

Happiness at Work Through Different Theoretical Perspectives: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study investigates the evolving significance of happiness at work (HAW), a multidimensional construct encompassing job satisfaction, engagement, meaningful work, quality of work life, and overall employee well-being. By synthesising existing evidence, the review highlights how supportive organisational practices, personal psychological resources, and meaningful work experiences contribute to positive employee and organisational outcomes. A systematic literature review combined with a bibliometric analysis was conducted using the SCOPUS database, covering publications from 1991 to 2025, resulting in 132 relevant studies. VOSviewer software was employed to map publication trends, influential authors, collaborative networks, journals, and country-level contributions in a systematic literature review of 73 studies. The findings reveal substantial growth in HAW research, yet also indicate fragmentation in conceptualisation and limited integration across perspectives. The review underscores the need for a deeper examination of happiness at work from managerial and cross-cultural perspectives, particularly in collectivist contexts.

Keywords: Happiness at work (HAW), quality of work life (QWL), workplace happiness, work happiness, work well-being & life satisfaction.

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1. Introduction

The role of the workplace has changed a lot with the introduction of globalisation; now work is not only a source of income but also a source of professional identity and personal satisfaction, which increases the importance of well-being in the workplace (Spreitzer et al., 2021; Kniffin et al., 2021). In today's competitive environment employees are the face of the organization, customers do not interact with the organization they deal with the employees and a depressed employee can ruin the brand image of the organization (Homburg et al., 2020; Bakker & Demerouti, 2020) and research trends on employee well-being shows an upward trend in employee turnover intention and one of the reasons behind such issues is employees are not satisfied with their quality of work life (De Simone et al., 2022; Sirgy, 2021).

The concept of happiness has been always remains a topic of interest for philosopher, sociologists and psychologists to explore human behaviour, in general happiness is the feeling of joy. According to Fisher (2010) happiness is the experience of pleasant emotions and moods. However, the concept is extensively explored in psychology, but it has gained importance with the introduction of positive psychology, which focuses on positive affect (Warr, 2020). Even at present, while researchers talk about workplace stress, anxiety, and depression, they do not talk about happiness. Happiness at work is the integration of two words, "Happiness" and "Work"; happiness is the experience of pleasant emotions and moods such as joy, pride, contentment, etc (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Work refers to the emotional and mental activity that facilitates the production of goods and services (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2023).

Happy employees are more productive, have low or no turnover intention and absenteeism rate, high customer satisfaction review, more cooperative, and less likely to gets sick as compared to unhappy workforce, employee well-being not only affect employee's performance but it also affects an organizational performance (Krekel et al., 2020; Inceoglu et al., 2021).

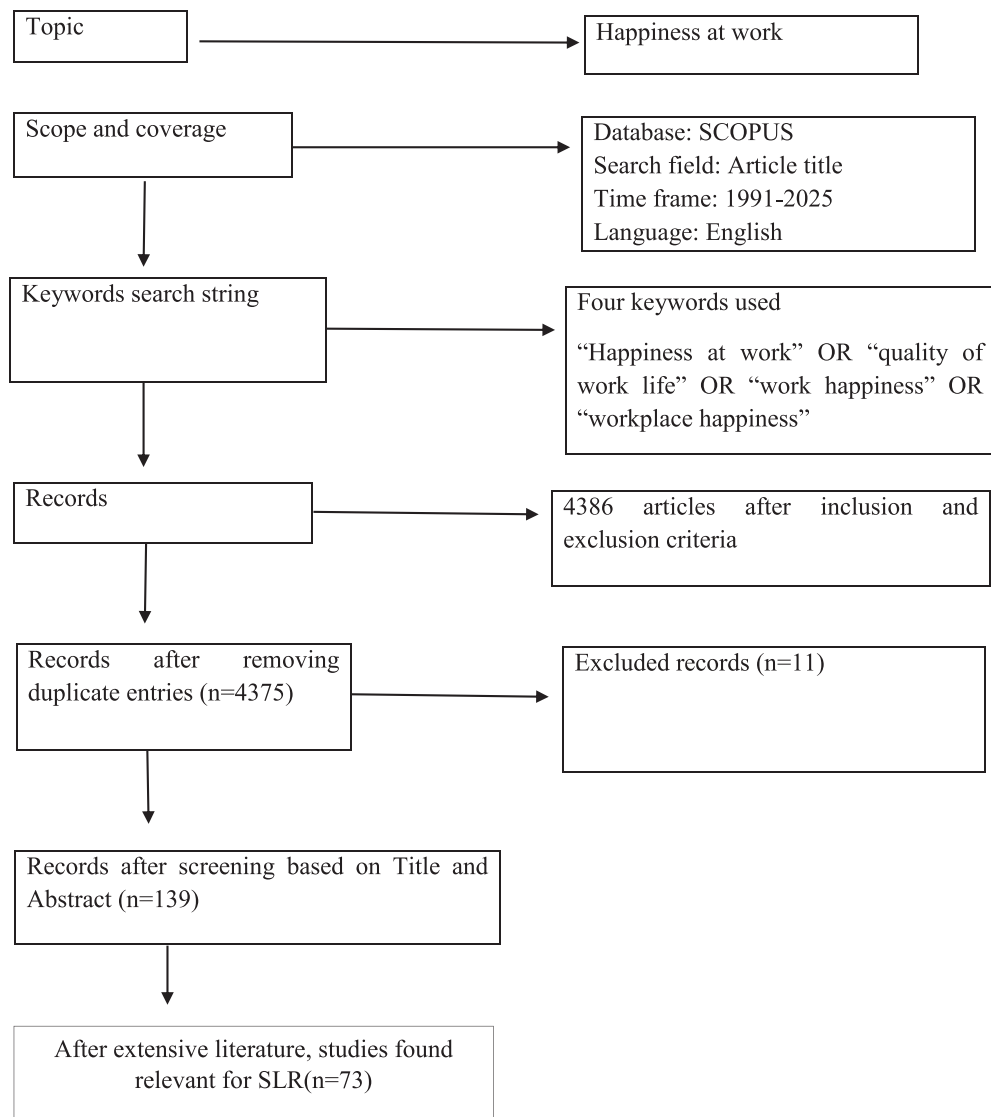
1.1. Research Gap

The review highlights different perspectives on HAW, while the existing literature lacks a unified investigation that captures the multifaceted nature of workplace happiness over an extended period. This study also highlights the various antecedents and consequences of HAW, and the review explores the different dimensions of happiness at work using a systematic literature review based on the "PRISMA" framework. To address the research gap, two research questions have been framed.

The study aims to address two broad research objectives: first, how the literature defines the different perspectives on Happiness at Work (HAW). Second, what is the contextual research from 1991 to 2025?

1.2. Components and Method

The current study is based on scholarly articles about workplace happiness. Data were gathered using the SCOPUS database. A sizable database of peer-reviewed material is SCOPUS. Using the four key terms "happiness at work" OR "quality of work life" OR "work happiness" OR "workplace happiness" for the 32-year time frame from 1991 to 2025. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) were employed to ensure more reliable results. The study included English-language articles on psychology, art and the humanities, administration, and business management; sources unrelated to these topics were omitted. In the end, 4386 articles were exported from the database. After screening 384 articles, publications on workplace well-being, employee well-being, job satisfaction, engagement, and employee outcomes were identified as pertinent to the bibliometric study. These additional articles were screened with the "Topic" and "Abstract" filters.

Figure 1*Flow diagram of search strategy*

2. Literature review

2.1. Philosophical perspective of happiness

The concept of happiness is extensively explored in psychology, sociology, and economics, but it originated in philosophy; Plato explored happiness as self-control. He has defined the best way of achieving happiness as not being affected by external changes, and it is always good to depend on yourself. Connecting to the same ancient scholar, Aristotle has defined happiness as the "holy grail of human existence, the be-all and end-all of life" According to him, "*Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence*". Further, the Greek philosopher Democritus (460 BC–370 BC) described happiness as the 'case of mind', not a consequence of favourable fate. This philosophy introduced a subjective approach to happiness: happiness is not dependent on circumstances; it is people's way of looking at the situation. Supporting Plato's approach, Epicurus advanced hedonism, describing happiness as the experience of pleasure and the absence of anxiety and fear. According to Epicurus, pleasure and virtue are interdependent; if a person lives

life with virtue, they will experience the feeling of pleasure. Following the same approach of hedonism, Jeremy Bentham suggested that “maximum surplus of pleasure over pain is the cardinal goal of human striving”

2.2. Psychological Perspective

Happiness has been explored with the development of positive psychology, in traditional psychological theory, and medication has been limited to dealing with negative symptoms such as mental illness and distress. However, the new science of happiness is concerned with interventions to understand, build, and sustain positive emotions and feelings such as pleasure, enjoyment, gratitude, and compassion. Seligman (2011) described two theories of happiness, namely authentic happiness and the PERMA model. According to the PERMA theory, employees can be happy if they experience pleasure, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment while performing tasks.

Extending the concept, Seligman has defined authentic happiness as a pleasant life, which refers to a sense of enjoyment in life, which is hedonic in nature, a feeling of contentment and pride with the past, experience of pleasure in the present and faith, hope and optimism toward the future, which makes life pleasant. The good life refers to the degree of engagement in life with activities, family, friends and hobbies. The meaningful life refers to the degree of affiliation in which a person derives purpose and meaning by serving society. People who score high on three different considerations are considered to have a full life. This view on happiness supports Aristotle’s philosophy of life. (Peterson et al., 2005). Csikszentmihalyi (2000) described happiness as the experience of “flow,” which means being immersed in an activity to the extent that the rest of the world becomes disconnected. This optimal experience is the source of a pleasurable state. (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Diener & Lucas (2000) explored subjective well-being as happiness, while subjective well-being has defined as the cognitive and affective evaluation of life, it is a multifaceted concept which consists high positive effect, low degree of negative effects and satisfaction with life (Diener & Lucas, 2003) and facilitating the

eudaimonic philosophy of happiness, Ryff and Keyes (1995) formulate psychological well-being as the combination of six components: self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, relatedness, environmental mastery, and purpose in life.

2.3. Happiness and Well-being

In literature, several authors described happiness and well-being as synonyms (Diener & Diener, 1996; Diener & Seligman, 2002) but Seligman in his famous book “Flourish” differentiate between happiness and well-being, according to author happiness is a just a component of well-being but do not define it, well-being is like a weather which composed with different elements such as rain, cloud, humidity, temperature, and wind speed each element is a real thing but unable to define weather similarly experience of positive emotion, engagement and meaningfulness contribute to well-being but unable to define it because well-being is much wider construct apart from the happiness component it affected by the personal development, emotional well-being, physical health and social well-being. Happiness is the subjective evaluation of one’s life; hence, it is also known as subjective well-being. From a philosophical point of view, “Eudaimonic” and “Hedonic” are two components of well-being, and optimal well-being is achieved through both eudaimonic and hedonic components (Gallagher et al., 2009); happiness refers only to the hedonic component. Eudaimonic refers to the feeling of self-actualisation, and hedonic describes the experience of emotions. Hedonic pleasure is momentary in nature; it includes affective and cognitive components, while eudaimonic happiness is the experience of flow, which is more sustainable in nature. From a psychological point of view, one’s optimal well-being is the integration of subjective and psychological well-being. Studies have defined subjective well-being (SWB) as cognitive and affective evaluations or judgements of overall life satisfaction and specialised domain satisfaction (Diener et al., 2003), which is assessed through positive emotions, meaningfulness and engagement (Diener & Seligman, 2002). It includes momentary and preceding-year evaluations of quality of life (Diener et al., 2003). The focus of SWB is the maximisation of positive affect, such as joy, affection and pride, and the minimisation of unpleasant experiences, such as

shame, guilt, sadness and anxiety (Myers & Diener, 1995).

On the other hand, psychological well-being (PWB) is centred on self-actualisation; it represents an individual's mindset and psychological functioning. The study of psychological well-being includes the six components, such as evaluation of self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationship and environmental mastery (ability to control one's environment and life) (Ryff, 1989). Differentiating the concept from subjective well-being is a complex process because a strong relationship exists between PWB and SWB (Keyes et al., 2002). In the circumplex model, PWB is described as an individual's subjective evaluation of life. (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). It shows that a person's level of PWB is associated with how they perceive themselves to be happy or sad. However, the literature review on subjective well-being shows that personality characteristics and cultural differences have a significant impact on one's SWB. (Diener et al., 2003).

2.4. Happiness at work

Happiness at work nothing but an enjoyment of one's own work and this enjoyment is not a momentary state, it is a process that keeps employee intrinsically motivated and engaged at the workplace (Farooq et al., 2024), searching of employee happiness at work always remains topic of interest still HAW is not clearly defined the reason is employee happiness considered as proxy of job satisfaction, HAW is an umbrella construct which is far beyond job satisfaction, employee engagement and organizational commitment (Fisher, 2010), it is an experience of flow which connects a person soul with his work (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and employees finds themselves happy when love their work, even in the most difficult circumstances, employees who enjoy their work will discover a new way to complete the assignment successfully. they find literature described happiness at work as construct in its own (Salas-Vallina et al., 2018), HAW reviewed as synonyms with QWL, study of (Sirgy et al., 2001) defined QWL as "employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the

workplace." happiness at work is a psychological state where a person experience more positive emotions and moods, which is ensured by healthy workplace practices such as opportunity to utilise skill, achieve personal goals with organizational goals, employee growth & development, employee involvement and recognition of employee efforts (Grawitch et al., 2006) It is not only satisfaction at job per se it's a spillover affect where satisfaction of one dimension affected by another domain satisfaction for example satisfaction at work have significant impact on non-working life and vice-versa, hence an employee bring happiness from home to work and work to home, it facilitate the premise that job satisfaction and life satisfaction have a sync in between and according to the study of (Oishi & Lucas, 2003) cognitive and affective are two key components of employee happiness. According to Watson (1973), sources of happiness at work include adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy work practices, opportunities for growth and development, social integration at work, and the social relevance of work life (Walton, 1973).

2.5. HAW as job satisfaction

According to Locke (1969), job satisfaction is "*a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job.*" It is one's perception of his job and the premise based on the fit between employee expectations and job characteristics: how well an employee's employment meets his needs in terms of what he considers vital. The lower the variation, the more satisfied the employee will be with their job. The set of characteristics that make an employee satisfied may not be a reason for satisfaction for others; satisfaction is highly subjective, and satisfied employees are productive. The satisfaction came from the kind of attitude employees have toward their jobs, and it depends on the working conditions and social cues (perception of coworker influence the perception about a job) (Staw, 1986), The source of job satisfaction is the job conditions (Warr, 2007), and the predictors of job satisfaction include pay, nature of the work, promotional opportunities at work and supervisory support (Fisher, 2010; Salas-Vallina et al., 2018) If employees feel they are not being paid enough for their tasks, this could lead to dissatisfaction and result

in negative work behaviour. It is a cognitive evaluation of one's job. According to Hackman & Oldham (1975) model the predictors of work outcomes are three psychological states found at workplace such as experienced meaningfulness of the work (how much one's job meaningful, valuable and worthwhile for an employee), experienced responsibility for the work outcomes (the degree of freedom employees have to take decision) and knowledge of results (wider job knowledge) and these psychological states can be achieved if five core job dimensions employee have such as skill variety (number of skill required to perform job effectively) task identity (number of task which formed a single task) task significance(how particular task affect lives of people), feedback and autonomy.

2.6. HAW as Affect

Affective well-being refers to an employee's emotional well-being; it focuses on two important states: moods and emotions. Moods tend to be more general and vague, while emotions are fleeting and focus on specific contexts, and are more stable than moods. HAW ensure the maximization of positive moods and emotions such as joy, interest and pride, employees who experience frequent positive affect founds more successful in their carrier (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) and shows advancement in task performance, organizations citizenship behaviour and counter-productive behaviour and feeling of anxiety positively influence employees withdrawal behaviour (Kaplan et al., 2009), researchers also explored employee happiness as the "dispositional affect" having previous job impact on present job, consistency is found in employees job attitude, workers consider themselves happy when they experience presence of positive dispositional affect and absence of negative dispositional affect (diener et.al, 1999), (Staw, 1986) and feeling of negative dispositional affect positively related to employee's turnover (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Emotional exhaustion is a key component of burnout or stressful conditions (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), and it is negatively related to work outcomes. Happiness as positive affect was explored through the introduction of the Circumplex framework, which presents emotions as a circular structure. It shows several emotions with two bipolar ends: on

the upper vertical axis, pleasant emotions; on the lower vertical axis, unpleasant emotions; and on the horizontal axis, intensity of affect. A 45-degree movement results in new dimensions of positive and negative emotions. (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). Affective measures are a better predictor of work performance (Fisher, 2003)

2.7. HAW as life satisfaction

The ultimate goal of human practice is to live a happy life, which people continually strive for. Studies have described happiness and life satisfaction as synonyms (Veenhoven, 1991) because they reflect self-assessments of the quality of one's life as a whole. However, happiness or well-being is a broader concept, and life satisfaction is one of its components. Happiness is the cognitive and affective evaluation of life, while life satisfaction is the cognitive measure of conditions (Glatzer, 1991). A comparative study of employment status and happiness levels shows that working people are happier in life, but this does not mean they are always happy; it is not employment status per se, but the degree of work satisfaction that is affected by employees' approach to their work. A person's orientation toward happiness and life satisfaction can be distinguished as empty or full. Being honest with oneself by identifying virtues and cultivating them (a eudaimonic approach) is true happiness or a full life. (Peterson et al., 2005) Moreover, this meaningfulness in life is the source of satisfaction, and work is the mediator that makes your life meaningful. Happiness at work, stemming from life satisfaction, reflects a spillover effect: one who is satisfied with his job may experience greater life satisfaction. Leisure, health, personal relationships, and pay are basic predictors of one's life satisfaction, and variance in job satisfaction also affects domain satisfaction in life. (Saari & Judge, 2004).

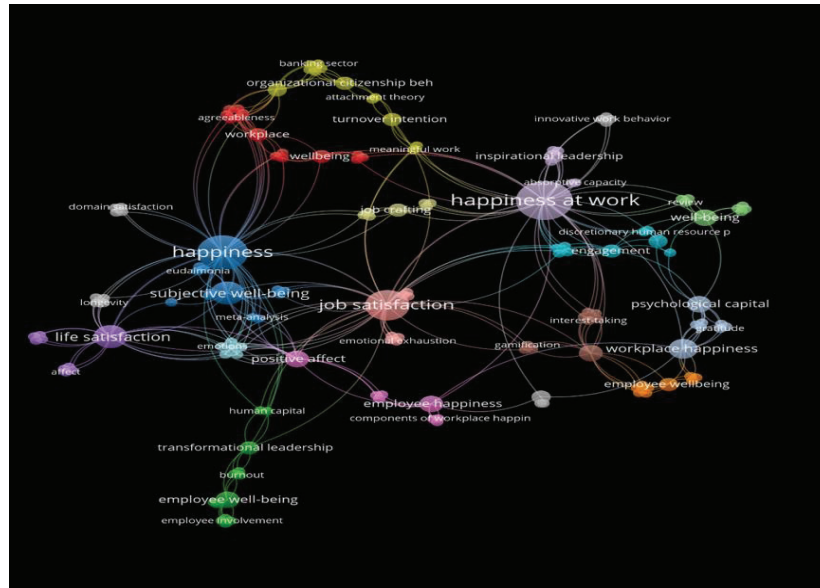
3. Key Word Analysis

Keyword analysis reflects the buzzwords evolving around the concept and describes the linkages between variables. To explore the concept in early-stage bibliometric analysis conducted on 139 studies using the VOS viewer 1.6.18 software. The visualised map of co-occurring keywords shows that the HAW

is explored across different broad areas, defined as clusters on the map, as shown in the output image and table.

Figure 2

Co-occurrence keyword analysis



Cluster Analysis

These 7 clusters have been further classified into 3 broad categories: central, supportive, and contextual clusters. Based on the above synthesis, clusters 1 and 2 (Table 1) are referred to as the central cluster, as they directly focus on what happiness at work *is* (well-being, satisfaction, meaningful work). Clusters 3, 4, and 5 (table 1), named as the supportive, because they act as drivers and mediators of happiness, and clusters 7 and 8 (table 1), named as the contextual, show how meaningful work and positive citizenship behaviours reduce turnover and boost well-being.

Table 1

Cluster Analysis

Clusters	Items	Core Link	Relation
Cluster 1- Happiness, Subjective Well-Being & Eudaimonia (Blue)	happiness, subjective well-being, eudaimonia, positive affect, life satisfaction.	This cluster forms the heart of the network, representing the conceptual foundation of happiness at work.	These are the primary psychological constructs that define how employees perceive happiness and satisfaction in the workplace.
Cluster-2 Happiness at Work & Job Satisfaction (Lavender)	happiness at work, job satisfaction, job crafting, meaning of work, inspirational leadership	Represents the direct concept of happiness at work and its association with job satisfaction.	Highlights how meaningful work and leadership influence employee satisfaction and overall happiness.
Cluster-3 Employee Well-being & Involvement (Green)	employee well-being, burnout, employee involvement, healthy workplace, psychological health.	Focuses on employees' health, involvement, and mental well-being.	Demonstrates how reducing burnout and promoting mental health creates a foundation for happiness at work.

Cluster-4 Psychological Capital & Workplace Happiness (Grey)	psychological capital, workplace happiness, resilience, adaptive performance, engagement.	Shows the psychological resources employees possess to thrive at work.	Psychological capital (hope, optimism, resilience) is a strong predictor of happiness at work.
Cluster 5- personality traits and workplace emotions (Red)	agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional intelligence, openness	How Big Five personality traits and emotional culture influence employees at work	Positive personality traits enhance interpersonal relations and adaptability, boosting workplace happiness.
Cluster-6 Employee Happiness & Positive Affect (Purple)	employee happiness, positive affect, job characteristics theory, components of workplace happiness.	Directly related to employees' emotional experiences at work.	Positive emotional experiences lead to greater job satisfaction and happiness at work.
Cluster-7 Meaningful work, Citizenship & turnover (yellow)	Meaningful work, purpose in life, job performance, turnover intention, ostracism, organisational citizenship	How meaningful work and positive citizenship behaviours reduce turnover and boost well-being.	Employees who find meaning in their work and engage in OCB feel valued, are less likely to leave, and experience greater workplace happiness.

Study Relevance

For the systematic literature review, a total of 76 papers were found relevant to the study, of which 27 are theoretical in nature, describing the phenomenon, and 49 are empirical in nature. The theoretical paper includes 20 descriptive papers and 7 conceptual studies. Furthermore, out of 49 empirical studies, 42 are cross-sectional, 6 are longitudinal, and 1 is experimental. In this extensive literature review, no single study has explored all the dimensions of HAW systematically. This study will be the first in the domain to provide a structure for presenting the literature developed to date.

Table 2

Most productive Journals

S.NO	Journal name	No of documents	Reference papers
1	Current Psychology	2	(Basińska & Rozkwitalska, 2022) ,
2	Journal of Social Psychology	1	(Roney & Soicher, 2021)
3	Human Relations	1	(Bryson, Forth, & Stokes, 2017)
4	Journal of Occupational Health Psychology	4	(Arnold, 2017), (Buruck et al., 2016), (Tims et al., 2013), (Nielsen & Cleal, 2010)
5	Psychological Assessment	2	(Disabato et al., 2016), (Zou et al., 2013)
6	Work and Stress	2	(Zou, Schimmack, & Gere, 2013), (Nielsen et al., 2017)
7	Social Indicators Research	3	(Sirgy et al., 2001), (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006), (Kapteyn et al., 2015)
8	Journal of Applied Psychology	5	(Hülshager et al., 2013) (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), (Berg et al., 2023), (Oerlemans & Bakker, 2018), (Richards & Schat, 2011)
9	Scandinavian Journal of Psychology	1	(Strobel et al., 2011)
10	Journal of Personality	1	(Gallagher et al., 2009)
11	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	2	(Ryff, 1989), (Waterman, 1993)
12	Journal of Happiness Studies	5	(Zelenski et al., 2008), (Veenhoven, 2008) (Brockmann et al., 2009), (Peterson et al., 2005), (Singh & Aggarwal, 2018)
13	Consulting Psychology Journal	2	(Cropanzano & Wright, 2001), (Grawitch et al., 2006)
14	American psychologist	3	(Seligman et al., 2005), (Ryan & Deci, 2000), (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

15	California Management Review	1	(Staw, 1986)
16	International Journal of Workplace Health Management	1	(Hosie & Sevastos, 2009)
17	European Research on Management and Business Economics	1	(Salas-Vallina et al., 2018)
18	International Journal of Management Reviews	2	(Fisher, 2010), (Van de Voorde et al., 2012)
19	Annual Review of Psychology	1	(Ryan & Deci, 2001)
20	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	2	(Ryff, 1989), (Waterman, 1993)
21	Journal of Management	2	(Erdogan et al., 2012), (Youssef & Luthans, 2007)
22	Journal of Economic Psychology	1	(Easterlin, 2006)
23	Psychological Science	2	(Diener & Seligman, 2002), (Myers & Diener, 1995)
24	Sloan Management Review	1	(Watson, 1973)
25	Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology	1	(Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997)
26	Applied Research in Quality of Life	1	(Bassi et al., 2013)
27	Frontiers in Psychology	4	(Garg et al., 2022), (Rodrigues & Junça Silva, 2024), (Fröhlich et al., 2025), (Salas-Vallina et al., 2020)
28	Management Decision	1	(Jaswal et al., 2024)
29	BMC Psychology	3	(Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2025), (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024), (Gogia et al., 2024)
30	International Journal of Organisational Analysis	1	(Farooq et al., 2024)
31	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	1	(Charles-Leija et al., 2023)
32	Global Business and Organisational Excellence	1	(Koul, 2025)
33	International Journal of Innovation Science	1	(Almazrouei et al., 2024)
34	Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration	1	(Hamid, 2025)
35	International Journal of Work Innovation	1	(Bhalla et al., 2025)
36	Evidence-based HRM	1	(Hamid & Kundi, 2024)
37	Personnel Review	2	(Aboramadan & Kundi, 2023), (Salas-Vallina et al., 2017)
38	Corporate Communications: An International Journal	1	(Ravina Ripoll et al., 2023)
39	Revista de Ciencias Sociales	1	(Canal Carrillo et al., 2023)
	Sustainability	1	(Salvadorinho & Teixeira, 2023)
40	Employee relation	1	(Salas-Vallina & Fernández, 2017)
41	Journal of Management & Organisation	1	(Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2021)

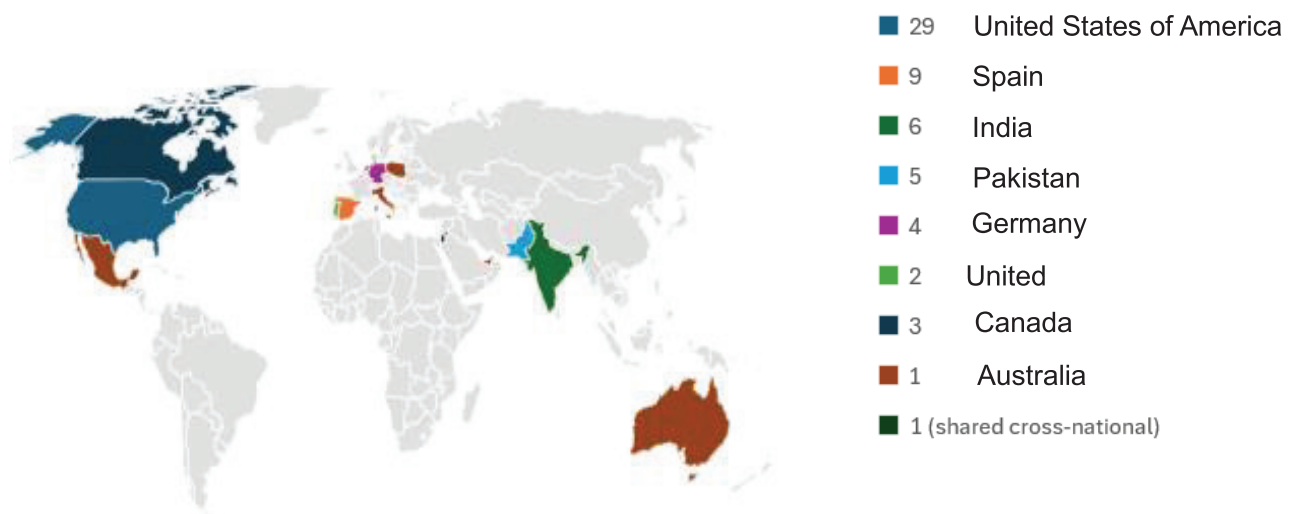
Among these 41 journals, the most prominent, based on the number of documents, are the Journal of Happiness Studies, Journal of Applied Psychology, Frontiers in Psychology, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, Social Indicators Research, American Psychologist, and BMC Psychology.

The Authorship Analysis

Based on the full analysis, the study concludes that Youssef C.M. and Luthans F. (Table 3) are the most productive authors, as they were found to be the most relevant for further studies; however, the number of documents is the same. Although the citation count for Youssef C.M., Luthans F. is higher still, Fisher's article "Happiness at work" is considered the landmark study in this field, as the study synthesises the concept at different levels. Similarly, Salas-Vallina also has many relevant articles in this field.

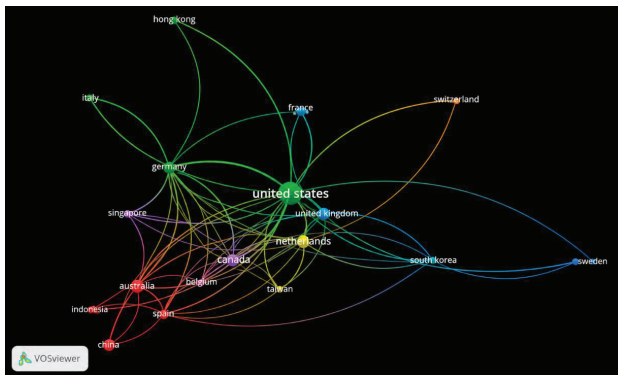
Table 3*Most Productive Authors*

Order	Authors name	Citation	No of documents
1	Youssef C.M., Luthans F.	1183	1
2	Hülshager U.R., Alberts H.J.E.M., Feinholdt A., Lang J.W.B.	1011	1
3	Fisher C.D.	723	1
4	Van De Voorde K., Paauwe J., Van Veldhoven M.	648	1
5	Sirgy M.J., Efraty D., Siegel P., Lee D.-J.	535	1

Figure 2*Most Productive Countries: Contextual analysis of HAW*

The contextual analysis (Figure 2) of this study, from a continental perspective, suggests a disengagement from existing research. The most productive countries, based on the number of publications, are the United States of America, with 29 studies. This presents the region as the central hub in research. The contribution of Europe is moderate, with 25 articles explored across the region: the United Kingdom (4), the Netherlands (3), Spain (11), Belgium (0), Germany (1), Denmark (2), and Poland (1). Although Europe comprises contributions from several countries, each country's individual contribution is very low on a scale, resulting in a dispersed and modest collectivist effect. In contrast, Asia presents a growing research presence with India (6) and Pakistan (5). The most underrepresented continent is Oceania, as Australia is the only contributor with 1 study. Across 76 studies, 7 articles collected data from more than 2 countries. The overall analysis reflects a Western predominance in the literature and an imbalance in contextual research.

This outcome supports the results of the bibliometric analysis of 131 studies, as shown in the output image (Figure 3), and highlights the contributions of different countries and the strength of coordination among authors across countries. Most of the documents are from the United States (29) and have strong ties to Germany (1), Canada (2), the U.K. (4), and the Netherlands (3).

Figure 3*Co-authorship relationship between countries*

4. Limitations of the Study

Despite this study providing comprehensive insight, it is still not free from limitations. First, the complete analysis of this study is based on the SCOPUS database. Other indexing platforms, such as Web of Science, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, SAGE, and ProQuest, were not included in the study. Second, only the journal's published articles are included in the study, meaning it excludes conference papers, dissertations, book chapters, and other grey literature that can also contribute meaningful insights.

5. Findings and Conclusion

Overall, the review of this study shows a steady, significant growth in scholarly interest in Happiness at Work (HAW) over the past three decades, with a recent intensification. This upward trend reflects the growing acknowledgement of employee well-being as a managerial concern for organisations. However, despite this steady growth, the review highlighted that from a management and organisational behaviour perspective, the conceptualisation of HAW appears fragmented and theoretically underexplored.

A primary finding of the study is the recognition of conceptual ambiguity surrounding HAW, as the current literature frequently conflates it with broader notions such as general happiness, subjective well-being, and work satisfaction. Although these concepts are interconnected, the lack of conceptual boundaries freezes the HAW's unique identity as an independent field of study. This further leads

to confusion in both empirical measurement and theoretical development.

The study also highlights the importance of distinguishing HAW from related concepts, such as Quality of Work Life (QWL). While HAW represents employees' subjective emotional and psychological experiences at work, QWL mainly concentrates on structural and organisational elements. QWL serves as a precursor to HAW, but the presence of favourable working conditions does not necessarily guarantee employee happiness. Existing studies failed to differentiate it. This lack of understanding creates ambivalence in practical application. Another contribution of the study is the identification of contextual gaps, particularly the dominance of Western settings; research in Asian and emerging-economy contexts is underrepresented. This contextual limit restricts the generalizability and cultural relevance of findings.

The review of the study also concludes with limited empirical clarity on the definition and measurement of HAW within business and organisational contexts. A lack of standardised scales and validated measurement frameworks leads to varied operationalisations across investigations. This variation creates comparability issues, making it difficult to synthesise findings or build cumulative knowledge. The study's key contribution is the first comprehensive systematic review, which provides an in-depth, consolidated examination of every core dimension of HAW across more than thirty years of research, by assembling, assessing and analysing the core concept and contextual gaps. This review provides a foundation for developing a more coherent and empirically grounded understanding of workplace happiness.

Overall, the study provides a robust foundation for future research by advocating for greater conceptual clarity, standardised instruments, and cross-cultural perspectives. It necessitates the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives and the development of empirically grounded, conceptually coherent models of workplace pleasure. This research advances HAW as a distinct and viable area of study, with substantial implications for organisational theory and practice.

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