WORKPLACE WELL-BEING CONSTRUCTS AND MEASUREMENT PRACTICES IN JAPAN AND IRAN'S KURDISTAN PROVINCE: AN EXPLORATORY COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWELVE EMPIRICAL STUDIES

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Abstract

The literature on workplace well-being often treats it as a single phenomenon. The studies themselves, however, examine psychological well-being, job satisfaction, work engagement, psychological distress, and burnout, and these constructs capture different aspects of working life. All of them are relevant to workplace well-being, but this does not make them interchangeable. Before the results of individual studies are compared, it has to be established which construct each study actually investigated.

Our analysis uses selected scoping-review procedures for data extraction and classification and covers twelve empirical papers identified during a pilot search: seven concerning Japan and five concerning Iran's Kurdistan Province. We examine how these papers defined and measured workplace well-being or related outcomes, and what analytical role the variables had in each. A common coding framework made it possible to compare the constructs, instruments, and research designs. The Japanese papers include direct measures of positive well-being as well as measures of work engagement and distress, and they comprise prospective and psychometric studies. The five Kurdistan papers all examine job satisfaction by questionnaire survey at a single point in time; in three of them, the cross-sectional design is inferred from the methods section. Under our classification, three Japanese studies are Direct only and four are Related only, while all five Kurdistan papers are Related only. The corpus supports a comparison of research approaches, not a ranking of employee well-being in the two settings. Its completeness could not be verified, and it should not be regarded as representative of either literature.

Keywords: workplace well-being; comparative literature analysis; scoping-review methods; Japan; Kurdistan Province; job satisfaction; work engagement; measurement comparability

1. Introduction and conceptual framework

Workplace well-being has been studied in occupational health, organisational psychology, and several branches of the social sciences, but a definition accepted across these fields does not exist. Depending on the author, the emphasis falls on emotional experience, psychological functioning, health, or attitudes towards work

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(Danna & Griffin, 1999; Fisher, 2010). Warr (1990) described work-related mental health as multidimensional, and Page and Vella-Brodrick (2009) considered individual and organisational components together. These approaches are not necessarily incompatible; the problem begins when findings from different instruments are read as observations of the same construct.

Job satisfaction and work engagement illustrate this difficulty well. Job satisfaction is an evaluative attitude towards one's work (Hulin & Judge, 2003), whereas work engagement is a positive and energetic work-related state (Schaufeli et al., 2002). A reduction in stress, psychological distress, or burnout does not, by itself, demonstrate an improvement in positive well-being. Ryff's (1989) framework, for instance, also includes autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, and relationships. We therefore keep satisfaction, distress, engagement, and psychological well-being apart, even where the original authors group them.

An outcome is classified as a direct measure of well-being if the original authors operationalised and analysed well-being as a distinct construct. The measure may be an established instrument or an indicator designed for the particular study. The word well-being in the title or in the discussion is not sufficient. Where engagement and distress are measured and analysed separately, we count them as related outcomes and do not infer a direct well-being measure from them. The predefined related category includes job satisfaction, work engagement, stress, psychological distress, burnout, and work–life balance. The distinction is not a quality ranking: a job satisfaction study can be as rigorous as one using a direct well-being scale.

The analytical role of each variable also has to be recorded. A measure can define the outcome of interest, serve as an explanatory predictor, or appear only as an external correlate in a validation exercise. Counting outcomes, predictors, and validation correlates together would produce misleading frequencies. We therefore report studies, substantive outcomes, instrument dimensions, and explanatory or validation variables separately.

The starting material of the analysis is a set of previously identified publications on Japan and Iran's Kurdistan Province. A country and a province are not equivalent units. Publication settings and access to databases also differ, and neither subset can therefore be regarded as a representative sample of its regional literature. We examine the individual papers, with respect to what was measured, with which instrument, and in what analytical role. The two settings were selected for pragmatic reasons within the original research collaboration, rather than as theoretically matched cases. The aim is therefore not to compare levels of well-being or to test whether it is culturally contingent, which this material cannot show, but to unpack the label: to establish what the studies that carry it actually measure.

Scoping reviews primarily aim to map the concepts, methods, and boundaries of a research field rather than pool effect sizes (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters et al., 2020). We adopted selected procedures from this tradition for extracting and organising information. Although the pilot and harmonised searches were completed, screening did not cover all retrieved records, and the available documentation does not permit a complete reconstruction of the selection process. We therefore do not present this analysis as a full scoping review. PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al., 2018) and PRISMA-S (Rethlefsen et al., 2021) serve as reporting reference points; we do not claim full compliance, and we do not construct a flow diagram that the available records cannot verify. Four research questions guide the analysis: (RQ1) how well-being and related outcomes are conceptualised and measured; (RQ2) which

instruments, designs, populations, and sectors appear in the corpus; (RQ3) what analytical roles organisational, psychological, relational, and contextual factors play; (RQ4) what similarities, differences, and evidence gaps can be identified within the twelve papers.

Two studies may use the same term without measuring the same construct. Item wording, response categories, scoring direction, instrument version, and timing of measurement can all differ. Means, correlations, or regression coefficients therefore cannot be placed on a common scale only because they are collectively referred to as well-being. Measurement equivalence is itself a methodological question in cross-national research (Davidov et al., 2014; van de Vijver & Poortinga, 1997). Measurement invariance was not tested in our analysis. The more limited task was to identify the differences, including those between translations and instrument versions, that would have to be addressed before such comparisons could be attempted.

RQ1 and RQ2 describe the studies and their instruments, RQ3 examines the roles assigned to variables and relationships, and RQ4 draws these observations together. An outcome absent from these twelve papers may still have been studied elsewhere in the same setting.

2. Methods

2.1. Study design

The analysis is an exploratory comparative literature analysis, which uses selected procedures for extraction and classification associated with scoping reviews, and it is not a full scoping review. The original plan was to retain all studies eventually found eligible; the present article, however, analyses the seven Japanese and five Kurdistan papers that were extracted in detail during the pilot. Both researchers reported that their expanded searches had been completed. The Japanese researcher reported finding no further eligible studies among the records she screened, although screening did not cover all retrieved records. The Kurdistan researcher, by contrast, identified further records that she considered potentially eligible. The records available to us do not establish a final eligible corpus or a deduplicated flow of records for either setting. An itemised, deduplicated list of the additional Kurdistan records was not available to us, so their uniqueness and final eligibility could not be established. The twelve papers are consequently treated as a documented analytical corpus and not as the verified end result of the expanded searches. Completion of the pilot did not establish that all screening decisions had been independently validated.

2.2. Information sources and search strategy

The searches were planned around a common set of concepts: well-being, satisfaction, engagement, stress, distress, and burnout. They were not implemented with identical coverage, however. The Japanese documentation lists J-STAGE, CiNii, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and PsycINFO, while the Kurdistan searches covered PubMed, Scopus, SID, and Magiran. Google Scholar provided supplementary material. According to the Kurdistan researcher's account, distress was omitted from her PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar searches. In Magiran she combined "Kurdistan" with four alternative terms ("job satisfaction", "occupational stress", "workplace wellbeing", and "job burnout"), and the SID query was confined to job

burnout. No Kurdistan search was conducted in Web of Science or PsycINFO. The Japanese researcher corrected the PubMed and Web of Science hit counts and filters in the search log; the project workbook of 24 October 2026 contains the corrected values (PubMed 7,478; Web of Science 16,602 records). The Japanese PsycINFO query was run exactly as recorded in the search log, without explicit grouping of the concept terms and the Japan terms. The restriction to Japan may therefore not have applied to every concept term, and the 155,537 hits are consistent with this; the retrieval scope for Japan in this database is uncertain. The project workbook retains the reported dates, queries, filters, hit counts, and screening decisions, and it can be provided for methodological inspection. These searches were not rerun independently by us, and counts containing duplicate records cannot be summed as if they represented unique publications.

According to the available search log, the searches were carried out between 25 September and 23 October 2026. The Japanese pilot included Japanese-language expressions, whereas the later expanded searches used English conceptual terms. Restrictions also differed across databases: some searches specified a lower publication-year limit of 2000 or 2006, while others specified none. The recorded language settings included English/Japanese, English/Persian, and English only.

The pilot records have to be distinguished from papers encountered during later verification and expanded searching. In some individual queries all logged results were examined, which was reported for CiNii and for the Kurdistan searches in PubMed, Scopus, and Magiran, but screening remained incomplete overall in both settings. In Japan, the researcher screened records in the database's own relevance order and stopped when few or no additional relevant records were being found; this criterion was not set in advance but developed during screening, and the remaining records were not screened later. In Kurdistan, papers were selected from successive result pages according to apparent relevance; declining relevance influenced the stopping point in SID, while Google Scholar screening was limited by time. Evidence that the Kurdistan stopping criteria had been specified in advance was not found.

2.3. Eligibility, screening, and unit of analysis

The twelve papers concern empirical research on employed adults or organisational members and report work-related well-being or one of our predefined related outcomes. An identifiable research setting in Japan or Kurdistan Province and sufficient detail to interpret the sample, measures, and results were required. Iran-wide findings were not treated as observations specific to Kurdistan, and opinion articles were not included. Lack of access to full text was also kept separate from substantive ineligibility: pilot full-text assessment remained incomplete for JPN-P012 and JPN-P015. In the search records, a study identifier does not always indicate the moment of first discovery. IK-P005, for instance, was known before the Google Scholar query of 22 October 2026, but its earlier discovery date and search expression were not documented.

The initial plan prioritised peer-reviewed empirical journal articles. The supporting documentation, however, was uneven across the two subsets. The Japanese screening log records seven exclusions relating to publication type or peer-review status, including two dissertations and a conference paper. In other cases the review arrangements in force when a paper appeared could not be confirmed, and one supplied link even led to a different publication. For several Kurdistan papers, by contrast, journal-level information was accepted without necessarily establishing

peer review of the particular article at the time of publication. Whether the journal's usual policy extended to the special issue containing IK-P002 could not be verified. This asymmetry may have affected the composition of the two subsets.

The unit of analysis is the empirical study, and not the individual outcome or scale. One study may investigate several outcomes, and the number of studies must not be equated with the number of measures. Papers are assigned to Direct only, Related only, or Both according to the outcomes examined substantively. Constructs used solely as external correlates in scale validation are not counted as additional substantive outcomes.

2.4. Data extraction and synthesis

Bibliographic details, setting, sector, population, sample, design, constructs, instruments, and analytical roles were extracted in a common format. Screening and extraction were undertaken by one researcher for each setting. The Japanese researcher reported having no second reviewer and resolving uncertainties independently; the Kurdistan researcher consulted the lead author about disputed cases, although what was checked cannot be reconstructed exactly. Neither setting documents independent dual screening or extraction. Discrepancies in source figures and instrument descriptions were retained and not resolved by conjecture. The Direct only/Related only assignments also reflect our own analytical recoding and not an unchanged transcription of the earlier workbook: JPN-P003 was classified Related only because engagement, depressive feelings, and somatic complaints were examined separately, while JPN-P011's validation correlates were not treated as separate outcomes. No formal risk-of-bias or study-quality assessment was conducted.

Three characteristics of design were distinguished: temporal structure (cross-sectional, repeated daily measurement, or follow-up), research purpose (association testing or validation), and data-collection mode. In analysing context, measured variables were similarly distinguished from setting descriptions, interpretations made by the original authors, and background evidence obtained elsewhere. These distinctions are retained in our extraction matrix and coding record. The two tables in the article report the study characteristics and our comparative synthesis.

The classification follows what was actually operationalized. In JPN-P003, engagement, depressive feelings, and somatic complaints were measured separately. Their inclusion under a broader well-being heading does not, by itself, establish a combined well-being measure. Conversely, a purpose-built indicator of positive experiences at work may qualify as direct well-being measurement under our definition, even though its psychometric properties cannot be presumed to match those of a standardised scale.

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics of the studies in the analytical corpus

During the pilot we extracted seven Japanese and five Kurdistan studies (Table 1). Two Japanese papers concern manufacturing workers (JPN-P001 and P013), one nurses (P016), and four multi-sector online samples (P003, P011, P014, and P019). The five Kurdistan papers examine agricultural extension personnel, physical education teachers, medical university employees, hospital staff, and university

faculty (IK-P001–P005). We emphasise that neither group of samples represents the employed population of its geographical setting.

Table 1. The twelve empirical studies in the pilot analytical corpus

Study ID / authors	Sample and design	Principal relevant outcome
JPN-P001 · Saito et al. (2017)	Manufacturing company; 50 employees approached, 39 respondents; sample size varied by analysis; 5 working days of data collection	Daily number of positive workplace experiences; individual mean across days
JPN-P003 · Matsuda & Ishikawa (2012)	1,127 employees; multiple sectors; cross-sectional online questionnaire	Engagement, depressive feelings, somatic complaints
JPN-P011 · Watanabe et al. (2018)	310 at baseline / 86 at retest; online validation study	Workplace PERMA well-being
JPN-P013 · Inoue et al. (2013)	1,095 employees analysed; manufacturing; one-year follow-up	Work engagement
JPN-P014 · Yokouchi et al. (2026)	3,851 employees analysed; approximately nine-month online panel follow-up	Distress and work engagement
JPN-P016 · Sawada (2013)	855 female nurses; four hospitals; cross-sectional questionnaire	Ryff-based psychological well-being
JPN-P019 · Inoue et al. (2023)	2,200 employees; cross-sectional online panel	Distress and work engagement
IK-P001 · Rezvanfar & Vaisy (2006)	74 agricultural extension personnel; questionnaire survey (cross-sectional design inferred)	Job satisfaction
IK-P002 · Mohammadi et al. (2016)	253 physical education teachers; descriptive-correlational questionnaire study (cross-sectional design inferred)	Job satisfaction
IK-P003 · Yusefinejad et al. (2018)	300 university employees; questionnaire survey (cross-sectional design inferred)	Stress and job satisfaction
IK-P004 · Sorsori et al. (2019)	Hospital survey; target population 949; abstract reports 600, Results section reports 512 participants; denominators uncertain	Job satisfaction and its subdimensions
IK-P005 · Arasteh & Seyedoshohadaei (2018)	122 university faculty members; cross-sectional questionnaire	Job satisfaction and burnout

Source: Own work

The temporal structures of the Japanese studies vary. Saito et al. (2017) collected daily observations on five working days — 5–6 and 11–13 October 2016 — whereas Inoue et al. (2013) followed employees for one year and Yokouchi et al. (2026) used an online panel with a follow-up after approximately nine months. Watanabe et al. (2018) included a one-month test–retest when validating the PERMA-Profiler. The five Kurdistan papers, by contrast, rely on questionnaires administered on a single occasion. Two explicitly identify a cross-sectional design; for three, we inferred it from the methods. We do not treat a test–retest for instrument validation as a prospective investigation of later outcomes.

3.2. Concepts and measures of well-being

Three direct operationalisations of well-being were identified in the Japanese subset. JPN-P001 used the average daily number of positive workplace experiences reported by each participant, which was a study-specific indicator and not a standardised multidimensional scale. In JPN-P011, job satisfaction, engagement, and distress were external correlates in the validation of the Workplace PERMA-Profiler, and they were not counted as separate substantive outcomes. JPN-P016 examined psychological well-being using a Ryff-based measure. JPN-P003 discussed employee well-being, but it analysed engagement, depressive feelings, and somatic complaints separately and did not produce an aggregated well-being outcome. For this reason JPN-P003, together with JPN-P013, P014, and P019, was placed in Related only. The resulting classification is three Direct only and four Related only studies in Japan, with none in Both.

All five Kurdistan papers examined job satisfaction. Stress was also measured in IK-P003 and burnout in IK-P005, but no direct well-being scale was identified among these five studies. Under the predefined rules the entire Kurdistan subset is therefore Related only. Other studies from the province may have used direct well-being measures.

The instruments used in the Japanese subset illustrate the differences in operationalisation. JPN-P011 employed the 23-item Workplace PERMA-Profiler. In JPN-P016 the analysis covered twenty items and four dimensions of a Nishida/Ryff-based measure, although participants had received a 25-item version. Versions of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), including UWES-J, were used in JPN-P003, P013, P014, and P019. The six-item Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) was used as a substantive distress measure in JPN-P014 and JPN-P019 and as an external validation measure in JPN-P011. The 12-item Psychosocial Safety Climate scale (PSC-12) in JPN-P019 was coded as an explanatory variable and not as a well-being outcome. The Kurdistan papers used several satisfaction instruments: IK-P001 reported a 20-item scale attributed to Brayfield and Rothe, IK-P002 a 22-item questionnaire of uncertain identity, and IK-P004 a 40-item instrument attributed to Smith. IK-P005 referred to a 45-item satisfaction questionnaire attributed to Safi and to the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), without documenting the version or scoring of the burnout instrument sufficiently. Instrument descriptions were based on the included empirical articles; not every original scale publication was independently consulted.

Several uncertainties in the original articles remain unresolved. These include the reported number of items in the short Effort–Reward Imbalance Questionnaire (ERIQ) in JPN-P013; the instrument version, Cronbach's alpha, and explained variance in IK-P001; conflicting sample figures in IK-P004; and burnout percentages in IK-P005. The precise identity of IK-P002's 22-item satisfaction scale and parts of its regression tables are also uncertain. These discrepancies do not by themselves invalidate any study; they limit comparisons between instruments and the interpretation of some associations.

3.3. Organisational, psychological, and relational factors

Organisational factors played different analytical roles across the studies. In JPN-P001, flexible choice of workspace, the number of workplaces used, and expressions of gratitude were associated with positive daily experiences (Saito et al., 2017). JPN-

P003 examined organisation-based self-esteem, perceived organisational support, and supervisor support as factors associated with engagement, depressive feelings, and somatic complaints (Matsuda & Ishikawa, 2012). These factors were explanatory variables, and they were not counted as well-being outcomes.

In JPN-P013, job demands, decision latitude, support from colleagues and supervisors, and effort–reward measures were examined as potential predictors of work engagement at follow-up (Inoue et al., 2013). In JPN-P014, workplace inclusion was related to later distress and engagement, with work arrangement treated as a moderator and sex used for stratified analyses (Yokouchi et al., 2026). JPN-P016 modelled workplace relationships, job involvement, and occupational and organisational commitment as separate components. Job involvement is not equated here with engagement measured by UWES, and a cross-sectional model is not interpreted as evidence of a causal mechanism (Sawada, 2013). Finally, JPN-P019 treated psychosocial safety climate as a predictor and demands, control, support, and reward as statistical mediators in its models of distress and engagement (Inoue et al., 2023).

In IK-P001, education, task variety, and pay were positively associated with job satisfaction, although the regression results reported explained variance inconsistently (Rezvanfar & Vaisy, 2006). IK-P002 used components of psychological capital in separate models of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Because resilience had a negative multivariable coefficient, the reported associations cannot be described as uniformly positive (Mohammadi et al., 2016). IK-P003 reported a stress–satisfaction correlation of $r = 0.404$, but the insufficient description of score direction prevents a confident interpretation of its sign (Yusefinejad et al., 2018).

In IK-P004, correlations between satisfaction subscales and the total score are part–whole relationships and not associations with independent organisational predictors (Sorsori et al., 2019). IK-P005 measured both job satisfaction and burnout but did not report a direct statistical test between them, despite the association suggested in its title (Arasteh & Seyedoshohadaei, 2018).

3.4. Comparative synthesis

Table 2 sets out the contrasting research profiles. The Japanese papers cover daily positive experience, PERMA- and Ryff-based well-being, engagement, and distress, with designs that include validation, cross-sectional surveys, and prospective observation. Job satisfaction occurs in all five Kurdistan papers, sometimes together with stress or burnout, and the data were collected on a single occasion. These differences characterise the twelve selected studies, not necessarily the wider research literature in either setting.

Table 2. Comparative research profiles of the two subsets

Dimension	Japan (7 pilot studies)	Kurdistan Province (5 pilot studies)
Outcome classification	3 Direct only (P001, P011, P016); 4 Related only (P003, P013, P014, P019)	5 Related only (P001–P005); 0 Direct
Temporal design	2 prospective (P013, P014); 1 test–retest validation (P011); 1 daily repeated-measures study (P001); 3 cross-sectional	Single-occasion questionnaires; explicitly cross-sectional in 2/5 (P004, P005), inferred from methods in 3/5 (P001–P003)

Dimension	Japan (7 pilot studies)	Kurdistan Province (5 pilot studies)
Measurement focus	PERMA, Ryff well-being, daily positive experience, UWES, K6	Job-satisfaction adaptations; stress (P003), burnout (P005)
Analytical roles	Predictors, mediators, moderator; validation correlates (P011)	Correlates, regression predictors, job-satisfaction scale dimensions
Populations	Manufacturing employees, nurses, multi-sector online worker samples	Agricultural extension, education, university, hospital
Methodological interpretation	Follow-up and model-based analyses do not, by themselves, establish causality	Cross-sectional and instrument-documentation limitations; several source discrepancies

Source: Own work

Three comparisons illustrate the importance of examining constructs and analytical roles together. First, the PERMA-based measure in JPN-P011 and the Ryff-based measure in JPN-P016 both fall within our Direct only category, but they do not operationalise identical constructs. Second, JPN-P013 and JPN-P014 provide temporal information through follow-up designs that is unavailable from the single-occasion stress–satisfaction correlation in IK-P003; this difference does not establish causality by itself. Third, psychosocial safety climate is an explanatory predictor in JPN-P019, whereas satisfaction with management forms part of the overall satisfaction score in IK-P004. The organisational themes may be related, but the reported quantities are not estimates of the same effect.

Sampling introduces a further constraint. The Japanese multi-sector online panels cannot be equated with studies confined to a single occupation or institution, and the Kurdistan institutional samples do not represent the province's workforce. Larger sample sizes do not eliminate these differences in selection and measurement. Table 2 therefore compares research profiles, not geographical levels of well-being.

Research purpose must be separated from temporal design. A validation study can include several scales without investigating each as a substantive outcome, while a one-month test–retest does not answer the same question as a follow-up study of whether job demands predict later engagement. Similarly, an indirect association in a cross-sectional mediation model does not establish the timing of the underlying process. We distinguish statistical mediation from evidence of temporal order and causation.

4. Discussion

4.1. What is being compared?

The twelve papers address different empirical questions. Some record positive experiences during the working day, some examine the performance of a well-being instrument, and others ask whether working conditions predict later engagement or which characteristics accompany job satisfaction. If their conclusions are compared without first examining the measures, the apparent similarities may be misleading.

The spread of constructs is not confined to the contrast between the two settings. The seven Japanese papers alone cover a daily count of positive workplace experiences, PERMA- and Ryff-based well-being, work engagement, and psychological distress, while the five Kurdistan papers all examine job satisfaction. The term workplace well-being thus covers a wide range of constructs even within

one setting, and the corpus shows this range without attributing it to any cultural difference.

The satisfaction measures in IK-P001 and IK-P004, for example, cannot be substituted for the Ryff-based psychological well-being measure in JPN-P016. The distress and engagement scores in JPN-P014 do not form opposite ends of a single scale either. The construct, the instrument, and the analytical role are consequently considered together before any comparison is drawn.

4.2. Study design and explanatory models

The designs of JPN-P013 and JPN-P014 distinguish working conditions measured earlier from outcomes observed at follow-up. The cross-sectional mediation model in JPN-P019 and the modelled paths in JPN-P016 do not establish the same temporal separation. This is a substantive methodological difference, since a more elaborate statistical model need not provide stronger grounds for a causal interpretation.

The difficulty is not confined to our material. In a broader review, Bautista et al. (2023) identified 158 different well-being measures in 388 empirical studies and found that the connection between the construct and its instrument was often unclear. Jarden et al. (2023) also described weaknesses in the reporting of psychometric evidence for employee well-being measures. We take these findings as support for examining operational definitions carefully.

The Kurdistan papers also differ in the kinds of analyses they report. IK-P001 and IK-P002 use multivariable models, IK-P003 reports correlations, IK-P004 concentrates mainly on dimensions of job satisfaction, and IK-P005 provides largely descriptive findings. A negative resilience coefficient in a multivariable model (IK-P002) must not be read as though it were a positive bivariate correlation. Similarly, without secure information about score direction in IK-P003, the reported r = 0.404 cannot be given a substantive interpretation merely from its sign.

The conceptual literature also cautions against treating all these variables as the same thing. Danna and Griffin (1999), Fisher (2010), and Page and Vella-Brodrick (2009) each discuss workplace well-being in multidimensional terms, though their formulations differ. The Job Demands–Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) offers a way to distinguish demands, resources, and outcomes, which is relevant when reading JPN-P013 and JPN-P019. We cannot, however, simply treat every satisfaction subscale as a job resource, nor can we retrospectively assign PERMA dimensions to studies that did not measure them (Seligman, 2011).

4.3. Context and geographical scale

Geographical scale and sample composition limit our comparison. Japan is a country, Kurdistan Province only one part of Iran, and the papers draw on occupational groups that are not equivalent. A contrast between hospital employees and a multi-sector online panel cannot, on that basis, be explained by culture. The geographical location of a study, furthermore, is not automatically a measured explanatory variable. Cultural or organisational interpretations made by the original authors are distinguished from contextual factors actually included in their analyses.

JPN-P014 tested a specific contextual relationship by treating work arrangement as a moderator and conducting analyses stratified by sex. Without the detailed interaction estimates, however, a general remote-work effect or a general difference between men and women cannot be inferred. The institutional settings in IK-P003

and IK-P004 (the university and the hospital, respectively) primarily specify sampling frames, and they are not treated as explanatory variables that were independently tested.

A shared occupational sector is no more sufficient for comparison than a shared geographical label. Research on hospital employees' job satisfaction may differ substantially from research on nurses' psychological well-being in its participants, measures, and explanatory model. Papers from different sectors may, conversely, have more in common methodologically when they study the same construct in the same analytical role. Sector alone is therefore not used as a criterion of comparability.

4.4. Research gaps and practical implications

Within our Japanese subset, three studies operationalised well-being directly and two used prospective designs; all five Kurdistan papers focused on job satisfaction and relied on single-occasion questionnaires. These are observable differences in the twelve papers, and not demonstrated characteristics of the wider literatures. The uniqueness and final eligibility of additional records found beyond the Kurdistan pilot could not be verified, and their inclusion might alter the profile presented here. Differences in language coverage and database selection further limit the interpretation of the observed proportions.

The papers suggest four priorities for further research. Clearer reporting of instrument origins, versions, and scoring is needed, together with a more consistent separation of outcomes, predictors, and validation correlates. Attending to temporal relationships alongside single-occasion designs is also valuable, as is examining cultural and institutional explanations through variables that can actually be measured.

Distinguishing constructs, measures, and analytical roles also has practical implications. Satisfaction with pay, promotion opportunities, or supervisors is not a substitute for directly measured psychological well-being. Psychosocial safety climate and workplace inclusion, moreover, generally appear in the papers examined as explanatory factors and not as outcomes. A cross-sectional correlation, an association with a subsequent outcome, and an effect demonstrated in an appropriate intervention design would not warrant the same practical conclusion.

5. Limitations

The principal limitation is that we cannot establish whether our corpus of twelve studies exhausts the eligible literature in either setting. Although the original plan was to retain all eligible papers, we analyse only the seven Japanese and five Kurdistan papers extracted in detail during the pilot. We could not verify the uniqueness or final eligibility of further records reported from the expanded Kurdistan searches, and screening remained incomplete in both settings. For Japan, no further eligible study was reported among the records screened; the Kurdistan subset is therefore the one whose completeness is more uncertain, and the two subsets are not equally complete. In Japan, the researcher proceeded through records in relevance order; in Kurdistan, selection from result pages was influenced by declining relevance in SID and time constraints in Google Scholar. Several Kurdistan queries omitted distress, SID was restricted to burnout, and neither Web of Science nor PsycINFO was searched. The Japanese PsycINFO query lacked explicit grouping, so the Japan restriction may not have applied to all concept terms. No verified

deduplicated record flow is available. Screening and extraction were undertaken by one researcher for each setting; independent dual review was not verified, and we cannot reconstruct the extent of the lead author's checking of disputed Kurdistan decisions. Differences in the documentation of peer-review status, geographical scale, language coverage, databases, and samples introduce further limitations. We cannot estimate how many publications may have been omitted.

Some constraints arise from the included empirical papers themselves: cross-sectional designs, respondent selection, adapted instruments, and inconsistent accounts of samples or statistical estimates. In addition, we could not verify whether the special issue containing IK-P002 followed the journal's usual peer-review practice. We undertook no formal quality appraisal and did not pool effect sizes. These limitations prevent us from using the observed differences to infer cultural causes, rank geographical populations by well-being, or claim that outcomes absent from our corpus are absent from the wider literature.

6. Conclusions

Our twelve-paper analysis allows us to answer the four research questions within clearly defined limits. For RQ1, three Japanese papers were Direct only and four Related only, while the five Kurdistan papers were all Related only and all examined job satisfaction. Regarding RQ2, the Japanese papers include a purpose-built positive-experience indicator, PERMA- and Ryff-based measures, psychometric validation, and two prospective designs; the Kurdistan papers used single-occasion questionnaires. For RQ3, job demands and resources appear as predictors or statistical mediators, work arrangement as a moderator, and satisfaction subscales as components of a total score. For RQ4, we can compare constructs, measures, samples, and analytical roles in this selected corpus, but we cannot rank the well-being of employees in Japan and Kurdistan Province. Final inclusion decisions from the expanded searches remain unverified, particularly for Kurdistan, and our conclusions apply only to the twelve papers analysed here.

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A MUNKAHELYI JÓLLÉT FOGALMI KERETEI ÉS MÉRÉSI GYAKORLATAI JAPÁNBAN ÉS AZ IRÁNI KURDISZTÁN TARTOMÁNYBAN: TIZENKÉT EMPIRIKUS TANULMÁNY FELTÁRÓ JELLEGŰ ÖSSZEHASONLÍTÓ ELEMZÉSE

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A munkahelyi jóllétről szóló szakirodalom gyakran egységes jelenségként kezeli a jóllétet. Az egyes tanulmányok azonban pszichológiai jóllétet, munkával való elégedettséget, munkába való bevonódást, pszichológiai distresszt és kiégést vizsgálnak; ezek a munkavégzés eltérő aspektusait ragadják meg. Mindegyik kapcsolódik a munkahelyi jólléthez, de nem tekinthetők felcserélhetőnek. Az eredmények összevetése előtt tisztázni kell, hogy az egyes vizsgálatok ténylegesen milyen konstruktumot mértek. Elemzésünk a feltáró áttekintések egyes adatkinyerési és osztályozási eljárásait alkalmazza, és tizenkét, pilotkeresés során azonosított empirikus tanulmányra terjed ki: hét japán és öt, Irán Kurdisztán tartományához kapcsolódó munkára. Azt vizsgáljuk, hogyan határozták meg és mérték ezek a tanulmányok a munkahelyi jóllétet vagy a kapcsolódó kimeneteket, és milyen elemzési szerepet töltöttek be a változók. Közös kódolási keret segítségével hasonlítottuk össze a konstruktumokat, a mérőeszközöket és a kutatási terveket. A japán tanulmányok közvetlen, pozitív jólléti mutatókat, valamint a bevonódás és a distressz méréseit is tartalmazzák, továbbá követéses és pszichometriai vizsgálatok is szerepelnek közöttük. A kurdisztáni öt tanulmány mindegyike egyszeri kérdőíves adatfelvétellel vizsgálta a munkával való elégedettséget; háromnál a keresztmetszeti elrendezésre a módszertani leírás alapján következtettünk. Osztályozásunkban három japán tanulmány kizárólag közvetlen jólléti mérést, négy kizárólag kapcsolódó kimenetet tartalmazott; mind az öt kurdisztáni tanulmány az utóbbi kategóriába tartozott. A korpusz a kutatási megközelítések összehasonlítására alkalmas, nem

pedig a két térség munkavállalóinak jólléti rangsorolására. A korpusz teljessége nem volt igazolható, ezért egyik térség szakirodalmára nézve sem tekinthető reprezentatívnak.

Kulcsszavak: munkahelyi jóllét; összehasonlító szakirodalmi elemzés; feltáró áttekintés módszerei; Japán; Kurdisztán tartomány; munkával való elégedettség; munkába való bevonódás; mérési összehasonlíthatóság