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HAPPINESS AT WORK, BUSINESS BEHAVIOUR, AND WORKER PERCEPTIONS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to identify business behaviours that can create greater worker satisfaction in the performance of their professional activity, and to study their consequent impact on personal happiness. It also attempts to understand employees' perceptions of their work environment and the influence they have on job satisfaction. Therefore, we applied a mixed research method (Yin, 2013; Crewell, 2013), which combines a theoretical study based on the Sennet (1998) model and a quantitative analysis. We reviewed the theoretical arguments and conducted a survey of 83 workers belonging to an American multinational company in 2013. The company is a leading *consulting*, *branding*, and *marketing* enterprise and has implemented pioneering business strategies in Spain. The study identified the actions that should be avoided or enhanced to create organizational models that inspire and promote happiness at work. Without prejudice to the recognition of codes of practice regarding ethics that aspire to justice, the study identified such actions from the understanding that the search for happiness (*eudaemo-*

nia) is precisely the objective that most immediately guides the actions of human subjects as moral agents.

Keywords: *job satisfaction, corporate behaviour, perceptions of workers, Sennett.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking of happiness is not easy. The word may sound ethereal in addition to being an ambivalent term, because it is mainly associated with beliefs, moods, personal convictions, particular circumstances, and a number of elements that may even lead us to being unsure about what we mean when we use this word.

However, the concept has a long tradition in the area of philosophical-moral reflection, which can be clearly seen in the fact that all philosophy, both Western and Eastern, has made happiness one of the fundamental aspects on which to reflect when seeking to discover, on the one hand, the true meaning of life and, on the other, the key that illuminates good praxis, as well as what we should do to act well and to be good. Naturally, the answers to such profound and unavoidable questions have changed according to historical periods, cultural contexts, and even to the frame of mind of different thinkers. While for Comte-Sponville (2011) to be happy is to enjoy and celebrate, for Crespin, happiness is a life without regret (Montaigne, 2007). In turn, from the *eudaemonic* orthodoxy perspective, Balmes (1940) suggested that happiness is the reward for exercising virtue. Furthermore, Russell (1964) stated that the happy man is one who does not feel failure in any aspect and whose personality is not cleaved against himself or rises against the world.

If there is a philosopher who offers, with his comprehensive thinking, clear consideration on the meaning of happiness in human life, it is Aristotle. As is well known, in his famous work *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle understood happiness as the result of a vital process (Aristotle, 1981) in which the individual configures his or her character (*ethos*) as second nature into exercising virtue. Ultimately, it is worth mentioning that being happy does not consist in performing actions of a specific type, fulfilling a number of orders, or abiding by imperatives predetermined from a stance of practical rationality. Being happy is the result of having a full life and of being fortunate in having a good moral character acquired

through virtuous praxis. In short, it is a consequent value: it is the result of a way of life and of performing right action.

In summary, one can understand that being happy is not a type of action, but rather the results of actions which are performed such that ultimately one can be happy and can feel fulfilled in all dimensions and facets (Agejas et al, 2007). Thus, we can say that happiness is a consistent value; that is, it is the result of a lifestyle or certain actions.

Indeed, speaking of happiness often refers to the feeling of satisfaction that follows the completion of a task we thought we should do. "Feeling accomplished" means precisely this, to have done something that was pending and to have done it successfully. Through these actions we feel validated and our self-esteem grows. We believe that our presence is useful and feel encouraged to continue in the same line. Because happiness is not something that is attained once and for all, Aristotle expressly cited the Greek saying, "one swallow does not make a summer", but that while life is presented as a *faciendum,* we intend to continue to gain happiness by our future actions. "Being happy" is thus a gerund, not a participle; it is not something "done", but something that "keeps on being done" (Maslow, 1989).

David (2013) argued that the fact that the United Nations declared 20th March as the International Day of Happiness is a challenge for companies. David (2013) stated that we are forced to wonder how happy our business is and must ask ourselves the following questions:

1. Do my employees enjoy their relationships and their work environment?

2. Are my team members in the roles which allow them to put their skills into action?

3. Do they understand the purpose or mission of the company?

4. Do they feel they are part of something that really matters?

David (2013) considered that these questions should be asked by every business leader and that organizational models must be designed to give affirmative answers to these questions. The leader must know that the workers' happiness depends on having positive experiences in their working environment, opportunities to demonstrate their abilities (their "genius"), and a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves. If these conditions are met, they may feel their sacrifice is worth it. Previous studies (Suojanen, 2012) defined happiness at work and emphasized the importance of this issue and the way it can be measured.

Research conducted at Stanford University suggested something similar, where Aaken (2016) designed the *"Designing (for) Happiness"* course with the support of companies such as AOL, Adobe, and Facebook and speakers from Cisco, Gap, and Twitter.

Businesses were attracted to collaborate with this successful program based on the following idea provided by Aaken (Johnson, 2012, p.1) "Instead of trying to achieve happiness or trying to be happier, we work to design environments that encourage happiness". You may ask, "Why a project like this?" Because the idea that something will make you happy is a strong generator of decision making.

This idea is in line with the opinion of Brooks (2013): "If you can discern what your personal project is and discover your true currency exchange, your value, you have achieved success; you've discovered the secret of happiness through your work". What is meant by success? How is it measured? One might think that it is only based on an economic criterion, but Brooks (2013) said that many entrepreneurs increasingly refer to a non-monetary criterion and intangible values when measuring the success of their company.

Across all levels, there is evidence that happiness has important consequences for both individuals and organizations (Fisher, 2010). This is why in recent decades, the study of happiness at work has been so important to understand both the behaviour of workers in the labour market and the development of financial activity (Hamermesh, 2001). Empirical studies have focused on different areas of knowledge, such as the economy (Freeman, 1978; Hamermesh, 2001; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Westover *et al*, 2010), psychology (Argyle, 1989; Duffy *et al*, 2012), or sociology (Kalleberg and Loscocco, 1983; Hodson, 1985). In addition, these studies have addressed different groups, such as medical personnel (Williams *et al*, 2001; Shanafelt et al, 2012; Lu et al, 2012; Ingersoll., 2002; Wang *et al*, 2012), teaching staff (Borg et al, 1991; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011), and hotel workers (Arora and Khanna, 2014). In general, existing empirical research has tried to determine the causes that explain happiness at work, showing that personal and social aspects are related to this aspect of happiness (Qu and Zhao, 2012; Kossek and Ozeki, 1998; Poelmans *et a*l, 2003).

At a theoretical level, studies have pointed to other factors that may also influence the levels of happiness at work, such as organizational behaviour and workers' perceptions of such behaviour (Sennett, 2010). However, these relationships have not been tested empirically and this is

where we find a gap in research on the causes that affect work happiness. Therefore, it seems important to investigate the impact of organizational behaviour on happiness at work and workers' perceptions of it. It would also be of interest to determine which organizational factors and which aspects of workers' perceptions have a greater impact on job satisfaction.

As is well known, happiness at work includes different aspects (Fisher, 2010). Of these, the present study addresses job satisfaction, because we consider it the most relevant due to its direct consequences on individuals and organizations. As mentioned, happiness at work often refers to the feeling of satisfaction that follows a task that turns out as we thought it would.

In order to address these research issues, we followed an empirical approach based on a well-selected case study. This method is a valuable research tool and its greatest strength lies in measuring and recording the behaviour of the people involved in the phenomenon studied (Yin, 1994). In this sense, Chetty (1996) indicated that the case study method is a rigorous methodology that is adequate to investigate phenomena and understand how and why they occur. The selected case provided us with a representative sample of Spanish workers. We measured their degree of job satisfaction and their perceptions regarding the behaviour of their business organization, as well as the business characteristics of the organization itself. In order to identify the effect of the selected variables on job satisfaction, an artificial neural networks model was built (Multilayer Perceptron (MLP), which provided us with comprehensive information on the impact of each variable within the problem under study. Recent research has shown that MLP is a very appropriate methodology when, due to the mode of measurement of the dependent variable, we are confronted with a multi-class modelling problem and with complex interactions between dependent and independent variables.

Thus, we conducted an exploratory study that used a qualitative and quantitatively mixed methodology, which places it within the milieu of the case method (Yin, 2013; Creswell, 2013). We applied a scoring approach to a business case. We are aware that the study *ad intra* is of great value to this setting.

This article is structured as follows: the next section reviews the literature related to job satisfaction and the research hypotheses are formulated; next, the data and model analysis are used to investigate the hypotheses; finally, the results and the main conclusions are presented.

We should emphasize the connection between our study, along with the mixed methodology used (case analysis/quantitative exploration), and the philosophical and moral approach which runs, like a *leitmotiv*, throughout this paper and serves as a guide for our most important intellectual objectives.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The appearance in 1998 of "*The Corrosion of Character*" by the famed sociologist and European sociology Awardee Richard Sennett, provided an interesting perspective on work patterns and organizational culture at the turn of the century. For many academics it was an invitation to focus attention on the world of business, which we all share to some extent. In our opinion, there is an immediate connection between the *eudaemonistic* approach, as an ethical paradigm, and the work of Sennett. In fact, as previously suggested, if character is acquired through the conscious use of freedom and the exercise of a voluntary action, and becomes second nature, and if good character is the result of such a second nature being shaped through the practice of virtue, then dealing with the corrosion of character in the work environment comprises an extremely important theoretical challenge for ethical management.

 Sennett (1998) established a conceptual distinction between personality and character. Thus, whereas the former concept refers to the sphere of feelings and inner thoughts, the latter is identified with the ethical value we attach to these feelings and thoughts in our relationships with others. This distinction is very similar to that made in the discipline of Ethics when its material object is explained (actions that do not relate to the temperament of the subject but to their *customs*). Thus, Ethics does not study the non-psychic tendencies of the subject, but rather the psychic ones, which are based on prior knowledge (either sensitive or intellectual) and are therefore voluntary. Moreover, the distinction between personality and character is of use in explaining how the environment affects people. This is the case, because, as stated above, the individual is constructed in the manner in which he or she relates to the circumstances (Ortega, 2001).

Currently, the employee is immersed in the work context of the "new capitalism" (Sennett, 2010). On the one hand, this work scenario is characterized by the globalization of the economy and, on the other, by

the importance of information technologies and communications. Above all, this capitalism is characterized by *a new dimension of change* in which time management is not arranged in a clear manner: companies are more flexible but are constantly redefined; an archipelago of inter-related activities is revealed but they are not clear; dysfunction affects confidence; and links become weak.

Today then, we are immersed in a working and productive system that does not promote a constructive and friendly narrative about the meaning of work. Nowadays, work is simply understood as a means of subsistence. This being so, it is hard to be able to achieve commitment and personal involvement beyond that required by the strict terms of the employment contract (Sennett, 2010), which is a condition for the possibility of business success in a dynamic and complex environment such as the one existing today.

In addition, efficiency criteria prevail in this model, which may immerse workers not only in a stressful process of continuous adaptation to changing structures (i.e., flexibility), but which may also engender feelings of uncertainty. These issues could be linked to some level of withdrawal, the impact of which would be reflected not only in the productivity rate, but also in the ethical attitudes of the workers.

Another feature of the current change-based system is that the understanding of professional ethics is meaningless. Ethics are affected by this flexible, changing, and uncertain system. Therefore, the skills must be "portable"; that is, they may be transferred from one sector to another or from one team to another, in which the rules are more often improvised rather than fixed. Seniority is no longer a value because what matters is continued novelty. The boss is no longer supposed to be the head of teamwork, which is a dogma in the modern working system. However, too much flexibility makes the worker more malleable; the absence of strong leadership leads to the dissolution of responsibilities; and neutrality affects the emotional charge of the worker (Sennett, 2010). In any case, some studies (e.g., Eisenbeiss and Knippenberg, 2014) have investigated the effect of the ethical behaviour of leaders on their subordinates and have highlighted the positive impact that these leaders have.

Moreover, it has been noted that the worker receives a set of attitudes and behaviours from their work environment; thus, these will influence the workers in some way. Previous studies (James and Tetris, 1986; Mathieu et al, 1993; Wong et al, 1998; Thoresen et al, 2003) have shown that there is a relationship between workers' perceptions of their working

environment and job satisfaction. Some authors (Bakhshi et al, 2009) have even studied the relationship purely from the point of view of the material aspects of the worker's environment and how these might have had an effect on their attitudes and behaviours. Other studies have focussed on the perception of work teams in relation to their satisfaction (Valle and Witt, 2001), workers' perceptions at the personal and teamwork level within a company (Kristof-Brown *et al*, 2014), and the relationship between work satisfaction and the differential perception of the characteristics of a job (Caldwell and O'Reilli, 1982). The relationship between perceived organizational justice and job satisfaction has also been studied. However, as far as we know, no studies have revealed an association between job satisfaction and the employees' perceptions of their colleagues (workmates, peers, and superiors).

In view of what has been said regarding the aspects that characterize the current organizational-business system, we now state our research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: If employees perceive that organizational values identify with their own personal values, their level of job satisfaction increases.

Hypothesis 2: The workers' perceptions of the behaviour of the business organization's agents will positively affect his or her personal satisfaction.

3. SAMPLE, RESEARCH MODEL AND METHODOLOGY

A business case study was carefully selected to investigate the relationship between levels of job satisfaction, organizational behaviour, and workers' perceptions of this behaviour. From a theoretical and an empirical point of view, this case is complete and coherent regarding relating the different parts of the process of testing the hypotheses. For this reason, we think that the chosen case satisfies the selection criterion because the objective was to choose a case that can replicate or extend the emerging theory under analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989). Specifically, we have provided a sample of workers belonging to a business organization for its outstanding leadership (it is a successful company), for its multinational character (it combines different business cultures), and for its large size (the challenges in human resources management are greater the larger the company). To this end, we selected a com-

pany that is a leader in the field of consulting, branding, and marketing, a foremost provider of real-time market information, and a specialist in market monitoring and marketing mix modelling.[1] According to their corporate communications, this business organization is committed to technology and innovation and offers a flexible nonhierarchical work environment. It preferentially hires proactive, pioneering, and professional people and ensures "excellent" benefits for employees (bonus system, health services, family policy, and a system of rewards and recognition based on customer satisfaction, high individual and team performance, excellence in people management, and loyalty to the company).

To obtain data related to the study variables, a total of 110 surveys were submitted to the employees at their headquarters in Madrid and Barcelona during the first half of 2013. Of these surveys, 83 were conducted. Each survey was personally conducted with each employee, who was provided with an explanation of its usefulness and with guarantees concerning its strict confidentiality protocols.

The structure of the survey was based on previous literature (Fields, 2002). The survey consisted of 44 questions divided into two parts. The first half addressed personal questions (age, gender, marital status, number of children, educational background) and the second half addressed professional aspects. In turn, there were two types of questions in the second half: Some were purely objective and were related to organizational behaviour (such as positions in the company, working hours, and flexible scheduling), whereas others were related to the employees' perceptions of the business organization (views on the tasks, rotations in jobs, relationships with superiors and subordinates, teamwork, or the work environment in their department, among others).

Of the total respondents, 41% were men and 59% were women. Respondents were middle managers, most of whom had a university education and with more than five years of experience in the company. Their average age was between 30 and 40 years. Most of them were married and had an average of 1.64 children aged 5 to 9 years old. In total, 75% claimed that parenthood had not harmed their professional development. The working schedule of the respondents was 40 hours per week, whereas more than 11% exceeded this average and over 38% worked from home.

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[1] See http://www.iriworldwide.es/Empleos/tabid/397/Default.aspx

The empirical strategy of this research was based on the Sennett (2010) model, in which it is assumed that job satisfaction is related to organizational behaviour and the workers' perception of this behaviour. The analysis model can be formulated as shown in [1]. The dependent variable is job satisfaction (S) as perceived by the worker i at t *time*, e represents the vector of variables that define the behaviour of the business organization, p is the vector of variables measuring the workers' perceptions of the business organization, and c represents the set of variables that controls the personal and professional situation of workers. Finally, μ is the error term of the estimation.

$$S_j = f_j\ (\ e, p, c\ ) + \mu_j \qquad [1]$$

In order to build the model we used the workers' perceived level of fulfilment as a *proxy* for happiness at work (Chiang, Méndez and Sánchez, 2010; Leal et al, 1999; Werther & Davis, 1982; Garmendia and Parra, 1993). Thus, we identified happiness with a sense of satisfaction. Sennett warned of the danger of work becoming illegible and therefore absurd and meaningless. In such an event the worker's connection to work decreases and life confusion increases. Therefore, workers were asked about their satisfaction at work under the *Feeling fulfilled item*.

Organizational behaviour was represented by 17 variables that refer to communication, treatment, respect for values, technology, and the flexibility of the company. Workers' perceptions of their company was represented by links, conflict resolution, honesty, and efficiency. Finally, personal and social characteristics were controlled for by taking into account variables such as the level of education, age, gender, marital status, children, and the job performed. Table 1 shows the variables used and their measurement.

Building a model to investigate the study hypotheses was influenced by the form of measurement of the dependent variable, which reports on various levels or categories of happiness at work. Therefore, it is a so-called multi-class modelling problem. Classification problems with multiple classes introduce a complex interaction between dependent and independent variables such that they require more effort in analytical processing. These problems can be solved by applying statistics and computer techniques, although the latter have been shown to be more appropriate in recent research (Qi and Davison, 2009; Becchetti et al, 2008; Kim et al, 2007; Bolton and Hand, 2002; Tsai, 2009; Estivill-Castro and Lee, 2001).

Table 1. Research variables

Designation	Measure
Dependent variable:	
Job satisfaction	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
Independent variables:	
Organizational behaviour	
Communication with their superior	1: no, not there; 2: yes, but not enough; 3: yes, enough; 4: yes, a lot
Communication with subordinates	1: no, I don't have any collaborators; 2: yes, but not enough; 3: yes, enough; 4: yes, a lot
Communication with peers	1: no, not there; 2: yes, but not enough; 3: yes, enough; 4: yes, a lot
Deal with subordinates	1: no, never; 2: no, almost never; 3: yes, sometimes; 4: yes, always
Dealing with equals	1: no, never; 2: no, almost never; 3: yes, sometimes; 4: yes, always
Dealing with superiors	1: no, never; 2: no, almost never; 3: yes, sometimes; 4: yes, always
They ask for results on short notice	0: no; 1: yes
The company respects values	0: no; 1: yes
Routine work	0: no; 1: yes
They give flexibility to achieve goals	0: no; 1: yes
Jobs are tailored to customers	0: no; 1: yes
The company has needed technology	0: no; 1: yes
Technology is detrimental to the individual	0: no; 1: yes
There is group consciousness	0: no; 1: yes
Company Type	0: horizontal; 1: vertical; 2: NR/DK
Existing structure makes your job easier	0: no; 1: yes
Their work is compatible with your values	0: no; 1: yes

(Continue)

<p style="text-align:center">Table 1. Research variables (cont.)</p>

Designation	Measure
Worker's perception	
I know my place	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
I know the mission of the company	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
I feel involved in the company's project	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
I feel valued	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
The company values experience	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
The company values and mine coincide	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
There is a feeling of togetherness in the company	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
Conflicts are resolved correctly	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
I consider myself to be efficient	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
I consider myself honest	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
My superiors are efficient	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
My superiors are honest	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
My subordinates are efficient	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
My subordinates are honest	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
My peers are efficient	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree
My peers are honest	1: disagree; 2: somewhat disagree; 3: indifferent; 4: somewhat agree; 5: agree

Table 1. Research variables *(cont.)*

Designation	Measure
Personal aspects	
Position	1: other; 2: individual contributor; 3: intermediate management; 4: management
How long served	1: one year or less; 2: 1 to 3 years; 3: between 3 and 5 years; 4: 5 years
education	1: other; 2: did not finish high school; 3: high school without university access; 4: high school with university entrance; 5: NVQs or equivalent; 6: technical engineer or university diploma; 7: graduate/degree; 8: Masters; 9: Doctor
Age	1: 18 to 30 yo; 2: 31 to 40 yo; 3: 40 to 50 yo; 4: above 50 yo
Gender	1: female; 2: male
Marital status	1: married; 2: single and lives alone; 3: single and cohabiting; 4: separated/divorced and lives alone; 5: separated/divorced and living with a partner; 6: widow/er and lives alone; 7: widow/er and lives as a couple
Number of members	Number of members in the family unit
Number of children	Number of children the worker has

A well-known multi-class computer technique is the so-called Multi-layer Perceptron (MLP), which is an artificial neural network model. It is a special case of a functional approach, in which there is no assumption regarding the underlying model of the data analysed (Núñez de Castro and Von Zuben, 1998). MLP is a feed-forward network that consists of a layer of input units (sensors), one output layer, and a number of intermediate layers, called hidden layers, with no connection to the outside. Each input sensor is connected to units from the second layer, which are connected to a third layer, and so on (Figure 1). The network attempts
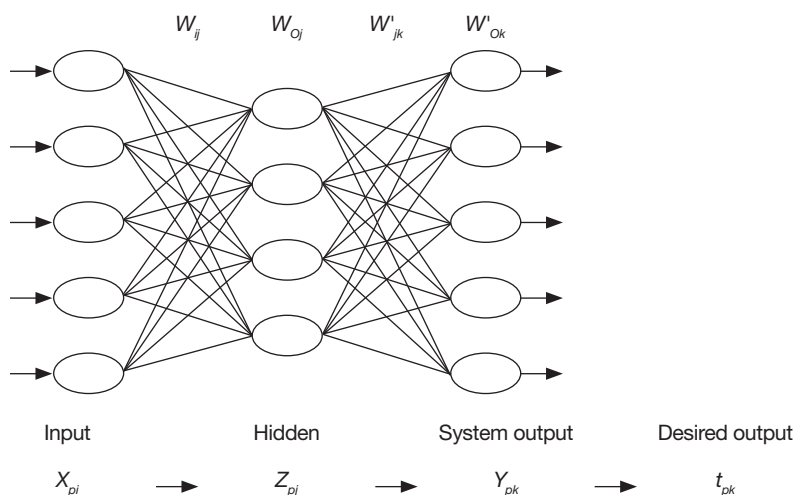
$$W_{ij} \qquad W_{Oj} \qquad W'_{jk} \qquad W'_{Ok}$$

Input   Hidden   System output   Desired output

$$X_{pi} \qquad\longrightarrow\qquad Z_{pj} \qquad\longrightarrow\qquad Y_{pk} \qquad\longrightarrow\qquad t_{pk}$$

Figure 1. MLP network architecture with a hidden layer.

to establish a correspondence between a set of inputs and a set of desired outputs.

The learning process of the MLP network involves finding a function that properly represents learning patterns, in addition to performing a process of generalization that allows the efficient handling of individuals not analysed during learning (Flórez and Fernández, 2008). To this end, it is necessary to adjust *W weights* from the information originated in the sample set, assuming that the architecture and network connections are known, the aim being to obtain the weights that minimize the learning error. A set of pairs of learning patterns is given $\{(x_1,y_1), (x_2,y_2)...(x_p,y_p)\}$ as well as a ε error (W, X, Y) function. The training process involves finding the set of weights that minimizes the learning error E(W) (Shang and Benjamin, 1996):

$$\min_{\top} w \left[E(W) = min_{\top} w \Sigma \downarrow (i=1)^{\top} p \equiv \left[\in (W. x_{\downarrow} i, y_{\downarrow} i,) \right] \right] \qquad [2]$$

Most of the analytical models used to minimize the error function use methods that require the assessment of the local gradient of the function E(W). Techniques based on second-order derivatives could be also considered (Flórez and Fernández, 2008).

In order to properly assess the level of accuracy of a neural network, sensitivity and specificity have to be taken into account; the higher their

values the more precise they are, as it will mean that they will be modelled with a higher setting. Matthews' coefficient can be used to automatically evaluate sensitivity and specificity levels. It not only reflects the levels of each of these parameters, but also shows the level of balance between them. Thus, this coefficient shows high values when sensitivity and specificity are high and both show similar values. The empirical study conducted numerous tests on the various possibilities of the number of neurons in the hidden layer and activation functions. A model was finally chosen that obtained the highest Matthews' coefficient.

In order to complete the model, a sensitivity analysis of the variables was conducted. This technique is used to interpret the weights or parameters of a model in neural networks (Hashem, 1992; Lisbon, Mehridehnavi and Martin, 1994). The objective is to know the extent to which variations in parameters or input values affect the output results. The analysis of these variations makes it possible to determine the importance of each variable, because each one has a proportional representation in the model. In the analysis, an increasing function was used of the difference between the expected or known network output (also called target value) and its output, together with the modified value of the variable. In general, for any type of model, the formula for the analysis would be derived from:

$$Sx_i = \frac{\delta \, (modelo)}{\delta X_i} \qquad [3]$$

where Sx_i is the sensitivity value of the variable X_i The sensitivity value corresponds proportionally to the weight a particular variable has within the model (Serrano, Soria and Martín, 2009), which would be equivalent to the ratio of the variable in a linear model.

According to the foregoing, some of the issues considered in this study do not go beyond the characterization of the sample, and consequently, they only have sociological and descriptive interest. Nevertheless, some other questions related to certain variables have greater ethical connotations. Such variables may include those related to the organization's mission and organizational values, those related to the treatment provided and perceived by the worker, and all those related to communication in the organization. Implicit in all these issues are moral values and ethical virtues, such as solidarity, veracity and, ultimately, honesty.

4. RESULTS

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Table 2 presents the distribution of the dependent variable. The average value for job satisfaction was 4.000, which suggests that workers have a high degree of job satisfaction.

Table 2. Happiness at work

Level of happiness at work	%
1 (disagree)	6.349
2 (partially disagree)	15.873
3 (indifferent)	7.936
4 (partially agree)	50.793
5 (agree)	19.049

Table 3 shows the correlation between the level of happiness at work and organizational behaviour variables. Happiness at work is mainly correlated with the company's flexibility by which the worker can conduct his or her tasks. It also positively correlates with communication with superiors and subordinates. The association between the degree of happiness and the ability to do custom work for customers is of interest. This association could be interpreted as an indirect one between employee satisfaction and company customer satisfaction. However, the fact of demanding results from workers on short notice is associated with problems in the communication process and the smoothness of the relationship between superiors and subordinates. Likewise, routine work is correlated with the technology available to the company and custom work for customers.

Table 4 shows the correlation coefficients of the dependent variable in relation to the workers' perceptions. It can be appreciated that the degree of job satisfaction is highly correlated with all the perception variables analysed, except for the personal considerations of efficiency and honesty that the worker has regarding him or herself and with the honesty of his or her subordinates. Therefore, it can be understood that workers feel fulfilled in their organization to the extent that they

recognize their place in the company, that they correctly understand the company's mission, and that they have a strong link with the project.

Regarding values, the data suggest that employees feel greater job satisfaction when they feel valued not only for their expertise but also for their own work. The identification of personal values with corporate values also causes a higher degree of job satisfaction. The perception of the values that are experienced in the business, in terms of solidarity and justice, which are measured by the way conflict resolution is perceived), is positively associated with levels of satisfaction. Finally, it is worth noting the positive association between the satisfaction that workers receive from their superiors, subordinates, and workmates and corporate values of honesty and efficiency (McDonald and Gandz, 1992; Blanchard and Oconnor, 1997; Garcia and Dolan, 1997; Lord, 2006; Boria-Reverter et al, *2010;* Gentile, 2010).

Finally, Table 5 shows data related to the personal circumstances of the workers. It shows that that job satisfaction is directly and solely related to the position they hold in the company and has no effect on the other factors studied. The position held in the company is associated with level of education and seniority in the company, which is an expected outcome; however, position is associated with the number of children, which is also related to the length of service in the company, age, and marital status. Gender is unrelated to any variable.

4.2. MLP MODEL

Table 6 shows the architecture and features of the MLP network developed for this study. The model consists of an input layer, in which there are as many neurons as independent variables (41 variables), a single hidden layer (3 neurons), and an output layer with 5 neurons because it is a multi-class model with 5 possible answers about happiness at work: 1 (disagree), 2 (somewhat disagree), 3 (indifferent), 4 (partially agree), and 5 (agree).

Within existing activation functions, the optimal result was obtained with the hyperbolic tangent function in the case of the hidden layer, and with the Softmax function in the case of the output layer. Thus, the classification level in the sample was 86.329%. If we generalize the model in the sample testing, the rating level was 83.766%.

Table 3. Correlation between job satisfaction and organizational behaviour

Variables		I feel fulfilled	Communication with superiors	Communication with subordinates	Communication with equals	Dealing with subordinates	Dealing with equals	Dealing with superiors	They ask for results on short notice
I feel fulfilled	Pearson	1	0.296	0.296	0.035	0.180	0.204	0.128	0.117
	Sig.		0.016*	0.016*	0.780	0.148	0.100	0.307	0.350
Communication with their superior	Pearson		1	-1.000	-0.161	-0.446	-0.400	-0.181	-0.356
	Sig.			0.000**	0.183	0.000**	0.001**	0.134	0.002**
Communication with subordinates	Pearson			1	0.161	0.446	0.400	0.181	0.356
	Sig.				0.183	0.000**	0.001**	0.134	0.002**
Communication with peers	Pearson				1	0.391	0.151	0.183	0.232
	Sig.					0.001**	0.212	0.130	0.053
Dealing with subordinates	Pearson					1	0.329	0.369	0.328
	Sig.						0.005**	0.002**	0.006**
Dealing with equals	Pearson						1	0.357	0.457
	Sig.							0.002**	0.000**
Dealing with superiors	Pearson							1	0.530
	Sig.								0.000**
They ask for results on short notice	Pearson								1
	Sig.								
The company respects values	Pearson								
	Sig.								
Routine work	Pearson								
	Sig.								
They give flexibility to achieve goals	Pearson								
	Sig.								
Jobs are tailored to customers	Pearson								
	Sig.								
The company has needed technology	Pearson								
	Sig.								
Technology is detrimental to the individual	Pearson								
	Sig.								
There is group consciousness	Pearson								
	Sig.								
Company Type	Pearson								
	Sig.								
Existing structure makes your job easier	Pearson								
	Sig.								
Their work is compatible with their values	Pearson								
	Sig.								

** Significant correlation at level <0.01; * Significant correlation at level <0.05

The company respects values	Routine work	They give flexibility to achieve goals	Jobs are tailored to customers	The company has needed technology	Technology is detrimental to the individual	There is group consciousness	Company Type	Existing structure makes your job easier	Their work is compatible with their values
-0.124	0.234	-0.338	0.344	0.039	0.126	-0.120	0.121	-0.105	0.308
0.321	0.059	0.006**	0.005**	0.761	0.315	0.335	0.335	0.403	0.012*
0.206	-0.247	0.013	-0.156	0.127	-0.117	-0.061	-0.069	0.103	-0.027
0.086	0.040*	0.914	0.198	0.302	0.340	0.618	0.572	0.400	0.824
-0.206	0.247	-0.013	0.156	-0.127	0.117	0.061	0.069	-0.103	0.027
0.086	0.040*	0.914	0.198	0.302	0.340	0.618	0.572	0.400	0.824
-0.108	-0.088	0.099	0.037	-0.091	0.094	0.017	0.169	-0.093	0.106
0.372	0.467	0.416	0.760	0.461	0.443	0.892	0.165	0.447	0.387
-0.303	0.142	0.166	0.107	-0.018	0.189	-0.142	0.266	-0.042	0.049
0.011*	0.240	0.169	0.377	0.881	0.121	0.245	0.027*	0.730	0.691
-0.218	0.273	0.056	0.000	0.043	0.190	-0.081	0.155	-0.033	0.123
0.070	0.022*	0.647	1.000	0.727	0.118	0.509	0.203	0.786	0.314
-0.373	0.229	-0.047	-0.053	-0.028	0.159	-0.366	0.243	0.147	0.230
0.001**	0.056	0.700	0.664	0.818	0.192	0.002**	0.045*	0.229	0.057
-0.286	0.071	0.075	-0.042	0.027	0.000	-0.219	0.149	-0.154	0.280
0.016*	0.559	0.540	0.730	0.827	1.000	0.070	0.222	0.206	0.020*
1	0.138	-0.157	-0.082	0.031	-0.069	0.187	-0.032	-0.119	-0.164
	0.255	0.195	0.501	0.803	0.575	0.124	0.795	0.331	0.179
	1	-0.214	0.285	0.280	0.198	-0.122	0.056	-0.001	-0.116
		0.075	0.017*	0.021*	0.103	0.318	0.650	0.993	0.343
		1	-0.228	0.133	-0.010	0.048	0.006	-0.042	-0.204
			0.057	0.281	0.933	0.698	0.960	0.733	0.092
			1	0.112	0.073	-0.027	0.157	-0.051	0.251
				0.362	0.552	0.827	0.196	0.675	0.038
				1	0.129	0.162	-0.280	0.184	0.018
					0.298	0.191	0.022*	0.134	0.885
					1	0.158	-0.034	0.235	0.063
						0.196	0.782	0.052	0.610
						1	-0.170	0.054	-0.061
							0.163	0.659	0.616
							1	-0.115	0.346
								0.348	0.004**
								1	-0.035
									0.773
									1

Table 4. Correlation between job satisfaction and worker perceptions

Variables		I feel fulfilled	I know my place	I know the mission of the company	I feel connected to the project/ company	I feel valued	The company values experience	The company values and mine coincide
I feel fulfilled	Pearson	1	0.505	0.456	0.605	0.685	0.644	0.472
	Sig.		0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
I know my place	Pearson		1	0.495	0.572	0.426	0.301	0.356
	Sig.			0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.014*	0.003**
I know the mission of the company	Pearson			1	0.486	0.553	0.448	0.486
	Sig.				0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
I feel involved in the company's project	Pearson				1	0.573	0.530	0.630
	Sig.					0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
I feel valued	Pearson					1	0.790	0.553
	Sig.						0.000**	0.000**
The company values experience	Pearson						1	0.570
	Sig.							0.000**
The company values and mine coincide	Pearson							1
	Sig.							
There is a feeling of togetherness in the company	Pearson							
	Sig.							
Conflicts are resolved correctly	Pearson							
	Sig.							
I consider myself to be efficient	Pearson							
	Sig.							
I consider myself honest	Pearson							
	Sig.							
My superiors are efficient	Pearson							
	Sig.							
My superiors are honest	Pearson							
	Sig.							
My subordinates are efficient	Pearson							
	Sig (2-tailed)							
My subordinates are honest	Pearson							
	Sig.							
My peers are efficient	Pearson							
	Sig.							
My peers are honest	Pearson							
	Sig.							

** Significant correlation at level <0.01; * Significant correlation at level <0.05

There is a feeling of togetherness in the company	Conflicts are resolved correctly	I consider myself to be efficient	I consider myself honest	My superiors are efficient	My superiors are honest	My subordinates are efficient	My subordinates are honest	My peers are efficient	My peers are honest
0.562	0.446	0.227	0.048	0.572	0.542	0.378	0.219	0.392	0.332
0.000**	0.000**	0.067	0.703	0.000**	0.000**	0.002**	0.077	0.001**	0.006**
0.369	0.452	0.219	0.106	0.501	0.329	0.405	0.271	0.283	0.290
0.002**	0.000**	0.078	0.397	0.000**	0.007**	0.001**	0.028*	0.021*	0.018*
0.422	0.394	0.163	0.212	0.456	0.459	0.352	0.321	0.310	0.265
0.000**	0.001**	0.190	0.088	0.000**	0.000**	0.004**	0.009**	0.011*	0.032*
0.576	0.545	0.039	0.028	0.441	0.506	0.446	0.383	0.284	0.342
0.000**	0.000**	0.753	0.821	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.001**	0.021*	0.005**
0.515	0.450	0.139	0.051	0.468	0.464	0.350	0.226	0.315	0.387
0.000**	0.000**	0.267	0.684	0.000**	0.000**	0.004**	0.068	0.010**	0.001**
0.461	0.453	0.063	0.060	0.523	0.594	0.292	0.168	0.310	0.372
0.000**	0.000**	0.613	0.630	0.000**	0.000**	0.017*	0.178	0.011*	0.002**
0.629	0.597	0.201	0.085	0.328	0.404	0.374	0.315	0.340	0.299
0.000**	0.000**	0.105	0.496	0.00**	0.001**	0.002	0.010**	0.005**	0.015**
1	0.712	0.132	0.000	0.438	0.466	0.316	0.227	0.377	0.395
	0.000**	0.291	1.000	0.000**	0.000**	0.010**	0.067	0.002**	0.001**
	1	0.147	-0.042	0.427	0.496	0.320	0.255	0.462	0.606
		0.239	0.736	0.000**	0.000**	0.009**	0.039*	0.000**	0.000**
		1	0.585	0.439	0.175	0.173	0.054	0.411	0.239
			0.000**	0.000**	0.160	0.164	0.666	0.001**	0.054
			1	0.173	0.128	0.251	0.0357	0.334	0.301
				0.164	0.305	0.042*	0.003**	0.006**	0.014*
				1	0.823	0.209	0.058	0.349	0.351
					0.000**	0.092	0.645	0.004**	0.004**
					1	0.162	0.142	0.366	0.432
						0.193	0.255	0.003**	0.000**
						1	0.761	0.425	0.326
							0.000**	0.000**	0.008**
							1	0.340	0.432
								0.005**	0.000**
								1	0.693
									0.000**
									1

Table 5. Correlation between job satisfaction and personal aspects

Variables		I feel fulfilled	Position	How long served	education	Age	Gender	Marital status	No. members	No. children
I feel fulfilled	Pearson	1	0.346	-0.86	0.056	0.068	-0.105	-0.047	0.176	0.125
	Sig.		0.004**	0.494	0.656	0.590	0.404	0.708	0.157	0.316
Position	Pearson		1	0.363	0.354	0.344	-0.236	-0.063	0.088	0.334
	Sig.		0.004**	0.001**	0.001**	0.001**	0.031*	0.581	0.440	0.002**
How long served	Pearson			1	0.103	0.406	-0.027	-0.332	-0.034	0.394
	Sig.			0.001**	0.353	0.000**	0.809	0.003**	0.763	0.000**
Education	Pearson				1	0.065	-0.119	0.015	-0.083	0.032
	Sig.					0.561	0.282	0.893	0.465	0.779
Age	Pearson					1	-0.054	-0.627	0.036	0.401
	Sig.						0.629	0.017*	0.750	0.000**
Gender	Pearson						1	-0.062	0.109	0.056
	Sig.							0.587	0.338	0.622
Marital status	Pearson							1	-0.260	-0.369
	Sig.								0.021*	0.001**
No. members	Pearson								1	0.573
	Sig.									0.000**
No. children	Pearson									1
	Sig.									

** Significant correlation at level <0.01; * Significant correlation at level <0.05

Table 6. MLP Architecture and results

Architecture	
Number of neurons in input layer	24
Number of hidden layers	1
Number of neurons in hidden layer	7
Hidden layer activation function	Hyperbolic tangent
Output layer activation function	Softmax
Results of classification (%)	
Within the sample	86.329
Test sample	83.766

Table 7 shows the results concerning the sensitivity of the variables. Only variables that have a high sensitivity in the model are shown, which together account for 92.72% of the variability of the dependent variable. The variables with the greatest impact are those relating to organizational behaviour; specifically, those that refer to the fact that the *Company respects values, Their work is compatible with their values,* and

Table 7. Sensitivity of the variables

Variables	Sensitivity (%)
The company respects values	10.900
Their work is compatible with their values	10.460
They give flexibility to achieve goals	9.260
Company Type	9.170
Jobs are tailored to customers	8.540
I feel involved in the company's project	8.270
My superiors are honest	7.940
I know my place	7.640
My superiors are efficient	7.630
Conflicts are resolved correctly	7.290
There is group consciousness	7.240
How long served	6.020

They give some flexibility to achieve objectives. The variables with the second greatest impact are those that refer to workers' perceptions, such as *I feel bound to the company's project, My superiors are honest,* and *I know my place*. Finally, it is also noteworthy that only one personal aspect value had significant impact on the model *(How long they've been in the company)*.

5. DISCUSSION

The importance of this study concerns the lack of clarity regarding work, which is a vital area of life. Undoubtedly, this area has an impact on other areas of life of greater importance, such as family relationships and friendships.

The main contribution of the study is that it showed the extent to which different organizational behaviours and the workers' perceptions of them influence the degree of job satisfaction (understood from the point of view of Sennett). Following the theoretical arguments and empirical investigation, we highlighted some results that allow us to encourage certain organizational behaviours that promote happiness at work compared to others whose effects are the opposite.

The results confirm H1 and H2. The variables with the greatest impact were those related to organizational behaviour and the perceptions of company workers, whereas those referring to the personal situation of the worker had little impact on job satisfaction.

The seven variables with the greatest impact on job satisfaction were associated with organizational behaviour: *the company respects values; their work is compatible with their values; they provide flexibility to achieve objectives; the type of company; tailor-made work is done for customers; I feel involved in the company project;* and *my superiors are honest*. All these variables had a sensitivity of more than 8%; the variables *The company respects values* and *their work is compatible with their values* were the most sensitive, each with a sensitivity of more than 10%. These data suggest that respect for workers' personal values has an impact on the degree of job satisfaction that is more than 20%. Thus, H1 is confirmed: If the employee perceives that the organization's values are identified with their own values, their level of job satisfaction increases.

It is very difficult for employees to feel connected to the company when their work is bland, there are no challenges or areas for improve-

ment, and they can hardly feel valued if other workers (including external ones) can easily replace them given the low "value" of their professional performance. This kind of detachment is inevitably linked to some vital confusion.

Furthermore, within the organizational behaviour category, the variable that measures *having group awareness or not* has considerable influence on job satisfaction, with a sensitivity of more than 7%. Thus, it is necessary to create meeting places and generate group awareness with a sense of belonging. These aspects largely depend on managers, who have to work extensively with the human resources management policies appropriate to this end; however, the workers also have responsibility in this regard.

The variable *flexibility to achieve the objectives* in the company could be seen as contrary to the concept of routine which, properly understood, allows an activity to be conducted with order and rhythm and encourages improvement and professional growth. However, the absence of routine generates a sense of insecurity in the worker, which destroys their creative abilities and forces them into a continuous adjustment scenario that affects their emotional stability.

Regarding the variables that measure workers' perceptions, those with the greatest impact on job satisfaction were: *I know my place in the company, I believe that my superiors are efficient*, and *In my company, conflicts are properly resolved*. All three variables add a sensitivity of more than 7%. In relation to the variable *I know my place in the company,* it should be emphasized that changing organizational models prevent workers from understanding their role in the company and forces them into a process of constant adaptation, which hinders their integration in the organizational dynamics. Undoubtedly, the uncertainty caused by these models degenerates into a sense of failure that can lead to frustration.

Regarding the variables addressing personal aspects, the variable that measured *The time served in the company* was the only one that reached significance in relation to the dependent variable (sensitivity more than 6%).

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

It is commonly believed that academics and entrepreneurs follow different paths and that their languages are different to the point of almost

being misleading. However, this is not always true. Entrepreneurs are as concerned, or even more so, as academics regarding the experience of employees in their work environments. They strive to measure the satisfaction of their teams and create work environments that improve the workers' experience in the company.

Despite their differences, many organizations, accounting firms, or government agencies that are responsible for measuring aspects of the working environment analyse key issues, such as workers' trust, pride of belonging, employee benefits, and efficiency of processes; that is, certain values are considered fundamental when addressing satisfaction and happiness. Furthermore, there are many entrepreneurs who are determined to address this issue directly.

The results of this study contribute to further clarify the aspects that can more positively affect the workers' degree of job satisfaction. These issues are grouped into three main categories that affect working life (organizational behaviour, the workers' perceptions, and their individual circumstances) and separate variables are defined for each category.

This definition of variables is essential because the professional ethics based on arbitrary criteria or a system that corrodes character are untenable given that they are not offering a vital narrative to their workers. The most stable frame of reference is needed from which to build a clear account of what is expected from the employee, their place in the organization, what is the mission of the company, and how the interests of all of the agents are integrated in the same project to avoid possible conflicts of interest.

At the centre of this situation – and beyond the appropriate management of organizational ethics – we must never lose sight of the anthropological core of morality. In general, people involve themselves in work and professional dynamics, and while using their abilities in these contexts, they either develop as human beings or corrode to some extent. Ultimately, they continue to shape themselves as individuals, for better or worse, good or bad, and happy or unhappy. When we act in a certain way, we not only perform actions that have a particular impact on reality, but we also do things that have an impact on ourselves. For example, when we say the opposite to what we believe in order to deceive someone, it does not just harm the person deceived; if we continue in such behaviour, we become accustomed to it – *mos-ris* – and we become liars. We were not born this way, we become this way. Does this characteristic trait bring us close to a fuller and happier life?

According to the foregoing, one of the most relevant implications of this study is the need for good organizational management, although it does not provide a detailed list of policies and practices that could be implemented according to this need. The final conclusion must not only focus on the success of the company or the sustainability of long-term processes, but should also address respect for the individual in the organization and his or her holistic flourishing, which is clearly associated with the acquisition of good character and consequent happiness. As is well known, these are still the basic building blocks of the best tradition of moral philosophy and excellence of the praxis and ethical behaviour.

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