

Review Article 01

The Role of Purpose-Driven Work Environments in Enhancing Employee Happiness: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This systematic literature review investigates the impact of purpose-driven work environments on employee satisfaction, with an emphasis on studies that were published between 2010 and 2024. Happiness, a subject that is constantly changing in the fields of psychology and organizational behavior, is demonstrated to be essential for enhancing workplace engagement, job performance, and life satisfaction. The paper examines the impact of both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of happiness in the workplace. Hedonic happiness is characterized by pleasure and satisfaction, while eudaimonic happiness is characterized by meaningful and fulfilling engagement. The review was guided by the PRISMA framework, which was used to select 116 pertinent articles from a diverse array of fields, such as environmental science, sociology, and human resource management. Insights into the impact of purpose-driven workplaces on employee well-being are provided by descriptive analyses, which emphasize research trends, key contributing countries, and prominent authors. The findings demonstrate that purpose-driven environments promote employee contentment by addressing intrinsic motivations, enhancing job satisfaction, and promoting social responsibility. This review also identifies prospective research directions to address the theoretical gaps, knowledge gaps, methodological gaps and contextual gaps in understanding how purpose-driven organizational cultures can be systematically implemented to ensure employee happiness and productivity.

Keywords: Employee happiness, employee well-being, organizational behavior, workplace

Introduction

The subject of happiness is gaining significant attention in various academic disciplines. Happiness is a psychological or affective condition of optimal health marked by positive or enjoyable experience ranging from satisfaction to profound delight (Diener & Seligman, 2002). The concept of happiness seems to be more highly esteemed than the pursuit of wealth, moral virtue (Sundriyal & Kumar, 2014). Happy individuals are characterized by regular experiences of pleasant feelings such as joy, interest, and pride, contrasted with occasional negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety, and rage (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). From ancient Greek philosophy to post-enlightenment western-European moral philosophy to contemporary quality-of-life and well-being studies in social, political, and economic sciences, happiness has been a subject of interest for many centuries. Various philosophers and social scientists have provided multiple definitions for the concept of happiness (Fernando & Perera, 2022). According to the Greeks, happiness is not primarily derived from receiving sensual pleasure, honors, or money, although these factors may play a role in a larger pattern of positive elements. Aristotle defines happiness as the ultimate goal in life, and to attain it, individuals must engage in productive endeavors inside reputable institutions (Gavin & Mason, 2004). Opatha (2019) has described happiness as a sensation characterized by gratification, contentment, or the experience of being satisfied. Further, it defines happiness as having two distinct connotations: (1) a feeling of pleasure, and (2) a profound sense of fulfillment in one's life (Opatha, 2019).

Happiness is consistently associated with favorable life and work results, including overall life satisfaction, optimal health conditions, exceptional work performance, and unwavering devotion (Dissanayaka et al., 2019; Nadesan & Gowthaman, 2021). A study employing an experimental approach has demonstrated that employees who are happier exhibit higher levels of productivity compared to their less happy colleagues (Oswald et al., 2015). Overall happiness refers to the extent to which an individual assesses their own life as a whole in a good manner or the extent to which they prefer the life they are living (Veenhoven, 2017). Diener et al. (2009) explored the relationship between happiness and the frequency of happy and negative emotions. He found that individuals who perceive themselves as successful tend to experience greater happiness.

According to Bhattacharjee & Bhattacharjee (2010) employee happiness encompasses an individual's level of contentment and fulfillment in both their professional and personal lives, as well as their subjective state of well-being within the workplace. Employee happiness is characterized as the combination of enjoyment, engagement, and significance (Seligman, 2002). Employee happiness, characterized by feelings of delight, is present in all fundamental categories of human emotions (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Workplace happiness, or happiness at work, involves effectively utilizing resources, overcoming hurdles, actively acknowledging successes, and managing setbacks to enhance performance and reach one's full potential (Pryce-Jones & Lutterbie, 2010). Employee happiness is described as the state of experiencing pleasure, satisfaction, or contentment (Opatha, 2019). The concept of workplace happiness revolves around individuals fulfilling their profound emotional and psychological requirements through their employment activities (Bhatia & Mohsin, 2020; Judge & Ilies, 2004). Workplace happiness refers to how individuals perceive their level of satisfaction, emotional connection, and positive sentiments towards their job and the organization they work for (Wesarat et al., 2015). This phrase is intricately linked to the notion of subjective well-being in the job. Consequently, numerous investigations employed them interchangeably (Fisher, 2010; Francis & Crea, 2017; Kroll, 2014; Kun et al., 2017).

In order to ensure clarity, coherence, and comprehensive understanding of the extensive and continuously growing literature on employee happiness, it is imperative to conduct a systematic review (Getzler & Mathers, 2022). This analysis will facilitate the synthesis of current knowledge, identification of research problems, and formulation of evidence-based conclusions regarding the development and influence of happiness at workplace. Furthermore, the current study is crucial for comprehending the current state of employee happiness by consolidating an extensive body of literature covering the years 2010 to 2024.

Research Methodology

This research offers a comprehensive analysis of the literature on employee happiness, with a particular focus on how organizations boost employee happiness. This assessment encompasses a wide variety of fields, including economics, sociology, environmental science, and human resource management. The systematic literature review procedure commenced with the documentation of the criteria used to include or exclude articles, as well as the methodology employed for analysis. This approach is similar to the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA), which facilitates the objective selection and analysis of papers (Liberati et al., 2009). Consequently, the most pertinent articles to be reviewed were identified through identification, screening, eligibility verification, and inclusion determination.

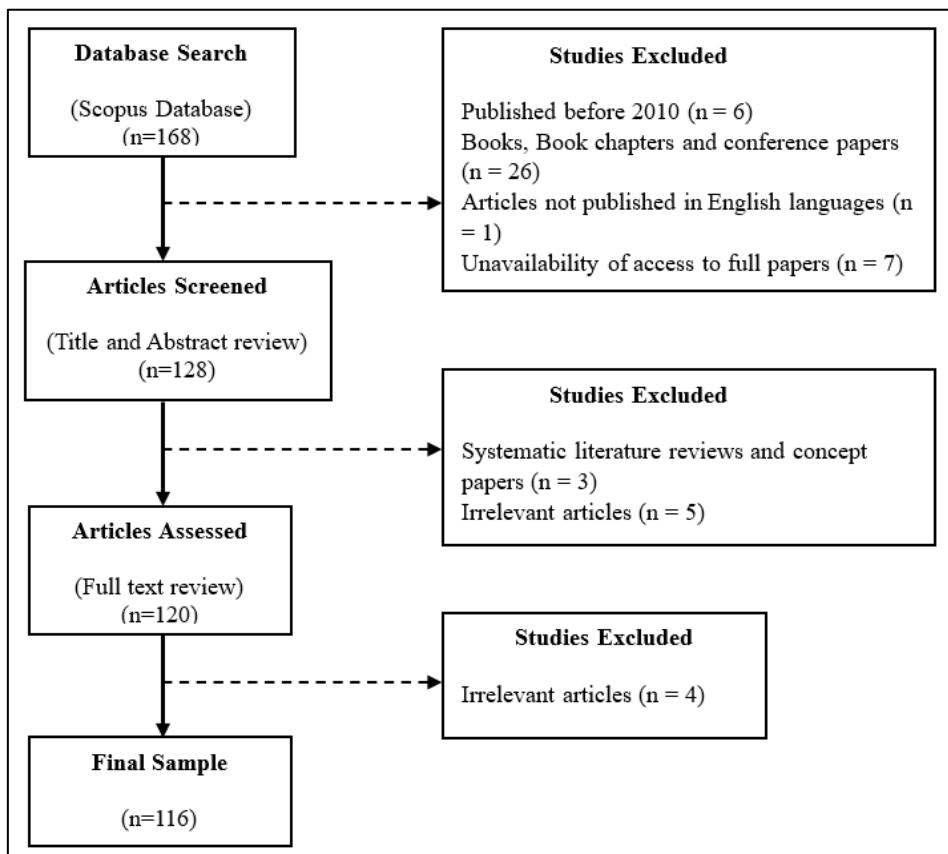


Figure 1: Articles selection strategy
Source: Developed by the author (2024)

Results and Interpretations

Descriptive Analysis

In order to detect patterns, strengths, and shortcomings in prior research, it is crucial to map the literature using descriptive analysis (Fernando & Janadari, 2024). Therefore, this section provides a descriptive analysis of 116 articles published between 2010-2024.

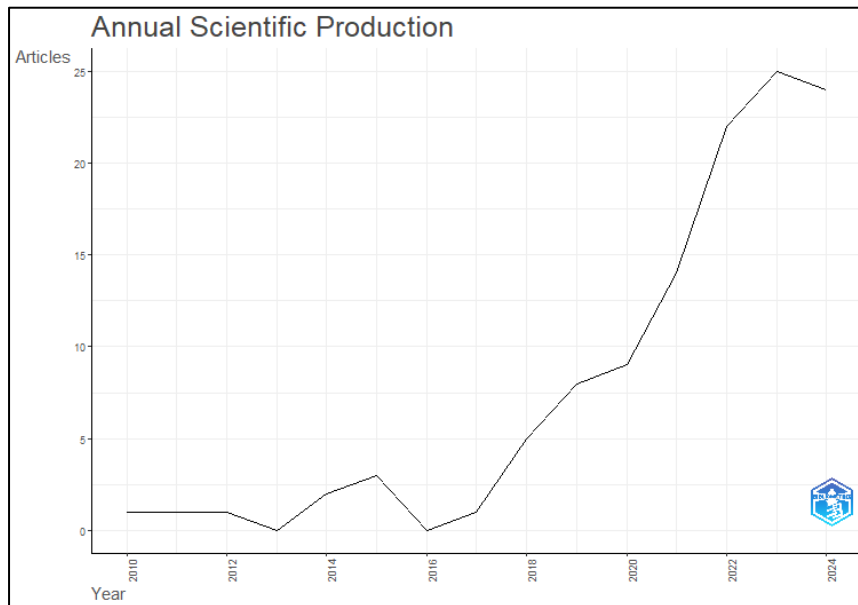


Figure 2: Year-wise publications
Source: Data output from bibliometric analysis (2024)

Figure 2 illustrates a notable increase in scientific output starting from 2017, marked by a steep upward trend after 2020, reaching its highest point in 2023 with more than 25 publications. These findings suggest a significant increase in research productivity in recent years, after a period of comparatively little activity from 2010 to 2016.

Country Analysis

Table 1 displays information on the research publication metrics of different countries, including the overall number of publications, the total number of citations, and the average number of citations per research article. India is the top contributor in terms of overall publications with 70, followed by Malaysia with 39. Spain and the USA, on the other hand, rank 19 and 18 publications, respectively. Nevertheless, although having a smaller number of publications, the United States surpasses other countries in terms of research influence, with 282 citations and a remarkable average of 40.3 citations per manuscript. Portugal likewise exhibits significant research impact, with a smaller number of publications (10) but an exceptional average of 60.3 citations per article, the highest among all the countries included.

Table 1: Country-wise Publications

Country	Total Publications	Total Citations	Avg. Article Citations
India	70	167	7
Malaysia	39	19	2.7
Spain	19	133	33.2
Indonesia	18	3	1.5
USA	18	282	40.3
United Arab Emirates	15	62	15.5
UK	14	100	14.3
China	13	7	2.3
Italy	13	5	5
Pakistan	11	18	4.5
Portugal	10	181	60.3
Turkey	9	1	1
Colombia	8	23	11.5
Saudi Arabia	8	2	1
Jordan	5	6	6
Mexico	5	25	25
Korea	5	7	3.5
Netherlands	4	3	3
Thailand	4	2	1

Source: Developed by the researcher (2024)

Spain and the UK exhibit a significant research impact, with average citations per scholarly paper of 33.2 and 14.3, respectively. In contrast, nations such as India and Malaysia, although generating a greater quantity of publications, have a comparatively lower average of 7 and 2.7 citations per article. This suggests that there is scope for enhancing the effect and visibility of their research. Indonesia, China, and Turkey, characterized by low overall citations and average article citations, may be making a minimal contribution to worldwide academic influence, despite their research productivity.

Source Analysis

The figure below displays the most relevant sources based on the number of documents published. It shows that four sources have published three documents each, while others have published two documents. The data highlights that no single source overwhelmingly dominates, with a relatively even distribution of documents across these key sources.

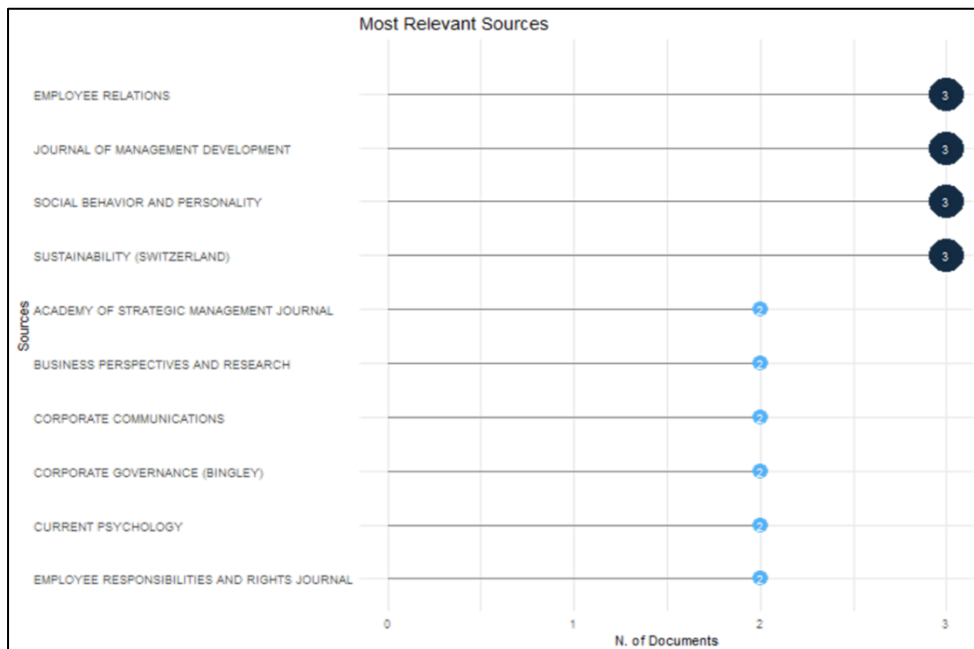


Figure 3: Source Analysis
Source: Data output from bibliometric analysis (2024)

Table 2: Journal-wise Publications

Journal	h index	g index	m index	TC	NP	PY start
Employee Relations	3	3	0.214	174	3	2011
Sustainability (Switzerland)	3	3	0.750	35	3	2021
Academy of Strategic Management Journal	2	2	0.500	9	2	2021
Corporate Communications	2	2	0.181	39	2	2014
Corporate Governance (Bingley)	2	2	0.666	37	2	2022
Journal of Management Development	2	3	2	13	3	2024
Polish Journal of Management Studies	2	2	0.500	23	2	2021
Administrative Sciences	1	1	0.333	14	1	2022
Advances in Developing Human Resources	1	1	0.142	42	1	2018
Analisi	1	1	0.333	2	1	2022

Source: Developed by the researcher (2024)

The table presents essential metrics for several scholarly journals, such as the h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), number of publications (NP), and the year of tracking initiated (PV_start). Employee Relations and Sustainability (Switzerland) is distinguished

among the journals by its significant h-index and g-index of 3, which indicate their robust production and citation influence. Sustainability in Switzerland has the greatest m-index of 0.75, suggesting a sustained impact throughout time. Based on its substantial total citations (174) and number of publications (3), Employee Relations emerges as the most prominent journal in this list, having been monitored since 2011. Recently established journals, such as Journal of Management Development (2024) and Corporate Governance (Bingley) (2022), are starting to establish their presence in academic circles yet demonstrate encouraging initial performance indicators. Overall, Employee Relations stands out as the most well-established and influential journal, while others like as Sustainability (Switzerland) demonstrate significant potential.

Author Analysis

Figure 4 displays the authors with the highest relevance indicated by the quantity of papers they have published. Siregar S is the primary author of 4 papers that have made a significant and constructive contribution to the subject. Next in line are Bruna E.M, Peciak R, and Khasawneh M, each having authored three published scholarly articles. Each of the following authors, namely Al-Jumaily I.S, Abdul S, Al-Malki A.A, Al-Fahmi A.A, Aleshinloye K, and Alina A, has made two contributions. The observed trend indicates a rather concentrated cohort of prominent contributors who are spearheading research in the topic.

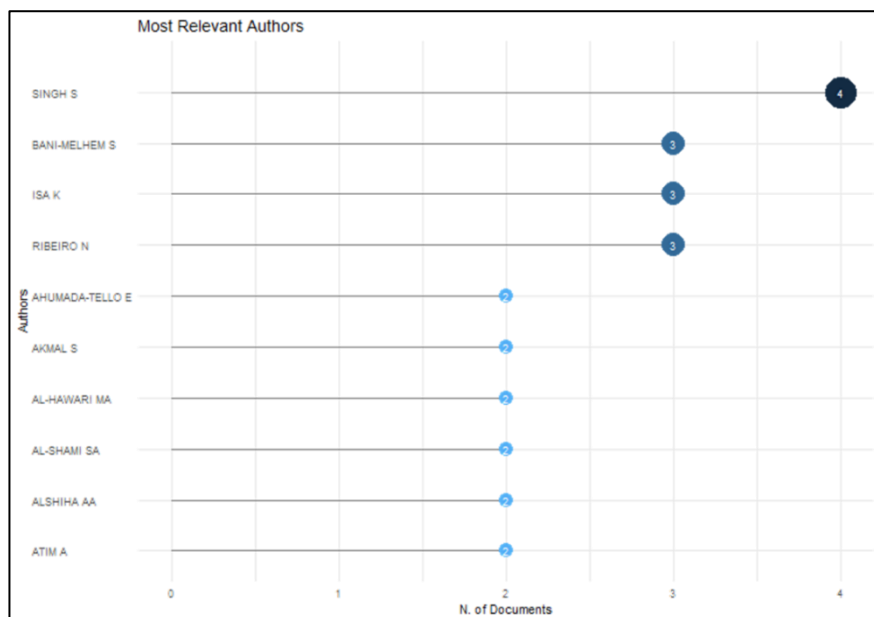


Figure 4: Author Analysis

Source: Data output from bibliometric analysis (2024)

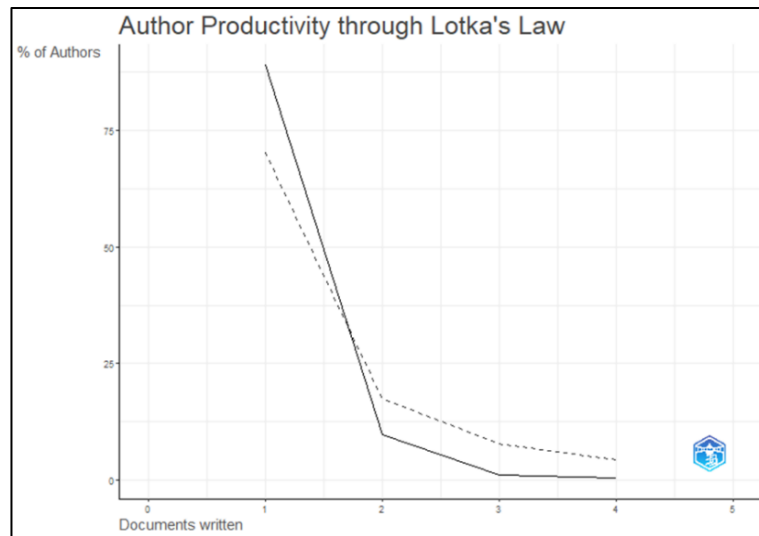


Figure 5: Author Productivity through Lotka's Law
Source: Data output from bibliometric analysis (2024)

The above figure depicts author productivity in accordance with Lotka's Law, which posits that a minority of authors provide the bulk of the work, while the majority contribute a smaller number of documents. The sharp rise in the curve suggests that about 75% of authors have authored a single document, while a smaller proportion have contributed two or more. Increasing the number of documents leads to a substantial decrease in the proportion of contributing writers. The graph illustrates the principle that scholarly contributions are predominantly concentrated among a small number of prolific authors, whilst the majority contribute infrequently. This demonstrates representative trends in scholarly output.

Three-Fields Plot

The following figure depicts a Sankey diagram that visually displays correlation among countries, authors, and research subjects in the domain of workplace happiness. On the left side, the countries depicted include Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Spain, and Portugal, with a significant presence from India and other nations such as the USA, UAE, and Colombia. At the centre, prominent scholars such as Singh S, Isa K, Iglesias-Sánchez PP, and Jambrino-Maldonado E are emphasized. The scope of their work encompasses a range of subjects, including happiness, workplace satisfaction, well-being, job performance, and organizational commitment. The visualization aptly illustrates the flow of research production from particular countries to prominent authors, focusing on topics such as employee satisfaction, job involvement, and human resource personnel management. The exposition highlights the worldwide academic network and multidisciplinary emphasis on workplace happiness and employee engagement.

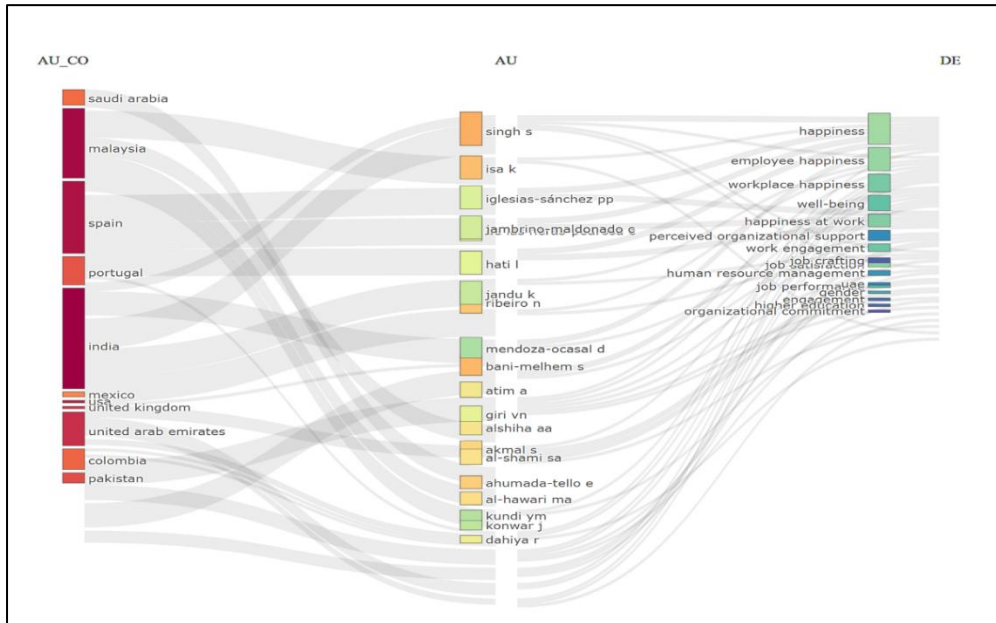


Figure 6: Three-Fields Plot

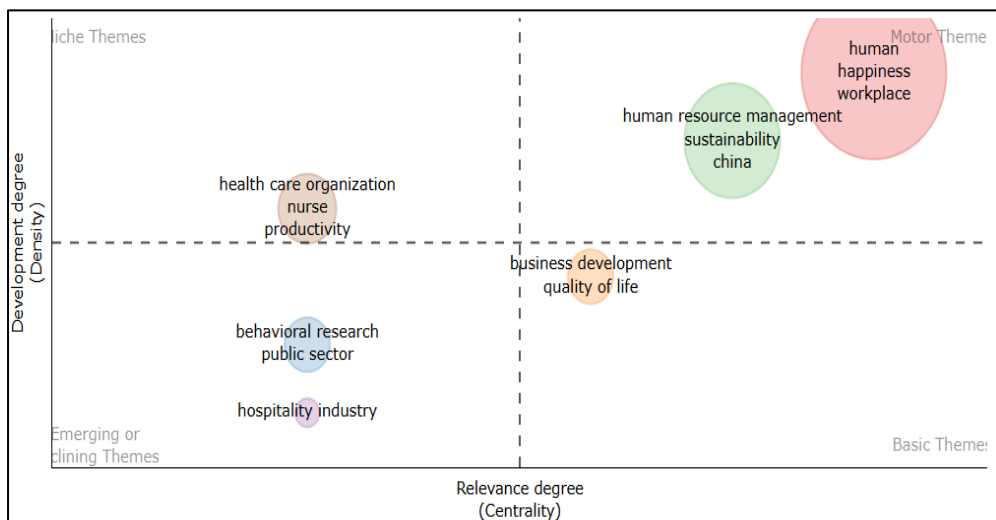
Source: Data output from bibliometric analysis (2024)

Keywords Analysis

Table 3: Keywords Analysis

Words	Occurrences
Employee Happiness	21
Workplace Happiness	15
Job Satisfaction	6
Citizenship Behaviour	4
Job Performance	4
Mediating Role	4
Social Responsibility	4
Healthcare Sector	3
Perceived Organizational	3
Public Organization	3
Analytical Study	2
Banking Sector	2
Corporate Social	2
Employee engagement	2

Source: Developed by the researcher (2024)



This strategic diagram divides themes into four quadrants: Motor, Basic, Niche, and Emerging or Declining Themes, based on their development degree (density) and relevance degree (centrality). The "human happiness workplace" is a well-developed and highly pertinent area in the Motor Themes quadrant, underscoring its significance as a central and dynamic topic in the research field. The Basic Themes consist of "business development" and "quality of life," which are primordial yet underdeveloped topics that are well-connected but may require additional research to become core themes. The Niche Themes quadrant includes topics such as "nurse productivity" and "health care organization," which are well-established and specialized but not fundamental to the broader discourse. Lastly, the "public sector," "hospitality industry," and "behavioral research" are among the Emerging or Declining Themes, which implies that these sectors may either be acquiring initial interest or losing relevance. This distribution underscores the importance of workplace happiness as a critical area, with other themes being either foundational, specialized, or at a nascent stage in the research landscape.

Keyword Co-occurrences



Figure 9: Keyword Co-occurrences
Source: Data output from bibliometric analysis (2024)

The concept of employee happiness is the focal point of this network visualization, with the clusters that surround it denoting related themes and subtopics. Three primary clusters are identified: one in blue, which is linked to topics such as "job satisfaction," "healthcare sector," and "leadership impact," indicating a focus on factors within organizational and leadership contexts that affect employee contentment. The red cluster contains terms such as "corporate social responsibility" and "promoting employee," which indicate the importance of organizational initiatives and social responsibility in cultivating a positive work environment. Finally, the green cluster emphasizes "workplace happiness" and motifs such as "citizenship behavior" and "mediating role," suggesting that workplace culture and employee engagement significantly influence workplace happiness. Together, these clusters indicate that employee contentment is multifaceted, influenced by the broader workplace culture, organizational

practices, and job satisfaction. This visualization emphasizes the interconnectedness of these factors in improving the overall well-being of employees.

Tree Map

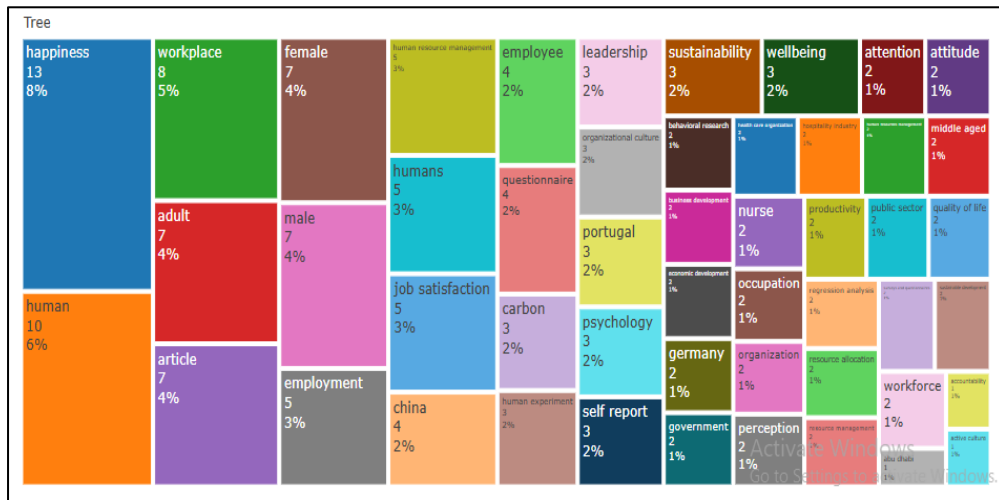


Figure 10: Tree Map
Source: Data output from bibliometric analysis (2024)

The frequency and relative importance of a variety of terms associated with workplace studies and employee satisfaction are illustrated in this tree map visualization. The main themes are the primary focus, as evidenced by the largest sections, which are "happiness" (8%), "human" (6%), and "workplace" (5%). Additionally, demographic factors such as "male," "female," and "adult" (each approximately 4%) are noteworthy terms. This implies that gender and age may be significant variables in this field of research. The concepts of "job satisfaction," "employment," and "employee" are fundamental to the well-being of employees and the work environment. Smaller but significant subjects such as "leadership," "sustainability," "wellbeing," and "psychology" suggest a fascination with the impact of organizational values, mental health, and management on workplace satisfaction. In the research, a global perspective is suggested by the use of geographical references (e.g., "Portugal," "China," "Germany"). In general, visualization underscores the multifaceted nature of employee satisfaction studies, with a particular emphasis on psychological, organizational, and demographic factors.

Discussion

The subject of happiness is gaining significant attention in various academic disciplines. The term "happy" first appeared in English in the late 14th century as an adjective, then later in the early 16th century as a noun. Both forms conveyed the idea of being fortunate and favored by luck (McMahon, 2004). The exploration of happiness from a psychological and philosophical perspective originated in China, India, and Greece some 2,500 years ago with the contributions of Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, and Aristotle. Notable similarities can be observed between the ideas of these philosophers and the contemporary "Science of Happiness" (Setton & Phil, 2024).

What is happiness?

Happiness is an intrinsic yet elusive concept that is subject to individual interpretation, with varying connotations depending on the circumstances (Silva et al., 2022). Happiness is contingent upon individuals' subjective evaluations and perceptions of their own lives (Bataineh, 2019). Happiness encompasses all positive factors that enhance the overall wellness and quality of life for both individuals and society (Veenhoven, 2012). Happiness manifests as a state of joyfulness, which appears to be present in all fundamental human emotions (Ranasinghe & Alwis, 2022) and experiencing happiness is crucial for every individual (Diener, 2000).

Happiness is a mental attitude that empowers individuals to take action to optimize their performance and reach their full potential (Pryce-Jones & Lindsay, 2014). Happiness is the state of experiencing positive emotions and feeling content at a given moment (Raibley, 2012). Happiness is the state of being satisfied or content with one's life. It is not determined by the presence or absence of certain emotions, but rather by the positive results of one's assessment when compared to particular criteria (Shin & Irvine, 2015). The subjective experience of happiness holds inherent value for the individual and is therefore assessed and pursued as a primary objective during one's entire lifespan (Tay et al., 2015). Happiness is a facet of one's quality of life that enhances overall well-being, encompassing attributes such as heightened creativity, robust physical well-being, substantial money, and a favorable work environment (Khoiriyah et al., 2020).

Happiness is a highly subjective concept. There are two overarching notions of happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic (Opatha & Uresha, 2020; Vidyapith, 2014). The hedonic notion focuses on subjective well-being and is characterized by heightened good emotions, reduced negative emotions, and increased overall life satisfaction (Diener & Lucas, 1999). Hedonic happiness refers to subjective well-being. According to Huta et al. (2012) Subjective well-being consists of two components: the affective component and the cognitive component. Opatha (2019) defines affective hedonic happiness as the extent to which individuals can increase pleasure and reduce pain in their lives. On the other hand, cognitive hedonic happiness refers to individuals' satisfaction with their overall life, including their positive feelings towards different aspects such as work, family, social interactions, education, and religion (Opatha, 2019). Conversely, the eudaimonic concept centers on psychological well-being and is specifically characterized by a sense of meaningfulness (McGregor & Little, 1998). Eudaimonic happiness is achieved by adhering to virtues and pursuing self-fulfillment (Opatha, 2019).

Factors of Happiness

Ashkanasy (2011) explored happiness as a topic of continuous investigation in the field of organizational behavior. He identified seven indicators of happiness: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, positive emotions, thriving and vigor, flow, and intrinsic motivation. These factors contribute to the attainment of competitive advantages within organizations. The happiness of an individual is impacted by both external and internal stimuli. External stimuli encompass factors such as income level, staff cohesion, societal recognition, and physical environment (Naghibakht et al., 2015; Othman et al., 2018; Roy & Konwar, 2020). Internal stimuli, in contrast, encompass feelings of joy, tranquility,

engagement, enthusiasm for life, and good emotions associated with internal contentment (Delle Fave et al., 2011; McMahon, 2004). Indeed, happiness can vary across employees, even when they are employed in the same business and utilize identical resources (Roy & Konwar, 2020).

Happiness is consistently associated with favorable life and work results, including overall life satisfaction, optimal health conditions, exceptional work performance, and unwavering devotion. A study employing an experimental approach has demonstrated that employees who are happier exhibit higher levels of productivity compared to their less happy colleagues (Oswald et al., 2015). Overall happiness refers to the extent to which an individual assesses their own life as a whole in a good manner or the extent to which they prefer the life they are living (Veenhoven, 2017). Diener et al. (2009), explored the relationship between happiness and the frequency of happy and negative emotions. He found that individuals who perceive themselves as successful tend to experience greater happiness.

Happiness is often perceived as a personal trait that individuals are accountable for. However, happiness can be a communal trait shaped by external factors outside the individual's control (Cloutier & Pfeiffer, 2015). Happiness is influenced by individual factors like personality, money, health, and perceived autonomy in making significant life decisions. Happiness is influenced by social characteristics like the level of trust in the community and political considerations such as the government's commitment to the rule of law. There is evidence suggesting that happiness is influenced by nature, either due to biophilia (passion for nature as a part of human nature) or the natural benefits supplied by the environment (Sachs, 2016).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The review emphasizes the substantial influence of purpose-driven work environments on organizational success and employee satisfaction. Research indicates that employees experience increased job satisfaction, enhanced well-being, and greater loyalty to the organization when they discover purpose and alignment with their values in the workplace. This systematic literature review demonstrates that happiness in the workplace is not limited to hedonic delight; it also encompasses eudaimonic principles, which provide employees with a profound sense of purpose and satisfaction in their work. The collective support of a positive organizational culture is consistently demonstrated by studies that demonstrate that happy employees are more productive, less likely to depart, and more engaged.

The analysis also emphasizes the differences across geographic regions, suggesting that the general principles of happiness are universally applicable, but cultural factors affect the specific factors that contribute to workplace satisfaction. Additionally, sectors such as healthcare and education serve as illustrations of the distinctive obstacles and solutions associated with fostering employee well-being. Limitations include the necessity of conducting additional longitudinal studies and employing a diverse sample of individuals to accurately document the long-term consequences of purpose-driven environments.

In general, the results emphasize the importance of management practices in the cultivation of a culture that is purpose-driven and promotes productivity and satisfaction. It is imperative for organizations to implement policies that encourage meaningful work experience as they increasingly acknowledge the importance of employee satisfaction. Future research should further explore sector-specific applications and the integration of emergent trends such as

remote work in order to establish resilient and adaptive organizational cultures that prioritize employee satisfaction.

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