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## Job Related Well-Being according to Demographic Factors: A Research in Tourism Industry

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### Abstract

It is commonly believed that happy workers are the key to have happy customers so the key to customer satisfaction is having happy employees. In working environment it is stated that demographics is a factor that discriminates working life perception, social-working life balance and work focus. At this point, this research focuses on understanding the job related well-being perception according to demographic factors including gender, marital status, number of children and generation in tourism industry. Research is based on surveys (N=194) conducted to different employees working in tourism industry in Turkey. Data were collected by Oxford Happiness Questionnaire developed by Hills & Argyle (2002). The results indicated that in tourism industry in Turkey, job related well-being happiness of males and females, singles and marrieds, x generation and y generation were not statistically significant, education level and job related well-being is directly proportional and finally the job related well-being is inversely proportional to the number of children owned.

*Keywords:* happiness, job related well-being, tourism

### Literature Review and Hypotheses

#### 1.1. Happiness

Happiness or subjective well-being is a word used in the same sense with kindness, life satisfaction and joy for many years. In fact, happiness is defined as a simple concept with all of these concepts. Happiness measured by the answer to a basic question such as that asked since 1972 in the United States General Social Survey (GSS): “*Considered all together, how would you*

*say things are these days—would you say that you are very happy, happy, or not happy?* (Easterlin, 2003: 11183)”.

The concept of happiness is difficult to define in consequence of abstract and intangible. Priority studies focus on defining happiness. Happiness was skeptically viewed as nonviable to be put under psychological construct because it was thought to be not impossible to be measured and studied empirically. Research on happiness has become very popular in recent years (Omar, Jain, Noordin, F, 2013: 703).

From ancient times until today, the answer to the question was sought; “How can we make people happy?” Happiness or subjective well-being means the individual's life assessment and reporting of the judiciary. Subjective well-being, involves the individual's own life as a subjective assessment of cognitive and emotional (Eryılmaz, Ercan, 2010: 952).

There are many different contents of the word happiness:

- Happiness is a feeling. Happiness is an emotion that we feel at the end of our work is our reward and true.
- Happiness is not the moment in which we live; after experiencing an emotion that is realized.
- Turkish Language Association dictionary defines happiness as, “*All the longing to complete and permanently accessible from nature pride condition*”.

The purpose of life is to be happy. Conditions in the mental state of many individuals and lived events determines happiness. To capture the happiness to reformat our terms of behaviour and opinions and we need to educate our heart, our mind in a systematic manner. So the key to happiness is in our hands (Lama, Cudler, 2008).

## *1.2 Job Related Well-Being*

Happiness is a term that has not been extensively used in academic researches on employee experiences in organizations. This does not mean that organizational researchers are uninterested in employee happiness at work. On the contrary, for many years researchers have studied a number of concepts that have same definition. Definitely, the most prominent and frequently used of these is job satisfaction, which has a long history as both an independent and dependent variable in organizational research (Fisher, C. D., 2010: 385).

Understanding how happiness can affect pleasure has important implications both for people and for organizations (Goldsmith, Kco, Dhar, 2012: 872). Happy workers are very important asset for organizations. A meta-analysis showed that happy employees are more positively evaluated by their managers and by colleagues, handle operational and managerial jobs better, exhibit more extra role and prosocial behavior at work, show less surrender behavior such as turnover and absenteeism, are less likely to burn out, and—last but not least—show superior performance and productivity (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, Schaufeli, 2012: 513).

Happy related activities matter because they can better explain job-related well-being (e.g. work engagement, flow, positive affect or passion), relations of employees at work (e.g. co-workers, clients), life outside work, and ultimately productivity (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Ilies, 2012: 1051). The results offered by Jones in his research suggest that happy work life provide workers healthier, more briefly motivated, more efficient and creative (Jones, 2006: 41).

Psychological well-being consists of many different components including affective well-being, competence, claim, self-determination, satisfaction. Two of the major studied components of psychological well-being are affective well-being and job satisfaction. Affective well-being is described as the relative compactness of positive affects compared to negative effects (Harris, Daniels, 2007: 408).

Russell (1980) defined job-related affective well-being as the perception of pleasure and satisfaction (Russell, 1980: 1161). Perception of job-related affective well-being is often used as a synonym for work satisfaction. Warr (1990) has been developed by the idea that the two concepts have different meanings for the first time. According to Warr, job-related affective well-being as a person's perception of how you feel and trying to analyze the personal and environmental factors that affect these feelings involves investigation (Warr, 1990).

Demographic variables especially age and gender differences in the workplace are the two main variables that affect the job related affective well-being. The impact of demographic variables on job related affective well-being has long been researched for decades. The gender and job satisfaction does not have an important impact on the job related well-being as well as perceptions about the job satisfaction (Wilks, Neto, 2012: 875).

In a recent article by Veldhoven and Dorenbosch (2008) advocates that older employees exhibit more proactive behavior, be able to articulate their ideas even without being asked, would come to cope with potential problems, negotiating skills and create more alternative solutions by further efforts to solve the problems (Claes, Loo, 2011: 240).

Luchman, Kaplan & Dalal (2011) remark, the relationship between age and happiness in the workplace has "U" shape; At a young age (18-40 years) with a high level of happiness in the workplace, in middle age (41-49) decreased, with increasing age (between 50-72 years of age) is starting to rise again to reach the old high-level (Luchman et al, 2011: 550).

### *1.3 Tourism*

Tourism industry like the other industries, to develop coherent without upheaval, effectively requires a convenient institutional framework with a set of links, defined by a functional relationship between them and an adequate information system. Developments in recent decades improved economies features the services economy, leading experts to overcome intensifying

concerns relative lag behind the theory to practice. These concerns interested primarily on defining the concept of service difficult problem due to the extreme heterogeneity of the services (Lupulescu, Dincu, Borlovan, 2014: 297).

Tourism is one of the fast improving sector in the World. This contributes to economic, cultural and environmental advantages to many countries. It brings economic worth in the form of revenue generation, continuous foreign exchange earnings and is a means for diversifying the economy. Socio-culturally and tourism provides employment opportunities. In addition, it allows the local culture to gain wider acceptance and leads to cross cultural exchanges with other countries. The natural environment can also benefit from tourism in the form of green taxes, the induction of environmentally friendly practices by tourism facilities and beautification drives which promote a level of aestheticism and happiness. Tourism symbolizes a panacea to sustainable development for many countries. As such, different countries promote different forms of tourism products (Ramgulam, Mohammed, Raghunandan, 2013: 51).

Tourism can be divided into two classifications; domestic tourism and international tourism. Domestic type of tourism is where the residents of a country travel inside the boundary of their own homeland. However, international tourism is where people travel abroad. But, international tourism is further more than easily travelling beyond the borders of one's own country. It involves all the services required for the tourist (Fridgen, 1991: 103).

According to Demir (2004), tourism has been playing an important role in the Turkish economy. The year of 1983 was the turning point for Turkish tourism in the national and international tourism market. The Chernobyl nuclear accident (1986) was very nearly to Turkey so this situation affected the tourism industry. After the Chernobyl Turkey tourism industry affected the Gulf War. The earthquake (1999) called "Marmara" occurred in the region of Marmara in Turkey causing international tourists to cancel their travels to Turkey. However, from 1980 to 2002, international tourist arrivals increased from 1.288 million to 13.247 million and tourism receipts increased from

US \$326 million to US \$8.484 billion. In the same period, international tourist arrivals in the world increased from 285 million to 714.6 million. After 1990's Turkey tourism income levels have been increasing transportation has been improving to meet the needs of international travelers. Turkish citizens are more educated and cultured than before and the number of lodging operations has been increasing (Demir, 2004: 326-327).

The sum of tourism receipts are distributed in the favor of developed districts, rather than less developed areas of Turkey. There are many subjects affecting this unequal distribution of tourism benefits, excluding the regional; natural, historical and cultural benefits. Some causes behind this unequal distribution of tourism benefits are; lack of adequate physical tourism investments, insufficient infrastructure, undiversified tourism facilities, seasonal disadvantages, security, and lack of adequate human capital. In order to diminish these disadvantages, related with tourism potentials of less developed regions, there are various measures taken by different ministries. Turkish Republic Ministry of Culture and Tourism, for example, has published its' Turkey Tourism 2023 Strategy Action Plan 2007-2013 in order to define policies on tourism potentials of different regions and to designate general strategies so as to improve Turkish tourism sector. Turkish Ministry of Economy, on the other hand, declared tourism facility development incentives in 2012, which are primarily focused on culture and tourism protection and development areas and tourism centers, together with other various regional incentives to reduce regional disparities (Kaplan, 2013: 3).

Mediterranean tourism industry has conventionally been characterized by impact seasonality with important differences in reside rates between winter and summer seasons (Amelung, Viner, 2006; Hoti et al., 2007). The most popular season or in a region with only one strong season, overcrowding and overbooking will reduce the quality of service if several of tourists surpasses the bed capacity (Kurtuluş, Ulama, 2010: 191). In addition, tourist experiences do produce impact on tourist, yet recent reviews explained there has been little attempt to integrate research on social-psychological effects for tourists into wider tourism research and classical marketing

advertisement of sun, sea and sand tourism downplay the contribution that holidays provide in terms of health and well-being (McCabe, Johnson, 2012: 43).

### ***Research Questions***

#### *Hypotheses*

This research tests the following hypotheses:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference about job related well-being perception according to gender in tourism industry.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant difference about job related well-being perception according to marital status in tourism industry.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant difference about job related well-being perception according to number of children in tourism industry.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant difference about job related well-being perception according to generation in tourism industry.

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant difference about job related well-being perception according to education level in tourism industry.

### ***Methodology***

In this study, in order to achieve the research goal, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was used to measure job related well being developed by Hills & Argyle (2002) which was transformed to Turkish by Doğan & Çötök (2011).

#### *Research Goal*

The research goal of this research is to understand the job related well-being perception according to demographic factors in tourism industry.

#### *Sample and Data Collection*

In this research totally 194 surveys were conducted. All surveys were made online, eliminating the risk of unfilled questions. So, all 194 surveys are usable. All surveys were sent to tourism industry employees (such as hotel employees, airline hosts and hostesses, airline ground operation

personnel, agency stuff...) in 5 cities (Antalya, Manisa, Ankara, İstanbul, Muğla). Totally 550 surveys were sent and as a result 194 suitable surveys were collected.

The below tables show the descriptive statistics of the participants:

**Table 1:** The descriptive statistics according to gender

Female		Male	
Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
90	46,4%	104	53,6%

**Table 2:** The descriptive statistics according to marital status

Single		Married	
Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
88	45,4%	106	54,6%

**Table 3:** The descriptive statistics according to number of children

No child		1 child		2 children		3 or more children	
Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
116	59,8%	52	26,8%	26	13,4%	0	0%

**Table 4:** The descriptive statistics according to generations

Baby Boomers (Born between 1946-1964)		X Generation (Born between 1965-1979)		Y Generation (Born between 1980-1999)	
Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
0	0,0%	74	38,1%	120	61,9%

**Table 4:** The descriptive statistics according to education level

Primary School		Secondary School		High School		Undergraduate		Graduate		Post graduate		Doctorate	
Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
0	0,0%	0	0,0%	36	18,6%	44	22,7%	102	52,6%	12	6,2%	0	0,0%

#### 1.4 Analyses and Results

An exploratory data analysis was conducted to determine if the job related well-being score distribution was normally distributed. Results for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality indicated that the happiness and job related well-being score distribution deviate significantly from a normal distribution ( $D = .102$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

A Mann-Whitney test indicated that happiness of males and females were not statistically significant ( $U = 4216$ ,  $p = .234$ ). So,  $H_1$  is rejected.



A Mann-Whitney test indicated that happiness of singles and marrieds were not statistically significant ( $U = 4576$ ,  $p = .821$ ). So,  $H_2$  is rejected.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference happiness between the employees having different number of children,  $\chi^2(2) = 7.677$ ,  $p = 0.022$ , with a mean rank pain score of 88,71 for having no child, 114.04 for having one child and 103.65 for having 2 children. So,  $H_3$  is accepted.

A Mann-Whitney test indicated that happiness of x generation and y generation were not statistically significant ( $U = 4240$ ,  $p = .598$ ). So,  $H_4$  is rejected.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference on happiness between the employees having different education level,  $\chi^2(2) = 11.230$ ,  $p = 0.011$ , with a mean rank pain score of 88,50 for high school graduates, 90,68 for undergraduates, 97,70 for graduates and 147,83 for post graduates. So,  $H_5$  is accepted.

## **Conclusion**

According to a training program run by European Community and Turkey, it is confirmed that the tourists will not be satisfied until the tourism personnel is satisfied. It is commonly believed that, the preliminary way to satisfy hotel visitors is to satisfy hotel workers. So, the sustainable tourism will be performed by tourism investments that manages to have happy, qualified and certified personnel. (<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turizm-calisani-memnun-olmadan-turist-antalya-yerelhaber-457850/>).

It is commonly believed that happy workers are the key to have happy customers. Especially on sectors that has direct contact with customers –such as retail, tourism, etc...- this effect can be observed more thoroughly. This suggestion is based on the remark that happy personnel create

more value, make less mistakes, and are more creative which results in a competitive advance for the organization.

Obviously, in working environment it is stated that demographics is a factor that discriminates working life perception, social-working life balance and work focus. At this point, this research focuses on understanding the job related well-being perception according to demographic factors including gender, marital status, number of children and generation in tourism industry. Much research has been done on job related well-being perception, but to our knowledge, this is the first study to explore well-being perception according to demographic factors in tourism sector.

The research proposed that happiness of males and females were not statistically significant, which is very parallel to previous research results.

Although previous studies (Lee et al., 1991; Hayo & Seirfert, 2003; Kangal, 2013) indicated that married working people are happier at work compared to singles, this research proves that in tourism industry, happiness of single and married working people were not statistically significant

The research also proposed that having a children effects the happiness at work. Parallel to previous findings (Hefferon, Boniwell, 2014) the job related well-being is inversely proportional to the number of children owned in tourism industry.

The expectations and demands of people working from different generations is a distinguishing factor in working life. The factors that motivates working people from different generations is different respectively. Different from the previous findings of researches, the working people in tourism industry, happiness of gen y and gen x are not statistically significant.

In the literature, there is not a common agreement on the relation between education level and job related well-being. This research proposed that the education level and job related well-being is directly proportional.

The findings are limited by the scale used, moreover the findings of the study are limited by use due to its focusing on employees of cities of Antalya, Manisa, Ankara, İstanbul, Muğla (in Turkey). This research has concentrated on Tourism sector employees, in future studies would be interesting to run this study in different sectors and compare the results. To our knowledge, this is the first study to explore well-being in tourism sector.

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