



Research Article

Work Engagement and its Influence on Happiness at Work: An Explanatory Study in a Peruvian Municipality

Kelly LEYVA-QUISPE¹, Jackqueline LEYVA-QUISPE¹, Yessica ERAZO-ORDOÑEZ¹
and Roberto MACHA-HUAMÁN²

¹Universidad Peruana Unión, Lima, Perú

²Universidad Peruana Unión, Lima, Perú

Correspondence should be addressed to: Yessica ERAZO-ORDOÑEZ; yessye@upeu.edu.pe

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Abstract

Work engagement has become a fundamental pillar in human talent management, being increasingly recognized for its influence on Happiness at work. The objective of the research is to establish the influence of work engagement on happiness at work in a Peruvian municipality. It is a quantitative research study with a non-experimental design, explanatory level and using structural equations, with a sample of 136 workers, applying a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The results show that there is an influence of the dimensions vigor or energy and absorption of work engagement on employee happiness. The theoretical model is acceptable, because the RMSEA and SRMR values are very close to zero, the CFI = 0.981, chi-square (X^2) = 82, and (gl) = 59. It was also found that there is a relationship between vigor and dedication of $\beta=0.83$, between vigor and absorption of $\beta=0.75$ and between dedication and absorption of $\beta=0.77$, there being a high relationship between the variables. Also, the variable vigor influences happiness at work with $\beta=0.30$ (HF), the variable dedication influences HF with $\beta=0.11$, and absorption has a negative influence on HF with $\beta=-0.07$. We conclude that improving work engagement will strengthen happiness at work in the provincial municipality of Abancay, Apurímac. Work engagement, which includes dedication, vigor and absorption, is essential to foster happiness at work.

Keywords: work engagement, vigor, dedication, absorption, happiness at work.

Introduction

Currently, the world of work and organizations are immersed in profound changes (Rodríguez Muñoz and Bakker, 2013), which makes it increasingly necessary to have a workforce that

is committed and willing to give its best (Polo-Vargas et al., 2017). To achieve this, it is essential for human talent to enjoy well-being and happiness, as these factors favor more open and creative thinking (Donovan et al., 2002), which, in turn, increases productivity (Lyubomirsky,

King and Diener, 2005). Adequate worker performance strengthens happiness at both the individual and organizational levels (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This makes it possible to reconcile the engagement required in an increasingly demanding work environment with job satisfaction and enjoyment (Novello, 2017).

According to research, engagement is a positive work-related motivational state characterized by energy, dedication, and absorption (Hermosa-Rodriguez, 2018). An unengaged workforce can be detrimental to the company, as decreased happiness reduces productivity (Shuck and Reio, 2014). Engaged employees are physically, cognitively, and emotionally connected to their role, which makes them happy, dynamic, goal-oriented, and involved in their work (Rodriguez Munoz and Bakker, 2013). Engagement, therefore, is a key indicator of happiness in the workplace and is closely related to well-being at work (Shuck and Reio, 2014). Given the time employees spend in their work environment, their happiness is an essential factor in strengthening their well-being, engagement, and satisfaction at both the individual and family level (Fisher, 2010).

Recent studies indicate that there is a strong relationship between the constructs of happiness and organizational commitment (Cornejo Lanao et al., 2019). For employees to be engaged and happy in their workplace, it is essential that they feel that they can develop and that they identify with the values and objectives of the organization (Novello, 2017). Therefore, entities should focus their efforts on implementing practical and concrete actions that promote the professional development of their employees, which will positively impact their satisfaction, commitment and happiness (Frias C., 2014). In addition, it has been shown that there is a significant relationship between the components of happiness and work engagement (Cordero and Matallana, 2014). When employees are highly committed to the organization and satisfied with their environment, they show high levels of productivity, which contributes to the growth of the company (Aldana, 2013). Likewise, a moderate relationship has been found between happiness and engagement, especially in the dimensions of dedication and vigor of engagement (Davey Contreras, 2017).

This study is justified by the need to further explore the influence of work engagement on happiness at work in this particular context. Given that Apurimac is a region with specific socioeconomic characteristics, it offers a suitable

setting to analyze whether theories applied in other settings can be applied to the local public sector. Moreover, understanding these relationships can provide useful insights for designing human resource policies that improve welfare and efficiency in municipalities, which would contribute to the region's progress.

However, despite the abundant literature on work engagement and happiness at work, there is an important gap in the context of public institutions in less studied regions, such as the provincial municipalities of Apurimac, Peru.

The objective is to analyze the extent to which work engagement influences happiness at work in a provincial municipality of Apurimac Peru.

Literature Review

Workplace engagement and happiness at work

Work engagement has been defined as a positive, satisfying and motivating state at work, characterized by energy, dedication and absorption in work tasks (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Hakanen et al. (2006) found that a high level of engagement is positively associated with happiness and job satisfaction. These findings suggest that highly engaged employees tend to have higher levels of happiness in their work environment.

Joo and Lee (2017) found that higher levels of work engagement, promoted by perceived organizational support (POS) and psychological capital (PsyCap), significantly improve employees' job satisfaction and subjective well-being. This suggests that when employees feel supported by their organization and have the psychological resources to face work challenges, they are more likely to be engaged and, in turn, experience greater happiness in their work and personal lives.

Similarly, other studies show that resilience, job engagement, and job satisfaction are positively correlated with each other, with engagement being a mediator that enhances job satisfaction and overall happiness at work (Ibrahim and Hussein, 2024).

Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2017) argue that engaged employees tend to be happier and more satisfied with their work. This positive state creates a virtuous circle in which happiness drives engagement and vice versa, thus

improving overall performance. Furthermore, they emphasize that job resources, such as social support and autonomy, are crucial to promoting engagement, which in turn contributes to employees' overall well-being. Therefore, creating an environment that fosters engagement is crucial for increasing happiness at work.

The study by Taris and Schaufeli (2015) focused on the relationship between well-being at work and work engagement. In it, the authors explore how factors such as workload, social support, and working conditions can influence employees' well-being and, in turn, their commitment to the organization. Implications for human resource management were also discussed, highlighting the importance of creating a work environment that promotes both well-being and engagement.

Vigor and happiness at work

Vigor, one of the key dimensions of engagement, is defined by high levels of energy, vitality, and

enthusiasm at work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003). Recent research has shown that vigor is positively related to happiness at work. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) found that employees who demonstrate high levels of vigor are not only more engaged in their tasks, but also experience greater satisfaction and happiness in their work environment.

Research consistently shows that vigor, defined as high levels of energy, enthusiasm, and resilience while working, plays a crucial role in improving both employee happiness and overall well-being at work. Employees who report a high level of vigor tend to experience greater engagement, which directly correlates with greater workplace happiness. Vigor contributes to feelings of fulfillment and satisfaction by providing a sense of purpose and energy in daily tasks, making employees more proactive and immersed in their work (Kun and Gadancz, 2022).

H1. Vigor influences happiness at work in a provincial municipality of Apurimac, Peru.

Dedication and happiness at work

According to studies by Field and Buitendach (2011) and Fisher (2010), dedication to work has a positive impact on employee happiness. On the other hand, Choi et al. (2019) reinforce this premise by identifying work dedication as a key factor to increase happiness in the work environment. This suggests that the more engaged employees are with their work, the

greater their overall happiness at work, which also contributes to the creation of a more positive and productive work environment. Hakanen and Roodt (2010) also found that engagement was positively related to happiness at work, confirming that employees who find meaning in their work are more likely to be happy and satisfied in their roles. Engagement provides a sense of success and value, which contributes significantly to employees' overall well-being.

H2. Engagement influences happiness at work in a provincial municipality of Apurimac, Peru.

Absorption and happiness at work

Absorption refers to the state in which employees are fully focused and immersed in their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to Sonnentag and Frese's research, employees' ability to recover from stress is related to their level of absorption at work. Those who feel more absorbed tend to experience greater well-being and happiness, which improves their overall performance and satisfaction. Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2006) found indications that teachers who feel more engaged and absorbed in their activities report higher levels of satisfaction and happiness, which is inferred as a key factor for well-being at work.

The study by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) recognizes the importance of preventing

emotions and promoting work in the workplace. Creating an organization that fosters acceptance and promotes well-being is an important organizational strategy that can increase job satisfaction and reduce individual turnover. Integrated practices promote adoption, continuous competencies and optimal capabilities for the work environment, the ability to develop employee well-being in the environment, and employee commitments and motivations.

There are research findings on the interrelationship between mindfulness and happiness. For example, Fritz & Sonnentag (2005) found that highly focused employees also showed higher levels of well-being and job satisfaction. Furthermore, mindfulness can serve as a mediator between job characteristics and

well-being, suggesting that a work environment that promotes focus and engagement can improve employee well-being (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017).

On the other hand, Csikszentmihalyi (1990), in his “flow” theory, describes total absorption in an activity, which may not necessarily be linked to immediate happiness, as a person may be immersed in a challenging activity mission and still not feel “happy” at the time. It is in this sense that Csikszentmihalyi (1990) differentiates between superficial pleasure and absorption,

which, although not always pleasurable, is the key to achieving a fuller and more satisfying life. Deci & Ryan (2000), from the perspective of self-determination theory, analyze psychological well-being and how different types of motivation relate to satisfaction or happiness. Their focus was on the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which can open a debate on the fact that absorption does not always lead to happiness, if the task does not satisfy basic psychological needs.

H3. Absorption influences happiness at work in a provincial municipality of Apurimac, Peru.

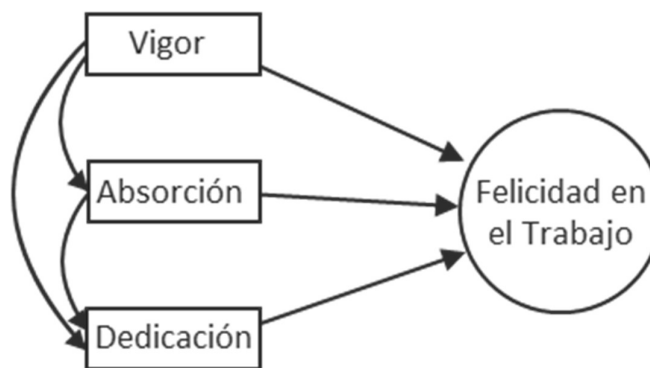


Fig 1. Theoretical model

Materials and methods

This study has a quantitative approach and a non-experimental design, since the variables were not manipulated. It was conducted under a cross-sectional design, which implies that data were collected at a single point in time, with the purpose of examining the cause-effect relationship of a phenomenon at an explanatory level. For the analysis, structural equations were used (Ato, López and Benavente, 2013). Inclusion criteria covered municipal workers in the different management directorates and operational units of a municipality in Apurimac, excluding personnel from other municipalities and taxpayers. The population consisted of a total of 212 workers and the sample was a total of 136 workers, found using the formula for known populations with a confidence percentage of 95% and an error of 5%. Non-probabilistic convenience sampling was applied since it did not involve a random selection of the sample.

To measure the engagement variable, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was used, which includes three dimensions: vigor, dedication and absorption, containing 17 items (UWES-9) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), with a Likert-type rating scale, such as: 0=never, 1=almost never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=very often, and 6=always. For the happiness at work variable, the happiness scale of Alarcón (2006) was applied, composed of 27 questions, designed according to the Likert-type scale with five alternatives, namely: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree, for the four dimensions: positive sense, satisfaction with life, personal fulfillment, and joy of living. The pilot test was carried out, and the reliability was found to be adequate, greater than 0.7 for both instruments. Jamovi software version 2.3.28 was used for data processing.

Results

We considered 136 questionnaires, sociodemographic information (Table 1), where

50.74% are female, 33.82% are between 20 and 30 years old; likewise, 52.21% are single and 76.47% are hired, and 42.65% have more than 6 years of service in the provincial municipality of Abancay, Apurimac.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics (n=136)

characteristics	Categories	frequency	percentages
Gender			
	Male	67	49.26%
	Female	69	50.74%
civil status	Single	71	52.21%
	Married	32	23.53%
	Cohabitant	30	22.06%
	Divorced	1	0.74%
	Widower	2	1.74%
Age			
	18-19	6	4.41%
	20 - 30	46	33.82%
	31 - 40	41	30.15%
	more than 41	43	31.62%
working condition			
	Appointed	32	23.53%
	Hired	104	76.47%
service time			
	Less than 1year	44	32.35%
	1 - 3 years	24	17.65%
	4- 6 years	10	7.35%
	More than 7 years	58	42.65%

Table 2 shows the reliability of the instruments used in the present study. That is, both Cronbach's alpha and McDonalds' omega measure the internal consistency of an

instrument. Therefore, for an instrument to be considered reliable, the coefficient must be greater than 0.7.

Table 2: Reliability of the instruments

Variables	alfa de Cronbach	omega de McDonald	N° de ítems
Engagement laboral (EGL)	0.942	0.944	9
Vigor	0.898	0.901	3
dedication	0.906	0.909	3
absorption	0.892	0.902	3
happiness at work (RM)	0.936	0.940	27

Note: Reliability results obtained with Jamovi.

For construct validation, we worked with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) because it allowed us to measure the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), which must be greater than 0.6. It also allowed us to obtain Bartlett's test of sphericity, which is composed of chi-square (X^2), degree of freedom (df) and p-value, which must be less

than 0.05 to be significant. In addition, it allowed the measurement of the variance explained, which must be greater than 50%. In this sense, the KMO was 0.901, chi-square (X^2)=1068, gl=36 and $p<0.001$. Finally, the variance explained was 77.4% for the 3 factors. See (Table 3).

Table 3: Factorial loadings of the dimensions of the variable work engagement

Items	dedication (DED)	absorption (ABS)	Vigor (VIG)
DED1	0.688		
DED2	0.782		
DED3	0.712		
ABS1		0.749	
ABS2		0.892	
ABS3		0.574	
VIG1			0.674
VIG2			0.835
VIG3			0.614

Note: factor loadings taken from the AFE.

For the happiness at work variable, the KMO was 0.916, chi-square (X^2)=3397, gl=351 and $p<0.001$. The variance explained was 67.8% for the 3 factors. It should be noted that the software

has united the life satisfaction and self-fulfillment dimensions into a single factor, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Factor loadings of the dimensions of the happiness at work variable.

Items	Satisfaction with life (SV) and self-realization (RP)	Positive Sense (SP)	Joy of living (AV)
SV1	0.914		
SV2	0.887		
SV3	0.869		
SV4	0.831		
SV5	0.789		
SV6	0.765		
RP1	0.787		
RP2	0.779		
RP3	0.725		
RP4	0.79		
RP5	0.764		
RP6	0.776		
SP1		0.726	
SP2		0.726	
SP3		0.761	
SP4		0.793	
SP5		0.755	

SP6		0.829	
SP7		0.809	
SP8		0.789	
SP9		0.868	
SP10		0.842	
SP11		0.721	
AV1			0.662
AV2			0.766
AV3			0.785
AV4			0.657

Note: factor loadings taken from the AFE.

The work engagement and happiness at work instruments have already been used in other contexts. In this sense, in order to confirm the theories, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used. For the work engagement variable, 3 factors were confirmed as shown in Table 5. Also,

the chi-square (X^2)=37.9; gl: 24 and $p=0.035$. In addition, the fit measures resulted as follows: CFI=0.987, TLI=0.980, SRMR=0.0337 and RMSEA=0.0657, considered with good fit because both CFI and TLI are above 0.95 and both SRMR and RMSEA are less than 0.08.

Table 5: Loadings of work engagement factors

Factor	Indicator	Estimator	EE	Z	p	standard estimator
Factor 1	DED1	1.41	0.1148	12.3	<.001	0.857
	DED2	1.36	0.0990	13.8	<.001	0.920
	DED3	1.19	0.0973	12.3	<.001	0.857
Factor 2	ABS1	1.51	0.1141	13.2	<.001	0.891
	ABS2	1.45	0.0941	15.4	<.001	0.978
	ABS3	1.02	0.1009	10.1	<.001	0.748
Factor 3	VIG1	1.43	0.1235	11.6	<.001	0.827
	VIG2	1.46	0.1069	13.7	<.001	0.919
	VIG3	1.29	0.1060	12.2	<.001	0.857

Note: factors taken from AFC

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the happiness at work variable confirmed 4 factors in accordance with the theory as shown in Table 6. Also, the chi-square (X^2)=546; gl: 318 and

$p<0.001$. In addition, the fit measures resulted as follows: CFI=0.932, TLI=0.925, SRMR=0.0465 and RMSEA=0.0726 considered adequate.

Table 6: Loadings of the factors of happiness at work

Factor	Indicator	Estimator	EE	Z	p	standard estimator
Factor 1	SP1	0.772	0.0788	9.80	<.001	0.733
	SP2	0.696	0.0724	9.61	<.001	0.722
	SP3	0.785	0.0755	10.41	<.001	0.764

Factor	Indicator	Estimator	EE	Z	p	standard estimator
	SP4	0.817	0.0740	11.03	<.001	0.795
	SP5	0.762	0.0739	10.32	<.001	0.760
	SP6	0.837	0.0713	11.74	<.001	0.828
	SP7	0.809	0.0706	11.46	<.001	0.816
	SP8	0.778	0.0716	10.86	<.001	0.787
	SP9	0.814	0.0641	12.71	<.001	0.871
	SP10	0.782	0.0653	11.97	<.001	0.839
	SP11	0.782	0.0815	9.59	<.001	0.721
Factor 2	SV1	0.928	0.0666	13.92	<.001	0.918
	SV2	0.846	0.0622	13.60	<.001	0.906
	SV3	0.759	0.0572	13.28	<.001	0.892
	SV4	0.699	0.0563	12.43	<.001	0.858
	SV5	0.707	0.0618	11.44	<.001	0.814
	SV6	0.719	0.0651	11.05	<.001	0.796
Factor 3	RP1	0.892	0.0694	12.86	<.001	0.877
	RP2	0.879	0.0672	13.09	<.001	0.886
	RP3	0.767	0.0639	11.99	<.001	0.840
	RP4	0.727	0.0603	12.06	<.001	0.842
	RP5	0.841	0.0745	11.29	<.001	0.808
	RP6	0.757	0.0672	11.28	<.001	0.807
Factor 4	AV1	0.680	0.0592	11.49	<.001	0.820
	AV2	0.759	0.0551	13.77	<.001	0.918
	AV3	0.783	0.0581	13.49	<.001	0.906
	AV4	0.740	0.0649	11.40	<.001	0.816

Note: factors taken from AFC

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a multivariate statistical technique for hypothesis testing and for the validation of a theoretical model. This technique made it possible to measure the relationship between dependent and independent latent variables. In this sense, the Robust Maximum Likelihood (MLR) estimation method was used to obtain the results of the theoretical model. The results were as follows: chi-square (X^2)=82, degree of freedom (df)=59 and "p"=0.026. Likewise, the CFI=0.981 and TLI=0.975 greater than 0.95 were considered a good fit. On the other hand, the

RMSEA= 0.054 and SRMR=0.062, less than 0.08 respectively, are considered adequate.

Figure 2 shows the path diagram of the measurement model. In this figure, it is observed that the variables vigor (VIG), dedication (DED), and absorption (ABS) are exogenous independent variables, in which between VIG and DED there is a relationship of $\beta=0.83$, between VIG and ABS there is a relationship of $\beta=0.75$ and between DED and ABS there is a relationship of $\beta=0.77$, there being a high relationship between these variables. Likewise, the variable VIG

influences happiness at work (FT) with $\beta=0.30$, the variable DED influences FT with $\beta=0.11$ and ABS has a negative influence on FT with $\beta=-0.07$. That is, the variables VIG, DED, and ABS are

influential independent variables on TF, however, they are not significant given that the “p” value in each of the causal relationships is greater than 0.05, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Estimated parameters

				95% Confidence Intervals				
Dep	Pred	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
FT	VIG	0.2679	0.321	-0.362	0.897	0.2963	0.834	0.404
FT	DED	0.1110	0.225	-0.330	0.552	0.1136	0.493	0.622
FT	ABS	-0.0763	0.203	-0.473	0.321	-0.0670	-0.377	0.706

Note: theoretical model developed with Jamovi

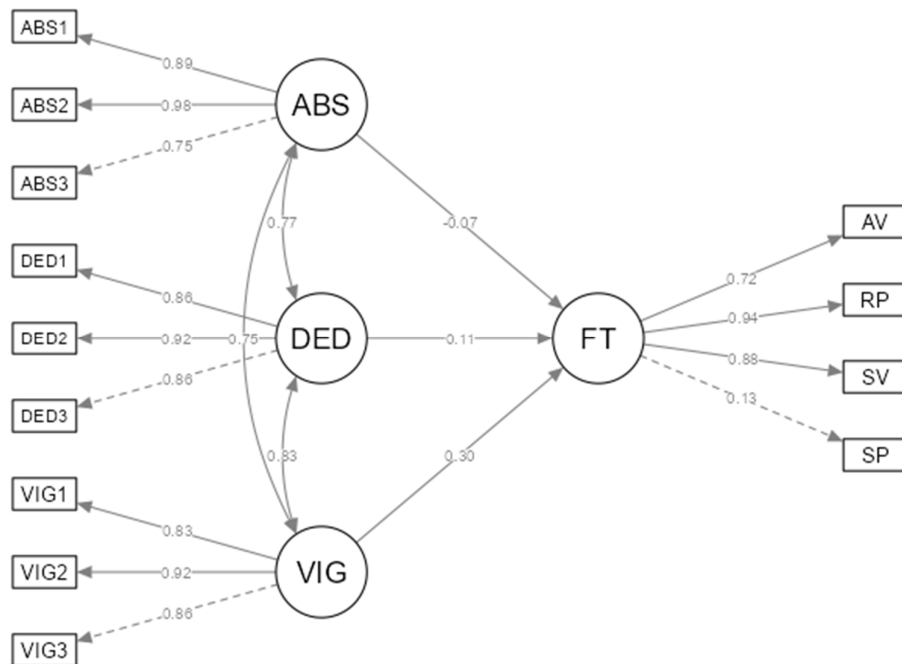


Figure 2: Path diagram of the model

Discussion

In accordance with the first hypothesis, the significant influence of vigor on happiness at work in a provincial municipality of Apurimac, Peru, has been demonstrated. Our results confirm previous hypotheses on the impact of energy and vitality on happiness. In line with previous studies such as Bakker and Demerouti

(2019) who found that employees who demonstrate high levels of vigor are not only more engaged in their tasks, but also experience greater happiness in their work environment. Our data suggest that employees who reported higher levels of vigor also reported a higher frequency of positive emotions at work, supporting the idea that vigor promotes happiness. So too, Sonnentag and Fritz (2019) found that vigor is a significant predictor of

positive recovery and job happiness. Employees who exhibit vigor tend to feel happier because they bring energy and enthusiasm to daily tasks, which contributes to a more positive and less stressful work experience.

In accordance with the second hypothesis, the significant influence of dedication on happiness at work in a provincial municipality of Apurímac, Peru, has been demonstrated. In line with previous studies on work engagement, Field and Buitendach (2011) and Fisher (2010) express that dedication to work has a positive impact on employee happiness. Likewise, Hakanen and Roodt (2010) also found that dedication was positively related to happiness at work, confirming that employees who find meaning in their work are more likely to be happy and satisfied in their roles.

According to the third hypothesis, the non-significant influence of absorption on happiness at work in a provincial municipality of Apurímac, Peru, has been demonstrated. Although different studies have shown that there is a direct relationship between absorption and happiness at work, such as that of Salanova, Schaufeli and Xanthopoulou (2020) and also Gorgievski and Hobfoll (2019), this study shows an almost null negative influence, because workers in this environment would be understanding absorption as spending a lot of time at work and that makes them less happy. Likewise, the theory indicates that absorption is understood as concentrating on a task; however, in this case, workers perform different tasks, which makes them less happy at work.

Conclusions

This study reveals that vigor is a key factor for work engagement and a strong predictor of happiness at work. Employees with greater vigor experience more positive emotions, job satisfaction and better work relationships, which improves their overall well-being. Fostering vigor through autonomy, skill development, and work-life balance improves emotional well-being, performance and organizational commitment.

This study confirms that dedication is key to happiness at work, as engaged employees who find meaning in their tasks report greater emotional well-being. Dedication not only promotes positive emotions and job satisfaction, but also helps reduce stress and burnout. Encouraging engagement through recognition, challenging assignments, and a

collaborative environment is critical to improving both employee happiness and performance.

This study shows that absorption does not have a significant influence on happiness at work. In contrast to previous research suggesting a positive relationship, our findings indicate that employees associate absorption with spending too much time at work, which may decrease their happiness. In addition, multitasking negatively affects their well-being. This suggests that it is critical to understand how workers interpret absorption, indicating that improving the quality and meaning of tasks may be more effective in increasing happiness at work.

The theoretical implication of this research is that it can contribute to a deeper understanding of work engagement, especially in the context of the public sector in a region such as Apurímac. From a theoretical perspective, the study provides empirical evidence showing how work engagement impacts happiness at work, which reinforces theories that support a direct connection between both concepts, highlighting the role of engagement as a key factor for work well-being. Given that most previous studies on engagement and happiness have focused on the private sector, this research could provide a theoretical framework for understanding how these concepts operate in the public sector, where intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are different, and factors such as job stability and public service play a crucial role.

This study has certain limitations as it focuses on a single municipality in a specific province (Apurímac); the results may not be generalizable to other municipalities, as socioeconomic, cultural and work conditions vary considerably. The study was based on a cross-sectional design and data were collected at a single point in time, which prevents observing changes in engagement and happiness over time. The sample of workers was small; therefore, our findings may not adequately reflect the reality of all employees in the municipality.

In future lines of research, it would be advisable to conduct comparative studies between different provincial or district municipalities, both in the Apurímac region and in other regions of the country, to identify whether the relationships between work engagement and happiness at work vary according to the organizational context. It would also be useful to develop longitudinal research that follows workers over time, in order to identify how work

engagement evolves and its impact on happiness. Likewise, it would be useful to evaluate the impact of various organizational interventions (wellness programs, professional development, improvements in the work environment) on the level of engagement and happiness of the municipality's workers.

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