

Is the influence of quality of work life on innovative work behavior mediated by happiness at work in teachers

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Abstract

The innovative work behaviour of teachers is critical in creating a dynamic learning environment, increasing student engagement and motivation, and encouraging professional development. Innovation not only benefits students but also helps teachers develop and adapt to face challenges in the world of modern education. Quality of work life is assumed to influence innovative behaviour at work but does not influence it directly. Therefore, this research uses happiness as a mediator variable. This research aims to determine the influence of quality of life on teachers' innovative behaviour, which is mediated by happiness at work. The research subjects were 119 people who worked as teachers in primary, junior, secondary and senior secondary schools. The instruments used are the quality of work-life scale, happiness at work scale and innovative work behaviour scale. Data analysis uses regression analysis techniques with mediation. The results show no direct influence of the quality of work life on innovative behaviour at work. However, it was found that happiness at work fully mediates the influence of the quality of work life on innovative behaviour at work. The expected implication is to make teachers feel happy by increasing the quality of life at work.

Keywords

Education, happiness at work, innovative work behavior, quality of work life, teachers

Introduction

The role of teachers in Indonesia has a broad and crucial scope in shaping a competent, characterful young generation ready to face future challenges. As figures who act as educators, teachers serve as mentors, motivators, counsellors, innovators, and agents of social change. This complex role requires continuous professional development, utilization of technology, and the ability to adapt to changing times so that teachers remain the driving force in improving the quality of education in Indonesia (Ben-Amram & Davidovitch, 2024). This is why it is necessary to understand the complexity of how the teacher works and how it affects the student's learning method.

In the era of globalization, effective education no longer focuses solely on the transfer of knowledge but also the formation of critical thinking skills and adaptation to technological developments. One important element in realizing adaptive education is through Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) among teachers. Innovative behaviour in teachers is the key factor in creating a dynamic learning environment, increasing student engagement, and supporting the professional development of teachers themselves (Jong & Hattie, 2022). Innovative teachers can adjust the learning process through interactive and student-centred teaching methods to meet individual students' needs, such as in project-based learning, flipped classrooms, or educational technology.

Previous studies have shown that teachers who implement innovative behaviour in their teaching process are more motivated and satisfied with their work, as innovation provides a sense of achievement and renewal in daily routines. This helps prevent burnout and professional exhaustion, which

often occur in teaching (Klusmann et al., 2022). Innovative teachers also tend to utilize technology, such as interactive applications and classroom management software, to improve the effectiveness of learning in the digital era (Ruggiero & Mong, 2021). This highlights the importance of IWB to teachers as it helps them to provide effective learning to students.

However, innovative behaviour at work does not form automatically. Many factors influence IWB in teachers, both from internal and external aspects. A study conducted by (Ida Sinaga et al., 2021) showed that affective commitment plays a role in encouraging innovative behaviour, especially in the aspects of idea generation and idea implementation. A work environment that supports innovation, effective team collaboration, and a good organizational culture also contributes to increased creativity and innovation in teachers (West & Anderson, 1996). Another equally important factor is self-efficacy, where teachers' self-confidence in facing challenges also influences IWB (Sofiyani et al., 2022).

In addition to these factors, quality of work life (QWL) also plays an important role in shaping innovative behaviour. High QWL, which includes aspects of employee development, participation, compensation, supervision, and

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work environment, correlates positively with IWB in teachers (Nurcahyo, 2024). Other research also shows that good QWL plays an important role in maintaining teacher happiness at work (Butt et al., 2019). This happiness then becomes a factor that encourages innovative behaviour at work, in line with the broaden-and-build theory, which states that positive emotions broaden a person's mindset and facilitate the emergence of creative ideas (Fredrickson, 2001).

In education, happiness enables teachers to work enthusiastically, face teaching challenges with an open mindset, and be more daring to experiment with new teaching methods (He et al., 2023). Positive emotions like happiness can promote creative and innovative behaviour in individuals. This suggests that enhancing QWL and work happiness is essential to support teachers as agents of change in education, as it will subsequently encourage innovative behaviour (Ouweneel et al., 2018).

However, there is a research gap regarding the relationship between QWL, work happiness, and IWB in teachers in Indonesia. While studies in other countries have shown a positive correlation between these three variables (Newman et al., 2018; Nugraha & Suhariadi, 2021), the educational context in Indonesia requires further study. This is due to differences in organizational culture, technological support, and local challenges teachers face in Indonesia.

This study examines how QWL and work happiness contribute to innovative behaviour in teachers in Indonesia. This study is expected to provide new insights into the importance of well-being and a supportive work environment and provide recommendations for educational institutions in creating a work environment conducive to innovation. Additionally, this research can help policymakers understand QWL in teachers to make an effective public policy in education. Increasing the IWB in teachers will positively impact the quality of education, which will bring better development for the younger generation in the future.

Method

Participants

The sampling technique in this study used the convenience sampling technique, which was based on convenience, namely, respondents who were willing to fill out the questionnaire. In this case, the convenience of respondents was chosen because they happened to be in the right place at the right time and because of the willingness of respondents to fill out the questionnaire (Sugiyono, 2019). From the data collection, 119 teachers were obtained as research subjects. The age distribution of the subjects ranged from 20 years to 60 years. Subjects who taught in elementary schools were 29 people, subjects who taught in junior high schools were 35 people and subjects who taught in high schools were 50. In addition, based on gender, there were 70 male and 49 female teachers. The participants in this study were teachers from several schools in East Java Province, Indonesia, particularly in Blitar and Malang.

Research Instruments

Data was collected using a survey method with a scale-based questionnaire that had been explained. The questionnaire

was distributed online to reach respondents in various regions. Respondents were explained the study's purpose and instructions for completing the questionnaire and were assured of the confidentiality of the data provided. This study involves three main variables: 1) Quality of Work Life (QWL) as an independent variable, 2) Happiness at work as the mediator variable, and 3) Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) as the dependent variable.

The Quality of Work Life (QWL) Scale used in this research includes nine main aspects of QWL: 1) Work environment, 2) Organizational culture and climate, 3) Interpersonal relationships, 4) Training and development, 5) Compensation and rewards, 6) Facilities, 7) Job satisfaction and security, 8) Autonomy, and 9) Accurate sources. This scale consists of 42 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting the level of respondent agreement with the statement given, from strongly agree to disagree strongly. The reliability value of this scale shows a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.963, indicating high internal consistency (Swamy et al., 2015).

The workplace Happiness Scale is used to measure happiness in the workplace (Ramirez-Garcia et al., 2019). This scale consists of two main aspects: the work environment and the employee's perception of their work. This scale consists of 11 items (6 items for the environment aspect and five for the worker aspect), with answer choices in the form of a 5-point Likert scale from very appropriate to very inappropriate. One example of an item on this scale is, "My school climate is good." The reliability coefficient of this scale is 0.926, indicating good consistency (Ramirez-Garcia et al., 2019).

The Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) Scale measures how innovative employees are in the workplace (Etikariena & Muluk, 2014). This scale has three main aspects: Seeing opportunities and generating new ideas, supporting innovation ideas, and Applying designed ideas. It consists of nine items and has a Cronbach's alpha reliability value of 0.965. The respondent's suitability to the statement is measured using a 5-point Likert scale from very appropriate to very inappropriate.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using correlational statistical techniques and path analysis. Correlation analysis was used to identify relationships between variables, while path analysis aimed to test the mediating role of workplace happiness between the QWL and IWB variables. This path analysis was conducted using statistical software, such as JASP, to determine whether workplace happiness mediates the influence of QWL on innovative behaviour at work.

Before regression analysis was conducted, several assumption tests were carried out, namely the normality and multicollinearity tests. The normality test results indicate that the data for the three variables are distributed close to normal. The skewness values for QWL, Happiness, and Innovative Behavior are -0.093, -0.293, and -0.334, respectively. These values fall within the acceptable range of ± 2 , suggesting that the data are not significantly skewed. Similarly, the kurtosis values for QWL, Happiness, and Innovative Behavior are 0.238, 0.874, and -0.312, all of which also lie within the range of ± 2 , further supporting the normality assumption. Based on

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Statistic

Variable	Mean empiric	Mean hypothetic	SD	QWL	Happiness	IWB
QWL	166.176	126	20.168	-	0.837	0.238
Happiness	44.428	33	5.642		-	0.306
IWB	33.579	27	10.627			-

$P < 0.001$

these findings, it can be concluded that the data distribution for all three variables meets the assumption of normality.

A multicollinearity test is conducted to ensure that no robust relationship between independent variables could affect regression results. This is assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values; if the VIF is less than 10 and the Tolerance value is more significant than 0.1, the data is considered free from multicollinearity problems (Kim, 2019). The Tolerance value for QWL and Happiness is 0.300, and the VIF value is 3.333, indicating no multicollinearity issue. Therefore, the data meets the multicollinearity assumption required for regression analysis.

Result

The results of descriptive statistics on table 1 describe the mean empiric of QWL = 166,176 (SD = 20,168), the mean empiric of happiness is 44,428 (SD = 5,642) and the mean empiric of Innovative work behavior = 33,579 (SD = 10,627). If we look at the empirical mean compared to the hypothetical mean, the research subjects showed a high tendency for QWL, happiness at work and Innovative work behavior scores.

Furthermore, from the results of the correlation analysis, it was found that there is a significant relationship between QWL and happiness at work, there is a significant and strong relationship between QWL and innovative work behavior at a low level and there is a significant relationship between happiness at work and innovative work behavior at a medium level.

Results of Regression Analysis with Mediation

This regression analysis evaluates the effect of quality of work life (QWL) on Innovative Work Behavior through the mediator variable happiness. The analysis was conducted by estimating parameters to see the direct effect, indirect effect (through mediation), and total effect of QWL on innovative behavior.

Based on table 2, the study results indicate that Quality of Work Life (QWL) does not have a significant direct effect on innovative behavior (Est = -0.003, $p = 0.699$). However, there is a significant mediation effect of happiness between QWL and innovative behavior (Est = 0.015, $p = 0.026$), meaning that an increase in QWL can influence happiness, which in turn fosters innovative work behavior among teachers. Table 2 shows that the total effect of QWL on innovative behavior through happiness is 0.012 ($p = 0.008$), indicating that although the contribution is small, an improvement in QWL still plays a role in enhancing innovative behavior through happiness. In other words, the positive influence of improving work-life quality on employees' innovative behavior occurs through increased happiness. Teachers who experience a better quality of work life tend to be happier, and this happiness ultimately drives them to engage in more innovative

work behavior. The analysis also shows that happiness has a significant positive effect on innovative behavior (Est = 0.358, $p = 0.025$), suggesting that an increase in teachers' happiness can encourage more innovative behavior in the workplace. On the other hand, while the direct effect of QWL on innovative behavior is not significant (Est = -0.003, $p = 0.699$), QWL has a significant positive effect on happiness (Est = 0.041, $p < 0.001$), indicating that an improved quality of work life has the potential to enhance teachers' happiness.

Path Coefficients

The analysis in the path coefficients on table 2 indicates that happiness significantly affects innovative behaviour, with an estimated 0.358 and a p-value of 0.025. This suggests that increasing teachers' happiness can foster more innovative behaviour in their workplace. On the other hand, the direct effect of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on innovative behaviour is insignificant, as shown by an estimate of -0.003 and a p-value of 0.699. However, QWL has a significant positive effect on happiness, with an estimate of 0.041 and a p-value of less than 0.001, suggesting that an improved quality of work life can enhance happiness.

The influence of QWL on IWB occurs indirectly through the variable of happiness. A positive mood at work can facilitate the creative process by increasing flexible cognition and intrinsic motivation.

These results highlight the importance of developing happiness in QWL programs to encourage innovative behaviour in the context of teacher work. Happiness can be a key element that bridges the quality of the work environment with better innovative output.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that quality of work life (QWL) does not directly affect innovative work behavior (IWB) or innovative behaviour in teachers. However, QWL indirectly affects innovative behaviour through the mediator, happiness. In this discussion, we will further explain the relationships among the three variables—QWL, happiness, and innovative behaviour by drawing on relevant prior research and theories that support the study's findings.

The indirect effect of QWL on innovative behaviour through happiness

One of the main findings in this study is the indirect effect of QWL on innovative behaviour through happiness. This suggests that a higher quality of work life increases employee happiness, which, in turn, enhances the likelihood of teachers engaging in innovative behaviour. This aligns with models that examine happiness as a mediator in the relationship between

Table 2. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) and the Mediating Role of Happiness

Connection	Estimation	Std. Error	z-value	p	Confidence Interval (95%)	
					Lower	upper
Direct effect						
QWL → IWB	-0.003	0.008	-0.386	0.699	-0.019	0.012
Indirect effect						
QWL → Happiness → IWB	0.015	0.007	2.227	0.026	0.002	0.028
Total effect						
QWL → IWB	0.012	0.004	2.671	0.008	0.003	0.020
Pathway coefficient						
Happiness → IWB	0.358	0.159	2.247	0.025	0.046	0.670
QWL → IWB	-0.003	0.008	-0.386	0.699	-0.019	0.012
QWL → Happiness	0.041	0.002	16.660	<0.001	0.037	0.046

Note. The table presents unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals (lower and upper bounds). Direct effects represent the direct relationship between variables without mediation. Indirect effects show the mediating role of happiness, while total effects are the sum of direct and indirect effects. Significant effects ($p < 0.05$) are highlighted.

the work environment and positive workplace behaviours, as demonstrated by previous studies.

Research suggests that multiple factors that shape QWL significantly influence employees' perceptions of their well-being at work. These factors include work-life balance, job security, and the level of support provided by management. When these aspects are adequately addressed, employees tend to experience higher satisfaction and greater happiness, as they perceive their work environment to be conducive to their overall well-being and personal development. This supports the notion that a workplace prioritizes employee needs and development, which has a substantial positive emotional impact and increases happiness and engagement. Consequently, improved QWL fosters a more satisfying work experience and enhances employees' motivation and loyalty (Judge & Robbins, 2017).

Research indicates that happiness or emotional well-being influences performance by enhancing engagement and commitment. This is particularly significant in the education sector, where teachers who feel happy and fulfilled in their work are more likely to be deeply engaged and respond creatively to daily challenges. Teachers who experience happiness due to positive QWL tend to be more involved in their work and more open to creative thinking, especially when facing difficulties. This active involvement fosters innovative behaviour, as teachers feel emotionally supported and are encouraged to express new ideas in an environment that promotes creativity (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000).

A study supports the role of positive emotions in enhancing productivity and innovative behaviour in the workplace. Happy employees are often more motivated to show initiative, think creatively, and generate new ideas. This finding highlights happiness as a mediator in this study, as it enhances the tendency toward innovative behaviour by providing a positive emotional boost. Employee happiness can drive engagement in problem-solving through innovative and creative approaches. Happiness acts as emotional energy that motivates individuals to innovate, emphasizing its crucial

mediating role in the relationship between QWL and innovative behaviour (Fisher, 2010).

The "broaden-and-build theory" proposed by Fredrickson suggests that positive emotions expand individuals' thinking and behaviour, allowing them to develop new skills and find creative solutions. In the context of QWL, where happiness acts as a mediator, a quality work environment can cultivate positive emotions that enhance employees' capacity for creative and adaptive thinking. This model shows that happiness boosts job satisfaction and strengthens employees' ability to innovate, mainly when the work environment supports their emotional well-being (Fredrickson, 2001).

Relationship between QWL and happiness

Quality of Work Life (QWL) encompasses various aspects of working conditions that impact employees' overall well-being, including a supportive work environment, good interpersonal relationships, opportunities for skill development, and recognition for performance. This study found that QWL positively and significantly affects happiness, aligning with previous research showing that a quality work environment can enhance employees' emotional well-being.

QWL includes factors that satisfy employees' basic needs, such as job security, recognition, social relationships, and development opportunities. The findings indicate that higher satisfaction derived from QWL leads to increased employee happiness. In teaching, this is crucial, as higher happiness levels encourage teachers to be more actively engaged in the learning process, fostering innovation in their teaching methods (Sirgy et al., 2001). The other research found that shift work does not influence happiness or the quality of work life. This suggests that QWL significantly affects happiness, regardless of whether employees have flexible working hours, including teaching (Kaliterna et al., 2004).

High QWL can mitigate stress and burnout, which are common challenges in the teaching profession. One research shows that a positive work environment lowers emotional stress levels and enhances happiness, improving overall work performance. Akar found that good QWL can alleviate

teachers' emotional strain, creating space for them to feel happier and focus on self-development and innovation in their work. Conversely, if teachers face stress from excessive workloads, the effect can be reversed, reducing well-being and hindering innovation (Akar, 2018).

Research found that stress and heavy workloads can negatively impact teachers' teaching performance. This underscores the importance of attending to teachers' emotional well-being, which can be positively influenced by QWL, to support them in fulfilling their roles effectively (Akmal et al., 2021).

Work-life balance and a safe work environment reduce stress (Greenhaus et al., 2003). A safe work environment, which is part of the QWL variable, helps alleviate stress experienced by employees, allowing them to experience positive emotions that enhance their happiness in the workplace. This finding confirms the relationship between a supportive work environment and employee happiness, including teachers in education (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

The effect of happiness on innovative behavior

This study also found that happiness significantly influences teachers' innovative behavior. This suggests that happiness impacts emotional well-being and encourages more creative and innovative behaviour. In the context of education, teachers can exhibit innovative and creative behaviour when a positive emotional drive supports their work. This finding is consistent with various studies showing that a positive mood can foster creativity and innovation in the workplace.

Positive moods, such as happiness, can boost creativity through increased flexible cognition, high motivation, and an openness to new ideas. Teachers who feel happy and satisfied with their jobs are more inclined to take risks and try new teaching approaches. In other words, happiness fosters a work environment conducive to exploration and experimentation, which ultimately encourages innovative behaviour (Amabile et al., 2005).

Broaden-and-Build Theory also supports this finding. This study discusses how positive emotions can broaden a person's cognitive framework. This implies that positive emotions, such as happiness, can help employees recognize new opportunities in their work and think outside the box. Positive emotions encourage employees to expand their understanding and build new skills in their work. In this context, happy teachers can more readily identify opportunities for innovation in teaching, thereby creating better student learning experiences (Fredrickson, 2001).

Happiness can enhance employees' sense of ownership over their work, fostering a more profound attachment to their roles, which drives tremendous enthusiasm and innovation (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Additionally, a supportive and harmonious work environment encourages motivation, leading to greater happiness and improved performance. Providing teachers with the autonomy to make independent decisions and the freedom to design their lessons contributes to optimal performance (Nurlaili et al., 2023).

Why does QWL not have a direct effect on innovative behaviour? One interesting finding in this study is the lack of a direct effect of QWL on innovative behaviour in teachers. This result may be because QWL, although important, is not

sufficient to drive innovation directly. Often, QWL influences positive outcomes in the workplace through increased emotional well-being or other mediator variables. This aligns with research, which found that emotional well-being or happiness is more likely to function as an intermediary or mechanism explaining the relationship between working conditions and positive work behaviour (Judge & Watanabe, 1993).

Another study also showed that psychological aspects, such as job satisfaction or well-being, play an important role in mediating the influence of the work environment on innovative behaviour. Although a good work environment can encourage engagement in work, the effect is often indirect and requires factors such as happiness to produce the desired outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

In the context of the teaching profession, QWL can act as a foundation that strengthens emotional well-being, but to achieve higher levels of creativity and innovation, happiness or emotional well-being remains an important mediator. Happy teachers tend to be more open to change and the development of new teaching methods, while QWL may only provide a basis for supporting this happiness. This finding is also consistent with the idea that self-efficacy can foster innovative behaviour in teachers. This self-efficacy is obtained through a conducive work environment, which brings out positive emotions in teachers and builds their confidence in performing their duties (Hsiao et al., 2011).

Research shows that innovative behaviour can be driven by the quality of the work environment, which builds intrinsic motivation. This motivation enables employees to innovate and find new approaches voluntarily. QWL cannot directly influence employees to implement innovative behaviour. Someone may feel comfortable with good working conditions, but this comfort may create a "comfort zone" that reduces the urge to engage in out-of-the-ordinary actions. This demonstrates that QWL first influences intrinsic motivation, directing individuals to innovate (Neviyani & Wardhani, 2020).

Conclusion

This study offers several important implications for policy development in the education sector, mainly providing clear evidence of the importance of enhancing the quality of teachers' work life, which can lead to more innovative teaching methods. Developing QWL programs should focus on employee happiness, as happiness is a link between QWL and innovative behaviour. By fostering a work environment that promotes happiness, schools or educational institutions can encourage teachers to become more innovative and adaptable to changes in the teaching and learning process.

Overall, the implication of this study emphasizes the importance of happiness as a mediating variable between the quality of work life and innovative behaviour. Efforts to improve QWL should be coupled with initiatives to boost employee happiness and maximize its impact, especially in fostering the innovative behaviour needed to address the dynamic challenges of the ever-evolving education sector.

Declaration

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Author contributions

All authors have contributed equally and fairly to the research and preparation of this article. Each author participated in the conception, design, data analysis, and writing of the manuscript, ensuring a balanced and collaborative effort throughout the process.

Conflict of interest

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