

Chapter 5

Selected Happiness–Increasing Interventions for Tourism and Hospitality Workers

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes evidence-based happiness techniques that are highly relevant for workers in the tourism and hospitality industries. Although happiness creates success for many stakeholders, there is limited evidence on how to increase the happiness of workers in these industries as the focus has predominantly been on the happiness of the customers. The authors fill this gap in the literature by presenting three proven interventions that are particularly relevant to these sectors: job crafting, acts of kindness, and gratitude exercises. The chapter explains what these concepts are and how they work. It also provides specific examples of how they can be implemented into tourism and hospitality organisations.

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INTRODUCTION

Research has conclusively demonstrated that a happy workforce is associated with a plethora of relevant organisational outcomes, including organisational profit (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). For example, positive psychological well-being of employees has been shown to be associated with reduced turnover intentions and increased customer loyalty – both of which impact strongly on an organisation's bottom line (e.g., Amin & Akbar, 2013; Gordon et al., 2019; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; O'Neill & Davis, 2011). In fact, not only do the benefits of employee well-being positively impact individuals (employees, customers, and colleagues) and the business, but they have even been shown to extend out to the wider society (see Zhang et al., 2014). However, Chia and Chu (2016) note that, despite Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener's seminal findings which indicate that happiness creates success for many stakeholders, there is limited evidence on how to increase the happiness of tourism and hospitality workers. For example, happiness of tourism and hospitality workers does not seem a common factor in the study of turnover intentions – the conventional antecedents tend to be job satisfaction, organisational commitment, emotional exhaustion, or perceived supervisor or organisational support (Park & Min, 2020). Indeed, for industries that focus on making guests feel welcome and happy, there is a surprising lack of research into accomplishing the same for its workers (Melief et al., 2020).

This conceptual chapter aims to bridge that gap by introducing three selected and well-established concepts that are particularly suitable for the context of tourism and hospitality workers. With so many organisations being negatively impacted by the pandemic, this seems even more pertinent now. The three concepts are job crafting, acts of kindness, and gratitude exercises. The focus of this chapter on research with practical application has lent itself to easy and accessible interventions that may hopefully enable a quicker recovery of these industries. The interventions selected all focus on the individual effort each employee can do, and therefore are closely aligned with what is commonly labelled as “intentional activity” – engaging in specific actions that would otherwise not occur and require a degree of effort. Intentional activities are one very important factor in extending people's long-term happiness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Along with explanations of these interventions, practical examples of how they can be applied in the tourism and hospitality sectors are provided.

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