



Research article

Business ethics, corporate social responsibility and fostering innovation as predictors of employee happiness

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Objective: this paper examines the influence of personal and social ethics, innovative behaviour, business training, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) on workplace and personal happiness. By exploring how these interconnected variables shape well-being in professional settings and extend into personal life, the research contributes to the broader understanding of happiness management within organisations.

Methodology: a quantitative approach was adopted, utilising covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM). The study analysed a sample of 323 employees from the industrial sector in Baja California, Mexico. Data were collected using validated scales to measure personal and social ethics, innovative behaviour, business training, CSR, workplace happiness, and personal happiness. The methodology included exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) to evaluate the relationships between the variables.

Results: the findings reveal that personal ethics, business training, and CSR significantly predict workplace happiness, which subsequently enhances personal happiness. In contrast, social ethics and innovative behaviour did not demonstrate a significant impact on workplace happiness, suggesting that cultural or contextual factors may mediate these relationships.

Conclusions: the study underscores the importance of fostering ethical practices and investing in professional development to boost employee well-being. Organisations that prioritise ethical growth and professional training can enhance both workplace and overall happiness. Future research should investigate these dynamics across diverse cultural contexts and industries to further elucidate the nuanced relationships identified.

Ética empresarial, responsabilidad social corporativa e innovación como predictores de la felicidad de los empleados

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:

Felicidad laboral,
ética personal,
ética social,
comportamiento innovador,
formación empresarial,
responsabilidad social corporativa,
bienestar laboral,
felicidad organizacional,
bienestar del empleado,
México,
CB-SEM,
modelos de ecuaciones estructurales.

Introducción/Objetivo: este artículo examina la influencia de la ética personal y social, el comportamiento innovador, la formación empresarial y la responsabilidad social corporativa (RSC) en la felicidad laboral y personal. Al explorar cómo estas variables interconectadas moldean el bienestar en entornos profesionales y se extienden a la vida personal, la investigación contribuye a una comprensión más amplia de la gestión de la felicidad en las organizaciones.

Metodología: se adoptó un enfoque cuantitativo, utilizando modelos de ecuaciones estructurales basados en covarianza (CB-SEM). El estudio analizó una muestra de 323 empleados del sector industrial en Baja California, México. Los datos se recopilaron mediante escalas validadas para medir la ética personal y social, el comportamiento innovador, la formación empresarial, la RSC, la felicidad laboral y la felicidad personal. La metodología incluyó análisis factorial exploratorio (AFE) y modelos de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM) para evaluar las relaciones entre las variables.

Resultados: los hallazgos revelan que la ética personal, la formación empresarial y la RSC predicen significativamente la felicidad laboral, lo que a su vez mejora la felicidad personal. Por el contrario, la ética social y el comportamiento innovador no demostraron un impacto significativo en la felicidad laboral, lo que sugiere que factores culturales o contextuales podrían mediar en estas relaciones.

Conclusiones: el estudio destaca la importancia de fomentar prácticas éticas e invertir en el desarrollo profesional para potenciar el bienestar de los empleados. Las organizaciones que priorizan el crecimiento ético y la formación profesional pueden mejorar tanto la felicidad laboral como la personal. Futuras investigaciones deberían explorar estas dinámicas en diversos contextos culturales y sectores para profundizar en las relaciones matizadas identificadas.

Introduction

In contemporary times, happiness has evolved beyond its emotional aspect to become an indicator of professional well-being (Rando-Cueto et al., 2024). Recognising its significance, the United Nations declared happiness a fundamental human right, highlighting its impact on quality of life and social cohesion within organisations (Feitor et al., 2022). Consequently, happiness in the work environment has gained increasing relevance in academia, becoming a critical focus of research (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2022).

Moreover, workplace happiness contributes to individual well-being and catalyses innovative behaviour and productivity (Popescu & Reis, 2024). However, understanding the factors that influence professional happiness remains an opportunity for further exploration by the academic world (Fitriana et al., 2022). In this context, Espasandín-Bustelo et al. (2020) emphasise that personal ethics and social responsibility are fundamental to creating healthier and more rewarding work environments. Similarly, Cuesta-Valiño et al. (2024) point out that CSR enhances happiness and purchase intention. Despite this, there is a notable lack of comprehensive studies addressing these factors' combined impact, particularly in emerging contexts where work and social structures are more dynamic (Salvadorinho & Teixeira, 2023).

In the same way, this research gap is particularly significant in today's business landscape, where companies' understanding of employee well-being dynamics has become a strategic imperative for optimising efficiency and fostering organisational commitment (Alzadjali & Ahmad, 2024; Gyensari et al., 2024). The present study is relevant in this context as it seeks to bridge this gap by comprehensively addressing the joint impact of ethics and social responsibility on happiness at work. While some research has explored these variables individually, they require further study and analysis, especially in emerging country contexts where work and cultural dynamics may uniquely affect employee happiness (Bergsma et al., 2020).

To justify the above, a search was conducted on the Dimensions.ai platform, one of the largest repositories of scientific documents in the world. For Mexico, only 103 studies related to business ethics were found; 146 studies on business innovation; 250 studies on corporate social responsibility; and 20 on happiness management. Among the identified research, only Galván-Vela et al. (2023) presented a model proposing eco-innovation as a predictor of happiness in business, excluding ethics from their proposal. Therefore, this is the first study to analyse the collective influence of these elements on happiness.

As such, this study aims to reduce this gap in the literature and enrich the existing body of knowledge by analysing the interaction between ethics, innovative behaviour, business

training, and social responsibility and their impact on occupational and personal happiness. By focusing on these effects in emerging contexts, the study offers a novel perspective that is valuable for academic research and business leaders seeking to optimise employee well-being (Coronado-Espinoza et al., 2023).

The main objective of the research is to explore the impact of business ethics, innovative behaviour, business training and social responsibility on happiness at work and how it relates to employees' happiness. This approach aims to provide tools for managers to implement practices that promote ethics, responsibility, happiness and productivity. The paper first presents a theoretical review supporting the research hypotheses, followed by a methodology that uses structural equations to evaluate the relationships between variables. The results are then presented, followed by conclusions, and the study concludes with limitations and suggestions for future research avenues.

Literature review

Happiness at work

Happiness at work has increasingly attracted attention in the social sciences (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2024) and is defined as a positive emotional state reflecting employees' holistic well-being within the organisational context (Cueto et al., 2023; Jambrino-Maldonado et al., 2022). Consequently, happiness at work is essential for companies aiming to optimise performance in a globalised business environment (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2022).

Moreover, empirical research demonstrates that prioritising workplace happiness enhances employee well-being and positively impacts organisational profitability (Martínez-Falco et al., 2024). For instance, Feitor et al. (2022) found that companies promoting happy work environments have more productive and engaged teams.

In this regard, Aflah et al. (2021) find that ethics foster happier, more upright and egalitarian work environments (Galiano-Coronil & Blanco-Moreno, 2024). Similarly, Al-Shami et al. (2023) demonstrated that happier employees exhibit more innovative behaviour, highlighting the positive impact of workplace happiness on innovation.

Parallel to this line of research, Benevene et al. (2019) found that investing in continuous training increases job satisfaction. Also, Chia (2020) found that employees' perception of their company's commitment to social responsibility significantly affects their happiness at work.

Therefore, it is unsurprising that the construct of happiness at work has been extensively studied in the last decades of the 21st century (Galván-Vela et al., 2024). This type of study has made it possible to demonstrate, among other things, that happiness at work is a multidimensional concept closely related to ethics, innovative behaviour, business training and social responsibility (Martínez-Falco et al., 2024).

Ethics

Ethics is crucial for the sustainable development of organisations and societies (Şengüllendi et al., 2024). This significance has grown in the 21st century, accentuating social

responsibility and ethical business practices (Garg & Punia, 2022). Not surprisingly, globalisation and technological advances demand ethical business behaviour to promote equity and societal well-being (Espinoza et al., 2021).

In this regard, recent literature distinguishes two types of ethics. These are personal ethics and social-business ethics. Personal ethics, which vary across cultures, promote harmony and contribute to social well-being (Sytsma, 2021). In contrast, social-business ethics create environments in which ethics guide decisions crucial for cooperative work and the responsible use of technology (Melé, 2022).

Based on these arguments, studies show, on the one hand, that the ethics-happiness construct significantly improves people's well-being, creativity, efficiency and satisfaction in their work environment (Suárez-Amaya et al., 2024). On the other hand, ethics promotes happiness through the love of work, social recognition or professional appreciation (Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2021). These intangibles are critical in corporate governance. It promotes equity, fairness and organisation through the culture of happiness management (Salvadorinho & Teixeira, 2023).

Innovative Behaviour

Innovative behaviour is significant for companies because it fosters organisational success in a globalised society. The reasons for this are, on the one hand, that it generates substantial competitive advantages, and on the other hand, it encourages the happiness at work of their internal customers (Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2023). In this regard, El Hami and Batubara (2018) show that innovative behaviour positively affects employee psychology. It translates, among other things, into enjoying an atmosphere of happiness at work within companies (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2017).

Happiness management demonstrates that linking innovation with happiness significantly improves organisational performance (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2022). This synergy enhances innovative capacity and fosters a work environment where employees feel more engaged and valued (Rosdaniati & Muafi, 2021). Consequently, integrating these factors increases job satisfaction and people's performance in their day-to-day jobs (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2022).

The current literature shows a strong relationship between the dimensions of innovative behaviour and happiness (Ma et al., 2024; Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2024). For example, Atti and Abdulhussein (2023) showed that these variables positively affect the dimension of organisational commitment in companies in the globalised world. Similarly, Sanchez-Hernandez et al. (2023) show that the innovative behaviour-happiness construct contributes significantly to improving the economic performance of companies.

Business training

Happiness and corporate training are vital to employees' quality of life and well-being (Espasandín-Bustelo et al., 2020). In this sense, Alam (2022) points out that sustainable entrepreneurship training within organisations is essential to creating an environment of work happiness that stimulates companies' economic success. Therefore, corporate learning and happiness are critical drivers for improving the productive efficiency of organisations (Noddings, 2003). One of

the reasons for this is that the corporate training-happiness construct not only influences the cultivation of proactive and humanistic leadership styles but also positively impacts managerial decision-making (Benevene et al., 2019). Both factors show, among other things, that the training and happiness of top management executives is a very relevant catalyst for their workforce to become agents of change and generators of corporate wealth (Ravina et al., 2022).

In this sense, Sousa and Carvalho (2023) point out that one of the challenges of the current strategic direction of organisations lies in aligning business training with the promotion of the work happiness of their human capital. Based on this line of research, Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2022) indicate that the business training-happiness link improves the competitive position of companies because it generates an ecosystem of employees who are committed and happy with the mission of their corporation based on the guiding principles of sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Social responsibility

Social responsibility is the commitment that companies and individuals make to contribute to sustainable social and environmental development (Shayan et al., 2022). This principle requires organisations to integrate ethical practices into daily operations and stakeholder relationships beyond legal obligations (Tamvada, 2020). Actions include supporting local communities, protecting the environment and promoting social equity (Ali et al., 2021).

Moreover, the importance of social responsibility has grown exponentially due to globalisation, increased environmental awareness, and rising demands for ethical and sustainable corporate behaviour (Halkos & Nomikos, 2021). Organisations incorporating social responsibility into their strategies enhance their reputation and strengthen relationships with employees, customers, and society, yielding tangible economic and social benefits and solidifying their commitment to collective well-being (Islam et al., 2020). On this basis, Chia et al. (2022) found that integrating ethical and social values into corporate structures benefits employees and improves the community's perception of the company. As a result of this research, Cuesta-Valiño et al. (2021) revealed that responsible practices significantly increase the happiness of both employees and customers. Also, Bibi et al. (2021) demonstrated that employees experience increased eudaimonic happiness when they perceive their employers are committed to sound social responsibility practices.

On the other hand, Tan et al. (2021) shows that companies with robust social responsibility policies foster a more favourable environment for innovation. Employees who perceive their organisations as ethical and responsible are more motivated to generate novel ideas that enhance the company's competitiveness. It means that business training is crucial for effectively implementing social responsibility. Bani-Melhem et al. (2020) concluded that CSR training strengthens employees' commitment to ethical practices and enhances their innovative behaviour. These elements are essential not only for the success of companies but also for cultivating the social well-being of territories.

According to the literature review carried out on the variables of our conceptual model (Figure 1), the following research hypotheses are put forward:

H1: Personal ethics is positively related to happiness at work.

H2: Social ethics is positively related to happiness at work.

H3: Innovative behaviour is positively related to happiness at work.

H4: Business training is positively related to happiness at work.

H5: Social responsibility is positively related to happiness at work.

H6: Happiness at work is positively related to personal happiness.

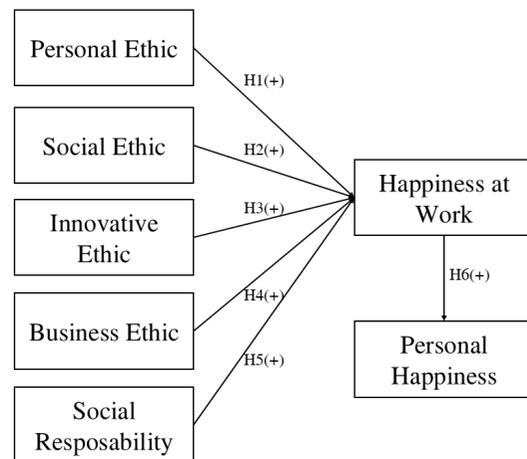


Figure 1. Theoretical model

Source: own elaboration.

Methodology

Participants and procedure

The study sampled 323 university graduates employed in the industrial sector of Baja California, Mexico. Initially, 368 participants were invited, of whom 45 were excluded because of incomplete responses or outliers in order to ensure the quality and reliability of the data. Participants were selected based on their active employment in the industrial sector, with inclusion criteria requiring at least one year of professional experience. The final sample struck a gender balance, with 163 females and 160 males, of an average age of 35, and 9.8 years of work experience. Most participants (80.6%) held bachelor's degrees, while 19.4% had postgraduate qualifications. The business sectors represented included industrial (43.3%), services (29.1%), education (13.6%), commercial (11.5%), and commodities (2.2%). Data collection was

conducted using validated instruments designed to measure personal and social ethics, innovative behaviour, business training, social responsibility, workplace happiness, and personal happiness. All scales demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70.

This study employed a quantitative, correlational, and explanatory approach, using a non-experimental and cross-sectional design to explore relationships between variables. This approach allowed for the analysis of causal relationships without manipulating the study's variables.

The research procedure followed a systematic process to ensure accuracy and replicability. Data collection took place over a three-month period via an online survey platform. Participants received invitations through their employers, along with clear instructions to complete the survey voluntarily and anonymously. The survey, requiring approximately 20 minutes to complete, included a mix of Likert-scale items and demographic questions. The collected data were reviewed to ensure completeness and validity before analysis.

The statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS and AMOS software. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to confirm the construct validity of the measurement scales, ensuring that factor loadings exceeded 0.40 and communalities were above 0.50. Covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) was used to test the hypothesised relationships between variables. The model fit was assessed using indices such as CMIN/DF, RMSEA, and CFI, all of which indicated an adequate fit of the theoretical model to the data.

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Ethics Committee of CETYS University, ensuring compliance with established research ethics standards. Participants provided informed consent before taking part in the study, acknowledging their understanding of the research purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Data confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with all records securely stored and accessible only to the research team. No conflicts of interest were identified, and all potential risks to participants were minimised. In cases where secondary data sources were used, proper citations were provided, and access to repositories was ensured for transparency.

Table 1. Characterisation of the study sample

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Female	160	49.54%
	Male	163	50.46%
Level of education	Undergraduate school	261	80.80%
	Graduate school	62	19.20%
Sector	Commodities sector	7	2.17%
	Industrial	141	43.65%
	Commercial	37	11.46%
	Services	94	29.10%
	Education	44	13.62%
Size of company	Small	82	25.39%
	Medium	82	25.39%
	Big	159	49.23%

(Continued)

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Age	22 to 62 years	35.48 years	8.37
Company experience	0 to 39 years	9.83 years	7.83

Source: own elaboration.

Instruments

The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire based on validated scales to measure the dimensions of our conceptual model. It included both open and closed questions to capture participants' perceptions.

Validated scales from previous studies ensured consistency and construct validity. Ethics in its social and personal dimensions was measured using the scale of Mercader et al. (2021). Innovative behaviour is assessed according to Jansen's (2000) scale. Corporate empowerment is measured with a scale based on conceptual notions, including items like "I think that the company facilitates my learning and enhances my education" and "I enhance my learning to make better decisions". Social responsibility is evaluated using the scale of Pérez et al. (2012). Happiness at work is measured with the Ramírez-García (2019) scale. Personal happiness is assessed with a scale developed from theoretical notions, including items such as "I have inner stability", "I possess objective well-being", and "I have inner motivation".

Data Analysis Technique

The statistical techniques used in the development of this research were exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) with IBM AMOS version 26. EFA validated the measurement scales by retaining items with acceptable factor loadings and communalities above 0.400 (Saeed et al., 2021). Reliability indices like Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Index (CFI) were calculated, all exceeding 0.700, indicating adequate internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021).

SEM assessed the causal relationships between the studied variables, providing a robust fit between the theoretical model and empirical data. Global fit tests showed CMIN/DF at 1.9, an acceptable limit (Avkiran & Ringle, 2018). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) were 0.905 and 0.906, respectively, confirming an adequate model fit (Hair et al., 2017). The RMSEA was 0.053, within acceptable ranges, validating the proposed structural model (Henseler, 2020).

Results

Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to examine the underlying structure of the variables and determine whether the measurement indicators are appropriate to evaluate the latent constructs included in the model (Lesia et al., 2024). The principal components method by Varimax

rotation was used, as it is a common technique for analysing data on social phenomena (Mohtar et al., 2024).

The results of the EFA for the “ethics” construct were grouped into two factors that explained 55.03% of the variance of this variable. Depending on the content of said items, two types of behaviour were identified: acting ethically before society, which we call “social ethics” and acting ethically with respect to individual values, which we call “personal ethics”. For these constructs, six items were eliminated for presenting factor loadings below the acceptable threshold (Mohtar et al., 2024). The remaining items presented significant correlations; its Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index test indicated an adequate level in terms of sample size as it was close to 1; and Bartlett’s test of sphericity ($p = 0.000$) confirmed a sufficient correlation between the data to justify factor analysis.

Regarding the innovative behaviour construct, the 12 items initially proposed were maintained by grouping them into a single factor and with high factor loadings. The high levels of correlation of the items, the optimal KMO index and the significant results of the Bartlett test confirmed the robustness of the construct for subsequent analyses. Regarding the business training variable, nine of the 12 initial items were maintained, only after discarding those with low factor loadings. The rest of the indicators showed adequate levels in all analyses, allowing the variable to explain 60.15% of the variance. This result reinforces the validity of the construct for subsequent analysis.

For the social responsibility variable, the EFA indicated low factor loadings for four items, so 11 indicators from the original scale were retained. This adjustment allowed the remaining items to provide a more accurate and consistent measure of the construct. Subsequent analyses indicated good sampling adequacy and all indicators showed satisfactory levels to measure the variable. Consequently, 64.06% of

the variance of the social responsibility construct was explained after adjustment.

Similarly, for the “work happiness” construct, the items that did not contribute significantly to its measurement were eliminated, so eight of the 10 items of the original scale were retained to preserve the validity of the construct, thus explaining 63.09% of the variance in happiness at work. Likewise, for the “personal happiness” construct, eight items that did not reach appropriate factor loadings were eliminated, and seven items that presented satisfactory levels for measuring the phenomenon and good sampling adequacy were retained. Together, these items explained 59.1% of the variance of the personal happiness construct. The purification of items in each of these constructs improved precision in the measurement of the phenomena of interest and ensured greater reliability in subsequent analyses, as shown in Table 2.

Correlations

Significant correlations among all constructs were found in our theoretical model. Personal ethics strongly relate to business training and personal happiness, indicating that ethically principled employees value professional development and well-being. On the other hand, social ethics correlated with personal ethics and social responsibility, emphasising the importance of values in social interactions and organisational commitment. The dimension of innovative behaviour was linked to personal ethics and business training, suggesting that innovation is connected to individual ethical principles and training. Also, business training significantly correlated with social responsibility and personal happiness. Social responsibility is strongly associated with business training and personal happiness. Finally, general happiness was mainly influenced by happiness at work, business training and social responsibility.

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis results

Variable	Ethic	Innovative behaviour	Business training	Social responsibility	Happiness at work	Personal Happiness
Correlations between items	245 < - > 552	0.529 < - > 0.718	0.420 < - > 0.674	0.479 < - > 0.732	0.433 < - > 0.713	0.410 < - > 0.689
Level of correlations	Low to medium	High	Medium to High	Medium to High	Medium to High	Medium
Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Determinant	0.002	0.0000761	0.007	0.0000012	0.008	0.037
Communalities	0.440 < - > 0.685	0.601 < - > 0.720	0.525 < - > 0.718	0.519 < - > 0.756	0.472 < - > 0.722	0.460 < - > 0.711
Level of communalities	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
KMO Test	0.938	0.964	0.935	0.966	0.92	0.898
Barlett’s test	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Factors extracted	2	1	1	1	1	1
Total variance explicated	55.03%	66.60%	60.15%	64.06%	63.09%	59.17%

Source: own elaboration.

Table 3. Correlations

	Personal ethic	Social ethic	Innovative behaviour	Business training	Social responsibility	Happiness at work	Personal happiness
Personal ethic	1						
Social ethic	.675**	1					
Innovative behaviour	.660**	.537**	1				
Business training	.743**	.590**	.685**	1			
Social responsibility	.648**	*.621*	.536**	.719**	1		
Happiness at work	.671**	.552**	.589**	.759**	.718**	1	
Personal happiness	.681**	.571**	.521**	.711**	.705**	.818**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4. Convergent and discriminant validity

	Discriminant Validity						Convergent Validity			
	Personal ethic	Social ethic	Innovative behaviour	Business training	Social responsibility	Happiness at work	Personal happiness	Cronbach's Alfa	IFC	AVE
Personal ethic	0.6004							0.775	0.857	0.600
Social ethic	0.3982	0.5761						0.815	0.872	0.577
Innovative behaviour	0.3295	0.2725	0.6737					0.951	0.958	0.674
Business training	0.4277	0.3493	0.4543	0.6055				0.905	0.958	0.606
Social responsibility	0.3697	0.4032	0.2788	0.5112	0.6406			0.942	0.958	0.641
Happiness at work	0.3684	0.3125	0.3481	0.5580	0.4858	0.6506		0.864	0.951	0.651
Personal happiness	0.4665	0.3318	0.2683	0.4802	0.4886	0.6037	0.5919	0.881	0.910	0.592

Source: own elaboration.

Analysis of common variance bias

Common variance biases, such as standard method variance, are frequent when evaluating psychometric measures based on participants' perceptions. This systematic error occurs when biases affect questionnaire responses. According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), bias becomes concerning when the single extracted factor explains more than 50% of the variance. In this study, the analysis yielded an explained variance of 43.278%, indicating the absence of significant bias in the data and validating the results' reliability.

Measurement model

Evaluating the measurement model is crucial to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs analysed. Reliability parameters such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the composite reliability index (CFI) must exceed 0.700 to ensure adequate internal consistency (Hair et al., 2017). These indicators confirm that measurements are consistent

and that items related to each construct consistently measure the phenomenon.

Convergent validity was assessed by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE), which must exceed 0.500 to ensure items sufficiently explain the construct's variance (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was verified following the Fornell-Larcker criterion, stating that the explained variance of each factor must be greater than the square of the correlations between factors, ensuring each construct is unique and distinct (Hair et al., 2017).

The results in Table 4 show that the reliability indices are adequate, with Cronbach's alpha and CFI values above 0.700, indicating that the model is consistent and stable (Henseler, 2018). Convergent validity was satisfactory, with all AVEs above the 0.500 thresholds, supporting that items grouped around each construct measure the same concept (Hair et al., 2019). Analyses also confirmed adequate discriminant validity, suggesting the measurement tools correctly distinguish between different constructs without undue overlap. These results provide a solid basis for the validity and reliability

bility of the measurement model and reinforce the credibility of subsequent analyses conducted in this research.

Adjustment indicators

An essential step in evaluating a structural model is verifying that its parameters are appropriately identified by analysing the degrees of freedom, which must be greater than zero for a parsimonious fit (Hair et al., 2017). In this model, the degrees of freedom were 1208, indicating a sufficiently identified structure.

For absolute fit, the Chi-square (χ^2), assessed through the CMIN, should be approximately twice the degrees of freedom. The model obtained a CMIN of 2304 against 1208 degrees of freedom, suggesting an expected fit. Due to χ^2 's sensitivity to large sample sizes, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was included, measuring discrepancy per degree of freedom (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The RMSEA was 0.053, within the recommended range, confirming a satisfactory fit.

Regarding incremental fit indicators, the CFI (Comparative Fit Index), IFI (Incremental Fit Index), and TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) were analysed, applying for all of them a design to compare the proposed model with a null model. The CFI, with acceptable values above 0.900, reached 0.905. Similarly, the IFI was 0.906, and the TLI registered 0.900, corroborating consistency across indicators (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Finally, the CMIN/DF, which corrects for χ^2 limitations when model parameters increase, was evaluated. Adequate values range between 1 and 3; the obtained value was 1.9,

suggesting a good fit for the structural model (Kline, 2015). Table 5 summarises all these indicators, clearly showing the model's overall performance.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing assessed the validity of proposed relationships using indicators such as effect size, measurement error (M.E.), critical ratio (C.R.)—which must be between ± 1.96 —and significance (P), which must be less than 0.05. Hypothesis 1, proposing a positive relationship between personal ethics and happiness at work, showed adequate significance and was accepted. Hypothesis H₂ and H₃, suggesting positive relationships between social ethics and happiness at work and between innovative behaviour and happiness at work, showed low effect and insufficient significance, leading to their rejection. Hypothesis H₄, proposing a positive relationship between business training and happiness at work, was supported with adequate significance. Hypothesis H₅ indicates a positive relationship between social responsibility and happiness at work, which showed excellent effect and appropriate significance, leading to its acceptance.

Finally, Hypothesis H₆ proposes a positive relationship between happiness at work and personal happiness, demonstrating a considerable effect and high significance level, confirming happiness at work as a critical predictor of personal happiness.

Table 5. Adjustment indicators

Fit index	Expected value	Obtained value	Fix
CMIN	Double the degrees of freedom	2304.49, DF=1208	Acceptable
RMSEA	0.05 < to > 0.08	0.053	Acceptable
IFC	0.90 – 1	0.905	Acceptable
IFI	0.90 – 1	0.906	Acceptable
NNFI or TLI	0.90 – 1	0.900	Acceptable
CMIN/DF	1 < to > 3	1.9	Acceptable

Source: own elaboration.

Table 6. Contrasting hypotheses

Hypothesis	Variables	Effect	S.E.	C.R.	P	Contrast
H1	Personal ethic ---> HAW	0.38	0.133	2.859	0.004	Accepted
H2	Social ethic ---> HAW	-0.075	0.093	-0.805	0.421	Rejected
H3	Innovative behaviour ---> HAW	0.021	0.049	0.429	0.668	Rejected
H4	Business training ---> HAW	0.512	0.114	4.484	***	Accepted
H5	Social responsibility ---> HAW	0.346	0.072	4.787	***	Accepted
H6	HAW ---> Personal happiness	0.826	0.061	13.47	***	Accepted

Source: own elaboration.

Conclusion and discussion

The conclusions of this study indicate a detailed analysis of each of the research hypotheses of this scientific study. The first hypothesis, proposing a positive relationship between personal ethics and happiness at work, was confirmed. It aligns with previous studies highlighting the importance of personal values in workplace well-being. Aflah et al. (2021) showed that ethical self-discipline and respect for others lead to happier work environments. It suggests that employees who adhere to ethical principles achieve higher work happiness.

However, the second hypothesis, suggesting a positive relationship between social ethics and happiness at work, was not supported. This finding differs from previous research, such as Chia (2020), which highlighted the crucial role of social ethics in the job satisfaction of employees. A potential explanation could be the unique cultural characteristics of the Mexican industrial sector, where hierarchical relationships may overshadow the influence of social ethics. Additionally, social ethics may exert an indirect impact on workplace happiness through mediators such as organisational climate or leadership style. Future research should examine these dynamics in greater detail, especially in sectors where interpersonal relationships are central, such as education or services.

The third hypothesis, proposing a positive relationship between innovative behaviour and happiness at work, was also rejected. It contradicts studies like Al-Shami et al. (2023), which showed that happier employees display higher levels of innovative behaviour. This outcome might stem from the nature of the industrial sector, where innovation may be perceived more as a job requirement than a motivational driver. Another plausible reason could be the methodological focus on tangible outcomes rather than creative processes, potentially limiting its perceived connection to workplace happiness. These results underscore the need for further investigation into these variables in diverse cultural and industrial contexts.

The fourth hypothesis confirmed a positive relationship between business training and happiness at work. This finding reinforces the arguments of authors like Benevene et al. (2019), who state that business training enhances employees' technical skills and increases job satisfaction. The results suggest that companies investing in employees' professional development contributes to their happiness at work.

The fifth hypothesis, proposing a positive relationship between social responsibility and happiness at work, was also confirmed. These findings are consistent with studies such as Bibi et al. (2021), which showed that companies committed to social responsibility create work environments where employees experience happiness.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis was confirmed, suggesting a positive relationship between happiness at work and personal happiness. It supports previous research showing that job well-being is closely related to overall life satisfac-

tion (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2022). Employees who are happy at work tend to transfer this well-being to their personal lives, confirming that creating positive work environments benefits both the company and employees' equanimity.

Future lines of research

Future research should explore cultural differences in the relationship between social ethics and workplace happiness. Additionally, it would be valuable to analyse how innovation may mediate the link between business training and happiness at work, particularly in industries where creativity and innovative behaviour is crucial for success. The rejection of the hypothesis regarding social ethics suggests further exploration into how cultural and organisational variables mediate its impact on workplace happiness. Similarly, examining the dynamics of innovative behaviour in sectors where creativity and recognition are central could provide valuable insights. Finally, studying the influence of macroeconomic and social factors on the relationship between social responsibility and happiness in emerging contexts is also recommended.

Practical recommendations

To enhance workplace happiness through validated predictors, organisations can adopt several practical strategies. Firstly, promoting personal ethics within the workforce can be achieved by implementing training programs that focus on ethical decision-making and personal values. Encouraging open dialogue about ethical dilemmas also helps employees align their values with organisational goals, fostering a culture of integrity.

Secondly, enhancing business training is critical. Organisations should provide regular opportunities for professional development, such as workshops, courses, and mentoring programs. Tailoring these programs to meet the specific needs of employees ensures they feel valued and equipped to perform effectively, directly contributing to their happiness at work.

Thirdly, strengthening social responsibility can create a positive impact. Organisations should develop and communicate clear corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies that resonate with employees' personal values. Actively engaging employees in CSR activities, such as volunteering programs, strengthens their connection with both the organisation and the broader community.

Lastly, facilitating happiness at work requires fostering a supportive organisational culture. Recognising and celebrating achievements, both individual and collective, helps create a sense of belonging and satisfaction. Additionally, introducing flexible work arrangements enables employees to better balance personal and professional responsibilities, enhancing their overall well-being.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Its focus on the industrial sector in Baja California and Mexico limits the generalisability of the findings to other territories. Additionally, the cross-sectional design prevents the analysis of how relationships between variables change over time, suggesting that longitudinal studies are needed. The insignificant results for innovative behaviour highlight the need for further research in innovation-driven sectors like technology. Furthermore, future studies should explore mediation and moderation factors, such as leadership and organisational climate, to better understand the relationships between ethics, empowerment, social responsibility, and happiness.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this study.

Author contributions

Victor Mercader: conceptualisation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing (original draft). Esthela Galván-Vela: conceptualisation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing (original draft). Rafael Ravina-Ripoll: conceptualisation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing (original draft), writing (review and editing). Mario Alberto Salazar-Altamirnao: investigation, methodology, writing (original draft), software.

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