

THE RIGHT TO DISCONNECT: JOB DEMANDS, BURNOUT, AND WELL-BEING AMONG FEMALE TEACHERS AND REGULATORY POLICY CONTEXT

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Abstract

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This study examines the impact of job demands, particularly after-hours communication, on burnout and well-being among female employees in Kuwait's Ministry of Education. This study is based on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model and boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). Utilizing a sample of 643 participants, the research employs principal component analysis (PCA) and linear regression to identify key predictors of well-being. Findings reveal that specific job demands, when perceived as manageable challenges, positively associate with well-being. Conversely, poor supervisory relationships significantly detract from well-being, highlighting the critical role of management support. The study highlights the importance of implementing the right to disconnect policy to enhance work-life balance and protect mental health. Implications for policy include improving supervisory relationships, providing boundary management training, and ensuring a balance between job demands and resources. Recommendations for future research include longitudinal studies and cross-cultural comparisons to further explore these dynamics. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on work-life balance and employee rights, offering practical recommendations for policymakers, organizational leaders, and academics.

Keywords: Job Demands, Employee Well-Being, Right to Disconnect, Supervisory Relationships, Work-Life Balance

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1. INTRODUCTION

The growing use of communication technology in today's digital age has led to a thinning of the distinctions between work and personal life, especially for employees who are always connected to their work. This situation has given rise to the policy known as the "right to disconnect", which safeguards workers from work-related obligations during their personal time. The ability to unplug is

becoming increasingly important in today's workplaces, especially in fields where excessive workloads and continual connectivity can cause serious employee burnout and decreased well-being (Nassen et al., 2023).

The expectation of constant connectivity has become a growing concern for many employees, particularly female workers (Choi et al., 2022). Like other public sector organizations, the Ministry of Education in Kuwait employs a substantial

number of female staff, who frequently have particular difficulties in balancing careers and personal lives. The difficulties are made worse by ongoing availability expectations from the workplace, such as the requirement to be reachable for business communications outside of official business hours. Employees' general well-being and job satisfaction may suffer as a result of increased stress and burnout brought on by this constant connectivity (Khalid et al., 2020).

Creating workplace rules that effectively promote employee health and productivity requires an understanding of the interactions between job demands, burnout, and well-being (Eneh et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effects of work-related stress, particularly communication that occurs after working hours, on the well-being and burnout of female employees in the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. The study seeks to shed light on these factors in order to better understand how female employees in the public sector might utilize their right to disconnect to enhance their work-life balance and mental health (Torres et al., 2023). To explore this issue, the research focuses on the following questions:

RQ1: What is the effect of workplace expectations for communication after official working hours on the well-being of female employees?

RQ2: How much burnout are these employees experiencing, and how is it related to their right to disconnect from work?

RQ3: What effects does the implementation of the right to disconnect policy have on employees' general well-being and job satisfaction?

Exploring this issue is important, especially in light of the modern world's growing demands for continuous connectivity, which can worsen work-related stress and have a detrimental impact on workers' mental health and job satisfaction.

The study provides valuable insights for policy and practice in the Ministry of Education and other public sector organizations. This study intends to emphasize the significance of putting regulations like the right to disconnect into place by analysing the particular challenges experienced by female employees with regard to work-life balance and job demands. These results can be used to develop methods that will reduce employee burnout, increase well-being, and raise job satisfaction levels overall, all of which will lead to a more effective and healthier workforce (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023). By providing useful advice for legislators and organizational leaders seeking to promote a better and more sustainable work environment, this research will add to the expanding body of knowledge on work-life balance and employee rights.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and provides background information about Kuwait as the research context. Section 3 describes the methodological approach, including data collection and data analysis. Section 4 presents the results of the study. Section 5 discusses the results and their implications. Section 6 concludes the paper, outlines study limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

One important field of research in current organizational theory is the connection between job demands, employee well-being, and the adoption of

conducive workplace policies. Specifically, the idea of the right to disconnect has become more well-known as a possible remedy to lessen the negative impacts of constant connectivity and stress at work (Hopkins, 2024). The theories behind job expectations and burnout, the effects of digitization on employee stress, the difficulties that women have in juggling their personal and professional lives, and the background of Kuwait's workforce are all addressed in detail in this review of the literature. The study intends to close research gaps regarding the efficacy of the right to disconnect policy and its consequences for female employees in Kuwait's Ministry of Education by analysing these aspects.

2.1. Background of the right to disconnect

The use of information and communication technologies is a vital component of the modern work environment (Moolngearn & Kraiwani, 2024). This integration of technology leads to the blurring of traditional boundaries between work and personal life. Therefore, employees are expected to be constantly available and responsive to communication through emails or any other online platforms, even during non-work hours (Bauwens et al., 2020). The "right to disconnect" refers to a policy that allows employees to refrain from engaging in work-related communications, such as emails and phone calls, during non-working hours without facing negative repercussions (Nassen et al., 2023). This concept has emerged as a response to the increasing intrusion of work into personal time, driven by advances in communication technologies that enable constant connectivity. The right to disconnect aims to protect employees' mental health and promote a better work-life balance. Countries like France have legally recognized this right, mandating organizations to establish guidelines that limit after-hours work communications (Pansu, 2018).

2.2. Theoretical underpinnings related to job demands and burnout

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model and boundary theory provide the theoretical foundation for this study. The JD-R model posits that job demands, such as workload and emotional demands, can lead to burnout if not balanced by job resources, such as support and autonomy (Javaid et al., 2023). This model emphasizes the importance of balancing demands and resources to prevent employee burnout and promote well-being (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023).

The boundary theory explores how individuals manage the boundaries between work and personal life. Poor boundary management, characterized by constant work intrusion into personal time, can result in higher stress and burnout (Ashforth et al., 2000). This theory highlights the need for clear boundaries to maintain a healthy work-life balance and to improve job performance (Duan et al., 2023).

2.3. Constant connectivity and digitalization

Constant connectivity through digital tools can blur the lines between work and personal life, increasing job demands and stress. Digitalization, while offering efficiency and flexibility, can also lead to expectations of constant availability, contributing to

employee burnout (Doargajudhur & Hosanoo, 2023; Molino et al., 2020). This phenomenon is particularly relevant in sectors like education, where teachers may feel compelled to respond to work-related communications outside of standard working hours, exacerbating stress and reducing overall well-being (Bauwens et al., 2020; Melweth et al., 2024).

Studies have shown that constant connectivity is linked to higher levels of job stress, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion (Ghislieri et al., 2017). Studies have also shown that constant connectivity is negatively associated with employees' well-being by limiting their ability to disconnect and detach from work responsibilities (Büchler et al., 2020).

The pervasive use of smartphones and other digital devices makes it challenging for employees to disconnect from work, leading to prolonged exposure to work-related stressors. Implementing policies like the right to disconnect can help mitigate these negative effects by providing employees with the autonomy to manage their work boundaries effectively (Farivar et al., 2024).

2.4. Gender-specific challenges in managing job demands and work-life balance

Female employees often experience unique challenges in balancing job demands and personal life responsibilities. In Kuwait, cultural and societal norms may place additional burdens on women, who are often expected to manage household responsibilities alongside their professional roles (Omar, 2022). These dual responsibilities can lead to higher stress levels and greater difficulty in achieving a work-life balance (Johnston et al., 2023).

Research has shown that women are more likely to experience work-family conflict and related stress compared to men (Srivastava & Gupta, 2022). This is particularly true for female teachers in Kuwait's Ministry of Education, who may face high job demands and expectations to be constantly available for work-related communications. Addressing these gender-specific challenges through supportive policies and workplace practices is crucial for promoting the well-being and job satisfaction of female employees.

2.5. The context of Kuwait

Kuwait is a country situated in the heart of the Middle East, particularly located in the Gulf region. The country is considered one of the wealthiest countries in the world, with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of over \$37,000 as of 2023 (World Bank Group, n.d.). Arabic is the official language of Kuwait. However, English is also widely spoken and understood. Kuwait is a high-income, oil-producing country with a gradually increasing population of approximately 4.3 million, based on the latest report by the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB, 2022a). Out of the total population, only approximately 30% are Kuwaiti nationals, with the remaining majority consisting of expatriates.

Due to its rich oil reserves, the country has experienced remarkable economic growth in recent decades. The "Kuwait Vision 2035" aims to diversify the economy beyond oil, promote social development, and modernize infrastructure (Al-Nakib, 2024). This initiative has enabled the government to allocate considerable resources toward enhancing the quality of various sectors, including the education system.

Since gaining independence, Kuwait has consistently prioritized education as a key element of its national policies. The Kuwaiti government has made significant investments to transform the education sector in alignment with the nation's economic and social development goals (Omar, 2022).

Regarding workforce information, the workforce participation rates in Kuwait indicate significant nationality disparities, with the labor force participation of Kuwaiti nationals being significantly lower compared to the expatriate population. Expatriates make up the majority of the labor force, particularly in the private sector, representing 95% of employees (CSB, 2022b). In contrast, public sector jobs are predominantly held by Kuwaiti nationals, who comprise the majority of employees in government organizations and ministries. The ratio of employment in 2022 in the public sector is equivalent to approximately 80% Kuwaiti nationals and 20% expatriates who contribute to various sectors, including education (CSB, 2022c).

This disparity in workforce participation rates reflects Kuwait's reliance on foreign labor, particularly in the private sector, while Kuwaiti citizens tend to be employed in the public sector. However, the recent government's Kuwaitization policy aims to reduce reliance on foreign labor by increasing employment opportunities for Kuwaiti nationals in different strategic sectors, such as education. Regarding gender differences, female workforce participation in Kuwait has been steadily increasing in recent decades, supported by governmental initiatives that encourage female employment. Females currently constitute around 56.4% of the total workforce in the public sector (CSB, 2022c). Despite this progress, female participation in the private sector remains comparatively low, as females represent approximately 21% of the private sector workforce (CSB, 2022b).

In the public sector, the Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing the educational system and implementing national education policies. The Ministry of Education represents a major employer, accounting for more than 35% of the total workforce in the public sector (CSB, 2022c). The Ministry employs over 130,000 individuals, with the majority being teachers. According to educational statistics in 2022, there are about 88,985 teachers distributed across approximately 800 public educational institutions, including kindergartens, primary, intermediate, and secondary schools (CSB, 2022c).

In terms of gender distribution, statistics from the Ministry of Education in Kuwait indicate that the teaching workforce is predominantly female, with females constituting approximately 70% of all teaching staff in the country (CSB, 2023). This strong female presence in the education sector highlights the importance of addressing the specific challenges faced by female employees. The working conditions and employment regulations of teachers in Kuwait's public education system are governed by the civil service regulations established by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the central government agency responsible for managing the public sector workforce (Alhashem & Alhouti, 2021). The CSC holds authority over teachers' professional guidelines and career-related decisions, setting salary scales, benefits, and employment policies for all public sector employees, including teachers.

2.6. Research gaps

The literature review reveals several research gaps in understanding the impact of the right to disconnect on job demands, burnout, and well-being, particularly among female employees in the public sector (Table 1). While there is a growing body of research on work-life balance and employee well-being, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the right to disconnect policy in mitigating burnout and improving well-being (Johnston et al., 2023). Additionally, there is a need

for more studies focusing on the specific challenges faced by female employees in balancing work and personal life responsibilities (Javaid et al., 2023).

To address these gaps, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on the impact of job demands, particularly after-hours communication, on the burnout and well-being of female employees in the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. By exploring these dynamics, the research seeks to offer practical recommendations for policymakers and organizational leaders to implement effective workplace policies that support employee health and productivity.

Table 1. Research gaps and areas for further study

<i>Research area</i>	<i>Identified gaps</i>	<i>Proposed study focus</i>
Impact of the right to disconnect	Limited empirical evidence on its effectiveness in reducing burnout and improving well-being (Fida et al., 2023; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023; Akduman & Hatipoglu, 2020).	Examine the impact of the right to disconnect on job demands, burnout, and well-being among female teachers in Kuwait.
Gender-specific challenges in work-life balance	Insufficient focus on female employees' unique challenges in managing job demands and personal life responsibilities (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023; Melweth et al., 2024; Johnston et al., 2023).	Investigate the gender-specific challenges faced by female teachers in balancing work and personal life.
Role of digitalization in job stress	There is a lack of detailed studies on how constant connectivity through digital tools affects employee stress and burnout (Doargajudhur & Hosanoo, 2023; Nassen et al., 2023).	Explore the impact of constant connectivity on job stress and burnout among female employees in the education sector.
Effectiveness of supportive workplace policies	Limited research on the implementation and impact of supportive workplace policies like the right to disconnect in the public sector (Hopkins, 2024; Stojković Zlatanović & Škobo, 2024).	Assess the effectiveness of the right to disconnect as a policy to improve employee well-being in the Ministry of Education.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This study investigates the effect of communication that occurs after hours on female employees' well-being and burnout at Kuwait's Ministry of Education. While some qualitative research methodologies, such as longitudinal study, can be useful to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, this study employs a quantitative research methodology. The quantitative method is chosen as it enables a more focused analysis and offers a strong framework for evaluating assumptions and determining the correlations between variables (Mohajan, 2020). A structured survey is the main tool used to collect data since it makes measuring different dimensions, including job demands, burnout, well-being, and views about the right to disconnect easier (Rumschlag, 2017).

The study's target population consists of female employees of Kuwait's Ministry of Education. The study's sample size includes 643 participants, who represent a wide range of female employees, including managers, supervisors, teachers, and administrative staff. The review of the literature highlights the distinctive issues faced by female employees in juggling job demands and personal obligations and their substantial representation in the education sector (Javaid et al., 2023). These factors are taken into consideration when selecting new employees.

A structured survey instrument was used to collect data, and it was intended to evaluate several aspects of job demands, burnout, well-being, and views regarding the right to disconnect. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurements, the survey incorporates established scales. The following are the survey's main elements.

Job demands. Evaluated by the JD-R questionnaire, which gauges a range of employment demands, such as communication after hours, workload, and emotional demands.

Burnout. Assessed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which looks at three aspects of burnout: diminished personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional tiredness.

Well-being. Assessed using the commonly used World Health Organisation-Five well-being index (WHO-5), which focuses on overall well-being.

Perceptions of the right to disconnect. Assessed using a set of questions intended to gather information on how employees felt about the right to disconnect, how it was put into practice, and how it affected their well-being and work-life balance.

The survey was distributed to the participants through both online and paper-based formats to ensure broad accessibility and high response rates. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the survey.

3.2. Data analysis

Statistical methods from both inferential and descriptive analysis were used on the collected data using SPSS v. 27. The steps that were involved in the data analysis process were as follows.

3.2.1. Descriptive statistics

Age, years of experience, job role, and communication preferences were among the demographic characteristics of the sample that were summarized up using descriptive statistics (Mohajan, 2020). A comprehensive view of the sample

was obtained by computing measures of central tendency (mean, median) and dispersion (standard deviation, range).

The Pearson's Chi-squared tests were used to investigate correlations between categorical data, including sector distribution and demographic groupings (Akduman & Hatipoglu, 2020). Significant variations in the demographic attributes of the sample's various parts were identified with the use of this study.

The study employed the linear model analysis of variance (ANOVA), or analysis of variance, to evaluate the variations in continuous variables, including job demands and well-being scores, among different demographic groups. This method made it possible to look at mean differences and pinpoint important variables affecting the measured constructs (Akduman & Hatipoglu, 2020).

Principal component analysis (PCA) was employed to ascertain the latent variables in the data, specifically pertaining to job demands and well-being. To make the components better understand, Varimax rotation was used. To confirm that the data were suitable for PCA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were employed. For additional examination, components with eigenvalues larger than one were kept (Hair et al., 2024).

3.2.2. Reliability study

Cronbach's alpha was used in the reliability study to evaluate the survey scales' internal consistency. Good reliability was defined as a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or above, indicating that the survey items accurately measured the intended components.

To forecast the effect of the job demands on burnout and well-being, linear regression analysis was carried out. To investigate potential variations in the determinants of burnout and well-being, distinct regression models were developed for the entire sample and particular subgroups (teaching staff, administrative staff, etc.). Work pressures, opinions about one's right to unplug, and demographic factors were all included as predictors in the regression models.

The general form of the linear regression model employed in the analysis is expressed as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^n \beta_i X_i + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

where,

- Y represents the dependent variable;
- β_0 is the intercept, indicating the baseline level of the dependent variable when all predictors are zero;

- β_i represents the regression coefficients for the independent variables X_i , capturing the influence of each predictor on Y ;

- X_i are the independent variables;

- ε is the error term, accounting for unexplained variability in the dependent variable.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Demographic characteristics

The demographics of the participants are listed in Table 2. In a sample of 643 participants, 95.65% were employed by the government. Responses differ in terms of experience level. A significant number (63.76%) reported having more than 16 years, followed by 11–15 years (13.37%), 1–5 years (10.89%), 6–10 years (10.11%), and less than 1 year (1.87%) experience. This is organized according to diminishing experience level. In terms of occupation, the majority was made up of teachers (58.0%), then administrative workers (8.7%), managers (10.9%), and supervisors (20.8%). As for the age range of participants, the majority of responses fell between 28 and 43 (48.2%) and 44 and 59 years old (43.7%). When it came to user preferences for communication, WhatsApp came out on top, with an incredible 80.25% of users choosing it over other methods (2.02%), emails (1.09%), text messages (1.4%), and phone calls (14.93%). The demographic parameters emphasize important facets of the Ministry of Education workforce. The high number of workers with more than 16 years of experience suggests a stable and maybe very skilled workforce. This stability could be helpful to the Ministry because it indicates a wealth of knowledge and experience that could be applied to improve educational outcomes.

Furthermore, a large percentage of teachers emphasize the importance of the Ministry's function and the significance of policies that directly affect these educators. The age distribution suggests that the workforce is fairly balanced, with a mix of younger and older employees. This can help to create a vibrant workplace that combines experience and innovation (Stojković Zlatanović & Škobo, 2024). The overwhelming inclination toward WhatsApp demonstrates how much the Ministry depends on digital communication channels for day-to-day activities. This decision is consistent with worldwide trends, which indicate that instant messaging apps' growing popularity for business communication can be attributed to their user-friendliness and quickness (Mohajan, 2020). Meanwhile, this reliance on digital communication also emphasizes the benefits of constant contact and the risks of burnout and stress at work.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Sector	Other (please specify)	6	0.93
	Public sector	615	95.65
	Private sector	20	3.11
	Non-profit sector	2	0.31
	Total	643	100.00
Experience	Less than 1 year	12	1.87
	1-5 years	70	10.89
	6-10 years	65	10.11
	11-15 years	86	13.37
	16 years or more	410	63.76
	Total	643	100.00
Role	Other (please specify)	10	1.60
	Teaching staff	373	58.00
	Administrative staff	56	8.70
	Supervision	134	20.80
	Management	70	10.90
	Total	643	100.00
Age	27 years old and less	45	7.00
	28-43 years old (Millennials/Generation Y)	310	48.20
	44-59 years old (Generation X)	281	43.70
	60 years old and above	7	1.10
	Total	643	100.00
Communication	Other (please specify)	13	2.02
	Email	7	1.09
	Phone calls	96	14.93
	Text messages	9	1.40
	WhatsApp	516	80.25
	I don't use any	2	0.31
	Total	643	100.00

4.2. Job characteristics, boss, and well-being statistics

The descriptive statistics for 643 female respondents indicate moderate satisfaction with job

dimensions (mean scores ranging from 2.8 to 3.7). Moreover, overall well-being scores (mean = 3.9), are suggesting a generally positive outlook on well-being (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for job dimensions, boss relationship, and well-being among female respondents

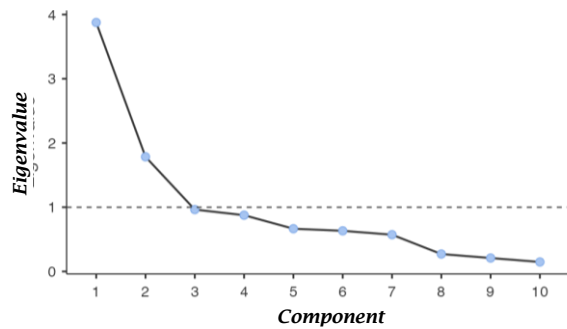
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean/Range</i>	<i>Female (N = 643)</i>
JOB1	Mean (SD)	2.8 (1.5)
	Range	1.0-5.0
JOB2	Mean (SD)	3.1 (1.3)
	Range	1.0-5.0
JOB3	Mean (SD)	3.7 (1.2)
	Range	1.0-5.0
JOB4	Mean (SD)	2.9 (1.0)
	Range	1.0-5.0
JOB5	Mean (SD)	2.9 (1.3)
	Range	1.0-5.0
BOSS	Mean (SD)	1.8 (1.1)
	Range	1.0-5.0
Well-being	Mean (SD)	3.9 (1.0)
	Range	1.0-5.0

Note: JOB1: I believe my job responsibilities make it difficult for me to completely disconnect from work during personal time; JOB2: My boss regularly contact me (outside working hours) for work-related tasks; JOB3: I frequently check my work-related tools (email, WhatsApp group, etc.) during my holiday; JOB4: When I contact colleagues outside of work hours, I always expect a response within a few hours; JOB5: When work demands arise outside of regular hours, I feel comfortable dedicating some personal time to address them; BOSS: I believe it is appropriate to contact other employees after regular work hours by the boss. Well-being: Mean score based on the variables WELL1, WELL2, WELL3, WELL4, and WELL5 (WELL1: I frequently experience burnout due to the pressure of responding to work outside of regular hours, impacting my personal life and work performance; WELL2: I believe my mental well-being has been adversely affected by specific types of after-hours communication, such as urgent deadlines, unexpected tasks, or constant notifications; WELL3: I believe receiving work-related communications after regular hours contributes highly to my stress levels; WELL4: I feel obligated to respond immediately to work-related messages and communications outside of regular working hours; WELL5: With the rise of digital communication tools, I feel a greater pressure to be available for work outside of regular hours).

4.3. Principal component analysis

PCA with varimax rotation was employed in the factor analysis of the questionnaire in an effort to identify underlying dimensions in the data. The study's KMO score of sample adequacy was 0.822 (Table 4), which suggests that there is a sufficient degree of intercorrelations between the variables to do factor analysis. This compatibility was further confirmed by Bartlett's test of sphericity, which produced a significant result

($\chi^2 = 2,721$, $df = 45$, $p < 0.001$), proving that the factor analysis was justified and that the correlation matrix significantly differs from an identity matrix (Hair et al., 2024). PCA is a potent statistical method for reducing the number of dimensions in a dataset while preserving the majority of its variation. There is confidence in the robustness of the results due to the high KMO value (0.822) and the substantial Bartlett's test result (Table 5), which show that the sample size is appropriate and the data is suitable for PCA (Mohajan, 2020).

Figure 1. Scree plot

The eigenvalues of the PCA (Figure 1) screen plot exhibit a sharp drop from the first component before beginning to level off to form an “elbow”. Given that the first two components’ eigenvalues are greater than 1, which indicates that they significantly explain variance in the data, this suggests maintaining them. A graphical representation called a scree plot is used to calculate how many elements to keep in a PCA. The “elbow”, or the point where the curve begins to flatten, indicates the ideal number of components that account for the majority of the variance in the data (Akduman & Hatipoglu, 2020). The two main components are visible in the component loadings (Table 6). Strong loadings (varying from 0.837 to 0.896) on the *WELL* variables (*WELL1* through *WELL5*) are seen in Component 1, suggesting a significant

degree of shared variance that is probably related to features of personal wellness. The job description variables make up the majority of Component 2, where loadings for *JOB1* through *JOB4* range from 0.537 to 0.655. Together, these components account for 56.6% of the variance. Component 1 accounts for 38.7% of the variance, while Component 2 accounts for 17.9% (Table 7). According to Hair et al. (2024), this distinction implies that job demands and well-being are two different but important aspects in interpreting employee experiences.

Table 4. KMO measure of sampling adequacy

Variables	Measure of sampling adequacy
Overall	0.822
<i>JOB5</i>	0.765
<i>WELL4</i>	0.823
<i>WELL5</i>	0.829
<i>JOB1</i>	0.649
<i>JOB2</i>	0.663
<i>JOB4</i>	0.741
<i>JOB3</i>	0.653
<i>WELL3</i>	0.910
<i>WELL2</i>	0.814
<i>WELL1</i>	0.837

Table 5. Bartlett’s test of sphericity

χ^2	df	p
2,721	45	< 0.001

Table 6. Component loadings

Variables	Component		Uniqueness
	1	2	
<i>WELL1</i>	0.896		0.195
<i>WELL2</i>	0.887		0.211
<i>WELL3</i>	0.858		0.259
<i>WELL5</i>	0.850		0.277
<i>WELL4</i>	0.837		0.299
X3: <i>JOB3</i>		0.666	0.538
X2: <i>JOB2</i>		0.664	0.529
X1: <i>JOB1</i>		0.655	0.569
X4: <i>JOB4</i>		0.537	0.692
X5: <i>JOB5</i>		-0.424	0.769

Note: ‘varimax’ rotation was used.

Table 7. Component statistics

Component	SS loadings	% of variance	Cumulative (%)
1	3.87	38.7	38.7
2	1.79	17.9	56.6

4.4. Reliability analysis

The reliability analysis of the scale used in the study showed good internal consistency, with the total scale having a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.916. This number implies that the scale’s components have a strong correlation with one another and work well as a whole to provide an accurate measure. The scale employed in this study is a very dependable instrument for evaluating the constructs of interest, as indicated by an alpha value above 0.9, which is typically regarded as outstanding (Hair et al., 2024).

4.5. Linear regression

The model showed moderate explanatory power with $R^2 = 0.212$ in the linear regression analysis evaluating female well-being predictors (Table 8).

This means that the included predictors account for about 21.2% of the variance in female well-being, as supported by the statistically significant model fit ($F[6, 611] = 27.3, p < 0.001$). Significantly, job demands categorized as *JOB2* and *JOB3* have a significant correlation with well-being ($\beta = 0.1158$ and 0.1207 , respectively; both $p < 0.001$), suggesting that increases in these job demands are related with improvements in well-being. In the same way, *JOB5* significantly improved well-being ($\beta = 0.1357, p < 0.001$), indicating that it is an important component in raising well-being. *JOB1* and *JOB4*, on the other hand, did not achieve statistical significance ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, it was shown that having a poor supervisory connection exerts a major detrimental impact on employee well-being, as the quality of one’s relationship with their boss (*BOSS*) significantly reduced well-being ($\beta = -0.3223$,

$p < 0.001$). Although it may appear strange, females' positive associations of specific job demand with well-being are consistent with the idea of eustress — good stress that can inspire and improve performance — as proposed by Torres et al. (2023). This shows that employment demands can enhance

well-being and a sense of accomplishment when they are viewed as challenges rather than obstacles.

The regression equation for predicting well-being among females based on the provided data is as follows:

$$\text{Well-being} = 3.6155 + 0.1158(\text{JOB D2}) + 0.1207(\text{JOB D3}) - 0.0674(\text{JOB D4}) + 0.1357(\text{JOB D5}) - 0.3223(\text{BOSS}) - 0.0268(\text{JOB D1}) \quad (2)$$

Table 8. Linear regression predicting well-being among females

Predictor	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		t	p
			Lower	Upper		
Intercept	3.6155	0.1951	3.2324	3.99867	18.53	< 0.001
JOB D2	0.1158	0.0302	0.0565	0.17519	3.83	< 0.001
JOB D3	0.1207	0.0319	0.0580	0.18339	3.78	< 0.001
JOB D4	-0.0674	0.0387	-0.1433	0.00855	-1.74	0.082
JOB D5	0.1357	0.0287	0.0792	0.19209	4.72	< 0.001
BOSS	-0.3223	0.0356	-0.3922	-0.25234	-9.05	< 0.001
JOB D1	-0.0268	0.0266	-0.0791	0.02549	-1.01	0.315

Note: $R^2 = 0.212$, $F(6, 611) = 27.3$, $p < 0.001$.

The study's finds that female employees reported better well-being scores, which could be attributed to distinct coping strategies or social support networks. This is consistent with other studies that indicate women may use social networks for stress management more successfully (Schwartz et al., 1996).

The impact of managerial connections on the well-being of female is statistically significant, highlighting the critical role that effective leadership plays in the workplace. The necessity for management training programs that emphasize developing supportive and constructive supervisory practices is highlighted by the consistent link between lower well-being and poor relationships with supervisors (Ghislieri et al., 2017).

Furthermore, it appears that not all job demands are intrinsically detrimental, given the positive correlation found between some job demands and well-being. Demands like these, when viewed as challenges, can improve motivation and engagement and improve overall well-being. This is in line with the JD-R model (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023), which asserts that when job demands and resources are balanced, positive outcomes can be achieved.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Interpretation of results

The study offers a thorough analysis of the effects of job demands, including communication that occurs after work hours, the health and burnout of female employees at Kuwait's Ministry of Education. Based on the demographic features, the workforce was found to be consistent and experienced, with a significant number of employees with years of experience. This demographic information is crucial since it implies that the workforce is experienced in their responsibilities, mature, and possibly more resilient to stress at work.

The Ministry depends heavily on digital communication, as seen by its preference for WhatsApp as its main form of communication. This research holds significance because it emphasizes how continuous connectivity may produce a blurring of the lines between work and personal life, which in turn can lead to burnout. Global trends are being followed by the use of digital tools for professional

communication, which emphasizes the need for regulations that control the effects of these tools on the welfare of employees (Farivar et al., 2024).

The main elements identified by the PCA are the job description and individual wellness. The significant loadings on wellness variables highlight how important personal well-being is to workplace dynamics. The JD-R paradigm, which proposes that job demands and sufficient job resources must be matched to avoid burnout, is supported by the identification of job demands as a distinct component. This finding bears major significance in the development of interventions focused on improving employee well-being by addressing job demands and resources (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023).

The results of the regression analysis offered detailed information about the factors that influence employees' well-being, regardless of gender. Job demands for female employees showed a positive correlation with their well-being (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). This unexpected result implies that work demands might increase motivation and engagement, which in turn can lead to improved well-being if they are seen to be fair challenges. On the other hand, unsatisfactory supervisor-subordinate relationships greatly reduced well-being, emphasizing the crucial role that managerial support plays in this mechanism (Rumschlag, 2017). Further research into gender-specific reactions to job demands is necessary, as evidenced by the other job demand factors' lack of significance (Hopkins, 2024).

5.2. Comparison with previous research

The results are consistent with previous studies on the effects of job demands and supervisory relationships on worker well-being. Prior research has indicated that job demands are not always harmful; in fact, they can improve motivation and well-being when they are viewed as challenges rather than obstacles (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). This strengthens the JD-R model, which highlights the significance of striking a balance between work demands and sufficient resources (Khalid et al., 2020).

In line with previous research, the findings of this study reveal that, as a result of various coping strategies and social support networks, women may perceive and report well-being in

different ways than men (Melweth et al., 2024). The results emphasize the necessity of gender-specific workplace policy changes to address these well-being dynamics effectively.

In addition, the findings of this study support existing research demonstrating that digital communication practices often contribute to the blurred boundaries between work and personal life. For example, research on professionals from Canada demonstrates that the use of work-related

digital communication beyond work hours negatively affects work-life balance (Senarathne Tennakoon, 2021). Similarly, a study on academics from Middle East and North Africa countries reports that the 24/7 availability phenomenon can contribute to work-life conflict and disturb employees' well-being (Ghali-Zinoubi et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of implementing the right to disconnect as a policy to enhance employee satisfaction and well-being.

Table 9. Research objectives and research questions

<i>Research questions/research objectives</i>	<i>Status</i>
What is the effect of workplace expectations for communication after official working hours on the well-being of female employees?	Met — manageable job demands (e.g., some forms of communication) showed a positive association with well-being.
How much burnout are these employees experiencing, and how is it related to their right to disconnect from work?	Met — burnout was present and related to constant connectivity; right to disconnect showed potential to reduce burnout.
What effects does the implementation of the right to disconnect policy have on employees' general well-being and job satisfaction?	Partially met — findings indicate a positive impact, but further longitudinal studies are needed.
Examine the relationship between job demands and well-being among female employees.	Met — positive association with manageable job demands and well-being.
Assess the role of supervisory relationships in influencing employee well-being.	Met — significant impact of supervisory relationships on well-being.
Provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the right to disconnect policy in mitigating burnout.	Partially met — need further longitudinal studies.

5.3. Implications for policy and practice

The findings of the study clearly have several of advantageous implications for decision-makers in government and other organizations:

1. Enforcing the right to disconnect through legislation can improve employee well-being by minimizing the intrusion of work into their personal time. In order to maintain mental health and preserve a work-life balance, this policy is necessary.
2. Companies ought to invest resources on leadership development courses to enhance management abilities and create helpful and productive interactions between managers and employees. Decreased well-being was significantly anticipated by insufficient management support.
3. Training courses intended to assist staff in maintaining boundaries between work and personal life ought to be offered by organizations. These courses may include how to avoid being constantly connected by using digital communication tools wisely.
4. Organizations should make sure that job expectations and sufficient job resources are balanced in order to prevent burnout. This includes providing enough autonomy, support, and opportunities for career advancement.
5. The fact that women reported high well-being scores raises the possibility that gender-specific therapies could be successful. Companies ought to think about creating initiatives that address specific challenges female employees encounter, especially when it comes to juggling work and personal commitments.
6. Encouraging staff to view the demands of their jobs as reasonable challenges can improve engagement and motivation. Employees who participate in training programs might learn how to handle stress and see the positive aspects of their work.
7. Establishing regular assessments of workers' well-being can assist companies in recognizing pressures and taking prompt action. These evaluations may provide useful information

for customizing interventions to the demands of the workforce.

5.4. Implications for academia

The results of the research also have significant ramifications for academic investigation:

- The results found in this study emphasize how crucial it is to carry out gender-specific research. Researchers should conduct research into how resources and responsibilities on the job differ for male and female employees.
- To further investigate the efficacy of the right to disconnect policy, more empirical research is required. Its long-term effects on company performance and employee well-being should be the focus of future research.
- A deeper understanding of the causal links between job demands, burnout, and well-being can be obtained through longitudinal research approaches. Understanding how these linkages change over time can be enhanced by such studies.
- Cross-cultural studies are required in light of Kuwait's cultural background in order to compare the effects of job demands and the right to disconnect in different geographic and cultural contexts.
- Integrating qualitative and quantitative research techniques can lead to a deeper comprehension of the relationships among job demands, burnout, and well-being. In addition to providing deeper insights into employee experiences, qualitative insights can supplement quantitative data.
- In order to provide a more thorough knowledge of employee well-being, future research should take into account additional characteristics such as personal coping methods, social support outside of work, and organizational culture.

6. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the way job demands, especially those pertaining to communication after

hours, have a substantial impact on the well-being and burnout of female employees in Kuwait's Ministry of Education. One important policy that comes to light for reducing these adverse impacts is the ability to disconnect. Significant strategies for raising worker well-being and productivity include putting supportive workplace policies into place and strengthening supervisory relationships. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on work-life balance and employee rights, providing useful suggestions for academics, business executives, and regulators. This will ultimately lead to healthier and more productive work environments.

Although this study offers valuable insight, there are a few of limitations such as the cross-sectional form of the study makes it difficult to determine causal relationships. To comprehend the causal links between job demands, burnout, and well-being, longitudinal research needs to be conducted. In addition, response biases could be introduced by depending too much on self-reported data. Further studies should consider employing a variety of data sources, including impartial assessments of job demands and well-being. Another limitation is related to the focus on female employees of Kuwait's Ministry of Education, which may limit its generality to other industries and regions. Other factors, including individual coping mechanisms, social support networks outside of the workplace, and

organizational culture that may have an impact on well-being, were not taken into consideration in this study.

The study's limitations and findings led to several avenues for further research. Future research may benefit from conducting longitudinal research to investigate the long-term effects on employee well-being and burnout of job demands and the right to disconnect policy. To obtain a deeper understanding of employees' experiences and perceptions of workplace pressures and the right to disconnect, future research may combine quantitative and qualitative research findings. It is also essential to examine the effects of job demands and the freedom to unplug in various cultural settings to see how these dynamics are influenced by cultural variables. In addition, to make the findings of the study more broadly applicable, future research may include employees from multiple sectors and geographies. Future studies should take into account factors including social support, company culture, and individual coping mechanisms to give a more thorough picture of employee well-being. Future research should also evaluate the effectiveness of particular workplace policies and training initiatives focused at lowering burnout and raising wellbeing intervention studies are recommended.

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