



IMA's 2021
**KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
SALARY SURVEY**

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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IMA'S 2021 GLOBAL SALARY SURVEY

For many years, IMA® (Institute of Management Accountants) has conducted the very popular salary survey of its members around the world, enabling its members to compare their compensation to others, assess the value of education and certification, and more. This is the seventh year IMA conducted a single global salary survey, making global trends easier to track and enhancing regional comparison. This individual country report presents survey results for participants in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia only and compares compensation levels and job satisfaction across several demographic groups. The global and individual country reports are posted on IMA's Thought Leadership website at www.imanet.org/salary_survey.



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IMA's 2021 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Salary Survey

Each year, IMA® (Institute of Management Accountants) conducts a global salary survey of its members. This report summarizes and analyzes information gathered in the survey from respondents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Similar to the global report, this report summarizes information related to education, certification, and experience, and analyzes the effects these factors have on compensation. This report also provides comparisons to the results from the current year's global and Middle East/Africa/India (MEAI) region surveys as well as the prior year's survey. Key findings for KSA respondents in 2020 include:

- The median base salary and median total compensation were \$36,000 and \$38,000, respectively. This is higher compared to MEAI, where the median base salary and total compensation were \$25,000 and \$27,000, respectively.
- Holding the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification continues to have a positive impact on compensation and other factors related to employment. CMAs earn 93% higher median total compensation compared to those not holding the certification. In addition, 93% of those holding the CMA agreed that the certification gives them more confidence to perform their job at a high level, and 93% would recommend the certification to a friend.
- Job satisfaction remains steady, with 69% of respondents agreeing that they love their job. Those holding the CMA tend to be more satisfied with their compensation compared to non-CMAs (51% vs. 40%). Non-CMAs, however, tend to be more satisfied with their jobs compared to CMAs (72% vs. 66%).

HOW WE CONDUCTED THE SURVEY

In October 2020, survey invitations were sent to 1,243 IMA members in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The survey was completed by 104 members, an 8.4% response rate. For the purposes of the salary results, we considered only respondents who indicated that they were either full-time employees or self-employed and included salary information. One response was eliminated, leaving 103 usable responses.

Demographic Information

The highest percentage of respondents in the KSA are from three provinces: Riyadh, Eastern, and Makkah (see Table 1).¹ Select demographic information for all respondents in the KSA is presented in Table 2. Only 3% of the respondents from the KSA are women, which is much lower compared to MEAI (20%) and globally (44%). The average age of the respondents is 36.3, which is almost four years younger than the global average age.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY PROVINCE/REGION

Province	2020	2019
Riyadh	34%	54%
Eastern	29%	26%
Makkah	17%	18%
Other	19%	3%
Total	100%	100%

¹ The Eastern Province includes the major centers of Dammam, Dhahran, and Khobar; and Makkah includes the major centers of Makkah, Jeddah, Thuwal, and Bahrah.

All of the respondents hold at least a baccalaureate degree, with 31% holding advanced degrees (master's or doctoral). The highest percentage of respondents are in middle management (51%), followed by senior management (22%), lower management (15%), and top management (12%). The percentage of respondents holding the CMA in the current year was 52%, which is a significant increase over the previous year (30%).

Compensation

The mean and median total compensation by age group is presented in Table 3. For the current year, the median base salary and median total compensation for all participants in the KSA were \$36,000 and \$38,000, respectively.² This is higher compared to MEAI, where the median base salary was \$25,000 and the median total compensation was \$27,000. It is, however, lower than the global median base salary (\$60,000) and median total compensation (\$67,500).

Respondents ages 30 to 39 and those 50 and older had the lowest percentage of median additional compensation. For both these age groups, only 3% of median total compensation came from sources other than base salary. Participants ages 40 to 49 earned the highest percentage of median additional compensation (25%), followed by those ages 20 to 29 (22%).

Impact of COVID-19

Respondents in the KSA were asked if, and how, the pandemic impacted their compensation and job status. Overall, 43.7% of the respondents said

TABLE 2: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

	This Year	Last Year	Middle East/ Africa/India	Global
Gender				
Female	3%	3%	20%	44%
Male	97%	97%	81%	55%
Age				
Mean	36.3	34.5	36	40
Median	34	34	35	38
Degree				
Baccalaureate	100%	99%	98%	97%
Advanced	31%	21%	41%	41%
Management Level				
Top management	12%	4%	9%	9%
Senior management	22%	33%	23%	21%
Middle management	51%	49%	45%	45%
Lower management/ Entry level	15%	14%	21%	23%
Academic position in college/university	1%	0%	2%	2%
Years of Experience (Median)				
Years in field	10	10	10	12
Certification				
CMA	52%	30%	53%	62%
CPA	12%	7%	9%	17%

their compensation did not change as a result of COVID-19, while 3.9% indicated that their compensation increased. Of the respondents in the KSA, 48.5% said that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their compensation due to either a salary cut (32%) or an impact on their bonus (16.5%). A smaller percentage of respondents were placed on

² All compensation data was collected in U.S. dollars and is reported here using that monetary unit. To convert to Saudi Riyal (SAR), multiply the U.S. dollar amounts by the exchange rate prevalent at the time the survey was conducted (approximately 3.750 SAR per U.S. dollar on average for the month of September 2020: www.x-rates.com).

TABLE 3: TOTAL COMPENSATION BY AGE RANGE

Age Range	Mean		Median	
	Base Salary (\$)	Total Compensation (\$)	Base Salary (\$)	Total Compensation (\$)
20-29	22,109	25,381	18,000	23,000
30-39	42,354	50,081	34,800	36,000
40-49	50,433	64,322	40,750	54,600
50 and older	63,625	76,375	70,000	72,500
All ages	42,664	51,580	36,000	38,000

unpaid leave (3.9%). Across industries, wholesale and retail trade had the highest percentage of respondents experiencing a negative impact on their compensation (87.5%), followed by medical/health services (55.5%) and construction (52.6%). The industries with the lowest percentage of respondents indicating a negative impact on compensation were agriculture and forestry (33.4%), finance (35.7%), and manufacturing (38.9%). (Note: Results are presented for industries with five or more respondents.)

The following demographic groups had significant differences related to the negative impact on compensation:

- Those with only a baccalaureate degree (52.1%) compared to those with master’s degrees (42.0%).
- Those in senior management (56.5%) compared to those in top management (41.6%).
- Respondents ages 40 to 49 (53.9%) compared to those ages 20 to 29 (23.1%).
- Those holding the CMA (52.9%) compared to non-CMAs (44.0%).
- Female respondents (66.6%) compared to male respondents (48.0%).

In addition to affecting compensation, the pandemic has caused employees to consider upskilling or updating their job-related skills. Overall, 79.6% of the participants in the KSA are

considering upskilling, while 89.3% are working on improving their job-related skills as a result of COVID-19.

Gender Pay Differences

The gender salary gap between the compensation received by men and women continues to be an important area of interest.³ As in past years, there were too few female respondents from the KSA in this year’s survey to make a meaningful comparison. As reported in the global salary survey report, women in MEAI earn a median base salary that is 78% of the median base salary earned by men. The gap is larger for median total compensation, with women earning only 69% of the median total compensation earned by men.

Because of the small percentage of female respondents in MEAI (only 20%), a more in-depth comparison of gender pay differences is not possible. Be very cautious about drawing conclusions from the gender pay differences mentioned here. The low percentage of female respondents prohibits meaningful comparisons.

CMA Certification

CMA certification continues to have a positive impact on compensation in the KSA. Table 4 shows the median base salary and median total compensation for those holding the CMA

³ The salary gap measures the percentage of women’s remuneration in proportion to men’s. For example, if women earn \$80,000 and men earn \$100,000, the salary gap is 80% (i.e., women’s earnings are 80% of men’s).

TABLE 4: COMPENSATION BY CMA DESIGNATION

	Mean		Median	
	Salary	Total Compensation	Salary	Total Compensation
CMA's	\$53,433	\$64,750	\$48,000	\$53,200
Non-CMA's	\$31,249	\$37,620	\$23,301	\$27,621
CMA Difference				
This year	71%	72%	106%	93%
Last year	67%	92%	73%	103%

certification and those not holding the certification. Participants in the KSA holding the CMA earn a 106% higher median salary and 93% higher median total compensation compared to those who do not hold the certification. This is significantly higher compared to MEAI, where CMA's earned a 76% higher median base salary and 80% higher median total compensation compared to non-CMA's.

There are a number of factors, besides just having the CMA, affecting the difference in salary. Being ambitious, disciplined, smart, and motivated have a lot to do with earning certifications, advanced degrees, and higher management levels.

The Value of the CMA

In addition to compensation, the CMA provides many additional benefits for those holding the certification. Of those holding the CMA in the KSA, 93% agreed that it gives them more confidence to perform their job at a high level, 91% agreed that it strengthens their ability to move across all areas of the business, and 79% agreed that the certification creates job opportunities for them. The value of the CMA is also evident from the following comments provided by respondents in the KSA:

- "The CMA certification helped me to achieve respect and growth within my organization and helped me nurture myself and explore my full potential."—*an auditor in Khobar*
- "I was able to compete against other engineers and finance professionals with four to five years of work experience for a job, even though I was a

fresh graduate with seven months of experience in accounting."—*a finance manager in Riyadh*

- "The CMA gave me more confidence and insight into strategic financial analysis. Management had great confidence in me and considered me for various assignments and decision-making roles."—*an accountant in Jubail*
- "The CMA significantly increased the level of my knowledge in comparison to my peers, which allows me to be on a faster track for career advancement."—*an internal auditor in Jeddah*

Education

The mean and median base salary and total compensation for those holding baccalaureate and advanced degrees are presented in Table 5. All the respondents in the KSA hold baccalaureate degrees, with 31% holding advanced degrees. As expected, education has a positive impact on compensation for participants in the KSA. The median total compensation for those holding advanced degrees is 45% greater compared to those with only baccalaureate degrees. In addition, those with advanced degrees earn 68% more in median additional compensation compared to those with only baccalaureate degrees.

Management Level

Table 6 presents the mean and median total compensation by management level. Based on the current year responses, those in lower management had the highest median total compensation (\$51,168), followed by those in senior management

TABLE 5: COMPENSATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL

	Mean		Median	
	Base Salary	Total Compensation	Base Salary	Total Compensation
Baccalaureate degree	\$37,249	\$45,403	\$30,000	\$35,500
Advanced degree	\$54,679	\$65,283	\$42,350	\$51,600
Percent Increase				
Advanced degree	47%	44%	41%	45%

TABLE 6: MEAN COMPENSATION BY MANAGEMENT LEVEL

	Mean		Median	
	Base Salary (\$)	Total Compensation (\$)	Base Salary (\$)	Total Compensation (\$)
Top management	35,573	46,334	14,000	23,001
Senior management	48,143	59,039	40,000	45,000
Middle management	42,064	49,717	32,500	35,750
Lower management/Entry level	42,260	51,633	43,200	51,168

(\$45,000), middle management (\$35,750), and top management (\$23,001). These results do not follow the pattern expected as respondents move into higher management levels and are driven by the unique responses for the current year. Across all management levels, the range between the lowest and highest median total compensation is very large. For example, the difference between the highest and lowest total compensation for top management is \$151,680, while the range for senior management is \$152,480; \$226,800 for middle management; and \$125,700 for lower management. Therefore, be cautious when interpreting compensation differences across management levels.

Responsibility Area

A higher percentage of respondents identified their responsibility area as general accounting (26%), followed by financial planning and analysis (FP&A, 20%), finance (17%), corporate accounting

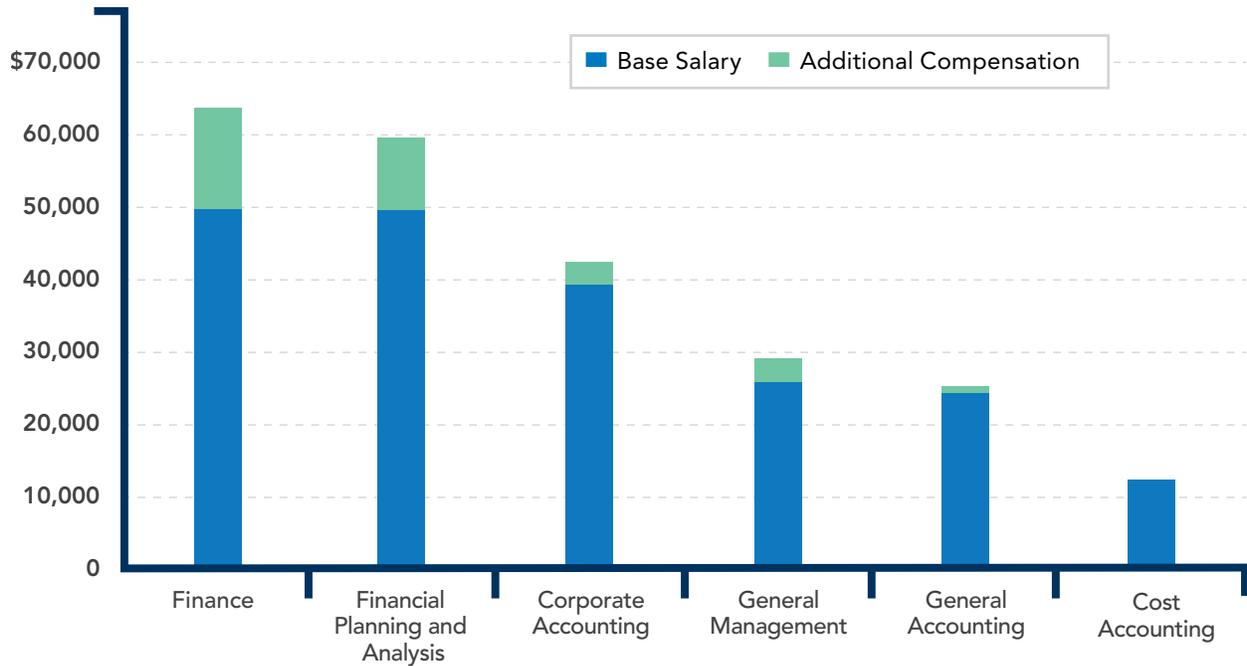
(12%), general management (7%), and cost accounting (7%). Other responsibility areas such as public accounting, risk management, taxation, internal auditing, and information systems are not included this year due to a low number of responses in these areas.

Figure 1 shows the median base salary and additional compensation for various responsibility areas. Respondents in FP&A had the highest median base salary (\$50,000), followed closely by finance (\$49,500). Respondents in cost accounting had the lowest (\$12,000) median base salary, followed by those in general accounting (\$24,000). Respondents in finance had the highest median additional compensation (\$14,140), while those in cost accounting received no additional compensation.

Job Characteristics and Satisfaction

Respondents in the KSA were asked if they agreed with several statements related to their

FIGURE 1: MEDIAN COMPENSATION BY RESPONSIBILITY AREA



job satisfaction and compensation. Overall, 69% of the survey participants either strongly agreed, or somewhat agreed, that they love their job, and 46% agreed that their compensation package was competitive with their peers. Only 40% of non-CMAs, however, agreed that their compensation package was competitive with their peers, compared to 51% of those holding the CMA. It appears that, for respondents in the KSA, satisfaction with compensation does not necessarily drive job satisfaction. Overall, 62% of the respondents agreed that their job impacts the strategic direction of the company.

Respondents in the KSA worked an average of 43.4 hours per week (see Table 7). Those in top management worked the longest average workweek (44.8 hours), with those in lower management working the shortest (42.4 hours). Across responsibility areas, those in general management worked the longest average workweek (46.2 hours), followed closely by finance (45.5 hours). Those in general accounting had the shortest average workweek (40.6 hours).

TABLE 7: HOURS WORKED PER WEEK BY MANAGEMENT LEVEL

Management Level	Mean Hours	Median Hours
Top	44.8	46.5
Senior	43.6	45.0
Middle	43.4	45.0
Lower	42.4	40.0
Overall	43.4	45.0

Consistency Amid Turmoil

For the current year, the median base salary in the KSA was \$36,000 and the median total compensation was \$38,000, which were higher than the median base salary and total compensation in MEAI (\$25,000 and \$27,000, respectively) in 2020. In addition, the compensation statistics are not significantly different compared to the prior year, which is good news given the uncertainty surrounding

the economy and employment during the pandemic.

Holding the CMA continues to add value for respondents in the KSA, with CMAs earning 93% higher median total compensation compared to non-CMAs. In addition, 93% of those holding the CMA agreed that the certification gives them more confidence to perform their job at a high level, and 91% agreed that the certification strengthens their ability to move across all areas of the business.

Job satisfaction remains steady, with 69% of

respondents in the KSA agreeing that they love their job. This is despite the fact that a much smaller percentage agreed that their compensation package was competitive with their peers (46%). A higher percentage of CMAs agreed that their compensation package was competitive with their peers compared to non-CMAs (51% vs. 40%).

Thank you to all those who participated in this year's salary survey. We hope the results will help support the increasing emphasis on management accounting in the KSA.