

Think Happy Be Happy: Salesperson's Personal Happiness and Flourishing

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Abstract

Although the role of positive emotions is important in sales, personal happiness remains understudied in the selling context. Grounded in broaden-and-build theory, this study aims to examine the relationships among personal happiness, job involvement, job satisfaction and salesperson flourishing. For salespeople, the new demands of a connected world have largely blurred the boundaries between their personal life and work life. It has allowed emotions from their personal life to spill over into their workplace. Data from 137 salespeople in the retail context in India lend support for the proposed serial mediation model. The authors propose that the influence of personal happiness on a salesperson flourishing is mediated by job involvement and job satisfaction. Results of this study shows that personal happiness has a direct influence on the salesperson's flourishing and is effective only through the mediating influence of job satisfaction and not of job involvement. This study extends the broaden-and-build theory by proposing that personal happiness may influence flourishing at work. The findings illustrate the need for a renewed focus on salesperson's personal emotions, especially in today's connected workplace where the boundaries between personal and work life are shrinking

Keywords

Personal happiness, salesperson flourishing, job involvement, job satisfaction,

Introduction

COVID-19 has changed selling as a profession and a function. Proliferation of the technology reduced the in-person sales conversations to online, reduced the travel and forced the salesforce to be with family (Fisher et al., 2020). At the same time, technology also brought in personal and professional work interruptions (Ter Hoeven & Van Zoonen, 2015), and declined the traditional work-life boundaries. For example, sales organizations have been caught by surprise with many changes in the COVID times that has forced the work-from-home (WFH) salesforce to adopt new digital tools (Guenzi & Habel, 2020). This has put them under anxiety (Rangarajan et al., 2021). More so, it has eroded well-being and positivity (Möhring et al., 2021). The salesforce should be aware of where their stressors emerge and take care of their well-being.

Friend et al. (2016) consider that studying positivity among salespeople helps increase the field command on the sales domain of what drives relevant attitudes, behaviours and performance, offsets the high cost of salesperson turnover, improves cross-functional sales interfaces and enriches customer relations. Studies demonstrated that positivity encourages performance at the workplace (Luthans et al., 2010). It mediates in the way leaders solve several problems (Avery et al., 2011) and in the overall organizational performance.

Positive states and emotions help in minimizing the effect of stressors and helps the salesforce to be more customer centric (Khwaja & Yang, 2018) and ethical oriented (Sridhar & Lyngdoh, 2019), and to improve their performance (Spring, 2018). They facilitate prosocial behaviour and perceptions of effectiveness (De Neve et al., 2013). Several studies identified that salespersons' well-being influences

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their service behaviours (White, 2010), ability to adapt and be creative (Lyngdoh et al., 2018), and performance (De Neve et al., 2013). Despite such credible evidence, sales context remains elusive of application of positivity. This article responds to the call by several scholars (Cameron & Dutton, 2003; Chawla et al., 2020; Dutton et al., 2005).

Personal happiness is a subjective or hedonistic viewpoint where the focus is on pleasure being present and negative emotions being absent. Flourishing is a eudaimonia view (Fowers, 2016) where it deals about an individual's way of living in whatever circumstances. It involves developing capabilities for a worthwhile goal (Annas, 2011). Further, flourishing includes both subjective well-being and psychological well-being (Diner et al., 2010). There is a consensus that a happy salesperson is more productive and content. This, in turn, rubs off onto the daily activities (Lyngdoh et al., 2018) that enhance the salesperson's flourishing. Despite this relationship between personal happiness and flourishing being important, it has received little attention. We propose that personal happiness leads to the building of job resources and repertoires (Fredrickson, 2003) that helps the salesforce to involve more in the job and thus find meaning and satisfaction in their job. This, in turn, helps the salesforce to flourish. Being immersed in one's job is related to the perception of rich job experiences and positive mental states (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Such states lead to job satisfaction (Sonnentag et al., 2012). Ample psychological resources may help to reduce the tension caused by work pressures, which are adversely linked to job satisfaction (Macklin et al., 2006). Positive resources out of job satisfaction enhance ego resilience (Cohn et al., 2009) and help in flourishing (Rautenbach, 2015).

We use the broaden-and-build theory to explain the relationships among variables in the study. This theory is a useful framework to understand an individual's generative behaviours at workplace (Bakker, 2008). Several recent papers have applied this theory to sales contexts, such as Anaza et al. (2018), Sridhar and Teidor (2019), Lussier and Hartmann (2017) and Lyngdoh et al. (2018). A more detailed explanation of the relationships using the theory is provided in the hypotheses section. In the initial part of the article, a brief overview of the broaden-and-build theory and the lead constructs—personal happiness and flourishing—is provided. Post the section on hypotheses development, the article discusses the method, analysis of data and the results.

Broaden-and-build Theory

According to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive emotions help extend an individual's thought-action reservoirs and provide a boost to the

development of long-term personal resources ranging from physiological to intellectual (Fredrickson et al., 2008). The resources built using positive emotions are durable and often function as reserves to be used either in later stages or in different emotional states. Thus, by broadening people's mental states and creating sustainable resources, positive emotions transform people for good and help them survive and flourish within this complex world (Fredrickson, 2013). Although the theory originally focused on emotions, its application has been recently extended to positive states such as flow (Sridhar & Lyngdoh, 2019), subjective well-being (Lyngdoh et al. 2018), flourishing (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), optimism (Friend et al., 2016) and resilience (Luthans et al., 2006).

The broaden-and-build theory indicates that positive emotions, though transient, can broaden the range of perceptions, memory and actions and can build up psychological, social and physical resources (Fredrickson, 2001). By broadening possibilities, salespeople can retain a flexible attitude towards problem-solving and can adapt to shifting consumer expectations and business conditions (Avey et al., 2008). Also, they can align themselves with higher purposes or meanings, as frequent experiences of positive emotions by salespeople expands their attention to include efforts for fulfilling their aspirations (Fredrickson, 2001), such as for targeting large accounts or winning 'salesperson of the year' awards.

Lussier and Hartmann (2017) analysed the relationship involving psychological resourcefulness and customer-oriented actions of salespeople to understand sales performance and customer satisfaction, on the foundations of the broaden-and-build theory applied to sales research. In a similar vein, Lyngdoh et al. (2018) demonstrated that salespeople's personal happiness broadens and builds their coping strategies and adaptive selling behaviours.

Personal Happiness

Personal happiness is a positive emotional state devoid of negative emotions such as anxiety, fear or anger (Diener et al., 2009). It is subjective in nature (Cropanzano & Wright 2001; Diener 2000; Medvedev & Landhuis. 2018) and involves experience of frequent positive affect, high life satisfaction and infrequent negative affect (Diener & Larsen 1993; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005, p. 115; Roessler & Gloor 2021).

Happy salespeople are more productive (Salas-Vallina et al., 2020) and have an improved sense of job security and organizational citizenship behaviour (George, 1991). Agnihotri et al. (2016) found that salespeople's happiness positively influences every aspect of impression management

capability such as reporting, detection of nonverbal information and interactions, thereby improving overall sales performance. In a similar vein, Lyngdoh et al. (2018) found that salespeople high on subjective well-being develop a greater adaptive selling ability and creativity.

Flourishing

Flourishing involves living within an optimal range of human functioning and relating to goodness, generativity, growth and resilience (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). It is a state and it evolves by engaging in an activity that one's potential can be expressed or actualized (Rasmussen, 1999). At a personal level, when in such positive state, the brain releases dopamine and serotonin that helps stabilize the mood and overall demeanour. It helps in reducing the ill effects of blood pressure and is thus related to longevity (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

Salespeople in a positive state are self-driven, perform well in their job and are likely to succeed. They are likely to get their co-workers' and seniors' support at the workplace (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In a state of positivity, a salesperson widens attention, broadens repertoires and is creative.

Hypotheses Development

We propose that a salesperson's personal happiness directly influences their flourishing in the workplace (Figure 1).

Moreover, the influence of personal happiness on flourishing is mediated by job involvement and job satisfaction. The hypotheses for these direct and indirect effects are developed in the following section as a serial mediation model. A two-mediator serial mediation model is one in which the mediators are sequentially related. The model has one antecedent variable (personal happiness), two serial mediators (job involvement and job satisfaction) and one outcome variable (flourishing).

Personal Happiness and the Salesperson's Flourishing

Flourishing is a higher order eudemonic well-being, which is distinct from hedonic well-being or happiness (Keyes, 2014). In other words, a happy salesperson cannot be termed as flourishing because in such state there is evidence of dedication, intent, competence, personal development and meaningful social interactions (Huppert & So, 2013). These augment interactions and feelings of association with others, notably customers, peers and other stakeholders. People who flourish accept themselves as they are and have purpose in life. They transform and navigate their personal circumstances, aspire to maximise their ability and sustain positive interpersonal relationships (Diedericks & Rothmann, 2013). They also embrace the differences among individuals, trust others' abilities, consider society important, view their actions as significant to others and enjoy interactions with others (Keyes, 2007).

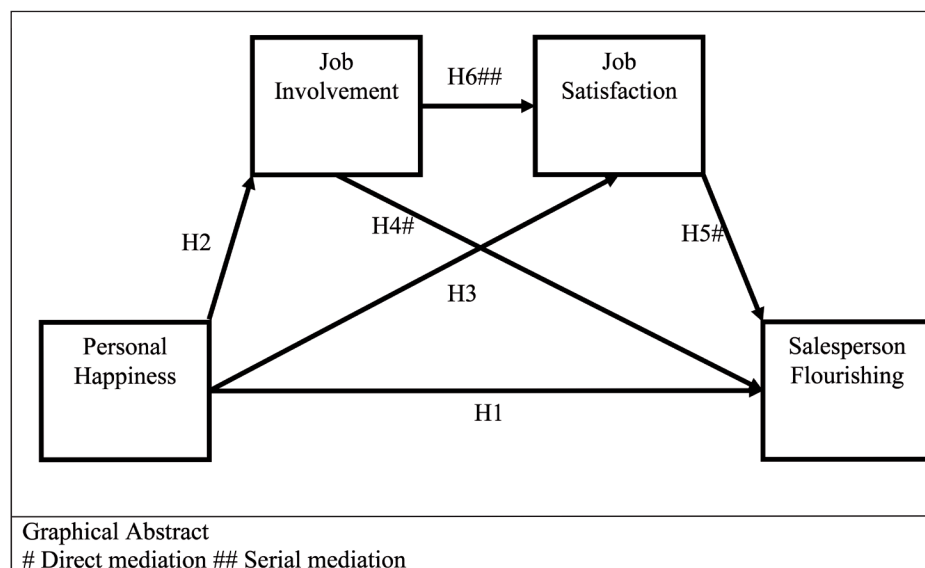


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

Source: The authors.

In general, when a salesperson is happy, positive emotions increase. In turn the sense of ‘oneness’ among salespeople towards their colleagues and customers grows (Hejmadi et al., 2008). It also boosts their confidence with contacts (Dunn & Schweitzer 2005), enhances their capabilities to work with co-workers and customers (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005), and amplifies their previous high-quality connections (Glynn & Dutton, 2007). The development of closer and more satisfying contact with other salespeople may create perceptions of more meaningful work, which in turn makes work inherently rewarding, fostering greater well-being (Rego et al., 2010). Furthermore, the notion of ‘build’ suggests that positive feelings contribute to the growth trajectories under which individuals develop personal resources over time. Thus, positive emotions like happiness over a longer term will help build resources and will enhance salespeople’s psychological and social resources to flourish and function optimally in the sales environment. Hence, we posit the following hypothesis:

H_1 : Personal happiness will increase the salesperson’s flourishing.

Mediation Through Job Involvement

Job involvement has been identified as a psychological affiliation or dedication to an individual’s job (Kanungo, 1982) as well as the internalization of job ideals or the importance of work for an individual’s self-worth (Chughtai, 2008). It is the degree to ‘which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one’s present job’ (Paullay et al., 1994, p. 224).

In line with the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2003), positive emotions out of happiness expand salespeople’s repertoire of thought–action and build lasting personal resources. This indicates that emotional states such as happiness can lead to job involvement as they broaden thought–action repertoire and contribute to the building of psychological capacities such as efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. As happiness helps build resilience and lowers burnout (Gloria et al., 2013), salespeople can get more involved in their job. It may reverse the dysfunctional influence of negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2003) associated with burnout and the demands of a sales job (Lee & Ashforth, 1996), thus aiding them in getting involved (Rothbard 2001) in their sales role. It can create a self-reinforcing upward spiral of outcomes leading to greater levels of job involvement (Salanova et al., 2005). Hence, we advance the following hypothesis:

H_2 : Personal happiness will increase the salesperson’s job involvement.

Employees who are involved are passionate and excited regarding their job, and they are fully absorbed in it, to the point that time appears to go by when they are working (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008). According to Rich et al. (2010), employees who showed higher levels of involvement were often more polite, courteous and supportive to their co-workers. Happiness leads to positive and meaningful existence (Keyes, 2007). Involved workers tend to think that they will generally experience good results in life (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013). Involvement in one’s work may be thus leading to flourishing because of autonomy, sense of meaning and purpose. Thus, drawing from H_2 , we argue that job involvement would mediate the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing because positive states enable job involvement, which in turn promotes individual flourishing.

H_3 : Job involvement positively mediates the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing.

Mediation Through Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a favourable mental state that represents an affective reaction to the work (Pomirleanu & Mariadoss, 2015). It is indicated by the result of an appraisal of feelings and characteristics (Robins & Judge, 2009; Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is associated positively with corporate engagement and performance and negatively with turnover intentions, leaving propensity and role conflict (Boles et al., 2003; Brown & Peterson, 1993).

According to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive emotions out of states like happiness will enable open and expansive ways of thinking that result in developing close social ties and acquisition of relevant skills and resources. Resources allow individuals to adapt effectively to tough life events and reap the benefits of life’s rewards (Cohn et al., 2009), and as a result, resources have been correlated to positive satisfaction assessments (e.g., Brough et al., 2005; Hunter et al., 2010). Cohn et al. (2009), for example, indicated that having positive emotions on a regular basis enhances ego resilience—a psychological resource that strengthens one’s capacity to cope with stressors, thus improving life satisfaction. Personal happiness can also provide valuable strength (or energy) to emotionally depleted salespeople. Research also shows that personal happiness or subjective well-being can influence motivational processes and may, in fact, be a resource for engaging in pursuing meaningful goals. Thus, according to the broaden-and-build hypothesis, positive emotions arising from personal happiness are likely to improve job satisfaction by generating new personal resources.

H_4 : Personal happiness will increase the salesperson's job satisfaction.

Flourishing at work refers to an employee's desired state of well-being, which can be attained by positive interactions and successful management of job-related considerations (Rautenbach, 2015). For the salesperson to flourish, they must be satisfied with their work (May et al., 2004). According to spillover hypothesis, one life domain's experiences have a corresponding impact on other life domain's experiences (Judge et al., 2002; Judge & Watanabe, 1994). We argue based on the spillover personal happiness phenomenon that salespeople who are personally happy have high job satisfaction and tend to find their jobs meaningful, develop mastery and share their experiences with others, thus cultivating positive social relationships that involve engagement with others. Therefore, we argue that the salesperson's job satisfaction positively influences their flourishing. Thus, drawing from H^4 , we postulate that job satisfaction would mediate the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing since positive affect enables job satisfaction, which in turn promotes workplace flourishing. We therefore suggest the subsequent hypothesis:

H_5 : Job satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing.

Serial Mediation Through Job Involvement and Job Satisfaction

We also propose serial mediation effect of job involvement and job satisfaction on the relationship between personal happiness and salesperson flourishing based on the argument that job involvement by itself may not fully explain the flourishing of salespeople. The widespread opinion that workplace engagement leads to favourable work and organizational variables (such as job satisfaction and performance) is supported by empirical evidence (Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003). Job involvement is represented by complete engrossment and engagement in work. Being immersed in one's job is like what has been termed 'flow': a condition of optimal experience that is marked by concentrated attention; a calm head, mind and body; effortless concentrating; total awareness' lack of self-consciousness' the illusion of time; and inner pleasure (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Job involvement has been linked to rewarding job experiences and mental states (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and it is seen to be related to favourable job outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Sonnentag et al., 2012). Saleh and Hosek (1976) indicated that job involvement will directly influence an employee's feelings towards a job. Therefore, job satisfaction can be construed because of job involvement.

Employees that are involved are more likely to build up adequate job-related resources (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001). Ample psychological resources may help to reduce the tension caused by work pressures, which are adversely linked to job satisfaction (Macklin et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Several empirical studies have indicated that job involvement promotes job satisfaction (Alarcon & Edwards, 2011; Giallonardo et al., 2010). Therefore, we anticipate that the relationship of personal happiness and salespeople flourishing is sequentially mediated by job involvement and job satisfaction. Hence, we hypothesize the following:

H_6 : Job involvement and job satisfaction will serially mediate the personal happiness and flourishing relationship.

Methodology

Sampling

Data was collected from sales professionals representing a wide range of retail organizations in India. The sales professionals worked in stores that sold a wide range of consumer goods such as major appliances, electronics, furniture and clothing apparel. The participants were recruited by seeking permission from the HR and store manager, and those that were consented to participate were asked to complete the surveys either before store opening or just before store closing. The participants were asked to provide demographic information and respond to survey questions, which included measures of the personal happiness, flourishing, job involvement and job satisfaction. The respondents received personalized invitations to complete the survey. Of the 200 subjects that were initially contacted, a total of 150 participated in our study, with a response rate of nearly 75%. There were 137 participants who completed the survey with 13 incomplete surveys. Among the respondents, 73% were male and 27% were female; all held graduate or advanced degrees and had an average sales experience of 2.06 years. There was no substantial variation in demographic profiles or response patterns between the early and late respondents. Table 1 depicts the sample characteristics.

Measures

Scales from the literature were used for measuring the constructs. All items in the study were scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7, with 1 being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree. Personal happiness was measured using the five-item scale 'satisfaction with life' developed by Diener et al. (1985). The salespersons'

flourishing was measured using the eight-item scale developed by Diener et al. (2010). A six-point scale designed by Churchill et al. (1979) was used to assess job satisfaction. Finally, job involvement was measured using a three-item scale adapted from Lodahl and Kejner (1965).

Analytical Approach

We adopted a two-stage analysis approach. The overall measurement model was evaluated using Smart PLS 3.0 (Henseler et al., 2009) in the first stage. The measurement model analysis indicated the reliability and validity of variables. In the second stage, IBM SPSS 20 PROCESS macro was employed to perform conditional process analysis (Serial mediation) using latent variable scores as input from a Smart PLS analysis (Hayes, 2017). It provided accurate validity results and enabled us to simultaneously test both direct and indirect pathways (Hair Jr et al., 2014). We measured the direct and serial mediation effects among personal happiness, job involvement, job satisfaction and flourishing.

Results

Measurement Model Assessment

The measures were evaluated for reliability indications as well as for convergent and discriminant validity. Table 2 shows that the loading of items was significant and exceeded the threshold of 0.50, thus, demonstrating convergent validity. In addition, convergent validity was demonstrated through the values of Cronbach alpha, composite reliabilities and average extracted variance (AVE) reaching the required thresholds (Hair et al., 2012), thus, indicating that the convergent validity is acceptable for the measurement model. Table 2 provides Cronbach alpha, composite reliabilities and AVE for all the constructs.

We used latent variable correlations, square root of AVE and Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio of Correlation (HTMT) to test discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). First, we examined the correlation matrix presented in Table 3 with the square roots of the AVEs presented diagonally. The table shows that the square roots of the AVEs are consistently higher than the off-diagonal correlation values, thereby demonstrating discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2013; Table 3).

Second, the HTMT values were below the suggested level of 0.90, establishing the discriminant validity (Gold et al., 2001). Finally, using bootstrapping, the HTMT inference criteria revealed that none of the values is greater than 0.90, as proposed by Gold et al. (2001). Therefore, based

Table 1: Sample Demographics.

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Respondent Characteristics | | |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 100 | 73% |
| Female | 37 | 27% |
| Education | | |
| Post-graduate | 88 | 64.2% |
| Graduate | 49 | 35.8% |
| Total Sales Experience | | |
| Less than 2 years | 46 | 33.6% |
| 2- 5 years | 80 | 58.4% |
| 6-10 years | 8 | 5.8% |
| More than 10 years | 3 | 2.2% |
| Age | | |
| Less than 25 years | 79 | 57.7% |
| 25- 35 years | 57 | 41.6% |
| 35-45 years | 1 | 0.7% |
| More than 45 years | 0 | 0.0% |

Source: The authors.

on the results in Tables 2, 3 and 4, the measurement model demonstrated both convergent and discriminant validity (Table 4).

We evaluated common method bias (CMB) using variance inflation factors (VIFs) criteria. The occurrence of a VIF greater than 3.3 is proposed as an indication of pathological collinearity and as an indication that a model may be contaminated by common method bias. Therefore, if all VIFs resulting from a full collinearity test are equal to or lower than 3.3, the model can be considered free of CMB. (Kock, 2017). Our analysis revealed the VIF scores ranging from 1.328 to 2.785, which was lower than 3.3 as suggested by Kock (2017). The score indicated that the model is free of CMB.

Hypothesis Testing

PROCESS Model 6 (Hayes, 2017), the serial mediation model, with PLS latent variable data as input, was employed to test the causal direct effects. The mean value of the total item scores was used to represent the constructs. Personal happiness was reported to have a direct, positive and significant influence on flourishing ($b = 0.486$, $p < .0001$), job involvement ($b = 0.251$, $p < .05$), and job satisfaction ($b = 0.347$, $p < .001$). Job involvement was found to have a direct influence on job satisfaction ($b = 0.376$, $p < .001$). However, the effect of job involvement on flourishing was insignificant ($b = -0.012$, $p > .05$). Job satisfaction was found to influence flourishing directly ($b = 0.199$,

Table 2. Scales, Reliability and Convergent Validity.

| Construct and items | Loadings | α | C.R | AVE |
|--|----------|----------|-------|-------|
| Job Involvement | | 0.851 | 0.909 | 0.769 |
| <i>I feel the most important things that happen to me involve my job</i> | 0.886 | | | |
| <i>I feel the major satisfaction in life comes from my job</i> | 0.920 | | | |
| <i>I live, eat, and breathe my job</i> | 0.820 | | | |
| Job Satisfaction | | 0.818 | 0.868 | 0.526 |
| <i>Overall job satisfaction</i> | 0.835 | | | |
| <i>My compensation (salary)</i> | 0.752 | | | |
| <i>Opportunities for advancement</i> | 0.797 | | | |
| <i>Job security</i> | | | | |
| <i>Company policies</i> | 0.719 | | | |
| <i>My supervisor overall</i> | 0.703 | | | |
| <i>My colleagues/workers overall</i> | | | | |
| Flourishing | | 0.886 | 0.906 | 0.548 |
| <i>I lead a purposeful and meaningful life</i> | 0.831 | | | |
| <i>My social relationships are supportive and rewarding</i> | 0.793 | | | |
| <i>I am engaged and interested in my daily activities</i> | 0.755 | | | |
| <i>I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others</i> | 0.760 | | | |
| <i>I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me</i> | 0.656 | | | |
| <i>I am a good person and live a good life</i> | 0.744 | | | |
| <i>I am optimistic about my future</i> | 0.670 | | | |
| <i>People respect me</i> | 0.692 | | | |
| Personal Happiness | | 0.758 | 0.845 | 0.582 |
| <i>In most ways, my life is close to my ideal</i> | 0.841 | | | |
| <i>The conditions of my life are excellent</i> | 0.894 | | | |
| <i>I am satisfied with my life*</i> | | | | |
| <i>So far I have gotten the important things I want in life</i> | 0.916 | | | |
| <i>If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing</i> | 0.683 | | | |

Source: The authors.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity using Fornell–Larcker Criterion.

| Fornell–Larcker Criterion | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Job Involvement | 3.822 | 1.312 | 0.876 | | | |
| 2. Job Satisfaction | 4.323 | 1.001 | 0.466 | 0.762 | | |
| 3. Flourishing | 5.275 | 0.929 | 0.205 | 0.406 | 0.740 | |
| 4. Personal happiness | 4.249 | 1.206 | 0.224 | 0.478 | 0.564 | 0.839 |

Source: The authors.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity using Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio.

| Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| 1. Job Involvement | | | | |
| 2. Job Satisfaction | 0.544 | | | |
| 3. Flourishing | 0.229 | 0.415 | | |
| 4. Personal Happiness | 0.253 | 0.532 | 0.591 | |

Source: The authors.

$p < .05$). Therefore, H_1 , H_2 , H_5 , and H_6 were supported and H_3 was not supported (see Table 5).

We hypothesized that the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing would be mediated by job involvement and job satisfaction, respectively. The mediation

Table 5. Hypothesis testing results - direct effects.

| | Job Involvement | | | Job Satisfaction | | | Flourishing | | |
|--------------------|--|----------|------|---|----------|------|---|----------|------|
| | Coefficient | Std. Err | p | Coefficient | Std. Err | p | Coefficient | Std. Err | P |
| Personal happiness | .251 | .083 | .003 | .347 | .073 | .000 | .486 | .077 | .000 |
| Job Involvement | | | | .376 | .073 | .000 | -.012 | .078 | .872 |
| Job Satisfaction | | | | | | | .199 | .084 | .020 |
| | R ² = .063 F= 9.07, p<.005 | | | R ² = .327 F= 32.64, p<.001 | | | R ² = .356 F= 24.57, p<.001 | | |

Total effect model

| | Flourishing | | |
|--------------------|---|----------|------|
| | Coefficient | Std. Err | P |
| Personal happiness | .571 | .070 | .000 |
| | R ² = .326 F= 65.37, p<.001 | | |

Source: The authors.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing results - mediation effects.

| | Effect. | Std. Err | LLCI-ULCI |
|--|---------|----------|--------------|
| Total Indirect → Personal happiness → Flourishing | .848 | .047 | (.007,.192) |
| 1. Personal happiness → Job Involvement → Flourishing | -.003 | .022 | (-.049,.043) |
| 2. Personal happiness → Job Satisfaction → Flourishing | .069 | .039 | (.004,.161) |
| 3. Personal happiness → Job Involvement → Job Satisfaction → Flourishing | .018 | .013 | (.000,.050) |

Source: The authors.

effects were tested using PROCESS Model 6 (Hayes, 2017), the serial mediation model, with the PLS ‘s latent variable data as input. The bootstrapping technique (with 5,000 resamples) was used to test the statistical significance of the direct and sequential mediation effects. As shown in Table 5, the cumulative indirect effect of personal happiness on flourishing (b = .848, p < .000) was significant. The effect was divided into three partial indirect effects, two of which were significant, as the resulting confidence intervals did not have a zero between them. Job satisfaction positively mediated the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing (c = .004–.161). However, results show insignificant indirect effects of job involvement in the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing (c= .049–.043). Furthermore, results show serial mediation in play, whereby personal happiness influences job involvement, which effects job satisfaction and in-turn influences flourishing (c= .000–.050). Hence, H₅ and H₆ were supported; however, H₄ was not supported.

Discussion

Over the years, the impact of happiness on personal life has increasingly been scrutinized (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

However, there is a dearth of research on how the personal happiness of salespeople spills over into their workplaces. To this end, we sought to examine the consequences of personal happiness experienced by salespeople in their daily lives on positive workplace outcomes. We examined the influence of personal happiness in salespeople on optimal functioning or flourishing in their jobs and the underlying factors that mediated this relationship. Building on positive organizational scholarship and the broaden-and-build theory, our research shows that salespeople with a high degree of personal happiness are likely to be more involved and satisfied with their respective roles and are more likely to flourish than salespeople who have a low level of personal happiness. Our study has also shown that job involvement combined with job satisfaction mediated the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing. These findings offered important theoretical implications for the retailing and positive psychology literature.

Theoretical Implications

Our research provides various contributions to the literature. Prior studies have shown how a positive lens brings new insights to the field of organizational research by directing the attention of scholars toward the positive

constructs instead of the negative (Mills et al., 2013). While conventional psychology helps salespeople to overcome obstacles, few studies have explored how individuals flourish—considering the evidence of positive psychological constructs and their direct impacts on sales outcomes (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). We extended positive psychology theories such as positive organizational scholarship and the broaden-and-build theory to examine the way in which retail salespeople flourish in their jobs.

We advanced a growing body of research that suggests the importance of employee flourishing and its potential to facilitate optimal work-related outcomes. The elevated levels of flourishing indicate a sense of well-being and expertise in carrying out important tasks (Diener et al., 2010). This approach emphasizes improving engagement and productivity because of optimal functioning as well as focuses on personal well-being because of optimal conditions (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). This study thus contributes to the flourishing research by contextualizing it in the research on retail sales.

The extant research on the flourishing has focused mainly on their organizational, group and leadership antecedents. However, very few studies have focused on personal level determinants (Van De Voorde et al., 2012) as antecedents. This study examines whether personal happiness constitutes an important antecedent of flourishing. In general, positive emotions help individuals to withstand pressure and setbacks (Taylor, 1983). Drawing on the broaden-and-build theory, this article suggests that the positive state of mind broadens awareness and builds resources, which facilitates psychological well-being and social well-being in salespeople. Personal happiness is a positive construct, and leads to flourishing, as per the broaden-and-build theory. Especially when the salesforce is in a difficult situation such as competitive pressure, demanding consumer and target pressure, personal happiness helps deal with such situations and flourish (Lewin & Sager, 2009; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Individuals flourish as they witness elevated psychological prosperity through feelings of mastery, thriving, individual development, meaning and purpose of existence (Bono et al., 2012) as well as social prosperity by developing safe and positive relationships with others (Gable et al., 2004). Results of the study supports Fredrickson's (2001) 'moments of truth' link, wherein a positive state evokes further set of positive states and reduces the effect of negative states. An increase in happiness leads to an improvement in flourishing.

Variables related to the affect were used to study different types of salesperson's behaviours (Agnihotri et al., 2016). To this theoretical landscape, we added positive attitudes such as job involvement and job satisfaction as mediators in a model that helps to understand the relationship

between personal happiness and the salesperson's flourishing. The findings indicated that job involvement and job satisfaction play a significant mediating role between personal happiness and flourishing.

Contrary to our expectations, we found that the salesperson's job involvement has no significant effect on their flourishing, possibly owing to the incongruence between a person's work and other personal and contextual details such as their work ethic, age and other occupational factors (Riipinen, 1997). Some of the heterogeneity in involvement is often related to the congruence between the needs of the worker and the requirements of the work, that is, how well the task suits the needs of the employee (Rabinowitz and Hall, 1977). Considering all the possible motives for holding a job, need fulfilment relates directly to and is an established foundation for work-related well-being (Riipinen, 1997). Therefore, job involvement is not related to need fulfilment; rather, it is triggered by other factors that influence well-being.

Managerial Implications

Our research has many key takeaways for retail organizations and managers seeking to nurture a flourishing workforce. According to a survey by online career database PayScale, 73% of the respondents classified the salesperson's job as highly stressful, making it the second most stressful job (Hedges, 2016). Salespeople are under enormous pressure to reach quotas, turn leads rapidly and raise approval ratings. A mentally healthy and optimally functioning salesforce is needed to align with the demands of a sales job. Therefore, organizations should make significant investments in human capital for increasing the salesperson's flourishing, especially as they are boundary spanners and are generally away for several days from their colleagues and family.

Our study also shows that the personal happiness of the salesperson acts as an important mechanism to promote flourishing. The results of this study indicate that higher the salesperson's personal happiness, higher their flourishing. Happiness and flourishing stimulate creative thinking as observed by Csikszentmihalyi (1996), which is an important resource in solving critical problems (Groza et al., 2016; Lask & Shepherd, 2013).

Managers who enable a salesperson's happiness will find it easy to grow not only the salesperson's motivation, abilities and resources but also their contribution to the organisational growth. Selecting and hiring a salesforce who can experience personal happiness helps benefit the organisations as they also help spread their positive states to others in the team. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) confirmed

that employees with autotelic characteristics are more likely to experience happiness and experience the work without any specific extrinsic rewards. Such people can be assessed through interviews and personality tests for recruitment and selection. Scales that are valid and reliable, as used in this study, can be employed while recruiting and hiring salespeople and managers. Similar efforts can be also considered for designing experiential training programmes where salesforce positive states are evoked, helping them remain in happiness for a prolonged time. Intermittently the frontline managers can intervene to help salesforce sustain their happiness.

Sales organizations should create an environment that helps salesforce search for positive states and foster happiness among the salesforce. For example, sales managers can assign customers so that salesperson's abilities match to the challenges. They can also consider intermittent interactions with team members to learn and share their experiences.

Therefore, as a summary, retail organizations seeking the benefits that accrue from flourishing salespeople should hire personally happier salespeople and nurture happiness in the workplace as well as in their employees' personal lives—a finding consistent with the past literature (Seligman, 2011; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Furthermore, the pre-employment assessment can also evaluate a candidate's level of personal happiness using single or multiple-item scales.

Limitations and Future Directions

We recognize that our study is not free of limitations. Although self-reported personal happiness provides useful perspectives, it can often be viewed in a dyadic context (Matthews et al., 2014). Future research should investigate the effect of positive affects generated via peers and supervisors or managers on the salesperson's flourishing and other outcomes. There is room for further evaluation of how salespeople can flourish by considering psychological capital, optimism and psychological empowerment as additional predictors. Future researchers can also benefit by capturing the personal happiness of salespeople from different sources and looking for longitudinal data as part of the data collected to understand its impact (Sender et al., 2021) In addition, the study populations of our study contained a high proportion of subjects within the age group of 35 years and younger. Research suggests that the average age of salespeople in emerging countries are within this age bracket (Sridhar & Lyngdoh, 2017). Therefore, future research should conduct studies with different and more representative samples of salespeople to better understand the effects of personal happiness on sales outcomes. Furthermore, the limitations of

study design may offer future researchers' new ways of measuring or examining personal happiness and clearly investigating its cumulative influence with the passage of time. Future researchers can also include and test the boundary conditions that may interact differently with the relationship between personal happiness and flourishing at work.

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