Can dealing with emotional exhaustion lead to enhanced happiness? The roles of planning and social support

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Abstract

Drawing upon the sustainable happiness model (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005), we examine boundary conditions to the detrimental effect of emotional exhaustion on happiness. We posit that perceiving low supervisor support enhances the employee’s engagement in the development of an action plan, which, when paired with an active search for instrumental social support, boosts happiness. Drawing on three distinct samples from participants working in diverse occupations (81 Portugal-based team leaders working under direct supervision; 177 US-based supervised full-time workers and 242 US-based employees working full-time and under direct supervision), we found that perceived supervisor support (PSS) moderated the emotional exhaustion-planning association, whereas searching for instrumental social support moderated the planning-happiness relationship. We also found that the indirect effect of emotional exhaustion on happiness, via planning, was positive and significant only when employees perceived low supervisor support and searched highly for instrumental social support. We conclude that under some conditions, the process of dealing with emotional exhaustion can enhance happiness. Implications for research on happiness, coping and social support are discussed, as well as implications for practice.

Keywords: Emotional exhaustion; Happiness; Perceived supervisor support; Planning; Searching for instrumental social support.
Emotional exhaustion has been found to predict several negative outcomes. For example, emotional exhaustion is associated with poorer performance (Taris, 2006), higher incivility (Van Jaarsveld, Walker, & Skarlicki, 2010), and depression (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008). This host of negative outcomes does not appear to bode well for those who experience emotional exhaustion. However, the literature on recovery from challenging and highly traumatic life circumstances suggests that people may be able not only to overcome them but also to experience positive outcomes in their aftermath (e.g., Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). A critical factor facilitating the emergence of such positive outcomes appears to be how people cope with the distressing experience (Holahan, Moos, & Schaefer, 1996; Yeung, Lu, Wong, & Huynh, 2016). Similarly, it is possible that positive consequences emerge, depending on how people cope with emotional exhaustion. Although to the best of our knowledge no direct support for this possibility exists in the literature, some indications are available in the work of Cherniss (1992), who found that individuals who experienced emotional exhaustion early in their careers approached their work more flexibly and had higher career stability 12 years later than those who experienced exhaustion later in their careers. Despite such promising indications, we still know very little about whether emotional exhaustion can actually lead to positive consequences, and about the conditions and the mechanisms that can explain the emergence of those positive outcomes.

In this research, we examine when and how emotional exhaustion enhances the positive outcome of happiness by drawing on insights from the sustainable happiness model (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). According to this model, the activities people engage in are more important to enhance happiness than their life circumstances. The effects of circumstances on happiness are only temporary as people tend to quickly adapt to them – that is, because they are only momentarily new (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). In contrast, activities are less prone to hedonic adaptation because they tend to provide new experiences...
on a regular basis (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Accordingly, it is likely that the actions taken to deal with an unpleasant circumstance, such as emotional exhaustion, may be able to counteract its generally detrimental effects and lead to increased happiness. Specifically, a coping effort capable of bringing an inflow of novel ways to deal with emotional exhaustion may be the mediating link in the emotional exhaustion-happiness relationship. We posit that under certain circumstances emotional exhaustion can stimulate planning activities, which, when paired with an active search for instrumental social support, can increase happiness. Because emotionally exhausted employees tend to lack the cognitive resources (Van Jaarsveld et al., 2010) required to engage in planning activities (and may therefore be unlikely to initiate planning efforts if nothing in their work environment stimulates them to do so), we investigate the role of work circumstances, in particular of perceived supervisor support (PSS), in stimulating planning activities to cope with exhaustion.

This study makes four main contributions. First, to our knowledge, we are among the first to propose and test a mechanism and conditions that can reverse the negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and happiness. Previous research has focused on listing the negative outcomes of emotional exhaustion and on identifying the strategies that could reduce both emotional exhaustion and its negative consequences (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). In contrast, the present research contributes to a greater understanding of whether benefits can be gained by individuals as they cope with emotional exhaustion. Accordingly, we adopt a perspective on recovery (aligned with the positive psychology movement) which focuses on going beyond “fixing what is broken” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 7) to actually promote beneficial outcomes for individuals in the wake of difficult life experiences (Resnick & Rosenheck, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In other words, we shift the focus from alleviating distress and suffering to enhancing well-being and happiness.

Second, we contribute to clarifying the role of social support in dealing with emotional
exhaustion. While other researchers have examined social support as a predictor of emotional exhaustion and as a buffer in the relationship between job stressors and the emergence of emotional exhaustion (see Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014; Halbesleben, 2006; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001), this study extends these approaches by focusing on the role of social support in dealing with and becoming happy after emotional exhaustion. Third, by distinguishing PSS (a work circumstance) from the active search for instrumental social support (an activity) we provide additional empirical evidence for the sustainable happiness model, which suggests that activities are more important for happiness than circumstances (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Specifically, we propose that the activity of searching for instrumental social support might be more relevant in the process of dealing with exhaustion and enhancing happiness than the mere circumstance of supervisor support. Finally, by analyzing the interplay between two coping strategies (planning and searching for instrumental social support), we show that their effects are not only additive but also multiplicative. In other words, the effectiveness of planning to enhance happiness might depend on the informational enrichment that seeking for instrumental social support provides.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Emotional Exhaustion, Happiness, and Planning

The first stage of burnout and its primary component is emotional exhaustion, a sense of depletion of one’s emotional resources (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion is found in different conceptualizations of burnout (e.g., Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 2001), is the component with the most robust and consistent set of relationships with other variables (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007) and is the component of burnout that generalizes best across work contexts (Tourigny, Baba, Han, & Wang, 2013). As such, emotional exhaustion has been extensively used in studies focused on analyzing the relationships between burnout and other variables (e.g., Halbesleben & Bowler,
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Happiness, broadly defined as subjective well-being (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), is one of the most common pursuits among people in Western cultures (Diener, Suh, Smith, & Shao, 1995). Happy people experience frequent positive affect and infrequent negative affect, and are satisfied with their lives (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). As a consequence, happy people tend to be healthier, more creative, and to have more success at work than less happy people (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008). In keeping with previous research (e.g., Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Nelson, Kushlev, & Lyubomirsky, 2014) and with the broad conceptualization of happiness we are following (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), we use the terms “well-being”, “subjective well-being” and “happiness” interchangeably. Happiness feels good and has a myriad of positive consequences, but according to the sustainable happiness model there is a caveat – because happiness is subjected to hedonic adaptation, continued effort and investment of resources is required in order to maintain or elevate it (Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm, & Sheldon, 2011).

Emotional exhaustion is likely to be negatively related to happiness. Because emotionally exhausted workers are often depleted – that is, they have fewer resources available (Hobfoll, 2001) – they tend to rely on readily accessible but frequently dysfunctional and defensive coping mechanisms, such as avoidance or withdrawal (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). This process further accentuates the negative consequences of emotional exhaustion (Sun & Pan, 2008) and precludes growth and happiness. According to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001), an opposite strategy is actually required to deal constructively with the situation: people need to invest resources in order to gain new resources and to eventually recover from emotional exhaustion. This reasoning is aligned with the sustainable happiness model, which proposes that taking action is the most effective way to help people attain happiness. Overall, by investing resources and taking action people
may become happier (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011) while overcoming emotional exhaustion.

Given its relevance both for dealing with emotional exhaustion and for promoting happiness, planning is likely to be a key activity in this context. Planning is defined as “thinking about how to cope with a stressor (…), coming up with action strategies, thinking about what steps to take and how best to handle the problem” (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989, p. 268). Past research has shown that planning is effective not only in helping people who face challenging life situations (e.g., Coote & MacLeod, 2012) but also in enhancing happiness (e.g., MacLeod, 2012; MacLeod, Coates, & Hetherton, 2008). Accordingly, planning might be a key mechanism linking emotional exhaustion to happiness. This mediation, however, is likely to be dependent on the individual’s work circumstances and on other coping efforts he/she engages in. Below we discuss the explanatory role of planning in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and happiness, and the moderating role of PSS and instrumental social support in those linkages.

*Emotional Exhaustion and Planning: The Moderator Role of PSS*

PSS is the worker’s general impression of the supervisor’s level of supportiveness, caring and appreciation for his/her contributions (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghhe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). Supervisor support is a key job resource for employees because supervisors are in a privileged position to provide assistance and help to address job stressors (Halbesleben, 2006; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Accordingly, it is well established that PSS can prevent the emergence of emotional exhaustion (Bakker et al., 2014; Halbesleben, 2006). However, we still have a very limited understanding of the role played by PSS once employees experience emotional exhaustion.

Both conservation of resources theory (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014; Hobfoll, 2001) and job demands-resources theory (Bakker et al., 2014) suggest that the value of a resource depends on the context under consideration. Resources
usually seen as positive can be unimportant or even harmful if they are not effective in maximizing individuals’ fit to the specific internal or external context they face (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Accordingly, although supervisor support has often been perceived as universally positive, this resource can only be beneficial if it fuels employees’ ability to engage in thoughts and behaviors important for their internal context. As discussed below, both theoretical and empirical evidence suggest that PSS may have detrimental effects on employees’ ability to engage in the coping activity of planning to deal with the internal context of emotional exhaustion.

First, systematic reviews on the effectiveness of interventions and actions to deal with stress and emotional exhaustion suggest that prevention and amelioration rely on different processes (see LaMontagne, Keegel, Louie, Ostry, & Landsbergis, 2007). Before experiencing emotional exhaustion employees may indeed benefit from the preventive role of supervisor support because supervisors can address potential job stressors before they harm the employee. In contrast, when employees experience emotional exhaustion they benefit mainly from coping with it (Hobfoll, 2001; LaMontagne et al., 2007) – in other words, from changing their cognitions and behaviors in relation to the emotional experience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As such, supervisor support may be ineffective for helping employees deal with emotional exhaustion because it does not directly address the internal problem (Posig & Kickul, 2003). This process of receiving support that does not directly tackle emotional exhaustion may not only be ineffective but can even mask the problem, delaying the development of an action plan to deal with it (Hobfoll, 2001). In contrast, perceiving low supervisor support can enhance the perception of the gravity of the emotional exhaustion experience, prompting the development of an action plan to solve the problem. Indeed, people tend to cope more quickly and effectively with demanding problems than with what they perceive to be minor ones (Gilbert, Lieberman, Morewedge, & Wilson, 2004).
Second, both self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the sustainable happiness model (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) suggest that fulfillment of the innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness is important for coping with difficult life situations. Although supervisor support benefits supervisees in several situations, in the context of emotional exhaustion it may also prevent them from engaging in the autonomy-dependent coping strategy of planning. Specifically, emotionally exhausted individuals have fewer emotional and cognitive resources available (Van Jaarsveld et al., 2010), and may thus tend to rely on readily available strategies rather than expend effort in coming up with alternative courses of action (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Hobfoll, 2001). As such, if emotionally exhausted individuals perceive high levels of supervisor support, they may rely on that external resource rather than come up with an action plan. Further, because the work circumstance of PSS can create perceptions of overprotectiveness, it can detract from individuals’ sense of autonomy (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014; Skinner & Edge, 2002) in the establishment of an action plan to deal with emotional exhaustion. In contrast, the creation of an action plan to deal with emotional exhaustion without receiving supervisor support can induce feelings of competence and autonomy, which in turn buffers the depletion of energy associated with emotional exhaustion (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Third, social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) predicts that employees perceiving high supervisor support strive to repay that support. To reciprocate the received support, employees may feel obligated to further help the supervisor achieve his/her goals (Eisenberger et al., 2002). This additional demand may drain even more employees’ already limited resources, and direct their remaining resources to reciprocate the received support and away from establishing a plan to cope with emotional exhaustion. In contrast, perceiving low supervisor support when a person is emotionally exhausted may activate less reciprocal obligations and free internal resources to establish an action plan. Therefore, we hypothesize:
Hypothesis 1. PSS will moderate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning: The relationship will be positive when employees perceive low supervisor support, and will be negative when employees perceive high supervisor support.

Planning and Happiness: The Moderator Role of Searching for Instrumental Social Support

Coping is defined as the “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Past research on coping suggests that, in work contexts, people tend to rely on problem-focused coping strategies to a large extent (Shin et al., 2014). Such strategies aim to solve the problem or to eliminate or reduce sources of stress (Carver et al., 1989). Diverse discrete behaviors, such as planning and searching for instrumental social support (defined as “seeking advice, assistance, or information”, Carver et al., 1989, p. 269), are included in this broader category of problem-focused coping (Litman & Lunsford, 2009). As argued below, these two problem-focused coping strategies may interact with each other to predict happiness.

The sustainable happiness model suggests that attaining happiness requires continued effort and the use of an effective strategy (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011). Past research indicates that planning can be one such strategy. Specifically, planning has been shown to be associated with happiness (Carver et al., 1989; Litman & Lunsford, 2009) and is a central component of interventions designed to promote subjective well-being (e.g., MacLeod et al., 2008). Planning is effective because it offers a sense of progress towards a desired direction and promotes goal attainment (Carver & Scheier, 1990; MacLeod et al., 2008). Despite all its benefits, we propose that planning can be even more effective when it is accompanied by an active search for instrumental social support.

The combination of planning with an active search for instrumental social support may
be an effective way to promote the emergence of happiness for the following reasons. First, these two problem-focused coping strategies can, together, contribute to satisfying the three basic human psychological needs. Both self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the sustainable happiness model (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) predict that happiness and well-being can be enhanced by need-satisfying daily experiences of competence, autonomy and relatedness. Because planning is usually volitional, self-determined, and its conclusions are self-chosen (and not imposed or forcefully suggested by others), the need for autonomy is likely to be satisfied when people engage in planning. Planning may also contribute to the satisfaction of competence needs, as people tend to feel more competent and to have more competence-based self-esteem when they think about, establish and readjust an action plan (Carver et al., 1989). However, being an individual strategy, planning is unlikely to address relatedness needs. Accordingly, a strategy such as searching for instrumental social support – which may help individuals to feel connected to and cared by others (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens, & Lens, 2010) – may be critical for further pushing individuals towards well-being because it satisfies their need for relatedness. It is important to note that when people search for instrumental social support they look for advice, information and new ideas to enrich their individual action plan, not to be directed on their planning activities. Thus, searching for instrumental social support is unlikely to undermine the feelings of competence and autonomy derived from planning.

Second, when a person engages in planning activities and simultaneously searches for different ideas in others, he/she is preventing hedonic adaptation (Diener et al., 1999; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). The processes of developing an action plan, of readjusting it on a daily basis, of searching for diverse instrumental social support, and of integrating the others’ instrumental support in the initially developed plan, creates an inflow of novelty that can prevent adaptation and enhance happiness. Third, actively searching for instrumental social
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support may hamper the negative side effects of planning. Although planning has been shown to increase happiness (Carver et al., 1989; Litman & Lunsford, 2009; MacLeod et al., 2008), in the long run planning activities can also deplete a person’s resources, provoking fatigue and reduced well-being (Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2007). Searching for instrumental social support may pay off by making helpful resources available (not only in terms of the new information that can be obtained but also because it fulfills the need for relatedness), thereby easing the process of planning. Thus, we predict:

Hypothesis 2. Searching for instrumental social support will moderate the relationship between planning and happiness: The relationship will be more positive when searching for instrumental social support is high (versus when it is low).

Moderated Mediation

Building on the hypotheses presented above, we expect to find support for a mediated model in which planning conditionally mediates the emotional exhaustion to happiness relationship. Effective coping efforts are likely to underlie the conversion of emotional exhaustion into happiness (cf. Baskin & Enright, 2004; Holahan et al., 1996), since it is unlikely that emotional exhaustion yields such positive benefits by itself. We argue that planning is a key mechanism linking emotional exhaustion to happiness, as it offers a sense of progress towards a desired direction and supports goal attainment (Carver & Scheier, 1990; MacLeod et al., 2008). Theory suggests that when people engage in planning activities they develop a sense of control over the stressor, experience and anticipate positive affect, have a meaningful plan to pursue, develop skills that enable achievement of desirable outcomes, and feel more connected to work and personal tasks and roles (Carver & Scheier, 1990; MacLeod, 2012; MacLeod et al., 2008). Thus, emotionally exhausted people may become happy because they are following a plan they believe will help them make meaningful progress (Diener et al., 1999). This reasoning is also aligned with the sustainable
happiness model (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), which suggests that because planning represents an activity it may be able to counteract emotional exhaustion and lead to happiness. As a plan is developed and implemented, people enjoy the increase in positive affect and decrease in negative affect that likely follows their efforts to deal with emotional exhaustion, hence becoming happier (Etezadi & Pushkar, 2013). Finally, planning appears to be relevant for the satisfaction of the fundamental need for autonomy, which can further contribute to an increased sense of control over the stressor (Ntoumanis, Edmunds, & Duda, 2009).

However, according to Hypotheses 1 and 2, this mediation is conditional to the perceived level of supervisor support and to the extent to which individuals engage in an active search for instrumental social support. Specifically, perceiving low supervisor support may facilitate the engagement in planning when people are emotionally exhausted (Hypothesis 1); while actively searching for instrumental social support may amplify the effects of planning on happiness (Hypothesis 2). Accordingly, we expect a positive indirect effect of emotional exhaustion on happiness, via planning, only when there is low PSS and a high search for instrumental social support.

We hypothesize that PSS moderates only the emotional exhaustion-planning association, whereas searching for instrumental social support moderates only the relationship between planning and happiness. It is unlikely that PSS changes the effect of planning on happiness for the following reasons. In order to benefit from instrumental social support a person needs to ask for it (Ashton & Fuehrer, 1993), and supervisor support is likely to be provided by the supervisor’s own volition. Additionally, the received support may or may not fit the informational needs of the employee’s planning. In contrast, searching for instrumental social support allows a more focused and directed search for potentially useful information. Also, it has the potential to infuse the planning activities with diverse and fresh instrumental support from not only the supervisor, but also co-workers, friends and
family. It is also unlikely that searching for instrumental social support moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning, simply because searching for instrumental social support is a behavior that requires the existence of a preliminary or at least a concomitant plan (Carver et al., 1989; Wiedemann, Schüz, Sniehotta, Scholz, & Schwarzer, 2009). Building upon Hypotheses 1 and 2 and on the arguments above, we test an integrated moderated mediation model that hypothesizes:

**Hypothesis 3.** PSS and searching for instrumental social support will moderate the indirect effect of emotional exhaustion on happiness, via planning: This indirect effect will be stronger when low PSS enhances the emotional exhaustion-planning relationship, and high searching for instrumental social support enhances the planning-happiness relationship; and weaker at different levels of the moderators.

**Overview of the Studies**

We tested our hypotheses in three studies. In order to generalize our findings we collected data from two countries (Portugal and USA) and from participants working in diverse occupations, we used different measures of emotional exhaustion, happiness and PSS across studies, and we controlled for different important covariates in each study. In Study 1, we focused on the moderator role of PSS in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning (Hypothesis 1). In Study 2, we focused on Hypothesis 2 and tested whether planning and searching for instrumental social support interact to predict happiness. Finally, in Study 3, we tested the entire model and conducted additional analyses to further support that PSS (a circumstance) and searching for instrumental social support (an activity) have different roles in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and happiness, via planning.

In this research the use of self-reports was required because all constructs were related to individual perceptions and strategies. To reduce common source variance data were collected at two time points in Studies 2 and 3 (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).
The two time points were separated by one month. This time span is appropriate to avoid the problem of common source variance and has been extensively used in studies focused on happiness (e.g., Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2009). In Study 1 we collected all measures at the same time. Because common method variance tends to deflate interaction effects, making their statistical detection difficult (Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010), Study 1 might be a conservative test of Hypothesis 1.

**Study 1**

Study 1 examined whether the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning was moderated by PSS (Hypothesis 1). Additionally, Study 1 measured two potentially important covariates: narcissism and desire for control. Narcissists are extremely confident and self-centered, see themselves as superior to others and believe in their self-sufficiency (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006). As such, they might rely more on their own planning than individuals with low levels of narcissism. Because people with high desire for control enjoy having control over situations and other people, they may engage more in planning activities in order to maintain or gain a certain level of control (Dahling, Whitaker, & Levy, 2009).

**Method**

**Participants and Procedure**

Eighty-one Portugal-based team leaders were recruited through an online advertisement. Participants supervised a team of at least two members and worked under direct supervision. Each participant received an individual and confidential report with a description of and ratings on each measured component. Confidentiality was guaranteed, and identification information was removed from the data once participants received their report. Additional data were collected from the same participants for separate studies addressing different research questions and using a different set of core variables. The majority of team leaders were men (69%). The average respondent age was 43 years ($SD = 8.68$), with an
average tenure in the organization of 13 years ($SD = 8.22$) and in the team of 7 years ($SD = 5.99$). Multiple occupations were represented, including management (28%), architecture and engineering (20%), computer and mathematical (7%), and sales (7%).

Measures

The questionnaire was administered in Portuguese. Items were translated from English to Portuguese and back-translated to guarantee equivalence of meaning and accuracy.

*Emotional exhaustion* was measured with the 9-item scale from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). A 7-point response scale (1 = “Never”, 7 = “Every day”) was used. A sample item is “I feel used up at the end of the workday”.

*PSS* was assessed with a proxy measure. One commonly used proxy for PSS is leader-member exchange (LMX; Gagnon & Michael, 2004; Matthews & Toumbeva, 2015). Social exchange theory provides the dominant theoretical basis for both PSS and LMX (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), both constructs are work circumstances and not activities, the two measures tap into components of support, trust and exchange (Gagnon & Michael, 2004), and as the quality of the relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee increases so does PSS (Chen, Wang, Chang, & Hu, 2008). Accordingly, LMX may be considered a good proxy for PSS. LMX was measured using a 7-item measure (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), with a 5-point rating scale (1 = “Not at all or none” to 5 = “Fully or very high”). Sample item: “How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?”

*Planning* (4-item scale; e.g., “I try to come up with a strategy about what to do”) was measured using the COPE Questionnaire (Carver et al., 1989), with a 4-point response scale anchored at 1 (“I usually don’t do this at all”) and 4 (“I usually do this a lot”).

*Control variables.* Participants’ gender, age, and organizational and team tenure were controlled for as they might influence the extent to which people rely on planning activities (Carver et al., 1989; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). We also controlled for narcissism and desire
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for control, as well as their interactions with emotional exhaustion. Narcissism was measured with the 16-item scale developed by Ames et al. (2006; e.g., “I always know what I am doing”). Items were rated on a 6-point agreement scale (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 6 = “Strongly agree”; Galvin, Waldman, & Balthazard, 2010). Desire for control was measured with a 3-item scale (Dahling et al., 2009; e.g., “I enjoy being able to control the situation”). The response scale ranged from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 7 (“Strongly agree”).

Results and Discussion

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations are reported in Table 1.

We performed a series of confirmatory factor analyses to evaluate whether the constructs of this study were empirically distinguishable and the theoretical measurement model fit the data. Due to the modest sample size, we parceled all scales with seven or more items by randomly assigning items to composites (Landis, Beal, & Tesluk, 2000). According to the guidelines presented by Hu and Bentler (1999), the five-factor model (emotional exhaustion, PSS, planning, narcissism and desire for control) yielded good fit ($\chi^2$ (94 df) = 133.39, $p < .01$; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .07). Items/parcels’ loadings on their corresponding latent variables were always equal or above .50 ($p < .01$). Chi-squared statistics revealed that the five-factor model fit the data better than a one-factor model ($\Delta$chi$^2$ = 538.57, df = 10, $p < .01$). These results indicate that our measurement model fit the data and that the variables of interest were empirically distinguishable.

Moderation hypotheses were tested with a four-step hierarchical multiple regression (see Table 2). All continuous variables were mean centered (Aiken & West, 1991). In step 1, we entered control variables. In step 2, we added emotional exhaustion and PSS. The predictor and the moderator were unrelated to planning. In step 3, we controlled for the interactions between emotional exhaustion and both narcissism and desire for control. No significant results were found. In step 4, we added the interaction between emotional
emotion exhaustion and planning for participants who perceived low support from their supervisors (-1 SD, simple slope = .21, p > .10; for high PSS, +1 SD, simple slope = -.23, p > .10). Following the recommendations of Preacher, Curran and Bauer (2006), we examined regions of significance using the Johnson-Neyman technique. Because of the modest sample size, we used both the 95% and the 90% regions of significance. The slopes for the emotional exhaustion-planning relationship became significantly negative for values of PSS that were at or above a standardized score of 1.8 (marginally significant at 1.2 SD) and became significantly positive for values of PSS that were at or below a standardized score of -2.7 (marginally significant at -1.5 SD). Based on these findings, it would require particularly high or low levels of PSS for emotional exhaustion to produce a significant reduction or enhancement in planning. Together, these results lend support to Hypothesis 1 as we found that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning was positive when PSS was particularly low; and was negative when PSS was particularly high.

**Study 2**

Study 2 tested Hypothesis 2, which suggests that planning may enhance happiness, particularly when paired with an active search for instrumental social support. To reduce common source variance data were collected at two time points, one month apart (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Happiness was measured at Time 2 and coping was measured at Time 1.

**Method**

**Participants and Procedure**

Three hundred and fifty US-based employees, working full-time and under direct supervision, were recruited online via Amazon’s MTurk to participate in a two-part questionnaire. Seventeen participants were excluded from the analyses because they failed to
correctly answer attention-checking items (e.g., “Please respond with disagree for this item”). One month later, the remaining 333 workers were invited to complete the Time 2 questionnaire and 206 replied to our invitation (response rate = 62%). However, we excluded 29 participants from the analyses because their answers to the attention-checking items revealed uneffortful responding. This resulted in a final analysis sample of 177 workers (59% male, 41% female; mean age = 32, SD = 9.58; tenure with current employer = 6, SD = 5.21). Several occupations were represented, including sales (15%), education, training and library (11%), computer and mathematical (10%), and healthcare (10%).

T-tests and cross-tabulations were conducted on demographics and core variables from Time 1 to determine whether there were significant differences between the analysis sample (T1 and T2) and the sample with participants who answered only the first questionnaire (T1). No significant differences were found on sex, age, tenure, planning and searching for instrumental social support. Only two marginally significant effects were found. The analysis sample was slightly older (Δ mean = 2.04, p < .10) and searched slightly less instrumental social support (Δ mean = .18, p < .10) compared with attriting respondents. These results suggest that there was no systematic biasing effect due to self-selection and attrition.

Measures

Planning (4-item scale) and searching for instrumental social support (4-item scale; e.g., “I ask people who have had similar experiences what they did”) were measured using the COPE Questionnaire (Carver et al., 1989), with the same response scale as in Study 1.

Happiness. Following previous research (e.g., Lyubomirsky et al., 2011; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006), happiness was measured at Time 2 as a composite of current pleasant affect, unpleasant affect (reverse-coded) and satisfaction with life. Participants were administered the 6-item Pleasant (3-items; e.g., “Content”) and Unpleasant (3-items; e.g., “Miserable”) Affect Scale (Barrett & Russell, 1998; 7-point response scale: 1 = “Not at all”
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20
te 7 = “Extremely”), and the 5-item Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; 7-point response scale: 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 = “Strongly agree”; e.g., “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”). Confirmatory factor analyses revealed that a second-order factor explained properly the relationships between the three components of happiness ($\chi^2(41, df) = 76.38, p < .01; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .07$).

Control variables. Participants’ gender, age and organizational tenure were used as control variables because they have been suggested to influence people’s subjective level of happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Results and Discussion

Table 3 reports the means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations.

Confirmatory factor analyses indicated that our measurement model fit the data and that the variables of interest were empirically distinguishable. The three-factor model (planning, searching for instrumental social support and the second-order factor of happiness) yielded good fit to the data ($\chi^2(146, df) = 228.36, p < .01; CFI = .98; RMSEA = .06$), and fit significantly better than a one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 926.89, df = 3, p < .01$). In the three-factor model, all items loaded above .57 ($p < .01$) on their corresponding latent variables.

All analyses were performed accounting for the control variables. Moderation hypothesis was tested following the procedure adopted in Study 1. Results are detailed in Table 4. Happiness was explained only by planning (Step 2: $\beta = .17, p < .05$). The interaction between planning and searching for instrumental social support was significant (Step 3: $\beta = .17, p < .05$). Simple slopes analyses revealed that planning related positively to happiness only when there was high search for instrumental social support (+1 SD, simple slope = .38, $p < .01$; for low search for instrumental social support, -1 SD, simple slope = .10, $p > .10$).

These results support Hypothesis 2 and suggest that planning is more beneficial for happiness when people also actively search for instrumental social support.
Study 3

Our third study attempts to replicate the results from Studies 1 and 2 and to test the conditional indirect effect of emotional exhaustion on happiness, via planning (Hypothesis 3). Thus, in Study 3 we examined the entire conceptual model. We also conducted additional analyses to further support that PSS (a circumstance) and searching for instrumental social support (an activity) have different roles in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and happiness, via planning.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Six hundred US-based employees were recruited online via Amazon’s MTurk to participate in a two-part questionnaire. To participate employees had to be working full-time and under direct supervision. One month after answering to the first questionnaire, all Time 1 participants were invited to respond to the second questionnaire. Two hundred and seventy eight workers responded to the Time 2 questionnaire, producing a response rate of 46%. Post hoc careless responding analyses (i.e., response time, the even-odd consistency measure, and the Mahalanobis D measure) for the respondents who answered both questionnaires (see Meade & Craig, 2012) revealed insufficient effort from 36 participants, at one or both times. As such, the analysis sample was composed of 242 workers: 141 women and 101 men. The average age was 37 years (SD = 11.58) and the average tenure with current employer was 7 years (SD = 6.40). With respect to educational level, 43% held a high school diploma and 41% held a college degree. Several occupations were represented, including sales (13%), education, training and library (12%), healthcare (12%), office and administration support (10%), computer and mathematical (9%), and business and financial operations (6%).

T-tests and cross-tabulations revealed that those who answered only the first questionnaire (T1) were younger (Δ mean = 3.19, p < .01) and had lower organizational
tenure (Δ mean = 1.55, p < .01) than the analysis sample (T1 and T2). However, no significant differences were found on sex counts and on the study variables measured at Time 1. Accordingly, it is not expected that self-selection bias and attrition over time threat the accurate testing of our hypotheses.

Measures

Happiness, the criterion variable, was measured at Time 2 and the other variables at Time 1 (i.e., emotional exhaustion, PSS and coping).

*Emotional exhaustion* was measured with the 5-item scale developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002). A 7-point response scale (0 = “Never”, 6 = “Every day”) was used. A sample item is “I feel emotionally drained from my work”.

*PSS* was assessed with the four-item measure developed by Seers, McGee, Serey, and Graen (1983), using a 7-point response scale (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 = “Strongly agree”). Sample item: “My supervisor makes worklife easier”.

*Planning and searching for instrumental social support* were measured with the same scales as in Study 2.

*Happiness*. Participants evaluated their level of happiness at Time 2 using the 4-item scale of subjective happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), with the original 7-point response scales. For example, an item asked participants to indicate the extent to which a description of a very happy person characterizes them (1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “A great deal”).

*Control variables*. As in Study 2, we controlled for participants’ gender, age and organizational tenure (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Results and Discussion

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations are shown in Table 5.

Confirmatory factor analyses supported our measurement model and the empirical distinction of the variables of interest. The five-factor model (emotional exhaustion, PSS,
planning, searching for instrumental social support and happiness) yielded good fit ($\chi^2 (179 \, df) = 375.09, \, p < .01; \, CFI = .96; \, RMSEA = .07$). All items loaded above .77 ($p < .01$) on their corresponding latent variables. Chi-squared statistics revealed that the five-factor model fit the data better than the one-factor model ($\Delta \chi^2 = 3031.49, \, df = 10, \, p < .01$).

Following the procedure adopted in Studies 1 and 2, we evaluated whether PSS moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning (Hypothesis 1) with a three step hierarchical regression (see Table 2). In step 1, we entered control variables. In step 2, we found that both emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .14, \, p < .05$) and PSS ($\beta = .17, \, p < .05$) were significant predictors of planning. In step 3, we added the interaction term between emotional exhaustion and PSS, which was negative and significant ($\beta = -.24, \, p < .01$). Simple slopes analyses (Figure 1) revealed a positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning for participants who perceived low supervisor support ($-1 \, SD$, simple slope = .38, $p < .01$; for high PSS, $+1 \, SD$, simple slope = -.12, $p > .05$). An examination of regions of significance using the Johnson-Neyman technique revealed that the slopes for the emotional exhaustion-planning relationship became significantly negative for values of PSS that were at or above a standardized score of 1.4. This finding is aligned with the results of Study 1 and suggests that not only low PSS enhances the emotional exhaustion-planning association, but also that substantial PSS hinders the establishment of a plan of action to deal with emotional exhaustion. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

In Table 4 we present the results for Hypothesis 2 (searching for instrumental social support moderates the relationship between planning and happiness). In step 1, we added control variables. The distal predictor (emotional exhaustion), Hypothesis 1 moderator (PSS) and their interaction term were also entered in step 1. Results indicated that PSS did not change the relationship between emotional exhaustion and happiness ($\beta = -.05, \, p > .05$). In step 2, the focal predictor (planning) and the moderator (searching for instrumental social support) were added. The interaction term between planning and searching for instrumental social support was negative and significant ($\beta = -.20, \, p < .01$). An examination of regions of significance using the Johnson-Neyman technique revealed that the slopes for the planning-searching for instrumental social support relationship became significantly negative for values of PSS that were at or above a standardized score of 1.4. This finding is aligned with the results of Study 1 and suggests that not only low PSS enhances the planning-searching for instrumental social support association, but also that substantial PSS hinders the establishment of a plan of action to deal with planning. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.
support) were added to the equation. Planning was the only significant predictor of happiness ($\beta = .22, p < .01$). In the third step, we added the interaction term and found that it was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .18, p < .01$). Figure 2 shows this moderation effect. A significant positive relationship was found between planning and happiness when there was high search for instrumental social support ($+1 \text{ SD}$, simple slope = .44, $p < .01$); however, the relationship was nonsignificant for employees reporting low search for instrumental social support ($-1 \text{ SD}$, simple slope = .11, $p > .05$). Hypothesis 2 was therefore supported and these findings are aligned with those of Study 2.

To evaluate whether there was a conditional indirect effect of emotional exhaustion on happiness via planning (Hypothesis 3), we used the Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) method. The 95% bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrapped confidence interval ($BC_a CI_{95\%}$), with 1000 resamples, was used to evaluate whether the conditional indirect effect was statistically significant. When zero is not included in the confidence interval, the indirect effect is considered statistically significant. We found that when PSS was low ($-1 \text{ SD}$) and searching for instrumental social support was high ($+1 \text{ SD}$), emotional exhaustion had a positive and statistically significant indirect effect on happiness (conditional indirect effect = .17, $p < .01$, .08 $\leq BC_a CI_{95\%} \leq .30$). The indirect effect was non-significant for the other combinations of high and low levels of the moderators. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Supplementary Analyses

To discard alternative explanations of our results, two sets of additional analyses were conducted. First, to evaluate whether the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning was moderated by PSS, as hypothesized, or by searching for instrumental social support, three-way interactions were conducted. Results indicated that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning was moderated only by PSS, as hypothesized (interaction term: $\beta = -.21, p < .01$). Searching for instrumental social support did not change
the effect of emotional exhaustion (interaction term: $\beta = -.03, p > .05$), of PSS (interaction term: $\beta = -.06, p > .05$), nor of the interaction between emotional exhaustion and PSS (three-way interaction term: $\beta = .06, p > .05$) on planning. Second, to evaluate whether the effect of planning on happiness was conditional on searching for instrumental social support, as hypothesized, or on PSS, a similar procedure was used. Results of the three-way interactions indicated that the relationship between planning and happiness was moderated only by searching for instrumental social support, as hypothesized (interaction term: $\beta = .16, p < .05$). PSS did not influence the effect of planning (interaction term: $\beta = .09, p > .05$), of searching for instrumental social support (interaction term: $\beta = -.04, p > .05$), nor of the interaction between planning and searching for instrumental social support (three-way interaction term: $\beta = -.03, p > .05$) on happiness. These analyses further support Hypotheses 1 and 2, suggesting that PSS (a circumstance) and searching for instrumental social support (an activity) have different roles in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and happiness, via planning.

Study 3 sought to replicate and extend the results of Studies 1 and 2. The pattern of results was very similar, suggesting that our results generalize across countries (Portugal and the USA), occupations, and measures. Thus, there is strong evidence for the external validity of the findings.

**General Discussion**

This research investigates how and when emotional exhaustion enhances happiness. Specifically, we investigated the moderator roles of PSS and searching for instrumental social support in the relationships between emotional exhaustion, planning and happiness. We found that low PSS enhanced the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning; whereas searching for instrumental social support enhanced the relationship between planning and happiness. We also found that the indirect effect of emotional exhaustion on happiness, via planning, was positive and significant only when employees perceived low
supervisor support and searched highly for instrumental social support. The two moderators were found to have well-defined positions in the mediation process: PSS only moderated the emotional exhaustion-planning relationship, whereas searching for instrumental social support only influenced the planning-happiness association.

**Theoretical Contributions**

Our results strongly support the hypotheses derived from the sustainable happiness model (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). This model predicts that dealing with a demanding challenge (such as emotional exhaustion) with an effective strategy and continued effort can enhance happiness. Prior research has analyzed the negative effects of emotional exhaustion on happiness (e.g., Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000). Our findings extend those results by suggesting that the activities people engage in have a key role in building happiness from an internally stressful experience, and are aligned with the positive psychology movement, which suggests that “a complete practice of psychology should include an understanding of suffering and happiness, (...) and validated interventions that both relieve suffering and increase happiness” (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005, p. 410). It is important to note, however, that it is not emotional exhaustion per se – but rather how people cope with it – that is beneficial for individuals. Accordingly, our findings help move the conversation from reducing emotional exhaustion and its negative effects, to enhancing happiness through the engagement in specific and synergetic coping strategies.

Our findings also contribute to the literature on social support. First, we contribute to clarify the role of PSS in the process of enhancing happiness after emotional exhaustion. In line with previous research (see Halbesleben, 2006) we found that PSS relates negatively to emotional exhaustion. However, to initiate the process of becoming happier after emotional exhaustion, employees benefit from low PSS. Accordingly, PSS appears to be a double-edge sword, on the one hand hampering the emergence of emotional exhaustion but on the other
hand also diminishing the likelihood that employees will engage in planning to deal with the experienced emotional exhaustion. These results can be viewed in the context of job-stress interventions/actions (LaMontagne et al., 2007). Before the experience of emotional exhaustion, PSS is preventive (primary interventions/actions), because it helps to address job stressors. After the experience of emotional exhaustion, the employees benefit mainly from coping with that internal source of stress (secondary interventions/actions). As such, the supervisor may help employees by letting them create their own action plan to deal with emotional exhaustion, unless help is explicitly requested. Second, by distinguishing PSS from searching for instrumental social support, we contribute to clarify the role that circumstances and activities have in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and happiness.

According to the sustainable happiness model (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) activities (e.g., searching for instrumental social support) are far more important than circumstances (e.g., PSS) for happiness. Our findings further suggest that some usually desirable circumstances and job resources, such as PSS, may not only be less important but even hinder the engagement in planning activities. Third, our results are aligned with and contribute to a growing body of research showing that not all types of social support, even if well-intentioned, are effectively beneficial for their targets (Beehr, Bowling, & Bennett, 2010).

Finally, this study contributes to the literature on coping by showing that two problem-focused coping strategies may interact with each other. Coping researchers have traditionally aggregated (e.g., Etezadi & Pushkar, 2013) or evaluated the additive effects (e.g., Litman & Lunsford, 2009) of different strategies of problem-focused coping. The problem with these approaches is the little attention paid to the synergies between different components of problem-focused coping. Although in studies 2 and 3 searching for instrumental social support had no direct effect on the criterion, when it was used to enrich planning activities it enabled higher levels of happiness. Evaluating only the mutually exclusive effects of these
coping strategies would lead to the inaccurate conclusion that searching for instrumental social support was not important for happiness. Creating an overall measure of problem-focused coping would probably lead to a tenuous relationship with happiness. These results thus provide empirical support for a synergistic view of problem-focused coping strategies.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

This study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results and contributions. First, data were collected through self-report questionnaires. Although this strategy was necessary because all constructs relate to individual experiences, perceptions and strategies; it raises concerns about inflated relationships. However, it is unlikely that common method variance is biasing our results because we collected data at two time points in two studies, following the suggestions of Podsakoff et al. (2012); and because common method variance tends to deflate interaction effects, making their statistical detection difficult (Siemsen et al., 2010). Second, although the cross-lagged design of Study 3 supports temporal precedence of emotional exhaustion over happiness, we cannot establish causality. Nonetheless, our results are aligned with previous research which analyzed the direction of the relationship and has suggested that emotional exhaustion is a predictor of happiness (Demerouti et al., 2000; Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012). Third, although several occupations were represented in our three samples, the data were collected only in the US and in Portugal. Consequently, we cannot generalize our findings to other cultures without further research.

Fourth, although low PSS appears to enhance the relationship between emotional exhaustion and planning, we cannot generalize this result to other job resources (e.g., performance feedback, perceived colleagues support) without further research. Fifth, based on insights from the sustainable happiness model, we focused on the synergetic role of two problem-focused coping strategies: planning and searching for instrumental social support. Future research should investigate the role of other problem-focused coping strategies (e.g.,
suppression of competing activities, restraint coping) in the emotional exhaustion-happiness relationship. Sixth, we do not know if the moderation and moderated mediation results we found hold for the other components of burnout. Further research is required to test whether planning and searching for instrumental social support are also effective coping strategies to enhance happiness after the emergence of depersonalization or reduced personal accomplishment. Finally, we measured PSS as a single variable. Future research should test whether separating instrumental from emotional supervisor support influences the moderation effects we found. Relatedly, considering that there may exist some overlap between PSS and actual requested support, exploring a more fine-grained distinction between available support and requested support would be another promising avenue for future research.

**Practical Implications**

Several practical implications for emotionally exhausted employees and their supervisors can be derived from this research. Supervisors would probably benefit their employees by being attentive to their experiences. Providing support may prevent the emergence of emotional exhaustion in employees. However, when an employee is experiencing emotional exhaustion it might be useful to just provide support when and if requested. Otherwise, the employee may not engage or delay the engagement in coping activities that can enhance his/her happiness. Also, caring supervisors might be tempted to increase the support they provide when an employee is showing signals of emotional exhaustion. Supervisors could benefit from training that differentiates actions that can prevent employees’ emotional exhaustion from actions that can support employees’ efforts to cope with emotional exhaustion. Our research also suggests that emotionally exhausted employees may benefit from using synergistically two problem-focused coping strategies. Establishing an action plan and enriching that plan with instrumental social support might be an effective strategy to enhance happiness after emotional exhaustion.
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Emotional exhaustion and happiness


Emotional exhaustion and happiness

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interactions in multiple linear regression, multilevel modeling, and latent curve analysis.

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Emotional exhaustion and happiness


Table 1

*Study 1: Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and Correlations*

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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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<td>3. Tenure in Organization</td>
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<td>.47**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Narcissism</td>
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<td>.03</td>
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<td>.61**</td>
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<td>7. Emotional Exhaustion</td>
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<td>.26*</td>
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<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.07</td>
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<td>8. Perceived Supervisor Support</td>
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<td>.09</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
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<td>9. Planning</td>
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<td>.25*</td>
<td>.35**</td>
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<td>.75</td>
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*Notes. N = 81. Reliabilities (Cronbach alpha) are reported in bold along the diagonal.*

* p < .10. * p < .05. ** p < .01
### Table 2

**Study 1 and Study 3: Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Planning (Hypothesis 1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Study 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Step 2: $\beta$s</td>
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<td>Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)</td>
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<td>.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>EE $\times$ Nar</td>
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<td>EE $\times$ DC</td>
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<td>EE $\times$ PSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>$R^2$ change</td>
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<td>.03</td>
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</table>

_Notes._ Study 1: $N = 81$; * $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Study 3: $N = 242$; * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. 
Table 3

Study 2: Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and Correlations

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Notes. N = 177. Reliabilities (Cronbach alpha) are reported in bold along the diagonal.

* p < .05. ** p < .01.
Table 4

**Study 2 and Study 3: Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Happiness at Time 2 (Hypothesis 2)**

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<td>EE × PSS</td>
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<td>.22**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan × SISS</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ change</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.18**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes.** Study 2: N = 177. Study 3: N = 242. * p < .05. ** p < .01.
Table 5

Study 3: Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sex (0 = Male; 1 = Female)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>36.69</td>
<td>11.58</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tenure in Organization</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emotional Exhaustion (T1)</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Perceived Supervisor Support (T1)</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Planning (T1)</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Searching for Instrumental Social Support (T1)</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Happiness (T2)</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. N = 242. Reliabilities (Cronbach alpha) are reported in bold along the diagonal.

* p < .05. ** p < .01.
Figure 1. Study 3: Interaction of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and perceived supervisor support, predicting planning. A similar interaction pattern was found in Study 1.
Figure 2. Study 3: Interaction of planning and searching for instrumental social support, predicting happiness. A similar interaction pattern was found in Study 2.