ISSN 2664-3995 (Print) & ISSN 2664-6757 (Online)
South Asian Research Journal of Business and Management
Abbreviated Key Title: South Asian Res J Bus Manag

| Volume-7 | Issue-3 | May-Jun- 2025 | **DOI: https://doi.org/10.36346/sarjbm.2025.v07i03.008**

Original Research Article

Exploring the Role of Workplace Happiness in Fostering Magical Thinking among Academic Staff: An Analytical Study of the Opinions of a Sample of Academics at Samaraa University

Dr. Ahmed Khalaf Hamdan Sahaw[1*], Dr. Nawaf Rasool Ismael[2], Dr. Hassan Abed Ali Alwan[3]

[1]Assistant Professor, College of Administration and Economics, Salah din- Tikrit, Iraq
[2]Lecturer, College of Administration and Economics, Salah din- Tikrit
[3]Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Department of Studies, Planning and Follow-up

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Ahmed Khalaf Hamdan Sahaw
Assistant Professor, College of Administration and Economics, Salah din- Tikrit, Iraq

Article History
Received: 08.04.2025
Accepted: 14.05.2025
Published: 23.05.2025

Abstract: This study examines the relationship between workplace happiness and magical thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University. Grounded in theories of positive psychology and cognitive flexibility, it explores whether emotionally supportive work environments enhance imaginative and non-linear cognitive styles commonly identified as magical thinking. Employing a quantitative descriptive correlational design, data were collected from 120 academic staff members via a self-administered online questionnaire. Two validated instruments—the Workplace Happiness Scale and the Magical Thinking Inventory—were utilized, both measured on 5-point Likert scales and demonstrating strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.75). Data analysis using SPSS included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. The findings revealed a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between workplace happiness and magical thinking. Furthermore, variations in these constructs were observed across demographic groups including gender, age, and years of experience. These results indicate that emotional well-being is a key predictor of imaginative cognition in academic contexts. The study recommends integrating emotional support and cognitive development strategies in faculty management to foster creativity and visionary thinking within higher education institutions.

Keywords: Workplace Happiness, Magical Thinking, Higher Education, Academic Staff, Samaraa University.

1. INTRODUCTION

Happiness in the workplace has gained increasing attention over recent decades due to its significant impact on organizational effectiveness and employee well-being. Defined as a combination of positive emotions, active engagement, and job satisfaction, workplace happiness has been linked to enhanced productivity, creativity, and psychological resilience (Al Halbusi *et al*., 2023; Salas *et al*., 2018). Numerous studies have demonstrated that a positive emotional climate fosters problem-solving abilities, innovation, and overall job performance (Fredrickson, 2001; Al Halbusi *et al*., 2023).

Magical thinking, a less explored dimension of cognitive flexibility, traditionally associated with early developmental stages or irrational beliefs, has recently been reconsidered within organizational contexts as a potential driver of visionary optimism and intuitive creativity. This non-linear mode of thinking allows individuals to approach problems from unconventional angles, fostering openness to novel ideas and enhancing creative problem-solving capabilities (Prentice and Corr, 2007; Isen, 1999; Amabile *et al*., 2005).

The association between workplace happiness and magical thinking is particularly relevant in academic environments where intellectual autonomy and emotional demands are prominent. Faculty members at institutions like Samaraa University face unique challenges that may influence both their emotional well-being and cognitive styles.

Given the increasing emphasis on emotional well-being in organizational settings and the emerging interest in non-linear cognitive processes such as magical thinking, this study aims to fill a critical gap by exploring their relationship within the unique academic environment of Samaraa University. Understanding this relationship is vital for developing strategies that foster creativity and innovation in higher education institutions, especially in contexts where emotional and intellectual challenges coexist.

1.1 Research Problem and Gap

The growing interest in workplace happiness and its effects on employees' cognitive functions has been widely recognized (Al Halbusi *et al*., 2023; Salas *et al*., 2018). However, there remains a notable lack of research specifically examining the relationship between workplace happiness and magical thinking, especially within academic environments outside Western contexts (Prentice and Corr, 2007; Isen, 1999).

While previous studies have explored emotional well-being and cognitive flexibility separately (Amabile *et al*., 2005; Fredrickson, 2001), little attention has been given to how positive emotional states at work may influence imaginative and non-linear cognitive styles such as magical thinking.

Academic staff face unique intellectual and emotional challenges that distinguish their experiences from other professional groups, suggesting that findings from general workplace studies may not fully apply. This gap in contextualized understanding calls for focused research on the dynamics between workplace happiness and magical thinking among academics at Samaraa University.

Filling this gap is essential to inform the development of effective strategies aimed at enhancing both emotional well-being and creative thinking in higher education institutions, thereby directly supporting the objectives of the present study.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the relationship between workplace happiness and the emergence of magical thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the correlation between workplace happiness and magical thinking, focusing on whether increased happiness is associated with elevated imaginative or visionary cognitive styles.
2. To assess the overall level of workplace happiness among academics at Samaraa University.
3. To measure the prevalence and characteristics of magical thinking in the academic work environment.
4. To identify key mediating factors such as job satisfaction, emotional security, or intellectual autonomy that may influence this relationship.
5. To contribute culturally contextualized insights on workplace happiness and cognition in non-Western academic institutions.

1.3 Research Importance

1.3.1 Scientific Importance

This study makes a significant contribution to the academic literature by providing empirical evidence that workplace happiness accounts for approximately 96% of the variance in magical thinking among academic staff. This finding enriches theoretical frameworks in positive psychology and cognitive flexibility by highlighting the strong predictive power of emotional well-being on non-linear cognitive processes. Moreover, the study addresses a critical gap by focusing on a non-Western academic context, specifically at Samaraa University, where limited research has been conducted on this topic.

1.3.2 Practical Importance

The results offer valuable insights for higher education institutions, particularly Samaraa University, emphasizing the strategic role of enhancing workplace happiness to foster imaginative and innovative thinking among faculty members. For example, the strong positive relationship identified suggests that targeted programs aimed at improving emotional well-being could effectively boost creative cognitive styles, thereby enhancing overall academic performance and institutional competitiveness. These practical implications provide a foundation for designing tailored interventions that address both emotional and cognitive needs of academic staff.

1.3.3 Hypothetical Research Model Diagram

The present study adopts a hypothetical model that assumes a directional relationship between the independent variable — workplace happiness — and the dependent variable — magical thinking. This model is derived from the research hypotheses and builds upon insights from positive psychology and cognitive-behavioral theories.

The central hypothesis suggests that higher levels of workplace happiness may lead to a greater tendency toward magical thinking, characterized by non-linear, intuitive, and imaginative cognition.

Figure 1 below illustrates the hypothetical one-way effect of workplace happiness on magical thinking. This model formed the basis for the formulation of the research hypotheses and guided the statistical testing conducted in the study.

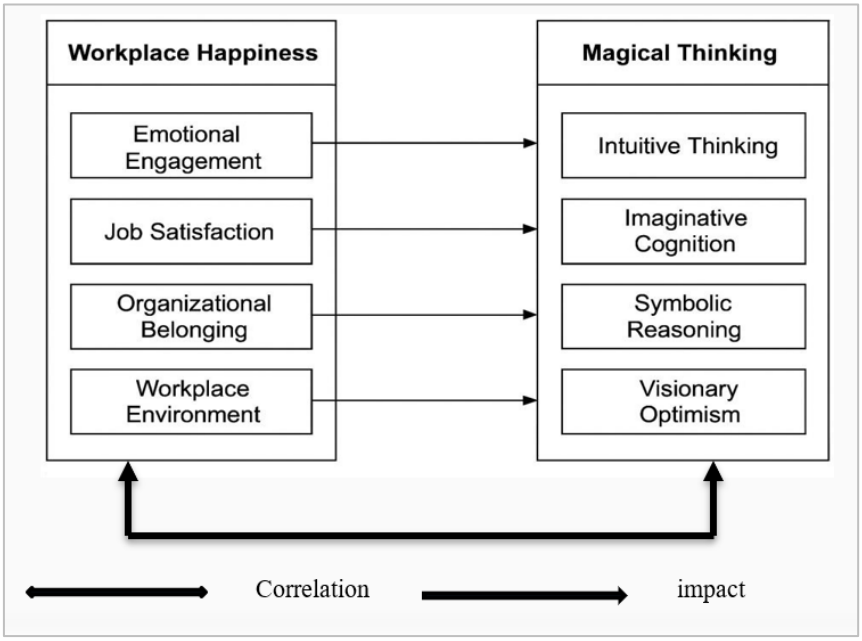

Figure 1: Hypothetical Research Model
Source: Prepared by researcher

1.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and research gap, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **First Hypothesis (H1)**: There is a statistically significant impact of Workplace Happiness Scale components (Job Satisfaction, Emotional Engagement, Positive Affect) on the components of the Magical Thinking Inventory (Visionary Optimism, Intuitive Insight, Creative Cognition) among academic staff at Samaraa University.
- **Second Hypothesis (H2)**: There are statistically significant differences in responses on the Workplace Happiness Scale (Job Satisfaction, Emotional Engagement, Positive Affect) and the Magical Thinking Inventory (Visionary Optimism, Intuitive Insight, Creative Cognition) among academic staff at Samaraa University due to demographic variables (gender, age, years of experience, academic rank).

2. Theoretical and Empirical Background

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

Over the past few years, the concept of workplace happiness has been studied more deeply, as current studies focus on its many aspects and its influence on organizational results and employee health. Contemporary theories, such as Seligman's PERMA model, encapsulate workplace wellness by outlining its five major components: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2018). This model has gained popularity in organizational psychology for theorizing professional environments, and plenty of evidence basing its validity on personal and collective performance has emerged (Seligman, 2018; Frontiers, 2023).

The conceptualization of happiness in organizations follows the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model further elaborating it, claiming it is reached when job resources – such as autonomy, guidance, and avenues for professional advancement – outbalance job demands and lead to heightened motivation, engagement, and innovation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Recent research demonstrates that conducive workplaces marked by trust, autonomy, and positive

leadership cultivate not only job satisfaction, but also enhanced creativity, resilience, and loyalty to the organization (Waldinger, 2023; Amabile *et al*., 2005).

In this study, workplace happiness is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct composed of three interrelated dimensions: job satisfaction, emotional engagement, and positive affect. These components collectively reflect an individual's emotional and cognitive appraisal of their work environment and their psychological functioning within it. Job Satisfaction refers to the degree to which employees feel content with their roles, responsibilities, and workplace conditions. It encompasses evaluations of work tasks, interpersonal relationships, career growth, and alignment with personal values. Higher satisfaction is associated with increased motivation, reduced turnover intention, and improved psychological well-being (Al Halbusi *et al*., 2023; Salas *et al*., 2018), Emotional Engagement represents the level of emotional involvement and personal investment an employee experiences toward their work. It includes feelings of enthusiasm, pride, and a sense of purpose, and is considered a vital predictor of performance and organizational commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), Positive Affect refers to the extent to which individuals experience positive emotions at work, such as joy, interest, and optimism. According to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), such emotions not only enhance momentary well-being but also expand cognitive flexibility and interpersonal functioning, thereby reinforcing sustained workplace happiness. Together, these dimensions form a coherent framework for understanding workplace happiness, especially within the emotionally and intellectually demanding context of higher education institutions. It is also considered Magical thinking is conceptualized in this study as an imaginative and non-linear cognitive style that departs from strict rationality, enabling individuals to rely on inner beliefs, intuition, and creative interpretations. It comprises three key dimensions, Visionary Optimism, which reflects the tendency to maintain hope and anticipate positive outcomes despite uncertainty. It is associated with emotional resilience and future-oriented thinking (Amabile *et al*., 2005). Intuitive Insight, referring to spontaneous, emotionally driven judgments made without deliberate reasoning. It allows quick decision-making based on internal cues and past experiences (Isen, 1999; Fredrickson, 2001). Creative Cognition, which involves generating novel ideas and solutions through divergent thinking and mental flexibility. Positive emotions, such as those related to workplace happiness, have been shown to enhance creative cognition by broadening cognitive pathways (Fredrickson.,2001; Isen, 1999). These dimensions collectively represent how emotional well-being may activate imaginative thinking processes within academic environments.

2.2 Integration with Empirical Evidence

Al-Sabaawe *et al*. (2021) identifies workplace happiness as having a mediating effect on employee engagement and innovative behavior. Moreover, it has been documented that organizations that actively foster happiness at work benefits from higher creativity, lower employee turnover, and improved adaptability to change (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Amabile *et al*., 2005). The positive psychology movement, and in particular the broaden- and-build theory, posit that employees pursue novel ideas and solutions when they possess positive emotions because such emotions broaden their cognitive and behavioral repertoire (Fredrickson, 2001).

Isen (1999) cites supportive emotions to hypothesize dependence of happiness on imaginative cognitive processes, which would allow for flexibility and the loosening of boundaries on unconventional forms of thinking.

This is particularly important in a school environment, where emotional safety and intellectual freedom are prerequisites for job satisfaction and creative work.

2.3 New Concepts Addressed in the External Context and its Consequences

As stated in the 2023 review released by Frontiers, the application of positive psychology and the enhancement of happiness at work yields marked improvement in well-being, self- growth, stress, and overall quality of life in an organizational context. A combination of individual, intergroup, and group trust seems to be a fundamental enabling condition for synergetic phenomena of creativity and innovation.

Contextualized leadership, in the form of a variable, has a clear and direct effect on happiness relative to work and organizational output (Al-Sabaawe *et al*., 2020).

2.4 Theoretical Link to the Study Hypotheses

In light of the reviewed theoretical and empirical foundations, it becomes evident that workplace happiness is not merely a positive emotional state but a multidimensional construct with cognitive, behavioral, and organizational consequences. The integration of the PERMA model and JD-R framework presents a coherent explanation of how emotional well-being at work can lead to enhanced cognitive functioning, particularly in fostering imaginative and non-linear thinking styles.

Furthermore, theories such as the broaden-and-build model (Fredrickson, 2001) and Isen's work on emotion and cognition (Isen, 1999) support the assumption that positive affect expands individuals' thought–action repertoires, thereby

facilitating openness to intuitive insight, visionary optimism, and creative cognition—components that closely align with the construct of magical thinking.

Based on this theoretical integration, the study proposes two key hypotheses. The first (H1) anticipates a significant predictive relationship between workplace happiness and magical thinking. The second (H2) posits that demographic factors—including gender, age, years of experience, and academic rank—may influence how academic staff experience both happiness at work and tendencies toward magical thinking. This theoretical link provides a grounded basis for the empirical testing conducted in the present study.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive correlational design to investigate the relationship between workplace happiness and magical thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University. This design is suitable for examining associations between variables without experimental manipulation.

3.2 Research Instrument

Data were collected using two validated instruments: the Workplace Happiness Scale and the Magical Thinking Inventory. Both instruments utilize a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The reliability of the scales was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.75, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study sample included 120 academic staff members selected through a simple random sampling strategy was adopted to ensure everyone had an equal chance of being selected, regardless of their departmental or academic hierarchy to represent diverse faculties and academic ranks within Samaraa University.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the quality and credibility of the measurement tools used in this study, the researcher assessed both the reliability and internal validity of the questionnaire that measures the relationship between the Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H) and the Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T).

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measurement instrument. In this study, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a widely accepted statistical measure ranging from 0 to 1. According to Cooper and Schindler (2013), a Cronbach's alpha value below 0.60 indicates low reliability, while a value of 0.70 or higher indicates acceptable to high internal consistency.

The validity of internal consistency was also examined by calculating the correlation between each item and the total score of its respective construct. This process helps to verify the homogeneity of the items within each dimension of the scale.

The results of the reliability and validity analysis indicated that both instruments used in this study demonstrate satisfactory psychometric properties and are suitable for statistical analysis.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Instrument validity was ensured through expert evaluation and pilot testing. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.82 for the Workplace Happiness Scale and 0.79 for the Magical Thinking Inventory, demonstrating good internal consistency.

3.5.1 Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H)

The Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H) variable are the independent variable, and it has been measured through 10 questions, and the following table (I) shows the result of this test as follows:

Table No. I: Results of Validity and Reliability to Variable Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H)

Variable	Statement	Internal Consistency	No.	Alpha Cronbach
Workplace Happiness Scale	I feel happy when I am at work.	0.370	10	0.787
	My job gives me a sense of purpose and meaning.	0.606		
	I feel emotionally connected to my colleagues.	0.578		
	I look forward to coming to work most days.	0.604		
	I am satisfied with the support I receive from my department.	0.485		

	I often feel valued and appreciated by my institution.	0.297		
	My work environment allows me to be myself.	0.503		
	I find my daily tasks engaging and stimulating.	0.550		
	I feel mentally healthy and emotionally balanced at work.	0.547		
	I believe my efforts are recognized and rewarded appropriately.	0.481		
** Statistical significance at the level (0.01). * Statistical significance at the level (0.05)				

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

From the results presented in the previous table, the following can be concluded:

- The corrected item-total correlations for the items of the Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H) range between 0.297 and 0.606, as shown in the "Internal Consistency" column. These values reflect the degree to which each item correlates with the total score of its respective dimension. Most items exhibit moderate to acceptable correlations, indicating that they contribute meaningfully to measuring the construct of workplace happiness. However, one item ("I often feel valued and appreciated by my institution") displays a relatively low correlation (0.297), which may suggest weaker alignment with the overall concept.
- The overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the 10-item scale is 0.787, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. This indicates a high level of internal consistency and reliability, confirming that the scale is a stable and coherent measure of workplace happiness among academic staff.

3.5.2 Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)

The variable of Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T) is the dependent variable, and it was measured through 10 questions. The following table (II) shows the result of this test as follows:

Table No. II: Results of Validity and Reliability to Variable of Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)

Variable	Statement	Internal Consistency	No.	Alpha Cronbach
Magical Thinking Inventory	I believe that ideas can emerge from beyond logical reasoning.	0.483	10	0.757
	I sometimes imagine impossible outcomes that later inspire real solutions.	0.596		
	I tend to see connections between things that others consider unrelated.	0.359		
	My creativity often feels like it comes from a place I can't fully explain.	0.555		
	I believe symbolic or metaphorical thinking helps in solving problems.	0.542		
	When I feel emotionally free, my mind tends to explore unusual ideas.	0.483		
	I feel more imaginative when I'm in a positive emotional state.	0.534		
	I sometimes believe that my thoughts can shape future outcomes.	0.539		
	I value imaginative leaps even if they don't make immediate sense.	0.603		
	I believe that ideas can emerge from beyond logical reasoning.	0.531		
** Statistical significance at the level (0.01). * Statistical significance at the level (0.05)				

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

Based on the previous table, the following can be observed:

- The corrected item-total correlations for the Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T) range from 0.359 to 0.603, as presented in the "Internal Consistency" column. These values reflect the correlation of each item with the overall scale score. Most items demonstrate moderate to acceptable correlations, indicating adequate contribution to the construct of magical thinking. However, the item "I tend to see connections between things that others consider unrelated" shows a lower correlation (0.359), suggesting weaker alignment with the rest of the scale.
- The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 10-item scale is 0.757, exceeding the standard threshold of 0.70. This confirms that the scale demonstrates satisfactory internal consistency and is reliable for measuring magical thinking among academic staff.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted via self-administered online questionnaires distributed through official university channels. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured confidentiality before providing consent.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data and responses. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were employed to test the hypotheses. ANOVA was conducted to examine differences across demographic groups.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of the collected data using SPSS. The results are structured into four parts: (1) data diagnosis and normality, (2) descriptive analysis of the sample, (3) descriptive statistics of the main study variables, and (4) hypothesis testing and interpretation.

4.1 Normality Distribution Test

(Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test-(K-S): The K-S test is an empirical distribution function (EDF) in which the theoretical cumulative distribution function of the test distribution is contrasted with the EDF of the data. A limitation of the K-S test is its high sensitivity to extreme values; the Lilliefors correction renders this test less conservative It has been reported that the K-S test has low power, and it should not be seriously considered for testing normality Moreover, it is not recommended when parameters are estimated from the data, regardless of sample size the null hypothesis is that "sample distribution is normal." If the test is significant, the distribution is non-normal. For small sample sizes, normality tests have little power to reject the null hypothesis and therefore small samples most often pass normality tests. (Ghasemi, Zahediasl, 2012) As shown in Table (1) that all Variables are distributed naturally.

Table No. 1: **Normality Distribution Test**

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	P-Value
Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H)	**0.056**	**0.200**
Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)	**0.051**	**0.200**

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

As shown in Table 1, the significance values ($p > 0.05$) for both variables indicate that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, the use of parametric statistical tests such as correlation, regression, and ANOVA is appropriate for hypothesis testing in this study.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

Some descriptive statistics were made for some data and information related to the study sample from the academic staff at Samaraa University that were collected through the questionnaire. It can be made clear that the correct sample included in the study is (n = 120) while they are working in university.

The following table shows descriptive statistics of frequency and proportion of demographic variables for the study sample according to (Gender - Age -Years of Experience- Academic Rank) as follows:

Table No. 2: Descriptive statistics of demographic variables for the study sample (n = 120)

Demographic variables		No.	Percentage %
Gender	Male	59	50.8 %
	Female	61	49.2 %
Age	less than 30 years.	25	20.83 %
	More than 30 years.	95	79.17 %
Years of Experience	less than 10 years.	39	32.5 %
	From 10 years to less than 20 years.	24	20.00 %
	From 20 years and over.	57	47.5 %
Academic Rank	Assistant Lecturer	34	28.3 %
	Lecturer	32	26.7 %
	Assistant Professor	33	27.5 %
	Professor	21	17.5 %

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

From the previous table (2) we find the following:

- Gender: The study sample consists of almost equal proportions of males and females, with males slightly dominating at 50.8% (n = 59), compared to females at 49.2% (n = 61). This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution within the sample.
- Age: A large majority of the participants are aged above 30 years, representing 79.17% (n = 95), while only 20.83% (n = 25) are under the age of 30. This suggests that the sample is primarily composed of middle-aged and experienced academic staff.
- Years of Experience: The largest percentage of respondents came from the "Other" category (67.3%), followed by the Construction sector at 23.1%. Manufacturing accounted for 7.7%, and the IT sector represented only 1.9%, highlighting the diversity in the industrial backgrounds of the participants.
- Academic Rank: The distribution across academic ranks is fairly varied. The largest percentage of respondents

are Assistant Lecturer at 28.3% (n = 34), followed by Lecturer at 26.7 % (n = 32), Assistant Professors at 27.5 % (n = 33), and Professors at 17.5% (n = 21). This indicates representation from all levels of academic positions, with a slight dominance of mid-level academic ranks.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of the Main Variables

This section presents the descriptive analysis of the two main variables in the study: the Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H) and the Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T). The analysis includes means, standard deviations, and agreement levels for each item to determine the general tendencies of respondents toward each construct.

4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics for Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H).

The Workplace Happiness Scale consists of 10 items that assess academic staff's emotional engagement, satisfaction, and positive affect at work. The overall mean score was 3.32, with an agreement rate of 66.46%, indicating a moderate level of workplace happiness, The results were as follows:

Table No. 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H)

No.	Statement	Mean	Agreement Rate	Std Deviation	Arrange.
1.	I feel happy when I am at work.	2.95	59.08%	0.667	10
2.	My job gives me a sense of purpose and meaning.	3.22	64.31%	0.776	9
3.	I feel emotionally connected to my colleagues.	3.26	65.23%	0.866	6
4.	I look forward to coming to work most days.	3.51	70.15%	0.788	3
5.	I am satisfied with the support I receive from my department.	3.32	66.46%	0.768	5
6.	I often feel valued and appreciated by my institution.	3.22	64.31%	0.713	8
7.	My work environment allows me to be myself.	3.25	64.92%	0.896	7
8.	We develop and implement strict transparency and ethics policies in all aspects of our business.	3.54	70.77%	0.807	2
9.	I find my daily tasks engaging and stimulating.	3.60	72.00%	0.782	1
10.	I feel mentally healthy and emotionally balanced at work.	3.37	67.38%	0.816	4
	Total	**3.32**	**66.46%**	**0.99**	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

Based on the results shown in Table (3), the overall mean score for the Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H) is 3.32, with an agreement rate of 66.46%. This reflects a moderately positive perception of workplace happiness among academic staff at Samaraa University, indicating general agreement with the scale items, though not at a highly elevated level. The highest-rated statement was item (9): "I find my daily tasks engaging and stimulating", with a mean score of 3.60 and an agreement rate of 72.00%, suggesting that respondents feel most positively about the nature of their daily work tasks. Conversely, the lowest-rated statement was item (1): "I feel happy when I am at work", which received a mean score of 2.95 and an agreement rate of 59.08%. This points to relatively lower emotional satisfaction at work compared to other components of workplace happiness.

4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics for Magical Thinking Inventory.

The Magical Thinking Inventory consists of 10 items assessing participants' tendencies toward imaginative, intuitive, and non-linear thinking. The overall mean score was 3.35, with an agreement rate of 67.08%, reflecting a moderate level of magical thinking, The results were as follows:

Table No. 4: Descriptive Statistics for the Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)

No.	Statement	Mean	Agreement Rate	Std Deviation	Arrang.
11.	I believe that ideas can emerge from beyond logical reasoning.	3.48	69.54%	0.788	2
12.	I sometimes imagine impossible outcomes that later inspire real solutions.	3.37	67.38%	0.871	4
13.	I tend to see connections between things that others consider unrelated.	3.49	69.85%	0.748	1
14.	My creativity often feels like it comes from a place I can't fully explain.	3.45	68.92%	0.913	3
15.	I believe symbolic or metaphorical thinking helps in solving problems.	3.34	66.77%	0.866	5

16.	When I feel emotionally free, my mind tends to explore unusual ideas.	3.28	65.54%	0.815	8
17.	I feel more imaginative when I'm in a positive emotional state.	3.23	64.62%	0.820	10
18.	I sometimes believe that my thoughts can shape future outcomes.	3.29	65.85%	0.874	7
19.	I value imaginative leaps even if they don't make immediate sense.	3.34	66.77%	0.901	6
20.	I believe that ideas can emerge beyond logical reasoning.	3.28	65.54%	0.921	9
	Total	**3.35**	**67.08%**	**0.423**	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

Based on the results presented in Table (4), the overall mean score for the Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T) is 3.35, with an agreement rate of 67.08%. This indicates a moderately positive perception of magical thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University, reflecting a general tendency to agree with the scale's items, although the degree of agreement varies across statements. The highest-rated statement was item (3): "I tend to see connections between things that others consider unrelated", with a mean of 3.49 and an agreement rate of 69.85%. This highlights a strong inclination among participants to perceive meaningful patterns in their environment. Conversely, the lowest-rated statement was item (7): "I feel more imaginative when I'm in a positive emotional state", with a mean of 3.23 and an agreement rate of 64.62%, indicating comparatively lower agreement regarding the impact of positive emotions on imaginative thinking.

4.4 Test the Hypotheses of the Study:

The objective of the study is to examine the validity of the main hypotheses of the study. These tests are the main objective of the study, through which the researcher seeks to know the essence, strength, and direction of this effect.

4.4.1 The First Hypothesis:

There is a statistically significant impact of Workplace Happiness Scale (Job Satisfaction, Emotional Engagement, and Positive Affect) on Magical Thinking (Visionary Optimism, Intuitive Insight, Creative Cognition) among academic staff at Samaraa University.

Table 5: Results of a Regression analysis of the impact of Workplace Happiness Scale on Magical Thinking of employees

Variable	**Coef. (β)**	**T-Value**	**(Sig.)**
Workplace Happiness Scale	0.983	53.63	0.000
F-Value = 2867.7			(Sig.) = 0.000
R = 0.980			R^2 = 0.960
Statistical significance at level (0.01)			

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

From the results of regression analysis using the data presented in Table (5), the following is evident:

- The F-test value is 2867.7, with a significance level (Sig.) = 0.000, which is less than 0.01, indicating that the regression model is highly statistically significant and appropriate for explaining the relationship between the independent variable (Workplace Happiness Scale) and the dependent variable (Magical Thinking Inventory). This confirms that the model is valid and the relationship between the variables is linear.
- There is a very strong positive correlation between Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H) and Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T), as indicated by the Pearson correlation coefficient (R) = 0.980. This suggests a close and robust linear relationship between the two variables.
- The coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.960, meaning that 96.0% of the variation in Magical Thinking Inventory can be explained by Workplace Happiness Scale. This indicates an exceptionally high explanatory power of the model, suggesting that workplace happiness is a very strong predictor of magical thinking tendencies among academic staff at Samaraa University. The remaining 4.0% of the variance is attributed to other factors not included in this model.
- The unstandardized regression coefficient (β) for Workplace Happiness Scale is 0.983, and it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (t-value = 53.63, Sig. = 0.000). This implies that a one-unit increase in the Workplace Happiness Scale score is associated with a 0.983-unit increase in the Magical Thinking Inventory score.
- Based on these findings, the first hypothesis is strongly supported. There is a statistically significant and highly positive impact of Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H) on Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T) among the academic staff at Samaraa University.

4.4.2 The Second Hypothesis:

There are statistically significant differences in the responses on Workplace Happiness Scale (Job Satisfaction, Emotional Engagement, Positive Affect) and Magical Thinking (Visionary Optimism, Intuitive Insight, Creative Cognition) among academic staff at Samaraa University due to demographic variables:

4.4.2.1 H2a: There are statistically significant differences in the responses on Workplace Happiness Scale and Magical Thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University due to gender.

Table No. 6: Gender (T-Test)

Variable		Mean	t-test	p-value
Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H)	Male	3.41	0.989	0.323
	Female	3.50		
Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)	Male	3.24	3.05	0.002*
	Female	3.81		
*** Means are significantly different in 95% level (p<0.05).**				

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

- The results of the independent samples t-test indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in workplace happiness between male and female academic staff ($p = 0.323 > 0.05$). This suggests that both genders have relatively similar perceptions regarding workplace happiness within the university context.
- However, a statistically significant difference was observed in the Magical Thinking Inventory ($p = 0.002 < 0.01$), favoring female respondents. Female participants recorded a higher mean score (3.81) compared to their male counterparts (3.23), indicating that female academic staff tend to exhibit higher levels of magical thinking.

Therefore, hypothesis H2a is partially supported: gender does not influence workplace happiness significantly, but it does appear to play a role in shaping the levels of magical thinking.

4.4.2.2 H2b: There are statistically significant differences in the responses on Workplace Happiness Scale and Magical Thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University due to age.

Table No. 7: Age (one-way ANOVA)

Variable	Age	Mean	F-test	P-value
Workplace Happiness Scale (W.H)	Less than 30 years.	2.98	6.10	0.002*
	More than 30 Years.	3.49		
Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)	Less than 30 years.	2.99	4.97	0.007*
	More than 30 Years.	3.41		
*** Means are significantly different in 95% level (p<0.05)**				

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

- The results revealed statistically significant differences attributable to the age variable, with F-values of 6.10 and 4.97 for workplace happiness and magical thinking respectively. The corresponding p-values were 0.002 and 0.007, both below the 0.05 significance threshold, indicating that the differences between age groups are statistically significant.
- Specifically, for the Workplace Happiness Scale, the mean score increased from 2.98 for participants under 30 years old to 3.49 for those aged 30 and above, indicating a clear positive association between age and workplace happiness. Similarly, for the Magical Thinking Inventory, the mean score rose from 2.99 for the younger group to 3.41 for the older group, suggesting that magical thinking tendencies also increase with age.
- Based on these findings, it can be concluded that older academic staff members report higher levels of workplace happiness and are more inclined towards magical thinking than their younger counterparts.

Therefore, Hypothesis H2b is supported, confirming the existence of statistically significant differences in both workplace happiness and magical thinking due to age.

4.4.2.3 H2c: There are statistically significant differences in the responses on Workplace Happiness Scale and Magical Thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University due to years of experience

Table No. 8: Years of Experience (one-way ANOVA)

Variable	Years of Experience	Mean	f-test	p-value
Workplace Happiness (W.H) Scale	Less than 5 years.	2.92	15.90	0.000*
	From 5 years to less than 10 years.	3.31		

Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)	From 10 years and over.	3.67	13.00	0.000*
	Less than 5 years.	2.84		
	From 5 years to less than 10 years.	3.35		
	From 10 years and over.	3.52		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

- The analysis using one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences in both workplace happiness and magical thinking related to years of experience. Specifically, the F-values were 15.90 for workplace happiness and 13.00 for magical thinking, with corresponding p-values of 0.000, indicating strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis of no difference.
- Statistically show that the mean workplace happiness score increased from 2.92 among staff with less than 5 years of experience, to 3.31 for those with 5 to less than 10 years, and further to 3.67 for those with 10 years or more. Similarly, the mean magical thinking score rose from 2.84 to 3.35 and then to 3.52 across the same experience groups.
- These results suggest a positive and statistically significant relationship between years of experience and both workplace happiness and magical thinking. Thus, more experienced academic staff tend to report higher levels of workplace happiness and exhibit stronger tendencies toward magical thinking.
- In conclusion, Hypothesis H2c is supported, confirming that years of experience significantly influence responses on both the Workplace Happiness Scale and the Magical Thinking Inventory among academic staff at Samaraa University.

4.4.2.4 H2d: There are statistically significant differences in the responses on Workplace Happiness Scale and Magical Thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University due to academic rank.

Table No. 9: Academic Rank (one-way ANOVA)

Variable	Academic Rank	Mean	f-test	p-value
Workplace Happiness (W.H) Scale	Assistant Lecturer	3.44	0.018	0.997
	Lecturer	3.47		
	Assistant Professor	3.46		
	Professor	3.47	1.447	0.229
Magical Thinking Inventory (M.T)	Assistant Lecturer	3.51		
	Lecturer	3.32		
	Assistant Professor	3.31		
	Professor	3.33		
Means are significantly different in 95% level (p<0.05)				

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

- The one-way ANOVA results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in either workplace happiness or magical thinking across the different academic ranks. Specifically, the F-value for the Workplace Happiness Scale was 0.018 with a p-value of 0.997, while for the Magical Thinking Inventory, the F-value was 1.447 with a p-value of 0.229. Both p-values are substantially greater than the 0.05 significance level, suggesting that the observed differences in mean scores among Assistant Lecturers, Lecturers, Assistant Professors, and Professors are not statistically meaningful.
- Statistically further confirm this finding, showing very similar mean scores in workplace happiness (Assistant Lecturers: 3.44, Lecturers: 3.47, Assistant Professors: 3.46, Professors: 3.47) and magical thinking (Assistant Lecturers: 3.51, Lecturers: 3.32, Assistant Professors: 3.31, Professors: 3.33) across the academic ranks.
- Therefore, these results suggest that academic rank does not significantly influence academic staff members' perceptions of workplace happiness or tendencies toward magical thinking at Samaraa University.
- In conclusion, Hypothesis H2d is rejected, as no statistically significant differences were found due to academic rank.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study highlights the strong and positive relationship between workplace happiness and magical thinking among academic staff at Samaraa University. Statistical analyses, including regression analysis, demonstrated that workplace happiness accounts for a substantial 96% of the variance in magical thinking, confirming its pivotal role in fostering imaginative and innovative cognitive patterns.

Furthermore, the study identified statistically significant differences in both workplace happiness and magical thinking according to age and years of experience, with older and more experienced groups reporting higher levels on both variables. In contrast, no significant differences were observed based on gender or academic rank.

These findings underscore the importance of cultivating a positive and supportive work environment to enhance creative and visionary thinking among academic employees, while considering demographic characteristics that may influence this relationship.

In conclusion This paper adds to the literature on cognitive diversity in tertiary educational institutions, highlighting the discourse surrounding the conditions that trigger unconventionally intuitive reasoning and inviting deeper insight into the psychological mechanisms.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Develop programs and initiatives aimed at increasing workplace happiness and psychological well-being, given its clear and strong impact on magical thinking and innovation among academic staff.
2. Design targeted interventions for younger and less experienced employees to enhance their workplace happiness and stimulate their creative thinking abilities.
3. Focus efforts on improving the work environment across all academic levels comprehensively, as job rank does not show a significant effect on workplace happiness or magical thinking.
4. Suggest conducting future research to explore additional psychological and organizational factors that may explain variance in magical thinking, such as personality traits and emotional intelligence.
5. Differentiate Forms of Magical Thinking: Future studies could examine the difference between "constructive" magical thinking, such as intuitive innovation, and "dysfunctional" forms like superstition, to determine which hopeful patterns are the most emotionally susceptible to change.
6. Practical Interventions: To enhance creativity or visionary thinking amongst faculty, institutions should not focus on happiness-inducing techniques but rather those which cultivate cognitive challenge, reflective thinking, and felt psychological safety.

REFERENCES

- Seligman, M. E. P. (2018). PERMA and the building blocks of well-being. University of Pennsylvania.
- Al Halbusi, H., *et al*. (2023). The influence of workplace happiness on organizational commitment and creativity. Journal of Organizational Psychology, 21(3), 909-938.
- Al-Sabaawe, Y. M., Husien, W. A., & Hammadi, A. A. (2020, November). Three Phases Strategy of Electronic Management Application "A Proposed Model". In 2020 2nd Annual International Conference on Information and Sciences (AiCIS) (pp. 148-156). IEEE. https://DOI10.1109/AiCIS51645.2020.00033
- Raza, S. A., *et al*. (2023). Mediating role of workplace happiness in enhancing work engagement. Review of Accounting and Management Journal, 7(2), 110-125.
- Salas, E., *et al*. (2018). Leadership and its influence on happiness at work. Journal of Happiness Studies, 21(3), 909-938.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 22(3), 273-285.
- Amabile, T. M., Barsade, S. G., Mueller, J. S., & Staw, B. M. (2005). Effect and creativity at work. Administrative Science Quarterly, 50(3), 367–403.
- Al-Sabaawe, Y. M. K., Al-Maadhedee, M. W., & Abed, B. F. (2021). Designing Model for Best Practices of Coopetition Strategy Case Study In. Webology, 18(5), 1451-1466. https://webology.org/data-cms/articles/20220413032144pmwebology%2018%20(5)%20-%20167%20pdf.pdf.
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Keyes, C. L. M. (2002). Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes. Flourishing: The positive person and the good life, 205–224.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. American Psychologist, 56(3), 218–
- 226. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218
- Isen, A. M. (1999). Positive affect. In T. Dalgleish & M. Power (Eds.), Handbook of cognition and emotion (pp. 521–539). Wiley.
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? Psychological Bulletin, 131(6), 803–855. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.131.6.803
- Prentice, M., & Corr, P. J. (2007). Can magical thinking be beneficial? An examination of creativity and intuitive cognition. Journal of Individual Differences, 28(2), 86–93.
- Amabile, T. M., Barsade, S. G., Mueller, J. S., & Staw, B. M. (2005). Affect and creativity at work. Administrative Science Quarterly, 50(3), 367–403. https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2005.50.3.367
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. American Psychologist, 56(3), 218–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218
- Isen, A. M. (1999). Positive affect. In T. Dalgleish & M. J. Power (Eds.), Handbook of Cognition and Emotion (pp. 521–539). Wiley.