

Temporal Changes in Employee Happiness: An Analysis From The Perspective of Demographic Factors

ABSTRACT

Employee happiness is a holistic reflection of an individual's emotional responses to their work, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being, and is considered a critical variable for organizational success. Today, changing working conditions, technological advancements, and the widespread adoption of flexible work models have led to employee happiness exhibiting a dynamic rather than a static structure. Accordingly, examining how employee happiness differs over time by demographic variables such as age, gender, education level, seniority, and position is of great importance. A review of the literature reveals that employee happiness is influenced by both individual and organizational factors and can vary over time. In this context, the aim of this study is to contribute to the literature by examining the temporal change in employee happiness within the framework of demographic factors. This study is a quantitative, comparative research project that analyzes changes in employee happiness over time. Within the scope of the research, the change in employee happiness is examined by comparing data from 2024 and 2025, and the study employs a longitudinal, repeated-measures design. The research findings are expected to contribute to the development of human resources policies and the creation of strategies to improve employee well-being. According to the findings, the average employee happiness scale score increased from 3.65 in 2024 to 3.77 in 2025, showing a generally limited positive increase. Analyses by gender showed no significant differences in employee happiness or sub-dimension scores for female participants over the years, whereas male participants showed a significant increase only in the working conditions dimension. Regarding age groups, no significant change was found for participants aged 25 and under and 46 and over, while significant increases in working conditions, self-actualization opportunities, and overall employee happiness scores were observed in the 26-45 age group in favor of 2025. In terms of seniority, no significant difference was found between participants with less than 1 year and more than 11 years of service, while a significant increase was observed only in the working conditions dimension for employees with 1-5 years of seniority. Overall, the findings indicate that the temporal variation of employee happiness differs depending on demographic characteristics, and this variation is particularly pronounced in the middle-aged and middle-seniority groups.

Keywords: Happiness, Employee Happiness, Happiness in Work Life, Job-Related Well-being Perception, Positive Organizational Behavior.

ÖZET

Çalışan mutluluğu, bireyin işine yönelik duygusal tepkileri, iş tatmini ve psikolojik iyi oluşunun bütüncül bir yansıması olarak ele alınmakta olup, örgütsel başarı açısından kritik bir değişken olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Günümüzde değişen çalışma koşulları, teknolojik gelişmeler ve esnek çalışma modellerinin yaygınlaşması, çalışan mutluluğunun statik değil, dinamik bir yapı sergilemesine neden olmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, çalışan mutluluğunun yaş, cinsiyet, eğitim düzeyi, kıdem ve pozisyon gibi demografik değişkenler açısından zaman içerisindeki farklılaşmasının incelenmesi önem arz etmektedir. Literatür incelendiğinde, çalışan mutluluğunun hem bireysel hem de örgütsel faktörlerden etkilendiği ve zamana bağlı olarak değişkenlik gösterebildiği görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın amacı, çalışan mutluluğunun zamansal değişimini demografik faktörler çerçevesinde inceleyerek literatüre katkı sağlamaktır. Bu çalışma, çalışan mutluluğunun zaman içerisindeki değişimini analiz etmeyi amaçlayan nicel ve karşılaştırmalı bir araştırma olarak tasarlanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında, 2024 ve 2025 yıllarına ait veriler karşılaştırılarak çalışan mutluluğundaki değişim incelenmiş olup, çalışma tekrarlı ölçümlere dayalı boylamsal bir araştırma yaklaşımına dayanmaktadır. Araştırma bulgularının, insan kaynakları politikalarının geliştirilmesine ve çalışan refahını artırmaya yönelik stratejilerin oluşturulmasına katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, çalışan mutluluğu ölçek puan ortalamasının 2024 yılında 3,65 iken 2025 yılında 3,77'ye yükseldiği ve genel olarak sınırlı düzeyde pozitif bir artış gösterdiği belirlenmiştir. Cinsiyet değişkenine göre yapılan analizlerde, kadın katılımcıların çalışan mutluluğu ve alt boyut puanlarında yıllar itibarıyla anlamlı bir farklılık gözlenmezken, erkek katılımcılarda yalnızca çalışma koşulları boyutunda anlamlı bir artış tespit edilmiştir. Yaş grupları açısından değerlendirildiğinde, 25 yaş ve altı ile 46 yaş ve üstü katılımcılarda anlamlı bir değişim bulunmazken, 26-45 yaş grubunda çalışma koşulları, kendini gerçekleştirme olanakları ve genel çalışan mutluluğu puanlarında 2025 yılı lehine anlamlı artışlar belirlenmiştir. Kıdem değişkeni bakımından ise, 1 yıldan az ve 11 yıl üzeri çalışma süresine sahip katılımcılarda anlamlı bir farklılık saptanmazken, 1-5 yıl arası kıdeme sahip çalışanlarda yalnızca çalışma koşulları boyutunda anlamlı bir artış olduğu görülmüştür. Genel olarak bulgular, çalışan mutluluğunun zamansal değişiminin demografik özelliklere bağlı olarak farklılaştığını ve bu değişimin özellikle orta yaş ve orta kıdem grubunda daha belirgin olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mutluluk, Çalışan Mutluluğu, İş Yaşamında Mutluluk, İşe İlişkin İyilik Algısı, Pozitif Örgütsel Davranış.

INTRODUCTION

Although the concept of employee happiness has long been considered synonymous with job satisfaction, it is now viewed as a more comprehensive construct. In this context, employee happiness is defined as a combination of an individual's positive feelings towards their work, a sense of meaning in the workplace, psychological well-being, and overall life satisfaction (Fisher, 2010; Diener, 2000).

Globalization, digitalization, and transformations in working methods have necessitated a reassessment of the human element, one of the most important resources of organizations. In this process, employee happiness has gone beyond being merely an indicator of individual well-being and has become a strategic variable for organizational performance, productivity, and sustainable competitive advantage. Today, employee happiness and well-being are

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fundamental to organizations achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Digitalization, flexible working models, and global crises have significantly transformed employees' work experience, making employee happiness a dynamic area of research.

Extensive studies conducted in recent years show that employee happiness is directly related to organizational performance, productivity, and employee commitment (De Neve et al., 2024). Changes in the workplace reveal that employee happiness is not a static concept but a dynamic state that can evolve over time. The COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread adoption of remote work models, and the increasing importance of work-life balance have directly affected employees' perceptions of happiness, leading to declines in overall well-being, particularly in the post-pandemic period (Smith et al., 2024). Furthermore, it is stated that employee happiness does not exhibit a homogeneous structure for all employees; it differs depending on variables such as age, gender, seniority, and working style, and the impact of factors such as workplace culture, psychological safety, and managerial support varies across different demographic groups (Workplace Wellness Research, 2024). This situation indicates that organizations need to adapt their policies aimed at increasing employee happiness to different groups. Therefore, considering the temporal and demographic dimensions of employee happiness together is important from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Employee Happiness

Employee happiness is considered a multidimensional construct in the organizational behavior literature. This concept encompasses job satisfaction, emotional well-being, and psychological well-being. Job satisfaction refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their work, while emotional well-being concerns the balance of positive and negative emotions experienced at work. Psychological well-being, on the other hand, is related to the individual's level of self-actualization and finding meaning in the workplace (Warr, 2007).

There are two main approaches to happiness in the literature: hedonic and eudaimonic. The hedonic approach defines happiness as the presence of pleasure, enjoyment, and positive emotions. The eudaimonic approach, on the other hand, associates happiness with meaning, purpose, and self-actualization. Employee happiness is considered a combination of these two approaches. Job satisfaction reflects the hedonic dimension, while finding meaning in work reflects the eudaimonic dimension. Seligman's PERMA model is one of the most important frameworks for explaining employee happiness, integrating these two approaches. In the model, happiness consists of five components: positive emotions, commitment, relationships, meaning, and achievement (Bai, 2025).

The positive psychology approach offers an important theoretical basis for explaining employee happiness. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model posits that happiness comprises five basic components: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. This model emphasizes that it is not enough for employees to simply be satisfied with their jobs; they must also find meaning in their work and have opportunities for development. The positive psychology perspective offers an important framework for understanding employee happiness. In this context, it is emphasized that employees should not only be satisfied with their jobs but also experience meaning, commitment, and development (Pandey et al., 2025). Current studies show that the PERMA model has strong explanatory power on job performance and employee well-being (Donaldson et al., 2024).

Employee happiness is not a static concept but changes over time. Current studies reveal significant fluctuations in employee happiness, especially over the last five years. It has been determined that employee well-being perceptions declined in the post-pandemic period, and that this varies across sectors and demographic groups (Smith et al., 2024).

Employee happiness can also change over time, influenced by factors such as economic conditions, organizational changes, and individual life cycles. In particular, employees' expectations and priorities change at different stages of their careers, and this is reflected in their happiness levels. Young employees generally value career development and learning opportunities, while more experienced employees place more importance on factors such as job security and work-life balance. This situation leads to differences in employee happiness across demographic variables such as age and seniority (Judge et al., 2001). In addition, external factors such as macroeconomic crises, technological transformations, and pandemics affect the trajectory of employee happiness over time. In this context, examining the temporal change in employee happiness is important for organizations to adapt to changing conditions.

Demographic Factors and Employee Happiness

The differences in employee happiness according to demographic factors have been extensively discussed in the literature. Age is an important variable affecting employee happiness. Research shows that there is generally a U-shaped relationship between age and happiness; happiness levels are higher in younger and older age groups, while a relative decrease is observed in middle age, when career and life struggles are most intense (Veldhoven and Dorenbosch, 2008; Luchman et al., 2011; Claes and Loo, 2011; Wilks and Neto, 2012).

Studies on gender reveal that the happiness levels of female and male employees can differ, but this difference is mostly related to working conditions and social roles. In this context, research arguing that gender is not a variable affecting employee happiness (Wilson, 1967; Diener, 1994; Myers and Diener, 1995; Kangal, 2013; Akduman, 2015; Karahan, 2018; Akduman et al., 2023) is available in the relevant literature.

Education level and position shape employees' happiness levels by affecting their expectations and job satisfaction. The fact that employees with higher levels of education have higher expectations can make their happiness levels more variable. When the relevant literature is examined, it becomes clear that there is no clear consensus on the relationship between education and employee happiness. While some studies argue that education level does not affect happiness (Haller and Hadler, 2006; Keng and Hooi, 1995; Michalos, 2007; Selim, 2008), others (Oswald, 1997; Scoppa and Michele, 2008; Diener et al., 2009; Gaygısız, 2010; Zagorski et al., 2010) argue that education level positively affects happiness.

Seniority, on the other hand, is considered a factor that strengthens employees' bond with the organization. Increased organizational commitment among individuals who have worked in the same organization for a long time can positively affect their happiness levels, but it can also lead to burnout or experience blindness, causing unhappiness (Akduman, 2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Method and Sample

This study is designed as a quantitative and comparative research aiming to examine the change in employee happiness over time. In the research, the change in employee happiness was analyzed by comparing data obtained at two different time points (2024 and 2025). In this context, the study employs a longitudinal research design with repeated measurements. The research population consists of white-collar employees.

The sample was selected using simple random sampling or convenience sampling. Participants' participation was voluntary throughout the research process, and the confidentiality of the collected data was protected. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and the data were used only for scientific purposes.

Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire consisting of two parts was used as a data collection tool in this study. The first part of the questionnaire includes a demographic information form consisting of the gender, age groups, and total working time information of the company employees participating in the research.

The second part of the questionnaire includes the Employee Happiness Scale developed by Akduman (2021) to determine the criteria that make employees happy. The scale has 20 items and 5 dimensions (managers, colleagues, working conditions, self-actualization opportunities, appreciation and reward) with a five-point Likert-type (1: Strongly disagree, 5: Strongly agree). High scores on the scale and its dimensions indicate a high level of employee happiness. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale for the year 2023 was 0.96; The Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the sub-dimensions were determined as 0.94 / 0.91 / 0.87 / 0.87 / 0.93, and for the data from 2024, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was 0.97; the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the sub-dimensions were determined as 0.95 / 0.92 / 0.85 / 0.84 / 0.93.

Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was conducted using the SPSS 21.0 statistical software package. Participants' demographic characteristics were summarized using frequency and percentage distributions. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values, were calculated for both the overall scale and its sub-dimensions. The normality of the scale scores was assessed based on skewness and kurtosis coefficients. It is generally accepted that if these coefficients fall within the ± 1 range, the distribution does not significantly deviate from normality. For variables that do not meet normality assumptions, either appropriate data transformations (such as square root, logarithmic, or inverse transformations) may be applied to approximate normal distribution, or nonparametric methods may be employed when such transformations are insufficient (Büyüköztürk, 2011). Following logarithmic transformation of the sub-dimension scores, both the total scale scores and sub-dimension scores were found to conform to normal distribution assumptions. Accordingly, an independent samples t-test was utilized to compare scores across gender and year, while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to examine differences across age groups and total work experience. In cases where significant differences were identified through ANOVA, post hoc analyses were conducted to determine the specific group differences. The LSD post hoc test was employed when the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied ($p > 0.05$ based on Levene's test), whereas the Games-Howell post hoc test was used when this assumption was violated. Additionally, paired samples t-tests were performed to evaluate changes in employee happiness scores across demographic groups over time. All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Findings

Descriptive Findings

Table 1: Distribution of Participants According to Their Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Variable	Groups	2024 (N=513)		2025 (N=747)	
		n	%	n	%
Gender	Female	265	51,7	349	46,7
	Male	248	48,3	398	53,3
Age Groups	25 and below	40	7,8	81	10,8
	26-45	432	84,2	586	78,4
	46 and above	41	8,0	80	10,7
Total Work Experience	Less than 1 year	98	19,1	133	17,8
	1-5 years	148	28,8	230	30,8
	6-10 years	158	30,8	192	25,7
	11 years and above	109	21,2	192	25,7

The study included 513 employees in 2024, with 51.7% being female and 48.3% male. 7.8% of participants were 25 years and under, 84.2% were 26-45 years old, and 8% were 46 years and older. 19.1% of participants had less than 1 year of total work experience, 28.8% had 1-5 years, 30.8% had 6-10 years, and 21.2% had 11 years or more.

The study included 747 employees in 2025, with 46.7% being female and 53.3% male. 10.8% of participants were 25 years and under, 78.4% were 26-45 years old, and 10.7% were 46 years and older. Of the participants, 17.8% had a total work experience of less than 1 year, 30.8% had 1-5 years, 25.7% had 6-10 years, and 25.7% had 11 years or more of total work experience.

Descriptive Statistics of Total and Sub-Dimension Scores of Employee Happiness in 2024

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of The Employee Happiness Scale And Sub-Dimension Scores For 2024

Sub-Dimension	Min.	Maks.	\bar{X}	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Managers	1	5	3,60	1,11	-0,73	-0,16
Colleagues	1	5	4,07	0,84	-0,10	-0,56
Working Conditions	1	5	3,40	1,11	-0,51	-0,54
Self-Realization Opportunities	1	5	3,73	0,95	-0,91	0,79
Recognition and Rewards	1	5	3,54	1,00	-0,65	0,05
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	1	5	3,65	0,89	-0,70	0,41

In 2024, the mean employee happiness scale score was determined to be 3.65 ± 0.89 . Considering that the scale allows scores between 1 and 5, the happiness level of the employees participating in the study is moderate ($100 * [3.65 - 1] / [5 - 1] = 66.2\%$). When examined at the sub-dimension level, the happiness dimensions with the highest scores were colleagues (4.07 ± 0.84 ; 76.7%), opportunities for self-actualization (3.73 ± 0.95 ; 68.2%), managers (3.60 ± 1.11 ; 65.0%), appreciation and reward (3.54 ± 1.00 ; 63.5%), while the happiness dimension with the lowest score was working conditions (3.40 ± 1.11 ; 60.0%).

Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores for 2024 and 2025

Table 3: Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores for 2024 and 2025

Sub-Dimension	Year	n	\bar{X}	SD	t	p
Managers	2024	513	3,60	1,11	-2,02	0,044
	2025	747	3,73	1,11		
Colleagues	2024	513	4,07	0,84	-1,32	0,186
	2025	747	4,11	0,87		
Working Conditions	2024	513	3,40	1,11	-4,03	0,000
	2025	747	3,65	1,05		
Self-Realization Opportunities	2024	513	3,73	0,95	-2,83	0,005
	2025	747	3,88	0,88		
Recognition and Rewards	2024	513	3,54	1,00	-1,80	0,072
	2025	747	3,65	1,02		
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	2024	513	3,65	0,89	-2,54	0,011
	2025	747	3,77	0,89		

It was found that the sub-dimension scores for colleagues and appreciation and reward did not show a significant difference between years ($p > 0.05$). However, the sub-dimension scores for managers ($t = -2.02$; $p < 0.05$), working conditions ($t = -4.03$; $p < 0.05$), self-actualization opportunities ($t = -2.83$; $p < 0.05$), and the employee happiness scale score ($t = -2.54$; $p < 0.05$) showed a significant difference between years. The sub-dimension scores for managers, working conditions, self-actualization opportunities, and the employee happiness scale score for 2025 are significantly higher than the scores for 2024 (Table 3).

Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores for 2024 According to Demographic Variables

Table 4: Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores for 2024 According to Demographic Variables

Sub-Dimension	Cinsiyet	n	\bar{X}	SD	t	p
Managers	Female	265	3,55	1,12	-0,93	0,351
	Male	248	3,64	1,10		
Colleagues	Female	265	4,07	0,84	-0,05	0,963
	Male	248	4,07	0,85		
Working Conditions	Female	265	3,27	1,11	-2,77	0,006
	Male	248	3,54	1,10		
Self-Realization Opportunities	Female	265	3,67	0,97	-1,54	0,124
	Male	248	3,80	0,93		
Recognition and Rewards	Female	265	3,44	1,01	-2,43	0,015
	Male	248	3,65	0,97		
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	Female	265	3,57	0,90	-1,98	0,048
	Male	248	3,73	0,88		

It was found that the sub-dimension scores for managers, colleagues, and self-actualization did not show a significant difference according to gender ($p>0.05$). However, the sub-dimension scores for working conditions ($t=-2.77$; $p<0.05$), appreciation and reward ($t=-2.43$; $p<0.05$), and the employee happiness scale score ($t=-1.98$; $p<0.05$) showed a significant difference according to gender. Male participants had significantly higher scores for working conditions, appreciation and reward sub-dimensions, and the employee happiness scale score compared to female participants (Table 4).

Table 5: Comparison of the 2024 Employee Happiness Scale and Sub-Dimension Scores by Age Group

Sub-Dimension	Age Groups	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Significant Difference
Managers	A-25 and below	40	3,89	1,10	1,72	0,181	
	B-26-45	432	3,58	1,10			
	C-46 and above	41	3,47	1,22			
Colleagues	A-25 and below	40	4,38	0,72	4,35	0,013	A>B,C
	B-26-45	432	4,05	0,83			
	C-46 and above	41	3,90	1,04			
Working Conditions	A-25 and below	40	3,55	1,25	0,50	0,609	
	B-26-45	432	3,38	1,10			
	C-46 and above	41	3,47	1,19			
Self-Realization Opportunities	A-25 and below	40	3,91	1,05	0,80	0,448	
	B-26-45	432	3,72	0,92			
	C-46 and above	41	3,66	1,18			
Recognition and Rewards	A-25 and below	40	3,75	1,22	1,08	0,341	
	B-26-45	432	3,52	0,97			
	C-46 and above	41	3,60	1,06			
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	A-25 and below	40	3,87	1,00	1,36	0,259	
	B-26-45	432	3,63	0,87			
	C-46 and above	41	3,62	1,01			

It was determined that the sub-dimension scores for managers, working conditions, self-actualization, appreciation and reward, and the employee happiness scale score did not show significant differences according to age groups ($p>0.05$). However, it was found that the sub-dimension scores for colleagues showed significant differences according to age groups ($F=4.35$; $p<0.05$). According to the LSD post hoc test results, the colleagues sub-dimension scores of participants aged 25 and under were significantly higher than those of participants aged 26 and over (Table 5).

Table 6: 2024 Employee Happiness Scale and Sub-Dimension Scores According to Total Working Time

Sub-Dimension	Total Work Experience	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Significant Difference
Managers	A- Less than 1 year	98	4,03	0,91	6,39	0,000	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	148	3,53	1,12			
	C-6-10 years	158	3,49	1,08			
	D-11 years and above	109	3,45	1,22			
Colleagues	A- Less than 1 year	98	4,27	0,78	3,14	0,025	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	148	4,07	0,83			
	C-6-10 years	158	4,03	0,82			
	D-11 years and above	109	3,94	0,93			
Working Conditions	A- Less than 1 year	98	3,74	1,00	4,12	0,007	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	148	3,26	1,11			
	C-6-10 years	158	3,34	1,14			
	D-11 years and above	109	3,37	1,13			
Self-Realization Opportunities	A- Less than 1 year	98	4,04	0,82	4,73	0,003	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	148	3,73	0,93			

	C-6-10 years	158	3,62	1,01		
	D-11 years and above	109	3,61	0,95		
Recognition and Rewards	A- Less than 1 year	98	3,97	0,89	8,50	0,000
	B-1-5 years	148	3,53	1,02		
	C-6-10 years	158	3,41	0,97		
	D-11 years and above	109	3,36	0,99		
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	A- Less than 1 year	98	4,00	0,80	6,99	0,000
	B-1-5 years	148	3,61	0,89		
	C-6-10 years	158	3,55	0,88		
	D-11 years and above	109	3,51	0,92		

It was found that the sub-dimension scores of managers ($F=6.39$; $p<0.05$), colleagues ($F=3.14$; $p<0.05$), working conditions ($F=4.12$; $p<0.05$), self-actualization opportunities ($F=4.73$; $p<0.05$), appreciation and reward ($F=8.50$; $p<0.05$), and the employee happiness scale score ($F=6.99$; $p<0.05$) showed significant differences according to total employment duration. According to the LSD and post hoc test results, the employee happiness scale and sub-dimension scores of the participants whose total employment duration was less than 1 year were significantly higher than the scores of the participants whose employment duration was 1 year or more (Table 6).

Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores for 2025 According to Demographic Variables

Table 7: Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores for 2025 According to Gender

Sub-Dimension	Gender	n	\bar{X}	SD	t	p
Managers	Female	349	3,61	1,10	-2,68	0,008
	Male	398	3,83	1,11		
Colleagues	Female	349	4,08	0,82	-1,71	0,088
	Male	398	4,14	0,92		
Working Conditions	Female	349	3,42	1,05	-5,72	0,000
	Male	398	3,85	1,02		
Self-Realization Opportunities	Female	349	3,76	0,82	-3,53	0,000
	Male	398	3,98	0,92		
Recognition and Rewards	Female	349	3,49	1,01	-4,01	0,000
	Male	398	3,78	1,01		
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	Female	349	3,64	0,86	-3,98	0,000
	Male	398	3,89	0,90		

It was found that the sub-dimension scores for colleagues did not show a significant difference according to gender ($p>0.05$). However, the sub-dimension scores for managers ($t=-2.68$; $p<0.05$), working conditions ($t=-5.72$; $p<0.05$), self-actualization opportunities ($t=-3.53$; $p<0.05$), appreciation and reward ($t=-4.01$; $p<0.05$), and the employee happiness scale score ($t=-3.98$; $p<0.05$) showed a significant difference according to gender. Male participants had significantly higher scores for managers, working conditions, self-actualization opportunities, appreciation and reward sub-dimensions, and the employee happiness scale score compared to female participants (Table 7).

Table 8: Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores for 2025 According to Age Groups

Sub-Dimension	Age Groups	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Significant Difference
Managers	A-25 and below	81	3,73	1,03	0,18	0,833	
	B-26-45	586	3,73	1,11			
	C-46 and above	80	3,65	1,20			
Colleagues	A-25 and below	81	4,24	0,72	3,32	0,037	A,B>C
	B-26-45	586	4,13	0,87			
	C-46 and above	80	3,88	1,03			
Working Conditions	A-25 and below	81	3,59	0,99	0,25	0,780	
	B-26-45	586	3,67	1,05			
	C-46 and above	80	3,61	1,13			
Self-Realization Opportunities	A-25 and below	81	3,93	0,72	0,50	0,609	
	B-26-45	586	3,88	0,89			
	C-46 and above	80	3,79	0,99			
Recognition and Rewards	A-25 and below	81	3,70	0,95	0,68	0,508	
	B-26-45	586	3,65	1,02			
	C-46 and above	80	3,53	1,11			
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	A-25 and below	81	3,81	0,80	0,74	0,479	
	B-26-45	586	3,78	0,88			
	C-46 and above	80	3,66	1,04			

It was determined that the sub-dimension scores for managers, working conditions, self-actualization, appreciation and reward, and the employee happiness scale score did not show significant differences according to age groups ($p>0.05$). However, it was found that the sub-dimension scores for colleagues showed significant differences according to age groups ($F=3.32$; $p<0.05$). According to the LSD post hoc test results, the colleagues sub-dimension

scores of participants aged 45 and under were significantly higher than those of participants aged 46 and over (Table 8).

Table 9: Comparison of The Employee Happiness Scores for 2025 According to Total Working Time

Sub-Dimension	Total Work Experience	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Significant Difference
Managers	A- Less than 1 year	133	4,06	0,99	5,69	0,001	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	230	3,70	1,15			
	C-6-10 years	192	3,55	1,13			
	D-11 years and above	192	3,70	1,10			
Colleagues	A- Less than 1 year	133	4,33	0,84	4,22	0,006	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	230	4,13	0,81			
	C-6-10 years	192	4,02	0,85			
	D-11 years and above	192	4,02	0,96			
Working Conditions	A- Less than 1 year	133	3,92	0,94	3,99	0,008	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	230	3,56	1,15			
	C-6-10 years	192	3,55	0,98			
	D-11 years and above	192	3,67	1,05			
Self-Realization Opportunities	A- Less than 1 year	133	4,15	0,80	5,78	0,001	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	230	3,89	0,86			
	C-6-10 years	192	3,78	0,87			
	D-11 years and above	192	3,79	0,94			
Recognition and Rewards	A- Less than 1 year	133	4,00	0,89	6,87	0,000	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	230	3,60	1,04			
	C-6-10 years	192	3,51	1,00			
	D-11 years and above	192	3,59	1,04			
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	A- Less than 1 year	133	4,07	0,80	6,68	0,000	A>B,C,D
	B-1-5 years	230	3,75	0,90			
	C-6-10 years	192	3,65	0,85			
	D-11 years and above	192	3,72	0,93			

It was found that the sub-dimension scores for managers (F=5.69; p<0.05), colleagues (F=4.22; p<0.05), working conditions (F=3.99; p<0.05), self-actualization opportunities (F=5.78; p<0.05), appreciation and reward (F=6.87; p<0.05), and the employee happiness scale score (F=6.68; p<0.05) showed significant differences according to total employment duration. According to the LSD and post hoc test results, the employee happiness scale and sub-dimension scores of the participants whose total employment duration was less than 1 year were significantly higher than the scores of the participants whose employment duration was 1 year or more (Table 9).

Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores by Demographic Variable Groups Over the Years

Table 10: Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores Across Gender Over The Years

Sub-Dimension	2024	2025	Difference			
			\bar{X}	Difference SD	t	p
Managers	Female	Female	-0,15	1,30	-1,26	0,210
	Male	Male	-0,18	1,52	-1,35	0,181
Colleagues	Female	Female	-0,03	1,21	-0,55	0,802
	Male	Male	-0,09	1,17	-0,90	0,370
Working Conditions	Female	Female	-0,19	1,60	-1,33	0,187
	Male	Male	-0,32	1,43	-2,45	0,016
Self-Realization Opportunities	Female	Female	-0,19	1,41	-1,49	0,139
	Male	Male	-0,21	1,36	-1,68	0,095
Recognition and Rewards	Female	Female	-0,16	1,45	-1,19	0,236
	Male	Male	-0,02	1,39	-0,14	0,889
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	Female	Female	-0,15	1,30	-1,26	0,210
	Male	Male	-0,14	1,23	-1,23	0,221

It was determined that the scores of male participants on the sub-dimensions of managers, colleagues, self-actualization opportunities, appreciation and reward, and the employee happiness scale did not show a significant difference over the years (p>0.05). It was determined that the working conditions scores of male participants showed a significant difference over the years (t=-2.68; p<0.05). The working conditions sub-dimension score of male participants for 2025 was significantly higher than their scores for 2023 (Table 10).

Table 11: Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores Across Age Groups Over The Years

Sub-Dimension	2024	2025	Difference			
			\bar{X}	Difference SD	t	p
Managers	25 and below	25 and below	0,22	1,95	0,20	0,862
	26-45	26-45	-0,17	1,56	-2,08	0,038
	46 and below	46 and below	-0,47	1,04	-1,00	0,374
Colleagues	25 and below	25 and below	-0,44	1,07	-0,72	0,547
	26-45	26-45	-0,06	1,16	-0,99	0,324

	46 and below	46 and below	-0,47	0,77	-1,36	0,245
Working Conditions	25 and below	25 and below	0,55	1,39	0,69	0,560
	26-45	26-45	-0,29	1,51	-3,58	0,000
	46 and below	46 and below	-0,40	0,92	-0,97	0,388
Self-Realization Opportunities	25 and below	25 and below	0,00	0,90	0,00	1,000
	26-45	26-45	-0,16	1,33	-2,25	0,025
	46 and below	46 and below	-0,55	0,84	-1,47	0,216
Recognition and Rewards	25 and below	25 and below	-0,14	1,62	-0,15	0,893
	26-45	26-45	-0,13	1,38	-1,71	0,087
	46 and below	46 and below	-0,43	0,92	-1,04	0,357
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	25 and below	25 and below	0,00	1,38	0,00	1,000
	26-45	26-45	-0,15	1,22	-2,38	0,018
	46 and below	46 and below	-0,46	0,80	-1,29	0,266

It was determined that the employee happiness scale and its sub-dimension scores did not show a significant difference over the years ($p>0.05$) for participants aged 25 and under (Table 11).

It was determined that the scores of the sub-dimensions of colleagues, appreciation, and reward for participants aged 26-45 did not show a significant difference over the years ($p>0.05$). It was found that the scores of the sub-dimensions of managers ($t=-2.08$; $p<0.05$), working conditions ($t=-3.58$; $p<0.05$), self-actualization opportunities ($t=-2.25$; $p<0.05$), and the employee happiness scale ($t=-2.38$; $p<0.05$) showed a significant difference over the years for participants aged 26-45. The scores of the sub-dimensions of managers, working conditions, self-actualization opportunities, and the employee happiness scale for participants aged 26-45 in 2025 were significantly higher than their scores in 2024 (Table 11). It was determined that the employee happiness scale and its sub-dimension scores of participants aged 46 and over did not show a significant difference over the years ($p>0.05$) (Table 11).

Table 12: Comparison of Employee Happiness Scores Across Different Working Time Groups Over The Years

Sub-Dimension	2024	2025	Difference			
			\bar{X}	Difference	SD	t
Managers	Less than 1 year	Less than 1 year	-0,25	1,33	-0,84	0,413
	1-5 years	1-5 years	-0,23	1,82	-0,90	0,374
	6-10 years	6-10 years	-0,32	1,35	-1,48	0,147
	11 years and above	11 years and above	-0,02	1,48	-0,05	0,961
	Less than 1 year	Less than 1 year	-0,27	0,74	-1,61	0,123
Colleagues	1-5 years	1-5 years	-0,25	1,16	-1,57	0,122
	6-10 years	6-10 years	-0,17	1,18	-0,87	0,388
	11 years and above	11 years and above	0,21	1,51	0,62	0,539
	Less than 1 year	Less than 1 year	-0,45	1,33	-1,51	0,148
	1-5 years	1-5 years	-0,49	1,70	-2,06	0,045
Working Conditions	6-10 years	6-10 years	-0,50	1,40	-2,20	0,034
	11 years and above	11 years and above	-0,21	1,16	-0,82	0,423
	Less than 1 year	Less than 1 year	-0,31	1,12	-1,25	0,228
	1-5 years	1-5 years	-0,19	1,47	-0,93	0,357
	6-10 years	6-10 years	0,54	1,39	-2,40	0,022
Self-Realization Opportunities	11 years and above	11 years and above	-0,24	1,16	-0,94	0,357
	Less than 1 year	Less than 1 year	-0,18	1,17	-0,68	0,503
	1-5 years	1-5 years	-0,14	1,62	-0,62	0,540
	6-10 years	6-10 years	-0,47	1,46	-2,00	0,053
	11 years and above	11 years and above	-0,26	1,15	-1,03	0,317
Recognition and Rewards	Less than 1 year	Less than 1 year	-0,27	1,02	-1,18	0,251
	1-5 years	1-5 years	-0,23	1,42	-1,17	0,247
	6-10 years	6-10 years	-0,42	1,21	-2,15	0,038
	11 years and above	11 years and above	-0,14	1,15	-0,56	0,582

It was found that the employee happiness scale and its sub-dimension scores did not show a significant difference ($p>0.05$) between years for participants with a total work experience of less than 1 year (Table 12).

It was found that the sub-dimensions of managers, colleagues, self-actualization opportunities, appreciation and reward, and the employee happiness scale scores of participants with a total work experience of 1-5 years did not show significant differences across years ($p>0.05$). It was found that the working conditions sub-dimension scores of participants with a total work experience of 1-5 years showed a significant difference across years ($t = -2.06$; $p < 0.05$). The 2025 scores of the working conditions sub-dimension for participants with a total work experience of 1-5 years were significantly higher than their 2024 scores (Table 12).

It was found that the sub-dimensions of managers, colleagues, appreciation, and reward did not show a significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between years for participants with a total work experience of 6-10 years. It was found that participants with a total work experience of 1-5 years showed significant differences in their working conditions ($t = -2.20$; $p < 0.05$), self-actualization opportunities ($t = -2.40$; $p < 0.05$), sub-dimensions, and employee happiness scale scores ($t = -2.15$; $p < 0.05$) over the years. Participants with a total work experience of 6-10 years had significantly higher scores in the working conditions, self-actualization opportunities sub-dimensions, and the employee happiness scale in 2025 than in 2024 (Table 12).

It was determined that participants with a total work experience of 11 years or more did not show significant differences in the employee happiness scale and sub-dimension scores over the years ($p > 0.05$) (Table 12).

When the research findings are evaluated overall, the average employee happiness scale score was 3.65 in 2024 and 3.77 in 2025. It was found that female participants' employee happiness scale and sub-dimension scores did not show significant differences over the years, while male participants' scores on managers, colleagues, self-actualization opportunities, appreciation, and reward sub-dimensions, and the employee happiness scale did not show significant differences over the years, but their working conditions scores did show significant differences over the years. It was found that the employee happiness scale and sub-dimension scores of participants aged 25 and under and 46 and over did not show significant differences over the years. It was found that the colleagues, appreciation, and reward sub-dimensions scores of participants aged 26-45 did not show significant differences over the years. It was found that the working conditions, self-actualization opportunities sub-dimensions, and employee happiness scale scores of participants aged 26-45 showed significant differences over the years. The 2025 scores of participants aged 26-45 on the managers, working conditions, and self-actualization opportunities sub-dimensions, and on the employee happiness scale, were significantly higher than their 2024 scores. It was found that the employee happiness scale and its sub-dimension scores did not show significant differences across years for participants with total work experience of less than 1 year and 11 years or more. Similarly, for participants with a total work experience of 1-5 years, the scores on the sub-dimensions of managers, colleagues, self-actualization opportunities, appreciation and reward, and the employee happiness scale did not show significant differences between the years. However, the working conditions sub-dimension scores of participants with a total work experience of 1-5 years showed a significant difference across years. The 2025 scores on the working conditions sub-dimension for participants with 1-5 years of total work experience were significantly higher than their 2024 scores.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When the findings obtained within the scope of the research are examined, it is seen that the average employee happiness scale score increased from 3.65 in 2024 to 3.77 in 2025. This increase indicates a generally positive change in employee happiness. However, the fact that this increase remains limited suggests that employee happiness is a phenomenon that does not change radically in the short term, but rather depends on structural and long-term factors. The findings obtained from this research show that employee happiness shows a limited but positive change over time. The increase in average employee happiness in 2025 compared to 2024 is consistent with the literature, which finds that employee well-being can be improved through organizational practices (Fisher, 2010; Harter et al., 2003). However, the fact that the increase remains limited supports the idea that employee happiness is a structure dependent on long-term, multidimensional factors rather than short-term interventions, as Warr (2007) stated.

Analyses of the gender variable show no significant differences in happiness levels or sub-dimensions among female employees over the years. This indicates that female employees' work experiences have shown a more stable structure over time. In male employees, no significant change was observed in the general happiness level or most sub-dimensions, but a significant difference was found only in the working conditions dimension. This finding suggests that organizational improvements occur primarily through working conditions and that this change is perceived more clearly by male employees. The findings regarding the gender variable are consistent with conflicting results in the literature. The lack of significant change observed among female employees is consistent with studies showing that job satisfaction and happiness do not differ by gender (Judge et al., 2001). The significant difference found only in the working conditions dimension among male employees suggests that organizational changes are perceived more through tangible, physical elements, and that this perception may vary according to demographic characteristics.

The findings by age show that employee happiness varies across three groups. For those aged 25 and under and those aged 46 and over, happiness levels remained unchanged over the years. This suggests these groups have stable expectations and experiences. However, employees aged 26-45 saw significant improvements in working conditions, opportunities for self-actualization, and overall happiness. This highlights that the 26-45 group, in an active, development-focused career phase, is more sensitive to organizational changes and perceives improvements more readily. These findings align with the U-shaped relationship between happiness and age observed in the literature (Blanchflower and Oswald, 2008). The significant increase in the 26-45 age group can be explained by the career-

stages approach: people in this range have both development and advancement expectations, making them more receptive to organizational improvements (Super, 1980). This aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which says self-actualization is a key motivation (Maslow, 1943).

When evaluated by total length of service, no significant difference was found between employees with less than 1 year and those with 11 years or more of seniority. This may be because new employees are still adapting, while senior employees are already familiar with the organizational structure. In contrast, only employees with 1-5 years of seniority showed a significant improvement in working conditions, suggesting greater sensitivity to change in this group. However, there was no significant change in social and managerial dimensions for employees with 1-5 years of seniority, indicating no change in organizational relations or management practices. These findings align with the literature on organizational commitment and happiness (Eisenberger et al., 1986), as well as the adaptation process for new employees and the familiarity of senior employees, which help explain the lack of change in those groups. Furthermore, significant differences among employees aged 26-45 and those with moderate seniority indicate that employee happiness is closely linked to career stage. The organizational focus appears to be on structural and operational aspects, as suggested by improvements in working conditions. However, the absence of significant changes in social and psychological areas—such as manager-employee relations, colleagues, and reward systems—suggests that improving physical conditions alone does not sufficiently boost employee happiness.

The significant increases obtained in the dimension of working conditions are consistent with studies highlighting the impact of physical and structural arrangements on employee happiness in modern organizations (Grant et al., 2013). In particular, findings suggesting that flexible work models and work-life balance practices increase employee well-being support this study's results. However, the lack of significant change in dimensions such as manager-manager relations and reward reveals that organizational culture and leadership practices are more resilient structures. This situation, when considered together with studies highlighting the impact of transformational leadership on employee happiness (Bass and Riggio, 2006), indicates that organizations should focus more on these areas.

Overall, this research supports the idea that employee happiness is a multidimensional construct encompassing both hedonic (job satisfaction, positive emotions) and eudaimonic (meaning, self-actualization) dimensions (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

The observed increase in self-actualization opportunities, in particular, shows that eudaimonic happiness is becoming increasingly important in the employee experience. Employee happiness is a critical variable not only for individual well-being but also for organizational success. This study aims to fill a significant gap in the literature by examining the temporal variation of employee happiness within the framework of demographic factors. The theoretical findings show that employee happiness is not a static construct but a dynamic process that changes over time and varies by demographic characteristics. This indicates that organizations need to continuously review their strategies for increasing employee happiness. Based on the research findings, the following recommendations have been developed:

- ✓ Human resources policies based on demographic differences: Instead of a uniform approach, organizations should adapt their employee happiness practices to the needs of different age and seniority groups. Career development and self-actualization opportunities should be increased, especially for employees aged 26-45.
- ✓ Improving working conditions: The research showed that working conditions are a significant determinant. Therefore, flexible working models, work-life balance practices, and ergonomic work environments should be developed.
- ✓ Strengthening leadership and organizational culture: The lack of significant change in manager-client relations and reward dimensions indicates that these areas need improvement. In this context, transformational leadership approaches should be adopted, and employee recognition systems should be strengthened.
- ✓ Supporting psychological well-being: Employee happiness includes not only physical but also psychological dimensions. Therefore, employee support programs, psychological counseling services, mindfulness, and stress management practices should be widespread in organizations.
- ✓ Long-term and sustainable approach: Employee happiness can be increased not with short-term interventions, but with long-term strategic approaches. Therefore, organizations should continuously measure employee experience, make data-driven decisions, and develop sustainable strategies for employee happiness.

Future research, through quantitative and qualitative studies across different sectors and cultural contexts, can more comprehensively reveal the temporal variation of employee happiness. Furthermore, longitudinal studies will contribute to a clearer understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships behind changes in employee happiness.

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