Does Employee Happiness Help in Reducing Turnover Intentions? Insights from Education Industry

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Abstract

The primary aim/objective of this study is to evaluate the relationship and impact of employee happiness on turnover intentions. The study is based on human relation theory and social exchange theory. A structured survey questionnaire is used to conduct a study among academicians of private universities in Punjab. SPSS is used to evaluate the data gathered from respondents. The stated objectives are attained using correlation and regression approaches. As per the findings, employee happiness and turnover intentions are highly associated, yet there is a negative relationship between these two. According to regression results, employee happiness appears to improve turnover intentions. The study concludes that happy academicians are less likely to leave the university and vice versa. The relevance and drawbacks are examined in subsequent sections. There are very few studies done in the education industry so far, therefore the study aims to address study gap and add to the extant literature.

Keywords: Academicians, Education Industry, Employee Happiness, Private Universities, Turnover Intentions, Work-life Balance.

Introduction

Individual happiness is a key priority in human life. From centuries, the topic of happiness has been often explored in Western studies. Nonetheless, it is still a critical concern nowadays. Happiness is regarded as a feeling of joy, fulfilment or positive well-being united with a belief that someone's life is expressive and useful (Fitriana et al., 2022). Happiness is indeed a psychological or emotional phase of well-being characterised by positive or pleasurable emotions that range from contentment to profound ecstasy (Thiruvenkadam and Jayasingh,2018). Happiness has always been regarded as a broad notion that encompasses a holistic appraisal of one's living.(Lyubomirsky, 2005) defines "Happiness is the experience of joy, contentment, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful and worthwhile". According to the "UN World Happiness Report 2022," India has risen to 136thplace out of 146 nations for the period 2022. India was ranked 139th in the world in 2021(Helliwell et al., 2022).

The concept has off lately been enlarged to include employee happiness or workplace happiness (Fitriana et al., 2022; Fisher, 2010).In unpredictable times and rivalry, top executives must have a profound knowledge of the necessity of their staff having a high level of positivity that enables individuals to embrace chances that appear risky (Ali, 2020).Hence,organizational and business unit happiness has currently emerged as a hot topic among organizational setups and strategy scholars(Castro-Martınez and Dıaz-Morilla, 2020).Happiness at the workplace can be defined as the estimated degree to which organisations and their management generate a pleasant working atmosphere for individuals(Ghadi andAlmanagah, 2020).In the words of Fisher (2010) Happiness at work "refers to pleasant judgments (positive attitudes) or pleasant experiences (positive feelings, moods, emotions, flow states) at work". Happiness is therefore, an invisible asset in organisational systems which is critical to achieve sustainable development and competitive advantage (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2021).

In recent decades, India has developed a tradition of monitoring the happiness of employees. In India, several IT organizations do not track their employees' happiness levels. This is a component that certain organizations include in employee assessment surveys or exit interviews. Microsoft, John Deere, Google India, Brillio Technologies, HCL Technologies and Zensar Technologies are among the selected organisations that have taken this step (Thiruvenkadam and Jayasingh, 2018). Nowadays, the education industry also realises the need of happiness coach in universities or colleges. Therefore, they start hiring people who are expert in guiding and mentoring individuals to stay happy and pleasant.

Employee turnover continues to be a key challenge (Rasheed et al., 2020; Alias et al., 2018) for human resource department and organisation administration due to the devastating effects on good organisational functioning. According to a thorough literature analysis on organisational behaviour, the turnover rates of workforce within firms are increasing day by day (Al-Ali et al., 2019).In the words of (Alias et al., 2018) "Turnover intention is defined as a process of employee to leave the current job or his willingness to separate from the organization". Externally and internally, a higher level of turnover intention is generally not a positive indicator for the organisation. Ultimately, it has an impact on the company's expenditures, staff motivation, employee happiness and poor efficiency (Awang et al., 2015). Several human resource issues namely level of operation; efficiency and ultimate total organisational performance are impacted by turnover intentions. In addition to such consequences, it may result in increased recruiting and training costs for the replacement part as well as an adverse impact on services performance and output (Baloch, 2009).

This comprehensive study donates to the corpus of knowledge in the field of human resource management. It adds to the growing body of knowledge on employee happiness and turnover intentions. There hasn't been any research into the relationship between employee happiness and turnover intentions of academicians of private universities in Punjab. Because of the growing prominence of private educational institutions, the scholar has opted to emphasis on private universities in Punjab. The research's useful implementation is to highlight the relevance of employee happiness in an attempt to better understand how it affects turnover intentions. The study's objectives/aims are as follows:

·To check the relationship between employee happiness and turnover intentions.

·To investigate the impact of employee happiness on turnover intentions.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

For hypothesis building, the present study used "Human Relation Theory" and "Social Exchange Theory" (SET). A few of the ideas that provide theoretical foundation for the connection among social conditions and individual conduct is human relations theory. The Hawthorn studies, which underlined the importance of cognitive and sociological factors inside the profession and their effects on individual behaviour, developed human relations theory in the 1920s (Rainey, 2003). Better interpersonal contacts are expected to lead to better performance (Perrow, 1970). According to

the theory, links, styles of leadership and mindsets all play a role in organisational effectiveness. Employees, employers, and enterprises are the major players in human relations theory.

The "social exchange theory" states that HR strategies contribute in the formation of expanded exchange connections between employers and employees. It labels "social exchange comprises actions contingent on the rewarding reactions of others which over time provide for mutually and rewarding transactions and relationships" (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Employees serve for business organisations in consideration for monetary benefits and other forms of incentives (Koster, 2011). HR practices are thought to generate good interchange relationships under this strategy and managers will show consideration for their workers' demands (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

The role of employee happiness on turnover intentions will be assessed using human relation theory and social exchange theory. Relying on the theoretical concept as well as the analyses mentioned above, the latest research presents a methodology to explore the impact of employee happiness and turnover intentions.

Employee Happiness and Turnover Intentions

Employee happiness is now a vital aspect of inspiring and facilitating employees to achieve higher levels of performance (Ostman, Razak and Usman, 2020).On the other hand, turnover intentions have an adverse effect on employees and organisations (Wadi'ah et al., 2021). Employee contentment, happiness and productivity are all affected by the intention to quit. Hence, it is critical for organisations to investigate the primary drivers of organisational affective dedication and intention to quit (Göl and Demirel, 2018). A rising level of employee turnover indicates a notable problem in fulfilling the organisation's objectives. Employees serve a critical role in establishing organisational performance and sustainability (Weerarathna, Somawardana and Weerasinghe, 2022). Therefore, for organisations in rapidly growing countries, balancing staff turnover with job qualities is extremely important (Sengupta, 2011).

The overall findings of the study shed focus on the value of having happy employees, as happy individuals are much more efficient and least likely to leave (Al-Ali, 2018; Awada and Ismail, 2019).Another literature study investigates the function of job happiness in mediating the association among job satisfaction and worker performance as well as turnover intentions. Work happiness appears to mediate the link among job satisfaction, employee performance and turnover intention. These insights could help human resources or related organisational management. Organizations may utilise job happiness as a determinant of individual behaviour and then develop recruitment strategies to assist and sustain employee happiness and satisfaction which eventually support employee retention (Al-Ali, 2019).As per the researcher's findings, employee happiness and job satisfaction have a significant and positive association. According to the results, a higher level of employee happiness might boost job satisfaction which eventually leads to lower turnover intentions (Thevanes and Jathurika, 2021).A study by (Weerarathna, Somawardana and Weerasinghe, 2022) also concluded that employee happiness has an influence on turnover intention. There is a significant association between employee happiness and turnover intentions. Furthermore, one study depicts that individual burnout is linked to a higher likelihood of turnover intention. Happiness was found to be a key moderator in the association among worker engagement, burnout and intention to leave. Likewise, males have a higher frequency of happiness as well as turnover intention (Santhanam and Srinivas, 2020).(Rasheed et al., 2020) exhibits that happiness is negatively connected to turnover intentions. The insights of another study revealed that employee happiness is a considerable mediating factor in the impact of job quality on intention to quit. It was determined that the aspects of work are insufficient to minimise intent to leave, implying that organisations should place a premium on employee happiness in order to confirm a favourable impact on quality of life and minimise employee turnover intention (Alserhan, Al-Adamat and Al-Adamat, 2021).

Certain variables such as better strategies& initiatives, incentives focusing on independent worker achievement, organising inspirational initiatives & sports, offering

institutional advantages, self-recognition and giving other facilities for employees should be implemented. An administrationmust consistently work to mitigate employee retention and create workplace happiness (Venkat and Khan, 2022).There is not much literature available on employee happiness and turnover intentions among academicians working in private universities in Punjab. Therefore, the present study is a novel contribution to the literature on employee happiness and turnover intentions. The aforementioned hypothesis has been constructed depending on existing explanations and studies carried out till date:

H1: There is a significant relationship between employee happiness and turnover intentions.

H2: There is a significant impact of employee happiness on turnover intentions.

Research Methodology

A descriptive research design is used to carry out the study. By employing convenience sampling, data is obtained from academicians working of private universities in Punjab. Since it is quickly emerging as an academic centre, the Punjab region is decided to pick. A structured (adapted) questionnaire is used as a data gathering instrument to acquire data from academicians. The data is processed using SPSS version 22. G*Power tool is used to compute the study's representative sample. The sample size calculated with this programme is 159 respondents. The survey questionnaire was sent to over 300 people, however, only 250 responses were valid and complete enough for the study.
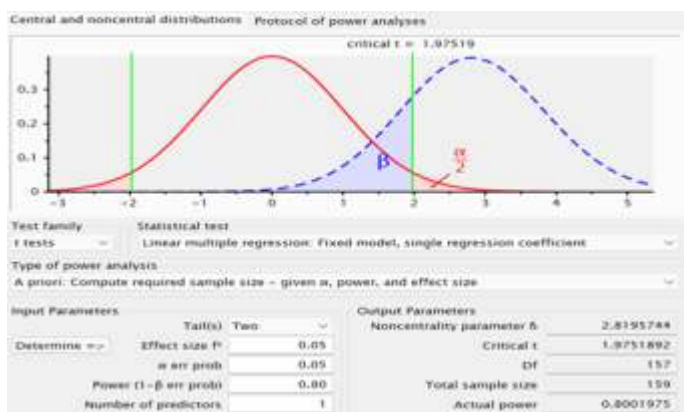

Fig. 1 Sample Size Calculation

Measures

Employee Happiness (EH): Scale adapted from Ramirez-Garcia, Perea and Junco (2019) to measure employee happiness. Where sample item is "I get fair rewards at my job".

Turnover Intentions (TI): Scale adapted from Cammann et al., (1979) to measure turnover intentions. Where sample item is "I often think about resigning".

The survey questionnaire is organized into two segments: the first segment covers employee happiness and turnover intentions, while the second covers demographics. All of the items were evaluated on a "7-point Likert scale," with "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" being the range.

Reliability Analysis

Table 1 Reliability of Constricts/Variables

Construct/Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Happiness	.947
Turnover Intentions	.873

The reliability of both constructs is good as they are above 0.7 (George, 2011;Tavakol, M., &Dennick, 2011).

Results

Descriptive related to Demographic Characteristics

Table 2 exhibits the statistical information related to demographics from the respondents. In the analysis, there are 126 (50.4%) male participants and 124 (49.6%) female participants. The big chunk of respondents is within the ages of 31 and 40(42.4%). According to the designation rank, 166 (66.4%) participants are Assistant Professors, 57 (22.8%) are Associate Professors, and 27 (10.8%) are Professors in the ongoing survey results. 35.2% of participants have less than 5 years of work experience, while 32% have <15 years of experience. When it pertains to relationship status, 87.2% of participants are married, while only 11.6% are single and 1.2% are separated/divorced. In terms of qualification, 26.4% of participants have a master's degree, 14.8% have an M.Phil. degreeand 58.8% have a Ph.D. degree.

Table 2 Respondents' Demographic Profile

Characteristics	Class	Occurrence	%
Gender	Male	126	50.4
	Female	124	49.6
	Total	**250**	**100**
Age	21-30 Yrs.	88	35.2
	31-40 Yrs.	106	42.4
	41-50 Yrs.	45	18
	< 50 Yrs.	11	4.4
	Total	**250**	**100**
Marital Status	Unmarried	29	11.6
	Married	218	87.2
	Separated/Divorced	03	1.2
	Total	**205**	**100**
Designation	Assistant Professor	166	66.4
	Associate Professor	57	22.8
	Professor	27	10.8
	Total	**250**	**100**
Qualification	Masters	66	26.4
	M.Phil.	37	14.8
	Ph.D.	147	58.8
	Total	**250**	**100**
Work Experience (Total)	Less than 5 Yrs.	88	35.2
	5-10 Yrs.	37	14.8
	10-15 Yrs.	45	18
	Above 15 Yrs.	80	32
	Total	**250**	**100**

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation is performed to estimate the relationship between employee happiness (EH) and turnover intentions (TI). A Correlation coefficient, with numbers ranging from -1 to +1, is the outcome of a correlation test. Where results with +1 signify that variables are associated significant positively, -1 signifies that variables are associated significant negatively and 0 signifies that variables do not correlate (Gogtay and Thatte, 2017). Table 3 exhibits a -.792 correlation between EH and

TI which signifies that EH and TI have a negative correlation with each other. "Values between 0.7 and 1.0 (-0.7 and -1.0) indicate a strong positive (negative) linear relationship through a firm linear rule" (Ratner, 2009; Schober, Boer and Schwarte, 2018). Therefore, in the present results (-.792) correlation is strong negative correlation among the studied variables. Hence, the relationship is adverse therefore, employee happiness leads to reduced turnover intentions whereas employee unhappiness leads increase turnover intentions.

Table 3 Correlation

Correlations		Employee Happiness (EH)	Turnover Intentions (TI)	H1
Employee Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.792**	Supported
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	250	250	

Regression Analysis

In the formulation of a regression approach, employee happiness is practised as a determinant of turnover intentions. The following table indicates the estimated regression values between employee happiness and turnover intentions. In this study, employee happiness is regarded as an independent variable, whereas turnover intentions are regarded as a dependent variable.

Regression Model: Y (Employee Happiness) =b0+b1 (Turnover Intentions)

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Er. of Estimate
1	.792a	.628	.626	2.914
a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Happiness				

R2 is a common abbreviation for R square. Its fundamental concept measures the percentage of variance that the independent elements influence the dependent element

(Wright, 1921).As spotted in Table 4, employee happiness accounts for approx. 62.8% of the variance in turnover intentions. Subsequently, a one-unit alteration in employee happiness causes .62-unit alteration in turnover intentions.

Table 5 Coefficient Table

		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
Model		**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
1	**(Constant)**	28.950	.857		33.767	.000
	Employee Happiness	-.300	.015	-.792	-20.454	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intentions						

The t-value and p-value (>1.96) (0.000) are used in Table 5 to show the validity and relevance of the indicated concept. Employee happiness is therefore demonstrated to determine the possibility of turnover intentions.

Table 6 Hypothesis (Reject/Fail to Reject)

Hypothesis	Correlation	H1 Supported
H1	EHCorrelates TI	Yes (Therefore we fail to reject H1)
Hypothesis	**Regression Weights**	**H2 Supported**
H2	EH ? TI	Yes (Therefore we fail to reject H2)

Table 6 represents that H1 and H2 both are supported. H1 indicates that employee happiness and turnover intentions are correlated with each other. Equivalent to H1, H2 is also supported. It indicates that employee happiness is a strong determinant of turnover intentions.

Discussions

Using an approach built on social exchange theory (SET) and human relation theory, the aforementioned study investigated the association between employee happiness and turnover intentions. Employee happiness has been acknowledged as an imperative component in keeping competent and committed academicians in private universities. The study provides a substantial contribution to the area by showing that employee happiness has a major impact on turnover intentions. There is a significant association between employee happiness and turnover intentions; therefore, we fail to reject H1.These findings are in line with previous research. A negative relationship occurs between employee happiness and turnover intentions (Weerarathna, Somawardana and Weerasinghe, 2022; Wang and Yang, 2016; Al-Ali et al., 2019).

As per the results, employee happiness has an impact on turnover intentions therefore we fail to reject H2. Private universities would be able to retain academicians for a significant period of time by increasing employee happiness and implementing efforts that bring happiness and satisfaction to employees. Employee happiness is a strong determinant of employee turnover intentions. The extant literature suggests that employee happiness decreases the turnover intentions of employees and employee unhappiness increases the turnover intentions of employees. There is an inverse relationship among these two (Alserhan, Al-Adamat and Al-Adamat, 2021).These days organisations need to pay full attention towards the happiness of employees.

A higher level of employee turnover indicates a severe problem in fulfilling the organisation's objectives. Employees serve a critical role in establishing organisational effectiveness and longevity. Therefore, happiness of employees plays a critical role in any organisational setup. Increased happiness leads to reduced turnover intentions and long-term stay of academicians in universities. The advantages of maintaining a happy workplace are connected to broad improvements in employees' happiness and the organisation's potential to change to a staff-friendly organisational culture.

Implications of the Study

This study addresses the theoretical and practical contributions. The theoretical section addresses the novel addition in the realm of the education industry about employee happiness and turnover intentions. The practical component discusses the insights which can be drawn from this study's results and how they can benefit academicians of private universities. The main addition of this study is the

determination of employee happiness in order to assess turnover intentions.It is discovered that being happy with colleagues and the surroundings has a substantial impact on turnover intentions. According to the literature accessible to the study, there is a shortage of empirical study that examines employee happiness and turnover intentions.

This research's practical significance is that it emphasises the essence of keeping happy academicians, as actual findings show that happy academicians are more efficient and have lower turnover. This study provides empirical proof to human resource managers that ensuring the university has happy academicians would ensure efficiency. As a result, the results could motivate human resource managers to create initiatives that strengthen academicians' social relationships and make them happier. Universities can use assessment questions to gauge workplace happiness in order to improve employee happiness. Job satisfaction assessments can be used to discover causes of employee dissatisfaction and how universities might develop appropriate strategies to address such challenges. Universities can gain a better understanding of employee happiness by conducting extensive assessments and taking the required steps to promote employee happiness. Maintaining a positive organisational culture is critical for employee happiness. Universities should do this by implementing numerous interventions, some of which are free. Giving academics respect and acknowledgment is equally vital for their happiness. Academicians would be enthused and motivated to contribute to university-wide efforts if they are consistently praised and recognised. Another factor that helps academics be happy is prioritising work-life balance. Making it clear that work-life balance is a prime concern at the university by providing unrestricted vacation time, rebates on nearby healthcare and wellness programmes or childcare services. Providing rewards that increase an academician's general quality of life demonstrates that the university is concerned for their well-being. It is therefore critical to hire happiness experts in order to build a happy university environment. This approach adds to the empirical study on employee happiness in the education industry that influences academicians' happiness in private universities.

Conclusion

The study's main focus was to analyse the relationship and impact of employee happiness on employee turnover intentions among academicians of private universities in Punjab. The results of the study depict that there is an association exists between employee happiness and turnover intentions. But a negative relationship occurs between employee happiness and turnover intentions. Happy academicians are less likely to leave the university whereas unhappy academicians are very much likely to leave university. In the present study, it is evidenced that employee happiness is a strong determinant of turnover intentions. Hence, it is essential to keep academicians happy for the long-term survival of the university. Universities can make such policies that are favourable for both universities as well as academicians. Extant literature has already proved that happy individuals at the workplace are more efficient. Therefore, universities can make initiatives such as a conducive environment, good relations, positive leadership, better reward systems, appropriate appraisal systems, healthy work-life balance etc. All such initiatives would definitely help universities to keep academicians happy.

Limitations and Future Scope

Despite getting valuable results, the present study is not free from certain weaknesses. These weaknesses of the present study are the road for forthcoming research studies. The study has following limitations: Firstly, because the data was gathered only from private universities in Punjab, so there is a risk of potential bias in the answers of respondents. Secondly, reactions may change depending on the university culture, policies and customs which is restricting the results' generalizability. Thirdly, because the study used convenience sampling, the limitations associated with this sampling technique are applicable here. Fourth, the study's sample size is quite limited; outcomes from a bigger sample or population may change. In the coming studies, the research can be conducted in a variety of academic universities including public, central and private universities.

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