

# Bibliometric Analysis of Employee Job Satisfaction: Exploring Under-Researched Variables

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify underexplored variables influencing employee job satisfaction, map emerging research trends, and integrate psychological, organizational, and environmental factors into a comprehensive conceptual framework using bibliometric mapping.

**Methodology/Approach:** This research applies the SLR method in strict accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Relevant studies were retrieved from reputable scientific databases using structured keywords and Boolean operators. Bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer was employed to visualize the research density and interrelationships among variables.

**Results/Findings:** The research predominantly focuses on traditional determinants such as compensation and leadership. Conversely, influential but under-researched variables, such as work-life balance, burnout, and self-efficacy, remain fragmented within low-density clusters despite their significant impact on overall satisfaction.

**Conclusions:** The dominance of traditional determinants often overshadows critical low-density variables. Consequently, an integrative, multidimensional conceptual framework is essential to bridge existing research gaps and support holistic empirical investigations.

**Limitations:** As this was a descriptive and bibliometric analysis, it did not assess causal relationships or provide longitudinal validation.

**Contributions:** This study contributes to the literature by proposing an integrative conceptual model that unifies psychological factors, work-life balance, and organizational conditions, offering a strong foundation for future empirical research on employee well-being.

**Keywords:** *Bibliometric Analysis, Employee Well-being, Job Satisfaction, Systematic Literature Review, Work-Life Balance*

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## 1. Introduction

Within the scope of strategic human resource management, job satisfaction is a core element underlying organizational commitment and ensuring long-term operational sustainability. Previous studies have identified various factors at both the individual and organizational levels that influence these levels. However, most research remains concentrated on conventional determinants such as compensation, work motivation, leadership, and organizational culture. These traditional variables form high-density research clusters, indicating their dominance in the field. Established theories, such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, categorize external factors, such as salary and physical environment, as "hygiene factors" that act as stabilizers. Similarly, Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Adams' Equity Theory highlight the importance of fair reward systems and transparency as powerful predictors of motivation and satisfaction in the workplace.

Although essential, the heavy focus on these areas has created a research imbalance. Literature mapping through a bibliometric approach provides a clearer overview of the research trends in employee job satisfaction. Density visualization using VOSviewer indicated that several critical variables were located in areas with relatively low research intensity. These variables include work-life balance, burnout, work experience, teamwork, training, rewards, employee engagement, self-efficacy, financial compensation, and the physical work environment ([Ariyanti, Sisdianto, & Susanto, 2025](#)).

This indicates a research gap, particularly concerning the lack of studies that integrate these variables into a single, comprehensive conceptual framework. Although the number of publications on employee job satisfaction continues to increase, there remains a paucity of research that systematically examines patterns and inter-construct relationships through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Much of the existing research is characterized by partial empirical studies focusing on specific contexts; consequently, it has yet to provide a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of employee job satisfaction based on a structured and transparent synthesis of the literature.

This study advances the field of human resource management by transitioning from a fragmented understanding of job satisfaction to a holistic and multidimensional perspective. By synthesizing variables that have historically been relegated to "low-density" research areas, the new conceptual framework addresses several critical gaps in the existing literature. Previous research has largely treated underexplored variables as isolated components. This framework unifies these disparate elements into a cohesive structure: Psychological Dimension: Incorporates internal predictors such as self-efficacy and burnout, moving beyond external motivators. Work-Life Balance Dimension: Addresses the modern necessity of harmonizing professional and personal spheres, which is often absent in traditional models. Social and Behavioral Dimension: Highlights the roles of teamwork, discipline, and engagement in creating emotionally supportive environments. Organizational Dimension: Recontextualizes training, rewards, and the physical work environment as primary determinants rather than mere supporting factors.

The identification and analysis of the role of under-researched variables in influencing employee job satisfaction were conducted using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach adhering to PRISMA standards. The selection of relevant journals was based on systematic inclusion and exclusion criteria, further strengthened by bibliometric mapping via VOSviewer software to validate existing research gaps. The synthesis of low-density variables into a unified framework represents the main novelty of this study. The synergy between the bibliometric approach and the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in this research is projected to enrich human resource management literature and serve as a reference for subsequent empirical testing of employee job satisfaction ([Manan, Wuryanti, & Mufahamah, 2024](#)).

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Employee Job Satisfaction***

Employee job satisfaction is a central construct in human resource management studies, representing an individual's affective evaluation of their work. Job satisfaction is understood as the result of the interaction between employee expectations, work experience, and the psychological and organizational conditions encountered by employees. Herzberg distinguishes between hygiene factors (extrinsic) and motivators (intrinsic). Conventional research often focuses on salary and supervision as hygiene factors in the workplace. However, this study integrates low-density variables, such as the physical work environment and financial compensation, as critical hygiene factors that, in the modern era, require more nuanced environmental design to prevent dissatisfaction. Furthermore, training and rewards are positioned as motivators that facilitate self-actualization, a connection that is often missing in fragmented studies. Social Exchange Theory posits that employee behavior results from an exchange process.

This theory provides a strong foundation for low-density variables, such as teamwork, employee engagement, and work-life balance. When an organization provides a supportive environment for personal life and fosters collaborative teams, employees reciprocate with higher levels of engagement

and satisfaction. This study clarifies that these variables are not peripheral but are core elements of the social contract between employers and employees. The relationship between self-efficacy (a low-density variable) and job satisfaction is rooted in Social Cognitive Theory. Employees with high self-efficacy view challenges as tasks to be mastered, thereby reducing the risk of burnout. By integrating these psychological constructs, the framework explains how internal cognitive states mediate the impact of external stressors on an individual's overall satisfaction. While the absence of hygiene factors leads to dissatisfaction, their presence alone is insufficient to ensure long-term satisfaction without including motivators. This is consistent with the findings of [Sinuhaji \(2025\)](#), who demonstrated that while hygiene factors (salary and environment) act as stabilizers, motivators (recognition) remain the primary key to intrinsic satisfaction within the modern retail sector.

In contrast, Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory explains that job satisfaction results from an individual's perception that their efforts will lead to high performance, which will be rewarded with desired outcomes. This theory underscores the importance of fair and transparent reward systems in enhancing motivation, aligning with [Dahrani and Sohiron \(2024\)](#) research [Dahrani and Sohiron \(2024\)](#), which evaluates how individual beliefs regarding effort, performance, and outcomes (expectancy-instrumentality-valence) remain powerful predictors of motivation and satisfaction across various organizational sectors.

Furthermore, J. Stacy Adams' Equity Theory emphasizes that job satisfaction is heavily dependent on the perception of fairness. Employees compare their inputs and outcomes with those of their colleagues; if an imbalance occurs, such as a workload that is disproportionate to compensation, their job satisfaction declines. This is evidenced by the study of [A. Putri, Alam, and Sanida \(2025\)](#), which utilizes Equity Theory to analyze how fairness in promotion and compensation systems significantly influences employee satisfaction levels. This aligns with [Suyasa \(2023\)](#), who found a significant positive relationship between organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) and job satisfaction. These findings confirm that when employees perceive fairness within corporate systems, job satisfaction increases consistently across various industrial sectors. The integration of these theories supports the argument that reward variables and financial compensation in low-density research areas must be managed according to equity principles to mitigate dissatisfaction.

## **2.2 Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction**

Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to harmonize professional responsibilities with personal needs. Herzberg distinguishes between hygiene factors (extrinsic) and motivators (intrinsic). Conventional research often focuses on salary and supervision as hygiene factors in the workplace. However, this study integrates low-density variables, such as the physical work environment and financial compensation, as critical hygiene factors that, in the modern era, require more nuanced environmental design to prevent dissatisfaction. Furthermore, training and rewards are positioned as motivators that facilitate self-actualization, a connection that is often missing in fragmented studies.

Social Exchange Theory posits that employee behavior results from an exchange process. This theory provides a strong foundation for low-density variables, such as teamwork, employee engagement, and work-life balance. When an organization provides a supportive environment for personal life and fosters collaborative teams, employees reciprocate with higher levels of engagement and satisfaction. This study clarifies that these variables are not peripheral but are core elements of the social contract between employers and employees. The relationship between self-efficacy (a low-density variable) and job satisfaction is rooted in Social Cognitive Theory.

Employees with high self-efficacy view challenges as tasks to be mastered, thereby reducing the risk of burnout. By integrating these psychological constructs, the framework explains how internal cognitive states mediate the impact of external stressors on an individual's overall satisfaction. [Hulu, Zega, Waruwu, Oktapiani, and Aziza \(2024\)](#) emphasized that work relationships and motivation remain the primary drivers of job satisfaction in 2024. When the alignment between the domains of work and personal life is disrupted, it triggers stress and erodes job satisfaction. However, VOSviewer analysis

confirms that researchers seldom explicitly incorporate work-life balance into the conceptual frameworks of employee job satisfaction.

### **2.3 Burnout and Job Satisfaction**

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory explains that high job demands in the absence of adequate support increase the risk of burnout, which ultimately diminishes job satisfaction. The relationship between burnout and job satisfaction is best elucidated through Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. According to COR theory, individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect their resources (e.g., time, energy, and social support). Burnout is a psychological dimension that significantly determines job satisfaction. Alongside self-efficacy, the degree of mental exhaustion (burnout) serves as a potent predictor of whether an employee feels satisfied or distressed in their role. Burnout is characterized by depersonalization and a decline in personal efficacy, resulting from an accumulation of poorly managed occupational stress. Burnout occurs when there is a significant threat of resource loss or a lack of resource gain after significant effort. In this context, job satisfaction serves as a psychological resource; when burnout depletes an employee's emotional energy, their level of satisfaction inevitably declines as a defensive response to this resource exhaustion.

By integrating burnout with other under-researched variables such as self-efficacy and work-life balance, this study clarifies the "Job Demands-Resources" (JD-R) tension. Burnout acts as a mediator: high job demands lead to exhaustion, which subsequently erodes employees' job satisfaction. However, low-density variables, such as teamwork and training, function as organizational resources that can buffer the negative effects of burnout. This theoretical clarification transforms burnout from a standalone clinical symptom into a pivotal organizational variable that directly dictates the ceiling of employee satisfaction.

Unlike conventional variables such as compensation, which primarily influence external satisfaction, burnout targets the internal and psychological dimensions of the worker. This review posits that without addressing burnout, improvements in traditional determinants (e.g., increasing salary) will yield diminishing returns in job satisfaction. Therefore, understanding the "low-density" interconnections between mental fatigue and the work environment is essential for developing a holistic framework. Specifically, research examining 'job stress, which is closely linked to burnout, demonstrates that a conducive work environment can mitigate stress to enhance job satisfaction ([Adinata & Turangan, 2023](#)). While the literature indicates a negative correlation between burnout and job satisfaction, this variable remains insufficiently integrated into broader studies of employee job satisfaction.

### **2.4 Work Experience and Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is understood as the result of a multidimensional interaction that encompasses work experience, employee expectations, and psychological and organizational conditions. The relationship between work experience and job satisfaction is deeply rooted in Super's Career Stage Theory and Person-Job (P-J) Fit Theory. Super suggested that as individuals progress through stages (Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline), their sources of satisfaction shift from external validation to intrinsic fulfillment. Furthermore, P-J Fit Theory posits that as employees accumulate experience, they achieve a higher degree of congruence between their personal competencies and the demands of their roles.

This alignment reduces cognitive dissonance and increases professional efficacy, which is foundational to long-term job satisfaction. By examining work experience alongside other underexplored variables such as self-efficacy and training, this study clarifies the "Experience-Satisfaction" trajectory. Unlike conventional variables such as compensation which may have a diminishing marginal utility work experience provides a cumulative "psychological capital." Experienced employees often develop higher self-efficacy, allowing them to navigate organizational stressors (such as burnout) more effectively than less experienced employees.

Consequently, work experience serves as a moderating variable that stabilizes satisfaction levels, despite fluctuations in the organizational environment. Existing literature often debates whether the

relationship between experience and satisfaction is linear or U-shaped (where satisfaction is high at the start, dips mid-career, and rises again). This systematic review argues that this ambiguity arises because previous studies have failed to integrate experience with work-life balance and employee engagement. By synthesizing these fragmented elements, the proposed framework clarifies that work experience enhances satisfaction primarily when coupled with continuous training and professional development opportunities.

Work experience represents the synergy between the knowledge and skills acquired by an individual through interactions within the work environment. [Rulianti and Nurpribadi \(2023\)](#) reaffirm that the work environment (both physical and non-physical) remains the fundamental basis for job satisfaction, which, when combined with work experience (career development), yields an optimal performance. The positive correlation between work experience and role clarity often serves as the foundation for achieving higher levels of job satisfaction. Unfortunately, bibliometric analysis revealed that the investigation of this variable remains within a low-density research area.

### **2.5 Teamwork and Job Satisfaction**

The relationship between teamwork and job satisfaction is primarily grounded in social interdependence and social exchange theories (SET). Social Interdependence Theory posits that the way goals are structured determines how individuals interact, which, in turn, defines psychological outcomes. When teams work toward a common goal (positive interdependence), they foster a supportive environment that enhances individual morale. Furthermore, according to Social Exchange Theory, the emotional support and knowledge sharing inherent in effective teamwork create a high-quality exchange relationship not only between peers but also between the employee and the organization, leading to heightened satisfaction.

Teamwork describes how members of an organization interact, coordinate, and provide mutual support to one another. It is categorized as a social dimension that shapes the overall job satisfaction. Positive interactions among colleagues create emotionally supportive environments. Currently, the teamwork variable is classified within the low-density category, implying that it requires more empirical exploration to understand its depth compared to classic variables such as compensation. Through a collaborative work environment, companies can foster a sense of belonging and psychological comfort among their employees.

By analyzing teamwork alongside other low-density variables such as burnout and self-efficacy, this study clarifies the "Social Buffer" effect. Teamwork acts as a critical mitigator of burnout; high-functioning teams distribute work pressure and provide emotional "venting" mechanisms that prevent individual exhaustion. Additionally, successful collaboration enhances collective self-efficacy, where the group's belief in its ability to perform tasks boosts the individual's confidence and sense of achievement. This theoretical integration demonstrates that teamwork is not only a structural necessity but also a psychological catalyst for satisfaction.

Unlike conventional variables such as compensation, which are often individualistic, teamwork addresses the intrinsic social needs of the workforce. The existing literature often fails to distinguish between group work and cohesive teamwork. This review clarifies that for teamwork to significantly impact job satisfaction, it must be synthesized with employee engagement and training. When employees are trained to work collaboratively, the resulting cohesion fulfills their need for relatedness, a core component of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), thereby driving sustained job satisfaction.

Solid teamwork enhances employee self-efficacy; when work obstacles are resolved collectively, the workload feels more manageable, which directly mitigates the risk of burnout and increases satisfaction. [Hulu et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Adinata and Turangan \(2023\)](#) reinforce that collaborative work relationships are capable of mitigating job stress, which in turn significantly enhances employee job satisfaction in modern organizational settings. To ensure that employees are fully engaged and retained, a supportive culture must be combined with a positive work environment ([Urfa & Tarigan, 2026](#)). However, bibliometric studies rarely explicitly link teamwork variables to job satisfaction.

## **2.6 Training and Job Satisfaction**

The relationship between training and job satisfaction is primarily anchored in Human Capital Theory and the Social Exchange Theory (SET). Human Capital Theory suggests that training increases employees' intrinsic value and productivity. From a psychological perspective, this enhancement of skills leads to greater self-efficacy, which is a significant predictor of satisfaction. Furthermore, according to the Social Exchange Theory, when an organization invests in an employee's development, the employee perceives this as a supportive gesture. This perception triggers a sense of reciprocity, resulting in higher organizational commitment and greater job satisfaction. Theoretically, training enhances employees' self-efficacy. When employees perceive themselves as having sufficient skills to complete their tasks, job stress decreases, and job satisfaction improves. Employees view training as a form of recognition and organizational commitment to their career development. This creates positive reciprocity in the form of increased loyalty and satisfaction.

Relevant training programs can strengthen the perception of organizational support and boost employees' job satisfaction. By examining training alongside other underexplored variables such as work experience and employee engagement, this study clarifies how developmental interventions mitigate stagnation. Training serves as a critical "resource gain" under the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. In environments where employees face high demands, training provides the necessary tools to handle complex tasks, thereby reducing burnout and preventing satisfaction erosion. This integration demonstrates that training is not merely a technical requirement but also a strategic tool for psychological resilience. By examining training alongside other underexplored variables such as work experience and employee engagement, this study clarifies how developmental interventions mitigate stagnation.

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When employees feel competent and capable of mastering their roles, their intrinsic motivation and satisfaction increase. By synthesizing training with rewards and work-life balance, the proposed framework highlights how a culture of continuous learning stabilizes the workforce in volatile markets. Job training that encompasses managerial or interpersonal aspects assists employees in interacting more effectively with superiors and colleagues, which has been empirically proven to enhance work comfort and satisfaction ([Hamdedi, Sari, & Kenamon, 2024](#); [Indra & Rialmi, 2022](#)). However, the job satisfaction literature still tends to position training as a supporting variable rather than a primary determinant.

## **2.7 Reward and Job Satisfaction**

The relationship between rewards and job satisfaction is primarily elucidated through Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Skinner's Reinforcement Theory. Vroom posits that satisfaction is a function of "Valence" the value an employee places on a reward. If the rewards (low-density variables) align with individual goals, the perceived value of the work increases. Complementarily, Reinforcement Theory suggests that positive reinforcement through timely rewards encourages the repetition of productive behaviors.

By differentiating rewards from fixed salaries, this study clarifies that rewards serve as an active psychological stimulant rather than a passive hygiene factor. By synthesizing rewards with other underexplored variables such as employee engagement and training, this study clarifies the "Total Rewards" perspective. Unlike conventional compensation, which focuses on economic exchange, strategic rewards foster reciprocity and self-efficacy. When employees receive rewards for skill

acquisition (training), they experience a boost in their professional confidence. Furthermore, rewards act as a vital resource in the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, providing the emotional "capital" necessary to offset the negative effects of burnout.

Compensation, as a form of material reward, exerts a direct and significant influence on job satisfaction, particularly when supported by a conducive work environment ([Lawren & Ekawati, 2023](#)). Meanwhile, rewards in the form of career development serve as more effective long-term motivators for enhancing job satisfaction than mere short-term incentives ([Rulianti & Nurpribadi, 2023](#)). There is a significant and positive relationship between compensation, motivation, and job satisfaction. This research underscores that rewards are not merely the fulfilment of an organization's financial obligations but rather a driving factor that directly impacts employee satisfaction and performance.

Consequently, although reward variables and financial compensation frequently appear in low-density areas within bibliometric mapping, the integration of these two factors remains a fundamental pillar in maintaining job satisfaction stability in modern organizational environments ([Akinsola, Abubakar, Akande, & Adekunle, 2024](#)). The findings of this study indicate that employee well-being exerts a significant influence on job satisfaction, as it reinforces both motivation and organizational engagement ([Firrentin, Zaman, & Hidayah, 2026](#)). A fair and transparent reward system can enhance motivation and satisfaction. However, results from a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) indicate that rewards are still frequently isolated from comprehensive job satisfaction models.

### **2.8 Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction**

The relationship between engagement and satisfaction is fundamentally rooted in Kahn's Theory of Engagement and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model. Kahn posits that engagement occurs when employees find meaning, safety, and availability in their roles. This study clarifies that engagement acts as the psychological energy that transforms mere "contentment" (satisfaction) into "active dedication." Furthermore, the JD-R Model suggests that engagement is a primary outcome of high job resources; when these resources (e.g., training or teamwork) are present, they drive engagement, which in turn serves as a critical driver of overall job satisfaction.

By examining employee engagement alongside other underexplored variables such as self-efficacy and burnout, this study identifies engagement as a protective mechanism. High levels of engagement create a "psychological buffer" that prevents the depletion of resources identified in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. This clarification positions engagement not only as a result of satisfaction but also as a mediator that sustains satisfaction even when organizational stressors (burnout) are high. Integrating these elements moves the discourse beyond simple transactional relationships toward a more dynamic, affective model.

Employee engagement is theoretically a manifestation of intrinsic motivation and organizational support. [Paais and Pattiruhu \(2020\)](#) and [Hulu et al. \(2024\)](#) indicate that when employees feel motivated and supported by clear career development, their level of engagement increases, which directly impacts their high level of job satisfaction. Consequently, employees inherently feel a deeper sense of job satisfaction when they perceive their work as a source of positive identity. Employee engagement serves as the antithesis of burnout; organizations capable of fostering high engagement reflect employees' strong emotional and cognitive attachment to their work.

Actively engaged employees tend to exhibit higher job satisfaction. Nevertheless, this variable is still relatively seldom positioned as a primary determinant of job satisfaction within Systematic Literature Review (SLR) studies. The existing literature often fails to distinguish between being "satisfied" (a passive state) and being "engaged" (an active state). Drawing from Social Exchange Theory (SET), this review argues that engagement represents the highest level of reciprocity an employee offers in exchange for a supportive work environment. When engagement is synthesized with work-life balance and rewards, it creates a feedback loop: high engagement leads to higher perceived satisfaction, which subsequently reinforces employees' desire to remain with the organization, ensuring long-term sustainability.

## ***2.9 Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction***

The relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction is primarily anchored in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). According to SCT, self-efficacy influences how people think, feel, and motivate themselves to act. In the workplace, employees with high self-efficacy perceive difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. This cognitive appraisal fosters a sense of accomplishment and mastery, which are direct precursors to intrinsic job satisfaction. Unlike conventional variables such as salary, self-efficacy provides an internal "locus of control" that stabilizes an employee's affective state, regardless of external volatility. By synthesizing self-efficacy with other underexplored variables such as burnout and training, this study clarifies its role as a psychological moderator. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, self-efficacy serves as a personal resource that buffers the impact of high job demands. Employees with high self-efficacy are less prone to burnout because they possess confidence in deploying their skills effectively. Furthermore, training interventions enhance self-efficacy by providing "enactive mastery experiences," thereby creating a synergistic path toward heightened job satisfaction.

Theoretically, employees with high self-efficacy tend to perceive work challenges as tasks to master rather than as threats. This creates job satisfaction due to a sense of achievement. Self-efficacy is theoretically viewed as an internal predictor of job satisfaction. This is reinforced by the findings of [Lestari, Sinambela, Mardikaningsih, and Darmawan \(2020\)](#), which indicate that an employee's self-belief interacts positively with the work environment to create a sense of satisfaction. Employees who believe in their capabilities will remain satisfied despite facing a high workload, as they feel competent in managing their workload. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to complete work tasks. Those with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident and satisfied with their jobs. Although psychologically relevant, self-efficacy still receives insufficient attention in the job satisfaction literature.

## ***2.10 Financial Compensation and Job Satisfaction***

The impact of financial compensation is fundamentally explained through Adams' Equity Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Adams posited that job satisfaction is determined by the perceived fairness of the "input-output" ratio. If employees perceive that their financial rewards are inequitable compared to their efforts or peer benchmarks, dissatisfaction ensues. Furthermore, Herzberg classified financial compensation as a Hygiene Factor. This study clarifies a critical theoretical nuance: while the presence of adequate pay may not inherently create long-term "motivation," its absence or perceived inadequacy serves as a primary source of institutional dissatisfaction, thereby acting as a foundational stabilizer for all other variables.

By examining financial compensation alongside under-explored variables such as burnout and work-life balance, this study clarifies the "Compensatory Mechanism." Financial rewards act as a resource gain within the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. When employees face high psychological demands or burnout, financial stability can mitigate external stressors. However, this review argues that compensation must be synthesized with rewards (recognition) and training to be effective in improving employee performance. Without these "low-density" qualitative factors, financial compensation alone offers diminishing returns on overall work satisfaction.

Financial compensation encompasses all monetary rewards, such as salaries, wages, bonuses, and commissions, provided by an organization in exchange for employee contributions. Theoretically, job satisfaction is achieved when employees perceive that the compensation they receive is commensurate with their workload and responsibilities. Adequate financial compensation functions as a 'hygiene' factor that can reduce job stress levels and prevent a decline in satisfaction resulting from operational pressures. A fair financial compensation system is the foundation of job satisfaction. This aligns with the findings of [Safri and Oktiani \(2024\)](#) and [Saputra \(2022\)](#), which emphasize that material rewards remain a crucial factor for employees to balance a high workload.

Furthermore, [Puspitawati and Atmaja \(2020\)](#) reinforce this theory by stating that competitive compensation can effectively reduce job stress, which ultimately enhances employee well-being. Financial compensation is a classic factor of job satisfaction. Despite the emergence of new variables in low-density areas within the VOSviewer analysis, financial compensation remains a high-density variable that frequently serves as the primary basis for measuring employees' psychological well-being. The SLR results indicate that financial compensation has rarely been analyzed alongside psychological factors and the physical work environment.

### **2.11 Physical Work Environment and Job Satisfaction**

The relationship between the physical environment and job satisfaction is fundamentally rooted in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Environmental Psychology (Bitner's Servicescape Model). Herzberg classifies the physical environment as a "Hygiene Factor." This study clarifies that while a superior environment may not perpetually motivate, a substandard or dysfunctional workspace is a primary source of cognitive and physical strain, leading to institutional dissatisfaction. Furthermore, Environmental Psychology posits that "ambient conditions" and "spatial layout" directly influence an employee's affective state and perceived autonomy, which are critical precursors to satisfaction.

By examining the physical environment alongside other underexplored variables such as burnout and work-life balance, this study clarifies the "Atmospheric Buffer" effect. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, a well-designed physical environment serves as an external resource that reduces the "cost" of working. For instance, ergonomic workspaces and quiet zones mitigate physical fatigue and mental depletion, thereby reducing the risk of employee burnout. In the context of the modern hybrid era, the physical environment also facilitates work-life balance by providing a clear spatial boundary between professional demands and personal life, a nuance often overlooked in traditional literature.

Existing research frequently treats the physical environment as a static setting. However, drawing on Social Interdependence Theory, this review argues that the physical layout is a primary facilitator of teamwork. Open, collaborative spaces (or specialized digital environments) encourage the social exchanges necessary for collective self-efficacy. When the physical environment is synthesized with employee engagement, it transforms from a mere facility into a strategic tool that reinforces employees' sense of value and belonging within the organization.

Adequate physical work environment conditions serve as the foundation for employees' psychological comfort in the workplace. This is supported by the findings of [Surijadi and Idris \(2020\)](#) and [Narwathi, Tarintya, and Astawa \(2023\)](#), which indicate that the physical work environment has a direct impact on job satisfaction. [Wahyudi \(2022\)](#) defines job satisfaction as the result of a psychological evaluation involving the fulfillment of expectations regarding job demands. One crucial yet frequently overlooked factor in major research clusters is the physical environment.

Furthermore, [Putra and Santosa \(2025\)](#) emphasized that the provision of facilities within the physical work environment is highly effective in maintaining employee morale, even when faced with dynamic workload demands. The physical work environment encompasses various aspects, such as spatial layout, lighting, noise control, and the availability of comfortable facilities. Job satisfaction is often triggered by physically adequate workspace conditions. However, an analysis of the current literature shows that physical environment variables occupy a poorly integrated position within comprehensive job satisfaction conceptual frameworks.

### **2.12 Integrative Conceptual Framework**

Based on the synthesis of the literature and bibliometric findings, this study proposes an integrative conceptual framework that combines psychological, organizational, and work environment factors as determinants of employee job satisfaction. This framework is expected to address the fragmentation in the previous literature and serve as a foundation for empirical testing in future research. Following the background, research gaps, and objectives outlined in the introduction, the research questions (RQ) for this study are as follows:

- RQ1:** How have the developments and trends in employee job satisfaction research evolved within the human resource management literature according to bibliometric mapping results?
- RQ2:** Which variables are most frequently and least frequently investigated as determinants of employee job satisfaction based on the VOSviewer density visualization?
- RQ3:** What are the characteristics and findings of previous research on the influence of work-life balance, burnout, work experience, teamwork, training, rewards, employee engagement, self-efficacy, financial compensation, and the physical work environment on employee job satisfaction?
- RQ4:** What are the conceptual relationships among these under-researched variables in shaping employee job satisfaction based on a systematic literature synthesis?
- RQ5:** What research gaps remain in the study of employee job satisfaction, particularly regarding the integration of variables that have received minimal attention in prior research?
- RQ6:** How can a comprehensive conceptual framework be formulated based on the results of a Systematic Literature Review to explain the determinants of employee job satisfaction?

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Type and Approach

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, which is classified as a review study. By adhering to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, this study aims to minimize bias in the literature selection process regarding low-density variables in employee job satisfaction. This study did not use experimental methods, simulations, or questionnaire-based surveys. All the analyzed data were sourced from previously published scientific articles. The SLR approach was selected to obtain a systematic, transparent, and replicable synthesis of the literature concerning employee job satisfaction and its relatively under-researched determinants. To maintain the quality and relevance of the synthesized literature, a rigorous screening process was implemented based on specific eligibility criteria.

Inclusion Criteria (IC):

1. Reviewed Focus: Articles published in reputable international and national journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, or Sinta.
2. Thematic Relevance: Studies specifically investigating the determinants of employee job satisfaction in corporate or organizational contexts.
3. Language & Type: Full-text articles written in English or Indonesian, focusing on original empirical research or comprehensive reviews.
4. Temporal Scope: Research published within the last 10 years (2015–2025) to capture the evolution of traditional to modern workplace dynamics.

Exclusion Criteria (EC):

1. Grey Literature: Dissertations, book chapters, conference abstracts, and non-peer-reviewed reports were excluded to ensure high data reliability.
2. Irrelevant Contexts: Studies focusing on student, customer, or job satisfaction in highly specialized niche fields unrelated to general HRM.
3. Methodological Insufficiency: Articles with unclear methodologies or lacking empirical evidence regarding variable relationships.

#### 3.2 Systematic Literature Review

The SLR process in this study adhered to the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. An SLR is a procedure designed to identify and interpret all available research findings to answer research questions objectively and systematically. This approach is reinforced by [Fink \(2019\)](#), who asserts that an SLR must be systematic and reproducible. The review protocol was established before the literature search to ensure consistency and transparency. This protocol encompasses the formulation of research objectives and questions, determination of inclusion and exclusion criteria, journal search process, and stages of literature selection and analysis. Next, the bibliometric phase serves to validate the research gap by visualizing a field's intellectual structure. The analysis followed these structured steps.

1. Data Extraction: Metadata (titles, abstracts, and keywords) were exported in CSV or RIS format from the scientific databases.
2. Co-occurrence Analysis: Using VOSviewer, a "Co-occurrence of Keywords" analysis was performed. A minimum threshold for keyword occurrence was set to filter out idiosyncratic terms, focusing on significant research trends.
3. Density Visualization: This step is crucial for identifying "low-density" variables. VOSviewer maps keywords based on frequency and link strength.
  1. High-Density Clusters: Represent well-established "conventional" variables (e.g., compensation, leadership).
  2. Low-Density Clusters: Represent underexplored variables (e.g., burnout, self-efficacy, work-life balance), which are identified in this study as critical research gaps.
4. Network Synthesis: The interrelationships between clusters were analyzed to determine how these fragmented low-density variables could be integrated into a unified conceptual framework.

### 3.3 Data Sources and Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted across reputable scientific databases relevant to management and human resources. The search strategy employed several primary keywords, including job satisfaction, work-life balance, burnout, work experience, teamwork, training, reward, employee engagement, self-efficacy, financial compensation, and physical work environment. Various keywords were adapted by applying a search string strategy using Boolean operators (AND, OR). According to [Snyder \(2019\)](#), the use of logical operators is essential in literature review methodology to ensure that the search is comprehensive and systematic. The OR operator was used to combine similar terms or synonyms to broaden the search scope, while the AND operator was used to connect distinct concepts to narrow the results, ensuring that they remained relevant to the research objectives.

Table 1 Article selection results based on PRISMA framework stages

Flow PRISMA	Procedural Steps	Description of the Selection Process	Quantity (n)
Identification	Database Search	The literature search was conducted across reputable scientific databases, including Google Scholar and Sinta. To ensure the comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies, the search utilized specific keywords and Boolean operators tailored to the research objectives.	169
	Preliminary Screening	Initial records were filtered based on the following fundamental inclusion criteria: publication timeframe spanning 2020 to 2025, language compatibility, and removal of duplicate entries across the respective databases.	(124)
Screening	Initial Screening	The remaining articles underwent title and abstract screening after applying year filters and removing duplicates.	45
	Phase I Exclusion	Articles were excluded if their focus was not on employees or Human Resource Management (e.g., focusing on patient, customer, or student satisfaction) or if the full-text manuscripts were unavailable.	(25)
Eligibility	Eligibility Check	In-depth assessment of the full-text manuscripts was then conducted to ensure alignment with the VOSviewer variable clusters	20
	Phase II Exclusion	At this stage, further exclusions were made based on the following criteria: ambiguous research methodologies (n=4), publication years outside the specified timeframe (n=2), and insufficient statistical data (n=2).	(8)

Inclusion	Final Synthesis	The final selection consisted of articles that met all the quality criteria and variable relevance for analysis within the literature review.	12
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The literature selection process was conducted systematically, adhering to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to minimize the subjectivity. The initial identification stage yielded 169 articles from various scientific databases. Through rigorous preliminary screening applying inclusion criteria for the period 2020–2025 and eliminating duplicates, the number of articles was reduced to 45 units. During the Screening phase, the authors evaluated the titles and abstracts of these 45 articles, resulting in the exclusion of 25 papers that focused on customer satisfaction or non-HRM fields. Subsequently, an Eligibility assessment was performed on the remaining 20 full-text manuscripts. In the final stage, 12 articles were identified as the most relevant, possessing robust empirical methodologies (such as the works of [Puspitawati and Atmaja \(2020\)](#); [Lestari et al. \(2020\)](#); and [Putra and Santosa \(2025\)](#)), to serve as the analytical foundation for this study.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

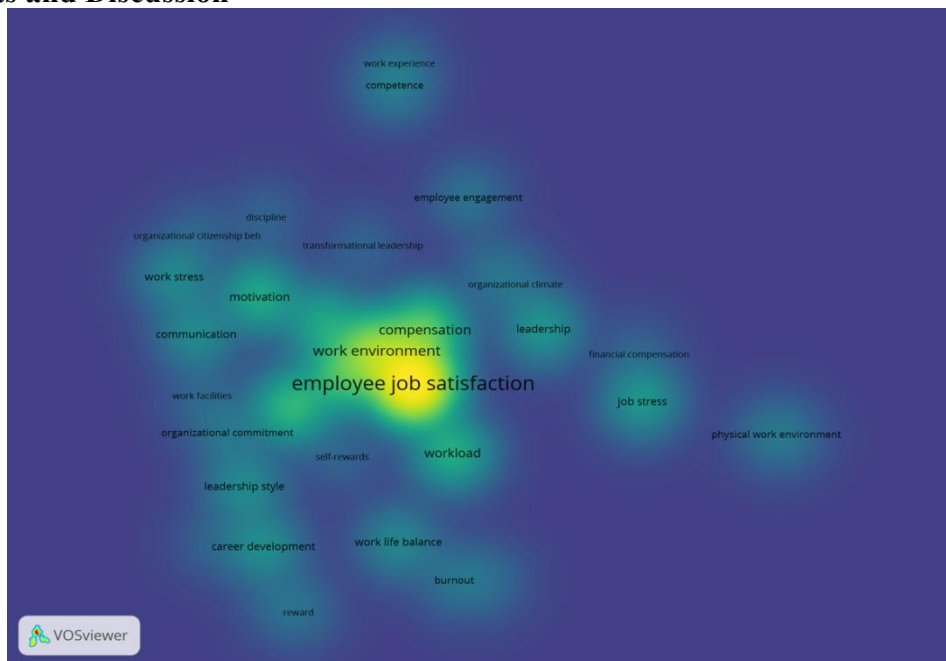


Figure 1. Density visualization map of employee job satisfaction research illustrating the distribution and intensity of studied variables based on bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer

The results of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) indicate that research on employee job satisfaction has consistently increased in the human resource management literature. However, research has focused on conventional determinants such as compensation, work motivation, leadership, and organizational culture. These findings are reflected in Figure 1 (VOSviewer density visualization), where these variables are situated in high-density areas (highlighted in bright colors), signifying dominant research intensity.

Conversely, Figure 1 illustrates several variables situated in darker areas, indicating a relatively low level of research intensity. The variables included work-life balance, burnout, work experience, teamwork, training, rewards, employee engagement, self-efficacy, financial compensation, and the physical work environment. The position of these variables, which are relatively isolated from the primary clusters, suggests that current studies on the determinants of employee job satisfaction remain fragmented and have not yet been comprehensively integrated.

Table 2. Literature selection results (in accordance with PRISMA 2020 methodology)

No		Research Title	Key Variables Identified
1	<a href="#">Puspitawati and Atmaja (2020)</a>	The Influence of Compensation on Occupational Stress and Employee Job Satisfaction	Compensation, Occupational Stress
2	<a href="#">Lestari et al. (2020)</a>	The Impact of Self-Efficacy and Work Environment on Employee Job Satisfaction	Self-Efficacy, Work Environment
3	<a href="#">Baribin and Saputri (2020)</a>	The Effect of Organizational Culture and Work Environment on Work Motivation and Its Impact on Job Satisfaction	Organizational Culture, Motivation
4	<a href="#">Meilasari, Parashakti, Justian, and Wahyuni (2020)</a>	The Influence of Compensation, Workload, and Work Discipline on Job Satisfaction	Workload, Work Discipline
5	<a href="#">Surijadi and Idris (2020)</a>	The Impact of Physical and Non-Physical Work Environments on Job Satisfaction	Physical Work Environment
6	<a href="#">Paais and Pattiruhu (2020)</a>	Effect of motivation, leadership, and organizational culture on satisfaction and employee performance	Motivation, Leadership, and Organizational Culture on Job Satisfaction
7	<a href="#">Putra and Santosa (2025)</a>	The Influence of Facilities, Organizational Culture, and Workload on Job Satisfaction	Facilities, Organizational Culture
8	<a href="#">Adinata and Turangan (2023)</a>	The Effect of Work Motivation, Occupational Stress, and Work Environment on Job Satisfaction	Occupational Stress, Motivation
9	<a href="#">Rulianti and Nurpribadi (2023)</a>	The Influence of Work Motivation, Work Environment, and Career Development on Job Satisfaction	Career Development
10	<a href="#">G. A. M. Putri, Fauzi, Saputra, Danaya, and Puspitasari (2023)</a>	The Impact of Career Development, Organizational Culture, and Workload on Job Satisfaction	Workload, Organizational Culture
11	<a href="#">Saputra (2022)</a>	The Influence of Compensation, Work Environment, and Workload on Job Satisfaction	Compensation, Work Environment
12	<a href="#">Sardina and Abdurrahman (2020)</a>	The Effect of Work Discipline and Work Motivation on Employee Job Satisfaction	Work Discipline, Motivation

Based on the VOSviewer mapping results, the 'Job Satisfaction' variable was situated within a dense central cluster. However, a systematic review of 12 selected empirical studies revealed certain determinants located in low-density areas that nonetheless exerted a significant influence. For instance, [Lestari et al. \(2020\)](#) underscore the importance of self-efficacy, while [Surijadi and Idris \(2020\)](#) highlight the impact of the physical work environment. These findings are crucial because, within the bibliometric map, such variables appear less frequently than conventional factors such as salary or leadership. Furthermore, the emergence of the 'workload' variable in recent studies by [Meilasari et al. \(2020\)](#) indicates a shift in research focus toward employees' psychosocial well-being, which necessitates integration into a new conceptual framework.

#### 4.1 The Shift from Transactional to Affective Satisfaction

Conventional variables are often transactional and focused on the extrinsic exchange of labor for rewards. In contrast, low-density variables such as Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement signify a shift toward "Affective Satisfaction."

Implications: This suggests that organizations can no longer rely solely on salary increments to ensure loyalty. Without fostering employees' belief in their own competence (self-efficacy), external motivators reach a point of diminishing returns. The framework implies that "inner-resource building" is as critical as financial remuneration for employees.

#### ***4.2 Burnout and Work-Life Balance as Systemic Risk Factors***

The presence of Burnout and Work-Life Balance in low-density clusters is particularly concerning, given the rise in remote and hybrid work models.

Implication: The lack of intensive research in these areas creates a "management blind spot." The analysis implies that burnout is not merely an individual health issue but a systemic organizational failure that erodes the foundation of employees' job satisfaction. By integrating these into a unified framework, organizations can shift from reactive mental health support to proactive and structural design.

#### ***4.3 The Physical Environment and Teamwork as Satisfaction Infrastructure***

The Physical Work Environment and Teamwork are identified as under-researched, yet they serve as the "infrastructure" of daily satisfaction.

Implication: As workplaces transition into digital and flexible spaces, the "servicescape" (physical or virtual layout) facilitates social exchange. The framework suggests that social connectivity through teamwork acts as a buffer against the isolation associated with modern work, thereby stabilizing satisfaction levels during periods of high organizational stress.

#### ***4.4 Training and Rewards as Reciprocity Catalysts***

While "Financial Compensation" is a high-density topic, Training and Rewards (non-financial recognition) remain underexplored.

Implication: This indicates a historical literature bias toward fixed costs (salaries) over investment-based growth (training). This study implies that training creates a "Reciprocity Loop" based on the Social Exchange Theory, where the employee feels valued through development, leading to engagement that transcends mere financial dependence.

#### ***4.5 Synthesis: The Necessity of a Multidimensional Model***

The primary implication of these low-density variables is the necessity of a Multidimensional Conceptual Framework. Existing research is often "siloeled," focusing on variables in isolation.

Strategic Outcome: By synthesizing these fragmented variables, this study provides a roadmap for "Total Well-being" strategies. This approach ensures that HRM interventions simultaneously address the physical (environment), psychological (burnout/efficacy), and social (teamwork) dimensions of the employee experience to achieve sustainable job satisfaction.

#### ***4.6 Inter-Variable Relationships via VOSviewer Analysis***

The analysis of inter-variable relationships was conducted using VOSviewer software to map the intellectual structure of employee job satisfaction research based on the journals selected in the Systematic Literature Review. This mapping aims to identify correlation patterns between variables, dominant research clusters, and areas of study that remain relatively unexplored. The network visualization results demonstrate that the 'job satisfaction' variable occupies a central position and maintains robust links with conventional variables in the field of human resource management.

This indicates that most previous studies have focused on the classical determinants of job satisfaction, thereby establishing a dense and well-established research cluster. Conversely, density visualization revealed that several variables were situated in areas with darker color intensities, reflecting a relatively low level of research activity. Variables such as work-life balance, burnout, work experience, teamwork, training, rewards, employee engagement, self-efficacy, financial compensation, and the physical work environment have emerged as constructs that are less integrated into the mainstream of employee job satisfaction research. These findings underscore a significant research gap in the existing literature.

Furthermore, the relationships between variables indicate that these factors tend to be studied in isolation and have not yet been developed into a comprehensive conceptual framework. This highlights the limitations of previous theoretical approaches in capturing the complexity of the factors influencing employee job satisfaction holistically. Based on the VOSviewer mapping results, this study provides a theoretical contribution by emphasizing the necessity of an integrative approach to examine employee job satisfaction. Integrating understudied variables into a single conceptual model is expected to broaden the scope of job satisfaction theory and establish a robust foundation for future empirical research.

## **5. Conclusions**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study successfully mapped the intellectual landscape of employee job satisfaction through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and bibliometric visualization. The results confirm a significant research imbalance: while conventional determinants such as leadership and organizational culture dominate high-density clusters, critical variables, including work-life balance, burnout, and self-efficacy, remain fragmented and underexplored. By synthesizing these low-density variables, this research bridges a critical gap in the Human Resource Management ([Mohrman, Cohen, & Morhman Jr](#)) literature ([Mohrman et al.](#)) ([Mohrman et al.](#)), moving beyond transactional models toward a multidimensional understanding of employee well-being. The proposed conceptual framework serves as a theoretical milestone by integrating psychological, organizational, and environmental factors.

It concludes that sustainable job satisfaction in the modern era cannot be achieved through isolated interventions but requires a synchronized approach that addresses both the extrinsic stabilizers and intrinsic motivators of the workforce. Based on the results of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and supported by bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer, the following conclusions were drawn: Research Landscape and Clusters: This study confirms that the literature on employee job satisfaction remains dominated by conventional determinants, forming stable research clusters. Conversely, several critical constructs, such as work-life balance, burnout, work experience, teamwork, training, reward, employee engagement, self-efficacy, financial compensation, and the physical work environment, reside in areas of low research intensity and tend to be fragmented.

Keyword relationship mapping indicates that these variables are generally examined in isolation and have yet to be developed into a comprehensive conceptual framework, as demonstrated by VOSviewer visualizations. In line with its theoretical implications, this study contributes by providing a synthesis of the literature and proposing an integrative conceptual framework that expands the theoretical understanding of job satisfaction as a multi-dimensional construct. However, a limitation of this study is its dependence on the available literature and the bibliometric approach, which does not evaluate causal relationships between variables. Therefore, future research should empirically develop and test the proposed integrative model across various organizational contexts to advance both the theory and practice of human resource management.

### **5.2 Research Limitations**

This study has several limitations. First, the Systematic Literature Review approach relies entirely on the availability and quality of published articles, which potentially limits the scope of the findings regarding undocumented research developments. Second, the analysis is primarily descriptive and bibliometric in nature, utilizing VOSviewer; consequently, it does not evaluate causal relationships between variables or empirically measure the strength of their effects. Third, the literature mapping process is dependent on the keywords utilized by previous authors, meaning that variations in terminology may have influenced the identified cluster structures and the research intensity.

### **5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research**

While the current systematic review and resulting conceptual framework offer a robust theoretical synthesis, bibliometric mapping highlights critical avenues for further investigation. To address current research fragmentation, future scholars are encouraged to pursue several key directions, beginning with

the empirical validation of the proposed multidimensional framework via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Given that this study is primarily a qualitative and bibliometric synthesis, there is an immediate requirement for quantitative validation using either Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) or Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) to test hypothesized paths between high-density variables, such as leadership, and low-density variables, such as self-efficacy and burnout. This approach aims to determine the statistical weight and effect sizes of underexplored variables on overall job satisfaction across diverse organizational scales.

Furthermore, bibliometric data suggest that many low-density variables, including work-life balance and employee engagement, are inherently dynamic and susceptible to temporal shifts, necessitating a transition toward longitudinal analysis. Researchers should move beyond traditional cross-sectional surveys in favor of longitudinal study designs that track the same cohorts over several years to observe how job satisfaction fluctuates as employees transition through different career stages. This would provide a more granular understanding of the "Experience-Satisfaction trajectory" that the current literature often overlooks.

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### Author Contributions

DA conceptualized the research framework, specifically focusing on low-density integration variables within job satisfaction discourse. DA was responsible for the formal study design and rigorous implementation of the PRISMA 2020 methodology. The data collection process, including systematic metadata extraction from scientific databases, was conducted by DA. Subsequently, DA conducted a bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer to produce co-occurrence and density visualization maps. DA drafted the original manuscript, interpreted the identified research implications, and developed the proposed multidimensional conceptual framework. The reviewer revisions and final refinement of the theoretical argument were carried out by DA, who reviewed the results and provided final approval for the version to be published.

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