INTRODUCTION TO THE PEDAGOGY OF HAPPINESS

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Abstract: The voice of children, the voice of teachers, the voice of parents can be primary sources for analyzing the existing models of happiness in school, as well as directions to investigate in order to build positive interventions in the educational environment since primary school. Happiness courses can be successfully taught in primary school, in the form of a happiness hour, but the design of classes in all disciplines can integrate the principles of happiness. In this way, the quality of school life increases: a deep, meaningful learning, simultaneously supported by the dimensions of happiness, as well as self-awareness, understanding the notions of "happy brain", "happy body", "happy teacher", "happiness teacher", "happiness at school". The benefits of happiness from an early age.

Key words: *education; happiness; pedagogy; school; teachers*

1. Introduction

The school provides the necessary school time for educational actors to know the dimensions of happiness, their impact on educational activities, habits that can support a high level of happiness, various ways to contribute to a happy climate in classrooms, balanced approach to all emotions.By capitalizing on school time in the direction of implementing the principles of happiness, the meaning of school life will determine a school life based on values and dedicated to eudaimonic happiness. Knowing the types of action that can be undertaken by each educational actor in a "happy school", combined with the openness to school happiness, is the necessary condition to ensure an adequate level of happiness in the educational environment. This paper proposes the investigation of 3 questions: *How does learning scientific happiness impact the life of a school? What is the role of happiness courses for children, teachers and parents? Is the pedagogy of happiness a basic element of a happy school?*

2. Multiple perspectives on happiness

Happiness has a rich history of interpretations, from which we will select the definitions of happiness perceived as a component that can develop, on which one can intervene to a certain extent, which can be taught and which brings advantages in all the roles that a person or an institution can play. This approach is intended to illustrate the need to inform on the spectrum of happiness of both educators and children from an early age, precisely in the idea of capitalizing on the happiness potential of a person, a group, an institution.

Lyubomirsky defines happiness as "joy, contentment, and positive well-being, combined with a sense of purpose and meaning in life" (Lyubomirsky, 2010, p.49). The

researcher illustrates the 3 main myths of happiness, by learning about the dynamics of happiness, avoiding the circulation of these myths in schools and emphasizing the idea that happiness can be built, that it is an integral part of activities. such as the 12 activities of happiness also proposed by Lyubomirsky. Happiness results in many "butterfly questions", mentioned by Baltatescu, related to "ideas that are currently circulating" and which "could prove wrong" (Baltatescu, 2019, p. 54) or "blind thoughts" which impedes choices that sustain happiness (Vitterso, 2019, p. 67).

Teresa Freire has the same perspective on buildable happiness: "happiness is a process of construction", and in this process "we need others to know things about us" (Freire, 2019, p. 181). The school is the space where we can get to know each other in the relationship with teachers and colleagues.

Freire (2019, p. 183)also says that happiness "means finding our place in life. It means seeing our own growth through the growth and development of others [...] to create bridges between affections, emotions, cognitions, actions, values, strengths, behaviors, people, society... ", and this aspect implies that happiness at school means finding our place in school, feeling the meaning of school life.

Akhtar (2019, p. 233)emphasizes that "happiness is like a muscle that can be developed", and for this development a holistic approach is needed: "you can train the mind for happiness, but happiness is not only found in the mind. Happiness training is holistic - for body and spirit alike" (Akhtar, p. 234). This statement is related to the discovery of Carol Dweck following her studies conducted in schools according to which children who are aware of this characteristic of "muscles" in terms of learning processes, they have a higher level of involvement, commitment to improvement and can put higher value, in a healthy way, on perfection instead of perfection. This flexible mentality is also necessary in the case of happiness, by realizing our ability to intervene, according to researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky in a range of up to 40% on our level of happiness.

If happiness is a "muscle", at the educational level it is important to intervene as educators so that children can intervene through their own solutions, through tools of happiness known in the classroom. Hallowell's question: "How do you think we can lay the foundation for children's happiness from an early age?" it is a question that can find its place in a school that prioritizes children's happiness.

"Happiness must be learned. Happiness can be taught at school. The first experiments and "happiness lessons" in lower secondary education proved to be a success! ", says Ernst Gehmacher (2019, p 252). Therefore, in the literature, the idea of teaching happiness in schools is supported and argued. There are countless studies on the impact on secondary schooling, but for an ecological approach to happiness and to prevent risk factors on happiness in old age, it is appropriate to deliver these happiness programs in the early stages, with age-appropriate tools.

Moreover, learning happiness involves understanding the differences between productive and non-functional forms of happiness. "Good forms of happiness must be learned and trained" (Gehmacher, 2019, p 251). At the same time, learning happiness involves knowing its paradoxes and increasing tolerance for frustration, widening the "green zone" that Siegel (2014, p.53) talks about in his work "The Affirmative Brain".

Mike Martin defines happiness by integrating its specific paradoxes, paradoxes compatible with the idea of appreciating one's own live and identifying a "healthy sense of meaning in life" (Martin, 2019, p. 80-81). In addition to general paradoxes, there are also individual paradoxes generated by the uniqueness of each of us. Lucie Mandeville (2019, p. 119) points out: "Happiness depends on who we are as people and is based on our special way of seeing the world".

In defining happiness, "meaning" is vital, G. Reker (2019, p. 75) saying that "true happiness is a byproduct of finding meaning" and extracting meaning from various sources.) This diversity of sources is the basic pillar of happiness (Reker, 2019, p. 7).

Diversity is also given by life experiences: Xing Zhanjun (2019, pp. 85-87)mentions 9 types of experiences that optimize happiness: experience of mental health, experience of physical health, experience of psychological balance, experience of adapting to interpersonal relationships, experience of family atmosphere, experience of trust in society, experience of acceptance self, experience of personal goals and values, experience of growth and progress.

Alex Michalos (2019, p. 99)refers to the multiple definitions given to happiness mentioned above and proposes to use "a very robust range of constituent and determinant factors of a good life."

For the purpose of a good and meaningful school life, this range of factors is fundamental to be illustrated in the classroom, on the understanding of children and with respect for the scientific truths of happiness, the need to know the "truths of happiness" (Mandeville, 2019, p. 121).

In school, we can talk not only about good scores of academic results, but also about good scores of happiness, the development of learning skills related to individual and collective happiness and not only lessons specific to existing disciplines, but also lessons of happiness.

How would learning scientific happiness impact the life of a school? School resources would be invested in providing the necessary conditions for happiness for all educational actors, teachers would understand their role as agents of happiness, children would be cocreators of happiness at school, happiness myths would not merge with learning myths, school communication would know the language of happiness, school efforts would be the basis for building school happiness.

Learning scientific happiness at school would be possible through happiness courses designed primarily for educators, teachers and parents and later for children, precisely to produce this change at the school level in a documented way.

Ben-Shahar describes happiness as the "supreme currency" and the need for this belief in happiness on the part of parents and teachers: Educators, parents and teacher who want to help children have a fulfilled life have to be convinced themselves that happiness is the supreme currency. Children [...] will assume the beliefs of educators" (Ben-Shahar, 2009, p.111). The teacher can also be seen as a" sender "of emotional state in the classroom (Goleman, 2016, p. 78).

Implementing happiness programs in school effectively depends on the level of knowledge of teachers on scientific happiness, understanding the impact of happiness factors and especially understanding the control area it has on the level of happiness in the classroom, but also understanding the effectiveness of control which a student can exercise on his own happiness and the happiness of the group, from self-responsibility, commitment to learning, the pleasure of learning, the habits of happiness maintained in the classroom, to the positive contagion at school.Happiness as a mental garment (Seligman, 2020, pp. 17-18) that we can choose to wear like a school uniform.School happiness needs to be connected to science and consistent action: "[...] We need science and action to transform the school and make it an open, flexible, environmentally friendly and positive environment for each student's development (Vrăsmaş, 2007, p. 8).

3. Why a pedagogy of happiness?

"Happiness should be one of the goals of education, and a good education aims to make a significant contribution to personal and collective happiness" (Tenney, 2011, p.14).

The pedagogy of happiness supports the pedagogical idea according to which happiness can be learned and that the principles of happiness can be used in teaching school subjects, having an impact on the school climate and school performance.

Moreover, the status of the student, the teacher, the parent, the principal supports new roles as agents of happiness. At the school level, we can learn to win together, to build together a happy climate of learning and collaboration: "the pursuit of happiness is, to a large extent, a collective issue: something we must do together" (Haybron, 2019, p. 41). Gael Brule (2019)exposes the concept of "happy education" and the active-participatory teaching style that contributes to it.

Lotta Uusitalo-Malmivaara (2019, p. 137)mentions that:"Sustainable happiness can and should be taught", "we should definitely provide training in happiness, starting from basic human needs"... Moreover, he says: "It would seem that the factors behind happiness are achievable, even simple. It is the duty of educators to make children and students aware of the factors that promote sustainable happiness" (Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2019, p.139).

Can school contribute to individual and collective happiness in terms of educational actors? "For something to make you happy, you have to learn to really appreciate it" (Zaccagnini, 2019,p.184). A pedagogy of happiness encourages the discovery of the meaning of the school and the framework it allows to access the sources of authentic happiness and to build a model of happiness that allows the coexistence of individual and collective aspects.

Openness to a pedagogy of happiness can be sustained by understanding notions of brain science and the impact of happiness habits on work and interaction in schools. "Happy brain", "happy body", "happiness hormones", are topics that can be addressed in happiness courses for teachers. Moreover, it is important for teachers to understand the happiness that school can host and their role in creating and maintaining this happiness.

The pedagogy of happiness pleads for the co-creation of happiness at school: the child's voice, the teacher's voice, the parent's voice, the principal's voice, the specialist's voice representing sources on the development needs existing in a school, each school having its happiness profile.

The design of school hours can be influenced by the notions of happiness and adopting a way of teaching that capitalizes on the interests of children, a pleasant but responsible learning, taking into account the "laws of the brain" stated by Medina (Medina, 2017), and a "happy", "friendly" evaluation, the hours can become" hours of happiness ".

The pedagogy of happiness involves positive school interventions that lead to awareness of the relationship between:

- Happiness and understanding the meaning of emotions, positive and negative
- Happiness and mental health of educational actors
- Happiness and learning atmosphere in the classroom
- Happiness and school academic results
- Happiness and school collaboration
- Happiness and respect for the uniqueness of educational actors
- Happiness and observing the habits of happiness at school
- ✤ Happiness and organizational culture
- Happiness and brain science
- Happiness and school architecture
- Happiness and technology
- Happiness and school humor
- Happiness and school optimism
- ✤ Happiness and meaning
- ✤ Happiness and learning through movement
- Happiness and sleep quality

Adequate understanding of these relationships makes it possible to develop happy schools. Happy schools are characterized by optimism, trust, positive study memories, antifragility, assertive communication, flexible architecture, with green areas (vegetation) and blue (water), a philosophy of happiness, self-respect, approaching challenges with a mindset. flexible, developed relationship skills. Happiness pedagogy also investigates the concepts of "group IQ" and the programming of a mood in Goleman's work (Goleman, 2016).

At the same time, it emphasizes how happiness can be conceptualized from school age and on the use of happiness questions to measure it in the school environment: "Because happiness is defined as something we have in mind, it can be measured through questions(Veenhoven, 2019, p. 357).

The pedagogy of happiness aims at the psychological immunization of children, but also of all educational actors: "A nation of pessimists will not be able to take advantage of the opportunities that the 21st century has to offer" (Seligman, 2020, p. 19). It aims to identify the profile of the happy teacher, the happy child, the happy principal and the happy parent, as well as the happy school.

Seligman (2020, p. 23)talks about a way of thinking about success, and in the pedagogy of happiness we can go in the direction of a way of thinking about happiness, both at the level of thinking of the child and at the level of thinking of the parent and of the director, but also in terms of pedagogical thinking necessary to implement models of healthy happiness in schools.

The pedagogy of happiness involves learning an adaptive way of identifying what makes us happy: "Psychologists have found obvious evidence that we do not know what makes us happy and what brings us pleasure and fulfillment, and as a result we sometimes struggle for things. which do not make us happy" (Lyubomirsky, 2010, p.31). The sooner children know their strengths, the more they can use them during their school years.

Identifying the sources of happiness can be done, in the case of teachers, in programs for teachers such as CARE (Cultivation of Awareness and Resilience in Education), mentioned by Jennings in the work "Mindfulness for teachers". "The goal is to help teachers understand, recognize, adjust their emotional reactions and react more effectively to the emotional reactions of others (students, parents and colleagues). The program involves reflective practices, role-playing activities that help participants recognize their emotional states and explore their individual "emotional landscape" - habits patterns, triggers and reactivity profile" (Jennings, 2017, p. 299).

In teacher happiness programs, they can examine their mental patterns and intervene to reach the "happy teacher profile" and the "happiness teacher profile." This profile also includes "inner dialogue at work" (Seligman, 2004, p. 205), the way they talk about teacher happiness.Following the pandemic, teachers have been much more active in the online area, so it is useful to address the relationship between happiness and technology, and Blankson even talks about the future of happiness in online environment (Blankson, 2019).

In the case of children, the pedagogy of happiness offers a series of tools of happiness that support the student to enjoy school life, to get involved in their own training ("the active role they have in the development of their own minds" (Dweck, 2008, p. 12), to develop healthy relationships in school, to feel that its uniqueness is respected.

Lefgren's study "showed that parents want teachers to promote student satisfaction along with academic success and that most parents actually perceive their child's happiness even more important than academic success" (Tenney, 2011, p.15). Therefore, parents can become educational partners in applying the principles of a pedagogy of happiness. In order to develop happiness programs in school and happiness hours, it is essential to capitalize on studies that incorporate the voice of the child in the school that conducts these programs and classes. More time needs to be given to children's voices to adequately address school happiness: "While student happiness should be an essential goal of education (Baker & Maupin, 2009; Huebner & McCollough, 2000; Noddings, 2003; Pajares, 2001), limited research has been done on the happiness of students in school" (Tenney, 2011, p. 21). There is a risk of lowering the level of school involvement even in primary school (Einsminger & Slusarcick, 1992), so we return to the need to explore the happiness of primary school students.

The pedagogy of happiness implemented in the primary school can also find an argument in Hallowell's statement: "childhood is a good time to make sure that happiness becomes a lasting habit. [...] Parents can make sure that they can teach their children the basics of this skill we call happiness" (Hallowell, 2016, p.18). And not only parents, but also teachers, in learning sessions and school curricula.

The pedagogy of happiness does not imply the creation of a golden cage, the elimination of school obstacles, but proposes the rational approach of happiness through a balanced positioning towards its components. For example, rational optimism is a key element in a pedagogy of happiness: "Rational optimism makes you see the real opportunities that exist in every problem or catastrophe. Rational optimism guides you to put a limit around a problem, rather than allowing it to encompass your whole life" (Hallowell, 2016, p. 184). Observing "the good parts of unpleasant feelings" (Seligman, 2020, p. 56) and understanding that "every internal state has its advantages and disadvantages" (Goleman, 2016, pp. 23-24) is another goal of happiness pedagogy.

Understanding that there is also a "smile with tears in your eyes"; research by Laura Carstensen, Joe Mikels on mixed emotions (Hershfield, 2019, p. 69) and the psychological significance of mixed emotions in assimilating all dimensions of life, the bright and less bright side(Hershfield, 2019, p. 71) determines a balanced approach to happiness.

Precisely the respect for human nature, with positive and negative sides, makes the pedagogy of happiness a pedagogy that respects the dignity of educational actors, the dignity of the child: "This child has dignity in himself. It is already there; we don't have to put it there. Our job is to recognize it and work with it" (Senge, 2016, p.196) and the dignity of the teacher: "each school must consider, as part of its main purpose, the promotion, development, care and safety of its teachers - in recognition of their importance. [...] Good teachers are themselves involved in a continuous learning, both of the subject they teach and of the teaching profession, developing throughout their lives " (Senge, 2016, p. 28).

A pedagogy of happiness proposes:

- New types of hours: Hour of happiness, Hour of solutions, etc
- New types of notebooks: Encouragement notebook, Question book, Game book, etc.
- Examining teachers' mental patterns "An unfortunate mental pattern among teachers is that parents are no longer interested in getting involved in school life. Another mental model sees parents as obstacles - the source of requirements that make the job of the educator more difficult. At the same time, parents have their own negative mental patterns when it comes to education. Some associate the school building with their own previous uncomfortable learning experience" (Senge, 2016, 29), as unexplored mental patterns limit people's ability to change (Senge, 2016, p.112)
- Co-created lessons, teachers, children: "the lesson co-created in the classroom" (Senge, 2016, p.106)

- An honest, friendly type of assessment: "Assessments challenge students to make changes based on the data received. Sometimes it is difficult for them to deal with this data; for, after all, if they do not take them seriously, they do not want to change. However, an honest assessment will tend to create a feeling of cognitive dissonance or imbalance, which makes people take the need for change seriously" (Senge, 2016, p.243)
- Managing one's own learning: "students will learn one of the most valuable life skills for adulthood: to manage their own learning."
- Development of the affirmative brain (Siegel, 2014)
- Developing the child's Balance: "all the lessons we would like to give to our children, together with the results we would like to see (significant relationships with family and friends, reparatory sleep, school success, happiness in general) depend of balance. In addition, when children lose control, they cannot learn" (Siegel, 2019, p. 47) and the teacher.
- Happiness teacher training: "the imperative to model adults so as to provide positive role models to the children they educate because, as Snyder and Lopez (2005) put it, << children are, plastically speaking, hungry for role models positive (...) it would be good for them to have the opportunity to find them in the real people around them, not in the characters in the programs and movies they watch. (p.94) "(Negovan, 2013, p. 40)
- Capitalizing on school humor: "Smile and laughter are exceptional human reactions. At the physiological level, they cause a slowing of the pulse, the secretion of endorphins and high levels of oxygen in the blood. They have been found to support higher level thinking and unleash creativity. Some students have not fully developed their sense of humor" (Senge, 2016, p. 263).
- Higher thinking: "Higher thinking: respect for the roles and values of other human beings; shows more compassion for other life forms; they perceive the value and uniqueness of all people and the things that get in their way. Amazement, admiration, passion - these are the premises of superior thinking" (Senge, 2016, p. 264).
- Interdependent thinking: "We are social beings. We gather in groups, it seems to us that it is something therapeutic to be listened to, we feed ourselves with energy from each other and we look for reproach. Probably the most intellectual behavior for the citizens of the twenty-first century and the future will be an increased ability to think in tandem with others. Problem solving has become so complex that no one can do it alone. No one has access to all the data needed to make important decisions [...] Working in groups requires the ability to justify ideas and test the feasibility of solving strategies in relation to others. "(Senge, 2016, p. 265)
- Intelligent risk-taking: "Smart people [...] develop a capacity for intelligent risk-taking a crossover of intuition, prior knowledge and a willingness to face new challenges" (Senge, 2016, p. 264).
- Happy teachers: "Happiness is contagious. The happy teacher will have happy students who love to work. They will work "for the sake of working". The tasks completed will be a daily impetus and what works with pleasure will be well done for you"(Biddulph, 2004); "For the development of children, we need to appreciate teachers" (Roffey, 2019, pp. 275).
- Child-to-Child Method: Teachers can learn how to motivate students and how to create an appropriate emotional environment for learning. [...] Peer tutoring is an excellent way to increase understanding of the subject, both for the tutor and the tutored" (Senge, 2016, p. 430).
- Positive attention in school: Where the attention is directed, there the neurons are activated"(Siegel, 2019, p. 32);

- Self-knowledge by eliminating distortions: "when you are learning-oriented, you need accurate information about your current traits in order to learn well. But if you are like those with a rigid mindset, for whom anything related to their priceless qualities is either white or black, distortion almost inevitably occurs. Some results are exaggerated, others are minimized, and before you know it, you end up not knowing anything about yourself "(Dweck, 2017, p.23);
- Movement in the learning process: "physical exercises improve a lot of skills needed in the classroom and at work" (Medina, 2017, p.41);
- The mentality of happiness for all educational actors: "If happiness is the answer we seek, then optimizing the mentality is the algorithm that leads us there" (Blankson, 2019, p. 110);
- Protocols on the mental health of educational actors: "Unfortunately, it is extremely rare for school authorities to have protocols on mental health that clarify policies, procedures and instructions for working with students with mental health disorders. [...] Although schools are an educational, not a clinical, setting, school staff members deal with students' mental health issues on a daily basis" (Dikel, 2015, p.5).

Confidence in a pedagogy of happiness is a key element in embracing it: "Probably the most important factor, as in any process of innovation, is to know how to create an environment in which people trust each other and can worktogether effectively" (Senge, 2016, p.205). The pedagogy of happiness relies on the sincerity of schools, on the authentic happiness it can create and share: "Science shows that sincerity matters," Fredrickson said (2019, pg. 60).

Application segment: Advocacy for a pedagogy of happiness in primary schools in Romania. In creating a 'happy environment' at school, it is necessary to investigate the conditions of happiness: "This search for happiness requires an understanding of the conditions for happiness, which, in turn, requires a systematic study of the subject. [...] (Veenhoven, 2019, p. 356). These conditions of happiness also create research directions to identify and analyze the happiness profile of schools in Romania.

Since 2016, we have initiated in the doctoral school studies on teachers 'happiness, students' happiness, tools for happiness for school, neuroscience programs for children."The journal of happiness at school" (Puiu, 2020) is a tool proposed to record the voice of children in schools in Romania, capturing the sources of happiness at school for them and capitalizing on these sources in the design of classes.During the research, I also designed some happiness notebooks: the *Encouragement Notebook*, the *QuestionsNotebook* and the *Happiness Games Notebook*. Moreover, as a primary school teacher, I conducted "happiness hours", whose design was documented based on specialized literature, to bring to class activities that support happiness at school.

At the same time, we investigated the definitions of "happiness at school" given by children, teachers and parents, as well as the profile of the happy teacher from the perspective of teachers and parents in Romania, the usefulness of neuroscience in obtaining good academic results, sleep habits, food and environment. online for children, the openness to participate in happiness courses for teachers and parents and the design of the "Hour of Happiness" from the perspective of Romanian students. According to questionnaires applied to parents, teachers and principals, the level of openness for a pedagogy of happiness is very high.

Conclusions

A pedagogy of happiness proposes the creation of a relaxed, optimistic, productive environment, which in the reality of many school and work environments is not reflected: "We have created extremely stressful work environments, although a stressed brain is much less productive than an unstressed one." (Medina, 2017, p.18); "Schooling must be radically rethought to ensure an emotional and interrelational education that is currently discouraged." (Bartolini, 2019, p. 305)According to the literature, there is an evolution in the approach to the "how" of happiness: Joar Vitterso: "recent evolution in the field, promoted by a growing number of researchers, who now insist on wondering how, about happiness" (Vitterso, 2019, P. 65). There are many arguments for a pedagogy of happiness, it is important to make the decision to be happy at school and to build happy schools.

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