



## Literature Review About Planned Happenstance

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### ABSTRACT

The fast-changing and uncertain era demands an adaptive approach to career development. 'Planned happenstance' or events that are unexpected but planned has become an essential instrument in the course of a career. In this context, 'planned happenstance' is defined as being open to unexpected changes and opportunities that can potentially change career paths. The essence of this approach is to reduce anxiety about the future, learn throughout life, and exploit and create favorable unexpected events. Its main aspects include curiosity, perseverance, flexibility, optimism, and courage. Indicators of the success of implementing 'planned happenstance' include the individual's ability to turn unexpected events into learning opportunities, take advantage of uncertainty as an opportunity, and, ultimately, create a fulfilling and meaningful career path. This literature review explores the application and implications of this concept in various contexts, such as education, professional development, and schoolwork transition. We conclude that 'planned happenstance' is an essential component of the career path, and more research is needed to explore how education and training can more effectively integrate this concept.

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Article History:**

Submitted/Received 4-06-2023

First Revised 4-06-2023

Accepted 31-08-2024

First Available Online 1-09-2024

Publication Date 1-09-2025

**Keyword:**

Planned happenstance,

Career development,

Career counselling.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this ever-changing and uncertain era, it is essential to have a strategy for navigating and taking advantage of these changes, especially regarding career development. These strategies must be flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen events and robust enough to guide individuals in planning and achieving their career goals. In this case, the concept of “Planned Happenstance” or “Unexpected Planned Events,” which was first proposed by [Mitchell et al. \(1999\)](#), offers an innovative and practical approach.

The “Planned Happiness” approach emphasizes reducing anxiety about the future, lifelong learning, and capitalizing on and creating favorable unexpected events. This method helps individuals see unexpected events as opportunities to try new activities, develop new interests, challenge old beliefs, and continue learning. Overall, this concept guides individuals to become more adaptive and proactive in responding to unexpected career changes and opportunities.

Some studies have shown that the “planned happenstance” skill significantly impacts career development processes and the creation of work identities. Researchers have introduced tools such as the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (PHCI) and the Readiness to Career Unpredictability Questionnaire that can help evaluate and enhance these skills. Other research has shown that the “planned happenstance” approach can be applied in various contexts and cultural groups, providing further evidence of the approach’s versatility and relevance.

This research guides us in exploring how the concept of “Planned Happiness” and related skills have been used and adapted in various contexts, including education and professional development. Several studies have shown that career flexibility is a crucial factor for success and that “planned happenstance” principles can be applied in various interventions to support students and professionals.

Even so, there are still many questions that need to be answered. How has “Planned Happiness” been developed and used since its introduction? How can the “planned happenstance” skill help individuals at various career stages and transitions? How is this concept adapted and applied in various contexts, including education and professional development?

As part of an effort to answer these questions, this article will summarize and analyze various studies that have been conducted on the concept of “planned happiness” and related skills. This study will evaluate and compare research methods, contexts, samples, and results from various studies and analyze and describe emerging patterns and trends.

This literature review will provide a deeper and broader understanding of “Planned Happiness” and how this concept can assist individuals in navigating and achieving their career goals. The hope from this literature review is that readers will gain valuable knowledge and insights from this article and can apply it in their practice and research.

For this reason, a research question will be the focus of this study: How has the concept of “Planned Happiness” developed since it was first introduced? How has previous research supported the relevance and effectiveness of the ‘planned happenstance’ skill in career development? How is the concept of ‘planned happenstance’ adapted and applied in various contexts, including education and professional development? Furthermore, finally, what is the role of the ‘planned happenstance’ skill in various career stages and transitions?

## 2. METHODS

This study will use the systematic literature review method, as described by (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This process involves the following steps:

### **Step One: Choose a Topic and Key Terms**

The topic for this literature review is “Planned Happiness.” The critical term for the literature search is “planned happenstance.”

### **Step Two: Identify the Database and Access Software**

The database to be used for the literature search includes Scopus. The access software to be used is a device available through the author’s university library, in this case, access to international journal subscriptions from the Indonesian University of Education and the National Library of Indonesia.

### **Step Three: Doing a Search**

A literature search will be conducted using the previously mentioned vital terms, individually or in combination. Searches will be filtered to include research articles published in reputable journals that have been peer-reviewed.

### **Step Four: Identify Sources as Primary or Secondary**

All identified sources will be classified as either primary or secondary sources. Primary sources are original research conducted by the author, while secondary sources are studies that summarize or analyze research that has been done previously.

### **Step Five: Evaluation and Source Analysis**

Each identified source will be evaluated and analyzed. This evaluation will consider the source’s relevance to the research topic, the quality of the research (e.g., whether the research was peer-reviewed), and the quality of the evidence presented. The analysis will include identifying the main findings from each source and how these findings relate to the research topic. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of planned happenstance using this method.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the Scopus database, extracted according to the criteria, 28 articles were obtained, which are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Recapitulation of the findings of the planned happiness manuscript from the scopus database

No	Definition	Essence	Aspect	Indicator
1	Planned Happenstance (Mitchell et al., 1999)	Take advantage of and build on unexpected career opportunities.	Build courage to explore new interests and learn from every situation	The counselee considers ideas for developing new interests and asks questions about how people in the field develop their interests
2	Planned Happenstance (Hagevik, 2000)	A concept that includes creating and transforming unexpected events into opportunities for learning	Able to respond effectively to changes and unexpected events	Ability to tolerate ambiguity and embrace uncertainty
3	Five Skills for Planned Happenstance (Hagevik, 2000; Mitchell et al., 1999)	Develop five skills to recognize, create and use unexpected	Career counseling	These skills are: Curiosity (exploring new learning opportunities), Perseverance (trying

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		events as career opportunities.		despite obstacles), flexibility (changing attitudes and circumstances), Optimism (seeing new opportunities as possible and achievable), risk Taking (acting despite the results uncertain)
4	Curiosity (Hagevik, 2000; Mitchell et al., 1999)	Attitudes that encourage a person to explore new learning opportunities	Have an interest and desire to learn and explore	Desire to ask questions, explore options, and avoid outdated answers or directions
5	Persistence (Hagevik, 2000; Mitchell et al., 1999)	Means giving extra effort despite facing obstacles.	Have the strength and resilience to carry on despite adversity	The ability to survive and continue the business despite facing obstacles or failures
6	Flexibility (Hagevik, 2000; Mitchell et al., 1999)	The ability to change attitudes and circumstances	Can adapt to changes and adapt to new situations	The ability to adjust attitudes and actions according to changes in the environment or circumstances
7	Optimism (Hagevik, 2000; Mitchell et al., 1999)	Allows you to see new opportunities as possible and achievable.	Have a positive view of the future and opportunities	The belief that positive results are possible and achievable
8	Willingness to take risks (Hagevik, 2000; Mitchell et al., 1999)	The ability to act even in the face of uncertainty	Able to take risks and act despite uncertainty	The ability to make decisions and act despite uncertainty or risk
9	Metacognitive and Planned Happenstance Career Training Course (Chien et al., 2006)	A training program to enhance students' career competencies in the metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions.	Perkembangan Kompetensi Karir	Significant improvement in career competence in metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions after participating in the training program.
10	Happenstance Learning Theory (Krumboltz, 2009)	A theory that emphasizes the importance of participating in various practical and exciting activities and learning the skills to succeed in each new activity rather than planning a career.	Career Development Through Activities	Success in generating favorable unplanned events through exploratory actions.
11	Career Development of Finnish Polytechnic Master's Degree Graduates (Ahola & Galli, 2012)	Research on the career development of graduates of the Finnish Polytechnic master's program	Goal-Based Career Development and Learning	Identify the type of career development: goal-oriented, learning, or drifting careers. Ability to take advantage

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		resulted in six different types of career development.		of unexpected events in career development.
12	A Moderated Mediation Model of Planned Happenstance Skills (B. Kim, Jang, et al., 2014)	This study examines how the 'planned happenstance' skill influences the relationship between career involvement, self-efficacy in decision-making, and certainty in career decision-making.	Career Involvement, Self-Efficacy in Career Decision Making, Career Decision-Making Certainty	Strong career involvement increases the certainty of career decision-making through self-efficacy when they have sufficient 'planned happenstance' skills to spot unexpected career opportunities.
13	Construction and Initial Validation of the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (B. Kim, Jung, et al., 2014)	This study aims to develop and initially evaluate the psychometric properties of the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (PHCI), which aims to assess skills in using unexpected events to develop career opportunities.	Career Development Through Unforeseen Events	The results show that the PHCI subscale correlates moderately and in the expected direction with career preparation, decision-making self-efficacy, and stress.
14	Planned Happenstance Skills and Occupational Identity Status in High School Students (Ahn et al., 2015)	This study examines how the components of the 'planned happenstance' skill are related to adolescents' occupational identity status.	Youth Occupational Identity Status	Higher identity statuses (e.g., achievement and moratorium status) were significantly related to the five components of the 'planned happenstance' skill. In contrast, lower identity statuses (e.g., closure and deployment status) were not significantly related to the five components of the skill' planned happenstance.'
15	The "Readiness to Career Unpredictability Questionnaire" measures an individual's disposition to explore uncertainty and take advantage of opportunities generated by random	This measure focuses on critical aspects of the theory of Planned Happenstance and the Chaos Theory of Careers, including the principles of non-linearity, 'attractors,' self-confidence, and optimism.	Disposition to explore and take advantage of unexpected opportunities; non-linear principle; attractiveness; confidence; optimism.	After psychometric analysis, 25 items were retained, and a four-factor structure was identified. All four scales show good reliability scores and moderate to strong correlations with other measures of exploration and curiosity.

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16	events. (Soares & Janeiro, 2015) This study examines the role of dysfunctional career thoughts between two longitudinal datasets in self-efficacy in career decision-making during the schoolwork transition. (B. Kim et al., 2015)	Research shows that the growth of dysfunctional career thoughts during the school-to-work transition period hurts self-efficacy in career decision-making.	The role of dysfunctional career thinking and Self-efficacy in career decision making.	The growth of dysfunctional career thoughts impairs decision-making self-efficacy significantly if students do not develop the 'planned happenstance' career skills.
17	This research examines two job search models based on the Planned Happenstance Theory (PHT) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). (Jung et al., 2016)	The results show that the TPB model fits the data better than the PHT model and that this model holds in the Japanese and Korean samples.	An understanding of the psychological process of job search.	The validity of the TPB model was confirmed through a multi-group test which showed that this model was invariant between Japanese and Korean samples.
18	Relationship Among the Six Vocational Identity Statuses and Five Dimensions of Planned Happenstance Career Skills (Rhee et al., 2016)	Examining the relationship between vocational identity status and 'planned happenstance' skills.	Vocational identity status and 'planned happenstance' skills.	More advanced vocational identity statuses (e.g., accomplished and search moratorium) scored higher on the 'planned happenstance' skills assessment.
19	The change of planned happenstance skills and its association with career-related variables during the school-to-work transition (Yang et al., 2017)	Examines the 'planned happenstance' change in skills during the schoolwork transition and its relationship to career-related variables.	'Planned happenstance' skills and related career variables.	All 'planned happenstance' skills, except risk-taking, degrade over time.
20	Longitudinal Changes of Planned Happenstance Skills by Gender, Community Types, and Employment Status in a Sample of College Students in School-to-Work Transition (S. R. Kim et al., 2017)	Examined the mean differences in the 'planned Happenstance' skill subscales at three separate times based on demographic factors.	Demographic factors and 'planned happenstance' skills.	The average 'planned happenstance' skill changes over time and varies slightly based on demographic factors.

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21	Initial Validation of the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory–English Version (Lee et al., 2017)	Testing the cross-cultural validity of the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (PHCI) for a sample of US college students.	PHCI and its validity across cultures.	The US sample supports the original 5-factor structure of the Korean PHCI.
22	Longitudinal Relationships Between Planned Happenstance Skills and Life Adjustment and the Moderating Role of Career Barriers (B. Kim et al., 2018)	The 'planned happenstance' skill plays an essential role in life adjustment, even in the face of high career barriers.	Planned happenstance skills; life adjustment; career barriers	The positive association between PHS and life adjustment, particularly when facing high career barriers.
23	Planned happenstance skills as personal resources for students' psychological well-being and academic adjustment (Valickas et al., 2019)	The 'planned happenstance' skill serves as a personal resource that supports students' psychological well-being and academic adjustment.	Planned happenstance skills; psychological well-being; academic adjustment	The positive relationship between planned happenstance skills and academic achievement and psychological well-being.
24	Capturing Serendipity in Careers: An Evaluation of the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory With Lithuanian Undergraduates (Urbanaviciute et al., 2019)	Evaluation of the 'Planned Happenstance Career' Inventory shows that the 'planned happenstance' skill has four interrelated factors and one factor that functions separately.	Planned Happiness Career Inventory; Planned happenstance skills; Career development variables	Confirmation of four interrelated planned happenstance skill factors and one different factor.
25	Examining the Use of Planned Happenstance With Students of Korean Cultural Backgrounds in the United States (Eissenstat & Nadermann, 2019)	'Planned happenstance' can facilitate career networking for students with Korean cultural backgrounds, especially those with intrinsic work value.	Planned happenstance, networking, work values	Mediation of planned happenstance between intrinsic work and networking.
26	The Planned Happenstance Career Inventory: A Cross-Cultural Comparison (Lee et al., 2019)	The cross-culture assessment shows that the 'Planned Happenstance Career' Inventory has a good 5-factor structure for American and South	Cross-cultural comparison; Planned Happenstance Career Inventory; career guidance	The 5-factor structure was adequate for American and South Korean groups, with differences in mean scores for some PHCI skills.

No	Definition	Essence	Aspect	Indicator
27	Career Flexibility (B. Kim et al., 2020)	Korean cultural groups. Ability to adapt to various situations and changes in career	Five profiles of career flexibility: passive wavy, mediocre, rigid thinking, moderately flexible, and productive flexible	Life satisfaction and self-determination are higher in the productive career flexibility profile and lower in the passive wavy profile.
28	Happenstance Learning Theory (Vieira et al., 2020)	A theory explaining how people make different paths in life, with an emphasis on chance events	The effect of this theory-based intervention on students	The intervention has an impact on perceptions of and attention to career opportunities
29	The Principle of 'Planned Happiness' in the Academic Library (Stephan, 2021)	Applying the 'planned happenstance' principle in academic library activities	Library involvement in research activities at the university	Changes and results of changes in library work during the Covid-19 pandemic
30	Planned Happenstance Learning Theory in Medical Professional Development (Vo et al., 2021)	Planned Happenstance Learning Theory in Medical Professional Development.	Application of this theory in medical career development	Interactive workshops designed to introduce PHLT attitudes and skills to lecturers and mentors can help increase awareness and use of these attitudes and skills by students
31	Planned Happenstance Theory (PHT) is applied in career development in clinical anatomy education (Bazos et al., 2021)	Train students' metacognitive skills through IPM to assist them in developing new career paths	Skills required in IPM include curiosity, flexibility, persistence, optimism, and risk-taking.	The indicators of IPM in this context are the number of references to IPM skills and the number of documented coincidences.
32	Careers and career trajectories of self-started female expatriates (SIEs) (Haak-Saheem et al., 2022)	Emphasis on national and individual factors, as well as life circumstances and contingencies in shaping the career paths of SIE women	National and individual factors, marital status, and life stages are the main aspects in shaping the careers of SIE women.	Indicators of career success for SIE women are an adaptation to national and individual changes and the ability to respond to unexpected events.
33	Affective atmosphere in community music practice (Neil, 2022)	Affective atmosphere, as a result of a mixture of affect, emotion, and sensation, can affect all stages of community music events.	In this context, the principle of 'planned happenstance' refers to creating and influencing a compelling atmosphere in community music events.	Indicators are the change, agency, and transformation that emerge from the affective atmosphere.

No	Definition	Essence	Aspect	Indicator
34	The Chinese version of the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (PHCI) (Si & Ding, 2022)	PHCI can be used to measure career planning in Chinese students.	Changes in this context refer to the revision and validation of the PHCI	The indicators are the reliability and validity of the Chinese version of PHCI

In the context of career development, individuals need to have readiness and flexibility in dealing with unexpected changes and opportunities. This involves being prepared to accept and respond to unexpected events, making decisions iteratively throughout life, and revising career paths based on changing contexts. A career counseling approach focusing on “planned happenstance” offers a different framework than traditional methods. This approach emphasizes reducing anxiety about the future, lifelong learning, and exploiting and creating favorable unexpected events (Mitchell et al., 1999).

This approach involves training counselees to use their curiosity as a starting point for learning and exploration. In addition, counselees are also taught to recognize how unexpected events can trigger their curiosity and how they can explore the career implications of this curiosity. This process also includes teaching how to create desired events and overcome barriers to action (Mitchell et al., 1999). The essence of the “planned happenstance” theory is recognizing and exploiting unexpected events in career development. This involves training counselees to see unexpected events as opportunities to try new activities, develop new interests, challenge old beliefs, and continue lifelong learning (Mitchell et al., 1999).

The concept of “planned happiness” in career development is centered on the idea that a person can respond to and take advantage of random events in their life to create unexpected career opportunities (Hagevik, 2000). The five attitudes that underlie this concept are curiosity, perseverance, flexibility, optimism, and courage. By inculcating these attitudes, individuals can turn unexpected events into learning opportunities, capitalize on uncertainty as opportunities, and, ultimately, create meaningful and fulfilling career paths.

Effective career development requires an open and adaptive approach. A study of Taiwanese students who attended a metacognitive-based training program and “planned happenstance” showed that career success could be enhanced through interventions designed to increase understanding and response to unexpected opportunities (Chien et al., 2006). “Happenstance Learning Theory” was introduced by Krumboltz (2009) as an approach that prioritizes exploring various activities and opportunities, not planning a career from scratch. This approach supports the idea that adaptability and the ability to take advantage of unexpected events can lead to career success. Other evidence from studies of polytechnic master graduates in Finland reinforces this notion, with some individuals achieving career success through planned paths or taking advantage of unexpected events (Ahola & Galli, 2012).

Other research shows that the “planned happenstance” skill is essential in career development and work identity, especially in career decision-making. When students have good ‘planned happenstance’ skills, they are more specific in making career decisions through self-efficacy in making career decisions (B. Kim, Jang, et al., 2014). Tools such as the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (PHCI) can also be used to understand the effect of unexpected events on career choice behavior (B. Kim, Jung, et al., 2014), and higher occupational identity status has a significant correlation with the five skill components’ planned happenstance’ (Ahn et al., 2015).

Other tools, such as the “Readiness to Career Unpredictability Questionnaire” (Soares & Janeiro, 2015), help evaluate individuals’ readiness to respond to uncertainty and take advantage of unexpected career opportunities. Other theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), offer better models for understanding the job search process than Planned Happiness Theory (PHT) and are relevant across cultures (Jung et al., 2016).

Research has also demonstrated the importance of the ‘planned happenstance’ skill in the schoolwork transition. There is a significant relationship between vocational identity status and ‘planned happenstance’ skills (Rhee et al., 2016), and these skills change over time, particularly during the schoolwork transition period (S. R. Kim et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2017). Cross-cultural validation of the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (PHCI) demonstrates the global relevance of this concept (Lee et al., 2017). This research shows that developing and understanding the ‘planned happenstance’ skill is essential to one’s career journey.

The importance of the “planned happenstance” skill has been emphasized in various contexts and cultural groups. B. Kim et al. (2018) found that the “planned happenstance” skill was a precursor and positively correlated with life adjustment, even with high career barriers. Another study by Valickas et al. (2019) linked these skills to academic achievement and students’ psychological well-being. Urbanaviciute et al. (2019) validated the four-factor structure of the “Planned Happenstance Career Inventory” among Lithuanian students, while Eissenstat & Nadermann (2019) demonstrated how the “planned happenstance” theory could help Korean students build career networks, especially those with intrinsic work values. Research by Lee et al. (2019) finally validated the five-factor structure of the “Planned Happenstance Career Inventory” among American and South Korean cultural groups, confirming this skill’s usefulness and cross-cultural validity.

The concept of ‘planned happenstance’ has applications in various fields, including career flexibility, education, and professional development. The study by B. Kim et al. (2020) points out the importance of career flexibility, and Vieira et al. (2020) show how the ‘planned happenstance’ principle can be applied in interventions for college students. In the context of academic libraries, Stephan (2021) suggests applying this principle in university research activities, especially in responding to changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Vo et al. (2021) created a workshop designed to teach the attitudes and skills needed to take advantage of unexpected career events in the medical field.

The concept of ‘planned happenstance’ has also been adapted and applied in various contexts, including career development and education. Bazos et al. (2021) show how this theory can provide insights into clinical anatomy education. Haak-Saheem et al. (2022) found that unexpected events and life stages often influence expatriate women’s career paths more than structured career planning. This concept is also applied in community music, with Neil (2022) exploring the ‘affective atmosphere’ as a mixture of affect, emotion, and sensation. Finally, the Career Planned Happenstance (PHCI) inventory has been adapted and validated for use in higher education in China, demonstrating the flexibility and relevance of this concept in various cultural and educational contexts (Si & Ding, 2022).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the existing literature, strong evidence shows the importance of the “planned happenstance” approach in career development. Research has shown that the skills and attitudes that contribute to “planned happenstance,” such as curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and courage, play a key role in helping individuals navigate their career paths and respond to unexpected events in valuable and productive ways. Moreover, “planned

happenstance” has demonstrated usefulness and relevance in various fields and cultural contexts.

Based on the conclusions above, several action steps are recommended. First, the “planned happenstance” approach must be integrated into career development and education programs. This can include developing skills and attitudes contributing to “planned happenstance,” such as increased curiosity, flexibility, and optimism. Second, tools such as the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (PHCI) and the Readiness to Career Unpredictability Questionnaire can help individuals and program managers understand and take advantage of planned happenstance. Third, further research is needed to understand how the “planned happenstance” approach can be adapted and applied in various cultural and industrial contexts. Finally, it is essential for stakeholders in education and work to recognize and understand the importance of “planned happenstance” and to find ways to support and promote this approach in workplaces and educational institutions.

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