

## **The Correlation of Organizational Factors and University Lecturers' Happiness**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

Happy employees are more likely to produce better performance. An employee will spend almost half a day at work. This study was conducted to determine the association between an organization and the happiness of Malaysian public university lecturers and to identify the most significant organizational factors for lecturers' happiness in Malaysian public universities. A descriptive survey was conducted involving 361 respondents who were selected based on simple random sampling. The relationship between organizational factors and lecturer happiness was analyzed using the Pearson correlation method. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the most significant organizational factors on lecturer happiness. The results of the study showed that the work environment had a high correlation relationship and a clear relationship with happiness in the workplace, with a Pearson correlation value of  $r = 0.823$ . In contrast, factors that influenced the happiness of lecturers in all categories combined contributed 83% to lecturer happiness in the workplace with a value of R square of 0.833. The work environment was also shown as the most dominant factor in multiple regression analysis, with a standardized coefficient value of 0.317. This study can be used as a

guide by the Ministry of Public University in Malaysia and other organizations, mainly to ensure that the happiness of the organization should be taken into account at all times to ensure that lecturers can perform their duties well.

**Keywords:** happiness, workplace, work environment, workspace

## **Introduction**

Happiness at the workplace is derived from three factors (extrinsic, intrinsic, and work-life) which is a significant factor that influences employee satisfaction and performance as well. The choice of workplace or the profession is due to flexibility of culture and happy environment of the workplace. This is because employees will spend about eight hours or even more in the workplace, and it will influence their stability of mood during the day.

According to Campbell Quick et al. (2010), happiness in the workplace refers to Positive Organisational behavior (POB), which is an element in the workplace that can affect employee happiness and positively influences employees' happiness. Happiness in the workplace refers to conceptual behaviors that influence positive thinking and relationships with co-workers and employers that can affect a person's life (Biswas-Diener, 2008; Fisher, 2010; Parackal, 2016). Many factors in the workplace influence employee happiness, such as leadership, job specification, workload, culture and environment, and many more; however, the factors of happiness at the workplace are debatable (Rao et al., 2018).

### ***Problem Statement***

As an employee, lecturers play an essential role in the university's success. Happiness in the workplace refers to the employees' satisfaction with work and life (Frieda et al., 2018). Lecturers have several job specifications such as research and publication, teaching and learning, consultation, administration, and community service to ensure their key performance indicator (KPI) set by the university has been achieved. Therefore, the employees who feel happy in the workplace tend to be more focused on working and increasing their productivity. At the same time, the company's effectiveness depends on the quality of the employees, which includes their satisfaction, happiness, stress, and depression. This can be achieved if every employee has happiness in the workplace.

According to Kamarudin and Taat (2020), lecturers who are dissatisfied with the teaching and professional development process will abandon their positions. This is because some lecturers cannot manage too much stress and workload at one time, especially when they have no support system in their work environment. Based on a study conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO), lecturers are unhappy if they do not have knowledge that aligns with their area of expertise. Therefore, it is important for organizations to provide the best package of career paths for lecturers to expand their competency.

In the university, many factors affect the lecturers' happiness, such as the employee status, income, relationships with colleagues, and work activities (Wesarat et al., 2015). Besides, Roy and Konwar (2020) highlighted in their study the organizational factor which influences a lecturer's happiness such as types of training provided, leadership, income, skills, relationship with a colleague and career development provided. Meanwhile, Isa and Palpanadan (2020) found that workload, work environment, income, leadership, and job specification impact employee happiness at the workplace. Agreeing with that, Mohamed Makhbul (2020) added that leadership style and commitment in the workplace also have an influence on happiness at the workplace.

Isa and Kadir@ Shahr (2021) found that besides job specification, administration workload such as holding a position like the head of the department, deputy dean, dean, and association could also burden lecturers. According to Munyengabe et al. (2017), financial management, workplace environment, motivation, and discipline in the workplace will affect lecturers' happiness; meanwhile, leaders who are not concerned with their subordinates will affect lecturers' happiness (Firman et al., 2021). Lecturers who are unhappy at work are likely to be lazy and unmotivated in their professions. In the long term, it will also affect lecturers' stress, depression and health (Roberts et al., 2019).

According to a survey conducted by JobStreet.com (2021), factors such as the company's location, the quality of the workplace, and the company's image are all important factors that contribute to employee job satisfaction. In fact, some Malaysians state that they feel happier in the work environment than at their home. From another point of view, Wang et al. (2019) stated that the spiritual aspect in organizational management relies on leadership, which influences the organization's environment.

The spiritual aspect of an organizational management can depend on the organizational leadership that can influence the environment. Those findings showed a strong link between organizational factors and lecturer happiness. Agreeing with that, Hui and Aye (2018) stated that it is important to create an ergonomic work environment as it can help reduce stress problems in the organization. According to de Macêdo et al. (2020), ergonomics not only refers to safety and healthy employee but can also encourage organizational competitiveness. Therefore, this research tries to determine the relationship between university factors and lecturer happiness and which organization factor significantly impacts lecturers' happiness in the university.

## **Organizational Factor and Employee Happiness in Workplace**

According to Veenhoven (2020), happiness is one of the elements that influences the quality of life. There are three aspects of life that must be considered: the ability to be happy, the ability to survive, and life satisfaction (Wesarat et al., 2018). A healthy work environment, organizational atmosphere, and relationships with colleagues are all elements that influence lecturers' pleasure at the workplace (Arora, 2020). The lecturer is happy when the teaching environment is pleasant, and the students are happy (Hernik and Jaworska, 2018). Being delighting in the workplace is a great condition because the individual will become more knowledgeable, manageable, and influential while performing their job, allowing the organization to fulfill its objectives.

Two ways to display happiness at work are controlling happy emotions and engaging in positive activities. Academic professionals or individuals who work in universities with lecturers have a variety of responsibilities, including researchers, lecturers, supervisors, and administrators (Wong and Chiu, 2019). The number of dissatisfied lecturers and university administrative employees has increased because of the changes in higher education's learning system. According to Isa and Palpanadan (2020a), one of the characteristics that make lecturers happy at work is their ability to manage stress, such as whether or not they can finish a particular task. On the other hand, happiness is impossible to achieve at the workplace due to various causes such as high workload, inadequate leadership, ad hoc organizational management, unclear job, and lack of work-life balance (Bilginoğlu and Yozgat, 2018).

As most of the lecturer's time is spent accomplishing given responsibilities, an ergonomic work environment and a continuous workload might make lecturers unhappy (Z.

M. Makhbul and Hasun, 2010). Workplace conditions such as poor ventilation, gloomy settings, noise pollution, cramped workspaces, and excessively hot or cold temperatures have a negative impact on lecturers' moods and productivity (Ahmad et al., 2020). Lecturers will be distracted by the displeased situation and thus, are more likely to be dissatisfied with their surroundings. The organizational climate plays a part in achieving happiness because lecturers would not be pleased if they worked for an autocratic leader (Abdullahi et al., 2020).

According to Boo et al. (2016), employees with a lot of property are happy. A stable income is significant to one's happiness. Many resources reported that wealthier individuals are happier in their life (Boyce et al., 2010; Kluger, 2013; Mogilner et al., 2018; Oishi et al., 2020). Employees are a resource for doing tasks that help the company achieve its objectives. As a result, it is vital for an individual working in an organization to do positive things and think positively to obtain pleasure in the workplace (Biswas-Diener and Dean, 2007).

The leader's autocratic style makes the lecturer feel compelled to complete the work. However, a good leader should be democratic for the lecturers to be able to perform the job more generously. Leaders must always be ready for any crisis that may arise in the workplace (Isa et al., 2019). A competent leader is one who can envision the direction of the organization. An exceptional and inventive leader in the organization has good character, according to a study conducted by Isa et al. (2019). The organization will not survive longer if the leader frequently scolds and insult their subordinates. One of the hallmarks of a good leader is that they are a visionary.

## **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The happiness of lecturers at a Malaysian public university was studied in relation to workload, work environment, income, leadership, and job specifications. The formation framework research includes two variables: an independent variable (organizational factor) and a dependent variable (lecturer happiness). This was translated into Figure 1.

The construction of the conceptual framework in this research is based on past studies and is also supported by Seligman's pre-selected theory. According to the literature review, organizational factors correlate with lecturer happiness. Based on various factors identified through past studies and the theory of happiness (Seligman, 2002), a study framework is constructed in parallel with the hypothesis research.

According to Veenhoven (2009), supported by Wahab (2022), happiness is a quality of life subjective for individuals because it is a peak of satisfaction. Happiness refers to the satisfaction in life for an individual. They will be satisfied if they are able to control their stress and achieve their goal. In the theory of Seligman, happiness for each individual is different. Similarly, the theory of life engagement is also related to socializing in the workplace. Each individual has their own way of ensuring a happy environment.

A study by Nanda et al. (2020) and Berg and Seeber (2018) says that extreme workload has been caused by high turnover of work. According to Azlan et al. (2020) and Christian et al. (2020), the use of high technology to improve work will result in an increased employee burden. This is also supported by Isa et al. (2019), who discovered that being overburdened with work and not having time for themselves can irritate their psychology. However, according to Isa et al. (2019), pressure is also necessary for lecturers to be more committed to carrying out tasks.

The work environment and workspace are also factors that can affect the happiness of the lecturer. According to Fouché et al. (2017), a good relationship between colleagues is an example of a good work environment supported by Narasuci et al. (2018). This contradicts Kidd and Murray (2020), who says a changing work environment makes lecturers unhappy. In a study conducted by Ahmad and Jameel (2018), there was a positive relationship between income and the well-being of the lecturer's life. To support the statement, Washington (2019) asserted that income is the main factor in making a lecturer happy and that more income will make a lecturer happier.

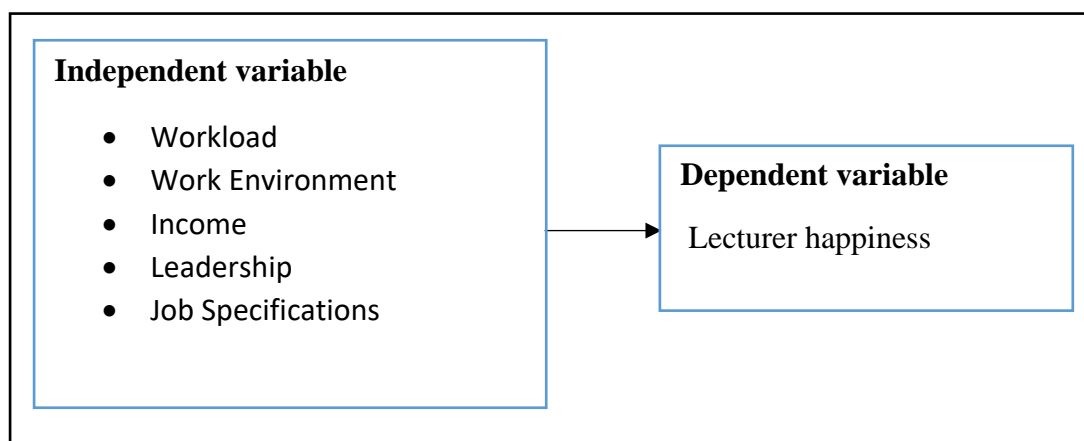
Basically, in employee happiness, a leader plays an important role because every decision must be agreed upon by subordinates (Zakaria et al., 2021). Isa et al. (2019) state that a leader must make sure each scope and instructions comply with the job scope of the lecturers and every decision must be made by mutual consent (Beran, 2019). Tanwar (2019) claims that an autocratic leader will cause lecturers to be unhappy. One leader should intelligently control and administer the organization to ensure organizational goals are accomplished. This is because organizational leadership has an impact on employee happiness (Cherkowski (2018); Na-nan et al., 2017).

As stated by Rudman (2020), job specification is a factor affecting the happiness of the lecturers. A job specification is a task that has been assigned by the organization to employees. Hee et al. (2019) state that lecturers who are happy with their job are the factors contributing to their job achievement. Opinions of Goo (2014) state that employees will be happy if they have significant job scope. Due to job specification factors, lecturers should be wise to control their stress to maintain their happiness.

A research framework is developed based on theory and studies that previous researchers have already performed. Seligman's (2002) theory was used to develop the conceptual framework of this study. According to Froh (2004), the theory of happiness is usually linked to the theory of psychology, which has something to do with the quality of human experience. Seligman (2002) explains how humans control psychology to make life more satisfying and increase happiness in individuals. The theory of happiness coincides with the theory of Maslow, who states that having a good experience is exhilarating and will cause the individual to be happy.

Based on research by Sheldon et al. (2013), the definition of happiness encompasses several important aspects, such as positive thinking, satisfaction in life, and meaningful life (Diener et al., 2010). In Engaged Life (Relationships), family and relationships are individual factors in achieving happiness. According to a study by Diener et al. (1999), people who marry are happier than those who have never married or have divorced. This is supported by Lyubomirsky et al. (2005). Marriage is the key to a happy life. Happy individuals will also affect the environment in which they live because they will have friends and acquaintances on whom they can rely (Papakostas, 2020).

Based on research let go by Diener and Tay (2017) and supported by the theory of happiness (Seligman et al., 2002), organizational factors that have been generated are workload, work environment, income, leadership, and job specifications. Pleasure, relationships, and virtues are all grouped together in Seligman's (2002) theory. The connection that can be made between theories and past studies is for workloads and job specifications factors. Work represents a theory of pleasure. Using welfare theory, environmental and workspace factors influence income and compensation. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of organizational factors that affects lecturers' happiness in Malaysian public universities.



**Figure 1:** *Conceptual Framework of Factors Influencing the Happiness of Lecturers in Public University in Malaysia*

## Methodology

This survey involved 361 lecturers at Malaysian public universities. Using the random sampling method, a set of questionnaires was used as research instruments. The questionnaire has three sections which are A=demographic, B= measurement of organizational factors towards lecturer happiness, and C= to measure lecturer happiness. Section B and C using four Likert Scale which is 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree. This section uses the Academician Happiness Index (MAHI) instrument developed by Isa and Palpanadan (2020a). Five factors for organizational happiness have been measured in this section: workload, work environment, income, leadership, and job specifications. All 15 items in this section are positive. This section investigates the relationship between organizational factors (workload, work environment, income, leadership, and job specifications) and the happiness of lecturers in Malaysian public universities.

Section B of the questionnaire measures the organizational factors influencing the happiness of lecturers in Malaysian public universities. A Pearson correlation analysis is used for answering research questions. The value of the correlation coefficient (r) is used to measure the strength of the relationship between factors within an organization and the happiness of the lecturer. According to Guilford's Rule of Thumbs, there are five stages of strengths to integrate a relationship correlation between the enabler and the change (Guilford, 1950), as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Level of strength relationship according to coefficient correlation*

Range	Level of Strength Relationship
< 0.20	Very low correlation, relationships are low
0.20 - 0.40	Low correlation but there is a connection
0.41 - 0.71	Moderate correlation, there is a connection
0.71 - 0.90	High correlation, a clear relationship
0 > 0.91	Very high correlation, a connection which is strong

For section C, the inference method was used using multiple regression analysis. Multiple analysis methods were used to determine the most significant organizational factors

affecting lecturer happiness. Each of the characteristics found in the organizational factors will be analyzed for its effect on the happiness of the lecturers.

The questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS 24.0 version. Section A for the demographic questionnaire was analyzed descriptively; meanwhile, Section B and C were analyzed inferentially. For the relationship between organizational factors, this study used Correlation Pearson and Multiple Regression Analysis to identify which organizational factor has a significant impact on lecturers' happiness in the university. The pilot test has been conducted to measure the reliability of the instrument. The result of Cronbach Alpha is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Result of Cronbach Alpha**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Organizational Factor	0.758
Lecturer Happiness	0.868

## Findings and Discussion

### Section A: Demography

The findings show that more than half respondents (n=207, 57.3%) were women and the rest (n=154, 42.7%) are men were involved in this study. Most of the respondents (n=149, 40%) at the range of age 41 to 50 years old, followed by the years of 31 to 40 years old (n=143, 39.1%) and in the range of 51 to 60 years (n=68, 18.9%). Only 0.9% (n=3) of the respondents were under 30 years old. This finding indirectly shows that most Malaysian lecturers are mature enough and have good physical and mental capabilities.

**Table 3: Respondents' Demographic Details**

Item	Frequency (n)	Percentage (100%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	154	42.7
Female	207	57.3
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 30 years old	3	0.9
31 - 40 years old	143	39.1
41 - 50 years old	149	40.1
51 - 60 years old	68	18.8
More than 60 years old	0	0
<b>Period of service</b>		
Less than ten years	120	34.5
11 - 20 years	144	40.5
21 - 30 years	33	22.4
More than 30 years	8	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The analysis showed that the majority of the respondents (n=144, 40.5%) has served for 11 to 20 years at the university, followed by the respondents (n=120, 34.5%) who served

less than ten years and some of them (n=33, 22.4%) has served for 21 to 30 years old. Only a small number of respondents (=8, 2.5%) have served more than 30 years old at the university. This finding assumes that most respondents really understand the University's mission, vision, and goals. This means there are no significant issues for the lecturer to work on the task given to achieve the university's Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Summary of demographic respondent analysis as shown in Table 3.

Section B: Determining the relationship between the organization with the happiness of Malaysian public university lecturers.

The Pearson correlation coefficient analysis reveals that the organization factor has a relationship with lecturer happiness with a significance of 0.01. The relationship of all five organizational factors, which are workload, have a correlation value of 0.815; work environment, with a correlation value of 0.823; income, with a correlation value of 0.730; leadership, has a correlation value of 0.673; and job specifications have a correlation value of 0.697 against lecturer happiness was shown in Table 4. According to the study, the environmental factor has the strongest relationship with the lecturer's happiness.

**Table 4:** *Schedule of Pearson Correlation*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Correlation Value</b>	<b>Significant Level</b>	<b>Relationship Level</b>
Work Environment	0.823	0.000	High correlation, clear relationship
Workload	0.815	0.000	High correlation, clear relationship
Income	0.730	0.000	High correlation, clear relationship
Job Specifications	0.697	0.000	Moderate correlation, there is relationship
Leadership	0.673	0.000	Moderate correlation, there is relationship

Note: \*\* significant at a level of 0.01

The analysis reveals a high correlation and a clear relationship between workload, work environment, and income. At the same time, factors like leadership and job specifications are found to have a moderate correlation and still have a relationship. The work environment has the highest correlation, which is 0.823, with a significant level of 0.000. Based on Table 5, the results show a significant relationship between all constructs available in organizational factors. Workload has a correlation value of  $r = 0.815$  (0.000), work environment has a correlation value of  $r = 0.823$  (0.000), income has a correlation value of  $r = 0.730$  (0.000), leadership has a correlation value of  $r = 0.673$  (0.000), and job specifications have a correlation value of  $r = 0.673$  (0.000). All of them have a correlation value of less than 0.9.

Section C: Determining the most significant organizational factors for lecturers in Malaysian public universities

This section identifies the most significant organizational factors that have impact on lecturer happiness (workload, work environment, income, leadership, and job specifications). The test from multiple regression analyses was used to determine the role and effect of the five-factor organization on happiness among lecturers in a Malaysian public university.



**Table 5: Results of Correlation Analysis**

<b>Correlations</b>		<b>happiness</b>
	Pearson Correlation	1
happiness	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	361
	Pearson Correlation	.815 **
Workload	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	361
	Pearson Correlation	.823 **
Work environment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	361
	Pearson Correlation	.730 **
Income	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	361
	Pearson Correlation	.673 **
Leadership	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	361
	Pearson Correlation	.697 **
Job specification	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	361

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings, as shown in Table 6, states that the factors of the work environment have significant relationships and impacts on the happiness of lecturers at Malaysian universities, with a significant value of 0.00. In the result analysis, the most dominant factor is the work environment, with a standardized coefficient value of 0.317. The value of R Square is 0.833. This gives a significant factor, contributing to happiness as a lecturer at a public university. The Malaysian public has as much as 83%. The value of R Square shows a high effect against variables.

According to Pearson Correlation Analysis, work environment factors have the highest correlation relationship. This is supported by the study of multiple regression analysis, which found that work environment factors are the factors with the most significant influence on the happiness of lecturers in Malaysian public universities. This coincides with a study conducted by Mustafa et al. (2020), who found that an organizational environment that is always well organized can give good emotions to lecturers. Obiora and Okpu (2015) also support this in their study, which also proved that the employee environment could form excellent employees. Othman et al. (2018) found in their study that working hours and the work environment are important and will affect both employees and the organization itself.

According to Makhbul et al. (2022), an ergonomic work environment will bring happiness to the lecturer. In addition, the atmosphere in the workplace and the work environment are factors that can contribute to happiness in the workplace (Ahmad et al., 2020). Mohamed Makhbul's (2020) study states that the physical cycle of the workplace, such as ventilation system, lighting, workspace layout, noise disturbance, extreme temperature, and poor light, can be the contributing factors to dissatisfaction in an organization. However, the study by Cooke et al. (2019) stated that social support in the organization is a major contributor to happiness in the workplace. Social interaction involves relationships with colleagues, employers, and organizations. The interaction is approximately the environmental factor of the organization.

**Table 6: Schedule of Multiple Regression Analysis**

<b>Model Summary</b>						
<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>		
1	.913 <sup>a</sup>	.833	.830	.25575		
a. Predictors: (Constant), job_specifications, Leadership, work_environment, income, Workload						
<b>ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	Regression	115.590	5	23.118	353.445	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	23.220	355	.065		
	Total	138.810	360			
a. Dependent Variable: happiness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), job_specifications, Leadership, work_environment, income, Workload						
<b>Coefficient<sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
1	(Constant)	.312	.069		4,522	.000
	Workload	.215	.031	.254	6,889	.000
	Work environment	.269	.026	.371	10,334	.000
	Income	.100	.026	.124	3,829	.000
	Leadership	.180	.027	.195	6,619	.000
	Job specifications	.135	.029	.141	4,700	.000
a. Dependent Variable: happiness						
<b>Coefficient Correlations<sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Job specifications</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Work environment</b>	<b>income</b>	<b>Workload</b>
Correlations	Job specifications	1,000	-.226	-.255	-.118	-.127
	Leadership	-.226	1,000	.110	-.278	-.288
	Work environment	-.255	.110	1,000	-.294	-.485
	Income	-.118	-.278	-.294	1,000	-.174
	Workload	-.127	-.288	-.485	-.174	1,000
	Covariances	Job specifications	.001	.000	.000	-8.861E-5
Leadership		.000	.001	7.835E-5	.000	.000
Work environment		.000	7.835E-5	.001	.000	.000
Income		-8.861E-5	.000	.000	.001	.000
	Workload	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001
a. Dependent Variable: happiness						

Agbozo et al. (2017) also support the findings of this study by stating that the work environment is an important factor that can affect job satisfaction and increase lecturers' happiness. Groen et al. (2019) found that organizational environments such as workspaces, appropriate ventilation and lighting, a quiet atmosphere, and thermal comfort could affect the emotions of the lecturer while performing the task. According to Ahmad et al. (2020), work environment factors greatly impact lecturers' happiness. Based on Sheldon et al. (2013) and supported by Kiran and Khurram (2018), friends, co-workers, and support from society are the causes of happiness in an organization. In addition, interactions between individuals and the environment influence cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes.

According to Jain et al. (2019) and Makhbul et al. (2013), studies conducted in Eastern Mediterranean countries have found that the risk of stress in the workplace can stem from an unstable work environment. Therefore, the happiness of lecturers can be achieved if they are able to adapt to any situation. According to Zafar et al. (2017), organizational division depends on the environment, and a toxic environment contributes to a reduced organizational achievement. These past studies have proven that work environment factors are among the important factors in determining a lecturer's happiness.

## **Conclusion**

Multiple regression analysis found that work environment factors were the most significant factors in the happiness of lecturers in Malaysian public universities. The findings of this study can also support the framework of the study that has been produced. Based on the framework of the study, organizational happiness can be achieved based on the theory created by Seligman (2002), who shows that lecturers in public universities are happily influenced by organizational factors. Based on the findings of the analysis that has been conducted, all organizational factors have a correlation with the happiness of lecturers, and the workplace environment is the factor that has the highest relationship with the happiness of lecturers.

In conclusion, finding an ergonomic work environment and workspace can affect the happiness of lecturers. The outcome may provide the lecturer with insight into the factors that contribute to workplace happiness. In this context, it is important for lecturers to be able to control and handle emotions and adapt to the work environment. Furthermore, as a guideline to the human resources division of public universities or the Ministry of Education to be more focused or concerned about the organizational factors that affect the happiness of lecturers at the Malaysian Public

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