



Happy Workplace: A Case Study of Kasem Bundit University Employees

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Abstract

This study used qualitative research to study the definition, factors of a happy workplace and the results of a happy workplace of Kasem Bundit University employees with the following objectives: 1) to describe the definition of a happy workplace 2) to study the factors that create a happy workplace and 3) to study the happy workplace which affects employees' work using in-depth interviews and literature reviews. The sample size (key informant) of this research consisted 12 employees. The results revealed that 1) the definition of a happy workplace was the organization that encouraged its employees to have a common goal, focus on adjusting a new work process, have operation guidelines which supported one another, strive for highest efficiency; moreover, the employees themselves had a chance to do what they loved, had a good attitude towards work, had good colleagues, were happy to work and loved their work 2) the overall factors that created a happy workplace included a total of 9 elements in accordance with the concept of a happy workplace of Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Thai-Health), which consisted of 7 elements as follows: Happy Body, Happy Heart, Happy Relax, Happy Brain, Happy Soul, Happy Family and Happy Society. In addition, the researchers found additional 2 elements i.e. Happy Instrument and Happy Environment 3) The happy workplace which affected employees' work could be divided into three types: the happy workplace affecting employees themselves, affecting colleagues and affecting the organization. It could be described that 3.1) the happy workplace affecting themselves (the employees), namely making them happy, enthusiastic to work, willing to work, and ready to develop themselves 3.2) affecting colleagues, namely creating collaboration, unity, helping one another and working together happily and 3.3) affecting the organization, namely improving performance, building loyalty in the organization and organization development.

Keywords: Happiness, Happy Workplace, Organization Development

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Introduction

Working is very important to human life. It can be said that working is a part of life that humans do more than any other activities to live on (Phajon, 1997). In addition to four basic needs (food, clothes, shelter and medicines), working is an opportunity to express your intelligence and creativity, which will bring honor and satisfaction to life and also create security for yourself and your family, including a good quality of life and good social status. As a result, a lot of people are caught up in working hard which ultimately makes your body and mind tired, especially the mental state, which is often affected and creates many work-related problems, such as the work itself, colleagues, and bosses, etc. or perhaps more than what have been mentioned. However, how many people are happy while working? (Sirintip, 2012). Creating happiness in the workplace, therefore, is a very important factor that makes the organization run smoothly. Because the people in the organization are happy, this will increase both the quantity and quality of the productivity.

Moreover, it contributes to staff creativity and innovation, stress and conflict reduction, which help the organization progress and develop efficiently and effectively (Prapon, 2006).

From International Business Report (International Business Report: IBR) of the year 2008 by Grant Thornton, it was found that 59 percent of businesses worldwide gave priority to recruiting and taking more care of the staff over the past year by specifying that motivation and employee care are the heart of business success (Business Thai, 2008). The happiness in working is then essential to working life as a second home of a working person in order to work smoothly and be happy with the job, colleagues and the organizations. Creating happiness in working is not the duty of anyone, nor is it the duty of just the corporate; nevertheless, it is the duty of every working person in the organization. To create happiness in working can be done by using the happy 8 model from the happy 8 in the workplace manual (Thanyarat, 2012). From the research of Porntipa and



Jiraporn (2013), it was found that making a relationship of the people in the organization to be happy can help working people live creatively and happily, love the job and have faith in the organization and are ready to fully dedicate themselves for working for the organization. Furthermore, the happy 8 has a positive correlation with the overall performance in working and individual aspects ($p < .05$).

The above mentioned reasons led the researchers to be fascinated in studying the elements of happy workplaces through qualitative research focusing on the study of the definition of happiness, meaning, the elements and the results related to happy workplaces in the context of Kasem Bundit University employees only because it has been operating for over 30 years and ranked one of the top 10 private universities in Thailand (Webometrics, 2014). There are the number of staff which can be considered as a large organization. Moreover, it has a structured management system that clearly distinguishes each section. Therefore, it is regarded as a prototype of the

organization to start studying a happy enterprise. The researchers emphasized that this research would be beneficial to human resources management, human resources development in organizations, and it would be a guideline for the development of the elements that contributed to happy workplaces in the future.

Purposes of research

To study the meaning, the elements and the results related to the happy workplace of Kasem Bundit University employees.

Methodology

The sample size (key informant) of this research consisted of 12 employees of Kasem Bundit University. According to this research, there were 12 key informants consisting of the executives, the academic personnel, and the supporting staff. The size of the key informants met the criteria which were laid down in accordance with Glaser & Strauss (1967), who recommended the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative

studies, while Creswell (1998) recommended 5 to 25 persons and Morse (1994) suggested at least 6 persons. And the data obtained from the interviews overlapped, (Saturated data), it then was regarded that the key informants were considered as the representatives of the population.

Conducting in this research was the qualitative research, a method that had the tools to experiment as follows:

1. The researchers were the most important tool for this qualitative research to directly contact with people. Therefore, we had to decently prepare ourselves because the researchers were the collectors and data analysis. The investigations prepared for this study were as follows:

1.1 Study and review related literature in the happy workplace to achieve the theoretical knowledge and related research.

1.2 Study on qualitative research methodology belongs with literature textbooks, qualitative research, and the guidance of research advisors.

2. The recording devices to record information during personal interview to check the accuracy of the information.

3. Interview frameworks were questions about the meaning of a happy workplace, elements of a happy workplace, and the happy workplace which affected employees' work.

4. The researchers had informed the key informants about the expected benefits to the research and those who were interested in further studying this research in a wider area. In addition, the researchers also took into consideration of the code of ethics of the key informants and the right protection of the key informants, especially the importance of voluntary interviews. The researchers would inform about their right to participate in the research, and during the interview, if the key informants were not ready to provide any information, it was possible for them to refuse or leave the research at any time with no impact that caused any damage to the key informants and the parties involved



Figure 1 Direct interview between researcher and participant

Methodology

The researchers explained the purposes of this interview and asked for permission to get the important information which the key informants in this research were Kasem Bundit University employees. They were divided into four groups: 1. Top executives (higher than deans) 2. Middle management (higher than head of the departments) 3. Academic personnel (regular lecturers) and 4. Support Staff (officials). The interview occurred between August and December 2017 using a guided interview (Guided Interview) (Kitipat, 2011) by purposive

sampling and Snowball sampling technique in recording accurately and completely, and starting by greeting or general questions for the comfortable conversation. After that, the researchers would ask following the framework, exchange ideas and keep asking during the conversation. Then the researchers made additional questions to get more important and reasonable details and made key informants feel like a natural conversation unless the researchers skipped to ask the right questions and opened issues along with controlled questions into the framework to get the most comprehensive information.

Results

Table 1 Personal data of sample groups

Key informants	Gender	Work Experience (Year)	Education	Position
Number 1	Male	15	Master Degree	Chief Executive
Number 2	Male	22	PHD.	Chief Executive
Number 3	Male	15	PHD.	Chief Executive
Number 4	Male	20	Master Degree	Chief
Number 5	Female	16	Master Degree	Chief
Number 6	Female	18	Master Degree	Chief
Number 7	Female	15	Master Degree	Lecturer
Number 8	Male	8	Master Degree	Lecturer
Number 9	Male	16	Master Degree	Lecturer
Number 10	Female	22	Master Degree	Staff
Number 11	Female	22	Bachelor Degree	Staff
Number 12	Male	7	Bachelor Degree	Staff

From Table 1, it was found that the samples in this study were mostly males at 58.33 percent; 41.67 percent were females. The minimum of work experience is 7 years, and the maximum of work experience is 22 years. Most of the key informants graduated a master’s degree at 66.66 percent. The highest educational level is the doctoral degree at 16.67 percent and graduated a bachelor’s degree at 16.67 percent.

This data analysis was conducted after it was collected with in-depth interviews with the 12 employees of Kasem Bundit University.

For the data analysis of this research, the results were classified into 3 parts.

Part 1: Described definitions of a happy workplace

The first conclusion in the research : (delete colon) expounded that the



definition of the happy workplace referred to the organization that encouraged its employees to have a common goal, focus on adjusting a new work process, have operation guidelines which supported one another, strive for maximum results; moreover, to have a chance to do what they love, have a good attitude towards work, have good colleagues, happy to work and love their work.

Based on an analysis of the interviews of 12 key informants, it could integrate the knowledge about the definitions of a happy workplace that a happy workplace in the context of Kasem Bundit University personnel consisted the essence as follows:

"When talking about the happy organization, I think of an organization that people come to work and have a feeling of comfort, happiness and would like to get up to work every day. "

(key informant No. 1)

(interviewed on Friday 15, December, 2017 at 13.12)

"Doing what you love, having a good attitude towards work, having good colleagues, and love the work you do.

This will make us work pleasantly, happily, and joyfully. You will feel like time passes by quickly. "

(key informant No. 5)

(interviewed on Wednesday 15, November, 2017 at 10.07)

"A happy workplace is an organization in which it is the one that achieves the goals of that organization. The successful organization needs to base on the personnel of that organization who work effectively and achieve the goals of the organization. If the personnel work effectively, then it means that the personnel must be happy with the agency and the organization. They are happy i.e. they have peace of mind working and loving their work. Something like that. "

(key informant No. 12)

(interviewed on Monday 20, November, 2017 at 14.31)

Part 2: The factors that create a happy workplace

The second conclusion in the research clarified the factors that created a happy workplace. The results cited that the synthesized information of a

happy workplace was due to the overall factors which created a happy workplace including a total of nine elements in accordance with the concept of a happy workplace of Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth), that consisted of seven elements as follows: Happy Body, Happy Heart, Happy Relax, Happy Brain, Happy Soul, Happy Family and Happy Society. In addition, the researchers found additional two factors i.e. Happy Instrument and Happy Environment. This chapter describes the following interview.

"Happy Heart" regarding to spirit, I think I'm lucky since I have received it from people at all levels who are quite friendly with me. Everyone takes good care of me. My supervisor also takes care of me in the sense of my feeling. People in the same level and position are quite loving and caring, or they rather take care of me to a certain extent. Most importantly, all of my colleagues take care of one another, and I see that most of them have good spirit and a very good relationship with one another, too. Consequently, I consider this point that it

makes many people have deep bond and have fun working together. "

(key informant No. 2)

(interviewed on Friday 15, December, 2017 at 14.58)

"There is Happy Brain development. The university has organized a training session to improve computer skills such as Microsoft Excel program with several versions, and many batches. Initially, I was not good at it at all and could not calculate or might not know anything. I became better, including Microsoft Word and the like as well.

(key informant No.10)

(interviewed on Tuesday 21, November, 2017 at 15.11)

"Happy Body, you mean being healthy? I have to answer that the university has been supporting staff healthcare. To make it simple, when we sit at work, we rather have freedom. We are not forced to stay at work all the time which will cause back pain. Something like that. The university also provides the personnel with freedom in the workplace. Any person can go to the toilet any time, stretch oneself or at



lunch, we can go out to have lunch on time. This is not likely to cause any harm to our health from the workplace. It should be healthy if we are able to manage our lives in line with time. The university also has the welfare of medical expenses, which we can reimburse. Moreover, we can get free medicines from the nursing rooms where

the university also allows us to lie down. Additionally, the university provides the staff with a fitness room for exercising. Finally, the university also facilitates annual check-ups for staff. "

(key informant No.8)

(interviewed on Friday 15, December, 2017 at 15.45)



Figure 2 Factors of Happy Workplace (Analyzed by NVivo program: Trial 14 days)

Part 3: The happy workplace which affects employees' work

The conclusions in Part 3 dealt with the Happy Workplace which affected employees' work. It could be divided into three types: the happy workplace affecting employees themselves, affecting colleagues and affecting the organization. It could be

described that 3.1) the happy workplace affecting themselves (the employees), namely making them happy, enthusiastic to work, willing to work, and ready to develop themselves 3.2) affecting colleagues, namely creating collaboration, unity, helping one another

and working together happily and 3.3) affecting the organization, namely improving performance, building loyalty in the organization and organization development, which are in compliance with the following interviews:

"A happy workplace results in our happiness. We would like to develop ourselves and the organization to keep it progressive or move further forward than in the present. We will have more efficient work and have time to work, have time to think, do not have to think about other things. Having good work makes us happy. Then when we are happy, we will work well. It should be an emotional state, right? I do not study psychology, but if we have a good mood, our task will move smoothly and the organization will move well; resulting in, maybe making our society better, which ultimately brings unity and we can walk together resulting in better faculties and better university. "

(key informant No.4)

(interviewed on Tuesday 28, November, 2017 at 12.52)

"If we are happy with where we live, we will have energy to work. The work will come out well. The organization will progress if the organization as a whole is good. We will be willing to work, not like working thoughtlessly. It is like we want to develop as we are the same family like them. We would like our family to grow together. "

(key informant No.6)

(interviewed on Monday 4, December, 2017 at 10.28)

"First of all, it must result in our good mental health. When we have good mental health, we won't be stressed out. Then we will have strength, both mental and physical, to work effectively. If we use the word "another home," where we feel comfortable to live in, have no worry, eat together, talk together and work together, which will affect our work i.e. we can work with peace of mind, satisfaction, clear brain and can think creatively".

(key informant No.7)

(interviewed on Tuesday 28, November, 2017 at 15.08)

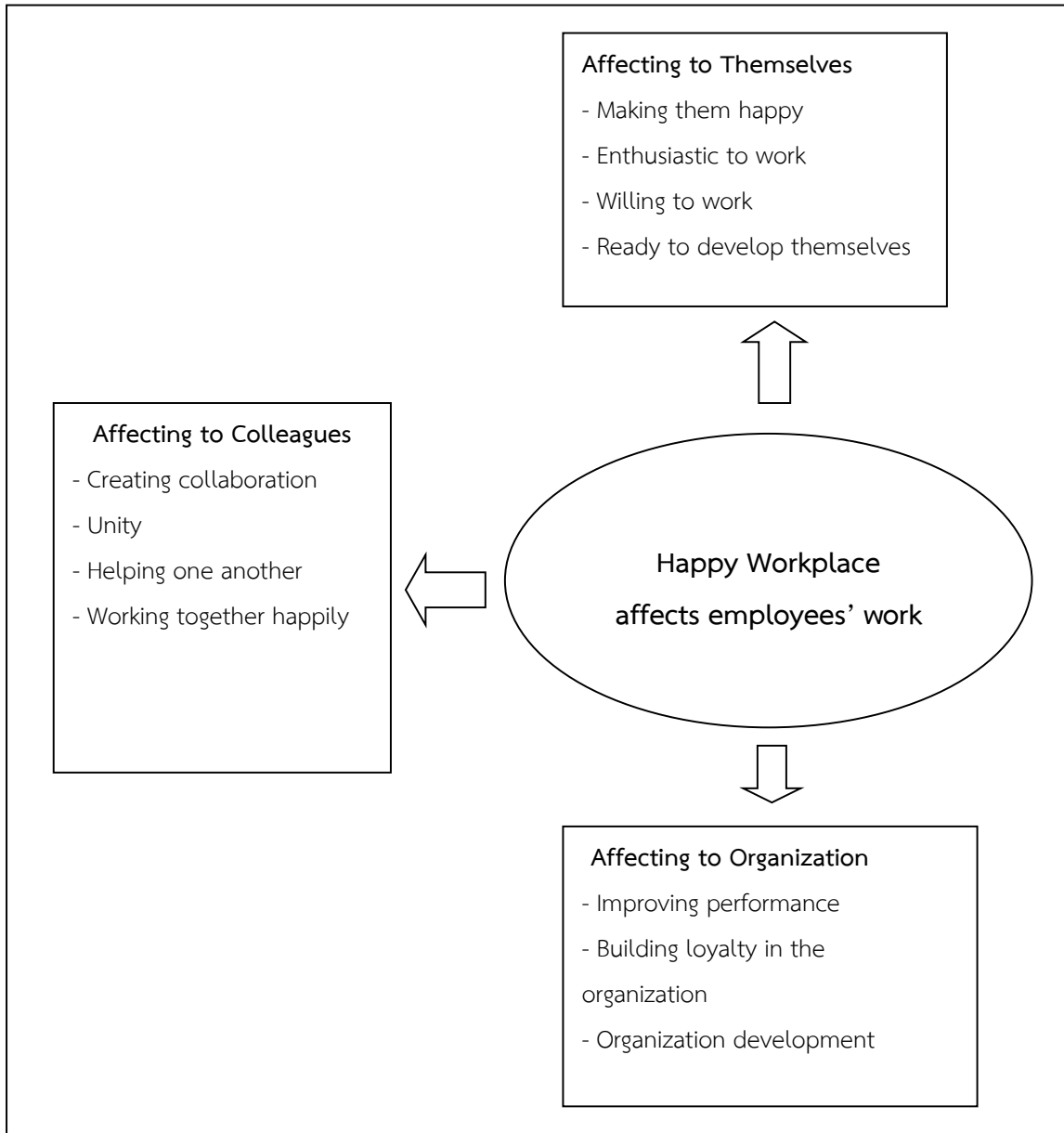


Figure 4 The Happy Workplace which affects employees' work (Analyzed by NVivo program: Trial 14 days)

Discussion and Conclusions

The data analysis can be divided into the following 3 main points.

Dimension 1: The meaning of a happy workplace

The results of the research were that the definition of a happy workplace was the organization that encouraged its employees to have a common goal, focus on adjusting a new work process, have operation guidelines which supported one another, strive for maximum results; moreover, the employees themselves had a chance to do what they loved, had a good attitude towards work, had good colleagues, were happy to work and loved their work in accordance with Weeraya (2013), who gave the meaning that to be happy to work meant the positive perception of work which that person did what he/she loved, felt satisfied with the job, did the job with pleasure and willingness, desired to achieve the goals that the organization had set, and in accordance with Phathara-on, Mohmad Yazam & Abdul (2015) who stated that happiness at the workplace referred to how

satisfied people were with their work and lives. The idea of happiness was related to individual's subjective well-being. Happiness at the workplace was crucial for improving productivity in any organization.

Dimension 2: Factors that create a happy workplace

Based on the analysis of the interviews, it was found that the factors that contributed to a happy workplace were nine elements as follows:

Happy Body, Happy Heart, Happy Relax, Happy Brain, Happy Soul, Happy Family, Happy Society, Happy Instrument and Happy Environment. It showed that the happy workplace components did not only mean having a healthy body and a good mind but also included having good relationships with the colleagues, materials, equipment, and the environment because having good relationship among the colleagues would help work together smoothly, thus resulting in the positive feelings and towards working together, which are in



compliance with the result of Yen-Fan Lee (2014) found that Nobel Peace Prize Winner Dalai Lama spoke in his book "The Art of Happiness at Work" that "Satisfaction and happiness from work comes from establishing positive relationships with co-workers, supervisors, and clients, which then ensures a pleasant collaboration." It was beneficial to work performance, and these are the people that require counselling. More than 60% of the respondents, fortunately, could sense incentives at work, who would then enjoy happiness from work. Yet, there is still room for improvement. In addition, having good materials, equipment and surroundings would reduce the difficulties of work and it allowed the workers to work conveniently and more comfortably. This led to a good sense of work, which are in compliance with the result of Jose L.F., et.al. (2017) found that the correlation between the level of happiness at work and organizational behaviour variables. Happiness at work is mainly correlated with the company's flexibility by which the worker can conduct his or her tasks. Likewise,

routine work is correlated with the equipment, the technology available to the company and custom work for customers. It can be seen that these nine elements created happiness to the people who work in those organizations, so when the nine elements are put together, they then generate a "Happy Workplace."

These are consistent with the results of the research of Office of Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Thai-Health) (2010; Athiwat et. al, 2010; Thanyarat Kerdsuwan, 2012; Tammattitta Yoocharoen, 2014) which found that the seven fundamental happiness that responded to human needs were as follows: Happy Body, Happy Heart, Happy Relax, Happy Brain, Happy Soul, Happy Family and Happy Society. Moreover, it was in accordance with the results of the research by Naruemon (2011), which found that the factors that affected a happy workplace of the faculty of business administration were relationship, love, success in work, acceptance, and environment. The relationship was in the same direction as the happiness in work, and it was found

that different education levels, lines of operation and types of personnel affected the happiness of work differently.

Dimension 3: The happy workplace that affects the work of personnel

Based on the analysis of the interviews of the key informants, it was found that the happy workplace which affected employees' work could be divided into three types: happy workplace affecting employees themselves, affecting colleagues, and affecting the organization. It shows that if the employees are happy to work, they will be more willing, be more enthusiastic, be attentive, and be ready to develop themselves together with the work because they have done what they love and are happy to do it. At the same time, happiness at work also affects the colleagues because when the staff works together with colleagues happily, they will have love, harmony, caring, and help one another, and eventually the unity resulting in being happy to work together. In terms of the effects on the organization, it is found that the

employees who are happy to work will result in the organization's good productivity and effectiveness including creating the loyalty in the organization because people who are happy to work will work willingly, be happy to work with everyone in this organization, be ready to dedicate to the organization and wish to stay with this organization forever, which were in compliance with the concept of Cynthia D. (2010) that a comprehensive measure of individual level happiness might include work engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Aspects of happiness have been (and should be) conceptualized and measured at multiple levels, including transient experiences, stable person level attitudes, and collective attitudes, and with respect to multiple foci, such as discrete events, the job, and the organization. At all levels, there is evidence that happiness has important consequences for both individuals and organizations, which are in compliance with the result of Sasithorn & Viroj (2014) showed that happiness at work has a positive influence on productivity of



work. The result of this research will make the employees know the true result of the management by 8 happiness activities. In addition, it becomes the method for the principle to specify the efficient plan of human resource development including to develop the organization to be the organization of everlasting happiness continually, which are in compliance with the result of Salvatore (2016) found that one of the main goals of work and organisational psychology is to promote the well-being and performance of employees. Human beings have always tended to pursue happiness as a goal or an end, as an ideal and permanent state of well-being at which to arrive. Happiness or individual well-being: Luthans (2002 as cited in Salvatore, 2016) states that several meta-analytical

investigations show that people who are satisfied with their lives also tend to be satisfied at work.

Recommendation

It can be seen that a happy workplace is a part that makes employees, colleagues and the organization happy, and it helps develop in a positive direction, unity and collaboration in working. Therefore, universities, corporations and organizations should turn their attention to incorporating the elements of these happy workplace, and use them to plan personnel development and set future training directions to increase efficiency and effectiveness for the employees and the organization

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