

# System Dynamic View on Well-Being – Implications of Occupation

Work-in-progress by:

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# Principal Topic

- In modern western societies the chase of **individual happiness** has become a driving force affecting even stability of families (Sund & Smyrniotis 2005) these days.
- At the same time **stress**, **anxiety** and **depression** seem to have reached epidemic proportions (e.g. Dozois & Dobson 2004) and become costly to societies (Hudson et al. 2004).
- Increased interest in happiness and well-being yet relatively few studies on the role of occupation:
  - We seem to know a lot about subjective well being and happiness in the employee context, while studies exploring e.g. family business owner-entrepreneurs construct of SWB (e.g. Karofsky et al. 2001) are hard to find.

# Aims

- In this study two occupational groups, namely family business owners and employees were compared to see whether their experiences of well-being differ from each other
  - **Well-being** was defined here **as** a main concept constructed of **happiness**, **satisfaction** with life, **mood** and **anxiety**
- To understand the overall experience, role of meaning giving and individual construct of well-being.

# Method

- A total of 771 (N=243 family business owners; N=528 employees) internet based questionnaires, utilizing a well established DVA (Ojanen 2003) scale on well being were analyzed in the current study
- The measure had good psychological properties and allowed tapping into the phenomenological level of experience while looking at well being as an individually constructed phenomenon holistically at the same time.
- The sample was representable on national level and well balanced on background variables such as gender, age, education, income level etc.
- Out of the 771 participants 41.5% were women and 58.5% were men representing the active work age (mean 42 years) population.

## Method continued

- Comparison of means (Mann-Whitney-U) and simple correlational analyzes were used to detect distinct patterns and finally to create system dynamic models of well-being for both groups.
  - Positive correlations for happiness, satisfaction with life and mood and negative correlations for anxiety
  - Well-being? = what potentially increases experiences of happiness, satisfaction with life and mood and simultaneously potentially decrease experienced anxiety.
- Instead of establishing clear cut cause-effect relationship the aim here was to look at the day to day patterns of meaning giving and complexity of possible connections available in the models.

# Results

Mean, (SD), Mann-Whitney-U

	FBO	Employees	P-values
<b>Happiness:</b>	8.9, (1.96)	<b>8.5, (1.99)</b>	.003***
<b>Satisfaction with life:</b>	8.8, (2.05)	<b>8.3, (2.08)</b>	.001***
<b>Mood:</b>	75.7, (16.23)	<b>73.0, (16.37)</b>	.012***
<b>Anxiety:</b>	29.1, (17.88)	31.4, (18.00)	.062

FBO= Family Business Owners, N=243, Employees= salaried employees, N=528;  
Scale happiness, satisfaction with life 0 – 10; mood and anxiety 0 – 100.

## Well-being – correlations happiness and satisfaction with life

FAMILY BUSINESS OWNERS	EMPLOYEES
<b>Happiness, positive correlations:</b>	
1. Satisfaction with life, (.85)	1. Satisfaction with life, (.82)
2. Challenges-resources balance, (.63)	2. Challenges-resources balance, (.62)
3. Balance between roles, (.55)	3. Balance between roles, (.62)
4. Appreciation, (.44)	4. Sense of peace, (.45)
5. Meaning of life, (.42)	5. Mood, (.44)
<b>Satisfaction with life, positive correlations:</b>	
1. Happiness, (.85)	1. Happiness, (.82)
2. Challenges-resources balance, (.65)	2. Challenges-resources balance, (.64)
3. Balance between roles, (.58)	3. Balance between roles, (.57)
4. Power of decision, (.51)	4. Sense of peace, (.49)
5. Appreciation, (.50)	5. Gratitude, (.46)

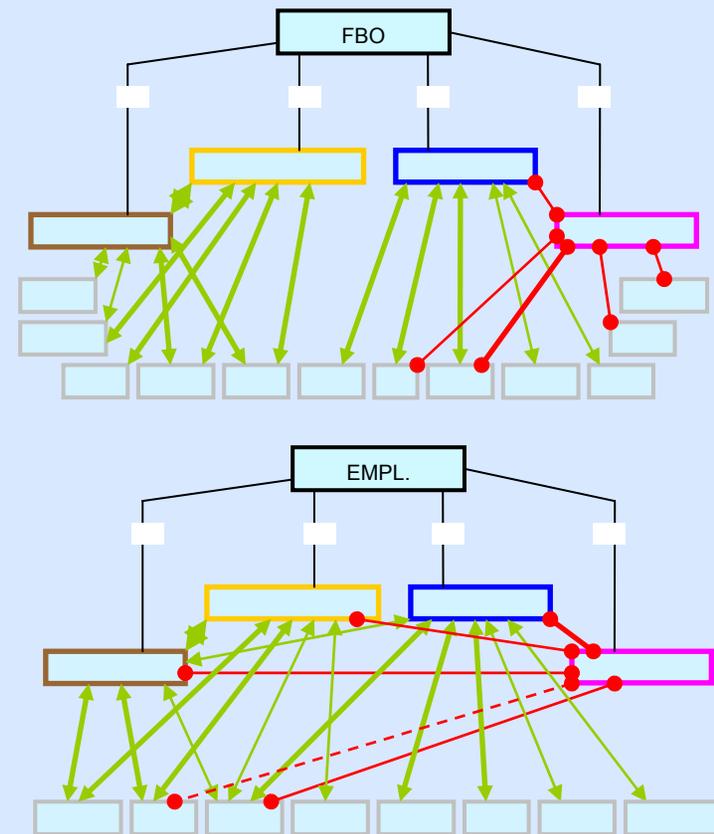
## Well-being, correlations mood and anxiety

FAMILY BUSINESS OWNERS	EMPLOYEES
<b>Mood, positive correlations:</b>	
1. Optimism, (.62)	1. Sense of peace, (.60)
2. Sense of peace, (.56)	2. Optimism, (.60)
3. Hope, (.52)	3. Hope, (.51)
4. Flexibility, (.47)	4. Self-efficacy, (.48)
5. Work ability, (.44)	5. Appreciation of self, (.47)
<b>Anxiety, negative correlations:</b>	
1. Sense of peace, (- .50)	1. Mood, (- .54)
2. Mood, (- .48)	2. Sense of peace, (- .49)
3. Hope, (- .43)	3. Happiness, (- .42)
4. Appreciation of self, (- .43)	4. Satisfaction with life, (- .40)
5. Self-efficacy, (- .43)	5. Balance between roles, (- .38)

All presented correlations significant on the  $p \leq .001$  level, Family business owners N=243; Employees N=528.

# Results and Implications

- **Family business owners were consistently:**
  - Happier
  - More satisfied with their lives
  - On better mood
  - BUT** equally ANXIOUS - anxiousness has a different role (red lines on pictures) from the point of view of overall well being
- **For family business owners ANXIETY is not reflected on happiness and satisfaction with life**
  - For employees anxiety is reflected on happiness and satisfaction with life with both direct and indirect connections



# TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

➤ **Different occupations may be reflected in:**

- Different thinking patterns:** e.g. What does anxiety mean? Part of daily life or something that puts happiness and satisfaction with life in jeopardy
- Different levels of freedom: FBOs in charge of every dimension of their life (family, business, ownership)



# NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- **Some important aspects to look at in the future:**
  - **Cumulative effects of happiness?**
  - **Characteristic thinking and action patterns of those who actually thrive in different forms of payed work?**
  - **Entrepreneurial thinking and action patterns and their effect on experienced happiness and well-being.**

# Thank You for Your attention!

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