

Cross-sectional Analyses of Self-employed and Directly Employed Workers' Job-specific Well-being in Creative and Corporate Workplaces

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Abstract

The current mixed-methods study explored differences in Job Specific Well-being (JSWB) amongst self-employed and directly-employed workers in creative and corporate workplaces. A descriptive, cross-sectional, comparative design with open-ended questions, employing purposive sampling, was used. A self-report, mixed method, digital questionnaire was used for data collection and respondents (N=230) were sourced globally. Analyses showed a significant difference in JSWB for overall self-employed compared with overall directly-employed workers. An effect of supervisory responsibility on JSWB was observed among groups of directly-employed workers. For self-employed workers, no significant effect of supervisory responsibility was seen for levels of JSWB. Additionally for self-employed workers, no significant difference in JSWB was seen based on "necessity" or "opportunity" self-employment. Generally, findings showed that both self-employed and directly employed workers in the current sample were dissatisfied with daily work. Findings were mixed, and results prompt important considerations for existing research.

Keywords: Happiness; Unhappiness; Job-specific well-being; Job satisfaction; Work; Employment; Self-employed; Entrepreneurship.

Introduction

According to Peter Warr at the University of Sheffield, happiness and unhappiness are central to human existence (Warr, 2019). Happiness is a sense of overall psychological well-being and may include feelings of fulfillment in oneself, energy and enthusiasm, a sense of full functioning, wholeness and self-realisation (Warr, 2011), and a sense of flow and optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Close relations of this overall sense of well-being are work-related well-being and job satisfaction (Tait, Padgett and Baldwin, 1989). As such, daily work and our feelings about it both influence, and in turn, are influenced

by, overall life satisfaction. Consequently, job and life satisfaction are significantly and reciprocally related (Judge and Wantanbe, 1993). Reviews of contemporary literature on well-being at work have shown that higher levels of subjective well-being are associated with good general health, longevity, improved personal relationships, higher levels of performance at work, and increased creativity (Diener, Oishi and Tay, 2018; Warr and Nielsen, 2018). In his discussion on the relationship between general well-being and well-being at work, Peter Warr suggests that daily work is a source of social cohesion, material welfare, and is critical to the mental and physical health of the individual (Warr, 2002, p. ix). Warr says that overall or “context-free” well-being has a broader concern than “job-specific” well-being, the latter being related to an individual’s feelings about themselves in their daily work. It is this latter aspect with which the current study is generally focused, and more specifically, given that health and well-being in the workplace are a critical concern for mainstream organisational research (Danna and Griffin, 1999), the current study seeks to explore how job-specific well-being differs between self-employed and directly employed workers.

A point of interest for the current study is how “job-specific” well-being is reported by those engaged in creative work specifically. Given the mixed results obtained from a 2016 study of well-being amongst creative versus non-creative workers (Fujiwara and Lawton, 2016), the current study aims to explore this via the following three-part question. Firstly, is there a difference in job-specific well-being (JSWB) between self-employed and directly-employed workers in creative and corporate workplaces? Secondly, is JSWB amongst self-employed and directly employed workers in creative and corporate domains of work dependent on supervisory responsibility? Lastly, where workers in creative and corporate domains of work choose self-employment over direct employment, is job-specific well-being influenced by the necessity to find work (e.g. as a result of job loss), or their recognition and pursuit of a commercial opportunity? The present study investigates these questions using a composite dependent variable referred to as “job-specific well-being” (JSWB). In an effort to, perhaps, inform quantitative findings, the current study employs a single open-ended question examining the individual’s personal feelings about their daily work. Given the scarcity in the available literature of research pertaining to JSWB amongst those who regard their daily work as creative (as opposed to traditional corporate) and who are self-employed, the current study aims to provide insight into the field of work psychology for this cohort of the workforce. The following section outlines these research questions and their rationale in further detail.

Composite DV Rationale

The composite dependent variable selected is composed of Satisfaction with Work Scale (SWSS) (Gagné, *et al.*, 2007), Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999), and the 12 item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) (Goldberg and Williams, 2000). The selection of these measures accounts for the conceptual rationale that human relationship to daily work is not a discrete aspect of life to be examined in isolation. As highlighted by Judge and Wantanbe (1993), job and life satisfaction are perhaps inseparable. Unlike a significant portion of contemporary research which utilises individual measures of work-related well-being to assess, in isolation, workers’ attitudes about work, it is suggested herein that an account of broader aspects of well-being should be included. The

current research suggests that “the individual at work” overlaps and encompasses other conceptual life elements and is a fundamental component that influences, and in turn, is influenced by broader aspects of life. As such, SWWS was chosen for its ability to obtain a global measure of work satisfaction. SHS was chosen to measure respondents' degree of happiness at a given point in time. And GHQ-12 was selected so that the composite DV encompassed a measure of overall mental well-being. It is considered, therefore, that the three measures selected may reflect a more balanced overall assessment of an individual's well-being as it relates to daily work. Additionally, it was considered a significant benefit to the current study that a qualitative component be included such that individual responses might inform and aid interpretation of quantitative results obtained.

Job-specific Well-being in Self-employed and Directly-employed Workers

The pursuit of financial security, work-related success and happiness leads most individuals into direct salaried employment. A study by the OECD recently reported that 85% of workers in 19 Euro area states are engaged in direct-salaried employment compared to 15% in self-employment (OECD, 2019). Blanchflower (2004) suggested that rates of self-employment have been generally declining across OECD countries. More recently, research undertaken on behalf of the European Commission (Fondeville *et al.*, 2015), reports there to have been increases in self-employment in the EU since 2007. However, researchers accounted for this increase as due to “bogus self-employment” as opposed to “bonafide self-employment”. In other words, these workers were ‘dependent’ on a single source of income (employer) rather than multiple sources as would be expected from bonafide self-employed. When self-employment rates were corrected for this and factors including hours worked, a decline was observed. Despite the apparent declining, or perhaps at best, static trend in self-employment growth in the EU, a wealth of research shows that the self-employed are more satisfied with their work than directly employed workers (Benz and Frey, 2004; Andersson, 2008; Lange, 2012; Binder and Coad, 2013), and the self-employed report significantly greater accomplishment in their lives than those directly employed (Warr, 2018). This appears to run counter to data suggesting, for example, that self-employed workers spend more time at work than their directly-employed counterparts (European Commission, 2016a), earn less than those directly employed (Hamilton, 2000; Green and Mostafa, 2012), experience higher levels of stress and anxiety (Warr, 2018) and regularly lose sleep over worry (Blanchflower, 2004). Additionally, results from a study by Jamal (2007) showed higher overall burnout, emotional exhaustion and lack of work satisfaction amongst self-employed workers compared to directly employed workers.

Interestingly, Hamilton (2000) further suggests that despite earning less, the non-pecuniary benefits of self-employment such as personal freedom and autonomy are substantial. In support of Hamilton, Warr (2018) indicated that these non-pecuniary benefits come despite the absence of sick-pay, employer pension contributions, and various other employee-specific benefits. Interestingly, perhaps, research by Blanchflower (2004) suggested that directly employed workers reported a preference for self-employment. With regard to workers engaged in creative pursuits, studies report that creative capacity is not significantly correlated with overall happiness (Ceci and Kumar, 2016). Artists earn less, on average, than they

would with the same qualifications in other professions, and their earnings reflect greater inequality than those of comparative groups (Steiner, 2017). Additionally, Steiner suggests that artists suffer from above-average unemployment and constrained underemployment such as non-voluntary part-time or intermittent work. However, Steiner also suggests that creative workers appear not to be outcome-driven, and greater job satisfaction may be derived from superior procedural characteristics of creative work. Indeed, it is this process-driven aspect of creative work which the current study hopes to expand on via open-ended question. Additionally, it has been reported that on average, artists enjoy higher job satisfaction than other employees, mainly due to more autonomy (Steiner, 2017; Bille *et al.*, 2013). This seems consistent with studies which take a broader view of job-specific well-being and happiness amongst the self-employed.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned studies, there appears to be a lack of empirical evidence relating to JSWB amongst creative self-employed workers. Moreover, as previously discussed, there appears generally to be a paradoxical nature to broad based findings on the self-employed. Self-employment amongst the working population is much less compared to direct employment, yet research suggests the sense of autonomy and fulfilment amongst self-employed workers appears to be higher than that of directly employed workers. Self-employed workers' compensation is often lower and their working hours higher. The self-employed seem to suffer adverse psychological effects of their work, yet research suggests that those who choose self-employment are happier. Therefore, the first aim of the current study seeks to examine job-specific well-being in self-employed workers compared to their directly employed counterparts in creative and corporate domains of work, where it is predicted that differing levels of job-specific well-being will be recorded.

Influence of Supervisory Responsibility on Workers' Job-specific Well-being

Research suggests that self-employed workers generally appear to be happier than directly employed workers (Benz and Frey, 2004; Protas and Thompson, 2006; Anderson, 2008; Lange, 2012; Binder and Coad, 2013). However, where the specific domains of creative and corporate work are concerned, does supervision of staff have a bearing? Are self-employed workers who oversee staff and directly-employed workers in managerial positions, affected equally by supervisory responsibility or is there a significant difference in JSWB between these two groups? Due to negligible literature available, the current study investigates these questions.

Research on workplace well-being comparing that of self-employed versus directly-employed workers is extensive and generally finds self-employed workers reporting greater job satisfaction than those directly-employed (Warr 2018; Anderson, 2008; Smeaton, 2003). This observation has also been recorded in studies examining participants in global samples (Benz and Frey, 2008; Lange, 2012). Exploring this further, Warr and Inceoglu (2018) reported that autonomy is a significant mediator of well-being amongst these groups. In support of this finding, research examining stress-strain in business owners versus non-business owners found that the former experienced lower levels of role ambiguity and role conflict, reduced emotional exhaustion, and higher levels of job and professional satisfaction than the latter (Tetrick *et al.*, 2000). Further, Jamal (1997) found that role ambiguity and role conflict is higher for directly employed workers than for self-employed. Tetrick *et al.* (2000),

also reported that directly employed workers in corporations who occupy managerial positions and supervisory roles, report increased levels of job satisfaction over those who do not. Interestingly, findings for self-employed workers with supervisory responsibility for staff appear to reflect the contrary.

In a study on personal values and varieties of happiness and unhappiness in the workplace, Warr (2018) found that job satisfaction amongst the self-employed exceeds that of directly employed workers but only where the former have no supervisory responsibility for other workers. Warr's research reports that where supervisory responsibility for others is absent, being directly-employed is pointedly different from being self-employed. In an organisation, Warr suggests, workers with non-supervisory responsibility are directed by managers and work within the often-strict constraints of their role. On the contrary, solo self-employed workers responsible for only themselves, must continually self-regulate, self-direct and be largely autonomous. The difference in the nature and demand of self-employed versus directly-employed workers in these contrasting situations, can account for the difference in their self-reported job-specific well-being (Warr, 2018). With regard to workers with supervisory responsibility; self-employed workers hiring subordinate staff for the first time may have previously been successful working alone. However, demanding tasks for which they usually found solutions may now weigh heavily on their subordinates, subsequently creating management challenges for the new employer. Not only must the new employer maintain current business activities, they must now also supervise staff, and navigate associated employee-related challenges. Unlike their contemporaries in management positions under direct employment, self-employed workers with supervisory responsibility for others may have little peer support, established routines or management practices upon which they can rely. Warr (2018) indicates that management of staff under these conditions reduces the new employer's autonomy and JSWB.

Warr's (2018) findings seem to suggest that JSWB is dependent on workers' personal values such as autonomy and ability to self-direct, and for the self-employed who would normally experience higher levels, there is a reported reduction in well-being where they are required to supervise staff. On the other hand, positions of responsibility within the structures of an organisation appear to be associated with increased JSWB over that reported by non-supervisory workers under the same corporate structures. As there seems to be an absence of data specific to creative self-employed workers, an aim of the current study is to establish the extent to which differences in their JSWB and that of their directly employed counterparts is moderated by supervisory responsibilities. Such findings may help in identifying the impact of supervision of others on JSWB in these groups.

Influence of Necessity and Opportunity Self-employment on Workers Job-specific Well-being

A focus of the current study concerns whether the need for self-employed, and the creative self-employed in particular, to generate income and provide for their family (necessity) or the recognition of a commercial opportunity (opportunity) influence their reported levels of JSWB. "Necessity" entrepreneurship is a relatively new and perhaps controversial term in contemporary employment/self-employment research, and was first introduced in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the country

by country global study of entrepreneurship (Frederick *et al.*, 2001). It has been deemed controversial insofar as it has been linked to corporate pursuit of perhaps unfair cost efficiencies which are said to “force” direct employees into forms of “bogus” self-employment. As noted earlier (Fondeville *et al.*, 2015), this ‘bogus’ self-employment has been shown to contribute significantly towards recorded increases in self-employment levels in Europe since 2007. As suggested by Perulli (2003), this form of employment exists within a “grey area” between employment and bonafide self-employment. Indeed, Block and Koellinger (2009) made the distinction between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship, where necessity entrepreneurs have a lower average satisfaction with their startup than their counterparts who were motivated through opportunity. Furthermore, Binder and Coad, (2013) suggest “necessity” and “opportunity” self-employment are mediating choice factors with self-employment often chosen as a means to escape unemployment rather than for reasons related to personal factors such as autonomy. The researchers regard this distinction to be one of the most significant influences towards heterogeneity in the self-employed. In research examining the impact of “necessity” as a motivation for new business start-up on entrepreneurial satisfaction conducted by Kautonen and Palmroos (2010), it was discovered that participants were somewhat more likely to want to return to direct employment later in their careers. Given the nature of research findings in this area, and once again, the absence of data pertaining specifically to creative self-employed, the current study aims to examine necessity versus opportunity as mediating factors in job-specific well-being amongst workers in the creative arts and corporate domains.

The Current Study

The aim of the current study was to explore “job-specific well-being” (JSWB) amongst self-employed and directly-employed workers in creative and corporate workplaces with the following four hypotheses proposed: 1) Self-employed and directly-employed workers operating in creative and corporate domains of work will differ generally on JSWB. 2) Self-employed workers in creative and corporate domains of work will differ on JSWB based on the presence or absence of supervisory responsibility (SR). 3) Directly-employed workers in creative and corporate domains of work will differ on JSWB based on the presence or absence of supervisory responsibility (SR). 4) Necessity and opportunity self-employed workers will differ on JSWB based on their necessity or opportunity based motivation for self-employment. From the qualitative perspective, a single open-ended question exploring how participants felt about their current daily work was included.

Methodology

Materials

Participants completed a self-report questionnaire consisting of a battery of quantitative single item and multiple item measures. Participants were presented with a detailed information sheet once they consented to participate which outlined the purpose of the study, the aim of the research, and details concerning consent, right to withdraw, and contact details of the research team. Six demographic questions followed which included age group, employment status, domain of work (creative or corporate), whether respondents’ work was a primary source of income,

if they had supervisory responsibilities, and where applicable, their reason for choosing self-employment. Three psychometric measures (see below) were employed which were compiled into a composite measure of well-being titled "job-specific well-being" (JSWB). IBM SPSS software was used to analyse the data. NVivo software was used to analyse qualitative responses (see design section). Psychometric measures employed are outlined in the following sections:

Satisfaction with Work Scale (SWWS)

The Satisfaction with Work Scale (Bérubé *et al.*, 2007) is adapted from the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener *et al.*, 1985) and is applicable to a workplace context to obtain a short global measure of work satisfaction. The SWWS is a reliable and valid measure of satisfaction at work with a reported internal reliability $\alpha = .75$ (Gagné *et al.*, 2007). The scale offers seven statements with which respondents may agree or disagree, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) Scores are totalled with a possible range of 7-35. Lower scores indicate extreme dissatisfaction with higher scores indicating extreme satisfaction.

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999) is a short 4-item scale designed to measure respondents' subjective happiness at a given point in time. Each item in the scale is completed by choosing one of 7 options (1-7) that reflect the respondent's level of agreement with the given sentence. Previous research by the author (Lyubomirsky and Tucker, 1998) found that self-rated happy respondents tended to think about both positive and negative life events more favourably and adaptively. Select items were reversed coded and the mean of the 4 items is calculated.

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) (Goldberg and Williams, 2000) is a self-administered screening instrument designed to detect depth of current mental disturbances and disorders. It is a widely-employed mental health measure for detection of emotional disturbances. The current study employs the GHQ-12 with Yusof (2010) reporting reliability range from .85 to .93. Individual items range from 0 (not at all) to 3 (much more than usual). The score is used to generate a total score ranging from 0 to 36. High scores indicate poorer general mental health.

Participants

Participants were English speaking, sourced from a global population, and were non-gender specific. Inclusion required participants to be minimum 18 years-old, self-employed or directly employed, and currently working in a creative or corporate environment. Participants were sourced via business social platforms such as LinkedIn, forums, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and business contacts list, and invited to participate. Participants could subsequently self-select to participate in the study by clicking the link provided in the message. Participants were required to be full-time, with their daily work providing their primary income means. Initial questions related to inclusion criteria were used to determine eligibility of respondents. Minimum total participants was established at 35 per group to ensure robustness as per sample size and normality requirements for proposed statistical analyses.

A total of 230 responses were collected for the current study of which 11.3% were aged 18-30 (N=26), 20.9% were 31-40 (N=48), 47% were 41-50 (N=108), 13.5% were 51-60 (N=31), and 7.4% were 60+ (N=17). For employment status, 40.4% (N=93) indicated they were self-employed while 56.1% (N=129) indicated direct employment. Additionally, 2.6% of respondents (N=6) indicated they were unemployed and .9% (N=2) indicated they were retired. These responses were omitted from further analysis. Thirty per cent (N=69) reported themselves working in a creative environment while 70% (N=161) reported their work to be corporate based. Where informed consent was not given, participation concluded and no data was collected. Assignment to groups was based on participant self-selection of demographic data.

Design

In the current study, a retrospective, cross-sectional survey design employing a qualitative open-ended measure was conducted. Non-probability convenience and snowball sampling methods were employed. For the qualitative component, an open-ended question was presented and responses were analysed using inductive Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The self-report questionnaire was constructed using Microsoft Forms and distributed via online platforms to gather data from a globally based audience. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to examine the group mean differences on the composite measure of workplace wellbeing, “job-specific well-being” (JSWB).

For **hypothesis 1**, Employment Status (IV) comprised two levels; total self-employed (SE) and total directly employed (DE), and was analysed for differences on JSWB (DV). For **hypothesis 2**, a second IV, ‘Self-employed supervisory responsibility’ (Total_SESR) was developed consisting of four levels; ‘Creative self-employed with supervisory responsibility’ (CSEwSR), ‘Creative self-employed without supervisory responsibility’ (CSEwoSR), ‘Corporate self-employed with supervisory responsibility’ (CPSEwSR) and ‘Corporate self-employed without supervisory responsibility’ (CPSEwoSR) and was analysed for differences on JSWB. For **hypothesis 3**, the IV was calculated for ‘Directly employed supervisory responsibility’ (Total_DESR) with four levels; ‘Creative directly employed with supervisory responsibility’ (CDEwSR), ‘Creative directly employed without supervisory responsibility’ (CDEwoSR), ‘Corporate directly employed with supervisory responsibility’ (CPDEwSR), and ‘Corporate directly employed without supervisory responsibility’ (CPDEwoSR), and was analysed for differences on JSWB. For **hypothesis 4**, an independent variable ‘Self-Employed under Necessity or Opportunity self-employment’ (Total_SENO) was developed with four levels; ‘Creative self-employed acting under necessity’ (CSE-N), ‘Creative self-employed acting under opportunity’ (CSE-O), ‘Corporate self-employed acting under necessity’ (CPSE-N), and ‘Corporate self-employed acting under opportunity’ (CPSE-O), and was analysed for differences on JSWB.

Procedure

Microsoft Forms was used to construct the digital questionnaire, the link for which was then compressed and simplified using a link-shortener. The shortened link was then circulated via WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, email list and contacts lists. An automation tool was also used to circulate the questionnaire link to social media accounts for several weeks on rotation. Upon clicking the shortened

link, potential participants were directed to the introductory page of the Microsoft form digital questionnaire. Here they were briefly introduced to the researcher and were informed as to the nature and intent of the study. They were further advised that some questions may cause minor negative feelings and assured that the questionnaire was of a standardised psychological format used widely as a research method. Additionally, the cover sheet advised visitors that participation was entirely voluntary and should they choose to take part, responses would be anonymous and confidential, and as such, withdrawal would not be possible subsequent to completion. Participants then moved through the question sequence commencing first with demographic questions, which were made compulsory due to group inclusion/exclusion criterion, then the SWWS, then SHS, and finally the GHQ. A debrief sheet with contact details for support services was presented on the final page of the questionnaire and participants were advised to make necessary contact with relevant services in the event they were negatively affected by the study. Upon final completion, the participants were thanked for their participation. After a two-week period, the questionnaire was closed to new participants. Raw data was then extracted in .csv file format on 2nd February 2020, formatted and tidied prior to import to IBM SPSS and NVivo software for analysis.

Ethics

The current research study endeavoured to ensure the highest level of ethical conduct. The requirement for strict adherence to the PSI code of professional ethics was upheld. It was a requisite to ensure informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality of all participants. Permission was sought from forum and social media group moderators via email/direct message prior to circulation of the questionnaire. No personally identifiable information was collected and participants' right to withdraw was outlined. A cover letter was included to outline the sensitive nature of the study. Informed consent was collected prior to advancing in the survey. A debrief sheet including contact details for relevant mental health services was presented to participants on completion. GDPR compliance was also ensured where email marketing software was used. With specific regard to the qualitative component of the current study, it was taken into account that participants were sharing potentially sensitive personal feelings and emotions regarding their working life. It was therefore important that participants were not identifiable through quotes used or other information. Participants were advised in advance as to how data was being collected, stored and after twelve months, that it would be destroyed.

Data Analysis

Prior to conducting the qualitative data collection and analysis, explicit decisions were required with regard to certain important issues and considerations. Reflection on the following elements was made prior and throughout the process. Themes reflected a pattern in the responses received, and an inductive, semantic, realist approach was employed for a rich analysis of the entire data corpus. Responses to the specific question guided coding and contributed to the overall thrust of the current research.

Results

Quantitative Results

A series of one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to examine differences between groups on the composite measure of job-specific well-being (JSWB). As previously described, the composite DV consisted of three individual outcome variables, satisfaction with work (M=15.19), subjective happiness (M=5.13) and general health (M=11.99). Preliminary assumptions checking for normality, linearity, multivariate and univariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity were carried out and, unless otherwise indicated, no serious violations were found. Acceptable alpha values were found for SWWS ($\alpha=.86$) and SHS ($\alpha=.78$), while alpha for the GHQ was below what would generally be considered acceptable ($\alpha=.48$). See Table 1.0 for descriptive statistics.

Table 1.0: Descriptive statistics for each of the three individual outcome variables

Measure	EmpStatus	N	Mean	SD	α	Skewness	Kurtosis
Work Satisfaction	Self*	89	12.82	5.67			
	Direct**	125	17.03	6.20			
	Total	229	15.19	6.35	.86	.61	-.24
Subjective Happiness	Self*	89	5.17	1.24			
	Direct**	125	5.10	.95			
	Total	229	5.13	1.08	.78	-.37	-.25
General Health	Self*	89	11.94	3.42			
	Direct**	125	11.92	2.93			
	Total	224	11.99	3.12	.48	.09	-.32

* Self-employed workers in both creative and corporate domains of work

** Directly employed workers in both creative and corporate domains of work

A one-way MANOVA examined differences in JSWB between self-employed (N=89) and directly employed (N=125) workers generally. Multivariate tests through Pillai's trace revealed statistically significant difference ($F(9,654) = 3.39, p < .001, \eta^2 =$

.045), therefore the null can be rejected.

Following a Bonferroni adjustment to .17 and examination of univariate results, a statistically significant difference was found for Satisfaction with work ($F(3,218) = 8.97, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$), with self-employed workers reporting greater dissatisfaction with their work ($M=12.82$) compared to directly-employed workers ($M=17.03$). There was no significant difference found between groups on Subjective happiness ($F(3,218) = .18, p = .91, \text{effect size} = .002$) or General health ($F(3,218) = .62, p = .61, \eta^2 = .008$). Figure 1 below illustrates visually a breakdown of results for group means on individual measures.

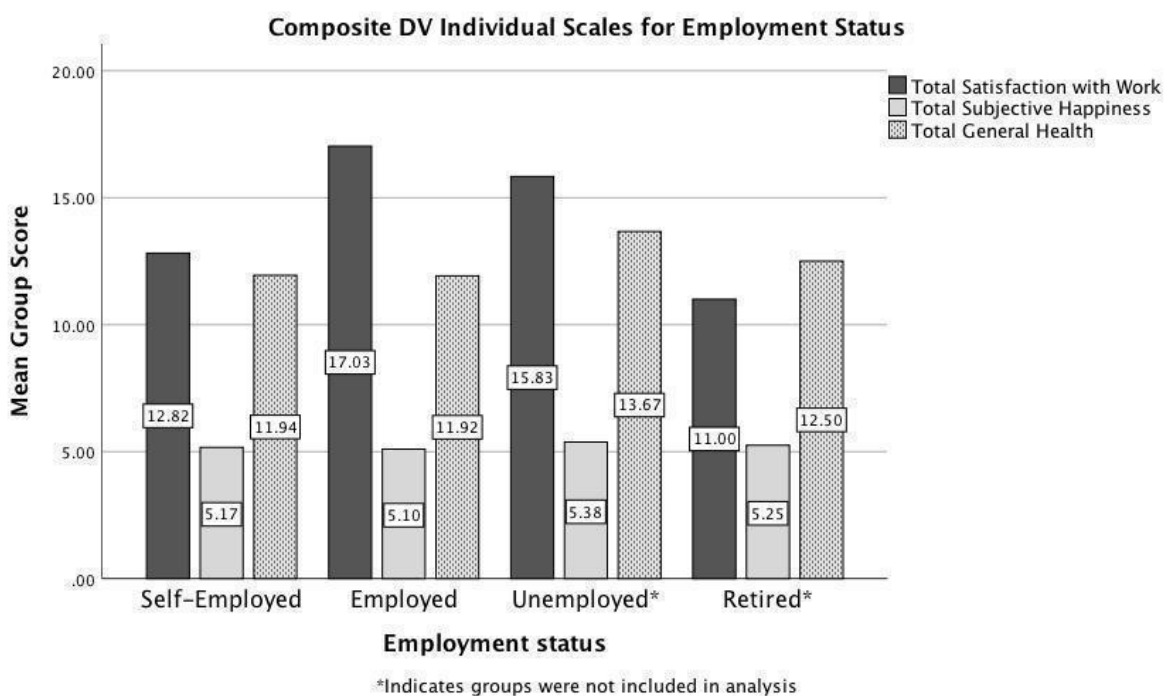


Figure 1: H1 mean group scores on individual measures comprising dependent variable JSWB

With specific focus on Self-employed workers, a second one-way MANOVA compared 'Creative' and 'Corporate' workers, with and without 'Supervisory responsibility', on JSWB. A new IV with four levels was computed, consisting of the 'creative self-employed with supervisory responsibility' (CSEwSR; N=14), the 'creative self-employed without supervisory responsibility' (CSEwoSR; N=29), the 'corporate self-employed with supervisory responsibility' (CPSEwSR; N=32) and the 'corporate self-employed without supervisory responsibility' (CPSEwoSR; N=14). Multivariate tests were conducted and Pillai's trace effect showed no statistically significant difference between groups ($F(9,202) = 1.58, p = .12, \eta^2 = .053$) therefore the null is retained. See Figure 2 for visual representation of individual scale results.

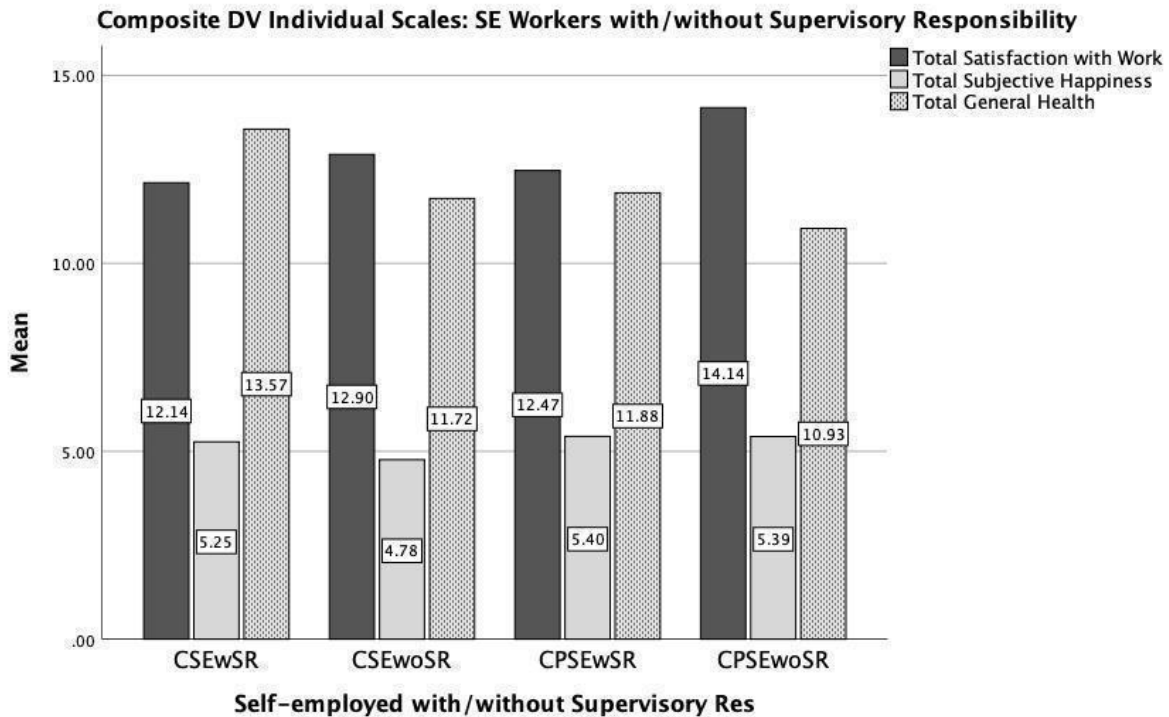


Figure: H2 group mean scores on individual measures comprising dependent variable JSWB

A one-way MANOVA was also conducted to examine ‘Creative’ and ‘Corporate’ directly employed workers, with and without supervisory responsibility on JSWB. Similar to the previous analysis, a new IV with four levels was computed, ‘creative directly employed with supervisory responsibility’ (CDEwSR; N=15), the ‘creative directly employed without supervisory responsibility’ (CDEwoSR; N=3), the ‘corporate directly employed with supervisory responsibility’ (CPDEwSR; N=64) and the ‘corporate directly employed without supervisory responsibility’ (CPDEwoSR; N=43). Results suggest a statistically significant difference between the groups on JSWB ($F(9,290) = 2.70, p = .005, \eta^2 = .062$) therefore the null can be rejected.

Following a Bonferroni adjustment to .17 and examination of univariate results, no significant difference was found between groups on ‘Satisfaction with work’ ($F(3,121) = 1.93, p = .13, \eta^2 = .046$) or ‘Subjective happiness’ ($F(3,121) = 1.01, p = .39, \eta^2 = .024$). However, there was a significant difference shown on ‘General health’ ($F(3,121) = 5.16, p = .002, \eta^2 = .113$) with the CDEwSR group (M=14) demonstrating poorer psychological health compared to the CDEwoSR (M=11.67), CPDEwSR (M=11.09), and CPDEwoSR (M=12.44) groups. Figure 3 below provides an illustration of individual scale results.

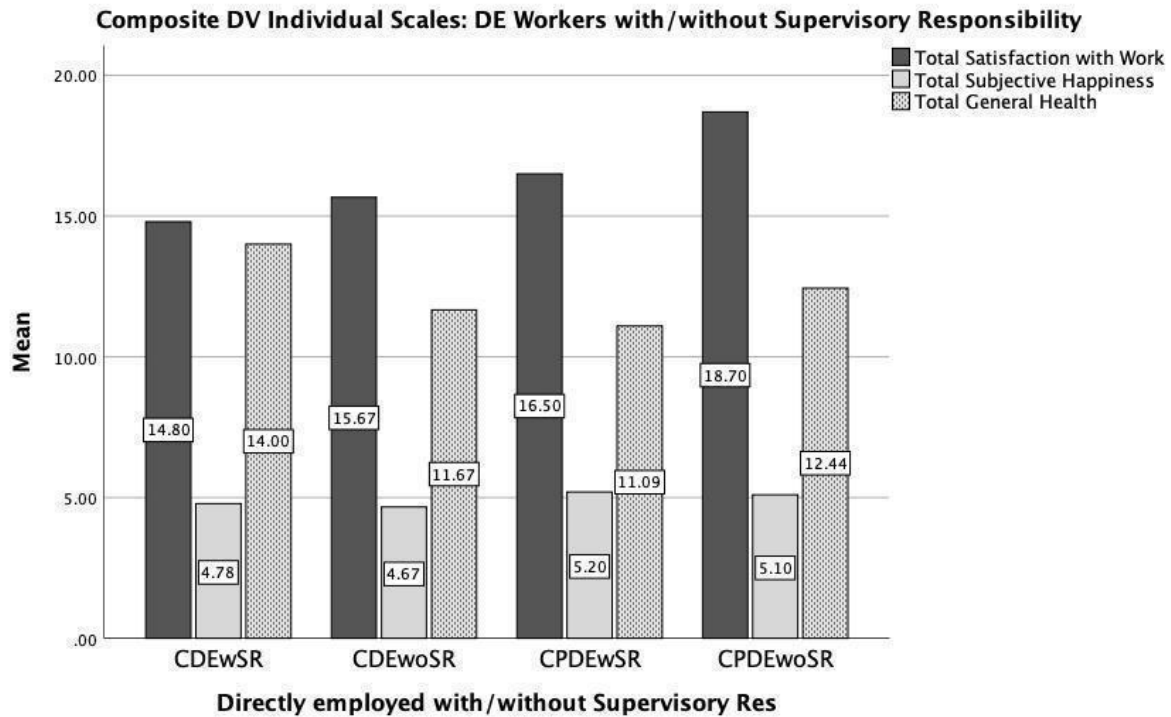


Figure 3: H3 group mean scores on individual measures comprising dependent variable JSWB

A final one-way MANOVA was conducted to examine JSWB of self-employed workers who commenced self-employment out of ‘necessity’ or out of ‘opportunity’. A further IV with four levels was computed as follows; Creative self-employed out of necessity (CSE-N; N=7), Creative self-employed out of opportunity (CSE-O; N=32), Corporate self-employed out of necessity (CPSE-N; N=5) and Corporate self-employed out of opportunity (CPSE-O; N=37). Results suggest no statistically significant difference between groups on JSWB ($F(9,231) = .90, p = .53, \eta^2 = .034$), therefore the null can be accepted.

Qualitative Results

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was employed in the current study to analyse responses to the qualitative component open-ended question. The following analytic steps involved a non-linear inductive process of coding the data revealing common themes in the responses; familiarisation with the data, creation of codes from responses, formation of themes from the coding, review of themes review and refinement, definition and naming of themes, and production of a report. As seen in Figure 5, below, the word cloud illustrates words most used by respondents in detailing their feelings about their work. The word ‘Enjoy’, and stemmed words such as ‘enjoyment’, ‘enjoyable’ and ‘enjoying’ were most commonly used (2.25%). Fifty three per cent of responses coded were positively framed, 42% were negative and 5% were neutral.



Figure 5: Word cloud representation of most frequently used words by respondents

Subsequent to data analysis and coding, the following themes were revealed in participant responses; Contentment, Apathy, Enjoyment and Meaning, Means to an End, and Burnout.

Theme 1: Contentment

This first theme can be defined as a particular degree of neutral contentment with work and reflects 5% of responses coded. There was neither stress or anxiety, or excitement and enthusiasm present in responses. Respondents reported to be “generally happy,” “relatively happy,” and “comfortable” as can be observed by participant 65’s response; “Generally happy with daily work. Could be managing diary and time a bit better, but improving in this area constantly”.

Theme 2: Apathy

Theme 2 can be defined as indifference, disengagement and an apathetic relationship with work, and reflects 13% of coded responses. Respondents reported to be bored and lacking enthusiasm for work. This can be recognised from the comment from respondent 147; “Mostly boring and repetitive with the occasional challenge. Good relationship to my boss, which helps, but the tasks are too monotone to compensate,” and participant 154’s response; “Do not 'love it' but not the worst”.

Theme 3: Enjoyment and Meaning

By far the most numerous response type observed from Figure 5 above, was that of enjoyment, happiness and positive relationship with work. Theme 3 represents 53% of coded responses and is defined as feelings of challenge but reward and meaning. Participants used words such as “grateful,” “fortunate” and “blessed” to describe their relationship with work. As respondent 176 expressed it; “I feel honoured that I get to serve other people”. Participant 189 suggests; “I know I am possibly in a rare situation as an employee, but I do very much enjoy my work,” and participant 10; “I’m fulfilled by my work, it is corporate in nature but it has meaning”. It should be noted, however, in almost all cases respondents held a caveat to these positive feelings.

Theme 4: Means to an End

Theme 4 can be defined as a transactional relationship with work and accounts for 11% of coded responses. Terms such as “tedious,” “necessary” and “pays the bills” were used by participants to describe their feelings about work. As participant 44 puts it; “It’s a grind, only doing it cos it pays the bills and hopefully provide a starting block for the kids when the time arises”. Participant 166 reports; “I work to live, I don’t live to work,” and participant 119; “A means to an end to get what I want”.

Theme 5: Burnout

Theme 5 can be defined as a feeling of working too hard, being emotionally stretched and anxious, represents 18% of coded responses. Words such as “under-appreciated,” “overwhelmed” and “frustrated” were used to describe this feeling. Participant 101 responded; “frustrating, broke, abandoned”. Participant 94 suggests; “I go home exhausted and stressed over stupid insignificant problems. I often want to shut off my mind and I’ve been living a bit on auto pilot lately.”

Discussion

It was the aim of the current study to investigate how well-being at work differed between self-employed and directly employed workers in creative and corporate workplaces, and in particular, for the creative self-employed. Research questions were explored via four hypotheses measuring group differences on the composite DV of “job-specific well-being” (JSWB). This DV consisted of satisfaction with work (SWWS), subjective happiness (SHS) and general health questionnaire (GHQ-12). Group inclusion was based on demographics of employment status, work domain, supervisory responsibility, and necessity/opportunity based self-employment. Additionally, the qualitative component explored respondents’ feelings about their daily work. Subsequently, themes were compiled through inductive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

For **Hypothesis 1**, results showed a significant difference in job-specific well-being between self-employed workers in both creative and corporate workplaces when compared to their directly employed counterparts, and, therefore, supported the hypothesis. However, results for the current sample showed directly employed workers were more satisfied with their work than self-employed workers which runs counter to established research findings (Benz and Frey, 2004; Anderson, 2008; Lange, 2012). Binder and Coad (2013), for example, reported their findings ‘robust’

that self-employed workers enjoyed higher job satisfaction than directly employed workers. Why current findings show self-employed workers scoring lower on satisfaction with work than directly employed is unclear. Research suggests that self-employed workers are under high strain from commercial insecurity (Warr, 2018), and they exhibit higher overall burnout, emotional exhaustion and lack of work satisfaction than their directly employed counterparts (Jamal, 2007). The contrast between the established literature and that of the current study may highlight a weakness of questionnaire based assessment of well-being in the workplace, and provide opportunity for further investigation perhaps through employment of longitudinal designs and alternative means of assessment. Additionally of note, both self-employed and directly employed group mean scores on the SWW scale reported dissatisfaction with work. In fact, none of the groups under examination across the breadth of the study showed satisfaction with work. Finally for hypothesis 1, no statistically significant difference was observed between total self-employed and total directly employed groups on general health or subjective happiness, although, means scores on subjective happiness were below that suggested for the average person.

Hypothesis 2 examined job-specific well-being (JSWB) amongst self-employed workers with and without supervisory responsibility in both creative and corporate domains of work. It was expected that results would support current available research in this area which suggests that well-being at work amongst the self-employed is contingent upon the presence or absence of supervisory responsibility for others (Warr, 2018; Tetrick *et al.*, 2000). Warr suggests that having little or no peer support or proven and established systems of management, work satisfaction amongst self-employed workers is moderated by supervisory responsibility. However, no significant difference between groups was revealed (see Table 2.0), therefore, results did not support the hypothesis. In other words, the current study found that self-employed workers in creative and corporate domains were no more satisfied or dissatisfied with work than their directly employed counterparts based on supervisory responsibility for other workers. Notwithstanding this, results for individual measures, albeit not statistically significant, found that corporate self-employed workers without supervisory responsibility (CPSEwoSR) were more satisfied with their work and had lower probability of clinical disorder compared to other self-employed groups. Looking at creative self-employed, the CSEwoSR group were fractionally more satisfied with their work and had lower probability of psychological disorder than the CSEwSR group. Results on the SWW scale, therefore, may suggest possible support for Warr (2018). Measures of subjective happiness provided very similar results for the four groups analysed, however, group mean scores were below that indicated by the measure as normal for the average person. Additionally, self-employed workers in creative domains of work with supervisory responsibility (CSEwSR) recorded the highest probability of clinical disorder and lowest on work satisfaction. This does not support findings by Bille *et al.*, (2013) that artists enjoy higher job satisfaction than other workers. Present results may reflect the finding that artists and creatives suffer adversely from above-average unemployment and constrained underemployment (Steiner, 2017). Taking into account Steiner's view that the relationship between pay and satisfaction is weaker for artists than non-artists (Steiner, 2007), perhaps this can be accounted for by present results and would be an issue worth examining in future research.

Further exploring the second of three research questions, **Hypothesis 3** sought to investigate job-specific well-being (JSWB) differences amongst directly employed workers in creative and corporate domains with and without supervisory responsibility. Once again, it was expected that results would support previous research which suggests that workplace well-being is dependent on the presence or absence of supervisory responsibility (Warr, 2018), and directly employed workers in supervisory roles show higher job satisfaction over those who are not (Tetrick *et al.*, 2000). Results showed a significant difference between groups on the composite measure of job-specific well-being and, therefore appeared to support the hypothesis and previous research. Subsequent analysis of individual measure results, however, showed that statistical differences on GH accounted for results. Similar to findings for Hypothesis 2, individual measure results showed directly employed workers in corporate domains without supervisory responsibility were higher on work satisfaction than those with supervisory responsibility and, therefore, did not support findings by Tetrick *et al.*, (2000). Perhaps paradoxically, results also showed those without supervisory responsibility were higher on probability of clinical disorder than those with supervisory responsibility, and may reflect a disconnect between how respondents actually feel and how they want to feel about their work. Additionally, results for directly employed workers in creative domains without supervisory responsibility also showed higher work satisfaction, but in this case, they showed lower probability of clinical disorder than their creative counterparts with supervisory responsibility. While individual measure results do not support Warr (2018) and Tetrick *et al.*, (2000), the mean score differences were small and not significant. It is worth noting that in examination of satisfaction with work, all respondent groups reported dissatisfaction with work ranging from dissatisfied to slightly dissatisfied. It is also of note that group sizes were not equal, with directly employed workers in creative domains without supervisory responsibility markedly lower in sample size (N=3) than other groups. This represents a notable limitation in the current study and future examinations of workplace wellbeing amongst creative directly employed workers should ensure adequate sample size.

Hypothesis 4 explored differences in job-specific well-being (JSWB) amongst self-employed workers in creative and corporate domains whose self-employment choice was motivated by either necessity or opportunity. That is to say, group inclusion was determined by whether self-employed workers were forced into self-employment through unemployment (for example), or they realised and pursued a commercial opportunity. Results found no statistically significant difference between groups and, therefore, did not support the hypothesis. According to research, “opportunity” entrepreneurs compared with “necessity” entrepreneurs are more satisfied with self-employment (Block and Koellinger 2009; Kautonen and Palmroos 2010). Binder and Coad (2013) suggest that those who enter self-employment through necessity experience reduced subjective happiness and general health than comparative groups. However, although not statistically significant, current results were not completely in agreement. Analysis of individual measures showed those who are creative self-employed through necessity (CSE-N) recorded higher levels of work satisfaction than the other three groups, but again perhaps paradoxically, subjective happiness and general health scores for CSE-N workers indicated lower subjective happiness and greater probability of clinical

disorder respectively, than other groups examined. As suggested for hypothesis 3, results may reflect a disconnect between how respondents actually feel and how they think they should feel about their work. Additionally, and perhaps a significant consideration in attempting to explain results, is that overconfidence biases of entrepreneurs has been found in self-report measures (Binder and Coad, 2013).

Although not investigated and compared directly, upon examination of creative self-employed and creative directly-employed workers with/without supervisory responsibility, similar scores were observed across individual measures. However, work satisfaction was higher for creative directly employed workers. Additionally, results on all measures for both creative self-employed and creative directly-employed workers were lower on satisfaction with work and subjective happiness, and higher on general health than their corporate counterparts. This perhaps reinforces the persistent cultural idea of the starving artist. Results here further support findings by Bille *et al.*, (2013) and Steiner (2007) suggesting that for creative self-employed workers whose motivation may not be outcome based, the pressures of business may weigh heavily on psychological well-being. Future research should explore self-employed and directly employed creative workers in effort to further understand these results and perhaps develop useful interventions. The examination of workplace well-being amongst self-employed and directly employed workers in creative and corporate domains offers a seldom explored comparison and represents a particular strength of the current study. Additionally, results herein question the validity of prior research as it is applied to creative groups and highlights the need for further specific investigation of the psychological well-being of creative people at work.

With regard to the qualitative component, 53% of coded responses reflected a positive relationship with work, 42% were negative and 5% were neutral and perhaps did not reflect quantitative findings. Notwithstanding this, many of the positive responses contained a caveat; "I like or I love my work, but...". There appears in responses a recognition that work contains an inherently negative aspect that perhaps cannot be avoided. But not all workers' responses reflected this. Some workers appeared to be in love with their work, to be in a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) as can be observed from respondent 176 when they reported; "I feel honoured that I get to serve other people". Does respondents' recognition of the negative aspects simply allow them to tolerate the intolerables of work even if these aspects have an adverse impact on their mental health? Is adherence to the typical workplace personality or the socially typical character of the time more important than one's well-being? Is this a wider socio-cultural problem that requires a reframing of daily work? Perhaps these questions may be considered too broad within the context of the current research, however, it can be observed from results that large numbers of individuals are unhappy in their daily work and seem to be merely getting by. Therefore, these questions are not only valid, but require urgent consideration and in-depth examination in future research. Finally in this regard, the satisfaction with work scale showed all groups scored in the dissatisfied range, and subjective happiness showed all groups were below normal for the average person. It may be argued, therefore, general health results were reasonably matched to qualitative findings.

One of the central aims of the current study was to explore job-specific well-being amongst self-employed workers compared to directly employed workers. The study wished to discover if those in creative work, be they self-employed or directly employed, were happier than their corporate counterparts. Although some results ran counter to previous research and were perhaps paradoxical, it may be possible to draw some tentative conclusions. In summary, the general findings of the current study are five-fold: (1) Self-employed workers as a whole, are less satisfied with work than directly employed workers. (2) Where supervisory responsibility exists, both self-employed and directly employed workers engaged in creative domains are generally less satisfied with work and have greater probability of psychological disorder than those in corporate domains. (3) Necessity based creative self-employed are highest on work satisfaction but paradoxically, they are lowest on general health. (4) Both self-employed and directly-employed workers, regardless of their domain of work, supervisory duties, or nature of taking up self-employment (where that applied to self-employed only), are dissatisfied with work, do not differ and are below normal levels on measures of subjective happiness. (5) A significant portion of the workforce are stressed, unhappy, and disaffected in their work. The current study, therefore, concludes that existing research pertaining to the workplace well-being of the self-employed does not accurately apply to creative self-employed workers. Furthermore, existing research pertaining to creatives and artists also does not accurately apply to creative self-employed workers.

Although the current study may be considered limited in respect to group sizes in certain cases, means and methods of data collection, and results may not be applicable to the general working population, results may be a valuable step towards understanding factors influencing workplace well-being amongst the creative self-employed. An additional strength of the current study can be observed in the platykurtic and symmetrical distribution of data highlighting the absence of outliers in the dataset. Subsequent research may benefit from a more selective means of participant selection and employment of a repeated measures design. Furthermore, a deeper examination of supervisory role, number of staff under management and extent of management experience, and the exclusion of part-time workers would aid group selection. Notwithstanding study weaknesses, where the creative self-employed are concerned, the current study has highlighted perhaps a neglected area of research within work and organisational psychology, offering counter results to respected papers on workplace well-being amongst the self-employed. Therefore, future research must be committed to examining the creative self-employed as a subgroup of self-employed in order to inform theories of work motivation and occupational choice specific to this cohort. Finally, design and application of well-being interventions in the workplace must take account of individual differences and environmental factors at play for these creative workers. Industry leaders, local politicians and small business support groups may be subsequently better equipped to assist the creative self-employed to successfully launch and grow their businesses, and subsequently support local and national economies. As such, the creative self-employed may broaden the reach of their work and contribute not just economically, but aesthetically and socially towards the overall life and well-being of themselves and others.

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