Pursuing Happiness in the Workplace, Purpose and Challenge for Human Resources Management

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Abstract

Through this paper we aim to demonstrate that happiness at work is particularly relevant to our existence, just as for each of us individual happiness is a priority. Taking into account that we all spend most of the day at work, surrounded by our colleagues, locked at our workstations, getting happiness at work becomes imperative.

Considering that the phrase "happiness at work" is a relatively recent one, and that at present it is still considered a myth, the study and analysis of the concept represents a real mission and a special challenge both for the management of human resources, and for managerial psychology.

The concept of happiness at work will be studied, both from the manager's perspective and from the employees' perspective, especially that enthusiasm, devotion, fidelity and happiness cannot be "acquired" by organizations, as no true leader can be "bought" by to employees.

Key words: Human resources management, job, happiness, satisfaction
J.E.L. classification: M12, M54, J53

1. Introduction

Happiness at work is closely linked to everyone's perception of prosperity (to prosper, but not in the material sense of the notion). When individuals engage in work so that they have more relational connections, more chances to try and learn new things, to support others, giving meaning to the work they are doing, they report higher levels of prosperity.

It is imperative to introduce in the equation of happiness at work, on the one hand the leadership (the process of directing individuals and / or their ideas) and on the other hand the employees, especially since on average at work, we spend 90,000 hours of our life, which is a significant part of our lives. (Sebastian, 2017) The internal and external challenges of any organization create unique, unique situations, and the manager is in a position to make decisions and initiate actions influencing the professional life of employees. Many situations generate dissatisfaction, frustration, even depression, "happiness at work" being limited, blocked or even forgotten.

Happiness at work is a relatively new concept, too little treated by human resources management specialists and more related to the component of managerial psychology or the psychology of the employer and the employee, so of the emotional dimension, the ability to reason with and about emotions.

From this perspective, happiness at work is different from work satisfaction (which, in a way, is a component of it). Assuming, categorically, the creation of an environment that allows employees to perform, an environment in which they feel valued and valued, feel comfortable, and determine their involvement "body and soul." The organization in which employees are happy at work must also allow an area of 'emotional development arena'. But it is not enough, at present, including the emotional intelligence of the organization, which derives from the relations between employees (working relationships, formed and under the influence of emotional skills).

Workplace climate determines job happiness or workplace stress. In this context, we cannot avoid talking about stress management, which refers to the ability to tolerate stress and to control momentum impulses.

Another key issue to be dealt with in the context of "happiness at work" is its performance and management, because obviously without performance management, work cannot be organized in such a way as to obtain optimum results.

Cultural differences also exert a major influence on the perception of happiness at work, just as it exerts a major influence on the employee rewarding process. The "money talk" principle is not always the equivalent of the principle of happiness at work. Each individual has their own perceptions about their professional career and their life as a whole. The individual goals at work are different, the perception of feedback differs, so that the subject of happiness at work, no matter how much we want it, cannot be an objective discussion.

2. Current Literature Review

If, some 30 years ago, psychologists and economists rarely discussed each other, now more and more specialists in the field of economics have realized that psychologists can make an important contribution to solving economic problems (Bradshaw, 2013).

A particularly interesting article that distinguishes between work satisfaction and happiness at work and explains why the first term is included in the second is "The Right and Wrong of Pursuing Happiness in the Workplace "(Positive and Negative Practices in the Process of Making Happiness at Work) (Gomez, 2017). If satisfaction is measurable and objective, happiness is extremely subjective. This is why we need to be cautious when studying this phenomenon.

Thus, an employee may want a higher salary to be happy, while another may require projects to be remarked, to be recognized in public (including diplomas and promotions). An employee is attracted to a large workspace and equipped with minimalist furniture, unlike another who would like a sushi bar and office desk colleagues, while his colleagues would like loyalty programs offered by the company (excursions free, fitness subscriptions, vacation leave) and so on. From an article on workplace happiness by studying renowned Romanian companies (including Flanco, Telus International, Mandarine International), happiness at work is inevitable when you are appreciated and you are constantly given the opportunity to you learn, learn and be involved in new activities. (Anghel, 2016)

Things can be presented in another light, because they are superficial people, ignore the problems, it is very easy to say they are happy at work, while others claim to be dissatisfied with what happens to work, always seeking to find the negative aspects and exaggerate the problems.

A new concept is also that of a total employee. The total employee (manager or subordinate) is the individual involved in his work in all aspects (physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual). He puts into play all the capabilities at his disposal. It has multiple abilities and assumes multiple responsibilities and roles (Câdea & Câdea, 2005, p. 32).

We do not have to treat indifferently the problem related to the type of activities carried out. We refer here to the different impact of routine activities on non-routine activities. "Formal structures deal with the routine extremely well, but not the change" (Kotter, 2009, p. 129), so all those involved in an organization, whether employed or employers, are spending more and more time trying to cope with disputes more and more vindictive. Certainly, there is a need for changes imposed by both the competitive environment and the natural evolutions that occur in any field of activity, requiring real changes in mentality in the rooted organizational cultures.

Motivation originates within the individual, and the employee is also motivated by the promised rewards. It is, therefore, recommended that organizations, through their leaders, communicate permanently the possible forms of rewards, so that employees can perceive the link between consequence, performance and effort in the clearest possible way. In this way, a strong motivating effect will be achieved, which will lead to job satisfaction and increased effort.

More and more organizations / companies / companies are investing in their employees to help them feel comfortable at work and even declare themselves happy because they are the ones who are more creative, more productive, and more loyal to the place and the likelihood that they leave the company is a very small one. This is why companies are late in providing additional financial

benefits for involved employees and delivering results. Some organizations open relaxation areas that employees can use, others offer free tolls to sports halls or health clinics, and so on.

However, we must not forget the reverse psychological component, namely: if the employee's needs are not satisfied, although he makes considerable efforts in his work, this will lead to internal tensions that no longer stimulate the individual to act on the organizational goals, him in a type of unwanted behavior. In order for an individual to be motivated at the workplace, he must be certain that performing certain activities will lead, in a natural chain to the satisfaction of his own needs, as a consequence.

In order to understand the employee's vision of work motivation, we must take into account Maslow's classification of pyramids in his work on individual development and motivation. Even if the years have passed and society has changed substantially, however, until the needs placed at the lower levels are satisfied, the higher ones do not appear as motivation. In this ample context, managers must also take into account the theory of expectations, as illustrated by Vroom. Though the ideas presented seem purely theoretical, in organizational practice, things are confirmed. Thus, the expectation theory starts from the premise that the intensity of an individual's effort in an activity depends on the value of the reward he expects to receive in return. In conclusion, motivation for work can be considered as the degree of availability of employees to involve in their work and make a sustained effort to achieve defined organizational goals, but also for them to earn the associated desirable rewards.

Managerial performance becomes a must-have in any organization, especially in a competitive environment. Achieving performance is becoming the reason for the concerns of managers and executors. A high-performance organization makes better use of the opportunities of the environment, goes beyond the obstacles it can put, satisfies quantitatively and qualitatively a certain segment of social needs, gains competitive advantage on the specific market they are operating. (Verboncu, 2005, p. 134). From the "general contextual of happiness in the organization" we inevitably get to the "happiness of the employer", who in turn has his own expectations and who believes that we should continue to focus on the goal of employment and strive to get more if we expect more from ourselves, we have more chances to get more (Laurence E. Lynn, 2004, p. 119).

In order to achieve so much coveted performance, it is necessary, on the one hand, employees to be happy and managers to be able to maintain the state of contentment, satisfaction, happiness at work, through special skills. In the end, it is about the happiness at work of both parties involved (both managers and subordinates), which means honesty assumed by both sides, each party desiring the respect of the other.

Exploring the nature of the employment relationship referred to above (the relationship between the employer and the employee) and investigating the formal or informal relations between the two sides, it is first and foremost necessary to create a climate of trust in this relationship so that possible formal happiness at work. The formal dimension includes rules and procedures, and the informal one covers opinions, expectations and assumptions (Armstrong, 2009, p. 177).

Promoting job happiness in recent years in big companies with large business figures is no longer optional. There is a growing desire for the confluence of what employees want and what employers are looking for. After all, the first holiday will not compensate for the toxic atmosphere in the office, the misunderstandings with the bosses, or the routine in activities that does not seem to lead anywhere. (Anghel, 2016).

3. Collection of Data

In order to undertake a concrete analysis of the subject, we applied one a questionnaire of 50 respondents (of different professions and ages), belonging to both the public and the private environment (both middle and high school employees).

In this respect, we conceived a number of 13 questions, elaborated in a clear and accessible language (the form can be analyzed within a maximum of 10 minutes), all of which have the variants of answers presented in the questionnaire, for ease of completion, being drawn up in such a way that the probability of refusal to pass it is minimized and the applicants do not give up completing it on the way.

The questionnaires were handed over to the people concerned, with the possibility of completing them at the time of handing-in or at home, each of them being eighth. All respondents preferred to browse and complete the questionnaire in privacy, which is why they returned the next day.

4. Data Analysis and Results

Taking into account all the aspects mentioned in the first part of the paper, and bearing in mind that, to date, worldwide, there is a study entitled The World Happiness Report (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017), which does not include studies measuring happiness in the specific context of the workplace and only addressing the concept of professional satisfaction, which correlates with happiness and subjective well-being, we considered it particularly appropriate to carry out a case study exclusively on the subject. Thus, through the questionnaire we can determine to what extent it contributes to achieving happiness, job attractiveness, organizational climate, salary level, additional rewards, manager and team recognition, job stability and so on.

Thus, to the simple question, "How do you feel in the current workplace?" The options and answers expressed in percentage terms, as shown in chart no. 1.

Figure no. 1. The feeling created by the workplace
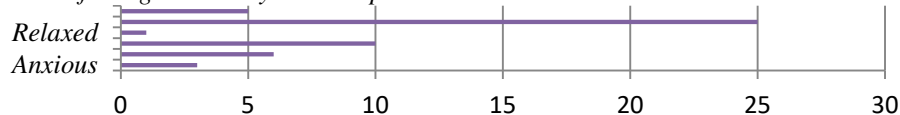
Source: Own research of the authors

In terms of job happiness, 34 of respondents consider that it has an important contribution to the general happiness of their lives, 12 say they do not think happiness at work affects the happiness of their lives, and the difference of 4 they did not even think that the two concepts would have any connection.

The questionnaire also included a question in which respondents had to arrange in order of importance, a number of possible benefits that they wanted from the workplace, so that the employees' preferences were classified as follows: a. a good salary; b. job security; c. a pleasant entourage; d. interesting and varied work; e. continuous professional development. This means that managers have to take these issues into account, and before offering opportunities for autonomy and advancement, they must provide stability to employees as soon as they offer them the possibility of having a satisfactory income.

Surprisingly, most of the respondents (34 answers from 50) said that, even if they inherit a lot of wealth or would win the lottery, they would continue to work.

Regarding the proportion of work done with pleasure, interviewees responded according to figure no. 2, it can be noticed that, in general, much of the work done is agreed by the employees.

Figure no. 2. Percentage of work done with pleasure by each employee

Between 81% and 100%
Between 50% -80%
Between 20%-49%
Less than 20%

Source: Own research of the authors

The next question leads the respondents to balance the rewards received (salary and other benefits) to the work they have done, and the result found was a gratifying one, meaning that 62% of them said they were satisfied, only 34% believed that they make too much effort for salary and other compensations (the remaining 4% did not think about this and did not make a calculation in this sense).
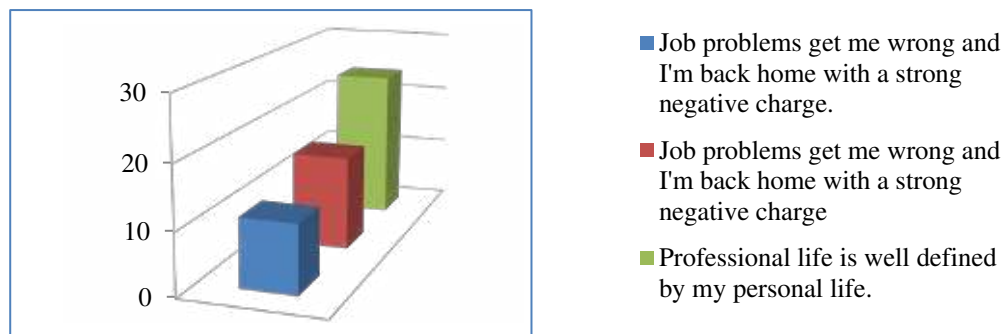
When asked whether outside the hours of the program they developed friendship with colleagues or bosses, the 50 people responded in the following way: 15 of them have friends from their colleagues and this helps to improve working relationships, 23 say they have developed friendships with just some of their colleagues, and the other 12 confess that their circle of friends is completely different and that they deliberately break the work environment to really relax.

The issues with which interviewed employees are confronted at work are the following, in order of their notation by respondents: lack of enough time to solve tasks, lack of future prospects, colleagues' misery, and lack of communication with hierarchical leaders.

Another issue addressed by our study was how each employee could contribute to the good work of his organization. The answers revealed the following aspects: by self-improvement, following participation in courses and seminars (18%), through innovative initiatives and ideas (32%), by becoming the best team partner, this being accomplished concurrently with finding harmony and inner balance (50%).

The last question deals with the correspondence between the professional career and the personal life of each employee, as well as the way one affects the other. From this perspective, the question "Do you sometimes have the impression that the problems in your personal life affect your ability to work or, on the contrary, that problems at work affect your personal life?" The answers were noted according to figure no. 3.

Figure no. 3. The way in which personal life problems affect work capacity

■ Job problems get me wrong and I'm back home with a strong negative charge.

■ Job problems get me wrong and I'm back home with a strong negative charge

■ Professional life is well defined by my personal life.

Source: Own research of the authors

Happiness at the workplace is the perception of each individual, his adaptability, resistance to change, the level of culture and training, and the influences from the family environment, as well as the social environment from which he comes.

5. Conclusions

Therefore, in a similar organizational environment, an employee can be satisfied or even happy, while another may feel unfulfilled or even stressed. At the same time, the employee must have the sense of reality and be able to realize his own value, so that he can negotiate his rewards.

In order to be truly happy at work, we need to contribute, as little as possible, to the happiness of others who work with us and who also want their state of well-being. In this sense, a natural consequence is the approach of empathy and, why not, juggling with social skills.

Team spirit is a very important component for an organization, because no matter how prepared and competent a member would be, it will certainly be able to improve its overall results, combining its skills and performance with others. That is why Steve Anderson's statement, "Alone we are smart. Together we are brilliant!', has become so famous. In the context of gaining happiness at work, we believe that the goal of team formation, beyond conjugating efforts to achieve optimal solutions, is to become more than teammates and build relationships that can be sustained beyond office. In order to be truly happy at work, we need to contribute, as little as possible, to the happiness of others who work with us and who also want their state of well-being. In this sense, a natural consequence is the approach of empathy (which is related to the awareness

of the feelings, needs, and experiences of others) and, why not, juggling with social skills (influencing others, persuasion, team spirit).

It is an organizational chain whose interrelationships are interdependent, and this is why "happiness at work" cannot be overlooked, but consciously assessed if it is to achieve organizational performance and profit.

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