Social Factor and Its Impact on Staff Happiness

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*Abstract***:** *Work and social life with family and friends are conceptualized as factors of personal happiness. Thus, work and social life have to share time resources. Time limitation can put strains on the relationship in work-related life and social life. Intense commitment at work has the potential to interfere one's social life. Therefore, this study aimed to figure out the effects of the social factors on staff happiness.The research design for this study was a quantitative method using survey and focus group discussion (FGD). The simple random sampling technique was executed as a methodology for this research paper. This study involved 535 respondents from the population of academic and administrative staff in UTHM. All the data is analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 2.0. The result has shown that the elements of a relationship, either with friends or family are found to be the main contributors in determining staff happiness.*

Keywords **:** *social support, social environment, family and social relations, staff happiness.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The last element in the Model of Happiness that is seen to contribute to employee happiness is social interaction. Support from family members and social system have significant effects on employee happiness. The social interactions that exist among individuals with other members of society can lead to a sense of trust and appreciation to one another. Through this approach, individuals will feel more refreshed and happy in their lives. Many previous studies have found that interaction elements and social relationships have a strong influence on individual happiness (Siska and Ami, 2007; Fisher, 2010 and Carr, 2004). In this context, the role of experts in the social support system is seen to affect the behaviour and emotions of the employees. Other than colleagues and social partners, family members are more likely to have an impact on employee happiness. This effect not only affects employees' emotions and physicals but also the current productivity of the organization.

On the other hand, workers who are able to spend time evenly between work and family life often success to find happiness regardless of their work conditions. Thus, time-sharing with family members and having a successful marriage could result in reducing stress and achieve personal happiness. Otherwise, there are some people willing to devote most of their time towards their work. This might be the way of certain people to alleviate their personal stress by binging on stressful work routines and responsibilities to find happiness. Human indicators of happiness are differents on each person depends on their own perspectives.

Nowadays, women no longer being full-time homemakers. Almost every woman have increased their labour market participation and have risen to become full-time caring at the same time. There are positive and negative views of how developments in the domains of work and family can effect happiness. Therefore, strong support from family members and friends are required for individuals to stay happy in their own way of living. Happiness is partially high among those with high income and many friends.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are previous studies which have proven that academic subjects with disgruntled conditions at work can ultimately impact their mental health. For example, the issue of the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education (IPGM) lecturers experiencing drastic changes in terms of workload, the daily scope of work and routine when the organization changed their status of education from college to institution. As a result, the lecturers experienced inadvertent life to balance time allocation between work and non-work life, such as family and friends. At Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), the death rate of academic staff also shows an increase from one in 2017 to four in 2018. Although the outcome of death is caused by a variety of factors, most of them were caused by stress factors.

The issue of work-family conflict has becoming a growing topic of interest which gives implications to both organisation and workers. Mc Shane & Von Glinow (2010) indicate work-family conflict is considered as a potential stressor that leads to various form of stress reactions. The conflict was arising when work-roles interferes with family-roles and vice versa. Regarding the issue, failure to allocate their time in personal life and work-related life can decrease workers productivity and increase absenteeism.

Despite the World Happening Index of 2018, Malaysia has been the third happiest country with an index score of 6,084 compared to Singapore (index score of 6.572) and Thailand (index score 6,424), but in reality 30 percent of Malaysians suffer from mental health problems. Arumugam (2016) explains that three out of every adult in Malaysia are faced with a mental illness caused by a variety of conditions, which are mainly due to stress and unhappiness in life.

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Meanwhile, the National Health Morbidity Survey (Kosmo Online, 2018) states that every three in ten adults over the past 16 years suffer from various mental health issues due to various causes such as stress, mental disorder, depression, schizophrenia, and conflict. Therefore, this study is conducted to find factors for the social domain that can contribute to the happiness of employees in the organization.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In terms of medicine, Jambunathan (2015) explains that individuals experiencing happiness can overcome a variety of illnesses, can improve their immunization, overcome stress and survive the challenges of daily life. This is because individuals with positive elements in themselves can inflict these effects to their environment. Therefore, being happy can avoid an individual from experiencing stress, mental stress and hypertension. According to Wesarat et. al., (2014), the use of word happy is a global and different term used for each person according to their own culture. Understanding in terms of happiness for an individual is different. Being happy at work is a step of achieving joy in life. They also explained that happiness at work involves individual work activities and job satisfaction at workplace.

According to psychologist Gordon Allport, social stimulation plays a role in affecting individual thoughts and motivations, individual internal factors and individual interaction patterns with other individuals. It shows how the influence of social elements in an individual can affect other social and emotional feelings. Relationship with other individuals in a formal or informal environment is highly believed to have an impact on individual happiness (Meriam, 2007; Siska and Ami, 2014). The position of workers in a social environment is very close to family members and co-workers. Therefore, these two factors influence each other in the formation of employees' emotions and thoughts.

According to Sunny Munn (2013), the work-life balance concept of happiness should be understood by all individuals and organizations in developing human resource management. It is because the concept of work-life balance of happiness is a concept that is closely related to the worker. Sunny Munn (2013) describes the work-life system in terms of individuals, organizations, governments, and correspondences in three-dimensions, which is working life equilibrium, work-life initiatives and working life policies. Each of these dimensions implies employees, organizations, and governments.

Generally, social support needs to be improved to help individuals involved in conflict and stress. Social support can be obtained from any particular group or organization. Meanwhile, immediate help can be obtained through friends and families. Many studies show social interactions between workers and the environment can contribute to happiness in the organization, but according to Yufi (2012) social support does not show significant results of the level of happiness of an individual. However, Murti (2013) expresses social support as one of the needs in employee satisfaction as well as individual personal characteristics, family relationships and pleasant feelings with the jobs they have. Besides, social support formed in social environments varies according to individual needs (Jaroslava Kubtova, 2017), and this also affects individual perceptions of the definitions of happiness.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to figure out the effects of the social factor on staff happiness. The research design for this study was a quantitative method using survey and focus group discussion (FGD).The simple random sampling technique was executed as a methodology for this research paper. This study involved 535 respondents from the population of academic and administrative staff in UTHM. All the data is analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 2.0.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study comprises of three subdomains, which are social environment, social support and family and social relationship. Overall, social domains scored an average level of happiness. This shows that respondents will be happy and content when surrounded by close and trustworthy individuals such as family and friends. According to Carr (2004), the individual's happiness depends on individual cognitive satisfaction based on multiple domains such as family and society. Respondents are happier if they get enough time to carry out social activities with family and friends, either in formal or informal interaction. The social interaction element is found to have a very significant value in determining individual happiness. This is because Siska and Ami (2014) indicate that positive relationships with others are the most significant factors that make a person feel happy at work.

Table 1: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Social Environment

No	Social Environment	Mean	Standard Deviation
B41	I have spare time with my interest.	2.855 (average)	0.699
B42	I have time to mingle around with the community.	2.885 (average)	0.707
B43	I have time to spend with my family.	2.936 (average)	0.701
B44	I will make sure I exercise after work.	2.674 (average)	0.773
B45	My colleagues and I are respecting each other.	3.314 (high)	0.556

Table 1 shows the mean score and standard deviation of the respondents' social environment. The social environment achieved an average mean score that attributes to happiness. The B45 statement '*My colleagues and I are respecting each other*' recorded a high score (mean = 3.314). The findings showed that the respondents appreciated the value of friendship among colleagues in the organization. The respondents also considered colleagues to be one of the factors to happiness.

Meanwhile, statements related to time which are "spare time with my interest" (mean = 2.855), "mingle around with community" (mean = 2.885), and "spend time with family" (mean = 2.936) recorded an average mean score, respectively. These findings showed relatively less satisfaction with the quality of time allocated to the three statements. Better time allocation is found to be helpful in contributing to the happiness of respondents in the organization. Happiness among individuals is a concept that drives the positive emotions of individuals, especially when doing a favorable activity (Seligman, 2005).

It is not surprising that there are individuals who are willing to participate in volunteerism and community activities such as being involved with the community. Hence, it is argued that individuals with higher levels of happiness generally have a satisfying social life and will spend a lot of time to socialize (Meriam, 2017).

The interactions that exist in social activities will usually meet individual needs and be able to inject the value of happiness within themselves. According to Argyle (2000 and 2001), affection between individuals is found to have a strong correlation with happiness and well-being. Therefore, Siska and Ami (2014) confirm that positive relationships with others have a more significant influence in determining the employees' happiness in the organization rather than work environment, work performance and health factors. This fact is confirmed by *Globaforce*, which found that happy employees will apply medical leave 10 times lesser than workers who are not happy. Hence, UTHM staff need more space for vacations in order to ensure they are able to achieve a work-life balance instead of work-life conflict

Table 2 : Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Social Support

No	Social Support	Mean	Standard Deviation
B46	I actively being involved in voluntary bodies	2.902 (average)	0.737
B47	I accepted advice from friends with open hearts	3.242 (high)	0.512
B48	Taking advice from the counseling center helps me in self-management.	2.574 (average)	0.863
B49	Good relationships with neighborhood make me feel more comfortable and safe.	3.226 (high)	0.581
B50	The close relationship with my family made me become a passionate person.	3.464 (high)	0.552

Table 2 shows the mean score and standard deviation of social support. B50, B47 and B49 statements show a higher score followed by B48 and B46 statements. The B48 and B46 statements gained an average score for social support subdomain. According to respondents via the B47 statement, "*The close relationship with my family made me become a passionate person*." This finding has shown that family factors have a significant impact on daily life and work productivity of respondents.

Respondents once again stated that friends could contribute to the happiness of respondents in the organization. This statement corresponds to the B47 statement "*I accepted advice from friends with open hearts*." In the context of this social support, it may not refer to colleagues but involve acquaintance from the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, both the B46 and B48 statements recorded an average mean score. According to the respondents, active participation in outdoors such as voluntary bodies (B46 statements) can cause a sense of happiness within themselves. Meanwhile, counseling services provided by the organization also help to influence the level of happiness. This situation can be proven by the B48

statement, "*Taking advice from the counseling center helps me in self-management*."

Either families or social factors, neighborhoods and friends also have an influence on the respondents' happiness. Simon et al., (2010), believes that individuals with good friends are happier because good friends will always support and back each other. The study of Zakaria et al., (2012) found that social environmental factors such as parents and peers have relationships with the formation of individual identity. Therefore, it can be said that social environmental factors can influence the level of individual happiness.

Table 3 : Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Family and Social Relations

No	Family and Social Relations	Mean	Standard Deviation
B51	I make sure no interruptions of work after working hour.	3.137 (high)	0.751
B52	Communicating with family members makes me calmer.	3.52 (high)	0.553
B53	Family members and I rely on each other in solving problems.	3.412 (high)	0.618
B54	My family is willing to hear out my work-related problems.	3.313 (high)	0.68
B55	I'm easy to chat with people I just met.	3.208 (high)	0.631

Table 3 shows the mean value and standard deviation of family and social relations with individuals in contributing to the happiness of employees in the organization. It is relatively possible that family and social relation can contribute to happiness. This is supported by the achievement of the high mean score of all the five items. However, the value of the family recorded the highest score and it emphasizes the importance of the family aspect in determining respondents happiness. It shows social influence is more significant than self-influence to respondents. The social interactions that exist among family, neighborhoods and friends can make respondents feel open to share opinions and not be burdened in discussing work-related issues. This finding can be supported by Ovaska & Takashima (2006) that personal relationships between individuals can be a factor that attributes towards employees' happiness.

Nevertheless, the explosive growth of social media has created new online destinations for people to engage in social dialogue and interaction, information exchange and collaboration in a variety of topics. It is not surprising that numbers of social media applications have an influence on users to emerged user to devote solely to conversations. Social relations in this study are not only seen in friendship or face-to-face relationships but also in the interaction of social media application as long as the interaction is able to create socialization space between individuals. Social media applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram have been integrated into the work environment as a medium of communication between employees and supervisors. In addition, these social media applications have interrupted quality times with family during weekends.

Respondents mentioned that they received job tasks when having vacations with family or spending time at home. This statement is supported by the B51 statement stating that "*I make sure no interruptions of work after working hour*". It means respondents acknowledge to balance time allocation in work-related life and social life. There are respondents who suggested about spending more time with family to enhance their level of happiness. But, some people may choose to spend more time in unpleasant activities, such as work and accept that they have to sacrifice more enjoyable activities, such as socializing with family and friends (Kahneman et. al., 2006). In some cases, people will spend more time on paid work because of constraints and demands from their workplace (Clarkberg & Meon, 2001). It may result in a shortage of time to spend with family and friends, which may have difficulty to balance work and family. More sadly, this may lead to having no time to spend for themselves.

Consequently, subdomain family and social relations achieved higher mean score, which means families are found to have a healthy relationship with individual happiness. Seligman (2002) and Carr (2004) found that marriage is seen to have a greater impact in influencing one's happiness than finance. This is because, through marriage, individual physiological needs are universally fulfilled, and individuals are focusing on other needs in achieving life goals. Ma'arof (2001) states that having a spouse or life partner is an authority in life because it will be able to fulfill the physiological and psychological needs. Levinger (1980) highlights that there are three stages in a relationship that can make a relationship more intimate. One of them is social space. The social attraction that exists between individuals will influence the level of other people's happiness when they feel comfortable and safe. This situation will eventually affect individual emotional levels (Ma'arof, 2001). In addition, Anggun (2015) confirms that the ultimate happiness of the individual is when they have friends or couples, who are not just there through the bond of marriage but also as social friends and colleagues.

The Staff Happiness Index in this study is based on the measurements used by the World Happiness Index in the World Happiness Index: Malaysia's Initiative with Local Authorities under the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (2012) which have shown a cumulative index of social domains at a moderate level with a percentage close to happiness scale of 80 percent. It means that social factors such as family and friends are helpful in creating a pleasant environment for respondents. This statement is supported by the findings of family and social relationship that achieved the 76.7 percent of the happiness index. In the perspective of Islam, it states that "social aspects or relationship of an individual with the environment" are necessary for the development of behavior, morals and individual identity (Zakaria et al., 2012).

Based on the result, respondents are happy when it comes to social context, especially in the context of family, friends and society. According to Naff (2012) and Snow (2013), positive relationships between colleagues in the workplace can affect the level of employee's happiness that ultimately causes employees to be happy. It is clear that employers are found to require support elements in the environment to help themselves achieve the level of happiness in the organization.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study found that family and social relationships have the most substantial influence on staff happiness . This suggests that more staff require other individuals as a support system in determining their level of happiness. Social interaction and support also indicate that employees are concerned with the elements of communication and interaction with other individuals. According to the respondents' opinions, the aspects of socialization are important in influencing their level of happiness. Ami and Siska (2014) state that relationships with other individuals have a high impact on the happiness of employees.

On the other hand, the elements of the relationship, either with friends or family are found to be the main contributors in determining staff' happiness. It has shown that all the items related to 'friends' and 'families' respectively have higher scores. The findings have shown that the respondents need friends and family as an element in determining their happiness.

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