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Factors affecting Happiness of Expatriate Academicians and Expatriate Non-Academicians in Dubai.

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Abstract

The research measures the levels of happiness of expatriate academicians in selected Dubai universities and compares them with happiness levels of non-academic people.

A face to face interview followed by a cross-sectional survey was used as a method to collect data from teaching staff from different universities in Dubai and also from the random public working in different business sectors in Dubai.

Happiness is significantly related to the other factors. There is no significant relationship between knowledge sharing and happiness of academics and well as non-academics.

The sample size of the academic group and the study targeted at the population of Dubai city only.

The discoveries of the research give helpful recommendations to the administration of Universities to provide better knowledge sharing opportunities among their teaching faculty to improve their happiness levels. It will also provide recommendations for a developmental purpose to University of Dubai and UAE's "Happiness and Positivity program".

There is no known research that studies the determinants of happiness for academics with non-academics in the UAE.

Keywords: Happiness, Expatriate Academicians, Job Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

According to the World Happiness Report UAE is the 28th happiest country in the world. The U.A.E has made the happiness of its citizens and residents a prime objective. The UAE's Prime Minister and Emir of Dubai, Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, have taken up a new Happiness program which is taken care by Smart Dubai Office. The Happiness program develops customary ways to deal with societal prosperity, presenting a necessity for meeting people's fundamental everyday life needs. The Happiness program puts forward a series of projects intended to find, impact and fulfill people's fundamental, intellectual and more profound needs — the basic elements for their happiness (Smart Dubai, 2016). His Highness reported through Twitter that his new cabinet has Ohoud Al Roumi as its first "Minister of State for Happiness" (Remeithi, 2016). The main aim of incorporation of a Ministry of Happiness is to make Dubai the happiest city in the world (Remeithi, 2016).

Research on happiness is increasing around the globe, and we can anticipate more and more insights and suggestions from researchers on how happiness can be achieved at every level of an institution, organization and country. The majority of us presumably feel that we do not need a formal definition of happiness - we know it when we feel it. We frequently utilize the term to portray an array of positive feelings, including delight, pride, satisfaction, and appreciation (Chan, 2005). We can also describe happiness as the "experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile" (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that more happy people are more averse to become ill and have more odds of living longer. A study at the University of Warwick showed that happy people are more productive than their unhappy counterparts (Oswald, 2015). However, no research has compared the happiness of expatriate academician's with non-academics in Dubai. We aim to do this, and also provide recommendations for a developmental purpose to the University of Dubai, and the UAE's "Happiness and Positivity program". The research question is How compatible is Happiness with different factors affecting an expatriate academician's life in Dubai?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Happiness

Researchers have found that there is no single formula to measure happiness. It is also not clear as to what are the determinants of happiness. The study of happiness is important because happier people contribute more towards the success of the organization and improves relationships at work (Jain, 2012). Many countries and institutions are currently measuring happiness in their populations, and associating this with self-actualization, life fulfillment, achievement, and peacefulness in life. Probably the first attempt at measuring happiness at a national level was done by Bhutan, in their implementation of a Gross National Happiness (GNH) measure in 1972. The United Kingdom has recently declared that they will embrace a national study called a "Happiness Survey" with the ultimate goal of quantifying the level of happiness in their country (John F. Helliwell, 2015). Various National Happiness programs are implemented in other regions like British Columbia, Brazil, and the United States (Pendery, 2014).

Psychologists say that a large portion of an individual's satisfaction level is attributed to hereditary, 10 percent influenced by outer conditions, and 40 percent influenced by convictions and practices that can be changed over a period (Lyubomirsky S. , 2008). In the professional workplace, happiness is a particular mood that motivates people to utilise their full capacity and work better. Individuals should be able to tackle the ups and downs in their daily work if they are to achieve happiness at the workplace (Pryce-Jones, 2011). Healthy and happy people reflect positively in all the work they do. People who can maintain a happy mood can keep their mind fit and increase their productivity levels and excel at their work (Seetubtim, 2016). On the contrary, workers who are unhappy may feel tragic, nervous, demoralized, sad, and useless. They may lose enthusiasm for work that once was pleasurable and may also encounter problems in decision making (Rashid Aziz, 2014). Research gives direction on what academician's can do to expand their overall happiness at work. Changes in outer conditions, for example, compensation rises, from time to time have a temporary impact. However, happiness levels increase are more permanent when academician's are practicing their skills, building solid relations, helping other people and have a feeling of achievement (Martin, 2011).

Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is the option and liberty present in the job to carry out various tasks (Brey, 1999). Job autonomy affects work strategies, the pace at which work is carried out and also the goal setting (Chung, 1977). People with

autonomy have the freedom to control the pace of work and to manage work procedures and assessment strategies. Independence and autonomy are not the same as a person working with autonomy may rely on upon interpersonal correspondence keeping in mind the end goal to finish the interrelated assignments (Chen, 2000). Job autonomy is often linked with high work effectiveness and more elevated amounts of inborn motivation (Langfred & Moye, 2004) since people think and view themselves as capable and innovative in achieving their work tasks (Saragih, 2011). Job autonomy has additionally been appeared to expand happiness and motivation within the employee and it also results in decreasing employee turnover rate (Robertson, 2016). Autonomy is a superior indicator of happiness far better than income - money may give you autonomy but not necessarily happiness (Fischer, 2011). Overwhelming demands from job and little power over decision-making, results in low levels of job satisfaction and high mental strain (Karasek Jr, 1979). Overall, job autonomy has a positive effect on employees overall well-being which includes its job, family, and life (Thompson, 2005).

Hypothesis one: *Job autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis two: *Job autonomy is positively related to life satisfaction.*

Hypothesis three: *Job autonomy is positively related to happiness.*

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge Management has been a topic of extensive discussions and research among professionals and academicians (Ismail, 2005). Knowledge sharing between people is the procedure by which information held by an individual is changed over into knowledge that can be comprehended, ingested, and utilized by different people (Ipe, 2003). Knowledge sharing is the act of making information accessible to others inside the organization and is considered to be one of the main functions of work environments (Chakravarthy, 1999). The way of learning, working culture, willingness to share and take chances to share knowledge, play a very important part in improving the knowledge among academic staff in public universities (Sohail, 2009). To create and maintain a knowledge sharing culture in universities, the management should provide the employees with necessary tools and atmosphere which encourage knowledge sharing (Skaik, 2014). There is a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and rewards attached to it (Bartol, 2000), and the Deans and Head of departments in universities should keep in mind intrinsic rewards when formulating reward policies (Jahani, 2011). High levels of knowledge sharing in the workplace will probably result in higher job satisfaction and also higher performance (Trivellas, 2015). Knowledge sharing plays an essential role in the workplace because it not only advances successful business related results, it also positively affects people's life satisfaction (Jiang, 2016). Very little research has been done with regards to knowledge sharing in the UAE, compared with studies in the fields of construction, business, and management (Skaik, 2014). Furthermore, there is no study where knowledge sharing in academics and non-academicians in UAE is done regarding its relation to job satisfaction, life satisfaction and happiness.

Hypothesis four: *Knowledge Sharing is positively related to job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis five: *Knowledge Sharing is positively related to life satisfaction.*

Hypothesis six: *Knowledge Sharing is positively related to happiness.*

Work-Family Conflict

Various studies have been conducted to address the impact of work-family conflict at work. Work-family conflict alludes to clashing between the occupation and the family, so that the gains attained in one is at the expense of the other (Greenhaus J. H., 1985). As such, work-family conflict arises when the needs and desires with a specific part do not meet the needs and desires of the other part (Greenhaus J. H., 2006). The conflict occurring between one's work and family duties often results in forcing the individual to choose between the needs of the job or the needs of the family, the two being mutually exclusive. Such conflicts result in low job satisfaction and low job performance (Byron, 2005). Academic occupational duties often require attention on a constant basis and require a huge amount of time and focus, which leaves very little time and energy left for different areas of life, especially the family (Christiana, 2013). Work- family conflict has a negative impact on subjective well-being (Lu, 2006), and many studies have found that there is a negative relationship between work-family conflict and life and job satisfaction (Ozeki, 1998).

Hypothesis seven: *Work- Family conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis eight: *Work- Family conflict is negatively related to life satisfaction.*

Hypothesis nine: *Work- Family conflict is negatively related to happiness.*

Job Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction "is the positive emotional response to the job situation resulting from attaining what the employee wants from the job" (Kainth, 2011). Deficient pay rates, a high measure of stipends, workload, credits to buy houses and automobiles are highly relevant variables for low job satisfaction of most academic individuals working in tertiary education Universities in Zimbabwe (Chimanikire, 2007). Results of previous research suggest

that the goals of higher education cannot be accomplished if there is a lower level of job satisfaction among academicians (Eyupoglu, 2009). Some research suggests that individuals with a high level of happiness also have high levels of job satisfaction (Martínez-Martí, 2017). Of the few studies, most of them have shown that job satisfaction and happiness are generally positively related, yet though there are many exceptions (Weaver, 1978). Thus, the relationship between happiness and job satisfaction is still not clear and warrants further investigation.

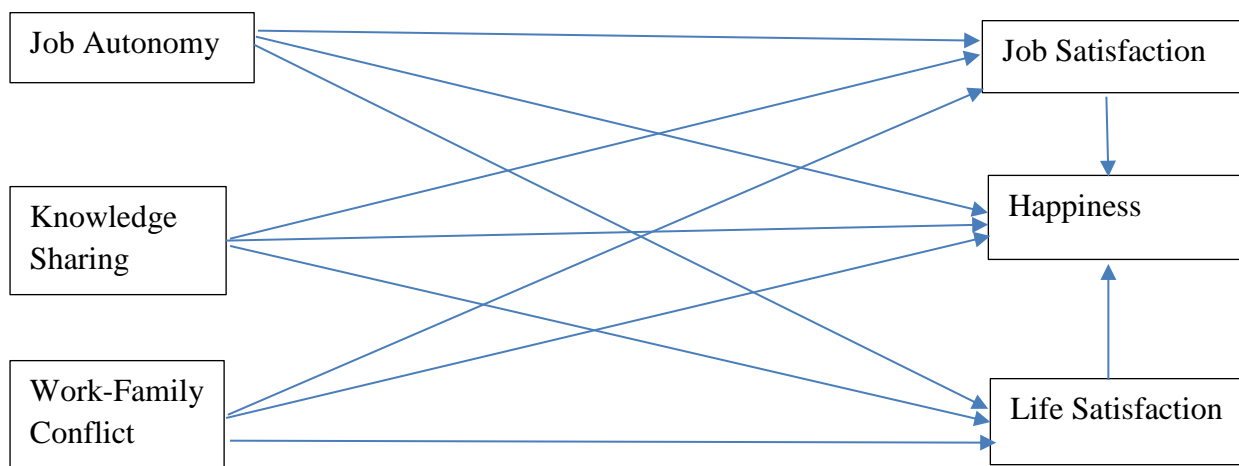
Hypothesis ten: *Job Satisfaction is positively related to Happiness.*

Life Satisfaction

There are many definitions of life satisfaction in various literatures and the term is vast in nature and notoriously difficult to study. Simply stated, however, life satisfaction is the general evaluation of emotions and states of mind about one's life at a specific point in time running from negative to positive. It is one of three noteworthy markers of prosperity, the other two being positive outcome, and negative outcome, (Diener, 1985). Life satisfaction is a complicated term and is in some cases used interchangeably with happiness, yet they are without a doubt two separate notions (Chompoo, 2015). Many previous studies have been done to demonstrate different factors that affect life satisfaction of an individual. For example in a study carried out by (Linn, 1985), life satisfaction of academic and clinical staff was compared with regards to job stress, work-family conflict, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Considering that happiness is a definitive goal in life, life satisfaction is firmly identified with it - various studies have had similar results whether life satisfaction or happiness is examined (Ng, 1997). Happy people tend to be more satisfied in life, and their positive emotions increase life satisfaction (Cohn, 2009). This study will try to find the relationship between life satisfaction and happiness among academics and non-academics in Dubai.

Hypothesis eleven: *Life Satisfaction is positively related to Happiness.*

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

We conducted face-to-face interviews with several expatriate teaching faculties at the University of Dubai. The interview was conducted in order to get crucial information about the main factors affecting happiness of the teaching staff. Following the interviews, a cross-sectional survey was used as a method to collect data from teaching staff from different universities in Dubai and from the random public working in different business sectors in Dubai. Thus, the target groups for this research are teaching faculty from different universities in Dubai and the random public working in different business sectors in Dubai.

Survey instrument development:

Once the main factors affecting happiness of academics were identified through the interviews, a survey questionnaire was developed for this research. The questionnaire consisted of two major sections. The first section

of the questionnaire covered demographics of the respondents (both academic and non-academic). The questions in this part included information about gender, age, industry, and their tenure.

The second section of the questionnaire consisted of different questions/items for each of the variables identified in the in-depth interview (mentioned in the subsequent paragraphs). A five point Likert Scale was used to measure the variables with point 1 for (strongly disagree) and point 5 for (strongly agree). Only the variable happiness was measured on a seven-point scale, in line with the literature.

Job Autonomy was measured with three items scale which was based on previous studies done by (Spreitzer, 2007) and the items in the scale included “I decide how I do my job”, “I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work” and “I have opportunities for independence and freedom about how I do my job”.

Knowledge Sharing was measured by a four-item scale, which was previously used by (Kanaan, 2013). The scale included items like “I enjoy sharing my knowledge with colleagues”, “I enjoy helping colleagues by sharing my knowledge”, “It feels good to help someone by sharing my knowledge” and “Sharing my knowledge with colleagues is pleasurable”.

The variable Job Satisfaction was measured by a five-item scale, which was previously used by (Judge, 1998). The scale included the following items “Most days I am enthusiastic about my work”, “I feel fairly satisfied with my present job”, “I find real enjoyment in my work”, “Each day at work seems like it will never end” and “I consider my job rather unpleasant”.

Work-Family Conflict was measured by a four-item scale, which was based on a previous study done by (Netemeyer, 1996). The scale included items like “The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life”, “The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities”, “My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties” and “Because of my work-related duties, I don’t have enough time for my family”.

Life Satisfaction was measured by a five scale previously used by (Diener, 1985). The scale includes items like “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”, “The conditions of my life are excellent”, “I am satisfied with my life”, “So far I have gotten the important things I want in life” and “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing”.

Happiness is the only variable measured on a seven-point scale. The scale is based on previous study by (Lyubomirsky S. &, 1999). The scale included four items. The first item measures general happiness of the respondent in general and measures it on a seven-point scale. The second item of the scale measures happiness of the respondents in comparison to their peers. The third item of the scale asks respondents to characterize themselves on a scale of one to seven as a happy person in all situations. The fourth item of the scale asks the respondents to characterize themselves on a scale of one to seven as not a happy person in all situations.

RESULTS

Data Analysis:

The purpose of the research is to find out the happiness levels of expatriate academicians in Dubai and to compare them with non-academicians working across Dubai. The research examines several demographics like age, gender, education and experience of the respondents. The sample size for expatriate academicians is $n= 70$ and the sample size for expatriate non-academicians is $n= 145$. Total number of 41 males and 29 females participated from academic sector and 93 males and 52 females participated in the survey from non-academic sector. The average years of experience for both the groups are 6.12 and 4.46 respectively. For the academic group 7 individuals worked for government organization and 21 and 42 worked for semi-government and private organization respectively. For the non-academic group 7 individuals worked for government organization and 12 and 126 worked for semi-government and private organization respectively.

Table 1: Demographics

Demographic value	Academic	Non-Academic
Gender		
Male	41	93
Female	29	52
Age		
20-24	1	39
25-29	2	48
30-34	11	21
35-39	18	22
40-44	20	10
45-50	17	3
>50	1	2
Organization Type		
Government	7	7
Semi-Government	21	12
Private Organization	42	126
Organization Size		
>250 employees	34	103
<250 employees	36	42
Mean years of Experience	6.12	4.46

The Cronbach alpha for all the factors of the data is found to be reliable and shown in table two. For example, the Cronbach alpha (α) for factor job autonomy is 0.912 in academic group and 0.933 in non-academic group. Table two gives all the readings for Cronbach alpha (α) for the all the factors in the data for both the groups academic and non-academic.

Table 2: Reliabilities Academic

Variable	Cronbac Alpha α	
	Academic	Non-Academic
Job Autonomy	0.912	0.933
Knowledge Sharing	0.794	0.968
Work-Family Conflict	0.933	0.968
Job Satisfaction	0.807	0.875
Life Satisfaction	0.681	0.801
Happiness	0.859	0.758

Table three and Table four show that the data is having convergent validity as all the factors from both the group are having composite reliability readings >0.7 and AVE (Average Variance Extracted) >0.5 as per the criterion developed by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)

Table 3: Reliabilities Non-academic

Variable	Composite Reliability	
	Academic	Non-Academic
Job Autonomy	0.945	0.971
Knowledge Sharing	0.86	0.952
Work-Family Conflict	0.952	0.976
Job Satisfaction	0.911	0.91
Life Satisfaction	0.825	0.883
Happiness	0.904	0.846

Table 4: Validity

Variable	AVE (AVERAGE VARIANVE EXTRACTED)	
	Academic	Non-Academic
Job Autonomy	0.85	0.918
Knowledge Sharing	0.608	0.832
Work-Family Conflict	0.833	0.912
Job Satisfaction	0.836	0.668
Life Satisfaction	0.613	0.717
Happiness	0.702	0.584

Table 5: Correlations for Academics

	JATOT	KSTOT	JSTOT	WCTOT	LSTOT	HTOT
JATOT	1					
KSTOT	.33**	1				
JSTOT	.49**	.35**	1			
WCTOT	-.22*	-0.1	-.37**	1		
LSTOT	.45**	.47**	.50**	-.29**	1	
HTOT	.22*	0.11	.55**	-0.08	.33**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
N=70

Table 6: Correlations for Non- Academics

	JATOT	KSTOT	JSTOT	WCTOT	LSTOT	HTOT
JATOT						
KSTOT	.40**	1				
JSTOT	.53**	.46**	1			
WCTOT	0.09	-0.05	-0.12	1		
LSTOT	.44**	.37**	.43**	-.22**	1	
HTOT	.39**	0.16	.34**	-.22**	.40**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
 N=145

As per the Pearson’s correlation table findings:

H1 is supported and independent variable job autonomy is significantly related to job satisfaction where $r = 0.49$ ($p < 0.01$) in academic group and $r = 0.53$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation in both groups is almost similar.

H2 is supported and independent variable job autonomy is significantly related to life satisfaction where $r = 0.45$ ($p < 0.01$) for academic group and $r = 0.44$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation in both groups is almost similar.

H3 is supported and independent variable job autonomy is significantly related to happiness where $r = 0.22$ ($p < 0.01$) for academic group and $r = 0.39$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation is found be to more stronger in non-academic group.

H4 is supported as independent variable knowledge sharing is significantly related to job satisfaction where $r = 0.35$ ($p < 0.01$) in academic group and $r = 0.46$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation is found be to more stronger in non-academic group.

H5 is supported as independent variable knowledge sharing is significantly related to life satisfaction where $r = 0.47$ ($p < 0.01$) in academic group and $r = 0.37$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation is found be to more stronger in academic group.

H6 is not supported as independent variable knowledge sharing is not significantly related to happiness where $r = 0.11$ in academic group and $r = 0.16$ in non-academic group.

H7 is partially supported as independent variable work-family conflict is significantly and negatively related to job satisfaction where $r = -0.37$ ($p < 0.01$) in academic group and not related to non-academic group where $r = -0.12$ ($p > 0.01$).The correlation is strong in academic group but it very weak in the non-academic group.

H8 is supported as independent variable work-family conflict is negatively related to life satisfaction where $r = -0.29$ ($p < 0.01$) in academic group and $r = -0.22$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation in both groups is almost similar.

H9 is partially supported as independent variable work-family conflict is not related to happiness in academic group where $r = -0.08$ and is negatively related in non-academic group where $r = -0.22$. The correlation is strong in non-academic group but it very weak in the academic group.

H10 is supported as job satisfaction is significantly related to happiness where $r = 0.55$ ($p < 0.01$) in academic group and $r = 0.34$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation is strong in academic group compared to the non-academic group.

H11 is supported as life satisfaction is significantly related to happiness where $r = 0.33$ ($p < 0.01$) in academic group and $r = 0.40$ ($p < 0.01$) in non-academic group. The correlation is strong in non-academic group compared to the academic group.

DISCUSSION

This research supports previous research in that job autonomy is significantly related to job satisfaction and life satisfaction. This is true for both academics and non-academics and the strength of the relationship is somewhat similar. However, it is interesting to note that the relationship between autonomy and happiness is stronger for non-academic group, compared with the academic group. This findings come as a surprise as one would think that the relationship would be stronger for the academic group. Perhaps further studies are needed to investigate why this is so.

Knowledge sharing is also significantly related to job satisfaction. Again the relationship is stronger in the non-academic group compared with the academic group. On the other hand, the relationship between knowledge sharing and life satisfaction is stronger in the academic group. This does not come as a surprise and there is a common belief that academics love to share knowledge, and when able to do so, they become satisfied with life. However, knowledge sharing is not significantly related to happiness for both groups, which again comes as a surprise and more studies are needed on this.

Interesting results are found relating to H7, in that work-family conflict is significantly related to job satisfaction for academic group and not significant for non-academic groups. Perhaps, academics are more affected by any imbalances in work-family conflict, resulting in lower job satisfaction. Non-academics on the other hand are able to separate feelings about the job from the family. However, work-family conflict is negatively related to life satisfaction and this affects both academics and non-academics to a similar degree. On the other hand work-family conflict is not significantly related to happiness for academic group, but is significantly negatively related to happiness in non-academic group. This shows that work family conflict can ultimately affect happiness for the non-academic group. With the academics, there is no relationship, presumably because there are other factors which affect their state of happiness. Further studies are needed to investigate why this is so.

Job satisfaction is related to happiness for both groups, although the relationship is much stronger for academic groups than non-academic groups. This is not surprising as academics probably attach more importance to work, and to be satisfied with work means to be happy. On the other hand, non-academics are less dependent on job satisfaction to make them happy.

Finally, life satisfaction is related to happiness but this time the relationship is slightly stronger for non-academic group compared with non-academics. Perhaps, for non-academics, to be happy in life means to be happy. For academics, on the other hand, the relationship is less strong, meaning that academics can be satisfied with life but still not happy. Perhaps further studies can be done investigate why this is so.

In conclusion, the results of this research raises even more questions. Results pertaining to happiness, are at times contrary to what was expected. This suggests that perhaps there are other variables which were not uncovered during the in-depth interviews and not included in this research, but are relevant to happiness. Another possible problem is the construct of happiness – respondents may not understand the true interpretation and meaning of happiness. On the bright side, the findings of this research suggests that further research, especially relating to the measurement of happiness and its antecedents, is warranted.

CONCLUSION

The present research mainly contributes to our understanding of the relationship between Happiness and other factors like job satisfaction, job autonomy and life satisfaction in context to expatriate academicians working in Dubai. It offers a range of empirical and theoretical insights into measurement of Happiness in U.A.E. The results of this study add to the literature in documenting associations between happiness and a range of other factors affecting behaviours and emotional responses of workers, in particular, academicians.

The analysis in this research indicates that Happiness concerning the targeted group is a dispositional factor and it is directly connected to other internal factors. So in order to increase happiness levels of an individual the government or the organization should try to increase the levels of other factors like job satisfaction, job autonomy and life satisfaction. On the other hand, as the work-family conflict is negatively related to happiness, the government or the organization should try to decrease the level of it in order to increase level of happiness.

A surprising finding and one which we argue is a particular strength of this research is the finding that knowledge sharing is not significantly related to happiness in both the groups. This means that expatriate academicians in Dubai does not regard knowledge sharing as an important factor for them to be happy at work. It could be that academics in Dubai are more focused on the extrinsic rewards rather than intrinsic reward such as knowledge sharing. In this respect, academicians should then not be treated any differently from non-academics. It is also noteworthy that academicians in Dubai see other sources of happiness.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In spite of the contributions this research provides, the research has a few limitations. First, the sample size for expatriate academic group is relatively small. A larger sample of academicians will improve generalizability of the research findings. Second, the research is targeted towards academicians in the city of Dubai only – place often associated with the pursuit of wealth and materialism. An addition of different regions to the study will give a better understanding of the research findings. Future work may focus on different parts of the UAE, on both academics and non-academics.

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