
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Work Environment and Life Satisfaction among Municipal Cleaning Workers in Jordan: A Qualitative Study

Suha Abdulkareem Mohammad Tohal

Researcher, Educational and Psychological Faculty, Amman Arab University, Amman, Jordan

Corresponding Author: Suha Abdulkareem Mohammad Tohal, **E-mail:** s.tahal@aau.edu.jo

| ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the professional environment and its impact on life satisfaction among sanitation workers in Jordan. A qualitative approach was used on a sample of 15 sanitation workers. Additionally, two focus group discussions were held, each containing 10 workers. The sample was selected purposively. The results indicated the presence of challenges preventing the provision of a safe work environment, such as administrative and organizational obstacles represented by the absence of social protection in social security and health insurance, lack of access to official holidays and leaves, discrimination and randomness in the distribution of tasks, and poor organization of daily and overtime working hours. Among the most prominent economic challenges were the absence of financial rewards and incentives, and the lack of financial stability due to the nature of daily wage contracts (Miyawama) for sanitation workers. Social challenges also appeared, such as negative societal treatment and exposure to various forms of violence—economic, psychological, verbal, physical, and sexual—in the absence of complaint and reporting mechanisms. The results also showed deficiencies in the application of health and safety standards, such as conducting periodic medical examinations for workers, and the absence of necessary procedures to deal with accidents and injuries. Among the most important recommendations were enhancing societal respect for sanitation workers through media campaigns and social initiatives, and conducting further studies related to sanitation workers in Jordan.

| KEYWORDS

Professional environment, life satisfaction, sanitation workers

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 January 2026

PUBLISHED: 17 January 2026

DOI: [10.32996/ijmer.2026.5.1.1](https://doi.org/10.32996/ijmer.2026.5.1.1)

Introduction

The human element is considered one of the pillars of work institutions that must be preserved and developed to achieve organizational efficiency and effectiveness and improve individual performance. This requires treating them not just as a resource, but as human beings with multiple psychological needs. This includes understanding the positive emotional reactions of the human element generated as a result of experiences related to the work environment and their impact on life satisfaction. This is considered a key to achievement and progress in work. Life satisfaction constitutes one of the most important indicators of the general quality of life for individuals, as it relates to their comprehensive evaluation of the conditions in which they live and the extent to which their personal, economic, and social needs are met. This indicator also reflects the level of happiness and well-being felt by the individual and is considered a major factor in achieving psychological and social stability. Since caring for workers is a priority in international organizations, the worker has become the main axis in the success or failure of any institution, and improving the professional environment has become an important requirement for development and sustainability (International Labour Organization, 2024).

In Jordan, the category of sanitation workers (Watan Workers) plays a fundamental role in maintaining public cleanliness and a healthy environment in communities. Despite the importance of this category and its vital role in protecting citizen health from

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environmental pollution by purifying and cleaning their surroundings from accumulated waste, they often face significant challenges related to economic, social, and professional conditions. These tasks are demanding and strenuous, both physically and psychologically, which negatively affects levels of professional satisfaction specifically, and life satisfaction in general (Bin Shu'ayla and Brik, 2023). The professional environment is considered one of the important indicators and signs for measuring the suitability of working conditions for the worker, in terms of their aspirations, desires, and capabilities, the psychological state of the worker, the sense of belonging to the institution and the environment in which they work, and the feeling of stability and job security, as well as satisfaction with work and life (Banat et al, 2020).

The International Labour Organization (2024) called for efforts to improve the professional environment and quality of work for workers, as the success of any institution depends on the efficiency of human forces, their desire to work, and their feeling of comfort from health, psychological, economic, and social perspectives. Diener (2000) believes that among the factors for an individual's feeling of life satisfaction are health and economic factors, successful and good social relationships, and self-acceptance, as well as acceptance of others. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the impact of the professional environment on life satisfaction for sanitation workers in Jordan.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the obstacles and challenges that prevent the provision of decent work environments for sanitation workers.
- To identify the nature of occupational hazards faced by sanitation workers at work sites.
- To determine the extent of life satisfaction among sanitation workers in Jordan.

Problem of the Study

Numerous scientific trends, as reported by Phoenix Center (2023), have addressed workers in the informal sector, including economic and environmental approaches. The phenomenon has also been studied from anthropological, social, human rights, and legal perspectives. The majority of these studies highlighted that workers in the informal labor sector are the most exposed to violations and infringement of their basic human rights, and are the workers most lacking in social protection systems, such as the absence of social security and health insurance systems, making this a global phenomenon.

Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals have linked economic growth with decent work, explicitly indicating that enhancing economic growth cannot happen without providing decent work standards within conditions that protect basic workers' rights. Consequently, decent work is considered the path to creating sustainable job opportunities that lead to reducing high unemployment rates and improving the economic and social conditions of workers. Job opportunities created by the government do not contribute to treating the unemployment problem if they do not meet decent work standards for all categories of workers (International Labour Organization, 2020).

The Jordanian Ministry of Labor classified the profession of sanitation workers as hazardous professions that lead to damage to the worker's health or life due to dangerous working conditions, such as repetitive heavy physical activities like pulling, carrying, lifting, and pushing, poor body postures like bending, and walking on slopes. It is also characterized by low wages, where wages for workers in primary professions range from (150-300) Dinars (Ministry of Labor, 2020). The profession of sanitation worker is considered unattractive to Jordanian labor, given the stagnation in the percentage of newly created job opportunities. Employment in waste management, water supply, and sewage activities accounted for (0.4%) from 2019-2023, compared to other economic activities where an increase in created job opportunities was observed during these years (Ministry of Labor, 2023).

Although the job of waste collection is one of the economic activities that provides job opportunities for Jordanians at multiples of what it provides for non-Jordanians, there is a gap between supply and demand for the job of waste collection and management among Jordanian workers (Ministry of Labor, 2019). Recent statistics indicated that job satisfaction plays a crucial role in determining employees' intention to stay in their jobs or seek to change them. According to a survey conducted by Bankrate in 2023, 48% of participants reported that they plan to look for a new job within the next twelve months, while 31% plan to move to different fields of work. These figures indicate that more than three-quarters of employees are considering changing their jobs, reflecting a direct impact of job satisfaction on their career decisions (Bankrate, 2023).

Therefore, the problem of the study came to identify the professional environment for sanitation workers in Jordan and its impact on life satisfaction for sanitation workers in Jordan.

Questions of the Study

1. What are the obstacles and challenges preventing the provision of decent work environments for sanitation workers?

2. What is the nature of the occupational hazards faced by sanitation workers at work sites?
3. What is the extent of life satisfaction among sanitation workers in Jordan?

Significance of the Study

The vision of the International Labour Office's 2030 program is represented in "...a world of full respect for human rights, human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality, and non-discrimination; and 'empowering people' alongside 'leaving no one behind' means there is a need to create greater job opportunities with actual enjoyment of rights, application of standards, equal opportunities, and provision of a decent work environment" (International Labour Office, 2019). Consequently, the importance of the study appears in the subject of the professional environment and its impact on life satisfaction for sanitation workers in Jordan, and determining how the professional environment—including wages, working conditions, and job stability—affects the level of sanitation workers' satisfaction with their lives in general.

This helps enhance societal and political understanding of these challenges and motivates the improvement of their conditions. This study may also contribute to adding new and modern information about variables such as life satisfaction and the professional environment, providing interested parties with cognitive additions through theoretical literature and previous studies related to the study variables, methodology, and scales used. This is especially relevant given the scarcity of official studies for this category, as the last official study published by the Ministry of Labor was in 2010, titled "Analytical Study on the Situation of Employed Persons through Employment and Labor Directorates".

Study Terminology

Professional Environment

A set of physical, organizational, and social conditions in which individuals interact while performing their work. It includes factors such as job security, nature of tasks, wage levels, work relationships, and the physical and psychological work environment (Herzberg, 1968).

Life Satisfaction

The individual's comprehensive personal evaluation of the quality of their life, based on the extent to which they achieve their aspirations and goals. It is linked to the individual's feeling of well-being and happiness, and this evaluation includes aspects such as psychological and physical health, social relationships, and economic status (Diener, et al, 1985).

Sanitation Worker (Watan Worker)

The worker who cleans streets, sidewalks, parks, and public squares, and collects garbage and waste from homes and buildings (Social Security Corporation, 2024).

Previous Studies

In a study conducted by Park et al. (2020) aiming to analyze injuries according to job characteristics and functions, a quantitative approach was used on a sample of 150 street cleaners in Korea. The study results indicated that participants most susceptible to injury were those with an education lower than middle school. Job characteristics showed that most participants had less than five years of experience, and most worked on temporary or daily contracts. The most common reason for exposure to injuries, according to participants' statements, was exhaustion, and the area most exposed to injury was the lower back. The results also indicated that injuries among cleaners are related to education level, work experience, number of leave days, and work intensity.

The study by Amer and Gharib (2020) indicated the identification of the impact of social support on the level of job satisfaction among cleaners in the municipalities of (Djelfa, Gabes, Saint-Gilles) belonging respectively to Algeria, Tunisia, and Belgium. The study used the quantitative approach, and the study sample consisted of (60) cleaners. The results reached a difference in levels of social support in its forms (material, emotional, affective, informational, appreciative, and social integration) between the three municipalities. The municipality of Saint-Gilles (Belgium) was the highest in the level of social support, and this is due to the nature of the social culture there, which highlights respect and appreciation for cleaners and the importance of the role they play in society. The results also confirmed the existence of a positive correlation between the level of social support and job satisfaction, which reflects positively on their integration into work and their ability to face psychological and social pressures. This confirms the pivotal role played by cultural and social factors in improving the conditions of this professional category. Fakhri's study (2019) aimed to study the psychological variables associated with the profession of waste collection and sorting in light of quality of life. The study used the descriptive correlational approach on (60) waste collectors in Manshiyat Naser. The study results indicated that waste collectors suffer from low social status and quality of life, low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with life, and vulnerability due to

professional conditions, lack of professional adjustment, and a negative outlook on the future. The results showed a statistically significant positive correlation between psychological variables and quality of life among cleaners. The study explained this relationship by stating that improving the psychological state of workers contributes directly to improving the level of their perception and evaluation of their quality of life and enhances their feelings of satisfaction and self-confidence. The study by Melkamu et al. (2023) aimed to determine the prevalence of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) and potential associated factors among cleaners and solid waste collectors in Gondar City, Ethiopia. The study used a cross-sectional study design. Data collection tools were a questionnaire to collect data related to muscle pain, in addition to personal interviews to collect demographic and professional information, and job satisfaction. The sample included 422 female cleaners. Among the most important results was that the prevalence rate of musculoskeletal disorders among participants was (73%), and (95%) of waste collectors did not feel satisfied with the work. Factors identified by the study associated with the risk of MSDs were age 35 and older, job dissatisfaction, and cleaning distances exceeding 2 km daily. A study was conducted by Miqdadi and Bani Khalid (2023) to investigate the impact of quality of work life on the performance of employees in Jordanian municipalities, using the descriptive analytical approach on a sample consisting of (504) employees in the municipalities of Irbid Governorate. The results showed that the level of both quality of work life and employee performance was average. It also showed a statistically significant positive effect for the dimensions of training and education, work environment and social relationships, leadership style, wages and financial benefits, and availability of promotion and development opportunities on employee performance, while no significant effect appeared for the dimensions of job security and participation in decision-making. The study recommended the necessity of enhancing the work environment and occupational safety and increasing employee participation in development plans.

Fatima (2023) conducted a study to measure the level of job satisfaction among employees in the Greater Jerash Municipality and ways to enhance it, using the descriptive analytical approach on a sample consisting of (75) male and female employees. The results showed that the level of job satisfaction was high with a mean of (4.22) and a standard deviation of (0.72), where the domain of satisfaction with teamwork performance came in the first rank, while the domain of satisfaction through the relationship with officials came in the last rank. The study recommended the importance of using modern technological means to enhance employees' connection to the municipality's goals, alongside adopting periodic questionnaires to monitor their satisfaction, motivating them financially, and improving administrative dealing methods with them.

What Distinguishes This Study from Previous Studies

A review of previous studies shows that most of them addressed the subject of job satisfaction and quality of life among different categories of employees in municipalities or cleaners in multiple countries, relying primarily on quantitative approaches (e.g., Park et al., 2020; Amer and Gharib, 2020; Fakhri, 2019; Melkamu et al., 2023; Miqdadi and Bani Khalid, 2023; Zurayqat, 2023). Those studies focused on measuring levels of job satisfaction, identifying factors associated with it, or revealing its implications for performance and quality of life using questionnaires and statistical indicators. However, this study is unique in several aspects, distinguishing it from previous studies, most notably:

Subject

It is not limited to studying job satisfaction or performance but delves into the professional environment with its various dimensions (administrative and organizational, economic, social, and health) and its relationship to life satisfaction in its holistic concept, which is a field not addressed by previous studies in the Jordanian context specifically.

Target Group

Unlike most previous studies that dealt with municipality employees in general or cleaners in multiple countries, this study focused on sanitation workers (Watan Workers) in Jordan, a category often marginalized and exposed to complex professional, social, economic, and psychological challenges, making the study shed light on a segment that has rarely received academic research attention.

Methodology

This study was distinguished by using the qualitative approach through Focus Groups, which allowed for a deep understanding of the experiences of sanitation workers and a qualitative interpretation of the challenges they face, unlike previous studies that relied mainly on quantitative questionnaires.

Explored Dimensions

The study revealed qualitative issues that did not appear in previous studies, such as violence in its various forms, the absence of complaint mechanisms, a deficiency in applying health and safety standards, and the psychological and social impact on family and professional life. These are topics not treated integrally by previous studies.

Scientific and Practical Addition

This study offers recommendations that go beyond institutional aspects to include media campaigns and social initiatives to enhance the status of sanitation workers in society, in addition to calling for more studies on this category, a dimension not addressed by previous studies, which focused mostly on the internal work environment.

Theoretical Framework

The work environment of cleaners (Sanitation Workers) is considered one of the arduous professional environments characterized by multiple physical, psychological, and social challenges. According to statistics from the Greater Amman Municipality (2020), the average per capita waste production for the year (2020) is approximately (0.28) tons/year, equivalent to (280) kilograms/year. Sanitation workers play a fundamental role in cleaning and collecting waste from the city, neighborhood, street, public parks, and sidewalks, and collecting garbage and waste from homes and buildings, the accumulation of which causes environmental pollution, the spread of diseases, and the deterioration of citizen health. With the increasing population in cities and neighborhoods, and changes in lifestyle resulting in a variety of solid waste types being collected (such as food residues, cleaning materials, glass, electronics, etc.) and the resulting toxic chemicals collected manually, in addition to body postures like bending, walking on slopes, and working in difficult weather conditions—hot in summer and cold in winter—they are exposed to physical diseases such as musculoskeletal diseases, coughing, and asthma. Accordingly, the profession of sanitation worker is classified under the Jordanian Standard Classification as one of the hazardous primary professions (Social Security Corporation, 2024).

Sanitation workers suffer from numerous problems, as indicated by Al-Muqannin (2021) in his study in Ashmoun, Menoufia, such as low educational level, and low wage levels that do not match life requirements like providing suitable housing, purchasing basic necessities for them and their families, and participating in various social activities. They are among the most deprived work groups, and they suffer from social stigma represented by negative behaviors such as littering in the wrong places, comments, and condescending looks that suggest belittlement. This was confirmed by the study of Mamah and Boukmish (2022), stating that (81%) of cleaners in Algeria believe they would be rejected if they proposed to a girl. Accordingly, since the year 2000, the Greater Amman Municipality chose the name "Watan Workers" (Workers of the Homeland) for those working in this profession as a synonym for (cleaner, waste collector, garbage collector); to enhance the positive outlook towards them, due to their exposure to many physical, economic, and social problems, in addition to psychological problems such as fear of diseases or infection, fear of the future, and poor social adjustment represented by their inability to share occasions with family and neighbors, discomfort at work, lack of happiness, and lack of life satisfaction (Jordan Labor Watch, 2019).

The concept of life satisfaction is one of the concepts of positive psychology. Concepts of life satisfaction have varied; some consider it a general feeling about life, and others define fields and aspects of life about which the individual feels satisfied. Al-Zawahira (2021) defined it as the individual's evaluation of the quality of life they live according to their value system, and this evaluation depends on comparing their life circumstances to the best standard they believe is appropriate for them. Al-Maliki (2011) adds that life satisfaction has a positive effect that drives the individual towards continuity and productivity and raises the level of ambition and future aspirations; a person satisfied with their life enjoys good health and is capable of psychological and social adaptation.

Life satisfaction counts in several aspects, including social satisfaction through adapting to others and building positive relationships; economic satisfaction through achieving an income that meets basic and recreational needs; and professional satisfaction in terms of the work environment and its conditions, such as working hours, incentives, and provision of health and safety standards. It also includes health and psychological satisfaction, where the individual feels physical and mental comfort through taking care of their health and enjoying the quality of life, such as participating in recreational activities (Abu Halawah, Al-Hudaybi, 2020). Maslow's theory indicates that achieving life satisfaction—for the sanitation worker—is represented in the gradual satisfaction of their lower needs: food, housing, security, feeling of belonging to work and society, independence, and self-esteem, up to higher needs like self-actualization. Achieving higher needs depends on external factors such as family, society, economic aspects, and the professional environment that provides them with basic needs and achieve their ambitions. The professional environment is considered all conditions and factors surrounding the work that affect behavior, opinions, and attitudes towards work, management, and the group they work with. These include physical factors (cold or extreme heat, noise, chemical exposure), organizational factors (wages, workload, leaves, supervision style, participation in decision-making, suitable work tools, training courses, and conflict between workers and management), social factors (such as marginalization and weak social status whether from their community or their institutions), and psychological factors, which are the outcome of the previous factors leading to psychological pressures such as anxiety, tension, and depression (Bin Marabit, 2023). Since the establishment of the International Labour Organization, (190) conventions and (204) recommendations have been issued to improve the conditions and circumstances of the professional work environment to achieve decent work goals; to reduce accidents and diseases, and to protect workers from unsuitable professional environments. Decent work is considered productive work that guarantees freedom, equity, security, and achieves gender equality, such as providing work rights like fair wages, non-discrimination, job stability, a safe and

healthy work environment, and social protection (International Labour Organization, 2022). Despite what the ILO called for, which aligns with Jordanian Labor Law to achieve decent work (productive work) under good professional conditions, cleaners work informally, which represents a major challenge. This means they work without guarantees or legal rights, do not receive social protection contributions or appropriate wages, and do not obtain paid annual sick leave. This type of work increases the fragility of their economic and social situation, making them vulnerable to exploitation and job insecurity (Jordan Labor Watch, 2024a). The study by Banat et al. (2021) indicated a weakness in Jordan regarding attention to decent work dimensions represented by (sufficient wage and availability of dialogue) compared to countries like Bahrain, Egypt, Nigeria, and China. The existence of problems in the professional environment causes a defect in commitment and discipline, reduces worker motivation, leads to individual non-acceptance of the profession, reduces their level of satisfaction with their profession, causes alienation of the rest of society members from those jobs, and feelings of anxiety about the future.

Methodology

The study used the Descriptive Analytical (Qualitative) approach on the study population consisting of sanitation workers in Amman Governorate, and the sample was selected randomly. The study tool is interviews to collect qualitative data. The questions were semi-structured to conduct several in-depth personal interviews with the sample members. Interviews were conducted individually at the workplace of the study population, and the interview duration ranged from 30-60 minutes. The number of interviews was (10). A total of two focus groups were held, each session containing (10) sanitation workers, bringing the final number of the qualitative study sample to (30) sanitation workers, who were selected via accessible purposive sampling. To verify the validity of the tool and its comprehensiveness for all elements required and the clarity of its vocabulary and items, the form was presented, attached with the concepts, objectives, and questions of the study to a group of specialized arbitrators at the University of Islamic Sciences, where necessary modifications, deletions, and additions were made in light of the submitted proposals.

Construct Validity

This was done by applying the scale to an exploratory sample from within the study population but outside its sample, consisting of (5) sanitation workers. This helped in testing the unstructured questions, ensuring that questions cover all required dimensions and do not contain any bias or ambiguity, and evaluating the adequacy of time to perform the interviews.

Discussion of Study Results and Recommendations

This part presents the results of the in-depth interviews and focus groups. The results were as follows:

First: Obstacles and challenges preventing the provision of decent work environments for sanitation workers in Jordan.

Sanitation workers in Jordan face many obstacles in the work environment, distributed across several axes:

A- Administrative and Organizational Obstacles

All respondents indicated the absence of fair policies regarding official holidays and leaves (Fridays, Eids, annual, and sick leave) for sanitation workers. The answers of all respondents agreed on the difficulty of obtaining leaves on Fridays, Eids, and annually. One respondent noted: "We don't take vacations, even sick leave, and sometimes if we refuse to work, they deduct three days from the salary". Another respondent adds: "Even on Eids, holiday is forbidden even though it is an official holiday". Respondents pointed out that they are not compensated with the wage stipulated in the Labor Law regarding work during official holidays, where the wage varies according to the supervisor. One of them noted: "There is no overtime in winter; we work sometimes until one in the morning". The results also show the existence of discriminatory procedures by supervisors in terms of treatment or distribution of tasks. The results showed the randomness and moodiness of supervisors during work, which led to the violation of workers' rights and a feeling of discrimination and exploitation. One respondent says, "The supervisor gives me leave according to his mood; sometimes he refuses without reason." All respondents indicated that task distribution depends only on "Wasta" (connections/favoritism), which affects professional justice among workers. Tasks are not linked to years of work, age, or promotion to work in offices or on cleaning trucks, for example. This was confirmed by one respondent: "There is no development; it all requires Wasta and acquaintances." Another confirmed: "The one who has Wasta is treated with discrimination, takes fewer tasks, and gets leaves and holidays."

Among the challenges pointed out by respondents was the absence of knowledge of their rights regarding reading signed contracts, and the lack of any neutral entity to handle workers' problems with supervisors, so the judge and the executioner became the same person. One of them says: "To whom shall I turn with a complaint?" Discrimination between Jordanian labor and Egyptian labor appears as one of the challenges pointed out by sanitation workers. One of them says: "Egyptian workers have privileges; they work washing cars and in painting workshops during working hours. In contrast, we do their work; I don't know the reason".

It also turned out that some sanitation workers are aware of their rights but do not have the ability to demand them, and despair of positive results when demanding. One respondent says: "I know what my rights are in the Amman Municipality, but my rights are digested; we will not benefit". The results showed poor organization of daily and overtime working hours, constituting a psychological, social, and physical burden on workers, affecting their satisfaction with work and life. One of them tells us: "This is the nature of the work. He might tell me to go to work in Sweileh, might tell me to go to work in Jiza, might tell me to work in Yarmouk or any area. We are under orders, not above orders". One shares saying: "There are evening workers, but the workers are not present, and we take their work". Another confirms: "At any moment, the supervisor speaks to me on the phone and tells me you are on the evening shift".

B- Economic Obstacles

The results indicated low wages for sanitation workers to cover basic needs, in addition to the need for some of them for daily transportation back and forth and a breakfast meal. One of them says, "The salary is not enough; we cannot meet the basic needs of the house." Another tells us: "Our salary is not enough; I spend 4 dinars daily on transportation, and breakfast and water are at my expense".

Respondents unanimously pointed out that no financial rewards or encouraging incentives are provided, whether when declaring a state of emergency in winter to clean manholes at night or during previous work in Corona. One of them noted saying: "When a state of emergency is declared, we stay in the street until late at night to clean manholes, and we do not take compensation".

C- Social Challenges

The results indicated the condescending view from society towards the profession through negative societal dealing with some sanitation workers, such as calling them by inappropriate terms like "Zbal" (Garbage Man) or deliberately throwing waste in non-designated places, marginalization, or belittlement by those around them like looks of disgust and negative comments, and refusal of marriage to them due to the nature of the work. This affected their psychological health, forming negative attitudes towards work and society. One respondent noted while crying, "Some people call us garbage men." Another adds: "Some people throw a cup of coffee on us from the vehicle, or call us by obscene terms; this work is all insult and frustration." Another added, "I was rejected for marriage because I am a sanitation worker". The majority of participants in the focus group discussions pointed to weak social relationships with family and relatives, either due to arduous working hours or due to feeling the condescending look from relatives. One of them indicates: "Because of long working hours, we cannot see relatives and friends." Another adds: "Sometimes I am ashamed to introduce myself as a sanitation worker; some of them do not like to mix with us". The results indicated that some sanitation workers are exposed to various and overlapping forms of violence and, in varying degrees, which exacerbates their daily suffering and affects their satisfaction with work and life. Among these is **Economic Violence**, represented by the appearance of Wasta in the professional environment as indicated previously, arbitrary dismissal, illegal deduction of salaries when absent on official holidays by deducting three days for one day's absence, unpaid overtime work, withholding information related to financial rights and privileges, and lack of clear channels to obtain dues. Remarkably, some workers indicated that some supervisors request a sum of money from the worker in exchange for granting him leave, and this is considered an abuse of power and illegal practice, increasing financial burdens on the worker, as well as weakening the worker's confidence in the employer. This is what one of them shared saying: "Some supervisors take money from workers to give them leave or to count sick leave".

The results revealed the exposure of some sanitation workers to other forms of violations, most notably **Psychological and Verbal Violence**. This violence is embodied in inequality and discrimination at work, and belittlement and insults, whether by some supervisors or members of society, affecting their psychological state and satisfaction with the work environment. One of them tells us, expressing the majority opinion: "Most of the time the supervisor screams at us". The results show the fear of the majority of sanitation workers of the presence of the supervisor during the interview with the researcher. It was clear either by changing statements, tension, and looking left and right, or accepting participation away from the workplace, which indicates an indecent work environment affecting the worker's psyche. One of them says: "If he finds me standing with you now, he might fire me from work; there is no job security". The matter was not limited to psychological violence only, but one interview showed the exposure of some workers to **Physical and Sexual Violence**. This was represented in physical assaults by supervisors, increasing their suffering. One respondent revealed saying: "Some of my colleagues were beaten by the supervisor". One respondent indicated exposure to assault of a sexual nature, such as gestures with finger movements, causing a flagrant violation of their dignity and human rights. One worker tells us: "Some supervisors might make a movement with the middle finger".

Second: The nature of occupational hazards faced by sanitation workers at work sites.

The right to occupational health and safety is considered one of the basic human rights, aiming to enhance the protection of workers and preserve their safety from accidents and injuries resulting from work, and prevent health damages resulting from

occupational hazards at work sites or connected to them. The results showed deficiencies in applying health and safety standards in several aspects, including a lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the majority of workers and its poor quality, such as gloves, masks, protective glasses, and suitable work clothes, to protect them from inhaling dust and dealing with contaminated and dangerous materials. One respondent points out, saying: "Gloves and work clothes, we get two per year, and this is not enough given the nature of the tasks." One says, expressing the majority of respondents: "I buy the gloves".

All respondents indicated the poor quality of the winter clothes provided. One says: "The clothes are light, do not protect us from cold and rainwater." Another adds, "Rain jacket, it is just a plastic rain cover".

Also, the majority of respondents indicated a lack of provision of basic cleaning equipment, such as brooms and cleaning buckets, which makes them either collect garbage with their hands in some cases or buy it at their personal expense. Thus, they become vulnerable to diseases due to direct and repeated contact with dirt, and an increased financial burden on them. One of them says: "They give us work equipment once at the beginning of our work, only once". The results also showed a shortage of labor, which increases pressure and severe hardship in work, considering the large area of regions that must be cleaned by sanitation workers. This affects their physical health, such as the appearance of disc diseases and their rapid infection with diseases. One respondent indicated: "I have 3-4 large areas that should be divided among 3 at least." Another adds: "The work area is large and I have chest asthma." Adding to the difficulty of tasks is the geographical nature of the mountainous city of Amman without the availability of means to alleviate burdens on workers in rugged or mountainous areas, such as carts or assisting equipment. One of them says, "My back hurts while I clean because the ground is not flat".

The results indicate weak awareness and training, where results showed that not all sanitation workers received training courses on how to deal with waste or face accidents to raise awareness of work environment risks. In this regard, one respondent shares: "I did not attend any course on occupational health and safety, and I was exposed to a traffic accident." One confirms saying: "We were not trained on anything, nor any kind of training from our first day of work". All respondents indicated the absence of preventive vaccinations since the beginning of work, which in turn reduces infection with diseases and allergies and prevents transmission of infection to the family. One respondent says: "At the beginning of work, we mostly get psoriasis allergy; of course, red pills spread in our bodies and white ones in the head. We should receive a vaccine at the beginning of work, but we do not get it".

The study results also showed the absence of necessary procedures to deal with injuries and accidents. Some workers indicated their fear of exposure to needle sticks or dealing with dangerous medical waste without receiving any instructions or tools to protect them, such as a first aid kit. One of them tells us about not being handed simple first aid tools, saying: "There is no first aid kit with the workers".

All participants in the focus group discussions indicated that no periodic examinations are conducted for early detection of any health effects related to work. The majority of respondents repeated their complaint about weak health insurance coverage for treating sanitation workers and their families. One respondent indicated: "There is insurance but it is weak, third category." Another tells us: "There are expensive medicines like asthma medicine, and they are not available with them; we buy the cheaper alternative which is not good". The results showed a disparity in recording work injuries, where some are recorded, and others are neglected. One respondent indicated: "I was exposed to an accident and was run over during work, but the supervisor refused to record it as a work injury, and I had to bear the expenses at my expense." Some indicated that the reason for not recording the work injury is fear of dismissal or the worker's fear of deducting part of the salary due to absence from work. One says: "Half the salary of (14) days was deducted due to the work injury".

The results also showed the presence of some occupational injuries, such as respiratory diseases like asthma, as a result of continuously inhaling dust without protective masks. One respondent tells us, "I got asthma because of the work." Another adds, "I got an allergy to dust".

Also, heavy physical burdens lead to problems in the spine, such as discs. One worker says, "I got a disc and underwent surgery." In addition to joint injuries resulting from long-standing and working in harsh climatic conditions, like extreme cold. One respondent says: "My joints hurt in winter while I work." Another adds: "I am now undergoing physical therapy".

In addition to traffic accidents that respondents are exposed to, one of them indicated that: "I was exposed to a major traffic accident". The failure to provide health and safety standards for sanitation workers makes many of them feel unappreciated or that their health problems are not cared for, which reflects negatively on their performance at work and their view of their job, and increases their daily, psychological, economic, and social suffering, affecting their life satisfaction.

Third: Life Satisfaction among Sanitation Workers in Jordan

There is an urgent need for sanitation workers to feel satisfied with life to achieve psychological reassurance, as it is an indicator of their sound psychological health and their ability to adapt to daily challenges. It also enhances their willingness to perform their professional and social duties with passion and effectiveness. The results indicated an almost complete absence of life satisfaction among sanitation workers, considering the lack of other job opportunities due to weak skills and educational level not exceeding high school. One worker says, "This is the available work; there is no alternative." The previous statement reflects a difficult reality where satisfaction depends on accepting the current situation due to the absence of alternatives, not due to satisfactory working conditions. However, the majority of sanitation workers suffer from a noticeable decrease in life satisfaction, in terms of professional satisfaction, social satisfaction, and psychological and future satisfaction, as follows:

Professional Satisfaction

The results showed that professional satisfaction among the majority of sanitation workers was very weak due to professional pressures and the low feeling among workers of comfort, achievement, belonging, and general satisfaction with their profession, such as satisfaction with wages, job stability, appreciation, respect, and development opportunities. One worker says, expressing the majority: "I am not satisfied with working as a sanitation worker". Another confirms: "If an alternative were found, I would leave this humiliating and frustrating work".

Social Satisfaction

The results indicate that social satisfaction for all workers was low, due to their low feelings of acceptance and integration within and outside the work environment, increasing psychological pressures that the worker may face in daily life, which negatively affected their satisfaction with work and consequently their satisfaction with life in general. One of them says, "People treat us as if we are less than them, and this makes me hate my job." One tells us about his lack of social satisfaction, saying: "I am not satisfied with my work nor my social life; we are not a tool to be exploited by whoever wishes".

Self-Satisfaction

The results indicate a noticeable decrease in the level of psychological satisfaction among cleaners. One respondent says: "If they give the wage of a sanitation worker profession a thousand dinars, I will not like the job". Another adds: "When you hear insults from people or the supervisor, what do you expect my psychology to be? I go home, I don't talk to anyone, and I don't want to return to work ever".

The results show fear of the future due to the absence of job stability and, consequently, increased psychological pressures on the sanitation worker. One of them says: "Daily wage workers, at any moment we could be fired, what do I do?". Fear of the future was also clear regarding the subject of public safety, where one indicated saying: "I am afraid of diseases or accidents and how they could affect my life and my family, and if I need treatment, can I bear its costs". The increase in anxiety related to the professional future among workers was accompanied by a rise in family life problems and a decrease in general life satisfaction, as indicated by the majority.

Conclusion and Recommendations

At a time when workers in the public cleaning sector—or what is known in Jordan as "Watan Workers"—are considered one of the main pillars for preserving community health and the environment, their practical reality does not reflect this important role. Field experiences and data from the current study highlight the magnitude of challenges and daily suffering faced by these workers, not only at the level of an unsafe and unhealthy work environment but also regarding the absence of fair legal and organizational policies, and their exposure to various economic, social, and psychological pressures that burden them.

Proceeding from the importance of shedding light on these problems, this study revealed manifestations of administrative dysfunction, failure to apply health and safety standards, institutional marginalization, in addition to weak societal appreciation. This means that they perform their work in conditions closer to "forced labor," where they are asked to give without guarantees, and without recognition of the value of their role or their basic needs as workers on the front lines of serving society. The results of the current study reveal a set of challenges and obstacles suffered by sanitation workers in Jordan, which prevent the provision of a safe and stimulating work environment. Foremost among them are administrative and organizational obstacles related to the absence of fair policies in granting leaves, poor organization of working hours, the absence of legal awareness of their rights, and discriminatory measures by supervisors. In addition to economic obstacles represented in low wages and the absence of incentives, rewards, and job stability.

The results also revealed a deficiency in applying occupational health and safety standards, increasing workers' exposure to the risk of occupational diseases and accidents, which increases their psychological, economic, physical, and social suffering.

The results indicated a decrease in the level of life satisfaction due to the feeling of marginalization and weak societal appreciation, and fear of the future due to lack of professional stability and technological development, which affects their professional performance and weakens their sense of belonging. The study results agree with the results of the Abu Halawah and Al-Hudaybi (2020) study regarding the importance of life satisfaction as a key element in enhancing the feeling of comfort and balance. They align with what Fakhri (2019) reached regarding the impact of administrative obstacles and weak supervision on the quality of the work environment. They are supported by the Amer and Gharib (2020) study, which indicated that low wages and lack of incentives are among the most prominent causes of weak professional satisfaction among cleaners.

Furthermore, the study by Park, Lee, & Lee (2020) confirmed that adherence to health and safety standards reduces occupational hazards, which is clearly reflected in the results of this study, which highlighted workers' exposure to health risks due to a lack of protective tools. Also, the study by Alie et al. (2023) showed that an unsafe work environment is associated with high rates of musculoskeletal disorders among cleaners, confirming the importance of improving the work environment to ensure their physical and psychological safety.

Recommendations

In light of the results reached by the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Including decent work indicators as defined by the International Labour Organization in the municipalities' procedures manual when employing or renewing contracts for sanitation workers. This ensures a more systematic commitment to health, safety, justice, and participation standards, and removes the issue from the moody scope of local supervision.
2. Designing periodic vocational rehabilitation and training programs that enable workers to acquire additional skills, such as maintenance, occupational safety, or first aid. This enhances their feeling of value, increases their chances of internal promotion, and contributes to building their capabilities for more stable professions in the future.
3. Including mandatory clauses in employment contracts that include providing group or individual psychological support sessions, at least once a month, to help workers face the effects of psychological pressures resulting from the inferior societal view and the nature of arduous tasks, in cooperation with specialized institutions such as the Institute for Family Health Care.
4. Enhancing societal respect for cleaners through media campaigns and community initiatives, confirming that they are partners in development and the cleanliness of the homeland. For example, launching a local initiative titled "Thank You, Watan Worker."
5. Providing collective rewards at the level of teams or neighborhoods that achieve high cleanliness or commitment standards. This enhances team spirit and belonging and rewards collective effort, instead of relying only on individual or discretionary incentives that may be subject to biases.
6. The necessity of establishing an independent oversight unit directly linked to a national oversight body, such as the Audit Bureau, concerned with receiving complaints from sanitation workers and verifying work environment violations and administrative transgressions. This is to provide protection and transparency in dealing with this fragile group, especially in light of the lack of trust between them and some direct supervisors.

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