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TEAM HAPPINESS: A MODERATOR OF WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY IN UPSTREAM PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the happiness–performance correlation through a synthesized review of literature on teams, in the specific context of Teams in Indian Petroleum Industry. The paper argues that Happiness improves Team Performance in upstream petroleum industry. The paper also finds the factors which drive happiness in petroleum teams and consequently moderates team processes for better team outputs, both for teams in oilfield settings as well as teams in office settings. The findings are strengthened by triangulation of the literature review with qualitative enquiry to secure specific information about conceptualization of Team Happiness and its relationships with Team Performance. The IPO model of teams has been leveraged to develop this conceptual model where Team Happiness is shown as a moderator of Team Processes. The qualitative enquiry is secured from team leaders and team members in two upstream petroleum companies in India, which comprise 80 per cent of the industry.

Introduction

Research shows that happiness makes people at workplaces more productive. Evidences are there that a team that's happy, are also more efficient, more cohesive, more primed to carry out the tasks at hand and deliver higher quality output. Through analysis of qualitative data, this paper takes a closer look at teams in upstream petroleum industry and the factors which correlate with happiness.

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Happiness is defined in management literature as the experience of frequent positive affect, infrequent negative affect and an overall sense of satisfaction and well-being with life as a whole (Myers & Diener, 1995). They

found that happy people are consistently marked by the four traits which are actually components of Emotional Intelligence: Self Esteem, a sense of control, optimism and extraversion.

2.2 In the context of workplaces, the issue if happy workers matter to firm productivity has been analysed for nearly a century. Cynthia D. Fisher (2010) finds that aspects of happiness have been (and should be) conceptualized and measured at multiple levels, including transient experiences, stable person-level attitudes, and collective attitudes, and with respect to multiple foci, such as discrete events, the job, and the organization.

2.3 In a study conducted in Harvard University, the only factor that contributed to their overall sense of happiness in students was their **connection to other people**. Regardless of how smart and successful they were, he found that the more isolated they became in the pursuit of success, the more unhappy they felt, too. This human connection plays out with real results in business as well.

2.4 Recent work by Tom Wright and Russell Cropanzano (2000) found "happy" workers often have higher performance but that "happiness" should be operationalized as psychological well-being. makes the case that happy employees — defined broadly using the metrics of subjective well-being — demonstrate superior job performance — that is, happy employees are better and more productive employees. Further, happy employees are more sensitive to opportunities in the work environment, more outgoing and helpful to colleagues, and more optimistic and confident — all of which give a positive push to organizations they work for.

2.5 Building social bonds have been found to be especially contributive towards long term Happiness (Burt, 1986 Cohen, 1988 House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988 Pavot et al., 1990). Social Cohesion is an important element of Team Cohesion.

2.6 Empirical research of McGrath (1964, 1984) on 'The Input Output Process model of teamwork' articulated the nature of team performance in classic systems model in which team inputs (I) lead to team processes (P) that in turn lead to team outcomes (O).

3.0 Research with team leads in Indian upstream petroleum industry

3.1 Research reveals that apart from traditional factors like physical health, wealth, etc. there are community-related drivers of happiness. To triangulate the findings from the synthesized review of literature above, qualitative data was collected from seven (7) team leads and nine (9) team members of teams in two leading upstream petroleum companies in India, which comprise 80 per cent of the industry. The data was analysed thematically. The patterns that emerged from the analysis provided the following factors which comprise the happiness quotient in teams in upstream petroleum industry and consequently enhance productivity. These drivers of happiness are interrelated, and can either reinforce each other or undermine each other, depending on various moderators.

3.1.1 **Out-of-office socialization:** Team leaders found that Team Happiness increases if the teams spend more time together outside work. Such out-of-office-socializations have been seen to improve team productivity as well. This factor is more profound in teams in oil-field settings than in office settings. In office-settings, there are other factors which moderate the happiness performance correlation, like demographics.

3.1.2 **Failure Absorption:** Teams which face failures together are found to be happier later. This is mediated by a strong analytical bonding which the team has to face after each failure. In upstream petroleum industry, high emotional intelligence correlates positively with bonding among team members. Such bonding during adverse times brings the members together and makes them happy together at work subsequently. There are some moderators here like a strong analytical approach of members strengthens the happiness-performance correlation, which is not there if the blame game approach is stronger in the members.

3.1.3 **Goal-orientation:** Teams which are more goal-oriented than task-oriented, are happier. It has been seen that teams in office-settings, are more task oriented, whereas teams in oil-field settings are more goal-oriented. Goal-orientation brings in Happiness in teams and catalyses higher productivity, especially in oil-field settings.

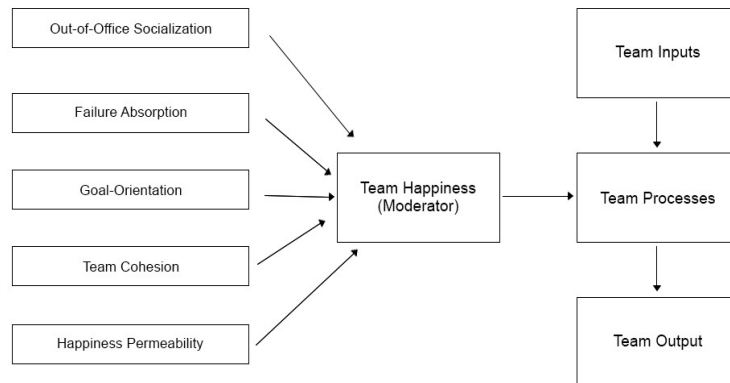
3.1.4 **Team Cohesion:** A team with higher Team Cohesion will be happier than its low-cohesion peer. Team Cohesion depends on various factors like Task Cohesion and Social Cohesion. Happiness in petroleum teams have been seen to mediated strongly by Social Cohesion. However, there are moderators like Power Distribution and Demographic Diversity in teams which affect the happiness-Productivity correlation in teams in upstream petroleum industry.

3.1.5 **Happiness Permeability:** Human brains are wired to mirror that behavior when we see it in others. Human beings are affected by the emotional environment they live in. This has been seen to be true in teams in petroleum industry, especially in oil-field settings. A couple of happy members will facilitate happiness to permeate to the other members, making the whole team happy and consequently productive.

4.0 A conceptual Framework of Team Happiness

Based on the above analysis, we propose a conceptual framework of Team Happiness in upstream petroleum industry, catalysing productivity in such teams. We have adopted the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model of teams while developing this conceptual framework. Team Happiness is shown to be moderator (distinct from team Inputs) in this IPO model of teams, catalysing the Team Processes for a more productive Team Output.

**Conceptual Framework of Team Happiness
in Upstream Petroleum Industry**



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