



Perceived Organizational Support and Well-being of Housekeeping Staff through Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: An Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

Martin Seligman examines the dynamics of learned helplessness and the development of a growth mindset in his ground-breaking study on the positive psychological drivers of human endeavor and identity. An ethnographic approach is used in this paper to examine the individual and collective existential affirmations that local conservancy staff members of a large educational institution, nestled in the Lavasa Valley grapple with, in their work life and their community socialization. Interest in the impact of employee wellness models of engagement at work has recently grown. The term 'Well-Being' commonly refers to the overall quality of life. Concepts of health, satisfaction with life experiences, work and prosperity are constituent units of experience commonly used to describe 'Well-Being' which also provides the endurance to engage constructively with distress, dissatisfaction, and worry. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) provides a primary model for occupational therapy that has been actively adopted in the training and development of sanitation workers. CBT is a therapeutic strategy that helps people to identify and change negative beliefs behaviours that contribute to anxiety and worry. A meta-review has found that stress-management interventions based on CBT have the strongest evidence for effectiveness in reducing work-related stress. This paper draws on the principles of positive psychology, where the researchers examine the collective experiences of the conservancy staff members by applying working principles from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to examine their perception of well-being and happiness.

Keywords: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Positive Psychology, Wellness, Meaning, Purpose, Happiness, Conservancy Workers

1. Introduction

An ethnographic study is a qualitative research framework used to observe and understand participants' behavior and beliefs. The housekeeping department is responsible for an organization's cleaning, maintenance, and decor. It ensures an organization's cleanliness, comfort, and safety (Tyagi & H.V., 2019). Housekeeping staff play an essential role in the smooth running of many organizations. However, they often work in demanding and stressful environments which can lead to a negative impact on their well-being. Interest in the impact of employee wellness at work has grown in recent years (Currie, 2001; Department for Work and Pensions, 2006;

Kersley et al., 2006; MacDonald, 2005; Peccei, 2004; Tehrani et al., 2007; Warr, 2002). The term wellbeing commonly refers to overall quality of life. Happiness, health, and prosperity are common terms used to describe it (Mayalagan, 2022). General well-being refers to a sense of happiness, enjoyment, and satisfaction with life experiences and work and a sense of accomplishment, utility, and belonging. It is free from distress, dissatisfaction or worry (Diener & Diener, 1996). Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a type of psychotherapy that has been proven to be effective in managing an array of mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression.



Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is an important model that social work programs have adopted in the training of social workers. (Bledsoe et al. 2007). CBT helps people identify and change their negative thoughts and beliefs contributing to their problems. A meta-review found that stress-management interventions based on CBT have the strongest evidence for effectiveness in reducing work-related stress (Joyce et al., 2016). Perceived organizational support (POS) relates to employees' perceptions that their organization values their efforts and concern about their well-being and employees interpret their immediate supervisor's approach towards them as a sign of the organization's support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Eudaimonia is a term used to describe psychological well-being. It is sometimes referred to as the "good life" or "flourishment" since it seeks to attain a higher sustained level of happiness beyond life contentment (Crespo & Mesurado, 2015). This study explores the relationship between the perceived organizational support (POS) and the well-being of housekeeping staff using CBT. The study will begin by reviewing the relevant ethnographic studies that have been conducted on this topic. It will then discuss the factors that can affect the well-being of housekeeping staff and the role that CBT can play in improving their well-being.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Wellbeing

Well-being is attributed to the degree of affluence provided by mental, emotional, physical, and economic factors in day-to-day life. It further states the necessity for employees to be happy and fulfilled in their jobs such that the degree of affluence provided by each factor is within the threshold of what is understood as desirable for individual well-being. Higher levels of job discretion and employee empowerment result from management's HR policies and practices in job design, training and development, employee involvement, information sharing, compensation and rewards, and other areas. Additionally, it develops a work atmosphere that is generally more engaging, gratifying, and encouraging. All of this contributes to a more integrated and generally happier workforce by improving the quality of work life for employees

(Peccei, 2004). If a set of HR practices was found to be associated both with high performance and employee satisfaction/wellbeing, then we would be closer to making improvements in the search for the elusive happy and productive worker (Staw 1986). The presence of perceived job alternatives is associated with life satisfaction, as an indicator of the importance of employment security for overall wellbeing. It is more important for life satisfaction than for work satisfaction and is significantly associated with life satisfaction in every sector (Guest, 2002). Three mechanisms are discussed in the psychological literature: first, positive affect enhances the number of cognitive components that are available for association. Second, it increases – through de focused attention – the breadth of these elements. Finally it enhances cognitive flexibility, and hence the likelihood that cognitive elements become associated with each other enhances (Isen, 1999). A survey was done in Gallup wherein their approach involved three steps: firstly aggregating employee wellbeing and the respective (context-specific) performance outcome at the business-unit level for each of the 339 research studies. Secondly calculating the business-unit-level correlation between employee wellbeing and performance outcomes for each study. Finally applying meta-analytical toolkit to obtain a single, adjusted (i.e. non-context-specific) average correlation between employee wellbeing and the respective performance outcome (Krekel et al., 2019). A number of positive feelings, including the experience of employee well-being, share the capacity to broaden an employee's momentary thought-action repertoires by broadening the potential thoughts and actions that come to mind (Wright. T, 2017).

2.2. Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Employee perception of organizational support (POS) measures how much they feel their organization values their efforts and is concerned for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to research, POS significantly affects employees' beliefs and behaviors like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to leave their jobs, and job performance (Eisenberger et al., 2002). High levels of POS are linked to successful



outcomes, while low levels of POS are linked to poor outcomes (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS is frequently linked to (Blau's, 1964) social exchange theory since it symbolizes an employer's commitment to their staff, and in turn, encourages them to work more to support the organization's objectives (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). Such reciprocity may be a significant organizational factor influencing the link between employee outcomes and empowerment. Employers can improve their employees' perceptions of organizational support by giving them resources and assistance to deal with stress at work, exhibiting supportive leadership behaviors, and making sure that rules and regulations are just and fair (Eisenberger et al., 2010; Ambrose & Schminke, 1999). By doing this, businesses may foster a more uplifting and encouraging work atmosphere that promotes employee engagement, productivity, and retention. According to organizational support theory, when given a great deal of encouragement, workers put in more effort to help their company achieve its objectives, showing loyalty and dedication in exchange for monetary and interpersonal benefits (J. Aselage & R. Eisenberger, 2003). Studies have found a strong positive relationship between organizational support and empowerment (Chow et al., 2006). When a company expresses its intention to reward and recognize employee effort, the POS "may be taken by employees as a sign of the organization's beneficial or detrimental intentions" (Lynch et al., 1999). According to research, organizational support can influence performance by reducing stressors and boosting affective engagement to the organization (Meyer et al., 2002). According to Lynch et al. (1999), employees feel more obliged to contribute to the organization's goals when they perceive high levels of POS. According to (Ahmed et al., 2013), POS is regarded as an exchange between an organization and its workers, wherein the organization's commitment to its workers produces feelings of support from it (Baran et al., 2012).

2.3.Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Today, CBT is used in a variety of methods, with all CBT treatments focusing on the person's cognitive

and behavioral components in common. CBT therapists think that humans learn through observation and imitation, as well as reinforcement. From this theoretical standpoint, dysfunction can be traced back to childhood experiences, though the approach itself focuses on the here-and-now. In various ways, all CBT treatments aim to examine and modify the client's thought process and actions in order to eliminate dysfunctional ways of being in the world (Rice, 2015). CBT is based upon the cognitive model of mental illness. According to the cognitive model, a person's emotions and behavior are influenced by their understanding of events. The three levels of cognition are core beliefs, dysfunctional assumptions and negative automatic thoughts. Our childhood experiences, particularly our interactions with our parents and other important people in our life, have an impact on our core values. Dysfunctional assumptions are the conditional rules for living life. Negative automatic thoughts (NATs) concentrate on the negative aspects of ourselves, the world, or other people (Beck, 1976). Aaron Beck created a type of psychotherapy that he initially called "cognitive therapy," a word that is frequently used synonymously with "cognitive behavior therapy" (Beck, 1964). Cognitive-behavioral therapy is one of the most deeply studied forms of psychotherapy (Hollon & Beck, 1994). CBT works on altering both the cognition and behavior patterns of clients. CBT is only a mixture of CT (Cognitive Therapy) and BT (Behavioral Therapy), the two fundamental treatments (Beck, 2011). CBT focuses on how people think and helps them think in ways that make them feel the way they want to feel and achieve their goals. A unique aspect of CBT is the idea that symptoms and dysfunctional behaviors are often cognitively mediated, and therefore, change may be created by altering dysfunctional ideas and thinking (Pucci, 2006). REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) and reinforcement are two CBT techniques used widely (David, 2014; Pucci, 2006). Further, REBT is used when people experience emotional discomfort as a result of illogical beliefs, and the therapist must persuade the client to change those irrational beliefs with reasonable ones, according to David (2014). Reinforcement assists the client in overcoming



negative cognitive biases, developing a more balanced perspective of the world and the future, and improving activity levels, particularly those that increase active engagement and problem-solving (Pucci, 2006). Values are fundamental attitudes guiding our mental processes and behavior which make us believe life is meaningful and serve as a measure of the degree to which people carry out their actions, in line with that person's value system. Value identification is a tool used in CBT for the identification and assessment of life values. It differentiates between values and goals and helps the therapist to set the therapeutic goals that are correlated with important areas of the patient's life (Vyskocilova et al., 2015).

2.4. Eudaimonia

The term eudaimonia originated from ancient Greek philosophers (Fowers, 2016). Aristotle (1999) offers an explanation of eudaimonia as the highest value for human beings in his primary ethical text the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Eudaimonism is an ethical theory that encourages people to identify and live in line with their daimon, or "true self" (Norton, 1976). Waterman (2008) defined eudaimonia as personal expressiveness and self-realization, both of which focus on bringing out the "true, inner self," conforming to current beliefs that "a self" is a natural human asset. According to Aristotle, every living or human-made thing has a unique or characteristic function or activity that separates it from all other things. In Aristotelian ethics eudaimonia is the state of flourishing or living well (Daly, C. B., 1954). The traditional meaning of eudaimonia is "happiness," but many contemporary philosophers prefer the translation as flourishing. The primary focus of eudaimonic principles is on behavior that reflects virtue, excellence, the best in us, and the full development of our potential (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Eudaimonia is defined as the pursuit of virtuous personal progress that permits one to accomplish one's life purpose (Aristotle, 1925; Waterman, 1993). The essential concept of the eudaimonic perspective is that individuals experience well-being when they are achieving their potential while contributing to the larger good (McMahan & Estes, 2011b; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Annas (2011) also

observes that eudaimonia differs significantly from our current understanding of happiness that each individual's pleasure consists of a very specific style of existence. Happiness in a eudaimonic sense, is not about what we own, it is about how we feel and live our lives, whatever the circumstances like healthy or unhealthy, rich or poor, educated or uneducated we should consider our lives and try to live them well. Living well implies developing our skills in pursuit of a meaningful or beneficial aim. Scholars in the field of psychology have generally chosen to view well-being as an umbrella word composed of various components that empirical study might assist disentangle (Della Fave, 2016). They followed two primary traditions based on different views of human nature hedonism and eudaimonism, both informed by ancient Greek beliefs about what defines a decent human life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hedonism is concerned with obtaining pleasure and avoiding pain, whereas eudaimonia is concerned with realizing one's potential while following one's life purpose in a virtuous manner (Ryan & Deci, 2008; Waterman, 1993, 2007). Thus, hedonia at work refers to how much fun and pleasure employees get out of their jobs. Hedonia differs conceptually from engagement, which is defined as psychological presence in a role as evidenced by high levels of attention and absorption (Kahn, 1990). Eudaimonia at work is the subjective experience that work helps one grow, provides a sense of purpose, and contributes to a larger community.

3. Research Methodology

The purpose of sampling is to enhance the quality of results by ensuring that the units studied are representative of the larger population. Purposive sampling is used in the study to select participants. Purposive sampling is one of the sampling technique in which researchers utilize their expertise to select specific participants who meet particular criteria, ensuring that they are relevant to the study's aims. A sample of 45 women performing housekeeping activities was chosen from diverse locations on the outskirts of Pune. The population under examination consists of female cleaning staff members working in different enterprises on the outskirts of Pune. The basic aim is to understand the experiences and



perceptions of organizational support and its impact on their well-being. These selected participants have different years of experience in the field of housekeeping, ranging from beginner to experience. This diversified set of experiences will provide comprehensive insights into the impact of perceived organizational support on the well-being of housekeeping staff.

4. Data Collection

The focus of the study was to qualitatively understand how organizational support on the well-being is viewed by housekeeping staff. The intention was to learn more about the topic and gain insights. Data was collected through various meetings attended by housekeeping employees. Prior to the meeting, all participants provided informed consent, which clarified the goal of the study, the confidentiality of their responses.

4.1. Activity-1

The meeting began with an unstructured conversation to create a calm atmosphere, allowing them to freely express their personal experiences and thoughts. The goal of this technique was to build trust and transparency among the participants. The conversation centered around topics such as their experiences with organizational support, factors affecting their well-being at work, and how these factors influenced their overall sense of fulfillment (eudaimonia) in the workplace. Open-ended questions were asked in the first meeting. Questions were related to different themes.

4.1.1. Personal Life

Participants were first asked about their personal life related questions that were mainly focused on everyday responsibilities, work-life balance, and after-work activities, with an objective of determining how the housekeeping staff are balancing their personal and professional life. The set of questions that were asked are as follows:

- Main tasks or responsibilities on a daily basis
- Handling unexpected situations or emergencies on a daily basis.
- Balancing work life and personal life
- Importance of work

4.1.2. Workplace Productivity and Efficiency

The next set of Questions was related to productivity, motivation, and involvement in institutional training sessions. The primary objective is to get a full understanding of the housekeeping staff's approaches and motivations within their work environment. The questions that were asked are as follows:

- Strategies for staying productive and efficient
- Motivation to complete tasks
- Management provides tools and resources

4.1.3. Relations with management and Organizational Support

Questions were focused on interactions, communication patterns, support, and challenges encountered while engaging with supervisory personnel. The aim of asking these questions is to gain an understanding of their overall perception of the organization, including aspects such as work culture, organizational policies, and a sense of belonging.

- Are the management approachable during difficulties
- Importance of organization in their life
- Management support

4.1.4. Observation

During this phase, it was observed that while some participants were engaged and responsive, a significant portion showed hesitation. It was evident from their nonverbal signs, such as avoiding eye contact and minimal vocal responses. They seemed reserved and preferring not to discuss their feelings or experiences. Around 30-40% of the participants actively participated in the activity. When the questions are asked they are sharing their feelings and experiences openly.

4.2. Activity-2

The second activity conducted was Picasso. This activity is in line with the elements of value clarification which is a tool used within cognitive behavioral therapy. The aim of the activity is to help individuals to define and understand their core values, beliefs or priorities. Before conducting the activity a short casual conversation was held to know about their daily activity after that participants were provided with A4 sheets and sketching materials and for this activity time provided was 30-40 minutes. The activity started with asking the participants to



create a visual representation of specific scenarios. In the first scenario participants were asked to draw themselves as birds and animals which has allowed participants to convey aspects of their identity and personal qualities. In the last scenario, participants were asked to imagine how their family saw them. The purpose of this drawing is to reflect their perceived roles within the family. It encouraged introspection to understand personal behaviors and their impact on familial relationships by imagining how their family views them. Although this activity does not explicitly ask participants to identify or clarify their values, it indirectly addresses their beliefs and perceptions about self-image, and their relationship with family members.

4.2.1. Observation

It was observed that around 75-80% of participants showed significant interest and active involvement in the activity. However, approximately 20-15% of the participants showed less engaged or hesitant to actively participate in the exercise. This group showed less involvement in the drawing task as compared to the more engaged participants. The visual arts created have been evidence of their engagement.

4.3. Activity-3

The third activity, Sanglee, was specifically designed to create a positive and supportive environment among the housekeeping staff. Its primary goal was to highlight positive incidents, attitudes, and character traits within the team, with the aim of enhancing the inherent value and mutual respect among all members. In this, first housekeeping staff were divided into groups of two and then they were asked to throw a ball to their partner. The person who catches the ball would express positive emotions, recalling good qualities and memorable incidents about the person who threw the ball and the same activity was repeated for the other person in the group ensuring that everyone had an equal opportunity to express and receive positive remarks. There were 18 groups and each group was allotted two minutes. This rotational approach was designed to create an inclusive environment in which each team member felt valued and acknowledged, promoting a sense of unity and belonging.

4.3.1. Observation

Throughout the session, the housekeeping staff showed a high level of enthusiasm and excitement for the activity. This excitement indicated a significant change from previous sessions, indicating increased interest and engagement among the staff.

5. Limitation

Several limitations are inherent in this study. Firstly, the research is confined to a specific group of housekeeping staff in the outskirts of Pune, limiting the findings. A purposive sampling includes the potential to introduce selection bias, which could affect the sample's representativeness. Although the study offers valuable insights, its qualitative character restricts the capacity to measure and quantitatively evaluate results. The time frame to conduct the research. Despite these limitations, the study aims to offer valuable qualitative insights into the experiences of housekeeping staff regarding organizational support and wellbeing.

6. Data Analysis

The qualitative data has been evaluated using thematic analysis. The data gathered in the form of informal interview, transcript, and notes and closely examined to identify common themes, topics and patterns that appear repeatedly.

6.1. Analysis of Activity 1

Questions asked in this activity were related to housekeeping staff's personal life, workplace productivity and management support. Questions were asked related to personal life and the responses are:

- Begin the day at 5 a.m. by preparing breakfast for themselves and their children and making sure they are ready for school before leaving for work.
- Throughout the day, perform cleaning and sanitation procedures such as dusting and mopping.
- Finish work by 5 p.m. and go home to take care of household responsibilities, such as meal preparation and spending quality time with family.
- When personal emergencies arise, they may request assistance from teammates to help in



their duties temporarily, ensuring that the work continues smoothly.

- In case of unexpected events, they take a collaborative approach, dividing the additional workload among team members to ensure timely completion.
- They sometimes show flexibility by rearranging schedules or tasks among themselves to manage unexpected situations or urgent cleaning needs.
- They value and give specific hours only to personal life, and they prioritize finishing work on time to ensure they have enough time for their family.
- They spend Sunday as a special family day by watching TV or movies at home.
- They find that working gives them a sense of purpose and enjoyment that breaks up the monotony of housework, giving them a break from their daily routine.
- Work is very important because it gives people the money they need to survive.

The responses of the housekeeping staff provides insights into their daily routines, explaining their dedication and commitment both at work and at home. The responses highlight a demanding schedule that begins at 5 a.m. with personal responsibilities such as food preparation for themselves and their family. This highlights the dual roles they play in balancing work and family responsibilities. They work together when unexpected tasks, such as sudden cleaning needs or events, arise at work. They divided the extra work among themselves in order to complete it on time. This indicates that they are capable of helping one another when situations change unexpectedly. The housekeeping staff values their family time. This indicates that they make a special effort to maintain a healthy balance between their work and family life. For them work is important because it provides the income needed to support their families. They cherish their work because it makes them feel like they are helping their family on a financial basis. Questions were asked related to workplace productivity and efficiency and the responses are:

- They effectively manage their work, making sure its timely completion without spending time on unnecessary conversations with other coworkers.
- They finish work early so they can see their kids, who are waiting for them at home.
- They finish work on time to have conversations with coworkers.
- The management offers necessary equipment, like long mop handles, which make cleaning tasks like mopping floors easier and increase productivity.
- Using the safety precautions when working with dangerous chemicals.
- The housekeeping staff prioritizes work efficiency by minimizing distractions, motivated by a strong desire to reunite with their children who are waiting at home. Supportive management provides necessary tools related to their work and provides safety measures emphasizing safety for their well-being.
- Questions were asked related to relations with management and organizational support and the responses are:
- During personal problems such as financial or health-related issues, they find management approachable, as they discuss concerns with their supervisors and receive necessary financial help.
- When they require emergency leave, management is accommodating and supportive, addressing their immediate needs.
- The organization has a significant impact on their lives by providing a work opportunity and support during difficult times.
- They feel a sense of belonging and independence at the organization, and they value the opportunities to earn money for their families
- Management-organized monthly engaging activities.
- The organization's support includes providing essential training sessions on workplace



safety when handling hazardous chemicals, ensuring their safety.

The responses from the housekeeping staff reveal a strong bond with management, portraying them as approachable during personal difficulties. This denotes a welcoming environment in which communication flows freely, fostering trust and dependability. Management's efforts to organize engaging activities encourage the staff's sense of belonging. Overall, these observations show a nurturing relationship between staff and management, characterized by effective communication, responsive assistance, and a supportive workplace culture.

6.2. Analysis of Activity 2

For the second activity participants draw themselves as birds and animals. Some draw themselves as fish because they think that women are bound by responsibilities and duties in the same manner fish are stuck in the pound. Others portrayed birds as horses, representing freedom and strength. The data collected from participants who drew symbols such as trees, flowers, and rangoli reveals interesting perspectives on their roles within the family. Some portrayed themselves as trees, associating them with the idea of constant support and protection to their family, similar to how a tree provides shelter in all seasons. Others drew flowers to represent their role as a source of blessings and protection for their children, similar to how bees are attracted to flowers for honey. Furthermore, some portrayed themselves as the rangoli representing the diversity within their families, with each member contributing unique qualities, similar to the different colors in a rangoli that collectively create a beautiful pattern.

6.3. Analysis of Activity 3

Not only good relationships with the management mattered, but also with the coworkers. Participants were asked to talk about good things about their coworkers and the responses are:

- They work together and help one another.
- They complement each other on their work.
- The new employees mentioned that their coworkers are friendly and helpful to them.
- They are respectful and kind to everyone.

- They behave as if they are a close family, having fun together.
- They solve problems quickly, not allowing things to get worse.
- They are always ready to support one another.
- They are friendly and have a good time working together.

The way the housekeeping team collaborates shows that they are a big supportive family. They help and appreciate one another, making the work environment enjoyable. They work well together, solve problems quickly, and enjoy their work. Overall, they foster a positive and encouraging environment for teamwork. The positive relationship between team members ensures that they go out of their way to support one another and that work is not affected.

7. Result

Activities influenced by CBT showed promising developments related to increasing employee engagement. Even though staff members' initial levels of participation varied, these activities eventually led to a greater level of enthusiasm among most of the staff. By incorporating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques like positive reinforcement, Cognitive Restructuring, and goal-setting, housekeeping staff experienced a positive transformation in their thinking patterns. The activities promoted self-awareness, confronted negative ideas, and fostered a positive team environment through skillful communication. According to the study, the well-being of housekeeping staff is positively correlated with perceived organizational support (POS). The housekeeping personnel through their personal reflections and through the reflexive exercises that were employed, were able to confidently conclude that there is dignity of labor, and that they were respected and cherished by their peers and the Institution's management. The goal of the housekeeping staff was to lead a happy life, no matter what. They balanced work and life, emphasizing growing professionally and achieving important goals. This commitment to pursuing a good life in spite of difficulties matched the concept of Eudaimonia.



Conclusion

The cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) methods were very efficient in improving the overall well-being of the housekeeping staff; although some were initially hesitant, most of them felt more enthusiastic and involved after participating in these activities. The CBT methods helped the staff members better understand themselves, address negative thoughts, and improve communication within the team. The CBT methods also improved the overall atmosphere of the workplace; the study found that when employees felt supported by the organization, they were happier at work and were able to find a better work-life balance. The study found that when employees felt supported by the organization, they were happier at work and were able to find a better work-life balance. The research encourages organizations to recognize the intricate relationship between organizational support, and employee well-being. Through this understanding, institutions can create positive, engaging work conditions that benefit both employees and the overall workplace environment.

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