# Positive Psychological Assessment for the Workplace

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Background:

Research stemming from the fields of Positive Organizational Scholarship and Positive Organizational Behavior has demonstrated that work wellbeing is good for the individual, the organization, and for society as a whole. Such findings are driving organizations to investigate and then further invest in Workplace Wellbeing Programs (WWP’s). As such it is important to know how organizations implementing WWP’s assess the wellbeing of employees, and how they evaluate the WWP’s they implement in relation to their impacts on employee wellbeing and important organizational performance indicators. However, there is no critical review or study of organizational wellbeing assessment practice presently available.

Aim:

The aim of this research was to review and appraise current workplace wellbeing assessment practices, drawing on various related literature. In other words, what do current workplace wellbeing assessment practices look like? Based on this review we aimed to provide suggestions as to both what should be assessed in organizations, and how this should be assessed.

Method:

We investigated what positive psychological and wellbeing assessment measures are used in 1) wellbeing promotion research, 2) what measures are used in workplace wellbeing research, and 3) what measures are suggested by positive psychological assessment experts. With promotion research we explored the assessment measures used in 40 effectiveness trials further, and this highlighted both which assessment measures, and to what extent the measures, are used in positive psychology intervention effectiveness trials. For measures used in workplace wellbeing research we conducted a systematic review to investigate which positive psychological measures are used to evaluate the effectiveness of a workplace wellbeing intervention. Lastly, we investigated what measures were recommended by positive psychology experts in literature.

Results:

In the promotion research, across 40 effectiveness trials 34 measures (e.g., Satisfaction with Life Scale, Scales of Psychological Wellbeing) were used to capture 17 constructs (e.g., Positive affect and negative affect, wellbeing), however only six were used four or more times. The workplace wellbeing research identified 56 studies that utilised 111 measures, with 8 used four or more times across the 56 studies. Experts (i.e., Owens, Magyer-Moe, & Lopez, 2015) identified 58 specific measures. Across all of this information many of the measures that were used were not traditional ‘positive measures’, nor assess ‘positive variables’, but rather measured clinical type variables (e.g., depression, anxiety, stress), or health variables.

Conclusions:

Whilst there is a lack of rigor in current assessment practices, we suggest, based on the above review, 11 measures as likely good candidates for potential use in positive psychological assessment practices in workplaces.

References

1. Owens, R. L., Magyar-Moe, J. L., & Lopez, S. J. (2015). Finding balance via positive psychological assessment: Recommendations for practice. *The Counseling Psychologist, 43*(5), 634-670.