



HAPPINESS AT WORK

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Uno de los principales objetivos de la psicología del trabajo y de las organizaciones es promover tanto el bienestar como el rendimiento de los empleados. Sin embargo, los distintos autores no son unánimes respecto a los fundamentos de la felicidad. El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar las enormes contribuciones de la Psicología Positiva y de la Filosofía al tema de la felicidad y sus influencias en el ámbito organizativo y de la productividad, ofreciendo una revisión de los distintos autores, subrayando las diferencias entre ellos y, sobre todo, abogando por un consenso en el campo de los fundamentos de la felicidad. De hecho, la gran diferencia entre los distintos autores es la falta de unanimidad respecto a los fundamentos de la felicidad. Mientras algunos autores optan por un concepto de felicidad que se identifica con el de placer, otros prefieren una mezcla de placer, compromiso y significado, evitando, sin embargo, definir la felicidad o, más bien, ocultándola detrás de la palabra bienestar. Sin embargo, si se lograra un consenso sobre las distintas aportaciones al tema de la felicidad, éste representaría un concepto mucho más manejable desde la perspectiva psicológica.

Palabras Claves: Bienestar laboral, Felicidad, Productividad, Tesis del trabajador feliz y productivo, Eudamonia, Edoné, Desempeño laboral, Bienestar.

One of the main goals of work and organisational psychology is to promote the well-being and performance of employees. However, the different authors do not agree on the fundamental concept of happiness. The objectives of this paper are to present the enormous contribution of positive psychology and philosophy to the subject of happiness and its influence on labour and productivity, to review several scholars in this field, to highlight the differences among them, and, especially, to find a consensus on the fundamentals of happiness. In fact, the major difference among all the contributions is that there is no unanimity on the fundamental concept of happiness. Whereas some authors see happiness as "pleasure", others prefer the concept of happiness as a mixture of "pleasure", "engagement" and "meaning", avoiding the definition of happiness, and hiding it behind the concept of well-being. However, if a consensus were reached, it would represent a concept that could be better managed from the psychological perspective.

Key words: Well-being at work, Happiness, Productivity, Happy-productive worker thesis, Eudaimonia, Hedonia, Job performance, Well-being.

Human beings have always tended to pursue happiness as a goal or an end, as an ideal and permanent state of well-being at which to arrive. But, not content with a happy future at the cost of a miserable life, we want to be happy at every moment of our life. This permanent happiness, however, seems very difficult to achieve, if not impossible, for life is always providing us with situations that are characterised by their "contrariness", i.e., they are opposed to our likes, our interests and our calmness. If we feel happy at any moment in time, a reason for disappointment soon appears, or some circumstance that disrupts our well-being. It seems that happiness cannot be permanent, but rather it is composed of small moments, details experienced in daily life, and perhaps its main characteristic is futility, its ability to appear and

disappear constantly throughout our lives.

What does it consist of, this happiness that we all pursue? Defining the concept is hard work. It is surely one of the most controversial and complicated definitions. As Kashdan, Biswas-Diener and King (2008) indicate, this is a "central concern" for humanity. The authors stress that several definitions can be found in philosophy, in religion, in cultural and political beliefs and values, and of course in psychology. However, they warn that psychologists synthesise ideas from other disciplines, although they are the only ones who provide a single united contribution to the concept of happiness and well-being. In fact, some authors (Diener, 1984) prefer to use a more manageable concept from a psychological perspective and speak of subjective well-being, which consists of three elements: a high number of personal satisfactions, a high number of positive feelings, and a low number of negative feelings. According to García Martín (2002), "There are many authors who have tried to define happiness or well-



being. According to Diener and Diener (1995) these concepts can be grouped into three broad categories. The first describes well-being as the individual's assessment of their own life in positive terms. This group refers to "life satisfaction". A second category highlights the preponderance of positive feelings or emotions over negative ones... The last of these three conceptions, closer to the philosophical and religious approaches, conceives happiness as a virtue or grace."

Now, the subject matter is further complicated if we associate the concept of "happiness" with another complicated concept: "work". In fact, although there is no general agreement on the definition of happiness, scientists are very concerned about man achieving happiness, especially in the workplace because, as Duró (2009) states, "we work 56,000 hours and we live about 700,000". The new millennium goal is to be happy at work. As Hosie and Sevastos (2009) state, in the new millennium, happiness at work is presented as an issue of utmost importance. In fact, these authors point out that, in recent years, there has been an explosion of interest among researchers in analysing happiness, optimism and positive character traits. Moreover, a search conducted using a scientific database (ABI/INFORM) in September 2015, resulted in nearly seventy-eight thousand results, with a substantial increase in research since 2000. Another significant finding can be found on the Internet: for example if we do a Google search using the English words "happiness and work", in September 2015, more than two hundred and twenty-six million web pages appeared. This indicates, on the one hand, that the subject of happiness at work is one of the topics of most interest today, and secondly, it is very likely that there exists profound sadness at work.

In fact, the World Health Organization analyses estimate that by 2020 depression will be the second leading cause of work incapacity, and they indicate that at present 22% of the workforce in Europe (almost 40 million workers) are victims of stress due to work.

In order to better understand the work-happiness relationship we must encounter the world of positive psychology, which provides interesting insights. However, it should be noted that the method of positive psychology is not aimed at discovering the root causes of happiness, but only the empirical manifestations of what is usually meant by happiness: the experience of positive emotions (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). We note that it is not even possible to define this "phenomenon" in precise scientific terms since

happiness consists of many different facets (Zelenski, Murphy & Jenkins, 2008).

So perhaps we must turn to philosophy for answers to the question of the nature and causes of happiness and to support the finding of a consensus integrating the two approaches to the study of happiness. For now we settle for two broad ideas from classical philosophy: a) happiness is a result of possessing goods that one loves; b) the person becomes what he loves. The human being aspires to attain many goods, but there is always one that he considers the most important, the absolute good, to which all others are subordinate, according to a hierarchy. It all depends on what that good is and the hierarchy established between the goods. If a person regards success as the absolute good, the happiness they can expect is that given by success. But also, in choosing that good as absolute, and in his subsequent conduct, the person decides about himself and makes himself. In this sense, every person has the happiness they want and becomes the person they want to be, according to the good or goods that they love and the order in which they love them.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Analysing the background of positive psychology, in a first approximation, it can be noted that this branch of research has as illustrious antecedents the ancient Greek philosophers who, like Aristotle, through the concept of eudaimonia (happiness), lay the foundations of a moral doctrine that identifies happiness with the possession of the good or, more specifically, to an activity of the soul in accordance with the virtue. In fact, as Vázquez (2006) states, "asking oneself about human well-being is not a fad. In a sense, Western philosophy has never had another central concern, either from the direct analysis of the substantive conditions of well-being (Aristotelian eudaimonia) or, more recently, from the analysis of the existential conditions that limit the scope of that ideal. Thus Aristotle, but also Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Bertrand Russell, Heidegger, and Cioran, have made this reflection on happiness one of the linchpins of thinking about "what it is to be human" (...) This new sensitivity to the scientific study of well-being, in a general sense, is not exclusive of psychology. The analysis of well-being and the pursuit of objective indicators concerning the social sciences as a whole (...) and dealing with human happiness within psychology is not a *fin de siècle* triviality."

Another author, Sanders (2003), shares the idea that the origins of positive psychology are to be found in the



Greek philosophers. In particular, the author warns that Aristotle pursues a practical knowledge regarding how to live well, developing all the capabilities that distinguish us as human beings and allow us to achieve *eudaimonia*, happiness or *flourishing*. Aristotle's question is very practical: what provisions should I acquire? These provisions - virtues - are settled and are shaped over time and custom. The cultivation of virtues will produce a happy man or woman.

Another Greek philosopher who spread the concept of *eudaimonia* in ancient Rome was Epictetus, a disciple of Socrates. Epictetus came to the conclusion that we can only achieve a full and happy life if we do the right things and live by the virtues, knowing how to distinguish between real and apparent goods (health, wealth, social position).

The concept of hedonism (Edoné) is associated with a Greek philosopher of the fourth century BC, Aristippus, who propelled the idea that the goal in life should be to experience the maximum amount of pleasure so that happiness would be represented as the collection of moments of pleasure.

However, there is no unanimity among the authors of positive psychology on the philosophical fundamentals. Some seem to opt for the concept of *eudaimonia*, others for that of *hedonia*, and others prefer a sort of mixture of the two concepts. This is the case of Ryan and Deci (2001), who claim that the results of various investigations have shown that the concept of well-being is better understood if viewed from a multidimensional perspective, including the theories of hedonism and happiness (*eudaimonia*).

But Peterson, Park and Seligman (2005) indicate that for the purposes of positive psychology it is almost superfluous to focus on looking for what they call "the sovereign principle", located at the base of happiness, and they advise us to focus on the concepts of "pleasure" and "meaning" as "ways to achieve happiness". Furthermore, the authors extend the two classic ways, adding a third way: engagement. Consequently, they present a longitudinal analysis to measure the three factors that predict satisfaction, obtaining the following results:

- a) Pleasure: 0.17
- b) Engagement: 0.30
- c) Sense and meaning: 0.26

As a result, they point out that the three "orientations" that lead to happiness are not incompatible with each other and can be pursued simultaneously in order to achieve it.

Therefore, we believe that positive psychology, trying to avoid as much as possible the potential "clashes of values" (Bacharach, 1989), represents a valid justification, from a philosophical perspective within the theoretical framework of the two schools mentioned and, furthermore, it can serve as a theoretical framework for harmonising the two philosophical currents. In fact, other authors have already pointed out that "regardless of whether well-being has a two-factor structure or not, what the two approaches have in common is the assumption that the hedonic and eudaimonic elements are part of the same overall structure of well-being, and they are interrelated" (Peiró, Ayala, Tordera, Lorente, Rodríguez, 2014).

THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Interestingly, in a few years, positive psychology has aroused a keen interest in academic and professional circles, hundreds of scientific papers have been written (in academic journals or non-academic magazines) and a large number of books devoted to the topic have appeared. According to Marujo and Neto (2008), the positive psychology movement "created a momentum with important implications for research, psychotherapy, education and other areas, all of which had an impact on professional and academic life, and hopefully, in an even more general way, they will impact our social worlds and the quality of our lives."

But, what is positive psychology? Sheldon and King (2001) define it as "the scientific study of the virtues and strengths of people dedicated to analysing the 'average person' but with the focus on discovering what works well and what can be done to improve". The goal of positive psychology is to improve the quality of life and prevent the onset of mental disorders and other diseases, with emphasis on building skills and prevention.

For Gable and Haidt (2005), it is the "study of the conditions and processes that enable individuals, groups and institutions to be able to thrive and operate optimally." According to these authors, "the goal of positive psychology is the study of the other side of the coin –the way in which people feel good, show altruism and create healthy families and institutions, dedicated to analysing the full spectrum of human experience."

When people refer to the term positive psychology, it tends to be interpreted as a new wave of spiritual philosophy or a new miraculous self-help method of the many that pervade the market. However, it only takes a little interest in the concept to understand how far these



assumptions are from reality. Positive psychology is but a branch of psychology that, with the same scientific rigour as the rest of psychology, focuses its attention on a field of research and interest different from that which is traditionally adopted: positive human qualities and characteristics.

We should ask ourselves whether positive psychology is a philosophical or empirical science. It is well-known that there is a branch of philosophy known as philosophical or rational psychology, which in many cases is equated with philosophical anthropology. This part of philosophy does not have as its direct mission to improve the quality of life or cure mental illness. Its goal is to understand the root causes of man's being, his cognitive and affective faculties, etc. In this sense it is a theoretical, not a practical, science. There is also empirical psychology which, based on observation, aims to cure certain mental illnesses. Well, we think positive psychology really belongs to the realm of empirical psychology, but has a much more pronounced philosophical dimension than "negative" psychology; a dimension that can vary from one author to another, and on which its proposals are based. In leaving out the objective of directly addressing pathologies, its empirical burden is less. And the fact that it seeks ways to improve quality of life leads this branch of psychology to wonder what makes a person happy, which is a philosophical question itself. Therefore, we believe that the key to success of positive psychology lies precisely in the philosophical basis adopted, i.e., rational psychology, which it takes as its starting point. If it begins with an appropriate anthropological conception, its proposals can be very valuable in improving the quality of life of the individual. If, on the other hand, it begins with a flawed anthropology, its solutions could be counterproductive for the individual, thus achieving the opposite of what it intended. The problem is that the authors of positive psychology, in general, do not make the philosophy behind its proposals explicit.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE FEELINGS

One of the most interesting aspects studied by positive psychology is that of feelings. This is a very broad and extremely complex field. So here we will limit ourselves to present the ideas or conclusions of some -very few- authors, on the importance of feelings for a happy life and especially for a happy life at work.

Among the researchers of positive psychology, we note the very pioneering work of the psychologist Barbara Fredrickson, who, among other things, presents the

"open and constructed theory of positive emotions", in which she shows that (2001) "positive emotions broaden the repertoire of ideas and actions of individuals, which, in turn, serve to create enduring personal resources, including intellectual, physical, psychological and social resources.

Vecina-Jiménez (2006) correctly notes that Barbara Fredrickson has opened a line of research focused specifically on positive emotions and their adaptive value. In particular, the open and constructed theory of positive emotions holds that emotions such as joy, excitement, satisfaction, pride, complacency, etc., although they are phenomenologically different, share the property of expanding people's thinking and action repertoires and building reserves of physical, intellectual, psychological and social resources available for future times of crisis. Experiencing positive emotions is always pleasant and enjoyable in the short term and, for this author, it also has other more lasting beneficial effects, to the extent that it prepares individuals for harder times ahead.

According to Seligman (2003), a positive attitude makes us adopt a way of thinking that is totally different from the negative attitude. Thus, while the negative, cold mood activates a way of thinking focused on what is bad in order to then remove it, the positive mood moves people to adopt a way of thinking that is creative, tolerant, constructive, generous, relaxed and lateral. This style of thinking aims to highlight what is good, not what is bad. It does not change course to detect errors, but it fine tunes itself to seek virtues.

According to Fredrickson and Losada (2005), there is a broad spectrum of scientific research documenting the adaptive value of positive emotions. In particular, experiments in the field of Positive Psychology have shown that good feelings:

- ✓ change the outlook of the person, broadening the scope of attention, widening behavioural repertoires, and increasing intuition and creativity;
- ✓ modify good bodily sensations, aiding recovery from the after-effects of cardiovascular problems, and altering the frontal brain asymmetry;
- ✓ protect physical and mental health, increasing the capacity to face adversity, increasing happiness, allowing psychological growth, reducing the level of hydrocortisone (cortisol), inflammatory stress responses and physical discomfort, increasing resistance to rhinovirus and reducing seizures;
- ✓ increase the chances of a longer life.

In addition, as stated by Seo and Barrett (2007),



positive emotions can constantly affect the three dimensions of motivation, helping to choose the direction (selection of an action), appropriately dosing the effort required to carry out the action (intensity of action), and finally acting with perseverance to achieve the selected target (duration of action).

In fact, the empirical study conducted by Erez and Isen (2002), clearly indicates that the people who participated in the experiment and were in a good mood, scored better than participants who were in a neutral mood, demonstrating a higher level of perseverance, greater engagement and higher levels of motivation.

Another empirical study by Marks (2006) on 2000 British workers, confirms that individuals who experience positive emotions scored more positively on key performance indicators such as job satisfaction, meaning of work, cognitive and physical engagement, loyalty and productivity. The author emphasises that positive emotions are not only the result of doing things right, but they even increase the potential to do things well in the future.

Judge and Erez (2007), trying to explain the obtaining of better results by positive workers, believe that this phenomenon may be related to the following:

1. The cheerful person usually has positive affect, and this, in turn, leads them to think better, to make better decisions, to be more creative and to be more motivated to cooperate and help more and, in general, to obtain better results in a wide variety of tasks;
2. The cheerful person attracts more and better companions;
3. The cheerful person participates in more activities and faces work with more vigour, more energy and greater initiative.

Finally, Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2008) note that empirical research has made it clear that positive emotions:

1. positively affect negotiations;
2. positively affect the individual level of optimism;
3. reinforce individual relationships;
4. predispose people to help others;
5. can positively affect originality and flexibility;
6. stimulate joy, exploration and creativity.

THE INFLUENCE OF FEELINGS IN THE ORGANISATIONAL FIELD

It is important to note for the purposes of our study that researchers in the field of positive psychology acknowledge that positive emotions can not only

transform individuals, but can also act at the organisational level. In particular, these authors argue that individual positive emotions can contribute to the transformation of organisations and communities, since emotions have interpersonal resonance. Therefore, by creating a chain of events that “transport” positive emotions between the different elements of the chain, these same emotions can transform organisations into more cohesive, more moral and more harmonious social organisations (Fredrickson, 2003).

In fact, as Páez, Campos and Bilbao (2008) indicated, there are at least five longitudinal studies that show that talking and sharing a positive experience with others reinforces happiness, beyond the impact of the act itself. This effect of “capitalisation or amplification of the positive impact” occurs more intensely if the people who hear the positive communication respond authentically, validating and accepting it, and the opposite occurs if the environment responds passively or destructively. In addition, the authors note that the amplification of positive emotions serves to strengthen the social relations that generate resources that facilitate altruism, reinforce affiliation, etc. In the same vein, another author, Myers (2000), notes that when we are happy, we are more ready to help others. In fact, psychologists call this fact “the phenomenon of feeling good, and doing good.”

Other empirical studies (Fowler & Christakis, 2008) confirm this intuition and show that happiness can spread within a social network, from one person to another, until it reaches three levels, reaching the conclusion that the happiness of people depends on the happiness of the people with whom they relate, and therefore happiness -like public health- must be considered as a collective phenomenon. Their research, which analysed the happiness of nearly 5,000 people over a period of 20 years shows that when a person is happy, the networking effect can be measured to the third degree. This means that a person’s happiness triggers a chain reaction that benefits not only their friends but the friends of their friends, and the friends of the friends of their friends, up to the third level. In particular, the researchers noted that when a participant experienced a moment of happiness, a friend who lived within almost a kilometre and a half (one mile), had a 25% higher probability of reaching a state of happiness. A spouse who was living with them experienced an increase in probability of 8%, and siblings who live less than a mile away experienced an increase of 14%. For neighbours who lived next door, the increase was 34%. However, the most surprising result was obtained in



indirect relationships. While a person who entered a state of happiness increased the likelihood that the same would happen to a friend, a friend of that friend experienced a probability of almost 10% of increasing their happiness, and a friend of that friend had an increase in probability of 5.6%.

A BRIEF REFLECTION ON FEELINGS

As can be seen by what we just stated, the authors of positive psychology attach great importance to positive feelings, attitudes and emotions, and show that these positively influence people's quality of life and the quality of their work, both individually and organisationally. However, the abovementioned authors and others lack deeper thinking about feelings. Specifically, we believe it is not enough to know that positive emotions are very important, and should be encouraged in order to achieve a higher quality of life, but the following questions must be answered at least:

1. What are feelings? Answering this question is important, because there is a big difference in considering feelings as superficial organic reactions or as a phenomenon of a somatic-spiritual nature. The world of affectivity, as noted above, is complex, and to penetrate it requires deep knowledge of the human being. It is necessary to distinguish between actual rational affectivity (will) and sensitive affectivity, and to explain the interaction between them. Thus, the feeling of pleasure is not the same as the feeling of joy, although some authors seem to equate the two or at least not distinguish between them. If only sensitive affectivity were considered, it would not be possible to account for its origin or purpose. Hence the following question:
2. What is the relationship between positive feelings and rational human faculties? The person is "one" and none of its dimensions can be explained in isolation. Feelings occur with the knowledge of certain perceptible goods, but the one who knows and loves (or hates) is always the person. And as the person is (and this has much to do with their will and intelligence) they will appreciate positively or negatively the goods they know.
3. Who should direct the action ultimately: feelings or reason? There is a certain danger into which the exaltation of positive feelings may fall: it bestows upon them the ability to direct the life of the person, which lies exclusively with the very rational faculties. Feelings have, in our opinion, an eminently "auxiliary" but not a directive character. Well oriented or educated, feelings are a great help for the person to know the

good that they must do and to put it into practice. We just used the words "well oriented or educated". Some people think that spontaneous feelings are always valuable precisely because they are spontaneous. But spontaneity is not a guarantee of value. Feelings by themselves (whether positive or negative) do not guarantee that what is being felt is good or bad for the person. Therefore, they must be educated to cooperate with reason and will in the knowledge of what is right and in its practical realisation. And that education is the "rationalisation" of feelings through prudence, which gives rise to two great virtues: fortitude and temperance. Which brings us to the next question:

4. What is the relationship between the moral life of the person and their feelings? If feelings are not educated by fortitude and temperance, they become an obstacle for the good, and therefore happy, life. But in order to educate their feelings, the person needs to have a real idea about the meaning of life and to be consistent with it. It is not that the person gives a "meaning" to their life, any meaning, but rather a meaning consistent with their being a person. If the meaning of life is summed up in the pursuit of money, power or success, their feelings will respond positively to these goods, but not to the need to help other people, to friendship, or to failure at work. Therefore, it is not enough to identify the factors that predict satisfaction. As we have seen, for some authors there would be pleasure, commitment, meaning and significance. It is necessary to know what pleasures are meaningful for the realisation of the person, what is the true sense or meaning that the person must give their actions and, finally, what commitments are worthy of the person and which ones are not.

All this leads us to affirm that the proposals of positive psychology must be completed with the appropriate rational psychology.

POSITIVE ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOR, A THEME OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Another subject, closely connected to the branch of positive psychology, is positive organisational behaviour at work (POB), which, as indicated by the founder of the theory, Fred Luthans (2002), represents "the study and application of the strengths of human resources and their positive psychological capacities that can be evaluated, developed and managed effectively to improve employee performance." Positive organisational behaviour is based on five psychological strengths:



- ✓ *Self-efficacy*. According to Bandura (1997) -quoted by Salanova (2008)-, self-efficacy represents “beliefs in one’s own abilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce certain achievements or results.” According to this author, self-efficacy is a primary human strength with enormous potential to positively influence business management, as it can lead to:
 - ✓ Choosing positively.
 - ✓ Motivating and trying harder.
 - ✓ Being persistent.
 - ✓ Thinking positively.
 - ✓ Resisting stress.
- ✓ *Hope*: This is a positive motivational state that is embodied in the willpower to achieve goals and to plan how to reach them. According to Luthans (2002), quoting Snyder, hope does not only represent the individual determination that the objectives will be achieved, but also the personal belief that successful plans will be formulated and the right paths will be chosen to achieve the objectives.
- ✓ *Optimism*: This is an attitude which leads people to trust that everything that happens is good and positive. As Peterson (2000) indicates, optimism is associated with the thought that the social and material future will lead to a situation that the person considers desirable and that involves certain pleasures. Therefore, optimism does not intend to have a similar outcome for all, as it depends on what each individual considers desirable. Nevertheless, optimism is the force that drives people to achieve their objective, while pessimism is the force that drives us to defeat. In this regard, Luthans (2002) cites a survey from *MetLife*, an American insurance company, which shows that the agents considered to be more optimistic, over two years, managed to sell 37% more insurance policies than the agents that had been classified as pessimistic.
- ✓ *Happiness* or individual well-being: Luthans (2002) states that several meta-analytical investigations show that people who are satisfied with their lives also tend to be satisfied at work.
- ✓ *Emotional Intelligence*: the ability to recognise our own emotions and the emotions of others. According to Luthans (2002), emotional intelligence applied to work is useful for creating a network of relationships that can be used in times of difficulty.

Salanova (2008), following the path marked by Luthans, noted that the rapid changes in societies also determine a rapid change in organisations. Organisational changes, in turn, result in changes in the workplace that can positively or negatively influence the health, safety, and well-being of

employees. So, if these changes are not well managed, this can eventually lead to the emergence of “sick” organisations that are characterised by their inability to adapt to the environment.

The author also points out that modern organisations expect their employees to be proactive and show personal initiative, to collaborate with others, to be responsible for their own career development and to commit to “business excellence”. “This business objective cannot be achieved with a “healthy” workforce in the traditional style: employees satisfied with their jobs, who do not experience job stress and who have low rates of absenteeism. It takes more than this to move all the organisational machinery and achieve this goal... The concept of the healthy organisation fits perfectly into this more positive scientific perspective.”

However, Luthans and Youssef (June, 2007) emphasise that people with positive attitudes do not necessarily create positive teams, since collective cognitions, emotions and actions are legitimated, promoted and coordinated by factors (business values, rules, policies and practices) that must exist in the organisational context in which they are expressed. For example, the honesty of the organisation can facilitate, enable and even generate individual honesty. Therefore, if the facilitating factors promoted by the organisation do not exist, individual positive actions are of little use.

POSITIVE ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND WORK PERFORMANCE

The meta-analytic research by Luthans and Youssef (June 2007) has shown that positive organisational behaviour can contribute between 4% and 15% of the variation in work performance. In addition, the authors calculated the economic impact of the results in the two companies where the research was conducted, concluding that the usefulness of individual positive psychology (optimism = 0.028 and persistence/tenacity = 0.055) multiplied by the average salary of an employee (\$ 50,000) and multiplied by the number of workers (almost 25,000) results in an increase of \$ 50,000,000 in the companies’ profits. Finally, the authors note that “the positive behaviours of workers, together with the positive behaviours of organisations, have a positive and substantial impact on both individual and organisational performance as well as on other business results. These results are probably more important than the results that can be achieved using other material resources, or other economic models.”

Other empirical studies support these findings. In



particular, the investigations of Wright and Cropanzano (2004), which show that Happiness/Psychological Well-being (PWB), a very similar concept to that of positive organisational behaviour, explained up to 25% of the variation in the results of workers. Specifically, the authors note that the higher the level of happiness and positive emotions of workers, the stronger the link between job satisfaction, performance and results. These authors, making a calculation similar to the one described above, note that in a company of 10 engineers with an average salary of \$ 65,000, the annual profit of Happiness / Psychological Well-being (PWB) is \$ 650,000.

Other researchers, Judge and Erez (2007) suggest that a correct application to performance of the combination of Emotional stability and Extraversion –which, in turn, is a reflection of a happy personality– involves much more significant results than isolated behaviours. Their results clearly indicate that people who are optimistic, cheerful and enthusiastic in life, achieve better performance than sad people.

CONCLUSIONS

In this review, we have presented the enormous contributions of positive psychology to the subject of happiness and its influences on the organisation and productivity.

As a potential contribution, a review has been provided of the various authors who have addressed the issue of positive psychology and happiness. The differences between them have been highlighted, especially considering that there is no unanimity between them regarding the fundamentals. While some opt for a concept of happiness that is equated with pleasure, others prefer a mixture of pleasure, engagement and meaning, however they avoid defining happiness or, rather, hide it behind the word well-being (which represents a more manageable concept from a psychological perspective). We would like to conclude this review showing that positive psychology should focus on ways of achieving happiness, as it can be presented as the necessary bridge in order to put aside the philosophical search for the sovereign principle of happiness and focus on the guidelines that lead to happiness, which, after all, are not incompatible with each other and can be pursued simultaneously in order to seek and achieve happiness.

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