



Does Happiness Increase with Entrepreneurship? Evidence from Women Entrepreneurs and Working Women in Haryana

Dr. Priyanka

Assistant Professor School of Commerce and Management Starex University
17394PRIYA@GMAIL.COM

Dr. Sapna Ahlawat

Assistant Professor School of Commerce and Management Starex University
drsapna1295@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23416104>

Abstract

In organizational and entrepreneurship studies, happiness and well-being have grown in importance, especially when it comes to figuring out how people's life satisfaction is impacted by their professional roles. The goal of the current study is to compare the happiness levels of working women and women entrepreneurs. The study was carried out in the Indian state of Haryana. For the study, a total of 450 respondents were chosen, including 225 working women and 225 women entrepreneurs. A structured questionnaire based on the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, created by Michael Argyle and associates, was used to gather primary data. Convenience sampling was used in the study to choose participants. The t-test was used to examine the data and compare the two groups' levels of happiness. The findings showed that there was a substantial difference in life satisfaction, joy, positive mindset, and self-efficacy between women who were employed and those who were entrepreneurs. The results show that, in comparison to employed women, women entrepreneurs reported higher mean happiness scores. The study emphasizes how professional flexibility and autonomy can improve women's happiness and well-being.

Keywords: *Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, Women Entrepreneurs, Satisfaction*

Introduction

In psychological and management literature, happiness has been extensively discussed as a state of pleasure, contentment, and general well-being that reflects the conviction that life is significant and valuable (Thiagarajan et al., 2018). Positive feelings and pleasurable experiences that promote psychological comfort and wellbeing are its defining characteristics (Thiagarajan et al., 2018). According to Veenhoven (2012), happiness is closely associated with life satisfaction and subjective well-being and can also be defined as an individual's assessment of life based on its overall quality and personal satisfaction. Martin Seligman asserts that a happy life is characterized by positive emotions, intense involvement in activities, and a sense of purpose, implying that happiness encompasses both feeling good and living a fulfilling life (Seligman, 2002).



Furthermore, studies reveal that happiness among employees and individuals increases creativity, productivity, and decision-making, all of which improve organizational performance (Gupta, 2012). Employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness have all been demonstrated to be significantly impacted by workplace happiness (Okoye & Eze, 2022; Adeyemi, 2023; Pandeya & Sharma, 2025). Additionally, the scientific study of happiness received a great deal of attention with the emergence of positive psychology, which emphasizes positive experiences, personal strengths, and supportive institutions (Sender, 2021).

In the context of their professional jobs, women's happiness is influenced by a number of factors, including the type of employment, autonomy, work-life balance, and financial independence. Women entrepreneurs often enjoy higher levels of autonomy, flexibility, and personal fulfillment than hired women, who may have job stability, a consistent income, and organizational support. Understanding the differences in satisfaction levels between employed women and women entrepreneurs has become critical in organizational and entrepreneurship studies (Pandeya & Sharma, 2025). This study primarily compares the level of happiness among employed women and women entrepreneurs in order to understand how different professional responsibilities affect women's overall well-being and life satisfaction.

Literature Review

Happiness and subjective well-being have become most important topics in organizational and entrepreneurship research because work plays a important role in shaping individuals' life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Veenhoven defines that happiness reflects an individual's overall evaluation of life and is closely related with life satisfaction and positive emotional experiences (Veenhoven, 2012). Similarly, Martin Seligman emphasizes that happiness is influenced by positive emotions, engagement, and meaning in life, all of which can be shaped by professional roles and work environments (Seligman, 2002).

A significant body of research suggests that entrepreneurship can positively influence happiness because it offers greater autonomy, independence, and flexibility. Studies indicate that self-employed individuals generally report higher levels of job satisfaction than wage employees, largely due to the freedom and control they have over their work activities (Benz & Frey, 2008). Similarly, cross-country evidence shows that self-employed individuals are more satisfied with their jobs compared to employees in most countries, primarily because entrepreneurship allows creativity and autonomy in work (Bianchi, 2012; Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998). Research further indicates that entrepreneurs tend to have higher life satisfaction due to independence, self-determination and procedural utility from controlling their own work (Hessels et al., 2018).

In the context of women, entrepreneurship has been increasingly recognized as a significant pathway for empowerment and well-being. Women entrepreneurs often have psychological advantages, such as higher self-confidence, financial independence, and flexibility to balance work and family responsibilities. Research



shows that women who start businesses often do so to achieve a better balance of work and family demands and to gain more freedom in their careers (Schjoedt, 2009; Stephan, 2018). However, entrepreneurial careers are also associated with financial insecurity, high responsibility, and work pressure, which in some situations may have detrimental effects on well-being. But women in employment have organizational arrangements that guarantee job security, income and institutional support. Studies have shown that employment can enhance well-being by offering structure, social interaction and financial stability (Clark, 2015). Research, also shows that workers tend to have less financial risk and more predictable working conditions than entrepreneurs, which can have a positive impact on psychological stability and work satisfaction.

However, previous literature gives mixed findings about whether entrepreneurs or employees are happier. Some research suggests that entrepreneurs report higher levels of happiness due to autonomy and control over their work, while other research finds that employees report higher levels of well-being due to financial security and lower stress levels associated with work (Stephan, 2018). Thus, it is necessary to compare the level of happiness of women entrepreneurs and employed women to understand the effect of different professional roles on their overall well-being and life satisfaction.

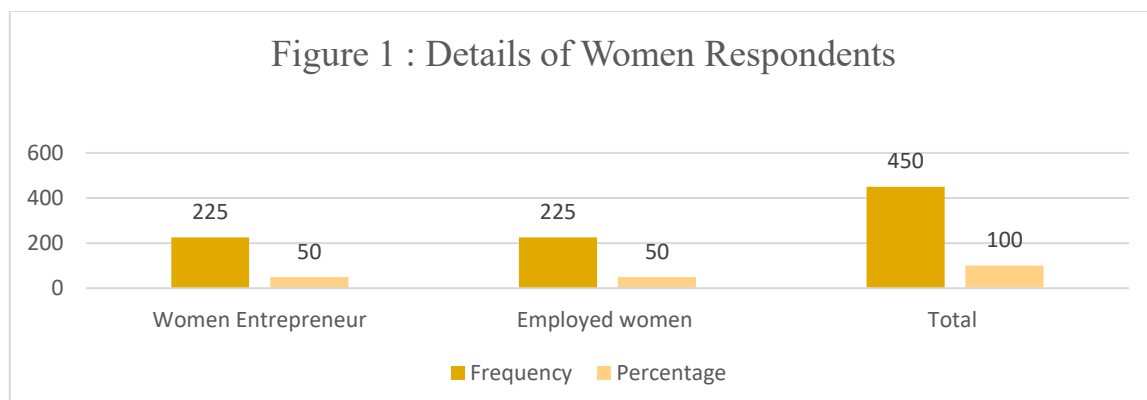
Research Methodology

The present study has been conducted by using descriptive and comparative research design. The purpose of the study is to find out the level of happiness among women entrepreneurs and employed women. This research is quantitative in nature and compares the happiness levels of the two groups to find out which group has higher levels of happiness and well-being. Data were collected using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire developed by Michael Argyle and colleagues. The respondents were selected from the state of Haryana, a part of India. A total of 450 respondents were included in the study and divided into two groups: women entrepreneurs and employed women. The data were collected using convenience sampling and analyzed using the t-test to determine whether there is a significant difference in the happiness levels between the two groups.

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile of Women Respondents

Figure 1: Details of Women Respondents





According to Figure 1, out of the 450 women respondents, half (225) work as entrepreneurs and the other half (225) are employed women.

Figure 2: Activity Wise Detail of Women Respondents

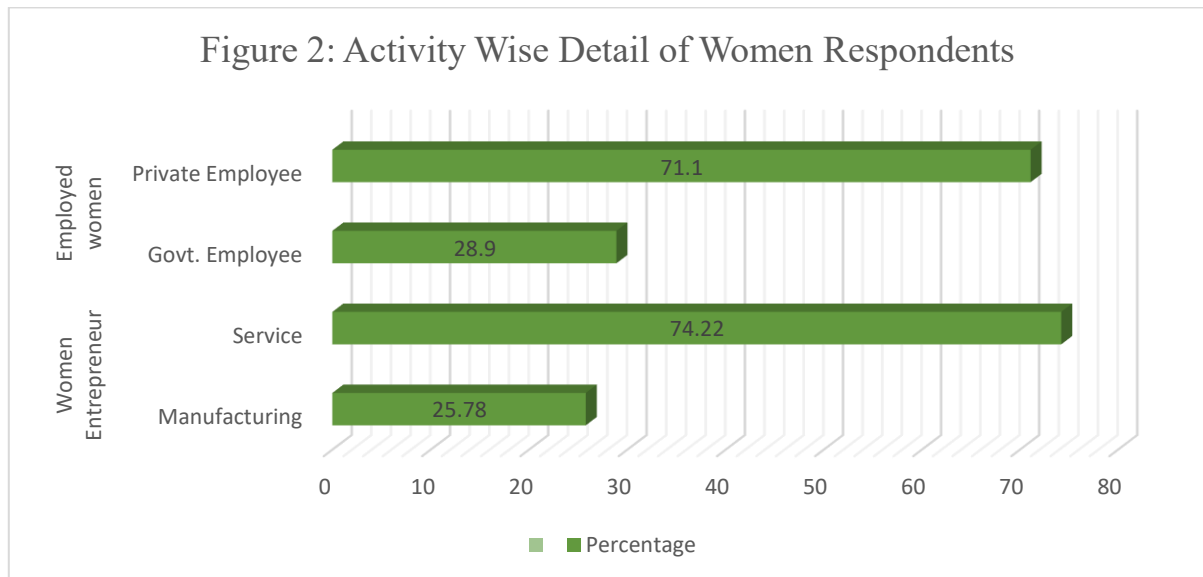


Figure 2 suggests that women entrepreneurs are mostly engaged in service, with manufacturing following closely behind. Similarly, among employed women, the majority worked in the private sector, with government employees coming in second.

Application of T-test for the comparison of happiness among women entrepreneur and employed women

Test of Normality

A normality test is done to determine whether the data is normally distributed or not. For testing the data normality, different tests are used in a visual and non-visual way. In SPSS, visually different tests can be used, including histograms, stem and leaf plots, box plots, P-P plots, and Q-Q plots. Besides that, some other statistical tests are also used, like the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test, the Shapiro-Wilk test, the D'Agostino skewness test, the Anscombe-Glynn kurtosis test, and many more. In AMOS, by using kurtosis and skewness values, normality can be assessed. But among all these tests, the K-S test and the S-W test are widely used for statistical purposes in SPSS (Ghasemi et al. 2012).

In this study, kurtosis and skewness values are used to check the normality of the data. The skewness (-3 to +3) and kurtosis values (-10 to +10) are within acceptable ranges (Brown, 2006); that's why it can be said that the data is normally distributed. T-tests are used for comparing the level of happiness among women entrepreneurs and employed women. And the null hypothesis is as follow:



H₀₁: There is no significant difference in happiness among women entrepreneur and employed women.

Table 1: Comparison of Happiness among Women Entrepreneur and Employed Women: Application of T-test

Factor of Happiness	Types of Respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		T	Sig.(2 tail)
					F	Sig.		
Life Satisfaction	Women Entrepreneur	225	5.4051	0.70948	19.995	.000	7.619	.000
	Employed Women	225	4.8089	0.93504				
Positive Mindset	Women Entrepreneur	225	4.3644	1.46537	0.123	.726	5.445	.000
	Employed Women	225	3.6284	1.40124				
Joy	Women Entrepreneur	225	5.3289	.75090	11.064	.001	9.797	.000
	Employed Women	225	4.5511	.92423				
Self-Efficacy	Women Entrepreneur	225	5.3274	.85853	32.959	.000	9.714	.000
	Employed Women	225	4.3481	1.24474				

T-test results are displayed in Table 1, which also explains that, under the heading of equal variance not assumed at the 5 percent level, there is a significant difference in life satisfaction, positive mindset, joy, and self-efficacy between women entrepreneurs and employed women. Their significance value is also less than 0.05. Because mean score of women entrepreneur is greater than that of employed women, women entrepreneurs report being happier than employed women. Based on life satisfaction, joy, positive mindset, and self-efficacy, it can be infer that there is a significant difference in happiness among women who are employed and women who are entrepreneurs.

Discussion

The findings of the present study reveal important differences in the level of happiness between women entrepreneurs and employed women. The results show that the respondents were equally divided into two



groups, with 225 women entrepreneurs and 225 employed women. This equal representation facilitated a balanced comparison between the two categories of women concerning their professional roles and happiness levels. The occupational distribution also revealed that the majority of women entrepreneurs were involved in service sector followed by manufacturing activities and the majority of the employed women were working in the private sector followed by government employment.

The results of the t-test indicate that there exists a statistically significant difference in the level of happiness between women entrepreneurs and employed women. At the 5 percent level of significance, the results, assuming unequal variances, indicate significant differences in important dimensions of happiness such as life satisfaction, positive mindset, joy and self-efficacy. The significance values of these variables were less than 0.05 and the null hypothesis of no difference between the two groups was rejected. Also, the mean scores show that women entrepreneurs reported higher values for these dimensions than employed women.

These results indicate that women entrepreneurs tend to be happier than employed women. One reason is that entrepreneurship entails more autonomy, freedom and opportunities for self-expression, which may result in greater life satisfaction and self-fulfilment. The ability to make independent decisions and control work activities may also ascribe higher levels of self-efficacy and positive mindset among women entrepreneurs. Working women on the other hand may be limited due to organizational restrictions, working hours and low authority in decision making which could affect their overall happiness levels.

In brief, the findings show that occupational roles are important for women's happiness and well-being. Higher levels of happiness reported by women entrepreneurs underscore the importance of autonomy, empowerment, and personal accomplishment in determining psychological well-being. These findings contribute to the literature on women's entrepreneurship and well-being and indicate that encouraging women's participation in entrepreneurial activities may have positive effects on their overall happiness and life satisfaction.

Conclusion

The present study concluded that there is a significant difference in the level of happiness of women entrepreneurs and employed women. The findings reveal that women entrepreneurs have higher happiness levels than employed women in terms of life satisfaction, joy, positive mindset, and self-efficacy. Women entrepreneurs may find themselves happier due to autonomy, flexibility, independence, and the opportunity to make decisions concerning their work and business activities. However, employed women may be subject to some organizational constraints such as fixed schedules and limited decision-making powers which may affect their overall happiness levels.

The research findings indicate that entrepreneurship is a vital vehicle for improving women's well-being and self-actualization. Promoting women's participation in entrepreneurial activity can help not only their economic empowerment but also their psychological health and life satisfaction. Therefore, policymakers and institutions should promote supportive environments, training programmes and financial assistance to



encourage women's participation in entrepreneurship. Such initiatives can play an important role in improving the socio-economic status & happiness of women in society.

References

- Adeyemi, O. (2023).** Workplace happiness and organizational effectiveness: An empirical study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior and Management*.
- Audretsch, D. B., Lehmann, E. E., & Schenkenhofer, J. (2018).** Entrepreneurship and happiness: A regional analysis. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 10, e00093. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbvi.2018.e00093>
- Bandura, A. (1986).** Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997).** Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Barnett, R. C., & Hyde, J. S. (2001).** Women, men, work, and family: An expansionist theory. *American Psychologist*, 56(10), 781-796. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.10.781>
- Benz, M., & Frey, B. S. (2008).** Being independent is a great thing: Subjective evaluations of self-employment and hierarchy. *Economica*, 75(298), 362-383. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0335.2007.00594.x>
- Bianchi, M. (2012).** Financial development, entrepreneurship, and job satisfaction. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94(1), 273-286. https://doi.org/10.1162/REST_a_00161
- Blanchflower, D. G., & Oswald, A. J. (1998).** What makes an entrepreneur? *Journal of Labor Economics*, 16(1), 26-60. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209881>
- Brown, J. D. (2006).** Statistics Corner: Questions and answers about language testing statistics. Shiken: JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG Newsletter.
- Brush, C. G., de Bruin, A., & Welter, F. (2009).** A gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 1(1), 8-24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17566260910942318>
- Carree, M. A., & Verheul, I. (2012).** What makes entrepreneurs happy? Determinants of satisfaction among founders. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 13(2), 371-387. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-011-9269-3>
- Clark, A. E. (2015).** What makes a good job? Job quality and job satisfaction. *IZA World of Labor*, 215. <https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.215>
- Cliff, J. E. (1998).** Does one size fit all? Exploring the relationship between attitudes towards growth, gender, and business size. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 13(6), 523-542. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026\(97\)00071-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(97)00071-2)
- Diener, E. (1984).** Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95(3), 542-575. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542>



- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985).** The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-75. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (2003).** Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54(1), 403-425. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145056>
- Dolan, P., Peasgood, T., & White, M. (2008).** Do we really know what makes us happy? A review of the economic literature on the factors associated with subjective well-being. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 29(1), 94-122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2007.09.001>
- Frey, B. S., & Stutzer, A. (2002).** What can economists learn from happiness research? *Journal of Economic Literature*, 40(2), 402-435. <https://doi.org/10.1257/002205102320161320>
- Ghasemi, A., & Zahediasl, S. (2012).** Normality tests for statistical analysis: A guide for non-statisticians. *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 10(2), 486-489. <https://doi.org/10.5812/ijem.3505>
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985).** Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76-88. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1985.4277352>
- Gupta, V. (2012).** Happiness and creativity at the workplace: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Management and Public Policy*, 3(2), 5-16.
- Gupta, V. K., Turban, D. B., Wasti, S. A., & Sikdar, A. (2009).** The role of gender stereotypes in perceptions of entrepreneurs and intentions to become an entrepreneur. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(2), 397-417. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2009.00296.x>
- Haar, J. M., Russo, M., Sune, A., & Ollier-Malaterre, A. (2014).** Outcomes of work-life balance on job satisfaction, life satisfaction and mental health: A study across seven cultures. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 85(3), 361-373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.08.010>
- Hessels, J., Rietveld, C. A., & Van der Zwan, P. (2018).** Self-employment and work-related well-being: The mediating role of job characteristics. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 33(5), 539-555. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.04.001>
- Hills, P., & Argyle, M. (2002).** The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: A compact scale for the measurement of psychological well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 33(7), 1073-1082. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869\(01\)00213-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00213-6)
- Jennings, J. E., & Brush, C. G. (2013).** Research on women entrepreneurs: Challenges to (and from) the broader entrepreneurship literature. *Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 663-715. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2013.782190>
- Kelley, D. J., Brush, C. G., Greene, P. G., & Litovsky, Y. (2013).** Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: Women's Report. Babson College.



- Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2007).** Psychological capital: Developing the human competitive edge. Oxford University Press.
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005).** The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(6), 803-855. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.131.6.803>
- Minniti, M., & Naude, W. (2010).** What do we know about the patterns and determinants of female entrepreneurship across countries? *European Journal of Development Research*, 22(3), 277-293. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2010.17>
- Nikolaev, B., Boudreaux, C. J., & Wood, M. (2019).** Entrepreneurship and subjective well-being: The mediating role of psychological functioning. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 44(3), 557-586. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258719830314>
- Okoye, P. V. C., & Eze, F. (2022).** Employee happiness and organizational performance: Evidence from Nigerian firms. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 14(1), 45-62.
- Pandeya, R., & Sharma, K. (2025).** Workplace happiness and employee performance: A psychological perspective. *British Journal of Business and Psychology Research*.
- Parasuraman, S., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2002).** Toward reducing some critical gaps in work-family research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 12(3), 299-312. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822\(02\)00062-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822(02)00062-1)
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001).** On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 141-166. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141>
- Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1985).** Optimism, coping, and health: Assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies. *Health Psychology*, 4(3), 219-247. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.4.3.219>
- Schjoedt, L. (2009).** Entrepreneurial job characteristics: An examination of their effect on entrepreneurial satisfaction. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(3), 619-644. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2009.00319.x>
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002).** Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment. Free Press.
- Sender, G. (2021).** Positive psychology in the workplace: A conceptual review. *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing*, 5(1), 112-125.
- Shir, N., Nikolaev, B. N., & Wincent, J. (2019).** Entrepreneurship and well-being: The role of psychological autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs satisfaction. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(5), 105875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.10.005>



- Stephan, U. (2018).** Entrepreneurs' mental health and well-being: A review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 32(3), 290-322. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2017.0001>
- Thiagarajan, B., et al. (2018).** Happiness, well-being and quality of life: A conceptual review. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Science*, 6(2), 15-22.
- Veenhoven, R. (2012).** Happiness: Also known as life satisfaction and subjective well-being. In K. C. Land, A. C. Michalos, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *Handbook of social indicators and quality of life research* (pp. 63-77). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2421-1_3
- Welter, F. (2011).** Contextualizing entrepreneurship - Conceptual challenges and ways forward. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 35(1), 165-184. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2010.00427.x>