Exploring the Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction for Saudi Private Sector C-Level Employees

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction among private sector employees in Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire measured WLB, satisfaction, and demographics for 106 C-level employees. Correlation analysis found higher perceived WLB associated with greater job satisfaction. Regression analysis revealed WLB positively predicted satisfaction, indicating implementing WLB policies could potentially improve Saudi employees' performance and retention. Recommendations include offering flexible arrangements like telecommuting and leave time. Findings highlight the need for Saudi private sector employers to prioritize WLB to support employees' satisfaction and sustain workplace effectiveness. Further research can explore WLB's impact across demographics.

KEYWORDS

Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Talent Management, Employee Attitudes, Organizational Culture, Flexible Working, Work-Family Conflict, Work Stress, Employee Retention, Employee Productivity

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance (WLB) is a critical focus area for today's organizations and employees globally. WLB involves effectively managing the constant juggling act between intense professional obligations and responsibilities, and demands from one's personal life outside of work (Shabir et al., 2022; Zimmerman, 2021). Maintaining equilibrium and harmony between competing work and personal life commitments has progressively become more challenging for employees across the world. As workplace pressures continue to build and jobs require longer hours and more cognitive, emotional, and physical investment, individuals often struggle to achieve satisfying balance (Adame-Sánchez et al., 2016). Experts consistently highlight the adverse impacts of poor WLB, including escalated stress, exhaustion, dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, lower engagement, and reduced career motivation and organizational commitment (De Simone et al., 2014; Deery & Jago, 2015). Poor WLB diminishes both employee wellbeing and organizational performance.

As a result, WLB has gained strategic importance for employers seeking to retain top talent and human capital in an intensely competitive labor market. Beyond just attracting talent, supporting employees' WLB is imperative for motivating, engaging, and sustaining a skilled, productive workforce. This is especially relevant as newer generations such as millennials highly prioritize WLB in their career decisions (Twenge, 2010). Lack of WLB vastly increases turnover risk, undermining
the significant investments organizations make to recruit and develop skilled talent (Deery & Jago, 2015). Therefore, leading global companies are elevating WLB as a human resources priority and formulating progressive WLB policies like remote work, flexible schedules, paid leave, meditation breaks, counseling, exercise incentives, and other innovative practices (Lee-Ross, 2015). Adoption of such initiatives has been linked to beneficial organizational outcomes including enhanced retention, performance, engagement, innovation, and overall employee well-being (Bloom et al., 2011).

Within the Middle East, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) provides an interesting backdrop to examine WLB, which remains relatively understudied in the Gulf region (Afiouni et al., 2014). Saudi Arabia has witnessed immense economic development and social change in recent decades. Major reforms have expanded educational access, women’s workforce participation, and private sector jobs for Saudi citizens (Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014). This rapid modernization has also intensified work demands, highlighting the growing need for Saudi organizations to embrace WLB. Both public- and private-sector employers must implement progressive human resource strategies focused on WLB to attract and retain top local talent, especially among the educated younger Saudi generation (Achoui & Mansour, 2007; Darwish et al., 2023). However, empirical studies exploring how WLB impacts key outcomes like Saudi employees’ engagement and job satisfaction remain limited.

This paper focuses specifically on Saudi Arabia’s influential private sector by investigating the relationship between perceived WLB and job satisfaction for employees in private companies (Yusoff et al., 2015). The private sector accounts for a sizable portion of Saudi employment and faces ongoing challenges retaining skilled local employees (Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014). This research aims to provide Saudi private-sector leaders and human resources executives with data-driven insights on employees’ WLB perceptions and their link to attitudinal outcomes. As retaining and motivating top Saudi talent is critical for private-sector growth and competitiveness, focusing on WLB can potentially enhance retention while supporting employees’ needs (Moloantoa, 2015). The findings can shape policies to create a satisfying, engaging workplace.

This study examined the following key research questions: What is the relationship between perceived WLB and job satisfaction for Saudi private-sector employees? Do employees reporting higher WLB also indicate greater job satisfaction than those perceiving lower WLB?

It was hypothesized that higher perceived WLB would have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction. Employees perceiving greater ability to balance work and personal life demands would correspondingly report higher job satisfaction (Haar et al., 2014). The literature establishes linkages between WLB and key attitudes like satisfaction (Syrek et al., 2013). However, generating local Saudi evidence is crucial, given the distinct cultural and organizational dynamics. The research model and hypotheses were quantitatively tested via a survey of Saudi private-sector professionals.

On a practical level, this study aims to inform organizational policies and interventions to promote Saudi employees’ WLB and job satisfaction (Deery & Jago, 2015). The private sector must take the lead in adopting progressive WLB practices like telecommuting, flexible schedules, and adequate leave time to attract, engage and retain top local talent (Lee-Ross, 2015). While this study focuses on Saudi private companies, the insights it yields could also be relevant for public-sector entities seeking to support employees’ personal-professional life equilibrium to strengthen organizational outcomes (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2011). With Saudi citizens increasingly prioritizing WLB, both private and public employers must emphasize WLB within their human capital strategies (Delecta, 2011).

For Saudi Arabia’s leadership, this research offers data and recommendations to catalyze progress on national strategic priorities. Enhanced WLB directly aligns with realizing the Saudi Vision 2030 goals of boosting citizen participation in the private-sector workforce while fueling innovation, productivity, and global competitiveness (Alshammary, 2014). The ability to craft policies nurturing satisfied, engaged Saudi knowledge workers in the era of Vision 2030 will be integral for sustainable growth (Al-Asmari, 2008; AlzaidAlsharif, 2022). This study aims to contribute locally applicable insights on how supporting employees’ WLB needs through responsive workplace policies can significantly improve satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Darwish et al., 2023). The findings