

The Relationship between Attitudes toward Privatization and Job Security among Employees in Saudi Government Sectors

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Received: 23/11/2024
Revised: 30/12/2024
Accepted: 19/1/2025
Published online: 15/1/2026

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Alyahya, I. A. (2026). The Relationship between Attitudes toward Privatization and Job Security among Employees in Saudi Government Sectors. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 53(6), 9830.
<https://doi.org/10.35516/Hum.2026.9830>

Abstract

Objectives: This study aimed to investigate the relationship between attitudes toward privatization and job security among employees in Saudi government sectors targeted by the privatization program.

Methods: A descriptive, correlational, and comparative approach was employed, involving a sample of 469 employees from government sectors undergoing privatization. Two scales were used: a researcher-developed scale to assess attitudes toward privatization, and De Witte's Job Insecurity Scale (2000; 2005), translated and adapted by the researcher, to measure job security.

Results: The findings revealed a positive correlation between attitudes toward privatization and job security. No significant differences were observed between men and women regarding attitudes toward privatization or job security. Similarly, no differences were found based on demographic factors such as age, experience, or education, except that younger employees exhibited more favorable attitudes toward privatization.

Conclusions: Positive attitudes toward privatization were associated with greater perceptions of job security among government employees. Additionally, younger employees demonstrated higher favorability toward privatization. Other demographic variables showed no significant impact on job security or attitudes toward privatization.

Keywords: Job Security, Attitudes Toward Privatization, Privatization Program.

العلاقة بين الاتجاه نحو الخصخصة والأمان الوظيفي لدى موظفي القطاعات الحكومية السعودية

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ملخص

الأهداف: تناولت الدراسة الحالية دراسة العلاقة بين الاتجاهات نحو الخصخصة، والأمان الوظيفي لدى موظفي الحكومة السعودية في القطاعات المستهدفة برنامج الخصخصة.

المنهج: اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي (ارتباطي، مقارنة)، في عينة قوامها (469) موظفاً من الموظفين. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة استخدم الباحث مقياسين: المقياس الأول من إعداد الباحث يقيس الاتجاه نحو الخصخصة، بينما المقياس الآخر يقيس الأمان الوظيفي من إعداد دي ويت (2000: 2005) وترجمة الباحث.

النتائج: أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة ارتباطية موجبة بين الاتجاه نحو الخصخصة والأمان الوظيفي، ولم تظهر فروق بين الذكور والإناث في الاتجاه نحو الخصخصة أو الأمان الوظيفي، كما لم تظهر فروق في المتغيرات الديموغرافية للعمر أو الخبرة أو التعليم، باستثناء متغير في الاتجاه نحو الخصخصة لصالح الفئة العمرية الأقل.

الخلاصة: نستنتج أنه كلما ارتفع اتجاه الموظفين الحكوميين نحو الخصخصة ارتفع لديهم الشعور بالأمان الوظيفي، كما أنه كلما انخفض العمر ارتفع اتجاههم نحو الخصخصة، ولا توجد فروق في الأمان الوظيفي والاتجاه نحو الخصخصة في المتغيرات الديموغرافية الأخرى.

الكلمات الدالة: الأمان الوظيفي، الاتجاه نحو الخصخصة، برنامج الخصخصة.



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Introduction

Professional success in a business organization (government and private) depends upon the performance, potential, and abilities of the organization, whose vision, culture, and values are directly reflected in its organizational behavior. For this reason, psychological and social factors are of interest at all levels of knowledge, including emotional and behavioral behavior. These factors might include employees' opinions, ideas, and innovations, their feelings and performance, and their behavior and interaction with others, all of which affect the general culture of the organization and pave the way for enhanced performance and higher productivity. Regulations and competition in the labor market exhaust employees and affect their output negatively. Procedurally and technically, given the potential for a reduction in effort and costs, increases in productivity, and a reduction of the error rate, policies, procedures need to be drawn up consciously in a way that allows employees to ease their negative emotions, such as fear of the unknown and insecurity. Studies have shown that these aspects are crucial pillars of success within business organizations, based on employees' sense of job security, through which employees enjoy functional security.

Focusing on job security in KSA, the researcher finds that government sectors had secure job systems, until publishing this program aims to privatize government sectors and to change their regulations and organizational structures, including changing mechanisms for hiring employees so that it accords more closely to their objectives, like the systems for work and contracts in the private sector. This is intended to ensure competition and cooperation between sectors of all kinds, whether governmental or non-governmental, as stated in the Vision Document (2030), which states that "the homeland we seek is not complete without the integration of our roles. We all have roles to perform, whether we are working in the government, private or non-profit sector" (Vision 2030, p. 67, 2016).

The privatization program set several goals to privatize specific government services and support the growth of the private sector, is one of many programs whose aim is to achieve the objectives (Vision 2030, 2016). Starting in 2018, the program aimed to identify government assets and services in several sectors within the Kingdom that could be privatized (National Center for Privatization, 2017). Employees developed attitudes toward privatization that included their general impression of it. In the literature on social and organizational psychology, these attitudes are considered a major influence on employees' sentiments and an important element in the building of a professional mindset. Both during and after the privatization process of government sectors, employees may doubt its prospects for success due to the lack of clarity in the communication of the vision, or their lack of accurate understanding of the process of transforming government sectors in privatization programs. They may have concerns about their professional futures—being made redundant or erosion of their legal and material rights that might result from this change. It is extremely important to identify employees' perspectives toward privatization to gauge their understanding of the privatization process and their awareness of its goals, and also the extent to which they have adapted to those goals. This may lead to reassurances about the employees' future careers and reduce anxiety in all its forms, which is integral to achieving the main objectives at an organizational level in the sectors targeted by the privatization programs (Al-Mutairi et al., 2014).

Moreover, the study of the way in which opinions are formed, and the identification of attitudes to change them, is essential to understand points of view at the level of individual perception (Katz, 1960). An employee's negative attitude toward their prospects generates psychological pressures that damage their emotional state, associating these pressures with anxiety about losing their job. An employee's positive attitude toward their prospects also helps to nurture organizational loyalty and job stability in the workplace (Bridges & Kaufman, 2018). This is demonstrated in the study by (Hur & Parry, 2020), which indicated that there is a correlation between feelings of job insecurity and negative feelings of job satisfaction.

The importance of job security was found to vary between genders, especially for employees with high levels of experience and skills, among whom it was found to be higher among women than men. No gender differences toward job security were found among employees with less experience and lower skill levels (Nikolaou et al., 2005), low job security manifests itself as a feeling of being under personal threat from organizational changes, and this leads to resistance to these changes (De Witte, 2005), job security has a direct or indirect effect, negatively or positively, on motivations, emotions, and behavior. It also has an inverse role in actually leaving work (Marouf et al., 2018).

Study problem:

The continuous developments of systems, policies and procedures require a level of understanding and mental awareness by employees, which shapes their attitude towards it, whether negative or positive. Studying employees' attitudes towards privatization is extremely important to identify their understanding of privatization systems, their awareness of its objectives, and the extent of their adaptation and impression, this may lead to reassurance about their career future and reduce the level of anxiety in all its forms to achieve the main objectives at the level of the organization as a whole in the sectors targeted by privatization programs (Al-Mutairi et al., 2014), employees' attitude results to several feelings among them is job security (Khirkhash, 2015), that may effects on job demands, job performance (Lu et al., 2017), organizational justice, organizational loyalty (Al-Shahri, 2021), job commitment, and job satisfaction (Gholamreza et al., 2011), while job insecurity portends negative consequences for employees of organizations, such as decreased job commitment and trust. To a large extent, job insecurity leads to actual leaving of work (Reisel & Banai, 2002).

Previous studies have not examined employees' attitudes towards the privatization of some government sectors and the extent of their feeling of job security. The study problem can be defined by the following main question: What is the relationship between job security and attitudes toward privatization among employees of government sectors targeted by the privatization program in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

Study questions:

1. Is there a relationship between job security and attitudes toward privatization among employees of government sectors targeted in the privatization program?
2. Are there gender differences between the employees of government sectors targeted in the privatization program with respect to their job security and their attitudes toward privatization?
3. Are there differences between employees of government sectors targeted in the privatization program in their job security and the attitude towards privatization when considering the demographic variables of age, experience, or education?

Study objectives:

1. Identifying the relationship between attitudes toward privatization and job security among employees of Saudi government sectors that are targeted for the privatization program.
2. Exposing gender differences among employees of Saudi government sectors that are targeted for the privatization program in the attitudes toward privatization and job security variables.
3. Exposing differences among employees of Saudi government sectors that are targeted for the privatization program in attitudes toward privatization and job security according to demographic variables (age, experience, education).

Study importance:

Theoretical importance:

1. Helping to uncover the phenomenon, leads to more insight in trying to control the prevention from consequences.
2. The results may raise many questions and conduct more future studies on other psychological variables related to the concepts of the current study, which may contribute to achieving the accumulation of research knowledge.

Applied importance:

1. The results may contribute to directing the attention of officials and decision-makers in government organizations to the importance of considering the opinions of employees and their impression of the privatization of the government sector, and any change in the organization.
2. The possibility of benefiting from the results on the attitude of employees toward privatization and their feeling level of job security and dealing with them based on these results.
3. Assisting the researchers to prepare awareness programs based on the results of this study and the proposed recommendations to reduce the problems resulting from the transformation of some government sectors into privatization.

4. Developing psychological scales of the attitude toward privatization contributes to enriching the library specialized in psychological measurement.

Study terms:

Theoretical term of Attitude toward privatization:

Eagly and Chaiken (2005) defined attitudes as beliefs and feelings related to a person or event (negatively, neutrally, and positively). Hamida (2013) defined privatization as the transfer of ownership of public government institutions or part of them to the private sector for economic rationalization and increased efficiency. The procedural term of attitude toward privatization could be: The set of beliefs and feelings of employees in government sectors targeted in the privatization program toward that program, and the organizational transformation in work, performance measurement, entitlements, benefits, penalties, ...etc, involved, and it is the procedural definition is then the score the examinee gets on the attitude toward privatization scale that developed by the researcher.

Theoretical term of Job Security:

A personally perceived and undesired possibility of losing one's job in the future, as well as fear and anxiety related to losing one's job (De Witte 2005). procedural term of Job Security could be: An internal emotional feeling of an employee toward their source of income and stability in their current job and the extent of their reassurance about their future career in the sector in which they work, also involves the individual's impression of the hierarchy in their sector and the result of changing the government sector system and wages to a privatized system with shorter-term contracts, and it is the procedural definition is then the score the examinee gets on job security scale that developed by De Witte 2005.

Limitations of study:

Objective Limits:

The study was limited to knowing the relationship between the attitude toward privatization and job security and identifying the differences between demographic variables.

Spatial Limits:

The study was applied to employees of the sixteen government sectors targeted in the privatization program in Riyadh City.

Temporal Limits:

The study tools and field procedures were applied in 2024.

Theoretical background:

Attitude toward privatization:

Attitudes are of utmost importance in life as they are a major determinant of an individual's thinking and behavior. An individual's attitudes may contribute significantly to their decision-making processes regarding any situations or topics toward which he has already shaped an attitude, whether it be acceptance, rejection, or neutrality. Therefore, attitudes are expected to have a significant impact on an employee's sense of job security or sense of agency at work. Attitudes are one of the basic concepts in social psychology, as they explain individuals' positions toward a wide range of subjects. Wicker (2010) suggested that attitudes reflect responses to hypothetical scenarios in which there will be acceptance or rejection toward opinions, people, events, places, or things. It is possible to change attitudes after acquiring new experiences.

One of the most important questions to be addressed is simply this: What do attitudes consist of? Answering this simple but profound question will enable us to build a concept of attitudes that we can measure. Most scholars of social psychology

Believe that the components of attitudes include the following three factors:

1. Cognition: This is the set of cognitive responses to situations and things and is expressed by the beliefs and knowledge associated with them.

2. Emotion: This is the set of nervous and sympathetic responses to situations and things and is expressed by preferential

or non-preferential tendencies stemming from feelings toward those situations and things.

3. Behavioral: This is the set of actual and kinetic responses to situations and things and is expressed by actions and behaviors toward those things and situations (Al-Anzi, 2006).

Attitudes, like other psychological concepts, are affected by several factors. These factors can be listed as follows:

Information: The information about situations that an individual has access to is subject to complex cognitive processes, from reception through interpretation to evaluation. In this way, the individual forms cognitive plans or structures and multiple concepts. This process is subject to the laws of knowledge, and the influence of a particular piece of information is determined by the recipient's perception of the source of the information (credibility, ambiguity, novelty, etc.).

Experience: The experience acquired by individuals through their daily lives represents a set of knowledge and information that influences the formation of attitudes toward certain situations and things. This may involve models of classical and procedural conditioning in response to certain stimuli (natural and conditional), as well as reinforcement, punishment, and other concepts that explain how an individual acquires experiences and the extent of their influence on their impressions, judgments, and evaluation of situations and things around him.

Modeling: Observing others and their attitudes toward situations and things and their consequences has an impact on individuals such that they adopt a model to follow and emulate. This results from the nature of the model's attitude or the individual's attitude toward the model, and is explained by the social learning theory, where we see that children often imitate their parents. The model expresses a certain attitude that the individual (the imitator) sees as a better choice than others.

Behavior: Behavior negatively or positively affects attitudes, and an individual forms attitudes through observations of their behavior. The theory of cognitive dissonance states that people adapt to an environment with meaning and regularity, even if this does not match reality, with the result that the individual exhibits a certain behavior that contradicts their beliefs about this behavior, and this in turn affects their attitude towards this behavior (Al-Anzi, 2006; Myers and Twenge, 2019).

Functional orientation theory to explain attitudes:

Katz (1960) used this theory to provide a systematic psychological framework for the dynamics of general and specific attitudes. He believed that attitudes are integrated with psychological functions, and therefore functions shape and determine attitudes. These attitudes may have an impact on perception, emotions, and behavior depending on one or more of the four psychological functions that Katz classified as playing the major roles in determining attitudes. The four functions are:

Adaptive: This may be seen as utilitarian, shaping individuals' attitudes to meet needs that they will feel the benefit from in their daily lives.

Ego-defensive: This function shapes individuals' attitudes to deal with internal conflicts.

Value-expressive: This shapes individuals' attitudes to maintain their personal identities and self-image.

Knowledge: This shapes individuals' attitudes to provide them with solutions and understanding of ambiguity in the world.

Katz described the roles of these functions in forming attitudes, in addition to analyzing their suitability for the conditions that determine the formation and change of these attitudes. According to Katz's theory, the adaptive function shapes employees' attitudes toward privatization as it meets their needs in terms of their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral inclinations toward privatization, whether this inclination is negative or positive. The self-defense function contributes to the decision-making process and reduces tensions concerning their future careers, while the value-expressive function helps employees shape their attitudes toward privatization in a way that is consistent with their selves and personal identities. The knowledge function pushes employees to become more familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of privatization and thus helps them to shape their attitudes toward it cognitively.

Job Security:

Job security takes several forms, which are as follows:

Motivational Security: This is the lowest level of job security, and means that the less likely the employee is to be dismissed, the more motivated he will be to make more effort, and thus achieve a higher level of performance.

Natural Security: This is an average level of job security, involving a covenant between the employee and the organization that their services will not be dispensed with, which makes him feel a sense of

belonging to the institution and secures their career future. Continuity Security: This is considered the highest level of job security, through which the employee feels that the organization cannot dispense with him (McGhee & Satcher, 1995). Job security is affected by many factors that may lead to its erosion, including Economic Conditions: These are the financial conditions of the country in which the individual works and the financial situation of government and private business organizations. Economic conditions play an important role in meeting the financial needs of individuals and may increase or decrease their job security through the organization's ability to provide decent wages and financial benefits. Work Environment: This is represented by clarity, transparency, and the participation of workers in development plans, a feeling of appreciation when assigned tasks and duties, and caring for their material and moral rights, as well as consideration of their psychological, social, and health conditions in a way that promotes their connection and loyalty to the organization (Al-Mutairi et al., 2022). Organizational Changes: These could be changes in organizational structures, systems, regulations, or legislation, especially those related to the organization's general budget, and attempts to reduce the number of employees to avoid financial problems (Hiam, 2001). Privatization: Changes are always hard to understand, causing anxiety due to a fear of the unknown. This applies to the privatization process, which involves the transfer of assets from the public sector to the private sector. This problem is evident in the experiences of employees during privatization and the subsequent cutting of the workforce (Al-Assaf, 2008).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

Maslow (1943) divided human needs into five aspects, which are: Physiological Needs: The necessities of life, including the need for air, food, water, warmth, etc., which must be successfully satisfied before moving on to other needs. Security or Safety Needs: A need for long-term stability in an individual's life, including safety from environmental hazards (social, material, emotional, or financial). The individual seeks stability and security around him before moving on to the needs that follow. Social Needs: Individuals seek attachments through acceptance and the company of others, establishing love and relationships with them. This is a requirement to prevent exclusion, loneliness, and isolation, and love here is based on need, not giving. Esteem Needs: The individual seeks to achieve a level of personal growth that satisfies him, receiving the respect, approval, and recognition of their group, so that he can trust, achieve, and be satisfied. Failure in this need leads to a feeling of inferiority and worthlessness. Self-actualization: This represents the top of the pyramid, and whoever succeeds in achieving self-actualization has reached their potential. They reach a level of self-acceptance by establishing clear and reliable relationships and progress confidently in all areas of life. Maslow emphasized in their theory that once an individual's physical needs have been met, their behavior is dominated by their need for security at all levels, including financial (economic) security. Maslow stated that individuals are deeply affected by insecurity and seek to obtain stability. This includes environmental, health, and job security (Maslow, 1954).

Expectation Theory:

Victor Vroom (1964) believed that the relationship between an individual's performance and their goals is of key importance in determining several psychological factors (behavioral, mental, and emotional). Their theory suggests that individuals have several goals that they will reach if there is a positive relationship between effort and performance, and the reward satisfies the needs sufficiently to make the effort worthwhile. Expectation theory is based on three main beliefs: Valence: The emotional orientation of individuals toward results (rewards), i.e. the desired results, whether material or moral. Expectancy: The perceived probability that the effort exerted by individuals at work will lead to a certain level of performance. Instrumentality: The perception of individuals concerning whether they will receive the returns they desire. Kong et al. (2015) indicated that expectation, according to Vroom, arises through the individual's belief in their ability to predict the outcome of their work. Once he starts to doubt or expect negative results beyond their control, this leads to hesitation and a decrease in performance, which naturally leads to psychological instability and dissatisfaction as a result of the fear of obtaining the expected negative results.

Previous studies:

The study by Lu et al. (2017) addressed the influence of job security on the relationship between job specifications and job performance among employees in several sectors in China for a sample of 513 employees. The results of the study showed that higher job specifications lead to increased job performance the higher the job security, and vice versa.

Al-Shahri's (2021) study found evidence for the role of job security in shaping the relationship between organizational justice and job loyalty among faculty members in Saudi universities. The results of the study showed that job security influences the relationships between all factors of organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and transactional) and job loyalty. The study by Abdolhoseinzadeh et al. (2022) examined the conceptual model of the causal relationship between organizational silence and productivity and the mediating role of job security for both, among a sample of 320 faculty members in universities in northwestern Iran. The results showed that job security plays a mediating role in the relationship between organizational silence and productivity.

The study by Durrah and Kahwaji (2023) revealed the role of job security in mediating between chameleon leadership behavior and innovative behavior in a sample of 282 employees in healthcare institutions in Oman. The results showed that there is no mediating role for job security in the relationship between chameleon leadership behavior and innovative behavior.

Osborn's study (1998) aimed to reveal attitudes toward privatization in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in thirteen sectors. It examined the relationship between attitudes toward privatization and attitudes toward economic change, and the differences in attitudes toward privatization along various demographic variables. The results showed a link between positive attitudes toward privatization and positive attitudes toward economic change. The results showed the following differences in attitudes toward privatization within the study sample: a more positive attitude in the younger cohort, in the more highly educated cohort, among males, and among those with higher incomes.

The study by Wated et al. (2008) evaluated two factors (positive and negative) that affected attitudes toward privatization among a sample of 944 employees in various sectors in Ecuador. The results showed a positive attitude toward privatization regarding economic returns and organizational benefits, and greater than negative attitudes with regard to national or patriotic factors and social aspects. The attitudes of public sector employees were more strongly associated with negative beliefs and less associated with positive beliefs.

The study by Kaur et al. (2014) examined the attitudes of 200 farmers in India toward the privatization of agricultural services and the extent to which attitudes toward privatization of agricultural services vary between demographic groups (age, education, economic status, etc.). The results of the study showed that a majority of farmers had a positive attitude toward the privatization of agricultural services, at 66.84%, with 47% of them expressing a more neutral positive feeling toward the privatization of services, but 28.46% of them opposed the privatization of agricultural services, and this attitude was consistent across all demographic variables.

Al-Mutairi et al. (2014) studied attitudes toward privatization among 238 employees in 21 sectors in Kuwait. The study sample expressed the opinion that it is difficult to achieve privatization in Kuwait because some service objectives include aspects of social responsibility, which the private sector cannot achieve. After all, the primary objective of the private sector is profit, with privatization subsequently causing problems such as the laying-off of employees and a reduction in subsidies from the state. In addition, the public sector has a significant financial advantage that the private sector may struggle to compete with, but the private sector can succeed in the sectors of industry, communications, and luxury services.

Most of these studies used samples taken from administrative employees, and this is in line with the sample of the current study, who all classified as employees. In terms of results, Osborn's study (1998) showed more favorable attitudes toward privatization among younger age groups compared to middle and older age groups, more favorable attitudes among the most educated compared to those with middle and low education levels, more favorable attitudes among males than females, and more favorable attitudes among high-income groups than middle- and low-income groups. No differences in attitudes toward privatization were found between demographic groups in Kaur et al.'s study (2014), while Al-Mutairi et al.'s study (2014) showed negative attitudes toward privatization due to dependence on the government for many services, financial benefits, and job security, such that the study sample does not see the possibility that they would be provided by

the private sector. After the researcher reviewed previous Arab and foreign studies, it became clear that all the studies addressing attitudes toward privatization tested the average extent of employees' attitudes toward privatization quantitatively. The exception is Osborn's study (1998), which tested the nature of the relationship between privatization and attitudes within the study sample toward various economic and political variables, while all previous studies that the researcher reviewed were on the work environments of different Arab and foreign cultures. The researcher did not find—to the best of their knowledge—studies that addressed the relationship between job security and attitudes toward privatization among employees of government sectors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia targeted by the privatization program since its launch in (2018), and there is an urgent need to study the attitudes of employees in those sectors toward privatization of the sectors in which they work and whether their attitudes are related to job security. The current study differed because it is based on a psychological perspective within the Saudi work environment and considered the Kingdom's target of privatizing certain government sectors as part of Vision 2030.

Methodology:

The researcher used the descriptive (correlational and comparative) method because it is appropriate for the objective of the current study to determine the relationship between its variables (attitudes toward privatization, job security) (Al-Assaf 2013).

The study was applied to all male and female employees in the sectors included in the privatization program in Riyadh (National Center for Privatization, 2017). Their number is thought to exceed 100,000 male and female employees of different ages, experience, and education.

The sample was selected from the study community using stratified random sampling. The study sample consisted of (468) employees, according to the sample size tables of the study community. The relative distribution of the sub-research sample = $\text{sub-research community} \div \text{total research community} \times \text{total research sample}$ (Al-Dhahian, 2012). Their ages ranged between (18-60) years, of both genders, males and females, with different experience and qualifications. In addition to applying the scales to a survey sample from the study community of no less than (129) employees to verify the properties of the psychometric scales (Tighza, 2012).

Table 1 Description of the characteristics of the study sample

Demographic	Category	No.	%
Gender	Male	345	73.7%
	Female	123	26.3%
Age	Less than 31	54	00.8%
	31 – 45	262	54.2%
	More than 45	152	45.0%
Education	Diploma or less	140	17.1%
	Bachelor	238	55.0%
	Postgraduate	90	27.9%
Experience (years)	Less than 10	92	17.1%
	10 – 25	268	52.7%
	More than 25	108	30.2%
Total		468	100 %

Tools:**Attitude towards Privatization Scale:**

The researcher reviewed several scales used in previous studies for the variable of attitude toward privatization. These included scales taking an economic perspective (Osborn, 1998; Wated et al., 2008) and an administrative perspective (Al-Mutairi et al., 2014). The researcher constructed the scale to serve the objectives of the current study taking a psychological perspective according to Daniel Katz's functional orientation theory (Katz, 1960), which assumes that individuals adopt a certain orientation, whether positive or negative, to help them achieve their goals. Psychological functions form and determine attitudes through their impact on the various components of the attitudes of individuals (mind, emotion, and behavior). The scale was constructed in three factors determined according to these three components. The mental (cognitive) factor comprised six items, the emotional factor comprised four items, and the behavioral factor comprised four items.

The scale was reviewed by 10 arbitrators specialized in psychology to determine its validity, and they added two items each to the emotional factor and the behavioral factor of the scale, so that the total number of items rose to 18, all of which were positive except for items 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, which were negative. Then the scale was applied to a survey sample of 129 employees with the same characteristics as the study sample, and the internal consistency validity was calculated by measuring the Pearson correlation coefficient of each item to give a total score for the scale, the responses were given on a five-level of Likert scale (Strongly disagree1, Disagree2, Neither agree nor disagree3, Agree4, Strongly agree5), taking into account negative items.

Table 2 Correlation coefficient between items in the privatization attitude scale and the Factor to which they belong:

Factor	Item	Correlation	Sig
Cognitive	1	0.85	0.01
	2	0.85	0.01
	3	0.81	0.01
	4	0.82	0.01
	5	0.03	0.73
	6	0.84	0.01
Emotional	1	0.76	0.01
	2	0.68	0.01
	3	0.8	0.01
	4	0.69	0.01
	5	0.78	0.01
	6	0.67	0.01
Behavioral	1	0.58	0.01
	2	0.63	0.01
	3	0.51	0.01
	4	0.72	0.01
	5	0.58	0.01
	6	0.62	0.01

Table 2 shows that the values of the average correlation coefficients of the items in the privatization attitude scale are linked to the factor to which they belong at a sig 0.01, apart from the fifth item in the cognitive factor, which was not

correlated to the factor. This item was deleted due to its lack of correlation to the factor to which it belongs, which means that the scale continued with 17 items, which all measured either high or medium for their internal consistency.

Table 3 Correlation coefficient between factors of the privatization attitude scale and the total score:

Factor	Correlation	Sig
Cognitive	0.92	0.01
Emotional	0.93	0.01
Behavioral	0.89	0.01

Table 3 shows that the values for the average correlation coefficients of the factors in the privatization attitude scale are linked to the total score at a sig 0.01, which means that the scale is generally continuous in its three factors and enjoys high internal consistency validity.

Table 4 Stability scores of the privatization attitude scale:

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Split-half
Cognitive	0.9	0.87
Emotional	0.82	0.82
Behavioral	0.66	0.60
Total	0.9	0.73

Table 4 shows that the Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability values for the privatization attitude scale are high,

Which means that the privatization attitude scale is stable in all its factors and items, except for the behavioral factor, where the split-half reliability coefficient was 0.6, which is less than 0.65. After deleting one item, the results were as follows:

Table 5 Stability of the behavioral factor in attitudes toward privatization after removing one item:

Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Reliability
1	0.657
2	0.633
3	0.692
4	0.578
5	0.667
6	0.643

Table 5 shows that the highest stability values after deleting each item of the behavioral factor from the privatization attitude scale came after removing the third and fifth items. After removing these items, the stability coefficient in Cronbach's alpha is 0.66, and that in the split-half is 0.70, both values higher than the 0.65 threshold that is set by many statistical researchers, such (Cortina, 1993; De Vellis & Thorpe 2021; Vaske, 2008). The scale had four items in this factor, with the third and fifth items removed.

Correcting criteria of scale:

The responses were given on a five-level of Likert scale (Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5) for ten positive items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15), while (Strongly disagree = 5,

Disagree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Agree = 2, Strongly agree = 1) for five negative items (7, 9, 11, 12, 14), the whole scale in final form contained (15) items, so the highest score on the scale is (75) and the lowest score is (15).

Job Security Scale:

The four-item De Witte scale (De Witte, 2000; 2005) (Unidimensional) was used to measure the variable of job security in the study sample. Translated by the researcher, this scale was used in several previous studies, including Selenko et al. (2017), (Vander Elst et al., 2014), and (Reisel & Banai, 2002). The scale was presented to 10 arbitrators specialized in psychology to evaluate the content validity of the arbitrators' data in Appendix 1, and two items were added to the scale by the arbitrators to make a total of six items, four of which are negative (items 1, 3, 5, 6), and two positive (items 2, 4). Then the scale was applied to a survey sample of 129 employees with the same characteristics as the study sample, and the consistency validity was calculated by measuring the Pearson correlation coefficient of each item with the total score of the scale.

Table 6 Correlation coefficient between the job security scale items and the total score

Item	Correlation	Sig
1	0.73	0.01
2	0.75	0.01
3	0.75	0.01
4	0.51	0.01
5	0.6	0.01
6	0.76	0.01

Table 6 shows that the values of the average correlation coefficients of the six scale items are linked to the average total score of the total scale at a value of 0.01, which means that the scale is generally continuous with six items and has high internal consistency. The Job Security Scale was used (Al-Qudat, 2019) as a criterion to calculate the degree of concurrent validity, and the results of the total score correlation coefficient for both scales were measured at 0.6 at a sig 0.01, which means that the scale is valid with six items.

Cronbach's alpha reliability and split-half reliability were both tested for the job security scale. The results of the reliability test showed that Cronbach's alpha reliability value of the job security scale was 0.77, while its split-half reliability value was 0.78, which is a value higher than the 0.65 specified as a minimum by statistical researchers such (Cortina, 1993; DeVellis & Thorpe 2021; Vaske, 2008).

Correcting criteria of scale:

The responses were given on a five-level of Likert scale (Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5), for two positive items (2, 4), while (Strongly disagree = 5, Disagree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Agree = 2, Strongly agree = 1) for four negative items (1, 3, 5, 6), the whole scale in final form contained (6) items, so the highest score on the scale is (30) and the lowest score is (6).

Results:

Question 1: Is there a relationship between levels of job security and attitudes toward privatization among employees in government sectors targeted in the privatization program?

Table 7 Pearson correlation between job security and attitudes toward privatization

Demographic	Category	Correlation	Sig
Gender	Male	0.208	0.01
	Female	0.237	0.01
Age	Less than 31	0.487	0.01
	31 – 45	0.197	0.01
	More than 45	0.163	0.05
Education	Diploma or less	0.040	0.71
	Bachelor	0.239	0.01
	Postgraduate	0.296	0.01
Experience (years)	Less than 10	0.281	0.01
	10 – 25	0.178	0.01
	More than 25	0.235	0.05
Total		0.215	0.01

Table 7 shows that there is a positive correlation between average job security scores and average sentiment in attitudes toward privatization, with a correlation coefficient of approximately 0.21 degrees, at a sig 0.01. It shows that there is a positive correlation between the average job security scores and the average favorable attitude toward privatization along to the gender variable (males/females) and the demographic variables (age, education, and experience). This was true for every category except the category of diploma and below in the demographic variable of academic education, where the value of the correlation coefficient is at a sig of more than 0.05.

Question 2: Are there statistically significant differences between the average scores within the study sample in the measures job security and attitude toward privatization along the variable of gender?

Table 8 the result of the "t" test between employees according to gender:

	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	df	Sig
job security						
Male	345	3.594	0.286	2.300	466	0.130
Female	123	3.639	0.264			
attitude toward privatization						
Male	345	3.176	0.755	0.275	466	0.600
Female	123	3.202	0.759			

Table 8 shows that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in their average job security scores and scores for attitude toward privatization, at a sig more than 0.05.

Question 3:

Are there statistically significant differences between the average scores of employees in government sectors targeted by the privatization program when measuring the categories of job security and attitudes toward privatization correlated with the demographic variables of age, experience, or education?

Table 9 ANOVA between employees in job security (age, experience, and education):

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Age					
Between Groups	0.391	2	0.196	0.301	0.740
Within Groups	301.698	465	0.649		
Total	302.089	467			
Experience					
Between Groups	3.334	2	1.667	2.595	0.076
Within Groups	298.755	465	0.642		
Total	302.089	467			
Education					
Between Groups	2.039	2	1.667	1.580	0.207
Within Groups	300.050	465	0.642		
Total	302.089	467			

Table 10 ANOVA between employees in the attitude toward privatization (age, experience, and education):

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Age					
Between Groups	4.241	2	2.120	3.350	0.036
Within Groups	294.272	465	0.633		
Total	298.512	467			
Experience					
Between Groups	1.361	2	0.680	1.065	0.346
Within Groups	297.152	465	0.639		
Total	298.512	467			
Education					
Between Groups	2.221	2	1.110	1.743	0.176
Within Groups	296.292	465	0.637		
Total	298.512	467			

Tables 9 and 10 show that there are no statistically significant differences between employees in government sectors targeted by the privatization program when examining the categories of job security and attitudes toward privatization along the demographic variables of age, experience, or education, at sig more than 0.05, except within the demographic variable of age in Table 10, at the sig less than 0.05, which means there are statistically significant differences between employees in the youngest cohort: 30 years and less.

Discussion:

The results of Question 1 showed a positive correlation between job security and attitudes towards privatization, consistent with the study of Falatah et al. (2021), in that job security is related to employee attitudes and their degree of

stability. This can be explained by the fact that the attitudes of employees toward privatization in government agencies did not change despite the transfer of ownership to the private sector. Rather, this led to a feeling of stability and that they are part of the organization's entity. It led to a feeling of security of continuity, which McGee and Satcher see as one of the most important types of job security, in which employees feel safe and that they cannot be dispensed with (McGee & Satcher, 1995). We conclude that employees who feel a high level of job security are more supportive of privatization, and this may be a result of the feeling of stability and confidence in the work environment, which makes them more willing to support and adopt the changes resulting from the privatization program.

The results of Question 2 showed that there were no differences in the study variables (job security and the attitude toward privatization) between employees correlating with the variable of gender (males/females). The results of the current study were consistent with the results of the study by Nikolaou et al. (2005), and there were no differences between the genders in job security if the employees had little experience and low productivity. As for those with high levels of experience and productivity, their results were contrary to the current study, in that differences between the genders were found for job security, with females scoring more highly. It also contradicted the study by Sarsour (2015), which found males scoring more highly, and contradicted the study by Osborn (1998), which found differences between the genders in attitudes toward privatization with males more in favor. This can be explained by the fact that an absence of differences between males and females may depend on different variables related to awareness, confidence, feelings of fear, etc. The researcher finds that both genders similarly experience job security in a similar manner and have a non-differentiated attitude toward privatizing government sectors, which draws attention to the cultural context of KSA when interpreting the results of the current study. Other factors influence behavioral and functional changes equally between the genders, and thus no personal or emotional factors affected the variables of the current study in a way that would produce differences between the sample members according to gender.

The results of Question 3 showed that there were no differences in job security among employees correlating with the demographic variables of age, experience, and educational attainment, which is contrary to the results of Claudio's study (2007), which found that job security decreases as the individual's age increases, and Nikolaou et al. (2005) and Sarsour (2015), which found higher job security for older age groups, and higher job security for more experienced cohorts, and contrary to the results of Nikolaou et al.'s study, which found greater job security among those with higher education (Nikolaou et al., 2005), but consistent with Sarsour's study (2015), which found no differences in job security correlating with the demographic variable of educational attainment. This can be explained by the fact that job security is affected by economic conditions, including the state or country under consideration, the facility in which they work, the budget of the sector, or the specific department affiliated with the facility. It may be affected by organizational conditions, systems, regulations, strategic plans, values, etc., or environmental conditions, as represented by the social environment around the employee. Al-Mutairi et al. (2022) state that the economic conditions in a country and the financial returns of organizations affect the cultures of organizations in terms of clarity, transparency, employee participation, and inter-employee interaction, which in turn affect employees' job security. Hiam (2001) also states that organizational changes in financial or administrative structures and legislation may raise employees' fears and affect their feelings of job security. Therefore, the researcher believes that, despite the difference in the results of the current study with previous studies, the three demographic variables may not be influential on job security due to the economic state that the KSA is currently enjoying in terms of prosperity.

The results of Question 3 showed differences in attitudes toward privatization correlated with the variable of age, with a more favorable attitude among the youngest group. This can be explained by habituation to public sector systems that create resistance to change with increasing age, with enthusiasm for implementing the privatization program evident among the youngest. Naturally, the youngest are more daring and impulsive in various matters, and thus their attitude toward privatization is more favorable than those of middle and older age groups, who are less willing to accept change and transformation from the public sector to the private sector in a positive light. We conclude that, the older the age group, the less favorable the attitude toward privatization, while the younger the age group, the more favorable the attitude toward privatization.

The results of the study also showed that there were no differences in attitudes toward privatization correlating with experience level. This can be explained by the fact that awareness of the privatization program and its targets has produced a lack of variation in attitudes toward privatization among all experience categories. Therefore, no matter how high or low the experience, the attitudes of employees toward privatization in the targeted government sectors for the privatization program are the same. From the researcher's point of view, this is due to awareness of the importance of privatization in the government sector at a professional level in terms of productivity, performance levels, quality, etc. However, it is not useful at a personal level, i.e. the benefit accruing to employees with high experience, and thus they support the idea of privatizing the government sector, in addition to that which the privatization program offers in targets for the less experienced categories to transition to private sector systems in terms of financial benefits and the like. The results also showed that there were no differences in attitudes toward privatization correlating to the demographic variable of educational achievement. This can be explained by employees' awareness of the advantages of privatizing government sectors and the resulting improvement in their professional and material conditions, whose advantages are not linked to higher or lower levels of education. Rather, privatization focuses in its advantages on professional competence. Therefore, the researcher believes that employees have an attitude of acceptance toward the implementation of the privatization program in their government sectors and anticipate enjoying its advantages without any concerns about their educational achievement posing a professional threat to their future

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