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Scandinavian work-life balance experience: its implementation in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) happiness context

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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

SCANDINAVIAN WORK-LIFE BALANCE EXPERIENCE: ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN
THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) HAPPINESS CONTEXT

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by
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This dissertation, written by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents and wife who have always inspired and encouraged me to remain driven in all my academic and professional endeavors. I am fortunate to have had their blessings, affection, and warmth, which eased every hurdle. This dissertation is also dedicated to my mentors who have enlightened me with their vast academic knowledge, experience, and advice. Their guidance has been integral in guiding this study throughout its course.

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Scheduling and Cost Control (IIR – GWU), 2010

SHRM (Sand Diego, CA. USA), 2010

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Essential of Leadership (London Business School), 2010

Risk Management (George Barlett), 2011

Making an Impact (IDG - Center of Excellence), 2011

Driving Economic Growth Through Enhancing Staff Expertise and Capacity (London School of Economics), 2011

Communications Review (Boston Global), 2011

ABSTRACT

Employee happiness and satisfaction are unanimously correlated to enhanced levels of productivity and efficiency, making them important for employees and employers. Scandinavian countries consistently rank highly on the world happiness index and correspondingly possess comparatively happier employees in their workplaces. Aside from the structural setting, internal components, and atmosphere of the workplace, it is primarily understood that the initiatives undertaken by Scandinavian countries in relation to the concept of work life balance are significantly important. The concept of work-life balance is cognizant of an employee's struggle in maintaining equilibrium between work and personal life. This study could aid the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in identifying, implementing, and emulating similar strategies to reap comparable benefits. This research encompassed a quasi-experimental mixed method design which sought to reveal and establish the impact, link, and correlation of numerous independent variables upon employee happiness. The theoretical model guiding this study highlighted four key areas, including organizational, people, job factors, and work-life balance. The qualitative aspect involved dividing these categories into 14 sub-components and utilizing more than 100 academic studies to collect requisite data to determine their theoretical purpose and supposed effect upon employee happiness and productivity. The quantitative aspect involved a corresponding survey conducted in UAE public sector. The data collected were evaluated using the statistical technique of regression analysis to estimate relationships between variables, which was eventually tied with the qualitative research to either confirm or refute the conclusions reached earlier. Each section of the survey was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha Score. It was concluded that countries possess the skill of augmenting workplace factors to achieve the desired result of increased productivity. Such factors and strategies are not yet well understood nor

endorsed in the UAE. As such, this research sought to clarify the value and influence of work-life balance and other components on employee happiness, revealing areas of improvement in the UAE work environment.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Scandinavian countries are statistically considered among the happiest countries on a global scale and are placed at the top of the happiness index (Hannerz & Gingrich, 2017). This raises the question about what exactly makes these countries the happiest in the world. Some issues can explain this state, such as the natural scenes in these countries, peace, and welfare. Some countries share these conditions, but they are not at the top of the happiness index. According to Dølvik and Steen (2018), the condition that is present in the Scandinavian countries and is not so in most countries is the work life balance, a factor believed to contribute to their top position at the happiness index. In an advertisement about beer made by Carlsberg (which has sponsored Liverpool Football Club since 1992), the company has used the Danish way of life in their advertisement for their product. The advert cites:

Many say that the Danes are the happiest nation in the world; but what is their secret?

Living life the Danish way - of course. That means enjoying a work-life balance, nature and craft, spending time together feeling *hygge*. That's the Danish way. Is that what makes Denmark such a happy nation? Perhaps. Or could it be that they brew the best beer in the world? Probably. (Lindskog & Stougaard-Nielsen, 2020, p. 219)

This advertisement has used a stereotyped Danish way of life. This advertisement provides evidence that there is a link between being the happiest country and enjoying work-life balance (Lindskog & Stougaard-Nielsen, 2020). Unlike the Scandinavian countries, the UAE is ranked 28th happiest country in the world and the first among Arab countries according to World Happiness Report 2016 (United Arab Emirates, the Cabinet, 2020; see Table 1). There was a drop in the happiness rank of the UAE in the 2016, 2017, and 2019.

Table 1

United Arab Emirates - World Happiness Index

| Date | World Happiness Ranking | World Happiness Index |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2019 | 21 | 6.825 |
| 2018 | 20 | 6.774 |
| 2017 | 21 | 6.648 |
| 2016 | 28 | 6.573 |
| 2015 | 20 | 6.901 |
| 2013 | 14 | 7.144 |

Figure 1

Happiness Index in the UAE Between 2015 and 2019



Adopted from United Arab Emirates- World Happiness Index.
(<https://countryeconomy.com/demography/world-happiness-index/united-arab-emirates>) In the public domain.

As shown in Figure 1, there is a drop in the happiness index of the UAE. One way to explain this drop in the level of happiness is that the UAE is one of the countries that do not have work-life balance (Charlez, 2014; Malik, 2018), making it to be positioned at a lower level of the happiness index (Daleure, 2016; Forster, 2017).

As discussed above, the Scandinavian countries are the happiest nations in the world because of the adoption of work-life balance, which means less stress and more enjoyment in life and family (Van Huegten, 2011). One of the methods that have been proven to be effective in reducing work-related stress is to create a comfortable work-life balance, which has been adopted by the Scandinavian countries and is the reason they rank among the happiest countries in the world (Rydahl, 2017). Specifically, Scandinavian countries have adopted the work-life balance whereby employees work fewer hours and spend more time with their families and friends and their private life (Lingard & Francis, 2009).

Lingard and Francis (2009) have defined the work-life balance in terms of job security, mobility into jobs that facilitate a work-life balance, skill development, predictability, and flexibility in scheduling work and work effort, and providing benefits that support employees and their families. In Sweden, employees receive 90% of pay for the first twelve months of parental leave and then they get a fixed benefit for an additional three months. This leave can be divided between parents, as fathers can get incentives if they get a substantial portion of it. Parental leave can be extended until the child is 18 months, and employees can work 6 hours a day and receive the same benefit till the child is eight years old (Jones et al., 2013).

The work-life balance strategy has some advantages, such as better staff recruitment and retention, reduced absenteeism, increased staff productivity, and improved performance (Kumra et al., 2012). The system of employment in Scandinavian countries depends on less working

hours, spending more time with family, a variety of options to do the tasks, and good payment during leave and holidays (Sanandaji, 2015). The other issue in the employment system in Scandinavian countries is that employees are engaged in decision-making to understand their specific needs as individuals and addressing them at the workplace (Waddington & Conchon, 2015).

Article Three of the UAE Labor Law states that working women are entitled to 45 days of maternity leave with full pay. If the leave expires and the mother wants to stay with her baby, she can discontinue her work without pay for 100 consecutive or intermittent days (The UAE Government Portal, n.d., para. 1). According to Maceda (2015), maternity leave in the UAE is among the shortest in the world. Fathers do not have the right to paternity leave in the UAE (Al Shamsi, 2019). According to the UAE Labor Law (Articles 65 to 73), working hours must not exceed eight hours per day or 48 hours per week of six days (Emirates Diary, 2019). Recently, there has been an increase in the annual leave of employees. Employees of Grade 8 to 11 will get 25 days paid leave as opposed to the 22 days they got previously. Employees of Grade 7 and below will get 18 days paid leave instead of 15 (Team KT, 2018). In terms of job security, Rawling (2019) states that Emirati residents feel less secure in their jobs and are less confident about getting an increase in their salary. As can be noted, there are changes in the regulations regarding work and social welfare, but there is still a lot to be done. Unlike the Scandinavian employment system, the Emirati one is based on long working hours, short maternity leave, and reduced payment during holiday and leave (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2012). Social welfare (social security, health, social care, education, and human well-being (Stephens et al., 2017) and job security are a concern in the Emirati employment

system and reforming them is a vital element in achieving work-life balance (International Council on Security and Development, 2010).

The employment system of the UAE causes genuine stress for male and female employees. Employees must spend long hours at work and come back home mentally and physically exhausted, which makes performing other social and family duties difficult (Ganguli, 2011). This affects the family life and the relationship among its members and increases the conflict between the husband and wife, which impacts the psychological state of the children and their feeling of security and safety. In other words, long working hours have been associated with work-family conflict, which reflects work interference with family rather than family interference with work (Iskra-Golec et al., 2016). Long working hours also affect the physical well-being of employees and they become unable to cope with family requirements. This leads to a deepening of the work-family conflict and increases the work and family strains on employees, which has its own social and personal effects on the employees, their families, and the society (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

The first question that arises when suggesting a work-life balance is why it has been chosen as a solution to the work-related stress that occurs in the workplace. In general, the work-life balance has been created as a response to the many changes that have taken place in the last few decades. Firstly, social and demographic changes have resulted in more females entering the workforce, which makes working women and mothers the norm rather than the exception. Secondly, the advancement of technology has made it easier for the work-life to intrude on family life. Thirdly, the rapid growth of global competition has put pressure on organizations and employees to be more flexible and responsive to change. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the proportion of people working long hours, especially in the developed countries due to the

increased workload (due to organizational changes, e-mail loads, and staff changes), a long-hours culture, and job insecurity (Jones et al., 2013). These issues have led to work-life or work-family conflict, which has been the drive to create the concept of the work-life balance.

According to Jones et al. (2013), the best way to understand the work-life balance is to consider it as “self-ratings of general perceptions of balance between roles” (p. 2). This balance has been measured in terms of “attention, satisfaction and effort across roles” (Jones et al., 2013, p. 2). P. Lewis et al. (2003) prefer to term this *integration* rather than *balance*. Kofodimos (1993) presents a definition of the work-life balance that includes all these points:

A satisfying, healthy and productive life that includes work, play and love; that integrates a range of life activities with attention to self and to personal and spiritual development; and that expresses a person’s unique wishes, interests and values. It contrasts with the imbalance of life dominated by work, focused on satisfying external requirements at the expense of inner development, and in conflict with a person’s true desires. (p. xiii)

In addition to the benefits that a work-life balance provides for employees, it also solves a number of problems that employers face, such as absenteeism because of stress, failure to retain talent, lack of initiative and creativity, low commitment and motivation, and unethical behavior (Clutterbuck, 2003).

The American Psychological Association defines work-life balance as employees’ expectations and preferences blended with ‘finite’ resources like time, energy, and money. “Work-life balance is the degree to which people’s physical, mental, and emotional resources meet their expectations” (Arenofsky, 2017, p. 5). The work-life balance is not a new concept. In the UK, the work-life balance concept was introduced partly in response to the culture of long-

hours working and to the ways in which paid work was combined with other responsibilities, such as studying and caring (Perrons, 2007). However, in modern times, it has been affected by different trends that have made its adoption more necessary. The trends that have impacted work-life balance are the advancement of technology and the computer age represented by the iPad, tablets and iPhones, makes it easier for employees to do their work at home, which has led to the interference of work in private and family life. The second factor that has impacted work-life balance is the rise of women's employment after WWII. Demands have increased on companies to provide woman-friendly benefits, such as paid maternity leave, protection from discrimination, lactation rooms, multicultural support, and consideration for the special needs of single caretakers. The third trend that has affected the work-life balance is empirical research on work-related stress. Research studies have investigated the physical effects of work-related stress and the psychological, social, and cultural ones. The findings of the work-related stress research have alerted researchers, employers, employees, and policymakers that something should be done to eliminate work-related stress and instead create a balanced life which the employees enjoy, allowing them to become more productive and creative (Arenofsky, 2017).

Problem Statement

Clark (2009) identifies work-life balance in terms of being able to find time and harmonize between one's work and private life. The concept of work-life balance is based on the notion that the private life of workers and employees should be considered as a corresponding facet, impacting overall satisfaction and productivity, as opposed to merely being conceived as an opposite priority to work. P. Lewis et al. (2003) suggest a system viewed as a two-way process that accommodates the needs of the workers and those of the employers. Okeke (2017), Lehto (2013), and Reynolds (2003) affirm that extensive work for prolonged hours results in

deterioration of productivity and health. As such, work-life balance has been seen as the strategy that can create a balance between work and private life to generate advantageous results within employment and overall general satisfaction and happiness.

There is a connection between employees' happiness and the work-life balance strategies that are adopted in the country in which they live. Fapohunda (2014) states that "work-life balance has become a determinant for more workers to attain 'a thriving career'" (p. 71). The growing obligations of work and the divide between work life and private life have created concerns because the stipulation of work or private life is a significant source of stress. There has been a need to create strategies that tackle the work-life imbalance concerns. In his study on Nigerian workers, Fapohunda (2014) has concluded that work-life balance is an essential determinant of fundamental aspects of job satisfaction.

A lot has been done in the UAE in terms of architecture, economy, culture, and education, but the implementation of the work-life balance strategies allowing people to work less hours and live their personal life has not been done (Ling, 2015). In the UAE, people work most of the time and they do not have real social life, which plays an important role in making people happier (Perlitz & Hutton, 2010). What makes people depressed and anxious is work-related stress, which has many negative physical and mental consequences (Moore & Buchwald, 2009). This will also lead to the loss of productivity, which will affect the nation's progress as well as the individuals' (Beehr, 2014). Work-life balance is strongly recommended for the employees' well-being and for the welfare of the nation (S. Lewis et al., 2016). This balance should be the goal of the UAE if it wants to be at a higher position on the happiness index, which is associated with higher productivity and higher well-being for the country (United Nations Development Program, 2017). There are several studies conducted on the concept of work-life

balance and how it affects the personal and social life of employees. However, these studies have been conducted on countries other than the UAE. Therefore, there is a need to survey the use of work-life balance strategies in the UAE and the benefits and advantages that it brings to both employees and employers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to better understand the differences between the UAE and Scandinavian countries in terms of the work-life balance strategy and the workplace circumstances in both countries by converging quantitative and qualitative research methods. This was a comparative study seeking to compare the work environment of Scandinavian countries to the UAE to ascertain the causes of the establishment of a happier and less stressful workforce in the former than the latter. The primary focus was exploring the notion of work-life balance strategies and their contribution towards generating a stable and balanced workforce through equal consideration of work and private life.

Therefore, the study objectives were:

- To examine the work circumstances that exist in the Scandinavian countries and the UAE to find the main determinants of the rate of happiness in each country.
- To explore the positive impacts that the adoption of work-life balance strategy has had on employees' life and well-being in the Scandinavian countries.
- To delve into and ascertain how work-life balance strategy can comparably affect employees' life and well-being in the UAE as it has in Scandinavia.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between organizational factors and employee happiness?

2. What is the relationship between people factors and employee happiness?
3. What is the relationship between the job factors and employee happiness?
4. What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee happiness?

Conceptual Theoretical Focus

The theoretical focus of this study was the organizational culture and communication styles used in the Scandinavian countries' and UAE's workplaces and how each element is related to the employees' satisfaction and happiness. How these two elements affect employees' satisfaction and happiness will be reviewed in Chapter 2.

As shown in Figure 2, employee happiness depends on some variables related to the organization where they work, the people they interact with at work, the description of the job, and how far the work environment is designed to care about the their well-being and the use of work-life balance strategy. The model in Figure 2 predicts that there is a relationship between the employee happiness and the organization and its vision and mission and goals. This means that the model posits that there is a correlation between employee happiness and the extent to which an organization provides an encouraging and stress-free environment. The model also predicts a correlation between employee happiness and the way managers deal with them and give them the opportunity to participate in decision making. According to the model, there is also a relationship between employee happiness and the adoption of work-life balance. The nature of the job, salaries, and working hours can also influence employee happiness, according to the model.

This study attempted to understand the way the factors shown in Figure 2 contribute to, and determine, the employee's happiness/unhappiness within Scandinavian countries and the UAE. It aimed to discover and ascertain how the utilization of work-life balance strategies impact the employee' state and well-being in their work, and private, social, and family lives.

This chapter has indicated that work-life balance is an essential determinant that is integral towards overall employee happiness by generating an overall balanced life.

Figure 2

Employee Happiness Model



Adopted from: <https://2daysmood.com/en/employee-happiness-model/work-life-balance/>. In the public domain.

Wellbeing Factors

Wellbeing factors include workplace conditions, work-life balance, and overall sense of vitality. The importance of employee wellbeing at work has been a neglected area in human resource management (Baptiste, 2008). The nature of the dynamic workplace and the increase in market competition lead to job overload and subsequent poor physical and mental health conditions, resulting in poor workplace performance (Atlaf & Awan, 2011). Job overload can

result from longer work hours, pressures from managers, and internal organizational competitiveness which negatively influences workplace performance and job satisfaction due to tiredness, loss of attention to details, stress, anxiety, and depression. Objective wellbeing factors, applicable to most employees, include health, happiness, financial security, work-life balance, initiatives by the organizations to develop their employees' skills and competencies, and supports provided by the organizations to maintain their employees' effectiveness, performance, attachment to the organization, and overall wellbeing. These factors can influence individual satisfaction of employees with their jobs and overall positive outlook on their life and wellbeing. Workplace wellness relates to the state or condition of good health, including tracing the changes in these conditions, such as through self-care (Richardson & Mackinnon, 2018).

The first realm of wellbeing is physical health. Many employers provide programs of cost sharing for gym and fitness class memberships. Some employers started to pilot their own programs of promoting employee health, such as by utilizing fitness wearables and workplace adjustments to reduce sedentary lifestyles (Richardson & Mackinnon, 2018; Swan, 2012). Another realm of wellbeing relates to mental and emotional stability of workplace in which employees feel themselves appreciated, supported, listened to, and provided with opportunities and tools for self- and professional improvement, as well as being drawn to the mission and vision of the company and to organizational core ethics. Atlaf and Awan (2011) state that workplace spirituality is the spiritual wellbeing of an individual in working conditions, which can be supported by companies offering a wide range of sessions, classes, and seminars on awareness and achievement of spirituality, as well as companies focusing on organizational ethics, fairness, employee supports, diversity, core values, and employee development programs. A more spiritual work environment leads to more positive working conditions and job

satisfaction, improving job performance, organizational commitment, and employee and organizational success.

Happiness Factors

Attempting to corral in a single attributive factor to a concept like the Nordic model is a foolish pursuit; the number of factors are as numerous as there are relationships between them. Catherine Kirchmeyer (2000) is a prodigiously vetted, well known and respected theorist in work motivation theory in large writ, with her contributions to helping define what should fall under the rubric of Scandinavian or Nordic work life balance considered benchmarks. The factors to happiness, then, as should be considered under this subsection, come from Kirchmeyer's loadbearing 2000 longitudinal, "Work-Life Initiatives: Greed or Benevolence Regarding Workers' Time?"

This study was not limited to purely Nordic data, rather, it was a near-global comparison of 'work-life' ratios to determine whether a correlative increase or emphasis on achieving balance and relative homeostasis between the two led to a quantifiable increase in happiness. Of course, the data substantiated that very thing; that the ability to engage in the latter requires agency regarding the self in relation to the former. Kirchmeyer (2000) clarifies the essence of the work life balance (WLB) model as the achievement of fulfilling experiences in the different aspects of life that require various resources, i.e. energy, time, and commitment. Kirchmeyer (2000) further acknowledges that these resources are spread across all domains.

It may then be said that the nebulousness of defining happiness is an outcropping of it being, beyond quantifiable matrices of economics, a *feeling* that has no fixed, single definition. It is emotive, therefore, it is qualified to varying degrees, from the macro to the microscopic, by each living person. However, there are consistent traits that emerge that can be identified by the

macro-theorist as causally linked to the manifestations of a happier group or culture. Kirchmeyer (2000) does just this with the Nordic, as well as creates an early ‘happiness index.’ That these indices are, more than two decades later, considered a normative part of academic theory and research *per annum* indicates that Kirchmeyer’s (2000) insistence that individual agency and ownership of self-fulfillment have stood time’s test.

Intrinsic Motivation

When it comes to the intrinsic theory of motivation, theorist Holton (2002) is a determining force in its reification, despite its reification being long-established. According to his multitudinous studies, Holton (2002) has provided a working definition of intrinsic motivation as a worker’s ability to fully hold notions of empowerment, individual learning and growth, and human development (Holton, 2002). Explicating exactly what this means in praxis becomes paramount for the individual worker to be able to consciously engage with.

Put plainly, intrinsic motivation is the emotive, sublimated self-ethic that normally trades under the banner of the feeling of ‘a job well done.’ This theoretical job, its details insignificant in the macro view, and its completion-success-engagement are entwined with the motivation itself. There is a self-impelling core that exists within the worker. Naturally, Holton (2002) and others recognize that this phenomenon is far likelier to appear with consistency or predictability in given social work models far more reliably than in others. The WLB Model—work-life balance—has been linked by Joo and Lee. (2010), in a longitudinal study informed by Holton’s (2002) theories, to be one the primary markers that may be linked between as causal to overall happiness.

Thus, intrinsic motivation—the ability to have agency as both a literal component and as a conceptual driver toward self-actualization—bolsters the work life model’s larger concern with

the happiness that is the concern of this writing. Individuals that are bereft of intrinsic motivation will betray lower levels of happiness (in the appropriate contextual definition thereof); this, in turn, will disrupt the Scandinavian model of happiness. Of course, it has been substantiated throughout this work that the same Model has intrinsic motivation as one of its key identifiers. As a result, what needs to be gleaned is that intrinsic motivation is inimitable to Nordic work-life happiness. It would not be too chasmal a proposition to recognize its key function in the success of Scandinavian societies in masse.

Definitions

Communication Styles: This refers to the way one communicates. Norton (as cited in Giri, 2004) defines communication style as “the way one verbally and nonverbally, and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered or understood” (p. 9).

Organizational Culture: According to Mukherjee (2005), organizational culture can be defined as a set of values, understandings, beliefs, and norms shared by the members of an organization.

Stress: Early definitions have defined stress according to its components. These definitions refer to stress either as a *stressor*, which refers to the presence of specific environmental or internal stimulus such as long work hours, a *response*, which refers to the experience of a specific physiological, behavioral, or mental manifestation, such as cortisol secretion, or an *interaction* between a *stressor* and *response*, which is the case when cortisol secretion follows a threat.

Work-Life Balance: Specifically, Scandinavian countries have adopted the work-life balance by allowing employees to work fewer hours and spend more time with their families and

friends and their private life (Lingard & Francis, 2009). According to Jones et al. (2013), the best way to understand the work-life balance is to consider it as “self-ratings of general perceptions of balance between roles” (p. 2).

Work-Related Stress: Work-related stress is among the most significant factors leading to employees’ depression, anxiety, and mood swings. It also creates self-dissatisfaction among individuals in relation to their lives and selves (Rossi et al., 2017). Work-related stress is believed to be responsible for employee absenteeism (Cox et al., 2000).

Qualitative Research: For the purpose of this study, qualitative analysis includes non-inferential statistics such as bar charts and pie charts, and other summary level analysis.

Significance of the Study

This study is one of the few that has researched the relationship between employees’ happiness and the organizations’ culture and communication styles in the Arab world. Most importantly, it is among the few studies that have aimed to ascertain the relationship and connection between work-life balance and employee happiness. Notably, the term work-life balance is still a new and uncommon term within the Arab world.

This study was necessary to understand the situation of employees in the UAE on the one hand and the methods that may make their productivity increase and their life more comfortable. This study was also helpful to find ways that create balance between employees’ work and their life and families to enhance their rate of achievement while maintaining a strong society. There is a scarcity of studies that have dealt with the topic of employees’ happiness and what creates in the UAE. There is a need to better understand the factors that make the UAE employees happier while leading a more balance life, which will positively reflect on the economic and social

welfare of the country. Also, the study aimed to shed light on how the UAE can benefit from the Scandinavian countries' experience of adopting work-life balance.

This study aimed to contribute to the work-life balance research by adding new perspectives on how this concept is understood in a different society and culture. Also, it aimed to contribute to the work environment research with new conceptualization of the relationship between organizational culture, communication styles as well as work-life balance and the employees' happiness and satisfaction. This study aimed to present an understanding of work-life balance that is typically shaped by the UAE society and cultural norms. It was envisaged that the country's culture would have a profound impact on the how the work-life balance strategy can effectively operate. As such, the social and cultural differences that are profound to the UAE imply that the application of a work-life balance strategy will be difference to that in any other country.

Summary

Regarding the non-correlative relationship between the questions and the answers in this study, this sidebar is necessary to clarify any misunderstanding that may arise. It is essential to note that the cultural differentials between the UAE and Scandinavian societies are fundamentally dissimilar. This difference is the reason for the non-correlation in the questions-answers responses; the possibility for a 1:1 transferability is not present.

In fact, to propose that such a correlation did exist would be to dishonor the covenant of research. The cultural dimension of family roles, in both the UAE and Scandinavia, are so wholly different that UAE respondents have no cultural context to understand their Scandinavian counterparts' connections to family. The UAE cultural norm is that familial ties are strong, intertwined, and do not wane with time. Conversely, Scandinavian culture is marked by its focus on

individual agency and the actualization of the self. While this does not mean that familial ties are severed, per se, there is too different a variance between the two cultures under study to attempt, in any way, for the UAE participants to know a life that is not inimitably mixed-in with family from birth to death.

This chapter introduced the basic elements the present study surveyed. This study aimed to better understand the circumstances that make the Scandinavian countries the happiest countries in the world. This happiness is associated with the adoption of work-life balance by the Scandinavian nations. The study compared the situation in the Scandinavian countries and in the UAE to explore the differences between the two in terms of the use of the work-life balance and work circumstances employees in both countries are exposed. The significance of the study stemmed from the apparent scarcity in studies that have researched the application of work-life balance in the UAE. This study assumed that social and cultural norms in the UAE will alter the use, application, and overall operation of the strategy. Undeniably, what works well in one society may not necessarily do so in another. The study was based on a model linking numerous factors to employees' happiness; work life balance is among those factors and forms our primary focus.

In Chapter 2, studies based on the Scandinavian countries and the UAE and the work environment of the two will be reviewed. The elements that will be discussed have been mentioned in the study models, which are the organization's features where employees work, the people they interact with at work such as leaders, the description of the job in terms of working hours, salaries, maternity and paternity leave, and how far the work environment is designed to care about the employees' physical and psychological well-being and the use of work-life balance strategy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The focus of the study was employee happiness that is associated with numerous factors, including work-life balance strategies. The framework for this literature review will be based on the conceptual theoretical model that identifies the connections of key categories that influence employee happiness. The employee happiness model is divided into four categories that are: (a) organization, (b) people, (c) wellbeing, and (d) job factors (Employee Happiness Model, 2021).

The breakdown of the four categories provides 15 individual elements with the addition of employee happiness that this chapter will consider, analyze, and evaluate. This literature review will cover all these areas to comprehensively ascertain the determinants of employee happiness.

Employee Happiness

Employee happiness refers to the level of contentment an employee experiences in their workplace, which signifies how satisfied they are with their work-life (Wesarat et al., 2014). Notably, the notion of happiness in such regards is a highly subjective experience since there are innumerable contributing factors of varying levels of importance for individuals (Roy & Konwar, 2020). There is a growing realization that employees do not work merely in exchange for monetary rewards as there is also an element of psychological fulfillment (Wesarat et al., 2014). Buljubasic (2008) asserts that employees are seeking organizations where they can find “a sense of happiness” in their job (p. 13). This is primarily because the concept of happiness interlinks and influences numerous other areas of one’s life such as personal, social, and professional (Rahmi, 2018). As such, “daily work enjoyment” contributes significantly to “daily

well-being”, which includes general “physical strength, emotional energy, and cognitive liveliness” (Fisher, 2010, p. 390).

Possessing a positive and happy “work-related state of mind” is “characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”, which is associated with “creativity and proactivity” (Fisher, 2010, p. 389). Happiness is equally important to employees and employers (Wesarat et al., 2014). Happiness correlates to enhanced productivity at work, whilst individuals who are unhappy often struggle to fully focus on their tasks (Wesarat et al., 2014). This is based on the simple notion that when employees are happy, they will be more engaged and motivated, and will be more productive and willing to “go over and beyond what is expected of them” (Joo & Lee, 2017, p. 207).

In the past decade, the concept of employee happiness has garnered attention worldwide owing to its connection to “work engagement, job satisfaction, flow at work” and efficiency (Rodríguez-Muñoz & Sanz-Vergel, 2013, p. 96.). It is contended that happy employees are much more likely to be “motivated, engaged, committed and loyal to their employers” (Andrew, 2011, p. 11).

It is notable that Scandinavian countries were the first to take initiatives to maximize their levels of employee happiness (Roy & Konwar, 2020). It is believed that Scandinavian countries value employee well-being and happiness with the understanding that it is directly linked to how well individuals perform their work (Roy & Konwar, 2020). In Denmark, the term *Arbedjsglæde* refers to happiness at work and is commonly utilized to refer to happiness and positivity that is derived from performing and committing at work (Roy & Konwar, 2020). Such happiness and “optimistic emotions” experienced during work can “escalate performance” thus ensuring “organizational effectiveness” (Roy & Konwar, 2020, p. 4452).

The aspect of organizational effectiveness is linked to the ability to work efficiently; those who “do not feel burdened with their jobs” are able to productively function in an efficient manner towards their goals (Rahmi, 2018, p. 35). The presence of employee happiness is not merely correlated to short-term benefits but can also bring long term benefits such as employee retention (Fisher, 2010). Fisher (2010) asserts that happiness at work almost certainly acts as a “glue that retains and motivates the high-quality employees of the future” (p. 405). Employees who are happy can enjoy their work regardless of challenges as they remain persistently committed to their organizations as opposed to unhappy employees (Joo & Lee, 2017). Andrew concurs, indicating that having a happy disposition allows one to be proactive, “less prone to stress symptoms” and more “resilient to adverse conditions” (Andrew, 2011, p. 10). Another major advantage of employee happiness is that it becomes an attitude that generally proliferates around the office, which empowers and motivates others (Andrew, 2011). It is also contended that happiness and positive attitudes can expand the “selection of potential thoughts and actions” when resolving any work-related problems (Andrew, 2011, p.10).

On the other hand, a lack of employee happiness gives rise to psychological stress that inevitably leads to “low productivity, decreased performance” as well as “increased absenteeism,” “fatigue/burnout, high turnover rates” and an adverse effect on health (Rahmi, 2018, p. 33). Unhappiness in the workplace can have a detrimental impact on the overall organizational productivity and efficiency (Rahmi, 2018).

The research supports that employee happiness is as important for organizations as it is for individuals themselves. The presence of a happy workforce can be seen to provide organizations a competitive advantage by possessing an efficient, productive, determined and committed workforce (Rahmi, 2018). Therefore, companies that strive to ensure the long-term

happiness of their employees are likely to be more efficient and profitable (Nadeem, 2015). To be able to generate employee happiness and its requisite benefits, it is imperative to consider a combination of factors of varying levels of importance and influence, as to be discussed below.

Organizational Factors

Internal Communication

Corporations around the world have increasingly recognized the importance of adequate interaction and communication with employees (Mishra et al., 2014). A lack of internal communication can disconnect employees from their company and its corporate goals and values. There is a positive impact on employee productivity and happiness is likely in the presence of strong internal communication (Kulachai et al., 2018). Such findings further reveal that the nature of information is irrelevant. Therefore, the nature of the communication need not be “essential to their job performance” since employees merely desire “being in the know” (White et al., 2021, p. 69).

It is a simple proposition that employees want to be “in the loop” by receiving corporate information followed by verifying and demonstrating that they are recognized and respected (White et al., 2021, p. 66). Mishra et al. (2014) concur that “positive communication efforts” can demonstrate “respect for employees” as well as “honesty, transparency, genuine caring, support, and a willingness to listen”, all of which stimulate employee motivation (p. 184).

Understandably, all employees want to be viewed and treated as valued members of the corporate unit as opposed to resources or insignificant workers. It is understood that employees increasingly seek job satisfaction and meaningful work, for which, internal communication can be a key persuader (Kalani Terumi Hayase, 2009). As such, internal communication has become a strategic focus for business (White et al., 2021).

Kulachai et al. (2018) identify that there are two forms of communication in a workplace; formal and informal. The former is purposefully “established by an organization to transmit message and information” to employees (Kulachai et al., 2018, p. 124). Adequate and clear formal internal communication is critical for the purposes of keeping the team organized, well-informed, and motivated to work towards goals. However, informal communication is created spontaneously and is dependent on the general workplace principles, atmosphere, or individual preference (Kulachai et al., 2018). Informal communication creates feelings of integration within the workforce, reinforcing a sense of belonging, purpose and “sense of community” (White et al., 2021, p. 67). The ability to communicate and connect can help sustain mental and physical vigor because it elevates the overall spirit and “interest of the workplace” (Joseph et al., 2012, p. 37). Conversely, “ineffective communication and misinformation” can have a detrimental impact of the morale of employees and can eventually lead to “poor cooperation” (Joseph et al., 2012, p. 37). A lack of internal communication will inevitably cause the workforce to lose direction and purpose, both of which are vital components that contribute to employee engagement as well as happiness.

Kulachai et al. (2018) highlight that it is imperative to consider that the “direction of the communication” can be either “downward or upward” (p. 124). The improvement of both directional internal communications is necessary for an organization. Downward internal communication refers to the transmission of information and direction from leaders and higher authorities to employees functioning at lower levels. Upward communication mainly involves lower levels of management or employees communicating with those at higher levels, which mainly involves either performance and activity reports or even communication of issues, concerns, and complaints.

Successful downward internal communication is an “important factor enhancing management effectiveness” (Kulachai et al., 2018, p. 124). On the other hand, an environment encouraging upward communication is an integral demonstration from leaders and managers of their willingness to understand and acknowledge the stance of employees. As such, nurturing upward communication can not only demonstrate that employees are valued but can reveal important internal views that can aid “strategic decision making” (Kulachai et al., 2018, p. 124).

Internal communication “plays an important role in enhancing participation of employees” as their information can influence corporate decision making (Kulachai et al., 2018, p. 124). Employees want to feel like they are valued and their ability to communicate and contribute leads to employee engagement and connects them to the company’s overall success (Mishra et al., 2014). Strong internal communication can result in employees becoming “absorbed in the performance of their roles” with a desire to provide superior service to continually “produce value” for themselves (Mishra et al., 2014 p. 184). Additionally, a strong communication framework with employees is also important in generating “greater commitment towards their organization” (Kalani Terumi Hayase, 2009, p. 51). Strong internal communication is advantageous for employees and employers. It enables higher levels of employee engagement, motivation that drives enhanced performance for the organization whilst ensuring employees feel valued and important. The level of internal communication an organization can cultivate is often influenced by the nature and even sector of the work. Nevertheless, it is advisable that businesses actively take initiatives to encourage the presence of such concepts.

Vision and Values

The vision and values of an organization are representative of its ethos and how it functions to drive the workforce towards goals. These vision and values form an organizational

culture that is “built using a set of values,” “shared beliefs” and “principles” (Frances Bissett, 2014, p. 8). Such vision and values are generally conveyed directly to employees to inspire them to work in alignment towards a purpose. It is deemed integral for a business to have a vision for the future that employees can work towards to form “a destination it is trying to reach” (Team B, 2018, p. 1).

Fundamentally, a vision provides a goal that employees can strive to work towards in an organized manner, becoming a “connective tissue to align effort with purpose” (Team B, 2018, p. 1). Every organization has “direct links between performance and purpose”, however, it is vital for employees to be able to see this connection (Team B, 2018, p. 1). A well established and communicated vision can reveal to employee as “how their work is interwoven with the larger goals” and allows them to take pride in their role (Team B, 2018, p. 1).

On the other hand, values essentially determine “the way things will and will not be done;” reflecting “the fundamental beliefs” of the organization (Team B, 2018, p. 1). Kanchana emphasizes that the values can be vital in being able the “gain the hearts and minds of employees” (Kanchana, 2013, p. 43). As suggested by numerous studies, “values have the power to influence, motivate, and guide” employees and can impact “organizational outcomes” and success (Frances Bissett, 2014, p. 2). When corporate values can relate and connect to personal values, they can form an intrinsic factor that can subsequently enhance employee engagement, receptiveness, and overall happiness (Rice et al., 2017). Organizations are increasingly recognizing that engaging employees in this manner on an “altruistic level” can add to the “meaning and importance with which they view their work” (Team KT, 2018, p. 1). An employee is much more likely to be “willing to exert effort” to facilitate their organization if they are mentally and emotionally involved (Rice et al., 2017, p. 1096).

Values alone “do not drive the organization, but they drive the employees within the organization”, resulting in higher levels of employee productivity (Kanchana, 2013, p. 42). Frances Bissett (2014) explains that the connection of the employees to the vision and values of their workplace has a distinct impact on behavior and productivity. This is because, inevitably, “anything that changes your values changes your behavior” (Frances Bissett, p. 2). Therefore, in a setting in which the employees are unable to connect to the general vision and values of their workplace, a discord will be visible through their unengaged nature, lacking happiness and productivity (Frances Bissett, 2014). Frances Bissett (2014) asserts that this discord is because such vision and values determine “how comfortable an employee is with being associated with an organization” (p. 8). Therefore, when employees find that there is a mismatch between their values and organizational values, this can take a toll on their “overall satisfaction on workplace culture”, affecting their “overall organization performance” (Kanchana, 2013, p. 42).

Kanchana (2013) expounds that employees are much more likely to operate at their best when working for an organization “whose values are in tune with their own personal values” (p. 43). On the other hand, employees are much more “likely to leave the organization” if personal values “do not fit” with those of their employers, because this seemingly compromises their personal or even moral views (Schreurs et al., 2014, p. 3). Schreurs et al. (2014) acknowledge that this is mainly due to the shifting perceptions of employees who increasingly want their work activities to be a means to “gain admiration and self-worth” (p. 2). Overall, establishing a clear vision and working under shared values can ensure that employees remain aligned towards the corporate goals and remain connected to their organization (Frances Bissett, 2014). It is imperative for corporations to understand that the presence of vision and values is beneficial for them and equally advantageous to their employees.

Strategy and Goal Alignment

Organizations set goals and objectives for employees to work towards. To properly align employees towards such objectives, organizations implement strategies to realize their desired objectives in an efficient manner. Boswell et al. (2006) emphasize that strategic goal setting and alignment are critical for organizations to “manage their human capital effectively” (p. 1). Furthermore, when employees are effectively organized and aware of their contribution towards goals, they are “likely to be more productive” and “more committed” towards their work (Developing an Employee Engagement Strategy, n.d. p. 5).

Teo and Low (2016) highlight that there can be numerous reasons why employee productivity is not as expected. The primary reason is that the employee is not clear as to what precisely is demanded by their job. As such, setting and conveying corporate goals enable employees to recognize the connection of their performance with the goals of their organization, providing a sense of achievement and satisfaction when successful. To retain employee engagement and satisfaction, it is vital for them to be considered a part of the overall organization. Being part of a corporate community and being aware of higher-level objectives and priorities naturally enforces a duty upon employees to play their part and help attain those goals (Teo & Low, 2016). In the absence of determined goals, employees are likely to “find themselves working ineffectively without direction and knowledge” (Teo & Low, p. 8). Factors that denote the value, accomplishment, and performance of an individual are vital contributors to their overall workplace happiness and satisfaction.

To establish the presence of goal alignment and strategies that efficiently involve employees, an organization must ascertain whether their employees have a line of sight as to the overall objective (Boswell et al., 2006). A line of sight refers to an employee’s understanding of

the strategic objectives in the organization as well as “how to contribute to those objectives” (Kontakos, n.d., p. 72). This line of sight “produces synergy and compatibility in organizational direction” that “ultimately translates to strategic success” (Boswell et al., 2006, p. 5).

Reputation and Brand

Semnani et al. (2015) assert that the reputation of a brand is essentially determined through a “collective assessment of the firm’s past behavior” which generates an overall image of the organization (p. 143). The reputation and brand of an organization can be an important factor that can determine employee perspective and performance. It is a simple notion that when employees feel positively about their workplace, they will feel better connected to it, approaching their work in a constructive manner. A reputable brand can be an appealing recruitment factor that individuals would want to connect and work under the organization. As such, brand and repute are “the most powerful tool” for the purposes of “attracting”, “engaging and retaining” employees (Vijayalakshmi & Uthayasuriyan, 2015, p. 211).

A comprehensive study conducted on the importance of external corporate reputation found that this element is “closely related to employees’ pride and satisfaction” (Yang et al., 2015, p. 74). When an employee is proud to be associated and identified with the favorable reputation of their organization, their “work attitudes would be positively influenced” (Yang et al., 2015, p. 75). As such, a high reputation and brand can be key in contributing to employee happiness, satisfaction, and willingness to work to their full potential.

People Factors

Leadership

Leadership is a fundamental pillar of any organization. Leaders are responsible for providing a sense of clarity, purpose, and direction towards corporate objectives. This allows

them to influence and drive the workforce to work in unison towards those goals, leading the firm towards success and growth. Gashti et al. (2014) clarify that leadership is a significant concept and a complex process in which an individual seeks to inject enthusiasm and spirit into a workplace, which can stimulate employees to demonstrate “maximum effort to achieve group goals” (p. 37).

The conduct and influence of the leader can have a significant effect on the employees because their vision and nature when effectively conveyed can gradually “become everyone’s vision” (Alnuaimi, 2018, p. 102). As such, in a “visionary leadership” where a clear direction and goal is conveyed to its followers, it can “activate” employees to attain those “determined aims”, which can have a positive influence on job satisfaction (Baltaci et al., 2012, p. 222). Furthermore, the act of driving employees towards a purpose can enable employees to see and “understand the importance of their roles”, making them feel valued and relevant (Alnuaimi, 2018, p. 102). As such, the nature of the leader and their leadership is a considerable factor that influences organizational performance as well as the employees’ level of happiness (Isa et al., 2019).

Saleem (2015) emphasizes the value of a good leadership in a corporation and the profound impact it can have upon employees. He highlights that a leader must ensure they are able to create a “fair and healthy atmosphere” that can fulfill the “needs and expectations of the employees” (p. 566). As such, leaders must ascertain workers are made to feel valued by being rewarded and appreciated “on the basis of fairness” only (Saleem, 2015, p. 566). On the other hand, in situations where an employee has a negative experience, leaders must ensure they handle employees with respect to avoid causing embarrassment and low work motivation, which ultimately makes employees unhappy (Isa et al., 2019). The treatment of the employees impacts

their attitudes towards job engagement and overall happiness (Saleem, 2015). Numerous studies have revealed that a lacking leadership structure and work system, lack of decision-making power, “lacking leadership credibility and employer recognition” make employees stressed (Isa et al., 2019, p. 6551). Furthermore, the compatibility level of the leader and employees is also a critical factor that can influence job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Baltaci et al., 2012).

There are numerous leadership styles that can be adopted by leaders, which are usually dependent on the workplace (Gashti et al., 2014). Gates (2021) identifies that leadership styles vary across the world with the French and Spanish preferring an autocratic method to ensure a strong sense of direction and discipline. On the other hand, the US and UK maintain a balanced approach depending on the nature of the organization whilst the Scandinavians leadership “differs considerably from other European models” (Isa et al., 2019, p. 6551). There are numerous key players in the decision-making process, allowing the leadership to be democratic (Gates, 2021). Finally, in relation to Latin and Arab countries, the leadership style and authority is largely influenced by ubiquitous nepotism with family relations principally forming the central source of power (Lubin, 2014).

A leadership style is defined as the selected pattern of behavior to realize a set mission or goal (Alnuaimi, 2018). A leader can behave in a democratic or autocratic manner. The former is deemed to be more positive and influential, as it optimistically “encourages employees to work openly and voluntarily” whilst the latter makes workers “feel compelled to do their work” (Isa et al., 2019, p. 6552). Autocratic and authoritative leadership can seem rather disconnected from employees, making them to feel somewhat “pressured”, “apprehensive”, and “less valued”, which is often associated with low employee retention rates (Isa et al., 2019, p. 6552).

The two leadership styles that are widely adopted around the world are transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is based on an exchange system in which leaders seek to exchange good performance with rewards (Alnuaimi, 2018). Likewise, those who fail to accomplish their job requirements are reprimanded based on the established “punishment and reward mechanism” (Asghar & Oino, n.d., p. 3). Such leaders adopt a pragmatic and practical approach by expecting “productivity, efforts, and loyalty from the follower” who has been subject to the justified punishment or reward (Saleem, 2015, p. 564). However, it is considered that such leaders are unable to connect to their employees on a deeper level, gradually leading to a less engaged workforce and less appealing work atmosphere. The lack of “necessary sympathy and intimacy” and lacking “interactionist leadership behavior” causes employees to lose motivation (Baltaci et al., 2012, p. 223). It may be an effective short-term strategy but can “adversely affect employee performance and satisfaction” in the long-term (Asghar & Oino, n.d, p. 8). Employees are much more likely to leave when their leaders follow the transactional leadership (Saleem, 2015).

On the other hand, transformational leadership is completely distinct from transactional leadership. Such leaders seek to transform their organization by being a “source of inspiration and vision” for employees (Asghar & Oino, n.d, p. 2). This leadership style involves investing in organizational values and the integration between values and behaviors with the realization that such factors are integral for long-term success (Alnuaimi, 2018). Unlike a transactional leadership, work accomplishments are driven by motivation and clarity towards attaining determined objectives, leading to high job satisfaction level and lower levels of employee turnover (Baltaci et al., 2012). The high levels of employee job satisfaction and happiness are a consequence of the “safe and soft influence” of this leadership style (Baltaci et al, 2012, p. 233).

The relationship between employees and such leaders is one that is engaging and inspiring, which automatically results in “appreciation, loyalty, obedience, and trust” from employees (Saleem, 2015, p. 564). The morale, motivation, and performance of employees are naturally enhanced (Asghar & Oino, n.d.). The effects of a good leadership can be powerful as it can drive employees towards goals and ensure that they perceive their work in a positive manner, contributing to employee happiness.

Relationship with Colleagues

The connection an individual has with their co-workers can be a key determinant of how happy, comfortable, and content they are at their workplace. In the last few decades, the notion of happier workers has emerged frequently as it is associated with higher levels of work engagement and productivity. However, Haar et al. (2019) assert that the groundworks to establish such a workforce is the renewed focus on healthy organizations. Undoubtedly, communication and social connections are an essential part of personal lives, but they have an equally important role in the workplaces too (Reba, 2019). Work relationships that provide positive mental stimulation are deemed crucial to employee well-being and can greatly contribute to our health (Reba, 2019). Kahn (1990) identifies that employees no longer simply pursue financial advancement since they also actively seek “psychological meaningfulness,” “psychological safety” and “psychological availability”, which allow individuals to “feel useful and valuable,” (p. 704) for which, social communication is imperative. The aspect of meaningfulness and availability refers to the presence of friendship or general sense of belonging whilst the aspect of safety concerns the ability to confer and work without any negative consequences or without fear (Ariani, 2015). Aktouf (1992) contends that lacking individual meaningfulness can be a key reason causing people to not feel engaged with their work. Positive

communicative interaction with colleagues will be “based on the feeling of security and self-confidence” which can support “mental and physical health” (Ariani, 2015, p. 37). The presence of “good lines of communication” will encourage employees and “help them feel happier” (Andrew, 2011, p. 8).

Ariani (2015) clarifies that such relationships and communication are distinctive from leadership-based or directional communication as formal authority elements are absent, providing a flat level of interaction without any intimidation. Strong co-worker relations are also important in creating a sense of belonging within the organization (Ariani, 2015). Ariani (2015) contends that even though there are numerous factors that drive employees, the main contributor is quite simply the “human spirit”. Consequently, when an employee is “able to engage” “emotionally” and “cognitively” with colleagues, he will be able to “happily immerse himself in his work” (Ariani, 2015, p. 34). Lin and Lin (2011) identify three types of commitments that can eventually be determined if good working relationships are present. Firstly, there is “affective commitment” that involves a “psychological and emotional” connection to the organization, secondly, there is a “continuance commitment” referring to a “willingness to stay” and finally a “normative commitment” (p. 3408) that denotes extended loyalty.

Relationships and communication with colleagues unanimously illustrate a positive correlation of such relationships to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lin & Lin, 2011). Andrew (2011) further emphasizes that such communication is not only beneficial to employees but also to employers. Employees who feel valued and “enjoy good working relationships” are “likely to be contributing the most” (Andrew, 2011, p. 11). Quite simply, positive work relationships generate happiness that can directly “align with greater well-being and work engagement and performance” (Haar et al., 2019, p. 11).

Ariani (2015) highlights that the ability to communicate with co-workers can also bring numerous other benefits, such as being able to share work related problems, which can ensure individuals remain motivated and maintain their commitment to the organization. Similarly, Edmondson (1999) underlines that such relationships are a key asset as employees “dare discuss the failures they experienced” which means they remain “willing to learn” (Ariani, 2015 p. 11). This is because the concept of teamwork is amplified and employees realize that co-operation and support is available, which provides a sense of reassurance and positivity (Buljubasic, 2008).

It is a common misconception that a non-interactive workplace where employees work single-mindedly in the absence of any inconsequential talk is the optimum way to secure higher levels of productivity. However, as explained earlier, workplace relationships and co-worker interaction can be largely beneficial in boosting productivity and motivation. Quite simply, positive relationships with colleagues play an important psychological role to ensure individuals feel involved, valued, motivated and happy, allowing higher levels of productivity, engagement, and loyalty.

Relationship with Managers

The manager is responsible for leading employees within specific departments and can act as an agent between employees and higher-level executives. The manager is directly involved with the employees unlike higher-level leaders and has a substantial impact on employees, including how they feel during work. Dewydar (2015) concurs that “the manager-employee relationship has a critical impact on performance” and engagement of employees, thus a bad manager could easily cause “negative results for disengagement” (p. 136). Tansel and Gazioglu (2013) assert that a good management-employee relationship is key in enhancing the performance of any firm by ensuring employees feel engaged and motivated.

Essentially, when a manager can establish a positive rapport with employees and display an active “interest in employees’ well-being”, they demonstrate that employees are “valued by management” (Dewydar, 2015, p. 136). Such positivity, clarity in communication, and understanding are “the top drivers of employee engagement,” resulting in “increased job satisfaction and productivity” as well as assisting in “low employee turnover” (Dewydar, 2015, p. 136). Tamme (2020) reveals that in a study of over 7000 individuals, half had at some point “left their job to get away from their manager” (p. 1). A similar study on 2000 individuals in the UK revealed around 49% was considering leaving their job solely because of poor management (Tamme, 2020).

It is critical that managers effectively supervise, coordinate, and delegate work in a manner that maximizes organizational productivity (Tansel & Gazioglu, 2013). It is the manager’s primary responsibility to ensure that employees recognize and remain on the right track (Dewydar, 2015). In fact, a manager can become a means for employees to gain “knowledge, hope, experiences, and happiness” (Dewydar, 2015, p. 138). The nature and persona of the managers can often be influenced by the location, nature, and generic culture of the organization. These form key considerations as to whether “autonomy of the employees” is prioritized or if the “hierarchical control by management” is prioritized (Tansel & Gazioglu, 2013, p. 1262). However, the manager seeks to maintain a balance and endorse a people-oriented management that is “positively correlated with all the dimensions of work engagement” (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020, p. 8). Such an approach demonstrates that employees are not “treated only as a source of profit” or “mere cogs in a machine”, generating a realization of their “sense of importance and purposefulness” (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020, p. 11). Furthermore, a supportive people-oriented management can lead to “psychological resilience to adversity”, which

motivates employees to show enthusiasm, maximize their effort and no longer view challenges as barriers or problems (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020, p. 11).

For managers to effectively fulfil their role, they must build a positive connection with employees. When employees are managed in a positive and supportive manner, they remain motivated and “want to connect with their work” to develop and enhance their standards (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014, p. 109). It is also imperative for managers to establish strong communication to convey their expectations to employees and “achieve optimum performance in all tasks” (Dewydar, 2015, p. 141). It is fundamental for employees to acquire information and guidance through clear communication as “poor communication” can act as a major “barrier to engagement” (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014, p. 112). Establishing strong communication can also allow employees to feel comfortable in expressing themselves, their views and ideas, and any problems they may be facing, which may reduce employee turnover in the long-term (Dewydar, 2015). Overall, the relationship with managers influences employees’ efficacy and productivity and affecting the well-being and happiness of employees whilst at work.

Social Values

The notion of social values refers to an organization’s ability to look beyond their own profit to benefit others at large. The element of such collective benefit can comprise creating external value for society and community, or simply ensuring internal benefits and values for employees. Employees no longer solely seek “financial value” but desire to “work for an organization that creates social” value and benefit for them (Jeffrey et al., n.d, p. 32). Essentially, individuals want to be a part of something bigger and a “part of a group with the same values” hence, they look “beyond financial rewards” (Trickey, 2019, p. 1).

Jeffrey et al. (n.d.) highlight that external social values in work can refer to the value attached to certain jobs within societies; therefore, high or low social values can denote pride or dishonor for employees. Undoubtedly, the subjective views of employee in relation to social values can often be sculpted by how outsiders view the organization (Jeffrey et al., n.d.). Notably, evidence from numerous studies demonstrates that a “positive social impact” is linked to a “higher job satisfaction” (Jeffrey et al, n.d. p. 32).

With regards to social values that are applied internally, these can differ depending on the location and general nature of the workplace. Aspects such as equality, a focus on well-being or ability to contribute and express oneself liberally signify internal social values. However, there are numerous considerations that influence the social values present in an organization. Many organizations display a sense of “power distance” that is symbolic to the distinct manner that power is distributed at different levels in an organization (Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, 2013, p. 76). In organizations where the social values are based on a strong hierarchical and power-based system, lower-level employees are less likely to feel valued and contribute freely. This overlaps with the concept of individualism or collectivism. The former requires one to “act as individuals” whilst the latter signifies a “tight social framework” in a group allowing employees to help one another (Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, 2013, p. 76). Undoubtedly, the former may lead to employees feeling somewhat socially detached from one another, yet strongly promotes independence. Trickey (2019) identifies that Scandinavians promote and prioritize an open environment by exhibiting an honest and frank nature, demonstrating that employees can comfortably express themselves and share their opinions, which is valued rather than minimized (Trickey, 2019).

The social values in relation to equality are also a significant factor for employees. Equality and diversity are crucial indicators that the workplace is unlikely to be disparaging or discriminatory towards any racial or economic background, religion, age, gender, or sexual orientation. This signifies that the organization is merely concerned with the skills and competency of the individual, supporting the notion of fair treatment (Digitalperks, 2021).

With regards to the specific aspect of gender equality, the influence and perspective of masculinity or femininity can depend on the location and culture applicable to the firm, and can determine the extent to which “achievement, power, and control” are deemed equally for both genders (Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, 2013, p. 76). The prospect of even securing work remains more challenging for women than men specifically around Northern Africa and the Arab States (International Labour Organization, 2017). Socio-economic factors such as the importance of conforming to household, marital or cultural roles largely influence the traditional gender roles perceived. Therefore, certain workplaces around the world, particularly in the east, remain heavily male dominated (International Labour Organization, 2017). The notion of gender equality is one that is becoming increasingly recognized and implemented. It is crucial that workplaces ensure their employees are presented with equal opportunities and treated fairly irrespective of their gender. Failure to do so could deprive an organization of capable employees whilst demotivating certain employees who may not feel as valued, impacting their overall engagement and productivity.

Equality and fairness irrespective of gender or other factors are a key consideration in most, if not all Scandinavian companies, and indication they promote employee value, worth, and well-being (Trickey, 2019). McLoughlin (2018) emphasizes that women make up almost half of the workforce in Scandinavian countries, “boast smaller wage gaps” and are still actively

“breaking up traditional notions of gendered jobs” (p. 1), demonstrating they appreciate the value of diversity in their social values.

The aspect of uncertainty avoidance by employees also denotes the social values present in the organization (Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, 2013). Uncertainty avoidance refers to “the degree to which individuals are inclined to accept risk” during work (Morris, 2020, p. 1). A higher level of uncertainty avoidance results in imposing strict rules and measures to “avoid unusual and unknown situations” (Morris, 2020, p. 1). Certain countries prefer strictly structured settings and situations as in the Arab region, as opposed to unstructured (Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, 2013). Structured work is typical in larger organizations in which employees are expected to work in a certain manner that is usually “well-documented and scheduled”; “expectations are easily understood” due to “consistent feedback from management” (Workfront, 2019, p. 1). A structured setting is usually associated with a larger power gap and unequal power distribution (Morris, 2020). On the other hand, an unstructured setting provides a higher level of flexibility and autonomy to employees.

Structured settings rank highly on uncertainty avoidance but lack the ability to adapt means there is an “increased level of anxiety about uncertainty and ambiguity” (Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, 2013, p. 76). On the other hand, in cultures that are “more accepting of ambiguity and are less rule-orientated”, the employees are more resistant to adversity, able to “take more risks, and more readily accept change” (Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, 2013, p. 76). Scandinavian businesses are profoundly recognized by the lack of hierarchy experienced in the office, which encourages “individuality and decision-making”, reducing the importance of competition in the workplace and simultaneously lowering the significance of materialism (Trickey, 2019, p. 1). Such a setting is significant as it depicts an

individualistic approach that allows employees to be open to taking risks so they can learn from their mistakes and enhance their performance (Trickey, 2019).

There are numerous factors that shape the internal and external social values held by an organization that can have a profound impact on the employees of an organization. Social values are associated with a higher employee retention rate as demonstrated by Scandinavian countries (McPhillips, 2020). McPhillips (2020) asserts that the simple term *Jantelov* fully encompasses the social values present in Scandinavian firms. The term merely refers to the “equality within a community, where no member is better than another” (McPhillips, 2020, p. 1). However, such a concept can only apply when employees are treated as people, not simply workers, which enhances their positive feelings for the workplace (McPhillips, 2020).

Job Factors

Salary and Benefits

The main motivation behind working is understandably to earn a living to support oneself. The salary and benefits provided by a job form a key consideration that can attract and retain employees, as well as motivate them to maximize productivity. Indeed, monetary rewards have a “major role in determining job satisfaction”; therefore, a salary that is perceived to be low will inevitably lead to job dissatisfaction and is “a major contributor to employee turnover” (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017, p. 82). The importance and influence of monetary rewards can fluctuate depending on the country. Matthee (2011) highlights the importance of money in providing a decent quality of life but may have an opposite effect, such as time with family or time to relax and enjoy.

Many academics refer to such incentives as compensation, which are the total number of “rewards provided to employees in return for their services” (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017, p. 82).

The salary of an individual has a direct link to their life satisfaction and happiness considering it determines an individual's ability to buy desired goods and services, making them feel competent and independent (Wesarat et al., 2014). Employees are also increasingly driven by fringe benefits that are distinct from a mere a salary, such as bonuses, a “family and medical leave, social security, healthcare, life insurance, retirement plan” or any other “indirect financial compensation” (Prasetio et al., 2019, p. 242). There is a positive correlation between a good salary and “employee loyalty, motivation, productivity” as well as “mental health” and “performance” (Prasetio et al., 2019, p. 245).

Such job factors are equally important for employers because they are “key motivators” or “satisfiers” that can stimulate employees to “work more enthusiastically” (Iqbal et al., 2017, p. 2). With particular emphasis to additional rewards and benefits, such aspects are universally desired by employees, particularly upon “special contributions and performance made by them” (Iqbal et al., 2017, p. 3). When facing challenging conditions or particularly heavy workload, employees then require “something of value as a form of exchange” (Prasetio et al., 2019, p. 241). When such benefits and compensation are provided, they can ascertain “the attraction and retention of employees” and accelerate the achievement of organizational objectives (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017, p. 81). There are numerous other benefits of a competitive salary, such as a decrease in employee stress and an increase in employee loyalty and performance (Prasetio et al., 2019).

Appreciation

At a minimum, employees expect to be treated fairly, paid fairly, and provided adequate safe working conditions (Alam et al., 2013). Employees want to be viewed as valued members of the organizations rather than mere workers. As such, appreciation and recognition by

organizations are deemed integral intrinsic ways to ensure employees remain motivated and connected to their workplace (Shonubi et al., 2016). Employee appreciation and recognition is defined as the “timely, informal or formal acknowledgement” of an employee for either their “behavior, effort, or business result” generated that was “beyond normal expectations” (Alam et al., 2013, p. 1). Appreciation and recognition methods can include verbal and written praise or any symbolic gestures to demonstrate approval of any “positive accomplishments or behaviors” (Tessema et al., 2013, p. 3). Employees recognize and associate such doings with “feelings of value and appreciation” that can enhance and boost their morale, which “ultimately increases productivity” (Danish & Usman, 2010, p. 160).

Alam et al. (2013) clarify that “appreciation is a fundamental human need” (p. 2) and acts as an acknowledgment of good work whilst confirming an individual is valued. As such, all employees, irrespective of the nature of their work, desire to be given credit by those they respect in the organization (Akafo & Boateng, 2015). When such credit is given, the employee will seek to maintain or improve their output (Alam et al., 2013). As such, Alam et al. (2013) highlight that “recognition systems are an essential tool” that can universally “integrate individual efforts with strategic business objectives” (p. 2). Employees who receive appreciation and recognition are positively correlated to “higher self-esteem, more confidence” and an “eagerness to be innovative” (Alam et al, 2013, p. 1).

Retention is tied to recognition since, when employees feel like they are respected members who are appreciated, they are much more likely to stay knowing their contributions are visible and valued (Tinypulse, n.d.). It based on the fact that praise sways the perception of the work environment. Even if an organization provides adequate financial stability and perks, no one wants to work at an organization that ignores their efforts and achievements (Tinypulse,

n.d.). In a study involving over 500 organizations from different sectors and over 20,000 employees, almost 80% did not feel strongly valued (Tinypulse, n.d.). An organization that lacks recognition for achievement is “always synonymous with employees’ lack of commitment and turnover” (Shonubi et al., 2016, p. 5222).

Learning and Development

Many employees aspire to enhance their “capabilities, knowledge, and skills” through which they can obtain a “competitive advantage in today’s global market” (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017, p. 206). As such, the notion of learning and developing over the course of work is becoming increasingly important as it allows “additional personal and professional development” for employees (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017, p. 208). Not only are such concepts integral in increasing employee confidence, self-esteem, and job gratification, but can also enable them to attain the “required level of knowledge or skill” to make them a more efficient worker (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017, p. 207).

Vnoučková (2013) asserts that a common strategic mistake of organizations is to “lower their expenses on education and learning” as most employees are aware of the “necessity to learn and self-development” (p. 178) and may eventually be motivated. More than 90% of employees, irrespective of their position or nature of work, are willing and eager for further development opportunities (Vnoučková, 2013). Vnoučková (2013) further highlights that if employees are repeatedly unable to deliver the quality and standards expected of them, they can become dissatisfied and leave. Organizations can ensure employee retention when they work at building their skills and ensuring they are continually involved in such programs (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Employees are likely to stay considering the possibility of recognition, higher pay, and

promotion as they will feel as though they are “investing in their own future” (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017, p. 208).

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation in an employee refers to their own personal drive, which inspires them to be as productive as possible. Toufaili (2018) explains that intrinsic motivation comes from oneself without any influencing external factors. It is a positive emotional state through which one appreciates their job and obtains a sense of “fulfillment acquired by experiencing” and achieving organizational goals (Raza et al., 2015, p. 81). Toufaili (2018) underlines that employees are internally motivated when they “seek enjoyment, interest, self-expression, and personal challenge” (p. 1746). Researcher Frederick Herzberg revealed that whilst job satisfaction is the whole matrix of job factors that motivate an employee and contribute to employee happiness, intrinsic motivation is a huge consideration (Raza et al., 2015).

Bergström and Martínez (2016) explain that intrinsic motivation has a substantial psychological effect in the ability to positively engage with work and be productive. If individuals can learn and grow as persons while working, due to the work itself, they can develop a sense of optimism and self-determination that can vitally contribute to their satisfaction and productivity (Bergström & Martínez, 2016). Raza et al. (2015) highlight that the presence of intrinsic motivation is dependent upon elements of “autonomy, competitiveness, and social association” (p. 85) that provide employees with a sense of fulfillment from their job. In a competitive global market, and in certain sectors, it often becomes difficult for organizations to provide strong extrinsic motivators. In such cases, intrinsic motivation may “become the only functional driver of performance” (Bergström & Martínez, 2016, p. 10). Bergström and Martínez (2016) identify that this is probably why most comprehensive studies on the issue have revealed

that “motivational factors of intrinsic nature are valued higher by employees in the public sector than those in the private sector” (p. 11). This is because the public sector is usually dominated by employees having a “general concern for the community” as well as a “desire to contribute to the public interest”; therefore, internal motivational factors can drive employees to maintain their sense of purpose (Bergström & Martínez, 2016, p. 11).

Toufaily (2018) asserts that it is imperative for organizations to understand the positive impacts of intrinsic motivation on employee happiness and productivity. To boost the level of motivation felt by employees, employers should actively appreciate them for their achievements and engage them in decision making, which “internally satisfies them with their job, organization and organizational environment” (Toufaily, 2018, p. 11). Bergström and Martínez (2016) agree with this view and highlight that it is vital for employees to hold strong and positive relationships with co-workers and managers, which contributes to employee well-being and their levels of positive connection with the organization.

Well-Being Factors

Workplace Conditions

Workplace conditions are the “physical and cultural setting of an organization that the employee works in on a daily basis” (Chinomona & Mofokeng, 2014, p. 1016). It is essential for workplace conditions to support employees in completing and fulfilling their tasks and role. There is a direct link between such conditions and the overall productivity of a company (Eluka & Nwonu, 2014). This is because the working conditions that an employee is subject to, can have a profound impact on their productivity. Marin-García et al. (2011) assert that the conditions of the working environment do not merely affect “progress of the work” but actually

affect the “well-being of the worker”. As such, working conditions are a fundamental aspect for any organization irrespective of its size, specifics, or location (Marin-García et al., 2011, p. 2051).

In elaboration of the rationale as to why working conditions are such an important consideration for employees, Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) clarify that the satisfaction of employees is dependent upon “the integrated set of psychological, physiological, and environmental conditions” (p. 718). As such, the conditions, and settings that an employee experiences daily have a critical influence as to how they feel during their time at work and their level of motivation and productivity (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). Unfortunately, many businesses across the world fail to understand the importance, effect, and influence working conditions can have (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

It is imperative organizations understand considerations that can impact the performance of employees such as “heat, humidity, noise, smell, light and dust” (Kahya, 2007, p. 517). Employers must make certain that physical components such as “natural light, cleanliness, ventilation, heating/cooling facilities” are available as well as a sufficient “working desk/area and general and personal storage space” (Hafeez et al., 2019, p. 178). When an employee is provided good conditions to work in, they will be more likely to “be committed to their work” (Chinomona & Mofokeng, 2014, p. 1016). This is because good working conditions can act as a supportive environment in which employees can effectively “put together their preeminent use of skills, competences, and knowledge” without any limitations (Hafeez et al., 2019, p. 176). A good working environment can also demonstrate that the employee is valued and respected for their contribution by being provided with a decent working environment. A study involving 250 people in similar office work settings in Pakistan sought to evaluate the difference in employee

productivity and perception if modifications to the working environment were made (Hafeez et al., 2019). It appears that simply “upgrading the physical design” of the workplace can enhance employee performance, productivity, and happiness by 5-10% (Hafeez et al., 2019, p. 178). On the other hand, unpleasant working environments can have the opposite impact on employees by generating a negative effect on job performance (Kahya, 2007). Hafeez et al. (2019) highlight that jobs are increasingly reliant on advancing technology to conduct office work. Employees are often subject to numerous underlying negative effects of such conditions, such as “eye strain, headaches, general fatigue, and back pain” (p. 178). Such working conditions may at first glance appear adequate, but in the absence of sufficient space, setting and breaks, these conditions can easily “decrease employee concentration”, compromising their performance and leading to “low productivity, poor quality, physical and emotional stress” (Kahya, 2007, p. 516). Essentially, employees in such negative circumstances cannot demonstrate their full potential and capability (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). Another consequence of such an environment is that the negative health issues created can easily increase absenteeism (Hafeez et al., 2019). It is also notable that the lack of good facilities, amenities, and conditions can impact the employee’s behavior and outlook towards their work, which is “mostly reflected by the lack of full commitment” (Polek-Duraj, 2013, p. 43). The overall working environment and conditions that employees are surrounded by daily can aid or hinder their level of productivity, motivation, and health.

Vitality

Employee vitality is attributed to those who are lively, motivated, and enthusiastic in their endeavors. Such qualities are associated to those who are physically and mentally well. A healthy lifestyle in which individuals are conscious of their levels of “physical activity, smoking, alcohol use, healthy eating and relaxation” can have an impact on vitality (Van Scheppingen et

al., 2014, p. 540). Vital employees can fully “commit their abilities towards work in a positive and enabling environment” (Malik et al., 2015, p. 702). A well-known definition associated with vitality in employees’ states that the presence of vitality brings “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working” hence employees are willing “to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties” (Van Scheppingen et al., 2015, p. 7).

Vital employees are an integral asset for any organization as they can function in a more efficient manner and there is a long-standing argument that vitality is “strongly associated with sustainable organizational performance” (Malik et al., 2015, p. 700). Energy and motivation can drive employees to show “greater performance and persistence” (Tummers et al., 2016, p. 358). Vitality has a particularly important role in the model of employee happiness and well-being. Lacking vitality can signify employees have a “lower life satisfaction, lower levels of positive emotion, and higher levels of negative emotion” (Jeffrey et al., n.d., p. 41). On the other hand, an employee with higher levels of vitality possesses “health, liveliness, and positive energy” and inevitably exhibits more healthy behaviors in the workplace (Jahanshahi et al., 2019, p. 6). These employees are more likely to demonstrate happiness, loyalty and “higher engagement in their tasks” (Jahanshahi et al., 2019, p. 12).

Vitality is a critical component that contributes to employee happiness, well-being, and productivity. Employers must ascertain they can promote and enhance levels of employee vitality to generate the potential positive outcomes. Numerous organizations have taken the initiative to “offer lifestyle programs to promote the health and vitality of their employees” (Van Scheppingen et al., 2014, p. 540). It remains to be seen as to how effective such lifestyle interventions are.

Work-Life Balance

Every individual is required to balance their time, effort, and attention between numerous aspects in their life. Work is an integral aspect that is responsible for providing financial stability and mental stimulation that aids self-worth, value, and confidence. On the other hand, personal life involves devoting time and effort towards oneself, health, family, and friends and is an essential contributor to overall well-being. Employees all around the world “face the challenge of having to balance their professional and personal lives on an ongoing daily basis” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 288). Oludayo et al. (2018) explain that unlike family and personal time, the time dedicated at work is purposeful through physical or mental exertion because it has economic and symbolic value. Employees worldwide are facing “increasing demand in the workplace” that is “coupled with multiple obligations outside the work environment,” which is denting their work-life balance and well-being (Oludayo et al., 2018, p. 1).

Most organizations and employers are blissfully unaware as to the “significant effect” that the workplace, “heavy work load and long working hours” have on an individual’s overall life (Aslam, 2015, p. 98). The challenging nature of both environments is leading to a “collision between work and families” (Khatri & Behl, 2013, p. 41). Employees face the difficult dilemma of attempting to manage the competing demands in work and life and struggle to avoid “negative effects of work spill over into their personal lives” (Meenakshi et al., 2013, p. 31).

The concept of work-life balance arose after some pioneering studies emphasized that a “reduction in working hours may improve productivity as it will enhance human relations at home, increasing overall motivation and happiness” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 289). The major groundbreaking study was conducted in 1924 by Charles S Myers (a British psychologist) who affirmed the positive impacts of reduced working hour on overall stress and contentment (Syed

& Özbilgin, 2015). It has since been asserted that “work-family conflicts are a substantial stress source”. Therefore, the “notion of equilibrium between family and professional life” is fundamental for the “successful development of both domains” (Bataineh, 2019, p. 100).

It is notable that societal roles of genders combined with the “growing diversity of family structures” have altered and heightened the demand of work-life balance (Rahman, 2020, p. 87). There is now a higher involvement of women in the labor market than ever before and there has been a “substantial growth in the social value associated with a father’s involvement within the home” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 290). Consequently, there has been an increase in the “popularity of part-time and casual work”, which is important for women that in many places are still “traditionally assumed to have, and many of them still have, the role of homemaker” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 290). There is also an “increasing commonness of dual-career couples” or those who wish to “devote more time to friends or enjoy leisure undertakings” (Bataineh, 2019, p. 100). As such, it is imperative that employers worldwide make a “systematic effort” to “create and foster an environment” to encourage and support employees to remain employed by addressing their “diverse needs” (Oludayo et al., 2018, p. 7).

Work-life balance refers to the way such employee related issues can be addressed while ensuring employers do not face any detrimental financial effects. This concept endorses the notion that both work and personal life can be “complementary, not competing, elements of life” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 288). Once adequately implemented, this concept seeks to bring stability and allow individuals to “simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional and behavioral demands of work and personal life” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 289). Instead of the individual being crushed by both aspects, these activities become more “compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” (Gagnano et al., 2020, p. 2).

Agha et al. (2017) clarify that, in reality, this concept seeks to juggle “fine aspects of one’s life at any point in time, namely, work, family, friends, health and self” (p. 164). Once an employee can achieve a rhythm through work-life balance, they will be able to efficiently “combine work and their other responsibilities and aspirations”, irrespective of their “age, race or gender” (Aslam, 2015, p. 99).

According to Meenakshi et al. (2013), it is not possible to create an “equal balance” as everyone has “different priorities and different lives.” Therefore, to schedule equal time to each activity is “unrewarding and unrealistic,” life ought to “be more fluid than that”, (p. 31).

However, this concept is based on the element of autonomy and “designing jobs” in a manner that increases an “employee’s self-determination” by providing “freedom to organize their own work” (Mas-Machuca et al., 2016, p. 590). To do so, establishes an element of balance and allows employees to manage their work more easily with their personal life, which generates a “positive effect on employee motivation and productivity” (Mas-Machuca et al, 2016, p. 590).

Employees are expected to work hard, and often expected to go above and beyond, irrespective of this leading to a “spillover” and “disparity between work and family” (Bataineh, 2019, p. 100). Al Sumaiti (2010) asserts that “most managers follow autocratic approaches”, which ensure higher levels of discipline and direction. However, they are usually “aimed at the wellbeing of the organization alone” and overlook the “basic needs of the employees” (p. 23). The combination of “unsupportive managers, heavy workload and corporate cultures that promote long hours all contribute to a work-life conflict” (Al Sumaiti, 2010, p. 23). This work-life conflict prevents employees from working to their full potential, with the result being “failure in performing tasks, turnover, and absenteeism” (Bataineh, 2019, p. 100). Such actions can compromise the “effectiveness and development on the organization” by reducing

“productivity and profits of organizations” (Bataineh, 2019, p. 100). Undoubtedly, it is the obligation of employers to ensure they can attain and sustain employees that are “healthy, well-trained, and capable on a long-term basis” (Bataineh, 2019, p. 100).

Work-life balance is a notion that provides “shared benefits for employees and the organization” (Oludayo et al., 2018, p. 2). The practice of work-life balance can be viewed as a “joint responsibility between the employer and employee” (Oludayo et al, 2018, p. 2). It is important that the needs of the employees and the demands of the employer are mutually fulfilled (Al Sumaiti, 2010). To do so can improve the life quality of employees, which leads to an improvement of productivity, enhancing the effectiveness of the organization (Bataineh, 2019). Oludayo et al. (2018) concur that when employers demonstrate they are interested in employees’ well-being and aid them in attaining healthy, rewarding lifestyles, they provide “stimulation for motivation, energy and willingness” to bring positive changes in their “behavioral outcomes” (p. 2).

Rahman (2020) describes motivation as a psychological process that has a substantial impact upon the “direction and the rate of individual’s behavior towards commitment” (p. 86). Employees who have a “greater level of motivation” demonstrate a “greater level of involvement,” are more productive, and display a “greater level of readiness to contribute” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 99). This notion is based on a social exchange theory that explains that employee behavior, performance, and productivity are strongly influenced by the “organization’s behavior towards them” (Mas-Machuca et al., 2016, p. 587). Therefore, when employers are “flexible” and “pay attention to individuals’ needs and circumstances”, allowing them to handle “personal and professional commitments” simultaneously, they automatically “retain skilled and engaged employees” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 296). The presence of a work-life balance can

eradicate “psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety and depression in employees” (Gagnano et al., 2020, p. 2). As such, it remains a prevailing belief that employees with a “good work-life balance regularly outperform those who do not” (Walga, 2018, p. 161).

On the other hand, in the absence of an adequate work-life balance, employers and work life can “adversely override the need” of individuals, adversely affecting their “health and overall well-being” (Khatri & Behl, 2013, p. 44). This can lead to an “increase in family conflicts, work-related stress, fatigue and health and mental problems”, which inevitably damages “creativity, morale, productivity, and general engagement” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 296). Meenakshi et al. (2013) assert that employees who are “constantly tied to their jobs” can face “disruption of relationships” outside work, which eventually leads to a mental and emotional “burnout” (p. 31). This exhaustion is usually the main cause of increased staff turnover and absenteeism (Walga, 2018). Absenteeism and turnover involve an employee’s “physical removal from the workplace”, signifying “withdrawal behaviors”, which cost businesses “billions per year” (Oludayo et al., 2018, p. 6). Oludayo et al. (2018) clarify that this is because increased stress and a work life imbalance typically leads to “lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment” (p. 164).

Organizations can employ well-framed policies that do not compromise the productivity of the organization whilst arranging the work in a more efficient manner (Oludayo et al., 2018). To do so, it is imperative to introduce flexible working arrangements that can work around an individuals’ life without compromising the organizations profit or productivity. The notion of working from home is becoming an increasingly popular idea that can accommodate those who are either raising children, wish to avoid commute, or simply maximize time with family (Syed

& Özbilgin, 2015). Organizations can retain their employees and ensure productivity levels are maintained whilst helping employees through such arrangements.

Organizations can also introduce the aspect of “split shifts or optimization of time at work, which can allow office workers to manage and schedule their work hours” (Khatri & Behl, 2013, p. 40). These flexible schemes are ideal for organizations that are willing to “focus on outcomes” rather than merely on the amount of “time spent in the office” (Meenakshi et al., 2013, p. 34). Al Sumaiti (2010) signifies that certain countries, such as the UAE, are highly dependent on technology, which has allowed telecommuting to become a prevailing work scheme that is highly valued by employees with commitments at home. Numerous organizations that have implemented these schemes in the UAE have seen lower absenteeism because of the increased flexibility that employees are provided (Al Sumaiti, 2010). However, it is notable that such schemes are dependent on the nature and demands of the work. Many companies may be “reluctant to adopt flexible working arrangements” to avoid a “shortage of workers” (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015, p. 298). Moreover, the concept of equal pay rule does not bode well with many employers seeing the absence of equal hours, especially as contribution of workers can be difficult to measure (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015). Also, it is feared that such schemes can be misused by employees who do not require this flexibility but merely desire to obtain requisite subsidies (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015).

Overall, an individuals’ personal and family life can have a significant impact on their health and motivation, influencing their level of productivity at work (Al Sumaiti, 2010). It is a simple proposition that when employees have access to more flexible schedules, childcare, parental leave, and support, it reduces work life conflict and stress, increasing job satisfaction (Bataineh, 2019). As explained earlier, the implementation of a work-life balance strategy is

equally advantageous for the employee and employer alike. Employers can attain higher levels of commitment and productivity from employees by increasing their job satisfaction and happiness (Al Sumaiti, 2010). On the other hand, employees can enjoy added value in life, better performance, enhanced relationships, higher levels of motivation, morale, and commitment towards their job (Al Sumaiti, 2010).

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study primarily focused on the stark difference in employee happiness in Scandinavian countries and the UAE. It is crucial for every country to maximize employee wellbeing, which mirrors the level of productivity, efficiency, and employee happiness (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Scandinavian countries rank highly with regards to employee happiness, which is generally attributed to their work-life balance strategies and distinct work environment, which is more considerate of their employees' private life responsibilities. Their implementation of such concepts allows strategic and organized leniency to employees than most countries, which in turn boosts employee happiness and productivity (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). It seems conceivable that the enactment of such concepts elsewhere may replicate advantageous effects for employers and employees (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). It was expected that this study would also shed light and reveal the difference between the Scandinavian and the UAE's approach in such regards. In effect, this would allow the UAE, which strives to improve their work-life efficiency, to generate similar positive effects by creating a less stressed workforce. It would be critical to understand the relationship of several factors with employee happiness including organizational, people and job factors as well as the notion of work-life balance.

Although there is some generic academic research focused on the incentives provided by the Scandinavian work environment, it is far from conclusive as to the full extent of the factors that affect employee happiness and their level of impact. As such, this research aimed to involve a direct and immediate interaction with employees operating in the UAE government sectors through a comprehensive questionnaire to acquire a valuable insight for the study. The questionnaire encompassed questions surrounding the importance of all the factors considered

relevant to the study. The study would be conducted in an impartial and strategic manner, which would provide a valuable insight of areas that can be improved by organizational leaders interested in developing or fostering change.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

This study aimed to provide a critical insight on the factors pertinent to the contrasting levels of employee happiness, work life balance, and employee productivity in Scandinavian countries and the UAE. To direct this study towards the requisite findings, the research was centered upon four crucial theoretical questions. First, it was important to consider what the relationship was between the organizational factors and employee happiness. Secondly, it was important to understand the connection and relationship between people factors and employee happiness. The third research question probed the relationship between job factors and employee happiness. The final research question aimed to ascertain the connection between work-life balance and employee happiness.

1. What is the relationship between organizational factors and employee happiness?
2. What is the relationship between people factors and employee happiness?
3. What is the relationship between the job factors and employee happiness?
4. What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee happiness?

Research Design

This research focused primarily on employees around the world who are distinguished through levels of work-life balance, generic management, and work-life environments, impacting their happiness and productivity levels. For the purposes of this study, the research was centered on the Scandinavian and UAE's civil sector employee happiness.

In relation to the specific research design, a quasi- experimental approach was undertaken. A quasi- experimental research design is typically undertaken to examine a “causal relationship between independent and dependent variables” (Rogers & Revesz, 2019, p. 133). A dependent variable is a factor affected or influenced in any manner because of changes in other circumstances. In this case, the dependent variable was the overall level of employee happiness and satisfaction of those in the public sector. The independent variables are factors capable of affecting the dependent variable. In this research the independent variables as explicated in the research questions and model were work-life balance strategies, organizational factors, people factors, and job factors. Quasi-experimental studies are a subtype of non-experiments and may involve a comparison group, which, in this case, were public sector employees in Scandinavia and the UAE (Rogers & Revesz, 2019).

Definitions

Qualitative research relies on data obtained from first-hand observation, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, participant-observation, case studies, et. Al. The data sets are generally nonnumerical. Though the presence of numerical data and their correlative visual counterparts—bar graphs, pie charts, etc.—may lead one to conclude that this study is quantitative, it is a qualitative study. Data used is entirely differential rather than inferential. Were the study dependent on inferential data, it would be classified as quantitative. As it is does not, clarification on this point need be substant.

This research utilized a mixed-method approach with quantitative and qualitative analysis making a valuable contribution. The qualitative aspect required the collection of data through academic studies relating to the theoretical purpose and supposed effect of work-life balance strategies and numerous requisite factors on employee happiness as viewed in Scandinavian

work environments. Such an inductive research approach utilized academic studies and observations based on Scandinavia for the identification of specific ways to replicate positive development elsewhere, as in the UAE.

There was also a critical quantitative aspect to this research considering this was largely a correlational study aiming to understand the link, impact, and relation of the numerous independent variables with the dependent variable. The quantitative method applied statistically quantified the level of impact of the independent variables upon employee happiness to some extent. This was done by the means of a comprehensive questionnaire (see Appendix A) aimed specifically at civil sector employees in the UAE. This questionnaire enabled the researcher to delve into organizations to better assess and evaluate the correlation between the research components and employee happiness. To effectively do so, leaders, managers, and employees operating on different organizational levels were invited to participate in this study through the means of a detailed questionnaire. The questionnaire contained simple and direct close ended questions concerning general happiness, general health, and generic organizational satisfaction. It provided important insights from an employee's perspective whilst revealing the most important factors that influence employee happiness and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the overall findings revealed the correlation between various factors and employees to address the research questions whilst directly tying it with the model proposed.

Sources of Data

To determine variants that distinguish the Scandinavian work environment from that of UAE, the relationship and impact of four individual variables upon employee happiness were investigated. The four independent variables were organizational factors, people factors, job factors, and work-life balance, as explicated in the research questions. Academic Green

suggested a simple and effective sampling method when research involves numerous individual predictors, $104 + m$, where m signifies the number of independent variables (Wilson VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007). As such, to follow this formula would mean combining 104 with 4 to give a minimum sample population of 108. Due to the nature of the research, it was important to focus only on the public sector, thus, a homogeneous purposive non-probability sampling method was implemented. To avoid scattered findings and results, the sample population only included those working within UAE government sectors who are subject to similar work settings. The research design involved a minimum sampling of approximately 108 participants working in government sectors of the UAE. A larger sample size allowed improved reliability and led to ease in determining requisite trends or correlations thus providing clarity in findings.

The research had incorporated and considered employees working at different positions in the company to obtain a fair and balanced finding. Consequently, the participants were of various ages, gender, working at various levels of the organization with varying levels of experience. Also, this formed a critical aspect in being able to collect demographic information alongside. The sampling method was a homogeneous purposive non-probability sampling method and comprised of leaders, managers, and general employees working at lower levels within the UAE government sectors. For the purposes of the study, the focus was on general employees who formed approximately 80% of the desired overall sample. As such, general employees formed most of the overall participants while those at higher levels were a smaller part of the overall sample. The questionnaire was the primary and central source of data to guide the study, but requisite secondary sources were also an integral consideration throughout.

Data Collection Strategies and Procedures

This questionnaire was a vital instrument to obtain a first-hand insight and generate vital findings as to the importance of different variants for employees. It had been considered that the questionnaire could be sent only to organizational leaders or managers who would then send them back upon manual completion. However, it was possible that the process could result in some biased results from employees who may answer with caution. To maximize efficiency and avoid any miscalculations in data collection, it was optimal to utilize electronic means to conduct the questionnaire. As such, the questionnaire was assembled on Google Forms whilst ensuring it was simple to respond to. Google Forms prohibits participants from skipping or ignoring any questions, ensuring participants respond to all questions.

After creating the questionnaire, the links to the questionnaires were e-mailed individually to all participants along with requisite information in the e-mail to clarify that anonymity would be maintained throughout the process. This was a means to obtain informed consent (see Appendix B). Participants could read the information and guidance in the e-mail and then proceed to complete the questionnaire once content with the information was provided. The collective results were then gathered and corroborated to draw requisite findings. It was realized that confidentiality and anonymity were an integral consideration for participants to obtain genuine impartial responses. Notably, participants were merely categorized by their organizational position. Furthermore, it was integral that the data were collected from approximately 108 participants. The questionnaire was initially sent to 150 participants to cover any issues of non-compliance by participants. Upon acquiring 108 full responses, the additional responses were to be disregarded.

Tools/Instrumentation Used

The questionnaire that was directed at UAE public sector workers was the main instrument that was utilized to obtain first-hand findings from employees. This questionnaire, which was the primary instrument in this study, was created as part of a research conducted on work-life balance and the benefits it provides to family-supportive organizations (Herlin, 2010). Permission has been obtained to utilize the instrument as part of this study. The original questionnaire had approximately 80 questions but all were not entirely relevant.

The response scale for all the questions was based on a 7-point Likert scale where the responses could range from 1 being strongly disagree to 7 which represents strongly agree. The original questionnaire was divided into numerous categories that were not fully relevant and connected to this research paper. As such, those questions were re-organized to fit the research model and questions.

There were a total of 34 questions placed into four sections (A-D) for the questionnaire that had been adjusted for this specific research paper. The participants were not aware of the reasoning behind the sections, but were representative of the four research questions. Section A had eight questions aimed at exploring the relationship between employee happiness at organizational factors, involving the general vision and values of the employee and employer. Section B had seven questions linked to the relationship between people factors and employee happiness, such as the general leadership and communication in the organization. Section C had seven questions relating to job factors and their contribution towards employee happiness. Finally, Section D had a total of 11 questions relating to work-life balance, which probed into the impact personal life has on productivity and how well balanced the overall environment is in supporting employees.

Human Subject Considerations

The participants of the questionnaire, who were the human subjects for this research, were protected according to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. Data collection only began after approval was obtained from Pepperdine University's IRB (see Appendix C). The questionnaire did not include any themes that could be perceived as sensitive, and participation was voluntary as opposed to mandatory. Furthermore, the participants remained anonymous throughout the process and were not asked for any personal information that could disclose their identity. Participating leaders, managers, and employees were categorized based on their position with any names and/or other information being encrypted. The online forms were also critical in ensuring participants were able to respond in an unbiased and independent manner with the understanding that their responses would not be individually revealed to their management or organization. The overall responses and findings would be disclosed on an aggregate level to aid development in certain areas by the organizations, but not on an individual level.

Proposed Analysis

The primary focus of this study concerned the difference between levels of employee happiness and corresponding productivity in the UAE and that of Scandinavian work environments. It was primarily understood that this could be owing to the initiatives undertaken by Scandinavian countries towards the concept of work-life balance. However, the research model demonstrated that there were in reality numerous factors that were important for employees and could have an impact upon their happiness. As such, it became important to ascertain the relationship and impact of these factors or independent variables upon employee happiness.

The purpose of this research was to explore the differences in the level of employee happiness in the two places and the factors, which contribute to it. With regards to the quantitative analysis, academic studies conducted about work life balance strategies in Scandinavian work environments and their effects as well as other positive contributing factors were assessed. As such, qualitative content analysis was undertaken, which allowed investigation of the purpose and effect of the numerous strategies implemented in Scandinavia as well as demonstrating how employees have responded to them and the way they have proven effective. However, this study was mainly driven by the multiple linear regression analysis that was conducted through the means of a detailed questionnaire aimed at workers in the public sector in the UAE. The dependent variable was the overall level of employee happiness and satisfaction of those in the public sector whilst the independent variables were work-life balance strategies, organizational factors, people factors, and job factors. There were sub-variables for each of the independent variables except for work-life balance. The sub-variables for organizational factors included internal communication, the general values and visions of the organization, the general goal alignment, and the general reputation of the organization. The sub-variables for people factors included the leadership style adopted by the organization, the communication between colleagues and managers, and general social values endorsed by the organization. Finally, the sub-variables for job factors were the general benefits provided by the job, including the salary and general motivation driving the employee.

The statistical technique of regression analysis is typically utilized when seeking to assess or estimate the relationships among variables (Uyanık & Güler, 2013). When involving more than one independent variable, the regression study is called a multi-linear regression analysis, which allows one to “determine the correlations between two or more variables having cause-

effect relations, and to make predictions for the topic by using the relation” (Uyanık & Güler, 2013, p. 234). Montgomery et al. (2013) highlight that there are four main purposes for conducting such a regression analysis. The first includes data description in which the link between variables is established, second is parameter estimation where an assumed theory relating to the variable may be confirmed, third is prediction and estimation that is typically involved in monitoring a process or system and the final is for control purposes where upon conducting the research, the variables can be monitored, calibrated, and controlled to bring about a desired effect (Montgomery et al., 2013). Almost all the factors highlighted by Montgomery et al. (2013) apply to this research since it aimed to confirm the relationship and effect of the factors on employee happiness. Also, it should ascertain that an employee orientated approach by means of work-life balance strategies and other factors have a positive impact on employee happiness and productivity, which may enable the UAE to calibrate their work environments to bring about similar positive changes.

The overall analysis revealed the correlation between key factors and employees, which directly tie into the research model whilst addressing the research aims and objectives. The findings revealed the overall importance of various factors as perceived by employees in relation to their organizational and work environment, which are integral to achieving employee happiness. The findings were displayed through various visual representations of the data such as graphs, tables, and diagrams to reveal the correlation and links between such key components with employee happiness. The results allowed better recognition of the differences between the overall work conditions, elements, and employee positions in Scandinavia and the UAE.

Means to Ensure Study Validity

This research utilized a mixed method approach in terms of analysis. The quantitative aspect involved a questionnaire that allowed participants to anonymously provide a firsthand and direct insight that was integral to this research. However, considering the sensitive nature of the study, it was implausible to conduct interviews in the same manner; thus, the qualitative aspect of the analysis merely involved the collection of data from previous academic studies. This inductive form of analysis involved exploring the theoretical purpose of those implementing work-life balance strategies and their supposed positive effect. The analysis also delved into numerous factors associated with employee happiness as viewed in Scandinavian work environments. Such conclusions were then corroborated and linked to the statistical findings of the questionnaire. With regards to the questionnaire, it was as an integral source of information in this study since ensuring its validity was imperative. This questionnaire had previously been utilized in a study relating to the benefits family supportive organizations obtained through their work-life balance centered approach (Herlin, 2010). As such, the internal validity of the questionnaire had already been confirmed through a Cronbach Alpha Score for each segment of the questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha Score for all the sections was at least 0.81 which is deemed a benchmark for a good reliability level (Herlin, 2010). Questions relating to the perspective of employees towards their organization attained a score of 0.86, questions relating to the employee commitment and job satisfaction attained a score of 0.92 whilst work life balance and family related questions attained a score of 0.89 (Herlin, 2010). However, there are many other considerations relating to validity. This research was based on ascertaining the presence and value of cause-and-effect relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Internal validity was paramount to ensure the data were indeed reliable, an

indicative of causality between the variables. There did not appear to be any extraneous variables that could equate to the independent variables present nor were there any confounding variables.

The questionnaire was sent to 150 participants as opposed to merely 108 to eradicate issues of noncompliance of research participants. It is important to ensure risks of design contamination are minimized. As such, the participants were able to complete the questionnaire independently and anonymously through an online platform, eradicating issues of bias or pressure when responding. Participants should not be aware of the comparative analysis of their overall working environment to that of Scandinavia. Compensatory rivalry may mean participants set out to demonstrate complete contentment when this is not so, or resentful demoralization may mean the value of the independent variables are artificially increased. Both factors could form threats to internal validity and must be avoided by ensuring participants were not aware of the comparative concept behind this questionnaire. Finally, it is notable that the questionnaire involved a wide array of questions that were to be responded to using a clear 7-point Likert scale. It has been ensured that there was no personal or internal bias infused in this research, which deliberately leads the participants to respond in a particular manner.

External validity of the questionnaire and research design was also considered. It was important to make sure the sample size was suitable to ensure reliability in results and to generate enough data to recognize the requisite trends and correlations for the study. A large sample size and aiming the questionnaire at employees working on different levels of the organization further safeguarded that the findings were a better indication of the significance of the factors that influence employee happiness. This element of population validity was a critical aspect of external validity otherwise there was a risk of generalizing across an entire population based on an unreliable sample size. Furthermore, to ensure some form of consistency and

uniformity in the study, the questionnaire was only aimed at those working in the UAE civil services for various government institutions.

Bias

The researcher is ethically compelled to acknowledge the bias inherent to his relationship with the subject matter and its environment. As a long-time employee within this specific employment arm of the public sector, the researcher has had, invariably, intimate and initiate knowledge and privilege afforded by his position. All attempts to rein in any possible biases that may exist, even those that may subconsciously exist, have been tempered to their nearest negation point. The paradigm under study exists with or without the researcher; its monolithic structuring exists with or with him, and it is with this passivity to scalar insignificance that the research has been taken. That is to say, it has been done as ethically and unbiased as possible.

Plans for Reporting Findings

It was optimal to present the data and findings through clear visual representations of the information such as tables, graphs, and charts. To do so allowed a clear depiction of the trends and correlations of factors with the employee happiness model and other theoretical frameworks. Moreover, such representations to report the findings would also ensure that each research objectives and question could be individually addressed by a specific graph.

Summary

There are few studies that have delved into or investigated the notion of work life balance and employee happiness or productivity, which significantly varies when comparing Scandinavia to other countries, particularly the UAE. Such considerations and themes remain relatively new in the UAE even though they idealistically aim to enhance their employee satisfaction with the belief that it will boost productivity. As such, this study ideally formed a valuable insight to drive

future research into this area. Undeniably, a better understanding of this concept can equally benefit employees and employers. It was paramount to conduct a proper comparative study such as this to highlight areas which require change. It is understandable that organizations require an evidence-based approach and reliable conclusions before properly working towards transformation, which might have been triggered by this study. It was anticipated that this study would highlight critical factors and requisite trends that could then be fine-tuned or adjusted to introduce positive results for the organizations and employees.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The purpose of this research paper was to study and understand the elements that generate a happier and more productive workforce. The Scandinavian workplace environment has been largely successful in creating and sustaining a happier workforce, which is linked to a higher level of productivity (Roy & Konwar, 2020). This study sought to ascertain the main determinants of happiness in a workplace and explore the effects of the widely adopted work-life balance strategies in Scandinavia, which could reveal advantageous approaches for the UAE to adopt to reap comparable benefits.

This study comprised a mixed-method approach. The qualitative research sought to delve into the numerous components associated with employee happiness as depicted in the selected conceptual theoretical research model. The quantitative aspect of this study was derived from a survey conducted on 108 participants in the UAE public sector out of which 103 successfully contributed and their responses have been compiled for data analysis purposes. Most participants (86) were general employees and the remaining (22) were those working at a higher level of the organization such as managers and leaders. The researcher ensured that reminder e-mails were sent every week to prompt a response from those who may have forgotten to complete the survey yet wanted to participate. A thank you e-mail was also sent after the closing deadline, which was exactly four weeks from the date that the survey opened. The survey had already been tested previously for validity and reliability. The survey was built on similar foundations as the qualitative research conducted in prior in accordance with the specific sections and components within the conceptual theoretical model and was also tailored to the research questions. The survey utilized a 7-point Likert scale that allowed for a statistical measurement as to the presence, absence, influence, and importance of numerous factors in the workplace from the

perspective of the participants. It also allowed the researcher to gauge the attitudes and thoughts of the participants in such regards to reveal potential areas of development in their workplace environment to aid employee happiness.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections including organizational, people and job factors as well as work life balance. It was hoped that the findings would indicate the disparities between the UAE and Scandinavian workplaces whilst highlighting the desired influencing variables of employee happiness. This chapter will present the findings from the questionnaire with the data analysis being illustrated in graphs.

Research Question 1 sought to explore the importance of organizational factors and their relationship with employee happiness. In relation to this research question, Section A of the survey generated some key information which is separated and presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Figure 3 focuses on the organizational factors of internal communication as well as vision and values in relation to employee happiness. Following this, Figure 4 considers the organizational factors of reputation and goal alignment in context with employee happiness.

Figure 3

Organizational Factors (Internal Communication & Vision and Values) and Employee Happiness

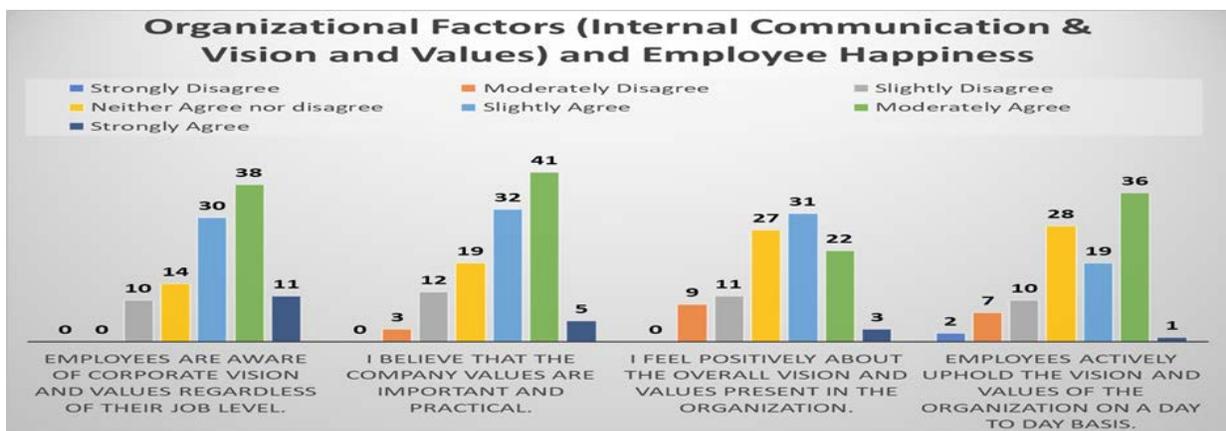


Figure 4

Organizational Factors (Reputation and Goal Alignment) and Employee Happiness

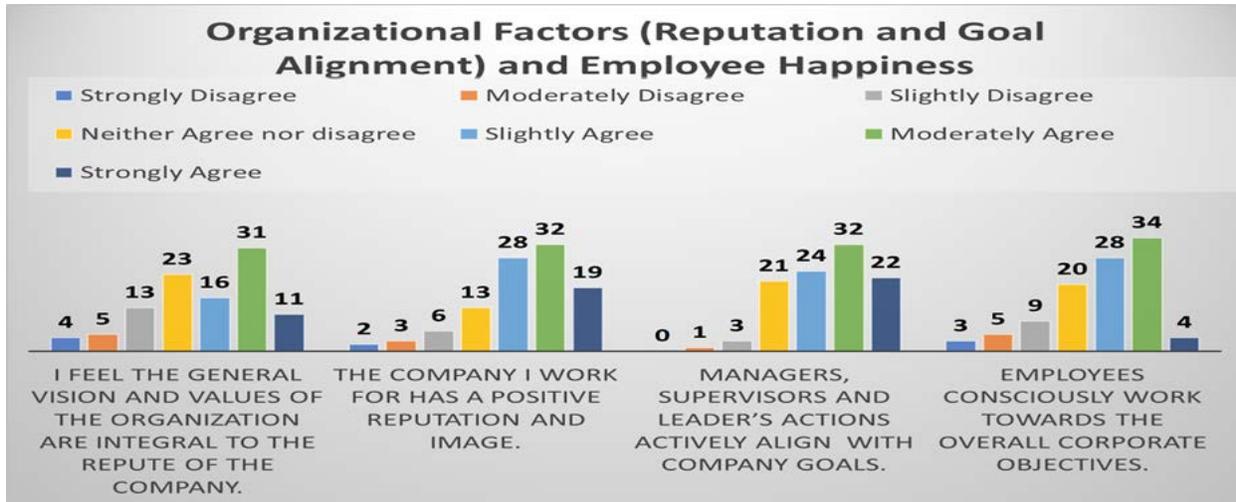


Figure 3 and Figure 4 are based on the responses gathered from Section A of the survey. The interpretation of the data from Figure 3 reveals that organizational factors such as awareness of corporate objectives as well as vision and values have a clear presence in the UAE workplace environments. Most employees appear to be substantially connected to their overall company vision, which provides a sense of direction to work towards. Most of the participants are aware of their corporate objectives, vision, and values.

The results also substantiate that this mindset is indiscriminate of the employees' job position or level as confirmed by 79 participants (over 75% of the overall sample population). Seventy eight employees (around 75% of the overall sample population) affirm that they feel positively as to the overall vision and values of the organization.

Figure 4 further looks on organizational factors but seeks to focus on the aspect of reputation as well as strategy and goal alignment as indicated by its title. Findings confirm that the employees associate the vision and values held by the organization with its overall repute. The majority confirm that the organizations held principles are deemed integral towards the

reputation and standing of the company worked for. In addition, 79 participants agree that their company has a positive reputation and image. Such statistics and mindsets are likely to generate potentially positive effects in the organization as to be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The presence and influence of company goals and corporate objectives can indicate the level of goal alignment presence; requisite findings were largely positive and substantiate this notion. Findings confirm that employees are mindful of corporate objectives whilst executing their work and in their general endeavors. This is made apparent as most participants confirm that they consciously work towards these objectives daily.

It also seems clear that leaders and managers in the workplace openly and consciously ensure their actions and leadership is based on these principles, which is visible to their employees. Seventy eight of the overall participants were aware and conscious of the fact that their leaders were actively aligning employee actions with the overall company goals.

The data from this section also explicated that most employees acknowledged and were in moderate agreement with the positive presence of these organizational factors, which can provide a direction and intrinsic motivation when performing duties as to be elaborated upon in Chapter 5. Only a minority differed in their views as to the importance and familiarity of such organizational factors.

Research Question 2 concerned the relevance and presence of people factors in the organizational setting. The relationship of an employee with their colleagues, managers, and supervisors has a significant impact upon their overall satisfaction and connection to the organization. The requisite results are depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5

People Factors and Employee Happiness

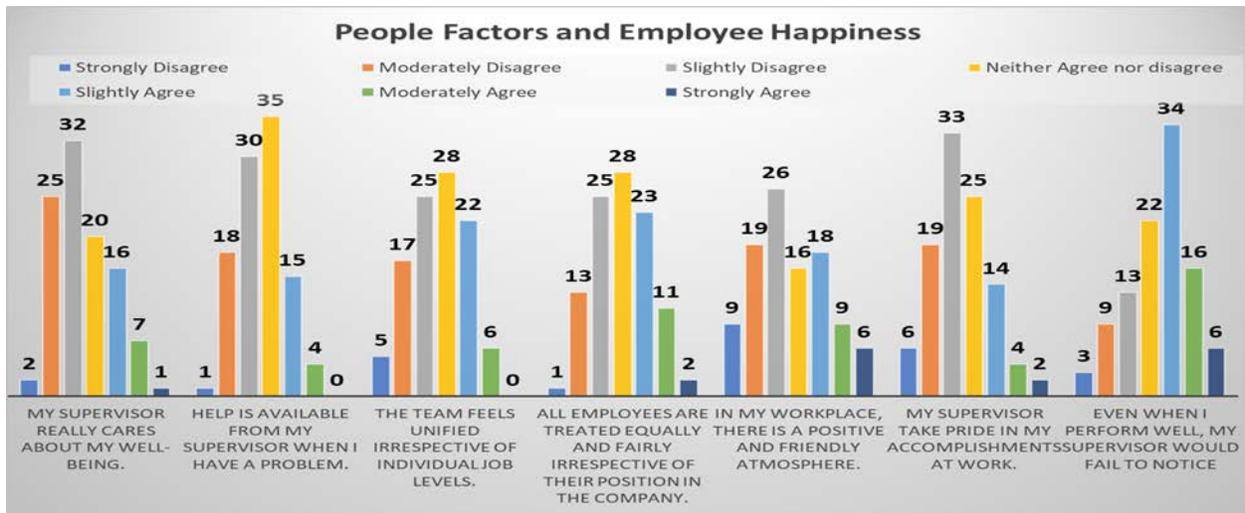


Figure 5 illustrates the responses based on the perception of people factors present in the workplace. The decision-making system and process in Scandinavia can afford those that are subject to the decision the ability to contribute in some corporate selections (Gates, 2021). However, in the UAE, there is usually a strong source of power, which initiates decisions and pertains to control and influence over the employees (Lubin, 2014). As such, this seemingly makes the supervisor’s role in the UAE even more critical for employees who are more dependent upon them for a sense of direction (Dewydar, 2015). Section B of the survey sought to investigate the aforementioned considerations and results are depicted in Figure 5.

The results from the questionnaire revealed that most employees feel detached from their managers and supervisors. Almost two-thirds of the participants disclosed they do not feel that their manager is concerned with their well-being. Over half of the employees revealed that they disagree that their supervisor takes pride in any of their accomplishments at work. More than half of the respondents also affirmed that they believe their supervisor would fail to notice any exceedingly good performance. In addition, almost half concurred with this sense of

disengagement by revealing that they do not feel that help is available from their supervisor when required.

The presence or influence of positive colleague relationships also did not appear to be promising. Almost half of the team admitted they do not feel unified and over a third indicated they felt that not all employees are treated equally. It seems there is a gap or disparity in communication, or the workplace is represented as a controlled environment, which does not necessarily endorse internal colleague rapport and communication as confirmed by the following findings. Only 33 employees felt there is a positive atmosphere in the workplace whilst the rest differed in their opinion. It seems that the roles and levels, which the participants work at have a direct impact upon their overall position and value at the firm, which takes a toll on the unity felt within the team (Morris, 2020).

Research Question 3 related to the job factors present, which can entice employees to join or continue in their service towards the organization. In relevance to this research question, Figure 6 displays the requisite results.

Figure 6

Job Factors and Employee Happiness

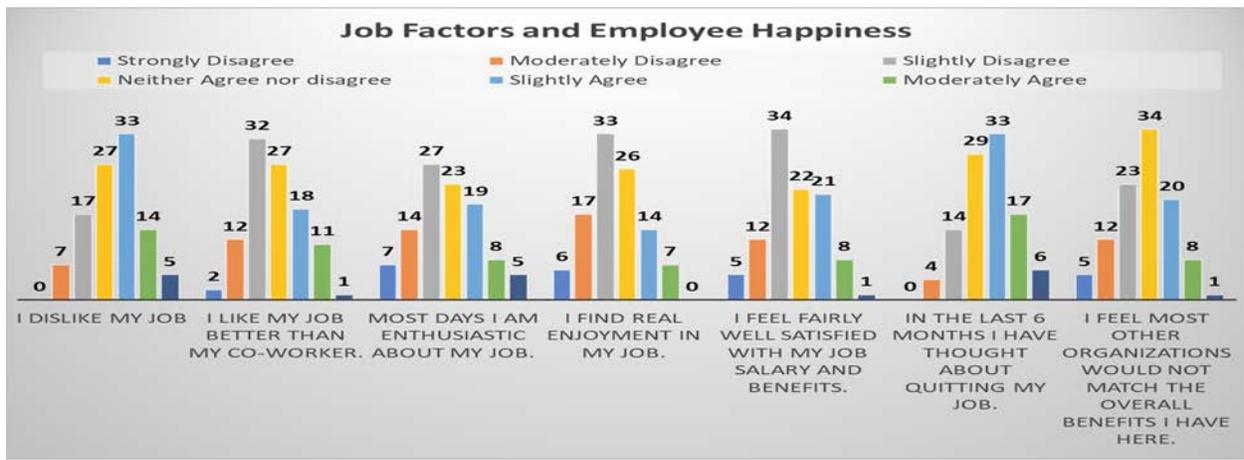


Figure 6 illustrates the perceptions of employees based on their job factors. There appeared to be a rather negative outlook overall as almost half of the participants admitted they disliked their job and did not find enjoyment in their job. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, not enjoying work and dealing with responsibilities merely as a chore is likely to produce a negative effect on efficiency and productivity (Toufaili, 2018). Findings further revealed that almost half of the employees did not feel enthusiastic about their job nor do they like their job better than their co-workers. As indicated earlier, this issue too is likely to produce undesirable effects upon efficiency and productivity (Young, 2018).

There were fairly balanced results as to the opinion of whether the job benefits could be matched elsewhere or were distinctive to the organization worked in. However, almost half of the participants admitted they had thought of quitting their job in the last 6 months, which is illustrative of a lack of commitment or motivation. Most significantly, it remains pertinent that this is despite an equivalent number affirming that they are satisfied with their salary. Such results confirm that there are other lacking factors, which have had a negative impact upon the overall level of employee engagement and happiness irrespective of the adequate salary provided.

Research Question 4 and the final section of the survey encompassed the most important aspect of this research, which is work life balance. Questions in the survey sought to determine the employee's mindset as to the work life balance present within the UAE as well as the manner or extent to which work-life balance is afforded appropriate consideration by organizations. Figure 7 and Figure 8 depict the findings from this survey; Figure 7 focuses on the perception of work-life balance within UAE organizations while figure 8 focuses on the presence and implications of work-life balance.

Figure 7

Work-Life Balance: Perception Within the UAE

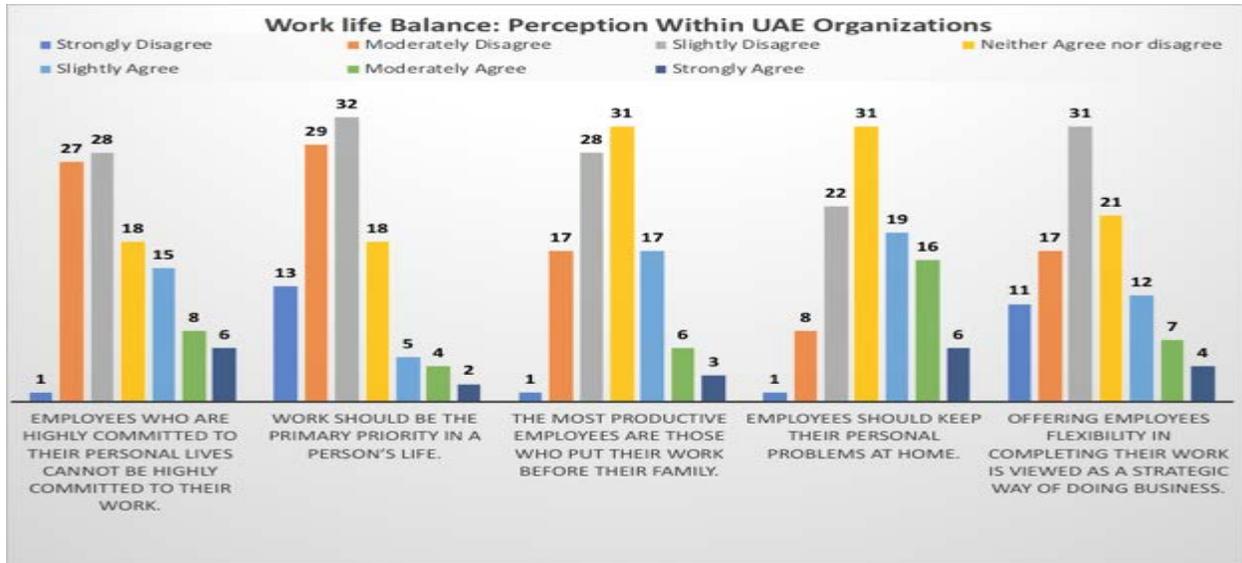
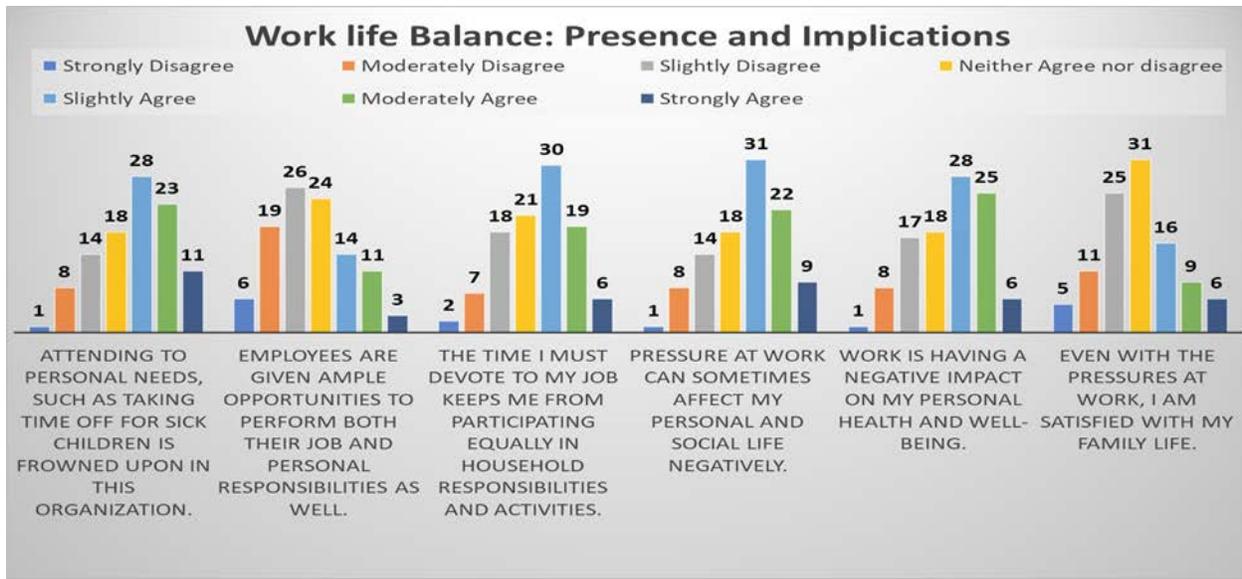


Figure 8

Work-Life Balance: Presence and Implications



The results for this section were very informative and revealing of the outlook of employees who evidently lacked the concept of work life balance in their lives and desired equilibrium between their work and personal life.

When gauging the perception of employees in relation to work-life balance within UAE organizations, Figure 7 revealed that most participants agreed that those committed to their personal lives were unable to fully commit to their work, thereby revealing that both aspects conflict with each other in the employee's lives. It also becomes clear that most participants (over 70% of the overall sample population) concurred that work should not be or rather cannot be the sole priority in one's life. Such statistics suggest that these 74 participants have personal commitments and would like to give them equal regard and importance too rather than making their professional life their only priority.

As to be discussed further in Chapter 5, it is often assumed that the inability to make work one's main priority can compromise the level and standard of efficiency and productivity of employees. However, when asked if work must be placed before family to accelerate productivity, almost half disagreed implying family life does not necessarily impede their performance at work.

When assessing the perception of employees regarding their ability and outlook of being able to display, exhibit or manage any personal feelings in relation to their problems at home during their work, the majority consensus was that these personal problems should strictly be kept at home. Such statistics are potentially indicative of the general organizational outlook, which lacks understanding or empathy of personal problems of employees thereby deterring them and leading to this reluctance in being able to mention such issues even remotely during office hours. The final question in regards to the perception of work-life balance within UAE organizations asked participants whether granting employees flexibility at work was considered a strategic way of doing business, but most refuted this claim. Such results reveal that most of the participating employees have understood and accept that their workplace does not regard

offering such flexibility as an efficient strategy or practice for their business. It became clear that currently the notion of work-life balance to enable employees to better manage their personal commitments alongside their work is still not a normal practice.

Following this, Figure 8 seeks to address the presence and implications of work-life balance in continuation of Figure 7 and in addressing Research Question 4. The findings from Figure 8 reaffirmed those revealed by Figure 7. The first question queried whether attending inadvertent personal issues such as taking time off for sick children was dealt with in understanding and empathetic manner, but the majority conceded that this was frowned upon by the organization. Around 60% of the participants admitted that the general outlook of the organization was deemed rather inconsiderate towards such personal matters involving employees tending to their family or personal issues.

In relation to being provided ample and sufficient opportunity in being able to perform work and personal obligations, almost half admitted this was not so. These results were then maintained and further validated when most employees admitted that pressure from work often affects their personal and social life negatively. Such findings reveal the actual implications of the lacking work-life balance upon employees. Most participants revealed that work was interfering with the ability to perform personal responsibilities and disclosed they were unable to distribute their time equally towards their household obligations and activities. In addition, almost half of the participants went as far as admitting that they are not satisfied with their family life due to pressures at work. As to be further discussed in Chapter 5, the findings demonstrate that the two aspects of life can overlap and influence each other. There is a consensus that when an employee's personal and social life is negatively affected, it can impede their concentration, efficiency and productivity at work (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015).

However, the most important finding perhaps was the disclosure that most employees are indeed realizing that work is having a negative impact on their personal health and well-being. Such results reinforce the importance of the concept of work-life balance whilst indicating that its absence is taking a toll upon the employees (see Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11).

Figure 9

Subjective Happiness Scale: In General, I Consider Myself: Not a Very Happy Person or A Very Happy Person



Figure 10

Subjective Happiness Scale: Compared to my Peers, I Consider Myself: Less Happy Or More Happy



Figure 11

Subjective Happiness Scale: Subjective Happiness Scale: Q3 and Q4

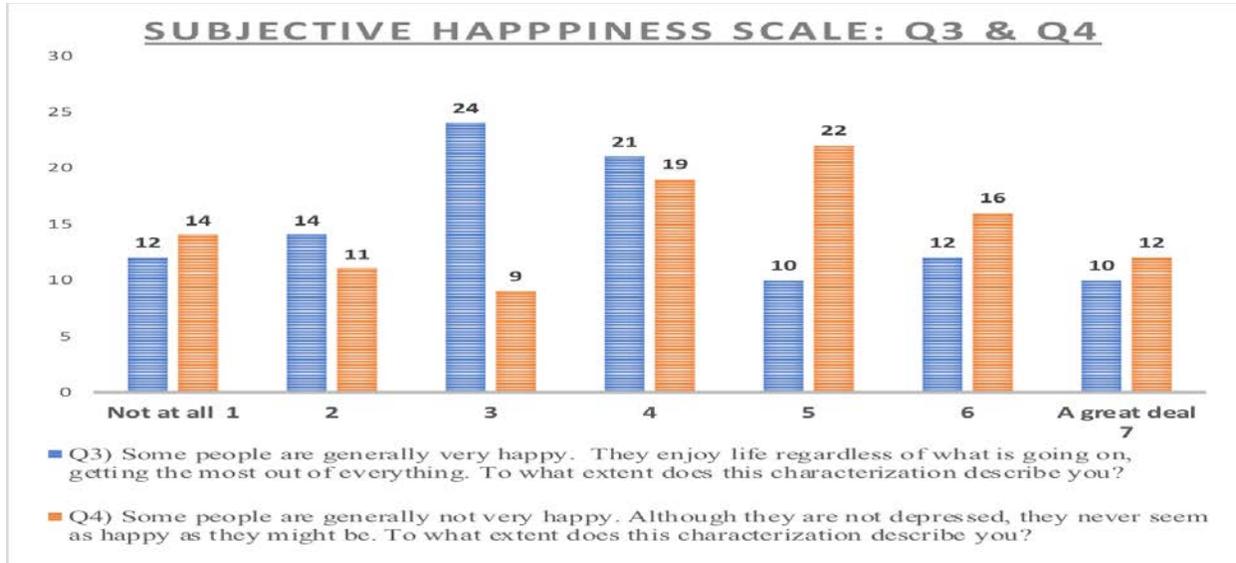


Figure 9, Figure 10, and Figure 11 illustrate happiness scales subjective to four questions. The survey utilized a 7-point Likert scale that allowed for a statistical measurement where 1 present a non-happy person and 7 present a happy person. Figure 9 examined the first question: “In general, I consider myself: Not a very happy person or A very happy person.” Most participants answered that they moderately not happy. Only 11 participants saw themselves as a very happy person. Figure 10 examined the second question: “Compared to my peers, I consider myself: Less happy or more happy.” Low number scales dominated participants’ results, indicating that employees saw themselves to be less happy. Figure 11 examined the third and fourth questions where scale 1 stands for “Not at all” and scale 7 “A great deal.” Question 3 was “Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?” and Question 4 was “Some people are generally very happy. Although they are not depressed, they

never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?” Participants’ result varied between not at all and a great deal. Yet, most employees choose that they did not see the statement as a good deal or moderately disagree with the statement in Question 3. Question 4 showed slightly opposite results with most employees agreeing with the statement. This shows that most employees do not agree that they enjoy life regardless of what is going on and that they get the most out of everything. However, most employees agreed that although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be.

In this section, direct correlation analyses were completed to investigate relationship between the aforementioned components and employee happiness. Correlation was performed to investigate relationship between organizational factors and employee happiness. Pearson correlation and Spearman correlation were performed between employee happiness and organizational factors. This was performed with two hypotheses, H0: There is not any relationship between organizational factors and employee happiness and H1: There is a relationship between organizational factors and employee happiness.

Table 2 shows the result of Pearson correlational analysis between *Organizational Factors and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.25, and there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. Table 3 shows the result of Spearman correlational analysis between *Organizational Factors and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.55, which shows there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. Table 4 shows the result of Pearson correlational analysis between *People Factors and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.25, showing there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. Table 5 shows the

result of Spearman correlational analysis between *People Factors and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.20, indicating there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. Table 6 shows the result of Pearson correlational analysis between *Job Factors and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.87, showing there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, null hypothesis is retained. Table 7 shows the result of Spearman correlational analysis between *Job Factors and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.77, indicating there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, null hypothesis is retained. Table 8 shows the result of Pearson correlational analysis between *Work Life Balance and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.27, indicating there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. Table 9 shows the result of Spearman correlational analysis between *Work Life Balance and Employee Happiness*. At the 95% confidence level, p value is 0.27, indicating there is not a significant correlation between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Analyzing Relationship Between Organizational Factors and Employee Happiness

| Correlations | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | | Organizational Factors | Employee Happiness |
| Organizational Factors | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.115 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .248 |
| | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 |
| Employee Happiness | Pearson Correlation | -.115 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .248 | |
| | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 |

Table 3*Spearman Correlation Analyzing Between Organizational Factors and Employee Happiness*

| Correlations | | | Organizational Factors | Employee Happiness |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Organizational Factors | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | -.059 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .551 |
| | | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 |
| | Employee Happiness | Correlation Coefficient | -.059 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .551 | . |
| | | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 |

Correlation analyses were performed to investigate relationship between *people* factors and employee happiness. Pearson correlation and Spearman correlation were performed between happiness and people factors. This was performed with two hypotheses, H0: There is not any relationship between people factors and employee happiness and H1: There is a relationship between people factors and employee happiness.

Table 4*Pearson Correlation Analyzing the Relationship Between People Factors and Employee Happiness*

| Correlations | | | People Factors | Employee Happiness |
|---------------------|---------------------|------|----------------|--------------------|
| People Factors | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .115 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .248 | |
| | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 | |
| Employee Happiness | Pearson Correlation | .115 | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .248 | | |
| | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 | |

Table 5*Spearman Correlation Analyzing the Relationship Between People Factors and Employee**Happiness*

| | | Correlations | |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | | People Factors | Employee Happiness |
| Spearman's rho | People Factors | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .200 |
| | | N | 103 |
| | Employee Happiness | Correlation Coefficient | .127 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .200 |
| | | N | 103 |

Correlation analyses were performed to investigate relationship between *job* factors and employee happiness. Pearson correlation and Spearman correlation were performed between employees' happiness and job factors. This was performed with two hypotheses, H0: There is not any relationship between job factors and employee happiness and H1: There is a relationship between job factors and employee happiness.

Table 6*Pearson Correlation Analyzing the Relationship Between Job Factors and Employee Happiness*

| | | Correlations | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | | Job Factors | Employee Happiness |
| Job Factors | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .016 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .869 |
| | N | 103 | 103 |
| Employee Happiness | Pearson Correlation | .016 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .869 | |
| | N | 103 | 103 |

Table 7*Spearman Correlation Analyzing the Relationship Between Job Factors and Employee**Happiness*

| | | Correlations | |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | | Job Factors | Employee Happiness |
| Spearman's rho | Job Factors | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | | <i>N</i> | 103 |
| | Employee Happiness | Correlation Coefficient | .029 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .770 |
| | | <i>N</i> | 103 |

Correlation analyses were performed to investigate relationship between *Work Life Balance and Employee Happiness*. This was performed with two hypotheses, H0: There is not any relationship between work-life balance and employee happiness and H1: There is a relationship between work-life balance and employee happiness.

Table 8*Pearson Correlation Analyzing the Relationship Between Work Life Balance and Employee**Happiness*

| | | Correlations | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | WorkLife Balance | Employee Happiness |
| WorkLife Balance | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.110 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .268 |
| | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 |
| Employee Happiness | Pearson Correlation | -.110 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .268 | |
| | <i>N</i> | 103 | 103 |

Table 9

Spearman Correlation Analyzing the Relationship Between Work Life Balance and Employee Happiness

| Correlations | | | WorkLife Balance | Employee Happiness |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Spearman's rho | WorkLife Balance | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | -.109 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .272 |
| | | N | 103 | 103 |
| | Employee Happiness | Correlation Coefficient | -.109 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .272 | . |
| | | N | 103 | 103 |

Summary of Findings

The survey was divided into four sections in accordance with the research questions as well as the conceptual theoretical model. It was critical to attain an insight from the employees working within the UAE civil sectors to gauge to the way their happiness and productivity is impacted by numerous factors. As highlighted above, the findings revealed many interesting issues and have partly supported the previous conclusions reached by the research in the literature review as to be discussed in Chapter 5.

In relation to Research Question 1 and Section 1 of the survey, Figure 3 and Figure 4 were able to confirm the common prevalence of a strong set of vision and values with which employees of various job levels are aligned due to their managers. It seemed clear that supervisors can utilize company objectives and visions as a form of direction to drive employee actions towards fulfilling company goals.

The second research question was dealt with in Section B of the survey and findings were depicted in Figure 5. This area revealed some concerning issues as most participants felt their

supervisors do not care about their well-being, nor do they recognize or notice any accomplishments at work either. Most participants revealed they do not receive the assistance, help or guidance from supervisors required when need be. Finally, it was also notable that the results were fairly balanced as to the equality in treatment irrespective of position in the company; however, most revealed that a positive atmosphere is lacking.

Figure 6 displayed findings from the third section of the survey based on Research Question 3. Yet again, results corroborated with the outcomes reached through the qualitative research. Findings revealed that although most employees were satisfied with their job salary and benefits, they did not like their job and do not derive any enjoyment from it and nor do they approach it with enthusiasm. Most admitted that although the overall benefits could not be matched by most other organizations, they had considered quitting their job in the last 6 months.

Finally, in relation to work-life balance as addressed by the final section of the survey, findings have revealed that there are clear implications of the lack of work-life balance as initially projected in the qualitative research. Most employees did not feel that work should be the sole focus of their life and affirm that family life does not necessarily negatively impact productivity or commitment towards work. Most participants admitted, in relation to the general outlook of the organization worked for, that flexibility at work is not currently regarded as a strategic way of doing business and in context to this, any personal problems should strictly be kept at home. As expected, employees disclosed friction and imbalance in being able to balance their personal responsibilities with work which is taking a toll on their overall health and well-being. Happiness scale showed that most employees agreed that although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. Nevertheless, correlation analyses did not assert that a directly positive or significant correlation is present between employees and happiness. The

aforementioned key findings (quantitative data) will be comprehensively discussed in Chapter 5 with the assimilation of the qualitative data from the literature review.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This research study was conducted with the intention of examining the factors that influence the presence and level of employee happiness in a workplace. Martela et al. (2020) highlight that in the recent World Happiness Report 2020 and since 2013, every Scandinavian country has consistently ranked in the top ten in general happiness levels, which applies equally to their work environments; particularly, with the implementation of work-life balance strategies. Employee happiness and satisfaction are positively correlated to increased levels of productivity and efficiency (Fapohunda, 2014). This study sought to learn and investigate the workings of work-life balance strategies and other requisite components as well as their influence and importance for employee happiness. This study used Scandinavian work happiness levels and work life balance strategies as a basis for comparison to the UAE. This study used a mixed-method approach; the qualitative research sought to delve into the numerous components associated to employee happiness as depicted in the selected conceptual theoretical research model while a corresponding survey generated quantitative data.

This chapter will discuss the findings from the survey in relation to the research questions. In doing so, the assessment of these components as per the survey results will be made in parallel to the understanding obtained from the review of the literature. This chapter will also seek to provide requisite recommendations as to the way the UAE workplace environment can improve to potentially facilitate employee happiness and work-life balance.

Below are the four research questions which guided this dissertation as well as the study conducted involving 103 participants from the UAE public sector.

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between organizational factors and employee happiness?
2. What is the relationship between people factors and employee happiness?
3. What is the relationship between the job factors and employee happiness?
4. What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee happiness?

Key Findings

Research Question 1

The first research question considered the connection between organizational factors and employee happiness. In the context of organizational factors, the underlying components as per the conceptual theoretical research model were internal communication, vision, and values, strategy, and goal alignment as well as reputation and brand. Internal communication refers to organizational messages being adequately transmitted across the work environment to ensure employees are properly connected and aware of company affairs. Not only is such internal communication from supervisors and leader's integral to generate a sense of connection and community in the organization, but it is also critical in keeping employees driven towards corporate goals, thereby influencing employee happiness (Mishra et al., 2014). In relation to vision and values, this refers to holding a set of shared beliefs, which can mutually guide and inspire employees to work in alignment towards a purpose (Frances Bissett, 2014). In essence, if an organization has visions and values that connect to the employees, it is perceived that it will act as a form of motivation beyond that of monetary rewards (Kanchana, 2013). As for strategy and goal alignment, this is also perceived to be integral in allowing employees to remain driven and focused whilst recognizing the connection of their individual performance with the goals of the organization. Working in alignment to a goal or objective can motivate employees and ensure they remain content with their presence and role in the organization (Boswell et al., 2006).

Finally, the aspect of reputation and brand of the organization can become closely linked to the employees' pride and satisfaction for working in that specific place (Yang et al., 2015).

Section A of the survey encompassed eight statements centered on the aforementioned components. The survey required participants to provide their response to each statement using a 7-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Findings revealed that the aforementioned organizational factors are deemed largely important for employees in the UAE. It was particularly apparent that for most employees, the vision and values are important aspects that guide their daily actions. Most employees were aware of the vision, values, and objectives of the organization irrespective of their job position. Having a clear understanding of what the organization is seeking to attain through their strategies and objectives, irrespective of job position, can allow employees to feel valued and informed member of the team whilst enabling them to see the connection and significance of their role and actions (Kontakos, n.d.). The vision and values of the organization can allow employees to see the immediate "links between performance and purpose" (Team KT, 2018, p. 1). Additionally, the presence of a communally held vision can be regarded as a "connective tissue" within the workplace because they signify and reveal the manner in which the teams' work is concurrently "interwoven with the larger goals" (Team KT, 2018, p. 1).

The findings revealed most employees held the belief that these visions and values are of significance to them and are practical. This indicated that such visions are viewed positively by employees as was confirmed by most participants in the following question. Holding a positive outlook in relation to the vision and values of the organization can be extremely beneficial in being able to work with commitment and efficiency. It is understood that strong visions and values can in fact "gain the hearts and minds of employees" (Kanchana, 2013, p. 43). When

employees are involved mentally as well as emotionally, they are usually more “willing to exert effort” in their daily activities (Rice et al., 2017).

Findings also revealed that most participants positively affirm and realize that their managers, supervisors, and leaders actively align their actions and the employees towards corporate goals. This indicates strong internal communication as well as strong strategy and goal alignment. As highlighted by Kulchai et al (2018), having effective formal communication to efficiently “transmit messages and information” (p. 124) is integral to keep the team organized and steered towards goals. Such communication is also known as downward communication, which occurs when those working at higher levels transmit information and direction to those functioning at lower levels. Findings suggest that the UAE management structure is cognizant of the importance of having a strong communication network to ensure employees recognize the organizations’ expectations from them (Mishra et al., 2014). Employees can be influenced, guided, and motivated towards striving to achieve the organizational outcomes desired (Frances Bissett, 2014). The findings from Section A of the survey have shown the presence of a strong formal downward communication framework as well a strong connection of employees with the vision and values of the organization. Employees are made aware and informed the objectives and targets of their organization to better guide their approach when undertaking and completing tasks. It seems clear that a sense of direction is highly regarded by leaders who ensure they adequately convey this and steer the organization to reach the targeted objectives. Such an approach can allow a common sense and perception of purpose and motivation, which is likely to positively stimulate employee satisfaction, productivity, and happiness (Kanchana, 2013).

In relation to reputation and image, most participants provided a positive response to indicate the organization they worked for has a positive repute and image. Employees are

attracted to organizations, which can boost their perceived status and value and can provide a sense of pride. The high numerical value of 79 participants indicated that employees are cognizant of this aspect (Yang et al., 2015).

In relation to organizational factors, it appears that employees are collectively driven towards reaching organizational goals and objectives as well as upholding shared vision and values. As identified above, supervisors and managers appear to be clearly guiding employees to work in conjunction with the strategies and goal alignment, demonstrating strong internal communication in such regards. It is recommended that this clarity in direction should be maintained so that employees can retain their focus to see and understand their contribution and importance in the organization. The statistic regression result did not support the qualitative portion of the survey. Therefore, it was not possible to find direct correlations between the aforementioned components and employee happiness.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 sought to explore and understand the impact of people factors on employee happiness. In such regards, people factors include the leadership within the organization, the relationship with colleagues and managers as well as social values. Leadership is an important characteristic in any organization as it can evoke a mutual sense of determination, purpose, and direction to employees for achieving corporate goals (Gashti et al., 2014). As aforementioned, there are numerous types of leadership styles. The UAE generally relies on a strong central source of power whilst Scandinavian work environments provide higher level of engagement for employees towards corporate decisions (Lubin, 2014). Having a strong sense of hierarchical management and control makes the supervisory and managerial roles in the UAE

even more significant as they can have a direct and substantial influence on an employees' perception of the organization and their importance and value within it (Lubin, 2014).

Irrespective of the type of leadership style, it is important to consider whether employees are acting “openly and voluntarily” or whether they “feel compelled” to act in a specific manner as dictated by a strong leadership (Isa et al., 2019, p. 6552). With regards to the relationship employees have with their managers, it is a known fact that a bad rapport with managers can significantly damage the performance of employees and is usually the leading cause of employees wanting to leave their job (Tamme, 2020). This is because, unlike leaders working on a higher level, managers are more likely to directly engage with the workforce and can easily make them feel like a valued member of the team, positively driving their motivation, happiness, and productivity levels or alternatively can make them feel unwelcome (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020). Relationships with colleagues are equally important as such positive engagement and communication can generate positive mental stimulation, which can aid employee well-being (Ariani, 2015). Finally, in relation to social values, they not only refer to the notion of looking beyond financial rewards to benefit the community at large but also refer to the aspect of equality and diversity in the workplace (Trickey, 2019).

Section B comprised of seven statements that also required a response based on the 7-point Likert scale to gauge the presence and influence of the above highlighted people factors upon employee happiness. To gauge the leadership and management style as well as the effect it produces, the survey sought to determine the perceived approachability and concern held by supervisors for their employees. Findings revealed that most participants had responded negatively when questioned whether their supervisor cares about their well-being, as only 24 responded positively. Further, only 20 participants felt that the supervisor takes pride in their

achievements at work whereas the majority disagreed. In conjunction to this, most agreed that even if they perform well at work, this is likely to go unnoticed by their supervisor. Only 25 felt that they would be acknowledged or noticed if they performed exceedingly well. These figures are largely concerning as the feeling of being disregarded or unvalued is bound to create a negative impact employee happiness and productivity (Dewydar, 2015). Such concerns are elevated as findings revealed that only 19 of the participants affirmed that they could approach the supervisor for help when a problem arises whilst the majority disagreed.

The behavior of managers and supervisors and the way they portray themselves can determine how approachable they appear to an employee and how comfortable employees will feel in seeking assistance when required (Dewydar, 2015). It is not necessary that the supervisors are unwilling to assist, but it is perhaps a natural and inevitable consequence of feeling detached from such leadership that employees feel. If participants do not feel that their supervisor is concerned with their wellbeing or their achievements, they are less likely to approach them with ease when required. As mentioned previously, the prominence of a strong leadership and structural layout in roles is a common practice in the UAE; however, the consequences of such a system can often be a communication gap between employees and managers as well as a diminishing or lacking level of connection with the establishment in which they work.

The findings appear correct in that if most employees do not feel that their manager is concerned about their well-being, they will certainly feel that it is futile to approach them when a problem surfaces as they are unlikely to care. Such communication issues with the manager can not only create inefficiency in communication and work in general but can eventually disconnect employees from the organization and diminish employee happiness (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014).

As highlighted above, managers have a crucial role in which they can delegate and coordinate work towards corporate goals (Tansel & Gazioglu, 2013). They can do so, in a more effective manner if they choose to drive their workforce with motivation, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose by making them feel valued and appreciated (Dewydar, 2015). Such feelings are likely to make employees act in the best interest of the organization with the understanding of how important their influence and role is (Aktouf, 1992).

In relation to the general equation and environment of the workplace, only 28 felt the team feels unified whilst generally participants indicated that the sense of unity and community lacked across different job levels. Despite this, the findings revealed a fairly balanced outlook as to whether the employees are treated equally and fairly irrespective of their position in the company with 36 providing a positive response and 39 providing a negative response. Notably, even though opinions in such regards are fairly divided, this too should be a cause of concern as it is integral to ensure all members of an organization feel valued and are treated respectfully irrespective of their position in the organization.

In addition, just over half (54) of the participants provided a negative response as to whether the workplace has a positive and friendly atmosphere. The lack of friendly environment combined with the perception of lack of community both indicate that the workplace does not foster or stimulate any general or informal atmosphere in which employees are able to engage with each other in a relaxed way. Such a strict formal decorum can lead to an alienation of employees from the team as they are unable to casually discuss their work problems or seek positive mental stimulation aside from their work only (Ariani, 2015).

The assessment of components under people factors using both the quantitative data from the survey and qualitative data from the research has revealed numerous areas that require some

revision. As aforementioned, leadership structures and practices vary across the world and across different fields of work. However, it is still highly recommended that the approach of managers is examined. The supervisors must alter the manner in which they are coming across or will risk continuing to inadvertently alienating their employees. At present, the current approach does not portray that the supervisors are approachable, nor does it encourage employees to feel comfortable to ask for any help, guidance, or discuss any issues they encounter. It is likely that if such an approach persists, employees are likely to feel less valued, which can decrease their motivation, happiness, and productivity levels and can start to affect their connection and loyalty towards the organization.

Secondly, endorsing a formal environment that is void of any distractions so that employees concentrate only on their work is not always the optimal approach. Communication and interaction between colleagues can introduce a sense of positivity and act as mental stimulation and can even operate as a means of quick recuperation and recovery from the normal stresses of work (Haar et al., 2019). As discussed above, it is important to accept some form of engagement in positive communication. It is recommended that the UAE reassess their internal composition in a bid to introduce some teamwork and collaborative activities in their organization to support and foster such internal communication, positivity, and unity.

Results from *correlation analyses* were unable to match the results of the qualitative survey.

Hence, it was not possible to find direct correlations between the aforementioned components and employee happiness.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 sought to explore the connection and influence of job factors on employee happiness. Job factors are comprised of salary and benefits, appreciation, learning and

development, and intrinsic motivation. Although there are many underlying motivations that drive an individual to work, financial rewards in return for service has always been and will remain a key motivator. However, there are also other rewards, which employees seek aside from salary to pursue a life of contentment known as fringe benefits (Iqbal et al., 2017). These are comprised of some form of bonuses such as “family and medical leave, social security, healthcare, life insurance, retirement plan” (Prasetio et al., 2019, p. 242). With regards to appreciation, this is a basic human need (Alam et al. 2013). All employees desire some form of acknowledgement, which makes them feel like a valued member of the team and acts as a means of motivation to increase productivity (Danish & Usman, 2010). Employees are aware of the competitiveness in the market and the complexity in being able to climb the career ladder. Therefore, they are increasingly attracted to jobs that can allow them to develop their skills (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Learning and development are becoming an important consideration for employees who wish to develop their “capabilities, knowledge, and skills” (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017, p. 206). This component links in with intrinsic motivation, which is described as a personal drive usually to grow as an individual whilst working (Raza et al., 2015).

With regards to salary and benefits, only 30 participants provided some form of positive response as to whether they were satisfied with their job salary as well as other benefits whilst 51 disagreed. Further, over a third of employees felt that the overall benefits provided could be matched by most organizations. It appears that although the public sector is inclined to provide competitive salaries, employees are lacking some form of incentive other than this financial compensation. It is vital to understand that money is no longer the sole or primary reason which allows organizations to retain their employees or generates employee happiness (Prasetio et al., 2019). If a workplace can offer alternative benefits such as benefits schemes, work-life balance

and general positive engagement, an employee is much more likely to be happier and productive (Prasetio et al., 2019, p. 242). The concept of bonuses and alternative fringe benefits remains a scarce concept in the UAE public sector potentially owing to the uncertainty as to its sustainability in the long term (Al Nasser et al., 2017). However, it could act as a key motivator to drive employees to increase productivity whilst making them feel valued and appreciated, positively influencing employee happiness (Iqbal et al., 2017).

The findings from the survey also revealed over half of the participants did not find any real enjoyment in their job and only 21 provided a positive response. Findings also revealed that only around 32 participants felt enthusiastic about their job whilst around half stated they did not and even admit that they dislike their job and had considered quitting their job.

Such statistics are immensely concerning as a lack of enjoyment indicates that intrinsic motivation and drive that can propel an employee's productivity is absent. Once an employee begins to lose interest in their work and role, this negatively impacts their motivation levels and ultimately their level of productivity (Bergström & Martínez, 2016). Employees whose performance is driven by passion, determination, and interest are likely to be more constructive and efficient than those merely functioning based on need (Toufaily, 2018). It is possible that this lack of enthusiasm is due to the nature of the work. Repetitive tasks and monotonous work are not mentally stimulating in the long term and can become laborious (Young, 2018). Psychologists Greg R. Oldham and J. Richard Hackman also acknowledged the negative impact a lack of motivation and interest in work can have on productivity and conducted a comprehensive study in such regards (Young, 2018). The resulting theory and model from the study was published in 1975 and remains a key consideration in job designs to generate employee happiness.

The model they created comprises of five factors, which overlap with the aforementioned job factors of appreciation, learning and development, and intrinsic motivation. Oldham and Hackman first highlight the importance of skills variety, which considers whether the tasks given vary in nature and are challenging or are monotonous (Young, 2018). The second characteristic is task identity, which questions whether the task has a defined beginning, middle, and end, providing a sense of satisfaction upon being completed (Young, 2018). Next, they refer to task significance, which asks whether the employee recognizes the value and importance of their role and feels it has a meaning in the organization (Young, 2018). The fourth element consists of task autonomy, which explores the extent of freedom the employees receive in making any decisions in relation to their work (Young, 2018). The final element is job feedback, which is self-explanatory and overlaps with the element of appreciation as it entails the manner in which the employee can be guided and that their efforts can be acknowledged (Young, 2018).

In relation to task significance and job feedback, for the employee to recognize their value in the organization, it is important for their leaders to have an active role. As mentioned in the discussion of Section B, findings have revealed that the internal communication with supervisors is not idyllic. Indeed, supervisors do ensure that team actions remain aligned with the vision and values as discussed in Section A. However, participants do not feel connected to their supervisors on an individual level, nor are their efforts generally acknowledged upon achieving something. As such, in relevance to the above-described model as well as the job factors, the aspect of appreciation is largely lacking, which can dissuade employees from optimizing their performance with the understanding that it will not be recognized and does not matter. Further, employees who have excelled in their performance yet have not been appreciated whether verbally or through any bonuses are also highly likely to

become discouraged from demonstrating extra efforts in the future (Danish & Usman, 2010, p. 160). In addition, when recognition is lacking, employees may lose sight as to the importance of their task, performance and role in the organization, which may further impact their performance negatively (Shonubi et al., 2016).

It has been recognized that intrinsic motivation can be injected into a workforce through the way employees are dealt with (Raza et al., 2015). In the public sector, jobs are more likely to be specifically defined in description and role. Therefore, the aspect of learning and development is likely to come to a standstill or diminish at some point. The level of autonomy may also not be as high as in certain adventurous private sector jobs (Bergström & Martínez, 2016). As such, it becomes increasingly important for organizations to play their role in supporting and fostering an environment to boost the morale and performance of their employees.

In this section, most employees provided negative responses and admitted their job is not enjoyable and disliked it nor do they generally feel enthusiastic. It is highly recommended that supervisors demonstrate their approachability so that employees can ask for help when required and feel like a valued member of the team. Furthermore, it is highly recommended that supervisors make an active effort not only to guide and correct employees when they are wrong but also to recognize their efforts and achievements. Supervisors must recognize the concept of appreciation as an integral job factor that is valued by employees when applying for jobs and staying in a job. As such, to ensure supervisors are guided through programs and training on how they should conduct and depict themselves as well as their potential influence upon employee happiness and productivity.

The concept of appreciation, intrinsic motivation as well as additional benefits other than salary all interlink with each other. As such, it is recommended that organizations in the UAE

seek to establish or promote a rewards-based system that encourages and recognizes employee efforts when they behave in a commendable manner (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). Such a scheme could boost the levels of intrinsic motivation present in the organization, driving employees to act in a more productive manner to reach their targets and go beyond them (Iqbal et al., 2017). Any form of bonuses and fringe benefits that act as a form of recognition and appreciation as well as internal environment related improvements can enhance the level of employee happiness, satisfaction, and motivation, and subsequently, productivity. The statistic regression result was unable to match the results of the qualitative survey. Consequently, it was not possible to find direct correlations between the aforementioned components and indent employee happiness.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was the most important aspect of this study, as it sought to explore the effect and link between work-life balance and employee happiness. Work life balance is a concept that considers the difficulty that arises when individuals try to maintain equilibrium between their work and personal life. Although women empowerment and access to education and equal opportunities is becoming increasingly emboldened and applied, women in most countries retain their domestic role and responsibilities (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015). They struggle splitting their time and priority levels towards work and advancing their career life whilst doing their home chores (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015). Men also have an increased and more active role in their family life than in the past and could also benefit from a work-life balance (Rahman, 2020). The inability to maintain a balance for men and women could lead to increased stress and tension levels, impacting their mental health, happiness, and work productivity (Meenakshi et al., 2013).

It is an uncomplicated fact that when employees are strained and stretched between both aspects of life, they usually begin to demonstrate withdrawal behaviors through lack of interest in work or even absence and “physical removal from the workplace” (Oludayo et al., 2018, p. 6). Such behaviors and state of minds are equally damaging for employers and employees (Bataineh, 2019). Many countries have sought to resolve this issue by introducing and implementing work-life balance strategies. Providing more liberty to employees to assist them and reducing their work-life balance conflict can enable them to approach work with an invigorated approach, accelerating their drive and productivity levels (Mas-Machuca et al, 2016). In relation to the findings from the survey, the findings were split in two parts, including the general perception of work life balance within UAE organizations and the presence and implications of it. In the first section, when employees were questioned as to whether they felt those highly committed to their personal life cannot be committed to work, over half disagreed. Similarly, when questioned on whether the most productive employees are those who are willing to put their work before their personal life, the most common response was negative. The prevailing overview in such regards was that simply being a family person with personal responsibilities does not necessarily detract from one as an employee nor does this aspect have to intervene with work. As such, most employees expressed the view that an individual who is highly committed to their personal life can also be highly committed to their work life. There were 29 who disagreed, indicating that they may be affected by or may be mindful of a lack of work-life balance which compromises their work progress if they are highly committed to their personal life.

The most important disclosure was provided when employees were asked if they felt work should be the primary priority in one’s life, which 74 employees (almost 72% of the

sample population) disagreed. Most of the employees are unable or unwilling to allow their professional work life to be the primary priority in their life. Undoubtedly, it is impractical to expect employees to disregard, neglect or compromise their personal life in any form or manner for the purposes of prioritizing their work life. It is notable that the Middle East has been having an increase in female employees in the labor market who often seek to manage work alongside their role as a homemaker and the substantial development in the societal role of fathers within their home (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015). As such, it is unreasonable to expect employees to be happy and productive if they are deprived the opportunity to manage their time and energy towards their family and personal life (Khatri & Behl, 2013). Inevitably, a work-life balance conflict will generate adverse implications for an employee's health, well-being, and general satisfaction in life, subverting their productivity and performance (Walga, 2018).

The mindset and attitude of the organizations towards personal life can gradually infiltrate the minds and understandings of employees as to how they should deal with such problems as shown by the next question. When employees were questioned as to whether they should keep their personal problems at home, almost half agreed that a separation should be maintained. It is highly probable that employees hold the view that personal life issues should not be disclosed or openly admitted or dealt with because they are aware that their organization will not be understanding of them. As such, the mentality of keeping personal problems aside, or at least attempting to, has gradually become instilled in the employees thinking.

Finally, the last question asked employees whether offering flexibility in completing their work is viewed as a strategic way of doing business, which the majority of the sample population provided a negative response by indicating that this mentality was not necessarily one that was endorsed or practiced in their workplace. This response implies that the organization perhaps

retains and imposes the mindset that employees should ideally maintain a clear distinction and segregation between their personal and work life. As such, the concept of flexibility in allowing more time or opportunities for employees to fulfill their personal responsibilities and obligations is not present. This is particularly concerning when considering the female employees; unquestionably, they are more than likely to have domestic responsibilities which present even more obstacles in being able to pursue and maintain a career (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015).

The ensuing questions in the survey then sought to investigate the position and presence of work-life balance in the organization as well as the resulting effects upon employees. It is understood that the circumstances in this organization are largely analogous to most typical organizations in the public sector in the UAE, in which work timing, conditions, behavior, and supervision towards employees is largely similar and comparable. To gauge the general stance and dealing of the organization with employees in relation to balancing personal life priorities, employees were asked whether taking time off for sick children was frowned upon, of whom (61) provided a positive result to affirm this statement. Such statistics are largely concerning as they underscore the absence of equal consideration and significance being granted by the workplace for their employees' personal life. It also highlights the fact that employees are expected to dispense with their personal issues for the sake of their employment. Such statistics also draw attention to the challenges presented by a work-life balance conflict that is being faced by employees in the UAE.

The survey then endeavored to further delve into the current situation faced by employees in relation to work-life balance. When questioned whether employees felt they were indeed given ample opportunities to perform their job and household responsibilities, only 28 provided a positive response, indicating any level of satisfaction in the balance present whilst 51 did not.

Almost half indicated that they were unable to retain a fair balance between both aspects of their life or were lacking the opportunities required to dedicate themselves to other responsibilities. Around a third of the employees also revealed that due to pressures at work, they are not satisfied with their family life. The reasoning as to why this may be so is revealed by the following findings.

This effect may be linked the job keeping employees from being able to participate equally in household responsibilities and activities, which 55 admitted to and a further 62 suggested that this pressure is affecting their personal and social life negatively. As highlighted above, an inadequate balance in the two aspects of life can undoubtedly have a significant adverse effect on the wellbeing on the individual. Personal and social life is fundamental in that it allows an individual to rejuvenate and recover from the pressures of work mentally and physically (Bataineh, 2019). The inability to adequately break away from the stress and burden of work can begin to take a toll on the general satisfaction and happiness an individual has in their life, which can then percolate to the level of motivation and productivity displayed at work (Gagnano et al., 2020).

The health implications of a work-life balance conflict are increasingly recognized and are rather worrying for employees and employers alike. This is supported by the findings from the following question in which when asked if work was having a negative impact on personal health and wellbeing, 59 agreed. Irrespective of the nature and type of the work, it should never impair the wellbeing and health of an individual. If it does so, it is likely to generate a detrimental impact on their performance, motivation, and happiness levels at work.

In evaluation of the quantitative data from the survey combined with the analysis of the qualitative data derived from academic studies and extensive research, the average or typical

UAE public sector organization ranks poorly in terms of providing a work-life balance for employees. The organizational standpoint seems rather averse to the notion of providing employees the flexibility in being able to balance their personal responsibilities alongside their work responsibilities. It is apparent that overall, when employees are unsuccessful in being able to maintain an adequate balance and are unable to devote the expected time at work, they do not receive any support but rather encounter a sense of disapproval or condemnation. From an employee's perspective, the majority concur with the view that work should not be the primary priority in a person's life. It appears that employees are inclined to keep their problems at home and independently focus on their work. However, as mentioned earlier, this is far from realistic or practical as a work life balance conflict can produce damaging effects. This seems to be somewhat discernible from the findings of the survey. Almost half admit they are not afforded the opportunities required to perform their personal responsibilities and participate equally in household activities. Undoubtedly, such a figure is concerning for female employees in the UAE, who are more than likely expected to fulfil other obligations in conjunction with work. In such a case, females are more likely to be deterred from entering this field of work or the public sector in general considering its rigidity in schedule.

In terms of the general impact, the findings have revealed some concerning patterns which mirror those examined during the qualitative academic research. Most employees have admitted that the pressure they are subjected to during work is affecting their personal and social life and is having a negative impact on their personal health and wellbeing. As aforementioned, when individuals are unable to devote time to themselves and their social life, they are unable to break away from the mental stress and strain that can eventually destabilize their wellbeing. It is

apparent that the UAE public sector does not necessarily view the prospect of offering flexibility to employees in completing their work as a strategic way of doing business.

However, considering the above discussed information, it is highly recommended that the UAE attempts to endorse a work-life balance strategy or approach through which their employees do not have to compromise on their personal and social life or domestic responsibilities and obligations. They will be able to provide their employees the happiness, motivation, and drive required to enhance their levels of productivity. The UAE public sector also needs to be more mindful of their employee demographics so that they can be more considerate, particularly towards their female workers who could benefit from some form of flexibility in their work structure to manage the expectations held from them in their personal and professional life. The statistic regression results were unable to match the results of the survey. Accordingly, it was not possible to find direct correlations between the aforementioned components and employee happiness.

Happiness scale examined four questions. The first question “In general, I consider myself: Not a very happy person or A very happy person.” Most participants answered that they moderately are happy. Second question was “Compared to my peers, I consider myself: Less happy or more happy.” Results revealed that employees see themselves as less happy. The last two questions examined two statements; “Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?” and “Some people are generally very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might want to be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?” Participants result varied between not at all and a great deal. Yet, most employees choose that they did not see the statement as a good deal or moderately disagree

with the statement in Question 3. Question 4 showed slightly opposite results, as most employees agreed with the statement. This shows that most employees do not agree that they enjoy life regardless of what is going on and that they get the most out of everything. Yet, record employees agreed that although they are not depressed, they are certainly not as happy as they might want to be. Nonetheless, the correlations were not statistically significant but were shown to support the qualitative portion. The scale used is not compatible because of measurement of scale. We are unable to say they have link but in general our data and literature review support our hypothesis. However, the concept of employee happiness and work-life balance remain a relatively new concept, particularly in the UAE, which necessitates further investigation and research.

Conclusions and Implications

This dissertation aimed to study the concept of work-life balance as well as other important components perceived to contribute and influence employee happiness levels. When employees are mentally satisfied and happier in their work-life, they are likely to show through their performance and productivity levels (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015). Indeed, Scandinavian countries rank highly in relation to overall happiness levels, which infiltrate into their employee happiness levels (Van Huegten, 2011). Scandinavian countries were the first to properly acknowledge and recognize that there are numerous contributing workplace factors to employee happiness, which can be augmented to achieve the desired result of increased productivity (Lingard & Francis, 2009). Scandinavian countries have implemented work-life balance strategies, which deliver the flexibility and support required by employees to adequately maintain equilibrium between their personal and work responsibilities (Lingard & Francis, 2009).

Such factors and strategies are not well understood in the UAE and nor are they endorsed by any means (Ganguli, 2011). The UAE has come a long way in terms of advancement in technology, education, and becoming a globally competitive hub that is attractive for international investors, but the understanding of employee happiness remains a scarce prospect (Ling, 2015). As such, the researcher has endeavored to comprehensively understand such components and the prospect of work-life balance through qualitative research of essential academic studies and by validating them through the quantitative data derived from a survey conducted in the UAE public sector.

The findings from the survey have supported and validated every part of the comprehensive research conducted on the numerous factors believed to contribute to employee happiness. Even though statistics did not support in doing so, all the research questions, which sought to determine the relationship between employee happiness and the components, have also been weighed. The survey was coordinated with the research questions. Below are the conclusions reached for each section of the survey and components researched.

In relation to organizational factors, results indicate that employees are provided a clear direction in terms of organizational goals and visions. Managers and supervisors are vigilant that the actions of their teams are aligned with the organizational objectives and goals. Most employees revealed that understanding and awareness of organizational visions, values, and goals is prevalent irrespective of the level worked at by employees. This denotes a strong sense of internal communication in which leaders can ensure communication which is “essential to their job performance” is processed and dispersed in an efficient and clear manner (White et al., 2021, p. 69). The findings have also affirmed the concept of “management effectiveness” in which managers can use internal communication to enhance participation of employees by

tuning their actions towards fulfilling company goals (Kulachai et al., 2018, p. 124). The presence of a united company objective is critical in acting as an ambitious “destination”; it can ensure employees remain focused and motivated, which could accelerate their productivity and their overall happiness in working in the organization (Team B, 2018, p. 1). The organizational setting in the UAE relies on strong downward communication, signifying a higher level of authority and responsibility; as aforementioned, in such regards, the findings indicate that supervisors are effective and successful in their responsibility. Unfortunately, statistical analyzes were unable to support the presented survey.

With regards to people factors, the main findings from the qualitative research indicated that relationship with the managers is a crucial aspect as to how employees feel when working at an organization, how productive and motivated they are and of course, how happy they are (Dewydar, 2015). Dewydar (2015) asserts that “generally negative relationship could be detrimental for employee well-being and happiness, which could permeate into their performance at work and lead to negative results for disengagement” (p.136). The findings from the survey supported this inference as it became apparent that the employees did not feel that their supervisors were particularly concerned with their well-being or any accomplishments that should ideally be met with commendation. As such, this negative detachment meant employees displayed a hesitation in approaching their supervisors even when they required help of any sort. As established by the conclusions for organizational factors, downward communication from leaders and supervisors towards their employees is clear and effective. However, the clarity in communication is not reciprocated and employees are unable to transmit information in a similar fashion. Such poor communication is harmful for employees and employers, as it begins to act as a major “barrier to engagement” (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014, p. 112). For employees to

demonstrate a tendency of hesitating or rejecting the prospect of reaching out to their supervisors means they are more likely to be stuck with an issue, which may otherwise be easily resolvable. Not only are employees potentially experiencing unnecessary stress and tension, but the organization may also be experiencing avoidable delay in the completion of tasks. It is imperative that organizations take care in the manner they train their managers in such regards to ensure they are perceived as approachable. The statistical analyses did not support the qualitative portion. None of the variables in the research questions had statistically significant relationships.

In relation to job factors, the findings revealed that employees are not only attracted to or retained through a competitive salary (Prasetio et al., 2019). The competitive salary aspect appears to be satisfactory yet, the aspects of intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm, and drive are largely lacking and absent. As expected, this led to substantial negative results in the data as to the aspect of finding enjoyment in the job with high numbers as to those who had or were considering quitting. It is realized that employees are not simply driven by salary, but other aspects. Additional fringe benefits can make them feel appreciated and valued as individuals, boosting their levels of intrinsic motivation as well as their happiness and productivity (Prasetio et al., 2019). The qualitative data also identified other job factors as part of the theoretical research model, which are deemed to contribute to employee happiness and retention.

Appreciation is also a key necessity for employees. It is vital that employees remain motivated towards their role, particularly when their effort or behavior exceeds normal expectations (Alam et al., 2013). To do so can drive employees to maintain their drive and momentum; however, a failure to recognize such efforts is “always synonymous” with decreasing commitment and turnover (Shonubi et al., 2016, p. 5222). In the previous section, a communication barrier between employees and their manager was identified with which the aspect of appreciation

overlaps. When employees are unable to even approach their manager when they need help and admit their supervisor does not appear to have much regard for their wellbeing, the concept of appreciation becomes far-fetched. The aspect of learning and development is also important, as employees aspire to enhance their “capabilities, knowledge, and skills” in a bid to essentially invest in their own future (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017, p. 208).

This becomes rather difficult in a job lacking autonomy or involves monotonous tasks as synonymous with most Public Sectors jobs. Notably, intrinsic motivation is “valued higher by employees in the public sector than those in the private sector” considering they are usually subject to more competitive or reasonable salaries and have limited extrinsic motivators (Bergström & Martínez, 2016, p. 11). In such regards, intrinsic motivation can be boosted by aspects of appreciation and recognition through better communication with colleagues and managers. A sense of community and connection can aid the retention of employees. Further, aspects of flexibility can also denote a sense of respect and appreciation from the organization towards individual accomplishments irrespective of personal circumstances.

Finally, in relation to work-life balance, the findings indicate that work-life balance remains a scarce concept in the UAE and is largely affecting their employees. Employees are struggling to adequately handle their personal obligations with work and are unable to devote the time required by them to maintain their domestic responsibilities. This raises numerous questions as to how accessible the UAE work environment is to women who are more than likely expected to fulfil personal and domestic duties and responsibilities alongside.

The societal and individual expectations from men in terms of their role at home have significantly modernized, which means they also cannot be discounted by any means in terms lacking responsibility at home (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015). The data from the survey support the

qualitative data in that employees admitted that their personal and social life was being affected by pressure at work, which was taking a toll on their personal health and well-being. It also became clear through the employee's perspective that the UAE does not necessarily see flexibility in completing work to be a strategic way of doing business but certainly need to modify this approach.

The quantitative data combined with the findings from the survey unanimously identify the negative effects of work spill into the employees' personal life. The UAE possesses and endorses an autocratic environment and setting in their workplace, which is upheld by their supervisors to implement a high standard of discipline and direction (Al Sumaiti, 2010). However, in a bid of doing so, the basic needs of the employees are often overlooked. The organization prioritizes their own goals and welfare as established by both methods of research. It is precisely such a mentality and combination of "unsupportive managers, heavy workloads and corporate cultures" that lead to a "work-life conflict", negatively affecting employee's personal life as well as overall happiness and well-being as established in the findings (Al Sumaiti, 2010, p. 23).

Most significantly, work-related stress and work-life conflict are associated with health and mental problems as constant fatigue and "disruption of relationships" inevitably leads to a mental and emotional "burnout" as uncovered in the findings from employees in the UAE (Meenakshi et al., 2013, p. 31). The findings revealed the workforce is subject to a lacking work-life balance, with the participants affirming that they are facing negative effects on health and well-being point towards the anticipated conditions of "psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety and depression" (Gragnano et al., 2020, p. 2). The consequences of such exhaustion or burnout are a decline in "satisfaction and organizational commitment" leading to

withdrawal behaviors from such conditions; as such, staff turnover and absenteeism can be expected (Oludayo et al., 2018, p. 6).

Whilst the UAE ranks highly in being able to establish a clear downward formal communication network to guide and direct employees towards corporate goals, there are still numerous areas that require development for employee wellbeing. Employees are unable to request or find the guidance they require from their supervisors when need be. The aspects of appreciation and value, which are critical in generating efficiency and motivation, are largely absent considering most employees do not believe their achievements are even noticed. Although employees are generally satisfied with their salaries, motivation, drive, and enthusiasm was largely missing, which indicates a lack of fringe benefits, appreciation, intrinsic motivation, or sense of personal development in their role. Finally, as aforementioned, the notion of work-life balance is largely missing, which is presenting the anticipated negative effects upon employees' happiness, personal life, health, and well-being. Unfortunately statistical analysis was unable to support the presented survey.

Implications for Practice

The quantitative analysis did not support the qualitative results. None of the research question variables were found to have statistically significant relationships with each other. As such, it was not possible to find direct correlations between the aforementioned components and employee happiness. However, the results from the survey, which involved participants in the UAE civil sector was still able to provide valuable information and reveal areas to improve upon. This study has clarified the value and influence of several components on employee happiness and productivity. It has also revealed areas that can be improved upon by workplaces to facilitate their employees in reaching their best potential. This study will benefit the organizations in the

UAE by helping them understand their current approach towards organizational management, structure and efficacy and the effects produced upon the employees through their approach. This study has also sought to reveal the way organizations in the UAE can implement changes that should enhance the levels of employee happiness and productivity. There are numerous approaches that can be adopted and changes that can be implemented to ascertain higher levels of employee happiness and productivity as to be elaborated upon below. This study will introduce the concept of work-life balance within the UAE and better guide them to offer their employees the flexibility required (particularly for females) without compromising on the productivity levels expected of them. This study will also contribute to the literature and knowledge base in relation to the aspect of employee happiness as well as work-life balance.

Recommendations for Practice

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 was important in comprehensively analyzing the benefits and detriments of certain components in the workplace for manipulating levels of employee happiness. The survey results also reaffirmed and validated the understanding gained through the qualitative research. In such regards, the main recommendations for practice will be discussed below.

In relation to organizational factors, the UAE ranked highly in providing a clear and defined direction to their employees as to the corporate goals and objectives as well as vision and values. There is a strong presence of formal downward communication that ensures the team remains organized, well- informed and motivated to work towards corporate vision and objectives. It became clear the managers actively ensure they align the actions of the team and individual efforts towards such goals. This approach holds vast benefits for employees and the organization alike. Ineffective communication can cause a detrimental impact upon the morale,

drive, and cooperation within the workforce. The current approach of the organizations in conveying the vision and values and keeping their employees aligned with their goals and objectives persists.

With regards to people factors, there were several areas to potentially develop, particularly in relation to the aspect of relationship of managers and colleagues. Whilst the UAE managers rank highly in terms of strategy alignment, it is strongly recommended that the manner in which managers and supervisors are trained or generally expected to behave is revised to edify them on the importance of the concept of appreciation in a work-based context and its implications on motivation and productivity. Notably, when fringe benefits are not present, the aspect of appreciation becomes even more significant to maintain intrinsic motivation and drive as it generates a sense of accomplishment. Managers must seek to recognize and notice the accomplishments and efforts of the employees to make them feel valued and maintain their enthusiasm towards their work. It is also vital to make managers appear more approachable and accessible to employees to avoid any negative implications upon employee morale and confidence as well as general organizational efficiency. With regards to relationship with colleagues, organizations should recognize the positive mental stimulation, which employees can gain from ordinary communication with their peers. As discussed previously, such communication is also critical in allowing employees to quickly recuperate and recover from the everyday stresses and tensions, ensuring they can sustain their momentum and motivation towards their work. As such, encouraging groupwork activities or tasks that promote such internal communication could be beneficial for the employees and organizations.

As for job factors, the main areas that necessitate development and change are appreciation and intrinsic motivation. It is paramount that employees conduct their duties and

role with enthusiasm and obtain enjoyment from the job to stimulate drive and efficiency whilst aiding happiness. At present, most employees cannot find real enjoyment in their job and have been considering quitting despite being reasonably satisfied with the salary received. As highlighted previously, employees wish to be respected, valued, appreciated, and regarded as members of the team as opposed to feeling like “mere cogs in the machine” (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020, p. 11). The demonstration of appreciation by leaders towards their employees can either be verbal or exhibited through the means of fringe benefits. Currently, the UAE public sector focuses mainly on providing competitive salaries as opposed to any other additional rewards or benefits to drive employees and increase their intrinsic motivation levels (Al Nasser et al., 2017). Organizations in the UAE should seek to implement a reward-based system that acknowledges the efforts of employees and makes them feel valued (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). Such rewards will also act as an incentive to boost performance. However, if this is not a viable approach in this sector, appreciation can be provided verbally by supervisors and leaders to highlight achievements and stimulate employees in a positive manner. As explicated above, the leadership approach adopted by manager fails to afford employees the appreciation they desire, which can be addressed through an enhanced outlook during the training of managers.

Finally, in relation to work-life balance, the UAE fares poorly in being able to appreciate the difficulties employees may be facing in balancing their personal obligations with their work life. The disadvantages of a work-life balance conflict have been comprehensively addressed previously. Organizations within the UAE endeavor to offer their employees an element of flexibility in completing their work. Several departments of the public sector ought to have a task-based approach where completion of work should be the priority as opposed to the specific timing in which this is done or location it is done (Meenakshi et al., 2013). Many public sector

departments and jobs do not necessarily involve any direct interaction with clients or customers. As such office timings do not necessarily have to be strictly monitored and defined. Indeed, if work is not completed to an adequate standard, requisite action can be taken. Difficulty in providing this flexibility may arise if the work involves information or tasks of a confidential nature. However, when this is not the case, organizations should strive to create schemes and strategies in which employees can work from home or can personalize their timetable to complete their weekly hours as per their convenience (Khatri & Behl, 2013). To do so will enable employees to better manage their personal obligations and responsibilities without excessive stress, which can be detrimental to mental health and general well-being and that too without compromising on the quality of their work. From the organization's perspective, their employees will be able to deal with delegated task with utmost focus and motivation and they will be able to create a happier and more productive workforce. This recommendation is of particular importance for female employees who could be empowered through this opportunity to work with flexibility irrespective of their personal responsibilities (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has involved a comprehensive analysis of factors that influence levels of employee happiness and compared these with the data and findings derived from the survey. After doing so, several potential areas of development and requisite recommendations have been provided. However, for the purposes of future research in such regards, below are some recommendations.

In studying the aspects of work-life balance, employee happiness, and productivity, the researcher did not delve into the demographics of the UAE workforce in general or in relation to the survey at hand as it was not explicitly demanded by the research issue. Recommendations for

future research includes avoiding taking all happiness scale questions from one source and to make sure to use a validated survey as used in first part of this study. Therefore, our scale was not compatible due to our measurement of scale. We are unable to say they have link but in general our data and literature review support our hypothesis.

The purpose of this study was to concentrate unequivocally on work-life balance and other factors relevant to employee happiness. However, as briefly highlighted in this research paper, the aspect of work-life balance in Eastern Countries is of particular significance to women. For future research, it may be interesting to focus specifically on the female employees who are faced with a work-life balance conflict when there are specific cultural expectations held from them in addition to work.

Although consideration was given to the reasoning and purpose behind work-life balance strategies as well as the requisite benefits and detriments, the specific way Scandinavian countries have implemented such approaches was not systematically studied. Therefore, future research should focus and analyze the specific strategies adopted in Scandinavian countries and how such approaches are likely to fare in the different sectors of the UAE. Scale number used in survey provide requisite recommendations for future researchers perhaps indicating that a stronger scale or means of measuring employee happiness, which may be available and accessible in future, should be able to establish positive results.

Even though the survey provided a valuable insight as to the current situation in the UAE civil sector, it was possible to find a direct correlation between the components during the statistical regression analysis. The survey results did not translate into the trends and correlations that were anticipated during the statistical regression. Further research in this area can provide more conclusive results in such regards. The area of employee happiness as well as work life

balance remains a relatively new topic, making the research base slightly limited. In future, researchers can create a stronger scale or measure of employee happiness, which can then be cross examined with the rest of the components. At this point in time, employee happiness or subjective happiness lacks a directly compatible survey, which may have compromised the final findings and led to an inconclusive null hypothesis. A future validated scale of happiness will lead to a better and stronger outcome in connecting all the above discussed components with employee happiness.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the prospect of work-life balance and other contributing factors that could influence the level of employee happiness present in an organization and could be manipulated to enhance levels of motivation and productivity. The quantitative data derived from the survey were presented in Chapter 4 through the means of various graphs. This chapter discusses the findings mentioned in Chapter 4 in context to the research questions as well as the literature review in Chapter 2. Following this comprehensive discussion, a conclusion was presented to summarize the data by highlighting the key findings of this study whilst illustrating what this research has accomplished. After the conclusion, requisite recommendations have been made in relevance to this study and some direction for potential future research has also been provided.

This research has demonstrated the importance of maintaining employee happiness, which is directly connected to higher levels of productivity and efficiency. Most importantly, this study has illuminated the numerous factors that are integral for the purposes of enhancing levels of employee happiness and the effects of their deficiency or absence. This study has also been able to reveal the simple ways through which issues in relation to these components can easily be

rectified. The significance of work-life balance has been made clear for employers and employees alike. However, it is apparent that the UAE has a long way to go in terms of creating an ideal business environment for their employees by recognizing aspects of work-life balance as well as developing other pertinent factors. Undoubtedly, to do so will allow the UAE to remain an enticing work environment and work prospect for national and international employees alike.

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APPENDIX A

Study Questionnaire

**SCANDINAVIAN WORK-LIFE BALANCE EXPERIENCE: ITS IMPLEMENTATION
IN THE UAE HAPPINESS CONTEXT**

Date _____ Place _____

Interview type: Structured

Number/Type of Questions: 34

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Instructions for the interviewer to follow:

You will now find 34 statements which will require your response, after reading each one you will be required to respond using a 7-point scale which will range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The statements are split into 4 sections A-D and will seek to obtain your views and perspectives surrounding various aspects of your workplace setting and environment. This survey should take no more than 20 minutes. Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout this research procedure therefore you will not be individually identified, nor will any of your response link back to you specifically.

SECTION A:

Employees are aware of corporate goals and objectives regardless of their job level.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

I believe that the company values are important and practical.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

I feel positively about the overall vision and values present in the organisation.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Employees actively uphold the vision and values of the organization on a day-to-day basis.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

I feel the general vision and values of the organization are integral to the repute of the company.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

The company I work for has a positive reputation and image.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Managers, supervisors and leader's actions actively align with company goals.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Employees consciously work towards the overall corporate objectives.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

SECTION B:

My supervisor really cares about my well-being.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Help is available from my supervisor when I have a problem.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

The team feels unified irrespective of individual job levels.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

All employees are treated equally and fairly irrespective of their position in the company.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

In my workplace, there is a positive and friendly atmosphere.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Even when I perform well, my supervisor would fail to notice.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

SECTION C:

I dislike my job.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

I like my job better than my co-worker.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

I find real enjoyment in my job.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

I feel fairly well satisfied with my job salary and benefits.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

In the last 6 months I have thought about quitting my job.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

I feel most other organizations would not match the overall benefits I have here.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

SECTION D:

Employees who are highly committed to their personal lives cannot be highly committed to their work.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Work should be the primary priority in a person's life.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

The most productive employees are those who put their work before their family.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Attending to personal needs, such as taking time off for sick children is frowned upon in this organisation.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Employees should keep their personal problems at home.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Employees are given ample opportunities to perform both their job and personal responsibilities as well.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Pressure at work can sometimes affect my personal and social life negatively.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Work is having a negative impact on my personal health and well-being.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Even with the pressures at work, I am satisfied with my family life.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Offering employees flexibility in completing their work is viewed as a strategic way of doing business.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Section E

In general, I consider myself:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Not a very happy person | A very happy person |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|

Compared to my peers, I consider myself:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Less happy | More happy |
|-------------------|-------------------|

Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Not at all | A great deal |
|-------------------|---------------------|

Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Not at all | A great deal |
|-------------------|---------------------|

Subjective
Happiness
Scale

| Participants | Q1) In general, I consider myself: | Q2) Compared to my peers, I consider myself: | Q3) Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you? | Q4) Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you? |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | More happy- 7 | 4 | 6 |
| 2 | 2 | 3 | A great deal- 7 | A great deal- 7 |
| 3 | A very happy person- 7 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 5 | 3 | 4 | A great deal- 7 | A great deal- 7 |
| 6 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 7 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| 8 | 6 | 6 | 5 | Not at all- 1 |
| 9 | 6 | 3 | 3 | A great deal- 7 |
| 10 | A very happy person- 7 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | Not a very happy person- 1 | Less happy- 1 | A great deal- 7 | Not at all- 1 |
| 12 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| 13 | 3 | 5 | 2 | A great deal- 7 |
| 14 | 2 | 6 | Not at all- 1 | 5 |
| 15 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| 16 | 4 | Less happy- 1 | Not at all- 1 | 3 |

| | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| 17 | 5 | 2 | | 2 | 5 |
| 18 | 4 | 2 | | 2 | 4 |
| 19 | 2 | 3 | | 5 | 5 |
| 20 | 2 | 3 | Not at all- 1 | | 3 |
| 21 | 4 | 4 | | 3 | Not at all- 1 |
| 22 | 2 | More happy- 7 | | 3 | 3 |
| 23 | 2 | 3 | A great deal- 7 | | A great deal- 7 |
| 24 | 3 | More happy- 7 | | 3 | 5 |
| 25 | 4 | Less happy- 1 | | 2 | 6 |
| 26 | Not a very happy person- 1 | 3 | A great deal- 7 | | 4 |
| 27 | Not a very happy person- 1 | Less happy- 1 | | 3 | A great deal- 7 |
| 28 | 4 | 4 | | 2 | 5 |
| 29 | 3 | Less happy- 1 | Not at all- 1 | | 2 |
| 30 | 3 | 3 | | 2 | 4 |
| 31 | A very happy person- 7 | 3 | | 4 | 5 |
| 32 | 3 | 2 | | 6 | 6 |
| 33 | 4 | Less happy- 1 | A great deal- 7 | | 4 |
| 34 | A very happy person- 7 | Less happy- 1 | Not at all- 1 | | 3 |
| 35 | Not a very happy person- 1 | 4 | | 4 | 4 |
| 36 | 3 | 4 | Not at all- 1 | | 2 |
| 37 | 3 | 3 | A great deal- 7 | | 2 |
| 38 | 6 | 4 | | 6 | 2 |
| 39 | 3 | Less happy- 1 | | 4 | 6 |
| 40 | Not a very happy person- 1 | 2 | | 2 | A great deal- 7 |
| 41 | 6 | 4 | | 5 | 2 |
| 42 | 4 | 4 | | 4 | 2 |
| 43 | 4 | 6 | | 2 | 4 |
| 44 | A very happy person- 7 | 2 | | 6 | 5 |
| 45 | 6 | 4 | | 6 | 5 |
| 46 | 3 | 3 | | 4 | 5 |
| 47 | 5 | More happy- 7 | | 2 | 4 |
| 48 | 3 | 5 | | 6 | 6 |
| 49 | 4 | 3 | | 2 | 6 |
| 50 | 3 | 2 | | 3 | Not at all- 1 |
| 51 | 5 | 2 | | 3 | A great deal- 7 |
| 52 | 3 | 5 | | 3 | Not at all- 1 |
| 53 | 3 | 2 | | 5 | A great deal- 7 |
| 54 | 3 | Less happy- 1 | | 6 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|
| 55 | A very happy person- 7 | Less happy- 1 | | 3 | | 6 |
| 56 | | 3 Less happy- 1 | | 2 | Not at all- 1 | |
| 57 | | 2 5 | | 4 | Not at all- 1 | |
| 58 | | 5 6 | | 4 | | 4 |
| 59 | | 3 3 | | 4 | | 3 |
| 60 | | 4 3 | | 4 | | 4 |
| 61 | | 2 2 | | 3 | | 2 |
| 62 | | 3 3 | | 4 | Not at all- 1 | |
| 63 | | 2 Less happy- 1 | Not at all- 1 | | | 4 |
| 64 | | 4 Less happy- 1 | Not at all- 1 | | A great deal- 7 | |
| 65 | | 5 5 | | 3 | | 3 |
| 66 | | 4 5 | | 4 | | 3 |
| 67 | | 2 Less happy- 1 | | 5 | A great deal- 7 | |
| 68 | | 3 6 | | 3 | Not at all- 1 | |
| 69 | | 4 More happy- 7 | | 4 | | 5 |
| 70 | A very happy person- 7 | | 5 A great deal- 7 | | | 6 |
| 71 | | 3 Less happy- 1 | | 4 | | 5 |
| 72 | | 2 3 | | 3 | | 5 |
| 73 | | 2 2 | | 4 | | 4 |
| 74 | | 4 More happy- 7 | A great deal- 7 | | | 5 |
| 75 | A very happy person- 7 | | 2 | 2 | A great deal- 7 | |
| 76 | | 3 Less happy- 1 | | 3 | Not at all- 1 | |
| 77 | A very happy person- 7 | | More happy- 7 | | Not at all- 1 | 5 |
| 78 | | 4 4 | | 6 | | 5 |
| 79 | | 3 5 | | 6 | Not at all- 1 | |
| 80 | Not a very happy person- 1 | | 4 | 5 | | 3 |
| 81 | | 2 4 | | 3 | | 5 |
| 82 | | 3 2 | Not at all- 1 | | | 2 |
| 83 | | 3 More happy- 7 | | 3 | | 2 |
| 84 | | 2 3 | | 3 | | 6 |
| 85 | | 5 More happy- 7 | | 3 | | 5 |
| 86 | | 3 3 | Not at all- 1 | | Not at all- 1 | |
| 87 | | 5 3 | Not at all- 1 | | | 6 |
| 88 | A very happy person- 7 | | 3 | 6 | Not at all- 1 | |
| 89 | | 5 3 | A great deal- 7 | | | 6 |
| 90 | | 4 2 | | 5 | | 4 |
| 91 | | 5 Less happy- 1 | | 4 | | 3 |
| 92 | | 5 Less happy- 1 | | 3 | | 4 |
| 93 | | 3 Less happy- 1 | | 5 | | 4 |
| 94 | | 5 2 | | 6 | | 4 |

| | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|
| 95 | 6 | More happy- 7 | 3 | 4 |
| 96 | 4 | More happy- 7 | 4 | 4 |
| 97 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| 98 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| 99 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 100 | Not a very happy person- 1 | 3 | 3 | Not at all- 1 |
| 101 | A very happy person- 7 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| 102 | 2 | Less happy- 1 | 3 | 6 |
| 103 | 5 | Less happy- 1 | 3 | 2 |

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

(Graduate School of Education and Psychology)

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

SCANDINAVIAN WORK-LIFE BALANCE EXPERIENCE: ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE UAE HAPPINESS CONTEXT

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Maktoom Almazrouei under the supervision of the Dissertation Chairperson, James DellaNeve (Ed. D) at the Pepperdine University. Your participation is voluntary. You are being invited to contribute because you are working in the Public Sector in the UAE hence will be able to provide a valuable and useful insight for the purposes of this study. Please find below some important information which you should read and understand prior to deciding whether you wish to participate. Please feel free to ask any questions if in doubt as to anything read below.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It is understood that the workplace culture and settings can have a profound impact upon the productivity and happiness of the employees. The employees of any workplace are the driving force of the company and are integral in generating success through their productivity. As such, it is increasingly recognized that ensuring employees are happy and comfortable in their workplace environment and setting will boost their levels of productivity. Many countries, particularly in Scandinavia, have conducted extensive research to determine what modifications can be made within the work environments and their setting to better accommodate their employees. There are many supposed determinants of employee happiness of which work-life balance is now deemed to be a key strategy. However, the recognition and understanding of such concepts remain scarce in the UAE, thus amplifying the importance of this study. A survey completed by employees in the UAE public sector will provide a valuable insight from the employees' perspective which will support a comparative study based on the work environment in the UAE and Scandinavia.

This study seeks to determine the factors which can lead to a happier, less stressful and more productive workforce in the UAE. Your contribution will help examine the work circumstances which exist in the UAE civil sector and the manner in which they impact you.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this study, you will be requested to complete an online survey which should take approximately 15-20 minutes. The survey consists of 34 simple closed ended statements regarding your work setting, culture and environment. After reading each statement you will be asked to respond using a scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Notably, you will not have the option to skip or ignore any questions, you will be required to provide a response for each question before being shown the next question. Following this survey, you will no longer be contacted in any manner, nor will you be required to further discuss the responses provided by you.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no more than minimal risks that the human subjects may encounter whilst participating in the study. There are minor psychological risks which participants may encounter in the process of responding to the survey which include boredom and mild discomfort with certain questions in relation to their work environment and their personal views and feelings in such regards. As with most technological platforms, there remains a risk of breach of confidentiality. The online platform utilized for the purposes of this survey seeks to ensure that any identifiable information regarding the participants remains secure and anonymous. There are numerous measures in place to ensure risks are minimized. Notably, any risks are further reduced and minimized as no private information will be required or demanded. The data collected could possibly be hacked and leaked, nevertheless, it is extremely unlikely for your responses to be successfully linked back to you or have any impact upon you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participation in this study does not confer any direct benefit upon its participants, however, there are potential collective benefits for employees that are subject to the UAE's work environment and setting. As aforementioned, it has been recognized that if employees are happier and are able to balance their personal life with their work life, this is likely to produce a positive effect of their productivity. This study will provide a critical insight as to how employees in this sector feel and where they stand with the work culture and environment they are faced with. This will inevitably reveal areas for improvement for the UAE government in terms of offering a more comfortable and productive environment for employees. The concept of work life balance is increasingly being adopted in foreign countries however is only now starting to garner attention in the UAE. This study is the first of its kind, therefore, albeit slightly buoyant, it is possible that it produces a momentum to further explore and even adopt the concept of work-life balance to reap similar benefits as in foreign workplaces and to further develop the work culture and environment present in the UAE. This study will also seek to ascertain the relationship and impact of various factors upon overall employee happiness thus signaling potential areas for improvement.

CONFIDENTIALITY

There are many measures that will be undertaken to ensure your confidentiality is protected. Upon completing the survey, the requisite data will be retained in a password protected electronic database. No personal details such as your name, contact number, email address or IP address will be collected or stored which could in any form allow one to individually identify you. Furthermore, it is important to note that your answers cannot be linked back to you, therefore, it will not be possible to identify you in relation to your responses. Your responses will be entirely private and anonymous, nor will they be individually revealed to your management or organization. After conducting the survey, the responses gathered will reveal findings as to the manner in which the organizational setting may be lacking and the manner in which it can develop to aid the employees within it. Therefore, the findings may be revealed on an aggregate level if desired by the organization, however, this yet again, will in no means infringe privacy or personal confidentiality. As aforementioned, your responses upon being submitted can no longer be specifically linked back to you. Anonymity will be maintained throughout the course of this research procedure.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

Participants may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. If participants have any queries or concerns pertaining to their rights during the course of contributing to this study through the survey, participants can feel free to contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University at:
Judy.Ho@pepperdine.edu.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study (“withdraw”) at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Pepperdine University or with your employers and organization. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled. You are not obliged to mandatorily participate; your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, you will not incur any penalty or suffer from any loss of benefit. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

As mentioned above, you have the option to disregard the opportunity to participate. If you choose not to participate, this will not in any way affect your relationship with your employer or the organization that you work for.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you suffer any form of injury as a direct result of your participation in any of the research procedures relevant to this study, only you and your insurance shall be liable for the associated costs of treatment. Pepperdine University shall not be liable or obligated to reimburse you with any form of compensation for your injuries.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

If participants are in any doubt as to the study and research procedure explicated above, or have any other queries or questions, they have the opportunity to seek clarification. Participants can contact Maktoom Almazrouei, Doctoral Candidate and researcher at: Maktoom.ALmazrouei@pepperdine.edu or the faculty Chairman at: James.Dellaneve@pepperdine.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By clicking on the I Agree button below, your consent to participate is implied. You should print a copy of this page for your record.

Clicking on the “Agree” button indicates that

- **You have read the above information.**
 - **You voluntarily agree to participate.**
 - **You understand that you may end your participation at end time, for any reason without penalty.**
- Agree to Participate.**
- Disagree to Participate.**

APPENDIX C

Pepperdine University's IRB Approval Letter

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: September 20, 2021

Protocol Investigator Name: Maktoom Al Mazrouei

Protocol #: 21-05-1595

Project Title: SCANDINAVIAN WORK-LIFE BALANCE EXPERIENCE: ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE UAE HAPPINESS CONTEXT

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Maktoom Al Mazrouei:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research