

EDU WORLD 2022

Edu World International Conference Education Facing Contemporary World Issues

**OPTIMISM AND WELL-BEING AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL
LEVEL**

Secară Carmen-Gabriela (a)*, Stroe Alina-Ștefania (a)

*Corresponding Author

(a) Faculty of Economic Sciences and Law, University of Pitești, Pitești, Romania, carmen.secara@yahoo.com

Abstract

This present paper aims to investigate a potential relationship between the two variables: optimism and well-being at the organizational level. From the point of view of prosocial behavior, optimism represents that conception of man, life, society which declares and supports the possibility of human perfection, as well as the perpetual improvement of living conditions, aspects which translate into social progress. Being a perfect predictor of success and positive orientation toward the future, optimism is considered a strength in most cultures. The benefits of optimism are thus multiple, from improved coping mechanisms, resistance to frustration and stress, physical and mental state in optimal parameters, to high levels of perseverance, setting, maintaining and achieving the proposed objectives. The optimists often relates to life's obstacles and failures in terms of experiences designed to contribute to evolution, because they gain and learn, but never lose. At the opposite pole, well-being represents the subjective and relative expression of the quality of life at a certain moment and time. Due to the relativism manifested, well-being is opposed to the real and objective perception expressed by the majority regarding the quality of life. Well-being brings to the fore personal experience of health, happiness and prosperity, of the goals and directions that each person pursues. In a broad sense, well-being is sought and pursued by all of us, because it includes a number of ideals that we aspire to: health, happiness, personal/professional goal and social connection.

2672-815X © 2023 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Benefits, career, optimism, organization, well-being

1. Introduction

From its very definition, optimism is that attitude according to which, both goals and desires, personal ideals are fulfilled despite the obstacles encountered. Optimism expresses the belief that, in one form or another, through sustained voluntary effort or purely by chance, positive results will never cease to occur, while confidence in the attainment of the proposed goals is essential.

Thus, the optimists are situated on the spectrum between the two opposite poles, somewhere between pure optimism and pure pessimism, but nevertheless, they demonstrate relatively stable situational tendencies toward one direction or another (American Psychological Association & Vandenbos, 2015, p. 740).

On the other hand, the concept of well-being is the subjective assessment of one's own level of happiness and satisfaction concerning life. Personal assessment of quality of life is carried out through two fundamental components. The first refers to oneself in terms of affections, positive feelings versus affections, temporary negative feelings, and the second to the well-being of another human being, both general and specific. In other words, we call well-being both what we experience at a certain time in our lives, which is, what we experience partially, but also globally. Components of the well-being differs in terms of stability and variability over time, as well as in relation to other variables (American Psychological Association & Vandenbos, 2015, p. 1043).

The World Health Organization (WHO) talks about the two concepts as integral parts of mental health.

Thus, a study conducted by the organization in 2014, shows that, globally, 264 million people face depression and anxiety caused by work, these being the main causes of psycho-emotional imbalance.

In terms of strategies in this regard, the programs: Global Plan of Action on Workers Health (2008-2017) and Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2030) are those that focus on promoting mental health in the workplace, keeping account for a number of issues, such as: quality of life, working conditions, stress, workplace harassment, time management, development of health services in general, occupational health, in particular, and others.

2. Problem Statement

Current research (Carver et al., 2010; Fineman, 2006) shows that optimism was initially viewed from multiple perspectives: as a personality trait, as a way of thinking, as an element that influences decision making, and as part of a continuum. Today, experts believe that optimism is a skill that can not only be learned, but also perfected.

Optimistic people stimulate expert interest in various fields, as they tend to have high levels of self-esteem and extraversion, and low levels of neuroticism, stress, anxiety and hopelessness. In this sense, optimism is associated with positive results both in terms of physical and mental health.

A strong immune system, reduced mood disorders, fewer negative interpersonal interactions, rapid transitions about major life events, creating lasting partnerships, solid friendships, and relational satisfactions sum up just some of the many benefits of optimism (Lewis, 2019).

The typology of this concept is varied, according to several authors, so we find: dispositional optimism, explanatory optimism, unrealistic optimism, comparative optimism, situational optimism, strategic optimism, realistic optimism, and learned optimism.

- i. Dispositional optimism - defines the type of optimism in which a person has positive expectations about future events;
- ii. Explanatory optimism - is the way in which a person describes the events of his personal life, in positive or negative terms (good/bad);
- iii. Unrealistic optimism - also called „erroneous optimism” is a person’s perception of future events that will surely unfold in his favor, as well as the likelihood that he will overestimate good and underestimate evil;
- iv. Comparative optimism - expresses a person’s belief that the risk to which they may be exposed is below average, despite a correct external evaluation;
- v. Situational optimism - refers to the positive expectations a person has about a specific context;
- vi. Strategic optimism - sets out that strategy according to which a person actively avoids thinking about possible negative results;
- vii. Realistic optimism - attests to a person’s ability to stay positive and focus on the favorable aspects of reality;
- viii. Learned optimism - it is based on the theory of Seligman and his collaborators (1968) which attests that optimism can be learned by discounting events and classifying them according to adversity, beliefs and consequences. In other words, the theory illustrates the major difference between the optimistic and the pessimist’s explanatory style. In the case of learned optimism, a person modifies the scenario of a personal event laden with adversity and reformulates it in terms of the optimistic explanatory style for a beneficial approach (Srivastava & Angelo, 2009).

Optimism exists both as a trait and as a state, hence the boundaries in its significance are essential. While, as a trait, optimism is considered a factor of protection against adversity and a fundamental element in achieving goals, as a state, it becomes the internal force that attributes positive experiences, stability and control, and negative ones, external causes, uncontrollable, unstable. When things go wrong, optimism urges us to consider the situation beyond our control and treat it as such.

Although optimism is rooted in popular wisdom, it is also firmly grounded in decades of theories and research aimed at understanding and expressing its behavior. In order to explore and perceive its directions of manifestation, the specialists developed the expectancy-value model.

The value-expectation model focuses its attention on self-regulation and goal setting. The main hypothesis is that almost all human behavior is driven, either explicitly or implicitly, by objectives. According to the model, objective-driven behavior is stimulated by the presence of two factors. The first of these, value, refers to subjective desirability for the individual. The second, expectation, refers to personal beliefs about achieving goals. Achieving goals is the common point of the two factors, and the balance between them causes the individual to be persistent in achieving them. The level of perseverance increases when the goal is considered valuable, and the expectation of the individual being successful in achieving it is high. The primary role of optimism in this model is that it allows the individual to have

more favorable expectations. Thus, optimists end up being more persistent in achieving their goals and achieving far better results than others. To cope with challenges and obstacles, optimists are more likely to use coping mechanisms, be active, predict, plan and reinterpret positively the situations they face. In most cases, they approach problems directly because they find it effective, but when problems seem unsolvable, they use emotion-based strategies such as acceptance, humor, or positive reformulation because they reduce the impact of the problem. However, the perseverance of optimists is not unlimited or self-destructive. Optimism is associated with behavioral flexibility in the face of stress and allows you to detach from unsolvable tasks that would only lead to an unproductive attitude (Brissette et al., 2002).

Progress toward achieving the goal can affect the person's mood. This is where self-regulation comes in, which states that optimists experience fewer negative emotions (shame, anger) when their progress toward goals is interrupted, because they anticipate that they will overcome the obstacles that arise. Indeed, optimists regulate their behavior while achieving goals, but they also work hard to achieve them. They are also proactive in promoting well-being and preventing stress, but they also demonstrate that they are better able to prevent emotions from directing their behavior (Chang et al., 1997; Chang, 2001).

There is no doubt that optimism is not only motivating, but also motivated, that it is beneficial for physical and mental health and that it is associated with positive results leading to professional success. Extrapolating, the researchers concluded that optimism is a strength of professional activity. In the workplace, optimists often stand out for increased motivation, emotional stability, high morale, high aspirations, setting difficult goals, perseverance, resistance to frustration and stress, taking on mistakes and failures, pursuing opportunities and capitalizing on unique opportunities. For certain areas of activity, such as sales, advertising, public relations, design, customer service, health and social services, optimistic people are especially valuable (Andersson, 1996).

Over the years, studies have shown that optimism is associated with performance, satisfaction and happiness in the workplace, participative leadership, human potential development, efficiency and effectiveness, decision-making power, wise choices and even generating quick, multiple and novel solutions to the problems encountered. Also, optimism works not only on an individual level, but also collectively, associating itself with teamwork, cooperation, communication, cohesion and group dynamics. In addition, it is negatively correlated with organizational cynicism, obscure intentions, chance and counterproductive behaviors at work, encouraging and supporting mutual psychosocial support (Luthans, 2011).

2.1. Well-being: the global understanding and psychological model of well-being

Over time, there have been numerous ways to conceptualize well-being, quality of life, and what it entails. Today, scientists attribute a subjective perspective to well-being by considering that each person knows his or her level of well-being best. Being a relative concept, well-being cannot be measured or generalized, but some predictions can be made based on the analysis of certain dimensions.

According to most authors, when assessing well-being, the factors considered are: subjective-global judgment/perception of life; satisfaction with its important dimensions (health, work, family), positive emotions (stability of positive emotions and moods); low levels of negative emotions and moods.

Because it is loaded with subjectivism, well-being is not only complex, but also inconsistent. It varies according to gender, age, relationships, status, environment, culture, spirituality and others. Thus, at global level, special frameworks for measuring well-being have been designed, which include dozens of dimensions applicable to all age groups and target distinct sides of the human being, such as: physical, psychological, cognitive, social, economic, and environmental and others (Thompson & Bates, 2009).

Carol Ryff's psychological model of well-being (1989, 1995, 1996) embodies the eudaimonic concept, replacing virtues with positive dimensions of mental health. According to Aristotle, eudaimonia refers to the pursuit and attainment of the highest form of personal well-being.

From the author's perspective, a person must present six positive dimensions of mental health in order to experience the highest levels of personal well-being. Following research in personality psychology, development and clinical psychology, the established dimensions were: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental control, purpose of life and personal development (Harrington, 2013).

Because work is essential to the identity of most people, no research on well-being can be fully considered outside of it. Organizational well-being is undoubtedly one of the biggest challenges for society. It refers to the totality of aspects of working life: the quality and safety of the physical environment, the organizational climate, how people feel about their work and the organization of the work itself. Health, safety, contentment, satisfaction and involvement in the workplace are components of well-being (Laine & Rinne, 2015; Pagán-Castaño et al., 2019).

Success and progress at the organizational level is due to the increased involvement of the management with regard to the well-being of the staff. Thus, well-being is a key factor in determining the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of an organization, with most studies showing that there is a strong and direct link between it, productivity levels and overall health.

Organizations are increasingly recognizing the need to take seriously the well-being of employees and are constantly taking steps to preserve and appreciate the resources invested by them. The lack of commitment to people's real needs, as well as the lack of promotion of well-being within the company, leads to problems such as stress, aggression, conflict, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, degradation and mental health disorders. Leadership, effective communication, orientation toward learning, training and development are just some of the solutions that increase the well-being in the workplace, making it a good one (Fisher, 2014).

The development of global policies, in addition to traditional ones, is quite common in highly industrialized countries and stands out for a growing interest in promoting staff health and providing support not only for hyper known problems, but also for a wide range of issues such as: lifestyle, tobacco use, poor nutrition, sports and psychological counseling.

3. Research Questions

The main questions of our research referred to: evaluating organizational optimism, evaluating well-being at the organizational level and determining possible relationships between optimism and well-being by identifying appropriate tools for evaluating the variables presented.

We started from the premise that there is a relationship between optimism and well-being at the organizational level. Further, we started from the assumption that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between optimism and well-being at the organizational level.

In this regard, we focused on: what is optimism at the organizational level, what do people feel about this concept, what does well-being at the organizational level mean, what do people feel about this concept, and the organizational environment itself, from a psychological point of view.

4. Purpose of the Study

The success of professional activity has always been a priority for organizations. In this sense, the cultivation of a favorable working environment that brings to the fore the quality of human life and preserves positive attitudes is more necessary than ever. The demands to which the human being is exposed in the process of work are multiple. That is why long-term performance can only be achieved by securing and maximizing human potential. Thus, the perpetuation of professional activity can be achieved by forming a general state of harmony that concerns the integrity and dignity of life.

Starting from these aspects, in the paper presented, we set out to investigate the possible relationships between optimism and well-being at the organizational level.

5. Research Methods

The method used to collect data is psychometric.

The number of participants in this research is 62, of which 44 female (71%) and 18 male (29%), aged 21-43 years, located in Argeş country. Their backgrounds vary, being urban and rural. The level of their studies and professions also varies.

In order to carry out a complex and rigorous analysis, participants in the research aimed at „organizational optimism and well-being” work in organizations with distinct profiles, such as: medical, engineering, legal, administrative organizations, banking, military, educational, hotel, sports and more. Because the aim was to shape a global perspective on the topic of interest, their choice was not coincidental.

The tools used: The „Organizational optimism assessment questionnaire” and the „Organizational well-being questionnaire” were built personally and provided a series of 10 items for each questionnaire, totalling a total of 20 items, on a Likert scale, with five response possibilities, as follows: „To a very small extent I agree”, „To a small extent I agree”, „Neither agree nor disagree”, „To a large extent agree”, „To a very large extent agree”, where „1” is the lowest value - „To a very small extent I agree” and „5” is the highest value - „To a very large extent I agree”.

The instruments were built personally for each variable analyzed separately. Thus, both the 10 items that evaluate optimism at the organizational level, and the 10 items that evaluate well-being at the organizational level, represent the expression of the specialized literature, from general to particular and from abstract to concrete, summing up the types and characteristics of the concepts themselves.

From the point of view of the fidelity of the test, we calculated in the S.P.S.S program the Alpha Cronbach coefficient for the two dimensions: optimism and well-being,, where we obtained a value of

0.74, which in relation to the value of the Alpha Cronbach index, represents a high value, generally accepted.

In addition, the value obtained reflects the consistency of the questionnaires we used.

From the point of view of the validity of the test, we used the S.P.S.S program, where we calculated the Pearson Correlation between all the items of the two questionnaires we completed. The coefficients obtained on each item were higher than 0.01, respectively 0.05 and thus, statistically significant for the process performed.

6. Findings

For data processing, the statistical software SPSS was used, and as calculation methods we used inference statistics. In terms of inference statistics, the Pearson correlation was made between the two variables of the research: optimism and well-being.

According to the Pearson correlation, Sig = 0, where Sig ≤ 0,01 (as can be seen in Table 1), which attests to the existence of a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables investigated: optimism and well-being at the organizational level.

Table 1. Pearson Correlation between Optimism and Well-Being

		Optimism	Well-Being
Optimism	Pearson Correlation	1	,469**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	62	62
Well-Being	Pearson Correlation	,469**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	62	62

In today’s society, the need to create an optimal organizational environment for physical and mental development has never been more important. Most of the time, work-related stress, overwork, and anxiety make it almost impossible to detach from work tasks and connect with yourself. The cultivation of optimism and well-being at the organizational level contributes decisively to productivity, efficiency, overall harmonious working climate and last but not least to vivacity, vitality among the staff.

In support of the above argument is found the inference statistical process that brings to the fore the advantages of the optimal-well-being ratio. Achievement of objectives organizational, together with sharing visions in this regard are fundamental, harmony being the one that increases the level of employee satisfaction, which brings added value to society.

In this sense, organizational optimism is a sure-fire way to strengthen the working environment, interpersonal relationships, the leader-subordinate ratio, to increase opportunities, to restore hope and to turn even the most difficult activities into enjoyable and designed to help with evolution. Optimism, according to the literature (Conversano et al., 2010; Frost, 2021) is not only an exercise with and toward yourself, but also a way of living and relating to what surrounds you. Cultivating optimism brings benefits and performance across the line, with healthy organizations being the ones that end up

prioritizing and preserving positive attitudes. They are the ones who are becoming stronger, more sustainable and more prepared for eventual failures, a key aspect of optimism being noted even in the case of gaining competitive advantage and creating a sound name among society. In addition, studies have shown that people's inclination to organizations that promote optimism and well-being is much higher compared to those that promote only material and economic aspects (Davidson & Prkachin, 1997).

On the other hand, it is the way of relating to well-being that currently makes the difference and represents the firm expression of the future. Aware of the need to preserve the mental and physical health of employees, globally, more and more organizations are joining support programs or developing personal coping strategies in this regard (Yalçın et al., 2019). Research in the field has shown that over 68% of HR managers annually assess the well-being of employees and consider it indispensable. What surprises us about the concept of well-being is the fact that it imposes both a solid organizational culture and development on many flanks, besides those known, such as: holistic, spiritual, emotional, social and community development.

The relationship between optimism and well-being is expressed not only in the literature, but also through concrete statistical processes. Thus, the thorough relationship between the two variables is one that ensures fidelity, uniform character, reveals needs and satisfies them, achieves the proposed goals, eliminates hazard, stimulates communication and cooperation, establishes connections, maintains a general working climate, removes stressors and encourages proactive attitudes.

In this respect, the testing of the research hypothesis by means of the Pearson correlation revealed the existence of a statistically significant positive correlation, which expresses the fact that, the participants in the research appreciate that the organizational environment that promotes optimistic attitudes is the one that generally has a working environment that is attentive to the quality of human life. In addition, the positive correlation of the two constructions involves equally, from all employees of the organizations they belong to, both superior cognitive and affective processes, which attests to a generally supportive need for growth and development on multiple sides, regardless of the hierarchical state. This is not accidental, as the harmonious relationship between the two variables brings with it multiple and unknown perspectives, which even for the most reserved means a new option, something different, something unheard of, which once it arouses curiosity, animates the person in that direction.

It goes without saying that this correlation once again draws attention to human needs, to the fact that most of the time what really matters is the trust and availability that organizational environments display or create for people. Far from material facilities and rising profits, what remains paramount is all the care that people carry toward each other, which they always want, regardless of the place, at home or at work, is all the inclination toward communication, understanding, mutual respect, to sustainable and healthy partnerships, to the joy, light and warmth that each carries within himself and can offer (Schneider & Barbera, 2014).

7. Conclusions

„Organizational optimism and well-being” reflects research whose major objective was to investigate how optimism is in relation to well-being and works together in the professional environment.

The objectives expressed in the choice of the theme were to assess optimism at the organizational level and to assess well-being at the organizational level, in order to identify a number of specific factors, highlighted by the studies in force. As we have noticed, they focus both on the decisive impact that the two concepts offer to the professional environment, and on the implementation of the techniques and methods of cultivation and promotion of the two, not only from the ideal of achieving success, but also from the need for stability.

The general hypothesis that laid the foundation for the study concerned the relationship between optimism and well-being at the organizational level. In this regard, 62 participants, including 44 female and 18 male, aged 21-43 years, expressed interest in the subject, expressing their views and making the academic approach possible. A novelty aspect of the paper is brought by organizations with distinct profiles of respondents, as follows: medical, engineering, legal, administrative, banking organizations, military, educational, hotel, sports and more.

The purpose of the academic approach was established by the existence of positive correlation which proves without a chance the value of positive attitudes, oriented toward people, visionary, with a major impact on the entire professional activity. The internal and external demands that people face are constantly expanding, and burnout is more present than ever. The human resource remains fundamental to the entire evolution of the organization, and its support remains capital.

Organizational optimism and well-being is not about commercial propaganda and the current „trend”, but about people’s mental health, their needs, their infirmities, progress, efforts, and the environment. elimination of all forms of discrimination, abuse, exploitation, blackmail and turning the place where they lead the best part of their lives into one where they want not only to be, but also to stay.

More important than progress will always be those with whom we achieve it.

Although we set out to evaluate abstract constructions and to go through stage by stage to reach from general to particular, the current research also expresses a number of limits.

The low number of participants in the research leads to the impossibility of generalizing the results at the population level. To this are added the backgrounds of origin (urban and rural), the level of studies, the specifics of the profession, as well as the age. All of this leads to various and multiple judgments on the subject of interest, because the specific features of each category listed are involved, to which the answers given on the basis of the criterion of social desirability are also joined.

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