HAPPINESS BASED ON THE HAPPY WORKPLACE CONCEPT OF MILITARY OFFICIALS: EVIDENCE IN THAILAND

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to study the level of happiness based on the happy workplace concept of military officials and analyze how many elements the happiness based on the happy workplace concept of military officials were. The sample for this research consisted of 340 military officers in Thailand. The data were analyzed using arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and structural validity was checked through confirmatory factor analysis. The research results revealed that the overall level of happiness based on the happy workplace concept of military officials was high. The aspect with the highest score was relaxation, while social well-being scored the lowest. The elements of happiness according to the happy workplace concept for military officers were found to include, in order of importance: relaxation, spirituality, passion for learning, family well-being, financial health, generosity, physical health, and social well-being. Relevant agencies can apply these conceptual frameworks to enhance the happiness of their personnel and create a happy workplace.
Keywords: Happiness, Happy Workplace, Happinometer, Military Official, Thailand

Introduction

Due to the rapid changes in society, politics, and the economy driven by the advancement of innovation and technology, which now play a significant role in human life, there are interconnected impacts from individuals to families, societies, organizations, and nations. This development, aimed at economic growth through capitalism, primarily seeks to satisfy the desires of individuals and certain groups, often neglecting ethical principles, resulting in numerous social and environmental issues. Crucially, this affects the mental state of individuals, causing problems in personal life, the economy, and society, and hindering sustainable development. Consequently, both public and private organizations today are increasingly focusing on the inner aspects of individuals, namely "happiness" (Prasartsin & Yanavuddho, 2016; Toomkerd & Piriyarangsan, 2019; Kittinorarat, 2022). Happiness is essential as it reflects the well-being of the organizations or societies with which individuals interact. Moreover, happiness influences self-perception, related to self-confidence. When individuals view themselves positively, they can better manage life events and challenges. In contrast, a lack of happiness can lead to negative emotions, preventing individuals from controlling anxiety and impairing their self-awareness (Zaker et al., 2016).

In the workplace, everyone aspires to happiness, but certain professions can impact personal happiness. Jobs involving life-and-death situations, warfare, riots, and threats both internal and external to the country, can affect one's happiness. Considering the duties of military personnel, it is a profession associated with weapons and strict hierarchical discipline. Orders must be followed decisively, which can lead to more stress and pressure compared to other professions. In addition, relatively low compensation can affect the quality of life of military personnel (Nakjakhe & Chunnapiya, 2014; Sepetch & Banchuen, 2014; Amornvitthavat & Sintao, 2023). Therefore, managing an organization with a focus on people is a challenge in creating a happy workplace where people and systems coexist harmoniously. This approach, known as a Happy Workplace, aims to foster happiness and enhance the quality of life for employees through targeted development processes and strategic alignment with the organization's vision and culture. This supports effective work and leads the organization towards sustainable growth (Watthanabut & Manasabutr, 2017; Kaeodumkoeng & Junhasobhaga, 2018; Sudsakorn, 2019). The Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) has been developing the Happy Workplace concept since 2015. This initiative, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Public Health, the Federation of Thai Industries, and the Thai Chamber of Commerce, aims to promote quality of life within organizations, turning it into a tangible and sustainable public policy. As a result, over 10,000 organizations have become aware of promoting happiness in the workplace. This concept designs the Work-Life Integration policy allowing for customization for different groups or personalization with understanding and flexibility. This new definition, "The Future of Workplace Well-being," aligns with changing contexts, addressing the development of organizations to survive while simultaneously creating employee happiness. The happy workplace encompasses 8 fundamental aspects that fulfill various human needs; Happy Body, Happy Heart, Happy Relax, Happy Soul, Happy Money, Happy Brain, Happy Family, and Happy Society. These aspects serve as indicators for creating "Gross Workplace Happiness" in every organization. For an organization to succeed, it must prioritize the happiness of its employees, which is the primary factor organizations should consider.

Measuring happiness according to the happy workplace concept among military officers will yield new knowledge reflecting their happiness. Military officers, as a professional group, encounter societal pressure that often results in more stress than happiness in their work. Therefore, assessing happiness based on this wellness organization concept serves as an initial evaluation to plan and formulate policies that will further promote the happy workplace (Tonwan et al., 2020; Sommay & Pavapanunkul, 2021; Termlap & Noppanatwongsakorn,

2023). This research is conducted to answer the research questions to what extent military officers experience happiness according to the wellness organization concept and what the components of happiness for military officers based on this concept are.

Literature Review

Happy Workplace

The Happy Workplace is a process of developing people in the organization with clear goals and strategies aligned with the organization's vision. This alignment ensures the organization is prepared for changes, leading to continuous growth and development. The Happy Workplace is a core concept that focuses on the primary target group, "employees in the organization," who are key individuals and the main support of families, organizations, communities, and society. Creating happiness in the workplace is a crucial factor in organizational management, emphasizing that all personnel within the organization should be happy in their work. This happiness generates cognitive processes that enhance the efficiency of assigned tasks, reduce work-related stress, and minimize internal conflicts. The happiness derived from work acts like a nurturing force that positively transforms and develops individuals' behavior. The principles of Happy Workplace are part of a Holistic HR policy, meaning Happy Workplace management takes care of employees in all aspects. This comprehensive care ensures that employees develop love and commitment to the organization and are dedicated to working to their fullest potential, growing sustainably alongside the organization's success (Bovornusvakool, 2017).

In addition, the Happy Workplace refers to an organization that fosters workplace happiness through the collective efforts of everyone involved, making the workplace feel like a second home for employees (Wasanthanarat & Wutthiwatchaikaew, 2016).

Dive (2004) suggests that the Happy Workplace is one that can achieve its mission while simultaneously growing and developing its personnel.

Lowe (2004) explains that the Happy Workplace is one with a work environment conducive to the health of employees and higher performance outcomes.

In summary, the "Happy Workplace" is one that can stimulate, motivate, and create both physical and mental happiness for everyone within it, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to achieving the organization's goals efficiently.

Components of Happy Workplace

The World Health Organization (WHO) has outlined guidelines for promoting workplace happiness to enhance an organization's efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. An organization should consider 3 key areas, detailed as follows (Burton, 2010).

1) Happy People: This refers to individuals who can balance their lives, recognize their importance within the organization, exhibit professionalism, enjoy a good quality of life with a warm family, uphold good morals, and show compassion towards themselves and society.

2) Happy Home: This means perceiving the workplace as a second home, fostering love and unity within the organization. The happy workplace comprises 3 key elements. 2.1) Teamwork: This involves members working together energetically, with dedication, valuing each other and the work, and sharing common goals. 2.2) The organization should cultivate a joyful atmosphere where employees are happy working altogether. 2.3) Creativity: This entails creating a unique, happy workplace tailored to its specific context.

3) Happy Teamwork: This involves fostering unity, teamwork, mutual support, and compassion towards the surrounding community, promoting a harmonious community spirit.

Wasanthanarat (2010), the manager of the happy workplace program for the private sector at the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, discussed the key elements for managing the happy workplace, which include teamwork, happiness, and creativity leading to progress. He proposed the concept and principles of creating the happy workplace based on 8 aspects of happiness as follows:

1) Happy Body: Good health, both physical and mental, achieved through a balanced lifestyle, proper diet, and adequate rest, leading to a happy life.

2) Happy Heart: Kindness, essential for living harmoniously with others. One must be considerate and caring because humans cannot live in isolation. Proper sharing and consideration for others are crucial.

3) Happy Relax: It is important to relieve stress in both work and personal life. Knowing how to relax appropriately prevents excessive pressure. If work is stressful, there must be a way to relax while working or even personal life as well. One must know how to relax properly.

4) Happy Brain: Knowledge acquisition is essential for continuous self-improvement and professional growth, leading to stability and advancement in work. It simply means learning to gain knowledge and teaching others in one's area of expertise.

5) Happy Soul: Having morality is a basic necessity for human living altogether in society. It is to have Hiriotappa in working as a team. The Hiriotappa is shame and fear of one's actions, especially bad actions. A good person with morals brings happiness to the organization because people have faith in religion and morality in life.

6) Happy Money: Financial management is being able to manage income and expenses, save money, use it wisely, and handle debts responsibly. It is about living within one's means, as debt is inevitable but can be managed appropriately.

7) Happy Family: A good family, which provides emotional support and stability, serves as a safeguard that helps individuals face future challenges and obstacles with confidence.

8) Happy Society: A good society encompasses both workplace and external communities. Everyone must foster love, unity, and generosity within their community to create a positive environment.

The process of creating organizational health can be divided into 6 steps, consisting of 1) diagnosing and examining workplace happiness, 2) creating awareness and commitment to the happy workplace image, 3) getting to know the organization, 4) assessing needs of the organization in terms of what kind and type it wants to create happiness, 5) designing for use in creating happiness for the organization, and 6) reviewing the results of creating happiness as well as the process of creating happiness in order to improve and develop it.
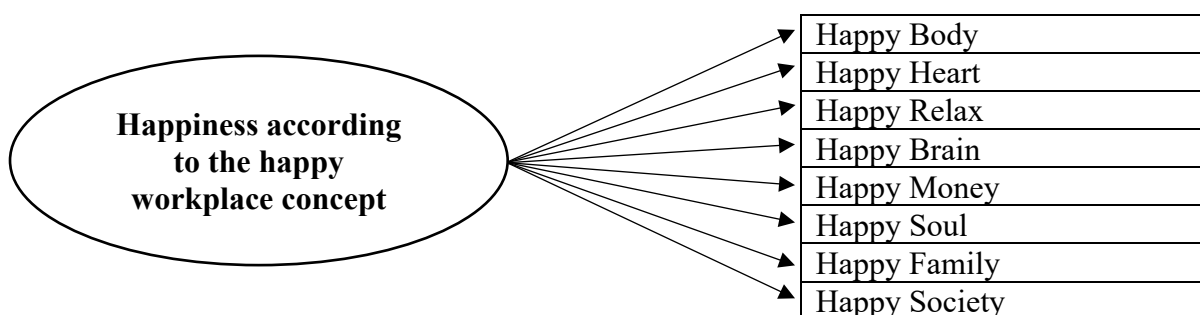
Research Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Happiness model based on the happy workplace concept of military officials

Research Method

From the conceptual framework, hypotheses, and models obtained from the literature review, the researcher carried out the research by choosing to use quantitative research method in order to obtain findings that respond to the objectives. The researcher carried out the research according to the research procedures as follows:

Population and Samples

The population is military officials who graduated from the Army Command and General Staff College of Thailand from the academic year 2013-2023. The sample size was calculated to be 340 people. In analyzing the sample size for this research, the Structural Equation Model

(SEM) was used with the LISREL program. The estimation used the maximum likelihood (ML) method. Hair et al. (2010) suggested that the appropriate sample size was 200-300 samples. Kline (2015) suggested the calculation of sample size based on parameters. It is defined as a ratio of 20 people per 1 parameter. As in this research, there are 17 parameters, the sample size is equal to 340 people. The researcher used simple random sampling to obtain the sample for the research. It was found that the majority of respondents were male (87.10%) with non-commissioned rank (76.50%) and most were in the age range of 41-50 (44.10%), followed by 51-60 years (29.30%) and 18-30 years (14.80%), respectively.

Data Collection

The research tool was Happinometer of the Institute for Population and Social Research Mahidol University. The researcher collected data manually in coordination with military officials who graduated from the Army Command and General Staff College who were class leaders for the academic year 2013-2023.

Data Analysis

For quantitative research methods, the researcher analyzed the data from the questionnaire using statistics. It can be divided into 2 parts; 1) Descriptive statistics, conducted to analyze happiness levels based on the concept of happy workplace for military officials with the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. 2) Reference statistics are to conduct a structural validity check using confirmatory factor analysis, consisting of analysis of correlation coefficients between observed variables in the happiness model based on the concept of happy workplace for military officials. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to obtain a correlation matrix between observed variables to be used as data for further structural equation model analysis. It was analyzed to check the structural validity of the happiness model based on the concept of happy workplace for military officials. Parameter estimation was used using the maximum likelihood (ML) method. Statistics used to check the consistency between the model and empirical data are standard errors and correlations of estimates, multiple correlations and coefficients of determination, model fit statistics, comparative fit index, model modification indices, respectively.

Ethics in Human Research

As this research is social science research, the survey and interview methods were used. It does not contain sensitive topics/questions. The attitudes were not asked in the case that it will be detrimental to employment if revealed. Publication of survey results does not discredit the organization that provided the data and does not record information in a way that can identify an individual, either directly or through a link code. Therefore, there is considered Exemption through consideration by Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Ethics Committee (Panel 2) and received a certificate number COA. 2-005/2024.

Research Result

Happiness Based on the Happy Workplace Concept for Military Officials

Overall, Thai military officials are happy according to the happy workplace concept at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 3.51). When considering each aspect, it is found that the aspect of happy relax ($\bar{x}$ = 3.84) is the highest aspect, followed by the happy soul ($\bar{x}$ = 3.79) and the aspect of happy brain ($\bar{x}$ = 3.61), respectively. The happy society ($\bar{x}$ = 3.03) is the least (Table 1).

The researcher conducted a confirmatory component analysis of happiness based on the happy workplace concept for military officials in order to check the construct validity. It was found that the model was consistent with the empirical data considering from χ^2 = 17.740, df = 12, p = .124, χ^2/df = 1.478, GFI = 0.988, NFI = 0.994, NNFI = 0.996, CFI = 0.998, RMR = 0.012, SRMR = 0.022, RMSEA = 0.035. The details are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation of happiness based on the happy workplace concept for military officials.

Happiness based on the happy workplace concept for military officials	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Meaning
Happy Body	3.29	0.72	Moderate
Happy Heart	3.17	0.70	Moderate
Happy Relax	3.84	0.76	High
Happy Soul	3.79	0.77	High
Happy Money	3.54	0.86	High
Happy Brain	3.61	0.70	High
Happy Family	3.59	0.79	High
Happy Society	3.03	0.77	Moderate
Overall	**3.51**	**0.57**	**High**

Table 2 Results of confirmatory factor analysis on the happiness model based on the happy workplace concept for military officials

Components	Component weight		t	R^2	Component score coefficient
	$b(SE)$	β			
Happy Body	0.538 (0.052)	0.538	10.375**	0.289	0.079
Happy Heart	0.596 (0.051)	0.600	11.782**	0.360	-0.072
Happy Relax	0.898 (0.043)	0.898	20.950**	0.806	0.354
Happy Soul	0.873 (0.044)	0.873	19.950**	0.762	0.262
Happy Money	0.668 (0.049)	0.668	13.569**	0.446	0.055
Happy Brain	0.850 (0.044)	0.850	19.174**	0.722	0.208
Happy Family	0.835 (0.045)	0.835	18.709**	0.697	0.146
Happy Society	0.449 (0.055)	0.452	8.217**	0.204	0.147

**$p < .01$

When considering the importance of the components of the happiness model based on the happy workplace concept for military officials, it was found that the weights of every standard component had positive value. The scale ranges from 0.452 to 0.898 with statistical significance at the .01 level. It can be arranged in order of importance from highest to lowest, namely, happy relax ($\beta = 0.898$), followed by happy soul ($\beta = 0.873$), happy brain ($\beta = 0.850$), happy family ($\beta = 0.835$), happy money ($\beta = 0.668$), happy heart ($\beta = 0.600$), happy body ($\beta = 0.538$), happy society ($\beta = 0.452$), respectively.

Conclusion and Discussion

In summary, the research findings indicate that military officers in Thailand, at least in this case, exhibit a high level of happiness based on the concept of happy workplace. This aligns with the study by Termlap & Noppanatwongsakorn (2023), which also found that the happiness of military officers working in the directorate of logistics in Bangkok is high. This suggests that even though the military profession involves strict discipline and decisive commands, which could cause more stress and pressure compared to other professions, the overall job satisfaction and willingness to work contribute to a high level of happiness. When considering each aspect, it was found that happy relax is the most prevalent. Meanwhile, a happy society is the least prevalent. Happy money ranks fifth and is also at a high level. This indicates a shift from the traditional Thai saying, "Military wives count bottles, police wives count money." The data from some studies similarly indicate that some military officers still encounter financial issues and debts (Suaysuwan & Chansom, 2021; Suebthamma & Jaija, 2023).

From the analysis on the components of the happiness model based on the happy workplace concept for military officials, it was found that military officers indeed experience happiness in line with the happy workplace concept, which comprises the following elements; happy body: being in good health and able to take care of oneself without being a burden to others, happy heart: having the kindness to help others, happy relax: being able to manage one's emotion, happy brain: loving to learn and being professional in one's work, happy soul: having morality and gratitude, happy money: being financially responsible, happy family: loving and taking care of one's family, happy society: loving and taking care of one's organization or society. These elements align with the happy workplace concept as outlined by the Organizational Health Support Office (n.d.). Therefore, to promote happiness among military officers and enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness, this concept can be fully utilized. For example, the aspect of happy money, as mentioned earlier, is supported by empirical data and continuous research pointing to it as an issue affecting morale, necessitating resolution (Kumnoy & Khoompoon, 2014; Homkrun, 2019).

Regarding the recommendations for future research, since this study synthesized the components of the happiness model based on the happy workplace concept for military officials, future researchers may consider applying the conceptual framework derived from this study to other government officials who are of interest and have not yet been studied. In addition, future research could expand to analyze the factors that influence happiness according to the happy workplace concept among military officers, as well as among other government officials.

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