



The Determinant Analysis of Happiness at Work (HAW): A Systematic Literature Review

Faif Yusuf¹, Achmad Husen², Suparno³, Asep Dony Suhendra⁴

¹⁴Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika, Indonesia

²³Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Correspondent: faif.fys@bsi.ac.id¹

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to enhance the understanding of happiness at work (HAW) by examining its dimensions and characteristics. Furthermore, it investigates the generation of knowledge concerning HAW through various theoretical frameworks, contextual elements, and methodological approaches. The study also identifies potential future avenues for HAW research. This paper undertakes a systematic literature review of 35 selected empirical articles published from 2010 to 2024, providing an in-depth exploration of HAW. It evaluates trends in publication, dimensions, characteristics, theoretical frameworks, contextual influences, and the research methodologies applied in HAW studies. The results indicate that while research on HAW has gained considerable traction, a significant need remains for further exploration, especially in developing countries. The study identifies several theoretical frameworks, including the job demand-resources model, social exchange theory, and broaden-and-build theory. It also recommends the incorporation of less frequently utilized theories, such as the positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) model, alongside flow theory, for future research initiatives. This review enriches the literature on workplace happiness by providing a thorough analysis and offers valuable insights to inform future research into the factors affecting employee well-being.

Keywords: Happiness, Work, Workplace, Wellbeing, Literature Review



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INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and competitive work environment, Happiness at Work (HAW) has garnered considerable attention from researchers and organizations. Identifying factors that promote workplace happiness has become an important area of focus for firms looking to increase employee productivity, creativity, and overall job satisfaction.

HAW is defined as "an experience of subjective well-being at work, manifesting through a significant presence of positive individual and organizational experiences, coupled with a minimal presence of negative experiences ([Kocollari et al., 2024](#)). For example, an employee who feels a strong sense of purpose and meaning in their work, experiences positive relationships with colleagues, and has a good work-life balance would be considered to have a high level of happiness at work. In contrast, employees who frequently feel stressed, undervalued, and disconnected from their organization would have lower happiness at work.

It is frequently used interchangeably with the term "wellbeing" and is described as a condition marked by a high degree of life satisfaction, a high degree of positive emotions, and a low level of negative emotions ([Fitriana et al., 2022](#)). According to Deci and Ryan (2008), when people talk about their "subjective well-being," they usually mean that they're quite happy, very satisfied with life, and not very sad or unhappy.

Happiness serves as a fundamental descriptor of a fulfilling and successful life. In light of the pressures associated with economic instability and heightened competition, fostering and sustaining a high level of happiness at work (HAW) has become increasingly crucial ([Roy & Alassadi, 2021](#)). The intense competition and substantial workloads are adversely affecting employees' mental and emotional health, prompting a shift in research focus towards positive psychology, which emphasizes the recognition and treatment of mental health issues ([Williams et al., 2017](#)).

Several positive organizational outcomes are directly affected by the degree of employee satisfaction. Employees who are pleased in their jobs are more likely to take the initiative, be friendly and accessible, be fully present in their work, show empathy for their coworkers, and persevere through difficult times ([Joo & Lee, 2017](#)).

Research in the fields of management and organization has seen a meteoric rise in the study of happiness and psychology ([Fisher, 2010](#)). Employees are happier in the long run when their employers cater to their material, social, psychological, and emotional needs, as well as any additional ones they may have ([Fitriana et al., 2022](#)). Numerous studies have shown that happy employees are more productive, engaged, and committed to their work ([Frinaldi, 2021](#)). In today's highly competitive business environment, organizations need to prioritize employee happiness to gain a competitive edge ([Palihakkara & Weerakkody, 2019](#)).

The research on happiness at work is important in the current context for several reasons: Firstly, there is a growing recognition that employee well-being and happiness are crucial factors in organizational success ([Fitriana et al., 2022](#)). Secondly, the concept of "happiness at work" has expanded beyond just job satisfaction, encompassing a broader range of positive emotions and experiences related to the workplace ([Fitriana et al., 2022](#)).

This holistic approach to employee well-being is particularly relevant in the current context, where work-life balance, work engagement, and organizational commitment are increasingly important ([Hidayat, 2020](#)). Additionally, the growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility and sustainability has led to a greater focus on the well-being of employees as a key component of organizational success ([Gulyani & Sharma, 2018](#)).

Happiness at work benefits individual employees and contributes to organizations' overall social and environmental impact. Furthermore, research on happiness at work is important in the current context because it can inform HR practices and organizational policies that promote employee well-being, job satisfaction, and retention. By understanding the factors that contribute to happiness at work, organizations can implement targeted interventions to create a more positive and fulfilling work environment ([Qamar et al., 2023](#)).

In conclusion, the research on happiness at work is crucial in the current context due to its impact on organizational performance, the evolving nature of work, the emphasis on corporate social responsibility, and its potential to inform HR practices and policies that support employee well-being ([Selvi & Madhavkumar, 2023](#)). Therefore, this research aims to add to the existing systematic literature reviews on HAW by providing a unique perspective that draws on current research, methodology, and theory.

Finally, this research aims to assess what is already known about HAW by looking at its antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences, among other aspects. Also included are the methodological techniques, theoretical frameworks, and contextual elements that help us comprehend HAW. In addition, by conducting a thorough literature analysis, the article will pinpoint possible avenues for future studies on HAW.

METHOD

A literature review is an extensive synopsis of scholarly work on a certain topic; it may be an independent study, an empirical or conceptual inquiry, or even part of a larger investigation. Among the many types of literature reviews, the systematic literature review (SLR) is unique in its scientific rigor, robustness, and careful implementation ([Bhawna et al., 2024](#)). Utilizing SLRs has become a common tool for synthesizing existing literature within a certain subject and a recognized approach ([Sauer & Seuring, 2023](#)).

The growing importance of literature reviews highlights the need to comprehend previous studies thoroughly and to identify the theories and methodology used to study a certain area ([Kraus et al., 2020](#)). As a result, the SLR method was used in this investigation to assess the current literature on HAW with a critical eye ([Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019](#)). The three separate steps of this process are as follows: assembly, arrangement, and assessment.

Assembling

Finding papers to include in the SLR is the first step in the assembling stage of this systematic review. The topic, research questions, source type, and source quality are defined during the identification phase, whereas the search technique, timeframe, and relevant keywords are described during the acquisition phase. Because of their stringent peer review process, which maintains scholarly quality standards, we choose journal articles as our main source type above other academic works including books, book chapters, conference proceedings, and theses ([Reina-Usuga et al., 2023](#)).

Selecting articles for review involves specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance and quality. First, the significance to the research topic about happiness at work (HAW) is a primary factor. Only articles that directly address the research questions or objectives are considered. Second, articles must be peer-reviewed to guarantee the credibility of the information. Additionally, the publication date is considered, with preference given to studies published within the last fourteen years to maintain the current relevance of the research. Third, the methodological rigor of the studies is evaluated, ensuring that the research methods used are sound and contribute to the validity and reliability of the findings.

The exclusion criteria for selecting articles involve several key considerations to maintain the quality and relevance of the review. First, articles deemed irrelevant, those that do not directly address the issue of happiness at work, are excluded. Similarly, non-peer-reviewed sources, such as articles from non-peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, or opinion pieces, are also excluded to ensure the credibility of the research.

Outdated studies are another exclusion factor, with research articles over ten years removed. Additionally, studies with poor methodological quality, including those that lack rigor or exhibit significant flaws, are excluded. Lastly, duplicate studies or articles that repeat data or findings already covered in the review are excluded to avoid redundancy and ensure a diverse range of studies is represented.

This Stage consists of two main activities, first, the focus is on the domain of Happiness at Work (HAW), with specific research questions addressing key aspects such as theories, context, characteristics, methodology, dimensions, and potential future avenues for exploration. The sources selected for this stage are primarily journal articles, ensuring that the quality of the sources is high, specifically targeting Scopus-indexed journals to guarantee credibility and rigor in the literature review process.

The second stage, acquisition, was the search for relevant literature, which was conducted using the Scopus database, covering the period from 2010 to December 2024. A comprehensive set of search keywords was employed, including terms such as “happiness at work,” “happiness at workplace,” “workplace happiness,” “employee happiness,” “work happiness,” “job happiness,” “organizational happiness,” “organisational happiness,” “corporate happiness,” “happiness management,” and “staff happiness.” This search returned 213 articles for further consideration in the review process.

Arranging

In this stage, the articles are systematically organized using specific codes such as the article title, journal title, author name, publication year, citation, theory, context, characteristics, and methodology. The organization of these articles is guided by the TCCM framework ([Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019](#)), which provides a structured approach for categorizing and analyzing the collected data, ensuring consistency and clarity throughout the review process.

The inclusion criteria focus on articles published between 2010 and 2024 in subject areas such as Business, Management and Accounting, Social Sciences, Psychology, Arts, and Humanities.

The documents considered are restricted to journal articles published in the final stages, written in English, and indexed in Scopus journals. Articles that were excluded were included, as well as those removed through abstract pruning and full-text reading. This resulted in a total of 42 articles for further analysis.

The detailed explanation of the TCCM framework consists of four main components. First, theory focuses on the theoretical foundations and conceptual underpinnings that guide research. This component examines key theories, models, and frameworks to explain and understand the phenomena of interest. Analyzing these theoretical aspects helps to identify theoretical gaps and opportunities for further development.

Second, context, which explores the contextual factors influencing research in the domain. It considers environmental, organizational, cultural, and other relevant factors that shape the research landscape. Understanding the context is crucial for interpreting the findings and assessing the generalizability of the research. Context helps establish the boundaries within the study and highlights factors that may impact its outcomes.

Third, characteristics examine the key characteristics of research in the domain. This component includes the research designs, methodologies, data sources, and analytical techniques employed by the studies. Analyzing these characteristics provides insights into the approaches used in the field and helps identify patterns and trends across various studies.

Fourth, methodology focuses on the research methods and procedures used in the studies within the domain. It evaluates the rigor, validity, and reliability of the research methodologies. Assessing the methodological aspects helps to identify gaps and opportunities for improving the quality of future research. This component ensures the research is built on solid, effective methods contributing to robust and credible findings.

Assessment

Assessment, the last step, includes both the evaluation and reporting phases. Our investigation focused on the many facets, theoretical advancements, settings, traits, and study methods used in HAW studies. This review was useful in spotting holes in the existing literature, opening doors to new lines of inquiry and real-world applications.

The stage evaluation method employed is content analysis. This approach allows for a systematic examination of the collected data. The agenda proposal for this stage focuses on identifying future avenues for research in Happiness at Work (HAW) and exploring its practical implications, aiming to provide valuable insights for both academics and practitioners in the field

The reporting phase entailed synthesizing the findings from the assessment, highlighting the key themes, trends, and areas of consensus within the literature. In this stage, the findings are presented using a combination of tables, figures, and words to communicate the results effectively. However, certain limitations are acknowledged, including the data type, as only English-language journals are included, the source, and the review is based solely on articles

from the Scopus database. These limitations are considered when interpreting the findings and suggesting areas for future research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The phrase "happiness at work" (HAW) encompasses a wide range of ideas and practices that contribute to a positive work environment ([Fisher, 2010](#)). Academic studies have used many different variables to measure workplace happiness. We found that most studies that looked at Happiness at Work (HAW) didn't break it down into its parts; instead, they took a more general approach. Using sometimes unidimensional measures or single-item questionnaires to measure HAW, these researchers aimed to define and assess happiness as a holistic concept. The degree to which people were satisfied with their work life was evaluated using various tools and techniques.

It is worth mentioning that some research has created specific scales for organizational settings, while others have modified existing measures of overall happiness or life satisfaction to assess workplace happiness. The Subjective Happiness Scale is a crucial tool for gauging HAW. ([Lyubomirsky et al., 2005](#)) and the OHQ that Oxford University developed ([Hills & Argyle, 2002](#)). These assessments generally reflect people's subjective impressions of how happy they are at work, but they don't explore the many facets that make up the larger concept of workplace happiness.

Moreover, rather than focusing specifically on happiness related to the work context, these measures predominantly assess individuals' overall life happiness. Consequently, they invite respondents to evaluate their general happiness or satisfaction with life, rather than highlighting specific aspects of their work experience.

Fisher (2010) provided a conceptual framework for understanding happiness within the workplace, emphasizing the importance of the multifaceted nature of happiness at work (HAW), which transcends traditional happiness metrics. According to Fisher (2010) Assessing HAW and its intrinsic complexity is best accomplished by looking at work-related categories, such as job satisfaction, work engagement, and affective organizational commitment, which are all ways of saying "happy."

Fisher (2010) identifies three dimensions of happiness in the workplace. One aspect is how happy people are in their jobs, which includes how they feel about their responsibilities and other aspects of their work. Second, there's affective organizational commitment, which shows how emotionally invested an employee is in the company and its mission, and it usually shows up as a long-term retention objective. The third aspect is engagement, which is described by three things: vitality, devotion, and absorption, and is marked by a good emotional state and general job satisfaction ([Fitriana et al., 2022](#)).

Appreciating the value of holistic viewpoints, this paper summarises the several criteria used to evaluate HAW. The most common aspects are as follows: (1) involvement in work, emotional investment in the organization, and contentment with one's employment; and (2) the degree to

which one experiences worry, sadness, pleasure, boredom, vigor, or placidity in response to certain emotions.

Table 1. Dimensions of HAW

No	Dimensions	Articles	References
1	Work engagement Job satisfaction Affective organizational commitment	10	Fisher (2010), William <i>et al.</i> (2016), Salas-Vallina and Fernandez (2017), Salas-Vallina <i>et al.</i> (2017b), Salas-Vallina and Alegre (2018), Salas-Vallina <i>et al.</i> (2020), Mousa <i>et al.</i> (2020), Rego and Cunha (2010), Rego and Cunha (2012), Rego <i>et al.</i> (2012, 2010)
2	Anxiety-Comfort Depression-Pleasure Boredom-Enthusiasm Tiredness-Vigor Anger-Placidity	4	Rego and Cunha (2010), Rego and Cunha (2012), Rego <i>et al.</i> (2010)
3	Affective well-being Intrinsic job satisfaction	1	Hosie <i>et al.</i> (2012)
4	Job satisfaction Self-perceived performance	1	Mathias <i>et al.</i> (2019)
5	Engagement Meaning Pleasure	1	Tandler <i>et al.</i> (2020)
6	Self-validation Pleasure	1	Bednarova-Gibova (2022)
7	Result and success Assessment of and feedback on the work Meaningful work Social relationship	1	Kun and Gadanez (2022)

Source (s): Jaswal, N., Sharma, D., Bhardwaj, B., & Kraus, S. (2024).

Antecedents of HAW

Recognizing the major factors of HAW is vital to promoting employee well-being and ensuring continuous organizational development and success. Motivation and leadership, psychological factors, positive organizational behaviors, job-related aspects, social and ethical considerations, organizational culture, and the intraindividual work environment are some of the antecedents identified in this review as impacting HAW.

This led us to classify all HAW precursors into six broad categories. We will review the main points from the chosen research that address the important causes of HAW.

1. Motivational and Leadership Influences on Employee Well-Being

If a business cares about its workers' long-term health and pleasure, it would prioritize its work environment's leadership and motivating aspects. Elements positively connected with high employee well-being (HAW) include self-esteem, inspiring work features, and employees' intrinsic motivation and successes in their professional lives.

Increased levels of HAW are often the result of workers' positive views of their workplaces brought about by the perks offered by their organizations, such as healthcare services, bonus programs, and pension plans ([Naudé et al., 2016](#)). According to studies, motivated workers are more invested in their work, more likely to take initiative, and more likely to feel fulfilled. This is especially true when employees are inspired to do their best ([Salas-Vallina, Alegre, et al., 2017](#)).

Additionally, the literature highlights that various leadership styles—including transformational, inspirational, generous ([Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2018](#)) and authentic leadership ([Jensen & Luthans, 2016](#)) significantly impact employee happiness. Salas-Vallina et al. (2020) learned that HAW benefit greatly from inspiring leadership when their followers exhibit optimistic tendencies. Given the positive correlation between HAW and motivational and leadership variables, it is reasonable to assume that strong leadership styles play a significant role in fostering an encouraging and inspiring work environment.

2. Psychological Antecedents of Happiness at Work (HAW)

Predicting Happiness at Work (HAW) relies significantly on workers' psychological traits. Key elements include psychological capital, flourishing, an authentic psychological environment, and psychological contract violations. Enhancements in performance, happiness, and health-related well-being have all been linked to psychological capital (PsyCap), which encompasses traits such as optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and resilience.

To foster employee happiness and well-being, psychological capital is essential in mitigating the adverse effects of work stress and overwhelming expectations. Thriving, a strong indicator of HAW, is characterized by an optimistic outlook cultivated through a shared sense of growth and vitality. When individuals experience this state, it indicates they are happy and fulfilled in their professional lives. Cultivating a sense of purpose among employees greatly enhances their HAW, enriching their work experience and adding meaning to their lives.

Positive factors like flourishing and psychological capital help create a supportive work environment promoting HAW. On the other hand, negative organizational factors like psychological contract breaches can hinder employee happiness by negatively impacting levels of HAW (Qaiser et al., 2020).

3. Positive Antecedents of Organizational Behaviour

Next on the list of important elements influencing HAW are characteristics linked to good conduct in the workplace. Organizational virtue, optimism, resilience, friendship, subjective happiness, HRM focused on well-being, and thankfulness are all part of this category ([Garg et al., 2022](#); [Salas-Vallina, Lopez-Cabrales, et al., 2017](#); [Youssef & Luthans, 2007](#)). This review's

results highlight the importance of workers' positive actions in creating a growth-oriented and supportive workplace culture, which in turn improves employees' overall well-being and HAW ([Youssef & Luthans, 2007](#)).

To elevate HAW, for example, it is essential for organizational members to show thanks ([Garg et al., 2022](#)). In addition, OV—which includes moral, ethical, and constructive actions—is crucial to increasing happiness in organizations ([Rego et al., 2010](#)). An individual's well-being, including pleasure, is enhanced when they see virtuous behavior inside their company. When people feel valued, they are more likely to be grateful to their organization and fellow members.

4. Social and Ethical Antecedents

Organizational practices and social and ethical dissemination also impact the establishment of HAW-friendly work environments. This includes initiatives such as CSR ([Bibi et al., 2022](#)), institutionalizing ethics, and bolstering one's coworkers ([Qaiser et al., 2020](#)). Such elements enhance workers' cheerful and healthy work climate and long-term pleasure and well-being. They represent an organization's dedication to fostering moral conduct, ethical practices, and society's betterment.

5. Job-Related Antecedents

This category includes job kind, activities, competency, job satisfaction, job demands, job features, and flexible working arrangements. Employees' health, happiness, and satisfaction on the job (HAW) may be greatly affected by these factors, which are inextricably connected to the job and the organizational work environment. Workers who can choose their schedules report higher happiness and health-related well-being ([Atkinson & Hall, 2011](#)). This enhanced HAW connects employees' voluntary or extra-role behaviors—going above and beyond the call of duty to help the company succeed—to many other good performance outcomes.

According to the research results, several aspects of work ([Sloan, 2012](#)), fulfilling one's work ([Bangun et al., 2021](#)), and competence on the job ([Chen et al., 2022](#)) act as indicators that HAW is likely to occur. In contrast, too demanding work conditions, including heavy workloads and time constraints ([Tadić et al., 2013](#)), may hurt HAW.

6. Social and Ethical Antecedents

Several social and ethical aspects in businesses greatly impact the creation of healthy and productive work cultures that support HAW. The concepts of CSR (corporate social responsibility) are among them ([Bibi et al., 2022](#)), procedures for the establishment of ethical norms ([Lee et al., 2018](#)), via the assistance of coworkers ([Qaiser et al., 2020](#)).

Gender disparities, socio-demographic characteristics, and occupational status affect how HAW is shaped. Studies have shown that women tend to show their happiness more often than men do ([Sloan, 2012](#)). Employees with higher education, income, and occupational status typically report greater job satisfaction ([Bednářová-Gibová, 2021](#)). Conversely, situational uncertainties, such as job insecurity, have been identified as negative predictors of HAW ([Bassi et al., 2013](#)).

Consequences of HAW

Recent studies on Happiness at Work (HAW) show that firms can achieve many positive results by promoting employee happiness and well-being. The consequences of HAW can be categorized into four distinct groups, as elaborated below.

1. Performance Outcomes

Much research on HAW has focused on individual and organizational performance, including contextual and task-related performance ([Hosie et al. \(2012\)](#)) managers whose levels of positive affective well-being (happy) were more effective and efficient in carrying out their duties than managers whose happiness levels were lower. This proves that contented workers are likelier to go above and beyond, benefiting their companies' bottom lines. Organizations may boost performance and productivity by creating a healthy work environment that supports HAW.

2. Behavioral Outcomes

There is a strong correlation between HAW and many behavioral outcomes, such as OCB, discretionary acts, creative practices, and counterproductive work conduct. Employees who are happy in their jobs are more invested in the success of the company as a whole and are more likely to go above and beyond in their work, according to studies ([Atkinson & Hall, 2011](#); [Bangun et al., 2021](#); [Bani-Melhem et al., 2018](#))

Counterproductive work behavior is a bad and damaging element of HAW that may negatively impact the business and its staff. In contrast, organisational citizenship behavior (OCB), discretionary actions (DA), and inventive behaviors are all good results linked with HAW. Inadequate amounts of HAW commonly cause this behavior ([Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2021](#)). Such negative employee behaviour highlights the need to promote HAW to cultivate a cooperative and collaborative company culture.

3. Well-being Outcomes

A healthy work environment contributes to a happy workforce because it reflects the good emotional and mental states encouraged by management ([Tandler et al., 2020](#)). Positive attitudes, feelings, and moods among workers are part of the health outcomes linked with HAW, which is good for businesses since it helps them expand over time. Psychological well-being (mental health) and subjective well-being (the presence or absence of negative affect) are components of total employee well-being, and HAW is a strong predictor of both ([Benevene et al., 2019](#)).

According to studies, an organization's workplace features substantially impact HAW, which might affect workers' psychological well-being. Workers' physical and emotional well-being, as well as their ability to handle stress on the job, are all positively impacted by an upbeat and supportive work environment, which in turn reduces employee turnover intentions ([Wang et al., 2015](#)). Based on strong empirical data, this research argues that encouraging HAW has several benefits for firms. It boosts employee happiness and fosters a supportive work environment, which in turn helps businesses succeed in the long run.

4. Other Outcomes

In addition to the previously mentioned outcomes, HAW has a considerable impact on job engagement, organizational commitment, absorptive capacity, knowledge-sharing behavior, employee innovativeness, and turnover intention.

How invested and enthusiastic an employee is in their work and the company they work for is a measure of job engagement ([Field & Buitendach, 2011](#)). It has been demonstrated that HAW improves job engagement ([Kim, 2019](#)) by instilling tremendous energy and mental resilience in employees, producing a sense of dedication, challenge, and inspiration. Unlike disengaged personnel, engaged employees tend to put substantial effort into fighting negative effects such as stress and burnout, which eventually helps the firm's general growth ([Bakker & Oerlemans, 2016](#)).

Furthermore, research has shown that HAW greatly improves organizational commitment, which is defined as the degree to which workers feel emotionally invested in and committed to their firm ([Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2021](#)) as well as employee innovativeness, which encompasses the capacity to demonstrate creativity and generate new ideas ([Bibi et al., 2022](#)). Employees who report high happiness at work are likelier to feel connected and loyal to their company. They are more creative, original, and capable of critical thinking. Because employees who are satisfied with their positions are less likely to hunt for work elsewhere, HAW is also connected with reduced turnover intentions. This leads to a more stable workforce and lower staff attrition expenses. ([Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2021](#)).

According to our research, worker performance and behaviour are HAW's most critical outcome characteristics. Our findings show that the HAW paradigm pays little attention to the implications of well-being, even though happiness is a significant aspect in people's overall well-being, particularly in areas such as work-life balance. Future research has a wonderful opportunity to study the relationship between HAW and various elements of well-being, including mental health and employee well-being.

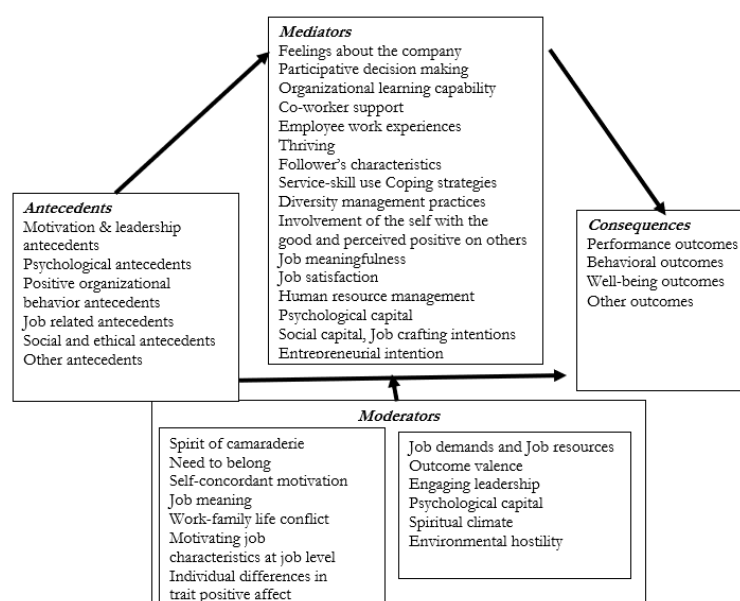


Figure 1: Summary of variables studied in HAW. Source (s): (Jaswal et al., 2024).

Mediators and Moderators

When looking at what contributes to HAW, it's important to consider the components that moderate and mediate the link between happiness and other organisational characteristics. Understanding these mediators and moderators is crucial to understanding the complex relationships between independent and outcome variables. Their help may help us better understand certain events or interactions, their timing, processes, and causes.

Figure 1 provides a list of the moderators and mediators that were used in the chosen studies. Both mediating and moderating factors influence the intensity of the association between two variables; the former clarifies the mechanism by which two variables are interrelated, while the latter modifies the relationship itself ([MacKinnon, 2011](#)). According to our findings, researchers studying HAW are focusing increasingly on merging various mediation and moderation effects to identify the underlying processes and context-specific variables that influence workplace happiness and employee well-being.

Organizational learning capability, diversity management practices, coworker support, job stress, coping strategies, and job satisfaction are some of the mediators that help explain how HAW leads to good organizational outcomes like employee innovation, organizational citizenship, workplace wellness, and mental health ([Bani-Melhem et al., 2018](#); [Mousa et al., 2020](#); [Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2021](#)).

Theoretical Perspectives

A theory comprises a set of assumptions that can be utilized to provide a more fundamental explanation for a specific phenomenon ([Lim et al., 2022](#)). This systematic literature review (SLR) identifies the key theoretical frameworks employed in HAW research. The Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) Model is the most frequently applied framework in examining the relationship between HAW and various organizational constructs, appearing in 11 research papers.

The Job Demands and Resources Model is developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). This model posits that the interplay between job demands—elements of a job requiring physical or mental effort and linked to specific psychological outcomes, such as exhaustion—and job resources—positive aspects of a career that facilitate goal attainment and alleviate stress—is crucial for the emergence of job stress and motivation, ultimately influencing employee well-being, including happiness.

Another key theoretical framework is Social Exchange Theory, introduced by Sir George Homans in the seminal work “Social Behavior as Exchange.” This theory is predicated on the analysis of costs and rewards in the formation of social relationships. By weighing rewards against costs, individuals determine whether to maintain or terminate social relationships. From an organizational behavior standpoint, the theory posits that employees are more likely to feel committed to their organization when receiving financial and social rewards ([Homans, 1958](#)).

The Broaden and Build Theory is another extensively utilized theoretical framework for exploring HAW. This theory emphasizes the role of positive emotions—such as love, joy,

interest, and contentment—in broadening an individual's thought processes and behaviors ([Fredrickson, 2004](#)). According to this framework, positive emotions foster creativity and action, whereas negative emotions constrict thought and behavior, limiting available coping resources.

Another finding of our systematic literature evaluation on Happiness at Work (HAW) highlighted some interesting themes and insights, particularly into existing studies on the subject. HAW is broad, embracing many ideas and behaviors to foster a happy work environment. However, a rigorous inspection of the papers included in our review reveals major gaps in how happiness is assessed and understood.

A recurring issue across many studies is that HAW is often treated as a general, unidimensional construct rather than broken down into various components. While happiness in the workplace is undoubtedly influenced by multiple factors—such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, employee engagement, and organizational culture—many studies failed to disaggregate these elements.

Instead, they used single-item measures or unidimensional scales to evaluate workplace happiness. While simple and convenient, this approach overlooks the concept's complexity and multifaceted nature. For instance, using a single-item questionnaire to assess overall happiness at work may miss subtle but important distinctions between factors like intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and social relationships.

This lack of differentiation between the different dimensions of happiness contrasts with some existing literature, which emphasizes a more nuanced approach to studying HAW. Research by Diener et al. (2011) suggested that happiness is a multi-dimensional and dynamic state, influenced by individual and organizational factors. More comprehensive tools, such as multi-item scales or qualitative methods, would provide a richer and more accurate understanding of what constitutes happiness at work.

Moreover, while the studies we reviewed assessed job satisfaction and work-life balance, there was often no clear indication of how these factors influenced overall happiness. For example, studies may have focused on job satisfaction but did not examine how this relates to other aspects of happiness, such as social support at work or opportunities for personal growth. This holistic view, while informative, could benefit from incorporating a broader range of variables and more sophisticated measurement techniques.

Practical Implication

Our research on Happiness at Work (HAW) has important practical implications for industrial practitioners who want to improve workplace settings and employee well-being. Our findings indicate many critical insights that might guide practice in organizational settings.

1. Improving Measurement Tools

Many research in the HAW literature use uni-dimensional or single-item surveys to evaluate happiness. Industrial practitioners should consider using more complex and multidimensional

techniques to understand the various facets of employee well-being better. Employers can acquire a more holistic knowledge of their employees' happiness and the specific areas that require attention by assessing characteristics such as work-life balance, engagement, organizational culture, and job satisfaction.

2. Customization of Interventions

According to the research, workplace happiness is not a one-size-fits-all idea. Employee happiness is influenced by various factors, including their role, workplace environment, and personal values. Remote workers, for example, may favor freedom over social contacts and team dynamics, whereas in-office employees may value these aspects more. Industrial practitioners should design interventions and programs to meet employee groups' requirements and preferences, promoting a more personalized approach to workplace well-being.

3. Holistic Well-being Programs

Given the various elements of workplace pleasure, firms should develop complete well-being programs beyond typical perks such as compensation and benefits. These programs should prioritize mental wellness, professional advancement, meaningful employment, social support, and fostering a positive company culture. A holistic approach to employee well-being can boost morale, productivity, engagement, and retention.

4. Ongoing Feedback and Adaptation

To improve HAW effectively, businesses must go beyond one-time assessments and implement ongoing feedback channels. Regularly measuring and tracking employee happiness via surveys, focus groups, or other feedback channels enables adaptive improvements to the work environment. This guarantees that treatments are relevant and effective over time, adapting to changing employee demands and external factors.

5. Employee Involvement in Decision Making

According to research, employees who feel their opinions are heard and actively participate in decision-making are likelier to express feelings of contentment. Industrial practitioners should promote an employee empowerment culture in which people at all levels have a say in the policies, practices, and projects that affect their jobs. This not only improves job happiness, but it also leads to increased dedication and motivation.

Addressing these practical consequences allows industrial practitioners to build a more supportive, inclusive, and productive work environment that fosters sustained pleasure and well-being for employees, eventually contributing to long-term organizational success.

CONCLUSION

The research shows that companies must foster an environment that promotes healthy habits and increases workers' happiness. A more efficient and productive workforce results from a culture that encourages workers to work together in harmony, feel like they belong, and support one another at all company levels. Businesses must launch programs and initiatives to improve workers' health and happiness. Employees' mental and emotional health are greatly enhanced

by programs prioritizing work-life balance, professional growth, health and safety, incentives, and recognition ([Grawitch et al., 2006](#)).

In addition, organizations should implement an incentive and recognition system to motivate high-performing employees. This will encourage workers to be cooperative and helpful, boosting their job satisfaction. ([Zhang, 2016](#)). By identifying a variety of antecedents and outcomes that influence workplace happiness, our review can aid management and policymakers in developing measures that support a healthy and enjoyable work environment for employees. ([Jaswal et al., 2024](#)).

Creating a more cohesive and trustworthy work environment is one of the best ways to boost morale and productivity. Values like positivism, equality, respect, and appreciation should be at the heart of this culture ([Berdicchia et al., 2023](#); [Fisher, 2010](#)). Organizations may improve their members' happiness and well-being by encouraging these concepts, which promote sharing, supporting, and pro-social actions ([Berdicchia et al., 2023](#)). In the end, this helps the company achieve long-term development and success.

The results show that many HAW-related factors have been recognized and classified. Based on what we know, HAW is most often studied in the context of positive organizational structures, specifically looking at what makes workers happier. On the other hand, there is still a big knowledge gap regarding what factors make workers unhappy.

The Job Demand-Resources Model, the Broaden-and-Build Theory, and the Social Exchange Theory are the most significant theoretical frameworks used to further HAW research. We must consider less popular ideas like the PERMA Model of Well-Being and Flow Theory to round up our understanding of the topic.

Among the many factors used to quantify HAW, our analysis highlights organizational commitment, employee engagement, and job satisfaction ([Kun & Gadanecz, 2022](#)). However, most investigations have treated HAW as a standalone construct or used broad measures of life satisfaction. There are several aspects of occupational happiness and well-being that this technique could miss. According to studies, HAW has more than one facet ([Fisher, 2010](#)) evidence that work-specific measurements allow for a more comprehensive assessment of the factors impacting workplace happiness ([Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2021](#)).

Organizations seeking to enhance employee happiness and well-being may also benefit from the practical insights provided by these customized scales. It is crucial to evaluate HAW using measures especially intended for work-related aspects, including job satisfaction and engagement, since these scales accurately assess well-being in workplace situations. Future studies should focus on developing happiness measurements tailored specifically to the workplace.

In conclusion, companies may benefit from ongoing advancements in this important field of study by better understanding the elements that impact employee well-being and developing and implementing tailored initiatives. In addition, by combining well-known theories with less well-known models, our review adds to the body of theoretical knowledge on HAW, advancing the field. Organizations that want to create a happy, productive, and satisfying work

environment may benefit greatly from the management insights offered by this theoretical integration, which also adds to the current body of knowledge.

This review aims to illuminate the development of HAW research in organizational behavior by comprehensively examining important ideas, variables, settings, and approaches. Future studies would be well-served if this study's limitations were recognized as inherent to any research endeavor.

First, we may have missed some relevant literature since we only used the Scopus database to retrieve articles. Future studies should consider adding other databases like EBSCO and Web of Science to include a broader range of papers. Second, our analysis only included 42 publications since our inclusion criteria excluded many other investigations.

Job Characteristics Theory (JCT), Social Exchange Theory (SET), Broaden and Build Theory (BBT), and the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model are the most popular theoretical frameworks used in HAW, according to this research. Nevertheless, future studies in this field might benefit from including several more models. An example of such a model is Seligman's PERMA framework ([Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000](#)). It includes five components: engaging with life, having meaningful relationships, accomplishing goals, experiencing happy emotions, and feeling a sense of purpose.

According to the study, most research has focused on happiness at work (HAW) as an outcome variable, but few have examined it as an antecedent. Future research should incorporate happiness as an independent variable and potential mediating and moderating mechanisms to gain a deeper understanding of the contexts in which HAW influences organisational outcomes. By applying these techniques to HAW, researchers may better understand how diverse contextual conditions influence the relationship between HAW and its causes or effects.

In light of our comprehensive literature review findings, we urge that future researchers study HAW's ability to act as both a mediator and a moderator in various circumstances. Investigating how HAW mediates and alters disputes may shed information on the fundamental mechanisms through which it influences various organizational outcomes.

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