

Guest editorial: Happiness management – A holy grail to be discovered by companies in the age of artificial intelligence

1. Introduction

In these last decades of the 21st century, there is a significant concern on the part of the academic and professional world to explore the subjective well-being of citizens (Sanagustín-Fons *et al.*, 2020), as well as the happiness at work of individuals within organisations (Foncubierta-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020). The latter concern has taken on considerable relevance after the Covid-19 pandemic, especially during the “Great Resignation”. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that a significant number of companies in today’s globalised society have become, perhaps unwittingly, toxic, stressful and conflictive environments for their human capital, and these factors and others limit the psychological health and professional growth of their workforce. This circumstance is exacerbated when it coexists with leadership styles focussed simply on pursuing short- and medium-term speculative success in the age of artificial intelligence (Abellán-Sevilla and Ortiz-de-Urbina-Criado, 2023).

In this sense, the emerging happiness management literature shows that corporate governance focussed on maximising only the economic benefits of its shareholders does not cultivate happiness at work within their organisations (Rando-Cueto *et al.*, 2023). Through this asset, company management can realise the philosophy of happiness management as an organisational culture that injects well-being, prosperity and quality of life into their human capital.

Previous scientific studies empirically demonstrate that the absence of corporate happiness within companies is synonymous with stress, emotional exhaustion or psychological problems on the part of their internal customers (Robina-Ramírez *et al.*, 2023a, b). These elements, and many others, not only negatively affect work performance and motivation but also lead to poor work performance due to inefficient and wrong decisions from a functional and operational point of view. Under such conditions, it is unsurprising that employees’ professional activity is characterised by low productivity and low innovative work behaviour.

A close look at this phenomenon shows that to reverse this situation, the resource of happiness at work is needed. A significant chain of academic studies indicates that the dimension of happiness at work plays a vital role in proactively increasing the creative skills, intrapreneurship or digital innovation of all members of organisations (Galiano-Coronil *et al.*, 2021). In this line of research, an essential body of scientific work recognises that the attractive philosophy of happiness management constitutes an essential business culture to boost people’s happiness at work (Hatami *et al.*, 2023). This appealing corporate culture allows corporate governance to undertake managerial actions to stimulate their internal customers’ intrinsic emotions through creativity, organisational justice or effective communication. It requires happy leaders who foster governance within their organisations that favour the generation of ideas from their employees (Ruiz-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2023). In this way, companies can improve their operational and managerial processes. It is an essential aspect to take into account with the advent of artificial intelligence, which will bring very drastic changes in the work organisation of corporations in the post-COVID-19 economy (Sánchez-Hernández *et al.*, 2023).



One of them is to holistically harmonise the economic efficiency of companies with the happiness of their internal customers at work. This juxtaposition will require companies to move away from trade-off principles and organisations to commit to a strategic direction focussed on boosting the corporate happiness of their employees. Undoubtedly, this asset generates competitive advantages when teamwork, passion for work and resilience of their human capital are significantly promoted (Mu *et al.*, 2023).

Suppose companies want to aspire to all of this. In that case, they must embrace the culture of happiness management as a down-top, collaborative governance style, which can play a crucial role in addressing the accelerating technological changes that artificial intelligence will bring about. It means that happiness management becomes the holy grail that shows us that a more dynamic, sustainable, innovative and productive fabric can be achieved when happiness at work and digital advances go hand in hand in the managerial life of companies (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2020).

In addition to the above, the editors of this special issue want to highlight the socio-economic benefits of happiness management for organisations in today's digital society (Martínez-Falcó *et al.*, 2023). These include, on the one hand, helping to cultivate a favourable climate for innovation, technological development and intrapreneurship. On the other hand, it cushions the adverse effects of artificial intelligence on employees' happiness at work.

Under this approach, the articles that make up this monograph's academic corpus aim to attract readers' interest in happiness management. It constitutes the holy grail of economic prosperity and competitive sustainability for companies in the genesis of the new era of artificial intelligence (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2019). Without further ado, we move on to the next section, where we will describe, in general terms, each of the articles that make up the special issue entitled: "Happiness Management – A holy grail to be discovered by companies in the age of artificial intelligence".

2. Overview of contributions to the special issue

This special issue comprises seven articles, which have been selected after a rigorous peer-review process from a large volume of submissions.

De las Heras-Pedrosa *et al.* (2024) conducted a bibliometric review of the literature on female entrepreneurship, happiness, and lifestyles in the last three decades. The VOSviewer software is used for this purpose. The results arrived at in this article show the relevant role that female entrepreneurship and gender equality play in organisational well-being in the emerging era of artificial intelligence.

Likewise, the article by Hafeez *et al.* (2024) explores, on the one hand, the effect of variety on happiness and job stress. On the other hand, it examines the mediating role of employee engagement between job variety and employee happiness and job burnout between job variety and job stress. The findings of this scientific study highlight two basic facts. First, job variety positively impacts employee engagement, leading to employee happiness. Second, employee engagement mediates the relationship between job variety and employee happiness, whereas burnout mediates the relationship between job variety and job stress.

In this same line of research, Hernández Martínez and Chunga-Liu (2024) examine the inferential association between the dimensions of work flexibility and happiness at work. To do so, they use gender and work–life balance as moderating variables. The findings of this academic work provide valuable information for human resources departments that want to implement a culture of happiness management under the guiding principles of gender equality and work–life balance.

In another approach, Jha *et al.* (2024) highlight the relevance of the parameters of inclusive leadership and organisational justice on the happiness of human capital at work in the new period of artificial intelligence. According to the results of this scientific study, company

managers should consider including happiness management in their management agenda. This culture contributes to the synergy generated by artificial intelligence and happiness at work. It is an essential catalyst to improve the productivity of companies.

Similarly, the article entitled “Aligning Company’s Business Goals, Social Responsibility and Employee Happiness in the Banking Industry” argues that responsible governance increases employee happiness when it promotes a culture of happiness management, an issue to be borne in mind in high-stress environments such as banking, which is the sector that is the subject of this research (Wulandari *et al.*, 2024).

Finally, the article by Ravina-Ripoll *et al.* (2024) quantitatively analyses the trinomial of emotional pay, happiness at work and organisational justice through happiness management. In it, the authors point out, on the one hand, that emotional pay has a notable effect on happiness at work. On the other hand, emotional pay positively mediates between the constructs of organisational justice and happiness at work. These findings show that it would be interesting for companies to implement management models that cultivate happiness management as a driver of productive prosperity and economic success in the face of the challenges that lay ahead with the technological advances that artificial intelligence will bring to the everyday life of organisations.

3. Concluding remarks

This special issue aims to make its readers think that the attractive philosophy of happiness management is associated with productivity, innovation, competitiveness and intrapreneurship (Galván-Vela *et al.*, 2021). In this way, company managers will be able, on the one hand, to cohabit with the five horse riders of the apocalypse, which will ensure the job satisfaction of their human capital (Robina-Ramírez *et al.*, 2023b). On the other hand, designing organisational cultures based on creativity, emotional pay, happy leadership and corporate social responsibility (Díaz-García *et al.*, 2023). These elements are fundamental to building a more inclusive, egalitarian, sustainable economy.

Under this approach, this special issue aims to bring to academic and professional attention that artificial intelligence will bring many challenges to management, including the implementation of new management models, whose success will be located in those governments where the culture of happiness management is present as a goal of quality of life, corporate welfare and productive excellence (Jiménez-Marín *et al.*, 2020).

Finally, we, the guest editors of this special issue, would like to thank, on the one hand, the authors who have contributed to the preparation of this monograph. On the other, the Editor-in-Chief of this Journal, Prof. Magnus Larsson, whose trust and support have been fundamental in giving greater dissemination to studies of happiness management as a management model that can interweave workers’ happiness at work with the technological advances that will give rise to artificial intelligence in the productive organisation of companies (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2023). We hope that you enjoy this special issue.

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