

2019

## A Phenomenological Study of High-Performance Teachers' Happiness at School and Home

Sarah Abuaqel  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Sarah Abuaqel

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

A Phenomenological Study of High-Performance Teachers' Happiness at School and  
Home

By

Sarah Abuaqel

Dissertation Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Walden University

May 2019

## Abstract

This research study is focused on understanding the phenomenology of happiness of High Performing Teachers (HPT) working in an elementary school located in a Midwest City. The purpose of the study was to understand positive and negative emotions of HPT, through their experiences at work and home. Qualitative methodology through in-depth interviews was employed for this study. Tomkins' affect theory of happiness (ATH), was used to assess and explore positive and negative emotions of participants of the study. In this study a purposeful sample of 11 participants that work in elementary school located in a Midwest City, participated in in-depth, face-to face interviews. Results of this study based on experiences of HPT show that positive experiences such as relaxing time at home, spending time with family members they felt make them happy. To understand negative emotions, most of participants indicated that anxiety; inappropriate interactions with others at work site, and financial issues are the main negative experiences that impact their performance. Overall, most of HPT felt happy in life; however, results show that they are happier at home. This study brought new knowledge about positive and negative emotions and the importance for public organizations about improving staff interactions that may impact the contribution to performing better as teachers.

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## Acknowledgments

At a very young age, I always wondered what constitutes happiness and how it affected our lives on a daily basis. The theory of happiness is very personal to me as it relates to the majority of my accomplishments in life. I am immensely grateful that this dissertation has made it to you. And it is my deep hope that it serves you in whatever way you find it beneficial. I wrote my dissertation in a three-year period, in Italy, Germany, Turkey, Jordan, Czech Republic, Austria, Dubai, and of course where I resided my entire life, the United States. There were times that I wrote and researched effortlessly and there were times my brain couldn't generate a sentence. But God always guided me by giving me strength to overcome all hurdles I faced and I remained determined to make my life-long dream come true! My motivation was always to set a high standard for my three children, to show them that anything you put your mind to is attainable.

As so, with a full heart I humbly want to thank my daughter's Dalal Abuaqel and Khawla Abuaqel for their endless support and patience during those sleepless nights. They always came through for me no matter what. And I must say I did rant a lot. I would also like to thank my son Osama Abuaqel for always giving me motivational speeches when I needed them most. I'm very happy to have had the opportunity to work with my chair Dr. Ed Naggiar; he always told me that resilience is key. Thank you Dr. Naggiar for your support, guidance, and wisdom. I also want to thank my committee member Dr. Derek Rhode for his valuable feedback. I would also like to thank my parents, Khawla S. Abuaqel and Suleiman Abuaqel, for all the years of your love and support. I would also like to thank Ekram for supporting me throughout this process; I genuinely appreciated your fruitful conversations. I would also like to give a special thanks to Sanad for always believing in me.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study**

### **Background**

Illinois is the sixth largest State in the United States, with a population of about 13 million inhabitants, with the unemployment rate of 5.9 %, and with income per capita of \$48,566, is one of the most developed states in the United States (State Data, 2017). Even though Springfield is the capital city of Illinois, Chicago—with a population of 2.7 million inhabitants—is the most prominent city in Illinois (Worldatlas, 2018). The Illinois Public Administration offers employees a variety of programs and assistance. State and local administrations give employees protection of their rights, minimum wage protection, the rights for compensation, equal pay protection, unemployment insurance, health insurance, employer's workers' compensation and coverage, tax refunds and many other benefits (Illinois State, 2018).

Because Illinois is one of the most developed states, it is important to understand how happy, well-performing teachers at public schools feel about happiness both at work and home (State Data, 2017). There are many arguments stating that income is associated with happiness (Kelly & Evans, 2017; Green et al., 2014; Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2014). There are other research studies that point out that happiness and work performance are related and correlated to age (Tadic et al., 2013; Yano, 2013), while others related happiness with materialism (Wang, Liu, Jiang & Song, 2017).

The main focus in this study was Midwest Public Schools. I interviewed high performing teachers (HPTs) from an elementary school. This elementary school is in a neighborhood noted for the high-achieving academic program and dedicated staff (CPS,

2018). This school includes 1,106 students, and it is considered as good standing school rating (CPS, 2018).

In this chapter, I provide the background for this study, including similar research about the issue being studied. I also discussed the statement of problem, purpose of the study, research question, theoretical framework, nature of study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. The primary research questions addressed the phenomenon of happiness among HPTs in this elementary school, and I used the theoretical framework through qualitative methods to assess happiness of employees. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Statement of Problem**

Krens (2017) and Lyubomirsky (2017), both stated that happy people perform better at work. Depending on the organization, some factors may play a role in work performance and motivation (Wang et al. 2017; Agbo & Ngwu, 2017). Past research indicated that income; family, and other activities such as social life played a key role in the happiness of high-performance employees (Lacey & Yanke, 2015; Krens, 2017; Lyubomirsky, 2012). Wasarat, Sharif, and Majid (2015) explained that happiness constructs such as income, family, and activities played a crucial role in employees performing very well.

Happiness is a vital element for individuals and organizations (Glass, Simmon & Andersson, 2016). Limited research has been conducted to establish the relationship between happiness and performance of individuals in the workplace (Fisher, 2010). Fisher (2010) stated that previous studies had underestimated the impact of satisfaction

on the overall performance of the organization. According to Hanson (2013), happiness has resulted in more productivity in the workplace. There is still a need for an increased understanding of happiness as a phenomenon, and how happiness may impact workplace environment (Scarlett, 2010).

Wasarat et al. (2015) explained that happiness constructs at the workplace such as employment status, income, friendship, and work activity are crucial elements for work productivity. Sallas-Vallina et al. (2017) concluded that organizations that promote positive feelings are needed to generate an atmosphere that promotes personal connections and enhances individual and organizational effectiveness. Positive organizational behaviors and the positive culture within the organization may have an impact on the happiness of employees, and this could lead to better work performance (Sallas-Vallina et al. 2017).

Social environment both at work and at home may play a role in work performance and happiness. In this regard, Yano (2013) explained that social environment through interaction and cooperation between individuals could create collective happiness and improve work performance. From an evolutionary perspective, positive emotions facilitate attention toward broadening cognitive repertoire and personal resources by building positive relationships and developing essential skills (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2006; Nesse, 1990; 2004). Even though pursuing happiness is sometimes thought of as a hedonistic and self-centered venture, current research shows that there may be substantial interpersonal and intrapersonal consequences for being happy beyond merely feeling good (Ferguson, 2010).

Past researchers focused on happiness through income, social life, interpersonal relations, but there isn't supporting research on employees and their connection to happiness both at home and at work (Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2014; Wasarat, Sharif & Majid, 2015). Some people may not be happy but they still have high work performance, and some others may be happy at work but not at home (Lacey & Yanke, 2015).

Currently, there are very limited studies on teachers that perform very well at work and their sense of happiness both at work and home. Public elementary schools have teacher's awards every month, and this public data could be analyzed. In general, there is no any assessment of whether HPTs feel happy at work in the same way they feel happy at home. There is a gap in the literature when looking at HPT's happiness working in elementary schools, as well as positive and negative emotions from the Affect Theory of Happiness (ATH) to understand the overall happiness. This study was needed because by the understanding phenomenon of happiness from high-performing employees, public organizations could contribute to fulfilling their objective by implementing factors that could contribute to the happiness of employees, thus increasing their performance.

This study closed this gap in the literature of understanding employees' experiences in Illinois, which may produce an understanding of happiness as a phenomenon both at home and at work. I focused on teachers that have high performance at this elementary school through positive and negative emotions deriving from ATH, their work, and their knowledge of happiness, how and what makes them happy in life. I found that it is yet to be discovered if HPTs at this elementary school in the Midwest feel happy and what emotions they have at work and home. In this study, I

looked at happiness through the lenses of ATH by exploring experiences of employees that have high performance at their work. Previous researchers focused on leadership traits that could increase work performance, motivation factors, and inspirations. However, to date, none of the studies were conducted through lenses of HPTs, in relation to understanding HPTs happiness, their way of life, and ultimately how they feel happy if the high performance is related to their happiness.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to understand the phenomenon of happiness of teachers with high performance and understand their happiness experiences in life. I explored the positive and negative emotions through the lenses of high performing teachers. By exploring their positive and negative emotions, I measured the overall happiness of elementary high performing teachers. To understand the degree of happiness, I compared positive and negative emotions. I focused the research questions on the emotions that high performing teachers have, and how they perceive happiness factors. By weighing positive and negative emotions, I determined the overall happiness of HPTs.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What positive and negative emotions do high performing teachers have at work and home?

(Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do high performing teachers perceive positive and negative emotions in relation to happiness?

### **Theoretical Framework**

A concept of happiness may vary from one person to another; however, my goal for this study was to understand the happiness of HPTs. HPTs may have their concepts of happiness. This research was based on Tompkins' ATH. Based on ATH, a feeling is an affect, or a combination of affects, that has reached consciousness and of which the person has become aware (Ostorovski, 2013). Tomkins in his ATH argued that affects function as analog amplifiers that create within the organism experiences of urgency. For Tomkins, the characterization of affect as an urgent, general, abstract amplifier is an original contribution to the understanding of affective phenomena of motivational power. According to Ostorovski (2013), for Tomkins, the effect of motivational power is a concept of a biological portion of emotions (Ostorovski, 2013). Tomkins's theory is composed of nine affects that impact the happiness of individuals: (a) interest-excitement, (b) enjoyment-joy, (c) surprise-startle, (d) distress-anguish, (e) anger-rage, (f) fear-terror, (g) disgust, and (h) shame-humiliation) (Lucas & McManus, 2015). For Tomkins, positive and negative emotions determine the overall happiness of an individual (Ostorovski, 2013).

In this study, I examined the affects that high performing teachers may or may not have and if these affects brought happiness to these teachers. I used this theory to guide the study throughout semistructured questions and interview protocol. The main focus of this study was related to happiness, the way HPT's understand happiness, and what makes them happy. Teachers with more positive emotions both at work and home tend to be happier, thus giving better performance at their workplace.



I used the ATH to create an assessment of nine affects: interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, surprise-startle, distress-anguish, anger-rage, fear-terror, disgust, and shame-humiliation for HPTs. These affects were the main factors that I used to determine their happiness. I asked the HPTs about their overall happiness level they think they have. At the end of each interview, I weighed positive and negative emotions to see the overall happiness of HPTs.

### **Nature of the Study**

I focused on how these dedicated HPT's are successful and if they were happy in their life both at work and home. I focused on understanding the phenomenon of happiness for HPT's at this elementary school and used purposeful sample selection. Understanding the HPT's happiness could serve other schools in implementing new strategies that could increase the school rating. By understanding the HPT's the education system could improve overall performance. HPT's experiences shared in this study can contribute to impact school management make necessary changes and promote a happy environment in their schools. Through qualitative in-depth interviews with HPTs, I explored the happiness phenomenon in two dimensions, exploring positive and negative emotions to understand the overall phenomenology of happiness.

This phenomenological study consisted of in-depth interview design about teachers' experiences at work and home. In order to get a deeper insight into the phenomenon of happiness, I used the happiness affect and the emotions of employees who perform very well at work, they were asked if they were happy in life, and what made them happy. I asked HPTs questions about their happy moments in their life, the

factors that impact their happiness such as interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, and surprise-startle; as part of their happiness to determine the overall happiness. I later asked them about distress-anguish, anger- in their daily activities both at home and work. Happiness was determined by affects that are emotions such as enjoyment, surprises, and excitements, in lack of distress, anger, and fear.

In the first phase of research, I focused on teachers that perform very good; they were asked questions about enjoyment, excitement, and surprises, to measure their happiness. Mainly HPT were asked for their positive emotions in this phase of the interview process. The second part of the semistructured questionnaire consisted of negative emotions or affects consisting of distress, anger, and fear. At the beginning of the study, participants were asked to explain what happiness means to them; it was a strategy to connect the dots of happiness to enjoyment, excitement, and surprises. The second part of the semistructured questions derived from understanding their sense of distress, fear, and anger. The third part of the semistructured questions consisted of interviewing by asking questions about how do teachers feel happiness when they feel happy in life, and how do they give meaning to happiness in their life. I worked through the process of triangulation, by understanding the satisfaction of HPT's, this study did give clarity on the happiness phenomenon.

By understanding positive and negative emotions of HPTs, this study will provide a clear insight on elementary school teachers' experiences of happiness. This qualitative study can shed light on how participants are related to each other, and why high-performing individuals feel happy and what makes them happy.

According to Ratvich and Carl (2016), the primary goals of qualitative interviews are to gain focused insight into individual lived experiences. Also to understand how participants make sense of and construct reality in relation to the phenomenon, events, engagement, and explore how individual experiences and perspectives relate to other study participants, and perhaps prior research on similar topics. I asked groups of employees that have high performance through flyers if they would like to participate in this study. I also explained the importance of the study and the purpose of it.

An assessment of employees that perform very well was done, as happiness was the key to understanding the phenomenon of happiness. To ensure the credibility and reliability of the study, I verified the data through a process of triangulation. I evaluated the official organization's data related to performance and motivation was compared to data collected through interviews. This qualitative research design was employed through the happiness phenomenology. It was understood through the integration of the theories, concepts, goals, contexts, beliefs, and sets of relationships that shaped the specific topic of happiness (Ratvich & Carl, 2016). Addressing the phenomenon of happiness of employees both at work and home added a new understanding to elementary schools. There was a gap in previous studies about happiness of high-performance teachers in the Midwest. The elementary school and this study assessed employees' experiences and their degree of happiness through their concept of happiness.

### **Definitions**

The following terms were used throughout this study:

*Affect:* Affect is often, but not exclusively, "used as a synonym for passion, sentiment, mood, feeling or emotion" (Shepard, 2004, para.1.). In this study, affect will be taken as emotions of teachers.

*Emotions:* Emotions are referred to as "a category of feelings like fear, anger, joy and interests" (Fredrickson, 2011, para.2.). In this study, emotions are expressed as an emotion both negative and positive.

*Experience of flow:* Experience of flow is the state achieved when fully engaged, immersed and absorbed in an activity (Warton, Keonig & Kahneman, 2010, para.4.). In this study, experience of flow is referred to as an engagement that is absorbed through any given activity.

*High-performance:* High performance is referred to a design to perform a high standard (Oxford Psychological Dictionary, 2018). In this study high-performance is referred to when looking at employees and their work-related progress, which is above average.

*Positive-affect:* Positive effect is referred to the experiences of individuals to engage with their environments and partake in activities, many of which are adaptive for the individual, its species, or both (Fredrickson, 2011, para.4.). In this study, positive-affect is being portrayed as in human activities that lead to positive affects and feelings.

*Well-being:* Well-being, as a term, according to the Oxford Psychology Dictionary (2018), is a state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy. Well-being in economic aspect may mean something more than a comfortable state of employees; it can

also be related to income and good life. In this study, well-being will be a state of comfort, health, and happiness.

### **Assumptions**

My assumption was that HPT's are happier because of their excitement both at home and work, surprises and enjoyment. I assumed anger, fear, and distress are assumed to cause unhappiness and lower performance at work. I also assumed that high performing teachers are happier because they enjoy their job, they are excited with new methods of teaching and also they are often surprised happily. I assumed that high performing teachers are happier because they enjoy their job, they are excited with new methods of teaching and also they are often surprised happily. My assumption is to collect qualitative data through understanding HPT's happiness can explore the phenomenon of happiness of teaching staff in schools. When weighing these affects (emotions) I can assume and determine if the HPTs are happy or not in their life. I assume happiness to be positively related to higher work performance.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

I used qualitative interviews in the Midwest, at this elementary school to gain deeper insight into the phenomenon happiness among employees that perform well at

work. To ensure that qualitative interviews are credible, participants were given answers when asked, their names were verified at the wall of HPT's, the employee of the month board. I utilized the process of triangulation, where data was verified to ensure that participants have records of high performance. My study explained the phenomenon of happiness both at work and home through experiences of teachers in elementary education that perform very well at work. This study consisted of samples of HPTs at this elementary school, by using the ATH as my framework, to get a deeper insight into their happiness. Participants were experienced teachers that perform very well at their work, and the study could be replicated in other schools or at the university level.

### **Limitations**

The primary limitation of this study was the geographic area of the study. I conducted all of the interviews and research in the Midwest. My employed analysis was limited to this elementary school only. Another limitation of this study is that the nature of this study is qualitative; therefore, there is a limited possibility to generalize about the phenomenon of happiness. This study did not employ time series study methods; therefore, the findings of this study may not reflect the phenomenon of happiness for high-performance teachers in the future.

Additional limitations of this study include, using qualitative data can limit the findings to only a specific district located in the Midwest, elementary school teachers' happiness. Given the nature of the study, the findings cannot be generalized for all HPT's in the United States. The study is qualitative, therefore it cannot be used to test theory, but uses the theoretical framework to measure the happiness of one group of teachers at

this elementary school. The study is also based on face-to-face interviews, and the participants may give various versions of their happiness of happy emotions. However, to address the limitations, the study methods and design could be applied to other schools and replicated.

### **Significance**

Happiness can be a multidimensional phenomenon; therefore, finding out the main factors that impact on the satisfaction of employees with high performance is a key to understanding this phenomenon. The primary goal of this study is to understand the phenomenology of happiness through feelings of HPTs by using the ATH, to see what makes them happy at work and home. Teachers provided insight into the affect (emotions) that impacts their happiness and if their happiness is related to job performance. This study intends to provide a voice of HPTs about happiness and give a more powerful view to better understanding factors that may have the impact on their happiness. This study filled a gap in the understanding happiness of HPT at this elementary school in the Midwest. There is limited research on the evaluation and exploration of employees with high work performance regarding their happiness both at home and work. This study closed a gap in adding new knowledge of how HPTs at elementary school feel happiness, what is happiness to their understanding, and finding if happiness plays a role in their performance. Most of the current research is focused on happiness at an individual level and its relationship with work performance and motivation; however, there is not any study about the evaluation of happiness through the lenses of ATH. This project is unique because it focused on HPTs, to see what kind of

positive and negative emotions they have, and whether their positive emotions outweigh the negative ones. Many research studies are conducted about happiness, but there is a wide gap and literature limitation on understanding employees that perform very good at work, how they overcame obstacles and if happiness had an impact on them during specific periods of time in their life. There is a limited number of studies about happiness as a phenomenon and behavior, and there is not any study about a comparison of happiness at work and home, and if this had any impact on work performance.

This study made significant positive social changes by adding new knowledge and understanding of current insufficient understanding of happiness as a phenomenon and its relation to work performance. This is why it is very significant to understand the experiences of HPTs to this issue and finding better methods that could lead to better work performance and sense of happiness both at work and home. Understanding happiness through the experiences of employees is a crucial point for future recommendations for organizations that strive to increase their productivity. In their study about the role of morality in the concept of happiness, Philips, De Freitas, Mott, Gruber, and Knobe (2017), argued that the effect of moral value seems to reflect a robust aspect of how people ordinarily make assessments of happiness. Some other researchers such as Lacey and Yanke (2015) argued that happiness in the workplace is not interrelated to employee engagement, but rather when employees are engaged in behavior leadership traits. Therefore, not only moral values, or perhaps income, but also leadership may play a role in the happiness of those who perform well at work. This is why this study is critical because it added new knowledge of how high performing employees understand



happiness and share their experiences about happy moments at home and work. It is assumed that engagement at job, income, and social life play a crucial role in the work performance of employees, and this combination of many factors may lead to happiness. However, it is unclear yet what is happiness for those who perform very well at work, how they feel happy and what makes them happy. This study is very significant because it would shed light on this phenomenon.

### **Summary and Transition**

In this chapter, key factors were discussed, and overall the happiness phenomenon among teaching staff in this elementary school. It is unknown, how happy HPTs are at this elementary school, and how do they perceive the happiness. The study filled the gap in adding new knowledge through experiences of HPTs related to happiness. Affect Theory was used as a framework to assess affective experiences (emotional) of HPTs at this elementary school.

This research consists of exploration of happiness phenomenon and its relation to work performance. There is a wide gap in the literature about the phenomenological study of happiness for HPTs at elementary public schools, and its relationship to happiness at work and home. Illinois is one of the most developed states in the United States, and this research was conducted in public elementary education school, by selecting HPTs, to understand their worldview of happiness both at work and home.

Chapter 1 covered a brief introduction, background for the study, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The first chapter also introduced the research questions, nature, and significance of the study, definitions, and assumptions and

limitations of the study. Chapter 2 included a literature review of the relevant studies associated with stress and performance issues, as well as the different characteristics of stress in high-stress professions. Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of the sample population, the research methodology, a rationale for the interview questions and process, and a discussion on the relevance of choosing phenomenology as the approach.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to gain a more in-depth understanding of happiness of HPTs through the use of ATH. I applied the theoretical framework of the ATH to gain a better understanding and measure the happiness of teachers. I used positive affect such as interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, surprise-startle, distress-anguish, anger-rage, fear-terror, disgust, and shame-humiliation to determine the overall happiness of teachers that perform well at elementary school. There are many arguments regarding the effects of positive emotions or affects on happiness (Kelly & Evans, 2017; Green et al., 2014; Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2014). Some other researchers interrelate happiness and work performance with age, indicating that young people are happier and have more energy to perform well at work (Tadic et al., 2013; Yano, 2013). The review of literature was also focused on happiness of employees with high performance at home.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

My main literature search strategy consisted of using Walden Library databases. The literature strategies were used to identify academic databases, which are connected to Walden University Library. I used the following databases: Science Direct, EBSCO, Sage Premier, ProQuest Direct and PsycINFO. I utilized the official web site with data of this elementary school was used to analyze the overall organization and its teaching staff. I also consulted the U.S. Department of Education and Midwest Public Schools websites. There was very limited literature about Midwest Public Schools; however, information I found through conference proceedings, and also official data information from Midwest

Public Schools was used for me to get new information for this given topic. I used a combination of keywords: *happiness OR high performance AND education OR impact OR teachers AND happy emotions OR happiness at home and work AND public school; teachers happiness OR happiness at home and work.*

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Tompkins' ATH holds that happiness reflects how well one generally feels (Veenhoven, 2006). He founded ATH in 1962 and in 1963 published his research *Affect, Imaginary and Consciousness* in two volumes (Demos, 2004). Veenhoven (2006) states that, "Happiness is not calculated but rather inferred, the typical heuristic being." Recent research on happiness and its relation to work performance are related to personality dimensions (Agbo & Ngwu, 2017). Analyzing ATH, Rojas and Veenhoven (2011), explained that positive and negative emotions, when they are weighed, determine the degree of happiness or the overall happiness. Affects such as interest-excitement, enjoyment, and surprise must outweigh negative affect such as distress, anger, fear and disgust in order for a person to be happy and successful (Lucas & McManus, 2015).

This chapter I focused on understanding the phenomenon of happiness through analyzing affects (positive and negative emotions) of teachers that perform very well. My rationale for using this theory was that it explored the phenomenon of happiness through weighing the positive and negative affect of teachers. Because happiness can be relative (Ruberton & Gladstone, 2016; Wang et al. 2017; Green et al. 2014), using ATH to gain access to the overall happiness of teachers is important. This theory was related to

research questions because the research questions were related to emotions of happiness and how the teachers perceived the happiness.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What positive and negative emotions do high performing teachers have at work and home?

(Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do high performing teachers perceive positive and negative emotions in relation to happiness?

Philips, De Freitas, Mott, Gruber, and Knobe (2017), in their study about the role of morality in the concept of happiness, argued that the effect of moral value seems to reflect a robust aspect of how people ordinarily make assessments of happiness. Wang, Liu, Jiang, and Song (2017), in analyzing self-determination theory (SDT), concluded that materialism impairs individuals' psychological needs satisfaction, and in turn decreases subjective well-being. Ruberton and Gladstone (2016), in another study about bank account balances with banking customers argued that "individuals with higher liquid wealth were found to have more positive perceptions of their financial well-being, which, in turn, predicted higher life satisfaction, suggesting that liquid wealth is indirectly associated with life satisfaction" (p.575).

Joshanloo and Jarden (2016) in their study in 19 nations with a sample of 6,899 participants, about the relation of hedonism and happiness, argued that culture influences

how happiness is most efficiently pursued in various cultures. In this context Joshanloo and Jarden, related happiness with cultural traits or customs of nations.

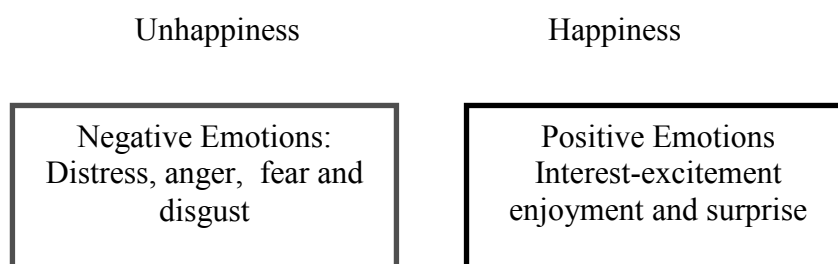


Figure 1. Tompkins' Affective Theory of Happiness, used for this study.

In Figure 1, Tompkins' ATH is used to explore the phenomenon of happiness among elementary HPT's. The best way to access to teacher's happiness is through understanding their positive and negative emotions as showing above. The degree of positive emotions determined the overall happiness, if the teachers possess more negative emotions, then their overall happiness is lower.

### **Key Variable and Concepts**

#### **Hedonic Level of Affect**

Based on Tompkin's ATH, happiness is accessed through the hedonic level of affect, which is the embodiment of human nature, the gratification of life, and then affective experiences, which all these three elements create a balance of pleasant or unpleasant affect for individuals (Veenhoven, 2006). In a research conducted in rich and poor nations, relating inequality and happiness, Kelly and Evans (2017), argued that in former communist nations, inequality reduces well-being related to happiness, but this does occur in capitalist countries. Furthermore, Kelly and Evans (2017) related that

happiness is also associated with well-being, which can be influenced by things in the past, the present, and, by expectations of the future. This research indicated that happiness is not a static feeling, but rather part of the ongoing life-cycle. Finding out how people feel happy and if the happiness is related to material life (Wang et al. 2017), or if it is related to a personality trait (Agbo & Ngwu, 2017), could determine new dimensions to boost work performances. If happiness is related to cultural traits and characteristics, as stated by Joshanloo and Jarden (2016), then work performance may be related to a particular cultural area of operations. In the context of ATH, Tompkins argued that good affects or emotions played a great role in overall happiness (Veenhoven, 2006).

A similar study using the hedonic well-being to compare meaning and happiness using five studies ( $N=923$ ) and a large cross-sectional survey of 1,471 participants, Tov and Lee (2016), found that the impact of negative events was generally associated with lower levels of satisfaction. The study also indicated that goal-directed activity and social experiences were correlated to greater satisfaction than meaning or unhappiness (Tov & Lee, 2016). This study confirms Tompkins' ATH, where the hedonic level of affect plays a crucial role in the happiness of people. However, since the research study was quantitative with a variety of participants, it is still unknown if this knowledge could be applied to the phenomenon of happiness at teachers' level. Based on the ATH, happiness comes from the sum of pleasures and pains weighted by the intensity of duration (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2011).

Contrary to the previous study relating to hedonic affect, Streimikiene and Grundey (2009) argued that well-being tends to be more actively affected by personality factors, personal relationships, and social participation than by economic factors. Analyzing income and life satisfaction, Streimikiene and Grundey concluded that wage satisfaction does not depend on how much people earn, but on how much people earn in comparison with others. This research heightened the importance of personality factors that may affect happiness, personal relationships, satisfaction of life, and work performance. Critically thinking, personality traits may be understood throughout a psychological profile, thus giving managers and hiring authorities a tool to hire the best potential candidate. Personal relationships are very complex and private matter.

In research about beneficial effects of the prosocial spending on happiness, Green et al. (2014) argued that participants who spent money in prosocial activities reported greater happiness than those that spent money only for themselves. This study indicated that happiness is not affected by the source of money but spending money on others contributes to more individual's happiness (Green et al.). There was a gap in this study of Green et al., because this study was too broad, and did not include the high performing employees.

Shinde (2017) indicated that using a scale to measure people's emotional experiences, such as positive and negative affects through secondary data might not always, lead to happiness. Furthermore, Shinde (2017), concluded that two traditions of happiness exist today: hedonic and eudemonic happiness, which both play a part in the overall happiness of a person. This study, even though it contributed new knowledge of



the phenomenon of the happiness, did not narrow the scope of happiness by elementary school teacher levels and their high performance. ATH was based on different kinds of affects, and these have different dimensions, such as active-inactive and pleasant-unpleasant (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2011).

Bakker and Oerlemans (2016), in their study that momentary work happiness and function of enduring burnout. Bakker and Oerlemans (2016), also argued that psychological need satisfaction would mediate the relationships between time spent on work tasks and happiness during the task. Furthermore, Bakker and Oerlemans (2016) concluded that those with high levels of burnout do not manage to satisfy their basic needs through their work, whereas those with high levels of work engagement satisfy their daily needs and stay happy. This study seemed to be very broad and focused on one affect: burnout, leaving out the exploration of other emotions mentioned in ATH.

Lathia et al. (2017), in another study about happiness and physical activities, argued that individuals are happier in the moments when they are more physically active. This may be another indication that people that work in areas where physical activities are present may be happier than people sitting in an office. This study indicated that people who are more active in sports activities, athletics, aerobics, and other physical activities tend to be happier and perform better at work. However, Lathia et al. focused only on short time activities and creating a gap in weighing positive and negative emotions to create the overall image of happiness.

Analyzing the benefits of frequent positive effect, and the evaluation of happiness that could lead to success, Lybomirsky, King, and Diner (2005), on their research using

cross-sectional, longitudinal and experimental data, concluded that happiness is associated with and precedes numerous successful outcomes such as successful behaviors. Lybomirsky et al. (2005) argued that there is a positive affect that is the hallmark of well-being which may be the cause of the desirable characteristics, resources, and successes correlated with happiness. Regarding happy people when experiencing negative emotions, Lybomirsky et al. (2005), concluded that "happy people can remain in positive mood as long as things are positive or neutral but experience a negative mood when things are very bad, thus motivating them to withdraw, conserve resources, or otherwise avoid harm" ( p.844). The findings in this study showed that positive emotions are often associated with resources and characteristics that parallel success and thriving, desirable behaviors and cognitions such as sociability, optimism, energy, originality, and altruism (Lybomirsky et al. 2005). If happiness is related to resources, it may be assumed that well-paid employees are happier and also show high work performance.

Bardo, Lynch, and Land (2017) analyzed Twenge, Sherman, and Lybomirsky claim that long-term cultural changes have increased young adult's happiness while reducing mature adult's happiness. They argued that the long-term relationship between age and happiness remains as it has been for decades despite any cultural shifts that may have occurred disfavoring mature adults. On the other side, the researchers left out analyzing the balance between pleasant and unpleasant effects. Positive and negative effects must be analyzed to understand overall, the happiness of individuals. Potts (2011), in research about economic factors on happiness in society, argued that to be happy, it is important to pay attention to social connections and cohorts. Furthermore, Potts

concluded that government and happiness policy couldn't make people happier than they can do for themselves with a little help from friends. In this regard, Potts assumed that collective happiness, teamwork and self-organizing plays a crucial role in overall happiness. Potts highlighted the importance of social connection, thus giving an idea to organizations to cultivate better collaboration among its members and also cooperate and create teamwork philosophy.

Carree and Verheul (2012), in research with the sample of 1,107 participants, found that intrinsic motivation and that of combining responsibilities lowers stress that leads to more satisfaction with leisure time. However, Carrie and Verheul, highlighted that women are more satisfied with their income than men, even though they have a lower average monthly turnover. Carree and Verheul did not exclude that gender also plays a role in happiness and work performance. This study showed that females even though disproportionally paid (underpaid in many cases), are happier than males.

Gross-Manos and Ben-Arieh (2014), in their study about well-being and material deprivation and social exclusion in Israel, explained that children who were identified as materially deprived tended to be unhappy. In a study consisting of 1,081 participants of 12-year old, examining the effect of material deprivation and social exclusion, to include study of culture and life circumstances, found that material deprivation was found to be significantly more important than subjective well-being of males compared with females, and for Jews compared to Arabs (Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2014). This study emphasized the importance of social exclusion and material deprivation that have a significant effect on the happiness of children in general. Material deprivation has more

effect on happiness than social exclusion based on the aforementioned study. In this study, Gross-Manos and Ben-Arieh (2014), did not also exclude the cultural factors that impact happiness. Based on this rationale, some nations even though deprived materially more than others, tend to be happier. Gross-Manos and Ben-Arieh (2014), explained only one dimension of happiness, relating cultural traits to well-being system. However, for Tomkins, the characterization of affect as an urgent, general, abstract amplifier is an original contribution to the understanding of affective phenomena of motivational power (Ostorovski, 2013).

Li (2016) conducted a study about the relationship between happiness and age, using age difference in cross-sectional drawing data from a survey of 7,229 persons from 2001 to 2011. He argued that age-happiness relationship could not escape the age-cohort-period with each person's age and success on overall life satisfaction. Thus, Li explained that regressions controlling for individual fixed effects reflect the change in happiness over life cycle within individuals.

Contrary to Li in a study of age and happiness relationship using a sample of 38 college students with the mean age of 21.37 years, Hass, Weston, and Lim (2016) examined the process of age judgment, found that emotional expression systematically impacted age estimates by young adults. Furthermore, Hess et al., (2016), argued that the social disadvantages that can occur when judged to be older it is critical to not the results of this study how emotion is capable of modulating the perceived age of a face. This study suggested that age plays a great role in the happiness of people. On the other hand, For Tomkins' ATH, the effect is a concept of a biological portion of emotion

(Ostorovski, 2013). Tomkins, interrelated happiness of fulfillment of both biological and psychological needs of a person.

Galambos et al. (2015) in their study about age and happiness, and happiness time series through two longitudinal studies, using a samples of high school senior followed from ages 18-34 and university seniors followed by ages 23-37 found that happiness increased into the 30s in both samples, with slight downturn by age 43 in the high school sample. Through this study, Galambos et al. argued that in both group samples, participants were happier in years when they have married an in better physical health. This research suggested that younger people or people at their 30s tend to be happier than other group ages.

Glass, Simon and Andersson (2016), in their research about parenthood happiness and its effects of work, argued that more generous family policies, particularly paid time off and child-care subsidies are associated with smaller disparities in happiness between parent and nonparents. Glass et al. (2016), suggested that nonparents and parents are happy or unhappy despite family policies. However, on the other hand, Capps and Carlin (2013), argued that it is impossible to attain lasting and true happiness. Furthermore, analyzing Freud's work on civilization Capps and Carlin (2013) concluded that people are much happier when their sufferings reduced than when they sought happiness. This is another indication that Caps and Carlin (2013) do not relate work performance with happiness. This article emphasized that people who had bad experiences in the past, upon the improvement of these experiences, they would feel happier. This kind of happiness impacts their life and work performance. Caps and Carlin

(2013) in their research did not close the gap of the understanding phenomenon of happiness among teachers in elementary schools.

Campos et al. (2013, p.76), in an observational study of 30 dual couples with children, found that mild positive emotions were generally charted eristic of both mothers and father, and mothers were more emotionally expressive than fathers, and only mothers' positive emotions dropped during the evening period. Campos et al. (2013), argued that the "emotion baseline of most people is positive, and emotional positivity is more frequent than negativity" (p.76). This research indicated that time plays a role also in the happiness of employees. From a logical point of view, before the shift is ended, employees the degree of positive emotions and degree of happiness is reduced. Another essential element that everyday life may impact peoples' mood (Campos et al. (2013). However, Campos et al. concluded that material satisfaction showed little association with any emotional variables in a study.

Luchesi et al. (2018) researched factors associated with happiness using a sample of 263 older adults in Brazil. They argued that satisfaction with life, social phobia, and age was significantly associated with happiness. Furthermore, using descriptive statistics, to perform for the dependent variables in overall sample of three groups of participants (not happy, intermediate and happy) using Pearson's chi-square and ANOVA. Luchesi et al. found that the level of happiness depends on age, and age was the only intrinsic variable associated with happiness.

### **Happiness at Work: Performance Context**

Analyzing transformational leadership and happiness at work, Sallas-Vallina et al. (2017), argued that happiness at work can broadly and accurately be related to management and leadership styles. Furthermore, Sallas-Vallina et al., concluded that organizations that promote positive feelings are needed to generate an atmosphere which promotes personal connections, and that enhances individual and organizational effectiveness. Positive organizational behaviors, the positive culture within the organization may have an impact on the happiness of employees, and this could lead to better work performance. Sallas-Vallina et al did not indicate that a positive environment in every state has an impact on happiness, thus leading to better work performance.

Allen and McCarthy (2015) argued that sport and performance psychology might be considered in the development of happiness in the organization. In another research conducted through the sample collection of 19 social workers, Shier and Graham (2013), found three themes related to the sociopolitical environment that can contribute to practitioner well-being. Furthermore, Shier & Graham (2013, p.15), found that the impact of the sociopolitical context of social work practice on social workers extends beyond the practitioner level, and to improve workplace functioning, efforts might need to be made that address those sociopolitical barriers. In this study, the authors focused on the sociopolitical environment, leaving a gap in the literature about high performing employees through measuring positive and negative emotions that determine overall happiness.

Lacey and Yanke (2015), argue that happiness in the workplace is not interrelated to employee engagement, but rather when employees are engaged in behavior leadership

traits. Thus, Lacey and Yanke (2015), concluded that happiness at the workplace is related to helping employees discover their inner strengths, and teaching them to love themselves and those around them. In this context, positive environment plays an important role in relation to high performing employees (Lacey & Yanke, 2015).

Uchida and Oishi (2016), studying individual happiness and the collective happiness, analyzing work national-level through cross-temporal analysis, found that personal happiness sometimes interferes with, collective happiness. Uchida and Oishi argued that a safe environment and a certain level of economic welfare are important to both personal and collective happiness. Going through historical context, Uchida and Oishi, explained that well-being and happiness matures, it would be critical to consider the well-being of both individuals and the collective. Collective happiness based on this study indicates that plays a significant role in individual happiness. Thus, a happy community based on a study means a happy individual (Uchida and Oishi).

Exploring college student's conception of happiness, Sharma and Patra (2014), argued that participants found happiness in helping others, by changing ones thought the process and by spending time with friends and loved ones. This study could serve as future professionals working with young people that are under therapeutic programs. Sharma and Patra highlighted the role of helping others about happiness. This study indicated that helping others produce greater happiness on individuals. People feel happier when they are engaged in charity activities, when they help others and when they think about making positive changes (Sharma & Patra).



Hulur et al. (2016) conducted a study about cognitive performance for empathic accuracy for happiness. They found there is association showing that higher levels of fluid cognitive performance predict higher empathic pattern accuracy of happiness, but not among women, only among men. This is another indication that happiness may vary based on gender and its role at work (Hulur et al.).

Williams et al. (2017) conducted a study using quasi-experimental design on a group of school staff of 61 participants, and a treatment group of 51. They found that employee attitudes, perception of positive organization (organizational virtuousness) and work happiness are associated one with another through both explicit and implicit attitude. Williams et al. (2017), concluded that employee well-being has an impact on employee happiness.

Hsiao et al. (2015), argued that high happiness at work alone is insufficient in explaining high quality of work as assessed by managers. Furthermore, Hsiao et al. concluded that "manager's judgment of employees' job performances are likely to include biases and inaccuracies that overlap in similarity to some extent with employee's self-assessment of the own job performance" (p.640). Thus, often managers conducting job performance of their employees may be biased in their judgment. Hsiao et al. brought up another important point in their study, indicated that managerial judgment might be influenced by biased elements. Thus, it is not sure whether work performance is better or not for some employees that tend to be happy. The study was based on secondary data analysis, and corporations, in general, have performance management, and this

management has a program that is filled out by management for employees (Hsiao et al.). Bias may be ruled out in such cases; therefore, the study has certain limitations.

In a study about work, employment and well-being in East Asia, Tsai and Qian (2014), argued that organizational restructuring is not effective in work performance of employees, and that job satisfaction, and well-being across Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Their comparative analysis showed that working part-time reduces the inter-role conflict between family and work, and yet it clearly hurts happiness when it is involuntarily. This study emphasized the importance of time spent with friends and family that adjust happiness, and positive emotions. Tsai and Qian suggested that people that work long hours, and multiple shifts tend to be unhappy than those that have part-time jobs and spend more time with friends and family. The study is too broad, and there is a lack of knowledge of how high performing employees feel happy and what makes them feel happy both at work and home (Tsai & Qian).

Analyzing stress in nonregular work, through a longitudinal study of task and employment aspects of stress, Vhale-Heinz (2016), found that, employment-related demands exhibited negative relationships with well-being and work engagement as well as the negative and positive relationship with self-rated performance over time. In using a two-wave longitudinal design, the results of aggressive cross-legged structural equation models, Vhale-Heinz argued that employment resources were primarily positive predictors of well-being and self-rated performance. Furthermore, Vhale-Heinz concluded that although autonomy has no main effect in the study, it may be the

important moderator for the relationship between employment-related demands and well-being.

Van De Voorde and Beijer (2015) in a study about high performance system and employee outcome, using high-work performance work system (HPWS) and its relation to human resources (HR) attributed examined 1,065 employees within 150 work units. They found that high-work performance work system practices influenced HR well-being and HR performance attribution. Van De Voorde and Beijer (2015), concluded that "these findings support the idea that HPWS can signal two messages to employees; both that they are seen valuable resources, as well as that increased performance, is expected of them" (p.72).

Alessandri et al. (2014), in a study about positive orientation in job performance, investigating the validity of conceptual mechanisms linking positive orientation to future job performance with a sample of 388 male security agents, argued that positive orientation plays an important role in work performance. Furthermore, Alessandri et al., explained that when work self-efficacy beliefs were high or medium, it had the direct impact on job performance. This study showed that " individuals holding more positive expectations toward one's self and future achievements, are more likely to perform better if they perceive to have the necessary abilities to accomplish work-related tasks" (Alessandri et al., p.782). This research is an elaboration that individuals with their focus toward achievements and future become more successful and are likely to perform better in the workplace. This study was based on security agents, which limits the conclusion for other high performing employees with other professions and tasks (Alessandri et al).

Meneghel, Salanova, and Martinez (2016), in the study about feeling good and strong, team resilience and positive emotions, argued that team resilience mediates the relationship between collective positive emotions and team performance, both in an extra role. Through the study of data collection of 1,076 employees grouped in 216 teams belonging to 40 companies, Meneghel et al. concluded that developing collective positive emotions have a significant impact to foster team resilience and improve their performance at work. They highlighted the importance of collective positive emotions to improve work performance and organizational productivity. Thus, this study proves the theory of teamwork effectiveness.

Lyubomirsky, (2012), in a study about success and happiness, argued that a positive correlation has been established between success and happiness in one's social life and other relationships. People who are happy in their personal life tend to be more productive at work, which leads to their success (Lyubomirsky). In this context Lyubomirsky, suggested that good social life leads to happiness and happiness leads to successful outcomes.

In a study about the causes of unsatisfactory performance related to emotions in golf, Allen, Jones, and Sheffield (2011), argued that high levels of anger emerged with poor performance. Furthermore, Allen et al. concluded that golfers are reported higher levels of dejection and lower levels of happiness when the causes of poor performance were perceived as personally controllable and unstable than when the causes were perceived as personally controllable and stable. In this context, this research is related to the work performance of employees, indicating that employees performing poorly at

work, they would show lower degrees of happiness than those with high performance. (Allen et al.) Thus, encouraging employees with low performance would be crucial in this context.

Ramlall (2008) in another study about employee performance through positive organizational behavior argued that positive relationships were found among typical measures of positive psychology, positive organizational behavior, and employee performance. Thus, Ramlall suggested that positive psychology and positive organizational behavior are connected to employee performance. All these factors are interrelated to each other; lack of one may lower employee performance. Thus, Ramlall highlighted the importance of organizational behaviors and culture, in successful outcomes.

Carree and Verheul (2012), in research with a sample of 1,107 participants, found that intrinsic motivation and that of combining responsibilities lowers stress that leads to more satisfaction with leisure time. However, Carree and Verheul, highlighted that women are more satisfied with their income than men, even though they have a lower average monthly turnover. Carree and Verheul, did not exclude that gender also plays a role in happiness and work performance. They suggested that females, even though disproportionally paid (underpaid in many cases), are happier than males.

McKee (2004) in a study about the exploration of Kelly's work on happiness argued that happiness through doing well is crucial for better work performance and successful outcome. Furthermore, McKee explained that for some people the real pleasure of various jobs comes from the sense of power they provide. This meant that

some jobs are related to helping others, and in this regard, some people in such jobs enjoy the satisfaction of thinking being in such circumstances to help others. In a conclusion after analyzing Kelly's work, McKee elaborated that "Kelly suggested that certain attitudes and experiences are necessary to a happy life are too often constrained to childhood" (p.407).

In a study about job-relation and well-being through the great recession, Green et al. (2014), found that downsizing, work reorganization, and decreased choices are associated directly with lower job-related well-being. However, Green et al. argued that task discretion has a large positive association with job-related well-being. This is another indication that employees that are allowed task discretion are happier at work. Thus, this could serve managers at organizations to plan about task discretion for their daily operations. Green et al. through this study suggested that economic downturn should if possible be avoided through macroeconomic management, and "the effects of rising insecurity and accelerated disruptive workplace change on job-related well-being provide yet more reasons to do so" (p.408). Thus, this research excluded better performance through broadening the use of economic incentives (Green et al.).

In a study involving a model of linking prosocial motivation, trust cues and task significance, and performance across three studies of fundraisers using three different objective performance measures, Grant and Sumanth (2009) found that interactions between prosocial motivation, manager trustworthiness, and dispositional trust prosperity, played a great role in fundraising from employees. They concluded, "mission-driven organizations stand to benefit from hiring trustworthy managers who value

benevolence and integrity” (p.240). This research in a context of work performance indicated that trust and managerial trustworthiness and integrity played a significant role in employee motivation and work performance (Grant & Sumanth).

Huang (2012) studied helplessness empowerment and the joint effects in participative leadership. He found that "participative leadership had a weaker impact on employees' psychological empowerment for those who had a low rather than high controllability attributional style" (p.313). Huang's research indicated that participative leadership did not have an effect on work performance, but also psychological empowerment was found to fully mediate the joint effect of participative leadership.

Hill and Bradley (2010) in an ethnographic examination of hair salon workers, through exploration of connection between service work and the everyday lived experiences of hair salon workers argued that status accorded gains associated with the conferral of complimentary evaluations by clients were conducive to positive emotions among the hairdressers interviewed. However, the status accorded losses and negative emotions were related to unsatisfactory evaluations conferred by clients. Hill and Bradley pointed out that material factors may impact toward positive or negative emotions. This research indicated that "emotional bonds develop among coworkers, and that these bonds were conducive to feelings of solidarity and belonging" (Hill & Bradley, p.56). In the end, it is apparent that this research study interrelates two main elements of happiness and work performance, one the perceived material gain that may impact in positive or negative emotions, and coworker bond, the relationship between coworkers (Hill &

Bradley). Both of them based on this study play a significant role in happiness and work performance.

Howell et al. (2011), in a study of momentary happiness, that included analysis of primary needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, found that "hour-by-hour ratings of psychological need satisfaction were correlated with momentary happiness, with individual differences in life satisfaction moderating this relationship" (p.1). Furthermore, Howell et al. argued that when autonomy and relatedness needs were met, individuals with higher levels of life satisfaction experienced greater increases in happiness than individuals with low levels of life satisfaction. They showed that individuals that reflect on their need satisfaction at the end of the day, autonomy, competence, and relatedness are associated with satisfaction at the end of the shift and overall happiness. The fulfillment of psychological needs may impact happiness and work performance. The momentary stress and lack of enjoyment may be an explanation why some employees do not always pursue competence-promoting behaviors, which to some degree maximize well-being and happiness (Howell et al.).

### **Home Happiness**

In research using a sample of 50 Spanish dual-earner couples examining whether engagement at work had an impact on own and partners' well being, using spillover-crossover model, Rodríguez-Muñoz, et al., (2014), argued that, individuals' work engagement would spill over to the home domain, thus increasing their happiness level at the end of the day. Rodríguez-Muñoz et al., concluded that employees' daily work engagement has a direct effect on daily happiness. Findings of this study indicated that



the positive effects of work engagement go beyond the work setting and beyond the employee (Rodríguez-Muñoz, et al.).

In a study about happiness dispositions and self, Klausen (2016), argued that happiness is an exclusively categorical mental state. Furthermore, Klausen explained that emotional state has an impact on a person's happiness. "Central affective states like moods and emotions do play a fundamental role in happiness "(p.1012), concluded Klausen. This study explained that happiness is temporary since it is a mental state that continuously changes. Thus, positive or negative emotions played a great role in happiness or unhappiness. Mood also as part of this factor has an impact on happiness, and happiness seems to be related to work performance.

Tadic et al. (2013) in a research of 84,247 reported daily activities and accompanying happiness levels, argued that what works for working adults is not necessarily suitable for nonworking adults, and working adults derive more happiness from relaxing activities in their leisure time, whereas nonworking older adults derive more happiness from effortful activities in their leisure time. In a study about applying complexity theory illuminating happy-low and unhappy-high performing frontline service employees. Tadic et al. argued that working adults feel happiness during their leisure time, while non-working adults do not value leisure time since they are most of the time in their leisure time. This study, even though very profound, it left out a comparison of high performing employees based on age to see the similarities and differences in happiness both at work and home.

Yano (2013), in a study about brain activity and psychological phenomenon of teaching, found that there is a large gap between the brain, as a psychological phenomenon, and high-level social phenomena such as teaching and learning. Yano argued that this gap could be filled with understanding of collective and cooperative human interaction in the social environment. In this regard, Yano explained that social environment through interaction and cooperation between individuals could serve in creating collective happiness and improving work performance. This study indicated that social environment and social interaction are may determinant forces of happiness.

In an analysis of past research about happiness in societies, Cabanas (2016), argued that neoliberalism brought a new structure of feelings, which simultaneously presupposes and demands from individuals, certain ways of being, thinking, and acting. Cabanas explained that happiness has to come to play a central role in the economic practices of neoliberal societies since the economic worth of commodities is no longer distinguishable from their emotional value.

Chong and Ahmed (2016), conducted an experimental study involving 300 participants, examining their feelings about dynamics of effect of outcome valence upon service evaluations within an integrated environment of a higher education service offering, found that sad people tend to be more self-focused and likely to engage in mood repair strategies, and the hedonic context of a branded retail café may serve as a place which alleviates one's emotional well-being. This study showed that "since some participants were rewarded with a gift card of the retail store examined in this study, the participants may have a higher tendency to report higher rating of retail service

evaluation due to a sense of gratitude. This study showed that higher management stimulates motivation and performance. Thus, employees can be happier and perform better if they are given gratitude. However, if the big corporations motivate the employees with a variety of promotions, within such organizations, there may be unhappy employees. The limitation in this study is that it is unknown if the happiness is temporary upon gratitude phase or not, and if this could also bring counter effects in the long run.

In a study about cohort and period patterns in happiness through General Social Survey data of individuals from 18 to 30, and from 30 and above from 1972 to 2014, using aggregated into approximate of five years groupings, Bardo, Lynch, and Land (2017), found that young and mature adults were affected by the Great Depression differently; however, young adults had a relatively rapid negative response followed by a relatively quick rebound, and mature adults had a lagged negative response followed by a relatively slower rebound so that their happiness was significantly lower than their long-term average in the period from 2008 to 2012, and returned to their long-term happiness by 2014. It is still unknown if, under normal economic conditions, high performing employees feel happy or unhappy at work and home.

Catalino, Algoe, and Fredrickson (2014), in their research about human experiences, argued that people put forward the thought that people choose to be happier each day by prioritizing positively in their daily activities. However, Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003) related the happiness phenomenon with environmental factors. In their study, Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter, concluded that activities in which an individual is

involved in also determine their level of happiness. Thus, less happiness derived from work-related activities than from spending time with friends and family. This study explained that prioritizing priorities in daily life could impact better work performance and a higher level of happiness.

In another study using sample of 46,301 participants in 29 European countries to examine the happiness age relationship, Morgan, Robinson, and Thompson, (2015), argued that eudaimonic (well-being) and hedonic (meaning and self-realization) happiness remained relatively stable across the life span only in the most affluent nations, and in poorer nations, there was either a fluctuating or steady age-associated decline. Morgan et al. conceded that the age-happiness relationship would be moderate by GDP was supported by both measures of happiness. Furthermore, Morgan et al. argued that historical factors stemming from these past conditions might affect the older generation in ways that manifest as cohort effects within data, rather than age effects. This study was focused only on European countries, leaving a gap if the same study would bring the same results in the U.S.

Studying mood and situational requirements, Storbeck (2016), in the study of a sample collection of 139 participants (90 females), argued that following a psychological challenge, interactions between mood and task demands best-predicted performance during the working memory task. Thus, Storbeck, concluded, "motivation can be more harmful than helpful" (p.496). However, Fisher (2010) argued that job satisfaction, effective organizational engagement, and work engagement are some of the factors that determine the happiness of the employees at the workplace.

In a study about recognizing emotions of happiness and sadness from dance movement, using a sample of 30 participants, Van Dyck et al. (2014), argued that female dancers are better at communicating emotional meaning corporeally than their male counterparts. This study suggested that female dancers express their feelings of happiness or sadness much more than male dancers.

Soliman and Soliman (2016), in the research about religion and psychological well-being, argued that “religion gives meaning to meaningless aspect symbols and strengthens the relationship between ego and the other through performing rituals” (p.560). Furthermore, Soliman and Soliman, in their study concluded that religion had psychological and social tasks and effects on individuals and society, it provided individuals with a system of values and standards making them adapted with all surroundings, so they feel psychologically stable. This study indicated that religious individuals in an organization are more psychologically stable and it is expected to have better work performance.

Dobbs (2014), in a research about leaders' emotional intelligence, suggested that the happiness of employees and work performance depends on leadership styles and their ability to have some emotional awareness. Furthermore, Dobbs advised that organizations should consider hiring managers with high emotional awareness, especially in positions requiring higher levels of task interdependence. But, Atkinson and Hall (2011) argued that happy employees perform better. In this study Dobbs, emphasized the role of leaders and managers within the organization, their positive attitude that may be key to better work performance of employees.

Perron et al. (2016), in research about traits of negative emotions and judgment smile, found that traits in the eyebrows were associated with better performance than traces in the mouth for sadness but the opposite was observed for anger. In their study, Perron et al. argued that results of research revealed that participants were sensitive to traces of negative emotions. Thus, variations were observed between emotions with performance being best for traces of fear and lowest for traces of anger in the eyebrows in the judgment task. "When the presence of negative emotion was reported, participants were less accurate in identifying fear but more accurate in identifying anger" (Perron et al. 2016, p.486). This is another point that identifying happiness is more complex than previously thought.

Brose, Lovden, and Schmiedek (2014) in a study about daily fluctuations and positive affect with working memory performance, through sample collection of 101 young adults (20-31 years old), in a micro longitudinal design, argued that positive effect is related to cognitive performance in multiple ways. Participants in this study had to report on their memory effect and their motivation to work on the task (Brose et al., 2014). Brose et al. found that, "in two of three tasks, performance was enhanced on days when the positive effect was above average" (p.1). This study elaborated that high levels of well-being are associated with higher work performance. Happiness and well-being of an employee are related to higher work performance. Brose et al., concluded that success on cognitively demanding tasks is more likely on days when feeling happier. This study apparently showed that happy employees perform better at the work area, and the successful outcome of an organization depends on cognitive demanding. However, this

study also indicated that when employees are experiencing negative emotions, may perform lower in a workplace. This is another indication that some employees may feel happier one day and perform better, while on the other day perform worse due to their negative emotions.

Studying effects of chronic achievement motivation, Heart, and Albarracin (2009), in four studies, measuring chronic differences in achievement motivation, argued that achievement priming activated a goal to achieve and inhibited a goal to have fun in individuals with chronically high-achievement motivation but activated a goal to have fun. Furthermore, (Heart and Albarracin), explained: " many important human outcomes depend on individuals marshaling up the motivation to go above and beyond comfortable conduct into the realm of difficult, effortful, superior behavior" (p.1129). This study also found "evidence that individuals with chronically low-achievement motivation prioritize fun seeking over achievement seeking, whereas individuals with chronically high-achievement motivation prioritize achievement seeking over fun-seeking" (p.1137). Based on this study, motivation to achieve something may lead to a successful outcome, and better results, however, there wasn't any relationship between work performance and happiness. In fact, if happiness is identified by fun (which was part of a study), then happiness could lead to low achievement. This study has some limitations, and further research may be needed.

### **Gap Discussion**

The phenomenological study of high-performance employees' happiness is very complex and also significant. Solving the puzzle of the understanding phenomenology of happiness of teachers in elementary school through affects: positive and negative emotions are still unknown. Past and current literature did not include a study of happiness of the teachers not only at work but also at their home. There are many research studies about high-performance employees and their happiness related to work. However, very limited studies are conducted with the purpose of understanding the phenomenon of happiness from contexts, work, and home through the deeper insight of ATH.

### **Summary and Transition**

The review of the literature indicated that happiness and work performance are interrelated (Potts, 2011; Ramlall, 2008; Perron et al., 2016; Brose et al., 2014, Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2014). In some studies, income does not play any role in happiness; however, well-being is related to work performance. On the other hand, well-being (Brose et al. 2014), material deprivation and social exclusion (Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2011) and time (Campos et al., 2013), played a crucial role in happiness and work performance. Well-being and personality factors were found to be interrelated to happiness (Streimikiene & Grundey, 2009), while attitudes and experiences are necessary elements for a happy life (McKee, 2004). However, materialism impairs individuals' psychological needs satisfaction, and in turn decreases subjective well-being (Wang et al., 2017).



Positive relations regarding emotions and happiness seem to be verified by many types of research. The interaction of teamwork seems to be associated with higher happiness levels and also work performance, to include positive organizational behaviors (Potts, 2011; Hill & Bradley, 2010; Lyubomirsky, 2012).

The review of literature about happiness and work performance indicated other important factors, including societal bond and helping others, that would both produce happiness (Hill and Bradley, 2010; Lyubomirsky, 2012; Sharma & Patra, 2014). In fact, not only helping others could lead to greater happiness (Sharma & Patra, 2014), but also finding help from friends seems to have a positive impact in the happiness of individuals (Potts, 2011).

The few studies that focused on wealth indicated that good financial standing predicted higher life satisfaction (Gladstone, 2016). Other studies found that higher cognitive performance predicted the higher empathic pattern of happiness (Hulur et al. 2016).

However, many other studies interrelated leadership and work pressure to work performance, which predicted that more pressure on employees would result in lower work performance. Furthermore, when employees are engaged in behavioral leadership, they would perform better and be happier (Lacey & Yanke, 2015). Few other studies interrelated happiness and work performance with physical activities (Lathia et al., 2017).

In Chapter 3, the methods and design of the study was discussed in detail.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **Introduction**

As I have explained in previous chapters explained the nature of the study, the factors that may impact on work performance and its relation to happiness. Relationships between these components are evaluated, including positive and negative affects as described under Tomkins' ATH, and overall perceived happiness. Even though most of past research interrelates high performance and happiness with well-being and income, this study shed light on positive and negative emotions that determine overall happiness for a particular category of people: high-performance teachers in this elementary school located in the Midwest.

To determine the overall happiness of HPTs, two main research questions were presented:

RQ1: What positive and negative emotions do HPT's have at work and home?

RQ2: How do HPT's perceive positive and negative emotions in relation to happiness?

I have outlined qualitative methodology, through face-to-face interviews with high performing individuals working in the elementary school located in the Midwest.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The study utilized a qualitative approach, through the in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews contained semistructured questions, with the focus on the main research question that shed light on the happiness of the HPT's.

To answer the first research question I analyzed the most current experiences of HPTs. Through semistructured questions, I asked employees to share their happiness experiences both at home and at work. Specific questions were asked regarding positive and negative emotions, for instance, I asked if they felt excited at work and home, how they feel enjoyment and surprise. Similar questions were asked about negative emotions. Specific questions were asked about their experiences of happiness in the current moment, what makes them happier while at work and also at home.

To answer RQ2, I asked participants specific questions about the relation of work performance with happiness at work and home. I asked about some of the main factors that might play a significant role in their happiness and their answers were analyzed. I asked participants for affects (emotions), and how they viewed these emotions based on ATH.

Because the theoretical framework consists of positive and negative affects or emotions, I asked participants about these emotions and then they were asked how they perceive these emotions, if these emotions made them happy. I interviewed a sample of 11 HPT's to explore their worldview of happiness and discover what happiness means to them.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as the researcher in this study was as an interviewer and observer. I did not have any connection to this public school and did not know any of the participants of the study. I explained to participants that I am a student researcher, in order to avoid any participant hesitation during the interviews. I thoroughly explained the purpose and

nature of the research to each participant, ways of collecting and analyzing data, and the measurements of the data collected. I submitted a Letter of Cooperation to the Principal of this elementary school (see Appendix A). In the sample selection I asked participants to obtain their consent for continuing with a study. I did not have any personal relations with any of participants; however, good rapport was built by mutual respect. I asked participants about his or her voluntary participation in the study and also gave them an informed consent form for them to sign. I gave each participant the opportunity to quit the interview at any time or reserve a right to not answer any question they do not want to answer. During the research, I used self-reflection journaling (see Appendix D) to avoid bias. This study consisted of purposeful sampling, where only HPT's were interviewed.

The participants are allowed to leave the interview at any time. Data collected through voice recorded method is kept confidential, and anonymity is ensured. Participant information is kept confidential and is used only upon request of University Research Review.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

HPTs, at the elementary school in the Midwest, are selected as a sample for this study. This school includes 1,106 students, and about 77 teachers (CPS, 2018). Only HPT's with a sample of 11 participants are interviewed. Participation selection is based on a purposeful sample method, where the employee of the month board is analyzed to find HPTs and to verify participants. Since currently, this elementary school numbers about 77 teachers, 10 to 15 participants for the study would equal to 19.5 % of the staff.

Saturation is a process where no new information would arise from further interviews (Ratvich & Carl, 2016). This was a good sample to reach the saturation point, where no new information came up. If new information came up, then more participants are interviewed. High-performance teachers are asked to voluntarily participate in a study.

A flyer (see appendix A) about the study is posted in the reception point of the school, at teachers' break area, where teachers are given information of pertaining to me, as well as the phone number and e-mail address. Potential participants were able to contact me anytime.

### **Instrumentation**

I recorded 11 in-depth face-to-face interviews, with a sample of 11 participants. Interviews were semistructured, and the main questions were the same for each participant. Voice recording is used for interviewing each participant through in-depth face-to-face interviews. Note taking is applied to each participant during the interview, however, I asked participants standard questions and if such questions need clarification, I asked follow-up questions. If new information came up during the interview, then I would follow up with questions that may vary from participant to participant. I asked participants open-ended questions. In case participants gave positive or negative answers, I asked follow-up questions for greater elaboration of the phenomenon. Main questions consisted of understanding the main research questions. An informed consent form was given to participants before the interview, and it explained the study, purpose and its nature. Each interview is turned into a transcript and each transcript is codified. For each participant I created the main document manually, where codes lined up and from codes

derived themes. Questions derived from the semistructured questionnaire were questions that are oriented toward positive and negative emotions that created the overall picture of happiness of participants. I offered each participant a safe and comfortable environment at the National Library. Interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes, and each participant selected the time of interview.

There are not many research studies about the phenomenon of happiness through experiences of HPT's in public schools, and this study shed light on this phenomenon.

RQ1 was: What positive and negative emotions do HPT's have at work and home? Participants are asked about their positive and negative emotions as described in ATH, and then this data is analyzed by finding the happiness points of participants. This question is answered by analyzing both positive and negative emotions, and if the positive emotions outweigh negative ones, then the results described the overall happiness of participants.

RQ2 was: How do HPT's perceive positive and negative emotions in relation to happiness? Answers from teachers are analyzed through the lenses of participants of the study. Understanding how teachers perceive happiness and how they feel about happiness is a key factor of the instrumentation of this research.

### **Researcher Developed Instrument**

The main source of data collection for this study was based on face-to-face interviews, in which I used semistructured questions. Through a process of triangulation, data collected is verified. Public data that are exposed on the employee of the month

board is verified, because the study consisted of HPT's. Data collected from each interview was compared to data of interviewees, ensuring the validity of the study. Each research question was answered through the semistructured questions that were related to positive and negative emotions and I correlated them to see if the participants are happy and how they perceived the phenomenon of happiness.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

I used a theoretical framework through qualitative methodology for this study. Selected participants are face-to-face interviewed, and each interview is voice-recorded. Each of the voice-recorded interviews is turned into transcripts, and each transcript is codified, after codes are created, themes are derived based on the main research questions. NVivo software is used upon availability because this software is a great help in the accuracy of the data processing. On the other hand, SPSS is used for certain variable measurements, such as comparing means of income and age of participants from performance recorded data and also creating tables. This helped the process of triangulation. Discrepant cases are treated carefully, where all data collected is verified, and validated.

### **Coding**

After each interview, the voice recording session of each participant is turned into the transcript. Transcripts are analyzed and coded. Coding is a part of qualitative analysis strategy, but it is not the only strategy employed in qualitative designs (Carl & Ratvich, 2016). A Microsoft Word document is created, and from coding process themes such as the relationship with happiness at work and home brought an in-depth understanding of

this phenomenological study. A coding memo is created, because this helped in finding connections between codes and other related data analysis, and findings. I derived themes from codes, and code descriptions, this was the way to attain answers to the main research questions. A table of data analysis is created to ensure triangulation process, participant validity, dialogic engagement and reflexivity of data processing.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

Interview questions were asked to ensure the credibility of the study, by aligning the questions with the theory, and such questions are clear. I asked questions clearly using simple language, in this way each participant understands them accurately. Through a process of triangulation, questions are verified with existing data. I asked follow-up questions to participants to ensure that their experiences of their emotions are understood clearly.

#### **Transferability**

I selected only participants that have high performance, in order to answer the research questions. Participants are selected as HPT's in the school currently during the period of 2019. A process of thick description consisted of explaining in detail the location, methods, and participant's qualifications, education, their performance and the design for future replication of the study.

#### **Dependability**

Member-checking techniques are used to reach the dependability of the study. Participants are asked to review their statements, and see if there is an error, or if there is



anything left out. Participants reviewed my interpretation of data, and I asked if they agreed with such interpretation or there was anything to be changed. Through a *process of triangulation*, the data I collected was verified. Participants are asked about their performance in school, and this information is verified.

### **Confirmability**

In order to avoid any bias or any prejudice, field notes are taken during the study. I engaged the chair and committee member through dialogic engagement. Finally, dialogic engagement was another important process in qualitative design. Through collaboration with other experts, the constructive criticism is ensured and checks were in place for remaining unbiased. Dialogic engagement was important knowing that social location, feelings, and other elements may impact research results. According to Ratvich and Carl (2016), dialogic engagement is a systematic process for engaging in generative dialogue with intentionally selected experts about the research process. Interview design, was crucial that and I had to be experienced; therefore, dialogic engagement played a crucial role in complying with research rigor and guidelines.

### **Ethical Procedure**

Before gaining access to participants or data, a request form was submitted to the Institutional Review Board, indicating the purpose, sample selection, treatment of participants and information about the institution. When the approved number of application is returned, the data collection would begin. The ethical memo is created, to address ethical concerns about the treatment of participants of the study. I also completed *Protecting Human Research Participants*, with certificate number 1842799. I respected

all participants in the study of the study. After the application was submitted to IRB for research permit, IRB granted a permit number *03-14-19-0582066* for this study.

Each participant is explained the nature of the study and its purpose, and I gave them the opportunity to leave the interview at any time. Each participant is asked if they voluntarily want to participate in a study, and permit them to leave at any time, and reserve the right to not answer at any question they feel they do not want to answer. The participant's are selected with the help of their superiors, where superiors asked high-performing employees if they want to participate in the study.

Collected data is in a safe place where only I had access to it. Each file created is a password-protected file, and saved in a locked storage case, in case a computer crash or there are technical issues with the computer. Participant names are not included in the data analysis, and through coding process participants are coded as P1, P2 and so on. In this study, I did not collect confidential data, only collected data to understand phenomenon of happiness. Stored are destroyed as per Walden research policy after the IRB and COA approve the final study. As per Walden University Policy, the stored data will be destroyed through shredding and burning, after five years.

**Summary**

The qualitative methodology is used in this study. Following all qualitative guidelines of this research is crucial. Since the nature of the study is oriented toward exploration of the phenomenology of happiness for HPTs, this study did not endanger any participant or I. My work is not related to any organization the study conducted, therefore this study is not in any way in a conflict of interest. Data is collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews, and each interview was codified and from codes, themes came up. In chapter four, the analysis of data is described in detail. In chapter 4, data collected is analyzed.

## **Chapter 4 Results**

### **Introduction**

The main objective of this study is to understand the happiness of teachers working in this elementary school in the Midwest. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What positive and negative emotions do HPT's have at work and home?

RQ2: How do HPT's perceive positive and negative emotions in relation to happiness?

In this chapter, I describe the setting in detail; then I listed the demographics of participants in the study, data collection approach, data analysis, and evidence or results, were part of this chapter. As a result, evidence of trustworthiness was valid and the overall chapter was summarized.

### **Settings**

The data is collected and the setting of this study is in this elementary school, located in the Midwest. Only HPT are selected for the sample of the study, by conducting in-depth interviews with participants. Each interview occurred in National Library, located in Midwest. Participants are teachers who at the time of interview they were working at the elementary school, in the Midwest. Only HPTs are interviewed using a semistructured questionnaire.

### **Demographics**

Table 2

*Participant Demographics*

Participants	Gender	Work Experience and Age	Education
T-1	F	17/54	Masters
T-2	F	4/36	Masters
T-3	F	12/36	Masters
T-4	M	17/52	Bachelor
T-5	F	15/43	Masters
T-6	F	7/30	Masters
T-7	F	15/36	Masters
T-8	F	12/37	Masters
T-9	F	3/30	Bachelor
T-10	F	4/24	Bachelor
T-11	F	18/40	Bachelor

**Data Collection**

Twelve participants expressed their interest in participating in this study.

However, one of the participants did not want to proceed with the interviews for a personal reason. A total of 11 interviews, reached data saturation and were in-depth interviews. Interviews are conducted at the National Library in the Midwest. Due to busy schedules, participants are interviewed separately after their work schedule, and based on

their free time. During the first 2 days of scheduled interviews, all participants showed up. There were days where only one participant showed up, and there were days where five participants showed up, so I had to arrange this, and let them know the best time of an interview under such circumstances. Each interview is voice-recorded, and these data are turned into transcripts, and each transcript was codified. From codes, themes emerged to provide insight on the phenomenon of happiness at work and home, and the impact of happiness in high performance. As per Chapter 3, my intention was to interview up to 15 participants, and 11 participants reached data saturation in the study. Each participant is selected as a HPT, and this was an indication that participants are high performers at school.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, 11 participants are face-to-face interviewed. Transcripts are codified, and from the codes emerged to themes. Most of the participants gave the same answers for the 15 main questions I derived from the semistructured questionnaire. I completed in-depth interviews within a 1-month period of time. Open-ended questions are asked to each participant, they consisted of 15 open-ended questions about their happiness factors. 95 codes are created, with total of five main themes that are all related to happiness. Theoretical framework is utilized to explore positive and negative emotions that HPT expressed. Four main themes are derived from all the interviews conducted: (a) happier at home, (b) negative interactions, (c) happiness and work performance, and (d) overall happiness.

## **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

Interview questions are asked to ensure the credibility of the study, by aligning the questions with the theory, and such questions are clear. I asked questions clearly using simple layman terms, this was a way for each participant to understand questions I asked accurately. Through a process of triangulation, questions are verified with existing data. Follow-up questions are asked to participants to ensure that their experiences of their emotions are understood clearly.

### **Transferability**

Only participants that have high performance are selected. Participants are selected as HPT's in the school currently during the period of 2019. A process of thick description consisted of explaining in detail the location, methods, and participant's qualifications, education, their performance and the design for future replication of the study.

### **Dependability**

Member-checking techniques are used to reach the dependability of the study. Participants are asked to review their statements, and see if there is any error, or if there is anything left out. Participants reviewed my interpretation of data, and I asked them if they agreed with such interpretation or if there is anything to be changed. Through a process of triangulation, data collected is verified. Participants are asked about their

performance in school, and this information is verified, by checking the list of employee of the month.

### **Confirmability**

In order to avoid any bias or any prejudice, field notes are taken during the study. I engaged my chair and one of my committee members through dialogic engagement. Dialogic engagement was an important process in in my study. Through collaboration with other experts, the constructive criticism is ensured and I remained unbiased. Dialogic engagement is essential given the social location, feelings, and other elements may impact research results. According to Ratvich and Carl (2016), dialogic engagement is a systematic process for engaging in generative dialogue with intentionally selected experts about the research process. This study's interview design was a crucially tested and practiced through interview tools before beginning the study.

### **Results**

RQ1: What positive and negative emotions do HPT's have at work and home?

Most of participants answered that motivation, excitement and strong relationships with colleagues were the main positive emotions for them. In regard to negative emotions, anxiety and not being able to fulfill the tasks were the main reasons for experiencing negative emotions. Participants T1, T3, T4, T9, and T10 indicated that negative emotions came from not having good relations with others in school. In order to understand the happiness and positive emotions at home, all participants answered that



they are happier at home, and the reason for being happier is because they felt relaxed. The feeling of relaxation dominated the determinism of happiness at home.

RQ2 was: How do HPT's perceive positive and negative emotions in relation to happiness? All participants shared the same view about loving their job, and that made them happy; however, in context of negative emotions, interaction with others played a crucial role in perceiving negative emotions and unhappy occurrences. The following themes explained in-depth positive and negative emotions of HPT at work.

### **Happier at Home**

Most of participants in the study indicated that they are happier at home than at work. Participants, T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T11, indicated that they were happier at home than at work. The reason why they felt happier at home is that they found time to relax and enjoy cooking and catching up on chores. Participant T3 stated, "When at home, I do not have to meet work deadlines." Similar results were found in a study conducted by Rodríguez-Muñoz, et al. (2014), where individuals that perform well at work are happier in their home environment. Similar studies by Tadic et al., (2013) confirms findings that working adults derive more happiness from relaxing activities in their leisure time. On the other hand, participants T4 and T10 indicated that they feel happier at work due to spending the majority of their lives at work. Participant T10 indicated "I am happier at work, because I am relaxed and can be myself and no one is attacking me." "I am happier at work because that is where I spend most of my life", Participant T4 said.

### **Negative Interactions**

Participants, T1, T3, T4, T5, T9, and T10, indicated that negative emotions occurred due to negative interactions with colleagues or students. In regard to negative emotions and the impact of work environment, Meneghel et al. (2016), came to such conclusion. Organizational behaviors played a role in increasing happiness and decreasing negative emotions (Ramlall, 2008). However, the findings from participants disconfirm a study by Evans (2017), related the happiness and well-being which can be influenced by things in the past, the present, and by expectations of the future.

Participant T1 stated that negative emotions come “when bullied by principal of school.” This participant confirms a study conducted by Grant and Sumanth (2009), concluding that interactions between prosocial motivation, manager trustworthiness, and dispositional trust prosperity played a role in the happiness of employees. Participant T2 stated, “Always rushed, I feel I have too many tasks to complete.” Similar findings were found by Green et al. (2014), indicating that employees who are allowed task discretion are happier at work.

### **Happiness and Work Performance**

In this study, 10 participants indicated that happiness is related to work performance. Only participant T9 stated that “I do not think happiness makes me a higher performer as a teacher, sometimes I am unhappy but I am still a great teacher because my feelings don’t matter.”

Lacey and Yanke (2015) found that happiness and workplace are not interrelated. Other participants indicated that happiness impacts their performance at work, and the

degree of happiness plays a great role. Almost all participants confirmed the Tompkin's theory on happiness, that emotions impacts overall happiness thus having an impact on high performance. Participants T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T10, and T11 stated, "if I am happy I perform better and I am more motivated." This confirms Ostorovski's (2013), findings that happiness motivates performance. However, the findings from interviews disconfirm a study conducted by Capps and Carlin (2013), whose findings do not correlate work performance with happiness.

### **Overall Happiness**

Most of participants interviewed stated that they consider themselves happy in general. Participants, T7, T9, and T10 when asked about their overall happiness indicated that they are unhappy due to financial difficulties. Financial issues and well-being are factors that have been found to impact overall happiness (Gladstone, 2016; Uchida & Oishi, 2016; Veenhoven, 2006). Participant T2 stated "I am a medium happy; I am not extreme with life." Participant's T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, and T11, indicated that they are extremely happy in life, with positive emotions in life.

The interviews confirm Shinde's study (2017), indicating that pleasure and pursuit of pleasure may sometimes but not always, lead to happiness. Most of these participants sought pleasure by finding the job they love, thus found happiness.

### **Summary**

Overall, HPTs feel happy in life, and overall they are happy with their profession and passionate teaching. Only one participant indicated that he is not happy. This study

also confirms ATH, to some degree, where positive and negative emotions play a role in determining happiness. In general, HPTs feel happier when they are at home; thus, happiness in the home environment is higher than at work. With regard to positive emotions, relaxation at home impacts happiness, and giving their best at school and seeing their students succeed impacts their happiness at work for most of participants of the study. When looking at negative emotions, anxiety has an impact on day-to-day degree of unhappy moments for participants. Another important point found in this study was that interaction with others often is not at a satisfying level, thus HPT felt that interaction with others contributed to negative feelings in their workplace. Furthermore, negative feelings such as social interactions with colleagues impacted HPT's to feel even more negative emotions as they were at work. Chapter 5 focused mainly on the interpretation of participants results found in this study.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to understand the phenomenology of happiness through qualitative in-depth interviewing design with a sample of HPTs, using ATH. The primary purpose of the study was to understand to what degree HPTs are happy or unhappy, and if this has any effect in their performance. Results show that the majority of participants felt happier at home than at work, however, most of them indicated that overall they also feel happy at work.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

Most of participants in this study indicated that happiness is related to job performance. For instance Participants, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T10 and T11, indicated that happiness is related to and impacts work performance. Follow up questions confirmed that overall happiness impacted participants work motivation. Shinde (2017), who used an interview design, found that hedonic and eudemonic happiness both play a part in the overall happiness of a person. The results of this study also confirm the similar study conducted by Shier and Graham (2013, p.15), where they found that the impact of the sociopolitical context of social work practice on social workers extends beyond the practitioner level and improves workplace functioning.

Participant T9 indicated that happiness does not play any role in work performance, stating, "I am unhappy but I am still a great teacher because my feelings don't matter I have to do my job no matter what." The statement of T9 confirms the study of Lacey and Yanke (2015), Happiness in the workplace is not interrelated to employee

engagement and that employees are happy when they are engaged in behaviors that portrays leadership traits. However, the study results found by Uchida and Oishi (2016) differ, where they concluded that personal happiness sometimes interferes with collective happiness. Most of participants in the study were happy, but T9 was not happy, giving the indication that collective happiness did not impact overall happiness as indicated by Uchida and Oishi.

### **Happier at Home**

As stated in previous chapter, T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T11, indicated that they were happier at home than at work. In this study, the reason why participant's felt happier at home was the sense of relaxation, and as T2 stated, "At home I can be anyone I want, at school I am only a teacher." A similar opinion was given by T3, stating, "At home I am happier, because I can be myself and I do not have to meet deadlines." The rest of participants indicated that at home they feel more relaxed. The answers of most of participants confirm the study conducted by Klausen (2016), where he concluded that happiness is an exclusively categorical mental state. Furthermore, the study conducted by Bardo et al. (2017), argued that age may have played in happiness of individuals, this may be the impact of outcome for HPT's.

Another point brought up by participants in the study in regard to happiness at home was that there is a sense of more freedom at home and this created a sense of happiness or higher degree of happiness at home than at work. Participant T2, stated: "I like the feeling of home, because I can do whatever I want at home." Participants T6 stated "happier at home, that is my comfort zone, and at work you have to follow a

routine but held accountable.” Participants T7, stated “happier at home, because I can be sad and no one knows, it’s more private.” The rest of participants except participant T4 indicated that they felt happier at home, due to their relaxing time with friends and family, free time to deal with any sport activities.

The responses from participants confirm a study by Sharma and Patra (2014), where the same results show that people are happier when they engage in family activities outside of the work. The findings in the interviews also confirm the findings by Williams et al. (2017), where happiness is related to attitudes and cognition. However, Williams et al.’s study design was quasi-experimental.

Most of participants’ answers confirm also the study found by Hsiao et al. (2015), elaborating that happiness at work alone is insufficient in explaining the performance. The interview answers from this study also confirm the findings in previous quantitative study conducted by Carree and Verheul (2012), where intrinsic motivation and that of combining responsibilities lowers stress that leads to more satisfaction with leisure time. Since most of participants answered that they are happier at home due to the feeling of relaxation, and emotions of relaxing, the results disconfirm the study of Lathia et al. (2017), where they concluded that individuals are happier in the moments when they are more physically active. Only participant P4, stated that “Happier at work because that’s where I spend most of my life. I spend about three to four hours with family a day so I do not see them much.” This statement confirms the study results found by Rodríguez-Muñoz, et al. (2014), indicating that, individuals’ work engagement would spill over to the home domain, thus increasing their happiness level at the end of the day. In similar

study, conducted by Fish (2010), similar results came up, that work engagement could determine the level of happiness.

### **Negative Interactions**

Most of participants feel negative emotions such as anxiety, workload stress, and negative interactions with colleagues or leaders led to negative emotions. Participants T2 stated, “Always rushed, I feel I have too many tasks to complete, anxiety, pulled in a million directions.” Participants T3, T4, T9, and T10, with negative feelings in consideration, not having a good interaction with others at work contributed to negative emotions. Similar results were found in a study Hill and Bradley (2010), and Lyubomirsky (2012), where the interaction of teamwork seems to be associated with higher happiness levels and also work performance, to include positive organizational behaviors. The answers in regard to negative emotions confirm studies by Glass et al. (2016) and Wasarat et al. (2015) about workplace happiness. Organizational positive climate can impact in overall happiness of employees and their performance (Hanson, 2013; Sallas-Vallina et al., 2017; Yano, 2013). The results of the interviews confirm that good interaction with each other may deter negative emotions of HPT.

Anxiety is one of the key negative emotions described in this study. Participants, T1, T2, T5, T7, and T8, indicated that anxiety was the main negative emotion for them. For instance T1 stated “anxiety due to workload and not having time to complete all tasks,” T5 stated also that “Anxiety comes from time management, trying to manage time,” T7 stated “Anxiety comes from family issues, but also not having enough time to complete all tasks.” Similar indications have been given by Tomkins’ affect theory of



happiness, where negative emotions are related to work area, and main negative emotion has been found to be anxiety. Statements of above participants of the study confirm the results found in a study conducted by Tov and Lee (2016), where they found that the impact of negative events was generally associated with lower levels of satisfaction. Participant T2's main negative emotion was the feeling of anxiety and too many tasks to be completed leading to distress. This confirms Tomkins affect theory on happiness, where main negative emotions are related to anxiety and distress.

### **Happiness and Work Performance Context**

Most of participants of this study felt that happiness might impact the work performance. It was concluded that, 10 out of 11 participants felt they were happy during the time of interview, giving an impression that happiness may impact work performance. Participant T1 stated "I feel good I produce well". Participant T3 stated "when I am happy, I am more energized, and if I feel good I perform well". Participants T7 stated "positive emotions have huge impact in job performance." Similar answers gave most of participants in the study. Similar results are found in many studies conducted in the past, such as Perron et al. (2016), where they found the relation between happiness and work performance, even though this study was quantitative in nature. Positive emotions and work performance are interrelated (Potts, 2011; Ramlall, 2008; Perron et al., 2016; Brose et al., 2014, Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2014). Participant T11 stated "happiness or positive emotions play a great role in my work performance, if I am in a bad mood, I don't perform as well as I usually do". Participant T9 stated "Feeling happy I am more energized and engaged never drained." Similar results from the past about mental state of

happy people were found by Klausen (2016), concluding that happiness is temporary since it is a mental state that continuously changes. However the results of the study, confirm findings by Tadic et al. (2013), where they used an analysis of 84,247 daily activities concluding that working adults feel happiness during their leisure time, but this impact on their work performance also. The answers from participants also confirm the findings by Catalino et al. (2014), where they concluded that people put forward the thought that people choose to be happier each day by prioritizing positively in their daily activities. However, above answers from participants' confirm the study of Atkinson and Hall (2011), arguing that happy employees perform better.

In this study, not everyone was happy, participant T4, which stated that he was not happy; in relation to question if happiness impacts his work performance he answered, "positive emotions are like a wave of energy to perform and be motivated to work better." Participant P10 stated, "If I have trouble at home I am not performing well at work." This is another indication that positive emotions may play a role in high performance of teachers. The findings from most of participants in a context of work performance and happiness disconfirm the study by Dobbs (2014), indicating that organizational style of management has impact on happiness of employees.

### **Overall Positive and Negative Emotions**

As stated in chapter 4, in general 10 out of 11 participants (HPT), were happy, felt happy, and expressed their happy life in general. Most of positive emotions that participants such as T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, T11, indicated that relaxation at home, and family time were the main positive emotions that made them feel happy. One of the main

factors of feeling unhappy for some participants was the financial issue. For instance participant T10 stated “I am unhappy because I have financial difficulties supporting my parents and children.” Another participant T7 stated “I am unhappy because I have a lot of financial problems and I am not paid fairly”. T7 stated that being paid unfairly did not influence work performance. Participant T8 also stated “I am always happy, some financial problems I have now that I have a daughter, but I am happy now.” Another participant T9 stated “I am unhappy for the past month because there is a lot of pressure of financial obligation”. The financial issue, mentioned by participants that may impact their happiness was found in a research conducted by Ruberton and Gladstone (2016), concluding that financial well-being predicts higher life satisfaction. The differences within this study were that the study of Ruberton and Gladstone study was quantitative. Answers of the participants also confirm results of the study Kelly and Evans (2017), arguing that income and well-being is related to happiness. Similar results were found also in a study conducted by Green et al. (2014) concluding that spending money for others contributed to individual happiness.

Most of participants of the study mentioned that money issues, paying bills, financial difficulties are main negative emotions for them. Participant T2 stated “money to pay bills and surrounding yourself with positive people make you happy.” Another participant T7 when asked about overall happiness, and how people can be happy, she stated “money, money, money-without it you cannot sleep at night.” Participant T8 also mentioned about “spending money wisely” while participants T1, T9 and T10 mentioned about financial obligation as a factor to be happy, and participant T11 stated “you need

financial stability to make things easier, and make you happy”. Similar results came out from research conducted by Kelly and Evans (2017), where they argued that inequality reduces well-being related to happiness. Answers from participants in relation to financial factors on happiness confirm findings by Wang et al. (2017), where happiness is related to material life. However, the study by Wang et al. was different approach due to the nature of study and testing theory about happiness.

### **Limitation of the Study**

Given the nature of the study, consisting of qualitative methodology, the study was not designed to agree or disagree, or to test theory of happiness. The main limitation in this study was that, most of participants were women. Geographic area of the study, by interviewing only HPT's at this elementary school, in the Midwest, is another limitation. Given the nature of the study, the findings cannot be generalized for all HPT's in the U.S. The study was conducted through face-to-face interviews, and participants may have given their views about their happiness, however, since the happiness can be temporary, or may change, the results of this study cannot be generalized, and since the sample was small, further research may be needed in other states and schools to understand the phenomenology of happiness for HPT's.

### **Recommendations**

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, results cannot be generalized, and further research using mixed methods could add strength to this study. The results of this study indicated the importance of positive emotions that may play in work performance, and overall understanding the feeling of happiness of teachers in the Midwest area, at

elementary school level. Since the study was qualitative, the study can be replicated. There are many arguments directing the focus of positive emotions (affects) on happiness (Kelly & Evans, 2017; Green et al., 2014; Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2014). One of the factors mentioned in previous researches was well-being and financial issues which the findings of this study also confirm that well-being can impact happiness. Well-being (Brose et al. 2014), material deprivation and social exclusion (Gross-Manos & Ben-Arieh, 2011) and time (Campos et al., 2013), played a crucial role in happiness and work performance. The interaction of teamwork seems to be associated with higher happiness levels and also work performance, to include positive organizational behaviors (Potts, 2011; Hill & Bradley, 2010; Lyubomirsky, 2012). The results of this study indicated that HPT feel happier at home, due to relaxing time there, while this feeling is reflected on their performance at work also.

### **Implications**

This study brought some interesting results, and added new knowledge about HPT, and their positive and negative emotions. Organizations, as indicated by results may need to do more in employee incentives as well as more time to complete tasks by not pressuring them to meet deadlines. Financial issues may be also negative reflection on performance, thus motivating employees with rewards such as promotions could increase their performance. This study was not designed to test any theories, answers of HPT, confirmed the provisions of Tomkins' ATH, where negative emotions are distress and anxiety, while positive emotions were found to be relaxing time at home. Positive and negative emotions can to some degree determine the overall happiness as indicated by

theory used to assess the positive and negative emotions of HPT in this study. Further research is needed to fully understand the phenomenology of happiness for employees that are recognized for high performance. Educative organizations such as elementary schools or even other business organizations must create friendly environment at work site, for employees and try not to push employees meet deadlines and pressure them.

### **Conclusion**

Results of this study show that HPT feel happier at home than at work, and based on their answers, the feeling of relaxation and being anyone they wish to be at home make them feel happier. This study reflects the qualitative results of interviews, where most of participants indicated that positive emotions have positive impact in their work performance. From negative emotions as used in ATH, to assess positive and negative emotions of each participants results show that interaction with others or leaders at work may be able to determine negative emotions. This means that negative interaction, can reflect in the development of negative emotions for high performing employees. Further research is needed to fully understand phenomenology of happiness for high performing employees in general.

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## Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation

Community Research Partner Name: Elementary School

Contact Information:

Date: Sept 15, 2018

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled A Phenomenological Study of High-Performance Employees Happiness at Work and Home, within the elementary school. As part of this study, I authorize you to post flyers at reception point (teachers' breakroom area) of our school, for the purpose of recruitment of those who wish to participate in the study, data collection, member checking, and results dissemination activities. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: data collection from high performing database, or employee of the month board, and ensure that participants of the study be given time for interview. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student may not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

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## **Appendix B: Flyer**

### Happiness Study

A Phenomenological Study of High-Performance Employees Happiness at Work and Home

Volunteers Wanted for a Research Study

#### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of this study is to understand the phenomenon of happiness of teachers with high performance. The goal of this study is to understand happiness of teachers with high work performance and understand their happiness experiences in life.

#### **Eligibility and Criteria**

Participants must be working at the elementary school, and also must be high performing teacher. Participants must voluntarily participate in this research. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete an Informed Consent Form (10 minutes or less to complete.)
- If deemed eligible, participate face-to-face interview that will not exceed 40 minutes to answer the questions.
- Note, the participant is under no circumstances required to complete the interview.

#### **Benefits of participation in the study**

The purpose of this study is to shed light on phenomenon of happiness, and understanding happiness through your positive and negative emotions that could lead to gaining new knowledge on this phenomenon and future impact of emotions at work and home.

#### **Contact Person(s) or Department**

The research is conducted under the direction of College of Behavior Sciences at Walden University, and the dissertation chair of this study.

Thank you for your consideration and support

## **Appendix D: Coding Memo Sample**

Memo: Coding- A Phenomenological Study of High-Performance Employees Happiness at Work and Home

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What emotions of happiness do high performing teachers have at work and home?

- **EMT- Emotion**
- **PRGM- Program**
- **FLG- Feeling**
- **INV- Involvement**
- **HP- High Performance**

RQ2: How do high performing teachers at this elementary school perceive the happiness factors?

- **PREC\_HP\_N\_FCTR Perceived Happiness Factors**
- **PROF\_GLS Professional Goals**

## **Appendix E: Self-reflection Journaling**

A Phenomenological Study of High-Performance Employees Happiness at Work and Home

Description:

Feelings about the study:

Experiences today:

Everyday Life and Topic of Study:

## Semi Structured Questionnaire

### A Phenomenological Study of High-Performance Teachers Happiness at School and Home

<b>Semi-structured Questionnaire</b> <b>Information about the participant</b> <b>Code:</b>
Name of Interviewee: Place of Interview: Date of Interview: Work Location of Participant: Work Experience at School: Education of the Participant Age of Participant:

**Part I Positive Emotions**

1. Describe your positive experiences at school here? Please explain  
What kind of positive emotions do you usually experience?
2. What kind of positive emotions do you feel when you are at home?
3. What is your opinion about your overall happiness at school and home?
4. How do you consider your positive emotions (if any) impact your work performance?
5. Are you happier when you are at work or at home, and why?

**Part II: Negative Emotions**

6. Can you describe your negative emotions in life?
7. Based on your experiences do you experience negative emotions at school?  
Please explain
8. What are some of the negative emotions you experience at work and at home?
9. What do you think about overall happiness, do you feel you are happy or not happy based on your negative emotions?
10. How can you explain the differences between negative emotions you may experience at work and at home?

**Part III: Overall Happiness in Life**

11. How happy are you in life or unhappy?
12. How do you see happiness in life, what do you think people need to be happy in life?
13. Can you explain if happiness may play a role in high performance at work?
14. What do you think of overall happiness at work and home; do you think that played a role in your work performance?
15. Is there anything you wish to talk about that may be related to the topic, but it was left out of this interview? Or do you have any questions?