

The Mediating Effect Of Meaningful Work Between Self-Efficacy And Subjective Well-Being

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Abstract

Women represent half of the total population. We cannot imagine enhancing a nation's or society's well-being by ignoring women's well-being. Therefore, the present study explores the nature of the subjective well-being of working women and assesses the mediating effect of meaningfulness of work between self-efficacy and positive affect. This study was undertaken on a sample of 114 working women from several schools and hospitals in Darbhanga town. Life satisfaction scale, PANAS, self-efficacy scale and meaningfulness of work scale were administered to them to collect their responses. To measure the correlations between self-efficacy and subjective well-being and between meaningful work and subjective well-being, Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used. Multiple regression was computed to measure the predicting effect of self-efficacy and meaningful work on two components of subjective well-being: a. life satisfaction and b. positive and negative experiences. Further, structural equation modelling was computed to assess the mediating effect. Results indicated that there were positive and significant correlations among self-efficacy, meaningfulness of work and components of subjective well-being. Multiple Regression and structural equation modelling indicate that meaningfulness of work has emerged as a substantial predictor of subjective well-being. It also has a mediating effect between self-efficacy and subjective well-being. Results were discussed in the light of previous research.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, meaningfulness of work, subjective well-being

Introduction

Well-being is a complex and broader concept. In simpler terms, it is the evaluation of overall life experience. If people are doing well, they will be satisfied, and their well-being will be satisfactory. For example, if a person is leading a good life, he or she has feelings of fulfilled desire, self-contentment, a sense of belongingness and positive coping at the workplace. Well-being may be subjective and objective. Subjective well-being includes psychological factors, such as our perceptions, fulfilment, commitment to the organisation, and positive affect like enjoyment, happiness, feeling of belonging, etc. On the other hand, objective well-being has physical characteristics like our basic needs. Examples are food/nutrition, money, wealth, suitable employment, safety, freedom from mental illness, etc.

Psychologists, sociologists, and economists have evolved several distinct components of subjective well-being. However, these components are not independent but rather overlap one another. The term happiness, for example, has been used in terms of momentary evaluation of affect and overall assessment of life. In the tripartite model, Diener (2000) defined subjective well-being as "people's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives." Here cognitive component is how we evaluate our whole life. It is concerned with satisfaction with our family life as well as our work life and career (Kashdan, 2004). The affective component incorporates the feeling of most of the time positive affect and rarely experiencing negative affect. It measures our emotional experiences, for example, experiencing happiness, joyfulness, and pleasantness most of the time and having experienced of negative feelings like sadness, anxiousness, sorrow, etc. occasionally. Therefore, most psychologists envisaged the interlink of three components of subjective well-being: a. "frequent positive affect", b. "Infrequent negative affect", and c. "Cognitive evaluations" as life satisfaction (Diener, 1984; Tov & Diener, 2013).

Subjective well-being is determined by several internal and external factors. The external influences on people's happiness may be living in poverty and having ill health, a child suffering from a severe disease, lack of proper nutrition, sanitation, safety, etc. On the other hand, internal factors are a person feeling happy because he/she has a supportive family, friends circle, resources to meet demands and good health. While in some cases, we see that some people are unhappy or depressed despite having ample resources. People may be happy or unhappy depending on their personalities, meaningfulness of work, self-efficacy, carefreeness, work morale, personality and modest

aspirations (Caprara & Steca, 2005; Sirgy, 2019; Wilson et al., 2010).

In some studies, it has been found that self-efficacy beliefs play an essential part in both cognitive and affective components of subjective well-being (Bandura, 1997). Calandri et al. (2023) examined the relationship between self-efficacy, positive coping mechanisms and subjective well-being among teenagers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was hypothesised that self-efficacy would emerge as a substantial predictor of subjective well-being. Their result supported the view that paying particular attention and kindness to adolescents' self-efficacy controls negative emotions during the crisis.

Meaningful work (MW) and subjective well-being are severe concerns for managers and employees working in different organisations. Meaningful work means doing or performing work that connects with our values, and interests and engages our moral arena (Goleman, 1995). It is concerned with our work engagement, job satisfaction, commitment, etc. (Chalofsky, 2010). However, very few studies have been carried out to establish a link between meaningfulness of work and well-being (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2022; Shiri et al., 2020). Gorgens-Ekermans & Steyn (2016) examined the association of the components of psychological capital like optimism and self-efficacy with meaningful work and subjective well-being. They examined subjective well-being in terms of work-life satisfaction and psychological health. Findings revealed that optimism and self-efficacy components of psychological capital directly impact employees' psychological health. It was also found that the association between optimism and subjective well-being was indirectly mediated by organisational commitment and work engagement. However, very few research have been carried out on Indian working women to assess the joint effect of self-efficacy and meaningfulness of work on subjective well-being. Chawla & Sharma (2016) highlighted the importance of societal belief in Indian culture. They found that still there is a belief that a working woman has to work well both at home and at the workplace. Therefore, working women are more susceptible to stress than their male counterparts. Thus, the present research aims to explore the role of meaningfulness and self-efficacy in predicting the subjective well-being of working women.

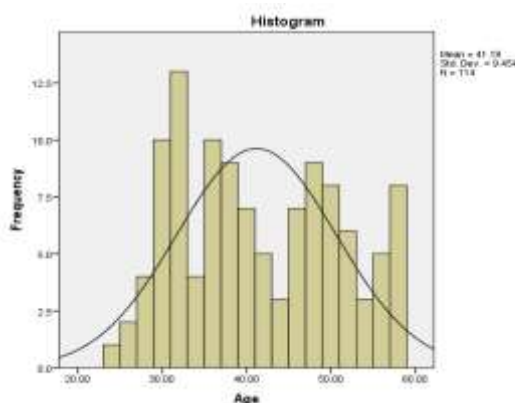
Methods

Sample

This study was conducted on a sample of 114 working women serving in different organisations like government schools, colleges, hospitals, and offices in Darbhanga City. Their age range was dispersed from 24 years to 58 years. The Mean and SD of Age were 41.17 years and 9.45 years, respectively (see Table 1). The skewness and kurtosis values were also found within the range of normalcy (Graph 1).

Table-1 Descriptive Data of Age
Graph-1

N	114
Mean	41.1754
Median	40.0000
Std. Deviation	9.45436
Skewness	.185
Kurtosis	-1.152



Measures

1. Subjective Well-being Measures:

Subjective well-being consists of cognitive aspects like life satisfaction and affective components like positive and negative feelings. Therefore, two scales, namely the life satisfaction and positive and negative affect scales, were used to measure subjective well-being.

A. Life Satisfaction Scale

This scale was advanced by Diener et al. in 1985 to measure life satisfaction. This is a short version scale consisting of 5-items. All items were rated on a 5-point scale. The scores range from 1 to 5 (from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). High reliability and validity have been reported in several studies across the globe.

B. Positive and Negative Affect Scale

Diener and his colleagues 2010 advanced a scale popularly known as the Positive and Negative Affect Scale. It comprises six positive and six negative items. This scale has equally reported high reliability and validity.

2. Self-efficacy Scale:

For the present study, Schwarzer & Jerusalem's (1995) self-efficacy scale was used (1995) to measure the perceived efficacy of working women. It is a 10-item scale. It is suitable for data collection on the Indian population, too.

3. Meaningfulness of Work Scale:

Steggar et al. (2006) advanced a scale for assessing the meaningfulness of work one is doing or performing at the workplace. It comprises ten items and measures the "positive meaning of work", b. "Meaning-making through work", and c. "Greater good motivation".

Results and Discussion

Pearson's coefficient of correlation was computed to assess the association between self-efficacy and subjective well-being and between meaningful work and subjective well-being. Further, multiple regression analysis was computed to assess the effect of self-efficacy and meaningfulness of work on life satisfaction as well as on positive and negative effects. The mediating effect of meaningful work between self-efficacy and subjective well-being was assessed using structural equation modelling. The entire statistical analysis was performed by using SPSS-20 software.

Table 1 represents the correlations among self-efficacy, the meaningfulness of work, components of subjective well-being like positive and negative affect and life satisfaction. It was found that self-efficacy significantly correlated with life satisfaction as well as with positive and negative affect. The obtained correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction ($r=.224$, $p<.00$) and self-efficacy and positive affect ($r=.196$, $p<.05$) was found positive and significant. However, a significant negative association was also obtained between self-efficacy and negative affect ($r=-.255$, $p.00$). Thus, it signifies the importance of self-efficacy in enhancing positive feelings and thoughts and minimising the occurrence of negative thoughts and feelings. Similarly, positive associations were also obtained between meaningfulness of work and life satisfaction ($r=.554$, $p<.00$) and between meaningful work and positive affect ($r=.225$, $p<.05$). The negative correlation was obtained between meaningful work and negative affect ($r=-.384$, $p<.00$). It reveals the fact that both self-efficacy and meaningfulness of work are strongly associated with life satisfaction and moderate correlated with positive affect and negatively linked with negative affect. It envisaged that self-efficacy also played a role in enhancing subjective well-being (Cakar & Savi, 2012; Capri et al., 2012; Luthans et al. 2007). Cakar (2012) stressed the need to raise self-efficacy in adolescents and young people as it is vital for good mental health and life satisfaction.

Table-2 Correlations among dimensions of subjective well-being, self-efficacy and meaning of work Variables

Variables	Life Satisfaction	Positive Affect	Negative Affect	Meaningfulness of Work	Self-efficacy
Life Satisfaction	1	.341**	-.214*	.554**	.224*
Positive Affect		1	-.114	.225*	.196*
Negative Affect			1	-.384**	-.255**
Meaning of Work				1	.497**
Self-efficacy					1

Multiple correlations were computed to measure the predictive effect of meaningfulness of work and self-efficacy on subjective well-being measures. Results in Table 3 state that self-efficacy did not emerge as a significant predictor of all three components of subjective well-being (i.e. overall life satisfaction, regular positive feelings, and seldom negative feelings). On the other hand, the meaningfulness of work has emerged as a significant predictor of both life satisfaction ($\beta = .558$, $t=6.475$, $p<.000$) and positive affect ($\beta=.347$, $t=3.483$, $p<.000$) and negative predictor of negative affect ($\beta=-.341$, $t=3.390$, $p<.001$). These findings indicate the meaningfulness of work in contributing to the improvement of the subjective well-being of Indian working women. Self-efficacy did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor. The reason may be the respondents' routine and sedentary nature of work in their organisations that do not require high self-efficacy.

Table-3 Multiple Regression predicts the effect of self-efficacy and meaningfulness of work on life satisfaction and positive and negative affect.

Criterion Variable	Predictors	B	β	t	p
Life Satisfaction	Self-efficacy	-.080	-.068	-.747	.457
	Meaning Work	.299	.588	6.475	.000
Positive Affect	Self-efficacy	.240	.113	1.137	.258
	Meaning Work	.316	.347	3.483	.001
Negative Affect	Self-efficacy	-.117	.085	-.842	.401
	Meaning Work	-.202	-.341	-3.390	.001

The structural equation modelling was computed to measure the mediating effect of meaningfulness of work between self-efficacy and three components of subjective Well-being. The table given here (see Table 4) states that the meaningfulness of work mediates the association between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The β value between self-efficacy and life satisfaction is $-.080$. It states that the direct effect of self-efficacy was about zero (See Fig-1). Thus, the meaningfulness of work significantly mediates between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Similarly, the

meaningfulness of work also mediates between self-efficacy and positive affect (see Fig.-2).

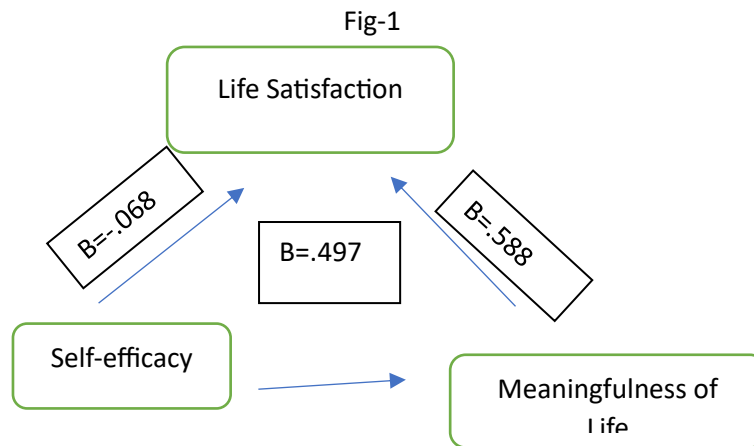
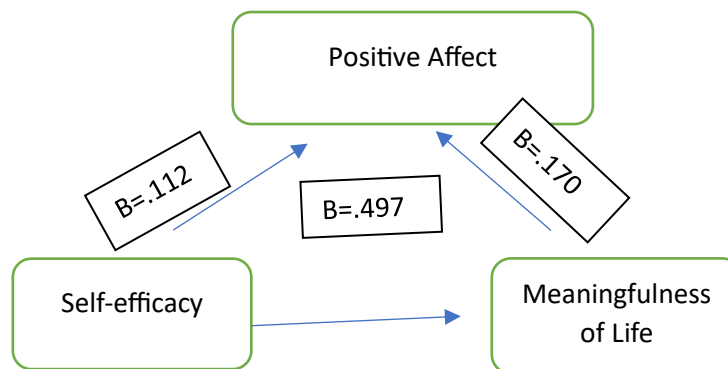


Fig-2



The study aims to understand how self-efficacy and meaningfulness of work enhance life satisfaction, maximise positive affect and minimise adverse effects. The results show significant relationships between general self-efficacy and subjective well-being among working women, consistent with previous findings. High self-efficacy is related to a higher level of positive well-being and a lower level of negative thought (Bandura, 1997; Sahu & Rath, 2023). It was found that only meaningfulness of work emerged as a significant predictor of life satisfaction and positive affect. On the other hand, self-efficacy did not emerge as a significant predictor. It is seen that self-efficacy or potentiality of the working force does not contribute to their well-being. The workforce sees the nature and meaningfulness of work as more important for their satisfaction and provide positive feelings (Bailey et al., 2019; Cheng & Chan, 2008; Allan et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Subjective well-being is the feeling or experience of positive or negative feelings and overall satisfaction with one's life. In several studies, it has been argued that self-efficacy and meaningful work enhance subjective well-being. However, in the present research, only meaningful work emerged as a significant predictor. It states that if we have to perform a job or assigned task that is meaningful from our perspective, it gives us a sense of satisfaction and pleasure, no matter whether the job we perform requires our high or low self-efficacy level. Further intensive research is needed to unfold the contradictory findings. Therefore, policymakers and management should focus more on making work meaningful for the workforce to improve the subjective well-being of working women.

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