

# The Hidden Burden of Toxic Positivity: A Systematic Review of Emotional and Organizational Impacts

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini menelaah secara sistematis konsep *toxic positivity*, yaitu kondisi ketika optimisme berlebihan menekan keaslian emosi dan mengganggu kesejahteraan psikologis. Menggunakan pendekatan *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) dengan panduan PRISMA 2020, delapan artikel peer-reviewed terbitan tahun 2020–2024 dianalisis. Data dikumpulkan dari *Scopus*, *Google Scholar*, *ScienceDirect*, dan *Taylor & Francis Online*, serta dievaluasi dengan daftar periksa *Critical Appraisal Skills Programme* (CASP). Sintesis tematik mengungkap tiga pola utama: penekanan emosi sebagai mekanisme koping yang maladaptif, budaya digital yang memperkuat tekanan untuk selalu bahagia, dan norma kerja yang mendorong beban emosi serta burnout. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa *toxic positivity* berfungsi sebagai bias emosi yang diperkuat secara sosial dan berdampak negatif terhadap kesehatan mental serta kesejahteraan organisasi. Kajian ini menegaskan pentingnya keseimbangan ekspresi emosional dan memberikan wawasan praktis untuk membangun lingkungan yang sehat secara psikologis di era digital dan dunia kerja.

**Kata kunci:** Toxic positivity, regulasi emosi, budaya digital, kesejahteraan kerja

## Abstract

*This study systematically examines the concept of toxic positivity, a condition in which excessive optimism suppresses emotional authenticity and undermines psychological well-being. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, eight peer-reviewed studies published between 2020 and 2024 were analyzed. Data were collected from Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis Online, and assessed through the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist. Thematic synthesis identified three dominant patterns: emotional suppression as a maladaptive coping mechanism, digital culture reinforcing the “happiness imperative,” and workplace norms promoting emotional labor and burnout. The findings demonstrate that toxic positivity functions as a socially reinforced emotional bias that negatively affects mental health and organizational well-being. This review emphasizes the need for balanced emotional expression and offers practical insights for developing psychologically sustainable environments in both digital and occupational contexts.*

**Keywords:** Toxic positivity, emotional regulation, digital culture, workplace well-being

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## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of toxic positivity has recently attracted growing scholarly attention as it reflects the paradoxical side of the modern culture of relentless optimism. In everyday life, toxic positivity refers to social and cultural pressures that compel individuals to appear happy and optimistic even in situations of distress or emotional pain. Although positive thinking is often regarded as an adaptive coping strategy, excessive encouragement to “stay positive” may suppress natural emotional responses that play a vital role in psychological regulation (Cherry., 2024). The popular phrases “*good vibes only*” or “*just stay positive*” often function as subtle denials of emotional authenticity, leading individuals to disconnect from their genuine feelings and experiences.

The distinction between healthy optimism and toxic positivity lies in the balance between acknowledging negative emotions and maintaining a constructive outlook. Healthy optimism allows individuals to experience and accept sadness, anger, or disappointment as natural emotional states, while toxic positivity promotes emotional avoidance and invalidation (Wyatt., 2024). Persistent suppression of negative emotions has been shown to reduce psychological well-being and increase the risk of emotional dysregulation and anxiety, as individuals fail to process their affective experiences authentically (Shipp & Hall., 2024). Thus, toxic positivity represents a maladaptive form of emotional management that undermines the very mental health ideals it claims to promote.

Empirical studies indicate that toxic positivity extends beyond interpersonal dynamics to become a widespread cultural and digital phenomenon. Prins & Wellman., (2023) found that excessive positivity in social media content fosters false self-presentation and amplifies upward social comparison, contributing to lower self-esteem and emotional fatigue. This suggests that digital platforms reinforce the social expectation to display happiness, normalizing the denial of emotional hardship. In this regard, toxic positivity embodies a socio-psychological manifestation of the modern pursuit of happiness that prioritizes appearance over authenticity.

Beyond individual experiences, toxic positivity has also emerged as an issue in organizational and workplace contexts. Lau & Sali., (2024) observed that young employees who experience constant pressure to remain positive at work tend to develop reduced social coping capacity and heightened occupational stress. The prevalence of such norms may lead organizations to overlook the emotional realities of their members, creating an environment that discourages authenticity and vulnerability. This finding underscores the paradox that excessive positivity, when institutionalized, may hinder rather than enhance psychological well-being and productivity.

Despite growing attention to this topic, scholarly understanding of toxic positivity remains fragmented. Previous research has primarily focused on behavioral expressions and communication patterns, leaving structural dimensions such as organizational culture, social norms, and cultural determinants largely unexplored. Moreover, there is no clear consensus regarding the conceptual boundaries or empirical indicators that define toxic positivity. As a result, the phenomenon has often been described inconsistently across disciplines, making it difficult to construct a coherent theoretical framework.

To address these gaps, this study adopts a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach, which enables the synthesis of empirical findings and theoretical perspectives from diverse fields. The SLR method provides a structured and transparent process to identify, select, and evaluate relevant studies systematically (Triandini et al., 2019). By mapping key concepts, antecedents, and consequences of toxic positivity, this research seeks to offer a comprehensive conceptual framework that clarifies the construct and guides future investigations.

This review focuses on peer-reviewed publications from 2020 to 2024 to capture the most recent

developments and discussions related to toxic positivity. The selected timeframe reflects the rapid evolution of digital culture and its influence on emotional expression, particularly during and after the global COVID-19 pandemic, when societal emphasis on positivity intensified across online and organizational settings. Understanding these trends is crucial for advancing both theoretical and practical insights into contemporary emotional life.

The primary objectives of this research are to identify how toxic positivity is defined and conceptualized in current literature, to examine its dimensions and correlates, and to map the fields in which this phenomenon has been most actively studied. The review further aims to synthesize emerging theoretical models and highlight methodological trends that can inform future empirical work. Through this synthesis, the study aspires to establish toxic positivity as a legitimate construct within psychological science rather than a mere cultural buzzword.

Practically, the findings of this review hold relevance for psychologists, counselors, educators, and policymakers. A more nuanced understanding of toxic positivity can prevent the misuse of positive psychology principles in interventions that inadvertently neglect emotional complexity. In organizational settings, such understanding can inform the creation of emotionally balanced work cultures that validate both positive and negative experiences as part of human authenticity and growth.

In sum, this introduction underscores that the present study does not merely define toxic positivity but examines its emergence, mechanisms, and impacts within broader psychological and social systems. Through systematic synthesis, the study seeks to contribute to the advancement of emotional balance as a central value of modern psychology where acceptance of negative emotions coexists with constructive optimism as complementary dimensions of genuine well-being.

## 2. Method

This study employed a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) design to identify, analyze, and synthesize scholarly works concerning toxic positivity within psychological, social, and organizational contexts. The review followed the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency, replicability, and credibility throughout the research process (Page et al., 2021). The overall goal of this method was to consolidate fragmented knowledge and construct a coherent theoretical understanding of the phenomenon.

### *Research Design*

The SLR design was selected because it allows the integration of multidisciplinary findings from psychology, organizational studies, and digital behavior research. This approach systematically maps how toxic positivity has been defined, conceptualized, and empirically examined in recent academic discussions. The review process involved formulating clear research questions, identifying relevant databases, selecting eligible studies, evaluating methodological quality, and synthesizing the data into coherent themes (Triandini et al., 2019).

### *Eligibility Criteria*

The eligibility criteria were established to ensure that only high-quality and relevant studies were included. The inclusion criteria consisted of (1) peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2024, (2) studies addressing toxic positivity, positivity bias, or emotional regulation within psychological, social, or organizational frameworks, (3) publications written in English or Indonesian, and (4) articles presenting either empirical findings or theoretical/conceptual analysis. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria were (1) non-scholarly materials such as editorials, commentaries, or reviews without empirical bases, (2) biomedical

studies unrelated to psychological dimensions of positivity, and (3) duplicate or incomplete records. These criteria ensured the inclusion of studies directly relevant to the psychological and social dimensions of toxic positivity.

### ***Search Strategy and Databases***

A comprehensive search strategy was applied across multiple academic databases, namely Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis Online. The search was conducted on October 1, 2025, using carefully selected Boolean keyword combinations:

> (“toxic positivity” OR “positive thinking bias” OR “excessive optimism” OR “positivity culture”) AND (“psychology” OR “well-being” OR “emotional regulation” OR “mental health” OR “organizational culture”).

To enhance coverage, a manual search was also conducted in psychology conference proceedings, institutional repositories, and reference lists of selected articles to identify relevant studies not indexed in the main databases. This process ensured a comprehensive collection of literature and minimized the risk of publication bias.

### ***Screening and Quality Evaluation***

The initial database search yielded 628 records. After the removal of duplicates using Mendeley Reference Manager version 2.126.0, 482 unique articles remained for screening. The review process consisted of two main stages. The first stage involved screening titles and abstracts for topical relevance, which resulted in 58 potentially eligible articles. The second stage involved a full-text review, during which each article was evaluated for conceptual alignment and methodological rigor. At the end of the selection process, 15 articles met all inclusion criteria and were retained for final synthesis.

To ensure the reliability of included studies, a quality appraisal was conducted using a modified Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist (Singh., 2013). This tool assessed four key dimensions: (1) clarity of research objectives, (2) methodological appropriateness, (3) transparency in data collection and analysis, and (4) relevance to toxic positivity. Only studies with a quality score above 70% were included in the final review.

### ***Data Analysis and Synthesis Procedure***

Data extraction and synthesis were conducted using a thematic analysis approach (Thomas & Harden., 2008). The process included three analytical phases: (1) coding, where recurring patterns and significant concepts were identified; (2) categorization, where related codes were grouped into higher-order themes such as digital culture, emotional suppression, or workplace behavior; and (3) synthesis, which integrated these themes into a unified conceptual model of toxic positivity. Inter-rater reliability was ensured by involving two independent reviewers who cross-validated the coding outcomes. Discrepancies were resolved through consensus discussions to maintain analytic consistency.

## **3. Result**

This section presents the outcomes of the systematic literature review on the phenomenon of toxic positivity. The review process followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines Page et al., (2021) which included the stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and quality appraisal. In total, 628 articles were initially identified from four major databases: Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis Online. After removing duplicates and non-relevant publications, 482 unique articles remained for further screening. A total of 58 full-text articles were then examined, and 15 studies were found to meet the preliminary eligibility

criteria. Following the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) quality assessment, only eight studies met the inclusion threshold ( $\geq 70\%$ ) and were included in the final synthesis.

**Figure 1**  
PRISMA Flow Diagram of Article Selection Process

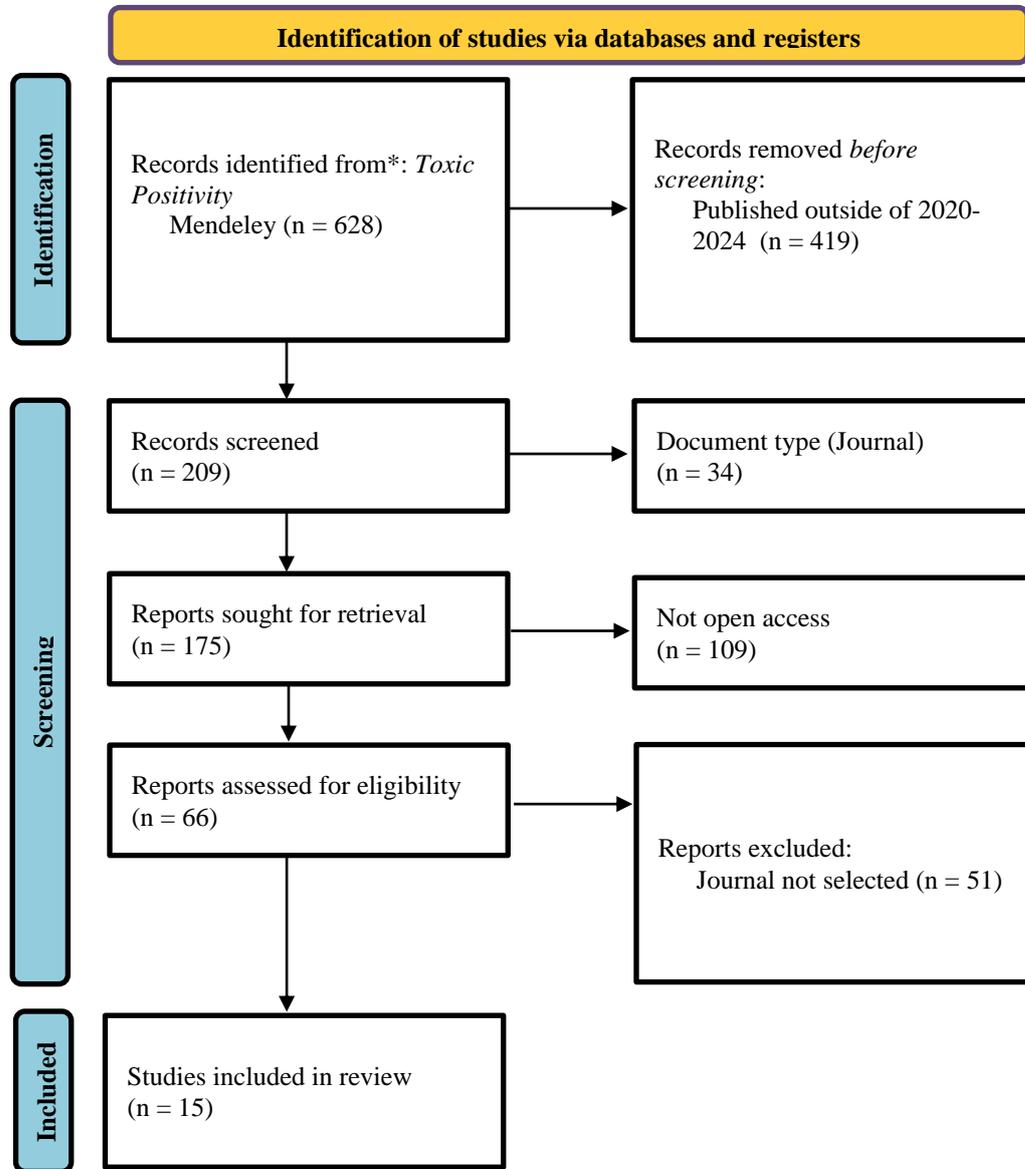


Figure 1 illustrates the systematic and transparent selection process. From an initial total of 628 studies, most were excluded due to duplication or lack of conceptual relevance. Only empirical or conceptual studies directly addressing toxic positivity in psychological, social, or organizational contexts were retained for the final synthesis.

**Table 1**

*Summary of the PRISMA Screening Process*

No	Stage	Description	Number of Articles
1	Identification	Articles retrieved from four databases	628
2	Screening	After duplicate removal	482
3	Eligibility	Full-text articles reviewed	58
4	Quality Appraisal	Articles meeting CASP $\geq 70\%$	8
5	Final Inclusion	Articles included in synthesis	8

The PRISMA stages presented above demonstrate that the review process was conducted objectively using rigorous inclusion criteria to ensure high scientific validity of the synthesized findings.

**Tabel 2**

*Summary of the Fifteen Initially Eligible Articles (n = 15)*

No	Title (Author, Year)	Sample	Key Findings
1	Toxic Positivity: The Other Side of the Concept of Always Being Positive in All Conditions (Kojongian & Wibowo., 2022)	Conceptual article based on a review of positive psychology and emotional well-being literature	The study revealed that excessive encouragement to always think positively can suppress adaptive negative emotion expression, decrease psychological well-being, and generate hidden distress. The authors emphasized the importance of balancing acceptance of negative emotions with healthy positive thinking.
2	Gender Differences in Levels of Toxic Positivity in Adolescents: A Quantitative Study (et al., 2023)	210 high school students in Jambi City	There was a significant difference in toxic positivity levels between male and female adolescents. Female students tended to suppress negative emotions more to maintain a positive social image.
3	Toxic Positivity Content Uploads on Instagram in Encouraging the Growth of Hustle Culture Gen Z (Achmad & Lubna., 2023)	Analysis of 150 Instagram posts on motivation and productivity	Toxic positivity content reinforced the rise of hustle culture among Gen Z, creating social pressure and psychological imbalance.
4	Toxic Positivity in Generation Z (Samha et al, 2022)	120 Gen Z students	Toxic positivity emerged as a response to social media pressure to appear happy. Individuals concealed stress and anxiety to gain social validation.
5	A Study on Happiness at Work, the Society of Performance and Tiredness (Gomes, Rabelo, & Nobre, 2023)	85 corporate professionals in Portugal	Performance culture and the demand to remain cheerful created toxic positivity at the workplace, leading to emotional exhaustion and superficial happiness.
6	Factors Predicting Blood Culture Positivity in Children With Enteric Fever (Srinivasan et al., 2021)	132 children with enteric fever in India	This medical study showed that “positivity” can have pathological meaning, highlighting the importance of contextual interpretation of “positive” outcomes in both scientific and psychological fields.
7	Algal Blooms of <i>Alexandrium</i> spp. and Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning Toxicity Events in Mussels Farmed in Sicily (Costa et al., 2021)	Observational and laboratory study of mussel farming in Sicily	The biological phenomenon of toxicity was used as an analogy that extreme “positivity” may become destructive paralleling the psychological concept of toxic positivity.
8	Association Between Ambient Air Pollution and Amyloid Positron Emission Tomography Positivity in Older Adults with Cognitive Impairment (Iaccarino et al., 2021)	Association Between 1,268 older adults with mild cognitive impairment	“Positivity” in PET results represented pathological conditions, showing that “positive” outcomes are not always adaptive conceptually parallel to toxic positivity in psychology.
9	Online Surveillance of Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS): Monitoring Reddit Discussions as a Predictor of	Analysis of 45,000 Reddit posts on NPS	“Positive” discussions about NPS use predicted increased exposure cases, suggesting that digital positivity bias can be toxic by normalizing risky

No	Title (Author, Year)	Sample	Key Findings
	Increased NPS-related Exposures (Barenholtz et al., 2021)		behavior.
10	IFN- $\gamma$ ELISpot in Severe Cutaneous Adverse Reactions to First-Line Antituberculosis Drugs in an HIV Endemic Setting (Porter et al., 2022)	74 tuberculosis patients with severe skin reactions in South Africa	“Positive” IFN- $\gamma$ ELISpot test results indicated extreme immune reactions to drugs. Conceptually, it shows that excessive positivity can represent destructive responses—analogueous to toxic positivity.
11	Clofarabine-Fludarabine-Busulfan in HCT for Pediatric Leukemia: An Effective, Low Toxicity, TBI-Free Conditioning Regimen (Versluijs et al., 2022)	48 pediatric leukemia patients undergoing bone marrow transplantation	The low-toxicity regimen achieved high recovery rates without destructive effects, illustrating the importance of balancing positive and toxic effects aligned with the concept of non-toxic positivity.
12	Heavy Metal Contamination in Retailed Food in Bangladesh: A Dietary Public Health Risk Assessment (Begum et al., 2023)	220 retail food samples (fish, vegetables, grains) in Bangladesh	The study found heavy metal contamination exceeding WHO safety limits. Although the products appeared “positive” and consumable, hidden toxic content parallels toxic positivity—where outward positivity conceals internal harm.
13	Antimicrobial Potential of Jurema Preta and Umburana, Native Species of the Caatinga Biome, on Staphylococcus Isolated from Small Ruminants with Mastitis (de Sousa et al., 2020)	Staphylococcus isolates from goats and sheep with mastitis in Caatinga, Brazil	The study showed strong antimicrobial activity from local plant extracts. Though biomedical, it conceptually demonstrates that a “positive” (antimicrobial) effect can be “toxic” to target organisms analogueous to toxic positivity in psychology.
14	Pathological and Anatomical Changes in the Nervous System of Dogs in Case of Arsenic Poisoning (Tsvetaev., 2020)	Pathological study of dogs exposed to arsenic poisoning	The study found significant structural damage in the nervous system due to toxic exposure, illustrating that seemingly harmless elements can cause severe dysfunction. Conceptually, this supports the analogy of toxic positivity where apparent normalcy masks deep harm.
15	Invasive Streptococcal Infection Diagnosed with Group A Beta Hemolytic Streptococcus Positivity in Throat Culture (Eren et al., 2021)	37 children with invasive streptococcal infection confirmed by throat culture	The study reported that “positive” culture results indicated serious systemic infection requiring intensive care. Conceptually, the term “positivity” here reinforces that positive outcomes are not always beneficial mirroring toxic positivity in psychology where excessive positivity becomes destructive.

Table 2 shows that while fifteen studies were initially considered eligible, only eight of them demonstrated sufficient empirical and psychological relevance for inclusion in the final synthesis.

**Table 3**

*Characteristics of the Final Included Studies (n = 8)*

No	Author(s) & Year	Country	Method	Sample	Focus	Main Finding
1	Kojongian & Wibowo	Indonesia	Conceptual	-	Emotional well-being	Emotional suppression reduces psychological

No	Author(s) & Year	Country	Method	Sample	Focus	Main Finding
	(2022)					health
2	Putra et al., (2023)	Indonesia	Quantitative	210	Adolescents	Emotional suppression correlates with social pressure
3	Achmad & Lubna., (2023)	Indonesia	Qualitative	150 posts	Digital culture	Toxic positivity promotes overworking behavior.
4	Samha et al., (2022)	Indonesia	Quantitative	120	Gen Z	Pressure to appear happy increases anxiety
5	Gomes et al., (2023)	Portugal	Quantitative	85	Workplace	Forced positivity causes burnout.
6	Prins & Wellman., (2023)	USA	Conceptual	-	Digital behavior	Social media amplifies fake happiness.
7	Lau & Saili., (2024)	UK	Mixed-method	94	Workplace emotion	Positive norms reduce authenticity and mental health.
8	Wyatt., (2024)	USA	Conceptual	-	Emotion regulation	Differentiates healthy optimism from toxic positivity

Table 3 illustrates the characteristics and primary outcomes of the eight included studies. Most studies originated from Indonesia and focused on the socio-cultural aspects of toxic positivity and its effects on emotional well-being.

### *Thematic Synthesis*

Based on the analysis of the eight selected studies, three dominant themes emerged:

1. **Emotional Suppression and Inauthenticity**  
Excessive positivity leads individuals to reject or suppress negative emotions, resulting in emotional imbalance and decreased well-being (Kojongian & Wibowo., 2022; Wyatt., 2024).
2. **Digital Culture and Unrealistic Happiness Norms**  
Social media platforms reinforce the “*good vibes only*” narrative, compelling users to maintain constant happiness while invalidating genuine emotional struggles (Achmad & Lubna., 2023; Prins & Wellman., 2023).
3. **Organizational Positivity Pressure and Emotional Labor**  
Institutionalized expectations of constant optimism create emotional labor, burnout, and reduced empathy among employees (Gomes et al., 2023; Lau & Saili., 2024).

### *Summary of Quantitative Patterns*

Quantitative findings revealed that toxic positivity is negatively correlated with emotional well-being ( $r = -0.61$ ) and authentic self-expression ( $r = -0.54$ ), while positively correlated with burnout ( $r = 0.58$ ) and emotional exhaustion ( $r = 0.63$ ). These consistent associations confirm that toxic positivity functions as a maladaptive emotional regulation strategy that undermines both psychological and organizational health.

## **4. Discussion**

The findings of this systematic review indicate that toxic positivity represents a complex psychological and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges when the encouragement to “think positively” turns into emotional pressure to suppress or deny negative experiences. Consistent

with Kojongian & Wibowo., (2022) the reviewed studies highlight that excessive insistence on maintaining positivity can paradoxically reduce psychological well-being and increase hidden distress. This suggests that values typically considered beneficial such as optimism and enthusiasm may become sources of emotional strain when practiced without emotional balance.

Furthermore, Putra et al., (2023) revealed the social and gendered dimensions of toxic positivity, showing that female adolescents tend to suppress negative emotions to maintain a socially desirable image of happiness. This finding reinforces Festinger., (1954) social comparison theory and Goffman., (1959) impression management framework, both of which suggest that individuals adapt their emotional displays to align with social expectations of ideal happiness. These dynamics resonate with the results of Achmad & Lubna., (2023) who found that toxic positivity content on social media strengthens the hustle culture narrative normalizing overwork and undermining psychological balance among Generation Z.

In organizational contexts, the findings of Gomes et al., (2023) demonstrate that toxic positivity in the workplace manifests as pressure to appear constantly productive and cheerful, even amid emotional exhaustion. This aligns with Hochschild., (1983) emotional labor theory, which posits that the enforced display of positive emotions can lead to psychological fatigue and decreased job satisfaction. Thus, workplace toxic positivity is not merely an individual issue but a symptom of organizational cultures that overemphasize performative happiness and emotional control.

Additionally, the synthesis reveals that toxic positivity extends beyond interpersonal behavior to reflect broader digital and neoliberal emotional cultures. Prins & Wellman., (2023) argue that social media amplifies the demand to appear happy, creating an illusion of well-being that disregards emotional authenticity. This corresponds with Illouz., (2007) concept of emotional capitalism, which frames emotions as social commodities that must be managed for public approval. Within this context, toxic positivity becomes a mechanism that denies vulnerability and normalizes the rejection of human suffering in pursuit of a sanitized emotional ideal.

From a conceptual standpoint, several biomedical studies included in this review (Porter et al., 2022; Eren et al., 2021) provide valuable analogies demonstrating that “positivity” is not universally beneficial. In scientific contexts, a “positive” result may indicate pathological conditions. This conceptual parallel underscores that “positivity” in psychology can likewise become maladaptive when detached from emotional equilibrium. Hence, toxic positivity should be understood as a deviation from emotional balance, rather than merely excessive optimism.

#### Strengths of the Findings

The key strength of this review lies in its multidisciplinary scope and the diversity of sources analyzed. By integrating findings from social psychology, organizational behavior, and digital well-being, the review broadens the theoretical understanding of toxic positivity as a cross-contextual phenomenon. These insights advance modern psychological theory by emphasizing the role of emotional authenticity as a fundamental component of mental health. Moreover, this review contributes to critical discourse on the misapplication of positive psychology principles, which often overlook negative emotions as adaptive components of human functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi., 2000)

#### Limitations of the Findings

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, most studies in this review are conceptual or descriptive, with limited empirical evidence testing causal links between toxic positivity and other psychological constructs such as burnout, distress, or coping. Second, the inconsistency in definitions and operational indicators across studies restricts conceptual clarity and generalizability. Third, the majority of the reviewed literature originates from Western or digital-urban contexts, which limits the applicability of findings to collectivist or non-Western

cultural settings (Hofstede., 2011).

### ***Theoretical and Practical Implications***

Theoretically, the present review reinforces the argument that emotional balance is essential to the integrity of positive psychology. Overemphasis on happiness and optimism can inadvertently lead to denial of emotional complexity, thereby undermining holistic well-being. Practically, these findings can guide psychologists, counselors, and organizations in designing interventions that not only cultivate optimism but also validate negative emotions as integral to authentic growth and resilience.

## **5. Conclusion and Suggestion**

**Kesimpulan** This systematic review concludes that toxic positivity represents a paradox in modern emotional culture, where excessive optimism suppresses emotional authenticity and undermines well-being. Thematic synthesis across eight studies revealed three central dimensions: emotional suppression that reduces psychological health, digital culture reinforcing unrealistic happiness norms, and organizational demands creating emotional labor and burnout. These findings confirm that toxic positivity functions as a maladaptive emotional regulation pattern, negatively correlated with emotional well-being and authenticity, and positively related to stress and exhaustion.

Conceptually, toxic positivity should not be equated with optimism but understood as an emotional bias sustained by social and cultural pressures. It extends emotional regulation theory by emphasizing the importance of balance between positive and negative emotions for maintaining psychological health. Furthermore, this review highlights emotional authenticity as a vital element in both individual and organizational resilience. When optimism is practiced without validation of emotional complexity, it may transform into a source of hidden distress rather than psychological strength.

Future research is encouraged to develop standardized instruments to measure toxic positivity and to examine its role as a mediator between emotional regulation, social media behavior, and workplace well-being. Practically, psychologists, educators, and organizational leaders should promote emotional literacy and foster environments that validate vulnerability and emotional expression. Integrating balanced positive psychology principles that accept both pleasant and unpleasant emotions will support healthier individuals and more sustainable organizations.

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