How do job insecurity and perceived well-being affect expatriate employees' willingness to share or hide knowledge?

Dr. Murad Ali
Assistant Professor, Department of Human Resource Management
Faculty of Economics & Administration
King Abdulaziz University Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
E-mail: mali3@kau.edu.sa
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1381-4049

Dr. Imran Ali
Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Economics & Administration
King Abdulaziz University Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
E-mail: imranalinim@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7008-7514

Dr. Gema Albort Morant
Assistant Professor, Departamento de Economía Financiera y Dirección de Operaciones
Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad de Sevilla
E-mail: galbort@us.es
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3796-8571

Dr. Antonio Luis Leal-Rodríguez
Assistant Professor, Departamento de Administración de Empresas y Marketing
Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad de Sevilla
E-mail: aleal6@us.es
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4403-9658

Abstract

Employee well-being is now at the core of organizational human resource management (HRM) strategies as firms attempt to grasp the importance of human resources while building competitive advantages. However, external factors such as the localization of labor can adversely affect expatriate employees' perceptions of firm-level well-being. The Saudi Arabian government's localization policies mean that organizations are replacing expatriate employees with local employees to avoid government-imposed penalties. Therefore, it is important to understand how this job insecurity might affect expatriate employees' perceptions of well-being and knowledge management behaviors. This study examines the influence of job insecurity on employees' perceptions of well-being and knowledge sharing or knowledge hiding strategies. The data for this study were collected from 265 expatriate employees working at different organizations in Saudi Arabia. The study uses partial least squares path modeling to test the research hypotheses. Some of the findings contradict previously reported findings because of the nature of the research context. The study shows the significant influence of job insecurity and employees' perceptions of work engagement and knowledge sharing. No significant association was observed between job insecurity and knowledge hiding. Work engagement has a significant association with knowledge sharing and burnout. Finally, burnout is significantly associated with knowledge hiding behaviors by expatriate employees.

Keywords: Job insecurity, work engagement, burnout, employee well-being, knowledge sharing, knowledge hiding, PLS-SEM, Saudi Arabia.

Introduction

In recent decades, doing business and managing the workplace have changed dramatically. The rise in the use of computers and information and communication technologies (ICTs) has driven organizations to become more innovative and competent while adapting to today's dynamic business and work environment (Ali et al. 2018; Leal-Rodríguez et al. 2018). Firms are increasingly developing knowledge management (KM) systems to exploit explicit and tacit knowledge resources and boost their intellectual capital (Ali et al. 2018). In other words, organizational design and managerial practice have become considerably more knowledge focused (Ali et al. 2017; Alavi and Leidner 2001).

Organizations strive to improve their employees' well-being to maintain an engaged, highly motivated, competitive workforce and retain their most talented employees (Wright and Bonett 2007; Rothausen et al. 2017). The management literature emphasizes the importance of employees' well-being to yield better individual and organizational outcomes, and many studies have examined the role of employee-related factors in the design and implementation of knowledge management strategies. However, few studies have examined expatriate employees' perceptions of well-being and these employees' intentions to share or hide knowledge in contexts of job insecurity. Ali et al. (2019a) showed that job insecurity causes stress and disengagement among expatriate employees, which leads to low productivity and negative job outcomes. Therefore, examining how the negative outcomes of job insecurity can be minimized to yield better knowledge outcomes among expatriate employees is crucial. The role of expatriate employees' knowledge resources is fundamental to improve local employees' individual and team innovativeness (Ali et al. 2019b).

As argued by Ferreira et al. (2017), further research should address global human resource management (HRM) and knowledge management in international contexts to ascertain the role of human capital in competitively relevant international business ventures. This paper sheds light on this issue by answering the following research questions: How do expatriate employees behave in terms of knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding in contexts of job insecurity? How do expatriate employees' perceptions of well-being determine or influence the willingness to share or hide knowledge from colleagues?

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between job insecurity and individual engagement (Lu et al. 2014; Ali et al. 2019a) or work engagement (De Spiegelaere et al. 2014; Wang et al.

2014; Moshoeu and Geldenhuys 2015). Scholars have also studied the link between job insecurity and negative outcomes such as burnout (Schaufeli and Greenglass 2001; Bosman et al. 2005; Aybas et al. 2015; Bitmis and Ergeneli 2015; Blom et al. 2018). However, scant research has examined the effect of employees' perceptions of well-being on intentions to share or hide knowledge in contexts of job insecurity. Accordingly, the relationships between job insecurity, employees' perceived well-being, and KM strategies have not been sufficiently studied. This paper fills this research gap by using engagement (positive behavior) and burnout (negative behavior) as proxies of expatriate employees' perceived well-being. These variables are then linked to employees' knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding intentions. Thus, this paper presents an original theoretical model that explains expatriate employees' perceptions of well-being, measured in terms of engagement and burnout due to job insecurity. This model also describes the role of both facets of well-being in predicting employees' knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding intentions. Furthermore, this paper examines the direct influence of job insecurity on expatriate employees' knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding behaviors.

This study contributes to the HRM, KM, and international strategic management literature in several ways. The proposed research model is consistent with research that stresses the importance of providing secure job settings and adequate working conditions if firms wish to effectively deploy KM strategies in the workplace. Thus, this study shows whether expatriate employees are willing to share their knowledge depending on their perceived well-being at work. This approach is aligned with prior studies that show that employee engagement is a key driver of employee motivation, which greatly contributes to both individual and organizational performance (Bakker and Bal 2010; Ford et al. 2015). Hence, this study contributes by theoretically and empirically enhancing our understanding of how a context of job insecurity might affect perceived well-being and KM strategies. The study thereby reinforces the idea that firms that seek effective KM strategies should never neglect or ignore the benefits of ensuring adequate working conditions for expatriate employees and securing their engagement. Furthermore, the findings of this empirical study enrich the literature because of their relevance to the success of expatriate management policies.

This study is conducted in the context of expatriate employment. Specifically, it uses a sample of 265 expatriate employees working in Saudi Arabia. As posited by Connelly (2010), the most common

expatriate profile (i.e., the "traditional expatriate") is an individual who works for a multinational corporation with a large international workforce, a corporate-level internationalization strategy, and an exhaustive set of expatriate management policies.

Saudi Arabia is characterized by its dependence on foreign workers. Approximately 75% of its workers are expatriates. Because of the high proportion of unemployed local citizens, the Saudi Arabian government has implemented localization policies to replace expatriate employees with home employees. To combat unemployment among Saudis, the Saudi Arabian government began to impose a levy on firms with expatriate employees. These firms are forced to pay 100 riyals per month per expatriate employee. Therefore, the total number of foreign workers in the Saudi labor market has dropped by around 1.8 million since the beginning of 2017, with up to 185,000 foreigners leaving the Saudi labor market in the first quarter of 2019 (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Labor and Social Development 2019). Given this job insecurity, many expatriates have returned to their home countries, seriously affecting the multinationals based in Saudi Arabia.

Many studies have examined HRM issues in the context of expatriate employees in Saudi Arabia. However, very few studies have empirically assessed knowledge sharing behavior in this context (i.e., Ewers 2013; Dulayami et al. 2015; Ali et al. 2019b), and no study has focused on the links between job insecurity, perceived well-being, and knowledge sharing or knowledge hiding behaviors. Restricting the scope of this research to the Saudi Arabian context makes it both original and essential because of the mass incorporation of expatriate talent in Middle Eastern countries in recent years (Gordon 2018).

This manuscript is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a conceptual framework that is useful for both academics and practitioners. This framework is based on the links between job insecurity, two facets of well-being (work engagement and burnout), and two intentions (knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding). The third section describes the method. The fourth section presents the empirical results. Finally, the fifth section discusses the main implications of the analysis, the limitations of the study, and future lines of research.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

Conceptualization of the variables of interest

Job insecurity

The conceptualization of job insecurity is a central question in the HRM literature. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) performed an exhaustive review of this concept. According to these authors, job insecurity can be defined as an employee's fear of potential loss of continuity in a certain job. This loss of continuity may range from permanently losing the job itself to losing certain job characteristics that are positively valued or considered important by the job holder. Among the most critical sources of threat, Greenhalgh (1983) highlights the importance of perceived organizational decline, arguing that employees can normally identify when their organization has entered a stage of decline. Employees also know that organizational decline often entails adjustments that are likely to affect their continuity in their current jobs. Fears may also arise in response to the threat of a potential reorganization. In a recent study, Gallie et al. (2017) posited that job insecurity not only comprises employees' fears of job loss but also encompasses employees' anxiety about potential threats to job status. Moreover, as Abildgaard et al. (2018) report, one of the major consequences of organizational restructuring, especially downsizing, is uncertainty regarding future job features and content (qualitative job insecurity) as well as uncertainty about how much longer employees will remain in the job in question (quantitative job insecurity).

Employee well-being

The conceptualization of employee well-being is vague. Warr (1987, 1990) extensively reviewed the concept of employee well-being, proposing employee mental health as an indicator of *affective well-being*. Diener (1984) also conceptualized employee well-being as the *subjective well-being* described by employees' overall experience in life, which is reported through an individual's self-described happiness. In the organizational context, job satisfaction is considered the most common predictor of employees' perceptions of well-being and happiness (Wright 2005). Employees' perceptions and behaviors toward the organization determine these employees' perceptions of well-being at work. Therefore, positive behaviors such as job satisfaction, loyalty, and work engagement reflect positive perceptions of well-being, whereas negative behaviors such as burnout and turnover intentions represent negative perceptions of well-being.

This study uses employee engagement as a positive behavior and burnout as a negative behavior to reflect perceptions of well-being. Employee engagement is extensively used in research on employee behavior. Schaufeli et al. (2006, p. 702), defined engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of

mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption." The present study uses two dimensions of employee engagement (i.e., work engagement and organizational engagement), as proposed by Saks (2006), and two dimensions of job burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion and depersonalization), as proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1981).

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing refers to the exchange of explicit and tacit knowledge among employees (Nonaka 1994). Aizpurúa et al. (2011) described knowledge sharing at work as the process through which an employee's knowledge is turned into a form that others can grasp, absorb, and exploit. Knowledge sharing is critical for mobilizing the flow of knowledge assets within an organization (Wang et al. 2008), which might lead to knowledge creation, knowledge application, and an increase in innovation outcomes at the individual, group, and organizational levels (Pinho et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2014). Knowledge sharing practices comprise the open sharing of knowledge among all employees at different levels and in different departments, networked formally or informally within the organization (Wang et al. 2008). Similarly, Lin (2007, p. 315) described knowledge sharing as "the exchange of employee knowledge, experiences, and skills through the whole department or organization. KS comprises a set of shared understandings related to providing employees access to relevant information and building and using knowledge networks within organizations." Nowadays, organizations rely on rigorous knowledge management systems using information and communication technologies (ICTs) to promote knowledge sharing among employees. Knowledge sharing processes can be conceived as the processes through which employees mutually exchange knowledge and jointly create knowledge (Van den Hooff and Van Weenen 2004a).

Knowledge hiding

Knowledge hiding is a relatively new concept in knowledge management. Traditionally, most research has focused on knowledge sharing. Accordingly, some readers might confuse knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding by considering knowledge hiding the intention not to share knowledge. However, knowledge hiding is not simply the absence of knowledge sharing; it is an intentional effort to conceal or withhold knowledge required by a colleague (Connelly et al. 2012; Cerne et al. 2014; Connelly and Zweig

2015; Bogilovic et al. 2017). Despite firms' endeavors and investments in KM systems and practices, knowledge hiding remains a prevalent behavior among employees. For example, Pan et al. (2018) reported that 76% of employees in the United States and 46% of Chinese employees tend to engage in knowledge hiding practices in the workplace.

Knowledge hiding by employees occurs in three forms: playing dumb, rationalized hiding, and evasive hiding (Connelly et al. 2012). Playing dumb refers to pretending not to know something when a colleague requests a specific piece of information or knowledge. Rationalized hiding occurs when the knowledge hider explains the rationale behind hiding the knowledge. Evasive hiding happens when hiders tell knowledge seekers that they will share the information even though they intend to conceal it (Connelly et al. 2012).

Links between job insecurity, work engagement, and burnout

Considerable research in the academic literature has examined the influence of job insecurity on employee behavior (Ashford et al. 1989; Lawrence and Kacmar 2017). Psychological stress theory, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), links job insecurity to employees' subjective assessments of job risk and the consequences of job loss (Roskies and Louis-Guerin 1990; Hartley et al. 1991). Job insecurity is often perceived by employees as a threat that may have severe adverse effects on their mental health and subjective well-being (Ashford et al. 1989; Hartley et al. 1991). Job insecurity reduces employees' loyalty to an organization. Moreover, it increases negative behaviors and decreases positive behaviors by employees (Hallier and Lyon 1996). Job insecurity is related to employees' perceptions of losing a job and becoming unemployed (De Witte 1999).

Scholars have described two dimensions of job insecurity: cognitive and affective. The cognitive dimension of job insecurity relates to the perception of potential job loss, whereas the affective dimension relates to an employee's fear of job loss (De Witte 2000). Hallier and Lyon (1996) have argued that job insecurity contributes to reducing positive behaviors (i.e., job satisfaction) and increasing negative behaviors (i.e., intentions to quit jobs) by employees. Moreover, De Witte (2005) posits that job insecurity increases the strain on workers and creates negative energy among employees. Other studies have shown that job insecurity increases employee churn and workers' health complaints while significantly reducing

job satisfaction and work engagement (Naswall et al. 2005). Several studies (e.g., De Cuyper and De Witte 2005; De Cuyper et al. 2008; Stander and Rothmann 2010) have shown that job insecurity is negatively related to employee engagement. Recently, Chen and Lam (2019) found that expatriate employees who perceive positive working conditions (i.e., perceived organizational support) also perceive greater subjective well-being, resulting in higher performance and retention levels. Similarly, Ramalu and Subramaniam (2019) found that meeting psychological needs is a fundamental driver of expatriate academics' level of work engagement. Likewise, stress is considered a key driver of expatriate employees' maladjustment and turnover (Davies et al. 2019). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Job insecurity is negatively related to expatriate employees' work engagement.

Burnout is defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981) as a syndrome characterized by deep feelings of emotional exhaustion (feeling emotionally overwhelmed and exhausted by work), depersonalization (an impassive and impersonal response to others), and reduced personal accomplishment (a feeling of reduced competence and achievement in one's work). According to these authors, people first experience emotional exhaustion due to work overload. Next, their work relationships start to suffer. Finally, a phase of breakdown toward others begins. When people notice their desensitization, they feel as if they are not good enough to do their jobs and subsequently label themselves as unsuccessful.

Burgard and Ailshire (2009) explained that job insecurity causes stress and raises expatriate employees' levels of anxiety and depression. Hence, burnout is considered a response to emotional or interpersonal stressors at work (Mustafa et al. 2007; Aybas et al. 2015) and involves an erosion of engagement with one's job (Maslach et al. 2001). Several studies have linked job insecurity to employees' perceptions of poor health. Nevertheless, scant empirical research has explored this link in the context of expatriates. One of the few studies to do so, a recent paper by Saquib et al. (2019), showed a significant impact of job insecurity on expatriate nurses' symptoms of severe depression, anxiety, and stress.

Expatriates already experience considerable levels of stress and mental exhaustion in their jobs. They often work long hours and must accomplish challenging tasks in a foreign country, where they might struggle to fit in culturally and establish roots. Localization policies can be a significant additional stressor that may affect their current and future work prospects, as well as their personal lives. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Job insecurity is positively related to expatriate employees' burnout.

Links between job insecurity, knowledge sharing, and knowledge hiding

Knowledge sharing plays a central role in employee-related knowledge management research. Organizations that realize the significance of knowledge management consider knowledge sharing a key factor in evaluating employee performance. In ideal conditions, employees share their knowledge with colleagues to gain the maximum benefits from the organization and learn from others. Thus, firms must attempt to develop HRM practices aimed at encouraging knowledge sharing among employees (Naeem et al. 2019). However, in situations of job insecurity, where employees have predominantly negative perceptions and negative energy in relation to their organizations, employees tend not to share their knowledge. According to Nonaka (1994) and Bock et al. (2005), sharing explicit and implicit knowledge is a voluntary behavior, and when employees have negative energy, they do not engage in such voluntary behaviors. Moreover, because knowledge is perceived as power and a competitive weapon of employees who feel that their jobs are insecure, they try to secure their competitive advantage by not sharing their knowledge with coworkers. This assertion is supported by the findings of Oye et al. (2011), who observed that job insecurity might contribute to individuals' censorship and the instinct to preserve knowledge. Thus, the intrinsic will of employees to protect themselves against this threat could lead to the creation of knowledge fortresses. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Job insecurity is negatively related to expatriate employees' knowledge sharing behaviors.

Knowledge is a key source of power for employees (Foucault 1980; Townley 1993), and employees make their own decisions regarding whether to share or hide knowledge based on different organizational factors (Heizmann and Olsson 2015). When employees feel that their job is insecure, they might try to hide their knowledge from colleagues to maintain their power as an expert and thereby secure their position (Raven 2008; Oye et al. 2011). When employees tend to feel worried and anxious about the influence of certain organizational factors that threaten their job security, they may hide their knowledge in an attempt to compete with colleagues and secure their jobs, using knowledge to give them competitive power. Serenko and Bontis (2016) also argue that job insecurity increases expatriate employees' intentions to hide knowledge. Based on these arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Job insecurity is positively related to expatriate employees' knowledge hiding behavior.

Links between work engagement, burnout, and knowledge sharing behavior

As noted earlier, burnout is a syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Because employee work engagement is a positive behavior, it may have the power to change the nature of employee burnout. Studies also suggest there is a negative association between employee engagement and burnout. For instance, Schaufeli et al. (2002) noted a negative association between employee engagement and burnout. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Work engagement is negatively related to expatriate employees' perceptions of burnout.

Employee work engagement is a positive behavior that is reflect in job-related activities as well as organization-related activities. Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) defined engagement as positive and gratifying, work-related feelings Hence, employees who feel engaged display high levels of positive knowledge sharing behaviors. Several studies have linked employee engagement with strong intentions to share knowledge. For instance, Cabrera et al. (2006) and Foss et al. (2009) found a positive association between employee engagement and knowledge sharing behaviors. Thus, as reported by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), employees who feel engaged with work have high levels of productivity and knowledge sharing behaviors.

Therefore, knowledge sharing is a self-motivated process that may lead employees to be more willing to share their expertise with colleagues and coworkers when they are dedicated to their work and enthusiastic about the organization they work for (Fatima and Khan 2017). Such knowledge exchange develops an organization's capability to acquire useful competencies while building competitive advantages (Reid 2003). Thus, implicating and motivating expatriate employees to share their knowledge with local employees or other expatriates are important actions. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Work engagement is positively related to employees' knowledge sharing behaviors.

The link between employee burnout and knowledge hiding

The concept of knowledge hiding is nothing new; in fact, it is as old as the field of knowledge management itself (Davenport and Prusak 1998). However, over time, researchers increasingly focused on knowledge sharing instead of knowledge hiding, considering the two constructs to overlap. Knowledge hiding, however, is distinct from knowledge sharing; it is not merely the absence of knowledge sharing. As suggested by Bogilovic et al. (2017), knowledge hiding actually entails deliberate efforts to conceal or withhold knowledge required by another. Knowledge hiding by an employee is a negative behavior induced by other negative perceptions held by that employee. Employees may feel more secure while intentionally hiding tacit and explicit knowledge (skills, expertise, know-how, documents, videos, reports, etc.) because their coworkers will be unable to discover and exploit these weaknesses and opportunities, which they could if this knowledge were divulged (Černe et al. 2014). Because burnout is a negative employee behavior, it encourages employees to hide their knowledge from colleagues to punish the organization or hamper organizational effectiveness. We therefore proposed the following hypothesis:

H7: Burnout is positively related to expatriate employees' knowledge hiding behaviors.

The conceptual model of this study is presented in Figure 1. The independent variable is job insecurity, and the dependent variables are work engagement, burnout, knowledge sharing, and knowledge hiding behaviors. The conceptual model shows negative links between job insecurity and work engagement and between job insecurity and knowledge sharing; in contrast, positive associations are shown between job insecurity and burnout and between job insecurity and knowledge hiding behaviors. Work engagement is also expected to exert a negative influence on employees' perceptions of burnout.

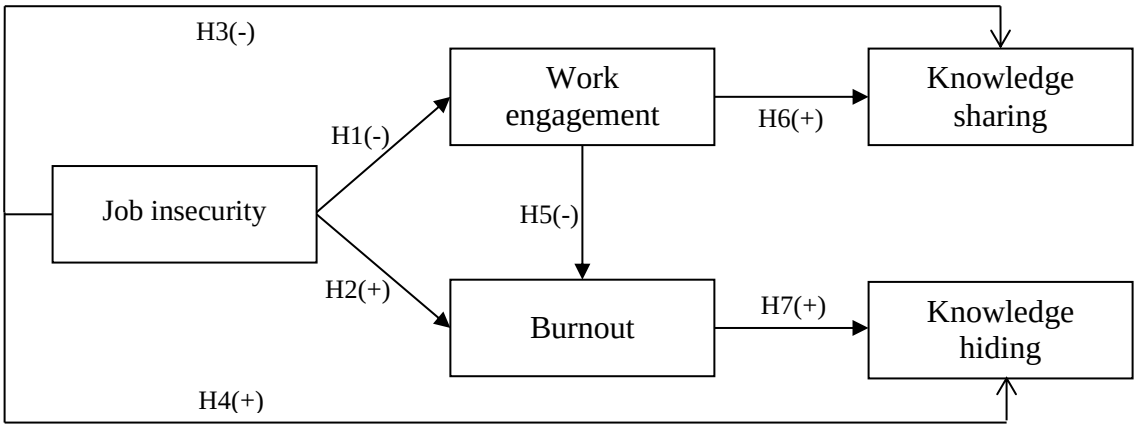

Fig. 1: Conceptual model

Method

Sample and data collection

In this study, the unit of analysis was expatriate employees working in organizations in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected from expatriate employees through self-administered online questionnaires. The expatriate employees belonged to diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in terms of gender, education, experience, designation and monthly income. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and participants were assured that data would be treated confidentially and anonymously. The professional networks of the research team were helpful in the selection of participants. Following previous research (Ali et al. 2019a, 2019b), a convenience sampling technique was employed. Approximately 500 expatriate employees were contacted and invited to participate in the survey. The survey took place from January 2 to February 1, 2018. The research model required only 33 sample observations to detect R^2 values of at least 0.25, assuming a significance level of 5%, a statistical power of 80%, the five constructs used in this study, 30 items, and an effect size of 0.15 (Hair et al. 2017, p. 26). A total of 265 valid responses were received. This number was sufficient, according to the results of the retrospective test (Cohen 1992) suggested by Faul et al. (2007) through statistical power analysis. According to G* 3.1.9.2 software, the sample in this study had a statistical power of 0.99, which is above the recommended minimum of 0.80 (Cohen 1992). Demographic data on the firms and respondents are shown in Appendix I.

Measures and instruments

The measurement instruments used in this study were borrowed from studies identified during the literature review. All instruments were rated on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The four-item job insecurity instrument was taken from De Witte (2000). It has been used by Vander et al. (2014). Work engagement was measured using the scale developed by Saks (2006). It had five items for work engagement and six items for organizational engagement. Job burnout was measured using Maslach and Jackson's (1981) scale, which was adopted by Choi et al. (2012). Two dimensions of job burnout were used: emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Each had four items. The instrument for knowledge sharing was adopted from Huang (2009). It had four items. The instrument to measure

knowledge hiding was taken from Peng (2013). It was based on the knowledge withholding scale (Peng 2012). The instrument had three items.

As in previous studies (Ali et al. 2019a; Foroudi et al. 2016), the employee characteristics of education, designation, and experience were included in the conceptual model to examine the effect of the demographic complexity of employees' attributes on employees' work behavior (employee engagement and employee burnout) and KM strategies (knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding). Therefore, in addition to the main hypothesized relationships, the analysis controlled for designation, education, and experience to eliminate any effects these factors might have on employees' work behavior and knowledge management strategies. The control variables were measured on nominal scales. They are described in Appendix I.

Data analysis

There are two types of structural equation modeling (SEM): covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) and variance-based SEM or partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM, also called PLS path modeling). CB-SEM, which is a maximum-likelihood modeling or factor-based technique (e.g., LISREL, AMOS, EQS, and Mplus), relies on the overall fit of the proposed model given by goodness-of-fit tests. It is suitable for confirmatory studies. On the contrary, PLS-SEM is a multiple linear regression modeling technique (e.g., SmartPLS, WarpPLS, PLS-Graph, and ADANCO), which relies on the maximization of the explained variance of the dependent variables. It is suitable for exploratory studies (Astrachan et al. 2014).

We used partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), which is a multivariate analysis technique (Henseler et al. 2015; Richter et al. 2015; Sarstedt et al. 2017), to estimate the measurement model and structural model. PLS-SEM has distinct features with respect to CB-SEM. For instance, PLS-SEM does not have minimal requirements in terms of the restrictive assumptions such as measurement scales, sample size, and distributional assumptions imposed by CB-SEM (Astrachan et al. 2014).

The use of PLS-SEM in this study is suitable for five reasons. (1) This study focused on predicting and explaining the variance in key target constructs (e.g., knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding). (2) The research model had a complex structure in terms of the type of hypothetical relationships and level of

multidimensionality (first- and second-order constructs). (3) The relationships between the main constructs of the study were believed to be in the early stages of theory development and thus provided an opportunity for new phenomena to be explored. (4) Latent variable scores were used in the subsequent analysis of predictive relevance, particularly in the implementation of the two-stage approach for modeling the multidimensionality of work engagement and burnout. (5) This study benefited from the advantages of PLS-SEM in terms of less rigorous requirements of restrictive assumptions, which enabled us to create and estimate the model without imposing additional limiting constraints (Hair et al. 2017). SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle et al. 2015) was used for the PLS analysis.

Results

Measurement model

The evaluation of the measurement model focused on the psychometric properties of reliability, validity, and dimensionality for each construct. These properties were assessed prior to undertaking hypothesis testing via exploratory factor analysis (EFA) by evaluating the reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), square root of the AVE, and inter-construct correlations. Work engagement and job burnout were operationalized as second-order reflective composite constructs. Work engagement was modeled as a composite reflective construct (Mode A) made up of two first-order reflective dimensions: work engagement and organizational engagement. As shown in Table 1, the two first-order reflective dimensions reflected the higher-order composite construct. Similarly, job burnout was operationalized as a second-order reflective composite construct consisting of two first-order reflective dimensions: depersonalization and emotional exhaustion. All other constructs were modeled as first-order reflective constructs.

The assessment of the individual reliability of the items depended on examining the standardized factor loadings. A popular rule of thumb is to accept items with loadings over 0.70 (Fornell and Larcker 1981). This study followed Kock's (2014) recommendation to use one-tailed *p*-values. Table 1 provides the standardized factor loadings for all first-order reflective constructs of each measurement item. The *t*-test for all the loadings yielded results at the $p < 0.001$ level. All the loadings were significant, with the exception of one job insecurity item (J-In2: "I am sure I can keep my job") and one organizational engagement item

(EE-OE3). These two items, whose loadings were less than 0.70, were found to be problematic and were removed from further analysis.

The reliability and convergent validity of the constructs were evaluated by analyzing Cronbach's alpha, Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρA), and the composite reliability of the indicator. A recommended value of 0.70 (0.60 to 0.70 in exploratory research) was used as the threshold for all three approaches. The scores for Cronbach's alpha, Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρA), and composite reliability exceeded the minimum threshold, indicating convergence or internal consistency (Table 1). Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation, and correlations for all constructs. The square root of the AVE is shown on the diagonal. The mean values show that most constructs were generally above their respective midpoints. The correlations between the independent constructs were relatively low. Thus, multicollinearity was not a concern in this study, as reflected by the data shown in Table 1 (Hair et al. 2017).

Table 1: Measurement model results at first-order level and second-order level

Construct	Code	Item wording	S.L.	S.E.	*t*-value [a,b]	α	ρ_A	C.R.	AVE [c]	VIF
Step I: Results of the assessment of the measurement model for first-order constructs										
Job Insecurity						0.86	0.89	0.91	0.78	1.37
	J-In1	Chances are I will soon lose my job.	0.86	0.04	23.77					
	J-In2*	I am sure I can keep my job.								
	J-In3	I feel insecure about the future of my job.	0.88	0.02	45.65					
	J-In4	I think I might lose my job in the near future.	0.91	0.02	44.98					
Work engagement						0.70	0.72	0.82	0.53	1.64
	EE-JE1	I really "throw" myself into my job.	0.79	0.05	16.83					
	EE-JE2	Sometimes I am so into my job that I lose track of time.	0.73	0.06	12.72					
	EE-JE3	This job is all consuming; I am totally into it.	0.80	0.04	20.90					
	EE-JE4	My mind often wanders, and I think of other things when doing my job.	0.59	0.11	5.42					
	EE-JE5	I am highly engaged in this job.	0.86	0.06	14.63					
Organizational engagement						0.82	0.85	0.87	0.57	1.58
	EE-OE1	Being a member of this organization is very captivating.	0.63	0.13	4.96					
	EE-OE2	One of the most exciting things for me is getting involved with things happening in this organization.	0.70	0.12	5.85					
	EE-OE3*	I am really not into the "goings-on" in this organization.								
	EE-OE4	Being a member of this organization makes me come "alive."	0.76	0.08	9.47					
	EE-OE-5	Being a member of this organization is exhilarating for me.	0.86	0.06	14.63					
	EE-OE-6	I am highly engaged in this organization.	0.82	0.06	13.00					

Emotional Exhaustion						0.81	0.83	0.88	0.64	2.44
	JB-EE1	I feel emotionally drained from customer service work.	0.78	0.05	14.42					
	JB-EE2	I feel used up by the end of the workday.	0.78	0.06	12.21					
	JB-EE3	I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning.	0.80	0.03	26.16					
	JB-EE4	I feel burned out from customer service work.	0.84	0.04	22.26					
Depersonalization						0.83	0.85	0.88	0.66	2.48
	JB-Dep1	I have become more callous (heartless) toward customers.	0.86	0.02	45.72					
	JB-Dep2	I feel that I treat customers as if they were impersonal "objects."	0.85	0.03	25.82					
	JB-Dep3	I worry about being callous (heartless) toward people.	0.70	0.07	9.96					
	JB-Dep4	I have become callous (heartless) toward people.	0.84	0.03	30.19					
Knowledge sharing						0.70	0.72	0.82	0.54	1.40
	KS1	I often share the reports and official documents from my work with the members of my team.	0.77	0.05	14.85					
	KS2	I always share my manuals, methodologies, and models with the members of my team.	0.76	0.05	15.34					
	KS3	I often share my experience or know-how with the members of my team.	0.81	0.03	24.19					
	KS4	I always share my know-where and know-whom when prompted by the members of my team.	0.56	0.11	4.99					
Knowledge hiding						0.82	0.82	0.89	0.73	1.45
	KH1	I withhold helpful information or knowledge from my Saudi coworkers.	0.85	0.02	35.22					
	KH2	I try to hide innovative achievements from my Saudi coworkers.	0.85	0.05	18.46					
	KH3	I do not transform personal knowledge and experience into organizational knowledge from my Saudi coworkers.	0.87	0.02	46.29					
Control variables										
	Designation	Employee designation	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Education	Employee education	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Experience	Employee experience	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Step II: Results of the assessment of measurement model after generating second order constructs										
Construct	**Code**	**Item wording**	**C.W.**	**S.E.**	***t*-value [a,b]**	**α**	**ρ_A**	**C.R.**	**AVE [c]**	**VIF**
Work engagement						0.70	0.82	0.81	0.69	1.04
		Work engagement	0.97	0.02	60.88					
		Organizational engagement	0.65	0.13	5.12					
Job burnout						0.86	0.86	0.93	0.88	1.50
		Depersonalization	0.93	0.01	78.65					
		Emotional exhaustion	0.94	0.01	120.59					

Note: * Problematic item removed from final analysis. S.L. = standardized loading; S.E. = standard error; [a] Test statistics obtained by 5,000 Bootstrap runs; [b] Absolute t-values > 1.65 one-tailed significant at 5%; α = Cronbach's alpha; ρ_A = Dijkstra-Henseler's rho; C.R. = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; [c] Percentage of variance of item explained by latent variable; VIF = variance inflation factor; C.W. = correlational weight.

The AVE can be used to assess convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend an AVE value of more than 0.50. Such a value means that 50% or more of the indicator's variance should be accounted for. Consistent with this suggestion, all first-order and second-order constructs had AVE values that exceeded this minimum, as reflected by the data shown in Table 1.

We assessed the discriminant validity using three approaches: the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross loadings, and heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The correlation matrix (Table 2) and structural model results (Table 3) show that, for each pair of constructs, the square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than the absolute value of their correlation (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The results of the cross loadings for all items show that they loaded higher on their respective constructs than on the other constructs, and the cross-loading differences were much greater than the suggested threshold of 0.10 (Gefen and Straub 2005). Finally, in all cases, the HTMT values were below the threshold of 0.85 or 0.90 (diagonal values in Table 2). These results confirm the presence of discriminant validity in this study.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, correlations, and discriminant validity at second-order level

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Job insecurity	3.00	0.83	*0.88*	0.40	0.62	0.29	0.56	0.01	0.24	0.05
2. Work engagement	3.39	0.65	-0.22	*0.83*	0.50	0.54	0.42	0.07	0.07	0.1
3. Burnout	3.02	0.91	0.58	0.25	*0.94*	0.39	0.66	0.13	0.13	0.07
4. Knowledge sharing	3.27	0.75	0.29	-0.49	0.37	*0.73*	0.35	0.07	0.04	0.06
5. Knowledge hiding	2.92	0.98	0.56	-0.25	0.47	0.35	*0.85*	0.09	0.10	0.04
6. Designation	3.05	1.24	-0.01	0.06	0.12	0.07	0.09	*1.00*†	0.43	0.25
7. Education	2.33	0.93	-0.24	0.04	-0.12	0.04	-0.1	0.43	*1.00*†	0.22
8. Experience	2.89	0.77	-0.05	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.25	0.22	*1.00*†

Note: SD = Standard deviation; Diagonal and italicized elements are the square roots of the AVE (average variance extracted). † The AVE value is not meaningful criterion for single-item measures. Below-diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. Above-diagonal elements are the HTMT values.

As expected, no control variable (employee attributes) had significantly different associations with any employee work behavior or KM strategies variable, except burnout. The results for the control variables show that employee designation was positively related to burnout (β = 0.13, p < 0.05). These results are consistent with previous studies in similar areas (Foroudi et al. 2016; Ageeva et al. 2018; Ali et al. 2019a).

Structural model

We followed the recommendations given by Hair et al. (2017) to evaluate the structural model. First, potential collinearity was assessed. The only way to assess collinearity issues is by using the variance inflation factor (VIF). Table 1 shows minimal collinearity in the structural model because all values of the VIF were below the commonly accepted threshold of 5 to 10 (Hair et al. 2017). Second, the predictive power of the structural model was computed in terms of the variance explained (R^2) values for the three dependent composite constructs, as shown in Table 3.

Third, the size and significance of the path coefficients that represent the research hypotheses were examined. Following Hair et al. (2017), the significance levels of the path coefficients were obtained using the bootstrapping procedure (with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 265 bootstrap cases). Table 3 provides the path coefficients, *t*-statistics, significance levels, *p*-values, and accompanying bootstrap 95% confidence intervals. Analysis of the path coefficients and levels of significance shows that all hypotheses are supported, except H3, H4, and H5.

Fourth, the blindfolding procedure yielded the Q^2 values using a sample reuse technique that omitted part of the data matrix and used the model estimates to predict the omitted part. For PLS-SEM models, a Q^2 value of more than 0 in the cross-validated redundancy report indicates predictive relevance. Table 3 provides the Q^2 values of all three dependent constructs. All Q^2 values were considerably greater than 0, thus providing support for the model's predictive relevance in terms of out-of-sample prediction (Hair et al. 2012).

Finally, we also calculated the overall model fit using the standardized root-mean square residual (SRMR) to capture the root mean square discrepancy between the observed correlation and the model implied correlations. We followed Henseler et al.'s (2015) approach and used the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as an index for model validation. Values below 0.08 are considered suitable (Hu and Bentler 1999). The model estimation with PLS-SEM in this study reveals an SRMR value of 0.07, which confirms the overall fit of the PLS-SEM path model (Henseler et al. 2015; Hair et al. 2017).

Table 3: Structural model results

Structural path	Path coefficient	S.E.	*t*-value (bootstrap)	95% confidence interval	Conclusion

Non-hypothesized links (control variables)					
Designation → Work engagement	-0.02	0.06	0.26	(-0.09, 0.13)	
Designation → Burnout	0.13*	0.05	2.55	(0.05, 0.21)	
Designation → Knowledge sharing	-0.02	0.01	1.02	(-0.05, 0.02)	
Designation → Knowledge hiding	-0.03	0.03	1.12	(-0.07, 0.02)	
Education → Work engagement	-0.08	0.07	1.17	(-0.04, 0.2)	
Education → Burnout	-0.06	0.05	1.21	(-0.15, 0.02)	
Education → Knowledge sharing	0.02	0.01	1.55	(0.00, 0.05)	
Education → Knowledge hiding	0.03	0.02	1.42	(0.00, 0.07)	
Experience → Work engagement	0.06	0.06	0.96	(-0.05, 0.16)	
Experience → Burnout	-0.07	0.06	1.17	(-0.18, 0.04)	
Experience → Knowledge sharing	-0.01	0.01	0.72	(-0.04, 0.01)	
Experience → Knowledge hiding	-0.02	0.02	0.90	(-0.06, 0.02)	
Hypothesized relationships					
H1(-): Job insecurity → Work engagement	-0.21*	0.12	1.77	(-0.38, 0.01) Sig.	Supported
H2(+): Job insecurity → Burnout	0.55***	0.08	6.75	(0.42, 0.68) Sig.	Supported
H3(-): Job insecurity → Knowledge sharing	0.12 NSig.	0.05	2.52	(0.03, 0.18) Sig.	Not supported (+ sign)
H4(+): Job insecurity → Knowledge hiding	0.03 NSig.	0.04	0.90	(-0.04, 0.10) NSig.	Not supported
H5(-): Work engagement → Burnout	0.14 NSig.	0.09	1.66	(0.04, 0.24) Sig.	Not supported (+ sign)
H6(+): Work engagement → Knowledge sharing	0.48***	0.02	24.00	(0.45, 0.51) Sig.	Supported
H7(+): Burnout → Knowledge hiding	0.46***	0.02	23.00	(0.43, 0.49) Sig.	Supported
SRMR composite model = 0.07 $R^2_{\text{Work engagement}} = 0.10$; $Q^2_{\text{Work engagement}} = 0.09$ $R^2_{\text{Employee burnout}} = 0.38$; $Q^2_{\text{Employee burnout}} = 0.29$ $R^2_{\text{Knowledge sharing}} = 0.48$; $Q^2_{\text{Knowledge sharing}} = 0.46$ $R^2_{\text{Knowledge hiding}} = 0.44$; $Q^2_{\text{Knowledge hiding}} = 0.43$					

Note: $^{*}t(0.05, 4999) = 1.65$; $^{**}t(0.01, 4999) = 2.33$; $^{***}t(0.001, 4999) = 3.09$. Sig. denotes a significant direct effect at 0.05; Nsig. denotes a non-significant direct effect at 0.05 based on $t(4999)$, one-tailed test. R^2 = coefficient of determination; Q^2 = predictive relevance of endogenous variable (omission distance = 7). Threshold for R^2 value ≥ 0.25 (weak); ≥ 0.50 (moderate); ≥ 0.75 (substantial). Threshold for Q^2 value > 0 indicates predictive relevance.

Discussion and conclusions

This study achieves several aims. First, it provides insight into the influence of job insecurity on expatriate employees' perceptions of well-being (measured in terms of engagement and burnout). Second, it examines how such perceptions of well-being shape employees' knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding behaviors. Third, the study assesses the direct influence of job insecurity on expatriate employees' knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding behaviors. The study was conducted in the context of the expatriate labor market in Saudi Arabia, which is characterized by uncertainty as a result of the Saudi government's localization policies.

The study contributes to theory and practice by explaining the role of job insecurity in expatriate employees' perceptions of well-being and knowledge management strategies in organizations. This study shows that, to increase expatriate employees' well-being and enhance knowledge outcomes, firms that wish to benefit from the knowledge resources of expatriate employees should minimize the negative outcomes of the job insecurity created by government labor market policies. To the best of our knowledge, the influence of job insecurity on employees' knowledge sharing behaviors has not been tested in the context of government policies on the localization of labor.

Interestingly, some of our findings do not support those reported in previous theoretical studies. These differences are due to the specific context considered in this study, which may actually be considered the strength of this research. The empirical results of this study reveal a positive association between job insecurity and knowledge sharing, which is contrary to our theoretical arguments and the findings of many previous studies. However, we did not observe a significant association between job insecurity and knowledge hiding. This finding suggests that job insecurity exerts external pressure on employees. Thus, in order to secure their jobs, expatriate employees tend to increase their knowledge sharing activities instead of hiding knowledge. This conclusion is consistent with self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2001). Accordingly, when expatriate employees fear they will lose their jobs, they increase their engagement at work and share more knowledge. Stander and Rothmann (2010) and Serenko and Bontis (2016) also noted that external pressures caused by job insecurity can change the behavior of employees, leading them to perform more positive behaviors to keep their jobs. Despite a lack of clear empirical evidence on the role of job insecurity in shaping knowledge sharing behaviors by expatriate employees in contexts of job insecurity, studies have shown that job insecurity appears to have some benefits (Sverke et al. 2002; Cheng and Chan 2008; Staufenbiel and Konig 2010; Ali et al. 2019a). For example, employees strive to keep their jobs by engaging more in positive behaviors (e.g., knowledge sharing) than in negative behaviors.

Likewise, contrary to our expectations, the empirical results reveal positive ties between work engagement and burnout. In contrast, Upadyaya et al. (2016) argued that work engagement and burnout symptoms are negatively associated over time. This study shows a positive, significant influence of job insecurity on employees' perceptions of well-being (measured by work engagement and burnout). Hence, two interesting questions arise. First, how can job insecurity simultaneously lead to superior levels of both

work engagement and burnout? Second, can employees' work engagement push employees to more extreme levels of burnout? Answers to both questions might be encountered in the findings reported by Timms et al. (2012), who argued that, for individuals and groups that work under pressure, certain aspects of engagement (i.e., absorption and dedication) may plausibly coexist with burnout symptoms. This reasoning is consistent with what studies by Schaufeli and Bakkers (2003) and Sonnentag (2005) have shown, suggesting that work engagement and burnout are opposite sides of well-being and that poor working conditions inevitably lead to burnout, even if employees still feel dedicated to their work (Timms et al. 2012). Furthermore, Schaufeli et al. (2008) found that the absorption dimension of work engagement also loads with workaholism. Workaholism might have caused our respondents to be burned out while remaining engaged because workaholics tend to find their job activity compulsively enjoyable, despite working under pressure (McMillan and O'Driscoll 2008). A possible clue to better understanding this phenomenon is that employees who feel highly engaged with their work might experience higher levels of tension and anxiety regarding the completion of their tasks, which could culminate in experiencing burnout symptoms.

Consistent with what was theorized, work engagement was observed to be positively associated with knowledge sharing. Thus, employees who feel deeply engaged at work may be more likely to perform knowledge sharing behaviors. Finally, burnout was found to be significantly related to knowledge hiding behaviors by expatriate employees. This finding suggests that when employees feel psychologically exhausted and burned out at work, they may engage in knowledge hiding behaviors. This conclusion seems consistent with employees' complaints about being too busy to share their knowledge with others. Our findings reflect those of previous studies (i.e., Ford and Staples 2008; Ford et al. 2015) and provide empirical support for the ties between work engagement theory and employees' commitment to knowledge sharing. Specifically, they reveal the prominent role of work engagement promotion and burnout prevention in driving knowledge sharing behaviors by expatriate employees.

This paper has several important managerial and practical implications for companies. Our study sheds light on whether expatriate employees are willing to share or hide knowledge based on their perceived workplace well-being in contexts of job insecurity due to government localization policies. Although the localization of the labor market is inevitable for organizations that are forced to localize by

the government, uncertainty and job insecurity have serious implication for organizations. The empirical findings of this study suggest that managers should promote HRM initiatives aimed at emphasizing expatriate employees' levels of engagement and well-being at work. Examples of these initiatives are adequate job design, work enrichment, plans to avoid a lack of meaningfulness, adequate compensation policies, and, in particular, provision of accurate and timely information about government policies regarding the localization of labor. This recommendation is supported by the management literature, according to which employees' engagement is at the core of motivation and plays a critical role in both individual and organizational performance (Bakker and Bal 2010; Ford et al. 2015). In sum, when a company has a greater desire for its expatriates to be willing to remain involved in knowledge sharing behaviors, its managers should focus more on reducing burnout drivers, improving work-related psychological conditions (i.e., reducing job insecurity and uncertainty), and ensuring that expatriates are highly engaged in their work. This conclusion implies that firms that ignore the benefits of ensuring adequate working conditions and work engagement for expatriate employees may find that their knowledge sharing initiatives deteriorate. The findings of this study are particularly important for corporations operating in the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait) because the countries in this region have started localizing their labor markets. Corporations in this region can exploit the knowledge resources of expatriate employees by reducing their sense of job insecurity and improving their workplace well-being. These actions can help expatriate employees provide even better knowledge outcomes in a more secure work environment. Even if companies must reduce the number of expatriate employees to provide more employment opportunities to local citizens, the decision should be made on the basis of knowledge outcomes, particularly in organizations that operate in dynamic industries that require a high level of innovation and knowledge from employees.

This research has certain limitations. For instance, the data were collected from only 265 expatriate employees working in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, researchers should be careful when extrapolating our findings to other countries. A larger sample could increase the validity of our findings. In addition, comparative analysis between local employees' and expatriate employees' perceptions of job insecurity, work engagement, burnout, knowledge sharing, and hiding behaviors might provide interesting findings in the future. Other constructs could also be used to explain why expatriate employees are willing to engage at

work and share knowledge despite facing a high level of job insecurity. Moreover, future studies could examine the moderating role of cultural aspects (religion or customs) or physical aspects (installations or attraction of the destination country) in expatriate employees' well-being. It could be of interest to establish whether hiding knowledge could incur associated problems when expatriate employees return to their home country due to illicit behavior. Finally, future research could also study the role of family well-being in expatriate dissatisfaction.

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Appendix I: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Data on respondents Measurement	No.	%	Data on sampled firms Measurement	No.	%
(a) Gender			*(a) Origin of company*		
Male	210	79.25	Saudi	167	63.02
Female	55	20.75	Non-Saudi	98	36.98
(b) Education			*(b) Number of employees*		
High school	51	19.25	Less than 100	145	54.72
Bachelor's degree	110	41.51	101–500	83	31.32
Master's degree	86	32.45	More than 500	37	13.96
PhD	8	3.02	*(c) Country of origin*		
Professional	10	3.77	Egypt	38	14.34
(c) Experience in years			Jordan	34	12.83
Less than 1	10	3.77	Sudan	33	12.45
2–5	58	21.89	Yemen	30	11.32
6–10	156	58.87	Pakistan	28	10.57
11–15	35	13.21	India	26	9.81
More than 15	6	2.26	Philippines	19	7.17
(d) Designation			Lebanon	17	6.42
Support staff	49	18.49	Syria	16	6.04
Clerical	23	8.68	Bangladesh	14	5.28
Officer	124	46.79	Other	10	3.77
Junior manager	26	9.81			
Middle manager	43	16.23			
(e) Income (Saudi riyals per month)					
Less than 5000	24	9.06			
5,000–9,999	65	24.53			
10,000–14,999	148	55.85			
15,000–19,999	17	6.42			
More than 20,000	11	4.15			