

PROMOTING LECTURER HAPPINESS: THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of human resource practices, perceived organizational support, and Religiosity on employee happiness at work. Utilizing a quantitative research method, data were collected through surveys from 115 academic staff at Padang City (google form). The research instrument was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and multiple linear regression for hypothesis testing (STATA). The findings reveal that effective human resource practices and perceived organizational support significantly enhance employee happiness, whereas Religiosity does not show a substantial effect. The implications suggest that organizations should focus on supportive HR practices and fostering organizational support to improve employee well-being. This research contributes to the understanding of factors influencing workplace happiness and offers practical insights for HR management in higher education institutions.

Keywords: *happiness at work, religiosity, perceived organizational support, human resources practices,*

INTRODUCTION

Happiness at work, particularly in higher education settings, is a topic of growing interest and importance. Research has shown that promoting happiness in educational environments can lead to increased performance, productivity, energy levels, better health, and overall well-being (Arora, 2020). In the context of higher education, there is a call to redefine the understanding of happiness, emphasizing the importance of pleasure in teaching and learning to create environments that foster happiness, especially for those facing challenges outside of academia (Guilherme & Freitas, 2016).

Studies have highlighted the relationship between happiness and various factors in higher education. For instance, higher levels of happiness have been associated with better health, higher education levels, and increased work satisfaction (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). Additionally, research has explored the impact of education on happiness, with findings suggesting that while education may not significantly affect certain satisfaction indicators, it can influence factors such as work fulfilment and occupational

status (Mangeloja & Hirvonen, 2007; Yang et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the influence of education on happiness is multifaceted, with demographic factors such as gender, marital status, income, and employment status playing significant roles in determining levels of happiness (Mahadea & Ramroop, 2015). It has been suggested that higher education can enhance subjective well-being by improving individuals' ability to connect with the broader social world, emphasizing the importance of non-monetary factors like interpersonal networks and cosmopolitanism in contributing to happiness (Wu et al., 2022).

Research on happiness at work has increasingly focused on the impact of human resources practices, perceived organizational support, and Religiosity. Perceived organizational support has been found to have a direct positive impact on job satisfaction, reducing stress and improving sleep quality (Caesens et al., 2014). Studies have shown that perceived organizational support is positively associated with employee flourishing, thriving, and work engagement, highlighting its role in enhancing well-being in the workplace (Imran et al., 2020). Additionally,

perceived organizational support has been linked to increased work engagement, leading to higher job satisfaction and a sense of dedication to work (Sulistyo & Suhartini, 2019). Moreover, the relationship between happiness, job stress, job dedication, and perceived organizational support has been explored, with findings suggesting that job dedication mediates the impact of these factors on happiness (Akgündüz et al., 2022). Perceived organizational support has also been identified as a significant determinant of work satisfaction, particularly in terms of caring characteristics that contribute to lecturer welfare (Yusuf & Nuraeni, 2023).

Furthermore, perceived organizational support has been associated with reduced absenteeism, increased job satisfaction, happiness, organizational citizenship behaviour, and organizational performance (Sun, 2019). Religiosity has also been studied in relation to happiness at work, with research indicating that personal Religiosity can positively influence social support, adjustment during difficult times, and healthier lifestyle choices (Li et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of considering cultural and religious contexts when examining the relationship between Religiosity and well-being in the workplace. Understanding the impact of human resources practices, perceived organizational support, and Religiosity on happiness at work is crucial for organizations and policymakers. By recognizing the significance of these factors, employers can implement strategies to enhance employee well-being, job satisfaction, and engagement. Moreover, considering Religiosity as a potential influencer of happiness can lead to more inclusive and supportive workplace environments. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into how organizations can create positive work environments that promote happiness and overall well-being among employees.

The empirical research on happiness at work in higher education has shed light on the influence of human resources practices, perceived organizational support, and Religiosity. Studies have shown that perceived organizational support has a direct positive impact on job satisfaction, reducing stress and improving sleep quality. Furthermore, perceived organizational support has been linked to increased work engagement, leading to higher job satisfaction and a sense of dedication to work. Additionally, the relationship between happiness, job stress, job dedication, and perceived organizational support has been explored, with findings suggesting that job dedication mediates

the impact of these factors on happiness. Religiosity has also been a subject of investigation in relation to happiness at work. Research has indicated that personal Religiosity can positively influence social support, adjustment during difficult times, and healthier lifestyle choices.

Moreover, the societal emphasis on religious faith has been found to shape the social-psychological relationships between personal Religiosity and well-being, with stronger positive associations observed in societies with higher levels of Religiosity. The importance of this research lies in its implications for higher education institutions and their human resource management. Understanding the impact of perceived organizational support and Religiosity on happiness at work can guide the development of strategies to enhance employee well-being, job satisfaction, and engagement within academic settings. Moreover, considering Religiosity as a potential influencer of happiness can lead to the creation of more inclusive and supportive workplace environments. By recognizing the significance of these factors, organizations can implement practices that promote a positive work environment, ultimately contributing to the well-being and success of faculty, staff, and students in higher education.

Human Resources Practise on Happiness at Work

The influence of human resource management practices on happiness at work has been extensively researched. Studies have demonstrated that these practices play a crucial role in affecting employee happiness and well-being in the workplace. For example, research has indicated that human resource management practices have a direct impact on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance, (Huselid, 1995). Additionally, the role of human resource policies in attracting and retaining creative talent through happy leadership has been emphasized, highlighting the importance of organizational strategies in promoting happiness at work (Ravina-Ripoll, 2024). Furthermore, the relationship between human resource practices and workplace happiness has been explored in various contexts, including the healthcare sector, where ethical leadership and social networks have been found to promote workplace happiness and quality of care (Gonçalves & Curado, 2023). Additionally, the role of psychological capital in enhancing workplace outcomes, such as happiness, work engagement, and job satisfaction, has been investigated, offering practical implications for enhancing employee well-being (Wen & Liu-

Lastres, 2021). Moreover, the significance of human resource practices in enhancing work engagement through workplace happiness has been highlighted, emphasizing the need to consider employee happiness in organizational management (Shelke & Shaikh, 2023).

Hypothesis 1: human resources practice has a positive on happiness at work

Perceived Organizational Support on Happiness at Work

Perceived organizational support (POS) has been extensively researched for its impact on happiness at work. Studies consistently demonstrate the significant influence of POS on various aspects of employee well-being and workplace outcomes. POS is valued as an assurance that aid will be available from the organization when needed to carry out one's job effectively and to deal with stressful situations (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This assurance contributes to strengthening employees' effort-outcome expectancy and affective attachment to the organization, resulting in greater efforts to fulfil the organization's goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organizational support theory (OST) proposes that employees form a generalized perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, known as perceived organizational support (POS) (Kurtessis et al., 2015). This perception has been linked to reduced absenteeism, increased job satisfaction, happiness, organizational citizenship behaviour, and organizational performance (Sun, 2019).

Furthermore, perceived organizational support has been found to affect employees' job dedication, promoting employee happiness (Akgündüz et al., 2022). The impact of perceived organizational support on various workplace outcomes has been investigated in different contexts, including its mediating role in influencing organizational commitment, turnover intention, and happiness at work (Kurniawan, 2024). Additionally, perceived organizational support has been shown to moderate the relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions and deviant behaviours directed toward the organization, compensating for relatively low levels of work engagement (Shantz et al., 2014). Moreover, perceived organizational support has been found to positively influence work engagement, organizational commitment, and work-life balance, with work engagement mediating the relationship between perceived organizational support and work-life balance (Sulistiyani et al., 2022). The influence of

perceived organizational support has also been observed in enhancing organizational happiness, job satisfaction, and employee performance (Ordu & Sari, 2022).

Hypothesis 2: perceived social support has a positive on happiness at work

Religiosity on Happiness at Work

Religiosity has been shown to have a significant impact on happiness at work based on empirical research exploring the relationship between religious beliefs and well-being in the workplace. Studies have demonstrated the positive influence of Religiosity on various aspects of employee happiness, shedding light on how religious beliefs shape workplace experiences. Research has indicated that Religiosity can promote intrapreneurial behaviours, affecting employees' engagement and commitment at work (Zimmer et al., 2016). Additionally, Religiosity has been linked to increased life satisfaction, with meaningful work acting as a mediator in the relationship between Religiosity, perceived organizational support, and life satisfaction (Myers & Diener, 1995). Moreover, Religiosity has been associated with a higher likelihood of mentoring youth, suggesting its potential impact on prosocial behaviours in the workplace (Diener et al., 2011).

Furthermore, Religiosity has been found to positively affect organizational trust and workplace happiness in academic settings, underscoring the role of Religiosity in influencing followers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours at the organizational level (Abualigah et al., 2023). Studies have also highlighted how Religiosity moderates ethical behavioural intentions, with individuals who adhere to religious principles more inclined to exhibit attitudes that foster ethical intent (Abualigah et al., 2021). Moreover, Religiosity has been linked to increased levels of psychological well-being, encompassing happiness, life satisfaction, positive affect, and higher morale, while also reducing depression, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse (Chaouali, 2021). The relationship between Religiosity and happiness has been explored in various contexts, such as among healthcare students, where Religiosity was found to promote mental health outcomes like happiness (Saleh et al., 2020).

Hypothesis 3: Religiosity has a positive on happiness at work

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with a survey design to measure the influence of human resource (HR) practices and organizational support on employee happiness among academic

staff in Padang City. The sample of 200 participants involved in this study consists of lecturers from various public and private universities in Padang City (online survey). The research instrument is a closed-ended questionnaire comprising three main sections: demographic data, employees' perceptions of HR practices, and levels of support and employee happiness. The questionnaire was distributed both directly and online, ensuring data confidentiality. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including

multiple regression, to test the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable with the help of the STATA application. Validity testing was conducted through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, ensuring the research instrument meets good research standards. The analysis aims to provide a clear picture of the influence of HR practices and organizational support on employee happiness, as well as practical recommendations for university management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Respondent Profile

No	Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Institution		
	Public University	109	94,7
	Private University	6	5,2
2	Gender		
	Male	55	47,8
	Female	60	52,1
3	Marital Status		
	Married	115	100
4	Education Level		
	Bachelor's Degree	2	1,7
	Masterr's Degree	105	91,3
	Doctoral's Degree	8	6,9
5	Average Age = 40 years		
6	Average Tenure = 10 years		
n = 115			

Source: data processed (2024)

Table 1 provides a comprehensive profile of the respondents, illustrating the demographic characteristics of the lecturers who participated in a particular study or survey. In terms of the origin of higher education institutions, the majority of respondents come from Private Higher Education Institutions, with a total of 109 individuals accounting for approximately 94.7% of the total respondents. Nonetheless, a small portion, six individuals or about 5.2%, come from Public Higher Education Institutions. The gender distribution among the lecturers shows a balance, with 55 male lecturers (47.8%) and 60 female lecturers (52.1%). Interestingly, all respondents in

this study are married, reflecting a level of personal life stability.

Regarding educational attainment, most lecturers hold a Master's Degree (S2), which is typically the highest level of education required in the academic field. A few hold a Bachelor's Degree (S1), while some have achieved a Doctoral Degree (S3). The average age of the lecturers who responded is around 40 years, and their average work experience is approximately ten years. With a total of 115 respondents, this table offers a very informative and relevant overview of the demographic profile of the lecturers involved in the study.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Stats.	Perceived Organizational Support	Happiness at Work	Human Resource Practise	Religiosity
Mean	28.3913	33.74138	28.49138	46.86207
Min.	40	43	40	50
Min	8	14	12	30
Sd	6.23473	5.348906	5.774751	4.417153
Variance	38.87185	28.61079	33.34775	19.51124
Skewness	-.5884061	-.5886618	-.5131898	-1.659771

Source: data processed (2024)

Table 2 provides highly useful information regarding lecturers' perceptions of several important aspects of the work environment. Firstly, the data show that the average perception of organizational support felt by lecturers is approximately 28.3913, with a standard deviation of about 6.23473. This indicates a significant variation in how lecturers perceive the support they receive from their organization. Additionally, the slightly negative skewness value (-.5884061) suggests that the data distribution tends to lean to the left, meaning most lecturers have a fairly positive perception of organizational support. However, some feel they receive inadequate support.

Secondly, in terms of workplace happiness, the average happiness of lecturers is around 33.74138, with a standard deviation of about 5.348906. This suggests that most lecturers experience a relatively high level of happiness at work. However, the relatively low minimum value (14) and the slightly negative skewness (-.5886618) indicate that a small number of lecturers may be experiencing a lack of happiness or satisfaction in their work environment.

Thirdly, regarding HR practices, lecturers give an average rating of about 28.49138, with a standard deviation of around 5.774751. This suggests that the HR practices implemented in their organizations are generally perceived positively. Nonetheless, the low minimum value (12) indicates that there are aspects of HR practices that may need improvement to enhance the overall satisfaction and well-being of lecturers. Lastly, the average level of Religiosity is 46.86207, indicating a fairly high level of Religiosity among the respondents. However, the highly negative skewness (-1.659771) suggests that there is a possibility of a substantial number of respondents having very low levels of Religiosity while others might have very high levels. These findings provide a comprehensive overview of lecturers' perceptions of Padang City's universities, highlighting areas of strength and those needing attention for better organizational support, workplace happiness, HR practices, and understanding of Religiosity among lecturers.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test

No	Variable	Instruments	Valid	Drop	Loading Factor	Scale Reliability
1	Perceived Organizational Support	8	7	1 (POS8)	0.6362 - 0.9278	0.9297
2	Happiness at Work	9	8	1 (HAW3)	0.6014 - 0.7910	0.8713
3	Human Resource Practise	8	7	1 (HRP3)	0.7259 - 0.8292	0.8976
4	Religiosity	10	10	-	0.9189 - 0.7393	0.9442

Source: data processed (2024)

The results of the validity and reliability testing (Table 3) for the variables in this study provide a strong indication of the quality of the instruments used. First, for the variable Perceived Organizational Support (POS), out of 8 items tested, 7 items proved to be valid, while 1 item

(POS8) was removed because it did not meet the established validity criteria. The loading factors of the remaining items showed a strong correlation with the construct being measured, ranging from 0.6362 to 0.9278. The reliability scale, which reached 0.9297, confirms that this instrument is

reliable in measuring perceived organizational support.

Second, for the variable Happiness at Work (HAW), out of the nine items tested, eight items were valid, while 1 item (HAW3) was removed for not meeting the validity criteria. The loading factors of the remaining items indicated a good correlation with the construct of happiness at work, ranging from 0.6014 to 0.7910. The reliability scale of 0.8713 demonstrates that this instrument has good consistency in measuring happiness in the workplace.

Next, the variable Human Resource Practice (HRP) also showed good results, with 7 out of 8 items proving to be valid, while 1 item (HRP3) was removed for not meeting the validity criteria. The loading factors of the remaining items demonstrated a strong relationship with the

construct of human resource practices, ranging from 0.7259 to 0.8292. The high-reliability scale, reaching 0.8976, confirms that this instrument is reliable in measuring HR practices.

Finally, the variable Religiosity showed excellent results, with all ten items proving to be valid without needing removal. The loading factors of these items indicated a very strong correlation with the construct of Religiosity, ranging from 0.7393 to 0.9189. The very high-reliability scale, at 0.9442, confirms that this instrument is highly consistent in measuring the respondents' level of Religiosity. Overall, the results of the validity and reliability testing indicate that the instruments used in this study are reliable and consistent in measuring the investigated variables effectively.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Result

Number of obs	= 115						
F (3, 111)	= 81.46						
Prob > F	= 0.0000						
R-squared	= 0.6876						
Adj R-squared	= 0.6792						
Root MSE	= 3.0421						
	HAW	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Result
POS		.2998524	.0725149	4.14	0.000	.1561593	Supported
HRP		.4634498	.0788187	5.88	0.000	.3072652	Supported
RG		.1173613	.0664367	1.77	0.080	-.0142875	Not Supported
_cons		6.519287	3.125057	2.09	0.039	.3267774	

HAW (Happiness at Work); POS (Perceived Organizational Support); HRP (Human Resource Practise); RG (Religiosity)

Source: data processed (2024)

Table 4 shows the results of hypothesis testing, providing insights into the relationships between the variables studied. The first hypothesis testing results indicate a significant relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and happiness at work. The POS coefficient is 0.2998524 with a standard error of 0.0725149, suggesting that perceived organizational support positively and significantly impacts the happiness of lecturers (H1 = supported). This implies that when employees feel supported by their organization, they tend to have a more positive attitude towards their work, which in turn enhances their workplace happiness.

Meanwhile, the results of the second hypothesis testing confirm a positive and significant impact of Human Resource Practices (HRP) on workplace happiness. The HRP coefficient is 0.463 with a standard error of 0.0788187, indicating that effective human resource management practices positively affect

employee happiness (H2 = supported). These findings suggest that good management strategies, such as employee development, clear communication, and recognition of achievements, can improve employees' satisfaction and psychological well-being in the workplace.

However, the third hypothesis testing results show findings that do not support the relationship between Religiosity and workplace happiness. The coefficient for Religiosity is 0.1173613 with a standard error of 0.0664367, a t-value of 1.77, and a p-value of 0.080 (H3 = rejected). Despite this, the results still provide important insights into psychological well-being in the workplace context, highlighting that the role of Religiosity in the relationship between individuals and their work environment may involve more complex dynamics or depend on additional variables not measured in this study.

The study found that Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and effective

Human Resource Practices (HRP) positively impact employee happiness, while Religiosity did not show a significant relationship with workplace happiness levels. Mert et al. (2021) demonstrated that perceived organizational justice is a strong antecedent for workplace social courage, which can be linked to the support provided by the organization. Additionally, Pradhan et al., (2022) further explored the role of perceived organizational support (POS) in bolstering employee happiness, supporting the notion that organizational support positively influences employee well-being. Furthermore, Fisher (2010) highlighted that many organizational behaviour constructs are related to happiness-related constructs, indicating the importance of organizational factors in influencing employee happiness. However, the findings did not support a relationship between Religiosity and workplace happiness levels. This is consistent with the study by (Maham et al., 2020), which indicated that Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility, which can be related to Religiosity, have a positive impact on employee happiness through perceived organizational justice but did not directly link Religiosity to happiness. Similarly, Chaouali (2021) found that the relationship between Religiosity, organizational trust, and workplace happiness is limited or scarce, further supporting the lack of direct association between religiosity and workplace happiness.

Employee happiness in the workplace is influenced by various factors, as evidenced by recent studies. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has been identified as a significant contributor to employee happiness (Sun, 2019; Akgündüz et al., 2022; Pradhan et al., 2022). POS reflects an organization's appreciation for employees' efforts and welfare, fostering a positive relationship and motivating employees to perform well (Sun, 2019). Additionally, effective Human Resource Practices (HRP) have been shown to positively impact employee happiness (Akgündüz et al., 2022). These findings highlight the importance of organizational support and HR practices in enhancing employee well-being.

Contrary to the positive effects of POS and HRP, Religiosity did not demonstrate a significant relationship with workplace happiness levels in the studies reviewed (Abualigah et al., 2021; Chaouali, 2021). While Religiosity may play a role in other aspects of employee well-being, its direct impact on workplace happiness appears to be limited (Abualigah et al., 2021). This suggests that factors such as organizational support and HR practices

may have a more pronounced effect on employee happiness compared to Religiosity.

Based on the research findings, organizations are advised to focus on enhancing Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Human Resource Practices (HRP) as primary steps to improve employee happiness. Implementing reward programs that acknowledge employee achievements and creating open communication channels between management and staff will strengthen the perceived support from the organization. Additionally, providing quality training and policies that support work-life balance can improve overall job satisfaction and employee well-being.

Although Religiosity did not show a significant direct impact on workplace happiness, organizations should remain sensitive to employees' religious needs by considering policies that support cultural and religious diversity if necessary. Further research is also recommended to explore the role of Religiosity in the context of workplace happiness and other factors that might mediate this relationship. Integrating these findings into organizational policies and practices will ensure that the strategies applied are more effective and evidence-based. Future research should also explore the relationship between POS, HRP, and outcomes such as Innovation Work Behavior (Wati et al., 2024) and Change Management (Zakiy et al., 2023). Studies could investigate how organizational support and human resource practices influence employees' innovative behaviour and their ability to adapt to change. This will provide additional insights into how to enhance performance and adaptability in a dynamic work environment. Moreover, further studies could identify factors that mediate these relationships, allowing organizations to design more effective interventions to boost innovation and manage change more efficiently.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that effective human resource practices and perceived organizational support significantly enhance employee happiness, while Religiosity does not show a substantial effect. Organizational strategies focusing on supportive HR practices and fostering perceived organizational support are vital for improving employee well-being and job satisfaction in higher education institutions. Practical managerial strategies should prioritize robust HR practices, such as comprehensive training and development programs, regular feedback, and employee recognition. These initiatives contribute to a

positive work environment by enabling career growth and reinforcing desirable behaviors.

Furthermore, perceived organizational support (POS) can be enhanced by creating a supportive work culture, offering flexible work arrangements, and providing resources to manage work-related stress. Managers play a pivotal role in fostering POS by showing genuine concern for employees' needs and maintaining open lines of communication. While Religiosity does not directly impact workplace happiness, fostering an inclusive culture that respects diverse beliefs is essential. Additionally, well-being programs addressing both physical and mental health can contribute to holistic employee well-being. By focusing on these practical managerial strategies, organizations can create a work environment that enhances employee happiness, drives productivity, and supports organizational success.

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