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At the Intersection of Happiness and Contentment at Work

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Introduction

The popular notion of "battle between the mind and the heart", where we intellectually and emotionally collide in our decision making, refers to the concepts of cognitive and affect based assessments respectively. Needless to say, the mind and the heart do not always run in parallel. In respect of happiness, the mind has the ability to conduct a conscious assessment of our level of happiness with our life, while heart-felt happiness relates to positive emotions, such as elation, joy, ecstasy, and glee, that are experienced on a day to day basis. These emotions are frequently shared with or radiated to others in our level of cheerfulness, laughter, and general positive feelings. The mind can conduct a cognitive evaluation of our happiness in comparison with our personal aims or goals in life, or against others' lives. On the contrary, positive emotions felt on a regular basis can be assessed in the absence of fulfilment of our own aspirations or in contrast to others'. A conscious assessment of our lives is embedded in cognitive theories of happiness, while the frequency of positive emotions felt are based on the concept of affect (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Cognitive judgment involves an evaluation of the differences between our actual and ideal life, while affect theory presents an assessment of frequency of positive emotions. Generally speaking, we define ourselves as happy if we frequently experience positive emotions; such as: joy, happiness, and contentment (Walsh, Boehm, & Lyubomirsky, 2018). However, our "hedonic profile" of happiness may vary. For example, similar reported happiness levels might differ in their relative levels of contentment with life versus their relative frequency of experiencing positive and negative mood states (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005).

Cognitive Appraisal

Cognitive theories regard happiness as a product of our individual thinking and aim to understand what goes on in our mind when we assess how much we appreciate our life. As such, these theories are rooted in social constructions, based on our notions of what we believe life should be, or what society collectively believes as ideal aspects for a good life. Such appraisals of how well life meets up to these standards are seen to be constructed in the social discourse. Thus, the assessment largely varies for different individuals and across different cultures (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013).

As we attempt to achieve the goals in life that we believe would allow us to enjoy life as it should be, it is intriguing to view others around us who exhibit positive cognitive assessments of their levels

of happiness when we may believe that they have not achieved what we regard as important, nor are living the lives we regard as ideal based on societal norms. We are probably all aware, and sometimes in awe, of some extreme examples of this perceived disparity. Similarly, others who we may see as surpassing our set goals for life, and also achieving those benchmarks we regard as the norm of society that we regard as a recipe of a good life, may still regard a shortfall in their cognitive assessment of their achievements towards a good life. It begs the question, what individual factors dictate a cognitive assessment of happiness? There is distinct similarity in the fundamentals that dictate a positive or negative assessment of happiness and those that allow for a low or high self-esteem. Since self-esteem is largely independent of objective achievements, and more a result of self-assessment of achievement in comparison to our same sex parent, fellow peers, group members, or unconditional love received irrespective of our achievements in our childhood (McCullough, Ashbridge, & Pegg, 1994), self-assessments of cognitive theories of happiness work with similar fundamentals. The fundamentals of how we generate personal goals, and how we assess our achievements of these goals, are based on our very individually constructed psyche. As such, our cognitive assessment of our level of happiness is deeply embedded in individual psychology, and exhibited through our level of satisfaction and contentment with our lives, making it very difficult to pass a judgement on the self-assessment of others based on our individually generated criteria, making it a very subjective assessment.

Comparisons of our lives to societal standards begs the question of how these "standards" formulated by societies can be relatively more objective in its nature. What is collectively believed by society as ideal aspects of life is socially conceptualized; hence, our comparative assessments are typically an outcome of socialization, involving the adoption of collective notions of a good life, with minor personalized modifications arising due to individual values preferences dictated by our individual psyche, giving it a subjective dimension (Oles & Hermans, 2010). Since collective notions of the good life are seen as social constructions, they draw heavily on the wider culture and shared history of the collective. In this line, some sociologists argue that in this case, happiness must also be a social construction, making cognitive aspect of happiness comparable to notions of beauty, the assessment of which is deemed to lie in the eyes of the beholder, where the vision of the beholder is dictated by a host of societal variables and developments, giving them highly diverse perspectives. Similarly, cognitive assessment of happiness conducted through comparison to societal benchmarks is highly dependent on the collective's history and stage of societal development, and varies significantly across cultures. Additionally, not only do we compare our life to standards of the society we live in, but also assess our life through the eyes of others in society. In other words, a cognitive assessment of our happiness includes our perception of how happy other people think we are. This enhances the salience of shared standards of the good life, giving the assessment more objectivity (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013).

Thus, cognitive theories of happiness through comparison assume that we have targeted standards of the good life and that we constantly weigh the reality of our life against these standards. In the variant of self-achievement, the focus is on whether we are doing better or worse than before, and an assessment of our growth towards the targets. The social comparison variant stresses how well we are doing relative to other people, and in particular to people who we believe are a part of our collective. In that view, happiness is surpassing the Jones, and unhappiness is any member of the collective surpassing us (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013).

Additionally, it is important to assess how the above assessment allows us to experience happiness. As we make progress towards our goals, the pre-goal attainment positive affect, experienced as little progresses are made throughout the journey to the goal, is defined as the 'progress principle'. It lasts along the journey, and the dopamine doses are received seconds or minutes after the achievement. These positive feelings encourage us to exert further effort towards attainment of the goal. The post-goal-attainment positive feeling is short lived euphoria, followed by contentment (Davidson, 1998).

The cognitive assessment of the accomplishment is retained and reported in self-assessment tools under cognitive theories of happiness. Unfortunately, the euphoria of achievement is not long lasting. Such exciting positive emotions last for hours or, at best, a day or two, and are frequently followed by a feeling of relief for not having failed (Ricard & Browner, 2007). As such, cognitive comparative happiness, such as contentment, can fall short in respect of arousal or positive feelings that are assessed by affective measures of happiness. To ensure affective happiness, further goals need to be set so that progress can be made towards them to allow for affective happiness encouraging us to jump on a hedonic treadmill each time we achieve a goal.

Affective Appraisal

Contrary to cognitive theories, several definitions depict happiness as an affective phenomenon. Affect theory holds that happiness is a reflection of how well we feel during a longer period of time, or on a typical day. One way of conducting this assessment would be to ask ourselves if we feel good most of the time, and the conclusion if the answer is positive is that we must be happy.

This leads us to the first question, why do we feel good or bad? Darwin (1859), in explaining the evolution of species, discovered 'natural selection'—the adaption of species to their environment to allow them to thrive. To reinforce actions that support successful survival of species, animals, including humans, get a rush of "happy chemicals" (Nguyen, 2014), released by the body when their actions support advancement of the evolutionary interest of the species. The positive feelings derived from the chemicals act as an internalized "reinforcement" (Skinner, 2009) mechanism which forms the essence of all positive emotions. Based on the empirical "law of effect", continuous encouragement of such actions leads to learnt behaviour by the species (Bandura, 1978; Pavlov, 1929). Thus, affects are an integral part of our "adaptive repertoire" and are linked to the gratification of survival needs (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013).

These happy chemicals are experienced in many situations that allow an individual to survive, such as while eating, drinking, sitting by a fire, or mating. It is high pleasure emotions referred to as pleasure, exhilaration, or ecstasy. However, as the behaviour is repeated, "diminishing law of returns" (van de Walle, Malthus, & Appleman, 1977 citing Turgot) ensures the correct balance for the species' survival, by replacing the release of happy chemicals with "happy chemical inhibitors" (Bergland, 1991); hence, regulating the extent to which the activity or action is pursued. These theories provide scientific fundamentals for Warr's (2007) vitamin model that suggests that similar to vitamin supplements, increasing the desired job characteristics for an employee will improve well-being only until deficiencies are overcome, and the happiness experienced from the supplement fades along with the deficiency.

While the above explains the selfish struggle for survival of an individual, providing fundamentals for constructs that measure personal level of happiness at work, group-level constructs describe happiness of collectives in organizations is an inherent desire in all of us. Adler (1911) concludes that every individual has natural aptitude for community feeling, or social interest. He explains this as an innate ability to engage in co-operative, reciprocal, social relations. Individual psychology assumes an essential co-operative harmony between an individual and society, and regards conflicts as an unnatural condition. Our own lives have value, only to the extent that we add value to other people's lives (Oles & Hermans, 2010). He extends this concept further by stating that the degree of social interests is a good measure of an individual's psychological health (Adler, 1911). Maladjusted people are said to lack social goals, with each living a life with only private meaning; hence, rendering exclusive selfish struggle for survival in humans as insufficient for happiness (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

Price (1970, cited by Gardner, 2008) applied game theory to natural selection, explaining how rituals that mimic conflict help to conserve a greater gene pool. These games assist in settling the

right to food, mate, or other survival necessities. Hence, creating a healthy compromise between self-survival, and survival of others of the species. This compromise of oneself for the collective optimizes survival of the species by ensuring a large gene pool for the species. This fundamental provides the basis for the potential of team play to allow for release of the happy chemicals (Totterdell, Kellett, Teuchmann, & Briner, 1998), and rivalry.

So, how does survival of the species and natural selection incorporate happy chemicals felt by an individual when catering for others? Psychologists (Freud, 1921), sociologists (Bandura, 1978), and group theorists (Bion, 1950) have documented the idea that people are inherently ambivalent about being members of groups and seek to protect themselves from both isolation and engulfment (termed "overwhelming" by Hollis (1998)) by alternately pulling away from and moving towards their memberships to the group. These pulls and pushes are people's calibrations of self-in-role, enabling them to cope with both internal ambivalences and external conditions (Kahn, 1990) that determines the level of engagement with others. The group can provide safety needs, belongingness, and the need for love; hence, a step above the individual psychological needs at the bottom of Maslow's pyramid (Maslow, 1943).

The Price Equation (Gardner, 2008) was also used by Hamilton (1970) to explain happiness from altruism by defining "survival of the fittest" (Spencer, 1898) as survival of the fittest gene, and not limited to the survival of the individual member of the species. It highlights the notion that life can be viewed as the genes' struggle for immortality, while the individuals are merely mortal vehicles for the struggle (Dawkins, 1976). Altruism is categorised in three fundamentals concepts:

– Nepotism, where the individual exhibits selflessness for the sake of his genes, through protection of those with whom the gene is shared (e.g. close family).
– Reciprocation, where the individual expects co-operation from the others that may assist in self-preservation.
– Group selection, where sacrifice of the individual would lead to benefits to the group (Boyd & Richerson, 2009).

While Nepotism explains the selfish struggle for survival for a species through preservation of their genes, reciprocation and group selection explain altruism, and the positive emotions felt from benefiting others. Since the birth of the first cities 6000 years ago, when individuals left their tribes to join others to create civilizations (Kirby, 2010), our relationships are increasingly founded on such a basis, as we forge bonds with strangers to form: acquaintances, alliances, friendships, families, and organizations, with unrelated individuals.

Not only do we experience the release of happy chemicals when contributing towards the survival of our genetic pool, but the release of happy chemicals is further extended to situations where an individual from one species assists in the survival of another species, or towards the environment in which the species have thrived. Conservation of the environment and other species ensures that the individual can continue to survive (Southwood & Clarke, 1999), explaining the drive in humans for welfare of plants, animals and birds, and the environment, and the happiness derived from seeking the survival of other species.

Conflicts can arise where both opposing actions can allow for happy chemicals to be triggered. For example, killing a wild beast can assist an individual to survive, allowing for thrill and exhilaration, while protecting the beast and the environment can also assist an individual to derive a different type of happiness (Derrick et al., 2005), hence challenging the possibility of if all forms of affective happiness can be experienced simultaneously.

In conclusion, the fundamental principles for affect are explained though the seeds sown by Darwin (1859) in his concept of evolution of species, and these principles match the hierarchy of needs theorised by Maslow's (1943). While Maslow (1943) emphasizes on the motivation of an

individual from an individualistic needs point of view, the theory of survival of species looks at the concept in a more biological manner, with emphasis on survival of the individual, gene pool, and the environment. These form the foundations of all positive emotions and hence the fundamentals for the concept of affect.

Secondly, the question arises as to what dictates a cognitive assessment of affect to be positive or negative for individual people? The popular concept of viewing our glass as half empty or half full can be extended to one's cognitive assessment of affect. We have observed people who are able to enjoy the positive feelings for the same event either more frequently, or with greater intensity than others, or are "lucky" enough to experience both. Such people would conclude their glass to be half full, and in our view it may appear as if they possess the ability to view their lives, and the world, through rosy shaded glasses (Sonnentag, 2015). So, how we self-assess the frequency of positive emotions to conclude if we are generally happy or not is, yet again, a subjective cognitive assessment. This cognitive assessment of affect is regarded as our internal automated summation of the positives and negatives of affect that informs us how well we are doing in general. While this can be argued to occur "automatically" and its balance reflected in our mood, making our mood an affective meta-signal, indicating either that there is something wrong or that all systems are functioning properly. If so, this is likely to have behavioural consequences, negative mood urging to cautions and positive mood encouraging continuance, bearing in mind the "diminishing law of returns" discussed earlier, that moderates the continuance and cautions to achieve a personalized balance in each of us (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013).

Cognitive and Affective Appraisal Intersection

Several definitions of happiness combine the two elements of cognitive and affective appraisal of our life. For example, "Subjective Well-Being" is defined as being satisfied with life, while feeling good, where the earlier relates to a cognitive assessment and the latter is based in affect (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997).

Expressed as being similar to the battle of the mind and the heart earlier, four studies have used different scales to measure and test the correlations between cognitive and affective appraisals of happiness. Using Affect Balance Scales and contentment using the Cantril ladder, the average correlation was found to be 0.52. Two other studies used an Affect Balance Scale for measuring hedonic level but measured contentment using responses to questions about perceived realization of wants, where the average correlation was found to be 0.40. Lastly, a study measured hedonic level using average daily mood over 6 weeks as reported in a diary and measured contentment with the Cantril ladder, where the correlation was only 0.26. The studies are sufficient to conclude that cognitive and affective appraisals of happiness do not always parallel (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013). Nonetheless, the interaction cognition and affect are not always a battle. For example, while struggles towards a goal allow for positive affect throughout the journey, and short-lived euphoria when achieving the goal, the cognitive assessment of self-happiness thereafter would be positive, hence combining affect and cognitive assessments of happiness. This combination is subject to the journey being enjoyable, progress being made towards the goal, achievement of the goal, and a cognitive assessment of post goal accomplishment to effectively align cognitive and affective assessments of happiness. When the heart and the mind align, it is certainly a strong indicative that we have stumbled upon a recipe for success when it comes to happiness.

So, what happens if the journey is not enjoyable, but we struggle while experiencing negative affect, or even lack of positive affect, and manage to progress towards our goal, achieving it in the end? Research using the Experience Sampling Method shows that duration of affect matters more than intensity towards happiness. As such, if the journey is not enjoyable, but accomplishments lead to short-lived euphoria, and overall achievement a level of contentment for having achieved a goal,

since the overall life-satisfaction is predicted by the relative frequency of positive to negative affect and not by the intensity of affects, there is a great risk of failing at concluding a happy life (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 1991).

Similarly, we can question if we would be happy if the journey is enjoyable, but we do not manage to progress towards our goal, which leads to failure to achieve the goal in the end. Frequently experienced affect may incline us to conclude a happy life, despite the lack of euphoria of progressing towards the goal, or the contentment of having achieved the goal. The above allows for greater emphasis for happiness to lie within affect, and in the frequency with which it is experienced over short-term ecstatic affect and contentment.

Needless to mention, if the journey is not enjoyable, and we struggle to experience positive affect, or experience frequent negative affect, and do not manage to progress towards our goal, which leads to failure to achieve the goal, this would fail to deliver happiness as a cognitive assessment and in terms of affect. More than 300 million people are estimated to be living with depression (World Health Organization, 2017). Since we spend majority of our lives in organizations, from nursery school, further education, working lives, and even retirement homes, it is crucial to recognize its implications on individual happiness. As such, the field of business management can address the problem through the umbrella concept of happiness at work.

Facets of Happiness at Work

If the concept of happiness at a personal level refers to a cognitive assessment of our life and pleasant moods and emotions, and is a sub-set of well-being and positive attitudes at a personal level (Fisher, 2014), then the concept of happiness at work is related to constructs such as: dispositional affectivity, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and typical mood at work (Warr, 2007). Researchers have used terms and developed constructs that overlap, encompass, and correlate with the concept of happiness at work. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, employee engagement, and empowerment all can have relevance for the state of happiness at work. Fisher (2010), in collectively reviewing the subject, concluded that happiness at work is an umbrella concept that includes a large number of constructs. Harrison et al. (2006) combined job satisfaction and organizational commitment into a powerful latent predictor. Fisher (2010) suggests that adding engagement to the construct should result in even better prediction. While the constructs overlap, each construct adds its unique perspective to the overall concept. Similar to a polished diamond, each facet assists the diamond to shine. In respect of happiness at work, each construct assists to collectively allow us to be wholly happy at work.

To test the relationship in-between the constructs to ensure that they operate under the same concept of happiness at work but do not fully overlap, thus contributing additional insights or perspectives, the relationship between job satisfaction, affective job commitment, and engagement levels were tested in a multinational accounting firm across 13 offices in different locations; a response rate of 62% was achieved. Using the abridged Job in General Scale for job satisfaction (Russell et al., 2004), Meyer et al.'s (1993) measure of affective organizational commitment, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), the correlations between the constructs were tested. The results were analysed using Spearman Rank Order Correlation, which assesses how well the relationship between two scales can be described using a monotonic function, since the scales used vary in the range of numeric outcomes. Results in Table 7.1 revealed highly significant correlations (1% significance levels) of very strong strength (β between ±0.50 and ±0.99). These results provide confidence that the constructs operate in harmony, and can allow for an understanding of the umbrella concept of happiness at work.

Additionally, the fact that correlations are strong, but not close to one another (except correlations for the components within the construct of engagement—vigor, dedication, and absorption), entails that

Table 7.1 Correlations between some constructs of happiness at work

Spearman Rank Order Correlations		*AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT*	*ENGAGEMENT*	*JOB SATISFACTION*
AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.677**	0.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	369	369	369
VIGOR	Correlation Coefficient	0.680**	0.929**	0.737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	369	369	369
DEDICATION	Correlation Coefficient	0.594**	0.935**	0.655**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	369	369	369
ABSORPTION	Correlation Coefficient	0.568**	0.867**	0.562**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	369	369	369
ENGAGEMENT	Correlation Coefficient	0.677**	1.000	0.721**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	369	369	369
JOB SATISFACTION	Correlation Coefficient	0.613**	0.721**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	369	369	369

Correlations of all constructs is significant at 0.01 level (highly significantly correlated depicted by ∗∗) and of very strong strength (β between ± 0.50 and ± 0.99).

while the constructs operate under the same umbrella of happiness at work, they are substantially different, evaluating the concept of happiness at work from different facets.

Job Satisfaction

Locke (1976, p. 1300) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job or job experiences". While this original definition of the construct is based in affect, scholars also state job satisfaction to be an "attitude", hence concluding it to consist of both cognitive and affect components. However, Weiss (2002) describes attitude as an evaluation or judgment made with regard to an attitudinal object, and argues it not to be synonymous with affect. Weiss' (2002) definition stated job satisfaction as an individual's positive measurable judgment on the working conditions; thus, regarding it as a cognitive evaluation on the job. Thus, the definitions vary in respect of the construct being cognitive or affective. Nonetheless, a host of measures of job satisfaction emphasize it as a constitutional concept; implying its focus to be on the features of the job and the features of job-related environment, hence based on a cognitive assessment. Brief & Weiss (2002, p. 284) stated over a decade ago that: "it no longer should be acceptable to define job satisfaction one way (affectively) and blindly measure it another (cognitively)". Since the classic definition identifies the construct to be an emotional state, it challenges measurement scales that

focus on descriptions or evaluations, such as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967) and the Job Descriptive Index (Smith et al., 1969 cited by Weiss, 2002), that do not capture affect well. Due to this consensus, job satisfaction is largely agreed to be a more cognitive assessment of happiness at work. Some scholars have emphasized the construct to be so rooted in cognition that they have gone as far as to state satisfied employees to be "contented cows" (Koprowski, 2011, p. 459) and arguing that "a high level of job satisfaction probably is closer to a state of bovine contentment than a state of happiness" (Ledford, 2002, p. 30).

Job satisfaction is found to be modestly stable over two, three, and five year periods (Staw and Ross 1985), even where employment or occupation is changed. Staw and Ross (1985, p. 478) compared stability of job satisfaction with that of locus of control to prove that it is: "at least as stable over time as one of the most widely used personality measures". Thus, it is a low arousal, more stable form of happiness at work alluding towards its fundamentals in cognition, rather than affect.

Commitment

As the name suggests, organizational commitment is an assessment of the "stickiness" of employees to an organization. Porter et al. (1974) define commitment in terms of the overall strength of an employee's identification with and involvement in an organization. A host of reasons can exist for commitment to an organization, ranging from: culture of loyalty, fear of change, lack of alternatives, geographic or political reasons, or a passion towards the job or the organization, or both. Thus, the construct is multidimensional, and all aspects of it may not always be based on cognition or affect (Brierley, 1996).

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) propose commitment categories of compliance, identification, and internalization. The concept of compliance relates to an employee's instrumental behaviour to gain reward, for example, behaviour aimed at achieving the target performance measures (e.g. key performance indicators as set by the organization) to ensure bonuses, pay increases, or promotions. Identification, on the other hand, occurs when an employee wants to be associated with the organization due to its image and an ability to identify with it. Lastly, internalization reflects a scenario where the employee's values or goals are aligned with the organization's goals, leading to a commitment to stay with the organization. Similarly, Mowday et al. (1982) categorized commitment into two perspectives: attitudinal and behavioural. Alignment of organizational goals with the employees' personal goals, that promotes willingness for hard work towards the goal and the level of desire to stay within the organization, is the view of attitudinal commitment. On the other hand, behavioural commitment was classified as the process by which the employee becomes locked into the organization. Categorization by Meyer and Allen (2016) divided the construct into three components: affective, continuance, and normative, concisely summarized as commitment to the organization driven by desire, need, or obligation respectively. It is fairly evident from the terminology used that affective commitment led by our desire is more affect based, while continuance commitment based on our decision to stay with the organization due to an assessment of our need is a cognitive understanding. Normative commitment is seen to be more complex, or arguably understudied, making it more difficult to grasp. However, with its basis in feelings of obligation, it can arise as a result of intersectional layers of social, cultural, or organizational loyalty norms (Boyd & Richerson, 2009). With its basis in personal psyche, society, and culture, as well as personal values, it can largely be categorized as a combination of cognitive and affective assessment of commitment.

Engagement

Kahn's (1990) concept of engagement is a relatively newer construct in comparison to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and differs from other constructs in that it combines high

work pleasure (dedication) with high activation (vigor, absorption), while job satisfaction discussed earlier is typically a more passive form of employee well-being. Although aspects of some older constructs are relevant to state engagement (those connoting affect and feelings of energy), those facets of the older constructs connoting satisfaction and contentment are not (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Engagement is developed further by two related schools of thoughts. Strongly linked to energy levels at work, engagement is summarized as the opposite of "burnout" (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997). Burnout is defined as high levels of exhaustion and negative attitudes toward their work (cynicism) (Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2010). Three subscales emerged from the data analysis: emotional exhaustion, when employees' emotional resources are depleted, which leads to a feeling that they are no longer able to give all of themselves at a psychological level; negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about the organization; and a negative self-evaluation, leading to unhappiness about themselves and dissatisfaction with their accomplishments on the job. Macey and Schneider (2008, p. 24) describe engagement as "positive affect associated with the job and the work setting connoting or explicitly indicating feelings of persistence, vigor, energy, dedication, absorption, enthusiasm, alertness and pride".

Identification with an organization ranges from cynicism to dedication (Demerouti et al., 2010). "Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge" (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, p. 210). Job dedication includes self-disciplined, motivated acts such as following rules, working hard, taking initiative, and following rules to support organizational objectives (van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). Dedication is defined as: "the motivational foundation for job performance that drives people to act with the deliberate intention of promoting the organization's best interests" (van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996, p. 526), including: conscientiousness, generalized expectancy of task success, and goal orientation.

Vigor is the level of energy we are able to tap into at work. Shirom (2003), with his work on vigor at work, elaborates on the definition of engagement by defining vigour as positive affective experience involving energetic resources including: feelings of physical strength, emotional energy in aspects at work including others, and cognitive liveliness or alertness. These three types of energetic resources, while individually owned, are closely interrelated. "Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working" (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, p. 210), and "the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gon Alez-ro, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Some people around us may be seen as high energy, while others are lower energy, and where we are placed amongst this array of energy levels we may see some as having an endless reservoir of energy at work while regard others to be suffering from sleepiness. Vigor represents positive arousal, or a combination of moderate amounts of arousal and pleasure. Vigor's counterpart is burnout, discussed earlier as the opposite of engagement. Additionally, the counterpart of vigor, where arousal is maintained but the experience is unpleasant rather than pleasant, therefore negative affect, is anxiety (Shirom, 2006).

"Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 210). A specific example of absorption at work is experienced as flow. It is experienced at times when focus peaks, and the employee is immersed in the task (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Flow is a very enjoyable state, having been described as a peak experience of exhilarating and euphoria. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) confirms that flow may not be pleasant at the time it occurs; nonetheless, it is regarded as an optimal experience, providing a feel and sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished, which does not come through passive, receptive, relaxing times. Optimal experiences occur when our physical or mental limits are stretched from a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.

Contentment and Happiness at Work Intersection

To delve into the intersect of contentment and happiness at work, it is firstly important to categorize the constructs of happiness at work as cognitive, affective, or a mixed assessment of happiness at work. A two-dimensional matrix of pleasure-displeasure and arousal-sleepiness can assist to position the constructs which are cognitive, and which are based in affective assessment of happiness at work. While positive feelings referred to on the axis as pleasure are described in the chapter earlier, the concept of arousal may simply be regarded as level of energy at work, making sleepiness the opposite end of the axis. Low arousal can have more severe repercussions than sleepiness. It is associated with criminal tendencies in societal life, and destructive behaviour in organizations and the mind struggles to find aspects that would invigorate the individual to allow for an energetic release to the arousal (Lomas, 2017).

Each facet, or construct, operating within the concept of happiness is differentiated by where it lies on the two-dimensional space that consists of the horizontal dimension of pleasure against displeasure, and of the vertical dimension of arousal against sleepiness (Russell, 2003) (Figure 7.1). Positioning these constructs using mood circumplex based measures of affect at work allows for an understanding of the level of arousal and pleasure that each construct taps into. Cognitive assessments are typically low arousal, high tenor, and stable forms of pleasure. Affective constructs are relatively higher arousal, lower tenor, variable, and fluctuating forms of pleasure. While the stability of high pleasure and high arousal constructs are relatively lower than those constructs operating in lower arousal and lower pleasure levels, it is needless to say that high arousal and high pleasures at work form an essential part of being happy at work, despite the fact that these feelings are more fluctuating.

In this two-dimensional space, continuance commitment described earlier is a cognitively concluded decision to stay with the organization or job due to personal needs or lack of alternatives.
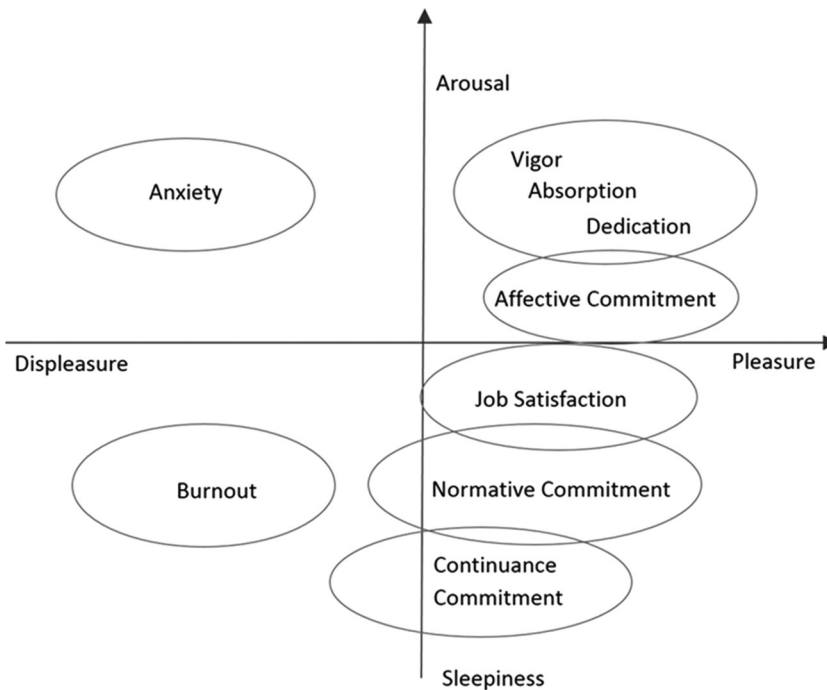

Figure 7.1 Quadrants for arousal V sleepiness plotted against displeasure/unhappiness to pleasure/happiness

This can cause low energy levels at work and even the risk of negative affective experience on a day to day basis, and the decision to stay with the job is based on a logical assessment. Job satisfaction, involvement, or commitment do not include the energy and effectiveness dimensions that engagement captures. Thus, engagement provides a more complex and thorough perspective on an individual's relationship with work (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

The X-axis in Figure 7.1 marks an arousal level where contentment with the job or organization shifts towards a fuller-bodied happiness at work. Job satisfaction at work when accompanied by an intention to stay with the organization or job due to the affective appraisal of commitment allows for the leap from cognitive to an affective assessment of being happy at work; thus, the primary intersection between contentment and happiness at work.

On the high extreme of pleasure, vigor represents positive arousal or a combination of moderate amounts of arousal and pleasure. Vigor's counterpart in the quadrant of displeasure-arousal is anxiety, and burnout (Shirom, 2006). Similarly, dedication and absorption also rank high in that quadrant, making engagement the construct that measures for highest pleasure and arousal.

While job satisfaction can allow for a stable form of pleasure, its intensity and the level of energy it allows for tapping into at work may not singlehandedly allow for an assessment of being happy at work. On the other hand, high engagement levels at work allow for higher energy levels and pleasure at work, in the absence of cognitive assessment of being happy at work with regards to our goals or compared to our peers, which can lead to a nagging feeling of not having accomplished what we aspired towards. Nonetheless, if engagement is frequently experienced, it may allow for us to side-line the ego, and accept not having achieved our goals or having underachieved compared to our peers through a justification of positive feelings experienced at work – i.e. if we are able to say "I love my job" due to the positive affect frequently experienced while at work, even if our accomplishments fall short of our aspirations.

Generalized Enablers and Stumbling Blocks

Aspects that would enable us to leap from mere contentment to overall happiness at work are highly specific for each of us. Nonetheless, a review of some examples of enablers and stumbling blocks would allow for self-development of enablers towards the transition between cognitive and affective happiness based on our individualistic tailor-made requirement for being happy at work.

The enablers for being happy at work are subject to our positioning on the arousal-pleasure matrix. A job that we are well engaged with, enjoying high pleasure and high arousal, but does not allow us to conclude that we are happy at work requires pursuit of cognitive assessment of being happy at work. This would require either targeting success and achievement of goals in the job or organization, or possibly revisiting our current benchmarks or societal conclusions of what is deemed to be a good life. Literature is full of enablers for achieving success, though it may be argued that these present more 'noise' than solutions. Aspects that require alternations to the benchmark we compare ourselves against are relatively less written about. The fundamental argument is that comparatives are variable rather than fixed, and follow our perceptions of possibilities. In other words, we would tend to judge life by what we think it can realistically be. One stumbling block is that improvements in our living conditions instigate higher aspirations. Steady social progress is believed to debouch in an inflation of aspirations. In this view, we are on a "hedonic treadmill". One of the main traps of the "hedonic treadmill" is the fact that we may enjoy the journey to the goal, but the post goal attainment positive affect is short-lived, forcing us upon the treadmill again. It is not far-fetched to have such a loop engulf us for our entire life, only to reflect, upon retirement, on the redundancy of our actions.

While aspirations need not be fixed and can be stretched, it is important to remember, recognize, and reflect upon our initial aspirations to allow us a "pat on the back" for having achieved those.

This reflection process, and remembrance in our diaries, photographs, internet posts that jog our memory, or through other means, can allow for an easy means to recall where we started from, and our accomplishments till date, before embarking on the next set of goals. Instead, we frequently jump on a hedonic treadmill each time we achieve a goal, and the post goal attainment positive affect diminishes. In recognition of this, once our targets are achieved, targeting affect rather than cognitive happiness would be more beneficial for our well-being.

In respect of comparisons to others, the hedonic treadmill can, in some occasions, launch us from one peer group to another, altering the peer group comparisons. In the age of debt, we must remember that it is very possible that exhibition of financial achievements may come at the expense of financial stress and burden. As such, caution must be exercised when comparing one's achievements to another. While enhanced connectivity allows us to be in touch with our roots, class mates, old neighbours, and friends, the biased publications of achievements, happiness, and life is evident on the internet, and a known cause of depression (Seligman et al., 2005). Additionally, globalization has allowed some of us to move from one society to another, which encourages comparatives to be altered. Touching base with your roots through visits, keeping connected to ex-fellow students, ex-colleagues, and whomever was regarded as your peer group can allow for 'fair' comparisons.

On the other hand, some of us may be successful in achieving our goals and meeting societal norms of a happy life, but we may still hesitate to regard ourselves as being happy at work due to our days not being filled with positive affect. Prioritization of cognitive happiness over affect is one of the most critical stumbling blocks. The move from cognitive assessment of happiness at work to an affective one may arise due to a fear of being viewed by others, or possibly by ourselves, as having under accomplished. Choosing a job based on what allows us positive affect, and an organization that matches our values and provides meaning to our day to day work, is a fundamental start towards a happier work life. However, yet again the recommendation is easier than action, which requires boldness to overcome ambitions set based on societal values to those based on personal values, a shift from seeking objective career success to subjective career success (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005).

As the word becomes more populated, integrated, globalized, and commercially focused, the prominent risk in larger cities of the world is a prime focus on cognitive assessment of happiness at work at the expense of affective experiences at work. This shortcoming of affect at work is a large risk for us to conclude with unhappiness in the workplace, as it is frequency of affect, rather than cognition, not the intensity of affective experience that dictates happiness at work to a great degree. Since affect is experienced in a host of activities, as we drown ourselves in cognitive comparatives, it may be that the recognition of affect is being ignored. Affect is felt in simplest aspects of life such as eating, drinking a hot or cold beverage that better maintains our body temperature, and even a breath taken. It is possibly the lack of mindfulness that allows affect to escape without being appreciated. Mindfulness exercises can help in the development of recognition of positive affective experiences, which can assist us to enjoy what we may regard as the most basic of privileges, such as a clean glass of optimal temperature water, or a breath of fresh air (Jones, 2018).

These experiences can be enhanced to appreciating work tasks as well, ones that allow vigor and absorption at work. A wide variety of activities can lead to flow, subject to the interests of the individual, which were shown to be non-related to culture, stage of modernization, social class, age, or gender. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested major components of flow: completion of a task where there is a clear goal, which is seen to be attainable, there is control, and fast feedback, an ability to concentrate, allowing for deep, but effortless involvement (similar to mindfulness (Jones, 2018) or meditation (Prelipcean, 2013)), leading to a concern for the self "disappearing", yet, paradoxically, the sense of self emerging stronger after the flow experience is over, and the sense of duration of time is altered.

Targeting our passions as work and seeking true meaning and purpose to our life through our jobs is an important enabler for happiness at work. Job satisfaction focuses on the organization, whereas engagement focuses on the work itself. Job satisfaction is the extent to which work is a source of need fulfilment and contentment, or a means of freeing employees from hassles or dissatisfiers; it does not encompass the person's relationship with the job (Maslach et al., 2001). Therefore, one of the first enablers of a leap from contentment to happiness at work is to target person-job fit (Edwards, 1991). Some people enjoy working with numbers, others with words; some enjoy working with their hands, and others with their mind. It is integral to work in a job that matches our preference of work in respect of our personality.

The above does not render person-organization fit as irrelevant. In fact, it is proven that this match can contribute significantly towards happiness at work, as it determines our daily work environment and the possible alignment of our values and beliefs to our everyday work (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). While happiness at work is more likely to be accomplished though frequent experiences of positive affect rather than the intensity of positive affect and the cognitive appraisal of happiness, negative appraisals of cognitive measure of happiness, such as low level of job satisfaction, can be triggered through stressors, such as work load, lack of resources, lack of autonomy etc., which can lead to a negative appraisal of overall happiness at work (Näswall, Sverke, & Hellgren, 2005). As such, an enabler of overall happiness is to work for an organization that aligns well with our personality.

In general, a choice to prioritize daily pleasures at work over achievements associated with a job (salary, job title, name of the organization, and our associations with them regarding their ranking etc.) is fundamental for the leap from contentment to being happy at work.

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