The Impact of Members' and Leaders' Positivity on Organizational Identification in Business Student Organizations

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by

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Acknowledgments

I first want to thank Dr. Mary Tucker not only for the incredible guidance and leadership throughout this process, but also for bringing so much positivity and hope into my personal and professional life. Working with Dr. Tucker has been an honor and the most amazing learning opportunity I had over my four years at Ohio University. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Hazel Dadanlar and Ms. Shawnee Meek for providing new perspectives and teaching me so much along the way. My thesis and our publication would not have been possible without the time and effort that Dr. Tucker, Dr. Dadanlar, and Ms. Meek put into this project to assist me. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Raymond Frost for his advising and support through my academic journey. I am lucky enough to have Dr. Frost as a past professor and advisor, and even luckier to have been able to work by his side as a TA for the last two years. I am unable to thank everyone who has had a positive influence on my Ohio University journey as there are so many of you, but a huge thank you to everyone I have met through my involvement in the Select Leadership Development Program, the Fixed Income Management Group, the Association of Women in Finance, and the Career and Student Success Center. I truly value the people I have met in the College of Business who have been the biggest influences in my life.

I want to thank my friends and family. My family has made so many sacrifices to help me achieve my goals and dreams and have fully supported me along the entire journey. They have been my biggest supporters and have helped me grow into the person I am today. A special thank you to my mom Julie, my dad Brian, and my brother Søren.

Since childhood they have pushed me to achieve more, do more, and be better. Although at times, I may have disagreed with specifics, their support and drive for me to be successful has been the biggest blessing in my life. My friends have been the foundation of my life at Ohio University and have guided me through many ups and downs, always having my back along the way. Thank you to all of my friends for making this thesis, and so much more, possible. I am incredibly lucky to have so many amazing people in my life.

Table of Contents

Why is This Important?

After completing three full years of studies at Ohio University, three internships, a handful of on-campus jobs, and six tutorials, one consistent conversation topic that always comes up is what student organizations I am involved in. Furthermore, in the College of Business, it is part of how you identify yourself. For example, my name is Elsa Gran, I am a senior in the Honors Tutorial College specializing in Finance, MIS, and Business Analytics, I am a Peer Coach in the Career and Student Success Center, and a TA in the MIS department, and I am involved in the Association of Women in Finance, the Select Leaders Development Program, and the Fixed Income Management Group. Beginning a conversation with any student will most likely follow a similar introduction, but will the student include all of their student organizations? Or will they only highlight some that they are involved in? And why? One possible reason they present in this way is that they identify with one organization more than another, possibly because it is a more positive experience. My research aimed to understand this concept further and the cause behind it.

As a student researcher from Ohio University, my research was opened to all 33 College of Business student organizations and those members that chose to participate in my survey. My research was aimed at closing the gap of knowledge on how positivity can affect student organizational identification, as well as how the positivity of a student organization's leader can affect the member's organizational identification, overall focusing on the impact of positivity on organizational identification within the student organizations of Ohio University's College of Business. The results of my study will

hopefully benefit the student organizations in Ohio University's College of Business and lead to further enhancement of each group.

Positivity has been proven to assist in post-graduation full-time career success as well as productivity, work outcome, leadership potential and more. Positivity, when considered a soft skill, is underdeveloped and most companies expect students to enter full-time jobs with their soft skills already fully developed. Students are then expected to develop their soft skills during higher education, but outside of the classroom, and most resort to student organizations for this growth of soft skills.

Organizational Identification (OI) continues to be defined by many researchers in multiple ways, and studied individually, although never in conjunction with positivity. One definition, by Wang, Demerouti, and Le Blanc (2017, p.186), is that organizational identification is one form of work identity, "referring to the extent to which an organization's identity and an employee's own identity overlap." My research brought a new study to the field that combined the research on positivity and organizational identification, specific to College of Business student organizations.

My research focused on two broad questions, visually shown below. First, does student organization member positivity result in organizational identification? Second, does student organization leader positivity result in organizational identification?

Exhibit 1: Does Positivity Impact Organizational Identification?
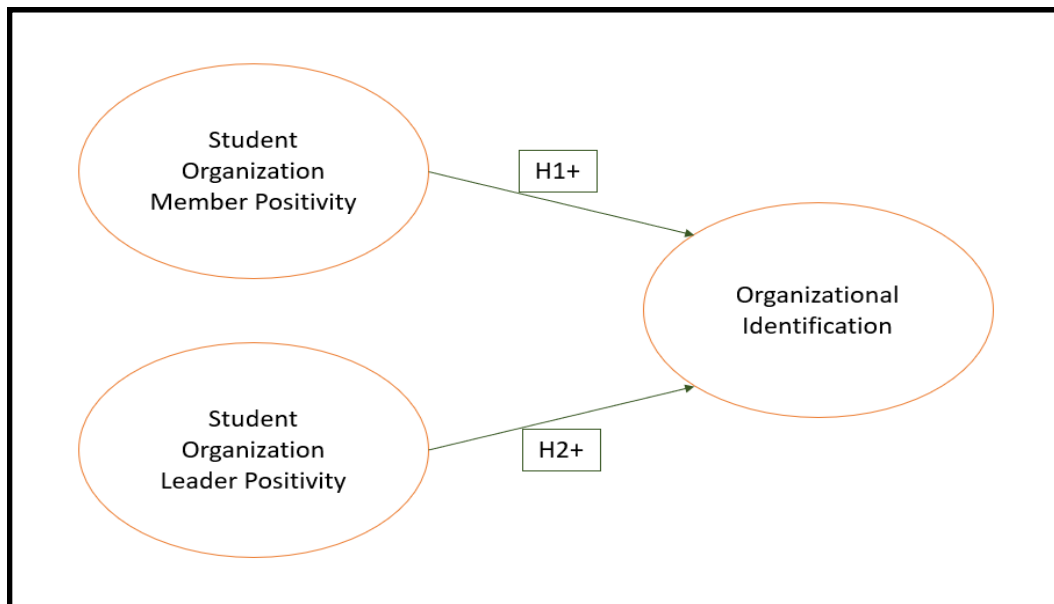
The first hypothesis to apply to this study (H1+) is that student organization member positivity is positively related to organizational identification. The second hypothesis (H2+) is that student organization leader positivity is positively related to organizational identification.

To answer these questions, in spring semester 2021 I obtained IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval, collected data using a survey via Qualtrics, and collected 399 responses from Ohio University's College of Business undergraduate students (focusing specifically on the members of all College of Business (COB) student organizations). This survey utilized a positivity scale developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) and an organizational identification scale by Mael and Tetrick (1992).

The Subjective Happiness Scale questions (our positivity scale) were based on a seven-point Likert scale from one (indicating the lowest agreement/positivity level) to

seven (highest level of agreement/positivity level) with four representing a neutral

response (See Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999, 151):

1. In general, how happy a person do you consider yourself?

2. Compared with most of your peers, how happy do you consider yourself?

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is
   going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this
   characterization describe you?

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed,
   they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this
   characterization describe you?

The Organizational Identification measure by Mael & Ashforth (1992) was

modified for this study, as the authors suggested, so that items were specific to the school

and professional organization appropriate for respondents. The six items were scored on

a 5-point Likert scale with one being strongly agree and five being strongly disagree with

three being neutral. The following items were included in the questionnaire for this

study:

1. When someone criticizes my COB student organization, it feels like a personal
   insult.

2. I am very interested in what others think about my COB student organization.

3. When I talk about my COB student organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they".

4. My COB student organization's successes are my successes.

5. When someone praises my COB student organization, it feels like a personal compliment.

Once our survey results had been collected, Dr. Dadanlar and I worked together to clean the data and find our usable responses. This included deleting any responses that had not been fully completed, with answers to all survey questions and demographic information. I was able to learn more about the process of research experiments, as Dr. Dadanlar is very skilled and has a lot of experience with this type of research. Next, Dr. Dadanlar completed a statistical analysis using SPSS, in which we found that both hypotheses were supported.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed that student organization member positivity is positively related to organizational identification. Our results indicated that student organization member positivity is significantly and positively related to organizational identification. Furthermore, this result showed that one unit increase in student organization member positivity will result in a 15% increase in student organization member's organizational identification. Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposed that student organization leader positivity is positively related to organizational identification. Like H1, our results indicated that student organization leader positivity is significantly and positively related to organizational identification. This result showed that one unit

increase in student organization leader positivity will result in a 23% increase in student organization member's organizational identification.

Once we had completed the statistical analysis through SPSS, I had also concurrently completed the majority of my article for submission to the Academic and Business Research Institute for their AABRI Fall 2021 Virtual Conference. This consisted of an introduction, literature review, methodology, and once finalized, our results and our discussion and conclusion. As Dr. Tucker, Dr. Dadanlar, and Ms. Meek had all published before, they were able to be my sounding board and help in many more ways than just an academic contribution. First, we submitted our article and an accompanying PowerPoint and video presentation to the conference, as there was no in-person option. We then made any last-minute changes, and finally submitted the article for publication. I was able to apply for two different grants, one through the Honors Tutorial College, and the other through the College of Business, to receive the money for our conference submission, and then our publication. In early January 2022, Dr. Tucker and I received word that our article was in the process of being accepted to the AABRI *Journal of Management and Marketing Research* and in late February our publication was finalized through this journal.

Once the publication was finalized, I began to move forward and work on my presentation for the 2022 Research Expo at Ohio University. I was unable to partake in the in-person section, so I opted for the social media presentation through Instagram. I made 10 full slides on Canva that encompassed my experiment, results, and future research. I am incredibly grateful to also have been chosen for an award through Bobcats Discover for "Most Creative Caption" in which I explained the implications and

importance of my research for the future. I also hope to use these slides in the future when discussing my past research with peers.

As soon as I reached out to Dr. Tucker with the interest of working with her on my senior thesis, she was ready to go. If not for her guidance and perseverance through every roadblock, my experiment would have looked quite different. The spring semester of my junior year (2021), she recognized that to obtain the best results for this specific research question, we needed to publish the survey by the end of the year in order to capture the then-seniors' experience and expertise. We immediately jumped into research in order to solidify our hypotheses and completed many literature reviews along the way to make sure this article would have an impact. Dr. Tucker, Dr. Dadanlar and Ms. Meek were also crucial in helping me obtain IRB approval in a very short time span, as the survey had to be out at least two to three weeks before finals week. I am incredibly grateful for all of the hard work and time they put into this project and am so hopeful that future research will continue to build off of it in hopes of increasing positivity, and therefore organizational identification, in colleges of business across the world.

ELSA GRAN, OHIO UNIVERSITY

The Impact of Members' and Leaders' Positivity on Organizational Identification in Business Student Organizations

@BOBCATSDISCOVER

Circumstances
10%

Set Point
50%

WHAT DETERMINES HAPPINESS?

Intentional
Activity
40%
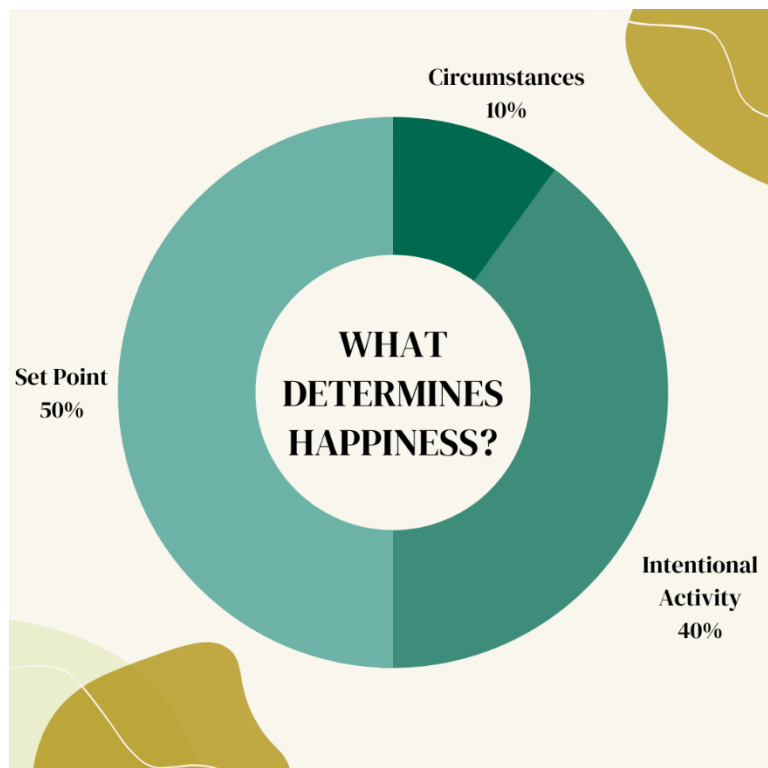
> **Folks are usually about as happy as they make their minds up to be.**
>
> - Abraham Lincoln

What do we know so far?

- Humans have the power to control up to 40% of their happiness
(Lyobumirsky, 2007)

- Subjective happiness and organizational identification can provide a way to be happier and more productive

- Literature has not discussed the impact of members' and leaders' positivity on organizational identification in business student organizations

Why is this important?

What do we know so far?

Positive Psychology
- Shows that people who exhibit positive effect, experience greater success

Positivity and College Student Success
- Positive students are more successful, set higher goals and are more energized

Organizational Identification
- Organizational identification (OID) has been linked to the feeling of satisfaction and belonging of people, and for the effectiveness of an organization

This research seeks to explore two hypotheses:

Student organization member positivity is positively related to organizational identification.

Student organization leader positivity is positively related to organizational identification.

The Study

- Data collected through a Qualtrics survey
- 399 responses from College of Business undergraduate students
- Survey utilized a positivity scale developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) and an organizational identification scale by Mael and Tetrick (1992)
- Excel and SPSS was utilized for cleaning an analysis, leaving 237 usable responses
- Leaders were identified as 122 students who self-reported holding a position in their organization

Results

- Both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are supported

- One unit in student organization member positivity results in a 15% increase in student organization member's organizational identification

- One unit increase in student organization leader positivity results in a 23% increase in student organization member's organizational identification

Member's Organizational Identification

15%   23%

Member Positivity   **Leader Positivity**
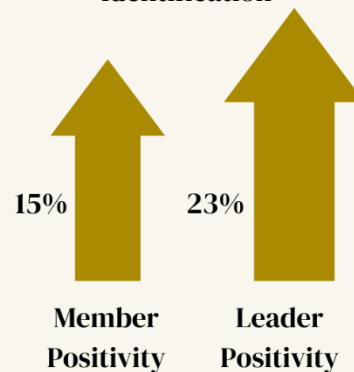
Discussion

- Research indicates that positivity increases productivity
- From this, we can say that student leaders and members who are more positive while engaging in their student organization, can achieve more during their time
- To move forward, we recommend bringing positivity into educational curriculums to enrich personal growth and enhance organizational outcomes

"

When we are happy - when our mindset and mood are positive - we are smarter, more motivated, and thus more successful. Happiness is the center, and success revolves around it.

- Shawn Achor

"

Personal Reflection

Starting my journey at Ohio University terrified me. I was unsure of my path and was not confident in my choice in the Honors Tutorial College or the College of Business. I had come from a non-traditional path in grade-school and high school and graduated high school with a group of only 80 other students. Beginning at Ohio University, although it is not huge compared to other universities, was overwhelming to me at first. I took the first semester to adjust and make sure I could succeed in my classes before exploring external opportunities such as clubs, jobs, or events. Although I was doing well in my classes, I was lacking confidence in myself and my abilities and most of the time did not think I would do well in the Honors Tutorial College or even see myself succeeding in my future.

Thankfully, a sophomore at the time was recruiting for the Fixed Income Management Group and my name ended up on his list of students to directly reach out to. I look back on my first year and quite honestly credit this direct push to my further involvement in the College of Business. It made me feel validated in myself, that a group was interested in having me join, and they saw potential in me. In the Spring semester I pushed myself even farther, applying for the Fixed Income Management Group and the Select Leaders Development Program at the same time, and was lucky enough to gain admission to both. I also joined a more casual organization, the Association of Women in Finance, in early spring. The Association of Women in Finance (AWIF) was a relatively new organization on campus, only having been around for about two semesters, and therefore they were looking for new students to join the executive board to hit the ground

running. I showed up to my first meeting, not even the first meeting of the semester, heard they were recruiting for the executive board, met the current president and vice-president, and immediately asked if I was still able to apply for a position. Luckily, the deadline had not yet passed so I went out for treasurer, knowing absolutely nothing about running any part of an organization, and received the position!

Unknowingly at the time, this sparked my passion for being involved in leadership in different organizations in the College of Business. I spent spring semester of my freshmen year into the fall of my sophomore year serving as treasurer for the Association of Women in Finance and then transitioned into president for the following two years, until mid-way through my senior year. I expected to learn the most about finance in this position, but in reality, I gained so much more in self-esteem, soft skills and inter-personal skills. December of 2019, the middle of my sophomore year, a mentor of mine sat me down and told me that he thought I would do well in a leadership position in the Fixed Income Management Group, specifically as Vice President of Operations. This position encompassed all day-to-day tasks for the group in which we ran a ~$3 million portfolio of fixed income securities, as well as multiple meetings a week as we are a student-run organization. I can say that the spring semester of 2020, my sophomore year, in which I began as President of the Association of Women in Finance and Vice President of Operations for the Fixed Income Management Group, was the busiest semester of my life, even though it was cut short by COVID-19. In all the turmoil though, I didn't notice how much I was growing personally. I look back and realize that that semester is when I began speaking my opinions to older peers, presenting new topics I

had never known of, leading groups, making decisions, and more. It was a crucial couple of months for my development.

Moving into COVID-19, I began working from home remotely in Cleveland, Ohio. My planned internship with Nationwide was canceled due to the pandemic and so I scrambled to return to The Heritage Group, where I had completed an internship after my freshman year. The Heritage Group is an amazing company, with a great culture, however, I realized that summer while working on the Mergers & Acquisitions team that the investment side of finance did not interest me anymore. This struck a fear in me because all of my heavy extracurricular involvement, and my classes, were focused on finance, specifically investments. And I was so scared that I would not have enough time to switch or even find something that I was passionate about for my career and the rest of my life.

Fall semester of junior year, 2020, was difficult and had many ups and downs. Personally, and professionally, I felt adrift and unsure. It was at this time that my jobs actually pulled me back in. I began working both as a Teaching Assistant for Dr. Raymond Frost in his MIS 2800 course and a Peer Coach in the Career and Student Success Center in the College of Business. Although these jobs were difficult to do online, they finally provided me with the connections to students and people and the community that we had lost through the pandemic. It also introduced me to other students my age who were pursuing other majors or other interests, and that allowed me to recognize the many different paths I could take, outside of the investment world. I began to dive deeper into my MIS and Analytics course load, thoroughly enjoying the MIS work, but also recognizing that it gave me a sense of accomplishment, but not the passion

that I wanted. The passion, I found, came from working with students whether that be in my jobs, in my organizations, or just in a personal setting. Helping the students with their path, helping them to see the positivity and the possibilities, helped me do the same.

Through the work I did in my organizations and jobs during the fall semester of my junior year, I finally settled on a realm that I would be interested in for my thesis, which was leadership. Leadership is such a big construct and can include so many other things, that frankly I wasn't sure how to even begin on this topic or where I wanted to take it. I began researching the faculty at Ohio University, specifically in the Strategic Leadership and Management major. I hadn't taken many management courses, so I was unfamiliar with most faculty, but eventually after reaching to a couple, I met Dr. Mary Tucker. Dr. Tucker was accomplished in research and was familiar with the process of an Honors Tutorial College thesis, both which were very good signs for me. But most importantly she understood how crucial my student organizations were to me and my success and supported my interest in researching this topic for my thesis.

The spring semester of my junior year, 2021, was very intense. I wrote multiple literature reviews when researching a new topic for my research question and once we had narrowed down our two hypotheses, we immediately jumped into applying for IRB approval so we could survey the students before the end of the semester. Before I had even submitted my prospectus to the Honors Tutorial College, I had completed our survey, received our results, completed the literature review, introduction, and more, all thanks to Dr. Tucker. Moving into senior year, I had secured a full-time job at Dell Technologies and was starting to feel a hint of senioritis sneak up on me. But once again, Dr. Tucker and I jumped right back into our thesis work. We continued in our analysis,

finished our results, discussion, and conclusion of our article and prepared it for submission to our journal of choice.

Once our article and accompanying presentation had been submitted to the journal, I finally felt like I could sigh in relief. Dr. Tucker, Dr. Dadanlar, and Ms. Meek, and all of their hard work allowed me to be incredibly ahead of the game by winter of my senior year. Having this burden lifted off of me, gave me the time and opportunity to be introspective on my life as I knew this portion, university, was soon coming to an end. I began writing down new life plans, or possibilities of a plan, and talking with mentors of mine about the uncertainty I felt going into my full-time job. At first all of the possibilities scared me, and I didn't think I would be able to figure out where to go, and while it still does slightly, I realize that it's a good thing. Not knowing where to go. Because it means there are so many amazing possibilities out there. And that I just need to be positive about it.

Author Bios

Elsa Gran

Elsa Gran is an Ohio University Honors Tutorial Senior with specializations in Finance, Management Information Systems, and Business Analytics. Elsa is originally from Cleveland, Ohio. She serves as the Vice President of Recruitment for the College of Business Select Leader Development Program. She is also the President of The Association of Women in Finance, which provides opportunities and connections to all women interested in the finance industry. In addition, Elsa is the Head of Membership and Strategies for the Ohio University Student Fixed Income Management Group, a $3.5 million student-run fixed income portfolio.

Within the College of Business, Elsa works two part-time jobs. One as a TA for a Management Information Systems course, and the second as a Peer Coach within the Career and Student Success Center. Over the past three summers, Elsa has been lucky enough to intern with The Heritage Group in Indianapolis, Indiana (two summers) and with Dell Technologies in Austin, Texas (virtual). After graduation, Elsa will be returning to Dell Technologies full-time as a Financial Analyst in their Finance Development Program in Austin, Texas. In her free time, Elsa enjoys spending time outside, visiting her friends, family, and pets, and cooking/baking.

Hazel Dadanlar

Dr. Hazel H. Dadanlar is a visiting assistant professor of strategic management & entrepreneurship at Ohio University's College of Business. She holds a bachelor's degree in Finance. She completed her MBA (graduated Beta Gamma Sigma) and PhD from The University of Texas. Dr. Dadanlar also holds health and life insurance licenses from the Arizona Department of Insurance. Her industry experience includes holding several managerial positions in a non-profit education foundation and working for the New York Community Bank as a financial services associate. She is currently serving on the advisory board of a franchise business overseas. She has volunteered as a certified tax preparer for the City of Phoenix, AZ for disadvantaged, low-income, and senior citizens. Dr. Dadanlar has received several awards and honors including Research Excellence and Outstanding Ph.D. Student Awards from the Department of Management, The University of Texas, and two Best Doctoral Student Paper Awards at the Annual Meeting of Southern Management Association. In addition, she has been selected for the prestigious Jess Hay Endowment for Chancellor's Graduate Student Research Fellowship, awarded by The University of Texas System. Recently, the management department at Ohio University honored her with the ' Best Emerging Researcher Award' for her high levels of research achievements.

Dr. Dadanlar's research interests fall in the broad areas of strategic management, entrepreneurship, and international business. Her specific areas of research interests include corporate governance, CEO succession, women's leadership in the upper echelons, corporate misconduct, and organizational innovation. She has been productive

in her research, having research articles published at top management journals. Also, she has been actively participating in top academic conferences (including Academy of Management and Southern Management Association) through presenting research papers, reviewing papers, and participating in the professional development workshops in her area. Besides research, she loves teaching capstone courses and principles of management.

Shawnee Meek

Shawnee Meek is an Assistant Professor of Instruction of Management and the Assistant Director of Emerging Leaders, a selective one-year accelerated student leadership development program at Ohio University. She teaches strategic business communication and leadership. Her research interests include workplace effectiveness, positivity, and leadership.

Shawnee is a John Maxwell certified speaker and coach. She provides leadership training for both private and public-sector organizations, including Global Cooling and GallopNYC. In 2019, she coached and co-led a team of students at a regional Collegiate Leadership Competition. Additionally, she works with Sogeti's training program to assist newly hired international professionals in refining their presentation and communication skills. Shawnee is a Certified Professional with the Society of Human Resources Management and has a Master of Arts in Human Resources Management from Webster University along with a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Communication from Kennesaw State University. Prior to her current position, she worked for the Board of

Trustees and President at Ohio University. Previous experience includes human resources, student affairs, and corporate trainer.

Mary L. Tucker

Mary Tucker is Professor of Management in the Department of Management at Ohio University and has taught courses in global leadership, management, organization behavior, intercultural effectiveness, and communication. Mary received her Ph.D. from the University of New Orleans; her dissertation research focused on transformational leadership. Mary has published over 50 professional journal articles and textbooks. She has garnered 12 teaching, 5 service, and 7 research awards, including a Best Research Paper Award from the OCIS Division of the Academy of Management.

Mary is a certified trainer in cultural intelligence and has done extensive training, speaking, and course development for both private and public sector organizations in the areas of leadership, effective communication, intercultural effectiveness, management, emotional intelligence, diversity, ethics, media relations, customer satisfaction, and total quality management. For seven years, Mary conducted leadership training for the American Association of Highway Transportation Officials in cooperation with the ENO Transportation Foundation in Washington, DC. She has worked on a faculty team for the OU College of Business Center for International Business Education and Development in an MBA program for Brazilian executives and served on a faculty team for the OU MBA without Boundaries program. She served as the Director of Communication across the Curriculum for the College of Business and directed the Management Department

Honors Program, which she developed. Mary team taught in the OU College of Business AACSB award-winning business cluster, a problem-based holistic teaching approach where students apply cross-discipline concepts to solve real-world consulting problems. Mary participated in the OU College of Business Global Consulting Program, teaching one quarter in Pau, France, and a summer session in Ancona, Italy. She also served as a Master Teacher Mentor, Director of Undergraduate Assurance of Learning for the OU College of Business, and Associate Director for Undergraduate Education for the OU Center for International Business.

The Impact of Members' and Leaders' Positivity on Organizational Identification in Business Student Organizations.

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28

Abstract

Although both positive psychology and organizational identification have been heavily studied, the literature does not reflect the impact of members' and leaders' positivity on organizational identification in business student organizations. This research was conducted by engaging student participants in professional business organizations at a Midwestern college of business. The first hypothesis (H1+) is that student organization member positivity is positively related to organizational identification. The second hypothesis (H2+) is that student organization leader positivity is positively related to organizational identification. The findings in this study indicate that students with a higher degree of positivity identify with their student organizations. Additionally, this study shows that student organization leaders with a higher degree of positivity also had higher organizational identification for their student organization. Since research indicates that positivity increases productivity, student leaders, then, who are more positive when leading their members, may lead the organization to achieve more during their tenure. This also has implications for training student leaders and organizational members in subjective positivity to enrich personal growth and enhance organizational outcomes.

Keywords: Positivity, Organizational Identification, Student Organizations, Student Organization Leaders

INTRODUCTION

Humans have the power to control up to 40% of their happiness, so why do people seem to struggle at attaining happiness? As a rule, people strive to be happy but always expect it to come tomorrow. Research indicates that 40% of what determines happiness is within reach and is an intentional activity. Another 50% is the "Set Point" that is genetically determined. The remaining 10% is the result of life circumstances or situations (Lyubomirsky, 2007). As students grow in college, they are on a journey to learn about themselves, find their place in the world, and most importantly discover what brings them fulfillment and success.

Past research has indicated that subjective happiness and organizational identification can provide a way to be happier and more productive in personal and professional venues. It is important, then, to research student organization members and leaders to determine whether subjective positivity of members and leaders enhance undergraduates' organization identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Positive psychology and organizational identification have been heavily studied; however, the literature does not reflect the impact of members' and leaders' positivity on organizational identification in business student organizations. Hence, this literature review provides brief discussions about positive psychology and organizational identification research.

Positive Psychology

Although Abraham Maslow first coined the term, "positive psychology" (1954), Martin E. P. Seligman (1998) created a research interest in the topic. Extensive research centers around the concept of positivity and its effect on individual, student, and business level outcomes. Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener (2005) published a comprehensive literature review of positivity effect and success. Psychologists support the idea that a positive mind-set, with effort, can be developed (Peterson, 2008; Seligman, 2002). Christopher Peterson adds that, "there are things that people can do to lead better lives, although…all require that we live (behave) differently…permanently. The good life is hard work, and there are no shortcuts to sustained happiness" (Peterson, 2008, p. 1).

Positive psychologists and researchers continue to experiment with activities that promote happiness. Sonja Lyubomirsky and her colleagues indicate that happiness increases through expressing gratitude, developing optimism, avoiding ruminations, practicing acts of kindness, investing in social relationships, cultivating resilience, practicing forgiveness, increasing flow activities, practicing mindfulness, pursuing meaningful goals, and taking care of the mind and body (2008). Tal Ben-Shahar suggests job crafting current roles, finding purpose by identifying meaning, pleasure, and strengths (MPS), simplifying one's life, positive psychology based educational programs, meditating on happiness, and appreciative inquiry activities developed by David Cooperrider and his colleagues in the 1980s (2007).

Positive work practices are found to support higher organizational performance, and thus competitiveness (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Lyubomirsky and colleague's literature review pointed to positive organizational behavior as a determining factor in happy individuals being "more likely to secure job interviews, to be evaluated more positively by supervisors once they obtain a job, to show superior performance and productivity, and to handle managerial jobs better" (Lyubomirsky, et al., 2005, p. 822). Other studies indicate that happier people earn higher incomes (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004; Graham, Eggers, & Sukhtankar, 2005).

Individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy and optimism fosters higher performance downstream (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998 as cited in Diener, et al., 2020). In a study in the United States and New Zealand, happier workers predicted better relationships with colleagues, cooperation, and increased engagement (Diener & Seligman, 2002 as cited in Diener, et al., 2020). Consequently, many businesses implemented positivity as a guiding principle when hiring. For instance, Men's Wearhouse strives to hire associates who exude optimism and enjoy life (Luthans, 2002). Just as positive psychology research in organizations demonstrates that those who exhibit positive effect experience greater success, students in the college setting also benefit from a positive disposition.

Positivity and College Student Success

As research shows that positive individuals are more engaged and productive in the workplace (Lyubomirksy, 2007), Medlin and Faulk (2011) found that

student engagement, through increased optimism, positively affects student perception of academic performance. Moreover, positive students are more academically successful (Nonis, 2005), and are more satisfied with their lives (Straw & Barsade, 1993 as cited in Lyubomirsky, et al., 2005). Happier college students persevere during hardships. In fact, students with developed coping strategies increase their academic performance and GPA (Saklofski et al., 2012).

Happier college students set higher individual goals than their less happy peers (Baron, 1990; Home & Arbuckle, 1988; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Moreover, happier students feel more encouraged and energized after developing goals than less happy students (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2012; in Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Further, Trope and Pomerantz (1998) suggest that students who reported engaging in a positive experience were more willing to accept criticism about their flaws related to achieving significant goals. In fact, students who reported higher positivity remained positive during the pandemic switch from in-person to online classes (Rist, Meek, & Tucker, 2019). Some colleges are now introducing positivity into the classroom (Meek, Tucker, Pueschel, & Jordan, 2019). However, there is an opportunity to explore student positivity within student organizational and whether such positivity leads to organizational identification.

Organizational Identification

Organizational Identification (OID) research flowed from the social identity perspective (Tajfel, 1978; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mail & Ashforth, 1992; Haslam,

2004; He & Brown, 2013). According to Tajfel, social identity describes an individual's "knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (1978, p. 3). According to Mael and Ashforth, "...OID is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) in which he or she is a member" (1989, p 104). Organizational identification is also known as a phenomenon of the tendency of individuals to see themselves and their groups or organizations as intertwined, having common qualities and faults, successes and failures, and common destinies (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Kelman 1961; Tolman, 1943).

There is a plethora of research on OID, including the impact of OID on performance outcomes (Riketta, 2005; van Knippenbert, 2000) including creativity (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; Hirst, van Dick, & van Knippenberg, 2009; Madjar, Greenberg, & Chen, 2011) and financial performance (Homburg, Wieseke, & Hoyer, 2009). OID has also been studied in nontraditional contexts, including mergers and acquisitions (Ulrich, Wieseke, & Dick, 2005; van Dick, Ullrich, & Tissington, 2006; Martin & Tyler, 2006) and corporate social responsibility (Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007; Hansen, Dunford, Boss, Boss, & Angermier, 2011). OID research in virtual work environments have increased in importance with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and COVID pandemic (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 2001; Bartel, Wrzesniewski, & Wiesenfeld, 2012). Bartel et al., assert that virtual workers may perceive less respect from their organizations (2012). Recent research has

found that interactional and interpersonal factors, including leadership factors, enhance OID (He & Brown, 2013).

Leaders can influence followers' identities (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004; Lord & Brown, 2001; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993), including OID. Leaders' behaviors can affect how employees see their relationships and social identifications with their work organizations. Employee OID has been shown to be positively related to multiple leadership styles, including transformational leadership (Carmeli et al., 2011; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005) and ethical leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Transformational leadership is a leadership style characterized by four main features. First, individualized consideration which can be described as attending to the individual needs of the followers. Second, intellectual stimulation can include risk-taking, challenging the status quo, supporting followers' ideas, and providing job meanings for followers. Third, inspirational motivation which is formulating a vision to inspire followers. And lastly, idealized influence which can be understood as having a role model for ethical standards as well as ingraining confidence and trust (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership is effective in influencing followers' behavior and performance, by first heightening followers' OID (Kark et al., 2003).

Organizational identification is recognized as having significant implications for the feeling of satisfaction and belonging of employees, and for the effectiveness of the work or organization (Brown, 1969; Patchen, 1970). Positivity research suggests that happy college students are more productive and successful. Since leadership influences followers' behavior and performance by increasing followers' OID,

this research seeks to explore that (1) student organization members' positivity results in OID, and (2) student organization leaders' positivity results in OID.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by engaging student participants in professional business organizations at a Midwestern college of business. The first hypothesis to apply to this study (H1+) is that student organization member positivity is positively related to organizational identification. The second hypothesis (H2+) is that student organization leader positivity is positively related to organizational identification. A Qualtrics survey was used to query students about their subjective happiness (positivity) and their OID with their professional business organizations. The Qualtrics survey was distributed in Spring Semester of 2021 after obtaining IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval. Responses came from 399 College of Business undergraduate students (focusing specifically on the members of all College of Business student organizations). This survey utilized a positivity scale developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) and an organizational identification scale by Mael and Tetrick (1992). Data from Qualtrics was downloaded into Excel and SPSS for cleaning and analysis. One hundred responses were discarded because students did not belong to an organization; another 62 students did not complete the entire survey, leaving 237 usable responses. Leaders were designated by identifying 122 students who self-reported holding an office in their organization. The study utilized the Subjective Happiness Scale and the Organizational Identification Scale.

Subjective Happiness Scale

Lyubomirsky & Lepper's 4-item Subjective Happiness Scale (1999) was utilized for this research because of its high internal consistency across global samples with good to excellent reliability and validity to measure subjective happiness. To support the subjectivist approach, the authors theorize that it seems reasonable because individuals are the best judge of their happiness (Myers & Diener, 1995; Diener, 1996; Lyubomirsky, 1994). The Subjective Happiness Scale questions were based on a seven-point Likert scale from one (indicating the lowest agreement/positivity level) to seven (highest level of agreement/positivity level) with four representing a neutral response (See Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999, 151):

2. In general, how happy a person do you consider yourself?

3. Compared with most of your peers, how happy do you consider yourself?

4. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

5. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

Organizational Identification Scale

The Organizational Identification measure by Mael & Ashforth (1992) was modified for this study, as the authors suggested, so that items were specific to the school and professional organization appropriate for respondents. The six items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale with one being strongly Agree and five being Strongly disagree with three being neutral. The following items were included in the questionnaire for this study:

2. When someone criticizes my CoB student organization, it feels like a personal insult.

3. I am very interested in what others think about my CoB student organization.

4. When I talk about my CoB student organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they".

5. My CoB student organization's successes are my successes.

6. When someone praises my CoB student organization, it feels like a personal compliment.

RESULTS

After reverse coding and standardizing the scale items, linear regression analysis was performed. The means, standard deviations and correlations of the variables used in this study are found in Table 1 (see Appendices). Student Organization Member

Positivity (r = 0.170, p < 0.05) and Student Organization Leader Positivity (r = 0.260, p <
0.05) are positively correlated with Organization Identification.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposes that student organization member positivity is
positively related to organizational identification. Table 2 (see Appendices) summarizes
the results from the linear regression analysis. The results in Model 1 of Table 2 indicate
that student organization member positivity is significantly and positively related to
organizational identification (B= 0.154, p < 0.01). This result shows that one unit
increase in student organization member positivity will result in a 15% increase in
student organization member's organizational identification.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposes that student organization leader positivity is
positively related to organizational identification. The results of Model 2 of Table 2
indicate that student organization leader positivity is significantly and positively related
to organizational identification (B = 0.230, p < 0.01). Similarly, this result shows that one
unit increase in student organization leader positivity will result in a 23% increase in
student organization member's organizational identification Therefore, both H1 and H2
are supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings in this study indicate that students with a higher degree of positivity
identify with their student organizations. Additionally, this study shows that student
organization leaders with a higher degree of positivity also had higher organizational
identification for their student organization. Since research indicates that positivity

increases productivity, student leaders, then, who are more positive when leading their members, may lead the organization to achieve more during their tenure. This also has implications for training student leaders and organizational members in subjective positivity to enrich personal growth and enhance organizational outcomes.

Not included in this study is whether students in an organization are happier than students who do not belong to a student organization. Indeed, research does recommend social connections as an important factor when growing personal happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2007). Students continue to pursue personal and professional growth throughout college, and post-graduation, including networking, work-life balance, meaningful connections, and more. Colleges and organizations alike can use this evidence to market their programs and groups to both potential and current students or employees. Previous research suggests that people who are positive tend to be also more productive, and companies with a more positive culture create more productive environments. However, student organizations have not been studied to determine if the more positive student organizations are more productive. Future research might investigate this intriguing relationship.

Few would disagree that change is happening at a faster and faster pace, creating stress that may affect our productivity. At the same time research indicates that subjective happiness and organizational identification may provide a way to be happier and more productive in our personal and professional lives. Additionally, faculty curriculum committees may benefit from our findings and bring positivity into their curriculum. Doing so not only equips students with knowledge of positivity and organizational

identification but may also help them become more successful in their personal and professional lives.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1	Organizational Identification	2.310	1.068	1		
2	Student Organization Member Positivity	3.004	1.173	0.170**	1	
3	Student Organization Leader Positivity	3.086	0.111	0.260**	-	1

*$p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$ ***$p < 0.01$*

Table 2: Regression Analysis Results

Variables	Model 1 Student Organization Member's Organizational Identification	Model 2 Student Organization Leader's Organizational Identification
Constant	1.846 *** (0.189)	1.594 *** (0.259)
Student Organization Member Positivity	0.154 *** (0.059)	-
Student Organization Leader Positivity	-	0.230 *** (0.078)
T-Value	2.636	2.955
N	237	122

Notes: Not standardized coefficients - *$p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$ ***$p < 0.01$*