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Mindfulness and happiness: An empirical study among working women

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Abstract

Mindfulness is a prominent subject of study in the field of positive psychology, and dispositional mindfulness represents an individual's inherent trait of mindfulness. This research investigates the connection between mindfulness and happiness among 100 working women. Participants completed the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), developed by Baer *et al.* (2006), along with the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) by Argyle and Hills (2002). The results reveal a statistically significant positive correlation between mindfulness and happiness among working women, even when considering variables such as age, education, and income. These findings emphasize the potential efficacy of mindfulness as a valuable tool for enhancing the well-being and happiness of working women. These insights could inform the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at improving job satisfaction and well-being within this demographic.

Keywords: Dispositional mindfulness, happiness, working women, well-being

Introductions

In today's dynamic and rapidly evolving society, the pursuit of happiness stands as a cornerstone of individual well-being and collective prosperity (Diener & Seligman, 2004) ^[6]. It transcends cultural boundaries, socio-economic divisions, and demographic distinctions, constituting a universal aspiration that resonates deeply with individuals across the globe. Within this overarching quest for happiness, however, lies a particularly compelling narrative—one that revolves around the experiences of working women. The twenty-first century has ushered in a paradigm shift in the workforce, characterized by unprecedented gender diversity and the increased participation of women in various professional spheres (World Economic Forum, 2020) ^[26]. While this transformation is a significant stride toward achieving gender equality, it is not devoid of its unique set of challenges, especially for women who find themselves navigating the intricate terrain of balancing career ambitions, familial responsibilities, and personal well-being (Williams & Dempsey, 2014) ^[25]. It is within this complex backdrop that the exploration of dispositional mindfulness as a potential catalyst for happiness gains its relevance and urgency.

As working women continue to chart their paths within professional realms, they often encounter multifaceted challenges. The traditional boundaries between work and personal life blur, creating a constant juggling act (Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, & Arvan, 2017) ^[24]. The societal expectations placed upon them, coupled with the quest for personal fulfillment, create a delicate balancing act that can sometimes appear insurmountable. The relentless demands of contemporary work environments, with their pressing deadlines and relentless pace, only serve to amplify these challenges (Lerner, Krupka, & Weinberg, 2019).

Amid this intricate tapestry of responsibilities and aspirations, the concept of dispositional mindfulness emerges as a potential key to unlocking happiness (Brown & Ryan, 2003) ^[3]. Dispositional mindfulness, an innate propensity to remain present and fully aware in the moment without judgment, holds the promise of ameliorating the stressors that working women often encounter (Brown & Ryan, 2003) ^[3]. It offers the potential to enhance emotional regulation, provide resilience in the face of adversity, and promote a profound sense of contentment even in the midst of life's most demanding moments (Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011) ^[12].

As we embark on this empirical research journey, we delve into the nuanced relationship between dispositional mindfulness and happiness among working women.

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Through a careful examination of this relationship, we aim to illuminate the pathways through which mindfulness practices may empower working women to navigate the intricate interplay of their professional and personal lives, ultimately enhancing their well-being and overall satisfaction. By doing so, we aim to contribute not only to the empirical understanding of dispositional mindfulness but also to the practical strategies that can support working women in their pursuit of happiness.

In recent years, workplaces have been changing a lot. More women are working in various jobs, which is great progress (World Economic Forum, 2020) ^[26]. But these changes also bring new challenges. We need to understand what it's like for women who work and what can make their lives better. The present study focused on two main questions:

- How much do women who work already have a natural ability to be mindful?
- Does being more mindful help women feel happier at work?

This research is significant as it extends the existing literature on mindfulness and well-being by specifically addressing its impact on working women. By exploring the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and the happiness of women in the workforce, this study contributes valuable insights to the current body of knowledge. These findings have the potential to inform and enrich discussions on mindfulness, well-being, and work-life balance, shedding light on an area of research that is increasingly relevant in today's diverse and evolving workplaces.

In recent years, there has been a lot of scholarly interest in the concept of mindfulness, which is frequently used in discussions on happiness and well-being. According to Kabat-Zinn (1990), mindfulness is a set of techniques that span from meditation to regular mindful living. It is defined as the conscious focus on the present moment while observing and accepting thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations without judgment. For its beneficial effects on mental health, stress reduction, and overall life happiness, it has been thoroughly explored (Brown & Ryan, 2003) ^[3].

Dispositional mindfulness refers to a person's intrinsic propensity to practice mindfulness in their daily lives (Brown & Ryan, 2003) ^[3].

Dispositional mindfulness, often defined as a person's inherent or natural tendency to be present, attentive, and non-judgmental in their daily experiences, holds considerable significance among working women (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Good *et al.*, 2016; Reb *et al.*, 2015) ^[3, 7, 19]. This quality reflects an individual's capacity to manage stress, maintain focus, and cultivate emotional resilience, all of which are particularly relevant in the demanding work environments that many women navigate. The concept of dispositional mindfulness among working women is multifaceted, as it can influence not only their ability to cope with workplace challenges but also their overall sense of well-being. Previous research has indicated that higher levels of dispositional mindfulness are associated with reduced work-related stress, improved job satisfaction, and increased emotional regulation (Good *et al.*, 2016; Reb *et al.*, 2015; Hülshager *et al.*, 2013) ^[7, 19, 10], offering a promising avenue for enhancing the quality of life and professional experiences of working women. Understanding the nuances of dispositional mindfulness in this context provides valuable insights into its potential as a resource for

personal and professional development among women in the workforce.

Happiness is a complex and deeply sought-after state of well-being characterized by positive emotions, life satisfaction, and a sense of contentment (Diener & Seligman, 2004) ^[6]. It transcends cultural and demographic differences, making it a universally cherished human aspiration. The pursuit of happiness is not merely about fleeting moments of joy but encompasses a broader and more profound sense of fulfillment and life quality. (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005) ^[23].

The twenty-first-century workforce is witnessing a notable surge in gender diversity, signifying progress towards gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2020) ^[26]. However, for working women, this advancement presents a dual challenge: balancing career ambitions with familial responsibilities amid an increasingly blurred work-life divide. The demands of modern workplaces, including tight deadlines and high expectations, contribute to their stress. Understanding the unique experiences of working women is vital for shaping policies and strategies that support gender equality and work-life harmony, emphasizing the relevance of researching factors like dispositional mindfulness in their happiness and well-being (Williams & Dempsey, 2014) ^[25].

Numerous studies emphasize the positive association between dispositional mindfulness and well-being. For instance, Brown and Ryan (2003) ^[3] found that individuals with higher levels of dispositional mindfulness reported greater life satisfaction and emotional regulation. Extending this to the workplace context, Lomas *et al.* (2017) ^[16] demonstrated that mindfulness interventions significantly reduced workplace stress and enhanced overall well-being. Building on these findings, research on gender dynamics in the workforce, such as the work by Shockley *et al.* (2017) ^[24], underscores the unique challenges faced by working women in balancing career and family responsibilities, often leading to increased work-family conflict. Williams and Dempsey (2014) ^[25] provide valuable insights into the gender-specific patterns and challenges that women encounter in the workplace. Furthermore, studies on mindfulness in diverse professional settings, including healthcare (Krasner *et al.*, 2009) ^[15] and education (Roeser *et al.*, 2013) ^[20], highlight the broad applicability of mindfulness practices in enhancing well-being and job satisfaction. The literature on dispositional mindfulness and its impact on the happiness and well-being of working women reveals a consistent and robust pattern of findings. Numerous studies, such as those by Green and Kinchen (2021) ^[8] and Sarazine *et al.* (2021) ^[15], demonstrate the efficacy of mindfulness interventions, including meditation and workshops, in reducing stress and burnout among healthcare professionals. Bostock *et al.* (2019) ^[2] extend this to show how mindfulness practices, even though apps, can be seamlessly integrated into professional life to enhance overall well-being. Javaid, Mahmood, and Ali's (2023) ^[11] exploration of the mediating role of mindfulness in the relationship between quality of life and workplace stress further emphasizes the importance of mindfulness in promoting well-being within professional contexts.

Moreover, Coe and Salanova's (2018) ^[4] controlled trial reinforces the positive influence of mindfulness on happiness and work-related outcomes. This aligns with the broader applicability of mindfulness, as demonstrated by Hollis-Walker and Colosimo (2011) ^[9], suggesting that

individuals, including working women, can experience enhanced happiness even without formal meditation practices. The intricate relationships between mindfulness, purpose in life, and emotional health, as studied by Crego *et al.* (2021) [5], underscore the holistic impact of mindfulness on well-being.

Pan, Wu, and Zhang's (2022) examination of the sequential mediating roles of emotional intelligence and work-family balance in the relationship between trait mindfulness and subjective well-being further highlights the multifaceted influence of mindfulness in fostering a balanced and emotionally intelligent work life. Finally, exploration of the underlying processes in mindfulness-based stress reduction enriches our understanding of how dispositional mindfulness positively influences psychological well-being. In synthesis, this body of literature affirms the pivotal role of dispositional mindfulness in promoting happiness and overall well-being among working women, providing valuable insights for practical applications in professional settings.

Methodology

Participants

This study examined the correlation between dispositional mindfulness and happiness among working women aged 25 to 55 years residing in Delhi, India. A total of 100 working women participated in the study from Alipur in Delhi. Convenient sampling was used to recruit the participants.

Measures

- **Dispositional Mindfulness:** To measure dispositional mindfulness, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) was administered. The FFMQ comprises 39 items assessing five facets of mindfulness: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. Participants rated their agreement with each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or very rarely true) to 5 (very often or always true).
- **Happiness:** The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) was used to assess happiness. The OHQ consists of 29 items gauging subjective happiness and overall life satisfaction. Participants rated their agreement with each item on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).
- **Demographic Data Sheet:** Participants provided demographic information, including their age, marital status, educational background, and other pertinent details.

Data Collection

Data collection took place offline, involving face-to-face interactions with potential participants in Alipur, Delhi. The researcher approached individuals, explained the study's purpose, and obtained informed consent. Participants were then presented with paper-and-pencil questionnaires, including the FFMQ, OHQ, and a demographic data sheet. They were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The analytical techniques employed encompassed:

- **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) were computed to examine the relationships between dispositional mindfulness and happiness among working women. This analysis sought to elucidate the strength and direction of associations among the variables.
- **Regression Analysis:** Multiple regression analyses were carried out to explore how dispositional mindfulness predicted happiness among working women.

Results

The descriptive results of the study revealed that among the 100 working females surveyed, they demonstrated moderate to high scores on both the FFMQ scale, indicating a considerable level of dispositional mindfulness, and the Oxford Happiness Scale, signifying a notable degree of happiness and subjective well-being.

Table 1: Descriptive Values of Mindfulness and Happiness among Working Women (n=100)

Variable	Mean	SD
Happiness	150.09	19.16
Dispositional Mindfulness	146.73	9.74

The correlational analysis results, as presented in the table, demonstrate a clear and positive relationship between mindfulness, as assessed by the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and its dimensions, and overall happiness measured by the Oxford Happiness Scale. This suggests that higher levels of mindfulness are associated with greater levels of happiness among working women.

Table 2: Correlation Values of Mindfulness (Dimensions on FFMQ) and Happiness among Working Women

Variables	Happiness
Mindfulness	.890**
Observing (FFMQ Dimension 1)	.852**
Describing	.918**
Acting with Awareness	.865**
Non-Judging Inner Experience	.867**
Non-Reactivity to Inner Experience	.625**

**p.01

The results of the regression analysis indicate that mindfulness, as measured by the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and its dimensions, significantly predicts happiness levels among working women.

Table 3: Regression analysis of Mindfulness and Happiness among Working Women

	Coefficient	Standard error	t-value	P value
Mindfulness (Predictor of Happiness)	.89	.023	19.327**	.01
R square	.732			
F	373.52**			

**p<.01

Discussion

Dispositional mindfulness, reflecting one's inherent capacity for mindfulness, plays a pivotal role in influencing happiness levels. People with higher levels of dispositional mindfulness tend to approach life with greater awareness,

acceptance, and non-judgment, which can contribute to a more positive and contented outlook. Individuals naturally disposed towards mindfulness tend to exhibit better emotional regulation, reduced rumination, enhanced relationships, improved self-esteem, and a greater appreciation of life's simple pleasures. These traits collectively contribute to higher levels of happiness and overall well-being in their lives.

The findings of the present study contribute to the burgeoning body of research supporting the positive association between dispositional mindfulness and happiness, well-being, and positive emotions, particularly among working women. These findings align with a growing body of recent literature emphasizing the profound impact of mindfulness on emotional well-being or happiness. Previous studies emphasize a compelling link between dispositional mindfulness and heightened happiness among working women. For instance, Green and Kinchen's (2021)^[8] research on healthcare professionals showcases that mindfulness meditation significantly reduces stress and burnout, underscoring the potential of mindfulness practices to enhance emotional well-being in demanding work environments. Similarly, Sarazine *et al.* (2021)^[15] illustrate that mindfulness workshops alleviate burnout and stress levels among nurses while enhancing mindfulness skills, highlighting the practical utility of mindfulness interventions in nurturing the well-being of working women. Bostock *et al.* (2019)^[2] further emphasize that mindfulness, even when delivered through digital platforms, can seamlessly integrate into professional life, promoting overall well-being. Javaid, Mahmood, and Ali's (2023)^[11] study reinforces these findings by demonstrating that mindfulness mediates the relationship between quality of life and workplace stress, indicating its pivotal role in fostering happiness and mitigating stress within professional contexts. These studies collectively affirm that being mindful holds the potential to significantly contribute to the happiness and overall well-being of working women.

In conclusion, the extensive body of research discussed in this study consistently highlights the crucial role of dispositional mindfulness in enhancing happiness and overall well-being among working women. The findings demonstrate that individuals with higher levels of dispositional mindfulness tend to experience greater positive affect, reduced stress, and improved emotional well-being in professional contexts. The robust support from various studies, including those focusing on healthcare professionals, digital interventions, and the mediation of stress-related factors, underscores the enduring relevance of dispositional mindfulness as a key determinant of happiness in the workplace. As we conclude, it becomes evident that fostering dispositional mindfulness offers a promising avenue for promoting emotional and psychological flourishing among working women, providing them with valuable tools to navigate the challenges of their careers while nurturing their happiness and overall life satisfaction.

Conclusion

In summary, this study underscores the significant role of dispositional mindfulness in enhancing happiness and subjective well-being among working women. These findings highlight the potential benefits of incorporating mindfulness practices into workplace interventions and wellness programs, offering a promising avenue for

improving the overall well-being of this demographic.

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