



Advance Social Science Archives Journal

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol.2 No.4, Oct-Dec, 2024. Page No. 473-483

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENVY AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

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ABSTRACT

This research study is about the relationship between employee envy and employee wellbeing. Envy is negative feeling when an employee feels about other employee superiority, success, and reward and wishes that for himself/herself. Wellbeing is positive or good behaviours and attitudes of employees' towards each other in an organization. This study aims to find that employees envy and employees wellbeing are related and to explore that how employees overall envy affect the employee wellbeing as a whole about organization performance. This study is qualitative in nature and data have been collected by interviews that are semi-structured. For analysis of data collected, researcher has used the thematic analysis technique. Results obtained from the thematic analysis showed that employees envy is negatively related to wellbeing of employees and organization performance. In this study employees' organizational wellbeing is explored, therefore, it is recommended that other aspects of the same construct could be investigated in future research. Relationship of employees envy and wellbeing can be studied with psychological concepts such as self-esteem of employees, citizenship behaviour of employees regarding organization, skepticism, narcissism and like concepts. Such studies may assist in exploring strength of relationship between envy and wellbeing of employees.

Keywords: Employees envy, employees' wellbeing, malicious, benign, semi-structured interview, thematic analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study explores the relationship between employee envy and wellbeing, with the aim of finding the effects of envy on employee wellbeing and consequently on work performance. Highlighting effects of employees' envy on their wellbeing and organizational performance, this study significantly contributes to knowledge. Envy is a negative feeling that an individual feels about others' superiority, accomplishment or reward and wishes that for herself (Charash and Muller, 2007). According to Vecchio (2000), envy strongly influences employees' behaviors and performance. Envy is a hostile emotion about a person and it has two types, malicious and benign. Malicious envy includes negative attitudes and consequences. Second type of envy is benign envy and it has positive outcomes. Wellbeing is positive or good behaviours and attitude of organizational employees towards each other. Because of employees' wellbeing, they show good behavior and are optimistic in their interactions with each

other. Wellbeing includes positive and good intentions of employees towards each other and organization. They work for the interests and welfare of the organization and its employees.

This research study is important due to several aspects including employees' behaviors that are envy and wellbeing. By means of finding out relationship between employees' envy and employees' wellbeing, they can try to minimize negative aspect which is malicious envy and can enhance their positive aspect which is benign envy. In the light of above discussion, this research study has significant impacts on attitudes, behaviors, and performances of employees.

In this research study relationship between employees envy and employees' wellbeing is found. This study can be used to understand these concepts in detail and also to evaluate employees' on the basis of their behaviors. It can be used as guidelines in order to correct and guide behaviors of employees' so as to minimize the negative perceptions and thinking at workplace.

2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Envy

Smith & Kim (2007) define envy as "*an unpleasant and frequently painful blend of feelings characterized by inferiority, hostility, and resentment caused by a comparison with a person or group of persons who possess something we desire.*" The word "envy" comes from the Latin word "invidere," which means to "*look at another with malice*" (Webster's Online Dictionary). Realizing a desired quality that another person or group of people enjoys causes this unpleasant, usually painful emotion. Additionally, it demonstrates low self-esteem based on the organization, decreased job satisfaction, absenteeism. Turnover intentions, and decline in employees' dedication to their work and organization (Vecchio, 2005). It is offensive that includes sense of subservience in individuals.

Envy can be classified as benign, malicious, periodic, or appropriate (Lange & Crusius, 2015). According to Cohen-Charash (2009), episodic envy is a bad feeling that arises from a specific negative social comparison of an individual with others. Malicious envy aims to bring down superior people, while benign jealousy is linked to motivation and upward mobility (Lange & Crusius, 2015).

According to Solvey and Rodin (1984), intermittent envy is a reliable indicator of animosity toward those who are envied and a lack of want to be friends with them. In addition to wanting to hurt envious parties (Cohen-Charash & Mueller, 2007), episodic envy also share information with others insufficiently or not at all (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2004). Periodic jealousy also results in immoral and damaging actions, like dishonestly hurting envious people (Gino & Pierce, 2009), and not helping them.

Upward social comparison encourages better performance and benign envy when people believe that self-improvement is achievable; when people believe that self-improvement is difficult to achieve, upward social comparison results in more admiration rather than any motivation for better performance (Ven, Zeelenberg & Pieter, 2011). According to Hill, DelPriore, and Vaughan (2011), envy can drain self-regulatory resources that are available for preferences and may be a key factor in

memory and attention processes. Envy lessens suffering since it is psychological anxiety that drives people to respond differently to adverse situations (Tai, Narayanan, and McAllister, 2012). Benign envy results from a more accurate and deserving assessment of people, while malice envy results from an unjustified assessment of people (Ven, Zeelenberg & Pieter, 2009).

2.2 Wellbeing

Warr (1987) defined wellbeing as the whole of an employee's experience and functioning at work. The three main components of employee wellbeing—social (related to social interaction), psychological (related to employees' psychology), and physical (related to employees' physique)—are the foundation of a universal definition of employee wellbeing that is derived from literature in fields such as healthcare, philosophy, psychology, and sociology (Grant, Christianson & Price, 2007). According to the World Health Organization (1946), "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" is what healthcare researchers refer to as health. Similarly, academics propose that a person's wellbeing comprise their overall well-being (Nussbaum, 2001).

Helping others, public recognition, and taking part in community activities are examples of social dimensions of wellbeing. Among the psychological aspects are self-respect, agency, capabilities, and satisfaction. A positive cycle of employee wellness is created by legitimate leadership that has impacts on successful business in successful organizations. This preserves staff wellness and helps leaders remain legitimate (Keyes, Hysom & Lupo, 2000). Low rewards as compared to considerable physical and psychological efforts of employees, significantly affects employees health (Jonge, Bosma, Peter & Siergist, 2005). There is a significant correlation between employee well-being and organizational success (Vanhala & Tuomi, 2006). Work-family conflict and decreased employee wellbeing can be avoided with the help of family and supervisor support as well as the application of problem-focused management techniques (Lapierre & Allen, 2006).

Instead of being three distinct forms of employee wellbeing; work engagement, Workaholism,

and burnout are three different kinds (Schaufeli, Taris, Rhenen, 2008). Employee wellbeing is inversely correlated with perceived fairness of supervisors' performance reviews, although job satisfaction and emotions of control at work are positively correlated with perceived fairness (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008).

2.3 Relationship between employees envy and wellbeing

Envy of employees develops hostile feelings about others which affect wellbeing of employees'. Negative emotional conditions and attitudes for example anger, envy, aggression, hostility, reduce human capacity to work in a better manner and thus affect employees' wellbeing. Envy is a negative emotion that has negative effects on employees work related behavior. As a result, the link between envy and employee wellbeing can be proven and the strength of this relationship may be different, but the very nature of this relationship is same. Envy activates negative emotion in employees and such negative emotion affect the self-respect of employee, produce stronger

negative relationship between employees envy and wellbeing. Similarly, the negative emotion which was experienced by someone because of feeling inferior (comparison over social standard) cause job dissatisfaction at higher level and this probably leads toward strong opposite association between envy to wellbeing. So the following framework is made (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008).

2.5 Theoretical Framework: Employee envy and wellbeing

The theoretical discussion above establishes that envy is detrimental to wellbeing. While envy is a multidimensional construct, here negative effect of envy is taken as an overall construct (Fernandes et al., 2012). The figure1 shows that envy leads to none or lower organizational wellbeing while employees wellbeing can reduce the envious behaviour. On the basis of relationship between employees envy and employees' wellbeing, the data collection is carried out through semi-structured interviews for this study to support this relationship.



Figure 1. Theoretical Framework: Employee Envy and Wellbeing

This study attempted to assess the role of envy on employee wellbeing. The above figure shows that if an employee has wellbeing behaviour towards other employees and organization, it minimizes the envy of other employees. According to Smith & Kim (2007), envy is socially unacceptable, and contains feelings of self-threatening, subordination and hostility. In this way, it lowers organizational performance of employees and also negatively affects the employees' wellbeing. In the same way, feelings of envious employees negatively effects wellbeing of other employee and organization. This increases turnover rate and reduces organizational performance of employees and consequently of organization.

3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Questions

Research questions for this research study are,

Research Question 1: To what extent employee overall envy and employee wellbeing are related?

Research Question 2: How the employees envy negatively affect the employee wellbeing about organization?

3.2 Positivism: Adopted research philosophy for this study

According to Benbasat et al. (1987), there is no such superiority of one research methodology over others, all of them are important. In interpretive research studies, the researchers produce and relate their subjective as well as inter-subjective implications as they interact with their surroundings. Therefore, they thus try to comprehend the overall phenomena by means of getting into the meanings participants allocate to them (Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991). According to interpretivism research philosophy, the access to reality is possible only through social constructions, such as shared meanings and language, etc. (Myers, 2008). According

to Walsham (1993), the interpretive research methods initiate from such a position that our knowledge about reality, which include the sphere of human actions, is the social construction of human actors and this put on equally to researchers. In this case the researchers do not discover the objective reality that can be replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivism. It is toward general from specific.

Since envy by its nature is a negative perception of employees, therefore it will cause low wellbeing, lower level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment and vice-versa. Similarly by means of positive organizational commitment, wellbeing can be enhanced (Meyer and Maltin, 2007). Carrying forward similar argument, positive commitment leads to higher wellbeing of employees while whenever there is no or little commitment of employees' with organization or their jobs, definitely it will cause low wellbeing.

3.3 Research Strategy

According to Saunders et al. (2009), it is notable that various research strategies are mutually comprehensive and inclusive. Researchers can use each research strategy for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory researches (Yin, 2003). Similarly Neumann (2013) states "researchers can use surveys for exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory research." Survey is a popular methodology for collection of a large amount of data from a specific population in an efficient way (Saunders et al., 2009). Most surveys ask a large number of respondents about their beliefs, opinions, characteristics, and past or present behaviors.

In current study survey strategy is used as data are collected from teaching and supporting staff as well as from administrative staff of Scientific Instrumentation Centre (SIC), University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar (UET). Researcher adopted semi-structured interview method about envy and wellbeing from various authentic researchers who have already worked in same areas. Questions of the semi-structured interviews also included opinion based questions in which respondents incorporated their input as well. In this way, interview fulfilled the real spirit of semi-structured interview.

3.4 Data Collection

Brayman and Bell (2007) believed that systematically collected data will correctly answer the research questions. The validity and reliability of a particular study are directly related to the correct measurement of the data (Wood and Ross-Kerr, 2010). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Researcher used semi-structured interviews for data collection. Some themes were already fixed on the basis of that researcher developed draft for data collection by using semi-structured interviews. Additionally form interviews of respondents, more codes and themes were identified and arranged according to the targeted concepts. In the third stage of data collection, responses of respondents were put according to their interviews and presented to them for transcription purpose. After some minor changes, all respondents signed their relevant semi-structured interviews sheets and allowed researcher to use their response only for research purpose.

4: ANALYSIS

4.1 Thematic analysis

According to Krippendorff (1980) and Weber (1990), thematic analysis is a systematic method of condensing the many words in a text into fewer thematic categories based on explicit coding rules. Thematic analysis is a method of creating interpretations by objectively and systematically identifying specific features of a message (Holsti, 1969). Thematic analysis is not limited to the field of text analysis, but can also be used in other fields, such as coding student drawings (Wheelock et al., 2000) or actions observed in video studies (Stigler et al., 1999). Thematic analysis techniques have six main issues to address. The first is the nature of the data, the second is the definition of the data, the third is the population, the fourth is the relative context in which the data analysis takes place, the fifth is the limitations of the analysis, and finally the intended conclusions (Krippendorff, 1998). Thematic analysis is more than just a simple word count, but a meaningful, comprehensive and rich method that relies on categorizing and coding the collected data (Stemler, 1998). The data collected can be in verbal, printed or electronic form. The data is likely to be obtained from open-ended questions, narrative responses from respondents, interviews, focus groups, etc. (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). Thematic analysis technique focuses on providing adequate knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). According to Weber (1990), a group of words with similar meanings or connotations are called categories.

4.2 Steps of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The main reason for using this data analysis technique is that this study already contains various themes that were extracted from previous literature and based on these themes; data were collected from the target respondents. Since this is a standard analysis method, the following steps were performed during the data analysis process.

Table 1: Steps of thematic analysis used in this study

Steps	Purpose	Authors	Used in this study
Deciding to use thematic analysis	Depends on thematic analysis objectives and accessibility of data for study. This study	United States General Accounting Office (1989)	Focus is on exploring the relationship between employee envy and employee wellbeing. It also focuses that either the relationship between the two constructs exists or not moreover, to find out nature of that relationship.
What to be counted in thematic analysis method	Samples for thematic analysis often includes sampling documents	Babbie (1973)	Hand written notes have used that were made during semi-structured interviews as input data calculated for thematic analysis
Selecting unit for analysis	Detailed units of analysis. Sections or sentences may also be decent selections	(GAO, 1989)	Unit of analysis is individual respondent (s) in targeted organization, as this organization is target population of the study.
Creating themes or categories	Framing categories are the foundation of the thematic analysis method	Berelson (1952)	Derived themes are mutually inclusive. These themes do not affect each other.
Classifying the information gathered	Recurrence of themes, and equal weight or importance of various themes	(GAO, 1989)	Semi-structured interviews based on themes that were extracted from the literature for this study. The information gathered from semi-structured interviews with employees has been categorized into various themes.
Examining and evaluating findings	To examine the gathered data in a way that makes the findings easily understandable	GAO (1989)	Results from the research study's data collection under the heading "Analysis of the Semi-structured Interviews.

4.3 Model of Thematic Analysis

Three interconnected stages make up the thematic analysis model, according to Miles and Huberman (1994). Data reduction is the first step, followed by data display and conclusion drawing. However, the methodology chapter of the study already includes the data collection stage. The following figure depicts it

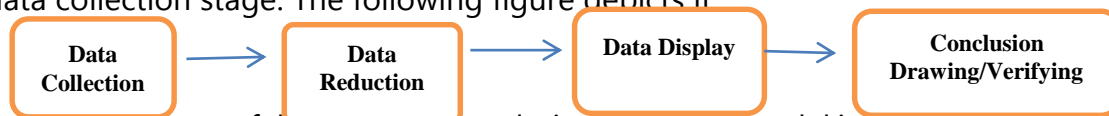


Figure 2: Component of thematic data analysis: interactive model in Miles & Huberman (1994).

Miles & Huberman, (1994), state that data reduction signifies the process of choosing, concentrating, restructuring, building and translating data to themes or categories. In this stage new concepts are established in terms of what should be involved in display of data. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data display is defined as "an ordered, compressed, assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action." Final stages of data analysis procedure are arranging and organizing concepts of research. It is attained by building comprehensible findings and extracting results from data that is shown. At this phase, contradictory and matching data statements need clarification (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this study collection of data has been carried out by means of interviews that are semi-structured using convenience sampling technique. Respondents were teaching and supporting staff as well as administrative staff of Scientific Instrumentation centre (SIC), University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar (UET). Then collected data have been condensed, filtered and reduced by using themes. Finally data have been displayed by means of main themes which lead to conclusions.

5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Results

In this study collection of data is done through interviews that are semi-structured and analyzed using qualitative method i.e., thematic analysis. Themes and codes that are derived from the literature of this study and later on from the respondents are arranged in data set of this study. Results and interpretations of thematic analysis suggest that employees envy is negatively related to employees' wellbeing and organization. Envy always bring unpleasant outcomes in workplace and creates an atmosphere of negative intentions between employees and organization and among employees as well. Envy causes counter productive work behaviour within employees which leads to inefficiency of employees and ultimately to organizational inefficiency and ineffectiveness. All these are not good signs for performance and goodwill of an organization. In conclusion it is argued in the light of the provided supporting data that the specific aspect of envy (malicious envy) is not good for the performance of employees and organization and consequently cause negative image of organization.

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