FEELING OF HAPPINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AS ASSESSED BY CONTEMPORARY EMPLOYEES

Anna WZIĄTEK-STAŚKO[1*], Katarzyna GRACJASZ[2]

[1] Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Faculty of Management and Social Communication, Institute of Economics, Finance and Management; anna.wziatek-stasko@uj.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0001-6873-7488
[2] Bachelor in Human Capital Management at WSB Merito University in Poznań; k.a.gracjasz@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0002-7599-687X
* Correspondence author

Purpose: The aim of the publication is to present the opinions of contemporary employees on the relationship between their sense of happiness at work and their organizational commitment.

Design/methodology/approach: The article predominantly focuses on the discussion of the determinants of the sense of happiness. The article is interdisciplinary in nature, as it intertwines findings from the fields of psychology, management, philosophy and social sciences. The research was based on the qualitative methodology. Polling the views on the relationship between the indicated constructs was conducted using the CAWI survey conducted in November 2023 on a sample of 220 Polish employees.

Findings: Research results prove that modern employees perceive the existence of a correlation between their sense of happiness in the workplace and organizational commitment.

Research limitations/implications: The sociodemographic diversity of the participants in the study (e.g. age, gender, etc.) may, to some extent, distort the obtained results. In the future, the research sample should be expanded to confirm the obtained results and the in-depth interview technique should be additionally used. It is also suggested to develop a new measurement tool that will allow for the formulation of more precise conclusions using advanced statistical methods.

Practical implications: Being happy at work is important to modern employees**,** unlike the attractiveness of remuneration, the role of which in the process of creating a sense of happiness at work gives way to good relations with the managerial staff. Happy employees are dominated by the emotional component of organizational commitment.

Originality/value: The issues discussed in this article fill the research gap regarding the identification of the interdependence existing between the sense of happiness at work and organizational commitment, thus expanding the area of knowledge about organizational behaviour in the presented area.

Keywords: happiness, eudaimonia, employees' sense of happiness, organizational commitment of employees, human capital management.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

The concept of the importance of the broadly understood happiness in the context of human capital management is generating more and more social interest, while in the scientific community it has gained special importance in research in recent years (Galván Vela et al., 2021; Fitriana et al., 2022). The indicated imperative appeared in those explorations mainly as a motivational component in the actions of individuals and social collectives, but it was also a leitmotif of politics, economics and contemporary thought (Rando Cueto et al., 2023).

Current trends in the area of exercising control over human capital emphasize the role of employee happiness, indicating this determinant as a key factor for achieving organizational success. Research on work psychology and management increasingly proves that the level of happiness in the workplace is integrally related to commitment, productivity, and loyalty of employees to the organization (Walczak, 2023). Happiness also influences employees' decision to stay in their organisation (Charles-Leija et al., 2023).

Recognizing the discussed topic, it can be noticed that despite the fact that the issue of happiness in its construct has been addressed from various perspectives and in multilateral correlations, the scientific discourse still lacks research assuming the interdependence between employees' sense of happiness and their organizational commitment. Undoubtedly, the existing scientific resources in this field are valuable and worthy of attention, but there are not many studies among them that would treat the problem of the importance of happiness in relation to organizational commitment. Therefore, an attempt was made to identify the views of contemporary employees regarding their sense of happiness at work and organizational commitment, as well as the interdependence between the above-mentioned constructs, which is the main goal of this publication. The article focuses mainly on the presentation of the determinants of the sense of happiness in the employee environment, and its structure includes first of all a theoretical part, focused on the essence of the concepts constituting the pillars of the selected topic, i.e. the sense of happiness and organizational commitment, and an empirical part, which includes: description of the research methodology, presentation of the research results, discussion and summary.

2. Reception of happiness – different approaches to eudaimonia

The issue of happiness, both in the literature and in the commonly accepted terminology, is considered from many perspectives, and on the scientific level it deviates from the criterion of unambiguity. Research on happiness is undoubtedly an interesting field. However, it is also extremely difficult to explain, causing heated discussions and controversial polemics, including

discussions on the relationship between happiness and particular models of economic development, satisfaction with life, and satisfaction with its various elements (Gierańczyk, Leszczyńska, 2019).

Reflection on happiness should start with linguistic analysis, explaining what the searched word means in order to discuss it logically later (Chwaja, 2017). Therefore, referring to the etymology, the Greek source of the word indicates the connection of the term in question with eudaimonism (Greek *eudaimon* means "happy"), which under no circumstances should be identified with hedonism understood as a life attitude focused mainly on searching and finding the fundamental content of a life of pleasure. Nevertheless, it is necessary to be aware that, just like the world, there were individuals, and at one time there were also doctrines according to which happiness consisted in enjoying pleasure (Drewnowski, 2008).

Referring to the dictionary definition from Encyklopedia PWN (Polish Encyclopaedia), happiness is an issue that is not uniformly defined, usually used in the sense of acquiring the most socially valued goods or attributes and lasting satisfaction with life, closely combined with cheerfulness and optimism. It is also interpreted through the prism of a cognitive perspective of assessing one's own life, with the belief that it is successful, valuable, meaningful. Happiness is related to a successful balance of life experiences (Encyklopedia PWN, 2023).

A comprehensive definition of happiness is provided by GPT Chat, which is based on artificial intelligence. Happiness here should be identified with a sense of contentment, joy, satisfaction, as well as general – in a holistic sense – well-being. It is a subjective experience, unique (individual) for each person, often resulting from a combination of successful relationships, a sense of purpose or meaning, commitment in activities that bring pleasure, and a positive attitude towards life (Chat GTP, 2024).

Undoubtedly, happiness is a complex phenomenon that includes long-term and rational satisfaction with life (Tatarkiewicz, 2005), a deep sense of fulfilment and emotional balance (Chat GPT, 2024), and not short-term and fleeting moments of pleasure (Wziątek-Staśko, Krawczyk-Antoniuk, 2022).

It is difficult to experience happiness without taking action, either physical or mental, because the effort put into completing tasks is a source of true satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Wziątek-Staśko, Krawczyk-Antoniuk, 2022), which generates a feeling involving a state of flow externalized through absolute absorption, complete immersion, even turning off consciousness (Sender et. al., 2021; Misra, Srivastava, 2022). Interestingly, people who are in a state of happiness eagerly move into untested areas, facing new challenges (Ali, 2020).

In general, maintaining a balance between a pleasant, active and meaningful life can contribute to achieving lasting happiness (Salas-Vallina et al., 2020), and the existence of specific connections between employee well-being and engagement was already confirmed by researchers at the beginning of the century (Schaufeli et al., 2008; Kinowska, 2021). Due to the multitude of terms relating directly to the issue of happiness, for the purposes of the survey, the authors of the study proposed to respondents a unified definition, which characterizes

happiness as a relatively lasting feeling of satisfaction with various aspects of life (work), combined with general optimism, cheerfulness and a positive attitude towards relation to the surrounding reality.

3. Organizational commitment – conceptualization of the concept

Organizational commitment of employees began to arouse increasing interest of scientists in the second half of the 20th century, along with a significant increase in the importance of human capital management in the economic space (Marzec, 2014). The discussed issue gained popularity mainly due to the contemplations that were closely related to the psychological aspects of the variously understood functioning of individuals at the place of their employment (Bańka et al., 2002).

The pioneer of the research on organizational commitment was the American sociologist – Howard S. Becker. His works were the first attempt to comprehensively approach that commitment, taking into account the perspective of the relationship between the individual and the organization. In his opinion, organizational commitment functions mainly on the basis of the economic exchange relationship between an employee and an economic entity, which means that it is of a calculated nature (Becker, 1960; Marzec, 2014; Wziątek-Staśko, Michalik, 2021).

According to the explanation proposed by William A. Kahn, organizational commitment can be understood as a mental state that enables employees to express themselves during their work. It is also harnessing the self of the organization's participants to fulfil their role in the workplace (Chałupczak, Bugaj, 2020).

One of the more popular definitions suggested by Lyman Porter proves that organizational commitment is associated with an employee's individual attachment to a given organization and identification with it (Porter et al., 1974; Lenart-Gansiniec, Michalik, 2018).

When considering the issue called organizational commitment, one should remember the approach proposed by Natalie J. Allen and John P. Meyer, who, through their research, developed a three-component concept of that commitment, introducing a division into the categories of affective commitment and durability, and finally enriching it with variant of normative commitment (Allen, Meyer, 1990; Grabowski, 2015; Wziątek-Staśko et al., 2022). The affective component of that commitment concerns positive emotions felt towards a given organization and the work performed for it. In turn, commitment to persistence means the employee's bond with the economic entity, primarily as a result of the benefits they achieve by being its participant (Kmiotek, 2016). However, normative commitment is associated with a sense of moral obligation to remain a participant in the organization, because employees characterized by a high level of commitment consider it an obligation to remain in the entity

that employs them for the sake of organizational loyalty (Gulewicz, 2019). When designing a tool needed to conduct a measurement among contemporary employees, the authors reduced organizational commitment to the category of an employee's relationship with an organization (company/institution), which occurs when the employee is largely willing to make greater than expected effort on its behalf and believes in its goals and values and wants to belong to it.

4. Research methodology

The aim of the research carried out in November 2023 was to identify the views of currently employed people regarding the relationship between happiness and organizational commitment. The measurement was carried out on a sample of professionally active employees (N = 220) using the CAWI method. Taking into account the fact that so far no effective tool that would research and measure both analysed concepts of happiness and organisational commitment was developed, an original instrument was created. The diagnostic survey method and survey technique using a questionnaire were used. The representativeness of the sample was achieved using a random sampling design. The majority of respondents in the research were middle-aged, i.e. from 35 to 44 years old – 46%, in most cases employed in private enterprises – 70% and in those that are considered large (employing over 249 employees) – 41%. In terms of gender, the research sample was relatively balanced, with a slight predominance of women – 57%.

Taking into account the fact that obtaining information about motives that directly influence the happiness of human beings can significantly increase the intensity of their eudaimonia (Spowart, 2022), and for the purposes of this article, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H.1. According to most respondents, feeling happy in the workplace is important to them.

H.2. The attractiveness of remuneration is the most highly rated determinant by modern employees, determining their sense of happiness in the workplace.

H.3. Happy employees have an emotional component to organizational commitment.

H.4. Most of the analysed respondents notice the correlation between their sense of happiness at work and organizational commitment.

5. Research results

The rich and extremely valuable factual material collected during the research allowed us to confirm hypotheses H.1, H.3 and H.4 and falsify hypothesis H.2.

The first hypothesis (H.1) assumes that for modern employees, being happy in the workplace is important. This is not a ground-breaking assumption, because currently, for many people, the primary value in life is broadly understood happiness, which they strive for on various levels, i.e. in the private and professional spheres. The questions included in the survey questionnaire allowed us to obtain comprehensive data, based on which it can be concluded that, in fact, being happy at work is of particular value to 95% of the respondents, which is 208 participants of the research. 151 respondents (over 70% of the analysed population) reported that they feel happy at work, which only confirms that this area of human functioning is extremely important to them.

As a result of the research, hypothesis H.2 was falsified, which means that the attractiveness of remuneration is not the leading condition, which is rated very highly by the research participants, on which they base their sense of happiness in the workplace. Only 49 out of 151 (32%) of the surveyed employees rated the attractiveness of the salary at the highest level of a five-point scale, which placed this factor only in a distant fifth place. The classification was dominated by the determinant relating to good relations between the organization's participants and the management staff, which was indicated by as many as 61 (40%) respondents. The remaining steps on the podium were taken by the following categories: experiencing a sense of meaning in the work performed (36% of the surveyed population) and the ability to make independent decisions while performing professional duties (36% of respondents).

Hypothesis H.3 applies to happy participants of economic entities who are characterized by an emotional component of organizational commitment. Since in the vast majority of cases happy employees declare their willingness to work for their current employer, the hypothesis can be considered confirmed. Considering the survey results, 89 (59%) of the 151 respondents who said they were happy in their workplace expressed their willingness to work without coercion or feeling of obligation to the organization. 43 (29%) people stated that they worked because they felt some obligation towards the entity employing them. Interestingly, 18 (12%) of the surveyed employees indicated that they had to work, while admitting that they felt happy at work.

According to the last hypothesis (H.4), modern employees are aware of the interdependence between the sense of happiness and organizational commitment. 157 (71%) of the 220 respondents are aware of the connection between the above-mentioned constructs. In the opinion of as many as 188 people, which constitutes 85% of the analysed research sample, the level of their happiness in the workplace may have a real impact on the intensity of their organizational commitment. However, 68% (150) of respondents point out the reverse of that correlation and emphasize that the level of organizational commitment may actually influence the level of happiness in the workplace.

6. Discussion

The sense of happiness is an extremely complex structure, and its individual conditions may be interconnected and create various systems (Kanasz, 2015). Over the years, the role of happiness in influencing employee satisfaction and its importance for performance in workplaces has been studied (Erselcan, Özer, 2023). An attempt has been made to examine the impact of satisfaction on employee happiness (Butt et al., 2020), gender in terms of happiness in the workplace in the Spanish financial sector (Castellanos-Redondo et al., 2021), and even happiness as a predictor of friendship in the organization (Öztürk, Sumbas, 2023). Year by year, there are more and more research works whose authors explore the topic of employee happiness, but as you can see, there are not many of them that connect employees' sense of happiness with their organizational commitment.

An advocate of positive psychology, Martin Seligman, in his scientific works, has repeatedly pointed out the connection between the sense of happiness and authentic and deep commitment (Seligman, 2011). It should be borne in mind that commitment to work or profession is a necessary condition, but at the same time it is not sufficient to talk about organizational commitment (Juchnowicz, 2009).

An in-depth analysis of the literature on the subject allowed the authors of this study to reach the content published by Cynthia Fisher, who in her scientific article from 2010 raises the issue of happiness in the workplace, referring to organizational commitment. The Australian management professor points out the correlation between the sense of happiness and the affective component of organizational commitment (Fisher, 2010), which was confirmed by the results presented above (hypothesis H.3).

When discussing the factors that generate a sense of happiness in the workplace, attention should be paid to the study conducted in 2021 by the Jobhouse employment agency (Gaszek et al., 2021), which clearly shows that remuneration is one of the key factors influencing the sense of happiness in the workplace. workplace. However, 51% of the participants in the measurement expect it to improve, which may explain why in the study conducted by the authors, the respondents rated good relations with the management staff as the highest, placing remuneration only in the distant, fifth position in the list of the highest rated factors determining the sense of happiness at work. The topics explored by the authors of this article highlight many interesting research areas. "Happiness" and "engagement" are inspiring research categories in themselves. However, their combination opens up new spaces prompting analysis. This applies to both the impact of happiness on commitment and the reverse relationship. This article focuses on the first of them.

The concepts of happiness and organizational commitment seem strikingly important, especially in relation to management practices. Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the majority of surveyed employees feel happy in their workplaces. The results obtained during the research confirm the existence of awareness of business entities' participants in the scope of the relationship between the sense of happiness and organizational commitment, at the same time enriching the current scientific achievements and knowledge regarding the mutual impact of the discussed constructs.

Touching on the topic of various limitations of the research process, it would be necessary to briefly comment on sociodemographic data, which undoubtedly influence the measurement results and, consequently, also the conclusions and reflections. The uneven distribution of participants in the study (126 women and 94 men) makes it impossible to decide which gender is happier in the workplace. Age and education influence the attitudes and behaviors of respondents, which is crucial in the context of social or psychological research. Therefore, it is difficult to clearly state whether belonging to a given generation and the level of education have a real impact on happiness in the workplace.

This publication is a kind of invitation to conduct further scientific research in the area of the axiology of happiness management, in order to analyse the evolution and trends taking place in practice on an ongoing basis. In reference to the above, it is suggested that in the future the research sample be enlarged in order to authenticate the results obtained in the survey. It would be worth exploring the topic of good relationships with managerial staff by asking respondents what exactly they mean to them. Distribution of all three components of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) among individuals who report being happy in their workplace is an interesting phenomenon. However, first of all, it would be necessary to expand the study based on quantitative methodology using statistical mathematics in order to finally confirm the authenticity of the correlation between the sense of happiness at work and the organizational commitment of modern employees. Undoubtedly, the wealth of subsequent directions encourages and motivates further activities and investigations at the diagnostic level.

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