

EXPLORING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF HAPPINESS AMONG LECTURERS BASED ON TAUHIDIK INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the sustainability of happiness among lecturers as it observes the level and factors that affect their happiness. A model known as, “Sustainable Happiness Model”, that is introduced by Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005), is used as the theoretical basis of this study to understand the influence of happiness among the lecturers. Yet, the element of Tauhidik is integrated along as one of the fundamental aspects in this theory. This study involves research universities in Malaysia. The result of the samples is determined by using stratified sampling (645 lecturers were involved). A descriptive analysis is used to describe the mean distribution level of happiness among lecturers, while inference analysis of multiple regressions is used to determine the most dominant factors that influence lecturers’ sustainability of happiness. Most of the lecturers recorded the high score in their happiness level (95.5 percent). While from the multiple regression analysis, it was found that the predictive factors showed significant correlation and strong relationship towards happiness which included cognitive, motivational and religion components. In this article, the importance of Tauhidik elements integration in building happiness were discussed as what has been taught by Prophet SAW.

Keywords: Sustainable Happiness, Lecturers, Intentional Activities, Tauhidik, Prophet SAW.

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a priceless gratification perceived by any being. Hence, cultivating happiness is important values that everyone looks for (Diener, 2000). Psychologists have defined the concept of happiness as subjective, positive and involve internal psychological aspect which is related to the mind of an individual (Diener, 1984; Lu, 1999; Tsou dan Liu, 2001; Veenhoven, 2010). Besides that, the word of happiness itself has been used differently in various fields of knowledge. As example, for Frey dan Stutzer (2002), they stated that the definition of happiness as perceived differently depending on the situations and it is defined differently from one individual to another. In addition, literally happiness refers to the state of happy, joy, gaiety and pride (Kamus Dewan, 2005). Therefore, a study regarding happiness focuses on scientific research as well as it involves the aspects of psychological of human’s well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Especially, Yang (2008) defined happiness as a feeling of satisfaction, fun and comfortable in every aspect of life, which also includes sustainable and desirable sense of mental health. Meanwhile, sustainable happiness which is described by Lyubomirsky et al., (2005) asserted that happiness is fixed to a certain condition, persistent and unchanged through hedonic adaptation process.

This is because, happiness can be a platform or 'buffer zone' to the stress faced by workers, apart from improving health, age, job performance, social relationships, and generate creative thinking, problem solving skills and improve human mental health (Argyle, 2004). This is supported by Fisher (2010) that claimed the aspect of happiness should be the main basis in the work environment because happiness includes the aspect of job satisfaction and at all levels of study found that happiness is an important basis and related to the success of individual and organizational goals. In addition, this is proven by other previous studies that depict workers who have high level of happiness, tend to obtain high marks in their working performance assessment, to share creative ideas and to contribute productive input for company's goal (Diener & Diener, 2008). Similar findings was found in study done by Momeni et al. (2011) who found that happiness is associated with job success. Furthermore, there were few studies done to determine various factors that contributes happiness (Frey & Stutzer, 2003), as it has become a focus in various fields such as psychology, medical, economy and others (Gardner & Oswald, 2007).

In Malaysia, there is not much of integrated study that is conducted to analyse happiness level and contributing factors of happiness among workers, especially among lecturers, despite of it is in critical phase (Noraini & Nor Ba'yah, 2011). Although, work satisfaction and complaisant in many aspects of life are only some of the sub-aspects depicting happiness (Yang, 2008). Studies on pressure among educators are focus more on teachers (at school level) in comparison to lecturers (tertiary level) (Azlina & Shiqah, 2010). Furthermore, most researchers focus on teachers' work satisfaction, work management aspect and work performance (Fauziah Noordin, 2009; Ismail Hussein Amazt & Abdul Rahman Idris, 2011; Nilufar Ahsan et al., 2009; Zainudin Awang et al., 2010), without exploring much on happiness among lecturers at work. On that note, this study aims to explore on the level and factors of lecturers' happiness that will help us to understand the element of their work and life satisfactions holistically.

Happiness and its Significant in Working Life

To date, a successful worker is seen as an individual who works hard, has good soft skills, has an excellent educational background, has a solid network platform, trustworthy and ambitious person (Diener & Diener, 2008). These characteristics are the main key of any companies looking for in a worker. Nonetheless, happiness rarely been the concern, whilst, being happy is one of a successful worker's traits as well. Especially many studies were done previously on workplace are often done to investigate the negative implications of individual with stress, anxiety and emotional instability (Myers, 2000), workplace violence, job insecurity and many other negative aspects related work oriented. Yet, rarely to explore on positive attributes as on individual happiness in work environment as almost no studies have been conducted on the characteristics of very happy individuals (Diener & Seligman, 2002). On that note, it is time to discover actively the positive aspects such as happiness in order to understand the meaning and impact of it on a job. (Turner, Barling and Zacharatos, 2002). In fact, not all lecturers experience happiness while working, particularly the challenge of busy implementing educational transformation that demands change and reform at higher education level.

As a Muslim worker, in order to attain happiness in our work, we need to realize that the best way to manage such work stress is through Islamic teachings and laws. Islam encourages those who face pressure and hardship to be patient, calm, rational and confident as Allah will always guide His servants:

“Indeed! We will test you with a little fear (of the enemy) and (with a feeling of) hunger, and (with the occurrence) lack of property and soul and crops. And give good news to those who are patient (that is)

those who, when a calamity befalls them, they say: Surely we belong to Allah and to Allah we shall return.” (Surah al-Baqarah, verses 155-156).

Having a career as an educator has a unique and distinctive value. Being an educator is not an easy task and demands perseverance. This is because educators are the most responsible people after parents in providing education and guidance to the nation. Especially, educators as teachers or lecturers spend most of their daily time teaching them as well as fulfilling other tasks related management work. Indeed, the duty comes with great responsibilities.

The condition of such career shall be as *ibadah* as has been explained by Prof. Dr. Yusof Al-Qardhawi (1978), as there are five terms of a work that are perceived as *ibadah*. namely: -

1. The work performed is recognized by Islam, in accordance by the laws of Syari'ah. Rasulullah SAW said, "That Allah SWT, His angels, the contents of the heavens and His earth, up to the ants in the ground and the fish in the sea, all pray for the welfare of those who teach human beings (i.e. teachers, lecturers, etc)." (Tarmizi from Abi Amamah). This depicts that working as a lecturer is highly valued by Islam.
2. The works shall be done with good intentions as a Muslim for the benefits of his family or his people as for the sake of Allah SWT. Hence, lecturers need to be enthusiast in carrying out their duty as working as a lecturer indeed fulfils this second condition.
3. The works shall be done at its best as possible to meet the requirements as in the hadith of the Prophet SAW, "God loves when oneself keep doing and improving his work." (Al Baihaqi). It is the positive attitude in performing the task will be reflected through its end results.
4. Working by the laws of Syari'ah as not oppressing people, betray, cheat or deprive people of their rights. This shows that working as a lecturer embraces courteous and other virtue values as uplift people instead.
5. One performs his responsibilities in performing prayer, fasting, zakat and practices acts of kindness as these would bring themselves closer to Allah SWT in managing the challenges that they have to face accordingly.

Therefore, when a lecturer is able to fulfil these five terms mentioned above in handling all his or her work and daily affairs, it is considered as *ibadah* to Allah SWT. This means that to make the assigned work as an act of worship, then the work (teaching and managing other works related) must be done diligently, fully dedicated, and committed and keep reminding ourselves as it is for the sake of Allah SWT. Besides, it nurtures oneself to be happy in performing their work. Especially, being happy at the workplace can influence and inspire colleagues in their environment (Dutton & Edmunds, 2007) as well as students. Consequently, effective teaching takes place. According to Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah and Ying-Leh Ling (2016) effective teaching includes characteristics such as students feel fun, increase interest, understand, appreciate the material taught, improve skills in cognitive, affective and physical aspects as well as they can perform activities related to the teaching process that were carried out.

This is important as to ensure the excellence of students in all aspects that are in line with the goals of national education. Moreover, this creates a healthy social relationship amongst them because each of

them feels prosperous, happy, fun and happy in the educational institutions' environment. Lecturers can be well at work and students can enjoy the learning processes accordingly. This positive situation is a prerequisite in the formation of lecturers' confidence and stimulate their innovative behavior in work in the educational institutions. Therefore, lecturers need to be in positive emotions or feel prosperous in their workplace to address the challenges of educational transformation.

The Concept and Theory of Happiness

The Sustainable Happiness Model that has been introduced by Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) is used as a theory basis study pertaining to happiness effect. This model is used as a basic in verifying the influences of happiness towards human. This model is chosen because its view explains factors of happiness comprehensively in which happiness is visualized from various dimensions of life including personality, work, education, health, social life and age (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). According to Sheldon dan Lyubomirsky (2006), sustainable happiness can be obtained by focusing on activity of daily life in three components which are cognitive, behavioral and motivation-oriented activities, meanwhile religious element becomes one of the components which has been added by the researcher. On that note, this study intends to integrate along the element of Tauhidik in this theory in investigating the level and factors of lecturer's sustainability of happiness.

Accordingly, from previous studies of Islamic scholars as al-Ghazali (Ihya Ulum al-Din), Ibn Sina, and Ibn Khaldun, it shows that the value of Tauhidik integration is very important in shaping a Muslim's personal well-being in perceiving happiness. This is because the word *tauhid* is action of belief in the oneness of Allah SWT (Nurul Arifah Musa1 & Syed Hadzrullathfi Syed Omar, 2017). Allah S.W.T created all human beings, as they are His creation (*khalq*) and existence (*ṭjād*) that will be rewarded if they obey and be punished for otherwise (Al-Ghazālī, n.d; Ibn 'Ata'Allah, n.d.) for their action. The integration of Tauhidik in this theory makes it clear that Muslims are obligated to recognize that everything will be evaluated accordingly by Allah S.W.T. Besides, it is Allah S.W.T who defies one to achieve His pleasure and Allah S.W.T also causes one to commit evil and to fall into the valley of disgrace (Mr. Minal, e.g., Muhammad Nawawiy, n.d.). It is through this aspect of Tauhidik's integration that it becomes an alternative component to the level of happiness as according to Beit-Hallahmi (2006), in terms of one's physical or mental happiness, one's emotions and behaviors are influenced by his or her spirituality, religious teachings, environment and experience in himself and in the surrounding community. This shows that the integration of Tauhidik onto the level of happiness on job sector would avoid troublesome traits as envy, revenge and greed (Asadzandi, 2015) and thus build individual's personal and moral character (Fakhrudin, Mohd Fauzi, Faizuri & Norafifah, 2010; Al-Nursi, 2007; Manzurul Haq, 1992).

A study conducted by Sharifah Basirah & Che Zarina (2015) found that Malaysian society, especially Muslims, increasingly face emotional, psychological, and cognitive imbalances that cause mental disorders. As a result, western theory is seen to have its own weaknesses when ignoring the inner aspect of spirit. Therefore, it becomes a necessity for researchers to inject religious and spiritual elements in improving the aspects of happiness and well-being. In order to live a balanced life between the demands of the world and the hereafter, it requires to refer the knowledge sourced from the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, one's Iman, Ihsan and Itqan will be instilled and reflected along in his work. Otherwise human beings are prone to commit mistakes and confusion (Yatimah & Mohd Tajudin, 2011). According to Siti Zalikah (2002), human beings cannot deny the strength of faith in embracing the concept of well-being. In fact, studies on the spiritual (*rohani*) elements in Islam such as prayer, remembrance, repentance,

fasting, helping others, reciting Qur'an have a high empirical value to be explored (Toghyani et al., 2018; Rizal Abu Bakar, 2009). Therefore, the teachings of Islam based on the Quran and Sunnah have a direct effect on one's soul and mind to provide balance and well-being (happiness) in human life.

It is very important to have a stable and continuous quality of work among staff in an organization, as guarantee happiness and provide positive mental health. Employees in an organization need to be taken care of by the management so that they are always interested and willing to carry out tasks and perform the responsibilities entrusted to them as best as possible (Chen et. al., 2006). This is because an employee is the most important agent in an organization. Ilhamie (2001) explains that the implications of Tauhidik principles in administration to each employee are as follows:

- i. Tawaduk, trustworthy, diligent, efficient, honest, disciplined and responsible in performing his duties because employees believe that they will not achieve success unless they follow the command of Allah s.w.t.
- ii. Not easy to give up when face challenges. Employees will fully trust in Allah s.w.t. in fact they will learn from past mistakes. This is because they believe that success and failure are the will of Allah s.w.t. Humans are only capable of planning and executing.
- iii. Obey the rules and laws set by God and refrain from committing sin. This is because they believe that human beings will be rewarded for their actions both in this world and in the hereafter.

The integration of Tauhidik element is a means that emphasizes the belief in the existence and oneness of God, a high commitment to Islamic law and the implementation of management practices that are based on faith-based knowledge as the philosophical foundations of individual and an occupational organization. In general, Tauhidik scope would infer on the work ethic of Islam in terms of attitude and life values among lecturers themselves as practices based on the concepts of Iman, Ihsan and Itqan in Islam. The concept of Itqan (*perfect*) is emphasized in the hope of achieving the best results. This concept is closely linked to create a quality work ethic among lecturer guaranteeing the sustainability of their happiness.

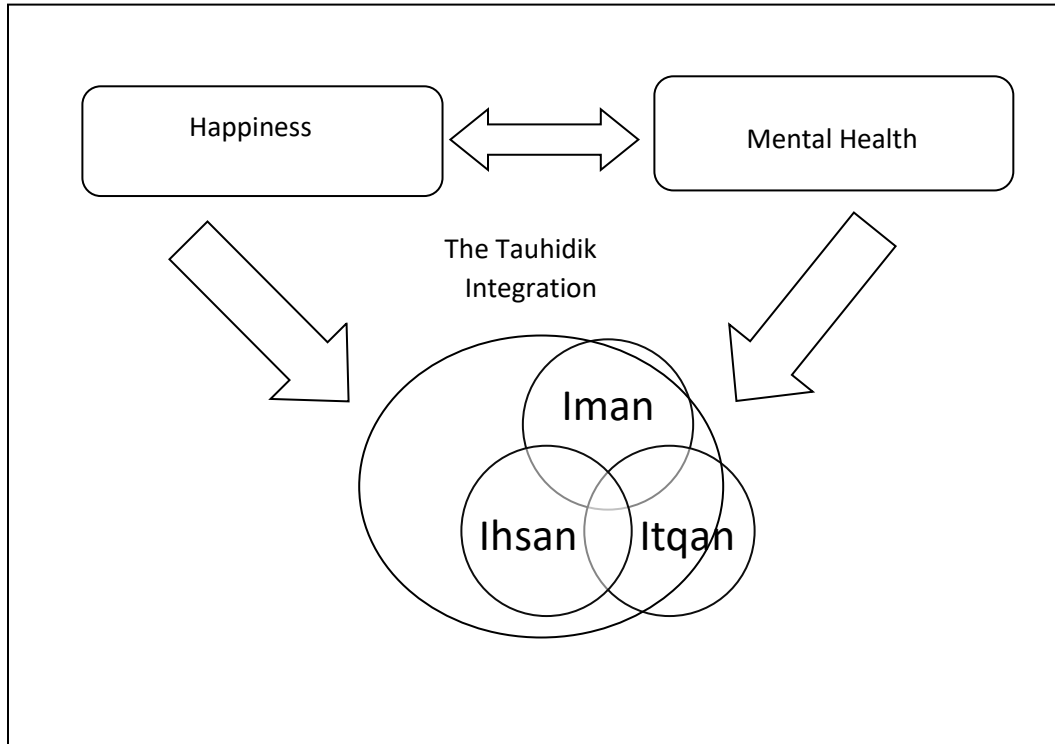


Figure 1.0. The relationship between Happiness and Mental Health in one's work through the integration of Tauhidik

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a quantitative research which used a survey as its method. This method comprises all ways in research method which need to be done in order to collect data directly from a group of subjects through interview session or by giving questionnaires that need to be answered by the respondents. (Chua, 2011). It is chosen in this study because this method's view is very suitable in assessing thoughts, feelings and humans' opinion directly (Shaughnessy, 2009).

Study sample sampling

This study involves four research universities in Malaysia. It used stratified sampling, also known as layered sampling with a sample study of 645 lecturers comprising lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors and professors.

Study instrument

Process of adapting and identifying sub-construct which is included in intentional activities has produced a measuring tool for intentional activities, a combination of four components and fourteen activities. A total of 42 items has been built from fourteen construct activities, where a total number of 10 constructs are included in this study is based on suggested activities which trigger happiness by Lyubomirsky (2008) in order to obtain and perpetuating happiness in life. While, another four more constructs are additions based on information that is collected from lecturers and previous study. These fourteen constructs are the results of four main components in intentional activities that have been listed. In addition, researcher

also has made a verification of the constructs described above to ensure that it is consistent and in conformity with the lecturers in the sample studied.

Table 1: Divisions of activities measurement according to components and construct

Component	Construct
Cognitive	Optimistic
	Avoid social comparative
	Self control
	Enjoy life
Motivation	Aim/Target
	Grateful
	Forgive
Attitude	Good attitude
	Social relationship
	Self care
	Self improvement
Religion (Islam)	Belief component
	Law/ <i>syaria</i> ' component
	Attitude/ <i>akhla</i> ' component

Data Analysis

In this study, data has been analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 19.0. It also used descriptive analysis by describing the distribution of the mean level of lecturers' happiness, while inference analysis of multiple regressions is used to determine the most dominant factors in influencing sustainable happiness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Happiness level among lecturers

Based on the conclusion of lecturers' happiness and the table given reveals that most of the lecturers have higher score which is about 616 lecturers or 95.5 percents. This finding is parallel with the study done by Stevenson and Wolfers (1999) which shows that the groups of people who are in higher education institutions or universities are much happier. However, the second highest score obtains from respondents' shows an alarming situation where as many as 27 people or 4.2 percent of lecturers are at a low level of happiness. It shows that there are some lecturers who are still not happy overall. The score of lecturers's happiness can be seen in the following figure:

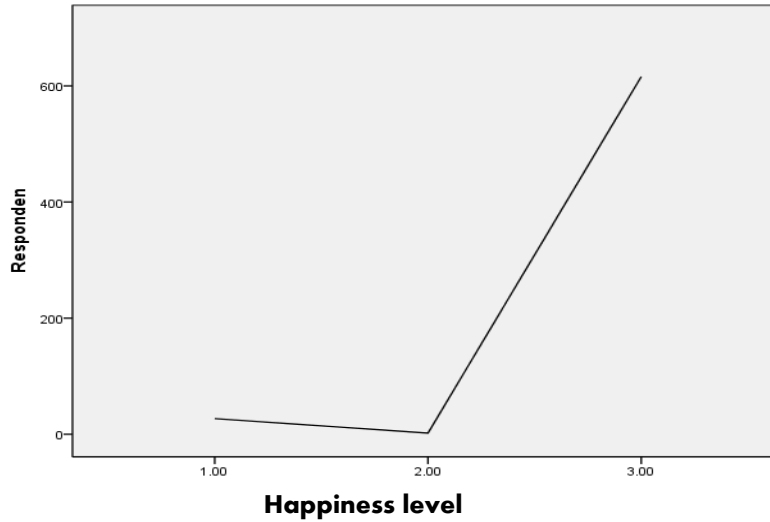


Figure 2: Happiness level among lecturers

The overall results of this study indicate that the number of lecturers who highly score in the level of happiness reaches a total number of 616 lecturers, or 95.5 percent of the total study sample clearly shows that the policy implemented by the ministry and also by the administration of local research universities are in a good track. In accordance with the position of a lecturer who uses the mind's ability to express ideas and arguments in the process of teaching and learning and also the development of scientific research, the purpose activities in cognitive component has become a main diviner for lecturers' happiness should be given a greater attention. More approaches and programs related to cognitive stimulation, motivation and religion must be implemented to ensure the maintenance of sustainable happiness can be optimized.

A total of 4.5 percent or 29 persons of academicians who are not happy must get a good support and should be approached in order to achieve a solution to the cause of unhappiness experienced by them. Lack of aspect in getting sustainable happiness among academicians should not be allowed to happen and intervention for improvement of feeling that they are experiencing now should be implemented. If this issue is neglected, the lack of aspect in getting happiness will be worse and hence it gives a bad effect to quality of works and productivity will decline.

Factors which influence sustainable happiness among lecturers

Table 1: A correlation between familiar environment variable and criterion

Variables	Happiness (<i>r</i>)	Sig.
Cognitive	.910	.000
Motivation	.847	.000
Religion	.762	.000
Attitude	.678	.000

Meanwhile, the results of multiple regression analysis (stepwise) found that the intentional activities are able to predict the lecturers’ happiness with the overall contribution of intentional activities as much as 86 percent ($R^2 = 0.860$) on the lecturers’ happiness. The R^2 value also shows the variance contribution of each independent variable (predictor) on the dependent variable (criterion) which is the value of the total variance contribution to the happiness. In the correlation table above, the result shows that all the predictive factors expose a significant correlation and a strong relationship except for intentional activities in behavioral component which demonstrates the medium correlation ($r = .67$), while the other intentional activities in other components demonstrate a strong and positive relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that the intentional activities can influence lecturers’ happiness. This is reinforced by the findings of Lyubomirsky et al., (2005) that intentional activities contribute 40 percent of individual happiness and it plays an important role in influencing sustainable happiness.

Table 2: Influences of intentional activities towards happiness

Activities	B	Beta (β)	Nilai t	Sig
Constants	-.802		-7.684	.000
Cognitive	.666	.599	19.723	.000
Motivation	.271	.235	8.258	.000
Religion	.244	.152	6.652	.000

Based on the table above, the result enables the regression equation to be used to predict the value of Y (happiness) in the future. The results of the regression analysis are obtained by the following equation;

$$Y = .802 + .666b_{1x1} + .271b_{2x2} + .244b_{3x3}$$

Y is happiness

X_1 is cognitive activity

X_2 is motivational activity

X_3 is religion activity

Table 3: Summary of variants contribution of intentional activities towards happiness

Purpose	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square
1.Cognitive	.910	.829	.828
2.Cognitive, Motivation	.922	.850	.849
3.Cognitive,Motivation, Religion	.927	.860	.859

Based on the table above, the value of R^2 indicates that as many as 82.9 percent of changes in the happiness variables are caused by the intentional activities in the cognitive component. This means that intentional activities in the cognitive component have become a main predictive factor for happiness. According to Bentall (1992), cognitive aspect gives an effect to the happiness, even the recent study by Nurul Atika (2020) also revealed that cognitive aspect play a huge role in achieving happiness for multi-tasking career woman in Malaysia. However, intentional activities in behavioural component are unable to significantly predict happiness level among lecturers. It can be seen in beta value (estimated

beta value when it is combined into the multiple regression model) which is too small, 0.031 ($p = .148$). Therefore, behavioral activity is eliminated from the model by multiple regression procedures (stepwise).

Next, the R^2 -value is .850 which shows that this increment of percentage increases to 85 percent when the contribution of predictive factors from intentional activities in motivating components accounted. It means that the element of motivation of lecturers will affect their happiness. In fact, previous study conducted by Khoshnam et al. (2013) found that internal motivation correlated significantly with happiness. In the meantime, a study done by a researcher in order to look for the relationship between motivation in achieving individual happiness in society and cultural differences found that motivation among Asians is focusing more on high level of motivation achievement in getting happiness as a collective (in common). It is associated with high social relations among them. This scenario is seen in the contradictions between individuals in Europe and America which emphasizes motivation element in building happiness based on individualistic goals. (Uchida et al., 2004).

This percentage continues to rise as predictive factors of intentional-activities in religion component accounted which contributes to 86 percent of lecturers' happiness, where it is a combination of three components of intentional-activities, which are cognitive component, motivation and religion. This conclusion is supported by the findings of ANOVA analysis where significant level recorded is 0.000 which is smaller than the significant level of 0.05 [$F(3,640) = 128.7251$; $p < .05$]. The finding in this study also shows that the religion influences lecturers' happiness and the religion component also correlated significantly with the happiness. It shows that religion can give them psychological and social benefits to humans. The practice of religion can assist individual in terms of human psychology such as creating a meaningful life and a fortress of strength to humans when facing big problems in life (Pollner, 1989) and further increased the psychological well-being and happiness of the person (Yaser Boolaghi, 2015).

In the Islamic perspective, Masri and Adam (1995) state that to achieve happiness in the Muslim community is through a number of factors such as good health, peacefulness and has a strongly attachment with the strengthening of the spiritual aspects through the practice of Islamic teachings such as dhikr, pray and read the Quran, and this at once can build an inner wealth. This is because, the absence of the element of adamant inner wealth combined with Islamic beliefs will cause a person to be always in a state of restless and fully unhappy when the happiness can only be seen in the context of materialism alone (Masri and Adam, 1995).

Results from the study of the factors which influence the sustainable happiness that is conducted reveals that sustainable happiness can be achieved if the individuals attempt to carry out components in intentional activities in their lives. This is because the intentional activities are the only component that can be generated and carried out in order to achieve and to sustain the happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In fact, happiness is also closely related to human mental construct which is one of the components of intentional activities, and it is not merely depends on the life condition. Hence, one can feel unhappy even if they live in luxuriousness and they will never feel complete; on the contrary people who are living in distress can also obtain happiness. It depends on how far a person is satisfied with what has been achieved compared to the desire in their life.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study that is conducted pertaining to happiness among lecturers is important to identify the happiness level and factors that contribute to the happiness of lecturers in order to strengthen their role in universities as a driving force that ultimately will contribute to the success of the country's workforce. In accordance with the government's desire in the implementation of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan Beyond 2020 which includes framework through the National Higher Education Action Plan Phase 1: 2007-2010 and subsequently continues by the National Higher Education Action Plan Phase 2: 2011-2015, lays down the role of higher education institutions, as a center of knowledge and human development in order to produce the scientists, scholars, scholarship, skilled and semi-skilled workers to contribute to the country socio-economic development.

The affecting factors of the happiness among lecturers correlate with their satisfaction in the performance of work that will eventually stimulates the lecturers to achieve a good performance in work, including in the aspect of effective delivery of lectures, conducting research and writing, building a commitment and willingness to face the challenges ahead (Zainuddin and Junaidah, 2010). At the same time, this study clearly shows that the research in lecturers' happiness is important not only in the interest of individual or on behalf of the profession of lecturer alone, but studies like this are important to the survival of the state of public higher education and certainly it will also give an impact on consumers in the higher education service, which is the government and the citizen.

The studies that had been done are limited where they only involve a group of lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors and professors. Therefore, researcher proposed that a study pertaining to happiness will be expanded to cover the entire lecturers who are working in the universities, because through these measures, the census profiles of lecturers in relation to aspects of happiness will be embodied through research profiles (profiling study) that will be carried out. With an integrated research involving more staffs, as well as data and index of happiness of every employee can be generated. The census should also be implemented in addition to the comprehensive study, as through this measure, the lecturers who need help and encouragement can be identified in order to produce sustainable happiness for those who involved and trigger the quality of employment.

In addition, several other groups in the university such as tutors as well as administrators can also be involved in such studies. In addition, the study can also be extended to other sectors of education such as school teachers, college professors, colleges and polytechnics, as well as part-time instructors. In fact, the improvement of the lecturers' happiness and also other employees is a result of proactive understanding and improvements of the determinants factors of happiness, and then the good products can be obtained by country and communities. Such studies should be continuously conducted in order to help Malaysia towards enhancing human capital development in the Public Universities mainly involves academic experts.

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