

Editorial: Searching for Meaning in Work and Life: Happiness, Wellbeing, and the Future of Organizations

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10 1 Introduction

11 Finding meaning in one's work and in one's life is a quest that has a powerful resonance in an era that
12 values holistic fulfilment. This research topic invited cross-disciplinary contributions to shed light on
13 the future of organizations seen through a meaning-making lens to employment across a number of
14 different organisational contexts. We received a series of insightful research pieces that untangle the
15 web of connections between happiness, well-being, and the workings of organizations.

16 Starting with a provocative stance, Pelligra and Sacco's postulation is that, in a post-scarcity society,
17 where people are increasingly looking for meaning in the workplace, meaning and purpose are
18 increasingly eluding work in ever more complex organisations. Drawing on anthropologist David
19 Graeber's notion of "bullshit jobs", the authors identify the root causes of meaningless, unsatisfying
20 work in the design and conditions of many of today's jobs. The design of many jobs is such that
21 individuals cannot see the value they are adding to society and they themselves come to consider their
22 employment useless to society and, thus, meaningless. This has significant repercussions on people's
23 wellbeing. The authors point out that the economic argument for compensating workers for dis-utility
24 has seriously underestimated the more complex psychological needs of human beings for self-worth,
25 trust and agency in the workplace. On the flipside, they warn against the risk of burnout for those
26 whose jobs are so meaningful that they can give too much of themselves, especially those creating
27 social value.

28 For the sceptics out there, who see the world as a zero-sum game, Parent-Lamarche, Dextras- Gauthier
29 and Julien offer reassurance that HRM practices do not have to exist in order to squeeze every last drop
30 of productivity out of employees at the expense of employee wellbeing. Their validated scale of High
31 Wellbeing and Performance HRM practices, firmly grounded in an integrated mutual gains perspective
32 (i.e. non-zero-sum games), provides a viable model for promoting employee wellbeing, leading to
33 productivity. Their scale validation distils 10 dimensions of HRM practices, including autonomy, on-
34 the-job training (formation), opportunities for career progression (career management), equality-
35 diversity and inclusion (diversity management) and flexible work (flexibility), to highlight but a few.

36 The study by Bryant, Lysova, and Khapova on the idea of "contributing to society" explores the
37 foundation of satisfying employment and vocation. This crucial idea is considered important, yet it is
38 still buried in much mystery. The authors reinterpret it as a profound sensation of affecting people who
39 are affected positively. The Situated Expectancy-Value Theory, which reveals three dimensions of
40 fulfilment—matching with one's purpose, investing personally, aligning contributions with
41 expectations, and measuring the accompanying costs—is the foundation of their ground-breaking
42 perspective. Like a prism, this paradigm highlights the rewarding echoes within oneself while
43 refracting task value dependent on benefit circumstances. This innovative strategy opens up new
44 research directions in meaningful work, social effect, and areas like employment design and public
45 policy.

46 Su and Jiang's research digs into the complex interplay of work-family dynamics among Chinese
47 female university lecturers, focusing on their conventional responsibilities. They use latent variable
48 path analysis with 527 participants to show that work-family conflicts and burnout have a negative
49 impact on job satisfaction. In contrast, perceived organizational support has a favorable effect. To some
50 extent, job burnout mediates the relationship between conflicts and job satisfaction, with perceived
51 organizational support reducing this mediation. This study sheds insight into the complicated dynamics
52 of female university professors balancing work, family, burnout, support, and job satisfaction within
53 the cultural environment of China.

54 In pursuing an optimal state of being, Clapp, Karwowsky and Hancock's research breathes life into the
55 elusive concept of psychological flow. This delicate equilibrium, with its interplay of task challenge
56 and skill mastery, creates an intrinsic symphony of satisfaction. The study unveils the elements
57 composing this symphony, charting their evolution in professional and leisure domains. With insights
58 gathered through candid semi-structured interviews with transactional workers, the study highlights
59 the flow experience within constrained roles. The discovery of two primary flow types adds depth to
60 the narrative, further enriched as traditional flow dimensions harmonize with participants' personal
61 experiences.

62 Thompson's exploration navigates the realm of awe's impact on resilience and well-being. The study's
63 focus on a NASA medical professional—a leader of both minds and hearts—reverberates significantly.
64 The intricate dance between awe and resilience, as navigated by this professional amid their role
65 supporting astronauts, opens a window into personal and professional transformation. As awe unfolds
66 its transformative magic, it reveals itself as an elixir for uncovering life's purpose, sowing seeds of
67 gratitude, weaving bonds of connection, and nurturing resilience traits that sustain optimism. This
68 research highlights the ethereal yet tangible threads intertwining awe, resilience, and personal
69 evolution.

70 Smaliukiené and colleagues' study takes us into the unique realm of the military service—defined by
71 unwavering dedication to one's nation and the noble aspiration to uplift others. A chorus of duty echoes
72 among the ranks of army reservists, often straddling civilian obligations and military commitments.
73 Recent research places the spotlight on the synergy between prosocial motivation and the profoundness
74 of service. The study fills a void in scholarship, offering insights into the latent power of prosocial
75 drive on the tapestry of service's significance. This research forges pathways of understanding,
76 unveiling the mosaic where prosocial motivation intertwines with role fit, self-efficacy, and the socio-
77 moral climate of military service.

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79 These studies collectively weave a tapestry of insight into the often-oversimplified needs of human
80 beings by sharpening our understanding of the convergence of meaning, happiness, and the dynamics
81 of today’s organizations. Notably, what emerges from the contributions taken together is a harmonious
82 chorus of findings, all singing from the same hymn sheet: factors such as purpose, autonomy and
83 mutual support, amongst many others, are the golden thread across all contribution. These factors are
84 at heart of thriving in a complex world—where work, family, and personal journey intermingle,
85 creating a symphony of resilience, fulfillment, and flourishing.

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87 **Author Contributions**

88 All authors of this Editorial contributed substantially as editors of papers in this Research Topic.

89 **Conflict of Interest**

90 The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial
91 relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.