

# Does Mindfulness & Happiness Predict Job Satisfaction among Indian Employees?

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*Management literature is increasingly preoccupied with the studies on psychological stances and related emotional concepts. Studies on issues such as mindfulness have therefore recently gained momentum. Previous studies in mindfulness suggested that through increased mindfulness, employees in organizations exhibit better job outcomes. In the last few decades, considerable research has focused on the effects of mindfulness on job performance in different parts of the world. Nonetheless, there is a gap considering Indian environment. This study investigates the interactive effects of mindfulness and happiness in workplace on a sample of 101 employees in North India. Results suggest a partial interaction effect of mindfulness and happiness on employee job satisfaction. Mindfulness and happiness were seen as significant predictors of employee satisfaction in the Indian context.*

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## Introduction

Mindfulness is a non-judgmental acceptance of one's emotions and thoughts while being present (Bishop et al., 2004). Although mindfulness has roots in Eastern philosophy, it has recently become a non-secular practice of many Westerners. Most definitions of mindfulness emphasize on awareness, observation, and acceptance without judgment of one's feelings and thoughts (Baer, Walsh & Lykins, 2009; Grossman, 2008). Even in various disciplines the mindfulness aspects are having its interference in the positive manner. Various practitioners and researchers have studied the impact of mindfulness on organizations and found it positive. Gradually it has become an imperative area of learning in the organizations. As organizational psychologists continue to investigate various aspects of mindfulness training, it will be important to identify the impact of training that helps explain the benefits of mindfulness. For example, at this stage it is difficult to discern whether mindfulness is the primary driver of benefits in the organization or whether self-reflective practices such as journaling or mindful movement (e.g., yoga) provide the same benefit to the

employees. As we move towards a better understanding of mindfulness in the workplace, we need intervention-based research that empirically isolates the specific behavioral, cognitive, and affective mechanisms responsible as well as individual and situational factors that may accentuate such effects.

Thus, a mindful perspective allows individuals to be more cognizant of how life events influence their emotional experiences, enabling individuals to make predictions that are less susceptible to the impact bias. Though several questionnaires (Baer, Smith & Allen, 2004; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer & Toney, 2006) have been developed to measure individual differences in people's tendency to be mindful, the current study examines Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), and how mindfulness may impact people's happiness and the impact work outcomes. We predict that people who report a greater mindfulness and act with awareness should be happier thus impacting positively on the job satisfaction.

### **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness originates from the Pali word *sati* and the Sanskrit word *smirti*, which connotes awareness, attention, and remembering (Engler, 1986; Nyaniponika, 1973). Its two key components are self-regulation of attention to the present moment, and maintenance of an open, curious, and accepting stance to the experience (Bishop et al, 2004). In the eastern assumption, mindfulness is to be the place you are with all your psyche

intends to consider inward procedure of brain. It implies having a capacity to hold tight the present items, recall them, and not dismissing them through diversion, cooperative considering, clarifying ceaselessly or dismissal (Weick & Putnam, 2006). Mindfulness is a non-belief specific spiritual orientation that reduces critical judgment (of ourselves and others) and facilitates compassion for self and others (Bishop et al., 2004; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Neff, 2003a). Awareness and attention are very closely related to the consciousness. Awareness offers a continuous monitoring of experience, while attention intensifies the feeling towards experience, allowing for extending one's concentration and investigation. Mindfulness can also be described as an awareness of what is happening in the present moment, considered by a non-judgmental, open and accepting attitude towards everything that arises in consciousness, without altering it (Cigolla & Brown, 2011:709). The founder of MBSR Kabat-Zinn sums it up as, "Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994: 4).

While mindfulness is often associated with traditions that are more philosophical than scientific, recent years have witnessed a remarkable surge of research activity surrounding mindfulness across several fields, including clinical and counseling psychology (Dane & Brummel, 2013). Studies have evidenced that mindfulness fosters ethical decision making (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2010), enhances creativity (Ostafin & Kassman, 2012), and improves the accuracy of

affective forecasting (Emanuel et al., 2010). In the similar vein a conceptual model of ethical mindset developed by Issa and Pick (2011) again concentrated upon the variables like ambiguity tolerance, spirituality, creativity, aesthetic judgment and mindfulness. From a mindfulness research standpoint, the expanding body of research on work engagement begs a key question: does mindfulness carry unique variance in the work-related attitudes in terms of satisfaction, commitment and organization citizenship etc?

**Mindfulness has been related to both greater basic psychological need satisfaction and autonomous self-regulation.**

One of the basic assumptions guiding this research is that practicing mindfulness, ultimately, makes people happier. More mindful individuals are more likely to pursue aspirations that are positively related to need satisfaction and wellness (Brown & Kasser, 2005; Brown et al., 2008). Therefore, mindfulness has been related to both greater basic psychological need satisfaction and autonomous self-regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Levesque & Brown, 2007). In a similar vein a study done by Reb, Narayanan and Ho (2015) recommended that awareness may be associated with the presence of positive states and behaviors (satisfaction, OCBs), whereas lack of absent-mindedness may be associated with the absence of negative states and behaviors (emotional exhaustion, deviance). Mindfulness appears to also enhance

motivation and satisfaction of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (i.e., interpersonal connection), which in turn boost wellness (Schultz & Ryan, 2014). A growing body of research also suggests that more mindful individuals are more likely to pursue aspirations that are positively related to wellness (Brown & Kasser, 2005; Brown et al., 2008). Which somehow supports the fact that mindfulness has been related to both greater basic psychological need satisfaction and autonomous self-regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Levesque & Brown, 2007).

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant positive relationship between mindfulness and happiness. That is individual who are more mindful will also report higher levels of happiness.

Studies in this area proved that mindfulness contributes to performance by improving cognitive flexibility and alertness (Moore & Malinowski, 2009; Zeidan et al., 2010) and safeguarding against distractions and performance blunders (Herndon, 2008). These findings advance the possibility that workplace mindfulness facilitates job performance and some researchers also argued that mindfulness promotes key work outcomes (Dane, 2011; Glomb, Duffy, Bono & Yang, 2011), empirical studies examining this fact are somehow scarce. In fact, most research on mindfulness has been conducted outside the workplace (e.g. Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt & Lang, 2013; Reb et al., 2012). Initially clinical settings were a more preferred area to do mindfulness studies rather than mindfulness in

organizational settings. While a growing body of evidence indicates that mindfulness carries a number of benefits, little empirical research has investigated mindfulness from a workplace standpoint. Though scholars have provided theoretical insights over how mindfulness may promote task performance, physical health, and psychological health (Dane, 2011; Glomb et al., 2011). Further, Hulsheger et al. (2013) conducted two important studies with employees and concluded that both state and trait mindfulness are related to lower emotional exhaustion and enhanced job satisfaction. Apart from this Dane and Brummel (2013) also found a positive relation between mindfulness and job performance and a negative relation between mindfulness and turnover intention. Further positive relations were found between employees' need satisfaction and their work-related well-being (i.e., lower burnout, higher engagement, and higher job satisfaction), more positive attitudes towards work (i.e., increased readiness to change, lower turnover intention), and better performances (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck et al. 2008).

Affective events theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) suggests that mindfulness may be positively related to job satisfaction. According to AET, work events are proximal causes of employee affective reactions and these reactions, in turn, predict job satisfaction. The relationship of trait mindfulness with job satisfaction was somewhat weaker but still significant (Hulsheger et al., 2013). Given these past evidences, we hypothesize that mindfulness will be an

asset in fostering work-related attitudes and wellness, and consequently positively related to basic job satisfaction at work.

Hypothesis 2: Workplace mindfulness is positively related to job satisfaction, i.e., individual who is perceived more mindful tends to be more satisfied by work, boss and subordinates.

### **Happiness**

Happiness was always very important and relevant from the perspectives of previous generations, though it was sidelined for some time but now it is again receiving a good deal of attention in a variety of disciplines. Though the number of other related terms such as: 'well-being,' 'subjective well-being,' 'quality of life,' 'life-satisfaction,' are more popular in spite of the existence of a direct term like 'happiness'. Happiness, in the form of joy, appears in every typology of 'basic' human emotions; feeling happy is fundamental to human experience, and most people are at least mildly happy much of the time (Diener & Diener, 1996). Myers and Diener (1995) define 'happiness' in general as the experience of high - frequent positive affect, low - frequent negative affect, and an overall life satisfaction. Additionally, Fisher (2010) said that happiness in the form of pleasant moods and emotions, well-being, and positive attitudes has been attracting increasing attention throughout psychology. Happiness, however, has not been the only indicator of positive psychological functioning in previous empirical studies (Ryff, 1989). Nonetheless, Ryff & Keyes (1995) asserted that the

theories of wellbeing recommend happiness or positive affect as a defining feature of human wellness and useful for certain aspects of positive functioning, such as the realization of one's goals and purposes, require effort and discipline that may well be at odds with short-term happiness.

In the aspect of wellbeing there has been a steadily increasing interest on the part of happiness research in economics and management. As we have already stated that happiness is the form of pleasant moods and emotions, well-being, and positive attitudes and has been attracting increasing attention throughout psychology (Fisher, 2010). Even happiness at work surpasses the job satisfaction of the employee (Fisher, 2010). According to the Broaden-and-Build model (Fredrickson, 2001), happier employees are more easily able to "broaden-and-build" themselves, more creative, resilient, socially connected, physically and mentally healthy, and more productive. Besides this, the whole gamut of HR practice such as wellbeing, health, happiness, prosperity and the development of human resources has been covered by the concept of employee engagement (Bannerjee & Yadav, 2016).

In a research by Weaver (1978) it was established that for most of the occupations and for both the sex groups job satisfaction and global happiness were partially correlated. Further, the study of Dockery (2003) confirmed that satisfaction with one's pay which is an antecedent of job satisfaction contributes to greater wellbeing. The results from two

studies by Dockery's (2003) Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) and Household Income and Labor Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA) show that work has a significant impact upon people's feelings of wellbeing. Moreover, it is not just the state of being in work as opposed to out of work that affects wellbeing, but it is rather the quality of one's working life. Further, Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Naotakawanabe & Locke (2005) suggested that individuals with positive self-evaluations are happier, and reports higher levels of job and life satisfaction. In a recent meta analysis which examined the relationship between job satisfaction and subjective well being, found positive relationships between job satisfaction and happiness. In addition, a review of studies suggested that there is a causal relationship between well being and job satisfaction (Eschleman & Wang, 2011).

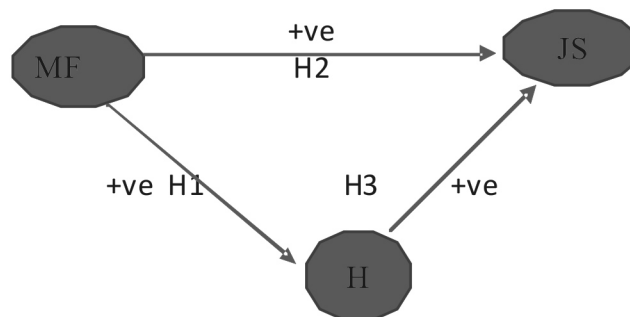
**That individuals with positive self-evaluations are happier, and reports higher levels of job and life satisfaction.**

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant positive relationship between happiness and job satisfaction i.e., individual who perceives higher job satisfaction will also report higher levels of happiness.

## Method

Our data collection procedure starts with selecting the population for the study from Indian service sector, majorly the private banking sector. The study explains

Fig. 1 Proposed relationships among hypotheses



MF: Mindfulness, H: Happiness and JS: Job Satisfaction  
Source: Literature review

the status of workplace mindfulness among middle level employees in north India. For the purpose of the study, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire covers gender, age, education, status etc. A sample of 182 employees was selected from the six private banks in north India using simple random sampling technique. In all 158 responded to the invitation. The data collected from the sample was analyzed using descriptive statistics, averages, correlation and regression. To ensure the integrity of data we reviewed the data for erroneous cases. The incomplete questionnaires or similar responses of the respondents were discarded. We also considered the time to complete the survey as a validity check. Cases in which respondents took less than 10 minutes to complete the survey were discarded.

After removing the invalid cases, 101 cases remained (55 percent response rate). With respect to demographics the sample was composed of 39 females (39 percent) and 62 males (61 percent). The average age of the sample was 25. 30 - 58 % people

were postgraduates, 27 were graduates and only 16 had some sort of diploma. Educational background of 46 people was science, 54 arts and 31% of the respondents indicated that their educational background should be placed into "other" group not listed in the questionnaire.

### Measures

In order to effectively measure the focal variables, this study utilized several scales developed in previous researches.

*Mindfulness:* Coinciding with the growth of scholarly interest in mindfulness, researchers have developed a number of self-report measures designed to assess individual differences in mindfulness (Baer, 2011; Bergomi et al., 2012). Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS: Brown & Ryan, 2003) - a scale aligned with the conceptualization of mindfulness is one of the most popular scales. Contrasting to scales developed specifically for use in clinical applications and interventions (e.g. Walach et al., 2006), the MAAS is geared toward assessing mindfulness across a wide range

of settings and audiences. MAAS was consisting of 15 items. Though frequently employed in mindfulness research, the MAAS is not without limitations (Grossman, 2011). The measure we used for assessing workplace mindfulness demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability was Cronbach's Alpha which was  $\alpha = .73$  in this case.

*Happiness:* Happiness of the individuals was assessed by using Subjective Happiness Scale. (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). The first item on the scale asked participants to characterize themselves using absolute ratings (1 = a very unhappy person; 5 = a very happy person). The second item asked them to characterize themselves relative to their peers (1 = *much less happy*; 5 = *much happier*). The third and fourth items, respectively, considered happy people ("Some people are generally very happy; they enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything") and unhappy people ("Some people are generally not very happy; although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be") and each asked participants to what extent each characterization described them (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *a great deal*). Responses to the four items, which showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = .86), were combined and averaged to provide a single composite score, ranging from 1.0 to 5.0.

*Job Satisfaction:* The satisfaction variable was measured by three exten-

sively acknowledged dimensions: degree of satisfaction with the work itself, degree of satisfaction with coworkers, and degree of satisfaction with supervision (Price & Mueller, 1986). The satisfaction items asked the following questions: "All in all, how satisfied are you with the work itself of your job? . . . All in all, how satisfied are you with your coworkers?" and "All in all, how satisfied are you with the supervision?" Ratings were made on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very unsatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*). Theoretic and experimental justification for combining these three facet measures of satisfaction into a combined measure have been widely documented (Price & Mueller, 1986; Wright & Bonett, 1991). The measure of internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) obtained for this variable was .63.

*Controls:* Several variables were used to account for individual differences. For instance, sex (male=1, female=0), status, age and degrees (educational) were included as controls.

### Analysis

We began our analysis by conducting an exploratory factor analysis to establish the discriminant validity of our scales. To accomplish this, we used SPSS 17.0.

Satisfaction demonstrated a positive and moderate correlation with mindfulness of the employees,  $r(101) = .49, p < .01$ . The regression findings (Table 2) also indicated support for hypothesis H2 that employees who exhibit high mindfulness

**Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Intercorrelations, and Reliability Estimates of the Study Variables**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Status	.41	.49									
2 Gender	.61	.48	-.07								
3 Age	2.3	.62	-.25*	.09							
4 Edu	.89	.64	.11	.05	-.11						
5 Percentage grad	1.65	.64	.04	-.01	-.11	.29**					
6 Edu background	.85	.86	.07	.05	.08	.13	.13				
7 Mindfulness	46.26	16.46	-.08	.01	.09	-.17	-.02	-.01	(.76)		
8 Happiness	8.22	2.59	.24**	-.12	.15	-.14	-.22	.03	.00	(.86)	
9 Satisfaction	9.90	3.60	.03	.14	.08	-.09	-.06	.12	.49**	.19*	(.63)

Note. N = 101. Cronbach’s alphas are presented in brackets on the diagonal. Age (in years): 18-21 was coded as 1, 21–25 was coded as 2, more than 25 was coded as 3. Gender: Male was coded as 1 and female was coded as 0. Education level: graduates were coded as 0 postgraduates were coded as 1, Diploma holder was coded as 2. Percentage in graduation /last degree were coded as 45-55 as 0, 55-65 as 1, 65 -75 as 2, more than 75 as 3. Educational background: science was coded as 0, arts was coded as 1 and others was coded as 2. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01.

**Table 2 Regression Analysis**

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	b	SE	B	t	Sig.
Mindfulness	Happiness	.01	.00	-.01	.00	.01	.01	.04	.965
Mindfulness	Job satisfaction	.52	.28	.26	.11	.01	.49	5.72	.000
Happiness	Job satisfaction	.19	.03	.02	.27	.13	.19	2.26	.049

Source : data analysis

**Satisfaction demonstrated a positive and moderate correlation with mindfulness of the employees.**

tend to be more satisfied. Organizational mindfulness was positively associated with the dependent variable, i.e., employee satisfaction. Organizational mindfulness was able to account for 24 % (R<sup>2</sup> = .24) of the variance of employee satisfaction. the value tells us that the predictor (Organizational mindfulness) is having positive relationship with the dependent variable (Table 2). According to regression analysis (Table 2) the organizational mindfulness is a significant

predictor of employee satisfaction. The standardized beta value for mindfulness is .49 which shows that it has considerable impact. When we have taken happiness as a predictor variable, we found that happiness was accounting for 26% of variance in perceived job satisfaction. Beta value (.21) tells us that happiness is also having significant positive impact on the value of perceived job satisfaction (Table 2).

The model summary in Table 2 gives R, R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, the standard error of estimate (SE), F change and corresponding significance levels. In the regression model, job satisfaction is pre-

dicted from workplace mindfulness of employees. This output shows that workplace mindfulness explains 24% of the variance in job satisfaction for this sample.  $R^2$  is close to adjusted  $R^2$  because of only one independent variable. Since there is only one model, “Sig F Change” is the inclusive worth of the model. Significant F statistics indicates the significance of the overall model. Correlation between average scores of workplace mindfulness and their respective job satisfaction was 0.49 at the p value of 0.00. A potential explanation of this finding is that mindfulness which we identified as an important mechanism may have a stronger effect on satisfaction. Supporting this idea, the present data revealed that zero-order correlations of surface acting were lower with job satisfaction than with happiness.

### Hypothesis Testing

The correlations between and descriptive statistics for the variables in the study are shown in Table 1. As expected, mindfulness is significantly correlated with the happiness and job satisfaction of employees.

### Hypothesis 1

As shown in Table 1 and Table 2 neither the relationship between mindfulness and happiness was supported nor the regression coefficient for mindfulness was significant. Thus, there was insignificant relationship between mindfulness and happiness of employees; therefore, the first hypothesis was rejected.

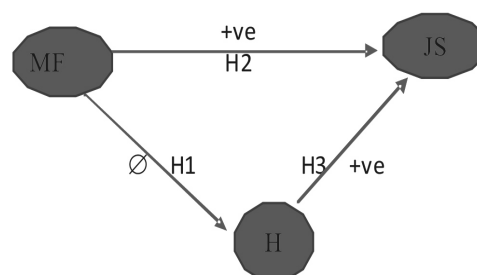
### Hypothesis 2

We found support for hypothesis 2, which states that the interaction of mindfulness significantly predicts job satisfaction in the Indian context. This means that higher scores on mindfulness in employees are decisive for enhancing the various factors of satisfaction of Indian employees.

### Hypothesis 3

In hypothesis 3 we searched the relationship between happiness and job satisfaction. The result (Table 2) indicates a positive and significant relationship between happiness and job satisfaction. Happiness also worked as a predictor for job satisfaction of employees as the regression shows a significant and positive beta value.

Fig. 2 Results of Analysis



MF: Mindfulness, H: Happiness and JS: Job Satisfaction

### Conclusion

Employees are the most important source for organizational success and this study examined the relationship of mindfulness and happiness and their effect on employees' job satisfaction in service sector. Our findings reciprocated the

positive results found in mindfulness studies within organizational settings (Hulsheger et al. 2013; Leroy et al. 2013). It is proved that mindfulness and happiness of employees play their role significantly in enhancing job satisfaction of employees which in turn augments the job-related outcomes in the organizations. Therefore, the study maintains that mindfulness and happiness of employees are potential indicators of employee satisfaction.

Though our results showed that mindfulness and happiness of employees were not significantly related for the targeted population whereas earlier researches proved that mindfulness is positively and significantly correlated with happiness-related constructs (psychological well-being) (Eollis-Walker & Colosimo, 2010; Choi, Karremans & Barendregt, 2012). Our findings show that the happiness of Indian employees is not significantly stimulated by their mindfulness, but it has the capability to affect their satisfaction towards their job. The study contributes to improvement in awareness of the application of mindfulness in the place of work. This study offers a useful message to industrial–organizational counselors about mindfulness interventions that can strengthen the job-related outcomes and that mindfulness can influence and foster positive employee attitudes. This study offers further understanding by testing if mindfulness of employees impacts on their job-related outcomes e.g., productivity, organizational citizenship etc. in the Indian context. This study finds that mindfulness has the ability to impact job related outcomes. It can influence and

foster positive employee’s decision-making ability.

Though the findings offer some new insights in to the Indian context, the research has its own limitations as the study examined perceived behaviors of individual at only one point in time and used the self-report method. The study has the further limitation of the same source bias; data for all the variables were collected only from the employees. Future research can be done by considering leader and subordinate data sets e.g., mindfulness of leader and its impacts on employee’s job outcome. It would be helpful for future researchers to conduct similar testing with modifications such as ‘other-rating’ rather than ‘self-rating’ instruments. Additionally, an extended and more representative sample which includes respondents from all walks of life, is recommended for future studies. Future research on employee outcomes other than job satisfaction such as commitment, employee engagement etc. should be taken to predict the organizational outcome.

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