

Determinants of Employee Workplace Happiness in Hospitality Sector in Riyadh

Dr Sanjeevni Gangwani^{a*}, Dr Rania Maher Alhalawany^b, Dr Shanoo Sheikh^c, ^aProfessor and Researcher, Department of Graduate studies and Scientific Research, Deanship of Community services and continuity in Education, Princess Nourahbint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh. ^{b,c}Assistant Professor in clinical psychology, Health Sciences Department, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences College, Princess Nourahbint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh. Email: ^{a*}sanjeevnigangwani@gmail.com, ^bRmalhalawany@pnu.edu.sa, ^cssskeikh@pnu.edu.sa

The sustainability of hospitality industry depends on their customer satisfaction. Customers can be satisfied if they are provided with adequate services and facilities offered by the firms in return of the cost paid by them. The operations of hospitality industry are managed by its employees. Employees can serve the customers to their best of the ability only when they are contented and happy at their workplace. However, keeping all employees happy and motivated at the workplace, especially in hospitality sector is a challenging task for the employer to sustain in the competitive business environment. The aim of this study is to discuss the determinants of workplace happiness in hospitality industry in Riyadh and to suggest a plan of action for facilitating a happy workplace. Data was collected through a self-designed closed ended questionnaire among 500 employees working in various hotels in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Data was analyzed using factor analysis principal components with varimax rotation method. Eight significant determinants of workplace happiness in hospitality sector were identified based on factor analysis which included: Work Environment, Family Environment and living conditions, Genetic and Personality Factors, Social Interaction, Organizational Factors, Leader/Supervisor Behavior or attitude, Spirituality and emotional wellness, Interventions. The results of this study can guide the employers, managers and human resource personnel to develop interventions to ensure a culture where happiness is promoted.

Key words: *Employee Happiness, workplace, interventions, hospitality sector, customer satisfaction.*



INTRODUCTION

Workplace happiness has become a topic of interest in today's employment world as employee retention and their satisfaction is the major concern for organizations today. Workplace happiness refers to a state in which employees feel comfortable, secure, and safe. Many employers are willing to spend money in order to hire life coaches and trainers who can conduct sessions on team-building exercises, gameplays, practical training, experience sharing in order to keep their employee happy and enthusiastic at work. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) stated that happy employees can lead a successful life. Oswald et al. (2009), Freeman (1977), Boehm & Lyubomirsky (2008), and Amabile & Kramer (2011) concluded in their study that through workplace happiness employees can achieve success, job satisfaction, self motivation and reduced employee turnover. There are many previous research which supported the fact that a happy employees are more productive (Judge et al. 2001, Cropanzano and Wright 2001, Zelenski, Murphy and Jenkins 2008), creative (Amabile et al. 2005, Rego et al. 2009), stable, exhibits better citizenship behavior (Rego et al. 2009, Rego et al. 2011). and are able to meet the organization goals. Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Judge & Hurst, 2008 stated that workplace happiness leads to prosperity of business, happy employees performed better and earned more money, they accommodate well with the workplace changes, they have better understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they display active participation in team sessions. Organizations who are able to keep employees happy can achieve better interpersonal relations by gaining respect and trust of its employees. Another beneficial effect with which workplace happiness is associated involves the realization of corporate spiritual values. Pawar (2008), found that workplace happiness improves social connectivity, reduces turnover rates, increases employee performance, firm profitability and harmony among employees. Liu & Robertson, 2011 stated that workplace happiness creates a sense of purpose in employees and gives them recognition. Therefore, organizations must focus on attaining workplace happiness for their employees, as happy and enthusiastic employees can serve their customers better and can act as a catalyst to achieve organization goals. The present study aims to explain the prominent factors or determinants of workplace happiness. The study can guide employers, organization consultants or administrators in hospitality sector to improve on the happiness at work of their employees.

Research Objectives

- i. To discuss the benefits of workplace happiness to the employee and the organization through intensive literature review.
- ii. To identify the factors that determine the employee workplace happiness in hospitality sector in Riyadh.



- iii. To suggest measures that can be adopted by the employee and the organization to improve workplace happiness.

Literature Review

Workplace Happiness

Happiness has been studied extensively across cultures to explore factors that causes happiness. Argyle (1987) described happiness as positive feeling experienced by an individual such as joy and pleasure. Diener et al. (1991) ,Myers and Diener(1995) and Fisher (2010) described workplace happiness as positive attitude, pleasant experiences of an employee. Staw et al. (1994) found that happy employees have better performance ratings, increases in pay, and social support. Diener (2002) stated happiness as the primary goal among employees. He found that happy employees are more successful in their career, they experience less unemployment issues and are more successful in their job.Pryce-Jones (2011) concluded that workplace happiness can increase performance and employee potential. Hosie and Sevastos (2009), stated that happiness requires individualization and to establish a balance between company profitability and benefiting the employees. Jessica Pryce-Jones(2010) explained the ways to achieve workplace happiness through optimum utilization of the resources. Jeffrey et al, 2014 explained the four dimensions of workplace happiness, which included personal resources, organizational system, organization functioning and work experience. Maktoum's (2017) defined happiness as "quality of individual life, emotional health, work environment, physical health, behavior and basic access favorably". According to Al Maktoum (2017),employee positivity is the predictor of workplace happiness.

Factors influencing workplace happiness

Primarily eight important determinants of workplace happiness were identified based on the intensive review of literature.

1. Work Environment

Fried and Ferris (1987) stated that favourable work environment can keep employee happy by fulfilling their needs ,preferences and can fulfill their career goal . Dawis and Lofquist (1984) proposed that positive and friendly work environment leads to workplace happiness. Lyubomirsky (2005) and Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2008) concluded that environmental factors affected workplace happiness. Dimitrov's (2012) described the significance of meaningfulness at work.

2. Family Environment and living conditions

Suh and Koo (2008) in their findings stated that employees who lead stable life such as happy married life, who have good supportive social networks, who are self employed, who participate in religious and leisure activities and who are healthy, they enjoy better status and earn more money. Fisher (2010) stated that the stable life circumstances creates employee happiness. (Ryan and Deci 2001; Ryff and Singer 2008) stated that antecedents to happiness include previous history of happiness, relatively stable family and living conditions. Veenhoven 2003 study cited social environment and specifics of their organization as elements that contribute to employee happiness. McNulty(2012) concluded that social environment plays an important role in keeping employee happy.

3. Genetic and Personality Factors

Numerous studies such as Lykken and Tellegen (1996); Tellegen et al. (1988) and Weiss et al.(2008) Lyubomirsky (2005) and Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2008) stated that the genetic factors can effect employee well-being up to fifty percent .Diener et al.(1999) and Lucas (2008) stated that genes and personality play a significant role in keeping employee happy at work. Rabbi Schachtel (1954), Ross (1997), Lyubomirsky(2001) and Larsen and McKibban (2008) explained that positive attitude of employees can impact the workplace happiness .Heller et al. (2004); Lucas (2008)and Steel et al. (2008) highlighted the role of personality traits such as extraversion, emotional stability ,positive attitude, locus of control, optimism and self-esteem in creating workplace happiness among employees. Judge et al. 2008 stated in their findings that individuals who have higher internal locus of control, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-evaluations and emotional stability are happier at work as compared to their peers. Diener and Seligman (2002)Francis et al. (2004) associated positive disposition and personality traits with workplace happiness particularly extraversion and neuroticism. Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005) explained that workplace happiness can be determined through life circumstances and intentional activity.

4. Social Interaction

Clark and Watson (1988) ,Dutton (2003) and Dutton and Ragins, (2007) explained the significance of social activities and social connections as an important source of happiness and energy for employees. Hatfield et al. (1994) in their study stated that mechanism of emotional contagion influenced the employee happiness. Baumeister and Leary 1995 emphasized that interpersonal relationships play important role in employee happiness and well-being. Argyle (2001) focused on good personal relationships as strong predictor of workplace happiness.



Diener and Seligman (2002) ,Mastekaasa (1992) ,Lucas et al. (2003) ,Easterlin (2006) and Demir, Özdemir and Weitekamp (2007) concluded that social relationships such as stable married life, close friendships and family relationships directly affects the workplace happiness.. Author Tom Rath (2006) in his popular book *Vital Friends* mentioned that individuals who had close friends at work were seven times more engaged and happy in their job. Fowler and Christakis (2008) stated that employees who have supportive friends and neighbor can feel much happier. Bader, Hashim, and Zaharim (2013) concluded that friendship of employees within organizations can foster the workplace happiness.

5.Organizational Factors

Hackman and Oldham (1975) and Fried and Ferris (1987) presented a typology of job characteristics such as stable job, challenging and interesting work, can affect employee overall satisfaction and happiness. Sirota et al.(2005) and Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) found that organizational factors such as equity and fairness, job security, self esteem ,employees empowerment, performance feedback, effective supervision, adequate pay and cordial relationship with peers influenced the workplace happiness. Huselid (1995) Lawler (1992) and Pfeffer (1998) emphasized on high performance work practices such as redesigning work ,offering job security, investing in training, sharing information and power with employees, adopting flat organization structures, and performance based rewards as a tool to ensure employee happiness. Carr et al.,2003 Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001; Colquitt et al.2001, stated positive organizational climate as another prominent factor that affects employee happiness. However, Warr's 'vitamin model' (1987,2007) suggested that just like vitamins must be given in the required quantity else it overdose may create a negative effect on the body, Similarly excess of some job characteristics cannot create beneficial effects on employee happiness. Warr 2007 stated that effective utilization of ones own skill, environmental clarity, equity, valued social position, pay and career issues are positively related to happiness at work .Study by (Weiss and Cropanzano1996) suggested that stable features of the work setting such as positive feedback can create pleasant experiences at work. (Fisher 2000). Lazarus 1991; Scherer et al. 2001 supported the critical role of the appraisal process in determining employee happiness. Seligman 2002; Wrz-esniewski et al. 1997 stated that employees can feel comparatively happy if there is a connection between what employees do at work and the work purpose .Golden and Veiga(2005) : Berg, Applebaum, Bailey and Kalleberg, 2004: Warr 2007: Atkinson and Hall 2011 stated that Flexible working might also promote employee happiness at work.

6. Leader/Supervisor Behavior or attitude:

Tepper (2007) stated that inappropriate leader behavior created a negative impact on employee happiness. Fisher, 2010 associated the need to keep employee happy by strengthening the relationship between employers and employees as a tool to retain best employees in industry . Salas-Vanilla and Fernandez 2017 found that effective leadership behavior positively affected employee happiness at work. The Great Place to Work Institute (<http://www.greatplacetowork.com>) has suggested that trust in the employer, built on credibility, respect, and fairness is an important parameter to keep employee happy at work .

7. Spirituality and emotional wellness

Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) explained the role of spirituality as an important element that affected the workplace happiness. Findings of Francis et al. (2004) and Snoep (2008) indicated a strong positive correlation between religion and happiness as participation in religious activity provides an opportunity for both meaningful activity and social support.

8. Interventions

Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2007 have highlighted the role of designing and assessing interventions to stay happy at work for improving long-term happiness . Seligman et al. (2005) found that to use of ones own character strength and taking note of good things that happened each day is one of the successful interventions. Seligman (2002) suggested that happiness is facilitated by developing and practicing character virtues such as kindness, gratitude, optimism, curiosity, playfulness, humor, open mindedness, and hope. Lyubomirsky et al.(2005) suggested that practicing gratitude ,performing several acts of kindness, forgiveness and engaging in meditation and physical exercise are ways to keep oneself happy at work. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) described 'job crafting' as one of the intervention that can be adopted by employees to improve happiness at work. It can be implemented by employees by asserting control, creating a positive self-image at work, modifying the tasks to be performed, and building relationships with co-workers or clients. (Argyle 2001, Diener and Seligman 2002, Warr 2007, Steger, Kashdan and Oishi 2008) (Post 2005, Meier and Stutzer 2008).showed that meaningful activity at work such as altruistic activity and volunteering can have a positive impact on workplace happiness. Al Maktoum (2017) stated that implementation of relevant strategies can improve productivity and increase the firm profitability. From the above review on literature, it can be concluded happiness in the workplace poses several beneficial effects to individual as well as the organization.. Hence there is a need by all organization to implement



strategies to keep employees happy at work in order to achieve firms profitability and improve employee performance and organization productivity.

Material and Methods

The research methodology for this study incorporated an examination of various sources such as books and journal articles that discuss factors affecting workplace happiness. A survey was conducted among 500 employees working in hospitality sector in Riyadh through Google form, using a self-designed closed ended questionnaire . The response rate was 97% as 488 responses were received. To explore the dimensionality of the questionnaire items, an exploratory factor analysis was applied using varimax rotated principal axis factoring. The analysis resulted into six factors with Eigenvalues and factor loadings that, respectively, exceeded the minimums of 1 and 0.3 suggested by Creswell (2012). The factors also fulfilled the minimum criteria (at least three items per factor) of defining a factor (Brown 2015). Accordingly, the authors named the generated factors through driving the concept behind the meaning of the constructed items. Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, was found to exceed the minimum of 0.6 suggested by DeVellis (2012) for all of the factors. Cronbach Alpha test was done to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The results of reliability test was found to be 0.837 ,as its value is greater than 0.70,hence the questionnaire was found to be reliable to conduct further research. The sample included the employees working in best hotel industry in Riyadh including Hilton hotel, Hyaat Regency, Durrat Resort and spa, The Ritz Carlton, Burj Rafal, Marriot International Hotel, Fraser Suites, Four seasons Hotel, Narcissus Hotel and Spa, Crowne Plaza Riyadh, RDC Hotel and Convention, Radisson Blu Hotel, Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter, Al Faisaliah hotel, Le Meridien, Sheraton Riyadh Hotel and towers, Vittori Palace Hotel, Braira Hettin Resort Vivienda Hotel, Corp Inn Deira, Aspar Resorts, Madareem Crown Hotel, Dorrah Resort, Fairmont Hotel. The collected data was analysed through SPSS 22 using Factor analysis Principal Components with varimax rotation method.

Results and Discussion:

1. Table 1 The Cronbach's alpha was run to test the reliability of the questionnaire and it was found to be 0.837 (>0.70).

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.837	.837	23

2.The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin(KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was undertaken to confirm the adequacy for factor analysis and its value was found to be 0.731 which is greater than 0.7 indicating that factor analysis can be applied to the set of variables .

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.731
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3.324E3
	df	243
	Sig.	.000

3.Various factors related to employee happiness at work were analyzed using Principal Components Factor Analysis with varimax rotation method.In order to make the questionnaire specific and concise for the respondents components were filtered and converted into 23 statements. In Factor Analysis, variables having factor loadings greater than 0.70 were identified as imperative factors and is retained in the study. The summary of principal components analysis is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Factor Analysis

Factor	Factor name	Variables under factor	Factor Loading
Factor 1	Work Environment	Does your organization has favourable work environment	0.881
		Does your work environment meet all your requirements and preferences	0.857
		Does your work environment matches with your personal goal	0.851
Factor 2	Family Environment and living conditions	Do you have a happy married life and good supportive social networks.	0.831
		Are you satisfied with your living conditions.	0.775
Factor 3	Genetic and Personality Factors	Do you communicate and socialize well with your customers.	0.936
		Are you emotionally stable at work and stay positive at your workplace.	0.842
Factor 4	Social Interaction	Do you have good interpersonal relations with your coworkers and supervisor at your workplace.	0.839
		Do you participate in social activities at your work.	0.764
Factor 5	Organizational Factors	Do you find your work challenging and interesting.	0.924
		Are you satisfied with the Pay,Promotion and benefits provided to you.	0.920
Factor 6	Leader/Supervisor Behavior or attitude:	Are you satisfied with the leadership style of your supervisor.	0.846
		Do you feel safe and secure with your leader.	0.832
Factor 7	Spirituality and Emotional wellness	Do you participate in religious and leisure activities.	0.839
		Are you satisfied with your social and occupational status	0.767
Factor 8	Interventions	Do you use your strengths and practice kindness,meditation ,exercise or implement any strategy to keep yourself happy.	0.842

4. Table 4 shows the Eigen values. Based on principle component analysis, following eight dominant determinants of workplace happiness were selected based on Eigen values which are greater than one:

- i. Work Environment.
- ii. Family Environment and living conditions.
- iii. Genetic and Personality Factors.
- iv. Social Interaction.
- v. Organizational Factors.

- vi. Leader/Supervisor Behavior or attitude.
- vii. Spirituality and emotional wellness.
- viii. Interventions.

Table 4. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.610	24.357	24.357	5.610	24.357	24.357	2.858	12.394	12.394
2	2.931	12.796	37.153	2.931	12.796	37.153	2.810	12.185	24.579
3	2.429	10.615	47.768	2.429	10.615	47.768	2.653	11.482	36.061
4	2.089	9.134	56.902	2.089	9.134	56.902	2.288	9.912	45.973
5	1.666	7.298	64.2	1.666	7.298	64.2	2.278	9.871	55.844
6	1.289	5.659	69.859	1.289	5.659	69.859	2.151	9.320	65.164
7	1.262	5.539	75.398	1.262	5.539	75.398	1.972	8.541	73.705
8	1.042	4.586	79.984	1.042	4.586	79.984	1.447	6.259	79.964
9	.777	3.433	83.417						
10	.653	2.892	86.309						
11	.527	2.257	88.566						
12	.518	2.220	90.786						
13	.395	1.684	92.47						
14	.336	1.428	93.898						
15	.313	1.325	95.223						
16	.257	1.171	96.394						
17	.224	.941	97.335						
18	.224	.939	98.274						
19	.184	.768	99.042						
20	.140	.573	99.615						
21	.087	.430	100.045						
22	.041	.143	100.188						
23	.017	.042	100.23						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5. Determinants of Workplace happiness

S.no.	Determinants of Workplace Happiness	Question no in Questionnaire
1	Work Environment	Q2, Q3. Q4
2	Family Environment and living conditions	Q5, Q6 Q7,
3	Genetic and Personality Factors	Q8, Q9, Q10
4	Social Interaction	Q11, Q12 Q13
5	Organizational Factors	Q14, Q15, Q16
6	Leader/Supervisor Behavior or attitude:	Q17, Q18, Q19
7	Spirituality and emotional wellness	Q20, Q21
8	Interventions	Q22, Q23

Table 6. Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component								Communalities
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extraction
You have favorable work environment	.273	.643	-.043	.050	.229	.215	.158	-.067	.656
work environment meets your requirements	.881	.071	.069	.007	.166	.085	.043	.105	.851
work environment matches with your personal goal	.225	.775	.246	.040	-.053	-.075	.182	-.007	.778
You have a happy married life	.857	.079	.178	.072	.130	.123	-.002	.079	.851
You have supportive social networks.	.851	.106	.104	.015	-.024	.212	.023	-.112	.824
Satisfied with your living conditions.	.163	.247	.523	.382	.323	-.089	.107	.255	.691
Communicate and socialize well at work.	.121	.156	.539	.017	-.322	.273	.249	-.368	.704
Emotionally stable at work.	.111	.064	.081	.072	.935	.153	.136	-.031	.943



Stay positive at your workplace.	.384	.441	.138	-.105	-.122	.457	.154	-.379	.758
Good interpersonal relations.	-.094	.822	-.051	-.081	.128	.122	-.158	.028	.748
Participate in social activities.	.077	.008	.145	.756	.053	.304	.113	.397	.869
Have Good friends at work.	.257	.017	.049	.178	.179	.857	.086	.092	.878
Finds work challenging and interesting.	.078	.108	.086	.828	.025	-.079	-.024	-.268	.792
Satisfied with the Pay, Promotion.	-.054	-.026	.117	.775	.101	.281	.102	.208	.759
Satisfied with work practices and policies.	.128	.056	.083	.077	.931	.166	.122	-.024	.938
Satisfied with the leadership style.	.021	.212	.069	.196	.144	.078	.788	.007	.735
Trust your leader.	-.008	-.027	-.022	-.081	.168	.038	.828	.061	.729
Feel safe and secure with your leader.	.223	.505	-.041	.128	-.211	-.068	.523	.004	.644
Participate in religious acts.	.154	.058	.013	.142	.167	.843	-.025	.092	.793
Leisure activities.	.134	-.058	.925	.123	.073	.041	-.038	.074	.904
Satisfied with your social and occupational status.	.133	-.059	.927	.099	.093	.008	-.025	.058	.898
Use your strengths and practice kindness.	.082	.045	.108	.088	-.078	.144	.086	.853	.789
Meditation and Exercise	-.073	.669	-.388	.297	-.053	-.112	.349	.155	.851

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.



Conclusion

Workplace happiness affects not only the individual but also the organization. There is no single factor that can create workplace happiness. Organization need to incorporate different elements that can enhance workplace happiness. Eight significant determinants were identified based on factor analysis which included: Work Environment, Family Environment and living conditions, Genetic and Personality Factors, Social Interaction, Organizational Factors, Leader/Supervisor Behavior or attitude, Spirituality and emotional wellness, Interventions.

Suggestions

Organizations and individuals should try to improve employee happiness at work. Individuals should identify their personal strengths, and then design their job or career to cultivate these strengths by applying them in their work. Organizations must adopt high performance work practices by creating a healthy, respectful and supportive organizational culture. They must support employees through competent leadership at all levels. Provide fair treatment, security and recognition. Redesign jobs to make them interesting and challenging. Facilitate skill development to improve competence and allow growth. Senior leaders and managers of organizations, should implement employee happiness programs.

Future Implications of Research:

Further studies can be conducted to analyze the relationship of happy employees and the firms productivity and profitability.

Limitations

- 1.The sample was collected only from hotel industry in Riyadh, Sample was not collected from other hospitality sector such as tourism, aviation.
- 2.All the employees of the hotel were not considered for study; simple random sampling was followed.
- 3.The findings of the study are confined to hotels in Riyadh only. Hotels located in other cities of KSA was not taken in the study.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.



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