

“Job Satisfaction and Innovation among Young Employees: a Broadened Happy-Productive Worker Thesis”

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Abstract: We aim to make a theoretical contribution to the happy-productive worker thesis by expanding the study to cases where this thesis does not fit. We hypothesized and corroborated the existence of four relations between job satisfaction and innovative performance: a) unhappy-unproductive, b) unhappy-productive, c) happy-unproductive, and d) happy-productive. We also aimed to contribute to the happy-productive worker thesis by studying some conditions that influence and differentiate among the four patterns. We tested the hypotheses in a sample of 513 young employees and representative of Spain. We performed cluster and discriminant analysis. We identified the four patterns. Almost 15% of the employees had a pattern largely ignored by previous studies (e.g., unhappy-productive). As hypothesized, to promote well-being and performance among young employees, it is necessary to fulfillment of the psychological contract, to encourage initiative, and to promote job self-efficacy. We also confirmed that over-qualification characterizes the unhappy-productive pattern, but we failed to confirm that high job self-efficacy characterizes the happy-productive pattern. The results show the relevance of personal and organizational factors to study the well-being-performance link among young employees.

Keywords: Job satisfaction; Innovative performance; Happy-productive worker thesis; Young employees; Discriminant analysis