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## Original article

# Working happiness and employee engagement at Publishing Company., Ltd

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**Background:** The purposes of this research were to study work happiness, employee engagement, and related factors in employees at a medium Publishing Co.,Ltd.

**Objectives:** To study work happiness, employee engagement and related factors that contribute to work happiness of permanent employees at a medium Publishing Co., Ltd. in Bangkok.

**Methods:** Data were collected from 124 employees a medium Publishing Co., Ltd. The questionnaire included general information, work happiness questionnaire, Corporate Engagement Questionnaire and the Patient Health Questionnaire - 9 (PHQ-9). The data were analyzed by Descriptive Statistics, unpaired *t* - test, One-way ANOVA, Spearman's correlation co-efficiency and multiple liner regression.

**Results:** Most of the subjects had high level of work happiness (50.8%), high employee engagement (64.5%). There was a statistically significant relationship between work happiness and employee engagement ( $P < 0.001$ ) and correlation coefficient was 0.788.

**Conclusion:** Employees of a medium Publishing had high level of work happiness and high employee engagement. The significant associated factors with work happiness were education level, received praise from their superiors, marital status, revenue, physical illness, depression, and stressful event. The predictive factors of work happiness were education level, received praise from superiors and stressful event.

**Keywords:** Work happiness, engagement, employee engagement.

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The working environment of the present day is filled with digital disruption, stirring up changes and competitions, allowing the birth of various new types of business.<sup>(1)</sup> This affects existing businesses because the new digital based ones are better able to serve consumers in terms of convenience and speed, resulting in fierce competition and direct negative blow to them. One of the many industries that endure this impact the most is printing and publishing. Faced with this new and daunting challenge, the entrepreneurs and their subordinates need to adjust accordingly.<sup>(2)</sup> This change to ensure survival, growth, and well-being of the company and the workers in such a competitive environment will require cooperation from all employees. Therefore, their happiness and employee

engagement hold tremendous importance as factors for the company's propulsion into the future.

An idea proposed by ChakBunma S, *et al.*<sup>(3)</sup> states that "A positive environment creates positive performance-related behaviors, improves a helpful attitude towards others, and allows inductive reasoning, more efficient decision-making, greater cooperation and the use of more successful negotiation strategies." This is the reason why the researcher is interested in studying the joy of working, employee engagement, and relating factors of the employees of a medium Publishing Co., Ltd. with the hope that this piece of research will contribute to the formation and development of corporate culture allowing the growth of a happier and more successful corporation in the highly competitive society of today. The objective of this investigation was to study the work happiness, employee engagement and related factors that contribute to work happiness of permanent employees at a medium Publishing Co., Ltd

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## Materials and methods

The study has been approved by Institutional Review Board, the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University (IRB no. 379/61). This research is a cross-sectional descriptive research. The sample population were 142 permanent employees and operational employees at a medium Publishing Co., Ltd. in Bangkok. Due to the small sample size and definite number of subjects the researcher had utilized Krejcie and Morgan's table for sample sizes<sup>(4)</sup> to approximate the proportions of the population and designate that the proportions of characteristics that are of interest in this study is valued at 0.5. The acceptable discrepancy was at 5.0% and the confidence level was at 95.0%. Due to the fact that the entire population was small and to minimize the likelihood of participants declining to the submit the surveys, the researcher decided to collect data in everyone in the population. The Human Resource Department of the Publishing gave the full opportunity for data collection which was conducted with sufficient information given to the participants, the employees of the Publishing aged between 18 - 60 years who were able to read, write Thai language with Thai nationality; they were assigned by the administration of the Publishing to comply on the objective of the research and the research methodology. They were also given time liberally to decide if they would like to participate before accepting to join the study.

Data submission was done via a box so the subjects were confident that the researcher cannot identify them. There are 3 instrument used in this research, namely:

**Section 1:** The employee joy of working survey created by Phattharayuttawat S.<sup>(5)</sup> according to Frederick Herzberg's Theory of Motivation.<sup>(6)</sup> There are 23 items as follows:

Happiness levels in working are divided into sections.

Average score	Interpretation
4.15 - 5.00	Highest level of happiness in working
3.51 - 4.50	High level of happiness in working
2.51 - 3.50	Moderate level of happiness in working
1.51 - 2.50	Low level of happiness in working
1.00 - 1.50	Very low level of happiness in working

The confidence and accuracy has Cronbach's alpha internal consistency at 0.89, an odd-even coefficient accuracy value of 0.85, and the total item

correlation is between 0.36 - 0.79 according to the study on work happiness and employee engagement in one import and distribution company by Kaewchaisa N.<sup>(7)</sup>

**Section 2.** The survey of employee engagement by Kongkrapan M.<sup>(8)</sup> The survey consists of 11 items, each item has a 5 level rating scale from highest, high, moderate, low, lowest. The average results will be interpreted into 5 categories.

The average from the data will be used to interpret the survey into 5 levels.

$$\frac{\text{The highest score} - \text{The lowest score}}{\text{number of levels}} = \frac{5 - 1}{5}$$

The cut points are as follows:

Average score	Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	Highest level of organizational commitment
3.41 - 4.20	High level of organizational commitment
2.61 - 3.40	Moderate level of organizational commitment
1.81 - 2.60	Low level of organizational commitment
1.00 - 1.80	Very low level of organizational commitment

The confidence and accuracy has Cronbach's alpha internal consistency at 0.91 and a factor loading of 0.41 - 0.92 according to the study on work happiness and employee engagement in one import and distribution company by Kaewchaisa N.<sup>(7)</sup>

**Section 3.** Patient Health Questionnaire - 9 (PHQ-9)<sup>(9)</sup>, which is a self-rating depression screening tool consisting of 9 items according to the criteria in the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder fourth edition)

The total score possible ranges from 0 to 27. According to a study by Lortrakul M, *et al.*<sup>(10)</sup> it was found that those who scored 9 and above are diagnosed with depression (sensitivity = 0.84, specificity = 0.77)

## Statistical analysis

Data analysis via descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD) unpaired student *t* - test, One-way ANOVA, Spearman's correlation coefficient and multiple liner) regression and multiple liner regression was used to describe the common quality of the Publishing employees.  $P < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

**Results**

This study was a descriptive study done by conducting a survey on the employees of the Publishing. There were 142 copies handed out and 124 were responded, which is 87.3%.

**Information on personal factors:** From 124 people who answered the survey, the majority of them were female (81.5%), aged between 26 - 30 years old (27.4%), graduated bachelor’s degree (84.7%), were single (74.2%), had family members they needed to care for (76.6%), did not drink alcohol (62.9%), and did not suffer from depressed mood (77.4%).

Occupational factors showed that most of the employees were in the operational positions (80.6%), have worked there for less than 3 years (50.8%), were rarely absent from work (91.1%). Many employees have received praise from their superiors (90.3%), thought that they were in a suitable work environment (96.0%), and believed they had adequate company welfare (99.2%). Psycho-social factors show that most participants were not subjected to stressful situations (54.0%). Although, most stressful situations

caused by the work itself (41.9%), and superiors and colleagues (8.0%), respectfully.

**Levels of happiness in working of permanent employees of the Publishing**

The happiness of working score in the Publishing employees are high levels = 50.8% with an average score = 3.66 (SD = 0.62 ), minimum score = 3 and maximum score = 5.

**Level of employee engagement of the Publishing employees**

Over the half of the subjects have high level of employee engagement = 64.5% with an average score = 4.11 (SD = 0.58), minimum score = 3, maximum score = 5

**Factors related to happiness in working**

The correlation analysis between the personal factors and the scores of happiness in working with unpaired student *t* - test and One-way ANOVA is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Factors that contribute to happiness at work.

Factors	Scores of happiness in working			
	n	Mean	SD	P - value
Educated higher than bachelor’s degree	13	91.23	13.04	0.033
No (personal) illness	100	84.59	11.74	0.035
Marries/with a partner	28	87.85	12.85	0.011
Not depressed	96	84.90	11.55	0.013
Received praise from superiors	112	84.33	11.15	0.017
Sufficient with extra to save	51	86.02	11.00	0.020
No stressful situations	61	88.19	11.82	0.001
Gender	101	83.01	11.56	0.297
Family member to care for	95	84.39	12.15	0.075
Position of work	106	83.16	11.05	0.461
Work responsibilities	60	81.93	11.44	0.093
Years of work	63	81.79	9.717	0.137
Vacations taken	104	83.72	11.72	0.676
Being absent from work	113	83.15	11.74	0.342
Sick leaves taken	38	86.29	10.80	0.066
Work setting	119	83.74	11.42	0.326
Company welfare	123	83.59	11.44	0.51
Drink alcohol	78	82.46	11.86	0.367
Age	34	84.00	12.14	0.264

**Table 2.** Illustrates the factors related to happiness at work analyzed with Spearman's Coefficient.

Factors	Happiness in working	
	<i>r</i>	<i>P</i> - value
Depression	-0.479	<0.001
Employee engagement	0.788	<0.001
Stressful situations	-0.432	<0.001

**Table 3.** Analysis of factors that predict happiness in working in employees of the Publishing by analyzing multiple liner regression.

Factors	R <sup>2</sup>	B	SE	<i>P</i> - value	95%CI
Stressful situations	0.198	10.03	1.764	<0.001	6.54 - 13.53
Education higher than bachelor's degree	0.252	2.626	0.969	0.007	0.72 - 4.53
Receiving praise from superiors	0.283	6.885	0.962	0.023	0.96 - 12.80

Table 2 shows that the factor with positive correlation with happiness in working is employee engagement, and those with negative correlation with happiness in working are depressed moods, and stressful situations.

Table 3 conveys that stressful situations can explain changes in happiness in working levels 19.8%. Adding education level can change the average of happiness in working level 25.2%. Adding praise from superiors can affect change in happiness in working levels 28.3%.

## Discussion

According to the study it has been found that nearly all the 124 employees of the publishing company were happy in their work. Many factors of working for the company make them happy which boosts their work and increases the success of the company because the staff work harder and take pride in the company. This helps the company reach its objectives and goals.

The difference in education level significantly and statistically affects the employees' happiness in working. Those with higher education than bachelor's degree have higher levels of happiness at work than those with bachelor's degree or lower education levels, which conforms to the study by Sawaengphol N.<sup>(11)</sup> It was found that those with higher education are assigned more challenging tasks and more workloads, allowing them more opportunity to advance in their career, which consequently allowing an access to

higher income and higher levels of happiness in working.

The difference in marital status has a statistically significant effect on levels of happiness at work. Those who are married or with a partner have a higher level of happiness at work than those who are single, divorced, or widowed. This coincides with a prior study conducted by Kaewchaisa N.<sup>(7)</sup> which found that different marital statuses have an effect on happiness in working; having a partner enables the worker to have a consultant and someone who listens when personal and professional problems arise, relieving them of stress and boredom of working. Moreover, it allows them to have a friend as they go through obstacles in life.

Those with enough income and extra saving are happier in working than those with enough income without extra income to save, and those with insufficient income and in debt. This conforms with a theory that Seligman M.<sup>(12)</sup> proposed that one of the factors that contribute to happiness in people are life situations and exterior factors such as wealth, looks, health, marital status, education, heartbreaks, salary raises, promotions, or losing one's job. Thus, income sufficiency is an indicator of financial status, resulting in happier employees than those with insufficient income.

Employees who have no personal illnesses are happier in working than those with personal illnesses. This finding matches up with the results of a study conducted by Buangasawakul K.<sup>(13)</sup> who proposed

the idea of the Happy Workplace 8, one of the 8 is happy body, referring to good health. When one is healthy one is more likely to be happy and ready to take on problems and obstacles that may arise. This enables the employees without personal illnesses to be happier in working than those who are with them.

Unsurprisingly, there is a contradictory effect between the depression and the happiness in working. Those who don't have depressed moods tend to be happier in working than those who do. This result is similar to the result in a study conducted by Thipraksa N.<sup>(14)</sup>, which stated that working while free of unhappiness, in a good mood, in a healthy body and a peaceful heart would allow a person to better enjoy their work and responsibilities. On the other hand, the depressed mood may cause somatic, emotional, and cognitive symptoms. These symptoms greatly impair the employee's daily functions, for example, lessened food consumption, weight loss, insomnia, loss of hope, depression, self-doubt, guilt and constant anxiety.<sup>(10)</sup> As a result, they are less likely to face their daily obstacles, leading to lessened levels of happiness in working.

Those who have been praised by their superiors are more likely to be happy in working than those who don't. This result is in accordance with the results from a study conducted by Ketkaew P.<sup>(15)</sup>, which stated that happy experiences is a key part in working, because happiness is a form of positive energy which brings about joy and liveliness. Praise from superiors is a happy experience which sparks in the employees, positive emotions, and consequently, more energy and determination to create work of value and quality.

Stressful situations have a statistically significant effect on the employees' happiness in working. Those without stressful situations are happier, which matches up to results in a study conducted by Sae Chua S.<sup>(16)</sup> Who found that finding happiness in working means one has to find a work-life balance, free of stressful situations, resulting in effective working and happiness.

Finally, the happiness in working has a positive correlation with employee engagement. There is an agreement between the finding of this study and the result in a study conducted by Jitteerapap N.<sup>(17)</sup> who explained that if an organization place significance on creating happiness in working, and having employees who work together harmoniously, would result in higher employee engagement.

The results of this study can be used and developed as guidelines for organizations to care for the happiness of their employees and reinforce their

employee engagement by creating policies and plans to improve organizational cultures, in order to improve the organization into a happy and successful one, ready for the high competition environment of today.

This study was solely conducted on employees of this Publishing, the results found here are not representative of other establishments.

## Conclusions

Employees of this Publishing had high level of work happiness and high employee engagement. The significantly associated factors with work happiness were: education level, receiving praise from their superiors, marital status, revenue, illness, depression, and stressful event. The predictive factors of work happiness were: education level, received praise from superiors and stressful event.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors, hereby, declare no conflict of interest.

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