

The Impact of Leadership Strategies on Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance: An Applied Study of Employees in a Dubai-based Healthcare-related Organisation

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Abstract: The importance of workplace happiness is strategic as employee well-being could influence performance, commitment and organisational stability. Yet, there is a lack of evidence to shed light on employees' experiences of happiness programs led by their leaders in the Gulf healthcare-related organisations. The relationships between leadership strategies, workplace happiness, organisational performance, and employee loyalty in one healthcare-related organisation in Dubai were explored in this study. A sequential exploratory mixed-methods design was used to collect data from 10 purposively sampled employees through semi-structured interviews, and from 149 valid responses from a survey. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data, and SPSS and partial least squares structural equation modelling were used to analyse the survey data. Five themes were found that highlighted leadership support, multidimensional well-being, performance, loyalty and implementation quality as interrelated dimensions of workplace happiness. Leadership strategies were positively associated with workplace happiness, which was positively correlated with organisational performance and employee loyalty. However, the loyalty relationship needs to be treated with caution due to construct reliability and discriminant validity issues. The integrated findings suggest that material security and recognition, flexibility and organisational care are all aspects of effective leadership support. Communication, fairness, accessibility and departmental relevance also condition programme outcomes. The findings offer context-specific, non-causal evidence to help design credible workplace-happiness strategies.

Keywords: Leadership Strategies; Workplace Happiness; Organisational Performance; Employee Loyalty; Healthcare-Related Organisation; Dubai; Mixed Methods.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The focus on workplace happiness has shifted from being an individual emotional state to being an organisational issue influenced by leadership, work practices and employee-organisation relationships. This is especially important for healthcare-related institutions, as employee experience can impact focus, decision-making, service quality and employee retention. However, the organisational value that has been placed on happiness can lead to the mistaken notion that if well-being initiatives exist, performance will improve. This assumption ignores the way employees perceive these programmes and the extent to which they feel that organisational support is genuine, fair and meaningful.

Leadership strategies go beyond the interpersonal style of the leader. Wages, healthcare, financial security, housing

support and welfare provision can be seen as organisational care by employees. The relational message of recognition, appreciation, flexibility and psychological support is conveyed in non-material ways. Some studies show that both monetary and non-monetary incentives can have a combined effect on job satisfaction and performance, not as alternatives but as a combination [1]. Thus, leadership strategy needs to be considered as a combination of material provision and relational support.

In Dubai, the context of this issue is further accentuated by the fact that workplace well-being is embedded in a broader policy agenda around happiness, quality of life and sustainable development. But the expectations of leadership and responses of employees are not necessarily culturally homogeneous. Research in the Arabian Gulf region indicates that the context of institutions and deeply rooted leadership

norms can impact the perception of authority, support and organisational responsibility [2]. The growing scholarship on well-being in the UAE has reinforced the focus on employee well-being, but also highlights the importance of evidence specific to the organisation. The evidence from the Western context thus provides relevant theoretical support while not ruling out the need for contextual investigation.

There are three limitations in the literature. First, happiness in the workplace is often broken down into job satisfaction, engagement or positive affect, and this does not capture the broader links with security, support, stress management and work-life quality. Secondly, studies tend to focus on individual leadership practices and ignore the interaction between tangible benefits and relational treatment in determining employee experience. Thirdly, the link between workplace happiness, organisational outcomes and retention is still inconsistent. While there has been a link between employee well-being, productivity and firm performance [3], the nature and significance of this link depend on the measures and settings used. Broader reviews also identify antecedents and contextual mechanisms that make it difficult to draw simple universal conclusions [4].

The present study is designed to overcome these limitations by exploring the problem through a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. Qualitative evidence first helps to identify the meaning that employees give to leadership strategies and workplace-happiness initiatives. The relationships between Leadership Strategies, Workplace Happiness, Organisational Performance and Employee Loyalty are then analysed quantitatively. The two phases can be integrated, allowing the statistical relationships to be understood in terms of employees' experiences in their organisations, instead of as self-explanatory coefficients.

The research question is: What is the impact of leadership strategies on workplace happiness and organisational performance? The term impact is kept from the approved research question, although the empirical analysis is based on associations and not on experimental causation. The study makes a contribution by conceptualising leadership support as a combination of material security and relational care, workplace happiness as a multidimensional organisational resource, and communication, fairness, accessibility and departmental relevance as conditions that affect the effectiveness of the programmes. It also offers evidence specific to the context of a healthcare-related setting, which has not been well researched, without claiming representativeness across healthcare organisations, Dubai or the Arabian Gulf.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

➤ *Leadership Strategies and Workplace Happiness*

There are two aspects of workplace happiness that relate to leadership strategies: organisational provisions and relational leadership [1], [5], [6]. These can be in the form of tangible benefits such as salary, healthcare benefits, housing assistance and financial or welfare support [1], [2]. Relational practices include recognition, appreciation, flexibility,

communication and psychological support [1], [5]. While there is a distinction between these categories, it is not necessarily a distinction that is felt by employees. The present study argues that a financial benefit can signal care within an organisation, while recognition can be of little value if employees feel insecure or if they feel that resources are being allocated in an unfair manner.

The results of Chi et al. [1] indicate that financial and non-financial rewards are not independent, but rather they interact with leadership, job satisfaction and performance. This is a challenge to approaches that focus exclusively on the provision of money or on intrinsic motivation. Security and perceived fairness can be addressed with financial rewards, while autonomy, recognition and organisational identification can be strengthened with relational practices [1], [5]. Kuvaas et al. also make a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but suggest that the two types of motivation do not yield the same employee results [5]. While their distinction is helpful, it may be misleading to treat material and psychological support as mutually exclusive sources of motivation, as they may be perceived together by employees.

Leadership strategies are thus not effective only when they are formally available, but when they are credibly implemented. Kompany et al. link effort-reward imbalance to turnover intentions and identify leadership and organisational culture as contextual factors [6]. This indicates that when employees feel that they are not getting a return on their contribution to the organisation, benefits may not increase employee happiness. Therefore, the evaluation of leadership support should be based on the employees' experiences of adequacy, fairness and accessibility and not on the number of initiatives that are offered.

➤ *Workplace Happiness and Well-Being*

Job satisfaction, engagement and positive affect are correlated with, but not synonymous with, workplace happiness [7]-[9]. Job satisfaction is typically about an employee's perceptions of the work environment or aspects of their job, while workplace happiness is more about the emotional aspects of the workplace, relationships, meaning, security and functioning at work [7]-[9]. Engagement is a measure of energy and involvement, but it does not necessarily mean that an employee feels fairly treated, has less stress or has a better quality of life [8], [9]. If these constructs are considered synonymous, they reduce the multidimensional nature of an organisational experience to a single work attitude.

Seligman's PERMA model is a conceptualisation of well-being in terms of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment [7]. It is a multidimensional structure that can be helpful in understanding the value of not assuming happiness from satisfaction ratings. However, PERMA was not created to be an organisational model and it can underestimate the effects of employment conditions, power and resource distribution. Van Zyl et al. take PERMA beyond the personal sphere and link individual flourishing with occupational conditions [8]. This extension enhances the context in which the model is

applicable but does not replace the need to investigate material security and programme implementation.

Sypniewska et al. relate work engagement and employee satisfaction to sustainable human-resource practices [9]. They conclude that positive employee experience is relevant to the organisation, but engagement and satisfaction are more narrowly focused than the current understanding of workplace happiness. An employee can remain engaged while stressed or be content with some benefits but not with recognition and psychological support. It is more appropriate, therefore, to consider workplace happiness as a higher-order organisational experience created by multiple dimensions that are related but not identical [7]-[9].

➤ *Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance*

There is a theoretical link between workplace happiness and organisational performance, but it is difficult to measure. Krekel et al. link employee well-being to productivity and firm performance [3], and Salas-Vallina et al. link shared leadership and passion at work with resilience and performance [10]. Such studies provide evidence of the importance of well-being in the organisation, but do not warrant the expectation that workplace-happiness programmes will bring about financial or operational benefits.

Performance can be measured through financial metrics, productivity, service quality or employee perceptions [3]. These measures provide different evidence. Objective outcomes capture recorded organisational consequences, whereas perceived performance captures employees' assessments of their motivation, concentration, work quality and discretionary contribution. Consistent with this distinction, Shulga et al. [11] identify service climate as relevant to workplace happiness. Positive employee perceptions and good organisational performance can also reinforce each other, however, and so it is difficult to determine causal direction in cross-sectional studies.

A defensible interpretation is thus that workplace happiness is an organisational resource, rather than a guaranteed performance intervention. Staff who are confident, supported and appreciated are likely to be better equipped to focus, make decisions and go the extra mile [3], [10], [11]. These individual experiences may or may not add up to measurable organisational performance, depending on the consistency and quality of programme implementation.

➤ *Workplace Happiness and Employee Loyalty*

Loyalty is a state of mind characterised by commitment, intention to stay and willingness to have a positive relationship with the organisation. According to reciprocity theory, people react to positive treatment they receive from an organisation with positive attitudes and actions towards the organisation [12]. Cropanzano and Mitchell build this argument on the basis of social-exchange theory, which focuses on the development of reciprocal obligations as a result of multiple exchanges, not single ones [13].

This view helps to explain why staff might see healthcare and well-being investments as a sign of care from the organisation and therefore feel more committed to the

organisation [12], [13]. However, reciprocity is not guaranteed. Inaccessible, poorly communicated or perceived as unfair support may not create loyalty. Kompany et al. also show that effort–reward imbalance can increase the likelihood of turnover intentions [6]. Therefore, the link between happiness and loyalty cannot be assumed from the existence of programmes alone. Instead, it depends on the credibility of organisational provision.

➤ *Integrated Theoretical Foundation*

The proposed relationships are explained by the different components of PERMA, reciprocity theory and spillover theory. PERMA explains the multidimensional nature of happiness in the workplace, while reciprocity theory explains how organisational support can lead to commitment [7], [12], [13]. In addition, self-determination theory suggests that, besides financial factors, autonomy, competence and relatedness are essential for motivation and well-being, which limits explanations based solely on financial factors [14].

Spillover theory suggests that experiences in one life domain can affect functioning in another [15]. Grzywacz and Marks describe positive and negative work–family spillover and indicate that work experiences can extend beyond immediate task performance [16]. In this study, organisational security and support might help to minimise uncertainty and enhance general well-being. However, spillover does not imply that all benefits in the workplace have positive non-work consequences.

The integrated conceptual framework positions leadership strategies as material and non-material organisational support linked to workplace happiness. Happiness in the workplace is defined as a multidimensional employee experience associated with job satisfaction, employee loyalty and organisational performance. Job satisfaction was examined qualitatively, while employee loyalty and organisational performance were examined separately in the quantitative model, as depicted in Fig. 1.



Fig 1 Integrated Mixed-Methods Conceptual Framework
(Source: Author, Developed from Literature Review)

A. Hypotheses Development

➤ Leadership Strategies and Workplace Happiness

Leadership can affect job satisfaction in two ways: by providing things and by providing relationships. Financial and welfare benefits can help to increase employees' sense of security, while recognition, flexibility and psychological support can help to tackle autonomy and feelings of belonging to the organisation. Chi et al. [1] demonstrate that financial and non-financial incentives are linked to leadership, job satisfaction and performance. But Kuvaas et al. [5] argue that outcomes of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are not equivalent, and therefore suggest that the types of support should not be confused as being equivalent. The anticipated link is thus between employees' general assessment of leadership strategies and not the individual impact of any one benefit.

- *H1: Leadership strategies are positively associated with workplace happiness.*

➤ Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance

Job satisfaction can contribute to job performance by fostering focus, motivation, engagement and discretionary effort. Krekel et al. [3] relate employee well-being to productivity and firm performance, and Salas-Vallina et al. [10] link positive work experiences to resilience and performance. However, the correlations do not indicate that happiness programs are always likely to have measurable economic impacts. In this study, organisational performance is measured by employees' perceptions of their performance in the workplace, not by audited organisational results.

- *H2: Workplace happiness is positively associated with perceived organisational performance.*

➤ Workplace Happiness and Employee Loyalty

According to reciprocity theory, employees are likely to feel more committed and inclined to stay with the organisation if they feel cared for by the organisation [12], [13]. On the other hand, when employees think that the organisational exchange is inadequate, effort–reward imbalance can be a reason for turnover intentions [6]. The happiness in the workplace can then foster loyalty if positive experiences are perceived as authentic support from the organisation. But it is not enough to assume that programme availability means loyalty, as fairness, accessibility and relevance can influence employees' responses in return.

- *H3: Workplace happiness is positively associated with employee loyalty.*

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ Research Design

The study used a pragmatic sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. Pragmatism was suitable as the research question called for both contextual knowledge of employees' experiences and empirical evaluation of the relationships between the main constructs. Pragmatism does not favour qualitative or quantitative evidence; it allows for the use of methods that are appropriate for the research

question [17], [18]. The sequential design started with a qualitative exploration and moved on to quantitative assessment. This ordering was required as the constructs and items explored in the following survey were based on the meanings that employees gave to the concepts of leadership support and workplace happiness.

Both phases were linked but had separate analytical functions. The qualitative phase explored the experiences of employees with leadership strategies and workplace-happiness programmes, while the quantitative phase analysed the relationships between Leadership Strategies, Workplace Happiness, Organisational Performance and Employee Loyalty. Thematic findings were compared with the results of the structural model to arrive at integration. This enabled statistical relationships to be understood within the context of the organisation and avoided the use of qualitative accounts as a replacement for quantitative evidence.

➤ Qualitative Phase

Purposive sampling was used to recruit 10 employees from one Dubai-based healthcare-related organisation. Purposive sampling was employed because the participants had to be knowledgeable about leadership practices and workplace-happiness initiatives within the organisation to be able to give informed accounts. The goal was to provide analytical depth, not statistical representation. The participants held varied organisational roles and were able to articulate their experiences of leadership support, well-being initiatives, performance and loyalty within the organisational context.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. The use of a standard interview guide enabled the inclusion of all components of leadership strategy, workplace happiness, performance, loyalty and strategic alignment, while open-ended questioning enabled participants to explain experiences not anticipated in the interview guide. This balance was more appropriate than a fully structured interview, which might have limited the ability to gain context-specific insights, or an unstructured interview, which might have diminished the ability to compare across participants.

Interview data were coded in NVivo and analysed using thematic analysis. Familiarisation, coding, initial theme development, theme review, definition and reporting were carried out in six phases according to Braun and Clarke [19]. The analysis also followed their later guidance by interpreting themes instead of merely summarising frequently repeated statements [20]. Themes were developed based on the research question, and coding was responsive to participants' accounts. Themes were examined against coded extracts and the full dataset to provide coherence and meaningful distinction within the analysis. The analysis identified five themes related to leadership strategies, multidimensional well-being, organisational performance, loyalty and retention, and strategic alignment and implementation.

➤ Quantitative Phase

The quantitative phase obtained 149 valid employee responses using an anonymous survey. Four latent constructs, Leadership Strategies, Workplace Happiness, Organisational Performance and Employee Loyalty, were measured using

survey items. The constructs were specified based upon the research framework and were further refined using the results of the qualitative phase. The survey was therefore not an independent parallel instrument but rather an operationalisation of contextualised relationships through employees' accounts. The quantitative phase used purposive sampling and a structured online questionnaire administered through Microsoft Forms. A total of 150 survey responses were collected; following screening for completeness, 149 valid responses were retained for analysis. The questionnaire operationalised Leadership Strategies, Workplace Happiness, Organisational Performance and Employee Loyalty and was refined using insights generated during the preceding qualitative phase. Most construct items were measured on a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded before analysis. Demographic items captured gender, age, length of service, department, nationality and primary work location. The target sample of approximately 150 respondents was considered appropriate for the applied PLS-SEM analysis used in the study [21], [22].

Preliminary data screening and descriptive analysis were conducted using SPSS. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was then performed using SmartPLS 4 [21]-[23]. PLS-SEM was suitable as it was used to assess the measurement model and estimate the relationships between several latent constructs. It was also appropriate for the predictive and applied nature of the study. However, the approach was not able to resolve problems associated with cross-sectional self-report data; it only estimated the relationships within the given model rather than establishing causation.

The measurement model was evaluated prior to interpreting the structural paths. Indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted were examined to evaluate indicator reliability, internal consistency and convergent validity [21], [22]. The Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio were used to assess discriminant validity [21], [22]. Since Cronbach's alpha can be sensitive to the number of indicators retained, composite reliability and average variance extracted were considered in addition to Cronbach's alpha.

The structural model was assessed using collinearity statistics, path coefficients, bootstrapped significance tests, coefficients of determination and effect sizes [21], [22]. PLSpredict was used to examine out-of-sample predictive relevance. Bootstrapping was used to obtain standard errors, confidence intervals and significance estimates without assuming a normal sampling distribution [21]. Statistical significance was interpreted in conjunction with explanatory power, predictive evidence and measurement quality, rather than as a substitute for evidence of theoretical importance.

➤ *Mixed-Methods Integration*

The five qualitative themes were mapped against the four survey constructs and the three hypothesised relationships to facilitate integration. Convergence was detected when employee accounts and the results from the structural model showed similar relationships. Qualitative

evidence was also used to explain conditions that were not represented as separate quantitative constructs, such as communication, fairness, accessibility and departmental relevance. Divergence and measurement weaknesses were not suppressed. Most importantly, the qualitative importance of loyalty was differentiated from the weaker discriminant validity of the quantitative Employee Loyalty construct.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

The University of Lancashire BAHSS Ethics Review Panel approved this study under reference BAHSS2 01502. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained. All interview data were treated confidentially and pseudonymised, while all survey responses were anonymous. Participants could withdraw from the interview process until two weeks before pseudonymisation. Data were kept securely according to the University's data-protection requirements. The organisation was not identified due to the risk of reputational and participant identification issues within a single organisation.

IV. RESULTS

➤ *Qualitative Findings*

Five interconnected themes were identified from the qualitative analysis. Participants consistently linked workplace happiness with organisational conditions rather than treating it solely as a personal emotional state.

• *Theme: Leadership Strategies as Sources of Workplace Happiness*

All 10 participants linked leadership interventions to workplace happiness. Eight participants specifically identified healthcare benefits, salary-related support, housing assistance or Takaful coverage as major sources of security.

✓ *P006 Stated,*

"Healthcare is the #1 driver of my Work Happiness."

The value of material provision was thus primarily understood in terms of reducing health-related and financial uncertainty.

Material benefits were not seen as sufficient without relational support. Recognition, appreciation and fair treatment communicated that employees' contributions were valued.

✓ *P003 Stated,*

"The leadership strategies that have the strongest impact on my happiness are employee recognition programmes, healthcare support, and fair salary benefits."

Employees did not experience material security and psychological recognition as mutually exclusive.

Flexibility was presented as an alternative priority.

✓ *P0010 Stated,*

"Flexible scheduling has the greatest effect as it directly enhances the balance between work and life and helps to alleviate stress."

- *Theme: Workplace Happiness, Well-Being and Job Satisfaction*

All 10 participants linked workplace-happiness programmes to emotional balance, stress reduction or enhanced quality of life. Workplace happiness was not limited to immediate workplace conditions. Participants described it through psychological security, stability and the ability to cope with job demands.

Six participants explicitly connected organisational support with reduced work-related stress.

- ✓ *P004 Stated,*

"These programs have helped enhance my personal well-being because they help relieve some of the stress involved with supervising big teams at an operational level."

- ✓ *P008 Stated,*

"The programmes have enhanced my well-being primarily in terms of more financial and psychological security."

These accounts distinguished workplace happiness from temporary positive emotions by locating it in employees' capacity to deal with prolonged professional stress.

The above accounts were similar, but the interviews yielded limited negative evidence concerning situations in which organisational support did not positively affect well-being. The agreement therefore represented a consensus among the interviewees and not necessarily evidence that all employees received equivalent benefits.

- *Theme: Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance*

Participants linked workplace happiness to concentration, confidence, professional judgement, commitment and discretionary effort. Performance was not defined exclusively in terms of output or productivity.

- ✓ *P007 Stated,*

"I am happier and feel better supported at work, which enhances my performance, focus, confidence and lab judgement."

Participants also connected support with going beyond their formal role requirements.

- ✓ *P005 Stated,*

"Since feeling supported directly translates to performance, through the ability to concentrate, engage and go above and beyond, it is a primary driver of how well a performance will be."

The accounts suggested that employees perceived workplace happiness as supporting both job performance and discretionary contribution.

The evidence, however, concerned perceived performance. No independent productivity, service-quality or financial records were examined. The qualitative findings therefore identified the perceived mechanisms through which

participants believed happiness supported performance, but they did not demonstrate that workplace happiness caused better organisational outcomes.

- *Theme: Loyalty, Retention and Organisational Commitment*

Participants linked organisational investment in well-being with loyalty, commitment and intention to stay.

- ✓ *P004 Stated,*

"These programs have instilled in me an even greater dedication to the company as they show that the company is committed to investing in its staff members for the long run."

Loyalty was thus interpreted as a response to perceived organisational care rather than solely as a consequence of contractual or financial dependence.

Recognition also helped build employees' sense of attachment.

- ✓ *P007 Stated,*

"This has strengthened my loyalty to the company, because it shows the company values its employees for who they are."

However, none of the participants reported that workplace-happiness programmes reduced loyalty. The lack of negative accounts constrained the available evidence concerning variation in employee responses.

- *Theme: Strategic Alignment, Organisational Value and Implementation*

Four participants explicitly linked workplace-happiness programmes with Dubai's broader focus on happiness, quality of life, productivity and sustainability.

- ✓ *P003 Stated,*

"I believe the organisation's workplace happiness programmes align well with Dubai's vision of promoting happiness and well-being."

However, strategic alignment did not necessarily ensure implementation effectiveness. Four participants identified communication, accessibility, fairness or programme relevance as areas requiring improvement.

- ✓ *P001 Stated,*

"The communication should be enhanced as currently some staff members do not know about some programmes/benefits and thereby decrease the participation."

- ✓ *P003 Stated,*

"However, one thing I dislike is that sometimes not all employees receive equal opportunities to participate or benefit from certain activities."

- ✓ *P006 Stated,*

"The thing that I don't like is that some programmes are too general. For instance, an activity that makes people generally happy, but not necessarily an activity that helps manage the stress of work in the Clinical. I think that the

organisation should be done better by talking to other departments before developing programmes.”

Employees therefore distinguished support for workplace happiness as an organisational principle from satisfaction with specific initiatives.

➤ Survey Demographics

Of the 149 valid survey respondents, 76 (51.0%) were male, 62 (41.6%) were female and 11 (7.4%) preferred not to state their gender. The largest age group was 35–44 years ($n = 59$, 39.6%), followed by 25–34 years ($n = 52$, 34.9%). Length of service was less than one year for 23 respondents (15.4%), one to three years for 48 (32.2%), four to six years for 44 (29.5%) and seven or more years for 34 (22.8%). Respondents represented Administration (21.5%), Human Resources (20.1%), Customer Service (16.1%), Operations (12.8%), Finance (11.4%), IT (6.7%) and other functions (11.4%). The sample was also multinational: 28.9% were Emirati, 27.5% Asian, 25.5% other Arab, 10.1% other GCC nationals, 2.0% European, 3.4% other nationalities and 2.7% preferred not to disclose nationality. Most respondents worked primarily in Dubai (65.8%), with 15.4% each in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah and 3.4% in other Emirates.

➤ Measurement-Model Results

Three reverse-coded indicators, WH1R, WH4R and EL3R, had loadings below the required level and were

removed during model refinement. The final model consisted of six Leadership Strategies indicators, four Workplace Happiness indicators, four Organisational Performance indicators and two Employee Loyalty indicators. The retained indicators had loadings above the recommended value.

The internal consistency and convergent validity of Leadership Strategies, Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance were satisfactory. Employee Loyalty produced a low Cronbach's alpha of 0.558 after the removal of one reverse-coded indicator, although its composite reliability and average variance extracted were acceptable. The construct was therefore retained cautiously with only two indicators as shown in Table 1. The Fornell–Larcker criterion was used to assess discriminant validity and was satisfied because the square root of each construct's average variance extracted was higher than its correlations with the other constructs. The heterotrait–monotrait assessment produced a less favourable result. The ratios between Workplace Happiness and Employee Loyalty and between Organisational Performance and Employee Loyalty were 0.942 and 1.039, respectively. Their confidence intervals also contained values greater than 1.00. These results indicated conceptual overlap involving Employee Loyalty and limited the strength of the conclusions that could be drawn from that construct.

Table 1 Reliability and Convergent-Validity Results

Construct	Reliability and Validity			
	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted	Assessment
Leadership Strategies	0.853	0.891	0.578	Acceptable
Workplace Happiness	0.835	0.890	0.670	Acceptable
Organisational Performance	0.847	0.897	0.686	Acceptable
Employee Loyalty	0.558	0.760	0.546	Retained with caution

➤ Structural-Model Results

The structural estimates were not compromised by collinearity because all inner variance inflation factor values were 1.000 as shown in Table 2. All three hypothesised relationships were positive and statistically significant when tested through bootstrapping. Leadership Strategies were positively associated with Workplace Happiness, supporting

H1. Workplace Happiness was positively associated with perceived Organisational Performance, supporting H2. Workplace Happiness was also positively associated with Employee Loyalty, supporting H3, although the measurement limitations affecting Employee Loyalty required this result to be interpreted more cautiously than H1 and H2.

Table 2 Hypothesis-Testing Results

Hypothesis	Structural relationship	Path coefficient	t-value	p-value	Confidence interval	Decision
H1	Leadership Strategies to Workplace Happiness	0.757	17.725	<0.001	0.651–0.826	Supported
H2	Workplace Happiness to Organisational Performance	0.693	14.203	<0.001	0.586–0.779	Supported
H3	Workplace Happiness to Employee Loyalty	0.731	16.202	<0.001	0.630–0.809	Supported with measurement caution

The final measurement and structural model retained the indicators and hypothesised paths presented in Fig. 2.

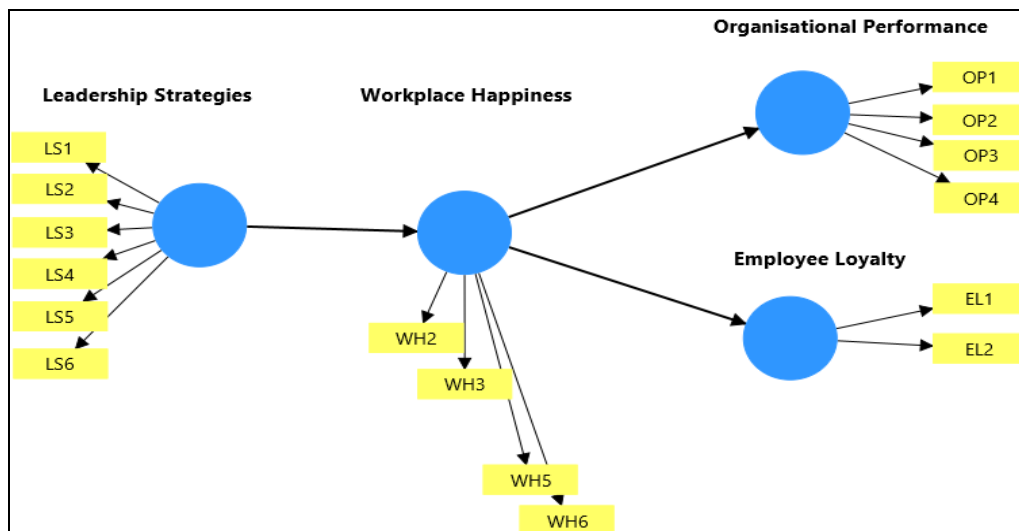


Fig 2 Final PLS-SEM Measurement and Structural Model Specification

Leadership Strategies explained 57.3% of the variance in Workplace Happiness. Workplace Happiness explained 48.0% of the variance in Organisational Performance and 53.5% of the variance in Employee Loyalty as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Explanatory Power of the Structural Model

Endogenous construct	Coefficient of determination	Interpretation
Workplace Happiness	0.573	Moderate
Organisational Performance	0.480	Moderate
Employee Loyalty	0.535	Moderate

The effect sizes were 1.340 for Leadership Strategies to Workplace Happiness, 0.922 for Workplace Happiness to Organisational Performance and 1.150 for Workplace Happiness to Employee Loyalty. All were classified as large. Positive Q²predict values demonstrated predictive relevance for the retained indicators. Comparisons with the linear-model benchmark were consistently favourable for Workplace Happiness but mixed for Organisational Performance and Employee Loyalty. The model therefore demonstrated stronger out-of-sample predictive performance for Workplace Happiness than for the two organisational outcomes.

➤ Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

The qualitative and quantitative phases converged on the central relationships but contributed different forms of evidence as shown in Table 4. The structural model established the strength and statistical significance of the specified associations, while the qualitative findings identified the organisational meanings and implementation conditions underlying them.

Table 4 Integrated Findings

Qualitative evidence	Quantitative evidence	Integrated inference
Material security, recognition, flexibility and support were associated with happiness	Leadership Strategies were positively associated with Workplace Happiness	Leadership support combined material and relational provision
Happiness was linked with concentration, confidence, judgement and discretionary effort	Workplace Happiness was positively associated with Organisational Performance	Happiness was associated with perceived performance through cognitive and motivational mechanisms
Organisational care was linked with commitment and intention to remain	Workplace Happiness was positively associated with Employee Loyalty	Loyalty was consistent with reciprocity, but quantitative measurement weakness limited the inference
Communication, fairness, accessibility and departmental relevance affected programme experience	These conditions were not modelled as separate constructs	Programme existence alone did not establish implementation effectiveness
Workplace happiness was perceived as aligned with Dubai's well-being orientation	Strategic alignment was not tested as a latent construct	Alignment represented contextual qualitative evidence rather than a statistically tested relationship

The integrated evidence supported the three hypothesised relationships while qualifying their interpretation. H1 and H2 received coherent qualitative and quantitatively robust support. H3 also received convergent

support, but its statistical interpretation remained provisional because Employee Loyalty lacked clear discriminant separation from Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance.

V. DISCUSSIONS

➤ *Leadership Strategies and Workplace Happiness*

The results show that there is a significant positive correlation between Leadership Strategies and Workplace Happiness, which is in favor of H1. Leadership strategies in this research were a wider organisational-support set up that included material provision, such as healthcare, financial and welfare provision, along with relational aspects, such as recognition, appreciation, flexibility and psychological support. The quantitative relationship must thus be seen as a reaction of the employees to the broader leadership context and not to any personal gain.

This finding is in line with Chi et al. [1] who found a relationship between transformational leadership, job satisfaction and performance besides demonstrating that financial and non-financial rewards do not work in a consistent manner. The current results also do not suggest that the more financial benefits one has, the happier he or she will be at the workplace. Rather, the qualitative data indicated that material provision gained value partially due to the fact that the employees perceived it as a sense of security and organisational concern. The recognition and supportive treatment was complementary and not substitutive of material security.

This interpretation is furthered by the findings that indicate that implementation quality is a condition that is relevant. Experience of leadership-led programmes was influenced by communication, fairness, accessibility and departmental relevance. Leadership strategies can thus be made formal and not felt to be equally supportive to every employee. The substantive implication of H1 is consequently not simply that leadership matters, but that leadership support is most strongly experienced where material and relational provisions are implemented credibly and fairly.

➤ *Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance*

H2 was supported as well with Workplace Happiness having a positive relationship with perceived Organisational Performance. The outcome shows that workplace happiness was related to more than personal satisfaction of the employees. Workers who reported to be happier in the workplace also reported to be having better performance results in work.

The result is in line with Krekel et al. [3], who related employee well-being to productivity and firm performance, and Salas-Vallina et al. [10], who related positive leadership conditions to resilience and performance. The qualitative results give additional description of this association. Participants associated workplace happiness with concentration, confidence, motivation, professional judgement, quality of work and readiness to go the extra mile in their job beyond what the job description mandates.

The organisational environment that is specific to healthcare is especially applicable to this interpretation since the performance cannot be diminished to the volume of output. Other aspects of performance that may be meaningful

are reliability, judgement, responsiveness and quality of contribution. The workplace happiness can therefore be viewed as an organisational resource which can contribute to the psychological and motivational needs in order to work effectively.

However, the research gauged perceived organisational performance as opposed to measuring organisational performance separately. There were no audited financial performance, productivity records or records of service-quality. The positive correlation thus cannot be considered as a result that workplace-happiness programs led to better organisational performance.

➤ *Workplace Happiness and Employee Loyalty*

H3 found a positive correlation between Workplace Happiness and Employee Loyalty. Qualitatively, employees explained organisational investment in well-being as an indicator that they were appreciated and this was linked to commitment and desire to stay. This meaning can be reconciled with the concept of reciprocity and social-exchange reasoning [12], [13]: positive treatment of organisations can create more attachment when employees perceive the treatment as an organisational care.

This finding is also congruent with the studies that have found a relationship between employee well-being and commitment and retention-related outcomes [3], [9]. But, loyalty of employees cannot be compared to real retention of employees. The current research evaluated the perceptions of the employees on the issue of loyalty, attachment and intention to stay as opposed to the actual retention behaviour.

More to the point, H3 needs more statistical caution as compared to H1 and H2. Employee Loyalty only had two indicators, the alpha of Cronbach was 0.558 and HTMT values showed that it was not separated enough with Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance. The major structural route does not however do away with the weakness of measurement-model. The qualitative data prove loyalty to be a significant employee experience, but the quantitative estimate must be regarded as tentative until the construct is measured with a more robust and well-differentiated measurement scale.

VI. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

➤ *Theoretical Implications*

The main theoretical contribution is the contextual synthesis of the existing perspectives as opposed to creating a new theory. PERMA, Spillover Theory and Reciprocity Theory shed light on various aspects of the results. The multidimensional approach to the concept of workplace happiness is supported by PERMA [7] since the participants did not only identify happiness with positive emotion, but also with relationships, recognition, engagement, security, quality of life and the ability to perform effectively. The results however add an organisational qualification to individual-based concept of flourishing: material security, leadership

support, fairness and programme accessibility were also found to be important to positive workplace experience.

The Spillover Theory [15], [16] is echoed in the reports by employees that relate organisational support and reduction of stress, emotional security, quality of work-life and well-being in general. The organisational resources were thus felt to be more than the performance of the tasks at hand.

The relationship between workplace happiness and employee loyalty can be explained by the reciprocity and social-exchange perspectives [12], [13]. The organisational investment in well-being was perceived by the employees as a sign of care and related to commitment and desire to stay. Nevertheless, the qualitative results show that the concept of reciprocity was conditional: the organisational support was more valuable when it was viewed as genuine, available, equitable and pertinent.

Another contribution is in relation to the correlation between material and non-material leadership strategies. Instead of being entirely distinct processes, the results show that employees can perceive them as a whole system of organisational support. Relational care can be conveyed through material benefits and recognition and supportive treatment can reinforce the interpretation of material provision by the employees.

➤ *Practical Implications*

The practical implication is that workplace happiness ought to be addressed as an organisational state as opposed to a set of well-being activities that are isolated. The focus of leadership should not be on the availability of the programmes but the real experience of material security, recognition, flexibility, support and fairness by the employees.

Particular attention should be paid to communication, accessibility and relevance to the department. Unless employees are aware of the programmes, they cannot take full advantage of them as they cannot access them or find them irrelevant to their work pressures. Organisations ought to not only assess the level of participation, but also the level of awareness of the employees, fair access and perceived relevance of various organisational functions.

The results also indicate that workplace happiness may be incorporated in the overall performance and workforce-stability strategies. Workers related good working experiences to focus, motivation, judgement, quality of work and discretionary input. This offers a viable rationale as to why leadership and human-resource functions should consider the well-being of employees and organisational performance as complementary, as opposed to competitive, concerns.

➤ *Limitations and Future Research*

This study has a number of limitations. First, it analysed one Dubai-based healthcare-related organisation; thus, the results are contextual and cannot be automatically extrapolated to other healthcare organisations, the UAE workforce or the Arabian Gulf, in general.

Second, the qualitative stage involved 10 purposely chosen participants, who were well versed with workplace-happiness programs, to give informed descriptions. This generated analytical richness but not representative of the population. The low level of awareness of employees of the existing programmes might have resulted in them being less apparent in the qualitative evidence, despite the level of limited awareness being found to be an implementation problem.

Third, the quantitative analysis was done using 149 self-reported survey responses. Leadership practices, employee happiness, organisational performance and loyalty are thus perceptions of the employees but not organisational outcomes as it were. Self-reporting can bring about response tendencies, social-desirability effects or common-method variance. Even though preliminary testing did not suggest that there was severe common-method bias, these types of procedures cannot rule that out.

Fourth, it was a cross-sectional study. The structural relationships are associations that are seen within the same broad period and they are not able to determine either temporal or experimental causality. The statements about the effects of the leadership strategies should be, in turn, viewed in the context of the observational mixed-methods design.

Fifth, organisational performance was measured using perceived work outcomes as opposed to audited financial measures, absenteeism rates, measures of service-quality or productivity recorded independently. The research thus is not able to show a direct economic payoff of workplace-happiness programs.

Lastly, there was a significant limitation in measurement of the Employee Loyalty construct. After deleting a poorly-performing reverse-coded item, two indicators were left. Its Cronbachs alpha is rather small, and results of HTMT are problematic, which means that it does not separate the discriminants with Workplace Happiness and Organisational Performance. Inferences made on Employee Loyalty should thus be cautiously made as compared to the other constructs. These are the limitations that are pointed out in the thesis.

The model needs to be tested in future studies in various organisations and industries in Dubai and other Emirates, longitudinal designs should be used to determine temporal precedence, integrate perceptions of employees with objective organisational indicators, and a more holistic independently validated scale of loyalty should be used. Communication quality, procedural fairness, programme accessibility and departmental fit are other conditions that should be tested more systematically in future studies as possible conditions influencing the relationship between organisational well-being initiatives and workplace happiness.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships between leadership strategies, workplace happiness and organisational outcomes in a Dubai-based healthcare-related organisation

using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. The integrated evidence indicates that leadership strategies were positively associated with workplace happiness, and workplace happiness was positively associated with perceived organisational performance. Workplace happiness was also positively associated with employee loyalty, although measurement limitations require greater caution when interpreting this relationship.

The research demonstrates that the leadership support cannot be narrowed down to either financial support or interpersonal leadership behaviour. The material security, healthcare and welfare support and recognition, appreciation, flexibility and psychological support were all interrelated in the organisational care of employees. Happiness at the workplace was also multidimensional and it included well-being, job satisfaction, less stress, security, positive relationships and ability to perform effectively at work.

The results also show that the existence of programmes does not determine the effectiveness. The communication, fairness, accessibility and departmental relevance had an impact on how the organisational well-being initiatives were experienced by the employees. The value of the study is thus to conceptualise the idea of workplace happiness as a situational organisational resource whose value is created through the interplay between the leadership support, employee experience and the quality of implementation. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the evidence, which is self-reported and based on one organisation, these relationships can be interpreted as context-specific relationships, but not causal effects.

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