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**How family firms are enhancing employee behaviour, motivation, satisfaction and turnover intentions**

Randa Fares

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# How family firms are enhancing employee behaviour, motivation, satisfaction and turnover intentions

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Randa Fares

Almabani General Contractors,  
Dbayeh, Lebanon  
Email: rfares@almabani.com

**Abstract:** This study aims to analyse the impact of motivation on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and employee behaviour across family firms in Lebanon. From a convenient sample of 336 participants out from 135 family businesses in Lebanon, our findings showed that motivation is positively correlated with job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and employee behaviour in Lebanese family business firms. When subordinates are motivated, they tend to work harder, show commitment, achieve brilliant results, and act ethically toward their leader and organisation. This study aims to highlight the lack of motivation in the workplace due to several factors. Our findings may well encourage Lebanese companies and government regulators to implement motivational techniques and practices to enhance human capital and family business firms' performance, which are pillars of every regional economy.

**Keywords:** family business; motivation; job satisfaction; turnover intentions.

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**Biographical notes:** Randa Fares is a DBA holder from TBS Education and the Head of Financial Accounting Department at Al Mabani in Lebanon. Her research interests focus on gender diversity, family businesses and corporate governance in the Middle East.

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## 1 Introduction

In past decades, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and job performance were not a major concern for employers, but it has become crucial to understand what makes an employee leave and what makes him dissatisfied. To fulfil employees' needs, employers should keep them motivated. Researchers and organisational behaviourists have studied and analysed the importance of job satisfaction and its relationship with employee turnover intention and job performance (Dansereau et al., 1975). Those authors found that they can be explained by the leader-member exchange theory and empowerment theory (Spreitzer, 1995), which are both motivational tools. According to Krueger (2005), job satisfaction is not just a matter of income. It was revealed, in fact, that European and American employees showed increased job satisfaction after 1990. Moreover, Harter et al. (2002) postulated that employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more engaged, more productive, and show no turnover intentions. Numerous studies and

evaluations have been conducted by organisations in the Middle East region to identify the determinants of satisfaction and motivation and thereby develop an understanding of how using these dynamics will influence the different aspects in the work environment. That is why many family business firms are vying to retain their competitive advantage by applying managerial strategies to enhance satisfaction and motivation, consequently increasing employee performance, and reaching organisational goals. Therefore, focusing on the factors that empower motivation and satisfaction is as crucial for MENA organisations as it is throughout the world; however, most employees are complaining about low wages, limited career growth, poor communication with upper management, and stress. Such people hold negative attitudes and normally lack motivation, which adversely affects the quality of their work. In contrast, many family business firms are always striving for higher performance and greater efficiency, because they recognise that satisfied and motivated personnel are the most vital element of an organisation (Gill et al., 2018). Employee performance is the fundamental conception within work and the organisational mindset as well as the critical factor in maintaining long-term survival. This study investigates whether motivation has direct and interactive effects on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and employee behaviour to highlight, through the social exchange theory, the moderating impact of motivation on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and organisational citizenship behaviours.

## **2 Research context**

Following a survey conducted by Bayt.com (2015), a poll was published on April 8, 2018, on work satisfaction in MENA. The results showed that 61% of MENA employees are not satisfied with the compensation they obtain from their employers; however, 90% of MENA employees claim to be loyal to their companies. Ahwash (2002) and Salloum and Azoury (2012) reveal that after 1990, companies started to examine and find new methods to eliminate bureaucratic behaviours, change organisational culture, increase flexibility, implement reward systems, enhance job satisfaction, decrease turnover intentions, and motivate employees so they can always be productive. Unfortunately, most companies neglect the importance of employee job satisfaction and how it affects their productivity, performance, motivation, and intention to leave. Despite having the Middle East's greatest asset in terms of human capital, Arab organisations are suffering from high turnover rates and job dissatisfaction due to limited and archaic organisational policies (Salloum et al., 2014). The region has capital managerial resources, but challenges remain. Limited budgets, the non-existence of reward systems, and the lack of internal managerial skills tend to demotivate existing employees and consequently affect their performance.

## **3 Theoretical foundation and hypotheses development**

Employees are the most valuable asset to any organisation. For a better understanding of the importance of people to an organisation, it is paramount to create a comprehensive harmonisation between the organisation and the human element. Every organisation believes that employees are the source of productivity, efficiency, improvement, and quality gains. Therefore, working effectively to satisfy and motivate employees enhances

business commitment and increases employees' level of confidence. According to Gill et al. (2018), satisfaction is explained by the difference or the gap that exists between what is expected and what is experienced through a number of disciplines. The theory describes the anxiety and the gloom that people feel in their jobs when they cannot perform well in their work to achieve their goals and desires. That is why people acquire their responsibilities over time. These obligations form what is called a set of principles that act as a self-guide. Once an individual fails to accomplish his duties, he will feel a sense of anxiety and agitation. However, when he succeeds in achieving his obligation, the reward system will rise and increase accordingly. Herzberg and Russell's (1953) two-factor theory developed the motivation-hygiene theory. The author identified the basic factors that contribute to the motivators and hygiene dimensions, by classifying the satisfiers as motivators and the dissatisfiers as hygiene factors. Humans' high-level needs, such as achievement, growth opportunities, and recognition, are known as the motivators or intrinsic factors and have a direct effect on satisfaction. However, the hygiene factors, also known as extrinsic factors, are those that must be met to prevent dissatisfaction, such as pay, job environment, and interpersonal relationships. Herzberg and Russell's (1953) two-factor theory is considered one of the most important models illuminating the process of motivating employees and notes that company policies and achievement have a major influence on overall job satisfaction. Herzberg's primary concern and focus was humans' well-being at work; he was mainly attempting to provide more care and humanity in the workplace. Therefore, his main purpose was to improve organisational performance rather than to develop motivational tools.

In the context of globalisation, organisations have become more aware of the importance of keeping employees satisfied and motivated. They need to achieve more and retain potential employees. Finding the right motivational tool is not easy, because each employee has specific needs, whether they are extrinsic or intrinsic needs, and they definitely differ from one employee to another. According to the findings of Luthans (2002), satisfied employees enhance the organisational culture and environment. Rewards and benefits are one of the key aspects of motivational techniques that influence organisational loyalty and sense of self-belonging. Employees will do their best to exceed their employer's expectations. In addition, Luthans (2002) has claimed that employees are differently motivated through four needs: self-actualisation, economic situation, social relationship status, and workplace environment. Employees will be motivated and satisfied if they obtain recognition from their employers, while the previous study argued that employees do not need financial rewards (Beck et al., 1983). They simply need consideration for their effort and success. A simple recognition from their employers will definitely motivate them to fulfil their self-actualisation need. However, employees facing unstable economic situations will be more motivated if they obtain a salary increase, a bonus, or any incentive reward. Employees' compensation and benefits are essential factors that tend to enhance motivation and productivity in the workplace (Gill et al., 2018). Another type of employees will be more empowered when they are interacting with customers, suppliers, and colleagues. Their only concern is to create interpersonal relationships (Gilboa et al., 2008). Finally, some employees need all the elements listed previously to become motivated and satisfied. In that case, employers may tend to have difficulties in satisfying all their needs. According to Beck et al. (1983), these people do not have stability and overestimate their capabilities; that is why they tend to change their work to find the right place that suits their needs. With his well-known motivation-hygiene theory, Herzberg (1964) argued that in the workplace,

there are some factors that will cause employee job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. He believed that intrinsic factors, such as job responsibility and recognition, will definitely lead to job satisfaction. Furthermore, he also mentioned that extrinsic hygiene factors, such as benefits, job security, and hygiene, may not lead to job dissatisfaction, but their absence will definitely lead to demotivation, turnover intention, and dissatisfaction. Keaveney and Nelson (1993) claimed that according to studies, companies that include a systematic rewarding and promotional process in the organisation's policies and regulations tend to retain and attract potential candidates. Employees will be motivated to work in such an environment, where all their efforts and contributions are well recognised and considered. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is formulated as:

H1 Motivation is positively correlated with job satisfaction.

Employees tend to quit their job due to job dissatisfaction, stress, low salary, strict rules and regulations, task complexity, and employers' no consideration. Ahmed et al. (2010) demonstrated that employees' productivity and performance are linked to how strongly they are motivated. Therefore, motivation is presented as a factor that influences turnover intentions. If an employee is motivated and satisfied, he will not quit his job, but if he is not, he will rather quit his job and search for another one that fits his needs and expectations. At this time, employee turnover has become a major problem. Organisations are spending much money on attracting candidates, and on training and developing their skills to adapt them to the organisation's policies, culture, and missions. However, employees who report low performance and low productivity will never be a major risk factor to an organisation's goals and objectives (Keaveney and Nelson, 1993). If they leave, they will never be reported as a company's loss. They will instead give the opportunity to attract potential employees who will help the company to move forward and achieve greater results (Dansereau et al., 1975). That is why organisations are using reward systems and different motivation techniques to retain potential and qualified employees. Intrinsic motivation is crucial for employees and employers knowing that extrinsic motivation is also a must. It will allow employees to accept challenges, to exceed expectations, and to achieve results. They will become eager to learn and show greater performance. Researchers such as Gilboa et al. (2008) have also found an important interest in studying turnover intentions. Their study revealed that turnover intentions are used as an indicator to test the effectiveness of the recruitment process in an organisation. In addition, not all organisations can afford the cost that covers the recruitment process and training. They cannot, therefore, risk having a high rate of turnover. They prefer to implement reward systems, which will retain qualified employees and will reduce the cost of the recruitment process (Vroom, 1966). According to Keaveney and Nelson (1993), intrinsic motivation tends to decrease work stress and create a comfort zone to boost job motivation. Simultaneously, extrinsic motivations will create a challenging environment in the workplace where employees will compete with each other and will try to challenge one another with a view to being rewarded. Motivation, therefore, plays an important role in job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions. The more an employee is motivated, the more his satisfaction will lead to loyalty toward and productivity for his organisation (Abubakar et al., 2018). Accordingly, the second hypothesis is formulated as:

H2 Motivation is negatively correlated with turnover intentions.

Motivated employees are highly productive and have self-confidence. They are self-determined and tend to reach greater goals. They are also highly challenged and competent and have no barriers to their success (Abubakar et al., 2018). Finding the right motivational tools is quite difficult, given that it is easy to implement a motivational theory, but applying it efficiently is difficult and costly. Therefore, organisations must be aware that the appropriate motivational tools should have the support of effective leadership. According to Vroom (1966), employee performance is affected by many factors, such as having an interesting job. When employees use their interests and talents within their tasks, they will enjoy working and performing better. Employees whose job tasks do not match their interests and skills will definitely be unproductive (Vroom, 1966). Moreover, the sense of belonging or ownership is crucial for employees. According to Alonso et al. (2018), employees who contribute to decision making and sharing ideas are more likely to increase their job performance. In addition, job security has recently started to preoccupy many employees. Due to the worldwide economic crisis, market competition and high unemployment rates are important issues in society. Employees are afraid to lose their job. Moreover, salary packages and benefits, which are the centre of attention for everyone, are a main concern. Motivation can be measured and linked through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors (Kuvaas, 2006). Flexibility, in the workplace, gives employees the freedom to work in a more pleasant spirit but with more responsibilities. Organisations should be flexible to build a strong positive relationship with subordinates. Increasing confidence and trust will thus enhance employees' skills and knowledge and, consequently, promote teamwork to reach mutual goals. Accordingly, the third hypothesis is formulated as:

H3 Motivation is positively correlated with employee performance.

As we have mentioned earlier, motivation is an important managerial tool to empower employees, increase their performance, and achieve outstanding results. Previous studies have revealed that it is not just about motivating employees, but that changing employees' behaviour and acting ethically in the workplace are crucial in any organisation (Salloum et al., 2022; Kuvaas, 2006). Motivated employees usually follow the rules and regulations of the company, respect the culture of the organisation, and have no intention to act unethically. They focus on achieving the organisation's targets instead. According to Crossman and Abou-Zaki (2003), motivation is the most powerful tool to avoid corruption and unethical behaviours in an organisation. Effective employers tend to encourage their employees through training to develop their skills. However, each employee may have personal issues that may affect their behaviour and performance. Organisations should pay attention to those details and listen to their employees while trying to give them advice and helping them to overcome their personal issues to limit their extreme uncontrolled behaviours. Assisting, guiding, and understanding employees is essential and will lead them to success and motivation. Therefore, supporting employees and building a strong relationship is crucial. It will increase trust, confidence, and communication between the two parties. This type of relationship will contribute to the success of the team and the organisation as a whole. However, when motivation is absent within the workplace, employees will be dissatisfied. Therefore, organisations should think rationally to give employees their freedom, but at the same time, increase their responsibilities, encourage their success, and always monitor and control their performance (Alonso and Kok, 2018). Organisations are trying their best to keep all their employees satisfied and motivated, because they are an important asset to the

organisation, and they represent the continuity and stability of the company. Currently, most companies are trying to motivate their team in one way or another to retain potential employees. Organisational practices such as incentive reward and recognition are different types of motivation that keep employees motivated to obtain consideration and appreciation from their employers. Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis is formulated as:

H4 Motivation is positively correlated with employee behaviour.

## 4 Methodology

This study employs a correlational design to test the relationship among hypothesis variables. A multiple regression technique similar to previous studies (Grant, 2007) and a Pearson's correlation test (Crossman and Abou-Zaki, 2003) suit our current conceptual framework design. A survey was conducted among 150 Lebanese family businesses.

The firms needed to have existed for at least 10 years and have a minimum of 50 employees. The respondents needed to have spent at least three years with the company and have a university degree.

An initial sample was selected from 410 employees among 150 family business firms from various sectors in Lebanon. Participants were selected using a non-random convenient sampling method using 5Index online business directory. The database is paid access, which allowed us to use a convenient sampling methodology. The survey (made on Qualtrics to collect electronically the data) was sent to the human resources director of each company in December 2021. Based on our selection criteria, the response rate was 82% (336) for the participants and 90% (135) for the family business firms selected. The sample size was adequate for conducting our data treatment.

**Table 1** Sample's sectors

	<i>Initial sample</i>	<i>Final sample</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Initial participants</i>	<i>Final participants</i>	<i>%</i>
Banking	35	33	24%	105	95	28%
Consumer goods	45	40	30%	135	110	33%
Distribution	15	13	10%	45	30	9%
Manufacturing	15	9	7%	45	31	9%
Services	20	20	15%	40	35	10%
Tourism	20	20	15%	40	35	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>410</i>	<i>336</i>	<i>100%</i>

The primary data collection was undertaken from December 2021 to February 2022. The study used five existing Likert-type scales, including the job satisfaction scale used by Spector (1985), the job performance scale used by Fethi and Pasiouras (2010), and the Ray-Lynn motivation scale used by Ray (1980).

## 5 Results and interpretation

As we can see in Table 2, employees are facing difficulties in showing commitment to their organisation and workplace for many reasons. Some 36.5% strongly disagreed that they are earning a satisfactory salary. Some 15.4% disagreed, and 11.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. Some 28.8% agreed that they are satisfied with their salary, and 7.7% strongly agreed. A high percentage is not satisfied with their earnings, which might be a main reason why employees tend to quit their job. In addition, according to the results, 15.4% strongly disagreed with the statement that their company is implementing a reward system, 30.8% disagreed, 21.2% neither agreed nor disagreed, while 26.9% and 5.8% agreed and strongly agreed, respectively. This means that employees are not motivated and treated fairly by their employer and organisation, and they will definitely decide to quit their job when an opportunity occurs.

**Table 2** Job satisfaction survey results

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Weekly working hours satisfaction	21.2%	23.1%	7.7%	32.7%	15.4%
Schedule flexibility	23.1%	11.5%	13.5%	40.4%	11.5%
Work location	13.5%	13.5%	19.2%	34.6%	19.2%
Sick/annual vacation offer	13.5%	19.2%	11.5%	44.2%	11.5%
Good working conditions	15.4%	11.5%	25.0%	34.6%	13.5%
Satisfactory salary	<b>36.5%</b>	15.4%	11.5%	28.8%	7.7%
Satisfactory benefits	15.4%	26.9%	11.5%	36.5%	9.6%
Implementation of a reward system	15.4%	<b>30.8%</b>	21.2%	26.9%	5.8%
Promotion opportunities	19.2%	21.2%	25.0%	30.8%	3.8%

In Table 3, we can notice that 36.5% strongly agreed that they are willing to look for a new job, and 30.8% answered that they are strongly not motivated at work. Some 42.3% answered that they are facing a high level of stress at work. In total, 67.4% have reported that they have multiple responsibilities, which mean that employees might have higher risks to less perform. Multiple task significance should be divided into specific subtasks so employees can master and accomplish their tasks effectively and efficiently. All the criteria reported by our participants above show that employees are not satisfied with their job and are not motivated.

Previous studies have used the Pearson's correlation test to measure the correlation between job motivation, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Schwalje, 2014; Kuvaas, 2006; Luthans, 2002).

If the Pearson's correlation score is  $\pm 0.5$ , it means we have a weak correlation between the variables.



**Table 3** Job motivation survey results

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Promotion opportunities	19.2%	21.2%	25.0%	30.8%	3.8%
High job security	13.5%	5.8%	25.0%	46.2%	9.6%
Efforts and work recognised	19.2%	25.0%	15.4%	30.8%	9.6%
Willing to look for a new job	7.7%	13.5%	13.5%	26.9%	<b>38.5%</b>
Job satisfaction	11.5%	26.9%	17.3%	34.6%	9.6%
Colleagues positive relationships	3.8%	5.8%	17.3%	42.3%	30.8%
Employer positive relationships	3.8%	15.4%	28.8%	26.9%	25.0%
Highly motivated	<b>30.8%</b>	13.5%	17.3%	23%	15.4%
Opportunity to learn new skills	13.5%	11.5%	25.0%	30.8%	19.2%
Skills and talents opportunities	15.4%	11.5%	25.0%	36.5%	11.5%
Training/seminars encouragement	5.8%	3.8%	11.5%	50.0%	28.8%
Stress at work	1.9%	9.6%	9.6%	36.5%	<b>42.3%</b>
Large variety of job responsibility	1.9%	5.8%	25.0%	<b>46.2%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>

**Table 4** Pearson's correlation test for motivation and job satisfaction

<i>Motivation and turnover intentions</i>			
		<i>REGR factor score for motivation</i>	<i>REGR factor score for turnover intentions</i>
REGR factor score for motivation	Pearson correlation	1	.724**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000
	N	336	336
REGR factor score for turnover intentions	Pearson correlation	.724**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	
	N	336	336

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). High correlation: 0.5 to 1.0; medium correlation: 0.3 to 0.5; low correlation: 0.1 to 0.3.

**Table 5** Pearson's correlation test for motivation and turnover intentions

<i>Motivation and turnover intentions</i>			
		<i>REGR factor score for motivation</i>	<i>REGR factor score for turnover intentions</i>
REGR factor score for motivation	Pearson correlation	1	.767**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000
	N	336	336
REGR factor score for turnover intentions	Pearson correlation	.767**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	
	N	336	336

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). High correlation: 0.5 to 1.0; medium correlation: 0.3 to 0.5; low correlation: 0.1 to 0.3.

**Table 6** Pearson's correlation test for motivation and performance

<i>Motivation and performance</i>			
		<i>REGR factor score for motivation</i>	<i>REGR factor score for performance</i>
REGR factor score for motivation	Pearson correlation	1	.801**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000
	N	336	336
REGR factor score for performance	Pearson correlation	.801**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	
	N	336	336

Note: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). High correlation: 0.5 to 1.0; medium correlation: 0.3 to 0.5; low correlation: 0.1 to 0.3.

In Table 4, the Pearson's correlation score for motivation and job satisfaction is  $0.724 > 0.5$ , which indicates that these two variables are strongly correlated. When employees are motivated, they will definitely love their job; therefore, H1 is supported.

According to Table 5, the Pearson's correlation score is  $0.767 > 0.5$ , which indicates that the two variables are strongly correlated, but we are going to question this result, because participants did not answer transparently concerning this issue. It is indeed a critical issue to discuss, and respondents preferred to keep it undisclosed. When employees are motivated, they will never think to quit their jobs; hence, H2 is supported.

In Table 6, the Pearson's correlation score is  $0.801 > 0.5$ , which means that the two variables are strongly correlated. When employees are motivated, they tend to increase their performance, obtain better results, and become productive. H3 is supported.

**Table 7** Pearson's correlation test for motivation and employee behaviour

<i>Motivation and employee behaviour</i>			
		<i>REGR factor score for motivation</i>	<i>REGR factor score for employee behaviour</i>
REGR factor score for motivation	Pearson correlation	1	.822**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000
	N	336	336
REGR factor score for employee behaviour	Pearson correlation	.822**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	
	N	336	336

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). High correlation: 0.5 to 1.0; medium correlation: 0.3 to 0.5; low correlation: 0.1 to 0.3.

According to Table 7, the Pearson's correlation score is  $0.822 > 0.5$ . This means that the two variables are strongly correlated. When employees are motivated, they tend not to act unethically, commit fraudulent actions, or show aggressive behaviour. Therefore, H4 is supported.

## **6 Discussion**

Middle Eastern family business firms should practice methods to increase job motivation and satisfaction through proven theories and practices. Job motivation could be improved through Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Latham and Ernest, 2006) and equity theory (Grant, 2007). An employer can assist its employees through motivation to help them access the next-level needs. In addition, by using the equity theory, the employer will tend to lower the principle of social comparison to ward off inequity among employees. Alternatively, role conflict theories could be used to improve job satisfaction (Gilboa et al., 2008). For those same authors and others (Ahmed et al., 2010), job satisfaction is based on situational characteristics (job facets related to prior employment, such as wages, benefits, and working conditions, etc.) and occurrences (unexpected attributes related to the characteristics listed previously). Gilboa et al. (2008) highlight that role conflict decreases job satisfaction while role clarity minimises conflict, thereby increasing job satisfaction. We recommend that further research should test our hypotheses and data independently, by sector, to build on the results of our study.

## **7 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to analyse the importance of motivation in the workplace and how it affects employees' job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and behaviour in Lebanese organisations. Our main concern was to reveal the actual state of employees working in different family business firms and sectors in Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. We aimed to investigate their satisfaction, motivation, and turnover intentions. People differ in their attitudes to and perceptions of the things that they encounter in the workplace as well as in their personal lives. The point is to know how to manage the difficulties to overcome stress and provide clear communication to increase satisfaction and performance. Each one of us is performing his task and doing his job regularly, and the organisation should provide the facilities and the resources for its employees to perform even better.

A long time ago, Lebanese family business firms were characterised by being family-owned businesses, before the emergence of multinational and international family business firms, which implemented international rules and regulations. Lately, most companies have started to consider how to implement strategies that preserve employees' motivation, how to retain potential candidates, how to decrease turnover intentions, and how to secure the stability, continuity, and growth of the company. They have started to implement reward systems, flexibility, overtime pay, and many other benefits that protect the employees' productive motivation. Unfortunately, not all Arab corporations are using the above strategies. Lebanese family business firms are limited by boundaries such as political and economic instability in the region. Archival and government policies thus need to be redesigned to implement motivational techniques through research theories from the existing scientific literature. Job motivation and satisfaction is a wide and interesting topic to be discussed at all levels, and researchers are still trying to figure out how to understand in order to find adequate solutions that keep both employees and employers safe and happy.

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