

Beyond the Aggregate Score: A Dimension-Level Assessment of Quality of Work Life, Commitment, and Culture Among UAE Public Sector Employees

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ABSTRACT

Public sector organizations often rely on a single composite score to summarize employee survey results. But an aggregate figure can hide which specific parts of the work experience actually need attention. This study addresses that problem directly. It profiles quality of work life, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and job satisfaction at the level of individual dimensions, using data from 412 employees of a UAE public sector ministry. The data came from a structured questionnaire administered across three departments in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, with a 98 percent response rate. Rather than testing relationships between constructs, the study examines where this workforce currently stands on each dimension. For every dimension, the mean, standard deviation, and a qualitative level were calculated, then ranked from strongest to weakest to identify concrete priorities for intervention. All four constructs sit at a moderate overall level. This picture hides real variation underneath. Within quality of work life, respect for law and work influence were the weakest dimensions. Both fell well below the moderate range, 1.30 points behind the strongest dimension, capacity. Within organizational commitment, normative commitment was markedly weaker than affective commitment. Within organizational culture, involvement lagged behind consistency, adaptability, and mission, though the gap here was narrower. An aggregate score alone would have hidden these specific, actionable gaps. The weakest dimensions found here also match independent literature on employee voice and work-life balance in similar public sector settings. This study argues that dimension-level diagnostic reporting should complement relationship-testing research, not replace it. It gives UAE public sector decision makers a concrete, ranked basis for sequencing workforce interventions, rather than a generic call to improve conditions broadly.

Keywords: quality of work life; organizational commitment; organizational culture; job satisfaction; public sector diagnostics

INTRODUCTION

Public organizations routinely summarize employee survey data into a single composite figure. It might be called an engagement index, a satisfaction score, or an overall quality of work life rating. Whatever the label, organizations use that figure to judge whether conditions are broadly acceptable. This practice is administratively convenient. But it carries a real risk: an aggregate score can mask substantial variation among

the individual dimensions that make it up. A moderate overall figure can hide both genuine strengths and genuine weaknesses that would otherwise call for targeted action. This risk is not a new observation specific to workforce surveys. Robinson (1950) first demonstrated, in what became a foundational paper in social science methodology, that a correlation computed on aggregated, group-level data can differ sharply from, and sometimes even reverse, the corresponding correlation among the individuals that make up those groups. Later work formalized this as aggregation bias, or the ecological fallacy: the inference that a pattern true of a group must also be true of its parts. The same logic applies directly to a composite workforce score. A moderate aggregate figure is a group-level summary. It carries no guarantee that the dimensions composing it are themselves moderate, undifferentiated, or evenly matched. Roberts et al. (2014) demonstrated this masking effect empirically, outside the human resource management literature. In a study of primary care performance data, aggregated practice-level scores concealed considerable variation in the underlying dimension being measured. The lesson applies to any field that relies on composite reporting. Recent evidence on public sector workforces makes the same point from the other direction. A synthesis of the 2024 OECD and European Union survey, covering over 56,000 central government employees, found that pay, working conditions, and engagement play distinguishable, separable roles in the employee experience: pay and working conditions showed weak direct effects on organizational performance but influenced it indirectly through engagement, rather than functioning as one undifferentiated factor that a composite score could adequately represent (OECD, 2025).

This concern is directly relevant to workforce diagnostics in the UAE public sector. Quality of work life, organizational commitment, and organizational culture are widely recognized as central levers for improving employee outcomes (Walton, 1974; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Denison et al., 2014). Jabeen et al. (2018) studied UAE public sector employees and established that quality of work life is positively associated with job satisfaction. What this research has not addressed is which specific dimensions of quality of work life, commitment, and culture are performing well, and which need priority attention within a given organization. Composite-level reporting is not a minor limitation in this literature. It is close to the norm. Ayalew et al.'s (2024) comparative study of quality of work life among government and private health institutions makes the point directly. The construct was analyzed and reported almost entirely at the composite level, even though item-level data that could have supported a more granular diagnostic was being collected. This shows how readily available dimension-level information goes unreported once a study's central purpose is explanatory rather than diagnostic.

This study addresses that gap directly. Explanatory modeling of this dataset has already examined whether quality of work life predicts job satisfaction, and whether commitment mediates that relationship. Here, this study pursues a different, more operationally direct objective instead: to determine, at the level of individual dimensions, where this UAE public sector workforce currently stands, and which specific dimensions represent the clearest priorities for intervention. Using the same 412 employee sample, drawn from three departments of a UAE public sector ministry in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, this study builds a full dimension-level diagnostic profile of quality of work life, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and job satisfaction. It ranks each set of dimensions from strongest to weakest and discusses what the resulting gaps mean in practice. The rest of this paper reviews the relevant measurement frameworks, describes the diagnostic method, presents the dimension-level results, and discusses their theoretical and practical implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality of Work life as a Multidimensional Construct

Sirgy et al. (2001) define quality of work life as the extent to which the work environment lets employees satisfy important personal and professional needs. Walton (1974) treated quality of work life as a genuinely multidimensional construct. He proposed eight dimensions: adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunities to develop human capacities, opportunities for continued growth, social integration in the workplace, constitutionalism, the total life space, and social relevance. This multidimensional structure matters for diagnostic purposes. Each dimension captures a distinct facet of the work experience. Some are tangible, like pay and safety. Others are relational or psychological, like respect

and voice. Because of this, two organizations, or two points in time within the same organization, can report an identical overall quality of work life score while differing sharply in which dimensions are actually driving that score. Jabeen et al. (2018) confirm that quality of work life, treated as a composite, is positively associated with job satisfaction and negatively associated with turnover intention among UAE public sector employees. But this composite-level finding does not show which dimensions are contributing most, or least, to that overall picture. Alkhateeb et al. (2025) reached a similar conclusion from a different angle. Their systematic review of 73 studies on job satisfaction determinants among healthcare workers across Gulf Cooperation Council countries identified pay, working conditions, and colleague relationships as empirically distinguishable predictors, not a single undifferentiated bundle. This supports treating quality of work life's component dimensions as separable diagnostic targets rather than interchangeable indicators of one underlying state.

Organizational Commitment and Organizational Culture as Multidimensional Constructs

Organizational commitment is similarly multidimensional. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model distinguishes affective commitment, an emotional desire to remain with the organization, from continuance commitment, a perceived necessity to remain because the costs of leaving are high, and from normative commitment, a felt obligation to remain. These three components develop through different antecedents. They also carry different implications for employee behavior. This means an aggregate commitment score cannot tell apart an employee base that stays out of genuine attachment from one that stays out of obligation or necessity. Organizational culture shows a comparable structure. Denison et al. (2014) organize the construct along four traits: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. Each reflects a distinct aspect of how an organization functions and how its members experience that functioning. Recent UAE-based evidence suggests these traits are not equally malleable in practice. Abuzanjali and Bashir (2024) studied service innovation across UAE government entities. Among the ten challenges their study identified as most critical to public service innovation, half related to innovation culture, which overlaps conceptually with the adaptability trait. This suggests that culture traits tied to change and innovation may represent a persistent concentration of difficulty, distinct from more stable traits such as consistency. It reinforces the argument that a single culture score would hide exactly the type of trait-level unevenness that matters most for targeted reform.

Job Satisfaction and the Value of Dimension-Level Diagnosis

Nair and Subash (2019) define job satisfaction as the pleasurable or positive emotional state that results from an employee's appraisal of their job. According to Herzberg's (1968) two-factor theory, this state is shaped by two different kinds of factors. Hygiene factors produce dissatisfaction when absent. Motivator factors produce genuine satisfaction when present. Two-factor theory implies that a single job satisfaction score is an incomplete diagnostic tool. Hygiene and motivator factors work through different psychological mechanisms and can move independently of each other. An organization could improve compensation, a hygiene factor, while leaving growth opportunities, a motivator factor, unchanged. A composite satisfaction score might then shift only modestly, even though the underlying employee experience has changed in a meaningful way. Hennicks et al. (2024) offer a useful illustration of this same logic, applied to a related construct. Rather than treating social wellbeing at work as a single score, they identified four distinct latent profiles among employees, ranging from socially disconnected to socially thriving. These profiles, not an averaged wellbeing figure, were what actually differentiated employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This precedent for profile-based rather than composite-based analysis is directly relevant here. The present study applies the same logic to quality of work life, commitment, and culture, rather than social wellbeing.

Specific Dimensions of Concern in Public Sector Contexts

Two dimensions deserve particular attention in a public sector diagnostic context, because of their documented links to employee experience in comparable settings. The first is employee voice. It overlaps conceptually with Walton's respect for law dimension, since both concern how far employees can express opinions and expect fair treatment under organizational rules. Kim and Cho (2024) found that when public agencies create genuine opportunities for employee voice, this is associated with improved organizational performance,

particularly when operational demands compete for attention. This suggests that a weak respect for law or voice dimension is not just a morale concern. It is a potential constraint on organizational effectiveness. Iddrisu and Mohammed (2024) reinforce this finding in a large sample study of 503 public sector employees. They show that employee voice significantly strengthens both organizational trust and organizational culture, which in turn improve public sector performance, with trust the stronger of the two mediating pathways. These two independent studies converge on employee voice as a performance-relevant construct, not merely a morale-relevant one. That convergence strengthens the case that a weak respect for law dimension deserves attention beyond its face value as a satisfaction item.

The second dimension of concern is work-life balance, and how work spills into personal life. This overlaps with Walton's work influence dimension. Alnagbi et al. (2025), in recent UAE-based research, found that work-life balance is positively related to work engagement, and through engagement, to individual work performance. This indicates that a weak work influence dimension in a UAE public sector context is a plausible constraint on both wellbeing and performance, not just an isolated concern. A further dimension worth anticipating in the results is capacity. In Walton's framework, this concerns employees' sense of role clarity and the responsibilities entrusted to them. Birgisdóttir et al. (2024), drawing on evidence from outside the public sector, show that role clarity and creative self-efficacy are closely linked. Role clarity was found to positively moderate the relationship between supportive leadership and employees' confidence in their own capability. This offers a plausible explanation for why capacity might emerge as a comparative strength in a stable, structured public sector environment, where roles and responsibilities tend to be clearly defined by policy and grade.

Building on this literature, the present study does not propose formal hypotheses about relationships between constructs, since its purpose is diagnostic rather than explanatory. Instead, it is guided by a single research objective: to profile quality of work life, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and job satisfaction at the level of their individual dimensions among UAE public sector employees, identify which specific dimensions represent relative strengths and which represent priorities for intervention, and consider the practical and theoretical implications of the gaps this profiling reveals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sample

This study used a quantitative, descriptive diagnostic design within a positivist research paradigm. A descriptive design suited the research question better than an explanatory one would have. The question here is where this workforce stands on specific dimensions, not why it stands there, and a model testing relationships between constructs would not answer that question any more directly than a carefully constructed ranking does. The study draws on the same dataset collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire, distributed to senior employees across three departments of a UAE public sector ministry in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. A stratified random sampling technique selected respondents proportionate to departmental size, a choice that matters for a diagnostic study specifically. Simple random sampling could have left one department underrepresented, which would blur the resulting picture rather than sharpen it. Stratification keeps each site's contribution roughly proportional to its actual share of the workforce. A total of 412 valid responses were obtained, a 98 percent response rate that comfortably exceeds the minimum sample size required for the statistical analysis, based on the a priori guidance of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Of the respondents, 69.2 percent were male and 30.8 percent female. Age skewed toward 41 to 45 years, at 38.6 percent. A master's degree was the most common qualification, held by 35.0 percent. UAE nationals made up 68.2 percent of the sample, and 41.7 percent worked in the Dubai department.

Measures

Quality of work life was measured with an eight-dimension scale adapted from Walton's (1974) framework. This instrument suited a dimension-level study for a specific reason. Walton's model was built from the outset as eight separable facets, not as a single latent trait with items added afterward, which makes it far better suited to disaggregation than an instrument designed only to yield one composite score. The scale covers capacity,

opportunities, fair compensation, respect for law, social integration, social relevance, work conditions, and work influence. Organizational commitment used the three-component model scale of Meyer and Allen (1991), covering affective, continuance, and normative commitment. This model carries the same advantage. Its three components were theorized as distinct constructs from the start, so examining them separately does not stretch the instrument beyond what it was designed to measure. Organizational culture was measured using the Denison Organizational Culture Survey, covering involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission (Denison et al., 2014). Employees' job satisfaction used an established multi-item scale covering satisfaction with pay, supervision, benefits, and the nature of the work itself. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. Reliability and convergent validity for all constructs and sub-dimensions were established in the confirmatory factor analysis reported in the doctoral research this dataset is drawn from (Al Shamsi, 2024). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.70, and average variance extracted values exceeded 0.50, for every dimension reported here. This matters more for a dimension-level study than it would for a composite-level one. A weak sub-dimension would undermine the whole diagnostic logic of this paper, since the analysis depends on trusting each dimension's score individually, not only the aggregate those dimensions eventually form.

Diagnostic Analysis Approach

Unlike explanatory studies that model directional relationships among these constructs, this study analyzes each dimension descriptively. For every dimension of quality of work life, organizational commitment, and organizational culture, and for job satisfaction as a whole, SPSS was used to compute the mean, standard deviation, and a qualitative level classification. This followed the mean score interpretation scheme used in the doctoral research this dataset is drawn from: scores were classified as low between 1.00 and 2.33, moderate between 2.34 and 3.67, and high between 3.68 and 5.00, based on dividing the five-point scale range by the three classification levels (Al Shamsi, 2024). Dimensions were then ranked within each construct from highest to lowest mean score, to identify relative strengths and priorities for intervention. This approach does not test statistical relationships between constructs. Its purpose is to establish, with descriptive precision, where this workforce currently stands on each measured dimension. That makes it a diagnostic complement to explanatory research on how these dimensions relate to one another, not a substitute for it.

RESULTS

Quality of Work Life: Dimension-Level Profile

Table 1 presents the dimension-level descriptive statistics for quality of work life, ranked from highest to lowest mean score. The overall score was moderate ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.362$). Capacity was the strongest dimension by a clear margin ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.318$). This reflects employees' relatively favorable perceptions of their responsibilities, performance appraisal, and how their role contributes to organizational outcomes. Opportunities ($M = 3.58$) and work conditions ($M = 3.55$) were also comparatively strong. Respect for law ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.311$) and work influence ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.335$), by contrast, were markedly weaker than the other six dimensions. Both fell at the low end of the moderate range, well below the overall quality of work life mean. These two dimensions represent the clearest priorities for intervention within the quality of work life construct.

Table 1. Dimension-Level Descriptive Statistics for Quality Of Work Life

Rank	Quality of work life dimension	Mean	SD	Level
1	Capacity	3.81	1.318	High
2	Opportunities	3.58	1.338	Moderate
3	Work conditions	3.55	1.256	Moderate
4	Social relevance	3.38	1.349	Moderate
5	Fair compensation	3.23	1.306	Moderate

6	Social integration	3.08	1.376	Moderate
7	Respect for law	2.56	1.311	Moderate (low end)
8	Work influence	2.51	1.335	Moderate (low end)
	Overall quality of work life	3.37	1.362	Moderate

Organizational Commitment: Dimension-Level Profile

Table 2 presents the dimension-level descriptive statistics for organizational commitment. The overall commitment score was moderate ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.418$). Affective commitment was the strongest of the three components ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.432$), closely followed by continuance commitment ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.497$). Normative commitment was noticeably weaker ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.390$). This indicates that employees' sense of moral obligation to remain with the organization lags behind both their emotional attachment and their perception of the costs of leaving.

Table 2. Dimension-Level Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Commitment

Rank	Organizational commitment dimension	Mean	SD	Level
1	Affective commitment	3.62	1.432	Moderate
2	Continuance commitment	3.50	1.497	Moderate
3	Normative commitment	3.26	1.390	Moderate
	Overall organizational commitment	3.47	1.418	Moderate

Organizational Culture: Dimension-Level Profile

Table 3 presents the dimension-level descriptive statistics for organizational culture. The overall culture score was moderate ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.234$). Consistency was the strongest trait ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.181$). Adaptability ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.283$) and mission ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.306$) followed closely behind, clustered near each other. Involvement was the weakest of the four traits ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.165$). This suggests that employees' sense of being actively engaged in decision making and organizational processes lags behind their perceptions of the organization's internal consistency, adaptive capacity, and strategic direction.

Table 3. Dimension-Level Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Culture

Rank	Organizational culture dimension	Mean	SD	Level
1	Consistency	3.65	1.181	Moderate
2	Adaptability	3.61	1.283	Moderate
3	Mission	3.57	1.306	Moderate
4	Involvement	3.45	1.165	Moderate
	Overall organizational culture	3.57	1.234	Moderate

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured as a unidimensional composite in the original instrument. It could not be broken down into separate sub-dimensions for this analysis. The overall score was moderate ($M = 3.607$, $SD = 1.268$), sitting at the upper end of the moderate range, closest to the high threshold among the four constructs assessed here.

Summary: Priority Dimensions across Constructs

Table 4 and Figure 1 bring these results together to summarize the clearest priorities for intervention identified by this diagnostic profile. Every construct examined returned an overall moderate score. On its own, that picture would suggest broadly acceptable, undifferentiated conditions requiring no particular urgency. The dimension-level analysis tells a different story. Quality of work life alone contains two dimensions, respect for law and work influence, that sit at the low end of the moderate range and diverge substantially from that construct's own strongest dimension, capacity. This divergence is the central empirical finding of this study. It would not have been visible from the aggregate scores alone.

Table 4. Strongest and Weakest Dimension Within Each Construct, With the Gap Between them

Construct	Strongest dimension (mean)	Weakest dimension (mean)	Gap
Quality of work life	Capacity (3.81)	Work influence (2.51)	1.30
Organizational commitment	Affective commitment (3.62)	Normative commitment (3.26)	0.36
Organizational culture	Consistency (3.65)	Involvement (3.45)	0.20

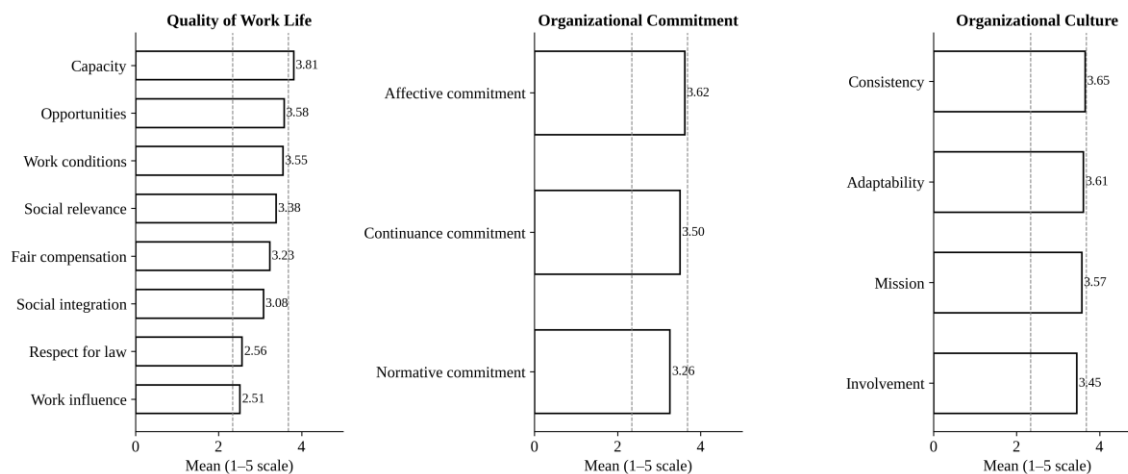


Figure 1. Dimension-level mean scores for quality of work life, organizational commitment, and organizational culture

DISCUSSION

What the Aggregate Scores Conceal

The most direct finding here is methodological as much as substantive. Every construct examined, quality of work life, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and job satisfaction, returned an overall moderate score. On its own, that result conveys almost no actionable information. It cannot distinguish an organization with broadly adequate conditions and no clear priorities from one, like the workforce examined here, whose overall figure is pulled down by one or two weak dimensions sitting alongside others that are comparatively strong. The 1.30-point gap between the strongest and weakest quality of work life dimensions, capacity and work influence, is not a subtle effect. It is a substantial divergence that a composite score of 3.37 does not communicate at all. Roberts et al. (2014) demonstrated an analogous masking effect in primary care performance data. The 2024 OECD and European Union survey of central government employees reached a parallel conclusion at a much larger scale: pay satisfaction, engagement, and well-being move as distinguishable dimensions of the public sector employee experience, not a single underlying factor (OECD, 2025). Taken together, this evidence suggests that public sector organizations relying on a single quality of work life, commitment, or culture figure are, in effect, discarding the specific information that would make that reporting useful. This is not a quirk of the present dataset. It is a structural limitation of composite reporting itself.

A more cautious reading is warranted, however, before this finding is generalized too far. The gaps observed here vary considerably in size, from 1.30 points in quality of work life down to only 0.20 points in organizational culture. This study did not run formal paired significance testing between dimension means, since its purpose was descriptive rather than inferential. So the practical importance of a small gap, such as the 0.20-point involvement gap, cannot be established with the same confidence as the much larger 1.30-point quality of work life gap, simply by inspecting the means. The argument that aggregate scores conceal meaningful variation is strongest, and most defensible, for quality of work life specifically, where the gap is large and matches independent literature discussed below. It is more provisional for organizational culture. The involvement gap there is directionally consistent with other evidence, but should be confirmed with formal paired comparisons before it counts as more than a secondary finding.

Respect for Law and Work Influence: Converging Evidence of a Voice and Balance Gap

The two weakest quality of work life dimensions found in this study, respect for law and work influence, are not conceptually isolated findings. Each converges with a distinct, recent stream of evidence on public sector employee experience. Kim and Cho (2024) found that public agencies which create genuine voice opportunities for employees see improved organizational performance, particularly when operational demands compete for attention. Iddrisu and Mohammed (2024) echo and extend this finding. Their study of 503 public sector employees showed that employee voice significantly strengthens both organizational trust and organizational culture, with trust the stronger of the two mediating pathways to performance. A respect for law score at the low end of the moderate range therefore signals more than an employee experience concern. It is a plausible constraint on organizational effectiveness under the type of operational pressure public sector ministries regularly face.

The work influence dimension captures how far work encroaches on personal life and rest schedules. It converges with a finding from Alnagbi et al. (2025) in recent UAE-based research: work-life balance is positively associated with work engagement, and through engagement, with individual work performance. That UAE study was conducted on a considerably smaller and more heterogeneous sample, though, spanning government, private, and non-profit organizations, unlike the present study's 412 public sector respondents. The convergence between the two findings is therefore suggestive rather than a direct replication. Read cautiously, these two bodies of evidence still suggest that the lowest scoring dimensions here are not idiosyncratic weaknesses of this particular sample. They reflect concerns recognizable, if not identically documented, in comparable public sector and UAE-based contexts.

Capacity as the Leading Strength, and Why it May not Generalize

Capacity emerged as the clear strength of this diagnostic profile. This finding invites a substantive explanation, not just acknowledgment. Birgisdóttir et al. (2024) found that role clarity positively moderates the relationship between supportive leadership and employees' confidence in their own capability. This offers one plausible account. Public sector roles in a structured ministry environment, governed by defined grades, job descriptions, and appraisal procedures, may provide the type of role clarity that private sector or less formally structured organizations do not always offer. That structural clarity could be driving the comparatively high capacity score observed here. An alternative, less flattering explanation fits the data equally well. A high capacity score reflecting satisfaction with one's responsibilities and performance appraisal could also reflect low expectations, or limited comparison points, among employees who have spent their careers within a single public sector structure, rather than genuinely well-designed roles. The descriptive data collected here cannot adjudicate between these two explanations. That ambiguity is itself an argument for pairing dimension-level diagnostics of this kind with qualitative follow-up, before drawing firm conclusions about why a particular dimension scores as it does.

Normative Commitment, Involvement, and Social Integration as Secondary Priorities

Within organizational commitment, normative commitment lagged visibly behind affective and continuance commitment. Normative commitment reflects a felt moral obligation to the organization, not genuine attachment or a calculation of the costs of leaving. This gap suggests that whatever affective bond and practical

stability employees do report is not being reinforced by a broader organizational narrative of mutual obligation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Within organizational culture, involvement was the weakest of the four Denison traits. As noted above, though, the gap here was small enough that it has not been formally tested and should be read as provisional. It is nonetheless consistent with Abuzanjali and Bashir's (2024) UAE-specific finding: innovation culture, which depends heavily on genuine employee involvement in generating and testing ideas, accounted for half of the ten challenges their study identified as most critical to service innovation across UAE government entities. Social integration, ranked sixth of eight quality of work life dimensions in this profile, is worth flagging alongside these secondary priorities. Hennicks et al. (2024) found that employees in the most socially connected wellbeing profile reported meaningfully higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention than those in less connected profiles. This suggests that a moderate but unremarkable social integration score should not be dismissed as inconsequential, even though it is not among this study's two leading priorities.

Fair Compensation: A Dimension That did not Emerge as a Leading Priority, Against Expectation

One result runs somewhat against what a reviewer familiar with the broader literature might expect. Fair compensation ranked fifth of eight quality of work life dimensions in this profile, moderate but not among the two leading priorities. That is despite Alkhateeb et al.'s (2025) recent systematic review of 73 studies across Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which identified pay as one of the most consistently documented determinants of job satisfaction in the region's workforce. This is worth stating plainly rather than glossing over. If pay were the dominant concern the wider GCC literature might suggest, fair compensation, not respect for law or work influence, should have emerged as this workforce's leading priority. It did not. One possible explanation is that public sector compensation in the UAE, backed by structured pay scales and benefits, is genuinely less variable. That would make it less likely to generate the sharp dissatisfaction sometimes seen in the mixed public-private samples that dominate the GCC review just cited. Another possibility is that this study's compensation items capture a narrower slice of the construct than the reviewed literature's pooled measures. Either way, this gap between what the broader regional evidence predicts and what this specific workforce reports is itself a useful diagnostic finding. It cautions against assuming that generic regional priorities, however well documented, transfer automatically to a specific organization, without directly measuring that organization's own dimension-level profile.

Theoretical And Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study makes three contributions to the literature. First, it demonstrates empirically, within a UAE public sector context, that relying on aggregate composite scores for quality of work life, organizational commitment, and organizational culture can obscure dimension-level variation large enough to change how the data should be interpreted. This connects human resource measurement practice to a much older methodological literature on aggregation bias, tracing back to Robinson's (1950) foundational demonstration that group-level and individual-level relationships can diverge. That literature has shaped fields such as epidemiology and political science for decades, but it is rarely invoked explicitly in workforce diagnostics, where composite reporting remains the default. This study's contribution is to show that the same statistical logic applies with practical force to quality of work life, commitment, and culture scores, extending a concern previously documented outside the human resource management literature (Roberts et al., 2014), and corroborated at scale by the 2024 OECD and European Union public servant survey (OECD, 2025), into this specific measurement domain. Second, this study identifies convergence between its lowest scoring dimensions, respect for law and work influence, and independently established literatures on employee voice (Kim & Cho, 2024; Iddrisu & Mohammed, 2024) and work-life balance (Alnagbi et al., 2025). This offers cross-validating evidence that dimension-level diagnostics surface concerns recognizable within the broader public sector and UAE-specific literature, rather than being an artifact of a single dataset. Third, the fair compensation finding discussed above, where pay did not emerge as a leading priority despite regional literature suggesting it typically is one (Alkhateeb et al., 2025), shows that dimension-level diagnostics do more than confirm what broader literature already predicts. They can also surface organization-specific departures from regional patterns, the kind a purely literature-driven approach to workforce priority setting would have missed entirely.

Practical Implications

For the ministry studied here, and for comparable UAE public sector organizations, the clearest practical implication is this: workforce reporting built around a single quality of work life, commitment, or culture score should be a starting point for investigation, not a basis for concluding that conditions are broadly acceptable. The specific findings here point to two concrete, near-term priorities. One is strengthening employees' sense that their opinions are heard and their rights respected, corresponding to the respect for law dimension. The other is addressing the encroachment of work on personal time and rest, corresponding to the work influence dimension. Both priorities align with interventions already gaining traction in the UAE public sector, including formal employee voice and grievance mechanisms, and flexible or reduced summer working arrangements. This study's findings give an organization-specific, data-driven basis for prioritizing such interventions, rather than adopting them as generic best practice. Secondary priorities, building normative commitment through consistent communication of organizational values, and strengthening employee involvement in decision making, offer additional, lower-urgency targets once the two leading quality of work life gaps have been addressed. This study's compensation finding also argues against defaulting to pay-focused interventions on the strength of regional literature alone. This specific workforce's own data does not support fair compensation as its leading priority. Resources directed there, on the basis of generic regional evidence, could be better spent on the respect for law and work influence gaps this diagnostic actually identifies.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. As a purely descriptive diagnostic, it did not run formal paired significance testing between dimension means. This means smaller gaps, such as the 0.20-point involvement gap within organizational culture, cannot be distinguished from sampling variation with the same confidence as larger gaps such as the 1.30-point quality of work life gap. Future work applying paired comparisons to this dataset would strengthen the case for treating any specific dimension gap as a genuine, reliable difference. This study also cannot establish why respect for law and work influence scored lowest. Nor can it confirm that improving these dimensions would produce the performance and engagement benefits documented in the literature it connects to. That inferential step would need the type of explanatory modeling this study deliberately set aside, in favor of dimension-level precision. The sample was confined to three departments of a single UAE public sector ministry. The gender distribution was unbalanced too, with male respondents making up 69.2 percent of the sample, which may limit how far the dimension-level rankings reported here generalize to other public organizations or to organizations with more balanced gender representation. The low, moderate, and high classification bands applied to mean scores, drawn from the scheme used in the source doctoral research (Al Shamsi, 2024), are interpretive conventions, not fixed statistical thresholds. Future diagnostic work could usefully benchmark dimension-level scores against comparable public sector organizations, rather than against a single study's classification scheme. Future research should test whether the dimensions identified as priorities here, particularly respect for law and work influence, actually predict job satisfaction and performance outcomes more strongly than the dimensions found comparatively stronger in this profile. That would validate the practical significance of prioritizing them. Future work should also extend this dimension-level diagnostic approach to other UAE public organizations and to the private sector, and should track whether targeted intervention on the lowest scoring dimensions identified here produces measurable improvement over time.

CONCLUSION

This study profiled quality of work life, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and job satisfaction at the level of their individual dimensions, among 412 employees of a UAE public sector ministry. It did this instead of relying on the aggregate composite scores that typically summarize such constructs in workforce reporting. Every construct examined returned an overall moderate score. But this uniform picture concealed substantial dimension-level variation. Within quality of work life, respect for law and work influence scored well below the construct's strongest dimension, capacity, a gap that converges with independent, recent evidence on employee voice and work-life balance in comparable public sector and UAE contexts. Within organizational commitment and organizational culture, normative commitment and

involvement emerged as comparatively weaker, secondary priorities. These findings show that a single composite score, however convenient methodologically, is an incomplete and potentially misleading basis for workforce diagnosis. Dimension-level profiling of the kind conducted here gives public sector decision makers the specific, ranked, and actionable information that aggregate reporting cannot supply on its own.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Declaration

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used an AI language model to check the manuscript's grammar.

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