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Measuring Happiness at Work Among Teachers: Survey from a Senior High School in Gowa Regency, Sulawesi Selatan

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ABSTRACT

Happiness at work is an important aspect of teacher well-being that contributes to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and the achievement of educational goals. Therefore, this study aimed to describe the level of happiness at work among senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design involving 100 senior high school teachers selected using purposive sampling. The instrument used consisted of three dimensions, namely engagement, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the assistance of Jamovi software. The results showed that happiness at work among senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency was generally categorized as high. High levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and affective commitment were also found among teachers. These findings indicate that teachers tend to experience positive feelings toward their work, demonstrate active involvement in carrying out their professional responsibilities, perceive their profession positively, and possess a strong emotional attachment to their schools. Therefore, maintaining teachers' happiness at work is important to support positive work attitudes and sustain the quality of education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Happiness at work is one of the effective ways that organizations can improve to encourage increased and more effective performance (Fisher, 2014).Happiness at work for individuals reflects well-being which includes job satisfaction, engagement, and positive feelings from daily work experiences. Fisher (2014) explains that happy individuals often display positive emotions such as satisfaction, enthusiasm, and interest in positive things, which then influence how they perceive happiness. Meanwhile, Diener (2000) suggests that individuals who are happy at work demonstrate career achievements, higher incomes, and a more prosperous life.

The same applies to individuals who work, including teachers, that happiness at work has become an important aspect of teacher well-being, affecting not only individual performance but also organizational effectiveness. Studies have shown that job stress is a major determinant of workplace happiness, where excessive workload and emotional exhaustion can reduce teachers' sense of satisfaction. Bhandari and Bhalla (2024) found that stress-reduction interventions, including the use of AI and strategies/mindfulness, significantly increases teacher happiness in the workplace. Similarly, psychological well-being, including emotional intelligence, motivation, and resilience, plays a crucial role in maintaining a positive work environment (Sarzhanova & Nurgabdeshov, 2025).

However, it is important to note that other important determinants of happiness at work Among teachers, personality traits are crucial. Research shows that extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness positively contribute to workplace well-being, while neuroticism tends to reduce it (Bhandari et al., 2025). These personality traits shape how teachers perceive and respond to the work environment. Teacher empowerment, particularly in decision-making and professional autonomy, also significantly predicts workplace well-being (Yusoff & Tengku-Ariffin, 2020). Empowered teachers feel more valued and able to influence their educational context, leading to greater satisfaction and reduced burnout. The findings of Yusoff & Tengku-Ariffin's study can serve as a reference for relevant parties, including school administrators, district/city or state education offices, and teachers themselves, in collective efforts to improve teacher well-being in schools. In creating a positive work environment, it is crucial to ensure the full support and trust of administrators and colleagues. Practically, this study suggests that in any school context, principals and top administrators should avoid a top-down approach in most cases.

Apart from individual factors, external factors also influence happiness at work teachers. For example, transformational leadership emerged as a strong organizational predictor of happiness at work leaders who inspire, support, and intellectually stimulate teachers will increase happiness and higher affective commitment (Abdullah et al., 2017). Furthermore, this relationship is further strengthened by a supportive work environment, where leadership opportunities and professional development enhance teacher satisfaction and performance (Rachmadi et al., 2024). However, demographic variables such as gender, age, and tenure were found to have minimal influence on happiness at work; this shows that external and psychological factors are more important to happiness at work (Ho-Thi et al., 2025).

Several other factors also contribute to teacher happiness at work, including organizational support, social climate, work engagement, and job satisfaction. A positive school environment characterized by supportive relationships, recognition, and constructive feedback has been shown to significantly increase happiness (Li et al., 2025). Furthermore, work-life balance, manageable workload, and meaningful professional development opportunities also play a

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significant role in fostering teacher well-being and motivation. Job satisfaction often acts as a mediator, strengthening the relationship between psychological well-being and organizational outcomes such as commitment, motivation, and engagement (Benevene et al., 2018).

Research results from happiness at work are very broad and varied. Happy teachers demonstrate higher academic performance, commitment, and job satisfaction, which collectively drive educational quality (Bhatia & Mohsin, 2023; Hardianto et al.., 2025). Meanwhile, Dreer (2024) emphasized that positive emotions in the workplace directly affect teacher well-being and retention, reducing turnover intention, and fostering a stable educational workforce. Based on this study, positive emotions among teachers need to be considered in future efforts to strengthen teacher job satisfaction and retention. Practical implications based on this research include the implementation of approaches aimed at fostering positive emotions among school teachers at all levels. For example, at the system level, a health management concept for the education sector should define the conditions necessary to enable and inspire positive experiences in the workplace. Furthermore, happiness at work teachers have a positive impact on student development, because emotionally satisfied teachers are better equipped to create a supportive learning environment.

Happiness at work Teacher well-being can be improved through systemic interventions, consistent with research demonstrating the need for systemic interventions that address both organizational and psychological dimensions. Reducing work stress, promoting empowerment, and fostering transformational leadership can lead to significant improvements in teacher well-being. Educational leaders should also consider teachers' spiritual and psychological needs, as these are linked to greater job satisfaction and professional fulfillment (Tunc et al., 2025). Overall, teachers' well-being at work not only supports their professional commitment but also contributes to the broader goal of educational excellence.

Happiness is conceptualized as a positive inner experience, a state of ultimate well-being, and a primary motivator for all human behavior (Lu, Gilmour, & Kao, 2001; Bekhet, Zauszniewski, & Nakhla, 2008). Snyder & Lopez (2007) suggest that happiness is a subjective positive emotion that depends largely on how individuals define it in their lives. From a positive psychology perspective, happiness is considered a subjective positive emotion that depends largely on how individuals define it. Research shows that individuals in positive relationships, such as those in marriage, report higher levels of happiness, which impacts overall psychological well-being (Mertika et al., 2020). Furthermore, positive psychology interventions have also been shown to be effective in improving subjective and psychological well-being (Gurgan & Ulubay, 2020). The presence of social support and strong interpersonal relationships are also important factors in achieving happiness and well-being (Singh et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of teacher well-being, empirical evidence regarding happiness at work among teachers in Indonesia remains limited. Mansir (2020) reported that teachers' well-being in Indonesia is still relatively low. Similarly, Nurwahyuni et al. (2024) found that teachers in Gowa Regency experienced low levels of economic and psychological well-being, which significantly affected the teaching and learning process. However, previous studies mainly focused on general well-being and happiness and did not specifically examine happiness at work among senior high school teachers. In addition,

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empirical information describing the level of happiness at work and its dimensions among senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency is still scarce. Therefore, this study aims to provide a more specific description of happiness at work among senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Happiness at Work

Happiness at work has become a central concept in organizational psychology, reflecting a shift from solely focusing on job performance toward acknowledging employees' psychological well-being as a crucial determinant of organizational success. Theories explaining happiness at work span from positive psychology to organizational behavior, emphasizing both personal and environmental factors. One of the most widely recognized theoretical foundations is Seligman's PERMA Model, which highlights Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment as core components of happiness (Seligman, 2011; Nithya, 2025). The PERMA model argues that when these five elements are satisfied, employees are likely to experience stronger job satisfaction, better health, and sustained productivity.

Complementing this perspective, the Broaden-and-Build Theory by Fredrickson suggests that positive emotions expand individuals' cognitive and behavioral repertoire, leading to improved coping abilities and social resource development (Fredrickson, 2001; Almazrouei et al., 2025). Similarly, Self-Determination Theory adds that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are critical psychological needs that drive intrinsic motivation and enhance happiness at work (Sakshi & Dhand, 2025). Together, these theoretical perspectives emphasize happiness not merely as a hedonic feeling but as a multidimensional construct rooted in meaning, growth, and social connection.

In addition to positive psychology perspectives, organizational behavior theories also provide strong foundations for understanding workplace happiness. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model states that employee happiness is determined by the balance between job demands and resources, such as managerial support, autonomy, and opportunities for development (Galván Vela et al., 2022). When employees receive adequate resources, they can manage stressors more effectively and perform better, leading to higher well-being. Furthermore, the Social Exchange Theory explains that reciprocal, respectful interactions between employees and leaders build trust, which contributes to happiness and engagement (Nithya, 2025). Research also indicates that happiness at work operates as both an outcome of positive organizational environments and an important antecedent of performance outcomes such as creativity and prosocial behavior (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2016). These theoretical approaches collectively underline the role of work conditions, leadership quality, and social relationships in shaping how employees feel and behave within their workplace, reinforcing that happiness is a product of dynamic exchanges between employees and their organizations.

Beyond theoretical constructs, numerous empirical studies have identified specific factors influencing happiness at work across various contexts. Employee autonomy, fair recognition, and supportive leadership consistently emerge as key predictors of workplace happiness (Galván Vela et al., 2022; Salazar, 2020). Recognition and reward practices also display cultural variation: for example, Colombian companies emphasize friendly environments and flexible time incentives, while U.S. companies more frequently link recognition to financial rewards and remote working options (Salazar, 2020). Work-life balance and family support have additionally been shown to be essential, particularly for female employees who often face

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dual roles (Bansal et al., 2025). Positive mental health initiatives such as mindfulness programs and stress-management training significantly contribute to sustained happiness at work and prevent burnout (Valentim et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, happiness at work is strongly related to affective commitment and employee engagement, ultimately improving job performance (Kustiawan et al., 2022). These findings provide robust support for theoretical claims that happiness results from both personal fulfillment and supportive organizational structures.

To support ongoing research and practical evaluation, validated measurement tools have been developed to assess employee happiness in the workplace. Rehwaldt and Kortsch (2022) introduced a multidimensional Happiness-at-Work Scale assessing meaningfulness, personal growth, and social well-being at work. Recognizing different cultural interpretations of happiness, Fitriana et al. (2022) validated a cross-cultural version suitable for Indonesian employees, demonstrating solid psychometric reliability. For applied organizational research requiring efficient data collection, Salas-Vallina and Alegre (2021) developed a shortened version of the Happiness at Work Scale, simplifying assessment without reducing conceptual clarity. These measurement tools support researchers and practitioners in determining levels of employee happiness, identifying areas for improvement, and evaluating policy effectiveness. Taken together, theoretical and empirical evidence underscores that happiness at work is a multifaceted construct influenced by personal emotions, organizational conditions, and social relationships. Promoting happiness is not only essential for employee well-being but also strategically linked to organizational success, performance, and resilience in an increasingly dynamic workplace environment.

3. METHODS

The participants in this study were 100 senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, aged between 22 and 60 years. A purposive sampling technique was employed. The inclusion criteria were: teachers currently employed at senior high schools in Gowa Regency, having at least one year of teaching experience, and being willing to participate in the study by providing informed consent. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed directly to teachers after obtaining permission from the respective school principals. The data collection process was conducted November 2025. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

The instrument used to measure happiness at work was adapted by Balqis et al. (2024) based on the scale developed by Salas-Valina et al. (2018). The scale consisted of 31 items representing three dimensions: engagement, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment. The instrument demonstrated good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.924. Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis showed acceptable model fit indices (CFI = 0.908, RMSEA = 0.072, and SRMR = 0.072).

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to describe happiness at work as the independent variable without examining relationships with other variables. Prior to descriptive analysis, data distribution was examined through normality testing to ensure the appropriateness of the analysis. Data processing and analysis were performed using Jamovi software and Microsoft Excel. In addition, categorization based on hypothetical mean and standard deviation was used to classify respondents into low, moderate, and high levels of happiness at work. The frequency distribution of respondents in each category was also presented to facilitate verification and interpretation of the categorization results.

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4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographics

Demographics	Characteristics	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage (N=100)
Gender	Woman	76	76%
	Man	24	24%
Age	Young age ≤ 25 years	10	10%
	Middle age (26-40 years)	46	46%
	Adult age (>40 years)	44	44%
Education	Master	82	82%
	Magister	18	18%
Working Hours	<1 year	3	3%
	1-5 years	24	24%
	>5 years	73	73%

Based on the table above shows a description of the demographic variables/happiness at work. In terms of gender, 24 respondents were male (24%) and 76 respondents were female (76%). In terms of age demographics, the researcher categorized the respondents based on young age (<25 years), middle age (26-40 years), and adult age (>40 years). In addition, respondents were divided into two categories based on educational background, namely 82 respondents (82%) with a bachelor's degree and 18 respondents (18%) with a master's degree. Furthermore, the length of service was divided into three categories. Respondents with a work period of <1 year were 3 people (3%), respondents with a work period of 1-5 years were 24 people (24%), and respondents with a work period of >5 years were 73 people (73%).

Analysis Happiness at Work To the Teachers of Gowa Regency

This study involved 100 respondents with four demographic groups. The data were processed using descriptive analysis with the help of the Jamovi program happiness at work can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. Happiness at Work

Happiness at Work	N	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	SD
	100	186	112	156	17.4

Based on the results presented in Table 2, the happiness at work scores ranged from 112 to 186, with an empirical mean score of 156 and a standard deviation of 17.4. These findings indicate that senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency generally experienced a high level of happiness at work.

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Table 3. Categorization Happiness at Work

Category level	Criteria	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
Low	X < M – 1SD	X < 80	0	0%
Moderate	M – 1SD ≤ X < M + 1SD	80 ≤ X < 129	9	9%
High	X > M + 1SD	X > 129	91	91%

Ket: M = Hypothetical mean, SD = standard deviation hypothetical, X = Total Score



Based on Table 3, the respondents were classified into low, moderate, and high categories of happiness at work. The majority of teachers were found to be in the high category, indicating that senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency generally experienced a high level of happiness at work. These findings are consistent with the results presented in Table 2 and support the conclusion that teachers tend to experience positive feelings, satisfaction, and emotional attachment to their work.

Dimensional analysis engagement

The following are the results of the data analysis at work based on dimensions engagement for teachers at Senior High School in Gowa Regency, namely:

Table 4. Dimension Engagement

	N	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	SD
Engagement	100	102	60	87.8	9.73

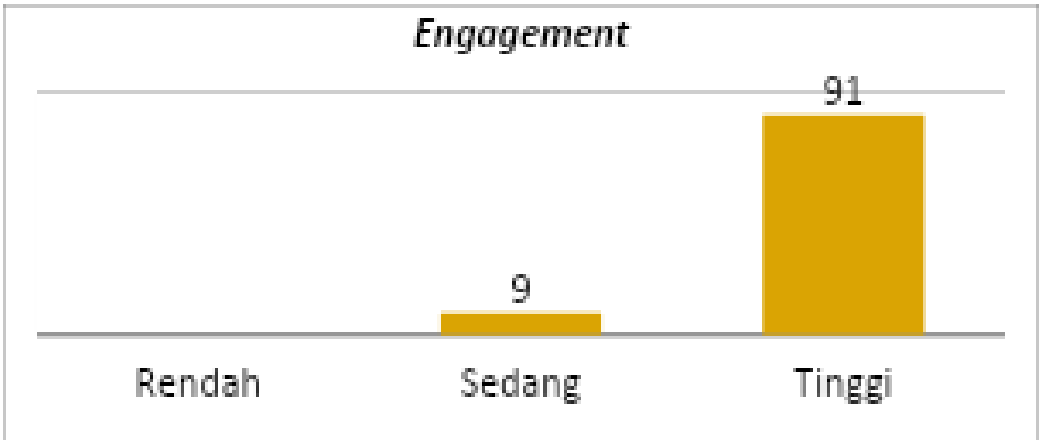
Based on the results presented in Table 4, the engagement scores ranged from 60 to 102, with an empirical mean score of 87.8 and a standard deviation of 9.73.

Table 5. Dimensional Categorization Engagement

Category level	Criteria	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
Low	X < M – 1SD	X < 45.33	0	0%
Moderate	M – 1SD ≤ X < M + 1SD	45.33 ≤ X < 73.67	9	9%
High	M + 1SD ≤ X	X > 73.67	91	91%

Ket: M = Hypothetical mean, SD = standard deviation hypothetical, X = Total Score

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Based on Table 5, most respondents were categorized in the high engagement category. This finding indicates that teachers showed high levels of enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in their work activities.

Dimensional Analysis Job Satisfaction

Table 6. Dimensions job satisfaction

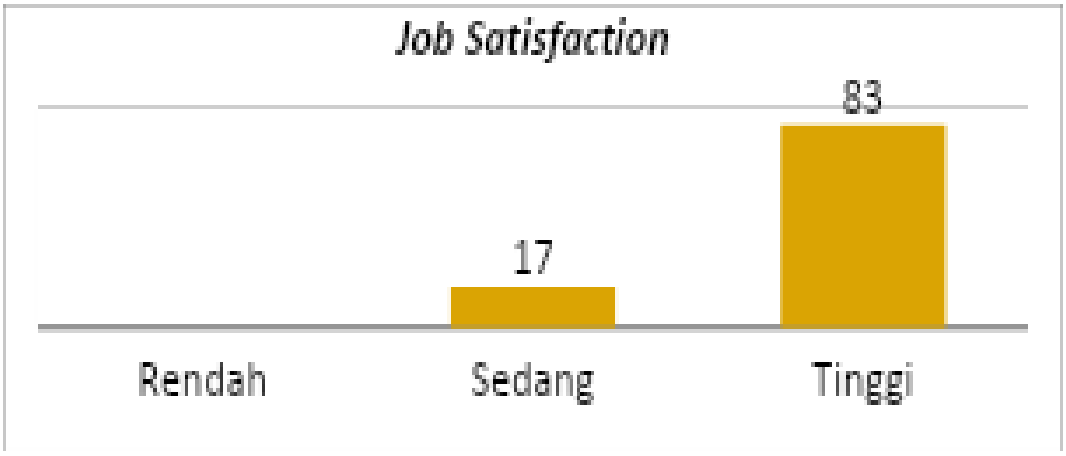
Job Satisfaction	N	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	SD
	100	36	18	30.6	3.75

Based on the results presented in Table 6, the job satisfaction scores ranged from 18 to 36, with an empirical mean score of 30.6 and a standard deviation of 3.75.

Table 7. Dimensional Categorization Job Satisfaction

Category level	Criteria	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
Low	X < M – 1SD	X < 16	0	0%
Moderate	M – 1SD ≤ X < M + 1SD	16 ≤ X < 26	17	17%
High	X > M + 1SD	X > 26	83	83%

Ket: M = Hypothetical mean, SD = standard deviation hypothetical, X = Total Score



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The results presented in Table 7 indicate that most teachers were classified in the high category of job satisfaction. This suggests that teachers generally perceived their work positively and were satisfied with various aspects of their job.

Dimensional analysis affective commitment

Table 8. Dimensions Affective Commitment

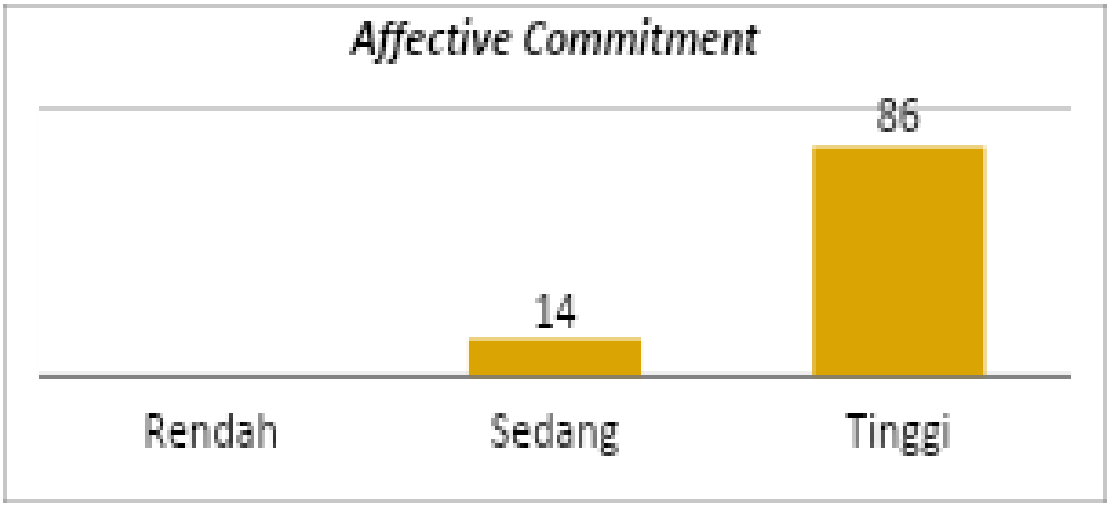
Affective Commitment	N	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	SD
	100	48	20	37.7	6.71

Based on the results presented in Table 8, the affective commitment scores ranged from 20 to 48, with an empirical mean score of 37.7 and a standard deviation of 6.71.

Table 9. Dimensional Categorization Affective Commitment

Category level	Criteria	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
Low	X < M – 1SD	X < 18.67	0	0%
Moderate	M – 1SD ≤ X < M + 1SD	18.67 ≤ X < 29.33	14	14%
High	X > M + 1SD	X > 29.33	86	86%

Ket: M = Hypothetical mean, SD = standard deviation hypothetical, X = Total Score



Based on Table 9, the majority of respondents were classified in the high category of affective commitment. These findings indicate that teachers had strong emotional attachment and identification with their schools and were committed to maintaining their membership within the organization.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency generally experienced a high level of happiness at work. Specifically, 91% of respondents were categorized in the high category, while 9% were categorized in the moderate category and none were classified in the low category. These findings indicate that most teachers tend to experience positive emotions, favorable attitudes toward their profession, and a strong sense of well-being in carrying out their responsibilities. The results suggest that teachers perceive

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their work positively and are able to maintain constructive attitudes toward their profession. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Nguyen-Thi et al. (2024), which reported that high school teachers in Da Nang and Quang Nam generally experienced relatively high levels of happiness in their work. Similarly, Bhatia and Mohsin (2023) emphasized that teacher happiness is associated with positive attitudes toward work and contributes to improving professional performance. Furthermore, Prasetyo et al. (2025) highlighted that teachers who experience happiness at work tend to demonstrate stronger motivation, higher engagement, and better teaching performance, which subsequently contribute to improved student learning outcomes and school effectiveness. Therefore, the findings of the present study provide additional empirical evidence regarding the importance of happiness at work among teachers, particularly within the Indonesian educational context.

Regarding the dimensions of happiness at work, the findings demonstrated that 91% of respondents were categorized in the high engagement category. This result indicates that teachers exhibit high levels of enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in performing their professional duties. High engagement reflects teachers' willingness to invest physical, cognitive, and emotional resources in their work. Engaged teachers tend to demonstrate greater persistence and commitment in fulfilling their responsibilities and are more likely to contribute positively to educational outcomes. These findings are in line with Adusei et al. (2016), who emphasized that motivation and enthusiasm for teaching are important factors contributing to teachers' involvement in their work. Likewise, Septiani et al. (2024) reported that workplace happiness and motivation play important roles in improving teachers' quality of work life and performance. Therefore, the high level of engagement found in this study indicates that teachers not only perform their tasks but also actively participate and dedicate themselves to achieving educational goals.

In terms of job satisfaction, the findings showed that 83% of respondents were classified in the high category. This result suggests that teachers generally evaluate their profession positively and experience satisfaction with various aspects of their work. Job satisfaction represents one of the central dimensions of happiness at work because it reflects employees' perceptions and experiences regarding their occupational roles. Teachers who are satisfied with their work are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes and maintain professional commitment. These findings are supported by Bhatia and Mohsin (2023), who argued that teacher happiness and job satisfaction contribute to improved teaching performance and educational quality. In addition, Septiani et al. (2024) found that workplace happiness is closely associated with teachers' quality of work life and professional performance. Thus, the high level of job satisfaction observed in this study indicates that teachers generally perceive their profession as meaningful and rewarding.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that 86% of respondents were categorized in the high affective commitment category. This finding indicates that teachers possess strong emotional attachment and identification with their schools. Affective commitment represents an important component of happiness at work because employees who have strong emotional bonds with their organizations are more likely to remain loyal and contribute positively to organizational objectives. Individuals with high affective commitment tend to feel proud of being members of the organization and demonstrate a willingness to support organizational goals. These findings are consistent with Mawarni and Tiarapuspa (2023), who found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among teachers. Therefore, the high level of affective commitment observed in this study reflects teachers' strong sense of belonging and emotional connection with their institutions.

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Overall, the findings indicate that happiness at work among senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency is characterized by high levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. These three dimensions collectively illustrate that teachers not only experience positive emotions toward their work but also demonstrate enthusiasm in carrying out their duties, satisfaction with their profession, and emotional attachment to their schools. Such findings enrich the existing literature regarding teacher well-being and provide empirical evidence concerning the condition of happiness at work among teachers in Indonesia. In addition, the results support previous studies emphasizing that teacher well-being is an important aspect of maintaining educational quality and promoting positive outcomes for both teachers and students (Delya et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2025). Therefore, attention to teachers' happiness at work remains essential as part of efforts to sustain a productive educational environment and improve the overall quality of education.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that happiness at work among senior high school teachers in Gowa Regency was generally categorized as high. The findings showed that most teachers experienced positive feelings toward their work and demonstrated high levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. These findings suggest that teachers not only actively participate in carrying out their professional responsibilities but also perceive their work positively and possess a strong emotional attachment to their schools. Therefore, maintaining these dimensions of happiness at work is important to support positive work attitudes and sustain the quality of education.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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