Summary

FINDING HAPPINESS AT WORK
TOWARDS MEASURING HAW WITH OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

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Master Thesis

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Summary

Happiness at work (HAW) is a topic of interest for personal well-being and performance at work. To better understand HAW concepts and their correlations, different models, such as the 5C model focused in this research, are required to gain a multidimensional perspective on HAW.

Societal change implies that the concept of HAW is dynamic. As a result, a current view on the concepts of HAW for an accurate understanding of HAW is necessary in times of change. Consequently, concepts and models need to be reviewed on their feasibility to measure and cluster the concepts and topics of HAW.

Furthermore, accurate measurement methods are required to measure and understand the present perspective and degree of employees' happiness and guarantee the validity of measurement tools such as questionnaires. Closed questions dominate questionnaires used to measure social concepts; however, open-ended questions show a suitable alternative for these and need to be considered for the future of questionnaire research.

As a result, this research aimed to find how far the 5C model can be confirmed or extended with answers to open-ended questions. In specific, this includes what the developments in HAW are and what the potential of open-ended questions is for measuring the concepts of HAW.

These questions were approached with an exploratory research design that includes a pre and main study. In the pre-study, three experts on HAW were consulted in a focus group on trends in HAW of the last ten years. Furthermore, the pre-study also included an interview with one expert on text mining with R on the potential of open-ended questions for measuring HAW. These findings were used to add to the theoretical framework and understand and analyze the conclusions of the main study.

The main study includes the data preparation and analysis of answers to two open-ended questions and the interpretation of that analysis. In particular, R text mining methods were used to analyze the text answers given to the open-ended questions related to an employee's HAW.

The dataset used in this research consists of n = 8950 respondents and includes data from 2017 to 2021. The stm package in R was used to generate topics that of these answers from employees and individuals. These topics were further analyzed on their link with the 5C and compared between the years before Covid-19 and during Covid-19. In specific, the topics were compared on the change in relevance and content.

Results show that the concepts and topics found in this research could all be linked to the 5C. Therefore, the 5C model still represents the relevant topics in the society of today. While it does cover the concepts and topics found in this research, it is also affected by the change. The generated topics showed a difference in relevance and content over the years. This change could also be logically explained with the measures taken for Covid-19, reaffirming the dynamic nature of HAW due to events in society. The crisis led to a change in employees' interpretation and needs of HAW. Therefore, this change in society also affects the concepts of HAW. Since the changed topics are linked to several of the concepts of HAW, change in a single topic in society affects several other topics and is therefore much more difficult to observe in single concepts.

Concerning new structures, 14 to 24 distinct topics have been generated around which clustered might be found. These topics are more sensitive to change and are suitable to be observed directly instead of focusing on the change in concepts to observe change better.

Lastly, open-ended questions showed great potential in this research to add content to questionnaires or even replace closed questions in questionnaires for measuring HAW. Specifically, answers to open-ended questions could be used to measure the content of the 5C model. Moreover, open-ended questions can extend the range of topics measured, as findings of this research show while further adding context to the information gained from the answers. Therefore, open-ended questions showed great potential for the future use of questionnaires to measure social concepts.