

Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction in the Era of Saudi Arabia's New Lifestyle: A Study on Expatriate Retention

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction in the context of Saudi Arabia's new lifestyle, with a specific focus on expatriate retention. The purpose of this study is to provide a deeper understanding of how WLB influences expatriate job satisfaction and ultimately impacts their decision to stay or leave their positions in Saudi Arabia. A qualitative methodology was used, utilizing semi-structured interviews with a sample of 15 individuals representing different industries. Participants were selected based on their status as expatriate workers and their experiences with the new lifestyle in Saudi Arabia. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and themes in the data. The results reveal a significant relationship between WLB and job satisfaction among expatriate workers. Participants emphasized the importance of having sufficient time for personal and family activities outside of work, as well as flexible working arrangements. Achieving WLB was found to enhance job satisfaction, leading to higher levels of commitment and retention. Conversely, participants who experienced work-life imbalance reported lower job satisfaction and expressed a greater likelihood of seeking opportunities elsewhere. These outcomes underscore the significance of promoting WLB initiatives within organizations operating in Saudi Arabia. Employers should consider implementing policies and practices that support employees in managing their work and personal lives effectively. By doing so, organizations can enhance job satisfaction, improve retention rates among expatriate workers, and ultimately contribute to their long-term success in the evolving Saudi Arabian lifestyle.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Expatriate Retention, Saudi Arabia's new lifestyle.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and rapid economic expansion, businesses in Saudi Arabia are faced with increasing competitiveness and the need to effectively manage their human resources (Adnan et al., 2021). To achieve organizational objectives, many businesses have recognized the importance of WLB initiatives. WLB refers to the ability of expatriates in Saudi Arabia to flexibly manage their working hours and balance their employment with other obligations such as family and social activities (Frame and Hartog, 2013). By promoting WLB, organizations aim to create a sense of fulfillment and contentment among expatriate employees.

Job satisfaction is another crucial factor that can influence WLB. Dissatisfaction with one's job can lead to negative attitudes and behavior, while job satisfaction fosters enthusiasm, productivity, and positive work outcomes (Khoerunnisa et al., 2019; Sutrisno, 2017; Mangkunegara, 2017). The elements affecting job satisfaction include career prospects, job security, income, company management, supervision, work environment, social interaction, and facilities (Sutrisno, 2017; Mangkunegara, 2017). Creating and maintaining employee job satisfaction is vital for organizational sustaina-

bility because satisfied employees contribute to improved efficiency and productivity (Kanwar et al. 2009).

Expatriate retention is a critical concern in Saudi Arabia because of the shortage of trained labor and high employee turnover rates. Retention refers to an organization's ability to retain its desired personnel for an extended period, establishing long-term commitment between employees and the organization (Johnson et al., 2000). Retaining skilled employees is essential to enhancing performance and remaining competitive in the market. Organizations strive to attract qualified candidates, select the most suitable candidates, and implement strategies to retain them. By aligning corporate values, offering support, and fostering a sense of belonging, companies can strengthen the connection between employees and the organization, leading to increased retention rates.

While previous studies have examined the relationship between WLB, job satisfaction, and expatriate retention, there is a need for further research that specifically addresses the post-2021 landscape in Saudi Arabia. Recent studies have shed light on the impact of WLB on job satisfaction, with a focus on the mediating role of training and development (Aruldoss et al., 2022) as well as its impact on job performance (Borgia et al., 2022). Additionally, Ugwu et al. (2022) explored the relationship between work engagement, WLB, and remote work arrangements. However, despite these advancements, there remains a dearth of research that examines the unique context of Saudi Arabia's new lifestyle and its

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implications for expatriate workers in terms of WLB and job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the existing literature has primarily focused on quantitative approaches, such as surveys, when studying WLB and job satisfaction. There is a lack of qualitative research on the subjective experiences and perspectives of expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia's evolving work environment. Qualitative methodologies, such as interviews, allow for a deeper understanding of the intricacies of WLB and job satisfaction, capturing the nuances and contextual factors that influence expatriate retention.

Therefore, this study aims to address these research gaps by qualitatively exploring the impact of WLB on job satisfaction and expatriate retention in the context of Saudi Arabia's new lifestyle after 2021. By utilizing interviews and focusing on the subjective experiences of expatriate workers, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to their job satisfaction, retention, and overall well-being in the rapidly changing work environment of Saudi Arabia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Numerous studies have sought to define and identify elements that affect work satisfaction. Understanding the causes of work happiness can be categorized into two main perspectives: the content view and the flexible process view (Abdulaziz et al., 2022; Foster, 2000; Spector, 1997). The content view examines job satisfaction from the perspective of demand fulfillment, while the flexible process's view emphasizes cognitive activities related to job satisfaction.

WLB is a broad term that encompasses establishing the right priorities between "work" (career and aspirations) and "life" (happiness, leisure, family, and personal development). Pandiangan (2018) highlights the importance of achieving WLB to balance personal and professional lives, leading to reduced workplace stress and tiredness. Recent research by Lestari and Margaretha (2021) further emphasizes that WLB impacts employee commitment, work satisfaction, and organizational performance.

As proposed by Siagian and Sondang (2002), job happiness acts as a mechanism for employees to evaluate the quality of their employment. JS is a personal trait that varies among individuals and reflects the degree to which their demands and expectations are fulfilled. Kuswadi (2005) suggested that work satisfaction involves meeting employee needs, especially those of expatriates, in accordance with their expectations. Effective compensation is crucial for leaders to address distinct degrees of job satisfaction among employees.

Recent studies have provided valuable insights into the relationship between work and life balance and job satisfaction, shedding light on their dynamic interplay. Aruldoss et al. (2022) investigated the moderating role of training and development in the relationship between WLB and job satisfaction, revealing a significant positive effect. Borgia et al. (2022) examined the impact of WLB initiatives on employee satisfaction and found that flexible work arrangements positively influence job satisfaction. Moreover, Palumbo et al.

(2022) explored the influence of WLB on job satisfaction among European workers, highlighting the importance of supportive organizational policies and practices.

Organizational factors play a significant role in shaping WLB and job satisfaction. Sun et al (2023) found that career and incentives ideals on work–life balance is stronger affects job satisfaction among employees. Flexibility in work arrangements such as telecommuting and flexible schedules has been associated with increased employment. Furthermore, Duan et al. (2023) found that digital technologies significantly improve coordination and knowledge sharing between individuals, leading to better work–life balance and improved job performance and satisfaction.

Research by (2018) confirmed the significant impact of WLB on job satisfaction. Achieving a balance between work and personal life is crucial for individuals to experience contentment, both within and outside the workplace. When individuals effectively manage the demands of work along with their personal lives, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations that prioritize WLB and provide support systems for employees can contribute to their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Furthermore, job characteristics also contribute to WLB and job satisfaction. For instance, Ugwu et al. (2022) revealed that work engagement significantly influences job satisfaction among employees. Expected relations and employee job attitudes have been identified as factors that can impact WLB and job satisfaction (Parray et al. 2022). Additionally, the availability of developmental opportunities and growth prospects within a job has been linked to higher levels of job satisfaction.

Understanding the relationship between work and life balance and job satisfaction is crucial for organizations aiming to create a positive work environment and enhance employee well-being. The content view and flexible process's view offer theoretical frameworks for comprehending the multi-dimensional nature of job satisfaction. Recent research highlights the positive effects of WLB initiatives on job satisfaction, emphasizing the need for supportive organizational practices and job characteristics. By addressing employee demands and fostering WLB, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction and create a more fulfilling work environment.

2.2. Work-Life Balance and Employee Retention

Employee retention is a critical concern for organizations in today's knowledge-driven economy. With a competitive labor market and ample opportunities available to talented individuals, organizations face the challenge of retaining competent employees (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022; Ferreira et al., 2017). In this dynamic corporate climate, employees have increased flexibility and choices regarding their organizational affiliations (Panda and Sahoo, 2021). To address this challenge, organizations need to implement effective strategies, one of which is the implementation of WLB programs.

Research conducted by Lee et al. (2022) indicated that WLB has a significant relationship with intrinsic motivation and impact retention. WLB is recognized as a crucial factor in promoting employee retention. Garg (2016) further supports

this notion by highlighting the favorable influence of WLB on employee retention. By implementing WLB practices, organizations can create an environment in which employees feel supported in managing their personal and professional lives, leading to higher job satisfaction and increased commitment to the organization.

Managing employee retention requires strategic initiatives to motivate and engage employees, ensuring that they choose to stay with the organization and remain productive (Bharath, 2023). An effective employee retention program plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining key talent, reducing turnover, and minimizing associated costs. Retaining high-quality employees is more efficient and cost-effective than constantly recruiting, training, and orienting new employees (George, 2015).

Organizations that prioritize WLB options, such as flexible work hours, job sharing, and breaks, demonstrate their commitment to supporting the synchronization of employees' personal and professional lives, thereby enhancing employee retention.

Recognizing the importance of WLB in fostering employee retention, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has implemented a series of financial and social adjustments to improve this relationship and provide greater freedom for individuals from all sectors. By aligning with global trends and acknowledging the significance of WLB in attracting and retaining talent, Saudi Arabia aims to enhance its organizational productivity and overall effectiveness.

WLB plays a vital role in employee retention and organizational performance. Organizations that prioritize WLB initiatives demonstrate their commitment to supporting employees' personal and professional well-being, leading to higher job satisfaction, increased commitment, and reduced turnover. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's efforts to improve WLB reflects recognition of its positive impact on employee retention and the overall success of organizations. By implementing effective WLB programs, organizations can create a conducive environment that fosters employee satisfaction, engagement, and long-term commitment. These factors contribute to organizational productivity, employee well-being, and, ultimately, the achievement of organizational goals.

2.3. Research Methodology

In this study on WLB and job satisfaction among expatriates in the era of Saudi Arabia's new lifestyle, a qualitative research design was chosen. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of individuals' perspectives and experiences, providing rich insights into their motivations, perceptions, and behaviors (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The constructivist approach was adopted, focusing on understanding how expatriates make judgments and how they perceive the various factors influencing their WLB and job satisfaction (Symon and Cassell, 2012).

The population of interest for this study consists of expatriates residing in Saudi Arabia. Expatriates from various industries and nationalities were selected to ensure diversity and a comprehensive representation of the expatriate community. The sample size was determined based on the principle of saturation, where data collection continued until no

new insights or themes emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions.

- **Data Collection Methods**

Data collection involved conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with expatriates. In-depth interviews allowed for individual exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to WLB and job satisfaction. Focus group discussions facilitated interactive and dynamic exchanges among participants, enabling the exploration of shared experiences and diverse perspectives.

- **Research Tools:**

Semi-structured interview guides and discussion protocols were developed to ensure consistency and guide the data collection process. These tools were designed to capture participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards WLB, job satisfaction, and the impact of Saudi Arabia's new lifestyle on their employment retention. Probing questions and prompts were used to elicit detailed responses and encourage participants to reflect on their personal experiences. The collected data, including interview transcripts and notes from focus group discussions, were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involved identifying patterns, recurring themes, and categories within the data. This process included coding the data, grouping similar codes into themes, and interpreting the meanings and implications of the identified themes. The analysis was conducted iteratively, allowing for constant comparison and refinement of themes.

- **Ethical Considerations and Research Process**

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the use of the data, and their rights to withdraw at any time. Ethical guidelines, such as anonymity and data protection, were followed during the collection, storage, and reporting of data.

The research process involved the following steps: (1) recruitment and selection of participants from the expatriate community in Saudi Arabia, (2) scheduling and conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, (3) transcribing and organizing the collected data, (4) analyzing the data through thematic analysis, (5) interpreting the findings, and (6) reporting the results in a comprehensive and meaningful manner.

2.4. Analysis and Findings

The findings of the semi-structured interviews conducted in this research shed light on the experiences and challenges faced by expatriates in managing WLB and personal responsibilities in the context of Saudi Arabia's new lifestyle. The objectives of the interviews were to gain insights into expatriates' coping strategies, concerns, and obstacles in both their professional and personal lives, following recent changes in the financial and social aspects of the country.

Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed several key topics, including family relationships, the impact of financial and social changes, entry processes, and employment limitations. These themes are thoroughly discussed in this section and supported by the participants' direct quotes. It is important to note that the quotations presented in this analysis have been slightly modified for clarity to ensure that they can be easily understood by readers whose first language is not English (Santos et al. 2015).

The subsequent sections provide an in-depth exploration of the identified themes, highlighting the unique experiences and perspectives of expatriate participants. By examining their narratives, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to navigate the complexities of WLB and job satisfaction in Saudi Arabia's evolving sociocultural environment.

2.4.1. Work-Related Stressors

The topic of work-related concerns covers all the challenges that individuals experience in their jobs and workplaces, such as workplace safety, work environment, and so on. The replies provided by the workers in relation to their job were further subdivided into the following sub themes based on concerns that were expressed by most of the employees questioned and were addressed by most of them. Among the subthemes are the following:

- **Unstructured work schedule**

During the interviews, a recurring concern among the expatriate workers was the lack of a structured work schedule. Many participants expressed frustration with the chaotic nature of project completion and resulting stress. They emphasized the need for better organization and workload distribution throughout the duration of projects. The unpredictable schedule of meetings and conferences also makes it challenging for employees to plan vacations and holidays with their families. Some quotes from the participants included the following.

- *"Even though my children have summer breaks, I am unable to organize a trip out with them since I never know when, what essential meetings will be planned."*
- *"There has to be greater transparency in the job description."*
- *"The responsibilities that have been assigned to us have become more simplified. I just wish there was a better understanding of the workload."*

The participants also highlighted a lack of leisure time during work hours, with instances of delayed or skipped lunches due to overwhelming workloads. Some employees resorted to having lunch on their desks while working. However, they also had opportunities for informal conversations with colleagues while enjoying tea or coffee. Additionally, some participants expressed a desire for more clearly defined goals and objectives, suggesting that performance reviews should follow a more organized format. These insights provide valuable perspectives on the challenges faced by expatriate workers in managing their work schedules and the impact it has on their WLB and job satisfaction.

- **How Many Years Worked in Saudi Arabia?**

During the interviews, expatriate workers were asked about the duration of their stay in Saudi Arabia and whether they had previous work experience in the country. The responses varied, with expats stating that they had lived and worked in Saudi Arabia for periods ranging from one to ten years. This sub-topic explores the expatriates' experience in adapting to social and economic changes and examines whether there is a correlation between the length of stay and acceptance of the new lifestyle in the Kingdom. The expatriates expressed a preference for longer-term contracts and staying in the Kingdom for extended periods, especially after the financial and social changes in the new lifestyle and the implementation of various policies to improve life in Saudi Arabia. Some quotes from the participants include:

- *"We have previous experience working in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in a variety of fields and for a variety of lengths of time, ranging from one year to five years, and as a result, we are better equipped to deal with any obstacles."*
- *"I would love to accept a long-term contract in Saudi Arabia, but my family would have to accompany me in this scenario."*
- *"I would prefer to have an open contract rather than annual renewals."*
- *"My target is 3-5 years. With Vision 2030 coming up, I feel expats will be pushed away."*

These insights shed light on the expatriates' perspectives on their length of stay, preferences for contract arrangements, and expectations regarding the future in Saudi Arabia.

- **How do you Think this Change in Lifestyle affect your Life Quality?**

The change in lifestyle has had a significant impact on the quality of life for expatriates in Saudi Arabia. Expats have found that living in compounds managed by foreign corporations allows them to experience a lifestyle that is more akin to their home countries. These self-contained communities provide a range of amenities and services, including stores, restaurants, swimming pools, and recreational facilities, which contribute to a higher quality of life. Expatriates have expressed their appreciation for the relatively relaxed regulations in these compounds, enabling them to engage in activities that were previously restricted. They now have more freedom to socialize, watch movies, and interact with friends of different genders. Furthermore, expats have found that the work environment is not vastly different from other locations as long as they maintain a professional demeanor. Quotes from expatriates further emphasize the positive impact of the lifestyle changes:

- *"Significant improvement outside of work. It's now much easier for expat couples to live in KSA."*
- *"Massively, as many of the recent changes assist/help me due to me being from a western background."*
- *"I would say the culture has become more open minded, especially with the younger generation of"*

Saudi nationals. More examples would include sporting events, cinema, and women drivers.”

- *“Many changes coming in the life style recently: more freedom as an expat (especially for my wife), cinemas opening, removal of segregation of restaurants, tourist visas allowing easy family travel”*

These responses highlight the positive experiences of expatriates, indicating that the changes in lifestyle have enhanced their overall quality of life in Saudi Arabia.

- **Family values in Saudi Arabia**

In comparison to those who live in Western nations, Saudis tend to keep their personal lives far more private, and the focus of most daily activities is on the family. It is not unheard of for Saudis to live near, or even with, their extended family members. It is also possible that they may visit their grandparents for supper many times a week at their house. As a direct result of this, some spaces are reserved only for families.

In conclusion, despite the fact that Saudi Arabia is a single nation, its several main areas each have their own distinct culture. Riyadh, the nation's capital, is a contemporary but traditional metropolis that is on par with other major powers in the area. In the meanwhile, Jeddah is a city that successfully combines its ancient and modern aspects while maintaining a laid-back vibe. On the other side, the regions of Khobar and Dammam on the east coast are busier and more often sought after because of their closeness to the less conservative nation of Bahrain.

- **Financial and Social Changes**

In this section, the majority of the expatriates who participated in the interviews confirmed that the economic and social shifts that have taken place over the course of the previous five years have had the greatest impact on their decision to continue working in the Kingdom, and they voiced their desire for increased personal freedoms. Some of the responses given by the expats are:

- *“Far more entertainment available, and dress code changes have made a noticeable improvement. Overall driving on the road is now much safer. Cost of living hasn't had a huge impact yet”*
- *“I think all the implemented changes will be hugely beneficial to Saudi Arabia as a whole. Overall, the country will eventually become more powerful/stronger/respected throughout the world with these changes.”*
- *“Since the introduction of VAT I'm spending more each month, so hopefully annual pay increases occur to counter inflation. Overall, I think the country is pushing towards a better direction regarding cultural laws, and entertainment industries. Dress code, I think everybody (including women) can wear whatever they want, but has to remain respectful.”*

While imported goods and dining out can be expensive, groceries are comparatively inexpensive, often up to 75 percent

lower than Western standards. Saudi Arabia does not impose income tax, and the cost of gasoline and automobiles is lower than in Western countries. Overall, the quality of life for expatriates in Saudi Arabia is generally good, allowing them to afford things that may be unattainable in their home countries.

- **The Challenges in Saudi and Getting a Job**

There are a variety of channels via which one might look for work in a foreign country, and Saudi Arabia is not any different from other markets in this regard. In spite of this, the government has increased its influence over the labor market in recent years as part of its Saudization efforts to increase the number of local jobs available.

The effort that is being made by the government to diversify the economy may result in the creation of new possibilities, especially in the areas of manufacturing, urban planning, resource management, and the service sector.

Interviews for employment are often conducted outside of Saudi Arabia, and candidates typically accept positions only after the employer has advertised the vacancy to Saudi citizens. The process of obtaining a work visa for Saudi Arabia might take up to two months. Employers, also known as sponsors, are the parties responsible for making an application to and obtaining authorization from the Ministry of Labor. After this, you will be required to visit authorized medical facilities in your home country to be examined for infectious diseases and conditions related to your lifestyle. There are a few requirements to meet, and if you are physically present in the country, you will need to go through another round of examinations in order to get your iqama.

Expats are not eligible for Saudi pensions and are thus given a gratuity when their employment in the country comes to an end. Expats are prohibited from working in 41 different occupations. In the event that you decide to make a career change, you are required to get permission from your current employer. Workplaces, particularly in the private sector, are more globalized, and they include a diverse collection of expatriates from all over the globe. It may take those from the outside some time to understand that religious and cultural practices are often integrated into the working environment. It is possible that gatherings will take place around the times of prayer, for example, and Saudi women may opt not to shake hands with males they are not related to, even when they are only being introduced.

Since the transition to the Gregorian or international calendar did not take place until 2016, you should not be startled if you come across references to the lunar Hijri calendar in your day-to-day life. Most businesses now use the Gregorian or international calendar.

Last but not least, get yourself ready for work on Sunday. Because Friday, the day of rest in much of the Middle East, is followed by Saturday as part of the weekend in Saudi Arabia, it is possible that it will take some time before you get used to the workweek. Some of the responses given by the expats are:

- *“Driving is my main challenge outside of the workplace due to the UK driving laws being much strict-*

er/controlled. All traffic violations are professionally 100% enforced by road traffic officers. Every day is a challenge within any workplace, here in Saudi the main challenge for me is the language barrier as I have a strong fluent Scottish accent."

- *"I would say the driving aspect is always very stressful, that hasn't changed at all."*
- *"Working days are different outside KSA"*

Living and working in Saudi Arabia for many foreigners is comparable to having a front-row seat at one of the most exciting socioeconomic dramas taking place at the present time. Along with it come incredible potential to help build a nation that is undergoing transformation in a variety of different industries, ranging from banking and block chain technology to education and the entertainment industry. If you are the sort of person who likes to live in intriguing times, you could certainly do a lot worse than choosing to live in a nation that is lovingly known as the Magic Kingdom.

There is an additional allure for Muslim expatriates in the form of a lifestyle that is centered on Islamic principles and provides convenient access to the holiest places in Islam, which are located in Mecca and Medina. In the meanwhile, families value the opportunity to bring up their children in an international setting that is free of danger and anxiety.

- **Concerns Relating to Oneself**

The topic of self-related concerns covers all the problems that workers confront that are linked to themselves, such as their health, their interests, their entertainment, their "me time," and other similar topics. The replies given by the workers in relation to their jobs were further broken down into the following subthemes. This was done based on concerns that were brought up by the vast majority of the workers who were questioned. The following is a list of the subthemes:

- **Poor management of One's Time**

When asked what they do during their "me-time," the workers grumble that they do not have any time to spend on themselves at all. They claim that they have a lot of things they want to do for their health and interests, but they just cannot find the time to accomplish them. According to the data presented by Roberts (2008)¹, WLB is more about the mindset and is not mostly influenced by work. It is more important to choose schedules and part-time occupations that allow for "Me Time" to be created.

letting go of one's own unique interests and preferences According to Margo, Shaw, Johnson, and Andrey (2008)², women who combine the responsibilities of parenthood and paid work have less opportunities for leisure time. The current research also notes that a significant number of workers (both men and women) who were questioned for the study admitted that they had to give up a variety of pastimes and recreational activities in the past because they were unable to strike a healthy balance between their responsibilities at

work and at home. Many people said that they had to give up activities that helped them stay physically healthy, such as going to the gym, doing aerobics or yoga, swimming on a regular basis, and so on. It was stated by several workers that they were forced to give up their hobbies, such as painting, drawing, playing musical instruments, manufacturing handi-crafts, and other such activities. Some workers had to give up on their usual amount of leisure activities because of the growing number of responsibilities at their jobs. These activities included meditating and going on "random just-me-long drives" on a regular basis.

When there is a lack of pleasure in one of the domains, compensation theory (Lambert 1990) suggests that there are two types of compensation that may be taken (work or home). First, a person may react to unhappiness in one area by chasing rewards in another domain. Alternatively, a person may limit their engagement in the domain that provides the least amount of pleasure.

4.4.2. Family Related Issues

The topic of work-related issues covers all the problems that expats experience that are connected to their families. These problems include complaints and issues that are connected to their roles as parents, as a spouse, and other roles in the family such as a daughter or son or a daughter- or son-in-law, among other roles. The replies given by the expats in relation to their job have been further categorized into the following subthemes. This categorization was done based on concerns that were brought up by the vast majority of the expats who were questioned. The following is a list of the subthemes:

- **Parenting Issues**

This subtheme examines everything that the workers reported in relation to the obstacles they have as parents in maintaining their WLB. Specifically, the subtheme focuses on the difficulties that they confront. Getting their children ready for school before work, leaving and picking them up from school, and not being able to be patient after work to listen to "stories" that their children want to share with them about their school, teachers, and friends are some of the very common challenges faced by the employees in this current study. The study was conducted in order to better understand the challenges that employees face in their jobs. Some people also claim that striking a balance is difficult when parents are required to be there in order to meet with their children's instructors or adhere to their academic requirements.

To quote a few participants from the current sample of female participants in the study:

It is especially difficult to be a parent if you are a woman who is employed outside the home.

"When I get back home, I'm sometimes so exhausted that I take my anger out on my son, even though it's not his fault."

These responses lend credence to the Spillover theory, which postulates that employees take the feelings, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that they develop at work with them into their personal lives and vice versa.

- **Challenges in Marital Life**

This subtheme discusses the issues that the employees reported, which are related to the challenges they face in maintaining a WLB in the role that they play as a spouse, whether it be a husband or a wife. It becomes extremely crucial for a person to spend time with their spouse and to give their spouse time. The few issues that were common included the fact that some men reported their working wives were dissatisfied with them regardless of how much help they provided around the house. Many employees have reported that the schedules of their spouses, such as the international calls that they take at night, make it difficult for them to have dinner together and spend quality time with one another. This presents a challenge for them. According to several workers' reports, either they or their spouses have jobs that require a significant amount of travel, which results in the couple spending very little time together.

2.5. Discussion

WLB has a significant impact on job satisfaction, as evidenced by research conducted with expat workers in Saudi Arabia. The study found a positive correlation between work and life balance and job satisfaction, which aligns with previous research by Haar et al. (2014) and Greenhaus et al. (2003). Furthermore, the research revealed that a healthy WLB is associated with increased employee retention, supported by the findings of Hashim (2016). Maintaining a healthy WLB is crucial not only for individual well-being but also for organizational success. Failure to achieve this balance can have detrimental effects on both employees and the organization as a whole. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to prioritize WLB and retain valuable personnel.

Besides, expat workers in Saudi Arabia recognize the importance of working efficiently and using existing organizational structures while maintaining WLB. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the positive relationship between WLB and job satisfaction.

Employee retention is the voluntary effort of organizations to create an engaging environment for employees throughout their careers. Retaining employees is crucial for organizations to benefit from the knowledge and skills of their workforce, ensuring economic competitiveness. Thus, maintaining a healthy WLB is important for employee retention. The research emphasizes the need to consider the financial and social impact of new lifestyle choices in Saudi Arabia and their relationship with WLB and job satisfaction. Achieving a healthy balance between work and personal life leads to increased satisfaction and a more pleasant working environment, which motivates employees to enhance their performance.

Interviews were conducted with expat workers in Saudi Arabia, focusing on senior and junior personnel in both the private and public sectors. The interviews explored the impact of working conditions and the link between working hours and healthy WLB. The findings indicate that workers have diverse perspectives on the impact of their working circumstances, highlighting the significance of WLB for organizations and their HR policies. Maintaining a happy and healthy balance between work and family life benefits both expatri-

ates and employers. It reduces work-life conflict; improves job satisfaction, performance, and productivity; decreases absenteeism; and increases retention, commitment, and loyalty. Companies should strive to build a culture that promotes WLB and implement policies such as flexible working hours, job sharing, and leave provisions to support employees.

Additional measures, such as providing counseling sessions, promoting emotional well-being through exercise and soft skill development, and creating a supportive work environment free from discrimination and harassment, are recommended. These initiatives contribute to the overall WLB and productivity of expat employees.

This research has practical implications for organizations that aim to retain talent through family friendly policies and WLB practices. By prioritizing WLB, companies can create a positive and supportive environment for expat employees, enhancing their happiness and productivity. It positions the organization as an employer of choice for expatriate workers.

2.6. Conclusion

The research findings were analyzed and categorized into themes and subcategories. The key concerns raised by the participants included work-related issues, financial and social changes, self-related challenges, family-related issues, and other miscellaneous issues. Coping strategies have also been developed to address these challenges. Besides, the results reveal that there is a significant relationship between the financial and social impacts of a new lifestyle (WLB) and job satisfaction. It also highlights the connection between WLB and employee retention. These findings have important implications for company leadership, emphasizing the need to create a positive work environment, provide facilities to support expatriates, ensure fair compensation, and promote open communication between employees and management.

Furthermore, companies can optimize employee satisfaction by aligning individuals' skills and interests with suitable positions, offering in-house training and educational programs for career development, and fostering positive relationships between coworkers. The implementation of flexible work arrangements, including work-from-home options, can contribute to achieving a better WLB, especially in light of the financial and social reforms in Saudi Arabia that have granted more personal freedom to foreigners and increased economic influence to the government. Given the significance of WLB in human resource research, it is expected that future studies will continue to explore this topic. The findings of this research provide evidence supporting the importance of WLB and its impact on various aspects of employee well-being and organizational success.

2.7. Implications

The present study has several practical and theoretical implications. In terms of practical implications, the qualitative study results offer a deeper understanding of WLB, and can be utilized in the fields of industrial relations and counseling for expatriates. The findings can assist human resource departments in developing work-life rules and support systems

that promote a healthy WLB, particularly for expatriates relocating internationally. By incorporating the challenges identified in this research, companies can enhance their employee relations and support programs to address expatriates' specific needs.

Furthermore, the research topics and issues discussed can guide the development of intervention and training programs as well as employee-focused policies. Companies can utilize the study findings to design programs that assist expatriates in managing the challenges they face in balancing work, life, and the self. These programs can provide strategies for time management, stress reduction, and maintaining a healthy WLB, ultimately improving employee performance and well-being.

The theoretical implications of this study are significant. This study contributes to the existing knowledge on WLB by offering a more comprehensive understanding, particularly in the context of expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia. The qualitative insights enrich the current theoretical understanding of WLB and shed light on the unique challenges faced by expatriates in achieving WLB. The research findings can also be applied to industrial relations and counseling. Professionals in these areas can utilize the insights gained from this study to provide guidance and support to expatriate employees, address their specific challenges, and help them navigate their work and personal lives more effectively.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of employee-focused policies that facilitate WLB for expatriates. By considering the challenges identified in this study, organizations can develop policies tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of expatriate employees. These policies can create a supportive environment that enables expatriates to maintain a healthy balance between their personal and professional commitment.

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