Revisiting the Happy-Productive Worker Thesis from a Eudaimonic Perspective

A Systematic Review
Under equal conditions, happier worker will perform better than unhappy ones.

Or will they...
Happiness and Productivity

- Happy and Unproductive
- Unhappy and Unproductive
- Unhappy and Productive
- Happy and Productive
Hedonism VS Eudaimonia

- pleasure and positive affect
- pleasure attainment and pain avoidance
- job satisfaction

- meaning
- self-realization
- excellence
- a perfectionistic ideal that gives direction to life
Eudaimonia

- Present-oriented
  - Flow
  - Engagement
- Future-oriented
  - Psychological wellbeing
  - Growth
  - Development
  - Purpose, meaning
Performance

4 broad dimensions

- **Task or in-role** refers to the activities included in the job description

- **Contextual or extra-role** behaviors that are not considered in job descriptions, behaviors that support the organizational, social, or psychological environment

- **Creative performance** behaviors that express employees’ creativity through novel ideas, procedures, or products that are beneficial for the organization

- **Counterproductive behaviors**
  They harm the functioning of the organization: absenteeism, theft, or substance abuse.

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**Global performance**

Composite indicators of performance include varied performance measures together in one global measure of two or more types of performance in a composite score.
Research questions

RQ1: What is the empirical evidence about the relationship between EWB and performance used in HPWT research when differentiating the specific dimensions of both constructs?

RQ2: What is the empirical evidence about the (bi)directionality of the relationship between EWB and performance in the framework of the HPWT?

RQ3: What are the main theories that have supported the empirical research on the relationships between EWB constructs and different performance types?
Method

- PRISMA protocol for systematic reviews
- ProQuest and PsycINFO
- Time scope from 2001 to 2020.
Figure 1. Overview of the search, analysis, and selection process.
105 EMPIRICAL STUDIES


THE 105 STUDIES REPORTED DATA ON 188 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WELL-BEING AND PERFORMANCE

• 57 (30.32%) RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED TASK PERFORMANCE
• 65 (34.57%) CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE
• 27 (14.36%) CREATIVE PERFORMANCE
• 10 (5.32%) COUNTERPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE
• 29 (15.43%) GLOBAL PERFORMANCE
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RQ3: What are the main theories that have supported the empirical research on the relationships between EWB constructs and different performance types?
Table 1. Summary of EWB–performance relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(+)</th>
<th>Ns</th>
<th>(−)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterpr.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>163</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(+)= support HPWT; ns = not significant relationships; (−)= contrary to the HPWT; counterpr. = counterproductive.
**EWB-Performance Relationships**

- Predominance of positive relationships (86.70%)
- The rest are mostly non-significant (11.70%)
- Only 3 show a significant negative relationship (1.60%).

There is a clear prevalence of **positive** relationships involving contextual performance (58), followed by task (47).

EWB-counterproductive performance negative relationships (9) have been studied less.

Of the 25 non-positive relationships (22 N.S.):
- 8 were with task performance
- 6 with contextual performance
- 5 with global performance
- 2 with creative performance
- 1 with counterproductive performance.

The only 3 negative relationships. They involved task (2) and contextual performance (1).
RESULTS

Figure 2. Eudaimonic well-being conceptualizations.
Table 2. Summary of EWB-performance relationships considering the different EWB constructs found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Focus on Present</th>
<th>Focus on Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Engagement (UWES and Similar)</td>
<td>Flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterpr.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Focus on Present</th>
<th>Focus on Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Engagement (Kahn)</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterpr.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(+) = support HPWT; ns = not significant relationships; (-) = contrary to the HPWT; counterpr.: counterproductive; PWB: psychological well-being. UWES: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale.
Moderating and mediating variables

Our review yielded 47 EWB–performance relationships that were studied considering interaction effects and/or mediated by other variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Moderators</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mediators</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality characteristics</td>
<td>Positive and negative affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Cognitive absorption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive supervision</td>
<td>Flexible human resource management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived organizational support</td>
<td>practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow variability</td>
<td>Personal initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovative behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Bi-directionality of the relationship

- ORG. COMMITMENT
- OCB
- 2 INDICATORS OF CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE
- CREATIVE AND CONTEXTUAL ENGAGEMENT
- ENGAGEMENT

Social exchange theory
Research questions

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THEORIES

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model > job resources lead to work engagement

Conservation of resources (CoR)

Broaden-and-Built: openness, and helping tendencies (OCB) that are facilitated by positive emotions as well as better integration of different stimuli (creative perf.)

Social Exchange theory: interactions that create obligations between the parties

Self-regulation theory: the state of mind experienced by engaged individuals promotes a vigilant, attentive, and focused state improving performance

Khan’s vie of engagement: values, identification and centrality of work boost performance
Future agenda & Conclusions

• Need to study bi-directionality, and trajectories over time

• Need to study more future related WB variables

• Need to study the role of “suffering” in eudaimonic wellbeing and performance

• Recycling old theories to fit the eudaimonic paradigm?

• Publication bias, lack of attention to n.s. relationships