

The Different ‘Faces’ of Happiness - Unhappiness in Organizational Research: Emotional Exhaustion, Positive Affectivity, Negative Affectivity, and Psychological Well-Being as Correlates of Job Performance

Thomas A. Wright and Laurie Larwood, University of Nevada at Reno
Philip J. Denney, Late of San Francisco, CA

This research examined relations among several commonly considered indicators of affective-based “happiness - unhappiness” in organizational research with job performance ratings. While psychological well-being predicted job performance, the results failed to establish relations among emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA) as correlates of job performance. Suggestions and implications for future research are introduced.

INTRODUCTION

Happily may I walk.
May it be beautiful before me.
May it be beautiful behind me.
May it be beautiful below me.
May it be beautiful above me.
May it be beautiful all around me.
In beauty it is finished.

(Anonymous, Navaho Night Chant)

As the above quote taken from a Navaho Night Chant indicates, the pursuit of “happiness” transcends both time and cultural boundaries. Nowhere does this appear more evident than in organizational research undertaken over the years to identify whether “happy” workers are also “productive” workers (Staw, 1986). In fact, many applied researchers have come to consider the happy/productive worker thesis as a “holy grail” of the organizational sciences (Landy, 1985). Despite the longevity of this ongoing discussion, the veracity of the happy/productive worker thesis remains in doubt, even as we enter the new millennium (Wright & Staw, 1999). We propose that part of this confusion may result from the widely varied manner in which “happiness” has typically been understood and measured in organizational research.

Without question, happiness is an imprecise term (Myers, 1993; Veenhoven, 1991). However, virtually all scientific approaches to happiness appear to converge around three defining phenomenon (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001; Diener, 1984, pp. 542-544). First, happiness is a subjective experience (Diener, 1994; Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993). Second, happiness includes both the relative presence of positively-toned emotions and the relative

absence of negatively-toned emotions (Argyle, 1987; Diener & Larson, 1993; Warr, 1987; 1990). Third, happiness is a global judgment; it is an overall evaluation that appears to exhibit some measure of stability over time (Diener, 1994; Myers, 1993). In organizational research, “happiness - unhappiness” has typically been operationalized by such seemingly disparate constructs as emotional exhaustion, dispositional affect, psychological well-being and job satisfaction (Wright & Bonett, 1997a; Wright & Staw, 1999). Typically, [un]happiness has been equated to job [dis]satisfaction in work-related research (Wright & Doherty, 1998). More specifically, we suggest that work-related research has primarily focused on examining the potentially negative consequences of worker distress or dissatisfaction, *i.e.*, absenteeism, turnover, poor performance, or a reliance on what is called the “disease model” (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000b).

The focus of the disease model involves attempts at minimizing the financial costs attributable to an unhappy or dissatisfied employee. This disease-based or utilitarian model is considered by a number of scholars to now be the prevailing research values perspective in the organizational sciences (Wright & Wright, 2000). As a result, an overriding emphasis of organizational research appears to be one concerned with identifying the pecuniary costs to the organization of distressed, dissatisfied and unhappy workers, as opposed to examining the possible benefits to all relevant organization stakeholders of research focusing on maintaining or developing attributes or profiles of physically and psychologically well employees. Interestingly, a similar emphasis appears to exist in the psychological sciences. Myers and Diener (1995) found that psychological publications focusing on negative states outnumber their positive counterparts by a ratio of 17 to 1! This emphasis on the negative, to the relative neglect of the positive, has undoubtedly had a significant [negative] effect on how many individuals have come to view the world. For instance, Myers and Diener (1997, p. 5) recently proposed “that most [Americans] are unhappy most of the time.” As an alternative to this disease or utilitarian approach, we suggest a research values perspective which considers the issue of employee health as a worthwhile consequence or *end* in itself. This approach is known as the health model (Ruack, 1999; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000a; Wright & Wright, 2000).

In the health model, the research focus is on how to initiate, maintain, or make things better for people (Wright & Wright, 2000). From this approach, employee health is viewed as an *end* in itself, an intrinsic good for which all organization stakeholders should work. Thus, unlike the disease model, which focuses on minimizing the potentially disabling symptoms or manifestations of mental or physical dysfunctional behavior (Kendler, 1999), the health model takes its cue from humanistic psychology (Fromm, 1994; Maslow, 1961). That is, health is defined not only in terms of the absence of dysfunctional behavior, but in terms of the presence of the potential for individual “growth” or “fulfillment” (Jahoda, 1958). Furthermore, the basic premise of the health model is that each of the organization’s stakeholders or constituents equally share in the responsibility to identify and help remedy preventable sources of organizational and individual distress (Quick, Quick, Nelson, & Hurrell, 1997). However, this change from a focus on a *means* to an *end* perspective constitutes a major transformation of how organizational research is typically framed and investigated (Wright & Wright, 2000; Wright & Wright, 2001).

Traditionally, following the disease model approach, organizational research has primarily concentrated on the possible maladaptive consequences of such employee health-related variables as job stress (Jex, 1998), job burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996), negative affectivity (Spector, Chen, & O'Connell, 2000), and job [dis]satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Moreover, because decades of research have failed to consistently demonstrate a strong link between job [dis]satisfaction and performance (*e.g.*, Vroom, 1964; Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985), interest in research examining the job [dis]satisfaction - performance relation appears to have waned (Wright & Staw, 1999). Alternatively, some interesting work on the role of affect-based measures of "happiness – unhappiness" as potential correlates of performance has started to accumulate. Following common parlance, we consider affect (and its derivative affective) as a superordinate term that encompasses all other affect-oriented terminology (Hunt, 1997; Wright & Doherty, 1998).

To date, the prevailing orientation of a number of affect-based constructs purporting to measure aspects of the "happiness – unhappiness" dimension appears consistent with the precepts of the disease model. For example, research has widely examined the maladaptive role of job burnout, especially emotional exhaustion, and negative affectivity in a number of organizational behaviors (Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). In contrast, two affect-based constructs proposed to be linked to aspects of individual growth and fulfillment, *i.e.*, positive affectivity and psychological well-being, have been much less widely investigated (Wright & Staw, 1999). The present research was designed to afford an initial opportunity to investigate the role of both positively (positive affectivity and psychological well-being) and negatively-toned (emotional exhaustion and negative affectivity) measures of affect — the different 'faces' of happiness-unhappiness in organizational research — as correlates of job performance. We now provide the theoretical basis for *why* relations may exist among emotional exhaustion, positive and negative affectivity, and psychological well-being with job performance.

Emotional Exhaustion and Performance

Historically, most research on emotional exhaustion has been guided by Maslach and Jackson's (1986) three-component conceptualization of burnout. In this model, burnout has three interrelated parts: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion, the subject of the present research, is defined as a chronic state of physical and emotional depletion that results from excessive job demands and continuous hassles (Shirom, 1989). Emotional exhaustion describes affective feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). In addition, emotional exhaustion is more narrowly defined than other, more general, conceptualizations of activation or arousal (Shirom, 1989). In fact, it is proposed that even minimal occurrences of this type of emotional strain, experienced relatively few times a month, are indicative of substantial activation, which may warrant some form of intervention (Gaines & Jermier, 1983). Given Wright and Bonett's (1997a) finding of a substantial negative relation between emotional exhaustion and another widely acknowledged operationalization of the happiness - unhappiness dimension, psychological well-being, we propose that emotionally exhausted and unhappy individuals share much in common (Wright & Doherty, 1998). Using the conservation of resources (COR) model of stress (Hobfoll, 1989), we next

provide a theoretical basis for the proposed negative relation between emotional exhaustion and work-related performance.

According to the conservation of resources (COR) model of stress (Hobfoll, 1989; Lee & Ashforth, 1996), emotional exhaustion is most likely to occur when there is an actual resource loss, a perceived threat of resource loss, a situation in which one's resources are inadequate to meet work demands, or when the anticipated returns are not obtained on an investment of resources (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Thus, prolonged strain or emotional exhaustion occurs when individuals feel they no longer have sufficient emotional resources to handle the stressors confronting them (Hobfoll, 1989; Lee & Ashforth, 1996).

Hobfoll (1989) noted the similarity between COR theory and the popular management concept of person-environment (P-E) fit (French, Caplan, & Harrison, 1982). Like COR theory, P-E fit theory posits that an incongruent relation between organizational demands and an individual's resources to meet these demands leads initially to job stress, and, if left unattended over time, to emotional exhaustion and other potentially maladaptive outcomes. However, COR theory goes beyond P-E fit theory and makes specific predictions regarding both *what* individuals will do and *why* they do it when confronted with stress (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). More specifically, COR theory predicts that individuals will experience a sense of discomfort and will attempt to minimize losses. Thus, use of COR theory as the theoretical framework affords researchers a great deal of precision in predicting the outcomes of emotional exhaustion (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). For instance, based on COR theory, resource deficient or emotionally exhausted individuals are proposed to overemphasize avoidance or withdrawal coping mechanisms (Leiter, 1993). Arguably, the most costly of these employee withdrawal-related correlates to the organization is diminished job performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

The results of the limited available research to date examining the proposed negative relation between emotional exhaustion and job performance have been inconsistent, however. Our literature review revealed three published empirical studies linking emotional exhaustion to non self-report measures of performance (Wright & Bonett, 1997a; Wright & Bonett, 1997b; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). More specifically, while Wright and Bonett (1997a) failed to establish a relation, Wright and Bonett (1997b) found modest support for a negative relation between emotional exhaustion and a composite measure of performance (measured 3 years later). Interestingly, this research failed to establish a cross-sectionally derived correlation between the measures, leaving overall interpretation of these results somewhat ambiguous. Finally, Wright and Cropanzano (1998) found support that emotional exhaustion was negatively related to a measure of job performance. Based on COR theory, we propose that emotional exhaustion is negatively related to job performance. We next examine the basis for relations among the two dimensions of dispositional affect, positive and negative affectivity, and job performance.

Dispositional Affect and Performance

Over the years, numerous personality traits have been widely identified and empirically tested by social scientists (Hough & Schneider, 1996). However, as noted by George (1996), these traits are not just randomly generated, but appear to be hierarchically structured with a

few broad, general traits at the top and more specific traits at the bottom of the hierarchy. While some controversy exists regarding the exact number and configuration of this trait clustering, there appears to be consensus that negative (NA) and positive (PA) affectivity are prominent among these general traits (George, 1996).

Negative affectivity or NA is the disposition to experience negative feelings. High NA is characterized by the experience of such negative feelings as anger, disgust, and contempt. Low NA is characterized by calmness and serenity (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Thus, while individuals high on NA tend to think and act in ways that result in negative affective experiences, individuals low on NA are not prone to think and act in this way. As noted by George (1996, p. 147), while high NAs are generally prone to experience distress over time and across situations, low NAs “are less likely to think and behave in ways that promote negative affective experiences.”

The second dimension is positive affectivity. Positive affectivity is the disposition to experience positive feelings. High PAs experience a good deal of positive feelings, such as, joyfulness, exhilaration, and enthusiasm. Alternatively, low PAs are more likely to experience such feelings as sadness and lethargy (Watson et al., 1988). As a result, they tend to become somewhat disengaged from the world around them in a “nonpleasurable manner or style” (George, 1996, p. 147). Furthermore, since NA and PA are considered independent dimensions (Watson & Clark, 1984), an individual can be high on both NA and PA, low on both, or high on one and low on the other. In fact, according to the dispositional model, a happy person is one who is high on PA, while being low on NA. Thus, from this perspective, our second operationalization of happiness - unhappiness, dispositional affect, is seen as being composed of two traits rather than one (Diener, 1984).

NA and PA appear to be beneficial constructs for understanding *both* psychological and behavioral reactions to the work context. In this regard, they have considerable merit as predictors of a wide range of work-related attitudes and indices of work strain (e.g., Brief, Butcher, & Robinson, 1995). NA has also been positively related to voluntary employee turnover (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Furthermore, recent research has used long-established models of motivation to hypothesize how NA and PA could predict employee achievement or performance (Brief, 1998; George & Brief, 1996). For example, from the perspective of expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), PA could facilitate not only the expectancy that one’s efforts lead to performance, but also the belief that performance leads to positive outcomes. Wright and Staw (1999) posited that the basis for these predictions comes from research showing that PA can lead to greater self-efficacy (Forgas, Bower, & Moylan, 1990) and optimistic biases in the estimation of future events (Seligman, 1991).

Further support for this hypothesis is found in goal-setting models of motivation (George & Brief, 1996; Wright & Staw, 1999). For instance, according to Wright and Staw (1999), one might posit that optimistic tendencies will lead individuals to set more difficult goals for themselves and/or accept more challenging goals provided by others. One possible consequence is increased productivity and performance. Additionally, one might also use an attributional model of motivation (Weiner, 1985) to hypothesize that PA has a facilitative influence on task persistence (Brief, 1998; George & Brief, 1996). Individuals who are high in positive affect or optimism tend to interpret failure more as a temporary setback caused

by situational, as opposed to individual, circumstances (Forgas, 1992). Thus, high PAs are seen as being more likely to persevere following adverse feedback than those with negative or pessimistic tendencies (Brief, 1998).

Taken together, the evidence suggests that people who are high in PA have different beliefs and experience different feelings than those who are high in NA. As a result, in many jobs, especially those requiring social contact or autonomous decision-making, one could expect individuals high on PA to be better performers (Staw & Barsade, 1993). However, to date, there is little direct empirical evidence linking dispositional affectivity and job performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Two studies failed to find a significant relation between dispositional affectivity and job performance ratings (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998; Wright & Staw, 1999), while two others reported only inconsistent findings (Cropanzano, James, & Konovsky, 1993, Studies 1 and 2).

Judge (1992) raised another issue regarding NA and PA. The dispositional perspective separates positive emotion into one dimension (PA) and negative emotion into another (NA). Observing that measures of psychological well-being combine positive and negative emotion into a single scale, Judge has suggested that it might be parsimonious to treat happiness as a bi-polar construct. Though available research is sparse, there is one piece of indirect evidence that supports Judge's position. In well-being scales, happiness is measured more directly. That is, these measures directly inquire as to whether one is "happy" or "sad." On the other hand, the measures of NA and PA do not ask direct questions regarding happiness. Rather, one infers the level of happiness from the respondent's NA/PA profile (for a more detailed treatment of these measurement issues, see Green, Goldman, & Salovey, 1993). Thus, a measure of well-being might afford both a more precise, as well as a more parsimonious, test of whether happy workers are productive ones. Given this possibility, we next examine the basis for the proposed relation between psychological well-being and job performance.

Psychological Well-Being and Performance

The importance of employee psychological well-being (PWB) has long been recognized by organizational scientists (Kornhauser, 1965). Psychological well-being measures the hedonic or pleasantness-based dimension of individual feelings and is widely conceptualized in terms of the overall effectiveness of an individual's psychological and social functioning. Clinical psychologists have long recognized the role of the pleasantness dimension of well-being (*i.e.*, happiness vs. sadness or depression) in the determination of various individual outcomes. For example, psychologically well individuals appear more likely to be satisfied with aspects of life and leisure, physically healthy, have high self-esteem, tend to be optimistic, and exhibit motivated behavior and constructive thought processes (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Holmes, 1991). Psychological well-being is typically considered an affectively-based "context-free" or global construct, one which is not tied to any particular situation (Wright & Bonett, 1997a). While psychological well-being has been considered as both a disposition or trait and a state or mood (*e.g.*, Diener, 1984; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), most typically it is viewed as a constant and stable trait.

In adherence to the disease model, research in organizational behavior has tended to focus on the extensive costs, in both financial and human terms, attributable to employee

dysfunctional psychological well-being (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001; Diener, 1984). For instance, depression, loss of self-esteem, hypertension, alcoholism and drug consumption have all been shown to be related to employee dysfunctional well-being (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). Since these variables have, in turn, been related to declines in various work outcomes, it is possible that psychological well-being and employee performance are related (Quick *et al.*, 1997).

Recent work-related research confirms that various affective-based measures of psychological well-being may be positively related to employee performance. For instance, Staw, Sutton, and Pelled (1994) re-analyzed a longitudinal data set to examine whether a single dimension measure of well-being could predict changes in performance outcomes. Staw *et al.* found support that their measure predicted changes in salary, performance evaluations, and social support. Staw and Barsade (1993) obtained similar results in an experimental study involving MBA students using a hedonically-toned composite measure of well-being. Likewise, Wright and his colleagues also found support for the psychological well-being to performance relation (Wright, Bonett, & Sweeney, 1993; Wright & Bonett, 1997a; Wright & Staw, 1999). The present research, composed of a sample of mental health workers, provides the initial opportunity to not only examine psychological well-being, but also emotional exhaustion, negative affectivity and positive affectivity as predictors of job performance. We tested the following three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Emotional exhaustion will be negatively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 2(a): Positive affectivity will be positively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 2(b): Negative affectivity will be negatively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 3: Psychological well-being will be positively related to job performance.

Prior research examining various affective-based correlates of job performance has established significant bivariate relations among emotional exhaustion, positive and negative affectivity, and psychological well-being (Wright & Bonett, 1997a; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998; Wright & Staw, 1999). In addition, relations between each of these variables and work-related performance behaviors have been investigated (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998; Wright & Staw, 1999). However, to date, no research has simultaneously examined the relative contribution of emotional exhaustion, dispositional affect, and psychological well-being as correlates of job performance. Given the importance of further establishing the potential role of various affective-based correlates of job performance, we pose the following exploratory research question: What are the relative contributions of emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and psychological well-being as correlates of job performance?

METHOD

The present study was designed to investigate the role of emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and psychological well-being as correlates of job performance. The third author, Philip J. Denney, asked mental health case workers (N = 90) employed by a public sector agency in the western United States to participate in the study by means of a

direct contact procedure. The actual sample includes original data available from 66 employees, representing a response rate of 73%. All respondents were employed in the same department and performed similar job duties. The mean age for the sample was 47 years; the mean tenure was 17.7 years. The sample includes all respondents for whom measures of emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, psychological well-being, and job performance were available.

In field research, where research participants are often difficult to obtain, it is important to determine the minimum number of respondents necessary for the detection of meaningful effects (Bonett & Wright, 2000). Guilford (1956, p. 145) noted that a squared correlation of .25 is indicative of a substantial or meaningful relation. Prior research by Wright *et al.* (1993) and Wright and Bonett (1997a) found simple, bivariate correlations between psychological well-being and performance in the .40 to .50 range. Using a standard sample size procedure (Cohen, 1988), a sample size of at least 40 is required to detect a squared correlation of .25 with power equal to .75 and alpha equal to .05. Thus, the obtained sample size of 41 used in the regression analysis is adequate for testing the relations investigated in this field research.

MEASURES

Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion was measured with Maslach and Jackson's (1986) nine-item emotional exhaustion scale (Maslach Burnout Inventory). This nine-item scale measures how often one feels emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. The inventory uses a 7-point scale (0 = never, and 6 = everyday). Sample items include "I feel emotionally drained from my work," "I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job," and "I feel I'm working too hard on my job." Evidence of the construct validity of emotional exhaustion has been provided by correlations between emotional exhaustion and selected job characteristics (*i.e.*, direct contact with patients; Maslach & Jackson, 1986). The present study established a Cronbach's alpha of .81.

Dispositional Affectivity

This study used the PANAS Scale developed by Watson *et al.* (1988) as the measure of affectivity. The PANAS Scale is designed to measure both PA and NA. PA is measured by descriptors such as "active, alert, enthusiastic, inspired, and interested." NA is assessed by descriptors such as "afraid, hostile, irritable, jittery, and upset." Participants indicated the extent to which they experienced each descriptor of affect *in general* on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Cronbach's alpha for PA was .90; for NA, the alpha was .84.

Psychological Well-Being

As a measure of psychological well-being, this study utilized the eight-item Index of Psychological Well-Being developed by Berkman (1971). The Berkman scale uses many of the same items as Bradburn and Caplovitz' (1965) earlier measure, but with a more general

time horizon. For example, respondents were asked how often they felt: “depressed or very unhappy,” “particularly excited or interested in something,” “pleased about having accomplished something,” and “on top of the world.” For a more complete description of the scoring and prior validation of the index, the reader is referred to a number of recent organizational studies which have used it (*cf.*, Wright & Bonett, 1997a; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000b; Wright & Staw, 1999). In this study, the Cronbach’s alpha was .70.

Performance

Employee performance was measured using the evaluation procedure validated by Wright and his colleagues (Wright & Bonett, 1993; Wright *et al.*, 1993). In the present case, management personnel from the current organization confirmed four dimensions as appropriate and relevant for assessing employee performance: support, work facilitation, goal emphasis, and team building. Each dimension was measured using a five-point scale ranging from “never” to “always” regarding the extent that employees emphasized a particular dimension. In this particular organization, each employee is typically evaluated on their yearly performance by their immediate superior. In this study, each employee’s superior provided ratings of employee work performance on each of the four dimensions for the relevant evaluation period. The four items were summed to form a composite measure of performance (Cronbach alpha = .82).

RESULTS

Correlational Analyses: Hypotheses 1-3

Table 1 contains the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the study variables. Hypothesis 1 predicted a negative relation between emotional exhaustion and job performance. This relation was not supported ($r = -.14$). Hypothesis 2 predicted positive (2a) and negative (2b) relations between PA and performance and NA and performance, respectively. These relations were not supported. Neither PA ($r = -.01$, ns) or NA ($r = -.06$, ns) were associated with performance. Hypothesis 3 predicted a positive relation between psychological well-being and performance. In support of Hypothesis 3, a significant positive relation was established between psychological well-being and performance ($r = .34$, $p < .05$).

These results provide support that psychological well-being is predictive of job performance. However, examination of Table 1 indicates that moderate correlations exist among psychological well-being, emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity. Thus, a more thorough test of the psychological well-being/job performance relation should include controls for emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity. To that end, a partial correlation coefficient was calculated in order to better gauge the relative contribution of psychological well-being in the prediction of job performance, above and beyond that of emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity. The partial correlation of psychological well-being with performance, controlling for emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity was .34 ($p < .05$).

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for the Study Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	47.0	7.6	—	-.13	.68**	-.12	.14	.14	-.08	.00
2. Gender ¹	—	—		—	.04	-.20	.09	.27*	-.19	.05
3. Job Tenure	17.7	6.2			—	-.09	.01	-.03	-.08	.01
4. Emotional Exhaustion	2.5	1.3				—	-.59**	-.42**	.74**	-.14
5. Employee Well-Being	3.4	1.5					—	.61**	-.63**	.34*
6. Positive Affectivity	3.4	0.7						—	-.49**	-.06
7. Negative Affectivity	1.8	0.6							—	.00
8. Job Performance	3.8	0.7								—

Note: All tests are two-tailed, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

¹Gender was dummy coded "1" for male and "2" for female.

Regression Analysis

Our exploratory research question proposed that we examine the relative contributions of emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and psychological well-being as correlates of job performance. Multiple regression analysis was performed ($n = 41$) to control for the simultaneous effects of psychological well-being, emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity. Thus, job performance is considered the dependent variable, with psychological well-being, emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity as the independent variables. If any of the independent variables is a significant predictor of job performance, holding the other variables constant, then one can have greater confidence in the obtained results (Pedhazur, 1982). As shown in Table 2, these four variables, considered together, failed to account for a significant amount of the variance in job performance ($F(4, 36) = 1.66$, ns). The value of the t -statistics for emotional exhaustion ($t(36) = -0.80$, ns), positive affectivity ($t(36) = -1.40$, ns) or negative affectivity ($t(36) = 1.32$, ns) did not reach significance. However, a test for psychological well-being ($t(36) = 2.14$, $p < .05$; $R^2 = .10$; adjusted $R^2 = .06$) was significant. Taken together, these results demonstrate that psychological well-being, even when controlling for emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity, is predictive of job performance.

DISCUSSION

Using various theoretical perspectives as guides (COR, attributional, goal setting and expectancy theories), the present study examined several widely used affective-based indicators of the happiness - unhappiness dimension in organizational research (e.g., emotional exhaustion, positive and negative affectivity, and psychological well-being) as correlates of job performance. Hypothesis 1 predicted a negative relation between emotional exhaustion and job performance. This prediction was not supported. Regarding Hypothesis 2, neither positive nor negative affectivity were related to job performance. Hypothesis 3 proposed that psychological well-being was positively related to job performance. This prediction was supported; psychological well-being was related to job performance. This result is consistent with a growing body of research establishing that a relation exists between various measures of psychological well-being and job performance (Staw & Barsade, 1993; Wright

TABLE 2
Regression Analysis Predicting Job Performance from Emotional Exhaustion,

Independent Variable	Beta	SE	t
Emotional Exhaustion	-0.10	.12	0.80
Positive Affectivity	-0.28	.20	-1.40
Negative Affectivity	0.32	.24	1.32
Psychological Well-Being	0.24*	.11	2.14

Note: N = 41; $R^2 = .16$; adjusted $R^2 = .06$
 $p < .05$ (all tests are two-tailed).

& Bonett, 1997a; Wright et al., 1993; Wright & Staw, 1999). Finally, regarding our exploratory research question, multiple regression analysis demonstrated that only psychological well-being was predictive of job performance, even after controlling for emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity and negative affectivity.

These results warrant further discussion. First, the present findings appear to indicate that psychologically well employees are oftentimes better performers. Thus, far from being a kind of “error variance” assumed by the disease model (Wright & Wright, 2000), issues of worker health and well-being are possible “main effect” determinants to organizational success. Second, given the equivocal findings of prior research investigating the emotional exhaustion to job performance relation (Wright & Bonett, 1997a; Wright & Bonett, 1997b; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), the present findings reinforce the need for additional research to help clarify the role of emotional exhaustion as a correlate of job performance. In addition, given that research in this area has been primarily cross-sectional in nature, including the present study, we recommend that future research examine both independent and dependent variables at multiple points in time, to allow for a more thorough examination of the emotional exhaustion to performance relation.

Both prior research and the current study examined job performance using supervisory measures of performance. Although the findings are interesting, one could argue that they are the result of the type of performance instrument used. More specifically, the finding of a significant relation between psychological well-being and performance might be the result of halo bias (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). That is, psychologically well employees may also be seen as being more likable and more fun to be around. Because people in general, and managers in specific, tend to be more tolerant of those they favor or like, managers may well provide higher evaluations for those employees who are psychologically well. As a consequence, rather than being directly related to changes in performance, our results might demonstrate that psychological well-being is a systematic source of halo in performance evaluations. However, in the present research, neither NA, PA or emotional exhaustion were associated with job performance. Thus, if rating bias was accounting for the psychological well-being - job performance relation, then one could have also expected significant bivariate relations among emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity, negative affectivity and job performance.

These relations were not found in the present study. However, it is possible that these measures may be related to job performance depending upon the content of the job (e.g., sales work versus mental health worker). For example, activation-based descriptors contained in the PA scale, such as, “alert, active, enthusiastic” might prove predictive of performance in sales and other occupations where performance is measured quantitatively. To that end, to provide a more thorough, comprehensive test, we recommend that future research examining these relations be undertaken using more quantitatively-oriented measures of performance.

These suggestions for more quantitatively oriented performance measures may prove a difficult task for future research endeavors. For instance, several authors have noted that many client and customer-oriented jobs emphasize non-task-specific performance dimensions in the appraisal process (Staw *et al.*, 1994; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). As a result, in point of fact, the selection and appraisal processes of many jobs may be primarily based on supervisory perceptions of employee happiness or well-being (the ambiguous notion of “good fit” used in academic selection decisions comes readily to mind). However, this situation may not be as critical as it appears at first glance. For example, Staw *et al.* (1994) noted that regardless of whether performance evaluations include halo or other forms of bias, they are predictive of “success” from the employee’s point of view. That is, supervisory performance evaluations are oftentimes the primary, if not sole criterion for promotional and pay raises — the primary means used to allocate various employee rewards. It now remains for future research, using additional participants in a variety of settings to establish the generalizability of these findings to other employee groupings.

Further research is also recommended to address another potentially limiting aspect of the present study. While examination of the Table 1 correlation matrix indicates moderate to substantial intercorrelations among the affective-based measures of “happiness – unhappiness” ranging from $-.42$ (emotional exhaustion to positive affectivity) to $.74$ (emotional exhaustion to negative affectivity), it also illustrates why, in the final analysis, these measures must be linked to “happiness – unhappiness” for descriptive purposes only. After all, even the obtained substantial correlation of $.74$ between emotional exhaustion and negative affectivity demonstrates that roughly 50% of the shared variance between these variables remains unexplained. In addition, while significant bivariate relations were established between psychological well-being and performance, neither measure of dispositional affect (positive and negative affectivity) nor emotional exhaustion was significantly related to performance. Taken together, these findings emphasize the fact that while emotional exhaustion, positive and negative affectivity, and psychological well-being share similar aspects, they are also distinct constructs. It now remains for research to further clarify and refine the various ‘faces’ of happiness in organizational research.

This need to further distinguish among these and other similar affect-based dimensions of happiness has long been recognized (Wright & Bonett, 1997a). Nearly 2000 years ago, Galen devised a four-fold typology (e.g., melancholic, choleric, sanguine, and phlegmatic) to describe individual differences in emotions. More recently, this perspective has been formalized into the circumplex model (Larsen & Diener, 1992; Wright & Bonett, 1997a).

The circumplex model posits that self-ratings of various forms of affect often cluster in a circular configuration, referred to as a circumplex structure (Russell, Weiss, & Mendelsohn,

1989). One of these dimensions or factors has been alternatively labeled “hedonic tone,” “happiness - unhappiness,” or “pleasantness - unpleasantness.” The second dimension has been labeled activation (Wright & Bonett, 1997a). The present study has now linked measures of both dimensions with job performance. Using the circumplex as a guide or framework, research is now recommended to further distinguish among the various proposed dimensions of “happiness” described in the current research. For example, both dispositional affect (PA & NA) and emotional exhaustion purport to examine aspects of the activation dimension. However, while emotional exhaustion examines the results of chronic levels of potentially intense activation, other activation-based scales, such as the PA and NA seem to be best suited to measure the more momentary or statelike fluctuations in activation-based activities (Watson *et al.*, 1988).

The distinction between chronic or traitlike and more momentary or statelike fluctuations raises the question of whether happiness is best considered as a trait or as a state. Typically, happiness is considered as a trait (Diener, 1984; Diener *et al.*, 1999). However, research has demonstrated moderate (*i.e.*, .40 to .60 range) correlations between dispositional or trait measures and affective mood (Wright & Staw, 1999). As a result, we emphasize that future research remember that happiness, however defined, has both “person” and “situation” aspects. For example, consider the work of George (1991). Using a sample of salespeople, George established a positive relation between a time-specific measure of positive mood and customer service performance-related behaviors. Following George, we suggest that research be undertaken to further delineate the relative merits of trait versus state explanations for the relations among affective-based measures of happiness and their correlates.

The issue of employee happiness or well-being brings to mind a very important, but widely neglected, organizational research topic: Ethical responsibility and the applied researcher. For instance, while there are numerous guidelines regarding the treatment of participants *before* and *during* a research experiment (AOM, 1997; APA, 1992), researcher responsibilities *after* the data are collected are less clear-cut (Wright & Wright, 1999). Consider the example of one of the participants in the current research study. As noted earlier, Maslach and Jackson’s (1986) emotional exhaustion scale measures how often one feels emotionally overextended and exhausted by one’s work (from 0 = never, to 6 = everyday).

In order to emphasize the extent to which he was emotionally exhausted, the participant in question added a ‘how often’ classification of ‘10,’ which he attempted to behaviorally anchor by an ‘expletive deleted’ phrase. Regarding his responses to the PANAS scale, he noted that he was *dead!* alert, along with being not just *extremely* angry, but *extremely, extremely ...* angry. Finally, in the margin of the questionnaire, he noted the need for certain coworker(s) to be killed (no specific names used). Unfortunately, as one might expect, tragedy struck shortly after he completed this questionnaire. The individual placed a loaded gun in his mouth, pulled the trigger, and instantly died. His suicide note focused on his great anger and despair.

According to the AOM ethical credo, the ethical responsibilities of the researcher are fulfilled once the data are collected, as long as deception is not part of the study. Deception was not a part of the present study. However, Wright and Wright (1999) suggest that the AOM’s ethical credo is woefully inadequate in this type of situation. More specifically, based on the

stakeholder approach to assessing outcome effectiveness, Wright and Wright (1999) proposed a committed-to-participant research (CPR) perspective. In this case, the CPR approach involved personal contact with the individual *after* the data were collected, a suggestion that the individual might want to consider seeking professional help, and an offer to help him take the first step in finding this professional assistance (notice the apparent irony given the subject's profession). While the intervention was not successful in preventing this suicide, the CPR approach has been beneficial in assisting other research participants. While further discussion of the CPR approach is beyond the scope of this paper, we would like to close by proposing that each and every organizational researcher has an ethical responsibility to carefully consider the interests of *all* relevant stakeholder groups involved in a research project. We consider this a very worthwhile and important topic area for future research.

CONCLUSION

In this research, we suggest that the ambiguous findings to date in organizational research regarding the happy/productive worker thesis can be considered a result of the various ways in which "happiness" has been operationalized. The present research examined the relations among emotional exhaustion, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, psychological well-being and job performance. Support is provided regarding the bivariate relation between psychological well-being and job performance. Multiple regression analysis further demonstrated the role of psychological well-being as a correlate of performance. We propose the circumplex framework as a potentially useful taxonomy for helping future research to better categorize and measure happiness and recommend additional research to help further address the specific circumstances or preconditional factors underlying the roles of emotional exhaustion, positive and negative affectivity, and psychological well-being as correlates of job performance.

As noted here and elsewhere (*cf.* Wright & Cropanzano, 2000b), all too often in applied research the emphasis has been on what we have called the disease model. That is, a focus primarily concerned with fixing what is wrong with an employee, as opposed to developing what is right. We now close by reiterating an important point. The promotion of employee happiness or well-being in the workplace is an intrinsic good for which all organizational stakeholders should work. That is, irrespective of its role in being instrumental in stimulating such organizational outcomes as enhanced performance, lower absenteeism and turnover, the issue of employee happiness remains of value for its own sake.

REFERENCES

- Academy of Management (1997). Academy of Management code of ethical conduct. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 1469-1474.
- American Psychological Association (1992). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist*, 47, 1597-1611.
- Argyle, M. (1987). *The experience of happiness*. London, England: Meuthuen.
- Berkman, P.L. (1971). Measurement of mental health in a general population survey. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 94, 105-111.
- Bonett, D.G. & Wright, T.A. (2000). Sample size requirements for estimating Pearson, Spearman and Kendall correlations. *Psychometrika*, 65, 23-28.

- Bradburn, N.M. & Caplovitz, D. (1965). *Reports on happiness*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Brief, A.P. (1998). *Attitudes in and around organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brief, A.P., Butcher, A.H., & Roberson, L. (1995). Cookies, disposition, and job attitudes: The effects of positive mood-inducing events and negative affectivity on job satisfaction in a field experiment. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 62, 55-62.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power for the behavioral sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cropanzano, R., James, K., & Konovsky, M.A. (1993). Dispositional affectivity as a predictor of work attitudes and job performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14, 595-606.
- Cropanzano, R. & Wright, T.A. (2001). When a 'happy' worker is a 'productive' worker: A review and further refinement of the happy-productive worker thesis. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 53, 182-199.
- DeNeve, K.M. & Cooper, H. (1998). The happy personality: A meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124, 197-229.
- Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95, 542-575.
- Diener, E. (1994). Assessing subjective well-being: Progress and opportunities. *Social Indicators Research*, 31, 103-157.
- Diener, E. & Larsen, R.J. (1993). The experience of emotional well-being. In M. Lewis & J.M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 404-415). New York: Guilford Press.
- Diener, E., Sandvik, E., Seidlitz, L., & Diener, M. (1993). The relationship between income and subjective well-being: Relative or absolute? *Social Indicators Research*, 28, 195-223.
- Diener, E., Suh, E.M., Lucas, R.E., & Smith, H.L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 276-302.
- Forgas, J.P. (1992). Affect in social judgments and decisions: A multiprocess model. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. New York: Academic Press.
- Forgas, J.P., Bower, G.H., & Moylan, S.J. (1990). Praise or blame? Affective influences on attributions for achievement. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 59, 809-819.
- French, J.R.P., Jr., Caplan, R.D., & Harrison, R.V. (1982). *The mechanisms of job stress and strain*. London: Wiley.
- Fromm, E. (1994). *On being human*. New York: Continuum.
- Gaines, J. & Jermier, J.M. (1983). Emotional exhaustion in a high stress organization. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 567-586.
- George, J.M. (1991). State or trait: Effects of positive mood on prosocial behaviors at work. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 21, 299-307.
- George, J.M. (1996). Trait and state affect. In K.R. Murphy (Ed.), *Individual differences and behavior in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- George, J.M. & Brief, A.P. (1996). Motivational agendas in the workplace: The effects of feelings on focus of attention and work motivation. In B.M. Staw & L.L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior* (pp. 75-109). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Green, D.P., Goldman, S.L., & Salovey, P. (1993). Measurement error masks bipolarity in affect ratings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64, 1029-1041.
- Guilford, J.P. (1956). *Fundamental statistics in psychology and education*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Hobfoll, S.E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist, 44*, 513-524.
- Holmes, D. (1991). *Abnormal psychology*. New York: Harper.
- Hough, L.M., & Schneider, R.J. (1996). Personality traits, taxonomies, and applications in organizations. In K.R. Murphy (Ed.), *Individual differences and behavior in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hunt, C.S. (1997). Disentangling feelings: Establishing a conceptual foundation for future research into the role of affective phenomena in work life. *Unpublished manuscript*.
- Iaffaldano, M.T. & Muchinsky, P.M. (1985). Job satisfaction and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 97*, 251-273.
- Ivancevich, J.W. & Matteson, M.T. (1980). *Stress and work: A managerial perspective*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Company.
- Jahoda, M. (1958). *Current concepts of positive health*. New York: Basic Books.
- Jex, S.M. (1998). *Stress and job performance: Theory, research, and implications for managerial practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Judge, T.A. (1992). The dispositional perspective in human resources research. In G.R. Ferris & K.M. Rowland (Eds.), *Research in personnel and human resources management* (pp. 31-72). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Kendler, H.H. (1999). The role of value in the world of psychology. *American Psychologist, 54*, 828-835.
- Kornhauser, A. (1965). *Mental health and the industrial worker: A Detroit study*. New York: Wiley.
- Landy, F.W. (1985). *The psychology of work behavior* (3rd Ed.). Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Larsen, R.J. & Diener, E. (1992). Promises and problems with the circumplex model of emotion. *Review of Personality and Social Psychology, 13*, 25-59.
- Lee, R.T. & Ashforth, B.E. (1996). A meta-analytic examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 123-133.
- Leiter, M.P. (1993). Burnout as a developmental process: Consideration of models. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach, & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 237-250). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Maslach, C. & Jackson, S.E. (1986). *Maslach burnout inventory* (2nd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Maslow, A.H. (1961). Eupsychia—The good society. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 1*, 1-11.
- Myers, D.G. (1993). *The pursuit of happiness*. New York: Avon Books.
- Myers, D.G. & Diener, E. (1995). Who is happy? *Psychological Science, 6*, 10-19.
- Myers, D.G. & Diener, E. (1997). The new pursuit of happiness. *The Harvard Medical Health Letter, 14*, 4-7.
- Pedhazur, E.J. (1982). *Multiple regression in behavior research: Explanation and prediction*. New York: CBS College Publishing.
- Quick, J.C., Quick, J.D., Nelson, D.L., & Hurrell, J.J. Jr. (1997). *Preventive stress management in organizations*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Ruack, J.K. (1999). Redefining the good life: A new focus from the social sciences. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. February 12: A13-A15.

- Russell, J.A., Weiss, A., & Mendelsohn, G.A. (1989). The affect grid: A single-item scale of pleasure and arousal. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 493-502.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (1991). *Learned optimism*. New York: Knopf.
- Shirom, A. (1989). Burnout in work organizations. In C.L. Cooper & I. Robertson (Eds.), *International review of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 25-48). New York: Wiley.
- Spector, P.E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spector, P.E., Chen, P.Y., & O'Connell, B.J. (2000). A longitudinal study of relations between job stressors and job strains while controlling for prior negative affectivity and strains. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 211-118.
- Spector, P.E., Zapf, D., Chen, P.Y., & Frese, M. (2000). Why negative affectivity should not be controlled in job stress research: Don't throw out the baby with the bath water. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21, 79-95.
- Staw, B.M. (1986). Organizational psychology and the pursuit of the happy/productive worker. *California Management Review*, 28, 40-53.
- Staw, B.M. & Barsade, S.G. (1993). Affect and managerial performance: A test of the sadder-but-wiser vs. happier-and-smarter hypotheses. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 304-331.
- Staw, B.M., Sutton, R.I., & Pelled, L.H. (1994). Employee positive emotion and favorable outcomes at the workplace. *Organization Science*, 5, 51-71.
- Veenhoven, R. (1991). Is happiness relative? *Social Indicators Research*, 24, 1-34.
- Vroom, V.H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Wiley.
- Warr, P. (1987). *Work, employment, and mental health*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Warr, P. (1990). The measurement of well-being and other aspects of mental health. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63, 193-10.
- Watson, D. & Clark, L.A. (1984). Negative affectivity: The disposition to experience negative emotional states. *Psychological Bulletin*, 96, 465-490.
- Watson, D., Clark, L.A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 1063-1070.
- Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement, motivation, and emotion. *Psychological Review*, 92, 548-573.
- Wright, T.A. & Bonett, D.G. (1993). The role of employee coping and performance in voluntary employee withdrawal: A research refinement and elaboration. *Journal of Management*, 19, 147-161.
- Wright, T.A. & Bonett, D.G. (1997a). The role of pleasantness and activation-based well-being in performance prediction. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 2, 212-219.
- Wright, T.A. & Bonett, D.G. (1997b). The contribution of burnout to work performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18, 491-499.
- Wright, T.A., Bonett, D.G., & Sweeney, D.A. (1993). Mental health and work performance: Results of a longitudinal field study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 66, 277-284.
- Wright, T.A. & Cropanzano, R. (1998). Emotional exhaustion as a predictor of job performance and voluntary turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83, 486-493.

- Wright, T.A., & Cropanzano, R. (2000a). The role of organizational behavior in Occupational Health Psychology: A view as we approach the millennium. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*, 5-10.
- Wright, T.A. & Cropanzano, R. (2000b). Psychological well-being and job satisfaction as predictors of job performance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*, 84-94.
- Wright, T.A. & Doherty, E.M. (1998). Organizational behavior 'rediscovers' the role of emotional well-being. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 19*, 481-485.
- Wright, T.A. & Staw, B.M. (1999). Affect and favorable work outcomes: Two longitudinal tests of the happy-productive worker thesis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*, 1-23.
- Wright, T.A. & Wright, V.P. (1999). Ethical responsibility and the organizational researcher: A committed-to-participant research perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*, 1107-1112.
- Wright, T.A. & Wright, V.P. (2000). How our 'values' influence the manner in which organizational research is framed and interpreted. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 21*, 603-607.
- Wright, T.A. & Wright, V.P. (2001). Fact or fiction: The role of [in]civility in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review, 26*, 168-170.