Jupiter: Jurnal Pendidikan Terapan
Homepage : https://journal.diginus.id/jupiter/index
Email: jurnalpendidikanterapan@gmail.com

p-ISSN : 2985-3214; e-ISSN : 2964-3171
Jupiter, Vol. 4, No. 4, September 2026
Page 307-318

The Association between Social Support and Employee Job Satisfaction: A Systematic Literature Review

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Submitted: August 11, 2026
Final Revised: Sept. 18, 2026
Accepted: September 24, 2026
Published: September 27, 2026

Keywords:
Social Support; Job Satisfaction; Employees; Systematic Literature Review.

ABSTRACT

Background: Social support is considered an important resource for employees in dealing with their work environment and maintaining positive work experiences. Previous studies have examined its relationship with job satisfaction in various occupational settings, but the findings are still spread across different contexts. A systematic review is therefore needed to bring together recent empirical evidence on this relationship. **Purpose:** This study aims to review and summarize empirical findings concerning the relationship between social support and job satisfaction among employees in different work settings. **Methods:** A systematic literature review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The literature search was carried out using the Scopus database with the keywords social support, job satisfaction, and employees. The review focused on empirical studies published in English from 2022 to 2026. After the screening and eligibility processes were completed, nine studies fulfilled the inclusion criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis. **Findings:** The findings across the reviewed studies generally showed a positive relationship between social support and employee job satisfaction. Different sources of support, including organizations, supervisors, coworkers, family members, and the broader social environment, were associated with employees' job satisfaction. Several studies also examined mediating and moderating factors in this relationship, although these findings represent statistical associations rather than causal relationships. **Research Implications:** The findings emphasize the relevance of a supportive work environment for employees' work experiences. Organizations can consider strengthening support from supervisors, coworkers, and organizational structures as part of efforts to create a more supportive workplace. The findings may also serve as a reference for future research examining social support and job satisfaction in different occupational contexts. **Conclusion:** Based on the reviewed evidence, social support is consistently and positively associated with employee job satisfaction across a range of occupational settings. However, all studies included in this review used cross-sectional designs. Therefore, the findings should be understood as evidence of an association rather than a causal relationship. Further research using longitudinal or experimental designs is needed to examine the relationship over time and provide stronger evidence regarding causality. **Originality:** This review synthesizes empirical studies published between 2022 and 2026 to provide an updated perspective on the relationship between social support and employee job satisfaction. By bringing together findings from different occupational settings and examining various sources of social support, this study provides a broader understanding of the factors associated with employee job satisfaction.

Doi: https://doi.org/10.61255/jupiter.v4i4.1825

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is one of the fundamental constructs in industrial and organizational psychology, as it reflects employees' evaluations of their jobs, work environment, and the experiences they gain while performing their roles within an organization. High levels of job satisfaction contribute to greater employee motivation and workplace engagement, organizational commitment, and employees' mental well-being. Conversely, poor job

satisfaction positively correlates with increased occupational stress, burnout, employee absenteeism, and turnover rates (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Wu et al., 2021). The importance of job satisfaction is further highlighted in the *Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2025* report, which indicated that only about 21% of the global workforce reported high levels of work engagement. This low level of employee engagement is estimated to result in global productivity losses of approximately US$438 billion (GALLUP, 2025). According to global estimates by the World Health Organization, anxiety and depressive disorders contribute to the loss of roughly 12 billion workdays each year, resulting in an estimated global economic loss of US$1 trillion due to reduced workforce productivity (WHO, 2022). Previous studies have also demonstrated that organizations that foster high levels of job satisfaction tend to achieve higher employee retention, better service quality, and more sustainable competitive advantages (Kaihlanen et al., 2023).

In the contemporary employment landscape, keeping workforce satisfaction high has proven progressively difficult, notwithstanding its decisive impact on individual and organizational outcomes. Advances in digital technology, automation, the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI), and changes in work arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic have transformed the nature of work and intensified job demands, including heavier workloads, job insecurity, role conflict, and difficulties in maintaining work–life balance (Claes et al., 2023). The International Labour Organization (ILO) has also emphasized that labor market transformation and global economic uncertainty may increase psychosocial risks in the workplace, underscoring the need for organizations to cultivate workplaces that support employee well-being (ILO, 2024). Furthermore, the widespread implementation of hybrid and remote working arrangements has introduced additional challenges, such as reduced social interaction, increased social isolation, and emotional fatigue, all of which have the potential to reduce job satisfaction (WHO, 2022). Previous research has consistently shown that job stress and role stress is linked to increased burnout and reduced job satisfaction, whereas job resources can buffer the negative consequences associated with workplace demands (Jin & Cheng, 2021; Wu et al., 2021). Collectively, the findings indicate the importance of creating supportive organizational environments in which employees have access to resources, particularly social support, to navigate workplace demands effectively.

Social support refers to individuals' perceptions that they are appreciated, cared for, and embedded within a supportive social environment (Cobb, 1976). In organizational settings, it manifests through supervisor, peer, and environmental assistance across emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal dimensions to aid task completion and stress management (House, 1981; Jolly et al., 2021). Substantial evidence highlights its positive impact on employee well-being. Substantial evidence highlights its positive association with employee well-being. For instance, workplace support has been associated with lower occupational stress and higher job satisfaction (Alsakarneh et al., 2023), whereas its absence may be associated with greater work challenges and lower satisfaction (Kim et al., 2019). Broad reviews further indicate that social support, particularly from supervisors, is associated with lower burnout and turnover intention, as well as higher work engagement, health, and work–life balance (Olaniyan et al., 2020). Overall, social support represents an important job resource that is associated with employees' ability to manage workplace demands and with more positive work experiences.

The connection between social support and job satisfaction is grounded in the theoretical perspective of the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model developed by Bakker and Demerouti, which highlights the role of workplace resources in employee outcomes. This framework posits that workplace characteristics are divided into two categories: job demands, which refer to work conditions requiring employees to sustain continuous physical and mental effort, and job resources, which facilitate goal attainment, reduce stress, and stimulate professional growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Within this structure, social support is considered a job resource that is associated with lower job-related strain, motivation, and engagement, which may also be related to higher job satisfaction (Claes et al., 2023). By drawing emotional, informational, and practical aid from supervisors, peers, and family, workers may perceive greater resources for managing job pressures and organizational changes (Cobb, 1976; House, 1981). Social support is therefore considered an important resource in relation to job satisfaction and positive workplace experiences.

Recent studies have consistently pointed to a positive association between social support and job satisfaction in various work environments. Göktaş and Özdinç (2022) found that workplace social support was positively associated with job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, Zhao et al., (2025) reported that higher levels of social support were associated with higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention among employees in elderly care facilities. Salleh et al., (2024) reported a positive association between supervisor support and job satisfaction among workers in the oil and gas industry. Kirazci & Buyukgoze-Kavas (2024) found that social support moderated the negative association between subjective underemployment and job satisfaction. In addition, Uddin et al., (2025) found that family social support was associated with work satisfaction through a mediation model involving work–family conflict. Aligning with these findings,Buonomo et al. (2024), Chan et al. (2026), Alsakarneh et al. (2023), and Sigursteinsdottir & Karlsdottir (2022) also reported associations between social support and job satisfaction across different occupational contexts.

Despite the growing number of studies on social support and job satisfaction, previous reviews have examined workplace social support from different perspectives. Jolly et al., (2021), for example, conducted an integrative review that discussed various forms and sources of social support in the workplace and their relationships with different employee and organizational outcomes. While the review offered a broad understanding of workplace social support, it did not specifically examine the relationship between social support and employee job satisfaction. Olaniyan et al., (2020) also conducted a scoping review on workplace support among child welfare workers, covering 55 primary studies published between 1985 and 2019. Their review identified coworker or peer support, organizational or management support, and supervisor or leadership support as important forms of workplace support in the child welfare sector. However, the review was limited to a specific occupational group and did not provide a broader synthesis of the relationship between different sources of social support and job satisfaction across occupational settings. Therefore, although previous reviews have contributed to the understanding of workplace social support, a comprehensive synthesis of recent empirical evidence specifically examining social support in relation to employee job satisfaction across different work contexts is still needed.

To address this gap, the present study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and focuses on empirical studies published from 2022 to 2026. The review examines the relationship between social support and employee job satisfaction across different occupational contexts. It specifically seeks to identify the sources of social support examined in recent studies, describe their relationship with employee job satisfaction, and examine the mediating and moderating factors reported in the literature. By bringing together findings from recent studies conducted in different work settings, this review aims to provide an updated understanding of the relationship between social support and employee job satisfaction and to identify aspects of this relationship that require further investigation.

METHOD

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine empirical findings regarding the relationship between social support and employee job satisfaction. The review process was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 framework (Page et al., 2021). This framework was applied to organize the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and selection of relevant studies in a systematic and transparent manner.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted in the Scopus database on July 12, 2026. The search aimed to identify recent empirical studies examining the relationship between social support and employee job satisfaction. The search string documented for the review was: ("social support" AND "job satisfaction" AND employees). The search was limited to English-language empirical journal articles published between 2022 and 2026. The 2022–2026 publication period was selected to capture recent empirical evidence on social support and employee job satisfaction available at the time of the search and to maintain a contemporary evidence base for the review. The search was conducted using the terms documented in the original Scopus search record. No additional field-specific operators, synonym blocks, or alternative search strings were preserved in the original search record. Therefore, these elements were not retrospectively reconstructed. The search strategy is reported as documented to maintain methodological transparency and avoid introducing procedures that were not actually used during the original search. Records retrieved from Scopus were exported to Rayyan for duplicate removal, reference organization, and screening.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The studies were selected based on several predetermined criteria. Studies were eligible for inclusion when they: (1) were empirical research articles published between 2022 and 2026; (2) were written in English; (3) were indexed in Scopus; (4) involved employees or workers as participants; (5) examined social support in relation to job satisfaction; and (6) provided adequate full-text information for further assessment. Studies were excluded when they were literature reviews, systematic reviews, conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, or other non-empirical publications. Studies involving populations outside the employee or worker population were also excluded. In addition, articles were not retained when social support and job satisfaction were not relevant to the main focus of the study or when the available information was insufficient to assess their eligibility.

Study Selection Process

The study selection process followed the four stages of the PRISMA 2020 framework: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The Scopus search initially yielded 643 records. After transfer to Rayyan, 22 duplicate records were removed, leaving 621 records for title and abstract screening. A total of 596 records were excluded because they were irrelevant to the review question or did not meet the predefined eligibility criteria. The remaining 25 articles underwent full-text assessment. Of these, 16 articles were excluded because the participants

were not employees or workers, social support and job satisfaction were not the main focus of the study, or sufficient methodological information was unavailable. Nine studies therefore met all eligibility criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis. Title, abstract, and full-text screening, as well as data extraction, were conducted by one reviewer using the predefined eligibility and extraction criteria. No independent second reviewer was involved. Consequently, no inter-reviewer discrepancy-resolution procedure was applicable. This single-reviewer process is acknowledged as a potential source of selection and data-extraction bias and is considered a limitation of the review.

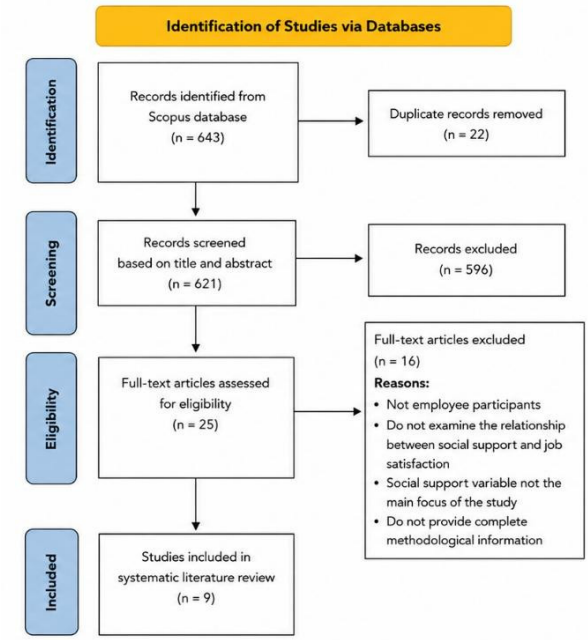


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram for the Journal Selection Process

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Information from the nine selected studies was extracted using a structured data-extraction framework. The extracted fields included author and publication year, country, sample characteristics and sample size, occupational setting, research design, source or type of social support, measurement instruments, analytical methods, principal statistical findings, and methodological quality. A narrative synthesis approach was used because the included studies differed in occupational settings, participant characteristics, sources of social support, measurement instruments, and analytical approaches, making quantitative pooling inappropriate. The synthesis was conducted in three steps. First, the extracted characteristics and findings of each study were organized and compared across the predefined extraction categories. Second, recurring patterns in the relationship between social support and job satisfaction were identified by comparing the reported findings across studies. Third, studies reporting similar relationships, contextual conditions, or sources of social support were grouped into broader thematic categories. Through this process, four synthesis themes were identified: (1) direct association between social support and job satisfaction; (2) social support in challenging employment conditions; (3) indirect or mediated relationships involving job satisfaction and related outcomes; and (4) sources of social support. A study was assigned to a theme when its reported analysis directly addressed the characteristics of that theme. Mediation and moderation findings were included only when they were explicitly tested and reported in the original studies. The themes were developed from the extracted empirical findings rather than from predetermined assumptions about the direction or strength of the relationships. Because all nine included studies used cross-sectional designs, the findings were interpreted as evidence of statistical association rather than causation.

Quality Assessment

The methodological quality of the nine included studies was assessed using the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies (Moola et al., 2020). The checklist consists of eight criteria addressing the clarity of inclusion criteria, description of study participants and settings, validity and reliability of exposure and outcome measurements, identification and management of confounding factors, and appropriateness of statistical analysis. Each item was assessed as Yes (Y), No (N), Unclear (U), or Not Applicable (NA), based on the information reported in the corresponding primary study. The item-level appraisal results are presented in Table 1 to provide a transparent assessment of the methodological strengths and potential limitations of each included study. Seven studies met all eight criteria (8/8), while two studies met seven of the eight criteria (7/8). For the

purpose of this review, studies receiving scores of 7/8 or 8/8 were classified as having high methodological quality. The appraisal results were considered when interpreting the consistency and limitations of the evidence.

Table 1. Quality Assessment of Included Studies Using the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklis

Studi	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Score	Quality
Göktaş & Özdinç (2022)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8	High
Sigursteinsdottir & Karlsdottir (2022)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8	High
Alsakarneh et al. (2023)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8	High
Salleh et al. (2024)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8	High
Buonomo et al. (2024)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8	High
Kirazci & Buyukgoze-Kavas (2024)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8	High
Uddin et al. (2025)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	7/8	High
Zhao et al. (2025)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8	High
Chan et al. (2026)	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	7/8	High

JBI Questions:
Q1: Were the criteria for inclusion in the sample clearly defined?
Q2: Were the study subjects and the setting described in detail?
Q3: Was the exposure measured in a valid and reliable way?
Q4: Were objective, standard criteria used for measurement of the condition?
Q5: Were confounding factors identified?
Q6: Were strategies to deal with confounding factors stated?
Q7: Were the outcomes measured in a valid and reliable way?
Q8: Was appropriate statistical analysis used?
Abbreviations: Y = Yes; N = No; U = Unclear; NA = Not Applicable.

RESULTS

Study Characteristics

Following the PRISMA 2020 study selection process, nine empirical studies met the predefined eligibility criteria and were included in the systematic review. The studies were published between 2022 and 2026 and were conducted in Türkiye, Iceland, Jordan, Malaysia, Italy, Bangladesh, China, and the United States. The studies covered diverse occupational contexts, including general workplace employees, the insurance industry, the oil and gas sector, remote workers, banking employees, social organisations providing care for older adults, and employed adults with ADHD. The sample sizes ranged from 100 to 4,973 participants. All included studies used cross-sectional designs. Social support was examined from different sources, including organisational or workplace support, supervisory support, peer or coworker support, friends, family, significant others, and non-work social support. The studies also differed in their measurement instruments and analytical approaches, including correlation and regression analyses, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), structural equation modelling (SEM), mediation analysis, and moderation analysis. Quantitative estimates were extracted when they were reported in the original studies. Because the studies differed substantially in populations, operationalisation of social support and job satisfaction, and analytical models, the reported coefficients were not pooled and should not be interpreted as directly comparable effect sizes.

Table 2. Characteristics of the Included Studies

Studi	Country	Sample & Setting	Design	Social support examined	Measurement instruments / analytical method	Key statistical findings
Göktaş & Özdinç (2022)	Türkiye	n = 260; employees from various occupational sectors	Cross-sectional	Organisational support	Organisational Support Perception Scale; Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS); DASS-42; Pearson correlation and regression analysis	Organisational support was positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = .562$, $p < .001$) and significantly predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = .423$, SE = .039, 95% CI [.346, .500], $p < .001$), explaining 32.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .329$).
Sigursteins dottir & Karlsdottir (2022)	Iceland	n = 4,973; employees	Cross-sectional	Workplace social support	Survey measures of social support, job satisfaction, bullying and harassment; linear	Social support was positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = .42$, 95% CI [.39, .44], $t = 29.41$, $p < .01$; $R^2 = .2475$). Social support also interacted with

Studi	Country	Sample & Setting	Design	Social support examined	Measurement instruments / analytical method	Key statistical findings
					regression and interaction analysis	bullying and harassment variables in predicting job satisfaction.
Alsakarneh et al. (2023)	Jordan	n = 269; insurance industry employees	Cross-sectional	Friends', manager, peer, and others' support	16-item social support measure; four-item job satisfaction measure; PLS-SEM using SmartPLS	All four sources of social support significantly predicted job satisfaction: friends' support (β = .244, t = 4.396, p < .001), manager support (β = .221, t = 4.590, p < .001), others' support (β = .345, t = 6.158, p < .001), and peer support (β = .282, t = 5.717, p < .001).
Salleh et al. (2024)	Malaysia	n = 155; oil and gas employees	Cross-sectional	Supervisory social support	Survey questionnaire; SmartPLS 4 and mediation analysis	Supervisory social support had a positive and statistically significant association with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was also examined as a mediator between supervisory social support and talent retention.
Buonomo et al. (2024)	Italy	n = 635; remote workers from service-based industries and public administration	Cross-sectional	Leader and colleague support	Self-report measures of leader support, colleague support, job satisfaction and work–life balance; structural equation modelling	The model showed a significant mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between colleague support and work–life balance. Model fit was $\chi^2(22) = 68.923$, p < .001; CFI = .973; TLI = .955; RMSEA = .059 (90% CI [.044, .075]); SRMR = .030. No significant direct or indirect relationship was found between leader support and work–life balance.
Kirazci & Buyukgoze-Kavas (2024)	Türkiye	n = 459; working adults	Cross-sectional	Social support from family, friends, and significant others	Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS); measures of underemployment, work-needs satisfaction and job satisfaction; moderation analysis	The model explained 26% of the variance in job satisfaction. Subjective underemployment was negatively associated with job satisfaction (β = −.015, 95% CI [−.028, −.002]), while work-needs satisfaction was positively associated with job satisfaction (β = .103, 95% CI [.083, .124]). Social support moderated the association between subjective underemployment and job satisfaction.
Uddin et al. (2025)	Bangladesh	n = 324; female employees in private commercial banks	Cross-sectional	Family social support	Measures of perceived family support, WIF, FIW and work satisfaction; structural/path analysis and bootstrapping	Family support positively predicted work satisfaction (β = .28, t = 4.197, p < .001) and negatively predicted WIF and FIW. WIF (β = −.21, t = 3.678, p < .001) and FIW (β = −.24, t = 3.841, p < .001) were negatively associated with work satisfaction. The direct effect of family support on work satisfaction was .32, while the indirect effect through WIF and FIW was .19 (BC 95% CI [.13, .32]).
Zhao et al. (2025)	China	n = 1,433; employees of social	Cross-sectional	Social support from family, friends and	Social support, job satisfaction and turnover intention	Social support was positively associated with job satisfaction (β = .303,

Studi	Country	Sample & Setting	Design	Social support examined	Measurement instruments / analytical method	Key statistical findings
		organisations caring for older adults		significant others	measures; Spearman correlation and structural equation modelling with bootstrap mediation analysis	SE = .031, p < .001). Job satisfaction was negatively associated with turnover intention (β = −.260, SE = .046, p < .001). The indirect effect of social support on turnover intention through job satisfaction was β = −.079, SE = .016, 95% CI [−.111, −.049], accounting for 34.88% of the total effect.
Chan et al. (2026)	United States	n = 100; full-time employed adults with ADHD	Cross-sectional	Non-work social support	Measures of workplace climate, ADHD-related policies, supervision, non-work social support and occupational outcomes; hierarchical regression and moderation analysis	After controlling for medication status, sex and age, non-work social support was associated with higher job satisfaction. The study did not report a comparable effect coefficient for this association in the accessible results.

Direct Association Between Social Support and Job Satisfaction

Several studies directly examined the association between social support and job satisfaction. Göktaş and Özdinç (2022) reported a strong positive correlation between organisational support and job satisfaction (r = .562, p < .001). In the regression analysis, organisational support significantly predicted job satisfaction (β = .423, 95% CI [.346, .500], p < .001), with the model explaining 32.9% of the variance in job satisfaction. Similarly, Sigursteinsdottir and Karlsdottir (2022), using a substantially larger sample of 4,973 employees, found a positive association between workplace social support and job satisfaction (β = .42, 95% CI [.39, .44], t = 29.41, p < .01). In the Jordanian insurance sector, Alsakarneh et al. (2023) found statistically significant positive effects of all four examined sources of support on job satisfaction, including friends' support (β = .244), manager support (β = .221), others' support (β = .345), and peer support (β = .282), with all p-values < .001. The findings from Salleh et al. (2024) and Chan et al. (2026) also indicated positive associations between supervisory or non-work social support and job satisfaction. However, these findings were obtained in specific occupational populations and through different analytical models. Therefore, the magnitude of the coefficients should not be interpreted as directly comparable across studies.

Social Support in Challenging Employment Conditions

Social support was also examined in employment conditions characterised by elevated demands or specific occupational challenges. During the COVID-19 period, Göktaş and Özdinç (2022) found that organisational support was positively associated with job satisfaction while anxiety and stress were negatively associated with job satisfaction. These findings indicate that social support was examined alongside psychological strain during a period of substantial workplace disruption. Sigursteinsdottir and Karlsdottir (2022) similarly examined social support in the context of workplace bullying and harassment during COVID-19. Their regression models showed a positive association between social support and job satisfaction, while interactions between social support and workplace adversity were also examined. Kirazci and Buyukgoze-Kavas (2024) extended this perspective to subjective underemployment. Their findings showed a negative association between subjective underemployment and job satisfaction (β = −.015, 95% CI [−.028, −.002]), whereas work-needs satisfaction was positively associated with job satisfaction (β = .103, 95% CI [.083, .124]). Social support functioned as a moderator of the relationship between subjective underemployment and job satisfaction, with the negative association becoming non-significant at higher levels of social support.

Taken together, these studies suggest that social support may be relevant to job satisfaction under challenging employment conditions. However, because these studies were cross-sectional and used different indicators of employment adversity, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than evidence of a causal protective effect.

Indirect or Mediated Relationships Involving Job Satisfaction and Related Outcomes

Three studies examined indirect pathways involving social support and job satisfaction or related work outcomes. Buonomo et al. (2024) found that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between colleague support and work–life balance among remote workers. The structural equation model showed acceptable fit, with CFI = .973, TLI = .955, RMSEA = .059 (90% CI [.044, .075]), and SRMR = .030. In contrast, no significant direct or indirect

relationship was identified between leader support and work–life balance. Uddin et al. (2025) examined a different mediation mechanism. In this study, job satisfaction was the outcome rather than the mediator. Work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) mediated the relationship between family support and work satisfaction. Family support had a positive direct effect on work satisfaction ($\beta = .32$) and a significant indirect effect through WIF and FIW (.19, BC 95% CI [.13, .32]). Thus, the study identified both direct and indirect pathways linking family support to work satisfaction. Zhao et al. (2025) specifically examined job satisfaction as a mediator between social support and turnover intention. Social support was positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = .303$, $p < .001$), while job satisfaction was negatively associated with turnover intention ($\beta = -.260$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of social support on turnover intention through job satisfaction was $\beta = -.079$ (SE = .016, 95% CI [−.111, −.049]), accounting for 34.88% of the total effect.

These findings demonstrate that social support was not examined only as a direct correlate of job satisfaction. Several studies investigated mechanisms involving job satisfaction, work–family interference, work–life balance, and turnover intention. Nevertheless, the mechanisms differed across studies and therefore should not be treated as a single uniform mediation pathway.

Sources of Social Support

The included studies examined social support from multiple sources. Workplace and organisational support were investigated by Göktaş and Özdinç (2022) and Sigursteinsdottir and Karlsdottir (2022). Alsakarneh et al. (2023) differentiated social support into friends', manager, peer, and others' support, with each source showing a significant positive association with job satisfaction. Supervisory support was examined by Salleh et al. (2024), while colleague and leader support were investigated among remote workers by Buonomo et al. (2024). Support originating outside the workplace was also represented. Uddin et al. (2025) examined family social support among female bank employees, while Kirazci and Buyukgoze-Kavas (2024) assessed perceived support from family, friends, and significant others using the MSPSS. Zhao et al. (2025) similarly operationalised social support from family, friends, and significant others. Chan et al. (2026) examined non-work social support among employed adults with ADHD. Thus, the evidence indicates that the social support–job satisfaction relationship has been investigated across both workplace and non-work sources. However, the variation in definitions and measurement of social support limits direct comparison between specific support sources.

Overall Synthesis

Across the nine included studies, the findings generally indicated a positive association between social support and job satisfaction or work satisfaction. The strongest directly reported quantitative associations included the correlation between organisational support and job satisfaction in Göktaş and Özdinç (2022) ($r = .562$), the regression coefficient reported by Sigursteinsdottir and Karlsdottir (2022) ($\beta = .42$), and the significant PLS-SEM paths reported by Alsakarneh et al. (2023) ($\beta = .221$–$.345$ across support sources). The synthesis also identified variation in how social support operated within the examined models. Social support was examined as a direct predictor, a moderator under challenging employment conditions, and a component of indirect pathways involving job satisfaction, work–family interference, work–life balance, and turnover intention. The direction of the associations was generally positive for social support and job satisfaction, but the specific relationships differed according to the source of support, occupational context, and analytical model. Importantly, all nine included studies used cross-sectional designs. Therefore, the findings support associations between social support and job satisfaction rather than causal relationships. In addition, the relatively small number of included studies and substantial heterogeneity in populations, measures, sources of support, and analytical approaches preclude quantitative pooling and require cautious interpretation of the apparent consistency of the findings.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic review indicate a generally positive association between social support and employee job satisfaction across different occupational and organizational contexts. This pattern was observed across studies involving different countries, sectors, and sources of support, suggesting that social support is a relevant work-related resource in a variety of employment settings. However, because all nine included studies used cross-sectional designs, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of association rather than causation. The overall pattern is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model, which identifies social support as a job resource that may help employees cope with work demands and maintain positive work-related outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In this context, employees who perceive greater access to supportive resources may also be more likely to report favorable evaluations of their jobs.

The consistency of the findings does not necessarily mean that all forms of social support operate in the same way. The reviewed studies indicate differences according to the source of support. Supervisor support is directly embedded in the employment relationship and may be particularly relevant to employees' experiences of guidance, feedback, recognition, and work-related assistance. Coworker support, in contrast, is more closely related to everyday interaction, collaboration, and interpersonal belonging. Family support may address demands that

extend beyond the workplace, particularly when employees experience difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities. Support from individuals or networks outside the workplace may similarly provide psychological or practical resources that are not directly connected to organizational tasks. These differences suggest that the relevance of social support may depend partly on the type of demand employees experience and the source that is available to address that demand.

The occupational and organizational context may further shape the association between social support and job satisfaction. In conventional on-site work environments, supervisors and coworkers are more readily accessible through regular face-to-face interaction. In remote work settings, however, opportunities for informal interaction may be reduced, potentially changing how employees experience interpersonal support. Buonomo et al., (2024), for example, examined supervisor and coworker support among remote workers and identified relationships involving social support, job satisfaction, and work–life balance. This finding suggests that social support may have particular relevance in work arrangements where physical distance can alter employees' opportunities for social interaction. Similarly, (Kirazci & Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2024) found that social support was associated with a weaker negative relationship between underemployment and job satisfaction. Rather than demonstrating that social support directly protects employees from the consequences of underemployment, this finding suggests that social resources may be particularly relevant when employees face unfavorable employment conditions.

Differences may also arise across countries, organizational settings, and employee characteristics. The nine studies included in this review were conducted in Türkiye, Iceland, Jordan, Malaysia, Italy, Bangladesh, China, and United States, covering a range of occupational and social environments. Expectations regarding relationships with supervisors, coworkers, and family members may differ across cultural and organizational contexts, which could influence how support is perceived and how relevant it is to employees' work experiences. Nevertheless, the included studies were not designed as direct cross-cultural comparisons. Therefore, differences between countries should not be interpreted as evidence that culture itself explains differences in the strength of the association. Rather, the geographical diversity of the evidence highlights the need for future research that explicitly compares social support across cultural and organizational contexts.

The characteristics of particular employee groups may also affect the relevance of social support. Chan et al., (2026), for example, examined employees with ADHD and found a positive association between social support outside the workplace and job satisfaction. This finding extends the scope of the literature beyond general employee populations and suggests that non-work social resources may be relevant for specific groups whose workplace experiences may involve particular individual or environmental demands. However, because this evidence comes from a specific population, it should not be generalized to all employees without further research. The finding is better understood as an indication that employee characteristics may represent an important contextual condition when examining the relationship between social support and job satisfaction.

The reviewed studies also indicate that the association between social support and work-related outcomes may involve different pathways. However, these pathways should not be interpreted as one common mediation mechanism. Zhao et al., 2025) examined job satisfaction as a mediator between social support and turnover intention, whereas Uddin et al. (2025) examined work–family conflict as a mediating factor in the relationship between family social support and work satisfaction. Buonomo et al., (2024) examined relationships involving coworker and supervisor support, job satisfaction, and work–life balance. These studies therefore point to different statistical pathways rather than a single mechanism through which social support operates. Moreover, because the studies were cross-sectional, the observed mediation models demonstrate statistical associations within the tested models but cannot establish the temporal sequence required to conclude that social support causes changes in the mediator and subsequently produces changes in the outcome.

The methodological quality of the included studies should also be considered when interpreting the consistency of the findings. The JBI appraisal indicated generally favorable methodological quality, with scores ranging from 7/8 to 8/8. However, high appraisal scores do not remove the limitations associated with cross-sectional research. The absence of temporal information makes it difficult to determine whether social support precedes job satisfaction or whether employees who are already more satisfied with their jobs tend to perceive their social environments more positively. In addition, reliance on self-reported measures may increase the possibility of common-method and self-report bias, particularly when social support and job satisfaction are assessed using similar data sources. Potential confounding variables, such as workload, employment conditions, organizational climate, individual characteristics, and socioeconomic circumstances, may also contribute to the observed associations. Consequently, the consistency of the findings should be viewed as evidence of a recurring association rather than definitive evidence of a causal effect. Because the review was conducted by a single reviewer and the original appraisal record retained aggregate rather than item-level JBI judgments, these methodological reporting limitations should also be considered when interpreting the review.

Taken together, the reviewed evidence shows convergence in the direction of the association between social support and job satisfaction, but it also reveals important differences in context and mechanisms. The relationship appears across multiple sources of support and occupational settings, yet the relevance of a particular source may depend on employees' work demands, employment conditions, work arrangements, and personal circumstances. The evidence therefore supports a contextual interpretation of social support rather than the assumption that all forms of support have an equivalent relationship with job satisfaction. At the same time, the limited number of studies within each specific context and the methodological differences among them make it difficult to determine whether particular sources of support are consistently stronger than others.

The findings have several practical implications that can be derived from these contextual differences. At the supervisory level, organizations may strengthen employees' access to support through clear communication, constructive feedback, recognition, and accessible leadership. For coworker support, opportunities for collaboration and regular interpersonal interaction may be particularly relevant in remote or socially isolated work arrangements. Where employees face work–family demands, organizational policies that provide greater flexibility and facilitate work–life balance may complement support received from family members. For employees experiencing unfavorable employment conditions, such as underemployment, access to supportive social resources may also be considered as part of broader employee support strategies. These recommendations should be interpreted as evidence-informed organizational considerations rather than interventions that have been demonstrated to causally increase job satisfaction. However, these implications should also be considered in light of a methodological limitation of this review, as the study selection, data extraction, and methodological quality appraisal were conducted by a single reviewer. Although the appraisal criteria were applied systematically, the absence of an independent second reviewer may have increased the possibility of subjective judgment or oversight during the review process.

Future research should strengthen the evidence base by using longitudinal designs to clarify the temporal relationship between social support and job satisfaction. Experimental or intervention-based research could further examine whether changes in specific forms of social support are followed by changes in job satisfaction. Future studies should also consider multi-source or objective measures to reduce common-method bias and should account more systematically for potential confounding variables. Comparative research across countries, occupational sectors, organizational types, and work arrangements could help identify boundary conditions under which particular sources of social support are more relevant. Finally, more consistent reporting of effect sizes, statistical coefficients, measurement instruments, and analytical procedures would facilitate stronger comparisons and, where appropriate, future meta-analytic synthesis.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review concludes that social support is consistently associated with higher levels of employee job satisfaction across a range of occupational and organizational contexts. The main contribution of this review is the integration of recent empirical evidence concerning different sources of social support, including supervisors, coworkers, workplace environments, family members, and social networks outside the workplace. Rather than indicating that one source of support is universally more important than another, the findings suggest that the relevance of social support may vary according to employees' work demands, employment conditions, work arrangements, and individual circumstances.

These findings provide a contextual understanding of the relationship between social support and job satisfaction and support the view of social support as an important job resource within the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework. From a practical perspective, organizations may consider strengthening support systems according to employees' needs, particularly through supportive supervision, positive coworker relationships, and organizational practices that accommodate work–family demands. However, these implications should be considered in light of the limitations of the available evidence.

All nine studies included in this review employed cross-sectional designs; therefore, the findings indicate associations but cannot establish causal relationships or determine the temporal direction between social support and job satisfaction. The review was also limited to empirical studies published between 2022 and 2026 and indexed in Scopus, which may limit the breadth and generalizability of the evidence. Future research should therefore prioritize longitudinal or intervention-based studies to clarify the temporal and causal relationships between specific forms of social support and employee job satisfaction.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the academic advisor and the Psychology Program at Surabaya State University for their continuous guidance and academic support throughout this research. Appreciation is also extended to all individuals whose assistance and encouragement contributed to the successful completion of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

NC: Conceived the study, designed the research methodology, conducted the literature search and study selection, extracted and analyzed the data, synthesized the research findings, and prepared, revised, and edited the manuscript. OP: Provided academic supervision and guidance throughout the research process, contributed to the development of the study, offered critical feedback on the analysis and manuscript content, critically reviewed the manuscript, and approved the final version for publication.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author made limited use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools to improve the clarity, readability, and linguistic quality of the text. The study's conceptualization, analysis, interpretation of findings, and conclusions were developed independently by the author. The author carefully reviewed and revised the entire manuscript and accepts full responsibility for itscontent.

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