

Happiness at Work of Generation X and Generation Y Operating Employees in Private Service Businesses in Chiang Mai Province

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Abstract—This study aimed to analyze the level of happiness at work and factors affecting happiness at work of generation X and generation Y operating employees in private service businesses in Chiang Mai province. Questionnaires were distributed to gather data from 200 respondents who work as operating employees in private service businesses, 100 respondents were generation X who were born between 1965 – 1977 and 100 respondents were generation Y who were born between 1978 – 1998. Descriptive statistics by frequency, percentage and mean and inferential statistics by independent sample t-Test and regression analysis were used to analyze the data.

The findings showed that the overall happiness levels of generation X and generation Y operating employees were at a high level. For the opinion of generation X towards the 11 factors of happiness at work, 9 factors were ranked at the agree level, namely achievement, the work itself, responsibility, salary, recognition, job security, company policy and administration, working conditions, and interpersonal relationship with superiors while 2 factors were ranked at the neutral level, namely interpersonal relationship with subordinates and possibility for growth. For the opinion of generation Y towards the 11 factors of happiness at work, 9 factors were ranked at the agree level, namely recognition, working conditions, responsibility, interpersonal relationship with superiors, job security, achievement, interpersonal relationship with subordinates, the work itself and company policy and administration while 2 factors were ranked at the neutral level, namely salary and possibility for growth.

The results showed that there was no significant difference between the overall happiness of generation X and generation Y. The results from regression analysis found that for generation X, job security explained 18.9% of total variance of happiness at work. As for generation Y, responsibility, job security, company policy and administration, the work itself, working conditions and interpersonal relationship with superiors all together explained 76.3% of total variance of happiness at work.

Keywords—Happiness at Work, Generation X, Generation Y, Service Business

I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are an invaluable resource for an organization. Although an organization has many factors that contribute to its production but if there is a lack of employees, the organization will not be able to complete its operations. Humans can therefore be regarded as the heart of the organization and are the one who drives the organization to perform its missions to achieve the objectives that have been set. Humans are therefore the most valuable resource of an organization [1]. Human resource management must take into account happiness at work of employees because the one thing that all employees in the organization desire is to work happily. Currently, the trend of happiness at work in Thailand is more widespread. [2] If the employees in the organization are happy with work, it will affect them, the assigned work and the organization. Happy employees contribute to good mental health, resulting in readiness and efficiency in work which leads to organizational development. [3] At present, organizations are faced with a variety of generations of employees in the organization. Each generation has different beliefs, values, and behaviors. [4] Organizations must focus on and understand the differences between employees in each generation.

In the service industry, service business plays an important role and is important in driving the country's economy that needs to be focused on and urgently developed, in order to support and strengthen the manufacturing industry to be able to create competitiveness and expand continuously with efficiency and sustainability. [5] Chiang Mai Province is considered the economic center in northern Thailand. Chiang Mai is considered the center of tourism, health service, education service, transportation, trade and investment. (Chiang Mai Province Development Plan 2018 – 2022) [6] From the GDP structure of Chiang Mai Province in 2018, the service sector has the highest proportion at 70.8%. [7]

For the reasons discussed above, the researcher is interested in studying the happiness at work of generation X and generation Y operating employees in private service businesses in Chiang Mai province, in order to use the results as a guideline for service businesses in Chiang Mai in planning, developing and improving the human resource

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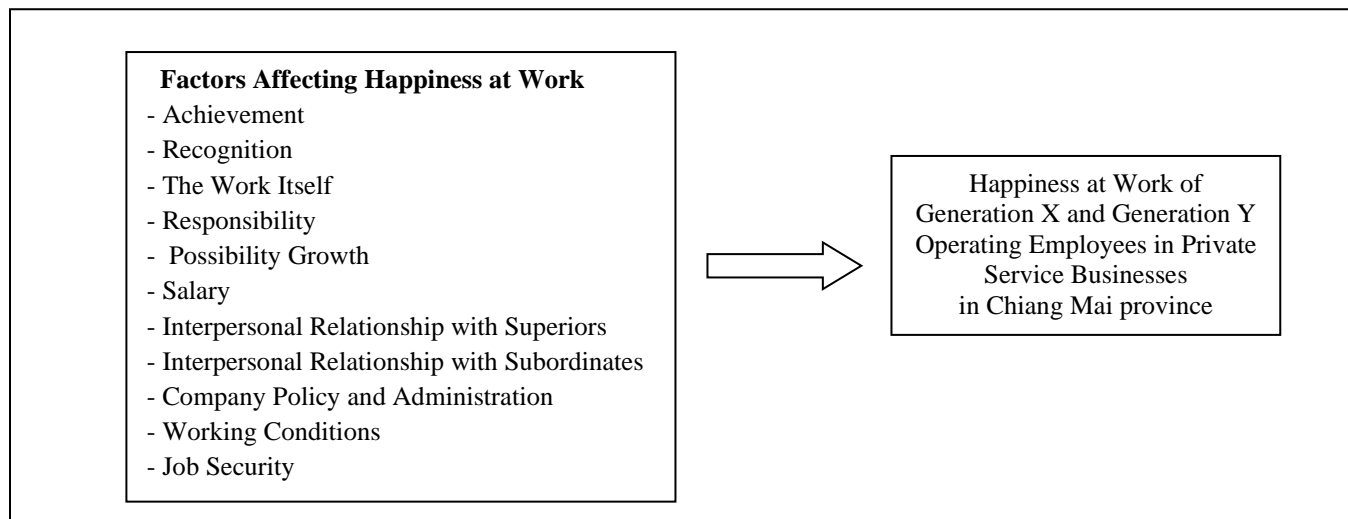
management to suit the different generation of employees. For employees in the service business to be happy at work which will affect the efficiency of work and the success of the organization.

II. PURPOSE OF STUDY

- 1) To study and compare the level of happiness at work of generation X and generation Y operating employees in private service businesses in Chiang Mai province.
- 2) To study the factors affecting happiness at work of generation X and generation Y operating employees in private service businesses in Chiang Mai province.

employees who have different perceptions. So there must be a way to involve all employees in working together as a team in order to increase efficiency and create development to most benefit the organization. The generations can be divided into 3 generations namely Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. Baby Boomers are those who were born between 1946 – 1964, Generation X are those who were born between 1965 – 1977 and Generation Y are those who were born between 1978 – 1998.

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework



III. CONCEPT AND THEORY

A. Happiness at work

Warr [8] has defined happiness at work as a feeling that arises within the mind of a person in response to an event occurring at work which consists of arousal, pleasure and self-validation

B. Motivational Factors at Work

Herzberg [9] studied the attitude of two hundred engineers and accountants towards their work. He found that what pleased and displeased them about their jobs was caused by two groups of factors, namely Motivational Factors and Maintenance Factors. Motivational Factors are factors that create satisfaction, leading to motivation and love for the job. These factors are directly related to the work, resulting in employees in the organization working at full efficiency. While Maintenance Factors are factors that prevent employee dissatisfaction. If these factors are absent or not properly managed, it will cause dissatisfaction in the job.

C. Generations

Scheef & Thielfoldt [10] discussed the characteristics of the generations in a context of the rapidly changing work environment. In an organization, there are many age groups of

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fig. 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The variables in this study are as follows:

- 1) Independent Variables: Factors affecting happiness at work
- 2) Dependent Variable: Happiness at work of generation X and generation Y operating employees in private service businesses in Chiang Mai province.

In this study, the conceptual framework was developed from the 11 factors affecting happiness at work by Sucheera Phattharayuttawat [11] which is based on the motivation theory of Frederick Herzberg [9], which states that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are caused by two groups of factors, Motivational Factors and Maintenance Factors. The 11 factors affecting happiness at work of generation X and generation Y can be explained as follows:

- 1) Achievement – When a person is able to complete a task, fix problems and prevent problems from happening,

causing a feeling of satisfaction and pride in the achievements of the work.

2) Recognition – When a person is recognized and respected by a superior or employees in the organization, such as being praised, given compliments, congratulated or encouraged as well as given expression of recognition of the ability when the person achieves the goals set.

3) The Work Itself – Work that is interesting, challenging and requires creativity or work that can be done alone from start to finish.

4) Responsibility – When a person is assigned new tasks and is able to take good responsibility without being closely monitored or controlled, resulting in satisfaction.

5) Possibility Growth – When a person in the organization has been promoted to a higher position or given opportunity to train or study to gain more knowledge.

6) Salary - Pay, deals, rewards and promotions to the satisfaction of the individual in the organization

7) Interpersonal Relationship Superiors – Communication between the employee and their superior which represents a good relationship, working together with a good understanding of each other.

8) Interpersonal Relationship Subordinate – Communication between colleagues which represents a good relationship, working together with a good understanding of each other.

9) Company Policy and Administration – Administration, management, and communication within the organization

10) Working Conditions - Physical conditions such as light, noise levels, weather, hours of operation as well as equipment and tools.

11) Job Security - A person's feelings about the security of their job, career, or organization.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Scope of the Research

The scope of this study consists of the 11 factors affecting happiness at work. The 11 factors affecting happiness at work, namely Achievement, Recognition, The work itself, Responsibility, Possibility Growth, Salary, Interpersonal Relationship with Superiors, Interpersonal Relationship with Subordinates, Company Policy and Administration, Working Conditions and Job Security.

This research studied generation X and generation Y operating employees in private service businesses in Chiang Mai province, namely, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, transportation, education, real estate, construction contractors, consulting business, media services and event planning businesses. In addition, the overall happiness at work according to the mental feelings towards the work of the two generations was also studied.

The population if this research is unknown, the sample size was determined using Sudman [12] recommended guidelines of the sample size of regional study, which states that the sample size should be between 200 – 500 samples. This research is a specific study, so the sample size was 200 samples using quota sampling.

B. Data Collection

Questionnaires were distributed to gather information from 200 respondents who were operating employees in private service businesses. The questionnaires were collected online, by posting the questionnaire on Facebook groups with members of the Chiang Mai population. 100 respondents were generation X who were born between 1965 – 1977 and 100 respondents were generation Y who were born between 1978 – 1998.

The questionnaire consists of 3 sections:

1) Background characteristics of the respondents, namely gender, age, marital status, education level, salary and working experience.

2) Information about happiness at work, this was divided into 2 parts.

2.1 Questions measuring level of opinion on factors affecting happiness at work, questions have been modified from the questionnaire of Sucheera Phattharayuttawat that was based on the concept of Frederick Herzberg [9], consists of 22 questions, containing the 11 factors affecting happiness at work. This part uses the 5-point Likert scale strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The negative items score will be reversed.

2.2 Question measuring the overall happiness at work of respondents. This part uses the 5-point rating scale very high, high, moderate, low and very low

3) Open ended question on happiness at work.

C. Data Analysis

1) Background characteristics, namely gender, age, marital status, education level, salary and working experience were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, namely frequency and percentage.

2) Happiness at work was analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely mean and percentage. This was divided into 2 parts.

2.1 Analyzing the level of opinions on the 11 factors affecting happiness at work. This part of the questionnaire uses the Likert scale. The criteria of level of opinions on the 11 factors affecting happiness at work are as follows:

Mean Score	Level of Opinion
4.51 - 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51 - 4.50	Agree
2.51 - 3.50	Neutral
1.51 - 2.50	Disagree
1.00 - 1.50	Strongly Disagree

2.2 Analyzing the level of happiness at work. This part of the questionnaire uses the Rating scale. The criteria of happiness of work are as follows:

Mean Score	Level of Happiness
4.51 - 5.00	Very High Happiness at Work
3.51 - 4.50	High Happiness at Work
2.51 - 3.50	Moderate Happiness at Work
1.51 - 2.50	Low Happiness at Work
1.00 - 1.50	Very Low Happiness at Work

3) The difference between the happiness at work of generation X and generation Y operating employees in Private Service Businesses in Chiang Mai was analyzed using the Independent Sample t-Test. The Independent Sample t-Test have the following hypothesis:

H_0 = The overall happiness at work of generation X and generation Y are equal

H_1 = The overall happiness at work of generation X and generation Y are not equal

4) Factors affecting happiness at work of generation X and generation Y were analyzed using Multiple Regression.

VI. RESULTS

A. Background Characteristics

The majority of the respondents were female (64.5%), married (56.0%), graduated with a bachelor's degree (75.0%), having a monthly salary at 20,001 – 30,000 baht (36.0%), and those with over 10 years of working experience (42.5%).

B. The Level of Opinions on the 11 Factors Affecting Happiness at Work

For the opinion of generation X towards the 11 factors of happiness at work, 9 factors were ranked at the agree level, namely achievement, the work itself, responsibility, salary, recognition, job security, company policy and administration, working conditions, and interpersonal relationship with superiors, while 2 factors were ranked at the neutral level, namely interpersonal relationship with subordinates and possibility for growth. For the opinion of generation Y towards the 11 factors of happiness at work, 9 factors were ranked at the agree level, namely recognition, working conditions, responsibility, interpersonal relationship with superiors, job security, achievement, interpersonal relationship with subordinates, the work itself and company policy and administration while 2 factors were ranked at the neutral level, namely salary and possibility for growth.

TABLE I. LEVEL OF OPINION OF RESPONDENTS ON FACTORS AFFECTING HAPPINESS AT WORK

Factors Affecting Happiness at Work	Generation	
	Generation X	Generation Y
	Mean Opinion Level	Mean Opinion Level
Achievement	3.87 Agree	3.78 Agree
Recognition	3.69 Agree	3.90 Agree
The Work Itself	3.76 Agree	3.59 Agree
Responsibility	3.76 Agree	3.89 Agree
Possibility Growth	2.90 Neutral	2.74 Neutral
Salary	3.70 Agree	3.49 Neutral
Interpersonal Relationship with Superiors	3.65 Agree	3.89 Agree
Interpersonal Relationship with Subordinates	3.41 Neutral	3.73 Agree
Company Policy and Administration	3.67 Agree	3.54 Agree
Working Conditions	3.66 Agree	3.90 Agree
Job Security	3.68 Agree	3.80 Agree

C. The Level of Happiness at Work

The findings revealed that the overall happiness levels of generation X and generation Y operating employees were at a high level, at 3.68 and 3.76 respectively.

TABLE II. LEVEL OF HAPPINESS AT WORK OF GENERATION X AND GENERATION Y

Gen	Level of Happiness at Work					
	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Mean (Happiness Level)
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
X	12 (12.0)	46 (46.0)	40 (40.0)	2 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	3.68 High
Y	19 (19.0)	47 (47.0)	27 (27.0)	5 (5.0)	2 (2.0)	3.76 High

D. Difference Between the Happiness at Work of Generation X and Generation Y

The results revealed that there was no significant difference between the overall happiness at work of generation X and generation Y.

TABLE III. INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST

Happiness at work	Gen	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig
Overall happiness at work	X	3.68	0.70896	-0.704	0.483
	Y	3.76	0.88899		

E. Factors Affecting Happiness at Work of Generation X and Generation Y

The results from Regression Analysis revealed that for generation X, job security is the only factor that affects happiness at work. Job security explained 18.9% of the total variance of happiness at work.

As for generation Y, 6 factors affect the happiness at work, namely responsibility, job security, company policy and administration, the work itself, working conditions and interpersonal relationship with superiors which all together explained 76.3% of the total variance of happiness at work.

From Multiple Regression, it was found that the factors affecting happiness of the two generations were different. Only one factor affects the happiness at work of Generation X while 6 factors affect the happiness at work of Generation Y. Therefore, the results of this study can be concluded that the factors that affect the happiness of Generation X and Generation Y are different.

<i>Model</i>		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	61.773	11	5.616	30.011	1
	Residual	16.467	88	.187		.0245
	Total	78.240	99			

<i>Model</i>	Generation X			Generation Y		
	Sig.	Beta	B	Sig.	Beta	B
Achievement	0.339	-0.103	-0.140	.0237	.0098	.0133
Recognition	0.083	0.236	0.250	.0169	.0130	.0158
The work itself	0.358	0.114	0.112	.0002**	.0265	.0245
Responsibility	0.122	-0.183	-0.199	.0000**	.0300	.0387
Possibility Growth	0.846	0.021	0.035	.0157	.0-087	.0-113
Salary	0.935	-0.011	-0.011	.0657	.0-029	.0-030
Interpersonal Relationship with Superiors	0.910	0.012	0.016	.0415	.0-065	.0-070
Interpersonal Relationship with Subordinates	0.530	-0.072	-0.080	.0006**	.0162	.0187
Company Policy and Administration	0.410	0.103	0.116	.0000**	.0267	.0272
Working Conditions	0.334	0.105	0.118	.0030**	.0-169	.0-188
Job Security	0.001**	0.343	0.399	.0001**	.0283	.0326

**Significant at 0.01 level

<i>Model</i>	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std .Error of the Estimate
1	.0889	.0790	.0763	.0433

TABLE IV. FACTORS AFFECTING HAPPINESS AT WORK

VII. DISCUSSION

From research, no studies have been found to examine happiness at work comparing between Generation X and Generation Y. Therefore, the author would like to discuss the overall comparative results with other studies.

From studying the opinion of generation X towards the 11 factors affecting happiness at work, the result is consistent with the result from a study by Mongkolpan [14] on the happiness at work of staffs in one of tertiary hospitals. In their study, the opinion on responsibility and job security were also ranked at the agree level, and possibility growth was ranked at the neutral level. However, other factors are inconsistent with this study.

The result of generation X is also consistent with a study by Choeidit [13] on factors affecting happiness in personnel working at aaa company. In their study, the opinion on the work itself, company policy and administration, and working conditions were also ranked at the agree level. Their study shows that for the factor the work itself, the personnel

have a good understanding of their duties and responsibilities towards the work they do. The personnel think that for the company policy and administration factor, their company has clearly defined the chain of command, roles and duties. As for the working conditions, the personnel feel that the workplace is safe, spacious, conducive to work, and health activities are regularly held.

As for the opinion of generation Y towards the 11 factors affecting happiness at work, the result is consistent with the result from a study by Mongkolpan [14] on the happiness at work of staffs in one of tertiary hospitals. In their study, the opinion on responsibility, interpersonal relationship with subordinates and job security were also ranked at the agree level, and possibility growth was ranked at the neutral level. However, other factors are inconsistent with this study.

The result of generation Y is also consistent with a study by Choeidit [13] on factors affecting happiness in personnel working at aaa company. In their study, the opinion on the work itself, relationship at work, company policy and administration, and working conditions were also ranked at the agree level. The personnel commented that for the relationship at work factor, colleagues were able to work well as a team.

From studying the factors affecting happiness at work of generation X, the result is consistent with the result from a study by Mongkolpan [14] on the happiness at work of staffs in one of tertiary hospitals, which also found that job security affects the happiness at work.

As for generation Y, the result is consistent with the result from a study by Mongkolpan [14] on the happiness at work of staffs in one of tertiary hospitals, which also found that responsibility, job security, company policy and administration, working conditions and interpersonal relationship with superiors affects the happiness at work. However, it was found that the work itself doesn't affect the happiness at work of staffs in the hospital, which was inconsistent with the result of generation Y.

The result of generation Y is also consistent with the result from a study by Choeidit [13] on factors affecting happiness in personnel working at aaa company, which also found that working conditions, relationship at work and the work itself affect the happiness at work of the personnel. However, it was found that company policy and administration doesn't affect the happiness at work of the personnel, which was inconsistent with the result of generation Y.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

1) Although the levels of happiness at work of generation X and generation Y were not different, the factors affecting happiness at work were different. The results of the study reflect that each generation's employees have different attitudes and needs. Therefore, organizations should adopt policies that are appropriate for the generation of employees in the organization.

2) The factor that affects the happiness at work of generation X is job security. Therefore, organizations should focus on job security, such as having a clear employment contract, having an organization chart with clearly defined job descriptions as well as ensuring employees' safety while working. Especially in the service business, employees have

to meet with a variety of customers, therefore, employees should be assured of safety, such as having CCTV in the workplace as well as having the necessary equipment to prevent accidents at work.

3) Factors affecting happiness at work of generation Y:

- The work itself - Organizations should make work challenging to motivate employees. It can be done by setting goals to make employees feel challenged and motivated to work towards the goals.
- Responsibility - Organizations should assign the appropriate task for employees, having the responsibilities appropriate to their job title, not too much or too little as well as having appropriate time for the task to be done. New tasks should be assigned to employees without forcing them, but use positive reinforcement to encourage employees.
- Interpersonal relationship with superiors - In the service business, there is often a need to solve immediate problems for customers which will require unity between employees, therefore, employees should be encouraged to have a close relationship. This can be encouraged by organizing activities to strengthen the relationship of employees in the organization. However, employees should be encouraged to participate voluntarily, not compulsory, as generation Y dislikes coercion.
- Company policy and administration - Organizations should distribute tasks that are appropriate for the employee's job title, making sure that the work is not overloaded for the employees. Management should communicate regularly with employees to have a common understanding, this can be done by using online platforms.
- Working Conditions – This factor is a maintenance factor, a factor that will make employees unhappy if not provided. All employees have expectations in place, such as the expectation of workplace cleanliness or being provided with the right work equipments, the organization should be able to fulfill those expectations to prevent dissatisfaction. It should also be considered that generation Y is more individualistic, organizations should provide both private space and common space, in order for them to work more effectively. Especially in the service business where employees are required to meet a large number of customers, there should be a private space for employees to relax.
- Job security – Organizations should focus on job security, such as having a clear employment contract, having an organization chart with clearly defined job descriptions as well as ensuring employees' safety while working. Especially in the service business, employees have to meet with a variety of customers, therefore, employees should be assured of safety, such as having CCTV

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