

Unhappiness is Unpredictability

Saturday 16th May, 2020

This study follows “Happiness is Flextime” (Okulicz-Kozaryn and Golden 2017), but with focus on the opposite of flextime, unpredictability. We study how schedule unpredictability affect subjective wellbeing (SWB) among full-time or part-time employees. We use 2016 US General Social Survey containing Quality of Worklife and Work Orientations modules. We find that in general the more unpredictability, the less SWB. Results have large effect sizes, as big as income or larger. Our findings provide support for both public and organizational policies that would promote greater predictability or control for employees. Results are for the US, and may not generalize to other, especially non-western countries. Directions for future research are discussed.

HAPPINESS, LIFE SATISFACTION, SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING (SWB, COMMODIFICATION, SCHEDULE UNPREDICTABILITY, FREEDOM, AUTONOMY, GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY (GSS)

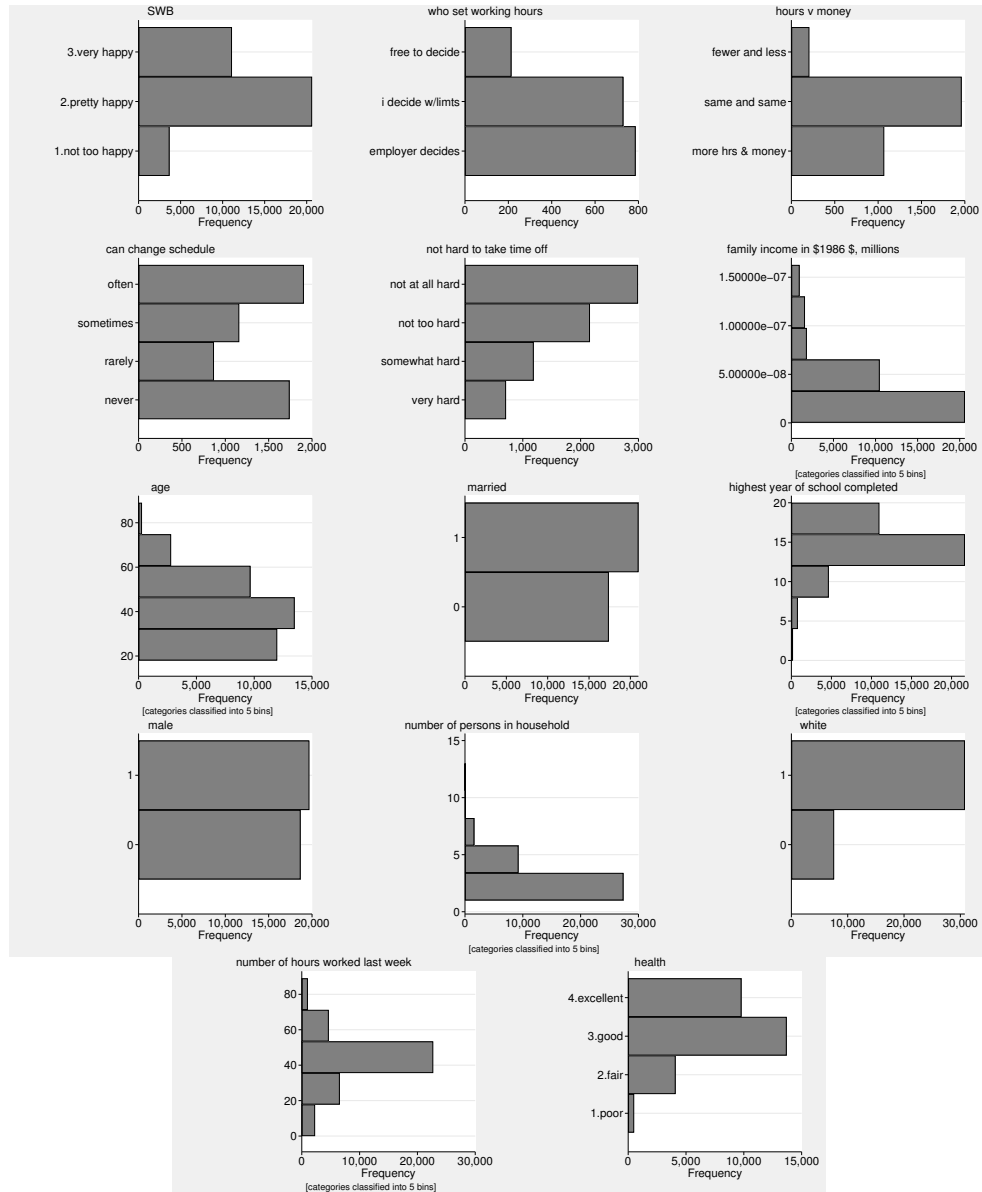


Figure 1: Variables' distribution.

Table 1: .

	a1	a2	a3	a4
fewest hrs/week worked in past month	0.01*	0.01**	0.01**	0.01*
most hrs/week worked in past month	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
family income in \$1986, millions		3.92***	2.03*	1.71+
age			0.01	0.01
age squared			-0.00	-0.00
married			0.29***	0.26***
highest year of school completed			-0.01	-0.02
male			0.08	0.08
number of persons in household			-0.01	-0.01
white			0.07	0.07
number of hours worked last week				0.00
health				0.15***
occupation and region dummies	no	no	yes	yes
constant	2.01***	1.92***	1.86***	1.41***
N	565	536	530	517

Table 2: .

	a1	a2	a3	a4
schedule or shift regularly changes	-0.07	-0.08	-0.09	-0.07
daily working times are decided at short notice	-0.25**	-0.28**	-0.29***	-0.32***
family income in \$1986, millions		4.12***	2.07**	1.88*
age			-0.01	0.01
age squared			0.00	-0.00
married			0.30***	0.28***
highest year of school completed			-0.01	-0.02
male			0.09*	0.11+
number of persons in household			-0.02	-0.00
white			0.01	0.07
number of hours worked last week				0.00
health				0.13***
occupation and region dummies	no	no	yes	yes
constant	2.20***	2.05***	2.48***	1.62***
N	920	862	850	517

ONLINE APPENDIX

[note: this section will NOT be a part of the final version of the manuscript, but will be available online instead] !!! have most of the stuff outputted to online appendix:)-start with that and then select stuff to paper-have brief narrative describing patterns in online app too !!!

Variables' definitions, coding, and distributions

Table 3: Variable definitions.

name	description
SWB	GENERAL HAPPINESS "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days—would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?"
flextime:	
who set working hours	WHO SET WORKING HOURS " Which of the following statements best describes how your working hours are decided? (By working hours we mean here the times you start and Finish work, and not the total hours you work per week or month.)"
can change schedule	HOW OFTEN R ALLOWED CHANGE SCHEDULE " How often are you allowed to change your starting and quitting times on a daily basis?"
controls:	
family income in \$1986, millions	Income variables (INCOME72 , INCOME , INCOME77 , INCOME82 , INCOME86 , INCOME91 , INCOME98 , INCOME06) are recoded in six-digit numbers and converted to 1986 dollars. The collapsed numbers above are for convenience of display only. Since this variable is based on categorical data, income is not continuous, but based on categorical mid-points and imputations. For details see GSS Methodological Report No. 64.
age	age of respondent
married	MARITAL STATUS "Are you currently—married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?" NOTE: variable recoded to 1 if married, 0 otherwise
highest year of school completed	HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED A. "What is the highest grade in elementary school or high school that (you/your father/ your mother/your [husband/wife]) finished and got credit for? " CODE EXACT GRADE.; B. IF FINISHED 9th-12th GRADE OR DK*: "Did (you/he/she) ever get a high school diploma or a GED certificate?" [SEE D BELOW.]; C. "Did (you/he/she) complete one or more years of college for credit—not including schooling such as business college, technical or vocational school?" IF YES: "How many years did (you/he/she) complete?"
male	male
number of persons in household	NUMBER OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD "Household Size and Composition"
white	RACE "What race do you consider yourself?"
number of hours worked last week	IF WORKING, FULL OR PART TIME: "How many hours did you work last week, at all jobs?"
health	CONDITION OF HEALTH "Would you say your own health, in general, is excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

Table 4: .

	a1	a2	a3	a4
who set working hours (base: i decide w/limits):				
employer decides	-0.02	0.02	0.04	0.03
free to decide	0.23***	0.19**	0.18*	0.12
family income in \$1986, millions		3.44***	1.58	0.88
age			-0.02+	-0.01
age squared			0.00	0.00
married			0.27***	0.27***
highest year of school completed			0.01	0.01
male			-0.04	-0.04
number of persons in household			0.00	0.00
white			0.06	0.03
number of hours worked last week				-0.00
health				0.16***
occupation and region dummies	no	no	yes	yes
occupation and region dummies	no	no	yes	yes
constant	2.22***	2.08***	2.26***	1.68***
N	827	761	756	711

Table 5

	c1	c2	c3	c4
can change schedule (base: never):				
rarely	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01
sometimes	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.04
often	0.13***	0.06**	0.06*	0.07*
family income in \$1986, millions		3.02***	1.56***	0.85*
age			-0.01**	-0.01*
age squared			0.00**	0.00+
married			0.27***	0.29***
highest year of school completed			0.01*	0.00
male			-0.04+	-0.04
number of persons in household			-0.00	0.00
white			0.02	0.01
number of hours worked last week				0.00
health				0.17***
occupation and region dummies	no	no	yes	yes
constant	2.14***	2.05***	2.26***	1.69***
N	4990	4576	4547	2944

Table 6

	d1	d2	d3	d4
not hard to take time off (base: very hard):				
somewhat hard	0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.03
not too hard	0.07*	0.06*	0.05+	0.03
not at all hard	0.15***	0.13***	0.13***	0.09*
family income in \$1986, millions		3.33***	1.74***	1.00**
age			-0.01***	-0.01*
age squared			0.00**	0.00*
married			0.27***	0.30***
highest year of school completed			0.01+	0.00
male			-0.02	-0.02
number of persons in household			-0.00	0.01
white			0.01	0.01
number of hours worked last week				0.00*
health				0.18***
occupation and region dummies	no	no	yes	yes
constant	2.11***	1.99***	2.20***	1.61***
N	6411	5920	5877	3799

Table 7: .

	a3beta	a4beta	c3beta	c4beta	d3beta	d4beta
who set working hours (base: i decide w/limits):						
employer decides	0.04	0.03				
free to decide	0.09*	0.06				
can change schedule (base: never):						
rarely			-0.01	-0.01		
sometimes			0.02	0.02		
often			0.05*	0.05*		
not hard to take time off (base: very hard):						
somewhat hard					-0.00	-0.02
not too hard					0.04+	0.02
not at all hard					0.10***	0.07*
family income in \$1986, millions	0.07	0.04	0.09***	0.05*	0.10***	0.05**
age	-0.38+	-0.23	-0.29**	-0.25*	-0.27***	-0.24*
age squared	0.35	0.22	0.24**	0.20+	0.23**	0.19*
married	0.22***	0.23***	0.22***	0.24***	0.22***	0.24***
highest year of school completed	0.05	0.02	0.04*	0.02	0.03+	0.01
male	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03+	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
number of persons in household	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01	-0.00	0.02
white	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
number of hours worked last week		-0.00		0.03		0.04*
health		0.19***		0.20***		0.21***
occupation and region dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
constant	***	***	***	***	***	***
N	756	711	4547	2944	5877	3799

Table 8: .

	a3beta	a4beta	c3beta	c4beta	d3beta	d4beta
who set working hours	0.02	0.01				
can change schedule			0.04**	0.05*		
not hard to take time off					0.08***	0.07***
family income in \$1986, millions	0.07	0.04	0.09***	0.05*	0.10***	0.05**
age	-0.41+	-0.24	-0.29**	-0.25*	-0.27***	-0.23*
age squared	0.38+	0.23	0.24**	0.20+	0.23**	0.19*
married	0.23***	0.23***	0.22***	0.24***	0.22***	0.24***
highest year of school completed	0.05	0.02	0.04*	0.02	0.03+	0.01
male	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03+	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
number of persons in household	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01	-0.00	0.01
white	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
number of hours worked last week		-0.00		0.03		0.04*
health		0.19***		0.20***		0.22***
occupation and region dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
constant	***	***	***	***	***	***
N	756	711	4547	2944	5877	3799

References

OKULICZ-KOZARYN, A. AND L. GOLDEN (2017): "Happiness is flextime," *Applied Research in Quality of Life*.