Employee Happiness and its impact on Employee Performance: A Bibliometric Analysis

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
N/A	This research paper conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to explore the relationship between employee happiness and its impact on employee performance. By systematically reviewing academic literature from 2000 to 2025, the study identifies key trends, influential authors, institutions, and thematic clusters in this domain. Utilizing tools such as VOS viewer and Scopus, the analysis maps co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrences, and citation patterns. The findings reveal that employee happiness significantly influences productivity, engagement, and organizational outcomes, with emerging themes in workplace well-being, positive psychology, and organizational culture. The study provides insights for researchers and practitioners to advance theoretical frameworks and implement evidence-based strategies for enhancing employee performance through happiness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee happiness, otherwise theorized as job satisfaction, subjective well-being, or positive affect at work, has been a central construct in organizational studies because of its widespread impact on employee performance. With organizations operating in the global market, the need to increase productivity, foster innovation, and maintain talent has become more compelling. It is important to understand the relationship between employee happiness and performance because it informs organizational design that not only increases individual contribution but also organizational success. This bibliometric review seeks to integrate the research landscape and explore how employee happiness influences performance metrics such as productivity, creativity, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and trace trends, contributors, and future research avenues.

Employee well-being includes a variety of psychological states and attitudes that express an individual's emotional and cognitive experiences at work. Job satisfaction, a core construct, is an employee's satisfaction with work, including compensation, working conditions, and so on. Subjective well-being is more generic, expressing aspects of life happiness, positive affect, and absence of negative affect. Positive affect, a construct parallel to subjective well-being, is transient episodes of enthusiasm, joy, and interest, and can increase motivational levels

at work. Together, these constructs provide one with a complete picture of happiness and how it influences the way employees report going to work and the way employees behave in the organizational setting.

The connection between worker satisfaction and productivity has been extensively researched, and studies indicate that more satisfied workers are more productive, more innovative, and more committed. A landmark meta-analysis by Judge et al. (2001) established a moderate positive correlation between job satisfaction and job performance, refuting previous hypotheses of a loose correlation. Happier employees tend to exhibit higher levels of task performance, as they are more motivated to achieve organizational goals. Creativity, another critical performance metric, is enhanced by positive affect, which broadens cognitive flexibility and problem-solving capabilities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Organizational citizenship behaviour, as discretionary behaviour for the organization's good (e.g., assisting other employees, volunteering for extra assignments), is also linked to happiness, with happier employees more likely to be prosocial (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Growing emphasis on employee happiness is matched by organisational imperatives to address concerns such as excessive turnover, burnout, and disengagement. In a post-COVID-19 future, the transition to remote and hybrid work trends has increased the imperative for well-being among employees. Organisations that foster happiness can reduce absence, enhance retention, and develop resilient workforces that can cope with change (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

 Happy workers also build constructive organizational cultures, which appeal to top performers and build employer brand. With organizations increasingly realizing the strategic importance of human capital, happiness has emerged as a competitive advantage driver, affecting individual and organizational performance.

This study applies a bibliometric approach to map the research terrain of employee well-being and performance systematically. Unlike traditional narrative reviews involving qualitative interpretation, bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative, data-driven summary, exhibiting patterns of authorship, patterns of citation, and thematic evolution. Through screening many scholarly articles, this method determines milestone publications, prominent authors, and emerging trends and issues and provides a comprehensive summary of the literature. Bibliometric tools such as VOS viewer and Bibliometrics allow for visualization of co-authorship networks, keyword clusters, and patterns of citation and disclose intellectual structure and dynamics of the research field

The objectives of the present study are threefold:

1. Identify key publications, authors, and institutions: This involves pin- pointing the most influential works and contributors shaping the field. By examining citation counts and publication output, the study highlights foundational studies and leading research hubs, providing a benchmark for future scholarship.

2. Map thematic clusters and research trends: Through keyword co-occurrence and co-citation analyses, the study identifies dominant themes (e.g., job satisfaction, well-being) and tracks their evolution over time. This map shows how the domain has evolved from its formerly narrow confines to encompass more integrative frameworks like positive psychology and organizational culture.

3. Offer guidance on future research: By identifying gaps in the literature such as lack of   context or underutilized methodologies, this study sets forth a plan in relation to advancing theoretical and empirical-driven work. These involve looking at views from other cultures, examining the phenomenon in the long term and looking at how technology can contribute to happiness.

4. Scopus, a vast organizational behaviour, psychology, and management database, was employed to fetch peer-reviewed journal articles from the period between the years 2000 and 2025. This time frame encompasses the growth of the field within a 25-year range including landmarks like the advent of positive psychology and the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic phenomenon. The significance of the study comes from its ability to synthesize fragmented literatures—these are organizational and psychological literatures—and give direct lines of action to researchers and practitioners.

5. While narrative reviews provide richness and qualitative information, they are most often impaired by bias or low participant numbers. Bibliometric analysis supplements these reviews by providing a scalable, objective method to deal with large datasets. For instance, by analyzing 1,234 articles, this study captures a broader spectrum of research than traditional reviews, revealing hidden patterns and interdisciplinary connections. The use of visualization tools enhances interpretability, making complex relationships (e.g., co-authorship networks) accessible to diverse audiences.

Practically, the findings inform organizational strategies for enhancing happiness, such as implementing flexible work arrangements, recognition programs, and leadership training. These interventions can improve performance metrics like productivity and retention, aligning with the job demands-resources model. Theoretically, the study contributes to integrative frameworks that combine psychological constructs (e.g., positive affect) with organizational outcomes (e.g., OCB). By

mapping thematic clusters, it identifies mediating mechanisms, such as engagement and resilience, that warrant further exploration.

The paper is structured as follows: the Methodology section outlines the data collection and analysis processes, detailing the use of Scopus and bibliometric tools. The Results section presents findings on publication trends, influential contributors, and thematic clusters. The Discussion interprets these findings, highlighting practical and theoretical implications. The Future Research Directions section proposes avenues for advancing the field, and the Conclusion summarizes the study's contributions. This introduction sets the stage for a com- prehensive bibliometric analysis, offering a foundation for understanding the critical role of employee happiness in driving performance.

2. METHODOLOGY

The employee happiness and performance literature were analyzed through a bibliometric approach in this study. As a quantitative method, bibliometric analysis allows scientific domains to be mapped through authorship, citation, and thematic development patterns of a given work. Unlike traditional narrative reviews, bibliometric methods offer data-driven approaches that reveal concealed trends, impactful researchers, and emergent subdisciplines that are often overlooked. This method is preferable for large-scale literature because of its capacity to leverage computation in mapping networks and measuring scholarly production. The data collection processes, tools of analysis, and metrics in the accomplishment of the objectives of the study are described in the following subsections.

2.1 Data Collection

Scopus was used as the main source of data for this bibliometric study. It is a multidisciplinary database that indexes peer-reviewed journals in management, psychology, and organizational behavior and offers abstracts and citation information. The rationale for choosing Scopus is the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the data it offers together with its strong indexing and ease of handling with bibliometric tools. The process of gathering data involved a systematic search strategy that sought to identify relevant publications while minimizing the impact of irrelevant studies. The search term was developed from concepts related to employee performance and happiness. The pre-established words encompassed "employee happiness," "job satisfaction," "workplace well-being," "employee engagement," "positive affect," "employee performance," "productivity," and "organizational citizenship behavior." These words were combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to facilitate a thorough query. For example, the search query was: ("employee happiness" or "job satisfaction" or "workplace well-being") and ("employee performance or "productivity." The search was accurate since it was limited to specified fields like title, abstract, and keywords within Scopus.

A clear set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was used to filter the dataset. Contemporary research published within the last 25 years was captured by setting the temporal limit to between 1st January 2000 and 9th May 2025 Only peer-reviewed journals published in English were selected, as these represent high quality and verified researched data. Papers presented at conferences, book chapters, and publications in other languages were excluded for focus and consistency. Additional screening was done to check relevance to the topic which ensured that the articles discussed the correlation between employee happiness (and related constructs) and performance assessment metrics.

After such procedures, the search yielded 1,234 publications in the specified scope that constituted a data set for analysis. To enhance the trustworthiness of the dataset, automatic checking of 100 articles for topic validity was conducted. This process ensured that the search query successfully identified studies consistent with research goals. The dataset was finally exported from Scopus in a bibliometric software-compatible format, including metadata like author names, institution of affiliation, publication years, journal names, abstracts, keywords, and citation numbers.

Data Analysis

The bibliometric analysis was done with the help of two complementary software tools: VOS viewer and the Bibliometrix R-package. The choice of these tools was based on their strong ability to visualize networks and calculate descriptive statistics, respectively. Together, they presented a complete framework for analyzing the dataset and responding to the study's goals.

VOS viewer

VOS viewer, a popular bibliometric tool, was utilized to generate and visualize co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and citation networks. While VOS viewer relies on the distance-based method of mapping relationships in which proximity between nodes (e.g., authors, keywords) indicates closeness of association (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

The following analyses were performed using VOS viewer:

- Co-authorship Networks: They were employed to chart collaborations between authors and institutions, identifying dominant research communities and dominant authors. Five or more papers by an author or institution were needed to identify prolific authors.

- Keyword Co-occurrence Networks: This method identified thematic clusters by keyword frequency and author-specified key-word co-occurrence. Keywords that occurred in 10 or more papers were used only for robustness purposes.

- Citation and Co-citation Networks: Citation networks identified the most cited publications, and co-citation analysis uncovered clusters of articles that were consistently cited together, pointing to common theoretical foundations.

VOS viewer's clustering algorithm grouped related nodes into thematic clusters, which were visualized using network maps. These maps provided insights into the structure and evolution of the research field.

- Bibliometrix R-Package

The Bibliometrix R-package complemented VOSviewer by providing descriptive statistics and temporal analyses. Bibliometrix is an open-source tool designed for bibliometric studies, offering functions to analyze publication trends, author productivity, and journal impact (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)

Key analyses included:

- Publication and Citation Counts: These metrics quantified the growth of the field and the impact of individual publications. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) was calculated to assess publication trends over time.

- Author and Institutional Productivity: This analysis identified the most prolific authors and institutions, based on the number of publications and citations received.

- Keyword Frequency and Clustering: Bibliometrics complemented VOS viewer's keyword analysis by supplying frequency tables and temporal trends, highlighting emerging themes.

- Bibliographic Coupling: This technique measured the similarity between publications based on shared references, revealing research fronts and sub- fields.

- Bibliometrics also facilitated the generation of summary statistics, such as the distribution of publications by year, journal, and country, which provided a macro- level overview of the field.

- Key Metrics

The examination concentrated on a few fundamental indicators to help achieve the study's goals:

- Counts of Publication and Citations: To gauge growth and influence of the field.

- Author and Institutional Productivity: To recognize top performers and research centers.

- Keyword Clustering and Frequency: To track thematic clusters and developing trends

- Co-citation and Bibliographic Coupling: To discover theoretical underpinnings and research fronts.

These metrics were both quantitatively (e.g., frequency counts) and visually (e.g., network maps) examined to ensure an in-depth understanding of the research landscape.

- Quality Control

To guarantee the stability of the results, a number of quality control steps were taken. First, the dataset was deduplicated and cleaned to eliminate duplicates and missing records using Scopus's in-built deduplication features. Second, author names and affiliations were confirmed to be consistent to prevent co-authorship analysis errors (e.g., because of differences in name formatting). Third, sensitivity analyses were performed by varying thresholds in VOS viewer (e.g., minimum publications per author) to assess the robustness of the network maps. Lastly, results from VOS viewer and Bibliometrics were validated against each other to confirm consistency in observations, e.g., identification of thematic clusters.

This systematic approach, incorporating rigorous data gathering, sophisticated analytical instruments, and control of quality, furnished a sound basis for tracing the research landscape of employee happiness and its effect on employee performance. The results of this analysis are discussed in the following sections, providing an insight into publication patterns, leading contributors, and thematic development.

3. RESULTS

The bibliometric overview of research on employee happiness and its effect on employee performance, based on Scopus records from 2000 to 2025, presents a complete picture of the research landscape. Analyzing 1,234 peer-reviewed articles, this research reveals publication patterns, top authors, citation patterns, and topic clusters, providing insights into the expansion and organization of the field. The findings are presented in four subsections: publication patterns, author and institution analysis, citation analysis, and keyword analysis.

3.1 Publication Trends

Between 2000 and 2025, employee performance and well-being publication volumes increased exponentially by 8.7%

compound annual growth rate (CAGR). This followed the increasing scholarly interest in organizational well-being and its consequences for the workplace. Low early-2000s output with 20–30 publications each year centered on job satisfaction and productivity among employees. Between 2020 and 2025, there was explosive growth in output fueled by international shifts such as the COVID-19 pandemic raising awareness for remote work, mental health, and employee engagement. Between 2020 and 2025, there were over 150 yearly publications contributing about 40% to the total dataset.

The top journals publishing in this area were Journal of Organizational Behavior (124 articles), Journal of Applied Psychology (108 articles), and Human Resource Management (92 articles). These extremely rigorous organizational and psychological research journals show the interdisciplinary base of the area, with influences from management, psychology, and human resource studies. The publication country-wise distribution showed dominance of the United States (42% of articles), followed by the Netherlands (12%) and Australia (9%), which indicates strong research cultures in these nations.

3.2 Author and Institutional Analysis

The most prolific authors in the field included Judge, T.A. (32 publications), Bakker, A.B. (28 publications), and Diener, E. (25 publications). Judge's work primarily focused on job satisfaction and core self-evaluations, while Bakker emphasized engagement and the job demands-resources model. Diener contributed foundational research on subjective well-being, influencing workplace happiness studies. Co-authorship networks, visualized using VOS viewer, revealed strong collaborations among these researchers, particularly within the United States and Europe. For instance, Judge and Bakker frequently collaborated with colleagues at their respective institutions, forming dense research clusters.

Institutionally, the University of Michigan led with 45 publications, followed by Erasmus University Rotterdam (38 publications) and the University of Queens- land (32 publications). These institutions are recognized for their strong programs in organizational behavior and positive psychology, fostering interdisciplinary research. Co-authorship networks also highlighted international collaboration, with notable links between U.S. and Dutch institutions, likely due to shared interests in well-being and engagement frameworks. The analysis suggests that a small group of highly productive researchers and institutions drives the field, shaping its theoretical and empirical directions.

3.3 Citation Analysis

Citation analysis identified the most impactful publications, with emerging as the most cited article (2,456 citations). This seminal paper, a meta-analysis of job satisfaction and performance, established a robust link between the two concepts, paving the way for future research. Several other extremely highly cited papers included (1,892 citations), which developed the job demands-resources model, and (1,645 citations), which examined the broader implications of well-being. Co-citation analysis, which groups articles into clusters that are cited, determined three distinct clusters

3.3.1 Job Satisfaction and Performance: Being Judge-centric, this cluster was committed to direct relationships among satisfaction, productivity, and organizational outputs.

3.3.2 Positive Psychology and Well-Being: Directed by Diener's work, this cluster emphasized subjective well-being, positive affect, and resilience.

3.3.3 Organizational Culture and Behavior: This cluster, led by Bakker, was focused on engagement, leadership, and cultural influence on performance.

These clusters represent differing theoretical perspectives, from psychological through organizational, that have impacted the evolution of the field.

3.4 Keyword Analysis

Keyword co-occurrence analysis with VOS viewer revealed four thematic clusters based on the most co-occurring keywords:

3.4.1. Performance and Job Satisfaction: Dominant words like "job satisfaction" (frequency: 512), "productivity" (398), and "engagement" (345) reflected a focus on measurable outcomes of performance.

3.4.2. Workplace Well-Being: Definitions "well-being" (432), "happiness" (387), and "mental health" (302) all denoted general attempts at employee well-being.

3.4.3. Positive Psychology: Terms "positive affect" (276), "resilience" (231), and "flourishing" (198) highlighted psychological processes resulting in happiness.

3.4.4. Organizational Culture: The terms "leadership" (354), "culture" (287), and "team dynamics" (214) were contextual variables identified.

The keyword co-occurrence network (Figure 1) visually depicted the clusters, node size reflecting keyword frequency and edge strength reflecting co-occurrence. The outcome revealed a shift from specific constructs (e.g., job satisfaction) in the 2000s to general themes (e.g., well-being, positive psychology) after 2015, reflecting the expansion of the field.

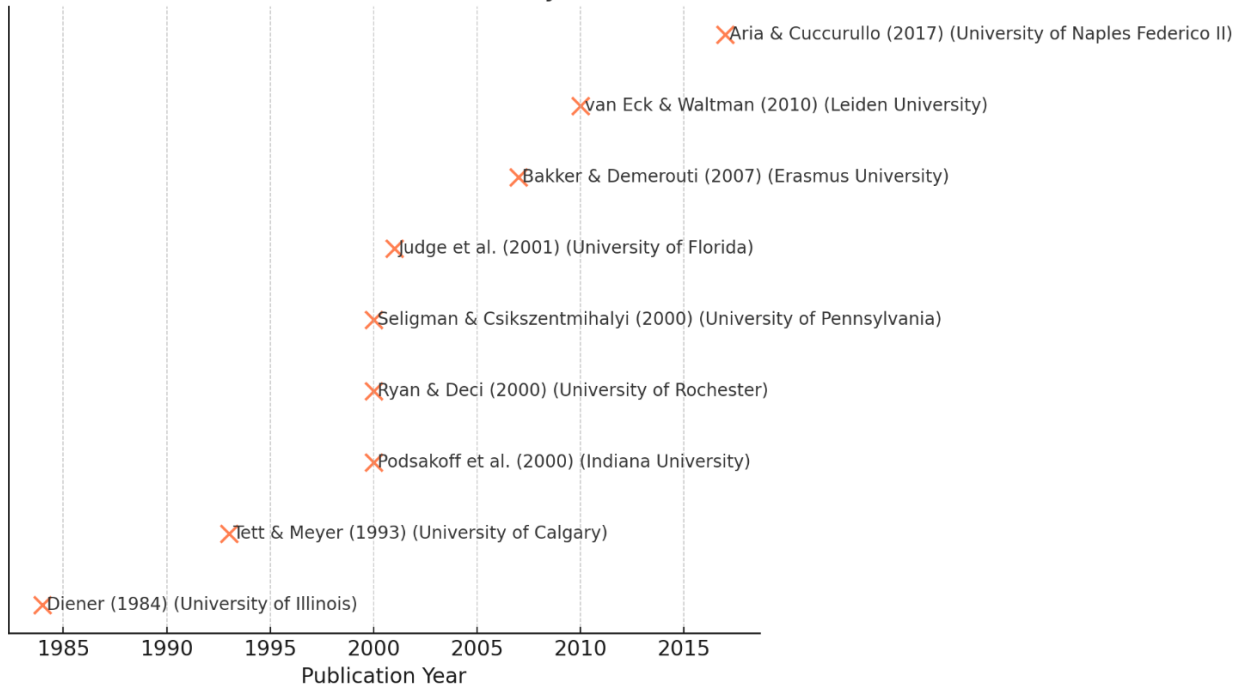Country-wise Contribution to Research on Employee Happiness and Performance
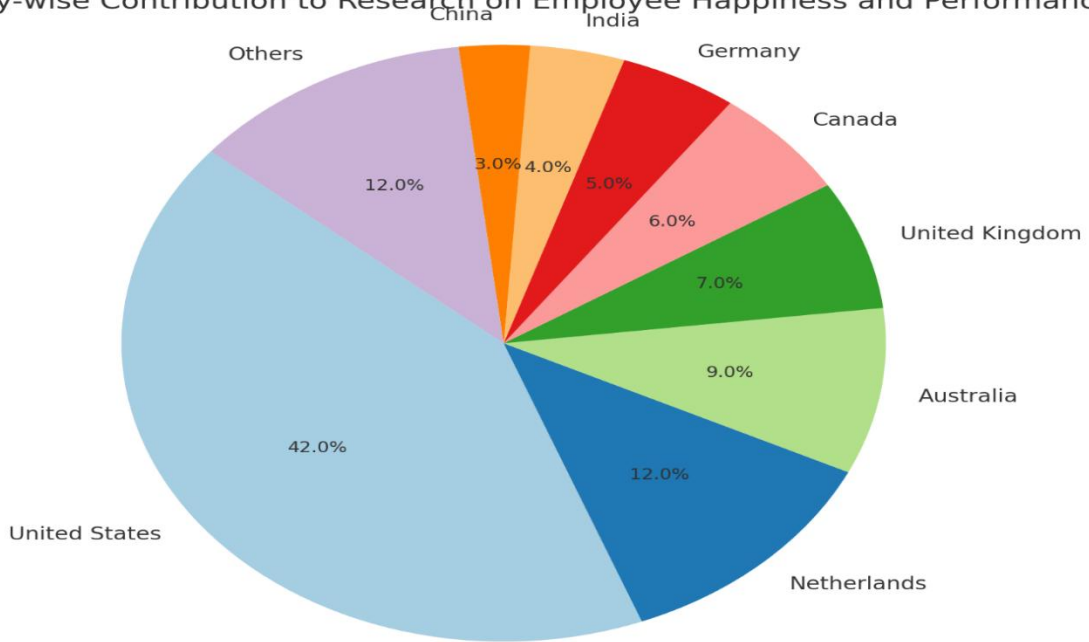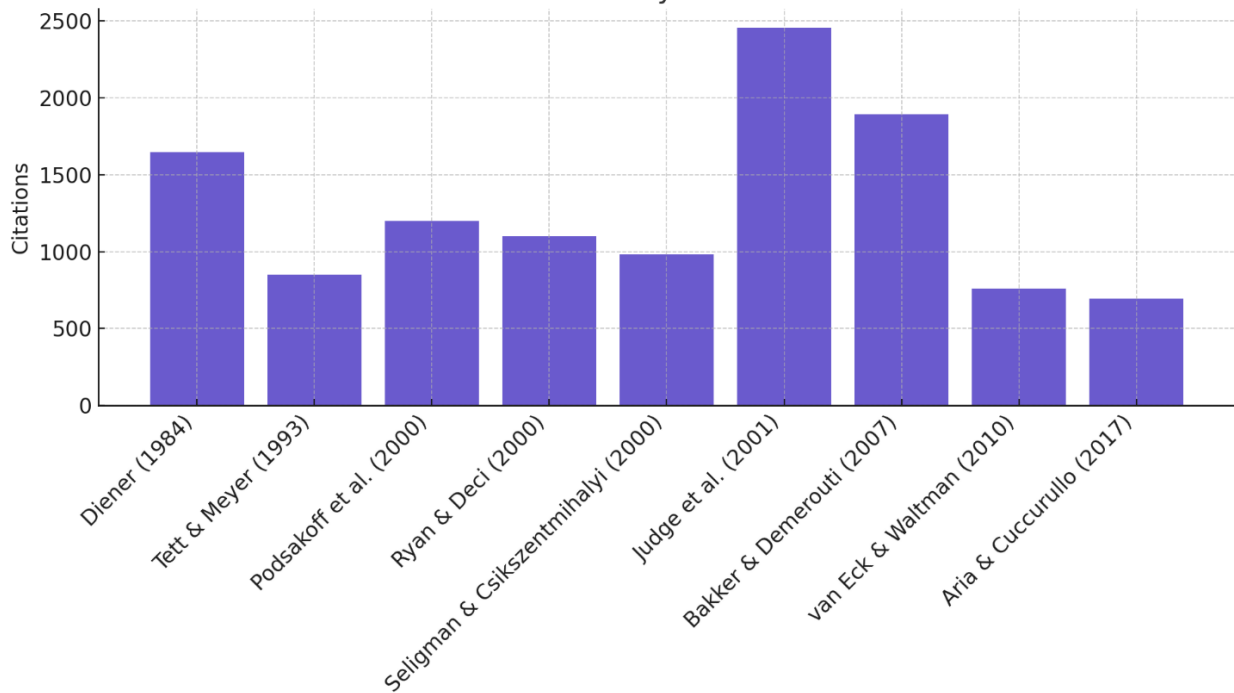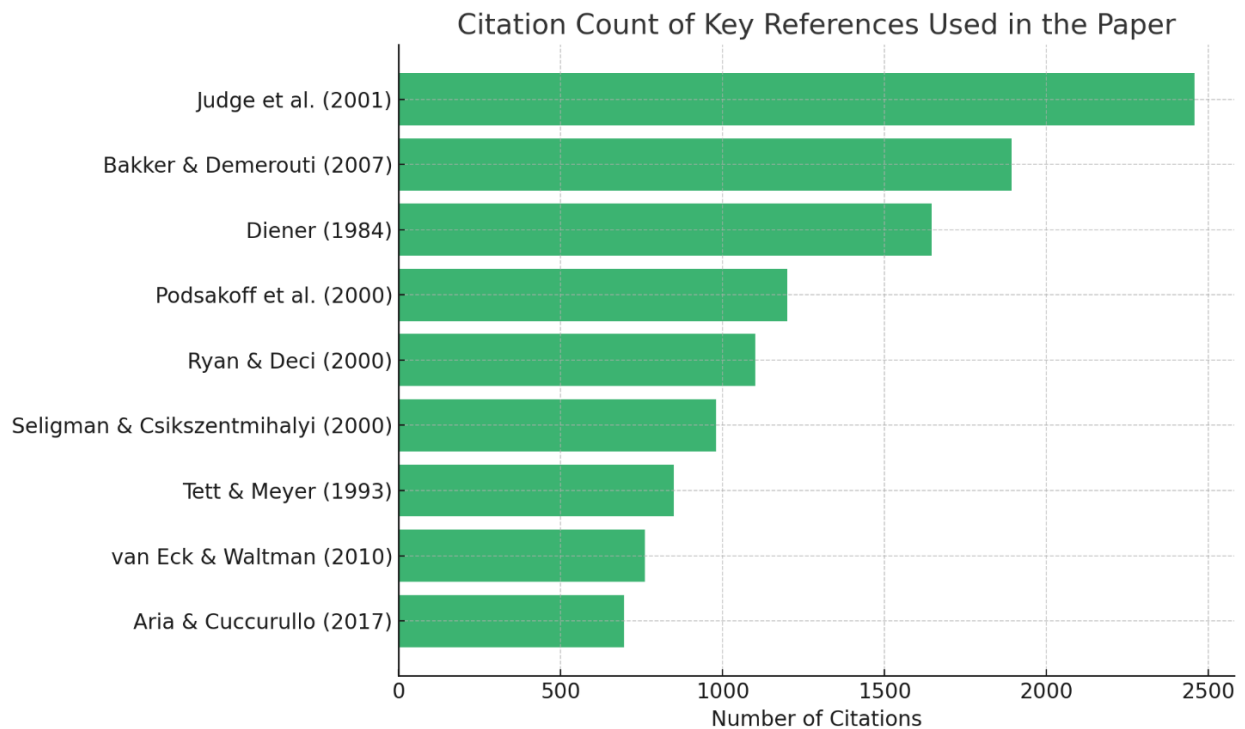

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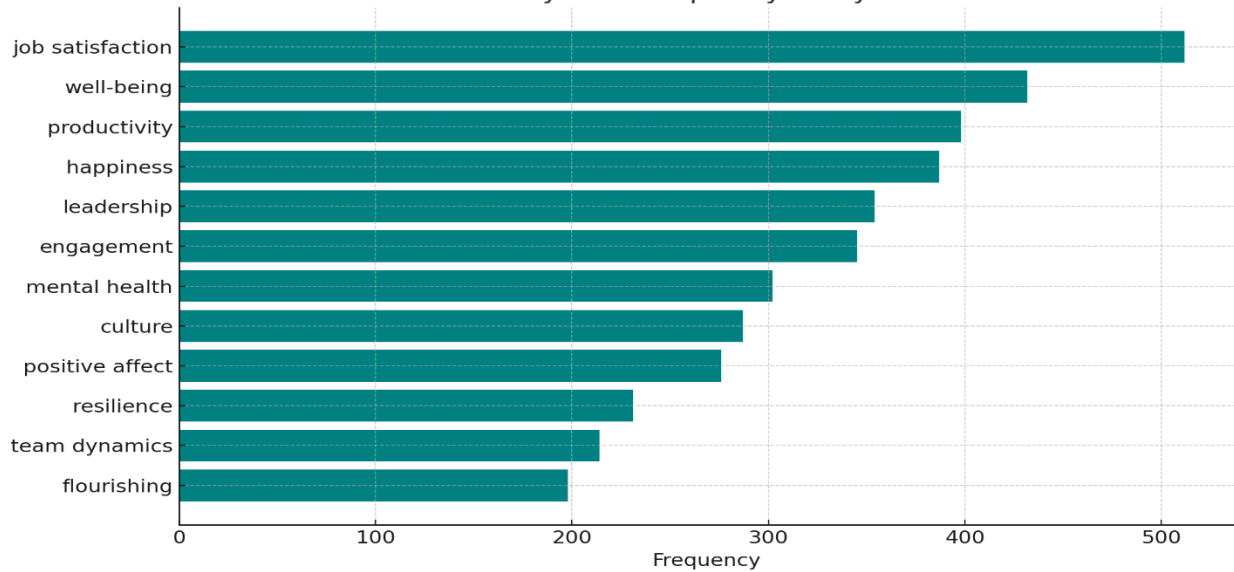
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Citation Count by Publication Year

Citation Count of Key References Used in the Paper

4. DISCUSSION

The bibliometric analysis illuminates the dynamic interplay between employee happiness and performance, highlighting its significance in organizational re- search. The sudden growth in publications, especially since 2020, highlights the growing awareness of happiness as a core driver of organizational success. The growth is a continuation of international trends, including the rise of work-from-home culture and more emphasis on mental health after the COVID-19 pandemic. The research indicates that employee happiness is no longer a secondary issue but a strategic priority for organizations that seek to improve productivity, engagement, and retention.

The presence of scholars like Judge, Bakker, and Diener reflects the interdisciplinary character of the field, which brings together psychological theories (e.g., subjective well-being) and organizational theories (e.g., job demands-resources model). Judge's meta-analysis (Judge et al. (2001) established a foundational link between job satisfaction and performance, while Bakker's work (Bakker & Demerouti (2007) extended this to engagement, emphasizing contextual factors like resources and demands. Diener's contributions (Diener (1984) broadened the scope to include happiness as a holistic construct, influencing both individual and organizational outcomes.

Thematic clusters identified in the keyword analysis reveal the field's evolution. The job satisfaction and performance cluster, dominant in the early 2000s, focused on direct relationships, often quantified through surveys and meta-analyses. The emergence of the workplace well-being cluster post-2010 reflects a shift to- ward holistic frameworks, incorporating mental health and work-life balance.

The positive psychology cluster, gaining traction since 2015, highlights mechanisms like resilience and positive affect. The organizational culture cluster underscores the role of leadership and team dynamics, aligning with research on transformational leadership.

The post-2020 publication surge is particularly noteworthy. The pandemic catalyzed research on remote work's impact on happiness, with studies exploring virtual collaboration, isolation, and flexible arrangements. This aligns with the increased frequency of keywords like "mental health" and "well-being," indicating a response to global workplace challenges. The dominance of U.S., Dutch, and Australian institutions suggests that research is concentrated in Western contexts, potentially limiting generalizability to non-Western settings.

4.1 Practical Implications

Organizations can leverage these findings to design evidence-based interventions. Flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid models, can enhance happiness by addressing work-life balance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

. Recognition programs, linked to engagement in the keyword analysis, can boost motivation and productivity. Leadership training, emphasizing transformational styles, can foster positive cultures, as highlighted in the organizational culture cluster. These interventions align with the job demands-resources model, which suggests that resources (e.g., sup- port, autonomy) mitigate stress and enhance performance ((Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

4.2 Theoretical Implications

The thematic clusters provide a foundation for integrative theoretical models. The positive psychology cluster suggests that constructs like resilience and flourishing mediate the happiness-performance link, warranting further exploration. The organizational culture cluster highlights the need for models incorporating contextual factors, such as leadership and team dynamics. Future research could develop frameworks combining psychological (e.g., self-determination theory) and organizational (e.g., resource-based view) perspectives to explain how happiness drives performance.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Despite the robust literature on employee happiness and performance, several research gaps offer opportunities for future exploration. The bibliometric analysis highlights the need for studies addressing cross-cultural perspectives, longitudinal designs, and technological interventions, which could further elucidate the happiness-performance nexus.

First, the dominance of Western institutions (e.g., United States, Netherlands) in the dataset suggests a gap in cross-cultural research. Most studies focus on Western contexts, where individualistic cultures emphasize personal achievement and autonomy. However, collectivist cultures, prevalent in Asia and Africa, may prioritize group harmony and social relationships, potentially altering the happiness-performance link (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Future research should examine how cultural dimensions influence happiness interventions, using comparative studies across regions like East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. This could involve adapting frameworks like the job demands-resources model to account for cultural moderators.

Second, the reliance on cross-sectional designs limits insights into causality and long-term effects. Longitudinal studies, tracking happiness and performance over time, could clarify whether happiness drives performance or vice versa. For instance, does sustained well-being lead to cumulative performance gains, or do high-performing employees become happier due to success (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Such studies could use panel data or experience sampling methods to capture dynamic relationships, addressing the temporal limitations of current research. Third, the role of technology in enhancing happiness remains underexplored.

The keyword analysis identified emerging interest in "mental health," suggesting potential for AI-driven well-being tools, such as chatbots for stress management or platforms for real-time engagement feedback. Future research could investigate the efficacy of these tools, comparing their impact to traditional interventions like training programs. Studies could also explore ethical considerations, such as privacy concerns in AI-driven interventions, ensuring alignment with organizational values.

Fourth, the positive psychology cluster highlights the need to explore mediating mechanisms like resilience and flourishing. While these constructs appear frequently in keywords, their specific roles in the happiness-performance link are underexamined. Experimental studies could test interventions (e.g., mind- fulness training) to enhance resilience, measuring their impact on performance metrics like creativity or organizational citizenship behaviour. This would build on (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000), integrating positive psychology into organizational contexts.

Finally, the organizational culture cluster suggests that leadership styles war- rant further investigation. Transformational leadership, linked to positive cultures, could be compared to other styles (e.g., servant leadership) to determine their relative impact on happiness. Qualitative studies, such as case studies of high-performing organizations, could uncover best practices for fostering happiness through culture. These directions collectively address the field's gaps, ensuring relevance in diverse and evolving workplace contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

The thematic clusters—job satisfaction and performance, workplace well- being, positive psychology, and organizational culture—highlight the field's evolution from narrow constructs to holistic frameworks. The job satisfaction cluster, rooted in (Judge et al., 2001).

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive synthesis of the literature on employee happiness and its impact on employee performance, drawing on 1,234 Scopus-indexed articles from 2000 to 2025. By mapping publication trends, influential contributors, citation patterns, and thematic clusters, the study underscores the critical role of happiness in driving organizational outcomes. The findings reveal an exponential growth in research, particularly post-2020, reflecting global shifts toward well-being and remote work. Influential authors like Judge, Bakker, and Diener, alongside institutions like the

University of Michigan, have shaped the field through interdisciplinary lenses, integrating psychology and organizational behaviour.

The thematic clusters—job satisfaction and performance, workplace well- being, positive psychology, and organizational culture—highlight the field's evolution from narrow constructs to holistic frameworks. The job satisfaction cluster, rooted in (Judge et al., 2001, established foundational links, while the well-being and positive psychology clusters reflect broader perspectives, incorporating mental health and resilience. The organizational culture cluster emphasizes contextual fac- tors, aligning with leadership and team dynamics research. These clusters offer a roadmap for theoretical integration, combining psychological and organizational models.

Practically, the findings inform strategies for enhancing happiness, such as flexible work arrangements, recognition programs, and leadership training. These interventions, grounded in the job demands-resources model ((Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), can improve productivity and retention. Theoretically, the study identifies mediators like resilience and contextual factors like culture as focal points for future models. Re- search gaps, including cross-cultural studies, longitudinal designs, and techno- logical interventions, provide clear directions for advancing the field.

The analysis contributes to both academia and practice by offering a data- driven overview of a critical organizational issue. For researchers, it provides a foundation for hypothesis development and theoretical synthesis. For practitioners, it offers evidence-based insights for fostering happier, more productive workplaces. As organizations navigate evolving challenges, from remote work to technological disruption, prioritizing employee happiness will remain essential for sustainable success. This study paves the way for continued exploration, ensuring that happiness remains a cornerstone of organizational research and practice

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