

Editorial

Special Issue “Rethinking the Subjective Wellbeing for a New Workplace Scenario”

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1. Introduction

From the public health policies' view, promoting subjective wellbeing is a must because it positively influences employee health and longevity [1]. In addition, the International Labour Organization (ILO) promotes changes to achieve decent jobs, and one of the main challenges is to mitigate the intense pressure to adapt workplace conditions to meet new organizational goals [2,3].

Subjective wellbeing has been widely addressed in the literature. For example, in 1999, Diener et al. reviewed three decades of work on this topic [4], and Danna and Griffith [5] conceptualized previous research on wellbeing in the workplace. Twenty years later, Diener et al. [6] quantified more than 170,000 articles and books concerning this topic published in academia.

The concept of wellbeing has been approached from different perspectives [7–11]. A subjective approach, called hedonic, focuses on enjoyment, pleasure, and comfort, versus another psychological approach, called eudemonic, whose characteristics are meaning and personal growth through more profound principles. From this point of view, Diener and colleagues developed an integrative proposal according to which three dimensions would integrate subjective wellbeing [12]:

- General with life (hedonic paradigm).
- Positive and negative feelings (hedonic paradigm).
- Flourishing (eudemonic paradigms), as a state of positive mental health.

Organizations invest plenty of resources in the recruitment of employees. If these workers experience poor health and less wellbeing, they will have lower performance, make worse decisions, be less disposed to absenteeism [13], and, consequently, decrease their contributions to the organization's performance [14]. Analyzing cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, Warr and Nielsen have found a small-to-moderate relationship between wellbeing and performance [15]. They highlight the role of moderating variables, such as personal discretion, professional grade, or expected benefits for this correlation.

The world is going through convulsed times that are causing a profound revolution in the workplace for many jobs. One of the most visible and immediate changes is the generalization of e-working due to the health, economic, and social crisis caused by COVID-19. In 2018, Charalampous and colleagues reviewed e-working research and found that e-workers can benefit from a better work–life balance; however, adverse effects exist and are related to social and professional isolation or technostress, among others [16]. Therefore, different factors, such as the preferences and personality of the employee, influence the impact of e-working on wellbeing. In this new workplace framework, the psychological contract between the organization and the employees must be adjusted. A second challenge comes from the robotization and computerization of jobs. In this sense, Frey and Osborne estimate



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that 47% of posts are at risk for these reasons [17]. The role of smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and algorithms in the workplace will affect psychological wellbeing, and the awareness of new technologies will decrease organizational commitment and career satisfaction and will increase depression and cynicism [18]. Finally, corporate social responsibility requires an exercise of transparency about the working conditions and the promotion of decent work because business plays a critical role in this promotion [19]. Therefore, a new challenge is to find practical and reliable measurements of subjective wellbeing in CSR reports.

Without a doubt, the work environment and jobs are being redesigned day by day to adapt to a new reality that, a few months ago, we did not even imagine. However, unfortunately, this tsunami has forced us to “quarantine” everything the academy knew about different personal, organizational, and contextual factors that determined the wellbeing of employees.

This research topic mainly concerns manuscripts that reflect on the wellbeing of workers, given the changes that are taking place in the work context. Therefore, this Special Issue focuses on both those changes motivated by the health, economic, and social consequence of the worldwide pandemic and other factors that relate to the health and meaning of the work. The first section is devoted to the pandemic effects and the changes from the remote experience. The second group of papers tackles the identification of job demands and job resources that may improve the quality of the job. The third block of papers deals with the self-imposed demands by workers derived from high engagement or in a negative version of workaholism. The last block addresses the meaning that work brings to the life of the employee.

2. Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Workplace

Several papers in this Special Issue analyze the upheaval in the work environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. First, Lugi et al. [20] review the literature on the effect of the pandemic on the workplace, analyzing 51 works generated in a short period since the pandemic. The conclusions of this paper are valid to address the quality of employment in health emergencies.

This paper places five topics that are related to psychological wellbeing: (1) Support from colleagues and organizations; (2) homework interface and balance; (3) changes in workload and work demand; (4) job competence and appropriate training; and (5) job insecurity and financial stress. The social work environment is critical in these situations that lead to harmful situations for health.

This Special Issue has included three other papers that conclude to improve wellbeing in the future workplace. The first of these shows the health crisis lessons; the second deals with the shift to digital environments that the pandemic has fostered; while the third addresses this transformation in the educational environment.

COVID-19 has been an experimental case that allows us to evaluate how workers perceive different health measures in a health crisis. Hyung-Woo and Dong-Young [21] studied a large sample in the USA. This research classifies the organization’s response into three types: employees’ protection while working, offering psychological support, and health support. Protecting employees while working is the measure that produces a sense of security, for example, alerting workers when there is a nearby COVID case in the workplace or providing cleaning and sanitizing supplies. The protection of vulnerable groups also generated a positive assessment.

The other two papers are qualitative and address the new scenario of less face-to-face attendance that has accelerated with the pandemic. In the Swedish context, Babapour and colleagues [22] conduct two studies with 53 subjects. Their work concludes that between a face-to-face and a remote scenario, a hybrid one that benefits from the advantages of both is preferable. Thus, these authors observe that the greatest benefit offered by remote work lies in an increase in flexibility, autonomy and the work–life balance, as well as in a better individual performance, although it is lost in the social dimension of employment that

face-to-face work has. The paper concludes that employees need to pay special attention to job design in the transition to hybrid models. Gómez-Rey and colleagues [23] found that technical difficulties were the most relevant in this transition in the educational context. A sector that overnight had to change the face-to-face teaching model to another online. This work shows that the informal support was more effective than the formal support provided by the organization itself. This work, like that of [22], underlines the importance of the transition to hybrid or remote models, not only for what it means for the employee, but also for the impact on the activity itself. The authors of [23] observed that the technical and management roles were the least resented in the online model; however, the social role and life skills promotion obtained the worst performances. This study is important because teaching models will evolve towards blended models, because it is a way to develop digital skills. The results warn of the challenges facing the change in methodology.

3. Job Demands and Resources' Effects on Settings

The Special Issue includes three papers that delve into aspects related to the job demands and resources in particular settings. The first of these, from Nawaz and colleagues [24], addresses the dysfunctional effect of customers on employees and how the exhaustion of workers leads to a negative response from workers to other customers. The authors have observed this trickle back effect in a sample of customers and employees' dyads from the salon-beauty and transportation sector (bus hostesses). This study extends the effects of this demand beyond the organization itself and proposes that organizations identify this type of dysfunctional behavior train their employees to face these situations that produce burnout and develop organizational policies that also address customers and are advertised in waiting rooms and media.

The second paper, written by Han et al. [25], addresses how trust-in-support concepts decrease burnout. The employee's trust in support of the supervisor and colleagues to face the demands influences the reduction of burnout and, with it, the turnover intention in the hotel industry. The authors conclude that exclusive reliance on the incentive system in this industry is not enough to prevent burnout; workers in this industry need to weave a network of trust with their superiors and colleagues to cope with the pressure they face effectively. With this, it is intended to reduce the level of turnover.

The third paper addresses the work pressure experienced by self-employed people in Ecuador. The group of entrepreneurs is under high pressure, and they have more limited resources available to face these pressures. Ceular-Villamandos and colleagues carry out the research under the Job Demands Control Support Model among a large sample of more than one thousand subjects [26]. They observed a negative effect of physical and psychological demands on wellbeing. Among the psychological demands, the authors identify dealing with angry customers, the speed at which they must perform tasks, and complex tasks. Among the job resources that buffer the effect of job demands, the paper highlights the control of the activity (mainly the autonomy of the subjects) and the social support from other colleagues and collaborators.

4. From Work Engagement to Workaholism: The Challenge of Heavy Work Investment (HWI) and Workers' Passion

The third group of works focuses on employee involvement, which can move from work engagement to workaholism. The Special Issue contains two studies on HWI. One of them is devoted to the conceptual integration of the three dimensions of the concept. The second one analyzes the psychometric properties of the most relevant scales for measuring HWI. A third paper explains the effect of an excessive implication of non-profit organizations' workers and the effect on work-life balance.

Tabak et al. developed a theoretical model of HWI based on the individual's personality and organizational characteristics, which classifies them as demands or job resources and can impact HWI [27]. The HWI is a multidimensional concept that encompasses work time and intensity; while the first approaches the concept of workaholism, the second is

closer to work engagement. The relationship between these two concepts functions as a continuum. Thus, workaholism is associated with HWI dysfunction, while work engagement is identified with a functional view of HWI that produces positive outcomes. The Job Demands-Resources model provides the proper framework for integrating organizational characteristics with the employee's personality traits.

On the other hand, Acosta-Prado et al. carried out a literature review on the scales used to measure HWI [28]. This study measures the psychometric properties of the three main HWI scales: Workaholism Battery (WorkBAT), Work Addiction Risk Test (WART) and the Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS). After carrying out a purification process of the works that would make up the sample, 35 articles were obtained. The DUWAS scale is the one that presented a methodological quality superior to the other two scales.

Riforgiate and Kramer wrote a third article about passion for work and addressed where it can harm the work–life balance [29]. This field of study is a non-profit organization with a high turnover rate. Communication is essential to improve the assimilation of organizational concepts and, with it, the entity's survival. In this qualitative study, conducted through 55 interviews, the workers explained how they came to the organization, how they learned the expectations about their behavior, as well as the messages that these young employees received from the organization (co-workers and supervisors) and from their families to manage their work and family commitments.

5. A Meaningful Work

The next step is the one that transports us from the passion for work to the meaning of work. This Special Issue on subjective wellbeing and the workplace includes three contributions that elevate the meaning of work. First, how does work contribute to personal fulfilment because it is valid?

The concept of Good Living has recently been developed in the Andean countries (Ecuador and Bolivia) and expands from an indigenous perspective of wellbeing. González-Díaz et al. develop a systematic review of the literature on human development and the Human Development Index (HDI) comparing the various approaches that the literature has developed on Good Living (Sumak: fullness, the sublime, excellent, magnificent, beautiful, superior; Kawsay: life, being) and UNDP Technical Notes (HDI) [30]. The main results highlight the difference between two axes of the Good Living concept: mobility and safety, and satisfaction with territories. HDI omits the relationship between social and ecological systems in the mobility and safety axis. Likewise, HDI does not include identity and social diversity, citizen values or education that are related to satisfaction with territories.

The last two papers analyze the meaning of the work. Del Pozo-Antúnez and colleagues study meaningful work in the accounting profession [31]. The concept of meaningful work is formed with the perception of a job well done and a useful job. The research is carried out on 739 accountants who responded to the sixth wave of the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). The paper tries to identify which are the characteristics of job quality that maintain a significant relationship with meaningful work and the interactions between characteristics with meaningful work. The authors note that the development of one's abilities and autonomy at work is related to higher levels of meaningful work. This relationship is more intense among the most senior accountants than the youngest ones. Although significant, it is of lesser importance among the youngest, with social support gaining weight (co-workers and supervisors). Curiously, the intensity of work, characteristic of this profession, exerts a marginal influence only on senior accountants.

Finally, Benites et al. develop qualitative research about the meaning of work among microentrepreneurs in Peru [32]. They observe that entrepreneurship is an opportunity to improve their quality of life, establish relationships with others, and commit the family to business success. These additional dimensions raise the purpose of the work.

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