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The importance of Professional Happiness on Patient Satisfaction. The case of physiotherapy professionals.

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In recent years research on organizational happiness has been increasing but instruments to measure happiness at work, considering organizational factors, are scarce. This study aims to validate a scale to measure organizational happiness among physiotherapists and its relationship with patient satisfaction. For that we will implement an Organizational Happiness Scale to physiotherapists and the Physical Therapy Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire to their patients. At the end two major outcomes will be achievable: (i) the study of validation and reliability of a happiness organizational scale to be used among physiotherapist and, (ii) to understand if happiest physiotherapists have more satisfied patients. Previous research demonstrates the positive impact of satisfaction on patient rehabilitation. This study will provide knew knowledge on the contribution of a happy physiotherapist professional for that.

Keywords: Organizational happiness; Physiotherapists happiness, Patient satisfaction.

State of the Art

The scientific interest in positive things emerging from organizations has followed the evolution of the study of happiness in general (Bakker, Rodriguez-Muñoz, & Derks, 2012; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, & Ilies, 2012). Different authors refer that labor achievement must be a central indicator for the definition of quality of life. The compromise between workers welfare, health and entrepreneurs concerns on profit and productivity is, from the beginning, the core of organizational scientific work.

Today we know, unequivocally, that work contributes to well-being or to happiness (Fisher, 2010; Warr, 2007) and that unemployment causes a significant reduction in well-being (Clark, Diener, Georgellis, & Lucas, 2008).

The number of research projects using positive constructs in organizations is achieving a major impact (Rodríguez-Muñoz & Sanz-Vergel, 2013). Main constructs, from different paradigms and methodologies are, among others, work engagement (Bakker & Leiter, 2010), job satisfaction (Judge, Thorensen, Bono, & Patton, 2001), work flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), positive emotions at work (Vacharkulksemsuk & Fredrickson, 2013) and work enjoyment (Bakker, 2008). All have in common, positive intellectual evaluations (judgments and attitudes) and positive affective experiences (feelings, moods, emotions) (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011), exactly in the same sense that is commonly accepted that happiness, subjective well-being or psychological well-being, consist on a set of valuation judgments and satisfactory, pleasant and positive emotional reactions (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Blanch, Sahagún & Cervantes, 2010; Diener, 2000).

If, in his widest sense, 'happiness' is an umbrella term for all that is good, 'happiness at work' is an umbrella concept that includes a great number of factors ranging from transient moods and emotions, to relatively stable attitudes and highly stable individual dispositions aggregated at an individual level (Fisher, 2010).

According to Bakker and Oerlemans (2011), happiness at work was conceptualized as the situation where the employee 1)is satisfied with his / her job and 2) experience frequent positive emotions, such as joy and happiness, and infrequent negative emotions, such as sadness and anger. Even if this definition do not raises major obstacles, we consider that it is rather vague: do not discriminate low-level emotions (usually of short duration) from more elaborate and permanent affections. Also, do not discriminate between situational situations and the work experience as a whole. Finally, the definition focuses exclusively on subjective experience, ignoring those context factors based on interpersonal experience.

Recent studies aim to decompose the various dimensions of labor welfare. As an example, several researchers have used Ryff's Psychological Well-Being framework (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) to operationalize assessments of self-realization - a major component of labor welfare (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). In PWB (Psychological Well-Being Scale) scale, Ryff (1989) identifies six psychological dimensions of self-realization. Each dimension articulates different challenges individuals encounter as they strive to function positively. These are: self-acceptance (seeing and accepting one's strengths and weaknesses); purpose in life (having objectives giving life meaning

and direction); personal growth (feeling that personal talents and potential are being realized); positive relations with others (having close, valued connections with significant others); environmental mastery (managing the demands of everyday life); and autonomy (following personal convictions, even if they go against conventional wisdom).

In a parallel context, the study of emotional well-being in the workplace has gained prominence with the works of Warr (1987, 1990) and Van Katwyk, Spector, Fox, & Kelloway (2000). Both works classify work-related emotions with the dimensions of pleasantness and arousal, and both models propose a specific scale. Warr (1990) proposes measuring the job-related affective well-being with four interrelated factors: anxiety, comfort, depression, and enthusiasm.

Otherwise, the concept of happiness is increasingly being framed in the overall context of the relationship between "Myself" and the "Others", which provides a more complete account of the way by which culture can influence our emotions and attitudes (Uchida, Norasakkunkit & Kitayama, 2004). De Leersnyder, Mesquita, Kim, Eom & Choi (2014) have developed a study across different cultural contexts: United States, Belgium and South Korea. Their results seem to demonstrate that individuals' emotional fit is associated with their level of relational well-being. Reasons for happiness at work, probably, are different according to national cultures. There is not much evidence on this, but Hofsteded (1991) seminal works on national culture is an excellent point of reference. This may justify the need to develop new research, replicating and structuring, ab-initium, new instruments allowing identify happiness organizational factors that may, naturally, vary from region to region.

In other words, our research is motivated by the pragmatic need to create an instrument, a scale, aiming to measure happiness at work for South Europe regions that, according to Hofstede (1991) have cultures with relevant similitudes. First, we have aimed to validate a model of Organizational Happiness and corresponding scale. A model was verified through confirmatory factorial analysis (Dutschke, Gomes, Combadão & Jacobsohn, 2015).

Methodology

Our research project started in 2012 by interviewing 969 professionals in Portugal. Respondents are active professionals, approximately equally male and female, from APG (Portuguese Association of Human Resources) database.

An open question was made: What do you need to be happy in your organization?

Methodology used to analyze the open questions was: (1) Data collection, (2) Data storage, (3) Coding, (4) Indexing system refinement, (5) Code relationship and (6) Identify Categories. For stages 3, 4, 5 and 6 was applied a content analysis, which according to Berelson (1952) "is a research technique applied with the objective to systemize, on a quantitative way, the content of communication". In this research, the content analysis developed is: (1) Analyze and identify variables, (2) Determine the encoding rules, (3) Determine category system, (4) Check the reliability of coding system - categorization and (5) Inferences. To develop the content analysis we have used Atlas Ti V6.0 software that combines a friendly use and a major ability to encoding and draws conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). We have considered the process proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994): citations evaluation, highlight the words of each response, encoding, code interpretation and category codification. For the encoding process we have first created a list with the initial based code (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to be used in the interactive process of analysis. The code facilitated the identification of occurrence patterns, bias control, and alternative or opposite directions and the level of consistency. After identifying the codes we proceeded to evaluate their interrelation, the frequency of occurrence and the number of relation with other codes. This allowed establishing the importance and strength of each code.

In total 1710 references were categorized. After analyzing each and all components, 38 variables where identified: (1) I have a very good work ambiance; (2) My colleagues are engaged with the organization; (3) There is a good team work spirit; (4) There is humor; (5) The communication is easy, (6) I have the tools that I need to develop my work; (7) I consider my colleagues as friends; (8) I am recognized for my merit; (9) I am respected as an individual due to the work developed; (10) The organization shows confidence in my work; (11) The organization is fair and honest; (12) The organization allows me to develop as individual and professional; (13) The organization allows a continuous learning; (14) The organization allows having new challenges; (15) I have autonomy and responsibility; (16) I may contribute for the organization strategy; (17) The organization allows me to be entrepreneur; (18) I have time to share opinions allowing me to have better decisions; (19) The organization allows job rotation; (20) My salary is good and fair; (21) The organization allows me to do what I like to do (professionally); (22) I feel that the organization needs me; (23) The organization has work and new projects; (24) The organization has well established processes; (25) The organization allows me to have a stable job, (26) The organization is innovative and promotes innovation; (27) All employees knows and share the organization vision; (28) Top management communicates clearly the organization objectives; (29) Leaders promote employees wellbeing; (30) I am involved with organization values; (31) Top management leadership is true and inspiring; (32) I

have all the support from management; (33) I look for excellency in my performance; (34) I work to achieve my objectives so that organization my achieve global ones; (35) The organization have clear objectives; (36) I have a good balance between professional and personal life; (37) The organization allows to fulfil my mission has individual and (38) The organization cares about social responsibility.

Considering the identified components, a first questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire validity was verified through three complementary methods: 1. The questionnaire was designed considering a qualitative research with content analysis (2) The proposed first questionnaire was sent to three experts (Professor, CEO, HR Expert) and (3) A previous test with ten respondents was applied. The questionnaire was sent to active professionals in Portugal through the APG (Portuguese Association of Human Resources) database during February/April 2013. At the end 1079 complete and validate answers were received. Respondents are approximately equally male/female (48%/52%) and 30% were directors. Main statistical tools used in this work were exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using the software R (Rcode team, 2014) and the packages lavaan, psy, psych, sem, e1071. At the end, a model and a scale for Organizational Happiness was validated (to be published elsewhere).

Having validated a general Organizational Happiness Model, and a general Organizational Happiness scale, we aim now to verify if the same model / scale could be used among physiotherapy professionals, or if it needs to be adapted.

Also, for this research, we have applied a questionnaire to measure satisfaction with physical therapy (Goldstein, Elliot & Guccione, 2000). By using these two scales we aim to verify if happiest physiotherapists have more satisfied patients. Being this a preliminary exploratory study, currently going on, we have at this time received answers from 11 physical therapists and 7 patients from these health care providers.

Results

We started the analysis of our data by measuring the means of the responses, codified as Likert items with 5 classes, for the Organizational Happiness. By comparing the data for physical therapists (PT) with the means for the general population (with dozens of different professions) we can assess that PT professional perceived more happyness in the Organizational dimension (table 1), in about half the items.

Table 1. **Means of the responses in the items of the Organizational happiness Scale for physical therapists (PT) and the general population of Portugal, difference of those means for each item and the *p* value of the *t* test for two samples (values less than .05 are considered significant)**

PT means	General means	difference of means	*p* value for *t* test
4.545	3.854	0.691	.008
4.545	3.667	0.879	.001
4.636	3.518	1.118	.001
4.364	3.782	0.582	.003
4.182	3.447	0.735	.002
4.000	3.732	0.268	.193
4.636	3.298	1.339	.001
4.000	3.535	0.465	.006
4.364	3.780	0.584	.038
4.364	3.846	0.518	.029
4.091	3.442	0.649	.003
4.091	3.602	0.489	.080
4.273	3.697	0.576	.036
4.091	3.611	0.480	.047
4.455	4.047	0.408	.078
3.818	3.435	0.383	.123
4.273	3.742	0.531	.022
3.636	3.385	0.251	.133
3.909	2.977	0.932	.014
2.273	3.101	-0.828	.056
4.000	3.634	0.366	.085
4.455	3.550	0.904	.001
4.000	3.772	0.228	.262
3.636	3.412	0.224	.298
4.000	3.364	0.636	.040
3.727	3.522	0.205	.321
3.636	3.213	0.423	.115
3.364	3.518	-0.155	.593
4.000	3.442	0.558	.039
4.273	3.602	0.671	.006
3.182	3.366	-0.185	.613
3.545	3.509	0.037	.916
4.273	4.161	0.112	.450
4.364	4.196	0.168	.299

PT means	General means	difference of means	p value for t test
3.818	3.598	0.220	.257
4.000	3.524	0.476	.109
4.273	3.591	0.682	.017
4.273	3.550	0.723	.012

To compare the relationship between the items in the different samples, we constructed the Pearson correlation network for each (figure 1). By visual inspection it seems clear that the relationship between items is different between the general population responses and the PT responses. Nevertheless, we used the procedure by Steiger (1980) to test the differences between the two correlation networks, which showed a very significative result (p< .001).
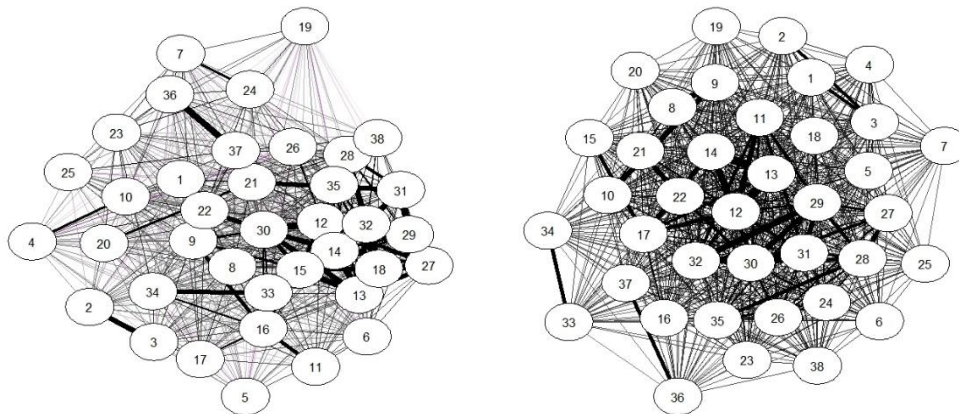

Figure 1 Pearson correlation network for the items response in the Organizational Happiness Scale. On the left the results for the PT and on the right the results for the general population. The visual differences are confirmed by the Steiger test (*p*<.001).

The loadings and communalities in exploratory factor analysis obtained in the Organizational Happiness Scale (HOS) validation study were used to calculate the scores of the PT sample for each of the dimensions of that same scale. From that analysis we conclude that five out of the five dimensions give a substantial increase (more than 10%) in the score of the factors in the HOS, being four out of five statistically significant (table 2).

Table 2 Factor scores for the PT sample and the general population sample, using the loadings and communalities of the OHS in the validation study.

Dimension	FT score means	General score means	difference of means	p value for t test
Workplace relationship	4.197	3.435	0.762	.001
Acknowledgment and respect	4.133	3.613	0.520	.004
Continuous learning and personal development	3.565	3.136	0.429	.009
Sustainability and job/family balance	3.782	3.328	0.454	.008
Leadership	4.115	3.717	0.398	.061

The internal validity of the responses for the PT sample was also assessed by the Cronbach α. For the entire OHS we obtained .952 and .720, .767, .853, .719, .925 for each of the dimensions of the scale, correspondingly. For the satisfaction part, it was also obtained a satisfactory value of .881, for the Cronbach α.

The satisfaction of the patients assessed by the mentioned questionnaire had several dimensions. We calculated the following mean values of the responses for the 11 dimensions: treatment 5.00; privacy 4.86; convenience of appointment time 4.47; cost 4.43; billing 4.86; ease of scheduling an appointment 4.86; scheduling 4.06; wait time 4.86; courteous staff 4.86; courteous PT 5; overall satisfaction 4.90.

The Pearson correlation between the dimensions of the OHS and the satisfaction of the patients was calculated as well (table 3). With this PT and its patients sample, only the workplace relationship dimension of the OHS and the scores in the patient satisfaction questionnaire had a high value, although its p-value was still higher than usually desired in these cases (*p* value was .13).

Table 3 Pearson correlation coefficients between the scores in the dimensions of the OHS and the score in the patient satisfaction questionnaire.

Workplace relationship	Acknowledgment and respect	Continuous learning and	Sustainability and job/family	Leadership	Satisfaction

		personal development	balance		
1	.290	.286	.376	.222	**.626**
.290	1	.931	.942	.843	-.232
.286	.931	1	.933	.916	-.147
.376	.942	.936	1	.870	-.205
.222	.843	.916	.870	1	-.166
.626	-.232	-.147	-.205	-.166	1

Conclusions

The internal validity of the OHS scale and the satisfaction questionnaire was very satisfactory and we believe that with a higher sample size the values will be even better. Surprisingly, the PT sample analyzed in this study showed significantly higher values in the OHS items and dimensions, when compared with the general sample used in the validation study of the OHS. Even more, the relationship, measured by the Pearson correlation coefficients, although with similar patterns was significantly different for what was obtained in the original study of the OHS. This suggests that although OHS can probably be used, it would be beneficial to continue a direction where a more specific PT scale can be attempted. There are several established strategies to measure invariance between groups in the confirmatory factor analysis and we will addressed these issues with that framework in the near future.

The correlation between OHS and the satisfaction questionnaire did not show at this moment statistical significant associations, but the correlation between the workplace relationship dimension of the OHS and the satisfaction questionnaire had a moderate to strong effect. This stimulates further inquiry, although this relationship may be intrinsically difficult to measure because in our sample almost all opinions were very favorable. It would be important to be able to measure these constructs in more variable populations and we also plan to pursue just that.

We began this article by pointing out that although Organizational Happiness had recently emerged as an important concept among both practitioners and academics, theoretical progress has been hampered. Therefore, using a grounded theory approach, we conducted a qualitative study and quantitative analysis that uncovered the professionals experienced features of the Organizational Happiness prototype. Thus, our work builds on prior research by taking constructs that had previously been studied independently and showing that Organizational Happiness can function as an integrated framework for investigating how they work together. Our qualitative studies also show that research on Organizational Happiness derived directly from well-being and positive psychology theories. We consider that our research have practical managerial implications. The key managerial question is how top management may promote employees professional happiness and, this way, contribute to a higher organizational performance. To repeat, our hierarchical model can assist managers in showing how more lower level, concrete subcomponents can be targeted—through concrete actions and communication to influence the higher-level and more abstract professional organizational happiness perceptions. Furthermore, a manager with budget constraints needs to know which pathways and mechanisms to emphasize to maximize the return on investment of his team.

Limitations and Further Research

Further work is needed to develop a confirmatory factor analysis and validate how the components of Organizational Happiness identified may interact with one another. Experimental research manipulating the features of the Organizational Happiness prototype would complement our cross-sectional research, helping to more unambiguously establish causal directions. Longitudinal research on the temporal development—and possible waning— of Organizational Happiness would also be very useful. Also, to valuate factors and components among different industries would be recommendable. Finally, would be high relevant to evaluate how national culture may influence Organizational Happiness and respective factors and components.

The major limitation of this study is the small sample of FT and its patients. Nevertheless, it is instructive to see that these preliminary results already point to FT as being significantly different from the general population, and in being so, to deserve a more profound and dedicated study.

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