

A Model of Happiness in the Workplace

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Abstract

Based on the existing literature, this paper proposes a model of happiness in the workplace. Following a brief introduction of the relevant definitions of happiness, both the antecedents and consequences of happiness in the organization are discussed and listed with reference to the various existing concepts related to subjective well-being/happiness. The former comprises three dimensions: money and unemployment as necessary conditions; community and its attributes (trust, individualism, democracy, and democratic process) as context; and individual behavior and experiences based on positive psychology. The latter includes individual-group interaction and its properties, enhanced individual capabilities, and the individual's eventual health and longevity, which is influenced positively by these two elements. The proposed model is followed by an evaluation of the three routes to happiness, which are based on positive psychology, as well as a discussion on happiness and constructs such as locus of control and the process of pursuing happiness.

Keywords: *happiness, subjective well-being, Japan, social capital, happiness process*

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this paper is to propose a model on happiness in the workplace. Based on the literature, it combines the relevant concepts and includes both the antecedents and consequences of happiness in the organization¹⁾. Particularly in empirical research on happiness, the notion of “subjective well-being” has been widely used as synonymous to the term “happiness.” However, in addition to subjective well-being, the eudaimonic view of happiness has also been discussed in the present paper.

Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being is assumed to comprise the hedonic component and life satisfaction. Affective experiences and cognitive judgments correspond to these two dimensions respectively. Thus, “a per-

son is said to have high [subjective well-being] if she or he experiences life satisfaction and frequent joy, and only infrequently experiences unpleasant emotions such as sadness or anger” (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997, p. 25).

With respect to affective experiences, since it was demonstrated that trait measures of positive and negative affect are essentially uncorrelated (Diener & Emmons, 1984), this hedonic component of overall subjective well-being is often measured as the ratio of positive affect to negative affect, over time, in a person's life. Diener et al. (1991) found that the relative proportion of time that people felt positive, as compared to negative emotions, was a good predictor of self-reports of happiness. A high average positive affect is also referred to as chronic happiness.

Life satisfaction is deemed as an essential component reflecting one's cognitive judgments about

life as a whole. Veenhoven (1984) regards life satisfaction as one's overall judgment of life, which is based on one's cognitive comparison with standards of good life, as well as based on affective information from how one feels most of the time. Thus, Veenhoven (1997) defined happiness as "the degree to which a person evaluates the overall quality of his present life-as-a-whole positively" (p. 3).

The eudaimonic view of happiness

The hedonic aspect of subjective well-being is similar to Jeremy Bentham's classic definition of happiness as "the sum of pleasures and pains." This view, however, differs from Aristotle's approach. Aristotle believed that the purpose of life was "eudaimonia," which literally means "good spirit," and is regarded as happiness. In this concept, happiness stems from conduct and the resultant soul, in accordance with virtue and philosophic reflection.

Thus, the quality of happiness, which is based on the concepts associated with one's sense of meaning in his/her life, could be taken into consideration in developing a model of happiness in the workplace. For example, Ryff and Keyes (1995) purported the model of psychological well-being comprising six distinct dimensions of wellness (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance).

Promotion of a good life is the key purpose of the modern society, and flourishing organizations should contribute toward attaining this purpose. Even within the organization, citizens, as employees, should be able to enjoy democratic freedom, and a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life. In other words, they should be able to attain high levels of subjective well-being and find meaning in their lives, i.e., achieve eudaimonic well-being. Fortunately, the literature seems to support this view. Thus, below, this paper briefly summarizes how happy employees are in Japan, which is followed by the development of a generic model of happiness in the workplace.

ARE EMPLOYEES IN JAPAN HAPPY?

Have Japanese people been happy? The answer is "not necessarily." The World Database of Happiness

(Veenhoven, 1993) uses several time-series data on average happiness in various nations. The longest series is from the USA, covering 45 years, while the Japanese series covers 32 years. Japan was regarded as a poor country even in the early 1960s. Between then and the late 1980s, the per capita income increased several-fold, transforming Japan into one of the highest ranking countries among industrialized nations. Yet, the average happiness levels reported by the Japanese were no higher in 1987 than in 1960.

The present author's research group conducted a survey in 2009, targeting 400 male businesspersons in Tokyo, to explore their perceived degree of happiness. While approximately 60% felt "happy" or "somewhat happy," only less than 5% of the respondents felt "very happy." In the 2015 World Happiness Report published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Japan was ranked 46th, while Switzerland was found to be the happiest country in the world. In the survey, the following items²⁾ were reported to be positively and significantly correlated with the construct of happiness:

- You can do work which does not go against your conscience.
- You can take on the challenge of doing different kinds of work.
- You have opportunities to test your way of thinking and skills.
- You have the freedom to make decisions.
- Your work provides a high sense of achievement.
- You are rewarded for doing good work.
- You have opportunities to help others.
- You have opportunities for promotion.

Some of the items are consistent with the motivators identified in the two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1959). The others, however, seem to reflect different dimensions. What model on happiness can possibly explain the above situation and the survey results?

MODEL OF INDIVIDUAL HAPPINESS IN THE WORKPLACE

The question of "What makes people happy?" has dominated the happiness-related empirical research

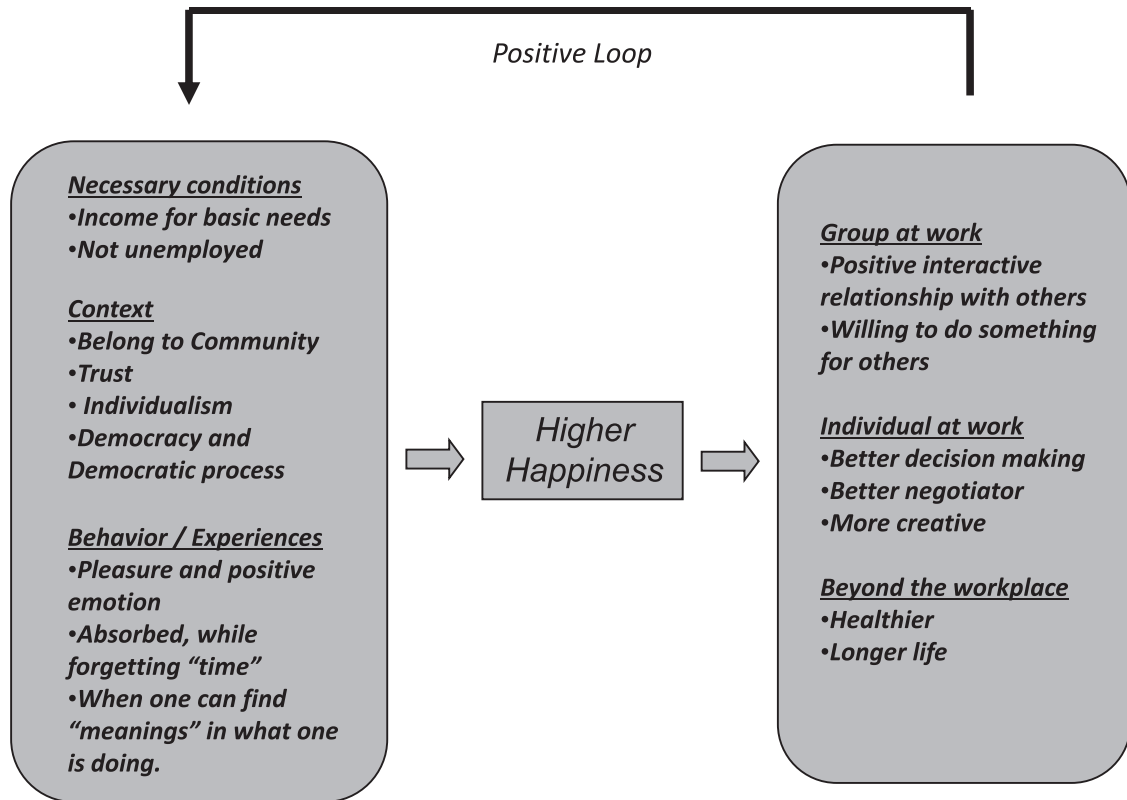


Figure 1: Generic model of happiness in the workplace

Source: Hiro Higashide, Graduate School of Commerce, Waseda University

effort. The above figure includes the antecedents identified in the literature. Three categories are listed in the order of how broad the unit of analysis is: necessary conditions, context, and positive psychology. This is followed by a discussion on the consequences.

Money, unemployment, and happiness: Necessary conditions

Can well-being come from money? Well-known empirical studies (e.g., Veenhoven, 1993) demonstrate that, until the basic needs of daily life are met, happiness increases rapidly as income rises. In other words, for the poor, more money is a requirement for greater happiness. However, once income exceeds a certain level, money is no longer able to buy happiness. Whilst there is some correlation across nations between wealth and satisfaction, even many developing countries have very high levels of happiness. On the contrary, despite having achieved higher living standards, people in devel-

oped countries do not seem happier than they were 40 or 50 years ago.

Once a certain level of per capita income is attained, the unemployment rate in the society strongly influences individual happiness (Dluhosch, 2014). The influence of unemployment is not limited to the loss of source of income. People lose their self-respect and identity as working people, as well as the social relationships that they nurture during their working experience (Leyard, 2005). Further, the impact of unemployment is not temporal. Even when one returns to work after a phase of unemployment, s/he still feels the impact of unemployment as a psychological scar (Clark et al., 2001). Even after a few years since unemployment, it is likely to hurt as much as it does at the beginning. Thus, being unemployed is such a disastrous condition, which individuals should not suffer from.

Community and its attributes: Context

Making friends at work, as well as through the community, is profoundly important for the quality of life and higher levels of happiness. The quality of the community is called “social capital” in well-being research (Putnam, 2000). Community engagement not only improves the well-being of those involved but also improves the well-being of others (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). This relationship is positive in both directions. Involvement increases well-being and happy people tend to be more involved in their community. People tend to feel happier, when they are with others (Pavot et al., 1990). In fact, “very happy” people appear to be highly social. Compared to less happy people, very happy people spend the least amount of time alone; the most amount of time with family, friends, and romantic partners; and have the strongest romantic and other social relationships (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Emmons (2003) reported that people who focus on establishing close interpersonal relationships tend to have greater levels of subjective well-being, than those who try to influence other people with power. Based on these findings, it could be concluded that good social relationships are a necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for happiness (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

Three important types of social capital have been identified, the first and one of the most important being “level of trust.” Living where one can trust others makes a clear difference to one’s happiness (Leyard, 2005). According to Christakis and Fowler (2009), happier people tend to be at the center of their social network, while unhappy people are more often found in the periphery. Thus, happier individuals are assumed to maintain more social ties with those with similar levels of happiness, than do unhappy individuals.

Modern societies, particularly those capitalizing on innovation, seem to be more based on trust and social interactions than ever. Since trust is a synthetic force within the society, without it, societies would disintegrate (Putnam et al., 1993). Putnam (2000) distinguished bridging social capital (social ties with dissimilar others) from bonding social capital (social ties with similar others). Level of trust is closely related to bridging social capital, and

bridging social capital is found to be beneficial for individuals who possess it. Granovetter’s (1973) classic study, for example, found that weak ties (i.e., ties between dissimilar people) aid better in finding better jobs than do strong ties (i.e., between similar people). Burt’s (2005) study is more closely related to the workplace, and claims that bridging social capital, as opposed to bonding social capital, is positively related to individuals’ economic performance and happiness.

The second type of social capital, which is one of the important properties influencing people’s happiness in the workplace, is organizational culture. Although most of the studies in this field have compared subjective well-being across national cultures and across different cultural groups within a nation, the findings seem to be applied to the institutional context.

Diener et al. (1995) found that one of the strongest predictors of national differences in subjective well-being was where each national culture is located on the collectivism-individualism continuum, controlling for national income level. This implies that, beyond the impact of economic factors such as income, cultural factors should draw attention. Importantly, they found that individualistic nations are happier than those with collectivistic cultures. It might be proposed that, if some members of a particular culture behave most appropriately to fit the culture, they can best pursue happiness in that cultural setting. Various empirical findings, however, seem to reject this proposition. Rather, based on research on the Japanese culture, researchers argue that, even in collectivistic cultures, people who adopt individualistic values report higher levels of subjective well-being and self-esteem than do the more collective-oriented individuals (Heine et al., 1999). These findings imply that an “organic” organization nurtures higher levels of happiness than does a “mechanistic” one (cf. Morgan, 1986). Further, within modern organizations, regardless of the organizational culture, people pursuing independent and autonomous styles of thinking, and those who try to be different from others are likely to attain relatively higher levels of happiness than those who adopt a collectivistic approach.

Finally, a democratic context and process is likely to foster happiness. In organizations in which

individualism is appreciated, organizational citizens with “civil liberties” are likely to accumulate mutual bridging social capital, and their well-being may also increase with their participation in the decision-making process. Thus, an organization with democratic elements is expected to raise its employees’ happiness. Veenhoven (2000) found a positive and significant correlation between the Freedom House Democracy Index and self-reported happiness, although this correlation became non-significant on controlling for national income levels. Further, social capital is perceived to be one of the indicators of a good democratic regime (Putnam, 1993). It was found that satisfaction with democracy is positively, albeit weakly, correlated with happiness (Stadelmann-Steffen & Vatter, 2012). Although these studies use countries as the unit of analysis, the inference to the organization is easy.

Research has pointed out that the level of happiness increases when people can easily access democratic institutions (Frey & Stutzer, 2000). In addition, Frey and Stutzer’s (2002) study revealed that, with reference to the process involved in democratic institutions, participatory democracy can be assumed to make us happier. They found that around two-thirds of the well-being effect can be attributed to the actual participation process itself, and only one-third to the improvement in policy that occurs as a result of such participation.

Individual behavior and experiences: Positive psychology

An important branch of psychology—positive psychology—has shed light on individuals who experience a positive sense of well-being, rather than paying attention to negative experiences. Particularly, Seligman (2002) initially defined and proposed three different routes to happiness: pleasure, engagement, and meaning.

Firstly, it is acknowledged that one may chase pleasure in the quest for happiness. In fact, the hedonic view of happiness espouses the importance of pleasurable activities. Feeling pleasure and experiencing immediate positive emotions are assumed to be of value. Seligman argued that it is possible to achieve a happy and pleasant life through increasing our positive emotions about the past, present,

and future.

Seligman suggests that we should be set free from our unfortunate past to change our negative thinking about the present and future. Rather than expressing anger about what happened, which produces more anger in the present, it is necessary to increase your gratitude about the good things in your past and learn to forgive past wrongs.

When looking to the future, Seligman recommends an outlook of optimism and hope. We feel desperate, at least temporarily, while facing any failures. In the optimistic style of thinking, people tend to view permanent factors such as their traits and abilities to be the causes of good events, while those of bad events are attributed to temporary reasons. On the contrary, pessimistic people tend to do the opposite. Further, if the explanatory style of the event is optimistic, one is likely to become more hopeful. “Finding permanent and universal causes of good events along with temporary and specific causes for misfortune is the art of hope;... [people] bounce back from troubles briskly and get on a roll easily when they succeed once” (Seligman, 2002, p. 92, 93). Fredrickson et al. (2003), for instance, found that resilience against depression was completely mediated by the experience of positive emotions such as gratitude, love, and interest.

It is indicated that experiencing positive emotions often leads to a variety of positive benefits (Fredrickson, 1998), subject to the conditions regarding the past and future. The state of happiness in the present moment is assumed to be partly attained by pursuing pleasures. These pleasures are defined as “delights that have clear sensory and strong emotional components, what philosophers call ‘raw feels’ ” (Seligman, 2002, p. 102), which require little, if any, thinking. In addition to pleasures, Seligman (2002) identifies gratification as the other property of happiness. This is assumed to connect the present with the past and future, and is closely related to the second route to happiness, “flow” experience, which leads to the broader conception of happiness rather than the mere hedonic perspective.

The second route to happiness is being engaged in what we are doing. As a result of gratification, while suspending consciousness, we are engaged and absorbed to the fullest. Seligman distinguished

the “good life” led by gratification, from the “pleasant life,” which is based on pleasures. This distinct nature of gratifications is, thus, closely related to eudaimonic happiness. Positive psychology indeed takes a comprehensive and inclusive approach, which examines the contributions of both the hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of happiness.

The work of Csikszentmihalyi (1990) revealed the importance of experiencing “flow” states for achieving a good life. Flow, which is characterized by being fully absorbed in a specific activity, is typically measured by summing individual ratings of (1) concentration, (2) involvement, and (3) enjoyment during a specific activity. During a flow experience, time seems to pass very quickly. The benefits of flow, including commitment, achievement, and persistence in a diverse range of pursuits, including academic and sporting, have been empirically demonstrated (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2005). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) argued that, for the flow experience, one must be engaged in challenging activities, for which one possesses the necessary skills and confidence. We are advised to move towards a greater use of our signature strengths in different areas of our life in order to have more profound and enduring rewards from the experience (Seligman, 2002).

The third route to happiness is to give life meaning in connection with others and/or organizations. Empirical research purports that we usually draw meaning from multiple sources, including family, love, work, and religion, in addition to engagement in other personal projects (Emmons, 2003). Happiness comes from using our strengths to belong to, and for the service of, something larger than us. Historically, the value of the meaning of life for well-being, as well as the value of imagination for survival, has been often appreciated for some situations (e.g., Frankl, 1963).

Although this dimension has been less explored than the other two routes, Baumeister and Vohs (2005), for example, associate our search for meaning in life with four main needs: (1) purpose—present events that draw meaning from their connection to future outcomes (objective goals and subjective fulfillment), (2) values—that can justify certain courses of action, (3) efficacy—the belief that one can make a difference, and (4) self-worth—

reasons for believing that one is good and worthy. Work is argued to be one of the most important sources of flow in our lives (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Handy (1995) stated that we need to go beyond the jobs or roles expected in order to make most of our opportunity to make a difference, to live up to our full potential, and eventually, to express ourselves. Thus, our quest for meaning seems to result in substantial positive benefits for happiness, particularly in the workplace.

CONSEQUENCES OF HAPPINESS

Early research on happiness mainly focused on three areas: the properties and measurement of happiness, the happy person, and the antecedents of happiness. As discussed, happiness has been historically well argued and regarded as the ultimate goal and good, within the hedonic and eudaimonic domains of happiness, by Aristotle and utilitarian philosophers. Thus, it is not necessary for the researcher to explore the possible consequences of this “ultimate” goal.

Yet, even in the 21st century, where the impact of the individual and of entrepreneurs are necessary and appreciated, managing the institution allows individuals and groups to perform tasks more efficiently by reducing transaction/agency costs. It also strategically helps them to work together, in a constructive manner, for creativity and innovation. Thus, the consequences of happiness are particularly relevant to the institution/workplace and the individuals there. Below, the consequences of happiness relevant to the individual in the workplace are extracted and briefly summarized from key review articles (Veenhoven, 1988; Veenhoven, 1989; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Presman & Cohen, 2005).

It has been suggested that positive affect produces a broad and flexible cognitive organization, and ability to integrate diverse materials. This seems to correspond to the effectiveness of bridging social capital. As Wright and Cropanzano (2000) found that job performance was significantly correlated with well-being, but uncorrelated with measures of job satisfaction, work performance is likely to be more strongly predicted by well-being rather than by job satisfaction, through three elements: the in-

dividual-group interaction, enhanced individual capabilities, and the individual's eventual health and longevity that is influenced positively by these two elements.

Firstly, with regard to the group at work, people with chronic happiness have been shown to have a more positive attitude toward others. This property may emerge partly as happy people's positive interactive relationship with others. Happy and satisfied people have been found to be more engaged in a greater frequency of activities in general, and in social interactions, and thus, show stronger sense of social support and more organizational affiliations (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Further, happy persons tend to relate to other people, and as Lucas et al. (2000) showed, positive affectivity functions as the "glue" that holds together various aspects of extraversion, such as ascendance, sociability, and affiliation. The positive affect experienced at work has been related to intentions to perform behaviors that are beyond the call of duty (Williams & Shiaw, 1999). This corresponds to the results of the present author's 2009 survey on happiness in 400 male employees in Tokyo, where perceived happiness was found to be positively and significantly correlated with the participants' intention to contribute to the organization in the future.

Happy people have been found to be helpful and more willing to do something for others, as finding that is supported both by cross-sectional and longitudinal research. Compared with their unhappy peers, happy people tend to be more kind, self-assured, open, tolerant, warm (Lyubomirsky & Tucker, 1998), altruistic, generous, and charitable (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In short, they are more interested in helping people (Feingold, 1983), tend to act in a prosocial or co-operative manner (Rigby & Slee, 1993), and intend to perform specific altruistic, courteous, or conscientious behaviors at work (Williams & Shiaw, 1999). These findings also correspond to the findings of the present author's survey in Japan, as mentioned above.

Secondly, happy people appear to be better decision makers and negotiators. Research on choice and decision-making suggests that happy people make better and more efficient decisions (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Happy individuals, compared with their unhappy peers, are more likely

to optimize or be satisfied with their decision-making, rather than to maximize efforts to achieve the best outcome, regardless of the cost in time and effort (Schwartz et al., 2002). The distinction between the maximizer (i.e., who seeks the best) and the satisficer (i.e., who are content with what is good enough) is of importance, as it is associated with the decision makers' happiness. Layard (2005) provides possible explanations. While implementing the decisions made, maximizers often tend to continue to analyze what would have happened if they had followed a different decision, which results in interactive regret. Another possible reason is that they are more affected by their perception about whether they did better or worse than their peers. The same is not observed in satisficers (Leyard, 2005).

Additionally, since it was found that work groups whose members were high in average positive affect were less likely to experience conflict and more likely to co-operate (Barsade et al., 2000). Happy people are also deemed as better negotiators who manage conflict constructively. Further, those with induced positive affect showed the tendency to prefer resolving conflicts through collaboration than through avoidance (Baron et al., 1990).

Happy people seem more capable of being creative. Richards (1994) found that, in our daily lives, we experienced higher "everyday creativity" when we are in a normal or elevated mood, and rarely when we are depressed. The relationship between mood and creativity is reinforced by the studies in the workplace. Amabile and Kramer (2011) demonstrated "the power of [small] progress." In their study, they found that progress occurred in creative tasks on 76% of people's best-mood days, and that positive mood is significantly correlated with creativity. People are more creative and productive, when they feel happy and are intrinsically motivated by the work itself (Amabile, 1993). They also concluded that, of all the things that can boost inner work life, the most important is making progress in meaningful work. These findings strongly imply the beneficial relationships among positive psychology, happiness, and creativity.

Regarding the impact of affective experiences in the workplace, positive affect expressed by employees on the job was positively correlated with super-

visors' evaluations of the employees' creativity (Staw et al., 1994). Several studies by Isen and her colleagues (e.g. Estrada et al., 1994) have demonstrated that positive affect led to elevated scores on originality and flexibility, which are often labeled as creativity (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In most studies, the group with positive affect tended to show the most original responses. Isen (1993) reviewed the extensive evidence from laboratory measures that suggested that positive affect induced creativity, and concluded that there is little doubt that induced positive affect, compared with neutral affect, heightens performance on creative laboratory tasks.

Lastly, the literature indicates the positive association between higher subjective well-being and longevity, supported by a healthier life style. Importantly, a number of longitudinal studies have shown that happy people are less likely to die of certain causes, including injuries and accidents, and that sustained levels of positive affect are related to longevity (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). It also contributes to mental health. Very happy people were reported to have few symptoms of psychopathology such as depression (Diener & Seligman, 2002). These findings corroborate the findings of a classic study on longevity based on autobiographies of a group of young nuns (Danner et al., 2001). The autobiographies from the 1930s were recently re-analyzed by identifying the number of positive emotions expressed in the writing. A strong relationship was found to exist between the frequency of expression of positive emotions, which was used as an indicator of well-being, and the longevity of the nuns. These findings are also supported by Presman and Cohen's (2005) comprehensive meta-analysis on the link between positive affect and health outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The image of the society implied by the above model is where people as individuals enjoy happy and creative work style. The community they belong to is not likely to be a traditional hierarchical organization. It is instead a network-based or even virtual organization in which people are connected globally and freely, in a democratic manner. Thus,

it could be speculated that entrepreneurs or an entrepreneurial work style is likely to gain significant importance in the future, and that the effective unit of analysis to diagnose the institution is likely to be the individual.

Entrepreneurs tend to have a strong internal locus of control. Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals perceive control over their lives and environment (Lefcourt, 1976). Research suggests that a successful leader, entrepreneur, and proactive person tend to show a strong internal locus of control. As for the link between well-being and locus of control, while various studies suggest that external locus of control tends to be positively correlated with psychological distress, such as depression, and the rate of suicide, other studies suggest that those with an internal locus of control tend to be happier in the workplace. These findings imply that, of the listed antecedents to happiness in the model, the three routes related to positive psychology seem to be important. It is relatively easier for us to start managing our happiness by managing our behavior and experiences by adopting positive psychology. However, two points should be critically noted.

Firstly, although positive psychology has contributed greatly to the research on happiness, it seems to ignore the perspectives of people with problems related to negative emotions, such as depression, anxiety, sadness, fear, etc. Of the three routes to happiness espoused in positive psychology, the route relying on "pleasure" or positive emotion has clear limitations. Positive affect is heritable, and we speculate that our emotions fluctuate within a genetically determined range. Thus, positive psychology does not seem to be panacea for everybody. Further, implications based on positive psychology might be more appropriate for countries such as the US, which emphasize more on self-reliance and self-expression as compared to Japan. Herein, it is necessary to remember that we might be living a life full of absurdities, as depicted in the story of "Le mythe de Sisyphe," by Albert Camus.

The other question is regarding which path appeals to you the most, when you reflect on these three different paths to happiness. As time goes by, we are more biased. We often learn what happiness is "supposed" to look like through our experiences

with surrounding people, including our family members. If we, in particular situations, found one of these three paths to happiness more effective than others, it could be difficult to consider that there are other ways to be genuinely happy. For example, if you witnessed your family members chasing happiness through material wealth, you might believe that you can never “really” be happy until you acquire those things too. However, research shows that people who are materialistic tend to be less happy than those who value other things (Kasser, 2002).

Finally, for long-term happiness in sustainable societies, the process to achieve happiness needs to be examined. It is believed that by engaging in eudaimonic pursuits, subjective well-being (happiness) will occur as an end or by product (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

We need something to hope for. Research has demonstrated that simply having important, valued goals is related to subjective well-being, as is making progress on those goals. “Meaningful work” is a form of hope, but here, let us think of our lives in terms of a sort of journey. Fyodor Dostoevsky’s famous words offer a hint: “It wasn’t the New World that mattered...Columbus died almost without seeing it; and not really knowing what he had discovered. It’s life that matters, nothing but life—the process of discovering, the everlasting and perpetual process, not the discovery itself, at all.” What sort of journey we design and implement for ourselves is likely to be key to realizing our hopes and dreams, and to becoming happy. There is a Japanese proverb, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” The prescription for achieving big dreams is to break them down into the cumulative achievement of smaller dreams. Even if you have a big dream, it can be achieved only by the continued pursuit of the joy of little achievements. We therefore need to carefully refer to the research findings on what types of goals and what properties of goals are likely to enhance subjective well-being.

The author really hopes that we all wish for a sustainable future. As Keyes (1998) defined social well-being as “the appraisal of one’s circumstance and functioning in society,” we are likely to be in need of seriously re-considering how people feel about the society that we belong to, and how or to

what extent we contribute to the society. It is important to distinguish between social and individual well-being. However, it is better if you can find “meaningful work” that makes you feel like you are contributing to the society through your work. A prominent entrepreneur, Kohnosuke MATSUSHITA, the founder of Panasonic, once said,

“If you try to pull the water in a basin towards you, it will only slip away through your fingers in the opposite direction. But if you push the water away from you towards others, it will certainly come back to you.”

If you replace the word, “water” in the message with “money,” how would you feel and behave?

NOTES

- 1) Genes are assumed to have the strongest influence on the level of happiness. However, it is also strongly influenced by circumstances in one’s personal life, such as family relationships. This paper focuses only on the factors relevant to happiness in the workplace.
- 2) The author translated these items for this publication. A double-back process has not been followed.

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