

## Employee well-being and work-life balance



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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore employee well-being and work-life balance in Qatar, with attention to the effects of health programs, flexible work arrangements, organizational culture, and leadership practices. A mixed-methods approach was applied, collecting data from 150 employees (white-collar expatriates, blue-collar workers, and Qatari nationals) and interviews with 10 government officials. The findings reveal strong positive associations between well-being, work-life balance, and quality of life, with work-life balance having the greatest influence. Group differences were evident, as blue-collar workers experienced more difficulties in emotional support, family communication, and flexibility, while expatriates and nationals had better access to support programs. The results highlight the importance of organizational culture and leadership commitment in shaping supportive workplaces. Policy recommendations include addressing cultural and linguistic diversity, reinforcing labor laws, improving multilingual communication, and providing culturally sensitive psychosocial support, along with leadership training to strengthen balance. The study concludes that investment in well-being and work-life balance enhances both employees' quality of life and organizational performance.

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### 1. Introduction

Today, the global workplace landscape is shifting rapidly, and it is becoming increasingly important for organizations and employees to consider employee well-being and work-life balance as strategic priorities rather than optional benefits. Although this may seem self-evident, shifting economic imperatives and evolving workplace cultures have redefined sustainable organizational success as contingent on employee satisfaction, health, and overall life quality. There has been a transition from viewing work as merely a means of economic survival to recognizing its role in personal development, engagement, and psychological fulfillment. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this transformation, compelling organizations to rethink fundamental assumptions about how work is structured, prioritized, and experienced (Pandey et al., 2025). This research investigates employee well-being and work-life balance within the distinct socio-

cultural and economic context of Qatar, focusing specifically on differences in experiences and outcomes among white-collar expatriates, blue-collar workers, and Qatari nationals. The study examines how organizational culture, leadership strategies, flexible work arrangements, and wellness programs influence employee outcomes across these groups. In doing so, the study not only identifies effective practices and persistent challenges but also seeks to reveal culturally grounded insights that can inform context-sensitive HR policies in Gulf labor markets. The findings aim to enrich the academic literature and offer practical recommendations for building more inclusive, balanced, and high-performing workplaces in Qatar.

As Qatar advances toward its National Vision 2030 goals, centered on human, social, economic, and environmental development, research on employee well-being and work-life balance becomes increasingly urgent. The Qatari labor market's multinational composition, legal reforms, and cultural expectations present a unique opportunity to examine how global HR principles intersect with local realities.

This study contributes evidence-based insights to inform policymaking, organizational interventions, and leadership practices that promote both human flourishing and institutional resilience in Qatar's diverse workforce. The specific research objectives

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are: (1) to assess the effectiveness of mental and physical health programs in enhancing employee well-being in Qatari workplaces; (2) to evaluate how flexible work arrangements affect job satisfaction and productivity across demographic groups; and (3) to explore the influence of organizational culture on employees' ability to achieve work-life balance in a multicultural environment.

## 2. Literature review

In modern organizational discourse, there is a growing recognition of the value of self-care and meaningful work experiences among employees. This shift reflects a deeper understanding that employees seek not only economic security but also personal fulfillment and psychological well-being in their work. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified this realization, compelling organizations and workers alike to reevaluate workplace structures, priorities, and expectations. This rethinking aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs that, when satisfied, enhance intrinsic motivation and well-being. Additionally, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) provides a useful framework to understand how workplace demands and available resources interact to impact job satisfaction, burnout, and productivity.

According to Tessema et al. (2022), policies promoting flexibility and employee engagement have led to a growing demand for freedom, meaning, and fulfillment at work. Working from home created opportunities for many employees to spend more time with family, focus on well-being, and challenge outdated organizational norms. Tessema et al. (2022) found that remote work experiences empowered employees to seek roles that offered greater autonomy and flexibility. These findings underscore a shift in employee values—from measuring success by output to measuring it by quality of life.

Organizations are now faced with critical questions: Can restructuring roles to promote work-life balance enhance productivity? Are investments in well-being programs justified by long-term gains in performance? A critical assessment of such interventions is necessary to support sustainable organizational success.

Job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation are central to these discussions. Stockkamp et al. (2023) defined intrinsic motivation as engaging in work out of personal interest and internal satisfaction. Pradenas et al. (2021) reinforced this by showing that intrinsic motivation stems from the act of performing the work itself. Manzoor et al. (2021) and Aljumah (2023) emphasized the long-term value of intrinsic rewards, noting that they have a durable impact on employee engagement. Stockkamp et al. (2023) asserted that, unlike extrinsic rewards, intrinsic motivation "never drains," making it essential for sustained performance.

Job satisfaction, an emotional, cognitive, and behavioral response to job experiences, is a crucial determinant of well-being. Montuori et al. (2022) defined it as a pleasurable emotional state derived from one's work. Das (2024) added that job satisfaction results from alignment between employees' expectations and actual work conditions. Satisfied employees are more likely to remain loyal, engaged, and productive over time.

The workplace environment, especially its structure and culture, significantly shapes these experiences. Zheng et al. (2022) and Aljumah (2023) explained that freedom, inclusion, and meaning at work are influenced by cultural norms, communication styles, and decision-making structures. When organizations foster participation, collaboration, and empowerment, employees experience greater well-being and satisfaction.

Work-life balance (WLB) has evolved from a personal aspiration into a strategic imperative. Malik (2023) defined it as the balanced distribution of time and energy between work and personal life, while Panda and Sahoo (2021) highlighted its benefits: reduced stress, improved mental health, and higher productivity. Organizations that prioritize WLB experience benefit for both employees and employers.

Bello et al. (2024) discussed how remote work, flextime, and paid leave can empower employees to manage workloads and personal commitments effectively. They also stress the importance of empowering employees through time management, task planning, and proactive decision-making to achieve optimal balance. These interventions are particularly important in reducing burnout and enhancing long-term organizational sustainability.

Multiple studies confirm the direct link between WLB, well-being, and productivity. Solihu et al. (2023) found that flexible work arrangements, leave policies, and career development opportunities significantly enhance work quality. Marecki (2022) reported that personal-professional harmony leads to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Sun (2024) showed that startups in Shanghai experienced improved innovation and mental health outcomes when WLB programs were implemented effectively. Similarly, Haider et al. (2018) found that psychological well-being mediates the relationship between WLB and job performance.

Gragano et al. (2020) emphasized that WLB strongly influences job satisfaction and mental health. Their findings support organizational efforts to create psychologically safe workplaces. Cvenkel (2021), through qualitative interviews and focus groups, showed that health plans, family activities, and wellness programs significantly boost employee engagement and well-being.

Tessema et al. (2022) emphasized that employees' active involvement in designing well-being and WLB initiatives is essential. Programs are more effective when employees participate in decision-making and evaluation. Flexibility, technological integration, and cultural alignment

were noted as key design features. Despite these insights, a gap remains in the literature regarding how to tailor and evaluate WLB initiatives in multicultural and economically diverse environments such as Qatar. The experiences of blue-collar workers, white-collar expatriates, and nationals differ significantly, and these differences must be addressed to design inclusive and effective programs.

Through the review of the literature and to achieve the research purpose, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1:** Organizations that actively promote mental and physical health programs will report higher levels of employee well-being compared to organizations that do not prioritize such initiatives.

**H2:** Employees who have access to flexible work arrangements will exhibit higher job satisfaction and productivity than employees with traditional, rigid work schedules.

**H3:** A supportive organizational culture is positively associated with employees' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

**H4:** Leadership strategies that prioritize employee well-being result in lower turnover rates and higher employee engagement.

**H5:** Implementing work-life balance programs and policies significantly reduces employee burnout and improves overall organizational performance.

### 3. Methodology

This section details the research design, sampling strategy, data-collection instruments, validity procedures, and analytical techniques adopted to investigate employee well-being and work-life balance (WLB) in Qatar.

The study employed a convergent mixed-methods design (Creswell and Creswell, 2017), integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative and qualitative strands were collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and then merged to provide complementary perspectives on the same research questions.

The target population comprised four stakeholder groups:

1. White-collar expatriates
2. Blue-collar expatriates
3. Qatari nationals
4. Government officials/policymakers

A proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to ensure fair representation of each subgroup and to reduce sampling error. A power analysis ( $\alpha = .05$ ;  $1-\beta = .80$ ) showed that at least 132 participants were needed. To allow subgroup comparisons (50 in each stratum) and to account for possible non-responses, the sample size was increased to 150.

The final numbers represent valid responses after data cleaning. The sample size for blue-collar workers was adjusted to account for literacy limitations and the practical organization of focus groups.

A 50-item instrument—adapted from validated scales on employee well-being (WHO-5), WLB (Sischka et al., 2020), and job satisfaction (JSS) was administered online (white-collar, nationals) and on paper (where Internet access was limited). Items used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Content validity was established via expert panel review (four HR academics and two industry specialists). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the total scale was .91, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Three focus groups (5–10 participants each) were conducted in Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali with professional interpreters. A semi-structured guide explored perceptions of WLB, workplace support, and cultural barriers. Sessions were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed into English for analysis.

Ten key informant interviews probed policy frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and planned reforms affecting worker well-being. Interviews averaged 45 minutes and followed an interview protocol aligned with the study objectives.

Quantitative data were screened for outliers and missingness. Cases with > 10 % missing values were removed ( $n = 6$ ). Remaining gaps (< 3 %) were handled via multiple imputations. Assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were examined. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values < 2.5 confirmed that multicollinearity was not a threat.

#### 3.1. Data analysis

- Descriptive statistics profiled demographic characteristics and mean scores on key constructs.
- Pearson correlations assessed bivariate relationships.
- Multiple regression tested the unique effects of well-being and WLB on self-reported quality of life, controlling for age, gender, job tenure, and weekly hours. Bootstrapped confidence intervals (5,000 resamples) increased robustness.
- Qualitative transcripts were coded inductively using NVivo. A two-cycle coding process (open coding → axial coding) generated themes, which were then mapped onto Self-Determination Theory and JD-R constructs for theoretical integration.
- Triangulation integrated quantitative patterns with qualitative narratives, highlighting convergences and divergences across worker categories.

#### 3.2. Limitations

1. Language barriers may have constrained the depth of blue-collar responses despite interpreter support.

2. Sampling bias is possible, as highly transient labor groups were harder to reach.
3. Self-report measures risk social-desirability bias, particularly among government interviewees.
4. Cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; longitudinal follow-up is recommended.

#### 4. Results

Work-life balance, employee well-being, and quality of life are interconnected aspects of modern workplace dynamics, particularly in fast-growing economies such as Qatar. Organizations and policymakers are increasingly recognizing the importance of creating an environment that supports employees' overall well-being while enabling them to maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal responsibilities. Employee well-being encompasses physical, mental, and emotional health in the workplace, while work-life balance refers to the ability to manage professional commitments alongside personal and family life effectively. Together, these factors significantly influence quality of life, a holistic measure of an individual's overall satisfaction and fulfillment.

This study aims to explore the relationships between employee well-being, work-life balance, and quality of life among individuals working in Qatar. By analyzing survey data collected from a diverse demographic group, this research provides valuable insights into how these variables interact and contribute to the overall quality of life. The study employs statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression to examine the strength and nature of these relationships.

The findings are expected to guide organizations in developing targeted interventions to enhance employee well-being and work-life balance, ultimately improving overall quality of life. Additionally, the study provides evidence-based recommendations that can inform HR policies and workplace practices, particularly in culturally unique and diverse settings such as Qatar. This analysis is crucial for understanding the factors that influence employee satisfaction and productivity, thereby fostering healthier workplaces and communities.

##### 4.1. Demographic analysis

The study sampled 104 respondents in Qatar to explore the relationships between Employee Well-being, Work-Life Balance, and Quality of Life. The age distribution reveals that most participants (49%) fall between the ages of 35-44, suggesting a predominant representation of mid-career professionals. This is followed by 26.9% aged 25-34, 13.5% aged 18-24, and a smaller proportion (10.6%) aged 45-54, reflecting a diverse age group. In terms of gender, females constitute a significant majority (67.3%), with males making up 32.7%, which may indicate potential gender-specific differences in

perceptions of work-life balance and quality of life. Regarding education, a notable proportion of respondents hold advanced qualifications, with 44.2% having a Master's degree and 34.6% a Bachelor's degree. This high educational attainment suggests that respondents are likely to be in professional or managerial roles, potentially impacting their perceptions of workplace well-being.

Employment patterns show that 80.8% of respondents are employed full-time, highlighting that most participants are likely balancing demanding work schedules. A small percentage are employed part-time (3.8%), self-employed (3.8%), or students (10.6%). Marital status indicates that more than half (51%) are married, while 38.5% are single, and smaller percentages are divorced (9.6%) or widowed (1%). Over half of respondents (52.9%) have children, which may further influence their ability to achieve work-life balance. Citizenship data reveal that 75% are local citizens, with 22.1% expatriates, emphasizing the local workforce's dominance in the sample.

The industry distribution highlights the largest sectors being government/public sector (27.9%), education (18.3%), and healthcare (8.7%), with fewer respondents in industries like technology, construction, and hospitality. Job positions are skewed toward senior roles, with 45.2% of respondents in senior-level positions and 26% in mid-level roles. Regarding working hours, the majority (45.2%) work 40-49 hours per week, with some working 30-39 hours (27.9%) and others exceeding 50 hours (7.7%). This indicates a workforce likely experiencing high work demands. Income data shows that nearly half (49%) earn \$10,000 or more per month, representing a financially stable group. However, 15.4% earn between \$7,500 and \$9,999, while smaller percentages fall into lower-income brackets. Collectively, these demographics provide essential context for understanding the relationships between the studied variables.

##### 4.2. Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics provide critical insights into the data distribution for the three primary variables (Table 1). Employee Well-being has a mean of 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.97, indicating that respondents, on average, experience moderate levels of well-being with some variability. The skewness (-0.044) and kurtosis (-0.280) values suggest the data is nearly symmetric and normally distributed, making it suitable for parametric testing. Work-Life Balance has a mean of 2.53 and a standard deviation of 0.69, reflecting a moderate perception of balance between work and personal life among respondents. The skewness (-0.007) shows near-perfect symmetry, while the positive kurtosis (0.384) suggests a slightly peaked distribution. Quality of Life has a mean of 2.54 and a standard deviation of 0.73, indicating a similar moderate level of satisfaction. The positive skewness (0.288)

implies a slight right-tail tendency, and the kurtosis (0.789) shows a sharper peak. These statistics collectively indicate that the three variables are

appropriately distributed for further analysis and highlight moderate perceptions among respondents.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew (Stat)	Skew (Std.)	Kurt (Stat)	Kurt (Std.)
Employee well-being	1.00	5.00	3.0053	0.96828	-0.044	0.237	-0.280	0.469
Work-life balance	1.00	4.73	2.5325	0.69763	-0.007	0.237	0.384	0.469
Quality of life	1.00	5.00	2.5380	0.72767	0.288	0.237	0.789	0.469

Min: Minimum; Max: Maximum; SD: Standard deviation; Stat: Statistic; Std.: Standard error; Skew: Skewness; Kurt: Kurtosis

### 4.3. Reliability analysis

Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.919 indicates excellent internal consistency across the three variables. This suggests that the items measuring Employee Well-being, Work-Life Balance, and Quality of Life are highly reliable and consistent in capturing the intended constructions.

### 4.4. KMO and Bartlett’s test

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.755 confirms that the sample size is adequate for factor analysis, indicating sufficient correlations among variables for meaningful results. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity is significant ( $\chi^2 = 256.550$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), further validating that the data is appropriate for multivariate analysis. Together, these tests reinforce the robustness of the dataset and its suitability for further statistical testing (Table 2).

of 0.744 suggests that 74.4% of the variance in Quality of Life is explained by Employee Well-being and Work-Life Balance, showcasing the model’s high explanatory power. The adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.739 further confirms the robustness of the model after accounting for the number of predictors.

**Table 2:** KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy	0.755
Bartlett’s test of sphericity: Approx. Chi-square	256.550
Bartlett’s test of sphericity: df	3
Bartlett’s test of sphericity: Sig.	0.000

df: Degrees of freedom; Sig: Significance

**Table 3:** Correlations

Variable	1	2	3
1. Employee well-being	1	.831**	.783**
2. Work-life balance	.831**	1	.852**
3. Quality of life	.783**	.852**	1

\*\* : Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table 4:** Model summary

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std.
1	0.862 <sup>a</sup>	0.744	0.739	0.37201

a: Predictors: (Constant), Work-life balance, Employee well-being

### 4.5. Correlation analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals strong positive relationships between the study variables. Employee Well-being and Work-Life Balance show a high correlation ( $r = 0.831$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that as employee well-being improves, work-life balance also tends to improve significantly (Table 3). Similarly, Work-Life Balance and Quality of Life exhibit the strongest correlation ( $r = 0.852$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), emphasizing that maintaining a balance between professional and personal life strongly enhances one’s overall quality of life. The correlation between Employee Well-being and Quality of Life is also substantial ( $r = 0.783$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher well-being are likely to report better quality of life. These significant correlations highlight the interconnected nature of the variables, suggesting that interventions in quality of life. This finding is critical for organizations aiming to improve employee satisfaction and productivity.

### 4.6. Multiple linear regression

The regression analysis examines the predictive relationship between the independent variables (Employee Well-being and Work-Life Balance) and the dependent variable (Quality of Life). The model summary reveals an R-value of 0.862, indicating a very strong overall relationship between the predictors and Quality of Life (Table 4). The  $R^2$  value

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is highly significant ( $F(2, 101) = 146.55$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that the predictors collectively have a statistically significant impact on Quality of Life. Examining the coefficients provides deeper insights. Work-Life Balance has the highest unstandardized coefficient ( $B = 0.677$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that for every one-unit increase in Work-Life Balance, Quality of Life improves by 0.677 units. This underscores Work-Life Balance as the most influential predictor in the model. Employee Well-being also has a significant positive effect ( $B = 0.183$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ), albeit with a smaller impact. This suggests that while well-being contributes to Quality of Life, its influence is not as strong as Work-Life Balance (Table 5). The constant ( $B = 0.273$ ,  $p = 0.051$ ) represents the baseline level of Quality of Life when both predictors are at zero, although it is marginally significant.

As shown in Table 6, the standardized coefficients (Beta values) indicate the relative importance of each predictor. Work-Life Balance (Beta = 0.649) is more impactful than Employee Well-being (Beta = 0.243).

This implies that efforts to enhance work-life balance may yield greater improvements in Quality of Life compared to initiatives targeting employee well-being alone. Overall, the regression analysis highlights the critical roles of both predictors, with Work-Life Balance being the dominant factor influencing Quality of Life.

**Table 5:** ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	40.562	2	20.281	146.546	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	13.978	101	.138		
Total	54.539	103			

a: Dependent variable: Quality of life; b: Predictors: (Constant), Work-life balance, Employee well-being

**Table 6:** Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.	Beta		
(Constant)	0.273	0.138		1.977	0.051
1 Employee well-being	0.183	0.068	0.243	2.685	0.008
Work-life balance	0.677	0.095	0.649	7.167	0.000

a: Dependent variable: Quality of life

#### 4.7. Conclusion

This study offers a complete analysis of the linkage of employee well-being, work-life balance, and quality of life in Qatar; it speaks to the critical linkages of these issues in the workplace. It is shown that employee well-being and work-life balance have a significant impact on quality of life and that work-life balance is the most powerful predictor. This means it is important to build an environment that encourages employee to balance their professional and personal interests.

The high correlations among the variables imply their interdependencies, thus implying that a percentage of gain in one area - like work-life balance - would result in a substantial amount of increase in employee well-being and the quality of life at large. Furthermore, the demographic data adds depth to the variable, as age, gender, education, employment type, and number of working hours may act as determinants that affect perceptions of these variables. The robustness and adequacy of the dataset further enhance the validation of the results, statistically as well as real world.

From a practical point of view, organizations in Qatar are urged to engage in work-life balance initiatives such as flexible work policies, wellness programs, and mental health support. Moreover, these strategies can be equally effective in improving employee satisfaction, increasing productivity, and contributing to creating healthier and more sustainable workplaces. These findings could be expanded further by future research into other factors or cultural nuances that might further influence these dynamics. This analysis will be useful for policymakers, HR professionals, or any organization leaders who would like to have environments that promote the well-being and enhance the quality of life for employees.

#### 5. Discussion and conclusion

The results of this research make valuable contributions to our understanding of employee well-being and work-life balance in Qatar's diverse workforce. Several key patterns and relationships have been discovered that organizational leaders, policy makers, and human resource professionals should discuss and consider further. There are strong positive correlations ( $r = 0.783$  to  $0.852$ ;  $p <$

$0.001$ ) between these constructs (employee well-being, work-life balance, and the quality of life) that indicate that these constructs are interconnected. Previous research in Sun (2024) and Haider et al. (2018) also found that a person's job satisfaction, reducing stress, and better mental health from a good managerial and personal life balance.

The regression analysis further demonstrated that work-life balance emerges as the stronger predictor ( $\beta = 0.649$ ) compared to employee well-being ( $\beta = 0.243$ ) in determining quality of life. This finding suggests that organizational efforts to enhance employee experience should prioritize policies and practices that facilitate a balance between work and personal responsibilities.

The demographic analysis revealed important differences in how various workforce segments experience and perceive well-being and work-life balance. While the quantitative data showed moderate levels of satisfaction across the sample, the qualitative findings from focus groups with blue-collar workers highlighted significant disparities in access to support systems, communication channels, and flexible arrangements. One focus group participant noted: 'We get food and a place to stay.' Nobody really checks, but if we are stressed or sick in other ways." This shows the difference between the workforce segments, and therefore, organizations need to take on more inclusive and differentiated approaches to employee well-being than what has been adopted thus far.

Finally, the focus group findings highlighted the very salient features of family connection for expatriate workers, especially those in blue-collar work, where they might often be separated from their loved ones for an extended period. Another participant said: 'The camp I live at, I live with other workers.' It has been two years since I've seen my family. The only time we speak on the phone." An important well-being issue is this emotional disconnection from organization policies that often neglect to address it. These findings are consistent with the research of Tessema et al. (2022) that technology-facilitated family connection and reunion opportunities should be viewed as necessary components, not optional, of a comprehensive well-being program.

The work-life balance initiatives were found to be substantially dependent on the organizational culture.

Stakeholder interviews indicated that even carefully constructed policies for the rest of us to work less often do not produce their desired effects when used in groups whose cultures routinely endorse or punish demanding work or lack of boundary setting. This is consistent with what [Zheng et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered as the main contributing factor to employee welfare and satisfaction: workplace culture. This current study broadens this understanding by elucidating the complexity in establishing supportive environments, further by the cultural expectations of Qatar's multicultural workforce.

Well-being programs were identified as marked by language barriers and communication challenges that were difficult to overcome for blue-collar workers. "There are issues that most supervisors will never grasp, because most supervisors don't speak our language and we can't really explain it," one focus group participant said. This supports the importance of prescribing the multilingual communication and culturally sensitive planning of the program, given the very varied nature of the workforce in Qatar. It also illustrates a pragmatic barrier that may not be signaled by the quantitative measures of program availability but leads to actual use and efficacy.

Leadership was constantly stressed in quantitative and qualitative data. The finding showed that leadership strategies that accounted for employees' well-being encouraged higher engagement and satisfaction levels. But interviews revealed inconsistent implementation of these strategies with different organizational levels, with middle managers either enablers or barriers to the implementation of work-life balance practices. The implication is that leadership development programs should include training to help support employee well-being and to model healthy work-life balance behavior.

This comprehensive investigation of employee well-being and work-life balance in Qatar has yielded several important conclusions that contribute to both scholarly understanding and practical organizational approaches. The research confirms that both employee well-being and work-life balance significantly influence quality of life, with work-life balance emerging as the more dominant predictor. This relationship was consistent across demographic variables, although important differences in experiences and access to support were observed between white-collar expatriates, blue-collar workers, and nationals.

The quantitative data revealed moderate levels of employee well-being ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ) and work-life balance ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ) among respondents, suggesting that while progress has been made, substantial room for improvement remains. The strong positive correlations between the study variables highlight the interconnected nature of well-being, balance, and quality of life, indicating that improvements in one area are likely to yield positive outcomes in others.

Qualitative findings from focus groups with blue-collar workers revealed significant gaps in emotional support, family connection, and communication. While employers generally provide basic facilities, comprehensive well-being strategies are notably lacking for this workforce segment. However, these challenges are not what white college expatriates and nationals face, who typically have more access to flexible work arrangements and wellness programs.

The interviews with key stakeholders have also suggested ongoing efforts to enhance labor laws, workplace policies, and organizational culture to more flexibly support employee well-being. However, progress has been possible, especially since reforms following World Cup preparation, and there are numerous opportunities for progress in implementation, expanding access to programs, and adaptation of approaches to serve the multicultural needs of Qatar's workforce. The research substantiates that organizational culture is an important contributing factor to support or obstruct this work-life balance, in which leadership commitment and communication are critical success factors. Organizations that have cultures that encourage flexibility, openness, and protected interaction boundaries between personal and work life were reported to have greater employee satisfaction and productivity. In sectors characterized by conventional management implementations and huge work intensity, there are implementation challenges.

To sum up, this study shows that putting time, energy, and money into employee well-being and work-life balance has enormously positive implications not only for the individual but also for the organization. The findings thus highlight the need for specifying approaches that respect certain principles as a core and create avenues that match the needs and circumstances of different workforce segments.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance employee well-being and work-life balance in Qatar:

### 6.1. Policymakers and government agencies

1. Develop and enforce comprehensive labor regulations that establish minimum standards for work hours, rest periods, and leave entitlements across all employment categories, with particular attention to vulnerable worker populations.
2. Create standardized guidelines for organizations on implementing culturally appropriate well-being programs that respect the diverse backgrounds, religions, and values represented in Qatar's workforce.
3. Develop policies that facilitate family visitation and reunification for expatriate workers at all levels, recognizing the critical importance of family relationships to overall well-being.

4. Establish robust monitoring systems to track the implementation and effectiveness of employee well-being initiatives across different sectors and workforce segments.

## 6.2. Organizations and employers

1. Ensure that well-being and work-life balance programs are designed with input from employees at all levels, incorporating diverse perspectives and addressing varied needs.
2. Improve multilingual communication channels to ensure that all employees understand available resources, policies, and support systems regardless of language barriers.
3. Expand flexible work options where operationally feasible, including adjusted hours, compressed workweeks, and hybrid work models to accommodate diverse employee needs.
4. Provide comprehensive training for managers and supervisors on supporting employee well-being, recognizing signs of burnout, and facilitating effective work-life balance across different cultural contexts.
5. Develop culturally sensitive mental health support programs that reduce stigma and provide accessible resources for all employee groups.

## 6.3. Future research

1. Conduct longitudinal research to track changes in employee well-being and work-life balance over time, particularly as Qatar's economy and labor market continue to evolve.
2. Sector-Specific Analysis: Explore industry-specific challenges and effective practices in promoting employee well-being and work-life balance across different economic sectors.
3. Evaluate the comparative effectiveness of different well-being and work-life balance interventions for diverse workforce segments to identify best practices and return on investment.
4. Investigate gender-specific experiences and needs regarding work-life balance in Qatar's cultural context, with attention to family responsibilities and cultural expectations. During this study, it became evident that policymakers and stakeholders placed a strong focus on female employees when discussing work-life balance. Many initiatives and discussions are centered around improving women's well-being and flexibility in the workplace. This gendered emphasis highlights the need for further research to explore the reasons behind this prioritization. Future studies could examine the potential implications of such a focus, including whether male employees receive equitable consideration and how gender-specific strategies impact overall organizational outcomes. This would provide significant value in developing more inclusive and balanced workforce policies.
5. Study the effects of digital technologies on work-life boundaries and identify strategies for

maintaining healthy separation in an increasingly connected workplace.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can work toward creating more supportive, balanced, and productive work environments that enhance both individual well-being and organizational success across Qatar's diverse workforce. Such initiatives align with Qatar's National Vision 2030 goals of human development and social progress while supporting sustainable economic growth.

## Compliance with ethical standards

### Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Community College of Qatar. Informed consent (written or verbal for low-literacy participants) was secured after explaining the study purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and confidentiality safeguards. Unique identification codes replaced personally identifying information; audio files were encrypted and stored on password-protected drives.

### Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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