

What Indonesian Teachers' Happiness is and How it Manifests at Work in Adopting Technology-based Teaching in the Digital Era: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the characteristics and factors influencing Indonesian teachers' work satisfaction when utilising ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in the digital era. The findings could serve as a foundation for optimising teachers' happiness at work in the face of technological transformation. The research method employed was an exploratory case study with the indigenous psychology approach. The participants were 550 teachers. Data collection involved open-ended questionnaires, which were analysed using content analysis. Four main categories emerged as characteristics of Indonesian teachers' happiness at work in the digital era: positive emotion, work contribution, positive working relationship, and meaning at work. Factors contributing to Indonesian teachers' happiness at work when using ICT stemmed from both personal and organisational sources. The personal factor included personality traits, while the organisational factors encompassed co-worker support, school principal, appreciation of work performance, teacher development programme, and school facilities. This research recommends optimising teachers' work happiness by understanding these characteristics and developing programmes that enhance work happiness based on personal and organisational factors, thus preparing teachers to teach effectively with ICT in the digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

The integration of technology to improve education quality has been implemented in Western countries (Kun & Gadanez, 2022).

In Indonesia the urgency of ICT-based teaching skills increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kraiwanit et al., 2023). Before the pandemic schools mainly relied on traditional methods (Herawati et al., 2022; Prasetyo et al., 2021). The pandemic emphasised the need to incorporate ICT into the curriculum. Teachers are now required to use technological applications in learning management, administration, and attendance systems (Prasetyo et al., 2024). This situation demands that Indonesian teachers move from conventional to ICT-based teaching approaches.

Teachers face difficulties in adapting to ICT requirements. Many find it challenging to master diverse applications and prefer conventional methods (Herawati et al., 2022; Prasetyo et al., 2024). These difficulties increase stress levels and reduce teachers' happiness (Prasetyo et al., 2024). Positive personal resources are essential in this process (Ho et al., 2023). Since teaching involves emotional labour, happiness at work becomes an important psychological factor for teachers in responding to technological change (Bangun et al., 2021).

Happiness at work is defined as pleasant experiences and behaviours that allow individuals to contribute effectively (Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2021). This concept is very important in school organisations because it helps maintain stability. Teachers with higher happiness levels show better performance and more innovative behaviour (Mertoğlu, 2018). Happiness at work also encourages teachers to improve their competence with technology (Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019).

Most studies on happiness in organisational psychology have been developed in Western contexts (Prasetyo et al., 2022). Western cultures emphasise personal achievement, while Asian cultures such as Indonesia prioritise interpersonal relationships (Atan, 2023). For this reason, this study applies an indigenous psychology approach that examines behaviour and mental processes according to the characteristics of local communities (Sundararajan, 2019).

A preliminary study through a systematic review of 23 articles (2010–2021) (Prasetyo et al., 2022), consists of 17 research articles on teachers in Western countries and 6 articles on Asian countries, showed that teachers' happiness at work had a positive effect on classroom management, student satisfaction and achievement, health, work engagement, affective commitment, and innovative behaviour. Factors that affect happiness are divided into individual dimensions (e.g., work stress, personality, job satisfaction, quality of work life, spirituality) and organisational dimensions (e.g., transformational leadership and distribution, school climate). Research that reviews teachers' happiness at work in the context of the digital era is still very limited, there is only one study in Western countries.

Based on the systematic review (Prasetyo et al., 2022), most of the research is still conducted in the Western context, while studies in Asia, particularly Indonesia, are very few. The cultural values of collectivism inherent in Asia are believed to influence the dynamics of teachers' happiness (Benevene et al., 2018; Wesarat et al., 2015). Previous

research in Indonesia has not identified the causative factors, characteristics, or perspectives of teachers' happiness at work that are in accordance with local culture and digital technology-based educational transformation (Prasetyo et al., 2022). Therefore, this research is important to provide a new perspective on the happiness of Indonesian teachers, especially in the digital era.

From the background, several conclusions emerge. First, technological transformation in education is advancing globally (Anwar & Jain, 2025; Pathiranga & Karunaratne, 2023), requiring Indonesian teachers to adapt and innovate through ICT. Such innovation depends on positive mental conditions supported by happiness at work. Second, happiness at work is a crucial variable for teachers, yet studies in Indonesia remain limited. Third, contextual differences show variations between Western and Asian perspectives on teachers' happiness.

Based on the conclusion above, this study aims to examine the characteristics and factors that shape Indonesian teachers' happiness at work in using technology. Using the indigenous psychology framework of U. Kim and J. Kim (2023), it focusses on two main questions: (1) what the characteristics of teachers are, who experience happiness at work with technology, and (2) what factors enhance their happiness in this context. The findings are expected to provide a foundation for developing culturally relevant psychological interventions and measurement instruments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Happiness at Work

The theory of happiness at work originates from the broader concept of happiness. Aristotle introduced "eudaimonia," describing happiness as living by cultivating virtues (Seligman, 2019). In the work context, Fisher (2010) defined happiness at work as positive attitudes and feelings in the workplace, while Salas-Vallina and Alegre (2021) emphasised positive emotions toward the work environment.

According to Kun and Gadanez (2022), teachers' happiness at work can be identified through four main categories, namely positive emotions, work contributions, social relationships, and work meaning, which reflect pleasant affective experiences, sense of impact, quality of social interaction, and meaningful feelings at work. Meanwhile, Bhatia and Mohsin (2020) emphasised the factors that affect teachers' happiness, namely intrinsic motivation, workload, and student behaviour, which shows that both internal and contextual aspects interact with each other in shaping teachers' happiness at work. A comparison of these two studies helps to understand the difference in perspective between the Western context and the findings of teacher characteristics in different cultures.

Happiness at Work and Human Resource Development in Teachers

Schools are organisations that continuously encounter changes and require effective Human Resource Management (Zhang et al., 2023). A crucial aspect of HRM in

school management is teacher development. There are two types of HRM strategies for teachers: macro and micro strategies. The macro strategy includes three components: educational objectives, the basic principles of education forming the curriculum basis, and educational methods. White and Kern (2018) state that one aspect of micro strategies for developing human teaching resources is promoting happiness at work. Happy teachers are in a positive psychological state, which fosters positive HRM patterns that enhance performance quality, work engagement, innovative work behaviour, teacher and student relationship.

METHODS

Research Design

This research employed an exploratory case study design with the indigenous psychology approach. An exploratory case study serves as preliminary research to gain a deeper understanding of a research topic (Yin, 2018). Correspondingly, the present study aimed to uncover the characteristics and factors contributing to happiness at work from the perspective of Indonesian teachers in the digital era. The indigenous psychology approach used in this research involved a comparative analysis of the identified characteristics and factors of Indonesian teachers' happiness at work. This analysis strived to determine whether these findings aligned with or differed from the concept of teachers' happiness at work within a Western cultural context.

Participants

Despite Indonesia's ethnic and regional diversity, national identity is unified through the Indonesian language and a standardised curriculum by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This study focussed on five regions: four provincial capitals in Java—Semarang (Central Java), Bandung (West Java), Central Jakarta (DKI Jakarta), and Surabaya (East Java)—and Padang (West Sumatra) as a representative area outside Java, chosen for their high teacher concentrations.

Purposive sampling was used to select schools that had integrated technology into teaching, such as computers, internet, mobile devices, social media, and educational software. The study covered elementary, junior, and senior high schools, with one school per level in each region. Teacher participants met the criteria of permanent employment and at least one year of tenure.

This research has obtained a research permit from the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Diponegoro. A total of 550 teachers (110 teachers for each study area) agreed to participate in the study. The participants included both male and female teachers from elementary, junior high schools, and senior high schools, categorised by work tenure. Table 1 represents the teacher demographic data.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire (Google Forms) to explore factors and characteristics of teachers' happiness at work with ICT. Access was

Table 1
Teacher demographic data

			Work Tenure			Total
			Early (1-5 years)	Middle (6-10 years)	Long (>11 years)	
Male	School	Elementary school	25	37	10	72
		Junior high school	37	41	6	84
		Senior high school	32	30	12	74
	Total of male teachers		94	108	28	230
Female	School	Elementary school	40	44	8	92
		Junior high school	46	50	14	110
		Senior high school	53	45	20	118
	Total of female teachers		139	139	42	320

Note. The numbers in the table represent the number of teachers

restricted to respondents who met purposive sampling criteria and was distributed through official school and teacher networks, with screening questions ensuring only eligible teachers participated. To ensure validity, the same set of guiding questions was used in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the same participants. The FGD served to check response consistency and validate findings, and its results were integrated into the content analysis. This combined method aligns with Yaakop (2023), emphasising the importance of multiple approaches in exploratory research.

The open-ended questions in this study were created based on indigenous psychology guidelines (U. Kim & J. Kim, 2023), focussing on what (characteristics) and how (factors) to formulate concepts or theories that align with the culture or country under study. Following these guidelines, this research aimed to identify the characteristics and factors of happiness

at work from the perspective of teachers in Indonesia in the digital era. Table 2 shows the open-ended questionnaire provided in this research.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study follows the content analysis technique from Yaakop (2023) through the process of data interpretation, coding, and evaluation. The main categories are derived by comparing previous literature and empirical findings. The study by Kun and Gadanez (2022) is an initial reference with the dimensions of teacher happiness in the form of positive emotions, work contributions, social relationships, and the meaning of work. The analysis of this study is also sharpened through comparison with the study of Bhatia and Mohsin (2020) in the Netherlands which emphasises intrinsic motivation, workload, and student behaviour. This comparison shows that the happiness at

Table 2
Open-ended questionnaire

No.	Questions
1	The Indonesian government requires teachers to use and improve their technological competence in teaching. Based on your experience, whether personal or observations of coworkers' performance, what are the characteristics of happy teachers when using technology? (You may provide more than one answer and explain the meaning of each answer).
2	Based on your experience, whether personal or from observations of coworkers' performance, what factors influence teachers' happiness at work when using technology? The answer may be one or more, and please explain the meaning of your answer.

Table 3
Example of content analysis

Teachers	Responses data	Sub-categories (coder 1)	Sub-categories (coder 2)	Agreement of Sub-categories	Agreement of Main categories
T491	Although I have been accustomed to conventional methods, I am sure that I can teach according to the changes of the digital era.	Positive beliefs, confidence	Feeling optimistic	Optimism	Positive emotion
T0152	Being able to create teaching materials with <i>PowerPoint</i> and online quizzes that students like, such as <i>Quizizz</i> , <i>Kahoot</i> , <i>Wordwall</i> , and <i>Quizlet</i> .	Productive, innovation	Progressive, progress working	Innovation	Work contribution

work of Indonesian teachers in the digital era has similarities with global themes, but also displays local peculiarities, for example in the aspect of technological adaptation. Thus, the categories produced for the determinants and factors of Indonesian teachers' happiness at work in the context of technology reflect the continuity with the literature while showing typical contextual differences.

The validity of the research data was ensured through an agreement process between two coders who determined the sub-categories and main categories of the

participants' responses (Table 3). These main categories were based on the closest definitions of clusters. The stages of the content analysis in this research are detailed below:

Responses tabulation: The researchers recorded the teachers' responses and assigned a numbering code to each line of their answers.

Independent content analysis: Two coders independently interpreted the responses to determine the units of analysis (sub-categories) within each teacher's answer.

Validation of sub-categories: Each coder submitted their identified sub-categories, and then both coders collaboratively validated these sub-categories.

Main categories grouping: The two coders jointly discussed and grouped the sub-categories into main categories based on the closeness of their definitions or meanings.

Table 4 shows coder agreement on 16 data units across four categories: positive emotions, work contributions, positive work relationships, and work meaning. It presents units of agreement and disagreement, forming the basis for calculating observed agreement and Cohen's kappa (Table 5) to assess reliability and validity.

Table 4 shows varying coder agreement across categories. Full agreement was reached in positive emotions (5 units)

and work meaning (3 units), while work contribution had 4 agreed units, and positive work relationships had 3 agreements with 1 discrepancy. Overall, 13 of 16 units matched (81.25%). Cohen's kappa of 0.75 ($p < 0.05$) indicates substantial inter-coder reliability, supporting the validity of findings (Table 5).

RESULTS

Characteristics of Teachers' Happiness at Work

Table 6 below presents the detailed results of content analysis, including the number of responses regarding the characteristics of teachers' happiness at work when using technology.

The data reveals that the characteristics of happy teachers in the digital era included having responsibility at work, self-control,

Table 4
Inter-coder agreement matrix for data categories

Coder 1\Coder 2	Positive emotions	Work contributions	Positive work relationship	Meaning of work	Quantity
Positive emotions	5	0	0	0	5
Work contributions	0	4	0	0	4
Positive work relationship	0	1	3	0	4
Meaning of work	0	0	0	3	3
Number (column)	5	5	3	3	16

Table 5
Inter-coder reliability based on Cohen's Kappa

Reliability statistics	Value
Number of units (<i>n</i>)	16
Observed agreement (<i>P_o</i>)	13/16 (0.8125 or 81.25%)
Expected agreement (<i>P_e</i>)	0.2578
Cohen's kappa (κ)	0.75
Interpretation (Landis & Koch, 1977) substantial agreement	

Table 6

Characteristics of teachers' happiness at work

Sub-categories	Total	%
Responsibility at work	427	77.64
Self-control	354	64.36
Optimism	331	60.18
Cheerfulness	310	56.36
Friendliness	289	52.54
Sincerity	276	50.18
Enjoyment at work	265	48.18
Ease in helping others	255	46.36
Innovativeness	238	43.27
Loyalty	210	38.18

optimism, cheerfulness, friendliness, sincerity, enjoyment at work, ease in helping others, innovativeness, and loyalty. The sub-categories of participants' responses in Table 4 were grouped into main categories (Table 7).

Table 7 portrays four main categories of characteristics contributing to Indonesian teachers' happiness at work in teaching using ICT in the digital era: positive emotion, work contribution, positive working relationship, and meaning at work. Below is an explanation of each main category and examples of response answers.

Positive Emotion

According to the teachers involved in this study, teachers must maintain positive emotions when dealing with any tasks and situations concerning the use of technology in teaching. The teachers described positive emotions as stable, positive feelings that enable them to teach with technology pleasantly. The sub-categories of positive

emotions identified were optimism, cheerfulness, and enjoyment at work.

Optimism

Optimistic teachers are those who strongly believe they can overcome obstacles related to mastering technological skills for teaching. These teachers view the challenges of using technology in teaching as opportunities to improve the quality of education in line with contemporary standards.

“Being able to overcome all obstacles and challenges calmly and positively when I have to teach with a variety of digital media.” (T046)

“In my opinion, a happy teacher is one who always believes that the difficulties of teaching with technology can be overcome well, leading to an improvement in the quality of ICT-based learning.” (T180)

Table 7
 Main categories of characteristics of teachers' happiness at work

Main categories	Sub-categories
Positive emotion	Optimism Cheerfulness
Work contribution	Enjoyment at work Responsibility at work Innovativeness Loyalty
Positive working relationship	Ease in helping others Friendliness
Meaning at work	Sincerity Self-control

Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness refers to a sense of joy and enthusiasm when teaching with ICT, enabling teachers to achieve maximum performance. Cheerful teachers reflect their positive emotions while teaching, often delivering material with a smile and a sense of fun. Their teaching materials also embody cheerfulness through the use of colorful and engaging ICT media, such as videos, animations, games, or quizzes, making learning more interesting and enjoyable for students.

“Even though the teacher may not have time to create teaching materials with ICT or is just learning to use technology, they must always engage with students in the classroom with pleasure and a smile in any situation, so that students also feel happy.” (T334)

“A teacher who is happy at work is enthusiastic about learning using various types of ICT. When teaching,

they can also arouse enthusiasm in students to adapt to using ICT together, delivering it in a fun way so that students are happy with their teacher.” (T215)

Enjoyment at Work

Enjoyment at work refers to teachers who feel comfortable and enjoy their job, enabling them to adapt and innovate in teaching with ICT. Teachers who enjoy their work love their profession, leading to pleasant experiences when performing their tasks. When teachers enjoy their work, they do not feel burdened by the need to shift from conventional methods to technology-based teaching and often perceive time to pass quickly. This situation occurs because they view the demands of teaching in the digital era as a process of learning and professional development.

“I enjoy the changes in the digital era curriculum because, after all, change is something that teachers are used to as

a consequence of educating students to be ready to face any changes.” (T021)

“I love my profession, so I enjoy teaching by creating interesting teaching materials with various ICT applications for students.” (T221)

Work Contribution

The second major category was work contribution. According to the teachers participating in this study, happy teachers not only experience positive emotions but their happiness must also be reflected in their work behaviour. Hence, work contribution refers to teachers' positive attitudes and behaviours that lead to optimal performance and the creation of innovative teaching materials. Work contribution comprised three sub-categories: responsibility at work, loyalty, and innovativeness.

Loyalty

Happy Indonesian teachers in the digital era are characterised by high job loyalty. Teachers' loyalty is a form of vocational dedication stemming from a love for the organisation and a sense of belonging to Indonesian schools and education. This loyalty makes them willing to adapt to the changing demands of the digital era or any other changes.

“A happy teacher in the digital era is the one who is ready to support these changes because, with changes in learning methods, education in Indonesia will progress.” (T311)

“I am happy with the shift to digital-based learning methods as a form of support, enabling schools in Indonesia to become more advanced and of higher quality.” (T120)

Responsibility at Work

Responsibility at work involves fully supporting the school's programme in developing technology. The teachers explained that responsibility at work is reflected in the positive work behaviour of teachers willing to develop their abilities and expertise to meet the demands or challenges of their era to achieve educational goals.

“Although school facilities are limited to support digital-based learning, I continue to teach and adapt to conditions with digital media that are easier to use.” (T227)

“A happy teacher is ready and supports every school's programme. Teachers who are happy to teach are those who are always ready to improve their competence by attending ICT training or seminars.” (T420)

Innovativeness

Happy teachers in the digital era are innovative and able to create digital-based learning media or methods by maximising the ICT facilities and infrastructure at school. The teaching and learning process using ICT becomes more engaging and can improve student learning outcomes.

Students who receive innovative teaching with ICT acquire the skills needed for their era.

“Being able to create teaching materials with interesting *PowerPoint* slides and online quizzes that students enjoy, such as *Google Forms*, *Quizizz*, *Kahoot!* *Wordwall*, and *Quizlet*.” (T015)

“Happy teachers are innovative teachers when teaching. Apart from being able to use technology, they are also able to produce teaching creativity that suits the needs of students.” (T070)

Positive Working Relationship

The third main category of the characteristics of Indonesian teachers' happiness at work in the digital era was a positive working relationship. It is defined as a relationship between a teacher and all school elements, such as fellow teachers, principals, and students. This association is not just passive; it is an activity that fosters more productive and satisfying results, leading to an optimal ICT-based learning process.

Ease in helping others

One sub-category of a positive working relationship identified in this study was ease in helping others. According to the findings, teachers who experience happiness in the digital era are those who willingly and joyfully assist each other in realising quality ICT-based learning, both among fellow teachers and students. This collaborative effort helps them advance together in technology skills.

“Voluntarily help colleagues who have difficulty making teaching materials using technology media.” (T150)

“Collaborate with students, fellow teachers, and communities to learn from each other using digital tools and resources to promote digital education success in Indonesia.” (T103)

Friendliness

Friendliness is a characteristic of teachers who can make students comfortable with the delivery of ICT-based teaching materials and are communicative in their interactions with students during the teaching and learning process. A teacher's happiness can be displayed in their ability to create a positive classroom atmosphere.

“Teachers should be able to create technology-based learning processes that are also communicative, such as online discussion forums that allow students to share thoughts and ideas and solve problems together. For example, in a geography lesson, the teacher might organise a collaborative project where students work in groups to create a multimedia presentation about an ethnic group in Indonesia.” (T198)

“Being able to deliver ICT-based teaching materials communicatively so that all students feel curious and participate actively in setting learning goals.” (T271)

Meaning at Work

Based on the results of this study, meaning at work encompasses a set of positive concepts, values, and beliefs about teaching. It serves as a personal resource in shaping the characteristics of happy teachers. The main category of meaning at work identified in this study consisted of self-control and sincerity.

Self-control

Teachers who derive positive meaning from their work tend to have an orientation towards growth and goals, which fosters good self-control. Self-control is crucial in achieving happiness among teachers because it enables them to manage their emotions and behaviour, maintaining positivity in any situation.

“Maintaining good behaviour at school and in any setting is important because teaching is a noble profession and sets an example for the next generation.” (T291)

“Happy teachers do not easily complain when facing technological changes related to their work because they understand that their behaviour will be an example for students.” (T126)

Sincerity

A characteristic of happy Indonesian teachers, as revealed by the teachers’ responses, is their ability to carry out tasks based on faith and as a form of worship to

God, sincerely and gratefully. This sincerity enables them to find happiness in their work and in educating students.

“Performing teaching duties sincerely as a form of worship towards God makes me grateful to be a teacher because it encourages me always to improve the quality of my teaching and be useful to my students.” (T093)

“Even though I have to adjust to the demands of teaching with the transformation of technology, I feel grateful for the opportunity to improve my teaching skills.” (T028)

Factors of Teachers’ Happiness at Work in the Digital Era

This study also identified the factors that could affect teachers’ happiness at work when using technology (Table 8).

Based on Table 8, it can be concluded that the factors affecting the happiness at work of Indonesian teachers when using technology were categorised into personal and organisational.

Personal Factor

A key personal factor was the teachers’ personalities. Based on the responses to open-ended questions, teachers must possess stable characteristics to process positive emotions and behaviours when adapting to teaching with technology. Participants defined these stable characteristics as aspects of personality.

Table 8
Factors of teachers' happiness at work

Factors	Total	%
Personality	472	85.81
Co-worker support	369	67.09
School principal	350	63.63
Appreciation of work performance	325	59.09
Teacher development programmeme	222	40.36
School facilities	218	39.63

“I believe that for teachers to experience happiness at work, they must have stable characteristics that enable them to remain content in any work situation.” (T197)

“Support from colleagues can make me feel happy when I work. For example, helping each other teach the latest technology applications among teachers.” (T252)

“Teachers must have a personality that is willing to learn anything, including technology, to ensure that the teaching and learning process is always innovative.” (T531)

“Teachers who help each other will make the work atmosphere fun. They will also be better prepared to meet the demands of the digital era.” (T340)

Organisational Factors

The teachers participating in this study highlighted several organisational factors contributing to their happiness at work.

Co-worker Support

Participants elaborated on the importance of positive relationships and mutual support among colleagues. Indonesian teachers, who are required to improve their technology skills, benefit from supportive relationships with colleagues. Teachers proficient in technology should help less skilled colleagues by sharing knowledge and providing training.

School Principal

The teachers in this study explained that the successful application of technology in schools in Indonesia heavily depends on the role of the school principal. Principals must manage all organisational resources and collaborate with teachers to educate students and achieve contemporary educational goals. They must create effective school management by mapping teacher competencies in using technology.

“Principals should routinely check the competency requirements of teachers in teaching technology.” (T089)

“Principals who can direct and attend to the needs of teachers to develop ICT abilities will make teachers feel comfortable and happy at work, leading to increased productivity.” (T190)

Appreciation of Work Performance

An essential factor that makes teachers happy at work is the appreciation of their performance. The teachers involved in this study expressed that innovative teaching with technology should be rewarded with incentives and recognition from schools or the government. Appropriate rewards for teacher performance foster happiness and high motivation to enhance professionalism in technology-based learning.

“However, demands for innovative use of ICT need to be encouraged with performance appreciation so that we as teachers also enjoy working.” (T417)

“The rewards are very meaningful because they make us happy and proud, as we are recognised for our best contributions by the school.” (T171)

School Facilities

According to the teachers engaged in this study, complete and adequate school facilities significantly affected their happiness at work. However, the application of technology in Indonesian schools encounters several challenges, including the lack of electricity networks and other supporting facilities such as

computers, e-books, interactive videos, and laptops. Adequate facilities can help teachers improve the quality of innovative teaching, making students more creative and imaginative.

“One thing that can make teachers comfortable and happy when teaching is the completeness of technology facilities for teaching.” (T145)

“Schools have to provide computers, e-books, interactive videos, and laptops.” (T458)

Teacher Development Program

Teacher participants in this study emphasised the importance of opportunities to participate in various programmes to improve their competency in using technology. Development programmes can positively affect teachers' psychological conditions, making them feel valued and supported. Teachers feel happy because the school considers their needs. Furthermore, teacher development programmes should include the availability of information and opportunities to participate in self-competence development, such as workshops, seminars, and training. In addition, teachers also need psychological training to help them feel comfortable when facing changes in teaching situations.

“Because the demands of teaching with technology require teachers to innovate, schools must provide various technology capability development

programmes and other supporting skills so that teachers feel comfortable and ready to teach.” (T288)

“Teachers need training in ICT and psychological competencies to cope with the changing demands of teaching and to ensure they remain happy while handling these challenges.” (T390)

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Teachers' Happiness at Work

The results of this study explored the characteristics of teachers' happiness at work, which are distinct from other employees or workplaces because teachers face unique job challenges and have different job characteristics. Given this condition, applying the general concept of happiness at work was not appropriate, as described by Fisher (2010) and Pryce-Jones (2010). Erozkan's research (2016) on teachers from western countries used a general measure of happiness, namely the subjective happiness scale, which does not specifically measure happiness at work.

Based on a systematic review by Prasetyo et al. (2022), there is only one study in the West that explicitly discusses teachers' happiness at work, namely Kun and Gadanez (2022) in Hungary, in a general context without a technological dimension. This research is different because it highlights the happiness at work of Indonesian teachers in relation to technology adoption. Comparisons remain

important to see fundamental similarities or differences with concepts in the West, while also adding a new perspective on the role of technology in teachers' happiness at work (Table 9).

The analysis in Table 9 shows how the emerging categories compare to the previous literature. The four main categories, namely positive emotion, work contribution, positive working relationship, and meaning at work partly in line with the findings of Kun and Gadanez (2022), who also emphasise the importance of positive emotions, work contribution, social relationships, and the meaning of work. However, this study adds different nuances: (1) the *dimension of positive emotion* in Indonesian teachers is more prominent and emerges as the main capital to face technological challenges, not just the result of achievements, (2) *work contribution* is shown through loyalty and innovation, not only through external recognition, (3) *meaning at work* is firmly rooted in spiritual values and sincerity, which are not highlighted much in Western literature. Thus, although the main category is relatively similar to previous studies, the subcategories that appear in the context of Indonesian teachers show cultural distinctiveness, namely the existence of a collective, spiritual orientation, and readiness to adapt to technology as part of professional meaning and devotion.

Positive Working Relationship

In terms of similarities, both Hungarian and Indonesian teachers emphasise the

Table 9
Characteristics of teachers' happiness at work

Characteristics of teachers' happiness at work in Hungarian teachers (Kun & Gadancz, 2022)	Characteristics of teachers' happiness at work in Indonesian teachers (based on this study)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Results and success: Successful outcomes from work, both past, present, and future, characterise a happy teacher who is also considered successful by their environment. b. Assessment of and feedback on the work: such as receiving positive assessments from students, colleagues, parents, and principals. c. Meaningful work: Happy teachers are highly motivated and interested in the teaching process, positively affecting student learning outcomes. d. Social relationships: Having good social relationships with everyone, including family and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Positive emotion: Stable positive feelings enable teachers to teach with technology pleasantly. The sub-categories include optimism, cheerfulness, and enjoyment at work. b. Work contribution: Positive attitudes and behaviours of teachers lead to optimal performance, resulting in innovative teaching materials. The sub-categories include responsibility at work, loyalty, and innovativeness. c. Positive working relationship: Relationships between teachers and all school elements (fellow teachers, principals, and students) are active and productive, leading to constructive and satisfying results and an optimal ICT-based learning process. The sub-categories include ease in helping others and friendliness. d. Meaning at work: Positive concepts, values, and beliefs about teaching. The sub-categories include self-control and sincerity.

importance of positive working relationships with peers, principals, and students. This emphasises that harmonious social interaction is the foundation of cross-cultural teacher happiness, although for Indonesian teachers the positive relationship is more directed towards collaboration that supports the creation of ICT-based learning optimally. The importance of a positive working relationship in the happiness of Indonesian teachers aligns with Atan's (2023) explanation, which notes that the orientation of happiness in Eastern or Asian cultures emphasises interpersonal relationships. This similarity is further reinforced by Moreira-Fontán et al. (2019), who explain that teachers in Western

countries are happier in their duties when they help each other improve their ability to use technology.

Positive Emotion

The most prominent difference is in positive emotion. In Hungarian teachers, the positive emotional aspect is only implied through the job satisfaction that arises from success and recognition. On the other hand, in Indonesian teachers, positive emotions actually appear as the main characteristic of happiness at work. Indonesian teachers express happiness through optimism, cheerfulness, humour, and joy, which helps them face the challenges of digital

learning and maintain the sustainability of motivation in educating students. In other words, if in Hungary positive emotions are more of a consequence of achievements, in Indonesian teachers' positive emotions are capital as well as strategies to adapt to change. Indonesian teachers are known to be cheerful, humorous, and optimistic, which allows them to manage their feelings well and foster a strong determination to educate students (Nadlifah et al., 2023). Thus, positive emotions are not just the result of achievements, but important capital for Indonesian teachers in facing change, especially in digital learning situations.

Work Contribution

The dimension of work contribution shows interesting cultural differences. In Hungarian teachers, happiness at work is more influenced by measurable achievement and external recognition from students, peers, parents, and principals (Kun & Gadanez, 2022). In contrast, Indonesian teachers gain happiness at work through dedication, loyalty, responsibility, and innovation in technology-based learning, where seriousness and creativity in developing learning are the main source of their professional satisfaction. These findings are in line with the research of Suyatno et al. (2019), which affirmed that Indonesian teachers have a high service orientation and willingness to work wholeheartedly, so that work contributions for them are more meaningful in terms of process and personal commitment than external recognition.

Thus, if teachers in Hungary are synonymous with *results and recognition*, then in Indonesia work contributions are more related to *dedication and innovation*. This difference confirms that the happiness of Indonesian teachers in the digital era is rooted in the value of moral responsibility and creativity in facing technological challenges, not solely on achievements and appreciation from outsiders.

Meaning at Work

Kun and Gadanez (2022) explain the meaning of teachers' work in a general context, namely motivation and interest in the teaching profession. Although it does not mention the digital dimension, this concept is still relevant to be compared with Indonesian teachers who are facing technological transformation. This research shows that in addition to professional motivation, Indonesian teachers emphasise spiritual meaning as worship, with the values of sincerity, self-control, and gratitude which are sources of happiness when facing the challenges of digitising education. This finding is in line with Nurtanto et al. (2022) who affirm that religiosity can strengthen the meaning of work and positive behaviour in organisations.

Thus, the general concept found by Kun and Gadanez (2022) can still be used as a cross-contextual reference, while this study expands understanding by adding religious and spiritual dimensions that are distinctive in Indonesian culture. These differences show that the meaning of teachers' work in Indonesia in the digital era is not only

rooted in professional motivation, but also in transcendental values that give strength in facing technological challenges.

Factors of Teachers' Happiness at Work

This part of the discussion also includes a comparison to see if the research findings on teachers' happiness at work in Indonesia are in line with or different from the Western context, especially teachers in the Netherlands (Bhatia & Mohsin, 2020). Although Bhatia & Mohsin's study (2020) addressed teacher happiness in a general context, the findings remain relevant because these general factors can be a framework to assess whether the happiness of Indonesian teachers in the digital era shows a similar pattern or has characteristics according to the socio-cultural context (Table 10).

A comparison of the factors that affect teachers' happiness in the Netherlands and Indonesia (Table 10) shows that there are different perspectives that reflect different cultural contexts and educational practices. According to Bhatia & Mohsin (2020), teachers in the Netherlands feel happiness at work, especially from job demands such as excessive workload, time constraints, student behaviour that supports the learning

process, inter-teacher support, and intrinsic motivation. This suggests that the happiness of Dutch teachers tends to be influenced by external factors and interpersonal relationships, with a strong orientation on results and performance.

In contrast, Indonesian teachers assess happiness through a combination of internal and contextual factors at school. Internal factors, especially personality, are the basis for teachers to still be able to work happily when facing the challenges of technology-based learning. Therefore, personality needs to be considered in the recruitment and selection process of teachers, as well as developed through development programmes that foster happiness, for example with strategy coping training (Jansen in de Wal et al., 2020; Baranski et al., 2023; Chiu et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2024). Contextual factors, such as peer support, the role of principals, rewards for performance, teacher development programmes, and school facilities, reinforce the experience of happiness, where peer support is influenced by a collective culture that emphasises teamwork and integration (Khoshroo et al., 2023).

Table 10
Factors of teachers' happiness at work

Factors of teachers' happiness at work in the Netherlands (Bhatia & Mohsin, 2020)	Factors of teachers' happiness at work in Indonesia (based on this study)
a. Job demands, including excessive workload and limited time	a. Personality
b. Student behaviour that does not support the learning process in class	b. Co-worker support
c. Support between fellow teachers	c. School principal
d. Motivation about working as a teacher	d. Appreciation of work performance
	e. Teacher development programme
	f. School facilities

In addition, effective school leadership encourages innovation and a positive climate during the digital transformation of education (Dursun & Bilgivar, 2022; Tore & Duman-Saka, 2023). Awards, both material and symbolic, as well as competency and digital literacy training, help teachers adapt to the demands of technology (Eryılmaz & Uzun, 2023; Hasanati, 2024; Oad & Niazi, 2021; Oubibi et al., 2022). The availability of adequate facilities, such as a stable internet network and digital platforms, is an important prerequisite for teachers' happiness in the digital era (Akram et al., 2022; Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019).

This difference confirms that cultural and educational contexts greatly influence teachers' experience of happiness. In the Netherlands, the focus is more on results, external evaluation, and direct interaction with students, while in Indonesia, happiness at work is more processional, collaborative, and innovative, emphasising personal contribution, cooperation, and adaptability in the face of technology-based learning transformation. The findings of this study on Indonesian teachers' happiness at work align with recent research in other Asian countries. In Malaysia, the sudden shift to online teaching fostered pedagogic agility but was limited by infrastructure (Annamalai et al., 2022). In the Philippines, teacher readiness was shaped by experience, location, and institutional support (Lapada et al., 2020). In Thailand, generational differences influenced digital tool usage (Thanaittipath & Boonmoh, 2024), while in Vietnam, AI adoption depended on

attitudes, ethics-privacy concerns, and systemic support (Van et al., 2025). These studies, like the Indonesian context, indicate that teachers' happiness and success in technology adoption rely on the interplay of personal resources, institutional support, infrastructure, and professional development tailored to local needs.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Indonesian teachers who thrive in the digital era exhibited positive emotions, significant work contributions, positive work relationships, and a sense of meaning at work. Understanding these characteristics could inform the development of a measuring tool to assess teachers' happiness at work in Indonesian. Such a tool is essential for schools to evaluate teachers' happiness at work significantly contributes to optimal teacher performance. Additionally, the research findings identified that the happiness of working with ICT among Indonesian teachers stemmed from both personal and organisational factors. These insights could guide school management in creating development programmes to enhance teachers' happiness at work in the context of increasing technological demands.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of happiness at work by identifying the special characteristics of Indonesian teachers in the digital era, namely

positive emotions, work contributions, positive work relationships, and work meaning. These findings show that teachers' happiness at work is not only influenced by personal and organisational factors but is also reflected in the behavioural traits and values they show in their daily lives. Thus, the concept of happiness at work has evolved from a mere supporting factor to a more comprehensive understanding of how happiness manifests in the real characteristics of teachers during the demands of technological transformation. This fills a theoretical gap while expanding the scope of happiness at work theory to the realm of digital education in the context of collective culture. Practically, the findings highlighted the importance for Indonesian teachers to manage their happiness at work, as it is crucial for adapting to the digital era. For the schools, Indonesian government and psychology practitioners, these results provide a foundation for policymaking to develop a measuring tool to assess teacher happiness at work and enhance teacher management strategies to boost teachers' happiness at work in Indonesia.

Future Research Suggestions

Future research could involve longitudinal studies to explore further the stability of teachers' happiness at work and the influence of technology-based teaching on their workplace happiness. In addition, further investigations could examine the impact of specific types of technology on teachers' happiness at work and the role of cultural factors in adopting technology.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by all authors. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Anggun Resdasari Prasetyo and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

This research has no conflict of interest and is in accordance with research guidelines for psychological research. The basic principle of this research has followed the Declaration of Helsinki, namely by giving respect to participants, the right of participants to self-determination to give consent after receiving an explanation of their involvement in the research. We received research approval from the school and consent forms from all participating teachers.

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