

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in  
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

**The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction since COVID-19:  
A Systematic Literature Review**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the job and life satisfaction relationship in the post-COVID-19 era, within the wider context of subjective well-being. Using a systematic review following the PRISMA statement, 21 studies indexed in the Web of Science database were analyzed, which revealed a robust link between job and life satisfaction, moderated by individual and organizational factors. The study proposes a novel theoretical model, extending existing theories and paving the way for future empirical investigations. The study's results hold significant practical implications, providing insights for enhancing employee well-being and laying the groundwork for further exploration in this evolving field.

*Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, Subjective Well-being, COVID-19, Systematic Literature Review*

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## 1 Introduction

*“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.” – Albert Schweitzer*

In the evolving landscape of the modern world, the interplay between individuals' work experiences and their overall life satisfaction has garnered increasing attention (Aruldoss et al. 2022). In light of the profound changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, grasping the intricacies of job and life satisfaction has emerged as a pivotal concern. Thus, this study delves into this relationship in the (post)-pandemic era using a systematic literature review.

Individuals dedicate a substantial portion of their lives to their jobs and when posed with a broad question like “Tell me about yourself”, many individuals tend to answer by mentioning their current job title (Judge and Klinger 2008). A harmonious connection between one's professional life and personal well-being has been linked to improved mental health, higher job performance, and greater overall life satisfaction (Erdogan et al. 2012; Judge and Klinger 2008; Unanue et al. 2017). However, the unprecedented disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have introduced new complexities that demand further investigation of this relationship. While the connection between job and life satisfaction has been studied diligently (e.g., Cannas et al. 2019; Chacko 1983; Rice et al. 1980; Schmitt and Mellon 1980; Tait et al. 1989), there is a gap in the literature regarding the COVID-19 era. The pandemic's widespread effects, including remote work arrangements, job insecurities, and shifts in work-life balance, have reshaped the traditional dynamics between work and personal life (Dwivedi et al. 2020; Ksinan 2022). Such changes demand a better understanding of how individuals' job experiences during and after the pandemic influence their overall life satisfaction.

Furthermore, the existing literature is regarded as somewhat inconsistent and lacks clear evidence on how job and life satisfaction are related (Erdogan et al. 2012; Unanue et al. 2017). Some studies show a strong positive link, while others suggest a nuanced relationship involving factors like work engagement, organizational culture, and coping strategies (Erdogan et al. 2012; Unanue et al. 2017). Thus, a systematic review is needed to consolidate this knowledge

gap, assessing the relationship between job and life satisfaction from a holistic perspective. To address this, the present study conducts a systematic literature review. The primary research question guiding this study is: “What is the state of the art on the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction in the post-COVID-19 era?”. Through a systematic review protocol, this work aims to provide a clear and updated understanding of the relationship between these two critical constructs in the context of the post-COVID-19 world, while providing valuable insights for both academia and practice.

This study unfolds in the following manner: Initially, the existing literature on job and life satisfaction is examined. Subsequently, the methodology and findings are presented. Lastly, results are discussed, highlighting both their theoretical and practical implications before directions for future research are suggested.

## **2 Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Job satisfaction**

*Job satisfaction*, central in organizational psychology and management studies, is linked to positive workplace outcomes like job performance, low absenteeism, and organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Chiok Foong Loke 2001; Heller et al. 2002). Judge and colleagues (1995) define job satisfaction as a subjective measure of success in one’s career, encompassing positive work-related outcomes resulting from work experiences. Further, job satisfaction can be defined as the level of positive emotional response an employee feels toward their job, influenced by their perception of the job’s alignment with personal values and fulfillment (Greenberg and Baron 2008; Janssen 2001). Thus, some authors categorize job satisfaction into two dimensions: affective and cognitive satisfaction. Affective satisfaction relates to an individual’s feelings about the overall job, while cognitive satisfaction pertains to how content employees are with specific aspects of their job (Judge and Klinger 2008). The concept is further closely associated with positive feelings about various job characteristics (Greenberg and Baron 2008). Particularly, research found that job satisfaction is significantly linked with

life satisfaction (e.g., Cannas et al. 2019; Gurková et al. 2014; Marcionetti and Castelli 2023; Unanue et al. 2017). Thus, in the following section, life satisfaction and its relationship with job satisfaction is analysed in detail.

## 2.2 Life satisfaction and Subjective Well-being

The terms *happiness* and *life satisfaction* have been used interchangeably; however, despite both being central components of *subjective well-being* (SWB) (Bruni & Porta, 2007), they are not the same (Cannas et al. 2019). Bruni and Porta (2007) argue that happiness is a result of a balanced affect (positive and negative) whereas life satisfaction stems from the perceived distance of realized quality of life from individuals' aspirations. Life satisfaction seems to be linked with reduced mortality (Chida and Steptoe 2008) and better sleep quality (Brand et al. 2010), lower turnover intentions and higher job performance in the organizational context (Jones 2006). Further, it can be seen as an antecedent of customer service quality and overall performance (Bellet et al. 2019; Erdogan et al. 2012). Higher levels of life satisfaction seem to correlate with other desirable outcomes within companies, including heightened career satisfaction and organizational commitment (Diener et al. 2013).

Frey and Stutzer (2002) present a comprehensive framework for understanding SWB by identifying three key sets of predictors: (1) *economic factors* play a crucial role in determining SWB, encompassing stable employment, wealth, and inflation, in particular, financial stability and adequate income are essential for individuals to experience a sense of security and contentment in their lives; (2) *socio-demographic factors* such as health, relationships, and recent life events significantly influence SWB, specifically, good health and strong social connections are known to positively impact an individual's overall well-being, while significant life events can have profound effects on their happiness and life satisfaction; and (3) *institutional and contextual environment*, including the type of democracy and organic structures present, also contribute to SWB; namely factors such as a stable and participative organizational system, supportive community structures, and access to essential services can

shape perceptions of well-being and satisfaction with life (Weimann et al. 2015). Understanding the significance of happiness and life satisfaction, along with the factors that influence them, allows us to explore the relationship between well-being and work in the following chapter.

### **2.3 Job satisfaction and life satisfaction**

The work domain has long been regarded as a fundamental aspect of our lives (Susanto et al. 2022). In traditional research, the balance between leisure and work is often discussed, with the assumption that increasing leisure time while reducing working hours would lead to higher individual utility, all else being equal (Susanto et al. 2022). Contrarily, empirical studies on happiness have revealed a different perspective. For instance, research by Frey and Stutzer (2002) demonstrated that being unemployed, even with the same income as when employed, leads to a decline in people's well-being. Surprisingly, the negative impact of unemployment on well-being surpasses the effects of other significant life events, such as widowhood, divorce, and separation (Cannas et al. 2019; Clark and Oswald 1994). Hence, when looking at work-related well-being, job satisfaction becomes a central issue. According to Bowling and colleagues (2010), the average correlation between job and life satisfaction is  $r .40$  and researchers have argued for three hypotheses to explain this link: *segmentation*, *compensation*, and *spillover hypotheses* (Rain et al. 1991; Heller et al. 2002; Bowling et al. 2010).

The *segmentation hypothesis* suggests that job and life satisfaction are unrelated, with work and non-work aspects considered separate factors (Rain et al. 1991). While *partial inclusion* theories have been proposed to explain this perspective, only Gupta and Beehr (1981) found significant support for and argued that work- and non-work factors are distinct.

The *compensation hypothesis* proposes a negative relationship, suggesting that individuals compensate for dissatisfaction in their job by seeking satisfaction in other areas of life (Heller et al. 2002; Iris and Barrett 1972). Principles like *substitution* and *catharsis* have been offered to explain this, however, only few studies have supported it (Champoux 1980; Chacko 1983; Schlenker and Gutek 1987; Unanue et al., 2017). Schlenker and Gutek (1987)

found that dissatisfaction with a new job led to discontent primarily within the work role, supporting compensation. Chacko (1983) revealed a negative correlation between working conditions satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Finally, the *spillover hypothesis*, suggesting a positive relationship between job and life satisfaction, has garnered substantial support (e.g., Tait et al. 1989; Rain et al. 1991). This hypothesis is supported by meta-analyses, showing that while correlations between job and life satisfaction are generally medium, the majority of studies indicate a positive correlation (Rice et al. 1980). A meta-analysis by Tait and colleagues (1989) confirmed the spillover hypothesis, with a corrected correlation of  $r .44$  between job and life satisfaction.

Despite the substantial empirical backing for the spillover hypothesis, existing research seems to primarily consist of correlational studies, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships (Unanue et al. 2017). The debate on whether life satisfaction impacts job satisfaction or the reverse persists (Unanue et al., 2017), with various studies presenting evidence for both perspectives. While some research suggests that job satisfaction leads to life satisfaction (Chacko, 1983; Orpen, 1978; Judge & Watanabe, 1993), others argue the opposite (Schmitt & Mellon, 1980). Thus, researchers have broadly differentiated between *top-down* and *bottom-up* approaches in the past to explain the relationship between both constructs (Diener 1984; Headey, Veenhoven and Wearing 1991).

### **2.3.1 The top-down model**

The top-down model proposes that individual personality traits and emotions shape people's levels of satisfaction in several aspects of their lives, also their jobs (Heller et al. 2002). This suggests that a person's life satisfaction can influence how they perceive their job satisfaction (Judge and Watanabe 1993). For instance, a study conducted by Steel, Schmidt and Shultz (2008) revealed that the *Big Five personality traits* seem to account for 18% of the variance in life satisfaction. It was also demonstrated that personality traits influence one's life satisfaction by shaping contentment in both work and marriage (Heller, Watson and Ilies 2004).

This implies that personality can influence how people perceive various facets of life, ultimately impacting their overall life satisfaction (Erdogan et al. 2012). Moreover, external circumstances such as life events also seem to bear significance (Diener and Diener 1996). A study by Brief and colleagues (1993) showed that the connection between personality and well-being depends on an individual's inherent interpretation of life events.

### ***2.3.2 The bottom-up model***

On the other hand, the bottom-up model states that job satisfaction is at the heart of workers well-being (Diener and Tay 2012). Hence, it proposes that job satisfaction influences life satisfaction (Unanue et al. 2017). Research has consistently found that increased job satisfaction leads to higher life satisfaction, while still missing out on exploring the determinants of this relationship. Considering the importance of work for individuals in their daily life, the causal influence of job satisfaction on life satisfaction is the most postulated in current research (Judge and Watanabe 1993; Unanue et al. 2017).

Thus, the existing literature posits three different hypotheses to explain the relationship between job and life satisfaction: segmentation, compensation, and spillover hypotheses (Rain et al. 1991; Heller et al. 2002; Bowling et al. 2010). Additionally, the academic discourse extends to causality, underlined by top-down and bottom-up models, debating whether job satisfaction influences life satisfaction or vice versa. These theoretical frameworks pave the way for the empirical exploration in the following sections, where the methodology and results of the present research are presented.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Systematic literature review**

A systematic literature review is a structured approach to analyzing existing research (Xiao and Watson 2019). Employing a systematic review was deemed suitable as it allowed for the comprehensive gathering of information while focusing on the specific research question (Rodgers et al. 2009). This method enables reviewers to gain deeper insights and a thorough

understanding of the topic compared to solely relying on automated filtering methods (Xiao and Watson 2019). The research followed three phases:

- (1) The data collection process was initiated by identifying scientific journals. Subsequently, a thorough literature search was conducted using keywords within one established bibliographic database system.
- (2) A bibliometric analysis of the gathered materials was performed.
- (3) A content evaluation of the selected studies was conducted, including identifying key topics, summarizing outcomes, and identifying avenues for future research.

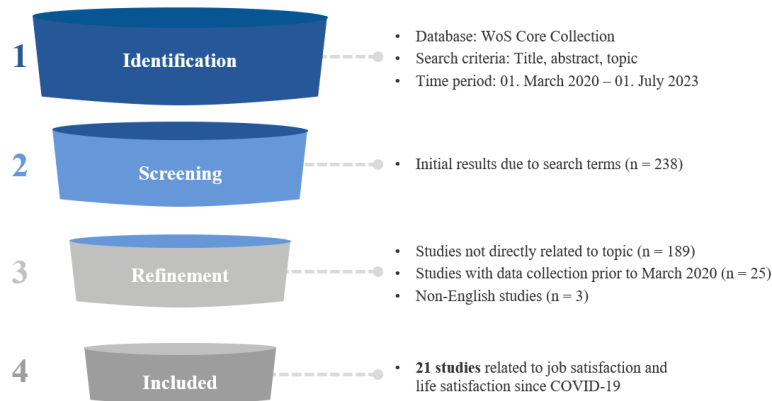
To refine the initial search results, the SPIDER tool was applied (Methley et al. 2014) to analyse the abstracts of each study. Thus, the information was clustered into the categories Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation and Research Type (SPIDER). The SPIDER tool, commonly employed in social sciences, was opted for as it was developed as an alternative to the widely used PICO or PICOS formulation and is better suited for defining key elements of review questions, especially in qualitative studies (Cooke et al. 2012).

### **3.2 Data collection**

Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection database was used to gather data from studies published between March 2020 and July 2023, focusing on the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on job and life satisfaction. The WoS Core Collection is a well-respected academic database known for its extensive collection of high-quality journals and publications (Falagas et al. 2008). To ensure a thorough and transparent review process, the PRISMA guidelines were followed, which are designed to promote methodological rigor and comprehensive reporting in systematic literature reviews (Page et al. 2021). For the search, the Boolean equation “life satisfaction“ AND “job satisfaction“ was used and the search was restricted to the fields Management and Social Psychology, which yielded 238 initial results.

After applying the SPIDER tool, pre-defined criteria were used, and 189 articles were excluded that did not address the research question. To maintain research relevance, studies

conducted after March 2020 were put in focus, excluding those with data collection before that date ( $n = 25$ ). Three studies were excluded as they were not written in English. Figure 1 details the data collection process that narrowed down the sample size to the final  $n = 21$  papers.

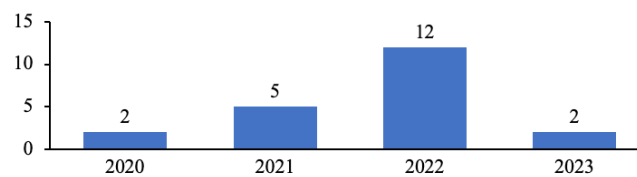


**Figure 1.** Steps followed during data collection process to arrive at the final sample ( $n = 21$ )

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Descriptive bibliometric analysis

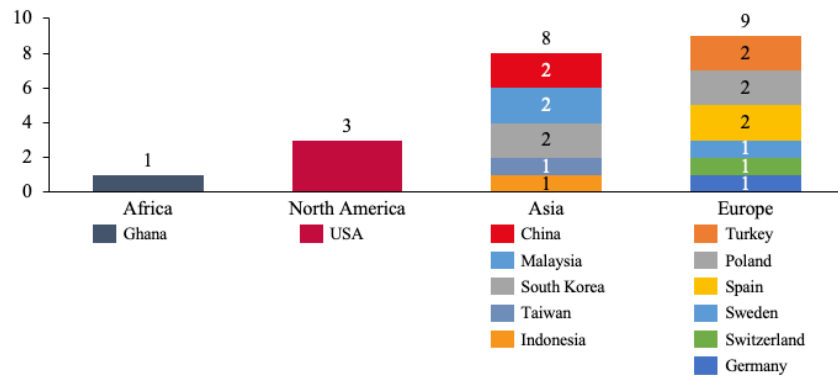
A descriptive bibliometric analysis of the 21 studies was performed (see Table 1 in *Appendix* for list of the 21 studies), covering number of publications per year, geographic distribution of studies, research domains as well as sample types. Figure 2 illustrates the yearly distribution of publications spanning from March 2020 to July 2023. Upon analysing the graph, one can see that the majority of studies in this review was published in 2022. This pattern can be attributed to several factors.



**Figure 2.** Number of publications per year

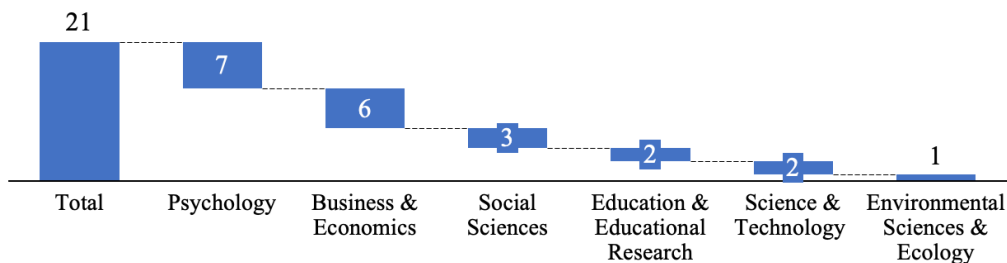
The year 2020, dominated by the persistent pandemic, witnessed a dip in scholarly output due to constrictions on research activities and a lack of funding. Furthermore, given that the data collection was undertaken in July 2023, the relatively small count of studies in 2023 appears reasonable. Nonetheless, this could also imply a potential decline in the ongoing interest surrounding the topic.

Figure 3 outlines the geographical distribution of studies across continents and countries. A majority of studies (17) emanate from Europe (9) and Asia (8). Notably, the United States (3) emerges as the greatest contributor to research on job and life satisfaction, followed by China (2), Spain (2), and Germany (2), among others. Results underscore the global reach and interest in this field, while also emphasizing the variance in research activity across diverse regions.



**Figure 3.** Number of studies and continents/country

Figure 4 shows a salient pattern in the classification of studies within specific research areas. Significantly, psychology (7) and business & economics (6) stand out as the main research areas in this particular field.

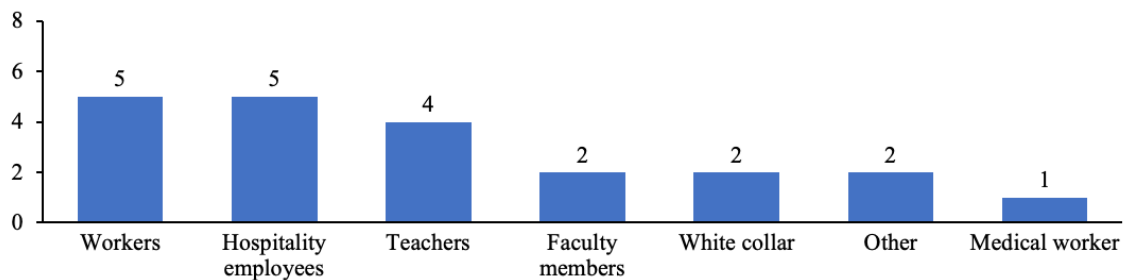


**Figure 4.** Frequencies and classification of studies within specific research areas

This highlights a focus on theoretical and exploratory efforts related to job and life satisfaction within these academic domains. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a substantial majority of the examined studies (20 out of 21) choose a quantitative approach, thus reinforcing the empirical foundation that defines research efforts in this specific field.

Various occupational groups were examined in the studies as depicted in Figure 5. Among these, workers had the highest frequency with 5 studies, alongside hospitality employees (5) and followed by teachers (4). The data reveals a diverse range of occupational

groups being studied which highlights researchers' interest in understanding job and life satisfaction across various job categories.



**Figure 5.** *Frequencies and types of samples*

## 4.2 Content evaluation

To conduct a qualitative review, the 21 selected studies were read and analyzed. Results are presented in the following section.

### 4.2.1 *Work Environment & Career Factors*

#### 4.2.1.1 *Career status*

Four studies report findings pertaining to the effect of career status on the relationship between job and life satisfaction (Han et al. 2022; Pramesti et al. 2022; Vinberg and Danielsson 2021; Weiss et al. 2022). The findings of Weiss et al. (2022) highlight the intricate relationship between occupational status, job satisfaction, and external factors. They discovered that individuals with higher occupational status tend to experience greater job satisfaction due to the advantages associated with their higher rank within an organization. However, the dynamics of this relationship were illuminated during times of crisis. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic unveiled a more complex relationship, as individuals with high occupational status faced intensified disruptions in their job satisfaction, possibly due to perceived constraints and less stable employment. This suggests that the stability of work environments and hierarchies can be significantly impacted by crisis situations, ultimately affecting both job satisfaction and subsequently overall well-being (Weiss et al. 2022).

Moreover, Vinberg and Danielsson's (2021) research further underlines the influence of occupational status on job and life satisfaction. Specifically, their study focused on managers

of micro-sized enterprises during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed that the pandemic-induced challenges, including increased workloads and shifts in leadership roles, adversely affected these managers' job satisfaction and subsequently their life satisfaction. The disruptions brought about by the crisis led to reduced time for personal activities, increased evening work, and decreased rest and recovery time. Upon reflection regarding well-being, the managers conveyed that their health had been adversely impacted by stress and the uncertainty surrounding the future. These constraints demonstrate how crises can significantly impact job satisfaction and, consequently, overall life satisfaction, particularly for managers in micro-sized enterprises (Vinberg and Danielsson 2021).

Furthermore, Han et al. (2022) indicated the significant correlation between increased job security and the augmentation of job satisfaction. This, in turn, fostered a sense of stable employment, thereby contributing to increased levels of life satisfaction among employees in the airline and hotel sectors. The research highlights that the perception of job security plays a pivotal role in shaping various facets of well-being and behaviours within the workforce. Notably, the study shows how job security acts as a robust factor influencing employee well-being, particularly in forecasting life satisfaction. It further shows the significant impact of perceptions regarding job security, reinforcing the interconnectedness of the work environment, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (Han et al. 2022).

Pramesti et al.'s (2022) investigation sheds light on the intersection of financial satisfaction, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction, especially within the context of the apparel industry. The study emphasizes the significant influence of financial satisfaction on life satisfaction, indicating that financial well-being has a direct impact on overall life satisfaction. During the COVID-19 outbreak, reduced wages among female laborers in the apparel industry led to financial hardships, affecting both marital relationships and general financial stability. Notably, the study highlights that job satisfaction acts as a mediator between financial

satisfaction and life satisfaction, underscoring the interconnectedness of job satisfaction, overall life satisfaction and financial well-being (Pramesti et al. 2022).

#### **4.2.1.2 Work engagement/adaptability**

Ng et al. (2022) delved into the linkages among career adaptability (psychosocial resources to cope with changing work conditions), job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. The research showed a significant connection between career adaptability and job satisfaction. Individuals with greater career adaptability tend to experience heightened job satisfaction, especially when comforted by robust support systems from family, friends, and communities. Importantly, this heightened job satisfaction ultimately contributes to a higher life satisfaction. The findings from this study show an interesting dimension by elucidating the indirect path through which career adaptability influences life satisfaction via job satisfaction. The study also emphasizes the distinction between the immediate outcomes of career adaptability (such as job satisfaction) and the delayed, broader outcomes (such as life satisfaction) (Ng et al. 2022).

#### **4.2.2 Psychological & Social Factors**

##### **4.2.2.1 Intrapersonal Capabilities**

Intrapersonal capabilities (the ability to understand, manage one's own emotions and motivations) can be seen as an enhancer for job satisfaction which ultimately impacts subjective well-being and life satisfaction (Chen et al. 2020; Gurbuz et al. 2021; Luque-Reca et al. 2022; Rogowska and Meres 2022; Yao and Gao 2021). Specially, three studies provide evidence for the impact of *emotion regulation* and *emotional intelligence*. Luque-Reca et al. (2022) present the mediating effect of positive and negative affects between trait emotion regulation and job and life satisfaction. They further found that through emotion regulation at the workplace, job satisfaction becomes the main determinant of life satisfaction. This intricately illustrates how an individual's capacity to regulate emotions plays a pivotal role in shaping their emotional states, which subsequently impacts job and life satisfaction levels. Further, Rogowska and Meres (2022) highlighted the constructive predictive power of emotional intelligence on both

domains of satisfaction. Their study unveiled the interconnectedness of these psychological facets, showing how emotional intelligence influences affective states, job satisfaction, and subsequently, overall life satisfaction. Finally, Mérida-López and Extremera (2020) contribute by identifying emotional regulation ability (ERA) as a pivotal facet of emotional intelligence that interplays with work engagement and satisfaction. Their findings suggest that effective emotional regulation, as a part of emotional intelligence, may exert an even more potent influence on life satisfaction than work engagement alone. In this context, the study proposes an intermediary mechanism through which emotional intelligence acts as a bridge between job-related experiences and overall life satisfaction (Mérida-López and Extremera 2020). Moreover, research indicates the substantial predictive power of positive affect on both job and life satisfaction (Ghasemy and Frömbling 2022). Positive affect seems to be a critical contributor to subjective well-being, thereby exerting significant influence over job satisfaction onto life satisfaction levels (Ghasemy and Frömbling 2022). In addition to that, Gurbuz et al. (2021) reveal a significant link between higher core self-evaluations and heightened job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and affective commitment. This shows how positive intrapersonal perceptions, encompassing self-efficacy and emotional stability can significantly shape an individual's satisfaction in both the work and life domain. This aligns with the notion that these psychological attributes serve as fundamental antecedents to subjective well-being, ultimately influencing overall life satisfaction. Lastly, Chen et al.'s (2020) focused on the concept of *job passion* and found a connection between harmonious job passion and heightened levels of job and life satisfaction. Hence, they postulate that individuals who derive intrinsic fulfilment and emotional attachment from work are more likely to experience positive affective states towards their jobs, leading to overall well-being.

The discussed studies underscore the pivotal role of intrapersonal capabilities in enhancing job satisfaction, which in turn, significantly impacts life satisfaction. It unveils a pathway that links individual's emotional aptitudes to their satisfaction and overall well-being.

#### **4.2.2.2 Contextual influences**

Four studies from the sample explored the relationship between job satisfaction, contextual influences, and their collective impact on life satisfaction. Kim et al. (2022) shed light on the indirect yet positive association between organic structure, autonomy, and social support with life satisfaction. Their findings revealed that these factors influenced overall life satisfaction through the intermediary of job satisfaction, suggesting that an environment characterized by enhanced social support not only enhances job satisfaction but also contributes to individuals' satisfaction in their broader life context (Kim et al. 2022). Similarly, Marcionetti and Castelli (2023) demonstrated that social support, self-efficacy, and burnout, demonstrated that these factors were linked to increased job satisfaction and, more notably, dispositional optimism and burnout were directly associated with life satisfaction. This implies that factors contributing to job satisfaction, such as self-efficacy and social support, can extend their influence to positively impact an individual's overall life satisfaction. Moreover, a mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between burnout and life satisfaction was found (Marcionetti and Castelli 2023). Kondratowicz et al. (2022) extended the exploration to the context of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research revealed that remote work, mediated by perceived stress, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, was linked to increased job and life satisfaction, showing the role of such factors in translating the benefits of remote work and job satisfaction into enhanced well-being (Kondratowicz et al. 2022).

#### **4.2.3 Organizational Dynamics**

##### **4.2.3.1 Organizational structures & politics**

Three studies offered insights on the effects of organizational structures and politics. Thai et al.'s (2023) study highlights the role of person-organization fit in connecting job satisfaction with life satisfaction, demonstrating that internal marketing has effects on both job performance and job satisfaction. Moreover, they find that job satisfaction relates to life satisfaction and unveil a mediation mechanism through perceived person-organization fit,

revealing that internal marketing's impact starts in the work domain and spills over into the life domain. In the context of organizational politics, Ampofo et al.'s (2022) findings illustrate that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between organizational embeddedness and life satisfaction. This indicates that employees who feel embedded within their organization and experience positive organizational politics are likely to exhibit higher job satisfaction which then cascades into higher life satisfaction.

Finally, a study by Kim and colleagues (2022) indicates an indirect yet positive association between organic structure and life satisfaction, mediated by job satisfaction. The authors suggest that an environment characterized by a fitting organic structure not only fosters job satisfaction but also contributes to individuals' overall life satisfaction (Kim et al. 2022).

The discussed studies show how organizational structures and politics, through mediation mechanisms like person-organization fit and organizational embeddedness, significantly impact job satisfaction, which in turn, impact life satisfaction.

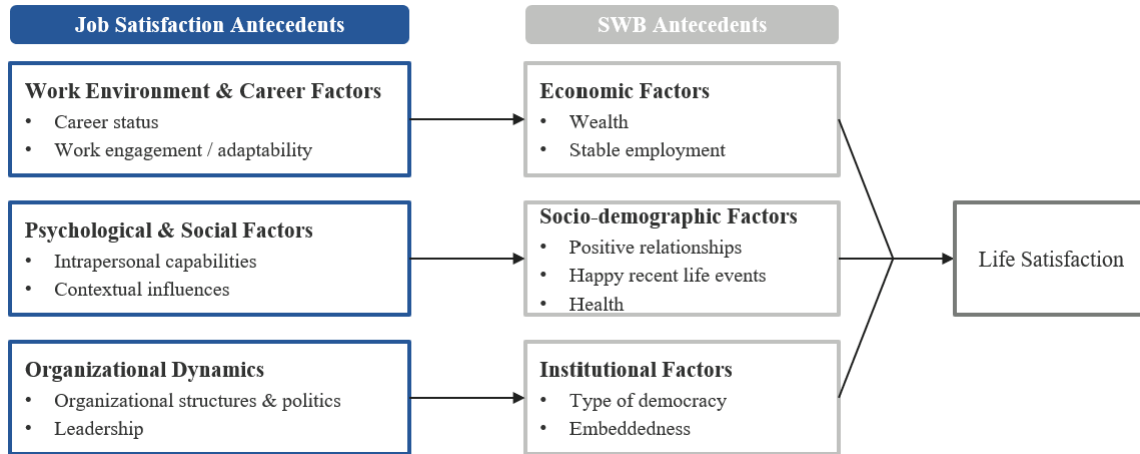
#### **4.2.3.2 Leadership**

Three studies provided results on the impact of *leadership*. Leader-member exchange (LMX) has shown to positively influence job crafting and job satisfaction, while job crafting also had a positive impact on job satisfaction (Pan et al. 2021). Better quality of relationship between leader (supervisors) and member (employee) led to enhanced job crafting and job satisfaction, and thus also higher life satisfaction (Pan et al. 2021). Research further suggests that an effective talent management strategy (TMS) can enhance job satisfaction through a positive spillover effect, where higher job satisfaction through TMS lead to increased life satisfaction (Srivastava and Tang 2022). Moreover, Kerse et al. (2022) found that health-oriented leadership affects job satisfaction through psychological well-being. The increased job satisfaction then led to an increased life satisfaction with PWB as a mediator.

In summary, the studies highlight the role of leadership dynamics in fostering job satisfaction which subsequently increases life satisfaction through several mediatory factors.

#### 4.2.4 Proposed Model

The content analysis presented in this section resulted in a new proposed theoretical model depicted in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Model of the proposed relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction

During the review, a trend where job and life satisfaction were investigated in research studies without substantial theoretical rationale behind it was observed. Furthermore, a significant portion of these studies explored the relationship of the two with only a limited set of variables. Consequently, Figure 6 serves as a comprehensive qualitative synthesis of the varied body of reviewed literature concerning job and life satisfaction. This synthesis builds upon existing research and theoretical frameworks. Following the bottom-up model introduced earlier, it was anticipated that characteristics of one's job environment, among others, impact job satisfaction which subsequently influences the antecedents of subjective well-being, hence life satisfaction. To create a structured model, distinct categories of variables were established. Initially, categories encompassing the antecedents of job satisfaction were defined. Consistent with prior research, *Work Environment & Career Factors* were identified as one such category. Within this category, a review of studies that examined aspects like *Career Status*, *Work Engagement*, and *Work Adaptability* was conducted. Additionally, *Psychological & Social Factors* were defined as another category of antecedents, encompassing variables such as *Intrapersonal Capabilities* (e.g., self-efficacy, emotional stability) and *Contextual Influences* (e.g., COVID-19, social support). Lastly, *Organizational Dynamics*, delving into areas of

*Organizational Structures, Politics, and Leadership*, were explored. The second section of the model shows the antecedents of subjective well-being, proposed as the intermediary factors linking job satisfaction to life satisfaction. In this regard, it is posited that *Economic Factors, Socio-Demographic Factors, and Institutional Factors* act as mechanisms that connect job satisfaction to life satisfaction (Frey and Stutzer 2002).

## 5 Discussion

This systematic literature review followed Erdogan et al.'s (2012) pressing question of "What is the contribution of the work domain to life satisfaction?" (p. 1039), as "the field of management does not have a ready answer to this important question" (p. 1039). Hence, current research on the relationship between job and life satisfaction since COVID-19 (March 2020 until June 2023) was analysed and it was tried to map results into a theoretical model that explains the job and life satisfaction relationship. The majority of papers reviewed in this article point towards the positive influence of job satisfaction on life satisfaction, thus confirming prior research findings on the bottom-up approach (e.g., Erdogan et al. 2012; Unanue et al. 2017).

### 5.1 Theoretical and practical contributions

Following the results of the analysis, a model of the relationship between job and life satisfaction is proposed (s. Figure 6). The model depicts which factors influence job satisfaction, which, in turn, affects subjective well-being and thus life satisfaction. These factors were categorized into *Job Satisfaction Antecedents*, encompassing Work Environment & Career Factors, Psychological & Social Factors, and Organizational Dynamics. Additionally, *Subjective Well-being Antecedents*, including Economic Factors, Socio-Demographic Factors, and Institutional Factors were identified as links between job and life satisfaction.

#### 5.1.1 Antecedents of job satisfaction and their relationship with SWB factors

##### 5.1.1.1 Work Environment & Career factors and Economics factors

In accordance with prior research, work environment and career factors were identified to be significant antecedents of job satisfaction as career status and occupational rank both

influenced job satisfaction in a positive way (e.g., Visser et al. 2012; Saeed et al. 2013). Further, the impact of occupational status on job satisfaction was influenced by external factors such as crises, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, research on career adaptability underscores the importance of personal traits and external support systems in shaping job satisfaction and, consequently, life satisfaction.

The intersection of work environment and career factors with economic factors as antecedents of SWB seems to play a role in shaping an individual's overall life satisfaction. Career status, for instance, holds an important position, as a positive career trajectory, characterized by growth and advancement, often goes hand in hand with higher income and financial stability (Judge et al. 1995; Marks and Fleming 1999). Those who find themselves in such positions typically enjoy greater resources and financial means, ultimately contributing to an enhanced quality of life, increased subjective well-being, and subsequently overall life satisfaction (Frey and Stutzer 2002). Moreover, work engagement and adaptability also contribute to this dynamic. Individuals who are deeply engaged and adaptable tend to excel in their professional roles and be more satisfied with their jobs (Mérida-López and Extremera 2020). This often translates into promotions, salary increases, and job security, which favour economic stability (Han et al. 2022; Pramesti et al. 2022). This, in turn, exerts a positive influence on their life satisfaction, as they feel more in control of their financial well-being, fostering a sense of security and contentment (Drishti and Carmichael 2022; Han et al. 2022; Pramesti et al. 2022).

The presented findings highlight the importance of organizational support and adaptability, especially during times of crisis. Organizations should consider strategies to provide stability and support to employees across all levels of the organization to ensure their well-being. Further, organizations should recognize the significance of fostering career adaptability among employees, as it can contribute to higher job satisfaction. Furthermore, the role of external support systems, such as family, friends, and communities in enhancing both

job and life satisfaction, suggests the need for a more holistic approach to employee well-being. Hence, organizations and managers should consider initiatives that support employees, even beyond the workplace, to ensure their well-being and overall life satisfaction (Guest 2017).

#### ***5.1.1.2 Psychological & Social factors and Socio-demographic factors***

The studies on intrapersonal capabilities, including emotional intelligence, emotion regulation, positive affect, and self-efficacy, provide us with an understanding of how individual traits influence job and life satisfaction. In line with prior research (e.g., Abid et al. 2016; Arekar et al. 2016; Judge and Bono 2001), such intrapersonal capabilities were identified as antecedents of job satisfaction (Chen et al. 2020; Gurbuz et al. 2021; Luque-Reca et al. 2022; Rogowska and Meres 2022; Yao and Gao 2021). Moreover, reviewed studies on contextual influences, such as social support, remote work, workplace incivility, and COVID-19 demonstrated the complex interplay of these factors in shaping job and life satisfaction. However, results strengthen prior findings and identify them as antecedents of job satisfaction (e.g., Saeed et al 2013; Babin and Boles 1996; Lok and Crawford 2004; Schwegker 2001).

Exploring the interplay between psychological and social factors as antecedents of job satisfaction with socio-demographic factors as antecedents of SWB, one can discover a direct link between them. Intrapersonal capabilities, such as self-efficacy and emotional stability, exert a significant influence on an individual's capacity to withstand life's challenges and stressors (Rogowska and Meres 2022; Yao and Gao 2021). Those possessing higher levels of self-efficacy and emotional stability demonstrate enhanced resilience in navigating adversities (Jerusalem and Schwarzer 1992). This favourable psychological disposition not only facilitates the cultivation of more robust interpersonal relationships but also empowers individuals to adeptly manage life events (Brand et al. 2010). Consequently, these elements significantly contribute to overall well-being and life satisfaction through increased health (Berking and Wupperman 2012) and positive relationships (Mao et al. 2023). Further, contextual factors such as a robust social support network lead to positive relationships (Kim et al. 2022; Marcionetti

and Castelli 2023). Such affirmative influences often manifest in heightened coping mechanisms, reinforcing an individual's emotional and physical health (Brand et al. 2010). These enhancements, in turn, play a pivotal role in enhancing subjective well-being and life satisfaction (Frey and Stutzer 2002). Thus, organizations should prioritize the establishment of supportive work environments that promote social support and mitigate influences of negative contextual influences to enhance job satisfaction. Further, recent insights regarding remote work dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the advantage for organizations to aid employees in non-traditional work arrangements by providing resources to manage stress and sustain self-efficacy (Kondratowicz et al. 2022).

### ***5.1.1.3 Organizational Dynamics and Institutional factors***

In line with prior research (Parlalis 2011; Tsai 2011), results show that positive organizational dynamics and effective leadership have a significant effect on job satisfaction. Through factors such as perception of embeddedness and positive attitudes towards work, this increased job satisfaction seems to spill over into overall life satisfaction (Kerse et al. 2022). Hereby, specifically flexible, organic structures and person-organization fit seem to promote job satisfaction and thus overall life satisfaction. Further, leadership, both within an organization and on a broader institutional level, also seems to wield substantial influence. It was shown that positive leadership within a workplace, characterized by transparent communication and fair decision-making, seems to have the power to shape an individual's job satisfaction (Chiok Foong Loke 2001). Present results are in line with this understanding (Pan, Chiu, and Wu 2021; Srivastava and Tang 2022). Further, when someone experiences effective leadership within their workplace, they are more likely to have faith in institutional effectiveness. This faith, in turn, may contribute to higher life satisfaction, as individuals feel a greater sense of trust and confidence in the systems that govern their lives and influence their work (Greenberg and Baron 2008). This finding mostly corroborates with conclusions of other authors (Chughtai 2018; Gregersen et al. 2018; Nielsen et al. 2008; Pasaribu et al. 2022).

The studies exploring the impact of organizational structures and politics shed light on how these factors influence job satisfaction and, consequently, life satisfaction. The findings highlight the importance of person-organization fit, internal marketing, and positive organizational politics in creating a positive work environment. Thus, organizations should strive to align their structures and practices with employees' values and needs to foster job satisfaction, which can spill over into overall life satisfaction. Reviewed studies on leadership, including leader-member exchange, talent management, and health-oriented leadership underscore the critical role of effective leadership in shaping job satisfaction. Thus, managers should prioritize leadership development and practices that enhance job satisfaction, as it can directly influence employees' life satisfaction. Recognizing the positive spillover effect of job satisfaction on life satisfaction through leadership practices suggests that investments in leadership development can have far-reaching benefits for both employees and organizations.

### ***5.1.2 Influence of COVID-19***

Only a few studies provided insights into how COVID-19 may have impacted the relationship of job and life satisfaction, either directly or indirectly. However, it is important to recognize that the relationship between COVID-19 and job and life satisfaction is complex and multifaceted. The pandemic brought about various changes in work environments, including remote work arrangements, increased job demands, health concerns, and economic uncertainties. These changes may have influenced job satisfaction positively or negatively depending on individual circumstances. Some findings suggest that the pandemic did not significantly drive perceived stress among certain groups (e.g., married female laborers), and therefore, it may not serve as a direct mediator between financial satisfaction and life satisfaction (Pramesti et al. 2022). However, this finding could be context-specific and may not apply universally. On the other hand, studies have indicated that COVID-19 has had an indirect impact on job and life satisfaction. For instance, managers of micro-sized companies stated significantly lower levels for job satisfaction, life satisfaction and mental well-being due to the

need to implement survival strategies for their businesses because of the pandemic (Vinberg and Danielsson 2021). Furthermore, individuals with higher occupational status experienced a steeper decline in job satisfaction over time, which can also be linked to the pandemic (Weiss et al. 2022). This suggests that the impact of COVID-19 on job satisfaction may have been more pronounced for individuals in higher-status positions. Furthermore, the impact of COVID-19 on life satisfaction may also depend on factors like social support, perceived control over one's work and life, and adaptability to changing circumstances. For some, the pandemic may have led to greater work-life balance due to positive effects of remote work (Kondratowicz et al. 2022), while for others, it may have resulted in increased stress and dissatisfaction due to the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life (Kondratowicz et al. 2022). Hence, COVID-19 has likely played a role in shaping the relationship between job and life satisfaction, although the direction and strength of this impact can vary widely. The pandemic's influence on these variables is a complex interplay of factors, including individual differences, job characteristics, and external circumstances. Organizations should take note of these findings to better support their employees during times of crisis and uncertainty.

## **6 Conclusion**

This review aimed to investigate the state of the art on the relationship between job and life satisfaction in the post-COVID-19 era through a systematic literature review, trying to close current theoretical gaps. Using the PRISMA method, a theoretical model was identified that should explain the relationship between job and life satisfaction. Studies in this review were derived from the WoS Core Collection with the data collection taking place between March 2020 and July 2023. After applying pre-set criteria, keywords, and an abstract analysis (SPIDER tool), 21 studies formed the final sample. Based on the final sample ( $n = 21$ ), it was found that job satisfaction seems to be a key indicator of life satisfaction through subjective well-being in a bottom-up approach of the relationship between job and life satisfaction. With regards to the impact of COVID-19, results were mixed, demanding further research in the

future. Regardless, by introducing a novel theoretical framework that links job and life satisfaction, this review aims to provide a valuable point of discussion for future research in this area. Hence, fellow researchers are encouraged to consider the proposed theoretical model in their own studies, fostering discussions as well as advancements in this field.

### **6.1 Limitations and future research**

A major strength of the review is that, to the best of our knowledge, it is the first to investigate job and life satisfaction research since COVID-19. Herewith, not only gaps are uncovered and assessed, but it also contributes to the literature by proposing a novel theoretical model of the relationship between job and life satisfaction. However, this review also has limitations. First, one limitation is that it only relied on a single database (WoS Core Collection), which may have caused missing information. Thus, future research should leverage more than one database for data collection. Second, the research has concentrated on a specific, relatively recent time frame (COVID-19 era) and it is important to mention that the volume of research was somewhat limited. Further, this review aimed at investigating the specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the relationship between job and life satisfaction. However, not all reviewed studies included COVID-19 as a variable in their analyses, thus limiting the overall potential impact assessment of COVID-19 in this review. Moreover, none of the reviewed studies allowed for a comparison of the relationship between job and life satisfaction in the pre- and post-COVID-19 era. Hence, future investigations should assess this era, delving deeper into the contextual impact of COVID-19 while also considering comparative methods to derive potential deviations between the pre- and post-COVID-19 relationship of job and life satisfaction. Finally, although only studies written in English were reviewed, a language spoken by a substantial portion of the population, potential cultural and geographic biases cannot be eliminated as research published in other significant languages like Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, and Arabic was excluded. Hence, future research should incorporate multilingual research to gain a more holistic and intercultural perspective on both concepts and their connection.

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## 8 Appendix

**Table 1**  
**Studies examining Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction (n = 21)**

Article	Sample	Studied Variables
Ampofo, Owusu-Ansah & Owusu (2022)	274 frontline employees in 4- and 5-star hotels in Accra	Organizational Embeddedness, LS, JS, Organizational Politics
Chen, Chen & Tsai (2020)	299 employees working in green restaurants in Taiwan	Job Passion, Environmental Stewardship, Job Autonomy, JS, LS
Ghasemy & Frombling (2022)	220 academics in Malaysia	JS, LS
Gurbuz, Costigan & Teke (2021)	537 participants. Data were collected from student (n = 216) and field samples (n = 321)	Core Self-Evaluations, JS, LS, commitment
Han, Lee, Kim, Wong & Moon (2022)	800 airline and hotel employees in Hong Kong and South Korea	Company Attachment, Job Performance, JS, LS
He, Walker, Payne & Miner (2021)	154 university faculty members	Workplace Incivility, Negative Rumination, Organizational Support, LS, JS
Kerse, Cakici & Deniz (2022)	187 employees (convenience sampling) of a healthcare organization operating in a province in Turkey	Health-oriented Leadership, Well-being, LS, JS
Kim, Chai, Kim, Kim & Song (2022)	358 participants. 273 employees and 85 supervisors from South Korea	Work Conditions, Job Outcomes, LS, JS
Kondratowicz, Godlewska-Werner, Polomski & Khosla (2022)	283 employed adults	JS, LS, Remote Work, Perceived Stress, Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem
Luque-Reca, Garcia-Martinez, Pulido-Martos, Burguera & Augusto-Landa (2022)	404 Spanish teachers	LS, Trait Emotion Regulation, JS, Affect
Marcionetti & Castelli (2023)	676 Swiss teachers	LS, Burnout, Self-Efficacy, Social Support
Merida-Lopez & Extremera (2020)	190 Spanish secondary-school teachers	Emotional Intelligence, Work Engagement, JS, LS,
Ng, Lim, Cheah, Ho & Tee (2022)	200 working adults in Malaysia	Career adaptability, LS
Pan, Chiu, Wu & Böckermann (2021)	263 nurses who worked in hospitals in Zhejiang province, China	Leader-Member-Exchange, JS, LS, Job Crafting

*(Continued)*

**Table 1 (continued)**  
**Studies examining Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction (n = 21)**

Article	Sample	Studied Variables
Pramesti, Adi & Rachmawati (2022)	629 female labourers in Indonesia	Financial Satisfaction, JS, LS
Rogowska & Meres (2022)	322 Polish teachers	JS, Emotional Intelligence, LS
Srivastava & Tang (2022)	512 sales employees	Matthew Effect, LS, JS
Thai, Nguyen, Chen & Tang (2023)	279 hotel employees working in the US	Person-Organization Fit, LS, JS
Vinberg & Danielsson (2021)	105 participants. 10 managers from micro-sized businesses and 95 managers of micro-sized and small-sized enterprises in the north of Sweden	Work-life balance, Well-being
Weiss, Weiss, Rudolph & Zacher (2022)	1,583 employees from Germany	Occupational Status, JS, LS
Yao & Gao (2021)	331 current employees working for Chinese chain restaurants	Emotional Labor, Self-Efficacy, LS

*Note:* JS = Job Satisfaction; LS = Life Satisfaction