



What's reshaping Saudi Arabia's workforce? AI, skills and opportunity

Middle East Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2025: Saudi Arabia findings



Introduction

Saudi Arabia's workforce in 2025 reflects a young, educated, digitally engaged and economically active population, well positioned to drive and navigate change.

In the Kingdom, as technology advances in step with national priorities, employees are not merely adapting to change, they are actively harnessing new tools, building future-ready skills and shaping the course of organisational transformation. The priority now is alignment and ensuring that technology adoption, skills development and career progression move in step so that today's momentum translates into long-term, sustainable growth.

Findings from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in PwC's Middle East Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2025 capture the sentiments of more than 400 respondents across the country, with 28% Gen X (those born between 1965 and 1980), 46% Millennials (1981-1996) and 24% Gen Z (1997-2012), reflecting a predominantly early- to mid-career workforce.

Looking closely at respondents in the Kingdom, 69% are university graduates and a further 10% hold postgraduate qualifications. Seniority levels are equally notable, with 44% of respondents being managers and 18% senior executives. This shows that a significant portion of respondents are directly shaping organisational and technological transformation, not just observing change from the sidelines.



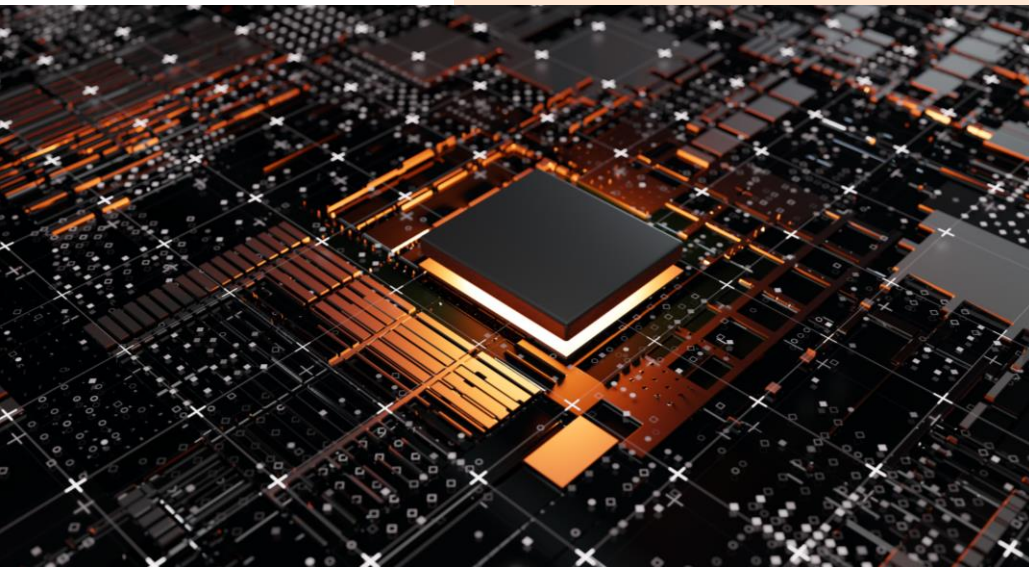
01

Change expectations are high, with technology and internal strategy at the centre

Employees in Saudi Arabia anticipate meaningful shifts in how they work over the next three years. The main drivers of change are technological change, government regulations and employer's long-term strategy.



Technological change leads, with 46% of respondents anticipating a large or very large impact on their job, slightly below the Middle East 49% but ahead of the global average 45%. Government regulations 44% and organisational strategy 43% are equally significant drivers, closely aligned with regional and global benchmarks.



For businesses in the Kingdom, this points to the need for deliberate alignment of their efforts with dynamic and evolving needs. Artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives, operating model shifts, and long-term strategy must move as one. When transformation efforts are fragmented, they can create uncertainty and risk confusion in a workforce preparing for coordinated transformation.



Survey findings also reveal that in Saudi Arabia, 56% of respondents expect to have a large or very large degree of control over how technology affects their work, well above the global average 40% and consistent with the Middle East 55%. Additionally, 69% feel optimistic about their future role, slightly above regional and global levels, both at 66%. This sense of agency and confidence provides strong foundations for successful digital adoption, but it also raises expectations for clarity, inclusion and capability-building.



02

AI adoption is advanced and performance gains are already visible

AI is firmly embedded in daily work across the Kingdom. 69% of employees report using AI in their job in the past 12 months, comparable to the Middle East 70% and above global levels 54%. Generative AI is becoming routine, with 36% using it weekly or daily, ahead of the global benchmark 32%.

The benefits are tangible:

85%

report improvements in the quality of their work.

77%

cite productivity gains.

81%

report enhanced creativity.

Expectations remain strong for the next three years, with 79% anticipating further quality improvements and 73% expecting greater productivity gains.

Importantly, employees largely perceive AI as augmenting their roles rather than threatening them. 55% expect AI to improve job security, well above the global average 38%. Additionally, 81% believe more than half of their current skills will remain relevant over the next three years.

This confidence in AI does not stem from blind optimism, but from experiencing real, measurable gains.

As AI continues to improve productivity and quality, businesses across the Kingdom can move beyond encouraging experimentation towards more structured integration, linking these outcomes more clearly to career pathways, promotion criteria and evolving role design. When employees see how AI-enabled performance contributes to progression and recognition, it reinforces motivation and sustains confidence in long-term opportunities.

03

Upskilling is embedded, but progression will define impact

In the Kingdom, employees' learning and upskilling efforts are well underway:

64%

of respondents learnt new skills in the past year that are helping their career.

67%

report access to the learning and development resources they need.

59%

feel supported by their manager in building new capabilities.

At the same time, expectations around stability and growth are high.

A notable 88% rate job security as very or extremely important when considering if a job is a good fit,

greater than the regional 85% and global average 79%,

while 85% value performance-based recognition,

above their regional 83% and global peers 70%.

81% prioritise opportunities to develop transferable skills,

in line with the regional average 81% and significantly higher than the global average 69%.

For employees in the Kingdom, a 'good job' is defined by three elements: security, development and meritocracy. In the context of Vision 2030 and sector diversification, there is an opportunity for organisations to tightly align employee development efforts with evolving roles and clear internal mobility pathways. This will reinforce trust in progression systems and sustain long-term commitment.

04

Engagement remains strong, but intensity must be managed

Engagement among employees in Saudi Arabia remains strong

74%

look forward to going to work, slightly less than the Middle East 78%, yet greater than the global average 64%).

70%

are willing to go above and beyond what is required in their roles, compared to 76% of their peers across the region and 67% globally.

84%

are proud of the work they do, in line with their regional peers 84% and significantly greater than the global average 74%).

The high engagement, however, coexists with increasing workload pressure. While 78% report feeling satisfied at work, 44% feel overwhelmed and 45% fatigued at least once a week, signalling a high-performance environment where ambition and workload intensity are increasing together.



Trust in direct managers is high (66%), in line with Middle East employees (66%) and greater than the global average (58%). Openness is also high, with 68% of employees reporting that they can speak openly with their managers – compared to the Middle East (67%) and global respondents (59%) – yet only 40% believe their manager cares about their wellbeing, significantly less than both the regional (47%) and global (52%) responses.

Employees in the Kingdom largely view managers as approachable, but less invested in their wellbeing, suggesting a performance-focused relationship.

Trust in top management

56%

and perceptions that senior leaders follow through on their commitments

54%



are both higher than global averages (**51% and 50%, respectively**),

but slightly below Middle East levels (**61% and 57%, respectively**).

This may imply that while employees across the Kingdom are engaged and optimistic, the energy and momentum cannot be assumed to be limitless. As AI augments output and transformation accelerates, sustaining performance will require balancing ambition with wellbeing. Clear prioritisation of workloads, stronger people leadership capability and visible care from managers will be essential to preserving resilience.

The Kingdom's opportunity now lies in integration. Aligning AI strategy with career progression pathways, embedding upskilling into future role design, and reinforcing leadership direction and care so that transformation becomes intentional and sustainable. If these elements move together, businesses in Saudi Arabia will not only adapt to transformation, but they will also define it.



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