

Time Affluence as a Path toward Personal Happiness and Ethical Business Practice: Empirical Evidence from Four Studies

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OBJECTIVE:

To provide empirical evidence that Time Affluence (TA) positively correlated to Subjective Well-Being (SWB), while keeping Material Affluence (MA) constant.

METHODS USED:

Study 1

Participants and Procedures: Used data from “Millennium/Microsoft” poll which used random digit dialing to sample people from all regions, ages and classes within the US.

Measures:

Material and Time Affluence (MATAS): Material affluence was assessed by asking participants if their total family income is less than \$15000, between \$15000 and \$30000, between \$30,000 and \$50,000, and between \$50,000 and \$75000 per year. Time affluence was assessed by a single question: “Is it harder these days for you to get enough time for yourself, or easier, or has there been no change?”

Subjective Well-Being (SWB): Subjective Well-Being was assessed with measures of family and job satisfaction. Participants were asked for family satisfaction: “How satisfied are you with your family?” and for job satisfaction: “How satisfied are you with your job?”

Study 2

Participants and Procedures: Between January and March 2007, students in a ‘Theories of Personality’ class at Knox College were provided the opportunity to earn extra credit by distributing surveys to individuals over age 18 who were not college students; only one participant per household was allowed. This resulted in a sample of 80 adults.

Measures:

SWB: Subjective Well-Being was assessed using Satisfaction with Life Scale using a 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5(Strongly Agree) scale. One sample question was : “In most ways my life has been close to my ideal.”

MATAS: Participants were assessed on a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) scale. 16 items tapping feelings of material and time affluence.

Wanting to be busy?: Participants were assessed three psychological characteristics that might lead to participants to want to be busy. First need of achievement was assessed. Second need for sensation was assessed. Thirdly, how much a subject desired to be “kept busy” was assessed.

Study 3

Participants and Procedures: Email invites were sent to Knox College students during January 2005 to fill out surveys; 106 students participated.

Measures:

SWB: Same survey as in Study 2

MATAS: Same survey as in Study 2

Mindfulness: Participants were assessed 14 items of mindfulness measure from Brown and Ryan's (2003) study of daily variation in mindfulness. One sample item was "I've been finding myself doing things without paying attention"

Need Satisfaction: Participants were surveyed using a survey of Reis et al. (2000). The participants reported three activities, other than sleeping, that they had spent the most time doing during the last 24 hours. Participants then rated how much they had done each activity for each of four reasons varying in autonomy, identified reasons, introjected reasons and external reasons.

Study 4

Participants and Procedures: Participants were recruited during the fall of 2004 using similar procedures as in Study 2. A total of 145 adults were recruited.

Measures-

SWB: Same survey as in Study 2

MATAS: Same survey as in Study 2

Mindfulness: Participants were assessed fifteen items from Brown and Ryan's (2003) Mindful Awareness Scale using a 1(Almost Always) to 6 (Almost Never) scale.

Need-satisfying activities: Participants reported how frequently they had engaged in 20 different activities, five of which were rated for Physical Fitness, Personal Growth, Affiliation and Community Feeling.

KEY FINDINGS:

Study 1

- Income related positively to both job and family satisfaction.
- Feeling of time affluence also related positively to both job and family satisfaction.
- At low levels of income, an increase in income improved well-being, but at higher levels, equivalent increases in income did not improve well-being as much.

Study 2

- TA was strongly correlated with SWB for participants high in MA than for participants low in MA

- TA had no influence on any of psychological characteristics moderators such as need for achievement, sensation seeking, and wanting to keep busy because it is fun, challenging and personally important.

Study 3

- TA had a significant positive association with SWB but MA did not.
- No interaction between MA and TA
- Individuals who experience more TA apparently report higher SWB in part because they experience more mindfulness and greater satisfaction of their psychological needs.

Study 4

- Benefits of MA increased substantially as individuals moved from low to moderate levels of MA but dissipated at higher levels of MA
- Significant association between TA and SWB.

CONCLUSION:

- The feeling of time affluence not only benefits people's physical health, family and civic involvement, and positive ecological behavior, but also their subjective well-being and happiness

LINKS:

[Journal of Business Ethics](#)

[Direct Survey Link](#)