Happiness Management and its Relationship with the Performance of Workers in SMEs in Arequipa

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Abstract. The evolution of the nature of work and its effects on people has led some to consider how the happiness management approach can boost corporate well-being and, by extension, employee performance in both the social and professional spheres. The objective is to analyze the relationships between the variable's happiness management and performance of workers in SMEs in Arequipa. The study was conducted under the methodology of quantitative, cross-sectional, explanatory approach, with correlations - causal, using structural equation modeling (SEM), to determine the relationship of individual responsibility between the variables, with a sample of 353 employees of SMEs in Arequipa, using the questionnaire as an instrument, to collect data and determine the relationship that the research variables have. The findings show that happiness management has a significant causal relationship with employee performance (r=0.925), and the constructs; individual responsibility (r=0.862), job satisfaction (r=0.900) and organizational commitment (r=0.896), with a discrepancy (CMIN/GI) of 2.522 and a quadratic error (RMSEA) of 0.071, which makes the confirmatory model relevant. It is concluded that happiness management, individual responsibility, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have a statistically significant relationship with the performance of workers in SMEs in Arequipa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern business strategies and practices are constantly evolving to help companies position themselves ahead of the competition (Sánchez-Bayón, 2020). Thus, one of the most important components that can establish the success or failure of a company is its employees (Valenzuela, 2022). So, keeping qualified workers requires their enthusiasm, happiness and dedication to work, which benefits the company in customer retention (Erazo & Riaño, 2021). Consequently, it is crucial that every management team prioritizes the well-being of its workers and adopts measures to keep them happy (happiness management) at work (Durán-Seguel et al., 2020).

As a consequence of the ever-changing trends that shape society, its most solid foundations are periodically rethought and altered, and significant advances are made in their arrangement (Canal et al., 2023). These huge leaps in development erase all precedents set by previous eras in terms of values, institutions and structures, and have far-reaching consequences for people's daily lives (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla, 2020). Therefore, establishing a strong bond between an employee and his or her organization can only be achieved through a combination of elements and metrics that contribute to employee happiness (Muriel et al., 2022). In this way, corporate cultures, emotional supports, appreciations, professional growth and work sector environment are usually what determine an employee's happiness in today's business climate (Ramirez Gañan et al., 2020).

On the other hand, achieving and exceeding the expected work and economic objectives in a given space and time is one of the most important pragmatic concerns of organizations when it comes to their work teams (Peñalver et al., 2023). However, as a result of globalization, changing market conditions and technological advances, the idea of "performance" has evolved to encompass the ability to adapt to new circumstances, learn from mistakes and maintain a position of technical preeminence, inventiveness and adaptability (Tuesta et al., 2021).

In that order of ideas, some small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have put, as in the industrial era, the integral production of the company before the productivity of the worker (Salas et al., 2021). As a consequence, they stopped seeing people for what they really are -valuable individuals- and began to worry exclusively about the demands of the organization (Pereira & Guillermo, 2022). As a result, some managers took advantage of their employees due to the emphasis on efficiency and performance, however, although much time has passed, some organizations still use this approach (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla, 2021). Moreover, when it comes to SMEs, employees are often overworked and underutilized. For such reason, this type of workload affects the worker, as it raises stress levels, which in turn decreases their job performance (Paredes-Zempual et al., 2021).

Therefore, an organization is nothing more than a set of subjects that have merged to achieve a shared goal, regardless of its size, sector or physical location (Garzón et al., 2020). For such reason, providing employees with tools that favor their mental health and happiness at work is crucial in today's complicated and changing business climate (Deroncele-Acosta, 2022). Thus, by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the company's human capital, happiness management improves the work environment and, consequently, the organization's ability to compete (López et al., 2023). To achieve this goal, it is necessary to provide a suitable work environment that fosters a series of desirable traits, such as collaborative mentality, creativity, openness to new ideas, efficiency, dynamism and adaptability (Ripoll et al., 2024).

In this context, the objective of this study is to analyze the relationships between the following variables: happiness management and the performance of workers in SMEs in Arequipa. For this purpose, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used.

1.1. Happiness Management (HM)

According to Ruiz-Rodríguez et al. (2023), the relationship between work and happiness should be studied in collaboration with positive psychology, which offers new ideas, current and attractive concepts for today. Jiménez-Marín et al. (2022) explained that in order to obtain effective job performance from workers, organizational leaders and human resource professionals must work together to define corporate happiness in a way that motivates employees. On the other hand, Mu et al. (2024) stated that when employees are happy in their work environment, there is an improvement in the organizational climate, which in turn boosts the company's competitiveness through higher performance of its human capital.

Thus, according to Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla (2020), the promotion of happiness management in the workplace should be elevated to the category of core competency of managers. For their part, Santana et al. (2021) state that happiness is paramount to achieve success and good interpersonal interactions in the work environment significantly boost the well-being of the company. Furthermore, organizations that foster happiness are those in which workers are united and support each other in the pursuit of shared goals, in an environment in which they can thrive and, at the same time, positively influence the future of the company (Mousa et al., 2020).

1.2. Worker Performance (WP)

According to Cieza-Sempertegui et al. (2021), effective time and resource management, as well as the improvement of the company's technical and procedural competencies, can contribute to establishing an authentic work environment, where employees improve their performance. Likewise, Peiró et al. (2020) mentioned that staff motivation and well-being have a direct correlation with performance, so it is logical for companies to look for ways to increase employee happiness, one way of doing this is to recognize that economic retribution is not everything in employee satisfaction.

On the other hand, the human element is always present in the production process, because it requires the active participation of people and the maintenance of social working relationships to obtain the desired results, this demonstrates the connection between workers and the effectiveness, productivity and performance of the organization (González & Cereceda, 2020). According to Alvarez (2022), work performance is enhanced by factors related to subjective well-being, although work happiness influences work quality and productivity.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is classified within the criteria of a quantitative, cross-sectional research, due to the data obtained at a specific time; it is described with explanatory scope, by exposing the existing relationship between the cause-effect of events leading to a certain phenomenon. It also raises hypotheses about causal correlations (Hernández et al., 2014).

In this sense, a global analysis of the correlation between employee performance and the dimensions of happiness management is carried out. A multivariate study using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Hayes, 2013; Byrne, 2010) was used to determine the relationship of individual responsibility (IR), job satisfaction (LS) and organizational commitment (OC) on employee performance. The purpose of this form of analysis is to generate a deeper reflection and a more systematic and global view of the issues addressed by simultaneously examining a series of dependency connections (Hair et al., 2007; Alaminos et al., 2015). In Figure 2, a posed theoretical model is shown.
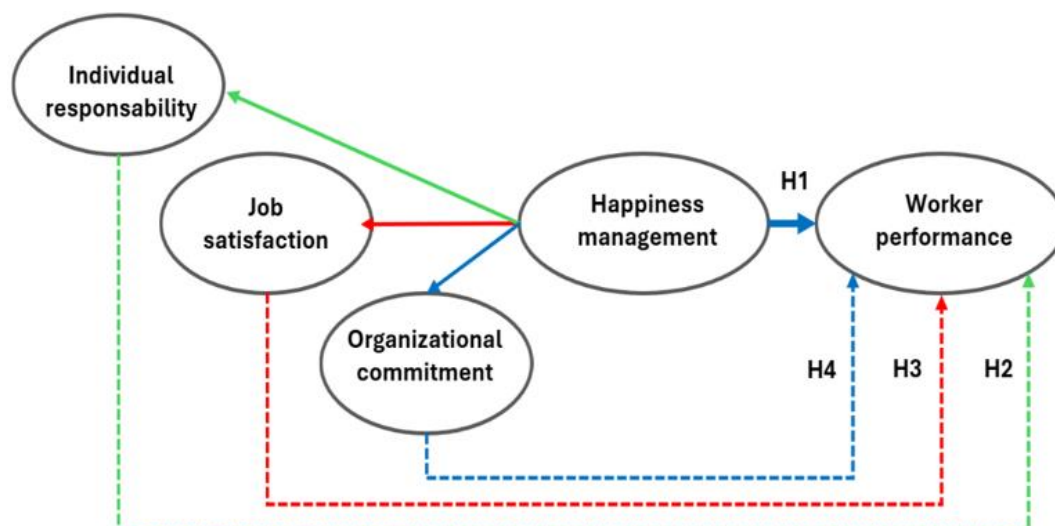

Figure 1: Theoretical model of relationships.

Likewise, the structural equation model (SEM) consists of five constructs, one component represents the dependent variable and four components correspond to the independent variables. In addition, twelve indicators were proposed to respond to the problem posed.

2.1. Participants

The population refers to the overall count of units evaluated according to predetermined standards in the study (Hernández et al., 2014, p. 174). Overall, there were 4382 collaborators of SMEs in Arequipa that made up the population (Municipality of Arequipa, 2024). Therefore, the sample can be any subset of the universe, whether probabilistic or not (Sabino, 2014). For the conformation of the sample, a simple random probability sampling was established. Through formula 1, corresponding to finite populations, it was possible to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{N*Z^2*p*q}{d^2(N-1)+Z^2*p*q} \qquad (1)$$

Replacing in the formula, we have:

$$n = \frac{4382 * 1.96^2 * 0.5 * 0.5}{0.05^2(4382 - 1) + 1.96^2 * 0.5 * 0.5} = 353$$

The sample consisted of 353 participants from SMEs in Arequipa.

2.2. Instruments

The survey was selected as a technique because it allows the study of subjective issues, assessment of public opinion, data collection, obtaining updated information and data of scientific importance. Specifically, the research instrument was a questionnaire, which is defined by Hernández et al. (2014, p. 217) as a series of questions related to a quantifiable variable or variables. The instruments used to assess the HM and DT of SMEs had sections aimed at collecting information on the variables and dimensions under study. A Likert-type scale was used to evaluate each item, and had a total of 24 questions (twelve for each variable). According to Arias (2016), Cronbach's α coefficients were used internally to test the validity of the instrument. The values collected showed that the instruments had internal consistency, with the variable HM having a value of 0.906 and the variable DT a value of 0.944.

2.3. Processing

Data analysis was carried out using Excel and the SPSS version 26 statistical program. Using descriptive statistics, including percentages and frequencies, the data were used to determine the main characteristics of the variables and indicators of the study model. To test the hypotheses posed, which relate the elements of happiness management (personal responsibility, job fulfillment and organizational loyalty) to the employee performance variable under study, given that the variables in this study are ordinal and respond to a Likert scale, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to simultaneously analyze multiple connections between the variables (Ruiz et al., 2010; Martínez & Fierro, 2018).

Also, for the analysis of the data information, a complementary component called AMOS version 26 of SPSS was used to compile the theoretical model, with the objective of verifying the theoretical assumptions made.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive Analysis of Data

First, the HM and DT of SMEs in Arequipa are the research variables studied in the following section, through descriptive analyses.

Table 1 shows the three dimensions of happiness management: individual responsibility, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It also shows the survey participants' ratings of these elements, along with their frequencies and corresponding percentage levels. Regarding the research variable (happiness management), 63.5% of employees are satisfied. In addition, 64.3% are satisfied with individual responsibility, 62.3% with job satisfaction and 59.2% with the company's organizational commitment.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the happiness variable and its dimensions.

Scale	Happiness management		Individual responsibility		Job satisfaction		Organizational commitment	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very dissatisfied	27	7.6%	24	6.8%	27	7.6%	22	6.2%
Dissatisfied	61	17.3%	64	18.1%	67	19.0%	66	18.7%
Indifferent	27	7.6%	22	6.2%	20	5.7%	42	11.9%
Satisfied	224	63.5%	227	64.3%	220	62.3%	209	59.2%
Very satisfied	14	4.0%	16	4.5%	19	5.4%	14	4.0%
Total	353	100%	353	100%	353	100%	265	100.0%

Table 2 shows the percentages and frequencies corresponding to the perceptions of the workers surveyed on the workers' performance variable and its dimensions. A 56.9% of the respondents agree that workers perform well, 58.4% that the quality of work is good, and 55.5% agree that responsibility at work benefits the organization. At the same time, 56.9% agree that the organization's leadership and teamwork are crucial.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the workers' performance variable and its dimensions.

Scale	Employee performance		Quality of work		Responsibility at work		Leadership and teamwork	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Strongly disagree	25	7.1%	24	6.8%	19	5.4%	27	7.6%
Disagree	68	19.3%	66	18.7%	74	21.0%	69	19.5%
Moderate	40	11.3%	33	9.3%	42	11.9%	37	10.5%
Agreed	201	56.9%	206	58.4%	196	55.5%	201	56.9%
Very much in agreement	19	5.4%	24	6.8%	22	6.2%	19	5.4%
Total	353	100%	353	100%	353	100%	257	100.0%

3.2. Evaluation of the Structural Model

Figure 2 shows the SEM model, which provides sufficient circumstances for the estimation of the overall complex model by identifying its normalized estimated values. Therefore, using general fit measurements, the SEM model validated the theoretical

model depicted in Figure 1 (Byrne, 2010; Alaminos et al., 2015; Catena et al., 2003).

The standardized factor loadings were 0.86, 0.92, 0.90 and 0.89, respectively, as shown in Figure 2, where the variables impact the endogenous variables through a causal relationship with the exogenous variables. The results of the analysis in Table 3 show that the SEM model of employee performance and happiness management is validated with individual responsibility, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Where the model has 286 degrees of freedom and a Chi-square value of 721.352, a probability level of 0.000, lower than the significance threshold of α = 0.05.

Also, Table 3 shows that the global fit model produced two significant values: a CMIN/GI of 2.522 and a CFI of 0.726. Given an RMSEA value of 0.071, which is within the established criteria (a value between 0.05 and 0.08 denotes a perfect fit), the global fit model has provided an acceptance of the SEM model in Figure 2 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Table 3: Results of the global structural model fit.

Adjustment values	Chi-square	GI	NP	CMIN/GI	IFC	RMSEA
	721.352	286	0.000	2.522	0.726	0.071

GI = degrees of freedom; NP = probability level; CMIN/GI = Chi-square/degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.
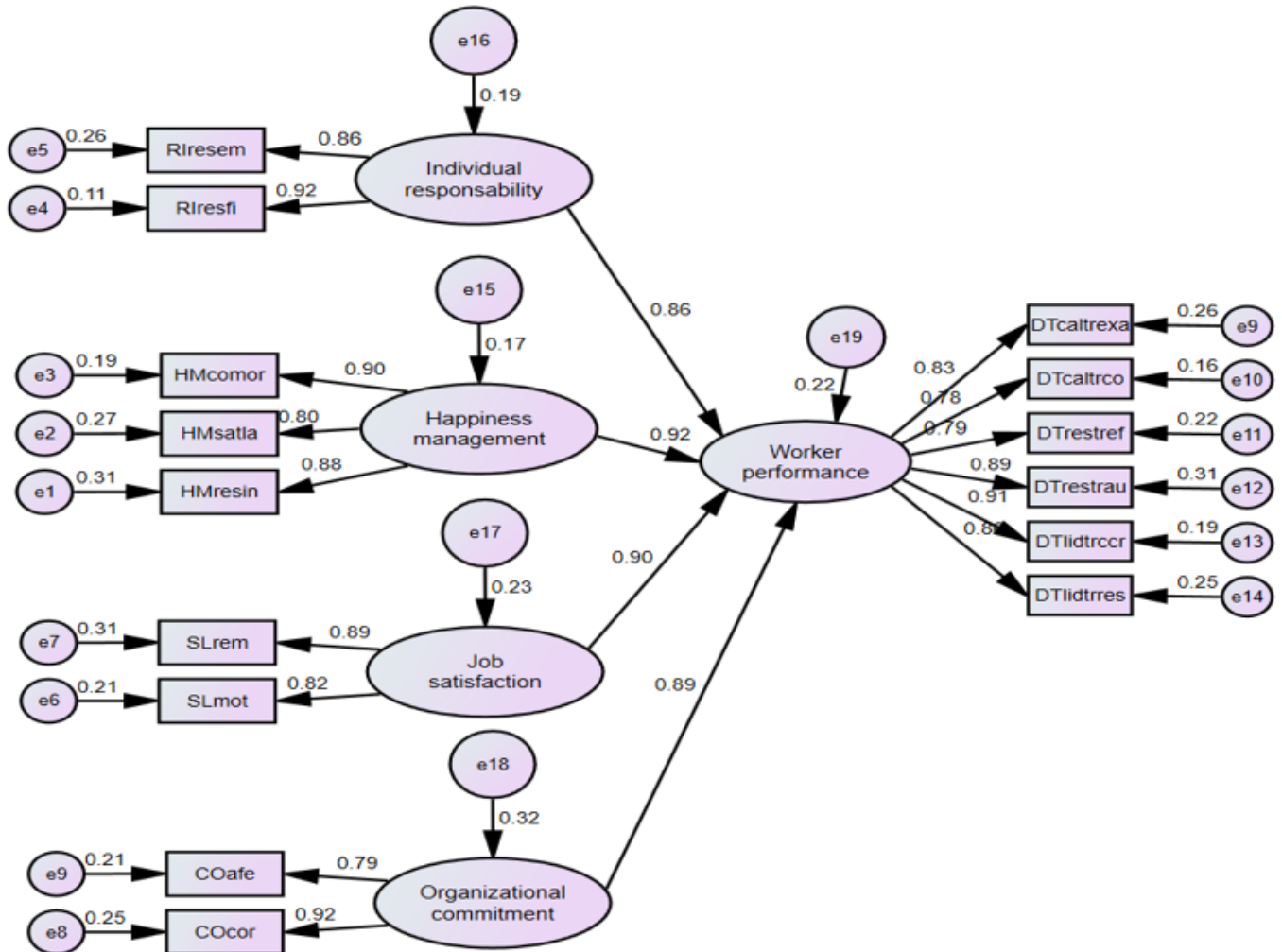

Figure 2: Structural model (SEM) of the HM and DT.

Figure 2 shows a causal relationship between the surface variables and the individual responsibility variable, physical responsibility (RIresfi) with a standardized value of 0.921 and emotional responsibility (RIresem) with a standardized value of 0.863 of the employees of the SMEs in Arequipa under study. The next variable, happiness management, has a causal relationship with its most significant dimensions: individual responsibility (HMresin) with a standardized value of 0.882, job satisfaction (HMsatla) with standardized value of 0.802 and finally organizational commitment (HMcomor), with a standardized value of 0.901.

In addition, the most important indicators of the job satisfaction variable are causally related to it, such as motivation (SLmot) with a normalized value of 0.827 and the compensation indicator (SLrem) with a normalized value of 0.896. Likewise, organizational commitment is significantly related to its indicators such as corporate commitment (COcor) with a normalized value of 0.924 and the affective indicator (COef) with a normalized value of 0.793. Also, workers' performance shows significant correlations with respect to the surface variables, where accuracy in work quality (DTcaltrexa) had a normalized value of 0.831 and constancy (DTcaltrco) with a normalized value of 0.787. Likewise, efficiency in work responsibility (DTrestref) with a normalized value of 0.794 and autonomy (DTrestrau) with a normalized value of 0.890. In addition, communication skills (DTlidtrccr) with a normalized value of 0.916 and respect (DTlidtrres) with a normalized value of 0.893.

3.3. Validation of Proposed Hypotheses

Figure 1 is based on the assumptions (H1, H2, H3, H4) represented with the SEM model, Figure 2 verifies the existence of causal correlations of impact and prognosis between the dependent and independent variables under study.

Figure 2 shows the overall SEM model, and Table 4 shows the results of the standardized estimates. Furthermore, all estimators are greater than 0.5 and have a significant p-value. This supports the first theoretical hypothesis (H1), which was supported, so Ho was rejected admitting the alternative model. It establishes the significant relationship between MH and DT of SMEs in Arequipa with a normalized value of 0.925.

The second hypothesis of the model (H2), with an effectiveness index of 0.862, verifies that there is a significant relationship between individual responsibility and the TD of SMEs in Arequipa. Likewise, hypothesis three (H3) of the SEM model verifies that there is a significant relationship between SL and the DT of SMEs in Arequipa (with an effectiveness score of 0.900). Finally, the normalized value of 0.896 confirms the theoretical hypothesis H4, which indicates that there is a significant relationship between the CO and the DT of SMEs in Arequipa

Table 4: Standardized results of the correlations of the constructs.

Causal relationship			Dear	Standardized coefficient	Sig.
Worker performance	<---	Happiness management	0.623	0.925	***
Worker performance	<---	Individual responsibility	0.821	0.862	***
Worker performance	<---	Job satisfaction	1.213	0.900	***
Worker performance	<---	Organizational commitment	0.932	0.896	***
RIresfi	<---	Individual responsibility	0.791	0.921	***
RIresem	<---	Individual responsibility	1.243	0.863	***
HMresin	<---	Happiness management	1.000	0.882	
HMsatla	<---	Happiness management	0.998	0.802	***
HMcomor	<---	Happiness management	0.762	0.901	***
SLmot	<---	Job satisfaction	1.642	0.827	***
Slrem	<---	Job satisfaction	0.763	0.896	***
COcor	<---	Organizational commitment	1.000	0.924	
COafe	<---	Organizational commitment	0.901	0.793	***
DTcaltrexa	<---	Worker performance	1.119	0.831	***
DTcaltrco	<---	Worker performance	1.372	0.787	***
DTrestref	<---	Worker performance	2.152	0.794	***
DTrestrau	<---	Worker performance	0.897	0.890	***
DTlidtrccr	<---	Worker performance	0.862	0.916	***
DTlidtrres	<---	Worker performance	1.285	0.893	***

By reviewing the postulates that have been statistically examined using the SEM model, this study contributes to the understanding of the relationship of HM with the DT of SMEs in Arequipa.

Hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4 related to HM, RI, SL and CO in workers' performance, have been accepted because the structural model indicates a remarkable correlation between the variables, being the p-value of these correlations lower than the threshold of 0.05; it should be noted that these associations are statistically significant, indicating that happiness management and its dimensions have a relationship with the DT of SMEs in Arequipa.

Research in this area has shown results that are consistent with this field. The same is aligned with the study by Ramírez-Asís et al. (2023), the significance of the model for service sector workers is evident in the results, which indicate substantial values for labor relations (0.761) and employee happiness (0.853). Likewise, comparable findings were observed in the study by Dolores et al. (2023), who showed a positive relationship (0.884) between the variables studied, which demonstrates that employees' WP is affected by their work motivation and happiness at work.

According to the study by Acosta et al. (2023), they agree that the well-being and happiness of an organization is crucial, as it affects the performance of its employees. Ibáñez et al. (2021) agree that a human capital management process can be initiated and supported by an organization's vision of employee happiness and satisfaction, which in turn drives productivity and good performance. Consequently, happiness management, or the practice of bringing a positive attitude to the workplace, is becoming increasingly common among progressive companies. Although many organizations have yet to recognize its true importance in helping them achieve their goals more effectively, there is no doubt that this emotion harmonizes with productivity at work (Hernández-Gracia et al., 2023; Andrade, 2023).

4. CONCLUSIONS

It is essential to value happiness management as a management mechanism applied to the business environment, since the results show that these constructs characterize its structure, which is corroborated by the fact that it incorporates several traits that help to increase workers' performance.

When analyzing the first hypothesis (H1) of the study, an effectiveness value of 0.925 was obtained, meaning that happiness management is related to the TD of SMEs in Arequipa. The results also showed a normalized value of 0.862 in hypothesis two (H2), demonstrating that individual responsibility is related to the DT of SMEs in Arequipa.

Regarding the third hypothesis (H3), the effectiveness value obtained was 0.900, which is why it is accepted that FS is related to the DT of SMEs in Arequipa. The fourth hypothesis (H4), on CO and DT showed a statistical effectiveness value of 0.896, which confirms that CO is related to the DT of SMEs in Arequipa.

Furthermore, the literature reviewed in this study suggests that happiness management is more than just a tool that business leaders use to improve performance in their workplaces by being more efficient. Considering it as a win-win strategy, it offers workers the opportunity to develop professionally and personally.

In summary, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and individual responsibility are the three constructs that most influence happiness management in the SMEs investigated in Arequipa. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies consider

including questions associated with the social and economic situation of employees, in order to verify whether the happiness management condition is maintained.

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