

STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, LIFE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

In the present research the aim was to study the psychological distress, life satisfaction and happiness among IT employees in Chandigarh. For this purpose Sample consists of 100 IT employees from Chandigarh. The sample also consists of two age ranges which includes 25-30 years (N=50) and 30-35 years (N=50). All the questionnaires (Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, K10 (Kessler, 2001), Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky, S. & Lepper, H. S., 1999), Satisfaction with Life Scale, SWLS (Diener et al., 1985), were administered. Results revealed that there were negative association between psychological distress and life satisfaction and between psychological distress and happiness. The value of r found to be -0.49 and -0.12 respectively. Findings also disclose that there were significant differences in the psychological distress among the IT employees of two different age ranges as the t value comes out to be 1.98.

Keywords: Psychological distress, life satisfaction, happiness, IT professionals.

Conceptual Framework

The most important requirement in organization is to be aware with the need of the employee. There is a mounting need to realize the relationship between managerial functioning and their worker. It is important to study the life style of the workers, their level of happiness, how much they are satisfied with their professional life and how this life act as stressor and spreads psychological distress. Psychological distress is a term used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that interferes with one's level of functioning. In other words, it is psychological discomfort that interferes with the activities of daily living. Psychological distress can result in negative views of the environment, others, and the self. Sadness, anxiety, distraction, and symptoms of mental illness are manifestations of psychological distress. Psychological distress can be thought of as a maladaptive response to a stressful situation. It occurs when external events or stressors place demands upon us that we are unable to cope with. Even everyday stressors, such as traffic, major life transitions, starting a new job, social activities and other stressors leads the person towards psychological distress. Life satisfaction is the way in which people show their emotions, feelings (moods) and how they feel about their directions and options for the future. It is a measure of well-being assessed in

terms of mood, satisfaction with relationships, achieved goals, self-concepts, and self-perceived ability to cope with one's daily life. Life satisfaction involves a favorable attitude towards one's life rather than an assessment of current feelings. Life satisfaction has been measured in relation to economic standing, degree of education, experience etc.

“Happiness, life satisfaction, and well-being are interrelated concepts about one’s quality of life” (Philips, 2006). Happiness is regarded as a “pleasant emotion”- an affective, brief reaction tied to specific events (Diener et al., 2004). In other words, happiness is “the frequent experience of positive emotions overtime” (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Edmunds and Pryce-Jones (2008) defined workplace happiness as “Happiness at work is about mindfully making the best use of the resources you have, to overcome the challenges you face. Actively relishing the highs and managing the lows will help you to maximize your performance and achieve your potential”. The happiness experienced at the workplace in the form of appraisals, promotions or other growth aspects can create counter effects at the level of family life. Happiness at work has traditionally been seen as a potential by-product of positive outcomes at work, rather than a pathway to business success. During the past two decades, maintaining a level of happiness at work has become more significant and relevant due to the intensification of work caused by economic uncertainty and increase in competition. Happiness is not fundamentally rooted in obtaining sensual pleasures and money, but those factors can influence the well-being of an individual at the workplace. However, extensive research has revealed that freedom and autonomy at a workplace have the most effect on the employee's level of happiness, and other important factors are gaining knowledge and the ability to influence the self's working hours.

According to Ramya, T & Pandian, R. (2016) it is important to study the psychological distress levels of employees working in the industries. Findings show that 38% of IT professionals are facing significant psychological distress. Heavy workloads, inadequate staff along with role ambiguity affects their family life. They are under great pressure to balance their work and family life. It further leads to reduction in happiness and life satisfaction.

Research study conducted by Sharma & Garg (2016) on IT Professionals of Jaipur reveals that there were significant differences in the private sector IT professionals with different age groups on psychological distress. It has also revealed that the level of distress is higher in males as compared to females. Reasons might be because of personal, social, cultural values or because of social rules regarding acceptable masculine behavior. Because of lack of balance in the personal and professional life and unexpected social norms for the male behavior can lead to more psychological distress among the male population as compared to the females.

NEED OF THE STUDY

It is well known that employees deliver with better productivity when they are motivated, satisfied and happy. Through this research work, we can categorize employees based on their age group, satisfaction & happiness levels. This can help us developing training and intervention programs focused towards enhancing the level of life satisfaction and happiness. The level of psychological distress can be reduced and work-life balance can be restored, that will lead to better

productivity of the organizations. Lesser Hiring Expenses: The findings of this research study can be used Human Resources Department of the organization to keep tap on the resource churning. With lesser resource churning Hiring/ Recruitment Expenses can be reduced significantly. Lesser Training Cost: Lesser the employee churning, more is the Knowledge Retention which further result in lesser training needs. This helps in reducing the training cost of the organization. Effective Training Planning: Organization can use the findings of this study to generate specialized age based training plans to improve the employee satisfaction and happiness; and reduce the psychological distress among the employees. Improved Work Life Balance: The outcomes of this research will add to the body of knowledge on the factors which are important to the enhancement work life balance of the private IT organizations. The companies will be able to identify strategies to increase and improve Satisfaction and Happiness Levels of their work force. All stakeholders will be able to understand the importance of the employee satisfaction and happiness for success in the workplace.

Since above areas are vastly impacted by employees' Psychological Distress, Life Satisfaction and Happiness. Further Psychological Distress, Life Satisfaction and Happiness vary across different age groups. Therefore, research and analysis of impacts of Psychological Distress, Life Satisfaction and Happiness in Private Sector IT Professionals Based on their Age Groups is required, to strengthen the position of the existing available studies, simultaneously provide ground work for future works.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

1. To study the psychological distress among IT professionals in Chandigarh
2. To study the life satisfaction among IT professionals in Chandigarh
3. To study the happiness among IT professionals in Chandigarh
4. To study the relationship between psychological distress, life satisfaction and happiness among IT professionals in Chandigarh

Hypotheses

From the above mentioned literature following hypotheses have been formulated

1. It is assumed that there exist differences in the level of psychological distress among IT employees ranging in the age of 25-30 years and 30-35 years.
2. It is assumed that there exist differences in the level of level of satisfaction among IT employees ranging in the age of 25-30 years and 30-35 years.
3. It is assumed that there exist differences in the level of happiness among IT employees ranging in the age of 25-30 years and 30-35 years.
4. It is assumed that there will be negative relationship between psychological distress and life satisfaction and between psychological distress and happiness among IT professionals in Chandigarh.

- It is assumed that there will be positive relationship between life satisfaction and happiness among IT professionals in Chandigarh.

Sample

Sample consists of 100 IT employees from Chandigarh. The sample also consists of two age ranges. Different age ranges were 25-30 years (N=50) and 30-35 years (N=50).

Tools Used

- Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, K10 (Kessler, 2001): This is a 10-item questionnaire based on questions about anxiety and depressive symptoms that a person has experienced in the most recent 4-week period.
- The Satisfaction with Life Scale, SWLS (Diener et al., 1985): A 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction.
- Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky, S. & Lepper, H. S., 1999): Also known as General Happiness Scale and it includes 4-item scale designed to measure subjective happiness. The options are different for each of the four questions.

Procedure

The sample of 100 private sector IT professionals will be identified based on their age group. Sample will be equally divided into two groups i.e. one with less than or equal to 30 years of age and another one with more than 30 years of age. Each participant will be explained about the research objective & Confidentiality of the participants would be assured. Questionnaires would be handed over to the participant. Participant will fill up his/ her responses off line and will return the responses after completing all questionnaires. Once the responses from all participants are received, results would be collated and analyzed.

Results and Discussion

Table-1

Mean, SD and t-value of the psychological distress, life satisfaction and happiness among IT employees

S.No	Variables	Groups	Age Range	Mean	SD	t
1	Psychological Distress	Group I	25-30	18.14	4.57	1.98*
		Group II	30-35	16.26	4.91	
2	Life Satisfaction	Group I	25-30	23.78	5.42	1.55
		Group II	30-35	25.32	4.40	
3	Happiness	Group I	25-30	4.88	0.69	0.11
		Group II	30-35	4.86	0.66	

*significant at 0.05 level

The mean±SD value of the psychological distress for 25-30 years of IT employees found to be 18.14±4.57 and for 30-35 years it was found to be 16.26±4.91. The t-value clearly opined that there was significant difference between these two groups (Group I and Group II of psychological distress). The calculated t-value comes out to be 1.98, $p < 0.05$. It was determined that there was a significant difference in the psychological distress of two different age groups of IT employees. IT employees having age range of 25-30 years suffer from higher psychological distress and there could be many reasons for the same. Changing location while changing job, adjusting to new job environment and family pressure of getting married may lead to psychological distress. This is the time when one must decide between continuing job and going for further studies. Some of these guys are going through break-ups of old relationships and getting into new relationships. This transition may lead to psychological distress at times. Windsor et al., (2005) studied anxiety and depression across age groups, and a measure of psychological distress was computed. Depression, anxiety and psychological distress showed a decline across age groups. Some of these age differences were accounted for other risk factors, like crises at work and negative social relationships with family and friends. According to the researchers' psychological distress generally declined across the age range 30–64 years.

Further table value also depicts the value of the variable life satisfaction. Mean±SD value of the life satisfaction for 25-30 years of IT employees found to be 23.78±5.42 and for 30-35 years it was found to be 25.32±4.40. t-value comes out to be 1.55 which was not significant as per critical value. However it was clear that there exist difference between two groups as the group I was low on life satisfaction and group II was high on satisfaction with life. Reasons may be that they are still to get to get themselves establish in their professional journey. They want to grow faster in their career which sometimes leads to dissatisfaction. With growing family needs, they sometimes fail to manage their expenses, delay in marriage in some cases also lead to frustrations & dissatisfaction. Baird et al., (2010) also found the same results on the life satisfaction and researcher also concluded that the satisfaction relatively increases from early 30s. They also described that there was changes in life satisfaction over the life span.

For the values of happiness the mean±SD found to be 4.88±0.69 for the group I of happiness and for group II it was found to be 4.86±0.66. The t-value comes out to be 0.11 which depicts no significant differences in happiness among the two groups of IT employees. The mean values also opined that the two groups of IT employees were at the same level and there were no differences.

Table-II

Correlation between Psychological distress, life satisfaction and happiness among IT employees

S.No	Variables	Psychological Distress	Life Satisfaction	Happiness
1	Psychological Distress	1	-0.49*	-0.12
2	Life Satisfaction		1	0.42*
3	Happiness			1

Table-II depicts the relationship between the measured variables. The correlational value between psychological distress and life satisfaction found to be -0.49. It revealed that there was negative and significant relationship between these two measured variables. As the distress increases and life satisfaction declines. Life satisfaction and happiness have positive and significant relationship. Life satisfaction enhances gladness, pleasure and happiness. The value of r found to be 0.42. Table value also opined that there was negative relationship between psychological distress and happiness as the value of r found to be -0.12. Therefore hypotheses no. 4 and 5 were upheld in the present study.

Conclusion and Implications

Life satisfaction and happiness are the important variables for any individual. The persons who are working in the IT scenarios suffered a lot from the psychological problems because of their work pressure, work environment conflicts, dissatisfaction etc. In the present research the psychological distress was found to be negatively correlates with the life satisfaction and happiness of the IT employees. Of course it again varies according to the age factor and the type of responsibilities one's have in working environment. The present study will help the employees, their superiors, officers to come with the solution for the reduction of the psychological distress. So that it enhances the happiness and life satisfaction. This study will add to the body of knowledge on the factors which are important to the enhancement work life balance of the private IT organizations. This research will aid the IT employees to think about how the level of psychological distress can be reduced and work-life balance can be restored, that will lead to better productivity of the organizations.

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