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# Guest editorial: Exploring happiness in the workplace as an essential theme for developing managers post-pandemic

Guest editorial

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## 1. Introduction

As recovery from the global pandemic takes shape, there are signs of a desire to rethink how our organisations manage, whether notions of building back better or fairer and more sustainable approaches resonate with the UN's long-established Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this sense, happiness and well-being are at the heart of the UN's 2030 agenda to achieve the SDGs. It challenges organisations to find new ways of managing for sustainable and competitive advantage through the happiness of their employees at work (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2021). This issue takes on particular relevance during the pandemic, as at this time, an essential academic and professional debate arises on the need to implement management models that revolve around the happiness at work of their human capital (Eliás Zambrano *et al.*, 2021).

Organisational psychology provides a wealth of information for corporate governance to cultivate a positive atmosphere within companies. Undoubtedly, this is one of the roadmaps for companies to encourage innovation, intrapreneurship or disruptive thinking among their employees (Galván-Vela *et al.*, 2021). It shows, among other things, that there is still a long way to go in academic research on happiness at work in the post-pandemic era (Salas-Vallina and Alegre, 2021).

A systemic review of the literature published in the last decades of the 21st century shows that an emerging line within this particular social discipline is the scientific studies that revolve around the attractive organisational culture of happiness management (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2023). This philosophy aims to comprehensively promote companies' economic and sustainable performance, especially in complex and uncertain environments (Mu *et al.*, 2023). It requires generating an organisational climate that enables workers to overcome the barriers they encounter in the day-to-day performance of their professional activity and thus to achieve their work goals with enthusiasm, happiness and social responsibility (Hatami *et al.*, 2023; Hernández-García de Velazco *et al.*, 2020).

In this way, top management can reduce psychological events that negatively affect employees' health and quality of life, such as pressure, stress and anxiety. Therefore, *happiness management* offers an excellent opportunity for companies to carry out a strategic direction that harmonises business benefits and the happiness of their internal customers under the criteria of inclusive growth, social marketing and sustainable development (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, happiness management can play an essential role in developing human resources policies that accelerate internal customers' labour productivity and operational efficiency through the holistic pursuit of their happiness at work and neuro leadership (Ruiz-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2023).

In this sense, the editors of this special issue would like to contribute to an academic debate that shows how the concept of happiness management can create the conditions for happy, productive and purposeful workplaces. From this perspective, the articles that make up the corpus of this special issue make it clear that current organisational management models need to be mindful that happiness at work is a driver of prosperity, sustainability



and competitiveness. The following general description of each article makes up this attractive special issue.

## 2. Synopsis of the special issue contributions

The special issue entitled “Exploring happiness in the workplace as an important theme for developing managers post-pandemic (Part-1)” features six accepted publications selected through a rigorous peer review process from a considerable number of submissions.

Romero-Rodriguez and Castillo-Abdul (2023) systematically reviewed the existing scientific literature in Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus on user-generated advertising content in the social marketing strategies of commercial brands. To do so, they use the PRISMA protocol. The results show that there is sufficient user-generated content work focused on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. However, no evidence of work explored the effects, impacts and potential dangers of uncontrolled brand exposure through unofficial brand ambassadors.

In this line of research, the article by Galiano-Coronil *et al.* (2023) shows, from the perspective of social marketing, that positive emotions, joy and happiness generate a substantial impact on tourism communication campaigns carried out on social networks in the post-Covid-19 era.

Similarly, Contreras-Contreras *et al.* (2023), in their study “Happiness and its relationship to expectations of change and sustainable behavior in a post-COVID world”, suggest that optimistic expectations of post-pandemic change are associated with environmentally beneficial behaviours. It translates into higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness for citizens.

Two other papers in this special issue focus on the philosophy of happiness management. The article by Martínez-Falcó *et al.* (2023) carries out a bibliometric review of happiness management in companies between 2000 and 2022. The results show the accelerated growth rate of scientific production on the happiness management construct since 2017. Perhaps this is because, that year, the University of Cadiz led the creation of the International University Happiness Network. On the other hand, the authors of this study show that most of the scientific production on happiness management publishes in the publishing houses Emerald, Springer and Elsevier. In this sense, Abellán-Sevilla and Ortiz-de-Urbina-Criado (2023) demonstrate bibliometrically that Smart HR plays a fundamental role in creating happy and intelligent companies.

Finally, the contribution of Cuesta-Valiño *et al.* (2023), “Smart human resource analytics for happiness management”, designs a structural equation model to explain the happiness of Spanish federated Karate athletes. The results reveal that service quality strongly influences satisfaction and trust and indirectly on happiness and loyalty in these specific athletes.

## 3. Concluding remarks

This special issue is motivated by the scarcity of scientific studies in the recent literature reflecting that happiness at work requires corporate governance that enhances the theory of the yellow swans, happiness philosophy and happiness management (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, a small number of academics from the International University Happiness Network, which includes the editors of this special issue, analyse happiness at work as a beneficial intangible asset that managers have in their hands to generate healthy, innovative and creative work environments that allow them to address the new technological challenges demanded by the globalised market after Covid-19 (Robina-Ramírez *et al.*, 2023). Under this approach, the first volume of this special issue provides its readers with two fundamental things: first, it offers cutting-edge literature on happiness management in the

post-pandemic era. Moreover, it presents a holistic view that happiness at work is crucial to generating an open atmosphere that satisfies not only workers' vital needs but also their functional, digital and disruptive capabilities.

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 and, on the other hand, the Editor-in-Chief of this Journal, Prof. Magnus Larsson, whose trust and support have been essential to further disseminate the studies of happiness as an organisational culture that drives economic success in the post-pandemic era. We hope that the first part of this special issue enjoys reading.

**Rafael Ravina-Ripoll**

*Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences, University of Cadiz, Cadiz, Spain*

**Esthela Galván-Vela**

*CETYS Universidad, Mexicali, Mexico*

**Cristina Raluca Gh. Popescu**

*Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Business and Administration,  
University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania, and*

**Eduardo Ahumada-Tello**

*Faculty of Accounting and Management,  
Autonomous University of Baja California – Tijuana Campus, Tijuana, Mexico*

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