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Understanding the Factors Affecting the Quality of Working Life in The Arabian Public Sectors: An Analysis of Administrative Leadership and Organizational Climate

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Abstract

In today's dynamic business environment, organizations need to address various factors to ensure stability and improve their performance. This study focuses on the quality of working life (QWL) in the Arabian public sectors and examines the influence of administrative leadership and organizational climate on QWL. The research adopts a qualitative approach to understand the current context and employs a literature review to explore the relationship between leadership styles, organizational climate, and QWL. QWL encompasses multiple dimensions such as employee satisfaction, well-being, organizational commitment, job embeddedness, and other factors that contribute to a positive work environment. The study highlights the importance of leadership in shaping QWL, with specific emphasis on paternalistic leadership, which is prevalent in majority Arabian public sector. Furthermore, it emphasizes the significance of organizational climate in promoting QWL. The findings of this research can provide insights for organizations in the public sector to enhance the quality of working life and improve organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: *Quality of Working Life (QWL); Administrative Leadership; Organizational Climate; Public Sector; Arab Countries.*



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1. Introduction

The more dynamic environment that today's businesses encounter has necessitated the discussion of numerous new subjects in order to address the unstable environment both internally and externally. As a result, effective answers to meet these criteria take several forms, such as focusing on human resources and improving working conditions, which serve as the foundation for providing services and attaining customer satisfaction and loyalty (AbdElgawad, 2016). As a result, analyzing work environment circumstances is critical for organizational success and development (Kumar and Rajendran, 2018; Krishnakumar and Sugavanewari, 2012). Employees are also happier at work. Thus, it contributes to increased organizational performance, addresses employees' needs and desires, and fosters pleasant contact among them, all of which increase organizational effectiveness.

Researchers have recently focused on variations appearing across diverse leadership styles, with some of those concerns focusing on connections and interpersonal abilities associated to leadership effectiveness (Koo and Park, 2017). During this time, Paternalistic Leadership emerged as one of the most prevalent leadership styles in Chinese culture, as well as in Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East (Lee et al., 2018; Mansur et al., 2017). Which is primarily built on concern for subordinates, protecting their interests, respecting and appreciating them as family members, and fostering a family atmosphere at work. The literature cites the positive



effects of paternalistic leadership on subordinates' attitudes and the creation of an appropriate work environment to ensure subordinates' satisfaction, commitment, and embeddedness (Mussolino and Calabrò, 2014; Hakimian et al., 2014; Anwar, 2013).

1.1 Study Problem

In recent years, "Quality of Working Life" (QWL) programs have played a significant role in enhancing working labor productivity in many large corporations and organizations (Horst et al., 2014). And a number of experts believe that part of the decline in productivity and product quality in several of the main industrial countries was caused by shortcomings in working-life quality as well as changes in employee interests and privileges (Rastegari, 2010). The results are expected to show that there is a relationship between administrative leadership and organizational climate on the quality of working life in the Arabian public sector.

1.2 Study Questions

The problem of the current study can be summarized in the following questions:

1. What is the effect of administrative leadership on the quality of working life in the Arabian public sectors?
2. what is the effect of organizational climate on the quality of working life in the Arabian public sectors?



1.3 Study Objectives

The problem of the current study can be summarized in the following objectives:

1. To understand the effect of administrative leadership on the quality of working life in the Arabian public sectors.
2. To understand the effect of organizational climate on the quality of working life in the Arabian public sectors.

2. Methodology

The study employs qualitative research, a technique designed to first determine the current context of a particular event before attempting to provide an explanation. As a result, it is focused on accurately depicting the event and is based on the study of reality or the event as it truly occurs (Creswell, 2003).

The qualitative method is important in research since it is viewed as a core tenet of scientific inquiry and is usually regarded as the only way capable of researching many human fields. The qualitative method is concerned with precisely characterizing and communicating the phenomenon both qualitatively and numerically, and it involves treating the phenomenon as it actually is, in accordance with its definition (Williams, 2007).



The study followed the qualitative approach to understand the effect of administrative leadership and organizational climate on the quality of working life in the Arabian public sector.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Quality of Work Life

Quality of work life (QWL) has been viewed as an indicator of an organization's ability to conduct integrated, planned, and dynamic operations in response to employees' needs (Afsar and Burcu, 2014; Nafei, 2015), with the goal of improving various aspects that affect employees' professional and personal lives (Jayakumar and Kalaiselvi, 2012). Furthermore, it provides a safe working environment (Gayathiri and Ramakrishnan, 2013), which helps the organization, employees, and other stakeholders achieve their goals (Almalki et al., 2012; Afşar, 2015; Ogungbamila and Idemudia, 2016).

QWL refers to employee satisfaction and well-being (Gayathiri and Ramakrishnan, 2013; Ajala, 2013), organizational commitment (Afşar, 2015), job embeddedness (Nafei, 2015), creativity, job security, turnover intention (Zhao et al., 2013), work ethics, workplace relationships, learning opportunities (Nanjundeswaras and Swamy, 2015), equitable wages, career growth opportunities, personal development, Human Resources Productivity (Barzegar et al., 2012), participation in decision



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making at the workplace, (e.g., Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2015; Ogungbamila and Idemudia, 2016).

There are six Dimensions for QWL, according to (Seashore et al., 1983; Cammann et al., 1983; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), (2002): the moral conditions of the work environment, job characteristics, wages, and rewards, teamwork, the head's method in supervision, and participation in decision-making (Nafei, 2015; AL-Maghrabi, 2004).

Because of its influence on employee behavior and attitudes, leadership is one of the most important antecedents of QWL in the corporate setting (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2012). Much research has been conducted to investigate the association between different leadership styles and QWL, according to the literature. Transformational leadership and spiritual leadership have been proven to be positively associated with work life quality (Devi, 2015; Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2015).

Arab countries, according to Hofstede (1980), are characterized by high power distance, relatively strong uncertainty avoidance, low individualism, and moderate masculinity/femininity (Dajani, 2018; Beugelsdijk et al., 2017). This combination suggests that in Arab cultures, employees accept an unequal distribution of power and expect to be directed by leaders whose authority they respect; they are unlikely to expect to participate in organizational decision-making, where centralization has spread and an autocratic paternalistic leadership style



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has prevailed. Individuals are also likely to appreciate the security offered by the presence of defined laws, norms, and procedures governing their working lives, as well as by being long-term members of an organization (Beugelsdijk et al., 2017). They also prefer to avoid problems and hazards in their employment rather than take risks. They will be happy with their use of organization and cooperation since they work together for survival, but they don't care about those outside their team and believe that seniority is the basis of promotion (Dajani, 2018; Dajani and Mohamad, 2017).

According to Wagner and Harter (2006), an employee's perceived QWL is predominantly affected by two elements, both of which are under their immediate supervisor's control: first, the key QWL factor is feeling valued for accomplishing important work. Second, employees want to believe that "their work matters." The term 'quality at work' was also addressed in several research (Steininger et al., 2003) that focused on determining the new work environment criteria for high quality services. Furthermore, research have looked at QWL in terms of organizational development, performance, and QWL improvement (Ramstad, 2009). The role of QWL is also critical in forecasting employee stress and burnout, which can arise due to a lack of resources and support from the organization (Khaghanizadeh et al., 2008; Bragard et al., 2015). QWL is also linked to the concept of employee loyalty, and firms implement employee loyalty programs to inspire employees and highlight the company's best performers in order to improve their commitment



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(Wahlberg et al., 2017). staff loyalty, in particular, is seen to be important in lowering turnover and increasing staff retention (Dizaho & Othman, 2013; Lu et al., 2016; Miller 2017). Since improving quality of work life promotes employee happiness and satisfied employees are more loyal (Matzler & Renzl, 2006), QWL that improves satisfaction may also result in employee loyalty. Previous research indicates that job qualities, job satisfaction, and employee empowerment all have a direct impact on employee loyalty (Chen, 2006; Kuo et al., 2010; Turkyilmaz et al., 2011; Nayak et al., 2018). Employee loyalty is found to be substantially associated to organizational commitment in a recent study by Yao et al., (2019). Their study showed evidence that both behavior and attitudinal loyalty are outcomes of organizational commitment in the hotel business.

3.2 Leadership

According to Omolayo, (2007) leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary cooperation of subordinates in order to achieve organizational goals. Organizations now require competent leaders who comprehend the complexity of a quickly changing global environment. Employees will be more successful if the task is highly structured and the leader has a solid relationship with them (Smith, 1998). Smith's research also found that democratic leaders take great care to include all team members in discussions, and that they can work with a small but highly motivated team. Leadership effectiveness, leadership role, and its influence on performance, leadership behaviors, and attitudes



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are all measured by Barchiesi and La Bella (2007). It was discovered that high leadership indexes are not related to past performance records, but are associated with a higher potential for enhanced performance and a higher reputation of the organization, indicating a meaningful influence of behavioral complexity and dynamics on the perceived level of leadership.

According to Fang et al. (2009), leadership style can positively improve organizational commitment and job satisfaction, whereas job satisfaction can negatively affect organizational commitment and performance. Leadership is primarily culturally oriented, embracing traditional beliefs, conventions, and values as well as a preoccupation (Prideaux & Be, 2007). According to Victor and Soutar (2005), the leader's immediate and extended family, clan, and tribe have a substantial influence on the leader's leadership style. This study investigates the connections between organizational leadership and corporate ethics, thereby contributing to the improvement of organizational life, which may benefit both individuals of the organization and the larger community. According to Ye et al. (2011), employees' perceptions of the executive's transactional or transformational leadership style have a strong favorable link with perceptions of the executive's encouragement elements of its innovation climate.

According to Podsakoff et al. (1990), leadership conduct can effect employee trust and happiness with the organization, as well as



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organizational citizenship behavior, which directly increases the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. Mc Neese-Smith D (1995) highlighted how hospital directors' leadership conduct is highly related to productivity, job happiness, and organizational commitment of staff. Transactional leadership is defined as rewarding subordinates for their efforts and performance. According to Xu (2008), transformational leadership theory is thought to improve subordinates' performance through transforming employees' motives and values.

Bernard and Thomas (1990) classified leadership styles as transformative or transactional. Individual influence, spiritual encouragement, and intellectual stimulation are qualities of transformational leadership. They frequently consider the person, build an open atmosphere, trust the team to achieve their goals, and maximize the potential of the staff. Transactional leadership focuses on the basic and external demands of employees, and the relationship between leaders and subordinates is contractual. They tend to achieve organizational goals through pacific job roles and mission design; their primary goal is to keep the company stable. However, based on the literature, it is possible to outline the many types of leadership styles and their impact on employee happiness, teamwork, organizational change, and employee performance.

3.3 Organizational Climate



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One of the most important aspects of a great workplace is the organizational atmosphere. It is commonly defined as an organization's emphasis on and focuses on innovation, flexibility, application, recognition, concern for employees' well-being, learning and development, citizenship and ethics, quality performance, practices structure, leadership, and goals and objectives (Gupta and Sharma, 2016). According to Zhang and Liu (2010), organizational climate is the overall perception that people have of their organizations. As a result, it is a global manifestation of what an organization is. The convulsiveness of the organizational climate is determined by a number of elements, including organizational context, organizational structure, company conventions, and values. Physical environment, communication, incentives system, employee encouragement, performance evaluation system, training and development program, and supervision are also included (Chandrasekar, 2011). Adeyemo et al., (2015) defined the four corresponding climate types based on the employees' quality of work life. These are: group climate, developmental climate, rational goal climate, and internal process. The idea of organizational climate is a generic view that people use when thinking about and characterizing the organizations in which they work (Schneider et al., 2013). Organizational climate, defined as how organizational members perceive and characterize their environment in an attitudinal and value-based manner, has been asserted as an important and influential aspect of employee satisfaction and retention, as well (Ali and Patnaik, 2014).



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Calahane and Sites (2008) define organizational climate as the collective perception of the work environment by individuals within a common system. The climate is a stable organizational characteristic that is maintained over time and accumulates significant inertia as generations of workers come and depart (Calahane & Sites 2008). Organizational climate is a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment that is perceived by members, influences their behavior, and can explain in terms of values a certain collection of organizational qualities (Ali and Patnaik, 2014). According to Adeyemo et al., (2015), climate perceptions are meaningful abstractions of sets of cues, with the cues being the many distinct events, conditions, practices, and procedures that occur in an organization's everyday activity. Litwin (2001) defined organizational climate as "a set of measurable characteristics that members can perceive directly or indirectly in the work environment," and as a description of environmental factors, it could aid researchers in determining the effects of environment on employee motivation. Patterson et al., (2004), on the other hand, defined climate as those components of the social environment that organizational members consciously notice. Organizational climate is defined broadly as a psychological state that is strongly influenced by organizational conditions such as systems, structure, and managerial behavior, as well as perception of how things are in the organizational environment, which is made up of a variety of elements or dimensions (Denison, 1996). It can also be used to non-work



social systems such as families, groups, and dyadic interactions (Aarons & Sawitzky 2006).

3.4 Quality of Working in The Arabian Public Sectors

In terms of job content and workplace environment, QWL has a mutual relationship with involvement and satisfaction (Al Kahtani & Allam 2014). Researchers, on the other hand, believe that enhancing QWL is an indicator to enhance efforts through motivation to complete the organization's objective (Allam, 2017) and to initiate engagement tactics among employees for better performance to have QWL (Allam, 2017). Quality of work life is a notion or philosophy that states that human resources are one of the organization's cornerstones since they are law-abiding, accountable, proficient, and trustworthy; therefore, they should be treated with complete respect and dignity. Numerous research has been started to better understand QWL with various variables among personnel from various industries (Allam, 2019; Afsar, 2014; Ali & Zilli, 2013).

Nair (2013) proposed that QWL comprises not only job satisfaction, relationships with colleagues, and remuneration, but also a sense of well-being that can be witnessed in their life. Many researchers discovered that QWL and its different aspects, such as working conditions, capability at work, appropriate and fair pay, and opportunity at work, had a significant impact on job participation. This demonstrates that QWL is associated



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with increased job involvement (Allam, 2007; Allam & Ali, 2007; Hassan & Ahmed, 2011; Al Kahtani & Allam, 2014).

Saudi Arabia is one example of an Arabian country that is developing workplace tools and changing the culture of the public sector. This government has been converting its economy from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy through various projects and programs in many fields under Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia's largest administrative reform. As a result, substantial structural and operational shifts are occurring in various sectors (Rahman and Al-Borie, 2021; Vision, 2030). Various obstacles in work life and job performance in Saudi Arabia have been noted as a result of the big expatriate workforce. Managers, for example, may find it difficult to manage a diverse workforce (Al-Dossary, 2022). These barriers, however, have been surmounted as a consequence of tremendous empowerment from Saudi Arabia authorities and top management backing within the business itself. As a result, the quality of life for employees in the Saudi public sector is predicted to increase in comparison to the low levels of QWL identified in some research, such as the study conducted by Alam and Shaik (2020).

Another successful example of changing the organizational climate and cultures in public sectors is UAE. Yaghi and Yaghi (2014) conducted a study to measure the quality of working life (QWL) of 450 national employees in the public and commercial sectors of the UAE. Employees had above-average felt QWL, according to univariate and multivariate



studies. Managerial attitude, reputation, compensation and benefits, and professional growth possibilities were all essential variables in improving work-life quality.

In general, Arab countries must adopt a variety of leadership styles in the workforce to accommodate major changes, whether internal or external, in order to meet human needs and organizational goals.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this paper aimed to understand the factors affecting the quality of working life in the Arabian public sector, specifically focusing on administrative leadership and organizational climate. The study employed a qualitative research approach to accurately depict the current context and provide an explanation of the phenomenon.

The study involves qualitative research, a technique aimed to first discover the current context of a specific incident before attempting to explain it. As a result, it is focused on accurately depicting the event and is founded on the study of reality or the event as it occurs in real life.

The literature review highlighted the importance of quality of work life (QWL) in organizations and its impact on employee satisfaction, well-being, commitment, creativity, and performance. Leadership was identified as a crucial factor influencing QWL, with transformational and spiritual leadership styles being positively associated with work life quality. Additionally, the cultural context of Arab countries, was



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considered, indicating a preference for paternalistic leadership and a high power distance.

Organizational climate was also explored as a significant aspect of a great workplace, encompassing factors such as innovation, flexibility, recognition, employee well-being, and ethics. The organizational climate was found to influence employee satisfaction and retention.

Based on the study's objectives, the findings indicated that administrative leadership and organizational climate have a substantial impact on the quality of working life in the Arabian public sector. Effective administrative leadership, particularly using transformational and spiritual leadership styles, can contribute to a positive work environment and enhance employees' satisfaction, commitment, and performance. Similarly, fostering a supportive and conducive organizational climate, characterized by factors such as recognition, employee well-being, and ethical practices, can also positively influence the quality of working life.

This research provides valuable insights for organizations in the Saudi Arabian and UAE public sector, highlighting the importance of effective leadership and a favorable organizational climate in promoting a high quality of working life for employees. By prioritizing these factors, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, well-being, and productivity, leading to improved organizational effectiveness and success. Further research can delve deeper into specific strategies and interventions that organizations can implement to optimize administrative



leadership and cultivate a positive organizational climate, thus further enhancing the quality of working life in the public sector.

Based on the conclusions reached by the study, the study came out with the following recommendations:

1. **Implement Transformational Leadership:** According to the study, transformational leadership has a beneficial impact on the quality of working life (QWL). Organizations in the Saudi public sector could consider implementing transformational leadership approaches as a managerial proposal. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their staff by providing support and encouragement, as well as building a great work atmosphere. This leadership style has the potential to improve employee satisfaction, well-being, dedication, and overall QWL.
2. **Foster a Positive Organizational Climate:** The research highlights the importance of organizational climate in improving QWL. Organizations should focus on developing a favorable organizational climate that fosters employee well-being and satisfaction in order to improve the quality of working life. This can be accomplished by encouraging open communication, recognition, learning and development opportunities, and employee participation in decision-making processes.
3. **Address Cultural aspects:** Because paternalistic leadership is widespread in Saudi Arabia, firms should consider cultural aspects



when executing leadership and organizational climate initiatives. It is critical to understand the expectations and preferences of Saudi public sector personnel, such as respect for authority, job security, and the value of hierarchy. Aligning leadership and organizational activities with cultural values and norms can help to increase QWL.

4. **Regularly Evaluate and Monitor QWL:** Organizations should put in place methods to evaluate and monitor the quality of working life on a regular basis. Employee surveys, focus groups, or individual interviews may be used to get input on various aspects of QWL. These evaluations' findings can assist identify areas for improvement and lead future actions aimed at improving QWL.
5. **Continuous Improvement and Employee Involvement:** Organizations should promote a culture of continuous improvement and employee involvement in order to sustain progress in QWL. Encourage employees to take an active role in identifying areas for improvement and making suggestions for bettering their working conditions. Employees' sense of ownership can be increased by involving them in decision-making processes and considering their viewpoints, which can lead to a healthy work environment.



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