

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND HAPPINESS IN THE WORKPLACE AMONG CENTRAL SULAWESI REGIONAL POLICE EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Background: Police officers, particularly those serving in the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police, face high workloads and stressful work environments, which can negatively affect workplace happiness. Factors such as intense job demands, lack of organizational support, and poor work-life balance may reduce employees' psychological well-being. **Objective:** This study aims to examine the relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work among employees of the Traffic Directorate of Central Sulawesi Regional Police. **Method:** This study employed a quantitative correlational approach using purposive sampling. The research involved 172 active Ditlantas employees who were within productive age and had worked for at least one year. Data were collected through two psychological scales measuring quality of work life and workplace happiness. Data analysis was performed using Pearson correlation through SPSS version 26. **Results:** The analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work ($r = 0.339$; $p < 0.000$). The higher the perceived quality of work life, the greater the level of happiness experienced by the employees. **Conclusion:** This study highlights the importance of enhancing quality of work life as a strategy to improve employee happiness. Organizational support, job security, fairness, and opportunities for personal development are crucial in creating a healthy and productive work environment. Future research is recommended to explore effective psychological interventions to promote well-being in the police work setting.

Keywords: Central Sulawesi Regional Police; happiness at work; quality of work life

Abstrak

Latar Belakang: Pegawai kepolisian, khususnya yang bertugas di Direktorat Lalu Lintas Polda Sulawesi Tengah, menghadapi beban kerja yang tinggi dan lingkungan kerja yang penuh tekanan, yang dapat berdampak negatif terhadap kebahagiaan di tempat kerja. Faktor-faktor seperti tuntutan tugas yang intensif, kurangnya dukungan organisasi, dan ketidakseimbangan kerja-hidup berpotensi menurunkan kualitas kesejahteraan psikologis pegawai. **Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kualitas kehidupan kerja dan kebahagiaan di tempat kerja pada pegawai Ditlantas Polda Sulawesi Tengah. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif korelasional dengan teknik purposive sampling. Subjek penelitian adalah 172 pegawai Ditlantas Polda Sulteng berusia produktif dan telah bekerja minimal satu tahun. Data dikumpulkan melalui dua skala psikologis yang mengukur kualitas kehidupan kerja dan kebahagiaan di tempat kerja. Analisis data dilakukan dengan uji korelasi Pearson menggunakan SPSS versi 26. **Hasil:** Hasil analisis menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif yang signifikan antara kualitas kehidupan kerja dan kebahagiaan di tempat kerja ($r = 0,339$; $p < 0,000$). Semakin tinggi kualitas kehidupan kerja yang dirasakan pegawai, semakin tinggi pula tingkat kebahagiaan yang mereka alami dalam lingkungan kerja. **Kesimpulan:** Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya peningkatan kualitas kehidupan kerja sebagai strategi untuk memperkuat kebahagiaan pegawai. Dukungan organisasi, keamanan kerja, keadilan, serta peluang pengembangan diri merupakan faktor penting dalam menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang sehat dan produktif. Studi lanjutan disarankan untuk mengeksplorasi intervensi yang dapat meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis dalam konteks kerja kepolisian.

Kata Kunci: Kebahagiaan di tempat kerja; kualitas kehidupan kerja; Polda Sulawesi Tengah

Introduction

Human resources are recognized as the central element in the effectiveness and sustainability of any organization, including public institutions such as the Indonesian National Police (POLRI). Employees serve as the operational backbone of such institutions and are directly involved with both internal systems and community service. In the context of regional police units, particularly the Central Sulawesi Regional Police (POLDA Sulteng), personnel face a combination of occupational hazards, high work pressure, and complex public service responsibilities. These conditions can significantly affect their psychological well-being, particularly in terms of perceived work satisfaction and happiness at work.

Happiness at work is a multidimensional psychological construct encompassing positive emotions, work engagement, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment (Fisher, 2010; Fitriana et al., 2022). This construct reflects the degree to which employees feel that their work is meaningful, enjoyable, and emotionally rewarding. Empirical studies indicate that happiness at work plays a critical role in boosting motivation, productivity, and organizational loyalty (Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007; Bakker & Oerlemans, 2016). In the policing context, however, emotional well-being is often jeopardized by prolonged exposure to stressors such as erratic schedules, public resistance, accident-related trauma, and high-risk field operations (Sidabutar, 2020; Ridwan et al., 2022).

The World Happiness Report (2024) shows that happiness levels across regions are not only shaped by national policies or income but also workplace climate and generational disparities. While Indonesia ranks modestly at the global level, national surveys report high levels of self-reported workplace happiness (Goodstats, 2024). However, within institutions like POLDA Sulteng, the lived experience of employees, especially those in the Traffic Directorate (Ditlantas), reveals a different picture—one of high workloads, lack of support, emotional exhaustion, and disengagement. Structured interviews conducted with Ditlantas officers in May 2025 confirm that frequent traffic violations, overlapping responsibilities, inadequate systems, and insufficient leadership support are major contributing factors to decreased job satisfaction and work-related happiness.

Happiness at work, as adapted to the Indonesian cultural context by Fitriana et al. (2022), includes four key dimensions: job satisfaction, vigor at work, absorption, and affective organizational commitment. These dimensions have shown high reliability and validity in measuring happiness in collectivist societies. Moreover, factors such as leadership style, fair treatment, workload balance, and recognition have been identified as important organizational variables influencing employee happiness. Conversely, unfair treatment, job insecurity, lack of career development opportunities, and excessive multitasking tend to diminish psychological well-being (Fisher, 2010; Budiasa, 2021; Febri, 2024).

On the other hand, quality of work life (QWL) represents employees' perception of the degree to which their organizational environment meets their physical, psychological, and social needs (Herrick, 1975; Cascio, 1995; Walton, 1975). According to Herrick, four main dimensions define QWL: fair treatment, job involvement, job stability, and self-actualization opportunities. These dimensions encompass both material and non-material factors, emphasizing the importance of equitable policies, safe and supportive work environments, and opportunities for growth. Previous research has demonstrated a significant positive relationship between QWL and employee happiness (Salsyabila & Winbaktianur, 2023; Tjiabrata et al., 2021).

Furthermore, theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) provide a solid foundation for understanding the mechanisms underlying this relationship. According to this theory, work satisfaction and happiness are achieved when the organizational environment aligns with employees' personal values, needs, and capabilities through supplementary fit, needs–supplies fit, and demands–abilities fit. When such alignment is lacking, employees may experience psychological distress, burnout, and disengagement.

Despite the increasing interest in QWL and happiness at work, the intersection of these variables remains underexplored in paramilitary or law enforcement institutions in Indonesia. The present study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work among traffic officers of POLDA Sulteng. The findings are expected to contribute to both theoretical discussions in organizational psychology and the practical development of well-being programs for police institutions. By identifying key determinants of workplace happiness, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can guide organizational leaders and policymakers in designing effective interventions to improve occupational well-being and organizational performance.

Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work among personnel of the Traffic Directorate at the Central Sulawesi Regional Police (POLDA Sulteng). Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional authorities before conducting the study. All participants were informed about the objectives, benefits, risks, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time. Participation was entirely voluntary, and each participant provided written informed consent prior to data collection.

Participant

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Sample or Population

The population consisted of all active personnel of the Traffic Directorate at POLDA Sulteng. The sampling method used was total sampling, involving 131 participants who met the inclusion criteria: (1) within productive working age (18–56 years), and (2) having a minimum of one year of service. Participants came from diverse age groups, ranks, and lengths of service, providing sufficient variability to support the generalizability of the findings.

Procedure

The research began with formal permission from institutional authorities. Following approval, coordination with unit leaders was conducted to schedule data collection. Participants were briefed in person about the research purpose, and all data collection was conducted within the participants' work environment. Respondents completed the questionnaires independently in a single session, under the supervision of the researcher, who was available to provide clarification if needed but did not influence responses. The data collection period lasted for two weeks, and completed questionnaires were checked for completeness before analysis.

Data Measurement

The quality of work life variable was measured using the Work Life Quality Scale developed by Antonius D.R. Manurung, based on Herrick's model (as cited in Kristanda, 2003). The scale consists of 24 items grouped into four dimensions: fair treatment, job involvement, job stability, and opportunities for self-actualization. Responses were scored on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). The scale has demonstrated construct validity (factor loadings ≥ 0.39) and a high reliability coefficient (CR = 0.917). The happiness at work variable was measured using the Happiness at Work (HAW) Scale developed by Fitriana et al. (2022). This instrument consists of 16 items representing four dimensions: job satisfaction, vigor, absorption, and affective organizational commitment. The scale has undergone content validation using I-CVI and S-CVI (> 0.80), construct validation, and reliability testing, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.991. A total of 131 participants completed both instruments during the same session.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Prior to hypothesis testing, data screening and normality tests were conducted to ensure that parametric assumptions were met. Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. The results are presented in tabular form and interpreted using conventional categories of correlation strength, supported by descriptive statistics and effect size estimations.

Result

This study aimed to determine the relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work among employees of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police Traffic Directorate. A total of 131 respondents participated in this research. Prior to testing the hypothesis, the data were analyzed descriptively to determine the average scores of each variable. Descriptive analysis showed that the mean score of quality of work life was 75.03 with a standard deviation of 6.64, while the mean score of happiness at work was 59.47 with a standard deviation of 6.26. This indicates that, on average, participants perceived both their quality of work life and happiness at work to be at a moderate to high level. To test the hypothesis, the Pearson product-moment correlation test was conducted. The analysis revealed a positive and significant correlation between quality of work life and happiness at work. The correlation coefficient was $r = 0.339$ with a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the higher the quality of work life perceived by employees, the higher their level of happiness at work.

The following table presents the statistical test result:

Table 1. Correlation between Quality of Work Life and Happiness at Work
($n = 131$)

Variabel 1	Variable 2	r value	p value
Quality of Work Life	Happiness at Work	0.339	0.000

*) Significant at $p < 0.05$

These findings support the hypothesis that quality of work life is positively associated with happiness at work. The strength of the correlation falls into the moderate category, suggesting that workplace happiness may increase when employees perceive fair treatment, job involvement, job stability, and opportunities for self-actualization in their organization.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a positive and significant relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work among employees of the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police. This finding suggests that the better employees perceive their quality of work life, the higher their level of happiness in the workplace. The strength of the relationship falls into the moderate category, indicating that quality of work life makes a meaningful contribution to psychological well-being at work. Theoretically, these findings align with Herrick's concept (in Kristanda, 2003), which emphasizes that quality of work life is closely related to how individuals are treated fairly, involved in their work, feel secure in their careers, and are given opportunities to realize their potential. These factors collectively foster a healthier and more productive work environment, which in turn contributes to more meaningful and enjoyable work experiences.

This result is also supported by Fitriana et al. (2022), who stated that happiness at work is not solely determined by external factors such as salary or facilities, but also by employees' perceptions of organizational justice, social relationships, and personal development opportunities. In the context of this study, respondents who felt secure in their roles, recognized for their efforts, and given space for personal growth tended to report higher levels of workplace happiness. Similar findings were reported by Nasyira et al. (2014) and Surlenty et al. (2013), who found that improvements in quality of work life significantly contributed to employee satisfaction and happiness across public and private sectors. From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight that even within high-pressure and risk-prone environments like law enforcement, organizations can improve psychological well-being by enhancing the quality of work life. Organizational interventions that focus on fairness, recognition, career advancement, and a positive organizational climate can be effective strategies to foster happiness at work. In conclusion, this study underscores the role of quality of work life as a predictor of happiness at work. It opens pathways for further research to explore potential mediating or moderating variables—such as resilience, social support, or organizational culture—that may influence or strengthen this relationship.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work among employees of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police Traffic Directorate. The results showed a positive and significant correlation between the two variables, indicating that employees who perceive higher quality in their work life also experience greater happiness in the workplace. These findings support the theoretical framework that aspects such as fair treatment, job involvement, job security, and opportunities for self-actualization contribute meaningfully to emotional well-being in professional environments. The discussion also highlighted how the findings are consistent with previous studies conducted in similar organizational contexts, strengthening the generalizability and relevance of the results.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that the institution enhances the quality of work life through concrete organizational efforts, such as implementing fair performance evaluation systems, encouraging employee participation in decision-making, and offering career development programs. Such initiatives are expected to create a more supportive and fulfilling work environment. In addition to practical implications, these results provide a foundation for further research, particularly to explore moderating or mediating factors that influence the relationship between quality of work life and happiness at work, such as organizational culture, leadership style, or individual psychological traits. Future research may also consider applying longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to gain a deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms between the variables.

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