

# Mental Well-Being and Its Impact on Work Engagement: A Study of Selected Indian Public Sector Undertakings.

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

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**Objective:** Today the effective management of work force has still been a matter of great challenge due to various folds of generations in the light of digital technology. This study explores the relationship between mental well-being and Work Engagement among employees selected from three Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) viz POWERGRID, MSPDCL and MSPCL.

**Methods:** Using a cross-sectional field survey, data were obtained from 379 employees of the three PSUs. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale is used for measuring Mental Well-being and a short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) by Schaufeli. ANOVA, t-test and correlation study are employed.

**Results:** More than 60 % of the employees falls in the moderate category of mental well-being, 17.41% falls in low category of mental well-being and 18.73 % falls in high category of mental well-being. A statistically significant correlation of 0.517\*\* is found between mental well-being and work engagement. Independent t-test shows that there is no statistically significant difference in mental well-being among male and female employees, while there is a significant mean difference among male and female work engagement scores, male having higher mean score than female. There is significant mean difference in mental well-being among Executives and non-executive employee(higher), while there is no significant mean difference among Work engagement between the two category Executives and non-executive employee. Through ANOVA it was found that mental well-being and work engagement mean difference between the employee groups based on age shows higher mental well-being and work engagement in age group 36-40 years and 41-50 years from 25-30 years.

**Conclusions:** This study suggest that mental wellbeing can significantly positively impact work engagement. Organizational HRD activities like trainings have an impact on the mental well being of the employees.

**Research Implications:** Such findings contribute to our better understanding of the relationship between mental well-being and Work engagement. Further such concept has been shown to have direct effect on productivity, hence the significance.

**Originality/value:** This study addresses the gap in the body of knowledge regarding the significance of mental well-being and Work engagement among employees of the three Indian Public Sector Undertaking, POWERGRID, MSPCL and MSPDCL.

**Keyword:** happiness, mental well-being, Work engagement, mental health, positive psychology, Positive Organisational Behaviour.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations across industries rely on people for sustained growth, making competent human resources essential. Despite ongoing efforts through core management functions, enhancing workforce capability remains a challenge. The nature of work has evolved significantly, and with Generation Alpha set to enter the workforce, workplace expectations are likely to shift further. These changes reflect broader transformations across four distinct phases of industrial and business development.

The evolution of the workforce can be seen across four key phases. During the Industrial Revolution, work was hierarchical, focused solely on survival, with little emphasis on motivation or well-being. The Information Age brought economic growth and technological advancements, offering more opportunities and leading to a more mobile workforce. In the Social Revolution phase, priorities shifted toward work-life balance, personal growth, and meaningful roles. Currently, the AI Revolution is transforming work dynamics once again, with human-centric concerns expected to take precedence as technology becomes more integrated into everyday life.

To succeed in a changing business environment, organizations must prioritize people-focused strategies that enhance performance and well-being while minimizing stress, burnout, and turnover. This concept draws from the positive psychology movement that caught more attention with Martin E.P. Seligman (1998a, 1998c, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) giving a call for more research and study in the field of Positive Psychology.

PSUs, in general, have been facing a lack of innovation, proper market response, autonomy, overstaffing, high overhead costs, and bureaucratic systems.

Influenced by positive psychology, Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB) has gained wide acceptance among scholars and practitioners. This paper explores mental well-being and its relationship with work engagement in PSUs.

Mental well-being has gained increasing attention in recent years, often discussed alongside terms like happiness and subjective well-being (SWB). SWB is broader than happiness, encompassing both emotional responses and cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction. It includes mental well-being, as highlighted in frameworks like (S)WEMWBS. According to Diener et al. (1999), well-being is a positive state as perceived by individuals, shaped more by how they emotionally and cognitively interpret life events than by the events themselves. People are generally considered happy when positive emotions outweigh negative ones (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

Work engagement is a key concept in organizational behaviour, defined as a positive, fulfilling state of mind marked by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). It reflects high energy, motivation, and focus, and plays a critical role in organizational performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Research shows its strong links to creativity, task performance, OCB, and client satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2014). Kahn (1990) further describes it as the full psychological presence of individuals in their work roles. Aligned with the JD-R model, work engagement stands as the opposite of burnout and, like PsyCap, is considered a state-like quality—malleable and developable (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Numerous studies have shown a positive relation between mental well-being and work outcomes like work engagement. Since POB is an emerging field, studies concerning developing countries like India are less general, especially in PSUs.

The workplace today demands a lot more than a simple carrot-and-stick system, and material/financial benefits have not been proven enough many times for a successful organization with the changing needs, thinking, and aspirations of the new world. Employees' behaviours and attitudes from the perspective of traits and state, with the state-like capacities open to development and change (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b; Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007a) may be seen as the fundamental idea behind POB.

### Mental well-being:

Terms like happiness, well-being, mental well-being, and subjective well-being (SWB) are often used interchangeably, though research distinguishes between them. SWB, defined as one's perception of life satisfaction (Diener, 1984), has gained significant attention due to its positive effects on performance, health, and work-life balance. Happiness is typically viewed through two lenses: hedonic (pleasure-focused, aligned with SWB) and eudaimonic (meaning- and purpose-driven), as discussed by Ryan & Deci (2001) and rooted in both classical philosophy and modern theories like Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

While thinkers like Bentham emphasized pleasure (hedonia), others like Aristotle and Maslow highlighted self-actualization and meaningful living (eudaimonia). Seligman (2006) proposed three pathways to happiness—pleasure, engagement, and meaning—echoing this dual perspective. Research suggests people often derive greater happiness from meaning and engagement than from short-term pleasure (Peterson et al., 2005). Mental well-being, particularly as measured by tools like (S)WEMWBS, aligns more closely with the eudaimonic dimension of happiness within the broader concept of subjective well-being.

## Work Engagement

Work engagement, a key outcome in the context of Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB), is vital for organizational success. It is commonly defined as a positive, work-related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This includes high energy, strong involvement, and deep concentration in work tasks.

Different theoretical perspectives provide nuanced understandings of work engagement:

1. Kahn (1990) defines engagement as the physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement in one's role, emphasizing psychological conditions like meaningfulness, safety, and availability that enable full engagement.
2. Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter (2001) present engagement as the opposite of burnout, with energy, involvement, and efficacy countering exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. They identify six key organizational factors influencing engagement: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values.
3. Schaufeli et al. (2002) further developed the concept within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, defining engagement through vigour (energy and resilience), dedication (enthusiasm and pride), and absorption (deep focus and immersion in work). This widely accepted model links engagement to both personal and job resources as antecedents, and outcomes such as performance and well-being.

Overall, work engagement is a dynamic, state-like construct influenced by individual and organizational factors, with significant implications for employee and organizational outcomes.

## 3. RESEARCH GAP

The present research fills up the gaps by exploring the relationship between Mental well-being and Work engagement in regard to PSUs in India and their impact on work-related outcomes.

Hypothesis (H1): Employee's Work engagement is positively related with Mental well-being.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 DESIGN

The survey was conducted among employees of POWERGRID, MSPDCL, and MSPCL, with clear instructions provided through the survey form and HR departments. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and their consent was obtained prior to participation. A total of 379 valid responses were received, with incomplete or incorrectly filled forms excluded from the analysis.

### 4.2 SAMPLE

The study was tested using a sample of 379 employees from the three Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs). A non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was employed, which is well-suited for exploratory research aimed at gaining insights rather than achieving statistical generalization.

### 4.3 MEASURES

The primary focus was to effectively measure Mental well-being and work engagement.

### 4.4 Mental well-being:

To measure happiness or mental well-being, this study uses the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS), a 7-item version of the original 14-item WEMWBS. Widely recognized for assessing positive mental health, the scale includes positively worded items focused on psychological functioning, such as "I've been feeling optimistic about the future" and "I've been feeling useful." Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, with total scores ranging from 7 to 35. SWEMWBS was chosen for its ability to capture both hedonic (pleasure and life satisfaction) and eudaimonic (psychological functioning and self-realization) aspects of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

### 4.5 Work Engagement

This study employs the short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006) to assess work engagement. The scale captures three key dimensions—vigour, dedication, and absorption—through items such as "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" (vigour), "I am enthusiastic about

my job” (dedication), and “I am immersed in my work” (absorption). Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day).

UWES has been validated across numerous countries and languages, with a robust international database of over 60,000 employees. It has demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  values exceeding .80 for each subscale and over .90 for the composite score. Its stability has also been supported, with mean stability coefficients around 0.65 over a one-year period, and up to three years in some studies (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002a, 2002b; Montgomery et al., 2003).

**5. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

SPSS software was used for data analysis in this study. The measure's reliability was checked using Cronbach's alpha (Selltiz et al.,1976). Cronbach's alpha showed acceptable reliability for WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale) i.e 0.797 and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) i.e 0.862, which are >0.7. One-way ANOVA and t-test were used to find if there were significant differences in the means of the variables in the study. Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation was used to find the relationship between the variables of the study.

**6. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Descriptive analysis of the main variables of the study are given below in Table 1.0. It revealed the mean value of the variables : Mental Well-being (24.06) and Work engagement (42.04).

After excluding incomplete or improperly filled responses, data from 379 respondents were used for analysis. Table 1 below presents the descriptive statistics of the sample:

**Table 1.0** Descriptive statistics of the main variables.

Constructs	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mental Wellbeing	379	14.10	35.00	24.0612	3.95795
Work Engagement	379	17.00	54.00	42.0396	8.25429

*Source: Primary data.*

**Gender of the employees.**

The Table 2, below gives the distribution of employees on the basis of gender and it is seen that females are lesser in number.

**Table 2** Gender of the employees

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	328	86.5
Female	51	13.5
Total	379	100

*Source: Primary data.*

**Job level**

Table 3. shows composition of employees based on Job level:

**Table 3** Job level category of the employees.

Job Level	Frequency	Percent
Executives	227	59.9
Supervisors/Workmen	152	40.1
Total	379	100.0

*Source: Primary data.*

Based on the WEMWBS scoring guidelines, participants were categorized into three mental well-being groups: low (score < 43), moderate (score 43–60), and high (score > 60). The distribution of respondents across these categories is presented in Table 4.:

**Table 4** Mental well being level among employees

Total no. of responses	379
% Low wellbeing	17.41
% Moderate wellbeing	63.85
% High wellbeing	18.73

The correlation matrix (Table 5) is given below showing the relationship between Mental wellbeing and work engagement.

**Table 5** Correlations between Mental wellbeing and work engagement.

		Mean	SD	1	2
1	Mental well being	24.0612	3.95795	1	
2	Work Engagement	42.0396	8.25429	.517**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level ( 2 tailed) , N = 379

Source: Author & Computed Data

From Table 5. The Pearson’s correlation coefficient between the total scores of mental well-being and work engagement was found to be 0.517\*\*, significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Hence the hypothesis (H1) is accepted. This indicates a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that employees with higher mental well-being tend to exhibit higher levels of work engagement. The finding underscores the importance of fostering mental well-being in the workplace to enhance employee engagement.

ANOVA test is done for different age group, i.e. 25-30 years, 31-35 years, 36-40 years, 41-50 years and 51 and above, to find the difference in mental well-being and work engagement among them. A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in mean mental well-being ( $F(4, 374) = [5.77], p = 0.001$ ) and work engagement ( $F(4, 374) = [5.77], p = 0.001$ ). score between at least two groups. To determine the exact groups which differ from each other, the Tukey post hoc test is done. Tukey's HSD Test for multiple comparisons found that the mean value of mental well being and work engagement was significantly in the groups age 36-40 years and 41-50 years from 25-30 years

Also, a two-sample t-test was performed to compare mental well-being and work engagement levels between males and females. The finding revealed that male high male employees were showing higher mean score of work engagement when compared to their female counterparts, Male ( $M = 42.4604, SD = 8.15663$ ) and Female ( $M = 39.3333, SD = 8.44670$ );  $t(377) = 2.535, p = .012$ . Again, There is significant mean difference in work engagement among Executives ( $M = 41.2026, SD = 8.28600$ ) and non-executive ( $M = 43.2895, SD = 8.07304$ ) employee(higher);  $t(377) = -2.43, p = 0.16$ .

## 7. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between mental well-being and work engagement of employees in a Public Sector Undertaking. Descriptive analysis showed a moderate average score for both mental well-being ( $M = 24.06$ ) and work engagement ( $M = 42.04$ ) among the 379 respondents. A majority of employees (63.85%) fell within the moderate mental well-being category, while a concerning 17.41% were in the low well-being group.

A significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.517, p < 0.01$ ) was found between mental well-being and work engagement, indicating that better mental well-being is associated with higher employee engagement. Gender-wise analysis revealed a significantly higher work engagement score among male employees compared to female employees. Similarly, differences in engagement levels were also found between executives and non-executives, with non-executives reporting slightly higher levels of engagement.

The ANOVA results showed significant differences in mental well-being and work engagement across age groups, with employees aged 36–40 and 41–50 years demonstrating significantly higher scores compared to those in the 25–30 years age group. These findings highlight the need for targeted well-being initiatives, particularly for younger employees and female staff, to foster a more engaged and mentally healthy workforce. Overall, the study underscores the critical role of mental well-being in enhancing work engagement and emphasizes the importance of demographic factors in designing effective workplace interventions.

This research focuses on Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the power sector. Future studies may expand to other sectors and include a broader range of positive behaviour constructs and outcome variables. Expanding



the sample size and scope would help validate and deepen understanding of the impact of positive behavioural elements in the workplace.

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