelings related to an event or person. Emotions are the effect of sequence, as we interpret the situations or events. Further emotions are not yet an effective way to boost your experience, well-being. Experiencing positive emotions pertains to enjoying the moment, feeling of excitement, cheerfulness and reassurance of self, as a whole.
- **E – Engagement:** Having a sense of engagement, engrossed in something we love to enjoy and outshine help to boost up your performance, interests. Research suggests that if task or work be relevant with the employee's interest, then only employees be engaged, motivated, performed and contribute well and be satisfied with the organisation. Further engagements foster the sentiments of positivity and well-being.
- **R – (Positive) Relationships:** Research suggests that relations such as family, friends strong social ties are key engenders of happiness and satisfaction. People who are socially engrossed tend to nurture emotions, sentiments, and possess a positive attitude toward life. Furthermore, moral support and social happiness may be generated through social networks or structures.
- **M – Meaning:** Even someone who is deliriously happy most of the time may not have a developed sense of well-being if they do not find meaning in their life. When we dedicate ourselves to a cause or recognize something bigger than ourselves, we experience a sense of meaning that there is simply no replacement for;
- **A – Accomplishment / Achievement:** We all thrive when we are succeeding, achieving our goals, and bettering ourselves. Without a drive to accomplish and achieve, we are missing one of the puzzle pieces of authentic well-being (Seligman, 2011).

### **Helping employees in creating a Positive Work Environment:**

Typical organizations where employees work for stipulated days and times nowadays are extinct. Today's workplaces provide opportunities to employees for generating distinguished roles and responsibilities. Research suggests, approach: a job which provides a balance between work-life conflict, job security with greater growth and development opportunity for the organization and self. At the same time, organizations are trying to retain their employees by generating ideas for creating a

sense of stability, contentment, and work-life balance. Motivation behind implementing the concept of positivity at the workplace is that contented employees have more job satisfaction, are likely to be more productive, creative, and responsible for creating a congenial working environment” (Thompson, 2012). Positive thinking reflects avenues of growth and development in the complex world. There are organisations intervening to obtain a positive work culture by providing job security measures such as flexibility in schedules, work from home, and other benefits to encourage their employees. Satyam Computer Services come up with an innovative initiative for developing a positive work environment. The organization solicits employees to invest and donate time and talent to the work, which they are interested in, to create a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in life. Satyam developed the software with the name 108 emergency services, it’s a volunteer skill development program where employees collaborate in programming their skills for 108 applications. Furthermore, organizations emerged with the concept “reflected best-self” by asking employees to introspect their personal best situation during their finest performance or ideal decision making, in order to exploit their strength and harmonizing with situation and circumstances. Furthermore, organization wants employees to strive for strengthening their strength rather than converging upon their restrains, confines or weaknesses.

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