

Exploring the Path to Employee Happiness: A Review of Employee Well-being Research

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Abstracts

As the global economy continues to develop and competition intensifies, the importance of employee happiness is increasingly recognized. Employee well-being not only relates to individuals' physical and mental health and quality of life but also directly impacts organizations (Alzain et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding and enhancing employee happiness have become important topics in organizational management and human resource management. In traditional organizational theory, employee job satisfaction is typically regarded as an evaluation of employees' perceptions of their job content, work environment, and working conditions. However, with increasing emphasis on employee psychological well-being and life satisfaction, researchers have begun to expand job satisfaction to encompass employees' overall happiness and well-being indices. This shift reflects a trend in organizational management away from the mere pursuit of productivity and economic efficiency towards a focus on holistic employee development and happiness. The purpose of this study is to systematically review and analyze research on employee happiness, including its concepts, influencing factors, and consequences. By delving into existing research findings, a better understanding of the mechanisms of employee happiness formation and the pathways of influence can be achieved, thereby providing theoretical guidance and practical recommendations for organizational and human resource management. This study aims to enhance the understanding of employee happiness, employing a literature review approach. Key findings include the multidimensional influencing factors of employee happiness and its associations with organizational performance and turnover intentions. Future research could explore employee happiness from various perspectives, including individual, team, and cultural differences, interdisciplinary approaches, and the application of emerging technologies. Such research endeavours will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of employee happiness, thereby providing more effective guidance and support for organizational and human resource management.

Keywords: Employee Happiness, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Performance, Organisation Commitment, Turnover Intention

Introduction

Researchers are increasingly focusing on employee happiness. Studies have shown that employee happiness is closely related to their job performance, creativity, and organizational loyalty. Paying attention to employee happiness not only helps improve employee job performance but also enhances organizational competitiveness. As people pay more attention to work-life balance, employee happiness has become one of the important factors in attracting and retaining talent (Selvi & Madhavkumar, 2023). Organizations are increasingly aware of the importance of employees' physical and mental health to the overall operation of the organization. Therefore, incorporating employee happiness into organizational strategic planning has become a trend. Focusing on employee happiness is important because it has significant impacts and significance for employees, organizations, and society as a whole. More and more studies have shown that meeting employee happiness can increase job satisfaction, reduce employee turnover rates, and promote organizational innovation and development, thereby enhancing organizational competitiveness (Parida et al., 2023; Alketbi & Alshurideh, 2023).

However, in practice, many organizations face issues of inadequate employee happiness, such as high job stress, work-life imbalance, and limited personal development opportunities. Therefore, researching the importance of employee happiness to organizations and its influencing factors can help identify problems, propose improvement suggestions, and optimize organizational management and human resource strategies, thereby achieving the common development goals of organizations and employees.

Based on the above background, this study aims to review relevant research on employee happiness, providing theoretical guidance to promote the sustainable development of organizations and the comprehensive development of employees.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a literature review approach, which involves systematically collecting, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing existing relevant literature to explore issues in a specific research field. This method aims to draw lessons from existing research, clarify research progress and achievements, and provide theoretical foundations and reference bases for current research (Parajuli, 2020). Literature related to employee happiness from the past 20 years was retrieved through Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The literature relevant to the research content is depicted in the following network diagram:

Table

Collection of papers from the past 10 years

| No. | Year | Title | Authors |
|-----|------|--|---|
| 1 | 2020 | The influence of social distancing on employee well-being: a conceptual framework and research agenda | Sven Tuzovic,Sven Tuzovic,Sertan Kabadayi,Sertan Kabadayi |
| 2 | 2018 | Multiple levels in job demands-resources theory: implications for employee well-being and performance | Arnold B. Bakker,Arnold B. Bakker,Evangelia Demerouti,Evangelia Demerouti |
| 3 | 2017 | Workplace resources to improve both employee well-being and performance: A systematic review and meta-analysis | Karina Nielsen,Karina Nielsen,Morten Birkeland Nielsen,Morten Birkeland Nielsen,Chidieber Ogbonnaya,Chidieber Ogbonnaya,Marja Käsälä,Marja Käsälä,Eveliina Saari,Eveliina Saari,Kerstin Isaksson,Kerstin Isaksson |
| 4 | 2021 | When and how health-oriented leadership relates to employee well-being—The role of expectations, self-care, and LMX | Antonia J. Kaluza,Antonia J. Kaluza,Franziska Weber,Franziska Weber,Rolf van Dick,Rolf van Dick,Nina M. Junker,Nina M. Junker |
| 5 | 2019 | Human resource management systems, employee well-being, and firm performance from the mutual gains and critical perspectives: The well-being paradox | Hoang Ho,Hoang Ho,Bård Kuvaas,Bård Kuvaas |
| 6 | 2020 | Impact of CSR and environmental triggers on employee green behaviour: The mediating effect of employee well-being | Mansoor Ahmed, Mansoor Ahmed, Zhigang Sun, Sun Zhou, Syed Ali Raza, Syed Ali Raza, Muhammad Asif Qureshi, Muhammad Asif Qureshi, Sara Qamar Yousufi, Sara Qamar Yousufi |
| 7 | 2021 | A systematic review of human capital and employee well-being: putting human capital back on the track | Md Shamirul Islam,Shamirul Islam,Muslim Amin,Muslim Amin |
| 8 | 2021 | The relationship between employee well-being and organizational trust in the context of sustainable human resource management | Vaida Jaškevičiūtė,Vaida Jaskevičiute,Asta Stankevičienė,Asta Stankevičienė,Danuta Diskienė,Danuta Diskiene,Julija Savicke,Julija Savicke |
| 9 | 2023 | Managerial leadership and turnover intentions with the mediating role of | Rajwinder Kaur,Gagandeep Kaur |

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| | | employee happiness: an empirical study based on private universities | |
| 10 | 2023 | Employee Happiness in Digital World | Varsha Dixit, Madhu Arora, Shruti |
| 11 | 2022 | Employee Happiness Heals the Turnover Intention: A Study of the Machine Operators of a Leading Apparel Company in Sri Lanka | R. S. Weerathna, Ranitha Sachinthana Weerathna, W. S. D. Somawardana, W. S. D. Somawardana, W. A. P. D. Weerasinghe, W. A. P. D. Weerasinghe |
| 12 | 2021 | The Impact of Job Insecurity on Employee Happiness at Work: A Case of Robotised Production Line Operators in Furniture Industry in Lithuania | Živilė Stankevičiūtė, Živilė Stankevičiūtė, Eglė Staniškienė, Eglė Staniškienė, Joana Ramanauskaitė, Joana Ramanauskaitė |
| 13 | 2019 | Impact of Taqwa (Islamic piety) on employee happiness: A study of Pakistan's banking sector | Raj Maham, Raj Maham, Omar Khalid Bhatti, Omar Khalid Bhatti |
| 14 | 2020 | Meaning of "employee happiness" within the context of complex organisations? An explanatory review on the UAE labour force | Vic Benuyenah, Vic Benuyenah, Bharti Pandya, Bharti Pandya |
| 15 | 2020 | Influence of Telecommuting on Work-life Balance and Employee Happiness: An Empirical Study of Sri Lankan Employees | K. I. Uresha, K. I. Uresha |
| 16 | 2020 | Measuring Instruments for Human Resource Management and Employee Happiness | K. I. Uresha, K. I. Uresha |
| 17 | 2020 | Investigating the Mediating Effect of Organizational Innovation on the Relationship Between Smart Government Usage and Employee Happiness | Rashed Alshamsi, Rashed Alshamsi, Ali Ameen, Ali Ameen, Ali Ameen, Osama Isaa, Osama Isaa |
| 18 | 2008 | Workaholism, Burnout, and Work Engagement: Three of a Kind or Three Different Kinds of Employee Well-being? | Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Toon W. Taris, Toon W. Taris, Willem van Rhenen, Willem van Rhenen |
| 19 | 2018 | Leadership behaviour and employee well-being: An integrated review and a future research agenda | Ilke Inceoglu, Ilke Inceoglu, Geoffrey Thomas, Geoff Thomas, Chris W. L. Chu, Chris W. L. Chu, David Plans, David Plans, Alexandra Gerbasi, Alexandra Gerbasi |
| 20 | 2020 | Effects of internal service quality on nurses' job satisfaction, commitment | Muhammad Ibrahim Abdullah, Muhammad Ibrahim |

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| | | and performance: Mediating role of employee well-being. | Abdullah,Muhammad Ibrahim Abdullah,Muhammad Ibrahim Abdullah,Dechun Huang,Dechun Huang,Dechun Huang,Dechun Huang,Muddassar Sarfraz,Muddassar Sarfraz,Larisa Ivaşcu,Larisa Ivascu,Larisa Ivascu,Amir Riaz,Amir Riaz |
| 21 | 2019 | Mindfulness training improves employee well-being: A randomized controlled trial. | Jeremiah Slutsky, Jeremiah Slutsky, Brian Chin, Brian Chin, Julianna Raye, Julianna Raye, J. David Creswell, John David Creswell |
| 22 | 2019 | Job demands-resources: a gender Perspective on Employee Well-being and resilience in retail stores in China | Qihai Huang,Qihai Huang,Yipeng Liu,Yijun Xing,Yijun Xing,Yijun Xing,Yijun Xing,Jos Gamble,Jos Gamble |
| 23 | 2019 | Socially Responsible Human Resources Management, Perceived Organizational Morality, and Employee Well-being | Moustafa Abdelmotaleb,Moustafa Abdelmotaleb,Sudhir K. Saha,Sudhir K. Saha |
| 24 | 2020 | Social Job Stressors Can Foster Employee Well-Being: Introducing the Concept of Social Challenge Stressors | Marcel Kern,Marcel Kern,Clara Heissler,Clara Heissler,Dieter Zapf,Dieter Zapf |
| 25 | 2020 | Antecedents and mechanism of employee well-being for social sustainability: A sequential mediation | Ghulam Abid,Ghulam Abid,Saira Ahmed,Saira Ahmed,Saira Ahmed,Saira Ahmed,Natasha Saman Elahi,Natasha Saman Elahi,Sehrish Ilyas,Sehrish Ilyas,Sehrish Ilyas,Sehrish Ilyas |
| 26 | | The Impact of Perceived Psychological Contract Breach, Abusive Supervision, and Silence on Employee Well-being | J. Morsch,Nyenrode |
| 27 | 2020 | Spiritual leadership and work-family conflict: mediating effects of employee well-being | William D. Hunsaker,William D. Hunsaker,William D. Hunsaker,William D. Hunsaker |
| 28 | 2021 | Research on the Impact of Work Flexibility on Employee Happiness—Based on the Perspective of Ecological Balance Theory | Wenxuan Xing,Wenxuan Xing,Xinwen Zhang,Xinwen Zhang |
| 29 | 2021 | A CONFIRMATORY FACTORS ANALYSIS OF THE HAPPINESS AT THE WORKPLACE IN PROMOTING EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATION | Essa Yousuf Majid Al Suwaidi |
| 30 | 2017 | Human resource management and employee well-being: towards a new analytic framework | David Guest, David Guest |

Research Content

Conceptual Development of Employee Happiness

Employee happiness refers to the state of satisfaction, joy, and overall well-being experienced by employees in the work environment. Wilson (1967) suggested that meeting needs is an important source of happiness. Deci and Ryan (1985); Warr (1987); Ryff and Keyes (1995); Ryff and Singer (1998) proposed that employee happiness is the psychological experience of having needs satisfied or the process by which employees, through their efforts in the work environment, explore their potential, realize their self-worth, and ultimately experience satisfaction.

Some scholars argue that happiness is not merely a psychological feeling but rather a complex concept. Diener (1984) emphasizes that happiness is not just a short-term emotional experience or a satisfaction evaluation of specific aspects but a complex concept that includes emotions, cognition, and overall assessment. This definition highlights the diversity and complexity of happiness, emphasizing that it is an overall psychological state involving multiple dimensions and factors. Similarly, Waterman (1993) suggests that happiness differs from joy, which is often seen as a short-term, transient emotional experience, a momentary, surface-level emotional experience. Happiness, on the other hand, involves an individual's overall life status and long-term psychological experiences, stemming from an overall evaluation of one's life. Happiness can be seen as a more enduring, stable, and intrinsic state.

Furthermore, some scholars argue that the definition of employee happiness is too narrow and should integrate positive and negative emotions experienced by individuals in the workplace (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Bakker and Oerlemans, 2012). With further research, more scholars believe that employee happiness should be a comprehensive indicator. Grebner et al (2005) suggest that employee happiness is a comprehensive quality indicator that employees experience and exercise in their work. Ilies et al (2007) emphasize the importance of not only focusing on employees' work-related states but also including factors such as health status and psychological experiences at the non-work level (life level). Fisher (2010) suggests that work happiness is the specific manifestation of subjective happiness in specific work situations, particularly evident in cognitive evaluations and emotional experiences. Jain and Sharma (2019) emphasize the combination of individuals' positive emotions towards organizational culture, job involvement, income, and team relationships after taking on all job responsibilities. Kirpik (2020) defines employee happiness as satisfaction with work or well-being, covering employees' satisfaction and happiness with various aspects of the work environment, job tasks, compensation benefits, work-life balance, and other aspects of personal life. Employee happiness not only focuses on the work level but also includes the influence of other aspects of life on employee happiness. This may include factors such as personal quality of life, family relationships, health status, social circles, and personal development.

Past Research on Employee Happiness

In this study, particular attention is paid to the antecedent variables of employee happiness and the outcome variables resulting from employee happiness, to gain insight into employees' psychological states and emotional experiences in the workplace, thereby assisting organizations in better managing human resources, improving employee performance, and achieving the mutual development of organizations and employees.

Antecedent Variables of Employee Happiness

Employee happiness, as a multidimensional concept, is influenced by various factors. There is a close relationship between employee happiness and satisfaction with compensation. Compensation not only represents recognition of the value of employees' work but is also an important way to meet employees' basic needs. When employees feel that their compensation is proportional to their efforts, they are more motivated and have a greater sense of identification with their work, thereby enhancing job performance. This recognition of the value of employees can enhance their self-esteem and confidence, positively impacting individual happiness. Several scholars have shown through research that there is a positive correlation between salary and happiness, as well as life satisfaction (Sakarji et al., 2022b; Mureşan et al., 2021; Wijaya & Rezeki, 2020b).

Good relationships with colleagues are closely related to employee happiness. Good interpersonal relationships help establish a positive work environment, making it easier for employees to feel comfortable and joyful at work. A good working atmosphere helps reduce work stress. Interpersonal relationships not only affect individuals' emotional states and psychological health in the work environment but also directly influence work efficiency and overall work experience (Haar et al., 2019). Good interpersonal relationships can also enhance individuals' sense of belonging and job satisfaction. When employees feel friendly cooperation with colleagues and cohesion within teams, they are more willing to stay in their current jobs and show higher levels of commitment and loyalty to their work. This sense of belonging and identification contributes to increasing employee happiness (Reuter et al., 2020).

Maintaining a balance between work and life is crucial for employee happiness. A good work-life balance helps alleviate employees' work stress and fatigue. When employees can effectively allocate time and energy to meet the needs of work and personal life, they can maintain physical and mental health, thereby enhancing employee happiness (Majumder & Biswas, 2023). Work-life balance has a positive impact on employees' physical and mental health and family relationships. Employees can have more time to take care of their families or pursue personal interests, which helps strengthen family happiness (Kanimozhi & A, 2023).

Job satisfaction with career development has an important and positive impact on employee happiness. When employees feel recognized and supported in their career development, they tend to be more satisfied and happy. Good job satisfaction with career development can inspire employees' work motivation and enthusiasm (Heriyanti & Krisma, 2022b). When employees see their work achievements being recognized, they will be more motivated and proactive in their work, while also enhancing their confidence and hope for the future. This positive attitude helps enhance happiness and life satisfaction.

Outcome Variables of Employee Happiness

Employee happiness has a positive impact on organizational performance, with highly happy employees exhibiting higher engagement and work efficiency (Biggadike et al., 2023). Sikandar and Sikandar (2023) suggest that sustained engagement, happiness, and satisfaction in the workplace have a positive effect on health, thereby enhancing the productivity and performance of employees within the organization. Thompson and Bruk-Lee (2020) demonstrate that employee happiness largely acts as a mediator between job demands and

organizational outcomes (including organizational commitment). Employees with high levels of happiness tend to be more actively engaged in work, demonstrating higher productivity and loyalty (Alzain et al., 2023). Oyelakin et al (2022) point out that job happiness has a positive and significant impact on organizational commitment, shaping employees' loyalty and commitment to the company to a large extent. Choudhury et al (2022) further confirm a significant positive relationship between employee happiness and organizational commitment. Research indicates that organizational commitment is a key driver of workplace happiness (Algarni & Alemeri, 2023). Establishing a positive, supportive work environment, paying attention to employee happiness and needs, and providing development opportunities and recognition can enhance employees' loyalty and commitment to the company. This positive organizational commitment helps improve employee job performance and contributes to the company's long-term stability and development (Azmy & Wiadi, 2023; Helu et al., 2023; Larmanda et al., 2021).

There is a close relationship between employee happiness and turnover intention. From the perspective of employees, when they feel satisfied and happy at work and are satisfied with the work environment, they perceive sufficient satisfaction and recognition in their work, making them more likely to develop high loyalty to the job and the company, which reduces their intention to leave (Köklü, 2023e). From the organization's perspective, considering and focusing on employee happiness can not only enhance employee happiness and team performance but also reduce turnover intention (Biggadike et al., 2023). Employee happiness is negatively correlated with turnover intention. When employees feel happy and satisfied, they are more inclined to have positive emotional connections to their work and organization, thus they are less likely to seek other job opportunities or leave their current positions hastily (Romão et al., 2022; Al-Serhan et al., 2021b; Omar & Noordin, 2014).

Research Conclusion

The study of employee happiness holds significant implications and insights for organizational management and individual well-being. Firstly, a thorough understanding of the essence of employee happiness and its influencing factors assists organizations in grasping employees' needs and expectations, thereby enabling the adoption of effective management measures to enhance organizational performance and competitiveness. Secondly, focusing on employee happiness can foster the creation of a positive and healthy work environment within organizations, enhancing employee job satisfaction and loyalty while reducing turnover rates and associated costs. Furthermore, the enhancement of employee happiness also contributes to the improvement of individuals' physical and mental well-being and quality of life, thereby promoting the development of social harmony and stability.

Summary and Outlook

Through the collection and analysis of a vast array of literature, a systematic review of the definition and influencing factors of employee happiness has been conducted, providing a comprehensive background and theoretical foundation for research in this field. Summarizing the main research areas and findings of employee happiness studies helps researchers understand the current status and significant achievements in this field, thereby providing references for further research.

Although this review adopts a broad search method, it mainly focuses on summarizing the antecedents and consequences variables of studying employee happiness. Employee

happiness is a complex concept influenced by various factors such as individual differences, cultural background, and work environment. Therefore, this paper cannot cover all factors that may affect employee happiness, leaving room for future research to explore further.

In future research, deeper exploration and study can be conducted in the following areas. Firstly, further investigation can be made into the relationship between employee happiness and individuals, and teams, as well as its characteristics and manifestations in different cultural backgrounds. Secondly, interdisciplinary research methods can be employed, integrating theories and methods from psychology, sociology, and other disciplines to gain a deeper understanding of the essence and influencing mechanisms of employee happiness. Additionally, attention can be directed towards emerging research areas and methods, such as big data analysis, the application of artificial intelligence technology in studying employee happiness, etc., to provide new ideas and methods for enhancing employee happiness and improving organizational management.

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