

Employee Happiness Unlocks the Future of Hospitality

Focusing on the “inside” that supports the tourism and hospitality industry: research on employee well-being contributes to sustainable growth

The tourism and hospitality industry is facing acute labor shortages and problems in the working environment. Workers experience extremely high levels of physical and psychological stress, but their work is also directly connected to service quality, and it is of such importance that it can significantly impact business performance. This research focuses on the previously neglected topic of “employee well-being.” It aims to provide scientific explanations for the causes of workplace stress and recovery mechanisms, and to utilise these findings to propose ways of enhancing workplace environments and contributing to the sustainable growth of the industry.



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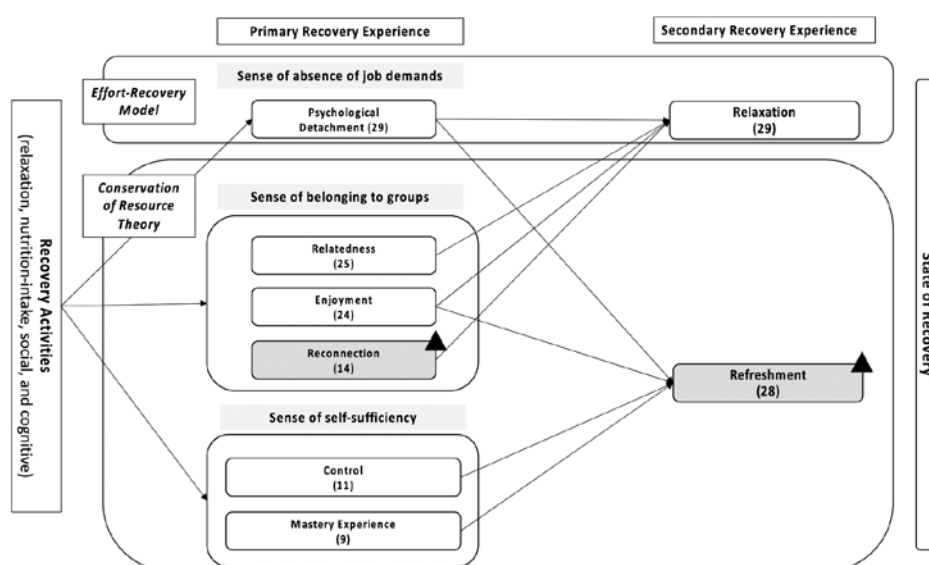
“People can work happily and in good physical and mental health, and the industry itself can grow: that’s the kind of relationship that I want to contribute to.”

A distinctive research approach that highlights the sustainability of the hospitality industry from the perspective of its workers

This research is distinctive as it highlights the “inside” of the hospitality industry through the lens of employee well-being. At the heart of this research lies an empirical study of employee conditions within organizations. In collaboration with researchers from outside Japan, I am conducting surveys on the well-being of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, this study analyzes the impact of specific workplace environment factors, such as the actual conditions of employee

break times and the roles of break rooms, on employees’ psychological and physiological recovery, with the aim of providing insights for improving workplace environments. There is almost no prior research in this area in Japan, and worldwide, some studies have just begun to emerge from fields such as psychology and sociology in recent years. My unique, holistic approach is attracting attention from researchers and academic conferences internationally.



Analysis of the break time recovery of customer-facing workers in the hospitality industry. The ▲ symbol denotes new recovery experiences identified through this study's analysis.

Aiming for practical contributions to issues confronting the hospitality industry at various levels

This study aims to make a practical contribution to addressing human resource management issues in the hospitality industry. The findings from practice-based research can provide concrete suggestions for improving employee satisfaction, as well as practical proposals for matters such as designing break rooms that consider both employees’ physical and mental health. This has the potential to evolve into support for human resource management across the regional tourist industry, beyond the context of any single hotel or facility. Currently, in the seminar I am responsible for, we are facilitating a discussion between hotel managers from Beppu City in Oita Prefecture and students. I pursue community

outreach through a combination of consistent local activities and global perspectives.



Left: Associate professor Saito presents at an international conference. Right: The associate professor often invites hotel operators and other business-people to attend his seminar classes as guest speakers.

