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Perceptions of Micromanagement: Insights from the Saudi Labor Market

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Abstract

This study explored employees' perceptions of micromanagement in the Saudi labor market and its link to negative outcomes. Using a survey of 107 participants, it assessed the impact of micromanagement on stress, creativity, job satisfaction, productivity, and turnover intentions. Results showed a generally neutral view of micromanagement, with varying experiences across respondents. However, micromanagement contributed to increased stress, reduced job satisfaction, limited creativity, and higher turnover rates. The findings highlight the need for empowering and autonomy-supportive management practices. Age, gender, and sector did not significantly influence perceptions of micromanagement, though employees aged 30-40 reported the highest levels of supervisory intervention. Hypotheses 4-15 were confirmed, showing a weak but positive correlation between micromanagement and several negative outcomes, including stress, impaired creativity, decreased productivity, and increased turnover intentions. This emphasizes the importance of management styles that foster employee autonomy and well-being.

Keywords: *Micromanagement, Satisfaction, Saudi, Private Sector, Public Sector.*

Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of the contemporary workforce, the relationship between employees and their supervisors stands as a cornerstone for organizational success. Within this framework, the management style adopted by supervisors plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' experiences, productivity, and overall organizational climate. Among the various management approaches, micromanagement has emerged as a subject of significant interest and concern within organizational behavior Ryan et al. (2024). According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, micromanagement refers to the meticulous control exerted over every aspect of a project or event, particularly concerning the tasks performed by employees Limon et al. (2021). Micromanagement, characterized by excessive control, close supervision, and intrusive involvement in employees' tasks, has been praised for its attention to detail and criticized for its detrimental effects on employee morale and performance.

Micromanagement involves closely overseeing, scrutinizing, and controlling a minute aspect within a broader process Wright (2000). In micromanagement, managers control insignificant details of employees', teams', and organizational daily activities Clearly et al. (2015). According to Chambers (2004), micromanagement is highly subjective. Indeed, what one person may perceive as support or collaboration, another may interpret as undue interference.

Understanding employees' perceptions of micromanagement becomes imperative in the Saudi labor market, where economic diversification and rapid development have spurred substantial changes in organizational structures and management practices (MANSOOR et al., 2021). This study endeavors to delve into the intricacies of this phenomenon by examining how employees within the Saudi workforce perceive and respond to micromanagement behaviors exhibited by their supervisors.

Micromanagers wield a detrimental influence on organizational efficacy and productivity. The failure to empower employees diminishes the overall quality of work produced (Chambers, 2004; Collins & Collins, 2002; Blackney, 2013; Barnes, 2015).

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Their presence often fosters a toxic environment within the workplace, subtracting value rather than adding to it. The crux of the issue lies in their tendency to micromanage every aspect of tasks, regardless of their significance or priority (Chambers (2004); Maignan Wilkins (2014). This uniform application of scrutiny and control imposes undue stress upon their subordinates, who cannot discern and prioritize their responsibilities amidst the micromanager's pervasive intervention.

Micromanagement can sometimes offer benefits in specific situations, but it should be seen as something other than a consistent management approach (Chambers, 2004). Examples include when new team members join, during significant organizational strategy changes, or when essential projects face challenges. Close monitoring aids in integrating newcomers, navigating transitions, and addressing project setbacks. However, this should be temporary, typically lasting 30 to 90 days, to avoid fostering a culture of excessive oversight (Riordan, 2009).

Saudi Arabia, with its dynamic economy and diverse workforce, provides a unique context for this investigation. As the country advances toward Vision 2030, aiming for economic transformation and national development, the dynamics between supervisors and employees gain heightened importance. Effective leadership and management practices are indispensable for organizational success and fostering a supportive work environment that promotes employee well-being and engagement.

Focusing on employees' perceptions, this study sheds light on the nuanced implications of micromanagement within the Saudi labor market. A comprehensive analysis of survey data and qualitative insights seeks to uncover the underlying factors influencing employees' experiences with micromanagement and the potential consequences for individual and organizational outcomes. Moreover, by identifying patterns and trends, this research provides valuable insights for organizational leaders and policymakers to enhance managerial practices and promote a culture of trust, autonomy, and empowerment. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the respondents' demographic profile regarding gender, age, and sector?
- Are there micromanagement practices among the responders in the labor market in Saudi Arabia?

The study also formulates hypotheses related to the relationship between gender, age, and sector and the presence of micromanagement and hypotheses for the correlation between micromanagement and various factors like stress, creativity, job satisfaction, productivity, and the intention to leave the job.

Research Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant difference in the presence of micromanagement when grouped according to gender.
- H02: There is NO significant difference in micromanagement in a person's work between employees in the private and public sectors.
- H03: The presence of micromanagement in a person's work across different age groups is the same.
- H04: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and stress levels among Saudi employees.
- H05: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement, restriction of freedom of work, and creativity among Saudi labor market employees.
- H06: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and the ability to make decisions independently among Saudi labor market employees.

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- H07: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and the quality of work among Saudi labor market employees.

- H08: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and flexibility in task execution among Saudi labor market employees.

- H09: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and the ability to learn and grow among employees in the Saudi labor market.

- H010: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and restriction, which slows the workflow among employees in the Saudi labor market.

- H011: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and job satisfaction among employees in the Saudi labor market.

- H012: A positive correlation exists between micromanagement and stress or anxiety among Saudi labor market employees.

- H013: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and the ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues among Saudi labor market employees.

- H014: A positive correlation exists between micromanagement and overall productivity among employees in the Saudi labor market.

- H015: There is a positive correlation between micromanagement and considering leaving a job among Saudi labor market employees.

This study contributes significantly to the existing literature on organizational behavior and management within the Saudi context. Addressing a critical aspect of leadership dynamics offers valuable implications for theory, practice, and policy, ultimately striving to foster healthier and more productive work environments within the Saudi labor market. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to address micromanagement in the labor market in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the last fifteen years.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 1 introduces the topic and aim of this study. Section 2 provides the literature reviews related to micromanagement. Section 3 explains micromanagement, micromanagement versus effective management, micromanagement effects, and finally, alternatives to micromanagement. Section 4, the methodology, is discussed in detail. Section 5 presents the results and data analysis. Section 6 provides a conclusion that summarizes the outcome of the research.

Literature Review

Many research findings highlighting the adverse effects of micromanagement, such as (Ivy, 2014), found that micromanagers often create unnecessary bottlenecks through excessive monitoring and approval processes. (Blackney, 2013) found that micromanagement stifles the creativity and initiative of their employees. Also, it was found that micromanagers frequently need to improve their team members' development. Consequently, employee morale experiences a decline. Employees become more disengaged in their work environment (Bielaszka-DuVernay, 2008; Blackney, 2013).

These factors collectively contribute to high employee turnover rates (Chamber, 2004; Collins & Collins, 2002; Blackney, 2013; Mayhew, 2021).

Lee et al. (2023) found that in clinical supervision within health professions education, micromanagement was linked to personal behavioral and personality traits such as distrust, perfectionism, self-assurance, and

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low self-esteem. This led to deficiencies in employee professional growth and well-being, patient care, and overall organizational dysfunction.

Limon et al. (2021) designed a measurement instrument for assessing the extent of micromanagement exhibited by school principals. Caise et al. (2023) found the necessity for management teams in the U.S. accounting industry to receive organizational backing, mainly through training initiatives to guide them in curtailing detrimental micromanagement behaviors within their teams. Ramos et al. (2023) assess the effectiveness of micromanagement concerning teachers and middle managers in the academic sector, focusing on compliance, productivity, competence, and job satisfaction. The findings suggest that micromanagement is effective in fostering compliance and productivity, moderately effective regarding competence, and slightly ineffective regarding job satisfaction.

Onu (2017) researched tableware companies in Lagos and found micromanagement suitable for small Nigerian enterprises due to their operational environment. The study, which used surveys and interviews, supported contingency management theory by concluding that appropriate management styles depend on the business environment, disproving the notion that one style fits all.

Kamarudin et al. (2023) conducted a descriptive investigation on the impact of a micromanaging leadership style on job satisfaction and employee perceptions in Malaysia's manufacturing industry. Involving 97 managers, the study found that micromanagement negatively affects productivity, morale, trust, teamwork, personal development, and innovation.

Mishra, N. (2023) conducted a study to determine the influence of micromanagement leadership on the performance of teaching staff in higher educational institutions in Delhi NCT.

Ramos et al. (2023) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of micromanagement for teachers and middle managers in the academic sector, focusing on compliance, productivity, competence, and job satisfaction. The findings indicate that micromanagement effectively promotes compliance and productivity, is moderately effective in enhancing competence, but is slightly ineffective in improving job satisfaction.

Caise, T., & Tucker, J. (2023) Explore leaders' perspectives in the U.S. accounting industry on effective leadership strategies to minimize micromanagement of employees in remote work environments. The findings from the data analysis indicate that management teams in the U.S. accounting industry require organizational support through training initiatives to help reduce negative behaviors associated with micromanaging their teams.

Nazarpouri et al. (2023) used quantitative and qualitative methods to identify and explain the factors contributing to micromanagement in governmental organizations, focusing on Lorestan Province managers and university professors. The research results indicate that the most significant antecedent factors of micromanagement are a manager's lack of trust in employees and a negative attitude toward delegating authority. The most important consequences are increased employee stress and dependence on the manager's orders.

Uddin et al. (2024) examined the impact of different leadership behaviors among employees of private commercial banks in Bangladesh empowering leadership behavior (ELB), micromanagement leadership behavior (MLB), and transformational leadership behavior (TLB) on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Additionally, they investigated the mediating role of job satisfaction (JS) in the relationship between these leadership behaviors and OCB.

Wright (1999) conducted a study of 56 medical sales reps in the northeastern U.S. and found strong correlations between micro-management, autonomy, and the manager's GNS, with a weak link to job satisfaction. No correlation was found between competitive pressure and micro-management.

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Iro-Idoro and Jimoh (2021) studied the impact of micromanagement on employees' job performance in the Nigerian manufacturing industry, evaluating it across three dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, and task performance.

Hall et al. (2024) highlight pharmacy academic administrators' challenges, emphasizing gender differences in preparedness and identifying areas for targeted leadership development interventions. Omar's (2021) study on the impact of leadership styles on employee commitment at King Abdullah Medical City found that democratic leadership boosts morale and performance, autocratic leadership enforces rules and tasks, bureaucratic leadership lacks team engagement, and laissez-faire leadership enhances flexibility and achievements.

The existing literature comprehensively shows micromanagement's adverse effects across various sectors and cultural contexts. It underscores organizations' need to reconsider micromanagement practices and foster a more empowering and trust-based leadership style. Training initiatives and organizational support are critical to mitigating the negative impacts of micromanagement and enhancing overall employee satisfaction and performance. Future research should focus on developing and testing interventions that effectively reduce micromanagement behaviors and promote healthier, more productive work environments.

Gaps in the Literature

Despite extensive research on micromanagement, several gaps still need to be addressed. Most studies are cross-sectional, offering a snapshot rather than a dynamic understanding of how micromanagement affects employees and organizations over time. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into its long-term consequences. Research has explored various sectors, but more granular studies are needed considering sector-specific dynamics and environmental factors, such as how micromanagement impacts creative industries versus manufacturing. Much of the research is concentrated in Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how cultural differences influence micromanagement's perception and impact. Comparative studies across different cultures could offer a global perspective. While the adverse effects of micromanagement are well-documented, there is a lack of research on effective intervention strategies. Future studies should focus on developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions to reduce micromanagement and foster a supportive management style. Limited attention has been given to how employees cope with micromanagement and their resilience strategies. Understanding these mechanisms could help design better support systems for employees. Additionally, with the rise of remote work, the dynamics of micromanagement are changing, necessitating exploration of how technology influences micromanagement practices and their impact on remote teams.

Addressing these gaps can enhance our understanding of micromanagement and inform more effective management practices that promote employee well-being and organizational success.

Reducing the Gap: Insights from the Saudi Labor Market

The current study addresses several of the identified gaps in the literature:

- Cultural Context: This study explicitly explores micromanagement within the Saudi labor market, providing valuable insights into how cultural factors influence perceptions and impacts of micromanagement. This contributes to the understanding of micromanagement in non-Western contexts, an area that has been under-researched.

- Sector-Specific Dynamics: This study highlights sector-specific differences and similarities by examining micromanagement practices across different sectors (private and government) within Saudi Arabia, which can inform tailored interventions suitable for different organizational environments.

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- Detailed Analysis of Demographics: The study includes a comprehensive analysis of how demographic factors such as gender, age, and sector influence perceptions of micromanagement. This helps in understanding the nuanced impacts of micromanagement on different employee groups.

- Correlation with Job Outcomes: The study investigates the correlation between micromanagement and various job outcomes, including stress, creativity, job satisfaction, productivity, and turnover intention. This multi-faceted approach provides a holistic view of how micromanagement affects employees and organizations.

- Intervention Insights: By identifying the detrimental effects of micromanagement and the factors contributing to these effects, the study offers practical insights for organizational leaders and policymakers. This can help develop effective strategies to reduce micromanagement and promote a more supportive work environment.

In conclusion, this study significantly contributes to the existing literature by providing context-specific insights and addressing several gaps related to cultural context, sector-specific dynamics, and comprehensive demographic analysis. This research lays the groundwork for future studies and interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of micromanagement and enhance organizational health and employee well-being.

Micromanagement

Micromanagement is a term commonly used today, often applied to describe poor management practices. Generally regarded as a negative management style, it occurs when a manager becomes involved in every detail of the workflow process Porterfield, 2003. Micromanagement is a management style where employers excessively focus on details, require frequent reports from employees, express dissatisfaction with the team's work, closely monitor activities, and unnecessarily control their employees' actions Mishra et al., 2019; Landry 2020. Micromanagement involves excessively overseeing every detail of a task or project, often surpassing what is necessary. It is characterized by a manager's tendency to closely monitor and control the work of their subordinates, leaving little room for independent decision-making. This approach typically stems from a need for more trust in employees' abilities or a fear of potential mistakes. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, micromanaging means controlling every aspect of a situation or project, including minor details. This approach can be unnecessary and may prevent other employees Bans-Akutey, A. (2020).

Several factors can lead to micromanagement, including:

- Perfectionism: Managers who strive for perfection may feel compelled to oversee every detail.

- Insecurity: A lack of confidence in their leadership skills or their team's capabilities can drive managers to micromanage.

- High Stakes: Projects with significant consequences might prompt managers to maintain tight control to ensure success.

Micromanagement Effects

Micromanagement can have significant and far-reaching effects on both employees and the organization as a whole. While micromanagement often aims to ensure quality and control, the negative impacts can outweigh any potential benefits.

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Employee Morale

According to Robert and John (2003), employee morale is the degree to which employees' needs are met and how much they perceive this satisfaction as contributing to their overall job satisfaction. Micromanagement negatively impacts employee morale by causing decreased job satisfaction due to a lack of autonomy and trust, increased stress from constant scrutiny and pressure to meet the micromanager's standards, and lowered motivation when employees are not given the freedom to take ownership of their work. Nazarpouri et al. (2023), De-Caro et al. (2011).

Productivity

Micromanagement undermines employee productivity Mayhew (2020); De-Caro et al. (2011). Managers must monitor employees' work and offer direction or correction as needed. However, the time spent demonstrating each task to staff gradually diminishes the time available for actual output. In both production-oriented and service-oriented environments, micromanagement can consume time better spent meeting corporate needs and serving customer demands Ndidi et al. (2022). Micromanagement can reduce efficiency by slowing down workflows due to employees seeking constant approval, create overdependence by leading employees to rely too heavily on the micromanager for guidance and decisions, and cause burnout through the pressure and stress associated with excessive oversight, resulting in decreased productivity and increased absenteeism.

Creativity and Innovation

Creativity generates new ideas from scratch, while innovation transforms those ideas into products and services Foad Farid et al. (1993). Effective management for creativity involves providing the environment, recognition, rewards, and leadership necessary to motivate employees to be creative. Micromanagement stifles creativity by limiting employees' ability to think creatively and explore new ideas, as strict adherence to guidelines and instructions suppresses innovative thinking. Additionally, the fear of constant scrutiny and criticism discourages employees from experimenting with new approaches or taking risks. Kamarudin et al. (2023).

Employee Development

Micromanagement hinders employee development by stifling skill growth. Employees need to be allowed to make decisions and take on responsibilities, thus preventing the effective development of their competencies. Continuous oversight and correction erode employees' confidence in their abilities, making them more hesitant to take initiative in the future. Furthermore, micromanagement limits learning by restricting employees from experiencing and learning from their mistakes. Kamarudin et al. (2023).

Organizational Impact

Employees who feel micromanaged are more likely to seek employment elsewhere, leading to high turnover rates that are costly for organizations in terms of recruitment, training, and lost productivity (Nigeria & Georgewill, 2020). Additionally, micromanagement can create a toxic work environment where employees feel undervalued and unsupported, resulting in decreased overall morale and a negative organizational culture. It also disrupts team dynamics and collaboration, as employees who cannot work independently or contribute ideas can hinder effective teamwork and communication.

Managerial Consequences

Micromanagers often take on excessive workloads to maintain control, leading to burnout and reduced effectiveness. This not only causes them to miss out on developing crucial leadership skills such as delegation, trust-building, and empowering employees, but it also hampers their potential to foster a more autonomous and motivated workforce, ultimately stifling their growth and that of their team.

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Micromanagement VS Effective Management

Micromanagement is often mistaken for effective management. According to Half (2018), an effective manager exhibits several key characteristics. They value their employees, express gratitude, communicate clearly, and listen actively and attentively. Effective managers make decisions, trust their employees to perform, and resolve conflicts efficiently. They understand their employees, set good examples, maintain transparency, achieve high standards, and consistently stay one step ahead of everyone else (Half, R. (2018)). Scholars have emphasized that micromanagement and monitoring are different. Monitoring is essential for ensuring the performance of critical tasks (Heimer, 1994), whereas micromanagement occurs when supervisors fail to understand their responsibilities.

Alternatives to Micromanagement

To foster a more productive and positive work environment, managers can adopt alternative strategies:

- Empowerment: Trusting employees to make decisions and handle responsibilities can boost their confidence and performance. Clear guidelines and expectations allow team members to operate independently within a defined framework.

- Delegation: Assigning tasks based on individual strengths and expertise not only optimizes productivity but also helps in developing employees' skills and competencies.

- Feedback and Support: Regular, constructive feedback helps employees understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Offering support and resources when needed encourages growth without the need for constant supervision.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative approach to gather data on employee perceptions of micromanagement. An online survey was distributed to 107 employees across various industries and sectors in Saudi Arabia. The survey included demographic questions and 13 items measuring perceptions of micromanagement on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency and variability, were used to analyze the data. Cronbach's Alpha assessed the internal consistency of the questionnaire. An independent samples t-test and Pearson correlation test were used to test the hypotheses and determine the relationships between variables.

The study examined correlations between micromanagement and factors such as stress, creativity, job satisfaction, productivity, and turnover intention. The demographic analysis considered gender, age, and sector to understand the nuanced impacts of micromanagement across different employee groups.

Results and Analysis

Data Collection

An online survey was distributed via Google Forms to the respondents. The total number of responders is 107. The researcher designed a questionnaire and used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree)

The first part of the questionnaire is demographic questions (age, gender, and sector). The second part of the questionnaire consists of 13 questions, which are:

VAR05	My supervisors intervene significantly and continuously in the execution of

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	my tasks.
VAR06	Micromanagement increases my stress at work
VAR07	Micromanagement restricts my freedom of work and reduces my creativity
VAR08	Micromanagement hinders my ability to make decisions independently
VAR09	Micromanagement negatively affects the quality of my work
VAR10	Micromanagement reduces my flexibility in task execution
VAR11	Micromanagement reduces my ability to learn and grow
VAR12	Micromanagement restricts and slows down the workflow
VAR13	Micromanagement reduces job satisfaction levels
VAR14	Micromanagement causes me stress or anxiety
VAR15	Micromanagement affects my ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues.
VAR16	Micromanagement negatively affects overall productivity
VAR17	Micromanagement makes me consider leaving my job

Data Analysis

The SPSS version 26 (IBM SPSS Statistics) was used to conduct the data analysis. The author used descriptive statistics to analyze gathered data, providing insights into the central tendency (mean, median, mode), variability (standard deviation, variance), and frequency distribution of responses. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

We first performed the normality test and homogeneity test of variance. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the participants' socio-demographic characteristics and the variables' scores. Pearson's correlations are measured to examine relationships between variables in the gathered data.

The Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the results value of the demographic profile of the respondents under study:

Table 1. Frequency Percentage Distribution on the Profile of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	%
Female	37	34.6
Male	70	65.4
Sector		
Government	28	26.2
Private	79	73.8
Age		
60 years and above	3	2.8
Between 20- and less than 30	13	12.1
Between 30- and less than 40	47	43.9
Between 40- and less than 50	31	29.0
Between 50- and less than 60	13	12.1

Descriptive Statistics

Reliability Statistics

Table 2 shows Cronbach's Alpha value of .926, indicating an excellent internal consistency level among the 16 items included in the scale. This suggests that the items are highly correlated with one another and measure the same underlying construct reliably.

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Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	*N of Items*
.926	16

Descriptive Statistics for the variables in the study and Interpretation

Table 3 outlines the scoring range for the Likert scale used in the survey, providing the Interpretation of the scores from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Table 3. Scoring Range of Likert Scale of the Survey Sözen, Erol & Guven, Ufuk. (2019).

From	*TO*	
Mean		Interpretation
1	1.8	Strongly Disagree
1.81	2.6	Disagree
2.61	3.4	Neutral
3.41	4.2	Agree
4.21	5	Strongly Agree

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables in the study.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables in the Study

	Mean	Std. Deviation	
VAR00005	3.0748	1.22629	Neutral
VAR00006	3.8224	1.07995	Agree
VAR00007	3.9065	1.09487	Agree
VAR00008	3.9720	.93625	Agree
VAR00009	3.5514	1.12630	Agree
VAR00010	3.7383	1.04011	Agree
VAR00011	3.4953	1.16856	Agree
VAR00012	3.7103	1.14108	Agree
VAR00013	3.7850	1.06424	Agree
VAR00014	3.82	1.080	Agree
VAR00015	3.63	1.060	Agree
VAR00016	3.68	1.087	Agree
VAR00017	3.59	1.116	Agree

The results indicate the following:

VAR05: My supervisors intervene significantly and continuously in the execution of my tasks

- Mean: 3.0748
- Std. Deviation: 1.22629
- Interpretation: Neutral
    - Employees feel moderately neutral about significant and continuous supervisor intervention. This suggests that while some experience high levels of intervention, others do not, leading to a neutral average.

VAR06: Micromanagement increases my stress at work

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- Mean: 3.8224
- Std. Deviation: 1.07995
- Interpretation: Agree
    - There is a general agreement that micromanagement increases stress levels at work. The relatively high mean score indicates that many employees feel stressed due to micromanagement practices.

VAR07: Micromanagement restricts my freedom of work and reduces my creativity

- Mean: 3.9065
- Std. Deviation: 1.09487
- Interpretation: Agree
    - Employees agree that micromanagement restricts their freedom and creativity. This high mean score reflects a significant impact of micromanagement on these aspects of their work life.

VAR08: Micromanagement hinders my ability to make decisions independently

- Mean: 3.9720
- Std. Deviation: 0.93625
- Interpretation: Agree
    - There is strong agreement that micromanagement hinders independent decision-making. The mean score close to 4 indicates that this is a prevalent issue among the surveyed employees.

VAR09: Micromanagement negatively affects the quality of my work

- Mean: 3.5514
- Std. Deviation: 1.12630
- Interpretation: Agree
    - Employees generally agree that micromanagement negatively impacts the quality of their work. This suggests that excessive supervision may lead to poorer work outcomes.

VAR10: Micromanagement reduces my flexibility in task execution

- Mean: 3.7383
- Std. Deviation: 1.04011
- Interpretation: Agree

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- The employees acknowledge the reduction in flexibility due to micromanagement, as indicated by the agreement level.

VAR11: Micromanagement reduces my ability to learn and grow

- Mean: 3.4953
- Std. Deviation: 1.16856
- Interpretation: Agree
  - Although close to neutral, the mean score suggests that employees agree that micromanagement hampers learning and growth opportunities.

VAR12: Micromanagement restricts and slows down the workflow

- Mean: 3.7103
- Std. Deviation: 1.14108
- Interpretation: Agree
  - There is agreement that micromanagement slows down workflow, reflecting inefficiencies introduced by excessive supervision.

VAR13: Micromanagement reduces job satisfaction levels

- Mean: 3.7850
- Std. Deviation: 1.06424
- Interpretation: Agree
  - Employees agree that micromanagement reduces their job satisfaction, negatively impacting workplace morale.

VAR14: Micromanagement causes me stress or anxiety

- Mean: 3.82
- Std. Deviation: 1.080
- Interpretation: Agree
  - These variables measure stress and anxiety caused by micromanagement, with a high agreement level, similar to stress at work.

VAR15: Micromanagement affects my ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues

- Mean: 3.63
- Std. Deviation: 1.060

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- Interpretation: Agree
    - Employees agree that micromanagement affects their collaboration abilities, indicating that excessive supervision might hinder teamwork.

VAR16: Micromanagement negatively affects overall productivity

- Mean: 3.68
- Std. Deviation: 1.087
- Interpretation: Agree
    - There is agreement that micromanagement negatively impacts productivity, suggesting that it is counterproductive in achieving efficient work outcomes.

VAR17: Micromanagement makes me consider leaving my job

- Mean: 3.59
- Std. Deviation: 1.116
- Interpretation: Agree
    - The agreement that micromanagement leads employees to consider leaving their jobs highlights its severe impact on employee retention and satisfaction.

The results show that employees generally agree that micromanagement negatively impacts their work life. The variables with mean scores between 3.41 and 4.2 (indicating "Agree") suggest that:

- Stress and Anxiety: Employees consistently report increased stress and anxiety due to micromanagement.
- Job Satisfaction and Productivity: There is a significant negative impact on job satisfaction and overall productivity.
- Creativity and Independence: Micromanagement restricts creativity and the ability to make independent decisions.
- Workflow and Collaboration: It slows down workflows and hampers effective collaboration with colleagues.
- Learning and Growth: Employees feel their opportunities for learning and growth are reduced.
- Consideration of Leaving: The consideration of leaving the job due to micromanagement is also notably high.
- In general, males tend to have slightly higher means in most variables than females, indicating that they perceive the impacts of micromanagement more strongly.
- Females report lower means, suggesting a slightly less intense perception of the effects of micromanagement.

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- The standard deviations are relatively similar between genders, indicating a comparable response variability.

These findings suggest that employees perceive micromanagement practices negatively in the Saudi labor market. This can lead to stress, reduced job satisfaction, hindered creativity, and potentially higher turnover rates. It highlights the need for managerial strategies that empower employees, promote autonomy, and foster a supportive work environment.

Group Descriptive Statistics for the Variables and Interpretation

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables in the Study Grouped by Gender

Variable	*Gender*	*N*	*Mean*	*Sample Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error Mean*
VAR00005	Male	70	2.9857	3.0748	1.25678	0.15021
	Female	37	3.2432		1.16441	0.19143
VAR00006	Male	70	3.8857	3.8224	1.02918	0.12301
	Female	37	3.7027		1.17532	0.19322
VAR00007	Male	70	4.0714	3.9065	1.04009	0.12431
	Female	37	3.5946		1.14162	0.18768
VAR00008	Male	70	4.1429	3.972	0.87287	0.10433
	Female	37	3.6486		0.97799	0.16078
VAR00009	Male	70	3.7571	3.5514	1.09592	0.13099
	Female	37	3.1622		1.09325	0.17973
VAR00010	Male	70	3.9143	3.7383	0.98897	0.1182
	Female	37	3.4054		1.06613	0.17527
VAR00011	Male	70	3.6857	3.4953	1.16149	0.13883
	Female	37	3.1351		1.10961	0.18242
VAR00012	Male	70	3.8143	3.7103	1.09403	0.13076
	Female	37	3.5135		1.21613	0.19993
VAR00013	Male	70	3.9143	3.785	0.9742	0.11644
	Female	37	3.5405		1.19244	0.19604
VAR00014	Male	70	4	3.82	0.978	0.117
	Female	37	3.49		1.193	0.196
VAR00015	Male	70	3.86	3.63	0.889	0.106
	Female	37	3.19		1.221	0.201
VAR00016	Male	70	3.96	3.68	0.955	0.114
	Female	37	3.16		1.143	0.188
VAR00017	Male	70	3.74	3.59	1.045	0.125
	Female	37	3.3		1.199	0.197

From Table 5, we conclude that:

- In general, males tend to have slightly higher means in most variables than females, indicating they perceive the impacts of micromanagement more strongly.

- Females report lower means, suggesting a slightly less intense perception of the effects of micromanagement.

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- The standard deviations are relatively similar between genders, indicating a comparable response variability.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables in the Study Grouped By Sector

	Sector	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error Mean*
VAR00005	Private	77	2.961	1.20789	0.13765
	Government	28	3.2857	1.24297	0.2349
VAR00006	Private	77	3.8052	1.11259	0.12679
	Government	28	3.8214	1.0203	0.19282
VAR00007	Private	77	3.8052	1.15894	0.13207
	Government	28	4.1071	0.87514	0.16539
VAR00008	Private	77	3.9351	0.97788	0.11144
	Government	28	4	0.8165	0.1543
VAR00009	Private	77	3.5195	1.17664	0.13409
	Government	28	3.5714	0.99735	0.18848
VAR00010	Private	77	3.6753	1.09354	0.12462
	Government	28	3.8571	0.89087	0.16836
VAR00011	Private	77	3.3766	1.24646	0.14205
	Government	28	3.7857	0.91721	0.17334
VAR00012	Private	77	3.6104	1.21564	0.13854
	Government	28	3.9286	0.89974	0.17003
VAR00013	Private	77	3.6883	1.15005	0.13106
	Government	28	4	0.7698	0.14548
VAR00014	Private	77	3.79	1.151	0.131
	Government	28	3.86	0.891	0.168
VAR00015	Private	77	3.56	1.082	0.123
	Government	28	3.75	1.005	0.19
VAR00016	Private	77	3.61	1.126	0.128
	Government	28	3.79	0.957	0.181
VAR00017	Private	77	3.68	1.141	0.13
	Government	28	3.32	1.02	0.193

From Table 6, we conclude that:

- Government employees generally report higher means in most variables than private sector employees, suggesting a more robust perception of micromanagement's impacts.

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- The differences between sectors are noticeable but not extremely large, indicating that micromanagement is perceived as an issue across both sectors, albeit slightly more in the government sector.

- Standard deviations indicate a similar spread of responses within each sector.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables in the Study Grouped by Age

		Age				
		from 20- less than 30 year	from 30- less than 40 year	from 40- less than 50 year	from 50- less than 60 year	more than 60 year
VAR00005	Frequency	10	30	25	26	16
	Percent	9.3	28.0	23.4	24.3	15.0
VAR00006	Frequency	4	10	19	42	32
	Percent	3.7	9.3	17.8	39.3	29.9
VAR00007	Frequency	3	13	12	42	37
	Percent	2.8	12.1	11.2	39.3	34.6
VAR00008	Frequency	2	7	15	51	32
	Percent	1.9	6.5	14	47.7	29.9
VAR00009	Frequency	3	22	18	41	23
	Percent	2.8	20.6	16.8	38.3	21.5
VAR00010	Frequency	3	14	15	51	24
	Percent	2.8	13.1	14	47.7	22.4
VAR00011	Frequency	4	23	20	36	24
	Percent	3.7	21.5	18.7	33.6	22.4
VAR00012	Frequency	5	15	14	45	28
	Percent	4.7	14.0	13.1	42.1	26.2
VAR00013	Frequency	4	9	23	41	30
	Percent	3.7	8.4	21.5	38.3	28.0
VAR00014	Frequency	4	12	13	48	30
	Percent	3.7	11.2	12.1	44.9	28
VAR00015	Frequency	4	12	27	41	23
	Percent	3.7	11.2	25.2	38.3	21.5
VAR00016	Frequency	3	15	22	40	27
	Percent	2.8	14	20.6	37.4	25.2
VAR00017	Frequency	2	20	25	33	27
	Percent	1.9	18.7	23.4	30.8	25.2

From Table 7, we conclude that:

- VAR00005 (Supervisor Intervention): The 30-40 age group has the highest frequency, suggesting that individuals in this group perceive more supervisor intervention. The perception decreases slightly in older age groups.

- VAR00006 (Stress at Work): The 50-60 age group reports the highest stress levels due to micromanagement, followed by the >60 age group. The 20-30 age group reports the lowest stress levels.

- VAR00007 (Restriction of Freedom and Creativity): The 50-60 age group feels the most restricted in their freedom and creativity due to micromanagement, followed by the >60 age group.

- VAR00008 (Hindrance in Decision-Making): The 50-60 age group reports the highest hindrance in decision-making ability, followed by the >60 age group.

- VAR00009 (Work Quality): The 50-60 age group feels that micromanagement negatively affects their work quality the most, followed by the 30-40 age group.

- VAR00010 (Flexibility in Task Execution): The 50-60 age group reports the highest reduction in flexibility in task execution, followed by the 40-50 age group.

- VAR00011 (Ability to Learn and Grow): The 30-40 age group reports the highest frequency, indicating they feel most hindered in their ability to learn and grow.

- VAR00012 (Workflow Efficiency): The 50-60 age group reports the highest restriction in workflow efficiency, followed by the 30-40 age group.

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- VAR00013 (Job Satisfaction Levels): The 50-60 age group reports the highest reduction in job satisfaction levels, followed by the >60 age group.

- VAR00014 (Stress or Anxiety): The 50-60 age group reports the highest levels of stress or anxiety due to micromanagement, followed by the >60 age group.

- VAR00015 (Collaboration with Colleagues): The 40-50 age group reports the highest negative impact on their ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues, followed by the 50-60 age group.

- VAR00016 (Overall Productivity): The 50-60 age group reports the highest negative impact on overall productivity, followed by the 40-50 age group.

- VAR00017 (Considering Leaving Job): The 40-50 age group has the highest frequency, suggesting they are most likely to consider leaving their job due to micromanagement, followed by the 50-60 age group.

This detailed analysis shows the perception of micromanagement's impact across different age groups, highlighting that older age groups (mainly 50-60) tend to report more negative impacts.

Hypothesis (H01, H02, And H03) Test

For H01, the p-value is 0.304 (Table 8), more significant than the standard significance level of 0.05. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis, which implies that there is no significant difference in the presence of micromanagement when grouped according to gender. This implies that gender has no significant influence on a person's opinion of the presence of micromanagement in their work.

Table 8. Independent Samples Test - T-test for H01

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
VAR00005	Equal variances assumed	.006	.939	-1.034	105	.304	-.25753	.24917	-.75159	.23653
	Equal variances are not assumed.			-1.058	78.463	.293	-.25753	.24333	-.74192	.22686

For H02, since the p-value is 0.230 (Table 9), which is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This implies no statistically significant difference in micromanagement in a person's work between private and government sector employees. This implies

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that the sector has no significant influence on a person's opinion of the presence of micromanagement in their work.

Table 9. Independent Samples Test - T-test for H02

SECTOR	*Levene's Test for Equality of Variances*			*t-test for Equality of Means*						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
VAR	Equal variances assumed	0.056	0.813	-1.209	103	0.230	-0.32468	0.26861	-0.8574	0.20805
5	Equal variances are not assumed.			-1.193	46.768	0.239	-0.32468	0.27226	-0.87246	0.22311

For H03, the p-value is 0.304, as shown in Table 10, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Thus, we do not have enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that age has no significant influence on a person's opinion of the presence of micromanagement in their work.

Table 10. T-test for H02

		VAR00005
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.304

Pearson correlation and Hypothesis (H04, H05 …… H015) test

We used the Pearson correlation test to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. It is represented by the Pearson correlation coefficient (r), which ranges from -1 to +1. Table 11 shows the result of the Pearson correlation test between variables.

Since all correlation coefficients for all variables are less than 0.30, which indicates that there is a weak positive correlation, and all alpha values for all variables (from variables 6 to 17) are less than 0.05, that means that we reject the null hypothesis, which also indicates that there is a statistically significant correlation at the 0.05 significance level between the presence of micromanagement and various factors like stress, creativity, job satisfaction, productivity, and the intention to leave the job.

Table 11. Pearson Correlation

Correlations

	VAR00006	VAR00007	VAR00008	VAR00009	VAR00010	VAR00011	VAR00012	VAR00013	VAR00014	VAR00015	VAR00016	VAR00017
VAR00005 Pearson Correlation	.267	.251	.281	.305	.193	.224	.218	.294	.238	0.169	.223	0.168
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.009	0.003	0.001	0.046	0.020	0.024	0.002	0.014	0.109	0.021	0.085
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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This results indicates that all hypotheses from hypotheses 4 to 15 is true and there is positive but weak correlation between micromanagement and stress levels among employees in the Saudi labor market, restriction of freedom of work and creativity among employees in the Saudi labor market, ability to make decisions independently among employees in the Saudi labor market, quality of work among employees in the Saudi labor market, flexibility in task execution among employees in the Saudi labor market, ability to learn and grow among employees in the Saudi labor market, restriction and slows down the workflow among employees in the Saudi labor market, job satisfaction among employees in the Saudi labor market, stress or anxiety among employees in the Saudi labor market, ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues among employees in the Saudi labor market, overall productivity among employees in the Saudi labor market, and considering leaving job among employees in the Saudi labor market.

The analysis of micromanagement in the Saudi labor market reveals several critical insights. The study confirms that micromanagement is generally perceived negatively by employees, leading to increased stress, reduced job satisfaction, hindered creativity, and higher turnover rates. These findings align with previous research by Ivy (2014) and Blackney (2013), which highlighted the adverse effects of excessive control and supervision on employee morale and performance.

The demographic analysis shows that micromanagement's impact varies across different groups. For instance, employees in the 30-40 age group reported higher levels of supervisor intervention, while those in the 50-60 age group experienced the most significant stress and job dissatisfaction due to micromanagement. These differences underscore the importance of considering demographic factors when developing management strategies.

Furthermore, the study's findings on the negative impacts of micromanagement on productivity, trust, and teamwork align with the results of Kamarudin et al. (2023) and Caise et al. (2023). The analysis suggests that micromanagement undermines essential components of a healthy work environment, such as autonomy, trust, and collaborative spirit, which are crucial for innovation and long-term success.

The discussion also highlights Saudi Arabia's cultural context, where traditional hierarchical structures might exacerbate tendencies toward micromanagement. The country's unique socio-economic environment, characterized by rapid development and economic diversification, necessitates a shift towards more empowering and flexible leadership styles.

In addressing the gaps in the literature, the author emphasizes the need for longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term effects of micromanagement. There is also a call for more sector-specific research to tailor interventions that consider the unique dynamics of different industries. Additionally, future research should explore effective strategies to mitigate micromanagement, such as leadership training programs that promote trust and delegation.

Conclusions

This study aimed to evaluate employees' perceptions of micromanagement in the Saudi labor market and their supervisors' implementation of micromanagement. This study makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by offering context-specific insights and addressing gaps related to cultural context, sector-specific dynamics, and demographic analysis. This research lays the foundation for future studies and interventions aimed at reducing the negative effects of micromanagement and improving organizational health and employee well-being.

Data were gathered from 107 participants using a survey methodology. This study formulates 15 hypotheses related to the relationship between gender, age, and sector and the effect of micromanagement. Also, it formulates hypotheses for the effects of micromanagement on various factors like stress, creativity, job satisfaction, productivity, and the intention to leave the job.

The results show that employees exhibit a moderately neutral stance regarding micromanagement. This suggests a varied experience among employees: while some encounter high levels of intervention, others

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do not, resulting in a neutral average overall. The findings suggest that micromanagement practices in the Saudi labor market are generally perceived negatively by employees, leading to stress, reduced job satisfaction, hindered creativity, and potentially higher turnover rates. It highlights the need for managerial strategies that empower employees, promote autonomy, and foster a supportive work environment.

The results also show that gender, sector, and age have no significant influence on a person's opinion of the presence of micromanagement in their work.

The 30-40 age group has the highest frequency, suggesting that individuals in this group perceive more supervisor intervention. The perception decreases slightly in older age groups.

This results indicates that all hypotheses from hypotheses 4 to 15 is true and there is positive but weak correlation between micromanagement and stress levels among employees in the Saudi labor market, restriction of freedom of work and creativity among employees in the Saudi labor market, ability to make decisions independently among employees in the Saudi labor market, quality of work among employees in the Saudi labor market, flexibility in task execution among employees in the Saudi labor market, ability to learn and grow among employees in the Saudi labor market, restriction and slows down the workflow among employees in the Saudi labor market, job satisfaction among employees in the Saudi labor market, stress or anxiety among employees in the Saudi labor market, ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues among employees in the Saudi labor market, overall productivity among employees in the Saudi labor market, and considering leaving job among employees in the Saudi labor market.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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