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Increasing organisational attractiveness

Increasing organisational attractiveness

The role of the HPO and happiness at work frameworks

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Abstract

Purpose – Happiness at work (HAW) is receiving much attention in the literature, as HAW seems to have a positive effect on organisational performance, such as in increase of productivity, lower turnover of employees and less customer complaints. There is however no research into the relation between HAW and the attractiveness of an organisation. It stands to reason that people who are happier at work are also happier about their organisation and express this to their family and friends. Having an attractive organisation is becoming increasingly important as the world is currently experiencing an economic boom creating shortages of qualified personnel. The paper aims to discuss this issue.

Design/methodology/approach – A possible way of creating an attractive organisation is by transforming the workplace into a high-performing organisation (HPO). The study described in this paper is looking in this respect at three hypotheses: *H1*. Higher HAW will increase the attractiveness of the organisation; *H2*. Becoming an HPO will increase HAW; and *H3*. Becoming an HPO will increase the attractiveness of the organisation. A large-scale survey of Dutch managers and employees was undertaken in which the respondents were asked their opinion of the high-performance level and attractiveness of their organisation, and their happiness with their job and organisation.

Findings – The study results show that the three hypotheses are basically confirmed. Increasing the happiness of work of employees, in general, raises the feeling of how attractive the organisation is to the employees themselves and to the external world. However, this positive feeling is mainly true for the work itself but not so much for how committed employees feel to the organisation.

Practical implications – Organisations now have knowledge at their disposal about ways to promote happiness in their employees, thus raising their attractiveness to current and future employees.

Originality/value – The study results indicate that senior management has to make more effort to raise the quality level of the organisation, preferably towards the high performance level, in order for employees to start feeling more committed to their organisation. This is because the study results show that transforming an organisation into a high-performance entity increases happiness of employees at work significantly, especially about their work and in a lesser degree with the commitment they feel towards the organisation itself. This result has not been found before, so this research provides managers for the first time with a validated way to help their staff to become happier and more productive.

Keywords High-performance organizations, Happiness at work

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

People generally spend a large part of their lives in the workplace and, for many, the work they do forms a big part of their identity (Gavin and Mason, 2004; Meyers, 2007). It is no wonder then that “happiness at work” (HAW) has received a lot of attention in the literature. Much of this literature not only addresses the definition and measurement of HAW, but also the effects of HAW on organisational results showing, in general, a positive correlation, whereby organisational results are measured in increase of productivity, lower turnover of employees and less customer complaints. There is, however, no research into the relation between HAW and the attractiveness of an organisation. It stands to reason that people who are happier at work are also happier about their organisation and express this to their family



and friends, thus raising the attractiveness of their organisation to the outside world. Having an attractive organisation is becoming increasingly important as the world is experiencing an economic boom again, after years of recession and decline. Already shortages can be seen in various labour markets, such as the healthcare sector (Dreves *et al.*, 2015), meaning that organisations have more trouble attracting high-quality people, thus causing the start of another “war for talent” (Ewerlin, 2013; Lis, 2012; Sommer *et al.*, 2017). In addition, it becomes increasingly clear that many employees are not engaged or even actively disengaged in their jobs (Achor, 2010; Clifton, 2017; De Neve and Ward, 2017). Thus, it is in the best interest of organisations to be attractive to both potential employees and current employees.

A second gap in the current literature is that there seems to be no consensus on how HAW can be increased. This is troubling because a lack of knowledge makes it difficult for organisations to promote HAW (Wesarat *et al.*, 2015). An interesting area of study in this respect is, according to Salas-Vallina, López-Cabrales, Alegre and Fernández (2017b), how HAW can be achieved by better managing the work environment, as little is known about the influence of the organisational context on HAW (Moynihan and Landuyt, 2009; Ugwu *et al.*, 2014). This knowledge is sorely needed because, as Gavin and Mason (2004, p. 387) put it: “Because we are now spending so much time at work and devote so much of our energy and attention to it, our organisations have become the source of many of our interpersonal, social and political relationships. Aristotle’s argument must now be expanded to include: ‘In order to achieve the good life people must work in good organizations’”. A way of creating “good organisations” which gets increasing attention is to transform the workplace into a high-performing one (de Waal, 2012). The question is then whether organisations that are becoming high performing also increase the HAW of their people (Meijman and Mulder, 1998), and, in the process, raise their attractiveness to the external world. This means we also need to look at whether causal relations exist between HAW and company performance as this is important for organisations to justify spending resources to provide a better work environment for their employees (Proto, 2016). Thus, the study described in this paper is evaluating three hypotheses:

- H1. Higher HAW will increase the attractiveness of the organisation.
- H2. Becoming a high-performing organisation (HPO) will increase HAW.
- H3. Becoming an HPO will increase the attractiveness of the organisation.

This study focusses strictly on how happy people are at their workplace with their work and their organisation it does not go into concepts as subjective well-being or positive psychology (Baptiste, 2008; Cameron *et al.*, 2003).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, the HAW literature is reviewed, with an emphasis on the definition of HAW, the contribution of HAW to organisational outcomes and how it can be influenced. Then the research approach is described, paying specific attention to the measurements used in the research. This is followed by the research results and an analysis thereof. The paper ends with the conclusion, limitations to the study and opportunities for further research.

HAW

Defining HAW

According to Fisher (2010), HAW is an overarching construct which consists of the traits “job satisfaction” and “organisational commitment”. Job satisfaction is described as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). Organisational commitment entails elements as staying with an organisation, identifying with the organisation’s goals and values, and being

affectively attached to the organisation (Fisher, 2010). Other traits used are, according to Fisher (2010), job involvement, a state of engagement with one's job, identifying with one's work and viewing the job as central to one's identity and self-esteem (Brown, 1996); engagement, the amount of authentic physical, cognitive and emotional self that individuals devote to their work and the feelings of attentiveness, connection, integration and focus that accompany moments of high engagement (Britt *et al.*, 2007) or "a positive fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption" (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, p. 209); thriving and vigour (the combination of feelings of vitality and energy with the belief that one is learning, developing and making progress towards self-actualisation (Spreitzer and Sutcliffe, 2007); flow, occurring when one is totally absorbed in using one's skills to progress on a challenging task (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990); intrinsic motivation, the amount of time voluntarily spent on a task after there is no extrinsic reason to continue; and effect at work, consisting of hedonic tone (pleasure or displeasure) and arousal or activation. Fisher (2010) also suggests to distinguish three focal points for happy feelings at work, thus defining HAW as having happy feelings towards the work itself, towards the job including contextual features and towards the organisation as a whole. Coetzee *et al.* (2010) define HAW as mindfully making the best use of the resources individuals have to overcome the challenges they face in the workplace. Hellstrom (2014) rather broadly defines HAW as the motivation and satisfaction at work people feel. Bakker and Oerlemans (2016) relate HAW to the concepts of burnout and work engagement and state that engaged employees are better able to satisfy their psychological needs through their work and are therefore happier at their work than burned-out employees. Salas-Vallina and Fernandez (2017) see HAW as an attitudinal broad-based concept that measures employees' quality of life at work. Pryce-Jones and Lindsay (2014, p.131) define HAW as "a mindset which enables action to maximise performance and achieve potential". As in this research we are looking for the (causal) relation between HAW and organisational outcomes, we are using the Pryce-Jones and Lindsay (2014) definition.

Positive effects of HAW

Looking at the literature on the relation between HAW and organisational outcomes, we find a plethora of mainly positive relations. Lyubomirsky *et al.* (2005), based on their meta-analysis of the happiness literature, reported that happy workers have higher levels of productivity, produce higher sales, perform better in leadership positions, receive higher performance ratings, are less likely to take sick days or to quit and – if they are CEOs – more likely to lead high-performance teams. Based on a literature review, Suojanen (2012) concluded that HAW increases the quality of work, creates better results, improves decision-making and communication, causes people to have stronger immune systems, therefore having fewer sick leaves and absences, and induces employees to be work more efficiently and provide more fulfilling services to clients. Pryce-Jones and Lindsay (2014) found, in long-term research among 32,000 respondents into HAW, that happy employees basically are high-performing employees as they take one tenth the sick-leave of their least happy colleagues, are six times more energised, intend to stay twice as long in their organisations and are twice as productive. Witters and Agrawal (2015), using data from the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, reported that happy employees are 30 per cent more likely not to miss any workdays because of poor health in any given month, miss 70 per cent fewer workdays because of poor health over the course of a year, are 27 per cent more likely to report excellent performance in their own job at work and being rated "excellent" by their organisation, 45 per cent more likely to report high levels of adaptability in the presence of change, 59 per cent less likely to look for a job with a different organisation in the next 12 months and 18 per cent less likely to change employers in a 12-month period. De Neve and Ward (2017) found, after combining the results from the Gallup World Poll (which has

been surveying people in 150 countries since 2006 on amongst others subjective well-being) with the European Social Survey (which monitors changing attitudes and values across Europe) that HAW leads to higher productivity and better organisational performance. Finally, Salas-Vallina, Alegre and Fernandez (2017a) focussed their research on a knowledge-intensive context and found a direct positive influence of HAW on the motivation to learn, quality of interactions between employees and pro-social behaviours. In summary, according to the literature HAW will lead to higher organisational outcomes in the form of better results on non-financial (such as quality of work and processes, absenteeism, employee turnover, employee motivation, client satisfaction) and financial (such as efficiency, productivity, sales) performance indicators.

Influencing the level of HAW

Warr (2007b) proposed 12 sources of HAW: the opportunity for personal control; the opportunity for skill acquisition and skill use; externally generated goals (i.e. work-life balance); variety in job content and location; environmental clarity in roles and tasks feedback; regular quality contact with others; availability of monetary income; physical security; a valued social position because of the significance of the role or task; supportive supervision; career outlook (i.e. opportunities for promotion or role shifts); and equity (i.e. justice in the way one is treated). Based on a literature review, Hellstrom (2014) identified eight major dimensions which strongly resemble Warr's (2007b, a) sources: perspective: the personal outlook on life and optimism and positivity at work; balance: the stability, solid benefits package and healthy work/life balance; autonomy: the ability to direct how/when/where we work and are being trusted; mastery: the ability to develop expertise and do work that fits in the "stretch zone"; purpose: that work is personally meaningful and makes a difference in the world; progress: making progress every day and have clear measured goals and performance; culture: the interpersonal support and a sense of belonging at work; and appreciation: positive feedback and recognition and a feeling of being respected. Also based on a literature review, Suojanen (2012) found that HAW is fostered by a higher income, a higher level of profession, reasonable number of working hours, nice co-workers and a favourable working environment, good management that regularly gives constructive feedback, a sense of humour in the workplace and interesting work. Oswald *et al.* (2015) examined whether organisations that make their employees happier experience higher productivity, and found in a classic piece rate setting work environment that this indeed is the case. In three different styles of experiment, they introduced techniques that made randomly selected individuals happier who subsequently achieved a 12 per cent greater productivity. They also looked at the effects of real-world shocks like bereavement and family illness, and found that lower happiness was systematically associated with lower productivity. The authors concluded that their study results were consistent with the existence of a causal link between human well-being and human performance. De Neve and Ward (2017) found several elements that make people happy at their work: having a well-paid job, having a good work-life balance, high job variety, having individual autonomy, getting the possibility to learn new things, high job security, and getting support from co-workers. Finally, Lyubomirsky *et al.* (2005) stated from their research that happiness precedes numerous successful outcomes and thus that there is a causal relation leading from HAW to organisational outcomes.

In summary, according to the literature, the level of HAW is influenced by a multitude of sources which can be categorised into four main groups (Fisher, 2010): the nature of the job, the relations with superiors and colleagues, the workplace (i.e. the organisational context) and external conditions (such as family and work-life balance). Spencer (2014) suggested that future research in the elements that influence HAW should be focussed on the actual objective conditions of work in an organisation. In line with this, Fisher (2010) stated that

happiness and positive attitudes are not directly created by the work environment or events but by people's perceptions, interpretations and appraisals of those environment and events. We will heed to Spencer's and Fisher's call by focussing our research on the influence of de Waal's (2012) HPO framework on HAW.

Methodology

In this section, the manner in which the various constructs are operationalized and the approach used in the research are described.

Measuring HAW

Fisher (2010) proposes one trait for each cause of happy (or unhappy) feelings in the workplace: "engagement" for the work itself, "job satisfaction" for the job including contextual features and "affective organisational commitment" for the organisation as a whole. This proposal is supported by Warr (2007a) who advocates that rather than envisaging one single construct of HAW, it is essential to look at multiple traits. Our study therefore takes, just as the research of Salas-Vallina *et al.* (2017a, b) does, Fisher's (2010) conceptualisation of HAW as being comprised of three traits: affective feelings for the work, which we measure with the Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES) (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002); evaluative judgements of job characteristics, measured with the Schriesheim and Tsui (1980) job satisfaction scale; and feelings of belonging to the organisation, measured with the Allen and Meyer (1990) affective organisational commitment scale. These scales have all been (repeatedly) validated in previous research. See Appendix for the detailed scales.

The UWES, and specifically the 17-item scale as developed by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002), has become a widely used measure of work engagement because of its robustness (Extremera *et al.*, 2012; Field and Buitendach, 2011; De Bruin and Henn, 2013) and its applicability in different contexts (Shimazu *et al.*, 2008). It consists of three dimensions: dedication, vigour and absorption. People scoring high on dedication are inspired by their work and see it as important and a source of pride. People scoring high on vigour are highly energised, have mental resilience and are willing to persist and invest effort in their work. People scoring high on absorption are highly engrossed in their work and have difficulty detaching themselves from that work (De Bruin and Henn, 2013). In accordance with Salas-Vallina *et al.* (2017a, b), we use, next to the UWES, two additional validated scales. Job satisfaction is measured with the Schriesheim and Tsui (1980) job satisfaction scale, and affective organisational commitment is measured with the Allen and Meyer (1990) AOC scale.

Measuring high performance

For measuring the level of high performance, we use the de Waal's HPO framework scale. The HPO framework is a conceptual, scientifically validated structure which practitioners can use for analysing how high performing their organisations are and to decide what is needed to improve organisational performance and make it sustainable (de Waal, 2012). The HPO framework identified the factors that affect the sustainable high performance of an organisation. These factors are:

- HPO factor 1: management quality. HPO managers focus on encouraging belief and trust from their employees in them. They value loyalty and live with integrity; they treat their employees respectfully and maintain individual relationships with them. HPO managers are highly committed to the organisation and have a strong set of ethics and standards. They are supportive and help employees in achieving results,

and also hold them accountable for these results. HPO managers are role models for the rest of the organisation.

- HPO factor 2: openness and action orientation: HPO managers value the opinions of employees and always involve them in important business and organisational processes. Making mistakes and taking risks are always encouraged in an HPO, as these are considered valuable opportunities to learn, to develop new ideas and to exchange knowledge in pursuit of collective improvement.
- HPO factor 3: long-term orientation: for an HPO, long-term commitment is more important than short-term gain. Stakeholders of the organisation benefit from this long-term orientation, and are assured that the organisation is maintaining mutually beneficial long-term relationships with them. HPO managers are committed to the organisation, and new positions are filled from within the organisation. An HPO is a secure and safe workplace where people feel free to contribute to the best of their ability.
- HPO factor 4: continuous improvement and renewal: an HPO has a unique strategy that makes the organisation stand out in its sector. It is responsive to market developments by continuously innovating its products and services, thus creating new sources of competitive advantage. An HPO ensures that core competencies are retained in-house and non-core competencies are outsourced.
- HPO factor 5: employee quality: HPO employees are flexible and resilient, as they are trained (formally and on-the-job) and encouraged to achieve extraordinary results. As a team, they are diverse and, therefore, complementary, enabling them to deal with all types of issues and generate sufficient alternative ideas for improvement.

The HPO framework has been validated as a suitable technique to analyse an organisation on its level of high performance in numerous studies (see e.g. Honyenuga *et al.*, 2014; Mroueh and de Waal, 2017).

Measuring organisational attractiveness

Organisational attractiveness can be defined analogue to the definition for “employer attractiveness” that Berthon *et al.* (2005) used, as set of benefits an individual experiences in working for a specific organisation. Highhouse *et al.* (2003) thus see organisational attractiveness as a prediction of potential employees pursuing employment at specific organisations. According to Altmann and Suess (2015), organisational attractiveness can be broken down in two distinct but interrelated dimensions: general attractiveness, which refers to an individual’s affective and attitudinal thoughts about companies as potential employers; and intention to actively pursue employment with a company. Chapman *et al.* (2005), in their meta-analyses of the literature on recruiting, also looked at measures for organisational attractiveness and found two main type of items which assessed either the extent to which a prospective employee is personally attracted to the organisation (e.g. How much would you like to work for this company?), or focussed on the attractiveness of the organisation in general (e.g. This organisation is one of the best employers to work for). A scale regularly used to measure organisational attractiveness is that of Highhouse *et al.* (2003), which we adapted by adding several items from the organisational attractiveness scales of Turban and Keon (1993) and Drevs *et al.* (2015). We did this as we found the Highhouse *et al.* scale a bit limited and by adding a few items from other organisational attractiveness measurement scales, missing in Highhouse *et al.*, we could obtain a better picture of organisational attractiveness.

Research approach

Many studies into HAW are quantitative and survey-based in order to relate the HAW construct to other organisational concepts (Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2017a, b)), and our study follows the same approach. Our survey was conducted by means of an electronic questionnaire as this is an efficient way to collect data (Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2017a). The participants were selected from the relation databases of three companies: the HPO Center, where one of the authors works; Direction, a sister company of the HPO Center; and Driessen, a human resource consultancy with which the HPO Center cooperates. In total, approximately 12,000 people were approached. Our research sample can be seen as being a convenience sample, as this is the fastest and most cost efficient manner to collect a large amount of data in a situation in which a representative sample cannot be constructed (Bailey, 2012; Mallet, 2006). The sample is likely to be biased towards people who are interested in the topic of HAW, but there is no reason to assume that the sample is biased towards either mainly happy or unhappy people who participated. In fact, the sample has a good coverage as it contains approximately the same number of managers and employees, thus non-randomness and selection bias in all likelihood will be limited (Blair *et al.*, 2014).

In the case of relations of the HPO Center and Direction, people who were willing to participate in the survey could click on a link which led them to a website containing a description of the study, highlighting its aims and importance, and a statement about data confidentiality. In the cases of Driessen, willing participants received a link with a password giving them access to the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, participants could indicate whether they wanted to receive an article describing the results of the study, in that case they had to leave their e-mail address. This offer was made because promising to send the results of a survey to participants encourages people to take part in it (Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2017a). The electronic questionnaire was composed of several pages with statements on the high-performance characteristics in their organisation, their HAW and the attractiveness of their organisation. In addition, at the end of the questionnaire, some additional information was requested, such as sector and industry of the organisation they worked at, number of people working at the organisation, function level, age, gender and tenure at the company. Monitoring was carried out in order to obtain as many completely filled-in questionnaires as possible, and several reminders were sent to the participants. In the end, we received 624 completed surveys, yielding a response rate of approximately 5 per cent which is in line with the response rate normally achieved on this type of large-scale internet-based surveys (Lozar Manfreda *et al.*, 2008; Pan *et al.*, 2014; Van der Heijden, 2017).

Research results and analysis

Just as Salas-Vallina *et al.* (2017a, b), we tested the psychometric properties of the HAW scale, that is, its dimensionality, reliability, content validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity. To do this, structural equation modelling through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used, which enables testing of the latent variables and the theoretical connections to their measurements (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

HAW factors

We started with a CFA as Salas-Vallina *et al.* (2017a, b) and Salas-Vallina, Alegre and Fernandez (2017a) had found three district factors measuring HAW. The aim of the CFA was to verify whether the three factors were indeed proper measurements of the previously found three HAW factors (Albright and Park, 2009; Stapleton, 1997). For a confirmation of the HAW factors, we would expect that the loadings of the items on the factors that they intend to measure, would be high and statistically significant; a substantial proportion of the

variance in the item scores would be explained by the factors; and loadings of the items on any of the other factors would not improve the model (discriminant validity). After performing the steps mentioned above, common goodness-of-fit statistics were checked. Improvements to the goodness of fit were achieved by adding covariances for the error terms of items belonging to the same factor; these covariances indicate that any of the factors (or dimensions) might have sub-dimensions not specified in the model. As a last step, Cronbach's α reliability statistics were computed for the retained items. The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is, with 0.7 being an acceptable reliability coefficient (Acock, 2013; Furr and Bacharach, 2014).

The CFA results show there are still three HAW factors but these are not identical to the original ones. The original HAW factor, job satisfaction, cannot be seen as a separate factor as its items are either unique or confounding with mainly work engagement. When treating job satisfaction as a separate factor, no acceptable model can be fit. When conducting an exploratory factor analysis, we again find that items of job satisfaction are part of work engagement. We also find that several of the items from factor work engagement now form a separate factor, which we called work ethic. The third factor, affective organisational commitment, basically stays the same. Table I provides the results of the CFA.

When looking at the goodness-of-fit statistics of the CFA (RMSEA = 0.063, CFI = 0.966 and SRMR = 0.032), we decided to keep the two-factor model of work engagement and affective organisational commitment. Theoretically, the UWES has a hierarchical structure with a general trait and three groups of underlying traits (dedication, vigour and absorption). However, the use of this scale in various studies led to unclarity about work engagement being one construct or three separate constructs. De Bruin and Henn (2013), in their bi-factor analysis of work engagement data, confirmed the multidimensionality of the UWES but also showed the presence of one strong general factor while the three sub-factors demonstrated a lack of discriminant validity. They concluded that the interpretation of a total score on UWES was to be preferred. This result was mirrored in the research of Wefald and Downey (2009) who also failed to confirm the three-factor structure. Here, we have also find one factor, work engagement, concurring with De Bruin and Henn, and Wefald and Downey.

Organisational attractiveness factor

The CFA shows that the items of organisational attractiveness indeed form one factor, with a high reliability of $\alpha = 0.84$. Only the item "I would not be interested in this organisation except as a last resort (reverse coded)" has a relatively low loading but was kept as the item-rest correlation is higher than the threshold of 0.30.

Correlation between HPO, HAW and organisational attractiveness

Table II shows the correlation between the HPO framework factors, the HAW factors and the organisational attractiveness factor. The correlation between HPO and organisational attractiveness is 0.65, which means that when an organisation is high performing, it is also

HAW factor	Number of original variables	Removed variables	Remaining variables	Cronbach's α
Work engagement	17	7, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17	1-6, 8-10, 13, 15	0.94
Job satisfaction	6	18-23	–	
Affective organisational commitment	8	24, 25, 27, 29	26, 28, 30, 31	0.86
Extra factor based on the EFA: work ethic			6, 11, 12, 14, (16)	0.88 (0.77 with item 16)

Table I.
HAW factors
and reliabilities

seen as attractive to its employees and the external world. This result means that *H3*, “Becoming an HPO will increase the attractiveness of the organization”, is supported. Although, theoretically, the causation may as well lead from attractiveness to high performance, previous research has shown that causation is that becoming an HPO increases organisational performance (de Waal and Goedegebuure, 2017). The correlations between the HAW factors and organisational attractiveness are 0.68 (work engagement) and 0.36 (affective organisational commitment), respectively. This results means that *H1*, “Higher happiness at work will increase the attractiveness of the organization”, is supported. Again, theoretically, causation could be reverse but the literature discussed earlier in this paper seems to indicate causation is from happiness to attractiveness. Thus, it seems to make sense for an organisation to make concentrated effort to make its employees happier as there are indications that this increases the attractiveness to these employees. The correlation between HPO and HAW is 0.51 (work engagement) and 0.28 (affective organisational commitment), respectively. This result means that *H2*, “Becoming a high performance organisation will increase happiness at work”, is supported (again, causation might be reverse).

The HAW model

Figure 1 shows the results of the structural equation model we performed on the HPO, HAW and organisational attractiveness factors. The resulting HAW model explains 45 per cent of the attractiveness of an organisation ($R^2 = 0.74$). The regression coefficient between work engagement and organisational attractiveness is 0.56; this coefficient takes into consideration all other variables in the model. It is twice as high as the coefficient (0.27) found Lyubomirsky *et al.* (2005) in their analysis in which they related many types of happiness with many forms of success in the workplace. This result can be construed as an indication of the validity of our HAW model.

Factors	Organisational attractiveness	HPO	Work engagement	Affective organisation commitment
Organisational attractiveness	1.00			
HPO	0.65*	1.00		
Work engagement	0.68*	0.51*	1.00	
Affective organisational commitment	0.36*	0.28*	0.67*	1.00

Note: *Significant for at least < 0.1

Table II.
Correlations between
HPO, HAW and
organisational
attractiveness

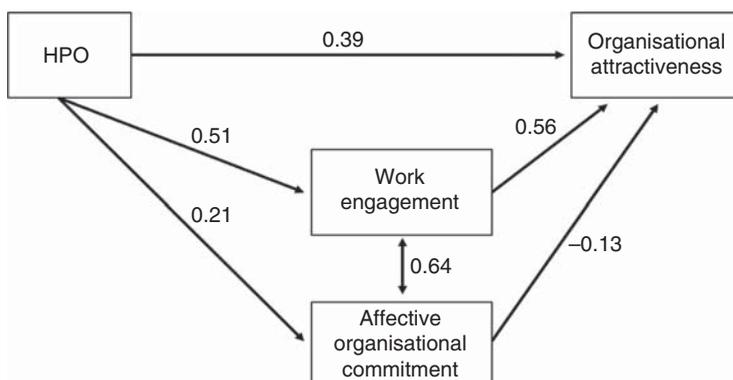


Figure 1.
The HAW model

The model in Figure 1 shows that the previously positive relation between affective organisational commitment and organisational attractiveness in combination with the HPO factors reverses in a weak significant negative relation. A possible explanation for this is that people who are initially very committed to their organisation – probably because it is the organisation that makes it possible for them to do work that they really love and engage with, see the strong positive relation between HAW factors work engagement and affective organisational commitment – might get frustrated with the organisation when it is not run properly and in the way that they deem fit and advantageous for the long-term thriving of the organisation. Support for this explanation might be found in the average score for the HPO factor, management quality, for our sample (6.6), indicating that these organisations are run on a fairly satisfactory level but not exceptionally well. Thus, the initial commitment of employees to the organisation might turn into frustration with how it is being managed, making the organisation less attractive in their eyes. This result matches that of De Neve and Ward (2017) who discovered that high degrees of job satisfaction (which translates in our study as work engagement) can hide low levels of engagement with the organisation. A possible explanation put forward by the authors is that job satisfaction is about an individual's contentment with one's job while active organisational engagement requires individuals to be fully committed to advancing the organisation's interests which is harder and more difficult to foster and achieve. This outcome is mirrored by the research of Pryce-Jones and Lindsay (2014) who found that there can be an adverse relation between HAW and engagement: they frequently found senior leaders that were highly engaged with their work but, at the same time, not happy with the organisation.

From Figure 1, it can be seen that the direct effect of HPO on organisational attractiveness is 0.39 while the indirect effects are 0.29 (Work Engagement: 0.51×0.56) and -0.04 (affective organisational commitment: 0.28×-0.13). This yields a total effect of 0.64 of HPO on the attractiveness of an organisation, reinforcing the message that in order for an organisation to become and stay attractive to its workforce and potential employees, it would do good to transform itself into a high-performance organisation.

HPO and HAW in the Netherlands

In Figure 2, the average HPO score the participants gave their organisations is given. As mentioned before, on average, Dutch organisations are not HPO yet (as HPOs have a score of at least 8.5 on all factors), and need to improve on all five HPO factors.

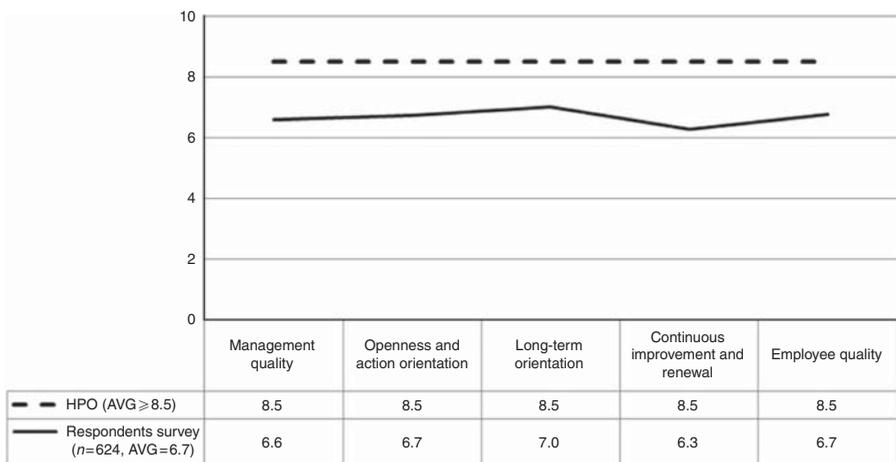


Figure 2. Average HPO-scores for the participating Dutch organisations

Calculating the HAW and organisational scores for the participating Dutch organisations, we get 7.2 and 7.7, respectively. This means that the respondents to the survey are reasonably happy at their work and they find their organisations quite attractive. However, when looking more in-depth to the individual HAW factors, we see that work engagement scores 7.8 while affective organisational commitment gives a 6.5, clearly indicating that people are happier with their work than with their organisation. When matching these scores with the disengagement of employees with their job, as mentioned in the Introduction, it becomes clear it is not the work part that causes this disengagement but the missing engagement with the organisation itself. Calculating the HAW factor scores for the various characteristics of the participating organisations sheds light on a possible cause for this disengagement with the organisation. There is not much difference to be detected in the scores based on the categories the respondents belonged, except for the function level: respondents who work on the board level score significantly higher, especially on HPO, affective organisational commitment and organisational attractiveness. The interesting thing is that these respondents are also the group with which employees probably feel most disenfranchised because they see management, and especially the board, being responsible for the development of the organisation. Clifton (2017) claims that “the practice of management has been frozen in time for more than 30 years” and “employees everywhere don’t necessarily hate the organization they work for as much as they do their boss”, concluding that “organizations should change from having command-and-control managers to high-performance coaches”. This claim is supported by the findings of de Waal and Goedegebuure (2017) who showed that management has a pivotal role to play in a successful transformation of an organisation towards HPO. Our study results show clearly that senior management has to “come out of its ivory tower” (Schmidt and Lange, 2014) and start a meaningful dialogue with the other organisational levels to get to know their views and thoughts and to see what is really the atmosphere on the work floor, and then start working on transforming the organisation towards an HPO, involving all organisational levels, and, in the process, raising the happiness and specifically the affective organisational commitment of the people in the organisation (Fisher, 2010).

Discussion

This study set out to seek confirmation for three hypotheses:

- H1.* Higher HAW will increase the attractiveness of the organisation.
- H2.* Becoming a high-performance organisation will increase HAW.
- H3.* Becoming an HPO will increase the attractiveness of the organisation.

Based on a large-scale survey of Dutch managers and employees, the study results show that these hypotheses are basically confirmed. Increasing the happiness of work of employees in general raises the feeling of how attractive the organisation is to the employees themselves and to the external world. However, when delving deeper into the HAW factors, it turns out this positive feeling is mainly true for the work itself but not so much for how committed employees feel to the organisation. The study results indicate that senior management has to make more effort to raise the quality level of the organisation, preferably towards the high performance level, in order for employees to start feeling more committed to their organisation. This is because the study results show that transforming an organisation into a high-performance entity increases happiness of employees at work significantly, especially about their work and in a lesser degree with the commitment they feel towards the organisation itself (*H2*).

The study results provide more knowledge about HAW which has both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, because the connection between the HPO concept and HAW concept opens up new avenues of research into the way happiness can be increased and

organisational results can be improved by changing the organisational context. Practically, organisations now have knowledge at their disposal about ways to promote happiness in their employees, thus raising their attractiveness to current and future employees.

Our study results contribute specifically to the situation-oriented theory, which focusses on factors at work beyond the individual such as the processes and communication in the work place and group dynamics which can contribute to HAW; in contrast to the individual-oriented theory, which focusses on the individual's attribution to the feeling of happiness (Suojanen, 2012). The situation-oriented theory is focussed on the specific environmental circumstances and conditions the study objects are presently in and then looks for a model to, in this case, strengthen happiness in a way that applies to various different situations and circumstances (Suojanen, 2012). Thus, this theory looks less at the happiness of a person, on which there is an abundance of research, and more at the (organisational) circumstances in which that person finds him/herself and which can influence the happiness of that person (Kahle and Argyle, 2013), which is exactly what our study focusses on. Finally, our study also contributes to the discussion about the ways to measure the HAW construct. We have combined several pre-existing scales and added to these, as we felt the current "stand-alone" scales did not cover the HAW construct, as defined in this study, well enough. We can imagine other researchers having a different view and therefore invite them in future research to (hopefully) not only validate the scale used in our study but to also add to it in a way that we might eventually arrive at generally accepted boundaries and dimensions of the HAW construct, and a generally accepted HAW measurement scale.

Conclusion, limitations and future research

Our study has shown that transforming an organisation into a high-performance organisation will not only increase the happiness of employees at work but will also increase the attractiveness of the organisation as a place to work. The study basically also shows the urgency of this transformation to an HPO as employees seem to be more happy and thus motivated by their work than by their actual workplace, which might increase the chance of especially good people leaving. Management has to therefore take focussed action on increasing the quality of their organisation significantly.

There are several limitations to our study. The respondent selection was basically based on a convenience sample which means we could not control for the organisational environments and contexts which could have had an influence on the study outcomes. Future HPO-HAW research could focus on data from one organisation and several organisations from one industry. In the same vein, our data originated from one country which makes it impossible to generalise our findings to other countries and cultures. Future research should therefore take place in different countries and cultures. Another limitation is that we did not have really high-performance organisations in our sample. Future HPO-HAW research should take place in such organisation in order to evaluate whether the negative relation between affective organisational commitment and organisational attractiveness will reverse from negative into positive (as these HPOs are, by definition, better managed). Another interesting avenue for research is to track over time organisations that transform themselves into HPOs and the happiness of their employees, to evaluate which HPO characteristics have the most effect on happiness.

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Appendix. Measurement scales

This Appendix gives the scales which were used to measure the level of high performance of the organisation according to respondents; their HAW, constituting their work engagement, job satisfaction and organisational commitment; and the attractiveness of the organisation. Also included are the average scores of the participants.

High performance

The level of high performance of the organisation is measured with the HPO Framework scale (de Waal, 2012; de Waal and Goedegebuure, 2017). It is a 35-item Likert scale, ranging from 1 "not at all" to 10 "very much so".

HAW

The HAW scale consists of three dimensions: engagement, job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment. Engagement is measured with the Utrecht Work Enthusiasm Scale (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). It is a 17-item Likert scale, ranging from 1 "never" to 6 "always". Job satisfaction is measured with the Schriesheim and Tsui (1980) job satisfaction scale. This is a 6-item Likert scale, ranging from 1 "totally disagree" to 6 "totally agree". Affective organisational commitment is measured with the Allen and Meyer (1990). This is a 6-item Likert scale, ranging from 1 "totally disagree" to 6 "totally agree". We changed the original answering scales on Schriesheim and Tsui (originally 1 – 5) and Allen and Meyer (originally 1-7) to use one uniform scale as not to confuse the participants. We could do this because we were going to perform a CFA in which the dimensions (and their scales) would be validated again. The "X" denotes the items that were removed during the CFA.

Organisational attractiveness

The attractiveness of the organisation is measured by taking the general attractiveness scale of Highhouse *et al.* (2003) as a starting point, and comparing this with and adding several items from the organisational attractiveness scales of Turban and Keon (1993), Drevs *et al.* (2015) (item 2). It is a 6-item Likert scale, ranging from 1 "totally disagree" to 6 "totally agree".

HPO factors	No	Characteristic	Score	Increasing organisational attractiveness
Continuous improvement	1	Our organisation has adopted a strategy that sets it clearly apart from other organisations	6.7	
Continuous improvement	2	In our organisation, processes are continuously improved	6.5	
Continuous improvement	3	In our organisation, processes are continuously simplified	5.8	
Continuous improvement	4	In our organisation, processes are continuously aligned	6.0	
Continuous improvement	5	In our organisation, everything that matters to the organisation's performance is explicitly reported	6.1	
Continuous improvement	6	In our organisation, both financial and non-financial information is reported to organisational members	6.4	
Continuous improvement	7	Our organisation continuously innovates its core competencies	6.2	
Continuous improvement	8	Our organisation continuously innovates its products, processes and services	6.6	
Openness and action orientation	9	The management of our organisation frequently engages in a dialogue with employees	6.7	
Openness and action orientation	10	Organisational members spend much time on communication, knowledge exchange and learning	6.3	
Openness and action orientation	11	Organisational members are always involved in important processes	6.2	
Openness and action orientation	12	The management of our organisation allows making mistakes	6.9	
Openness and action orientation	13	The management of our organisation welcomes change	7.1	
Openness and action orientation	14	Our organisation is performance driven	7.2	
Quality of management	15	The management of our organisation is trusted by organisational members	6.3	
Quality of management	16	The management of our organisation has integrity	7.2	
Quality of management	17	The management of our organisation is a role model for organisational members	6.8	
Quality of management	18	The management of our organisation applies fast decision making	6.5	
Quality of management	19	The management of our organisation applies fast action taking	6.6	
Quality of management	20	The management of our organisation coaches organisational members to achieve better results	6.3	
Quality of management	21	The management of our organisation focusses on achieving results	7.3	
Quality of management	22	The management of our organisation is very effective	6.4	
Quality of management	23	The management of our organisation applies strong leadership	6.3	
Quality of management	24	The management of our organisation is confident	6.9	
Quality of management	25	The management of our organisation is decisive with regard to non-performers	5.8	
Quality of management	26	The management of our organisation always holds organisational members responsible for their results	6.4	
Quality of employees	27	The management of our organisation inspires organisational members to accomplish extraordinary results	6.9	
Quality of employees	28	Organisational members are trained to be resilient and flexible	6.6	
Quality of employees	29	Our organisation has a diverse and complementary workforce	7.1	
Quality of employees	30	Our organisation grows through partnerships with suppliers and/or customers	6.5	
Long-term orientation	31	Our organisation maintains good and long-term relationships with all stakeholders	7.0	
Long-term Orientation	32	Our organisation is aimed at servicing the customers as best as possible	7.6	
Long-term orientation	33	The management of our organisation has been with the company for a long time	7.3	
Long-term orientation	34	New management is promoted from within the organisation	6.3	
Long-term orientation	35	Our organisation is a secure workplace for organisational members	6.8	

Table AI.
The HPO factors and accompanying characteristics

JOEPP

HAW dimension	HAW items	Score	
Work engagement	1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy	7.4	
	2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	8.2	
	3. Time flies when I am working	8.3	
	4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	7.7	
	5. I am enthusiastic about my job	8.0	
	6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me	6.9	
	7. My job inspires me	x	
	8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	7.4	
	9. I feel happy when I am working intensely	8.1	
	10. I am proud of the work that I do	8.1	
	11. I am immersed in my work	x	
	12. I can continue working for very long periods at a time	x	
	13. To me, my job is challenging	7.8	
	14. I get carried away when I am working	x	
	15. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	7.9	
	16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job	x	
	Job satisfaction	17. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well	x
18. I am satisfied with the work I do		x	
19. I am satisfied with my supervisor		x	
20. I am satisfied with the relations I have with my co-workers		x	
21. I am satisfied with the pay I receive for my job		x	
22. I am satisfied with the opportunities which exist in this organisation for advancement (promotion)		x	
23. All things considered, I am satisfied with my current job situation		x	
Affective organisational commitment		24. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation	x
		25. I enjoy discussing my organisation with external people	x
		26. I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own	6.3
		27. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one	x
	28. I feel like part of the family at my organisation	6.0	
	29. I feel emotionally attached to this organisation		
	30. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me	6.8	
	31. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation	6.9	

Table AII.
The Happiness at work factors and accompanying characteristics

Organisational attractiveness item	Score
1. This organisation is attractive to me as a place for employment	7.1
2. For me, this organisation is a good place to work	7.4
3. I would not be interested in this organisation except as a last resort (reverse coded)	8.5
4. I would not recommend this organisation to a friend (reverse coded)	8.1
5. I like this organisation	7.3

Table AIII.
Items to measure the attractiveness of an organization

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