الجامعة الملكية للبنات

ROYAL UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

The First Private University **"Accredited By HEC"**
أول جامعة خاصة "معتمدة من مجلس التعليم العالي"

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

OF RUW 2ND CONFERENCE ON

WOMEN AND SOCIETY

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

18 - 19 April 2018
Kingdom of Bahrain

His Royal Highness
Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa
The Prime Minister of the
Kingdom of Bahrain

His Majesty
King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
The King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

His Royal Highness
Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa
The Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander
and First Deputy Prime Minister

Under the patronage of

H.E. Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi
Minister of Education and Chairman of the
Higher Education Council,
Kingdom of Bahrain

Conference Overview

Women are one of the main contributors to nation building, the economic sector, and community life, among other important things. However, throughout the world women are under-represented in the majority of employment sectors. More often, women are paid less than men and fewer reach senior management positions. The gender gap is not only hindering women themselves; it also has an adverse effect on economies, communities, and families. Education is one of the most significant factors for enabling the progression and advancement of women. Higher education institutions must increase their efforts in order to enhance further developments.

Royal University for Women (RUW) is the first private HEC accredited, purpose-built, international university in the Kingdom of Bahrain dedicated solely to educating women. Under the patronage of His Excellency Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, Minister of Education, RUW collaborated with Gulf Education and GCL to host the RUW 2nd Conference on Women and Society with the theme 'Empowering Women through Higher Education' on 18-19 April 2018. This Conference was in continuation of the successful Conference on Women and Society held by RUW in April 2016 where more than 45 research papers were presented by participants from over 15 countries. The 2nd biennial conference exceeded the previous Conference with over 55 research papers presented in a two-day span. The conference theme aimed to highlight the opportunities for, and challenges women face in higher education. It served as a platform to discuss, discover, and share additional methods universities might deploy in order to generate outstanding overall improvement for women in higher education.

KEY TOPICS EXPLORED IN THE CONFERENCE

- Empowering Women in the Twenty First Century: the role of Universities
- Building Gender Equality through Education
- Inspiring women to take Leadership positions
- Empowering Women through legal education
- Role of STEM education in women empowerment
- Women Employability and Entrepreneurship
- Generation Z: Women's Advancement
- Empowering Women in Art and Design Education

CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Over 150 participants attended the conference from over 22 different countries, and over 55 researchers presented papers/posters. Participant groups was comprised of academics from local, regional and international universities and educational institutions, research institutions and foundations, representatives from the Ministries of Education, government organisations, NGOs, researchers, consultants, local business representatives, professionals and graduate students.

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

Day 1: Keynote addresses, panel sessions, gala dinner, awards ceremony, and networking.

Day 2: Workshop sessions with focused discussions, academic research paper presentations, poster presentations, networking

Alongside the Conference, there was:

- A poster session aimed to encourage researchers and postgraduate students to present their research in a poster competition on a selected conference theme. The three best poster presentations received certificates

- An exhibition of education and learning resources set up by the participants

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Empowering Women in the Twenty First Century: The role of Universities

Empowering Women in the Twenty First Century:
The role of Universities

The UN Women organisation defines the principles of women empowerment as, "Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities." Universities are in a privileged position of ability to revolutionise women's development by supporting women to be free thinkers, explore channels of self-discovery, and determine the ways in which they want to participate in the world. Often, higher education is a woman's outlet to the knowledge based world. Women develop in university through various forms, curriculum, student organisations, programmes, clubs, and sports- A wide array of involvement creates well-rounded individuals. Access to a university of quality significantly advances not only women's empowerment, but also progresses world development in general by opening doors and changing systems. Consequently, providing university education contributes to eradicating poverty, raising levels of social and/or economic class, and improving global health. It must therefore be the mission of universities to continually attract more female students and build opportunities for enrolment, as well as to constantly improve and expand programmes of study and extracurricular for women. Furthermore, universities must allocate their resources towards understanding and encouraging efforts which will empower women.
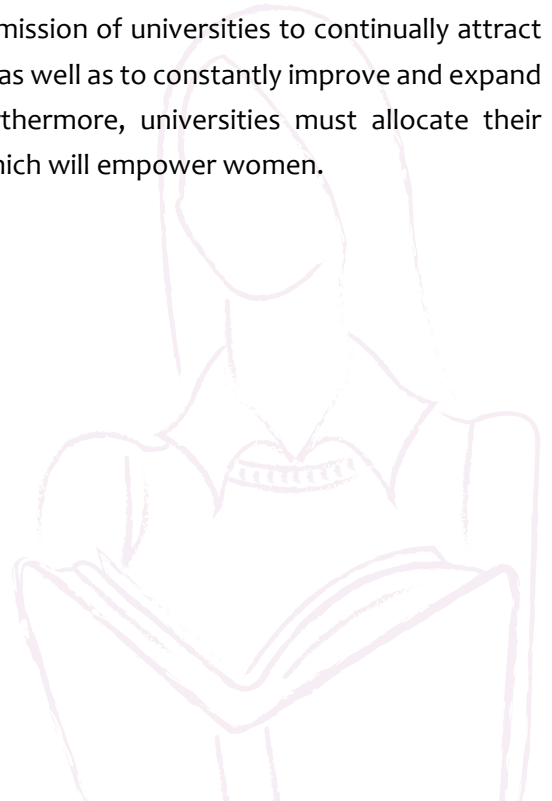
GENDERED OPPORTUNITY: A PRE-ACADEMIC CAREER DYNAMIC IN THE ACADEMIC LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The discourse surrounding female academics, with their comparatively slow academic progression records, reveals a range of issues arising from gender inequality. This has, predominantly been ratified through traditional feminist perspectives of gender which enter upon women and their experience of disadvantage; a focus that leaves the experiences and positioning of male academics largely unattended and unanalysed. This paper therefore focuses whether male privilege acts to disadvantage the positions of academic women and interrogates role model configurations where this gendered relationally is evident; in pre-career experiences located in family. It explores how these experiences and practices influence gender relational outcomes for male and female academics. The research approach is qualitative and the data was collected from Sri Lankan and Australian universities. A multitude of parental and inter-familial influences, and social background factors significantly shape academics' entry and career aspirations. These social factors of motivation include class privilege, positive family support, role modelling and relatively greater opportunity available to male academics through their family backgrounds interwoven with gendered social practices. Females reported being restricted significantly due to gender ideologies than due to family values or support in this regard.

Keywords: Gendered opportunity, Academic men and women, Gender relationally, Pre-career dynamics, Gender inequality

Introduction:

Gender inequality has been an issue of social and academic interest since times that extend beyond memory. It has resulted from the ongoing attempt to categorize and regularize biological men and women as masculine and feminine, arranging them in a hierarchy valuing the male much higher than the female. This situation is constantly and historically at odds with cohesive social development efforts and is questioned and critiqued with much distrust and suspense especially by those subordinated and victimised by this system of ordering.

Further, a large number of studies demonstrate women under representation in higher education as a major concern (Probert, 2005, Pearson, 2004, Shakleton, Simonis and Riodian, 2005, Husu & Morley, 2000, Brooks, 1997, Park, 1996, Castleman et al, 1995). The discourse surrounding female academics, with their comparatively slow academic progression records, reveals a range of issues arising from this inequality and gendering of academic activities. This interpretation has, however, predominantly been ratified through feminist perspectives of gender that center upon women, female understandings and their experiences of disadvantage. However, such a focus leaves the experiences and positioning of male academics within those contexts of disadvantage and inequality largely unattended and unanalysed, thus with an implied theoretical irrelevance to the stories and positions of women's disadvantage. These prevailing customary approaches attribute the constructions of under-representation fundamentally to the women-female perspective and to the 'acclaimed lack' of women's capabilities within those interrogations. Therefore, alternatively we need to pay attention to aspects within men's gendered behaviour and their gender constructions of privilege too in this regard (Hearn, 2001, Eveline, 1996, Cockburn,1991)

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Hence, this research paper, therefore, endeavours to address this deficient and incomplete analysis theoretically, adopting a critical feminist lens to interrogate male privilege and to examine the extent to which male privilege constructs in everyday life, configures and orders women's disadvantage and similarly their under-representation in the academy.

Hence this paper focuses upon one of the key questions of my PhD thesis, accordingly the study aims to analyse the concept of gender relationality. It interrogates a few key areas where this relationality is evident in the accounts of the daily experiences of male and female academics' in the context of pre-career family background. Further, it questionswhether male privilege acts to disadvantage the positions of academic women within the sample and interrogates a few main areas with regards to gendered elements in role model configurations where this relationality is evident in the accounts of the daily experiences of male and female academics': particularly in the context of pre-career experiences located in family background. It explores the way in which these experiences and practices located within family influence the construction of gender relational outcomes for male and female academics.

The point of departure thus for this analysis of academics' gender relational experiences is concerned with the pre-career experiences and its influence on their entry into an academic career. These include the dynamics within family background that shaped employment aspirations of these academics towards an academic career. Here, the aim was to identify whether there were any regular gender relational patterns of privilege and/or disadvantage evident in academics' social backgrounds that contributed towards their academic career aspirations or shaping of academic interest as gendered pre-determinants of their entry into an academic career and success or failure in it.

Here two specific aspects of the factors regarding family background is being focused upon. One explores the support, exposure and circumstance-related factors in academics' family backgrounds and considers whether these suggest gender relational privilege and disadvantage in the way they are shaped. A second aspect was to understand the relevance of ideologies of femininity and masculinity as sources of the external to the individual that shaped those aspirations as 'gender sensitive pre academic career determinants'.

Literature

This analysis begins with a brief introduction of what is meant by gender relationality within this analysis and why it is important in the context of male privilege and academic life. It very briefly reiterates the need for a scrutiny of male privilege in the academy, taking a few explicit reference points from previous feminist research on academic life. Joan Eveline (1996), for example, is a pioneer for her passionate emphasis on the need to shift the analytical focus from a woman-blame approach to an 'essential' articulation of men's

advantage. This shift of perception is necessary for a more insightful, realistic and complete understanding of the mutuality or the relationality of the discourse that constructs the gender advantage/ disadvantage duality (1996: 69). Such an emphasis introduces an innovative critical dimension to the whole analysis of women's less privileged position in academia. These views have been supported by other scholars too such as Hearn (1989), Connell (1995), Harding (1987) and Holter (1970).

Gender relationality in the Social and Family Background

Social learning theories show that significant elements of human social behaviour are 'learned' through primary and secondary socialisation that occurs from infancy within the family, and from childhood into

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maturity through more formal channels (Giddens, 2001: 29). The knowledge and behaviour content of these socialisation experiences are acquired via a range of social roles through a multitude of processes. These correspond to and are guided by the multiple social needs normatively defined and related sets of means made available to men and women.

With regards to gender and Social/family background, more especially theoretical ideas of Ann Okley in 1972 in her work of Sex Gender and Society are relevant to this point. She states that feminine and masculine roles are neither innate nor the result of biology, rather the result of prescriptive social processes that leads to self-socialisation, imitation and reinforcement in internalizing and learning gender roles and attributes. Okley refers to four main ways in which socialization into gender roles occur drawing on Ruth Hartley's 1966 typology. These include Manipulation, Canalization, Verbal appellations and Exposedness. In the context of gendered pre- career aspiration construction (of male and female academics'), this idea is very useful and applicable, especially when scrutinizing male female academics' experience in terms of choice of an academic felid as well as the career path.

On the other hand, studies largely point to a very strong link between attitudes to learning; in this case the academic aspiration, educational performance and the various social environments that primarily comprise home, family and parental social orientation that shapes this experience. Further, these studies also point out that children's performances are highly contingent on the stimulus the home environment offers (Owizy, 2012 my italics)[1] whilst the members of the family serve as role models providing the child with necessary guidance towards future career Eyake (1997) quoted. Adeyeme (1977)', the failure to do so damages the child. Whilst there is a large volume of information and research perhaps focusing on family background and its influence in shaping the career choice of children in general, the gender dynamics and relations that shape and configure career is limited and seem to represent only a few facets of this reality. In the case of Sri Lanka, there is near absence of such inquiry regarding gendered patterns in academic career choice pertaining to university faculty and academic staff in general.

Methodology

Here the concept of gender relationality is analysed considering informal everyday aspects of pre-academic career determinants in family background. The materialization of privilege/disadvantage relationality has been investigated considering pre- career determinants or gendered opportunity that have been significantly influential in the choice of an academic profession.

Gender relationality is captured and demonstrated as an influence, initiation or intervention which occurs through discursive processes external to the individual her/himself and not of their own making or initiative. Such processes may be experienced as representations in the external world as beliefs and gender ideologies, or in material terms such as in tangible concrete everyday patriarchal normative practices. In a context of gendered (masculine) privilege, these may have positively favorable influence that contribute to meeting positive academic outcomes and career advancement more often for the male academic than for the female. Such initiations **would** simultaneously result in/produce a negative influence on female academics' career advancement due to the **possible** gender bias against women through such unequal practice.

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1   THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND ONSTUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PHYSICS INGBOKO LOCALGOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE. **Simon OnowaOwizy, Feb 2012,** A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUMAND TEACHING, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, BENUE STATEUNIVERSITY, MAKURDI IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THEREQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE INEDUCATION DEGREE IN PHYSICS [B.Sc ED PHYSICS]. Unpublished report

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The field data was collected through the method of academic life histories, data collection was carried out over a period of 8 months from 2 predominantly conventional academies in Australia and Sri Lanka (December2009-July 2010). The total sample includes 37 academics, 20 females and 17 males. The field data was analysed using Foucauldian discourse analysis to illuminate discursive construction and production of gender relationality in everyday social contexts. This paper therefore focuses field data exploring the relevance and impact of the manifestation of male privilege through gender relational opportunity created in pre-career experiences located particularly within family backgrounds and related spaces.

Findings

Relational Privilege in Social and Family Background

The interviewee responses in this study, revealed a multitude of experiences of parental and inter-familial influences, and social background factors that significantly shape academics' entry and career aspirations. Within these responses, some key trends are observed which exerted a significant influence in shaping academics' career aspirations and choice. While clear and strong privilege and disadvantage gendered relationality/duality was reflected within some of the representations others represent relatively free narratives unaffected by it. Such elements of influence however are seen to primarily represent a class status dynamic which is relatively free from gender bias, whilst a role model configuration that indicated gendered elements [in] shaping academic career aspirations. However, for this discussion, I have selected an investigation with regards to gendered elements in role model configurations that indicate relationality, whilst supporting gender privilege disadvantage duality in academics' pre- career life experiences.

Relational Privilege in Gendered Opportunity

In so far as human social behaviour is learned through socialisation (Giddens, 2001: 29), similarly gendered norms of behaviour are also understood to be learned within social relations and social practice (Connell, 2005 Also see Oakley, 1972, 74 regarding gender role socialisation) and this can have a significant influence in shaping our career and work aspirations.

In this sample, significant influence on men and women's choice of an academic career path was experienced in a form of 'gendered opportunity' that shaped individual academic's career aspirations. A clear element of gender relational advantage and disadvantage was evident in the distribution of such opportunities to men and women.

Relational Opportunity

Embedded within the above-noted supportive family environments, positive role models and class privilege, it was evident that a 'privilege of gendered opportunity' was notably present in men's experience. Such opportunities were experienced as chances to venture into academically-motivating, unique public events and occasions in pre-academic life which were usually unavailable or gendered in female academics' family background related experiences.

Male respondents often cited having experienced such unique academic opportunities and the freedom to get practical experience and exposure in their field forming a strong foundation for shaping academic career inspiration and confidence, implicitly as well as explicitly. The implicit opportunity was realised in two key ways: 1) within upper and middle class backgrounds this was through sharing and engaging in the inspiring professional achievements of immediate family members such as parents, siblings or relatives, who acted as role models; 2) in lower and poorer class family environments it was through chances that

arose from the constant coaching, support and unique opportunities for developing academic skills- and confidence-building that they received. Among these academics, it indicates that the gendered nature of this kind of opportunity and its configuration often set men's and women's experiences apart as privileged and disadvantaged in constructing academic career aspirations. Nevertheless, within the responses there were very few men and women who did not mention any of the above motivational elements in their family environment. Similarly, there were also a few women who were benefitted by the privilege of opportunity without any obvious gender bias.

Implicit gendered opportunity and class privilege

In the following example the opportunity is represented implicitly. This male was benefitted by the reputation and popularity of his grandfather and by being involved in his socio-political activities.

> 'My grandfather was an [Aurvedik[2]] guru and he was also … a politician. So he used to engage in a lot of social services and I used to help him. I felt that even during my under graduate life here [being politically active] … I used to give private tuition too.'

> **(Senior Lecturer II, Arts, SL, M)**

Here, an opportunity to develop a good grasp of academic's own area of specialization today materialised out of his association with the grandfather. Later in life, he had been a politically active undergraduate, having been inspired and influenced by and learning from the experiences of the grandfather. Subsequently, teaching students through his own personal initiative presented further opportunity to develop teaching skills and build up confidence towards realistic academic aspirations. Similarly, as discussed in earlier accounts, the availability of opportunity through economic stability & financial security and role modelling present even more evidence in this regard.

Embedded within this kind of explicit opportunity is also an important implicit element of confidence that is subtly gendered. The opportunity to build up this kind of confidence is made available 'naturally' to men as a right, and this constructs a big part of their privileged position while contributing to their academic success. In the present research the 'legitimated' opportunity to build up confidence given to men rather than to women was made evident in some male respondents' experiences. The confidence element manifests here in the form of encouragement, love and, significantly, in the constant and committed propelling of the aspirant towards setting and achieving academic goals by their immediate family, relatives or teachers. For example, a few examples could be cited but the installation of strong career goals encouraged and being coached by his father helped one participant to believe in his own capabilities and develop academic confidence as a child.

> 'One day my father took me down this road, the road in front of the Engineering faculty…he showed me the faculty and said, 'Do you know what this faculty is?' I said I didn't know. He said, 'You know this is the X University's Engineering Faculty and one day you should come here.'…I thought I should somehow try to come here [this faculty] and become an engineer.'

> **(Senior Lecturer I, Engineering, SL, M)**

In this way similar opportunity for academics without class privilege or positive professional role models within their family backgrounds also received inputs that shaped their academic aspirations, especially

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2   The traditional or the indigenous system of medicine/ medical practitioner in Sri Lanka, that has been in existence over centuries.

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being encouraged to have a go and get involved in unique social situations and forums that fostered building the necessary self-confidence and creativity required for an academic career.

> 'But my parents had the wisdom…to say, 'Look, no. If you don't want to be a farmer, don't. Go and do what you need to do.' So I did…they weren't academic or university people…I think for me, one of the turning points when I was only very young was in Australia…when we had the Referendum. I remember standing with my father as he was lining up going to vote in that referendum and listening to the conversations around me,…I was probably only seven. But it's one of those things that clearly stands out in my mind, and I think from that moment on I just thought, 'Well that's where I'll go. That's what I'm interested in.' And that's what I've done.'

(Level D, Social Sciences, Australia, M)

> The only positive thing I would have had is… people would come to our house on a Saturday or a Sunday night, they would talk. These are working class people work in factories and farm labourers. They have very long complicated discussions about all sorts of issues…quite involved and technical…I found that very fascinating.

(Level C, Social Sciences, Australia, M)

Explicit gendered opportunity for academic aspirations

Some academics referred more explicitly to the gendered nature of privilege in the forming of academic aspirations. In the following example, the influence of parental coaching and career guidance is seen in the career progression and ambitiousness of siblings of different genders, as comparative career guidance and advancement are differentiated for the two children in the same middle class family, in the same medical profession.

> 'Though he was not knowledgeable enough [in medicine] to guide me into selecting the subjects but he gave me overall direction. He said, 'Becoming a doctor is not enough– you must become a specialist.' something like that… and my sister was a doctor too, she stopped at a certain level [in her career] because she is a wife and a doctor, and she voluntarily gave up her career at a certain point.'

(Senior Lecturer I, Medicine, SL, M)

Here the encouragement towards further advancement in the medical profession was for the male to become a 'specialist' while his sister remained a general physician. The suggested notion of a voluntary decision on the part of the female not to advance her career clearly warrants further interrogation by problematizing the ways in which this so-called 'voluntary' decision is embedded within prevailing societal norms and culture, rather than representing a simple expression of choice. The seemingly natural justification given by the respondent of the sister's decision is typical of the gendered relationality of this opportunity.

Another explicit example of gendered privilege in the opportunity created for academic career aspiration and achievement was articulated in the experiences of the following Sri Lankan Professor.

> 'My mother pushed me to go to [better school] a Christian school in a nearby town so, she always wanted me to do well in studies…Well…here probably there was a gender factor, I was the only boy in the family. My mother actually wanted everybody to study but she wanted me to study

a little bit harder and qualify in whatever I do, and she actually wanted me to go in the science stream…she is a major influence on me in my [academic] life.'

(Senior Professor, Arts, SL, M)

In addition to his explicit recognition of the 'gender factor' here, this professor pointed out that none of his sisters reached the academic success that he did, nor received equal propelling and coaching.

In a few cases however, the opportunity for academic aspirations within the family background was reported by females, though it entailed a notable degree of gender bias. Mainly this opportunity was experienced as role modelling or as an academically supportive and conducive family environment. A few female academics in male dominated disciplines pointed out that their academic aspiration for entering into masculine disciplines may have been influenced by association with male siblings. For some it was the parents or relatives. However, it was noted that these experiences within class privilege showed gendered patterns to a lesser degree than those experienced within working class or poorer class environments. For example, for the following respondent, taking up residence with an aunt who was an academic living in a university hostel had inspired academic career aspirations through role modelling.

'I had the influence of my Aunt who was an academic because I knew she was teaching in the university…like especially after I joined the university I came and I moved in with her [she lived on campus] … then I thought how nice it is being a student here [university] and then to work here and I thought it would be like may be one percent of the people getting that opportunity.'

(Senior Lecturer II, Science, SL, F)

In the case below, the female is also from a middle class family environment. Her mother's perseverance and dedication in ensuring university education for her children, and setting up foundations for it, provide the opportunity in this case. However, the gendered nature of ambitious pursuit of academic aspirations by both men and women can be observed within this example. The female here expresses a half-hearted commitment and ambition towards achieving and performing at the highest level in the following response.

'It was not like I wanted to become an engineer as such; I don't know, for some reason my parents didn't push me or my sisters for that matter. I had best results for Ordinary Level Exam. I was the only girl who had eight Distinctions from my school…but still I did not want to like cram a lot and do my studies. I wanted just to make sure (that)I got through the exam to enter the university and did that part…I didn't have any idea at all about joining the university as a lecturer, not at all. I was kind of average, I could have done better but I didn't want to cram myself so much and I wanted to enjoy the life at the University… and my idea was that I wanted to go to the university and get that experience, and because my mother was selected to (University) when she did her Advanced Level exam…and then she got married, she never got the chance to go to university because my father said 'no you should stay at home'. It was her dream to send one of us[girls] to (University).'

(Senior Lecturer II, IT, SL, F)

From the above examples it can be observed that in the context of class privilege some females do have the benefit of opportunity. However, they often indicate that it may be gendered and disadvantageous towards women more generally within family environments. In fact, the opportunity and encouragement

towards practical, public engagement is relatively high in men's reports while poorly experienced by women in the sample.

Relational Disadvantage

Thus men's privilege is seen to be realised through the multiple opportunities offered them in family backgrounds that support and help build up confidence and positive strength. By contrast, some specific experiences of women present the relative disadvantage women suffer in being deprived of these opportunities, making it difficult for women to build up the same level of confidence to which most men in the sample had 'legitimate' access.

Let us take a closer look at the way this situation has been constructed. For these respondents, gendered employment aspirations that were resistant to academic career aspiration-building had taken place by way of specific social practices, in particular the gender differentiated social aspirations that parents hold and practice and, notably, the limitations on career choice enforced through gender stereotyped career aspirations.

Gendered employment aspirations of parents

The following example highlights the negative influence that parents can effect in this regard.

> My parents were very angry with me... when I was in year 10 they said, 'We think it is time that [you] should decide whether [you are] to be a hairdresser or to work in some sort of butchering trade' (which was what my parents did) and I said, 'I don't care for either of those' and I wanted to read books, and they said, 'No, you have to choose one of those', and I said, 'No I was not doing any of that stuff'.

> **(Level E, Health, Australia, F)**

This report shows how some women experience considerable retaliation and disapproval within the family if they want to deviate from the traditional line of occupations and strive for upward mobility. These attitudes can result from ideologies of class as well as those concerning gender-appropriate career goals. Also in certain other experience of an Australian female, strong encouragement towards forming academic career aspirations was explicitly lacking and possibly seen as irrelevant.

> 'I think my gender probably maybe limited me in the beginning in areas I thought that I could do. I don't know whether it was just gender or whether it is the lack of self-confidence. For example I remember earlier in school liking science...and then I thought well I could be a laboratory assistant, that was like my highest thing that I could achieve within science and that I am sure was because I thought I was a woman..., I didn't think that I could be a scientist; [but] a laboratory assistant...and then I think when I did start university and I enrolled in drama initially at...[X] University and I really would have liked to have done that... but I never thought I could be a film director you know?...So...I don't know whether that was gender or self-confidence and in terms of what I could do, but I suspect gender played a part in that.'

> **(Level B, Arts, Australia, F)**

Gender stereotyping and naturalised career aspirations

Specific disadvantage frequently manifests itself by way of limiting chances of free movement in one's own choice of a career especially due to gendered ideologies concerning an appropriate career path.

This was much more commonly reported by women in the sample than men, because they felt limited by societal notions of what was appropriate employment for them, with or without their knowledge. These experiences clearly exemplify the level of confidence generally accessible by the exercise of freedom to choose a career in society (Refer above quote).

Most women respondents in both countries here expressed great difficulty in challenging these conventions, especially when deciding on an academic area, and often gave into them for reasons of social survival and acceptance. The extent to which these constructions and conditionings are naturalized also emerges as astonishingly real.

Gender disadvantage was particularly evident in female academics' selection of academic disciplines and areas of specialization, diminishing females' aspirations for entering into more privileged, male dominated discipline areas. Some females in science-oriented disciplines reported explicitly their experience of gendered influence when choosing their area of specialization. The following two responses in Sri Lanka articulate how certain areas of skill had been carefully removed or made unavailable to females as a result of the strategic stereotyping of feminine and masculine discipline areas.

> 'In my fourth year I wanted to do fisheries. I loved going out into the sea and all and then because I was a girl and because I was the only one who chose fisheries and the professor in charge said, 'it will be difficult to do' because I have to go by the boats to the sea and all. Then I was taken aback because I wanted to do [fisheries].'

(Senior Lecturer II, Sciences, SL, F)

Here a career door closes naturally and explicitly for reasons of gender. In the following experience a Sri Lankan female's choice of discipline shows clear connotations of gender undermining her free choice because she was aware of the limitations imposed by society for women in employment that involves high levels of outdoor practical engagement. The situation of 'naturalised exclusion' is further aggravated in this respondent's representations due to notions/awareness of Asian cultural restrictions for women.

> 'I never liked engineering for some reason. For example, I didn't like the practical side, and I thought if I become an engineer, I was not good at hands on experiments that much, relative to problem solving. [I am] more into the theoretical science but not practical; that is something common to lot of females. (Were you not good at it or were you not interested?) Both…, I never liked, haven't tried until then, I would have been behind if I went for engineering because of my inability on the practical side…that is the culture what we live in. So that [gender] was also probably a contributory factor in my decision. Because I thought if I became an Engineer it will all be practical work.'

(Senior Lecturer II, Science, SL, F)

Research studies have numerously argued that women academics are relatively less ambitious and driven in their career pursuits and academic progression (Probert, 2005). Some academics' responses regarding their pre-career undergraduate experiences vividly reveal the influence of culture in the construction of gendered disadvantage. Academic and career pursuit decisions in everyday life reflect the way male employment is prioritised over female, and their impact on academic aspirations for women is demonstrated clearly.

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A similar impact with regard to women's aspirations and the shaping of them was evident in a reversal of experiences by a male academic. This respondent represented the privilege bestowed on him in his own academic career as triggered by the gendered aspirations of his girlfriend, who preferred him to excel and to prioritise his career aspirations over hers. This resulted in lower achievement as an under graduate on her part compared to his. In this case, women's perception in the South Asian culture that a man's career should receive more significance and priority within the intimate relationships between partners would probably have played a role in the shaping of the gendered aspirations observed in this account.

> 'Then really she [my wife, then girlfriend] motivated me a lot…she did her Advance Level well, got better results than me but for the Degree she only got an average pass…she really worked hard for me and she wanted me to excel, so she supported, those days she was doing those individual classes and she would attend the lectures get notes and give everything to me, so there was that type of motivation, support and push.'

(Senior Lecturer II, Management, SL, M)

Conclusion

The above analysis has been concerned with socially motivational factors in shaping academic career aspirations in the context of pre-career family related factors. The gender relational nature of those experiences suggests several clear insights. In particular, the basic factors motivating academic aspiration include class privilege, positive family support for educational pursuits, and professional role modelling, especially by fathers. Within this sample of experiences class privilege was gendered to a lesser degree.

On the other hand, relational male privilege was clearly evident and demonstrated itself largely in the greater number of opportunities available to male academics through their family backgrounds interwoven with gendered social practices and the relative freedom they enjoyed in the choice of discipline areas. This facilitated a much greater lack of inhibition for men in constructing career goals, aspirations, and avenues into academic career pursuits. Although parental support was almost a parallel privilege for both male and female academics, men's accounts of being channelled into academic career paths and receiving encouragement displayed a much more vigorous intensity and subtle commitment than was represented in female academics' experiences. Females reported being restricted much more significantly due to gender ideologies than due to family values or support.

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Building Gender Equality through Education

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Building Gender Equality through Education

Women have been striving to become equal on all platforms for centuries. In the work place, women are challenged to obtain equal salary as men for the same job, and to attain the promotions which will place them in leadership roles. Progress has been made, yet more can be accomplished. Perhaps the most effective way to build upon the laid foundation of gaining gender equality is by providing women of all ages with continuous education and employment opportunities. The world must continue to fight collectively for gender equality, since it cannot yet be stated that women have equality in all measures and in all areas of society. UNESCO declares, "Education is the pathway towards gender equality, and given the extensive and growing participation of women in income generating activities, education for girls and women is particularly important, especially in attempting to reverse gendered patterns of discrimination. Not only is it impossible to achieve gender equality without education, but expanding education opportunities for all can help stimulate productivity and thereby also reduce the economic vulnerability of poor households." The education of girls and women can lead to a wide range of benefits from improved maternal health, reduced infant mortality and fertility rates to increased prevention against diseases. Educators and educational institutions are in the most influential position to produce the largest impacts of improvement; thus, all societies must ensure girls and women are granted proper educational involvement.
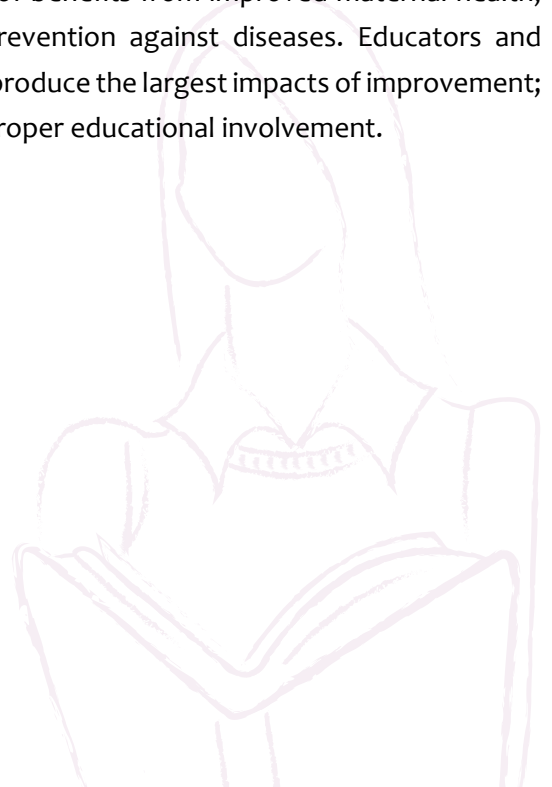
EMPOWERING GENDER EQUALITY AT STATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Vladimir Davchev, Ph.D. Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the changing practice of gender studies and gender equality in higher education at the state Universities in the Republic of Macedonia. It concentrates mainly on Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. The author traces the impact of the introduction of gender studies and gender practice at this university over the past 10 years. Interest of modernizing the curricula with gender sensitive courses, mostly on BA and MA level, was evident in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences, but despite all the efforts made, gender inequalities still persist in higher education. Gender inequalities are mainly evident in the university management leading position and decision-making structures, the majority of which are held by man.

Keywords: gender equality, higher education, gender mainstreaming, curricula, decision-making

Introduction

Education in general, especially higher education. has long been under the dominance of men. The creation of policies, the structural organization of higher education institutions, the process of evaluation, throughout centuries, have been expressed through the male perspective. While the status of women in higher education has improved since the 1960s revival of the women`s movement, women in academia have remained underrepresented in most higher education institutions all over the world. Several recent studies (National Research Council, 2010; Ceci et al, 2014) have found that women in academia make up more than half of all college students, but slightly less than one-third of all full professors, and only 22% of women presidents lead doctorate-granting institutions. Equal opportunities for men and women to attain higher education are a main concern of the social dimension within most countries around the world.

Higher education in the Republic of Macedonia is no exception. Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of women enrolling at the tertiary education. According to statistic data in 2015/2016, out of a total of 59,865 students enrolled at universities in the country, 55% are women and 45% are men (State Statistical Office, 2017). Also, there are more women enrolling in the second and third cycle of studies. In 2016, the total number enrolled in MA and PhD programs was 257 out of which 55% are women and 45% are man. Of the total graduating from the first, second and third cycles, 59% are women and 41% are men. The number of women enrolled and graduated from the first, second and third cycle is generally higher in social sciences, humanities and medical sciences, while in technical and technological sciences, the number of women is lower in comparison with male students.

This is a clear indicator that women have a commitment to build an academic career or are already building it. At first glance, it can be said that the state`s efforts to improve the participation of women in all spheres of education, especially at the high level, are clearly visible. But if you scratch beneath the surface and put statistics aside, you realize that while the academic environment shows a gender balance tendency, in quantitative terms, you will notice that most of the decision-making positions in the academic environment (rectors, pro-rectors, deans and department heads) are in the hands of men. In addition, student evaluations at universities show that women's performance is often more critical than man. Academia research about women is still often underestimated by male colleagues. Introduction of subjects related to gender or curricula in the field of gender issues is still disputed in part of the Academy's circles, claiming that this

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is not a scientific discipline and that it interferes and interweaves with the 'traditional' well-established scientific disciplines. In other words, opponents of gender studies still use subtle and systematic measures of resistance against the establishment of a number of courses and study programs at state universities in the Republic of Macedonia.

This article analyze how successful was strategy of gender mainstreaming at the State University Ss. Cyril and Methodius by establishing stand-alone gender studies programme and dissemination of gender issues in other academic fields, by means of patterns of infusion and diffusion.

Gender in Focus – National Framework

The Republic of Macedonia started to establish an institutional framework for ensuring gender equality only in the past 12 years. In particular, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Official Gazette No.66/2006 and 6/2012) aims at ensuring equal opportunities and equal treatment of both genders. The law rules the jurisdictions, tasks and obligations of the parties responsible for ensuring equal opportunities, the procedure for identifying unequal treatment of women and men and the rights and duties of the Advocate/Attorney for Equal Opportunities for women and men, which is a function that has been set up in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to implement the Law. The Law on the Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination (including the discrimination based on sex) lays the ground for the establishment of an independent seven-member non-professional Anti-Discrimination Commission (Official Gazette No. 50/2010). The competences of the Commission partly overlap with those of the Ombudsman, as well as those of the Advocate/Attorney for equal opportunities. If a person feels they are the victim of any form of discrimination (including sex) they can complain to the Antidiscrimination Commission, which then discusses and provides advice and recommendations on the available measures in the courts and other institutions. The Commission is also engaged in some research activities related to sex discrimination. Still, the EU Progress Report 2014 asserts that there is need to further improve the capacity of the main antidiscrimination bodies in the country. According to the report, the female participation and employment rates remain very low compared to the EU average, and despite some improvement, the Department for Equal Opportunities within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy still lacks appropriate resources. Moreover, women in rural areas are still subject to discriminatory customs, traditions and stereotypes. As assessed by the Gender Inequality Index, the Republic of Macedonia was ranked at the 36th place out of 188 countries in 2015, with an Index of 0.160, with the largest gender gap in the labour market participation (the ranking declined from 33rdplace in 2014).

National Strategy on Gender

In 2013, the Government adopted the Strategy on Gender Equality 2013-2020, with an aim to promote equal opportunities for men and women in the overall social and economic life in the country. The vision of the Strategy is to increase quantitatively and qualitatively women's participation in the public and political life, as well as in the private sector reaching the levels recommended by the Council of Europe and the European Union. The Strategy aims at greater involvement of women in education and the labour market, ensuring better balance between work and private life, etc., as well as increasing public awareness of the importance of equal opportunities for overall development of the social and democratic life, leading to drastically reduced stereotypes and prejudices. The implementation of the Strategy in the first period is guided by the Action Plan for Gender Equality, 2013-2016. The Action Plan sets three strategic objectives:

– Strategic Objective 1: Establish an effective and efficient system for achieving gender equality through functional support mechanisms at national and local level, harmonized indicators to measure progress on gender equality;

– Strategic Objective 2: Improving the level of gender equality in priority thematic areas;

– Strategic Objective 3: Nourishing/Building a culture of equal opportunities and promoting equal treatment and non-discrimination on grounds of sex.

Gender Studies in Higher Education and Curricula

Higher education in the Republic of Macedonia is acquired by 5 state and 9 private universities. The oldest and largest is the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje. This university is the first state university in the Republic of Macedonia, established in 1949 with three faculties. Today, it comprises of a community of 23 faculties, 5 scientific institutes, 4 public scientific institutions - associate members, 1 associate member - another higher education institution and 7 associate members - other organizations. Its activity is regulated by the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the University. More than 60,000 students from all over the country, in the first and second cycle of studies, as well as more than 700 foreign students, study in all faculties. Doctoral studies are conducted with a total of 1071 students, within the School of Doctoral Studies at UKIM. Over 3,100 teaching and research associates, as well as administrative staff are involved in the educational and scientific process of the faculties and institutes.

The first step towards the establishment of gender studies in the academic environment was made in 1999 as a result of the 'informal` academic network initiated by the Research Center for Gender Studies, as part of the Euro-Balkan Institute for Social and Humanities Research' (Kolozova, 2011). This center later grew into a department of the Euro-Balkan Institute and offered an accredited MA program in the field of Gender and Humanities and Gender and Social Science.

Today, only two accredited institutions can obtain formal education in the field of gender studies - the Institute for Gender Studies, at the Faculty of Philosophy, which is part of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius (gender studies at the level of BA and at the level of MA) and the private academic institution - Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities Skopje (gender studies at the level of MA).

The initiative for the establishment of the Institute for Gender Studies at the State University Ss. Cyril and Methodius arose from the previous several pilot projects, lead by few individuals in the academia, in which the curricula of the University were analyzed. The analysis showed that in the curricula of the faculties and departments that are integrated in the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius there is a lack of presence of subjects in the field of gender studies and gender sensitivity. It did not mean that there were no attempts at incorporating gender issues, but they were more concerned individual efforts of individual teachers rather than a clearly defined educational strategy for gender mainstreaming and gender equality.

In addition, it was necessary to institutionalize the process of legitimizing gender studies as an integral discipline in the academic environment of the country. Without any intention to minimize the value of all efforts made by the non-governmental sector and many institutions offering non-formal education in the field of gender studies, institutes and departments with accredited study programs:

> …brings an important dimension of legitimization of the field and adds to the credibility of the arguments of those who criticize the aspects of gender insensitivity in the curricula of the other

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disciplines. **By strengthening its position as an academic field, by way of introducing entire curricula and departments, one makes way for the possibility of increasing the level of gender sensitivity of curricula in disciplines other than gender and women's studies. (Kolozova, 2011:69)**

The introduction of a study program on gender studies at the Faculty of Philosophy was a pioneering step in the domain of higher education, not only in our country, but also in the region. The intention was to offer a study program that is compatible with modern theoretical and educational trends in the world, as well as with the state strategy for incorporating the gender perspective in all domains of social life.

Therefore, when designing the study program, care was taken to include teaching subjects whose content would meet academic criteria, which means being consistent, representing a coherent whole, to correspond to what is the range in this area in the world, but at the same time to be applicable to our specific cultural environment. For that purpose, dozens of study programs were carefully consulted at many universities in the world, including in the region. This study program was designed as an interdisciplinary program in the field of humanities and social sciences. When designing the study program, it was taken care to include as many teachers as possible within the frameworks of their scientific disciplines already introduced content from the gender issues, not only at the Faculty of Philosophy, but also at other faculties within the structure of UKIM.

The academic efforts of the implementers of the study program on gender studies are directed towards the task of examining and re-evaluating the established assumptions for men and women, masculinity and femininity, and their interrelationships that lie at the heart of culture and society; to analyze the discrepancy between equality as a universal value on the one hand and persistent forms of domination in terms of gender, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnic, national or regional origin, on the other. In that sense, gender studies should re-examine the old and develop new learning methods, presenting the interests, needs and aspirations of all people, which will be in favor of improving the quality of individual and social life.

The undergraduate studies are organized as full-time and part-time undergraduate studies for a period of four years (eight semesters). The studies are organized according to the criteria of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Since its inception, the gender studies program has offered an independent BA program, with an average of 45 courses in four academic years, covering a wide range of topics. The program covers special areas such as theories of gender, history of gender, sexed identities, techno-feminism.

Over the 10 years, the Gender Studies Department student body has increased significantly: from the initial number of 15 students, in the first year, the department serves about 25-35, BA students, per academic year.

When looking at the gender distribution, female students make up the vast majority of the Gender Studies Department student body: of the total of 267 students (of all years), only 67 male students have enrolled in the department.

Gender Practice at the University of SS. Cyril and Methodius

As one of the largest Institutions in the country that provides higher education Ss. Cyril and Methodius University is obliged and encouraged, according to the Law on Higher Education, to develop and establish modules, courses and study programs with European content, orientation and organization. It offers a

wide range of professional profiling, greater flexibility of programmes of study and concerted efforts directed at achieving compatibility with European programmes in similar fields. Universities periodically review its programmes, in order to standardize them and create curricula in conformity with the national requirements and the Bologna Process. Departments organize workshops to revise curricula according to clear guidelines. Substantial curriculum changes and new programs are accredited externally by the Accreditation Board.

Many new courses have been added and many traditional courses have been adopted to meet the new market economy and society changes. In terms of gender studies, main interest has been manifested in modernizing the curricula. The changes were mainly expressed in the social sciences and the humanities. Gender sensitive approach in Natural sciences and Technical sciences is absent. Students from these sciences have the opportunity to choose courses in gender studies from a list of elective subjects at the level of University, but to this day, in practice and from my experience as a lecturer at the Gender Studies Institute, it has not proved to be effective. Students in the natural sciences do not choose (or very rarely choose) elective subjects from the social sciences and humanities, especially not courses in gender studies.

The current state of affairs reflects the context within which the existence of gender studies remains to be tied to individual interest and commitment of very few university and faculty members, outside the Gender Study Department at the Faculty of Philosophy. Part of the problem of this situation lies in the organizational structure of the University. A large number of faculties, organized in separate departments, according to the current way of work, are concentrated on profiling of staff from their scientific field. This in the foreground raises the question of the way in which the gender aspect of higher education should be promoted. Thus, despite the institutional commitment made, by establishing the Gender Studies Department, the debate is still present within the University, revolving around the dilemma of gender studies aiming at autonomy or integration in curricula.

Only the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, among other states universities, offers formal academic education in gender studies at the level of BA programme (in 2017 MA programme was acredited). The BA programme is conducted at the Faculty of Philosophy, the Department of Gender Studies. Since the first idea of establishing the Department of Gender Studies, given the interdisciplinary character of gender studies, it was clear that the main goal - the promotion and introducing of gender practice at the Faculty of Philosophy and the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, is unachievable without a change in the approach to gender issues in other departments and faculties, especially the need of inclusion of courses related to gender studies in the curricula. In that direction, during the initiative for the creation of the program for gender studies at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius, a letter was sent to the heads of all departments at the Faculty of Philosophy (in 2007, 10 in number) for proposals for subjects that would be included in the program and to treat this issue from the aspect of the scientific field for which those departments are in charge. The same was requested from the Deans of all faculties that are members of the Ss Cyril and Methodius University, but only the Faculty of Law responded positively to this request. This approach enabled the creation of cooperation with a number of departments and teachers from different departments at the Faculty of Philosophy (Psychology, Sociology, Social Work and Social Policy, Security, Defense and Peace, History) which was and still is a good basis for promoting gender equality of the faculty and the University.

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The inclusion of teaching staff from other departments in the BA program at the Institute for Gender Studies (besides the professors employed at this Institute) has enabled, during the past 10 years, gender-sensitive curricula in other study fields at the Faculty of Philosophy. Most of the course chairs were specialists in gender, but there was also a course chair whose main specialization was not gender. Thus, at the few Departments at The Faculty of Philosophy gender courses are offered as an elective for the BA program. At the Department of Psychology, an elective course of Gender and Gender Base Violence was offered, at the Department of Sociology two subjects were offered - Gender and Society and Sociology of Women`s Work; at the Department of Defense, Security and Peace Course Gender Studies and Peace; at the Department of Pedagogy a course - Gender Education Policies. Although unpretentious, this step is important in promoting gender equality at the Faculty of Philosophy and the State University. This approach was necessary and important. Since gender studies are interdisciplinary, the involvement of experts from different scientific fields who have worked on gender issues, either as individuals or as a small group of enthusiasts on projects, gave us the opportunity to establish the network of experts. It also served as a basis for creating a curriculum of gender studies, which would enable students enrolled at the program to be able to acquire knowledge from several special areas during the tuition. At the same time, the involvement of lecturers from other institutes was a real challenge for a large segment of the academic staff at the Faculty of Philosophy to shift their academic focus in gender issues.

At the initiative of the Institute for Gender Studies and the Faculty of Philosophy, with the aim of promoting gender equality and the opportunity to introduce as many students as possible, 10 elective courses at the State University level were offered. This allows all the students at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, especially those who are not from the Social and Humanity sciences, to acquire certain knowledge about gender issues. The interest of students at the State University, especially those of the Natural and the Technical Sciences, as was mentioned previously, is not very large. The absence of gender curricula or courses from the faculties in Natural and Technical sciences is serious. The focus of these faculties still remains to profile subjects rather than social subjects.

Example of Gender-Sensitive Curricula at State University

In 2017, the MA program of gender studies was accredited. The program implementer is the Department of Gender Studies, in cooperation with several other departments at the Faculty of Philosophy. The program started in the academic year 2017/2018, lasts one academic year, and comprises of two semesters of lectures and offers fifteen courses, practical work in institutions and NGOs, and the preparation of the MA thesis as the final stage in studying. The first semesters include the following courses:

Compulsory courses:

- Research Methods in Gender Studies
- Gender Anthropology
- Modern Theories of Masculinity

Elective courses:

- Empirical Research on Gender-based Violence
- Technology and Gender
- Feminist Epistemology
- Theories of Gender

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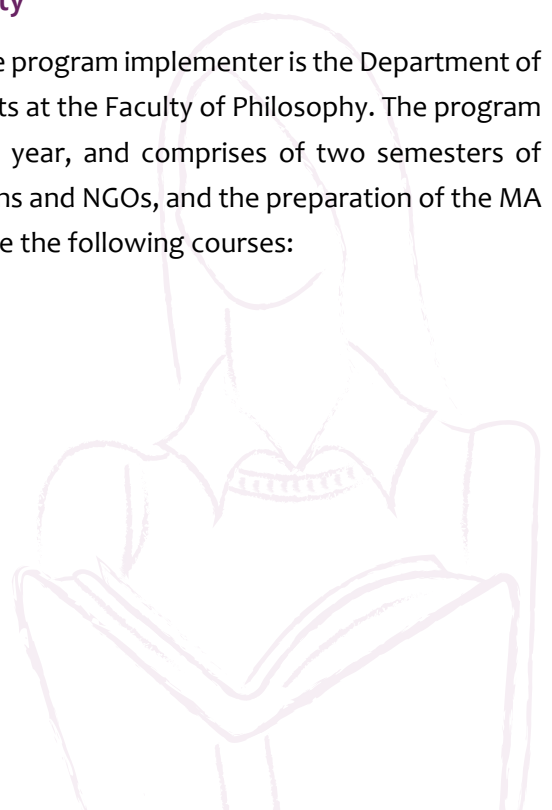
- Sexual and Reproductive Health - Rights and Policies

The second semester contains the following courses:

Compulsory courses:

- Multiculturalism and Gender Perspective
- Human Rights and Gender

Elective courses:

- Gender in International Relations
- History of Gender Relations
- Gender Perspective in Social Policies
- Managing Gender Differences in the Workplace
- Gender and Development

Upon completion of both semesters, students complete their practical work in different institutions, and confer with their mentors for the preparation of their MA thesis.

This MA program is carried out by nine university professors, PhDs, from the Institute of Gender Studies and from four other departments - the Department of Social Work and Social Politics, the Department of Psychology, the Department of Sociology and the Department of Pedagogy. The academic staff involved in this MA program are experts in their fields, with published scientific papers related to gender issues and have been involved in several projects with non-governmental organizations dealing with gender mainstreaming and gender equality. We consider this a great advantage for the program, because at the level of MA programs at the Faculty of Philosophy there are only a few programs that in the implementation of the program include professors from other departments. I would especially emphasize the readiness of the professors from other departments to prepare   completely new courses for this MA program. For example: Managing Gender Differences in the Workplace; Empirical Research on Gender-based Violence; Gender in International Relations; Gender and Development.

Within the framework of this MA program, lecturers are expected to invite gender experts from government institutions responsible for the implementation of gender practices, as well as experts from the NGO sector, most of whom have many years of experience in gender mainstreaming, within their lectures.

MAN ARE STILL IN POWER – INCLUSION/EXLUSION IN DECISION-MAKING

The establishment of the Gender Studies Institute at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University opened the possibility for a number of research projects that focus on gender equality and gender practice in the society. One of the first projects initiated by the Institute was Gender Practice of the Universities in the Republic of Macedonia: Inclusion/Exclusion of Women in The Decision Making Structures and Processes, supported by the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. The results of the survey published in 2011 showed that the number of women involved in decision-making processes at the universities in the Republic of Macedonia is extremely low. At the level of the Rector's (President's) Office at Ss. Cyril and Methodius, the women are rarest. Only one woman was a rector (president) in the University's 50-year existence. At the level of the Dean's Office, the percentage of women is 9.09 out of the total number of 23 deans.

Seven years after the survey was conducted, the situation has not changed much. If we compare numbers, in the academic year 2017/2018, out of 23 faculties of UKIM, only 4 faculty deans are women. The number of

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women vice deans is relatively higher and it is 26, out of 23 faculties of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University. The implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, in this case has also not shown a trend of increasing the percentage of women included in decision-making processes.

Table 1. Leading positions at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius (2016/2017 academic year)

Position	Total number	Man	Women
Rector (President)	1	1	0
Vicerector	4	2	2
Senat members	68	44	24
Dean	24	20	4
Vicedean	58	34	26

Source: Directory of University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Human Resources, 2017

Despite the increasing number of women employed at universities, their number is too small in decision-making structures, which indicates that universities have made little progress in promoting women's participation in management structures and decision-making processes.

Table 2. Teacher and support stuff in tertiary education, number and sex distribution, 2016/2017

	Number		Sex distribution %	
	men	women	men	women
Professor	417	672	38	62
Associate professor	288	393	42	58
Docent	492	534	48	52
Senior lecturer at faculty	41	16	72	28
Assistant	410	308	57	43
Junior assistant	56	117	32	68
Lector	43	8	84	16
Expert associate	3	8	27	73
Associate	58	65	47	53

Source: State statistical Office, 2017

Some researchers identified that one of the biggest obstacles to the inclusion of women in the decision-making positions in the Republic of Macedonia is the traditional male-oriented networks and the lower level of professional ambitions that women tend to have (Paunova, 2103). In addition, there is still widespread opinion that there is no gender discrimination in the academic world, which corresponds to the widespread view that in a society where there are legal regulation governing gender relations, gender inequality issues are solved.

The research showed that one of the essential reasons for the absence of women from the decision-making positions, i.e. for the presence of the glass ceiling phenomenon is the more seldom candidacy of women for leading positions, i.e. (non)motivation of the women to apply or compete for high working positions and the prejudices and stereotypes that are still present and that burden the women's participation in the decision-making processes.

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Women refrain from applying for careers in decision-making structures and processes due to this discouragement. Persistent social and cultural norms create exclusion mechanisms that constrain women's advancement within the universities. Some of them are related to the common belief in male and female professions. The traditional mother, wife, and housewife role obstructs the woman in balancing her professional and private life.

One of the main reason why the gender mainstreamed knowledge should be included in higher education curricula is the presence of gender stereotypes in the education system. Only with the re-evaluation and adjusting processes of gender sociaization to the realities of the life and development of modern trends, reproduction of the traditional patterns of behaviour and relationship between man and women, can be changed.

Conclusion

The implementation of gender equality and gender mainstreaming is a systematic political determination of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. In order to achieve this commitment, the government has drafted and approved a number of acts and strategies for gender mainstreaming and gender equality. A number of international conventions on women's rights and gender mainstreaming have been ratified. The last ratified international document is the Istanbul Convention. State policies on gender equality in the field of education, employment and decision-making processes are clearly defined. However, the real state of gender equality in these areas is far more complicated than it appears on paper and in theory. The main problem is the partial implementation of these activities and the lack of experts for what they would do.

As part of the society, but also as an important creator of the mainstream, higher education should play a key role in creating that human potential. But in order to do so, it is necessary that gender equality be integrated into higher education. Therefore, it was necessary, especially in the last 15 years, to redesign the existing study programs, but also to design new curricula in which the gender component and gender equality will be incorporated. In addition, higher education changes in terms of gender perspective should move towards changing the climate that hinders women to express their full potential. Formal and informal policies that take into account the needs of the diversity of individuals, including the feminist perspective, are necessary and expected and should be widely implemented and reinforced in the academic environment.

Can we say that we have made progress in gender equality in higher education in the state universities?

The answer to this question is very complex. Gender studies, as a visible field of academic research, have been introduced in the Republic of Macedonia at the end of the 20th century. As part of higher education, gender studies were introduced in 2007 as postgraduate studies (Social Sciences and Humanities Research-Euro-Balkan) and in 2009-2010 as undergraduate studies (Department of Gender Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy).

During the last decade, the increased curricula choices and the teaching staff specializing in gender studies might have been contributing to the slow, yet steady, inclusion of gender in higher education in general, and at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, in particular. It's not clear enough yet if this increase should be understood as the result of a combination of institutional mechanisms and changes in gender agenda as political interests of the society, the so called `democratization agenda` - with gender as one of its components, or as personal investments and strategies of individuals in academia.

From today`s perspective we can argue that visible step has been made in gender studies integration as part of higher education. Existing study programs have been redesigned, new curricula with a gender studies component and gender equality have been incorporated, new MA programs have been offered, although there is still uneven inclusion of gender in various disciplines and marginalization of the field throughout higher education curricula. But, we are still far from being able to claim that the gender mainstreaming and gender equality has been attained. Gender issues are still considered priority with Humanities and Social Sciences. In other state universities or other faculties at the state universities, gender issues are seen as less important and gender courses are not offered at all or are offered as an elective module.

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Women Empowerment and Legal Education

Legal Education is an essential tool for advancing women's empowerment and strengthening their role in the society. Gender-based stereotypes which have frequently prevented women to access legal education and professions in the past have been drastically reduced over the last decades. In the modern society women are an essential part of the legal environment, though in many areas legal empowerment of women is still yet to be fully developed and women still face different obstacles.

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WOMEN'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND LEGAL PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT

The research focuses on the issue of gender diversity in the composition of the arbitral tribunals and is mainly based on the analysis of the data collected through a survey conducted among a cohort of students of both genders coming from the MENA Region and participating in the 8th Willem C. Vis Middle East Pre-Moot, with the aim to examine the students' perspective on arbitration as an educational tool for promoting equal representation on arbitral tribunals. Moreover, the study analyses the outcome of another survey conducted among women and men arbitrators operating in different jurisdictions and participating in the same event, to assess the professionals' point of view on the existing gender gap. In the light of such unique set of data, the paper provides suggestions for promoting equal representation in the field and highlights the importance of educating women for the further development of arbitration as a powerful ADR method.

Keywords: Diversity in arbitration, equal representation on arbitral tribunals, international commercial arbitration, legal education, Willem C. Vis Moot, women arbitrators.

Introduction and Research Methodology

For quite a while gender equality has been considered as an area of focus in the debate regarding the composition of the arbitral tribunals, but in the recent past the topic has gained momentum since women, no matter how much educated they might be, are still underrepresented in the field of arbitration[2]. Although the presence of women at university law studies is high, women continue to experience inequitable treatment within the legal professions[3]. Indeed, despite that all over the world Law Schools offer courses related to arbitration, the number of women arbitrators is somehow limited when compared to their male counterparts. Women still represent a tiny part of the international arbitration community.

The lack of diversity, historically captured by the experts in the statement 'pale, male and stale'[4], has

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1   I would like to thank my students Ms. Reem Benshams, Ms. Maryam Shah and Ms. Fatema Abdulmalek for their assistance with the data collection.

2   For an overview of the involvement of women in international dispute resolution and its evolution, see Philippe, M., 2015, 'When Did the Doors to Dispute Resolution open for Women?, Special Issue on Diversity', Transnational Dispute Management, viewed 8 March 2018 from: www.transnational-dispute-management.com; Puig, S., 2016, 'Social Capital in the Arbitration Market', viewed 10 March 2018 from: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2311418; Brown, G. V., Kupfer Schneider, A., 2014, 'Gender Differences in Dispute Resolution Practice: Report on the ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Practice Snapshot Survey.' Marquette Law School Legal Studies Paper No. 14-04, Marquette University, Milwaukee.

3   Demeter, D. R., Easteal, P. & Nelson, N., 2015, 'Gender and International Commercial Arbitrators: Contributions to Sex Discrimination in Appointments', Transnational Dispute Management, viewed 27 February 2018 from: www.transnational-dispute-management.com.

4   This is a remark from Sarah Francois-Poncet in 2003, reported in an article by Goldhaber, M. D., 2004, 'Madame La Presidente - A woman who sits as president of a major arbitral tribunal is a rare creature. Why?', Transnational Dispute Management, viewed 2 March 2018 from: www.transnational-dispute-management.com. Indeed, it is reality that the first 'old men' of arbitration were white and from Europe or the United States and the subsequent developments confirmed such stereotype. For a thorough analysis of the common arbitrator's profile, see Seraglini, C., 2015,'Who Are the Arbitrators? Myths, Reality and Challenges', Kluwer Law International, Legitimacy: Myths, Realities, Challenges, ICCA Congress Series, pp. 589, viewed 2 April 2018 from: www.kluwerarbitration.com/.; van Haersolte-Van Hof J. J., 'Diversity in Diversity', 2015, Kluwer Law International, Legitimacy: Myths, Realities, Challenges, ICCA Congress Series, p. 638, viewed 18 March 2018 from: http://www.kluwerarbitration.com/.

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been already attested through several gender statistics published by various arbitral institutions; all of them, have confirmed that practitioners and users of international arbitration across the globe are facing diversity issues[5].

In recognition of such underrepresentation, the international arbitration community has been undertaking some initiatives in the attempt to fill the gender gap: on one side, the non-profit organisation Arbitral Women was established in 1993 to create a network of women practitioners operating in international dispute resolution, and is very active in promoting seminars and other activities to discuss and promote gender equality on arbitration[6]; on the other hand, a 'Pledge' has been drawn up to take actions towards the promotion of equal representation in arbitration, such as inclusion of women in bodies and conference panels, appointments made in a way to include a fair representation of women, systematic disclosure of gender statistics by the arbitral institutions[7]. Most recently, a new organisation, the Alliance for Equality in Dispute Resolution, has been formed to advocate for the cause of increasing diversity in the international dispute resolution community[8].

Undoubtedly, the empowerment of women comes with education and, in this context, the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot seems to be an excellent tool for training female students to pursue a career as arbitrator[9]. For this reason, the research has been developed to assess the impact of the Vis Moot on the students coming from the MENA region to participate in the 8th Annual Vis Middle East Pre-Moot[10] and on the professionals that devoted their time to serve as arbitrators in the competition. The point of view of both students and professionals has been investigated through an anonymous survey designed to collect information regarding the participants' perception on the composition of the tribunals in terms of gender, the impact of arbitration as educational tool or profession and suggestions to promote equal representation in the field, starting from the assumption that, in most jurisdictions, the percentage of women sitting on arbitral tribunals is still marginal or at least lower than the percentage of male arbitrators.

The Gender Gap at First Glance

It is widely recognized among scholars and practitioners that the gender imbalance in arbitration is mainly a consequence of lack of seniority of women in the legal professions, insufficient visibility of qualified women lawyers and some degree of perceived or real bias in favour of men[11]. Some years ago, a male author provoked stark reactions by describing the arbitration landscape as follows:

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5   For statistics on the current gender imbalance, see Berwin Leighton Paisner, Diversity on Arbitral Tribunals. Background Note, Viewed 3 April 2018 from:https://www.blplaw.com/media/download/Diversity_on_arbitral_tribunals_-_background_note.pdf.

6   For information see the official website https://www.arbitralwomen.org. In this regard, see Philippe, M., 2016, 'Speeding up the path for gender equality', Transnational Dispute Management, viewed 19 March 2018 from: www.transnational-dispute-management.com.

7   The pledge, which has been awarded as best development in arbitration at the Global Arbitration Review (GAR) Awards 2017, has currently 2,646 signatories. More details are available at The Pledge, Equal Representation in Arbitration, viewed 3 April 2018 from: http://www.arbitrationpledge.com/.

8   The organisation, founded by Lucy Greenwood and Rashda Rana, focuses on addressing the lack of diversity in relation to ethnicity and geography in international arbitration, and is also engaged in addressing the issue of the under-representation of women in the field. For more details see the official website The Alliance for Equality in Dispute Resolution, viewed 3 April 2018 from: https://www.allianceequality.com/.

9   See the official website The Annual Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot, viewed 2 April 2018 from: https://vismoot.pace.edu/.

10   The competition, hosted at the Royal University for Women, Bahrain, and organized in collaboration with the Commercial Law Development Programme (CIDP - US Department of Commerce), CILE (Center for International Legal Education of the University of Pittsburgh), Bahrain Chamber for Dispute Resolution (BCDR-AAA), Mena Chambers Bahrain (MCB), UNCITRAL and ICC (International Court of Arbitration), is one of the several pre-moots arranged worldwide in preparation for the Vienna Moot.

11   Greenwood, L., & Baker, C., 2015, 'Is the balance getting better? An update on the issue of gender diversity in international arbitration', Arbitration International, pp. 413–423, viewed 11 March 2018 from: https://doi.org/10.1093/arbint/aiv034.

An observer from planet Mars may well observe that the international arbitral establishment on earth is white, male and English speaking and is controlled by institutions based in the United States, England and mainland European Union. For the most part, arbitrators and counsel appearing actively in international arbitral proceedings originate from these countries. The majority in a multi-member international arbitral tribunal is always white. The red alien from Mars will be puzzled in his own way because the majority of the published disputes before international arbitral tribunals involve parties from the developing countries and nearly three-quarters of the people on Earth live in those countries and are not white and more than half the total population are women[12].

Despite such criticism, some experts consider the appointment of the arbitrators being mainly outcome based[13]. Others - a minority indeed -, stress that it is not always accurate to describe the pool of international arbitrators with the stereotype of the senior western man, because nowadays the tribunals appear more diverse in terms of gender, ethnic and national backgrounds[14]. Moreover, the Queen Mary International Survey on 'Choices in International Arbitration' conducted in 2010 shows that, when choosing an arbitrator to deal with, diversity is not the first thing that the parties think of; whereas open-mindedness and fairness, prior experience of arbitration, quality of awards, availability, knowledge of the applicable law and reputation are the key factors that influence corporations' choices about arbitrators[15].

Indeed, over the last few years the scenario seems to be slightly improved. For instance, an increased number of arbitral institutions has 'stepped up' and decided to publish diversity-related statistics as way to increase awareness and define the magnitude of the problem. In 2015 for the first time the ICC, world's leading arbitral institution, disclosed statistics on the gender balance of the ICC tribunals as part of the Court's ongoing strategy to enhance both the diversity and transparency of international arbitration. According to the latest ICC figures available, of 1,411 arbitrators appointed in 2016, 209 were women, compared with 136 of 1,313 total arbitrators in 2015[16]. The LCIA statistics for 2016 indicate that of 496 individual appointments, 102 (20.6%) were of female arbitrators[17]. As compared to 2015, this represents an increase in the number of female candidates selected by the LCIA Court and nominees, in contrast to the selection of female candidates by the parties, which saw a considerable decrease[18]. As far as the SIAC is concerned, the report published in 2017 reveals that of the 145 arbitrators appointed by SIAC, 43 (or 29.7%) were women. This is

12   Nathan K. V. S. K., 2004, 'Why Did You Not Get the Right Arbitrator?', Mealey's International Arbitration Report.

13   See, Berwin Leighton Paisner, Diversity on Arbitral Tribunals. Background Note, Viewed 3 April 2018 from:https://www. blplaw.com/media/download/Diversity_on_arbitral_tribunals_-_background_note.pdf.

14   Dalmaso Marques, R., 2015, 'To Diversify or Not to Diversify? Report on the Session Who Are the Arbitrators?', Kluwer Law International, Legitimacy: Myths, Realities, Challenges, ICCA Congress Series, pp. 579, viewed 1 April 2018 from: http://www. kluwerarbitration.com/.

15   Queen Mary University of London, School of International Arbitration: 2010 Choices in International Arbitration, viewed 4 April 2018 from: http://www.arbitration.qmul.ac.uk/research/2010/.

16   It seems important to highlight that the ICC appoints arbitrators in less than a quarter of cases but in 2016 the institution was responsible for appointing a higher percentage of women (46.5%) than the parties themselves (41.1%) and by co-arbitrators (12.4%). The Court also appointed 57 women arbitrators upon proposal from an ICC regional representative – known as national committees – and made 38 direct appointments. In 2016, women were appointed in one third of all emergency arbitrator cases. Detailed data are available in: International Chamber of Commerce, viewed 31 March 2018 from: https:// iccwbo.org/media-wall/news-speeches/icc-court-sees-marked-progress-gender-diversity/. In this regard, see also Philippe, M., 2017, 'Diversity & Transparency - ICC Gender Statistics', Transnational Dispute Management, viewed 22 March 2018 from: www.transnational-dispute-management.com.

17   Of the 102 female arbitrators appointed: 80 (78.4%) were selected by the LCIA Court; 9 (8.8%) were selected by the parties; and 13 (12.7%) were selected by the parties' nominees. Putting this into context, in 2016: of the 197 appointees selected by the LCIA Court, 40.6% were women; of the 219 appointees selected by the parties, 4.1% were women; and of the 80 appointees selected by the nominees, 16.3% were women. The full report, 2016: A Robust Caseload, is published in: The London Court of International Arbitration, 2016, viewed 22 February 2018 from: http://www.lcia.org/LCIA/reports.aspx.

18   In 2015 figures were 28.2%, 6.9% and 4% for the LCIA Court, parties and nominees, respectively.

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an increase from 2016, where 22.8% of the arbitrators appointed by SIAC were women[19].

The above statistics show some progress in the direction of gender diversity. The institutions are making efforts to appoint more diverse candidate which demonstrates that parity is a focal issue in the legal community. Nevertheless, women arbitrators are sidelined in international commercial disputes[20] and this calls for resolute measures to be undertaken in order to balance the existing gap. One of such measures is promoting the participation of law students in the Vis Moot Competition and this is the reason for the survey group chosen for the research.

Survey Group Profile: The Students' Viewpoint

A cadre of 40 students, out of 120 participants, agreed to complete the survey[21]. Their age ranged between 18 and 40 years old; however, most of the students interviewed were in their 20's.
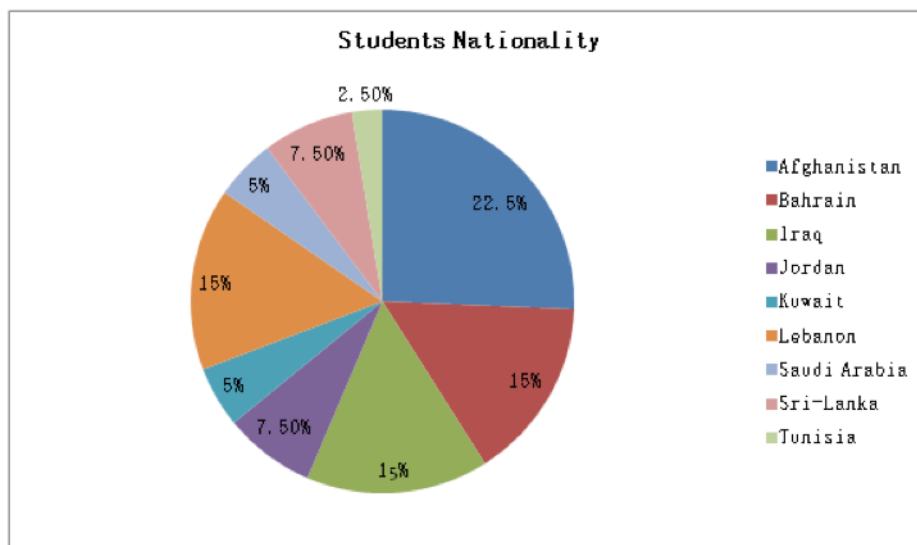
Figure 1

According to the pie chart, most of respondents were students from Middle Eastern countries. In fact, out of the total number of students the majority were Afghans (25% of the total), followed by students from Bahrain, Iraq and Lebanon (15% of the total). The Sri-Lankan and Jordanian students were 7.5% each of the total. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were only 5%, whereas the minority were the students from North Africa (2.5%).

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19   The Singapore International Arbitration Center, 2017, 'Annual Report', viewed 30 March 2018 from: http://www.siac.org.sg/2013-09-18-01-57-20/2013-09-22-00-27-02/annual-report contains the statement that the SIAC is ever mindful of the need to do more to promote diversity. As of now, of the 22 members of SIAC Court of Arbitration, 4 (or 18.2%) are women. Women constitute 75% of SIAC's management and Secretariat. The full report is available at: http://www.siac.org.sg/2013-09-18-01-57-20/2013-09-22-00-27-02/annual-report.
20   Santiago Bahia L., 2018, 'Report on Women in International Arbitration', Arbitral Women Newsletter, p. 10.
21   Specifically, 11 males and 29 females, which is the 33.3 % of the attendees.

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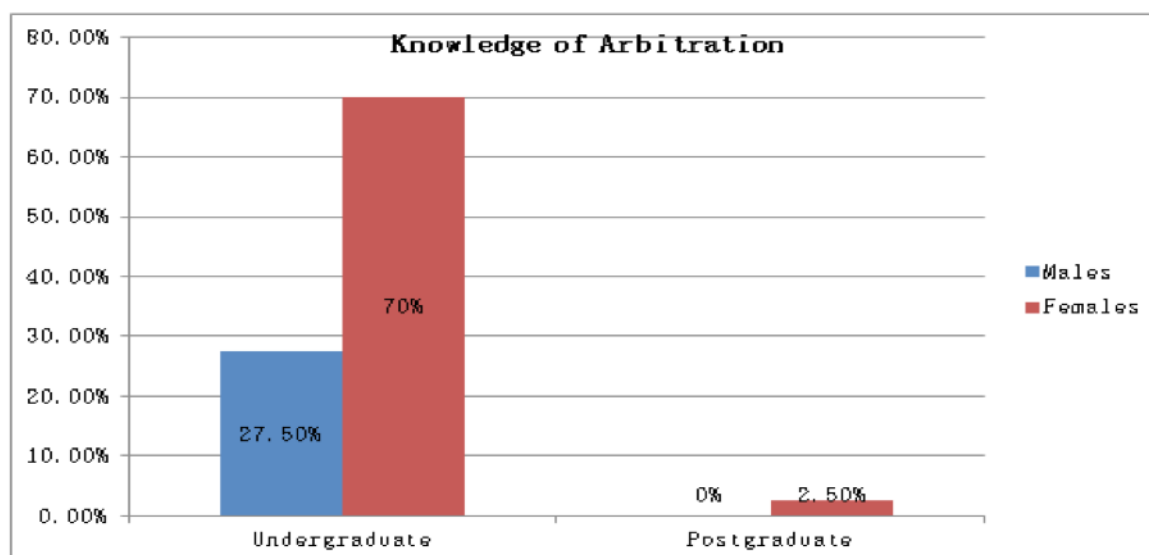
Figure 2

As illustrated in the graph, apart for 1 student, all the participants declared to have become aware of the possibility to resort to arbitration for the settlement of disputes as an alternative to the State Court litigation during their undergraduate studies[22].
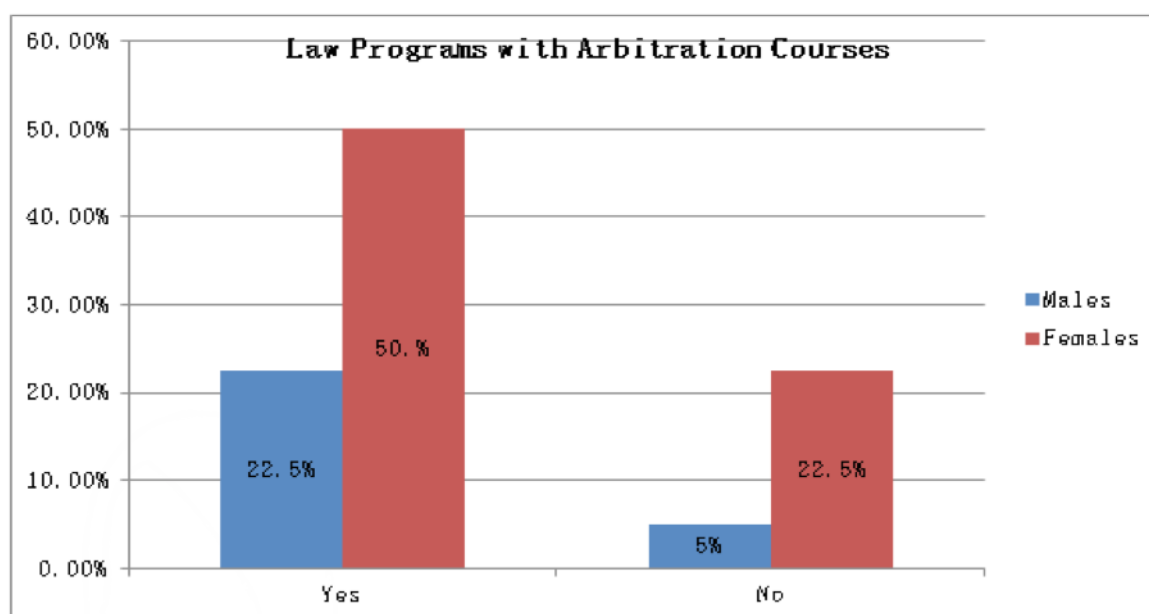
Figure 3

Because of the progressive movement towards the use of arbitration as an alternative to litigation, the survey shows that a good percentage of Law Schools in the MENA region (72.5%) embeds in the curriculum courses related to arbitration. However, there are still a few universities (27.5%) which do not offer such type of courses as part of the Law Programme.

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22   Degree of studies: 11 males undergraduates; 28 females undergraduates; 1 female postgraduate.
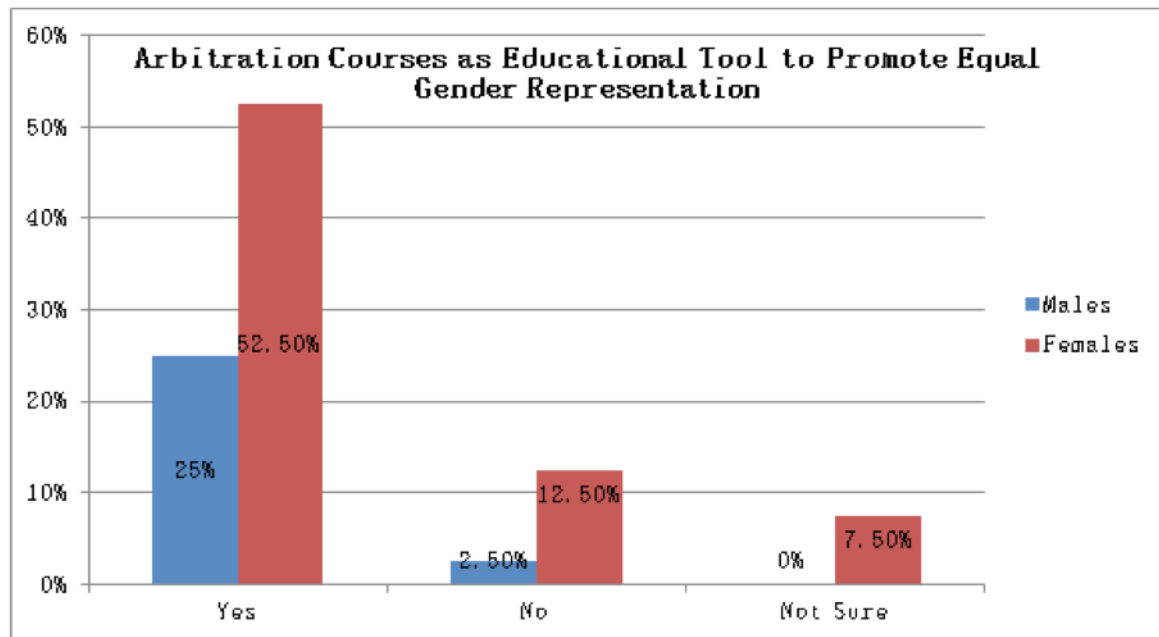
Figure 4

As highlighted in the graph, most respondents (77.5%)[23] agreed that studying arbitration is the first step for promoting equal representation in arbitration. This result demonstrates that the students' participation in the Vis Moot facilitates the development of a cultural understanding of current issues debated in the arbitral field. The interesting data is that, among those who disagree, the majority are female students, which is the 12.5% of the total in contrast to the 2.5% of male students. Moreover, 7.50% of the females could not express a clear opinion on the topic, whereas all the male students took a position.
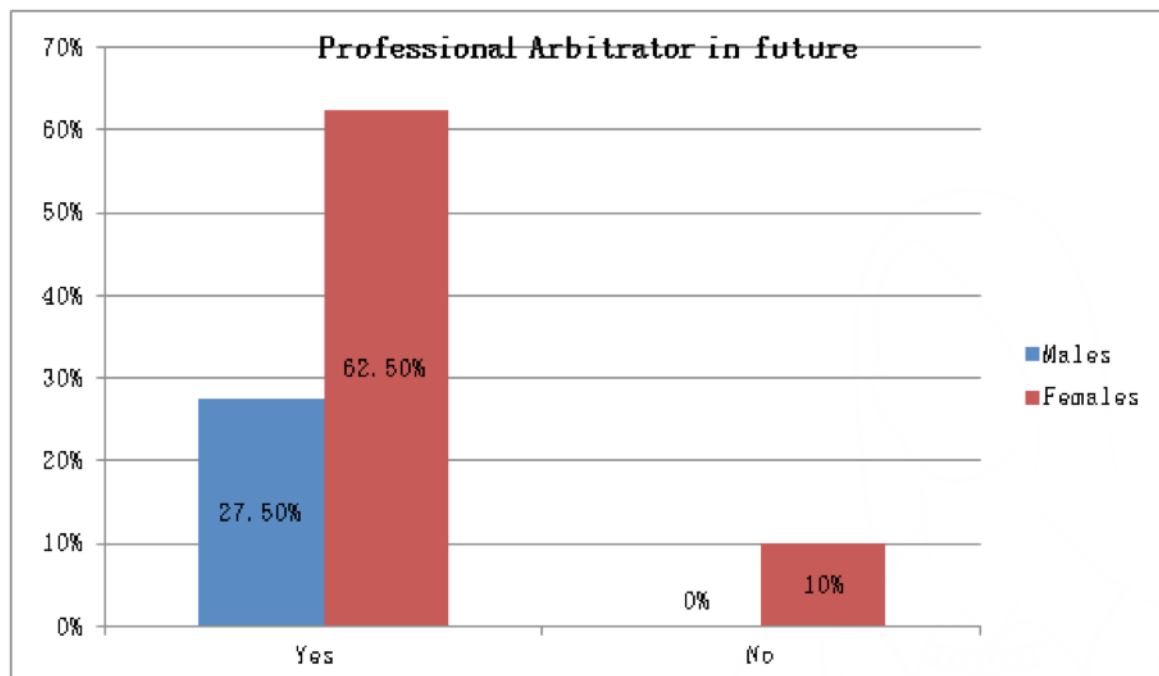
Figure 5

The graph reveals that almost all cohort of students interviewed is willing to pursue a career as professional arbitrator. It is evident that the Vis Moot Competition helps the students in acquiring a proper

23   More specifically, 52.5% of female students and 25% of males.

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understanding of the world of arbitration and trains them to work in the field. Nonetheless, there is still a minority of students, all women, unwilling to practice as professional arbitrator in the future. None of those students identified specific challenges or obstacles in pursuing a career as arbitrator, which might probably be interpreted as a reluctance deriving from personal aspirations rather than difficulties in the specific working area.

- In answering the question regarding the techniques to increase the number of women appointed as arbitrators, the respondents highlighted different solutions which can be summarized as follows:

- Education, because the real empowerment of women can be achieved only by providing female students with the same opportunities to learn.

- Awareness campaigns, in the light of the assumption that unless a motive is created and supported no equality will be achieved.

- Inclusion of gender equality in arbitration rules.

- Encouraging clients to appoint female arbitrators by submitting lists with an equal number of arbitrators of both genders.

- Activation of arbitration centers in countries where the use of arbitration is still underdeveloped and support the inclusion of more women in the newly established institutions.

Legal Professionals and Equal Representation on Arbitral Tribunals: Survey Analysis.

A group of 70 legal professionals attended the Middle East Vis Pre-Moot. However, only 17 participants agreed to complete the survey. Their age ranged between 20 and 60 years old. Most of them were between the mid 20's to the mid of 30's.
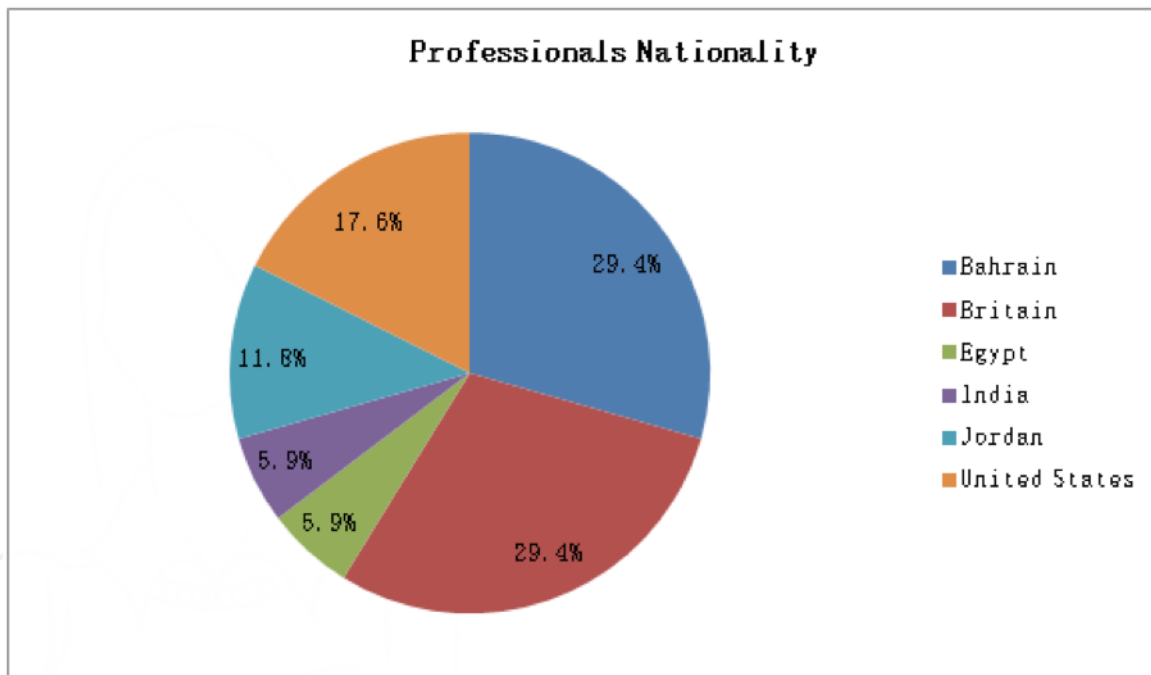
Figure 6

The slices of the pie chart reveal that most professionals were British and Bahrainis, equivalent to more than half of the total,[24] followed by Americans with a percentage of 17.6% and the Jordanians, with a percentage of 11.7% each. The minority were Egyptians and Indians, only 5.9% each of the total.
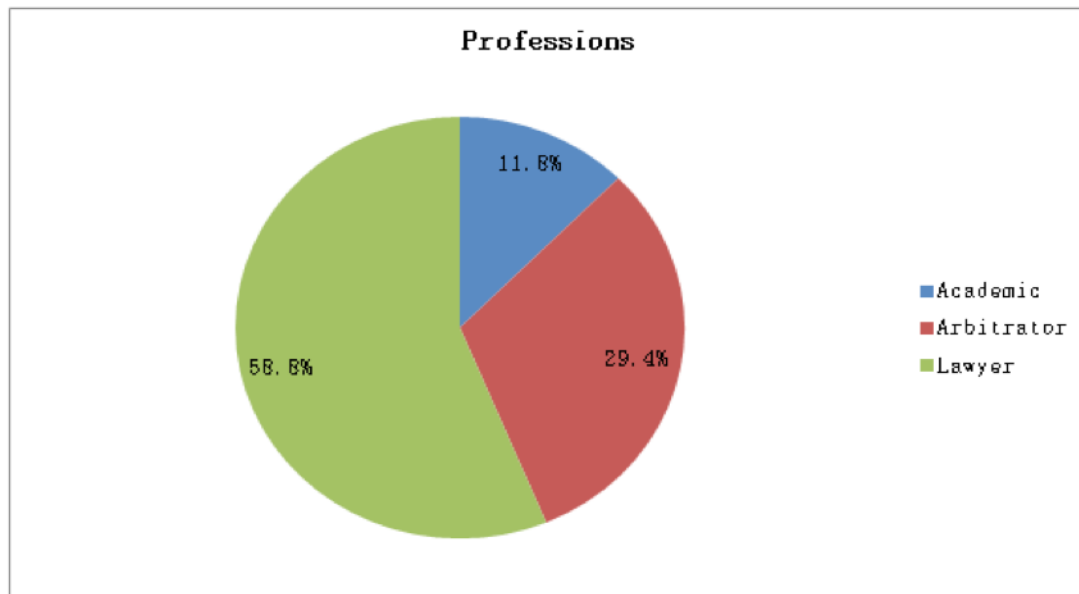
Figure 7

The pie chart shows that the lawyers amount to the largest percentage of respondents, being the 58.8% of the total, followed by professional arbitrators, roughly the 30%. Only a minority of academics participated in the survey.
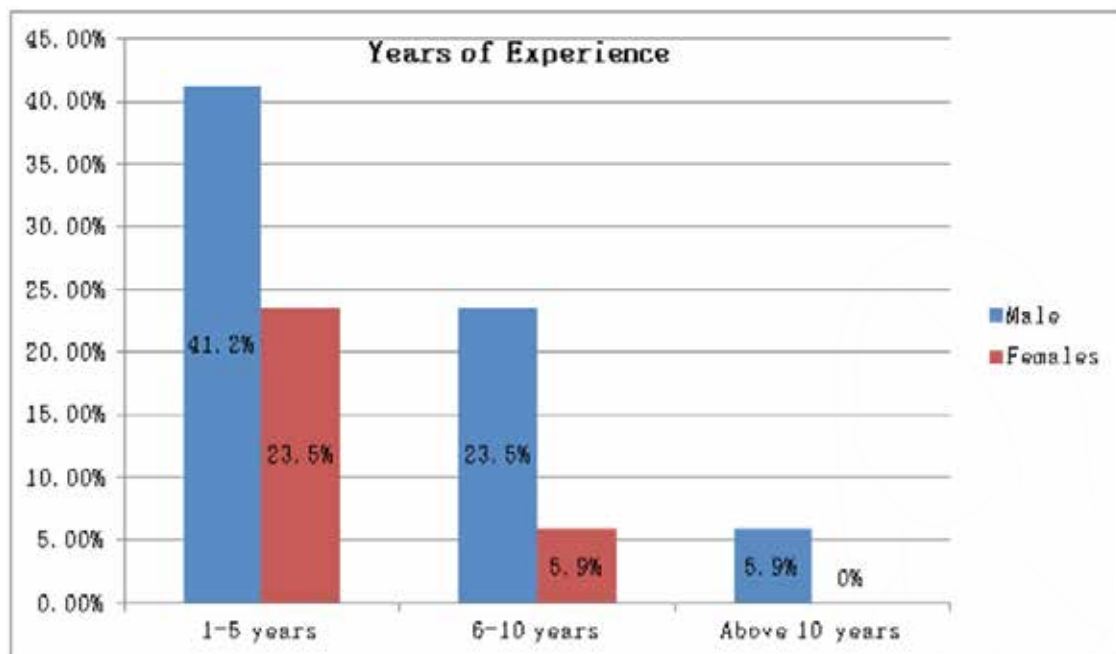
Figure 8

The graph illustrates that most of the professionals, both males and females, have acquired an approximate experience of 1-5 years in arbitration[25], whereas a minority of females, just 5.9%, claimed to have an experience which varies between 6-10 years. This is a quite interesting, but not surprising data, when compared to the

24   Specifically, the 58.8% of the respondents.
25   Specifically, 64.7% of the total.

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percentage of males within the same range of experience, that is 23.5%. None of the women professionals gained an experience of more than 10 years, in contrast with the 5.9% of males, which confirms that there is an urgent need to implement strategies for the promotion of gender equality in the field.
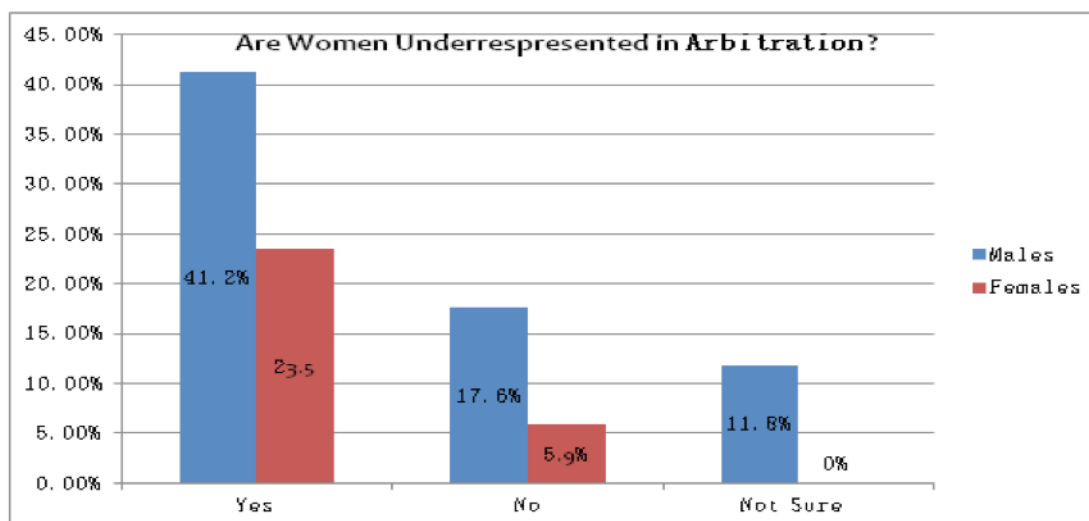
Figure 9

As revealed by the graph, a significant percentage of professionals of both genders agreed that women are underrepresented[26], which confirms that women are still outsiders in the arbitration field and there is at least an 'unwitting bias' towards the appointment of women arbitrators[27]. However, almost a quarter of respondents[28] seems not to perceive a gender imbalance in the composition of the arbitral tribunals[29] and roughly 10% of the professionals could not respond to the question.
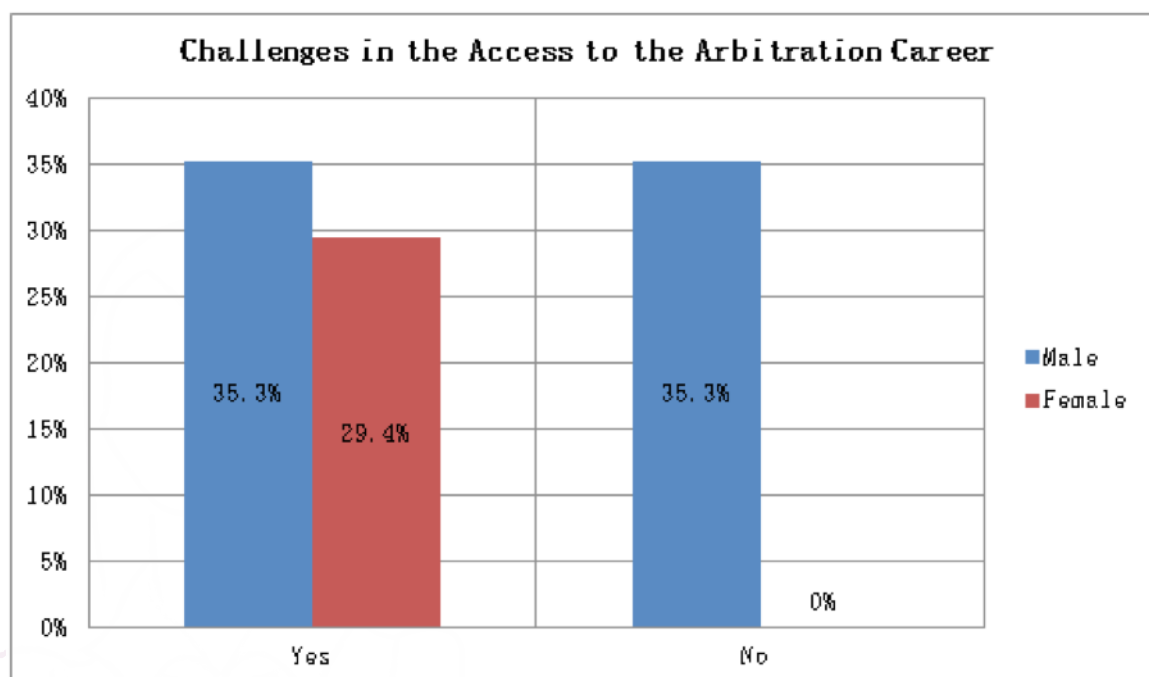
Figure 10

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26   A total of 64.7% professionals believed that women are being underrepresented.
27   One of the professionals declared that, in his opinion, in the MENA Region women are well represented in the arbitration community and that such representation needs to be reflected in the number of arbitrators appointed.
28   Precisely 23.5% of the total.
29   Out of which 17.6% are males.

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As illustrated in the graph, most part of the professionals declared to have faced challenges to start a career as professional arbitrator[30], with the percentage of males which is the same for both responses.

Among the challenges in pursuing a career as arbitrator, the professionals have emphasized the following:

- The composition of the arbitral tribunals is often affected by the legal expertise required in the specific proceedings, especially when national laws from Arab jurisdictions are to be applied.

- Arbitration is characterized by a 'closed club mentality' and certain groups of arbitrators seem to play a dominant role in terms of number of appointments.

- The parties often choose male arbitrators and the institutes tend to appoint male case managers. At the early stage of the career is almost impossible for a woman to be appointed.

- Difficulties in developing a reputation as a recognised arbitrator to parties and the arbitrators' community.

- Lack of opportunity for women. In general, women are given less chances to act as arbitrator, they are not visible and usually are not considered when parties or organization appoint panels. Young women are treated as secretaries and are underestimate on tribunals.

- Bias towards women since this is still considered as a male dominated field.

- Arbitration is a competitive market which is quite difficult to enter because it is "supersaturated" (especially in some European countries). Any potential arbitrator must acquire the necessary skills and constantly improve them in order to be frequently appointed.

Survey participants who responded to the open-ended question, 'In which ways would you promote gender equality on arbitral tribunals?' indicated the following:

- Education and, more specifically, the introduction of arbitration basics in the early stage the university studies; attraction of more women to Law school; promotion of opportunities for female law students, such as the participation in Vis moot.

- Qualifications: continuous training and workshops targeting legal professionals and students of both genders to give them the opportunity to gain experience and skills.

- Organization of campaigns to promote self-confidence for both genders and raise awareness on gender equality. In fact, initiatives such as "the pledge" highlight unconscious bias towards women arbitrators and require actions to address any imbalance. Ultimately, the promotion of equality should not be based on gender rather on the qualifications.

- Inclusion of more women on the lists for appointment by the parties and the arbitral institutions.

- Self-motivation. Women must push themselves and support each other. For instance, creating opportunities to demonstrate competence, such as speaking at conferences, might be a way to demonstrate competence and overcome any bias.

- Dispute resolution clauses including gender provisions, especially for gender specific cases.

- Inviting arbitral institutions to implement lists of female arbitrators' specialization-wise and issue brochures briefing the eminent experience of women in arbitration as way to defeat bias.

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30   Specifically, 29.4% of females and 35.2% of males.

- To recommend diverse arbitrator profiles to clients and persuade them to appoint more female practitioners.

- Providing support to diversity initiatives like the Pledge or Arbitral Women.

Gender Diversity in Arbitration: When Education Meets the Legal Profession

At the outset, based on the response rate, the survey conducted during the 8th Vis Middle East Pre-moot portrays a scenario where the students seemed to be more responsive than the professionals in providing support to the data collection[31].

The results depict that three-thirds of the students reckoned that studying courses related to arbitration at the Law School is a powerful educational tool to promote equal gender representation in the field, and 90% of the respondents declared to be willing to work as arbitrator in the future. Among the suggestions received to support equality in the composition of arbitral tribunals, training female students and equipping them with the qualifications required to be potential arbitrators, leading the parties or the institutions to appoint more women as arbitrators were the most common answers. Spreading awareness was the second highest recommendation received.

The survey also reflects that the majority of professionals consider the field of arbitration affected by a lack of women and declared to have faced, at the inception of the career, some challenges mostly related to the fact that the arbitral world is an 'elite club' where just well-known arbitrators are appointed in most of the proceedings. Some women considered themselves discriminated in the appointments because of their gender. Professionals and students partially shared similar views on the appropriate measures to defeat the existing imbalance. Further recommendations include the incorporation of gender clauses in the arbitration agreement and/or in the arbitration rules as a strategy to encourage clients to appoint more female arbitrators.

The data collected give us insights regarding a segment of participants in a Moot court programme designed and conceived to be an educational tool besides the competition itself. In a race, just one wins, whereas in this programme what matters the most is the sense of inclusion that, in different ways and for a variety of aspects, transform all the participants in winners.

One can argue whether the lack of gender diversity makes a clear difference for the parties or not, inasmuch the appointment of the members of the arbitral tribunals has a clear subjective component. Indeed, when appointing the arbitrators, the parties are understandably much more concerned with the solution for the dispute and seek the right arbitrator to decide their own case. For this reason, start thinking 'outside the box' and give more women the chance to be heard in order to overcome any unconscious bias is the first conscious step to be taken.

The change is a process catalyzed by inspiration and that is why we need to believe that the best thing one can do to promote values is to behave in a proactive way and to be ambassador in support of equal opportunities. It is now time to admit that the first and utmost movement towards gender equality in arbitration starts within the Law Schools, which have the responsibility to prepare female students to be future advocates and to educate them to speak up their truth; such movement continues at the arbitral institutions, that must be in charge of tracking and disclosing the gender of the parties and the institution appointed arbitrators involved in any arbitrations they administer.

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31   Indeed, the 33% of students filled out the survey against the 24% of professionals.

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Notwithstanding all the challenges, something is moving. Countries very conservative and with strict hierarchies, like Saudi Arabia, in 2016 have appointed the first female arbitrator[32]. The gender statistics reveal positive numbers, especially in the institutional appointments. Worldwide initiatives to advance equal representation are flourishing. It is undeniable that the most effective and pragmatic solution is yet to come. But, in the meantime, combating any prejudice seems to be the only meaningful way to oppose the woeful underrepresentation of women in arbitration and, more specifically, on the arbitration tribunals.

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32   Almulhim, M., 2016, ' The First Female Arbitrator in Saudi Arabia' in *Kluwer Arbitration Blog,* viewed 3 March 2018 from: http://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2016/08/29/the-first-female-arbitrator-in-saudi-arabia/.

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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:
BAHRAINI WORKING WOMAN'S RIGHTS A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

There is a correlation between the development of the world and the development of laws henceforth the laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain have been amended to better suit the current conditions as well as to regulate and enhance performance. One of the main legal aspects which has developed in the Kingdom concerns the rights of women, particularly the rights which have been stated in the Kingdom's labor laws. It must be noted that the amendments to women's rights in the labor laws is possible due to the country's faith in women perusing work in the Kingdom of Bahrain. One of the major roles of the Kingdoms' development in this aspect is the Supreme Council for Women due to the unwavering to support of the rights of working women in all fields since 2001. Although the development of the Kingdom's Labor Laws in relation to women is evident, the comparison with other states' is crucial to acknowledge the possible direction for legal progressions that must be made in order for the women's rights in the Kingdom's labor laws to reach their optimum. Thus, an initial comparison between the previous Labor Law (No. 23 of 1976) and the current Labor Law (No. 36 of 2012) is conducted in order to accentuate the progressive nature of the women rights in the Kingdom. Moreover, a comparison with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states' labor laws, specifically the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is conducted to compare and contrast women's rights in labor laws within the gulf region. According to United Nation, women rights are not only a fundamental part of human rights, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

Keywords: woman, labor law, empowerment and discrimination, sustainable society, working conditions

Introduction: Bahraini Women

Supreme Council of Women of the Kingdom of Bahrain mentioned in its report that Bahrain has taken pioneering steps in the field of women's empowerment, developing women's capabilities and enabling their participation in society Through statistical data, a clear vision of the current situation of women in the Kingdom of Bahrain is portrayed throughout various sectors including education and healthcare, as well as economic, social and political areas. This document describes what is experienced by women in these sectors and demonstrates the remarkable evolution in the role of women and their ability to be an equal partner in building a competitive and prospective society. Bahraini women today are at a more advanced stage in the process to build a sustainable society and have a greater ability to attain the highest positions in the Kingdom. Whereby women in Bahrain today are Ministers, Judges and Business Women, yet still maintaining their natural presence as a family nurturer, which in turn results as a nurturer of the nation as a whole. Perhaps, the most contributing factor to enhance the advancement of Bahraini women has been the harmony between official and civil efforts which has led to a fast improvement in the status of Bahraini women and its progress. This is reflected through

the conviction that comprehensive development cannot be achieved without the advancement of the status of women, who represent half of the society.

According to population estimates, the population of Bahrain reached 1,314,562 people in 2014, 39% of which were female while the remaining 61% were male. The total number of Bahraini citizens totaled to reach 630, 744 people during the same year. The results also indicated that 49% of this figure represented female Bahrainis and 51% represented male Bahraini citizens. The ratio of women to men in the Kingdom is roughly equal throughout all age groups, especially the Bahraini population of adults at a working age. Bahrain has been a pioneer in the region to dedicate attention to education at an early stage, achieving great success on all levels, especially the education of women. In the academic year 2013-2014, the percentage of female students in higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain amounted to 60%; thus, outperforming the number of male students which in number which was 40% causing a gap of 20% between the genders. Such high levels of education for Bahraini women significantly contributed to the empowerment and increased the participation of women in economic activity.

The percentage of women's representation of the total Bahraini workforce increased from 4.9% to 31.8% during the period 1971–2013. This increase reflects the positive effects of education, laws and regulations issued in the Kingdom, and the realization of the principle of equal opportunities, between men and women in rights and duties while pursuing public service.

Within the public sector, women's representation ratios rose above the level of men in educational and specialized jobs in the Kingdom during 2012. As for the private sector, the total percentage of representation of women compared to men was: 48% in the field of office work, 36% in the field of business, sales and trade, 42% in the field of professional technical and scientific operations, and 32% in administrative and supervisory fields, and about 24% in other fields, in the second quarter of 2015.

The rights of women working in Bahraini labor law

Women joined men's legal ability to work in all fields is a basic requirement. The human effort for human development in any country seeks the well-being and the generosity of its members, it is affected by both the quality and the psychological and social conditions of the individual, as influenced by his competence and artistic skill. To provide the worker with suitable working conditions to be able to give and create.[33]

Accordingly, these conditions must be provided to working women who must also be covered by a number of legal guarantees which enable them to play their role in the service of society. In this regard, the legislator of the Kingdom of Bahrain was concerned about the work of women. The legislation provided a number of guarantees and rights for working women. These guarantees were provided in Bahraini Labor Law No. 36 of 2006, its amendments, regulations, instructions and decisions issued by law[34].

Before we address the rights and guarantees of women working in Bahrain's labor law, we therefore strive to address women's right to work in the Bahraini constitution.

Since the establishment of the State in 1972, the Bahraini legislation has been concerned with the equality of citizens in rights and duties, including the right to work. Starting with the Constitution of 1973, passing through the important legal and political documents, which received the satisfaction of the Bahraini people at 98.4%. This original 1973 constitution established the groundwork of equality between men and women regarding the right to work. Carrying forward, the 1973 constitution was amended and enhanced resulting

33   Dr. Slah Doab, 2014, explaining the rules of labor law in the kingdom of Bahrain, 2 press, Bahrain university. P45
34   Bahraini Labor Law No. 36 of 2006 and its amended.

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in the establishment of the 2002 National Charter[35] which states in the fourth article: "To amend the basis of governance, cooperation and compassion link and confidence among citizens, freedom, equality, security, tranquility, science, social solidarity and equal opportunities for citizens pillars of It combines guaranteed by the State. Moreover, the text of the second paragraph in Article 13 states "The State shall ensure the provision of job opportunities for citizens and fair conditions." Therefore, Article 9 paragraph (d), stipulates: "The law regulates the relationship between workers and employers on an economic basis, considering the rules of social justice."

The right of women to work was affirmed by the law which established the right to maternity leave and adequate child care, including health and social guarantees and the provision of suitable working conditions. In addition, the Charter reflected the society's readiness for women's partnerships within society and other supporting services through the assertion of their constitutional and legal right to equality, education, education, guidance, training and work, and enabling them to take their rightful role in society building and progress.

In the area of determining the right to work for women in the ordinary legislation, the Bahraini Labor Law No. 36 of 2012 is clearly written to affirm the equality of men and women in labor rights, where the worker is defined as, 'Every natural person employed in consideration of a wage with an employer and under his management or supervision.'[36]

Provisions on the conditions and elements of employment of women

The legislator of Bahrain and the legislator of UAE make it clear that the nature of women is different from the nature of men. Therefore, works that do not conform to the nature of women because of the health risks that affect their safety and health, Moreover, working at night may not be in line with the role of women in caring for the family in terms of their duties and responsibilities towards their families and children, and because of the moral and security risks involved, for these reasons and considerations of caring for women, Both legislators have taken care of women working with guarantees and controls to ensure their health and moral protection. Health protection is achieved by preventing women from operating in certain businesses and industries that may affect their health, moral protection is achieved by prohibiting them from operating at times that may affect them morality.[37]

Protecting women from dangerous or hard work

Bahraini Labour law stipulates in article 30 that: " The Minister shall issue a resolution determining the events, jobs and events where it is not permitted to employ women during the night. Moreover, in article 31 added "The Minister shall, upon obtaining the opinion of the concerned authorities, issue a resolution determining the occupations for which the employment of women is prohibited". While in Article 29 of the UAE Labor Law stipulates that "the employment of women in hazardous, arduous or harmful work, whether in health or morals, or in other work, which is determined by a decision of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs shall be prohibited after consultation with competent authorities."[38]

Through these two texts, Bahraini and Emirati legislators have given the Minister of Labor the authority to define the industries and hard work that women cannot do or the industries and jobs in which the work

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35   - constitutional law of the kingdom of Bahrain 1972 and the amendment 2002, articles 9&13.
36   Bahraini Labor Law No. 36 of 2012, article 1.
37   Dr. Said Abdel Salam,2016, the mediator in the new labor law, Dar Al Nahda Arab, Cairo.P102.
38   UAE labour law No 8 OF 1980 and its amended.

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of women is a danger to their health, after a review by the competent official authorities. We note that both of the above articles are in Both laws came in absolute form so that the Minister of Labor has the right to define these works and industries, as well as to determine the times after taking the opinion of the competent authorities, that is, each of them. Can accommodate any work, whether hard or dangerous to working women.[39]

The Bahraini Minister of Labour has issued a resolution on the work and times in which the employment of women is prohibited. This decision was issued also by the Minister of Labor of the UAE. These works included: 1. Mining, quarrying and all works related to the extraction of minerals and underground stones 2. Metal smelting 3. Hydrating mirrors by mercury 4. Manufacture of explosive materials, crackers and related works 5. Welding of all kinds of metals 6 - Processes which are in circulation or manufacture lead material such as: lead smelting, lead oxidation, lead generation industry 7 - blending and kneading operations in the manufacture and repair of electric batteries 8 - cleaning workshops that do the work described in items 9 - asphalt industry 10 - industry Rubber 11 - Shipping, unloading and storage of goods in ponds, docks, ports, warehouses, receiving and maintenance of vessels 12 - Painting with Doku 13 - Management or control of mobile machines 14 – killing and Cutting animals 15 - Working in bars.[40]

By reviewing these prohibited industries and business for women, the legislator show that women are more concerned with health workers, especially pregnant women, because they have a negative impact on their health. These industries and businesses are likely to harm working women, such as mirroring mirrors and mercury processes. In circulation or manufacture of lead material, and it also involves considerable difficulty to do, such as underground work in mines, quarries and so on.[41]

Prohibition of women's work overnight

There is no doubt that working at night is more stressful than daytime work. The many studies that dealt with the implications of working nightly on the health of workers revealed two main causes of health risks: sleep disturbances and changing dietary habits, where night work may show women, especially during days Their monthly menstruation is too stressful to make their need. Protection was first and required by men's need for protection. [42]

The work of night has social and moral effects that are harmful to the family, especially if the mother works night with children in need of care. In addition, the continuation of women in carrying out household tasks may lead to fewer hours of sleep and increase fatigue, as a result, the health of their children is negatively affected. Moreover, the employment of women does not deprive them of rest during the night as a natural period of rest and impede their marital duties.[43]

Bahraini Labor Law concerning Working Bahraini women

There are many laws clauses that stem from labor law that protects working Bahraini women's rights. Among the many laws are as follows:

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39   Dr. Mohamed Nasr Rifai,2014, Damage as a Basis for Civil Responsibility in Contemporary Society, Dar Al Nahdah, Egypt. P134.

40   Dr. Mohamed Labib Shanab,1 998, Explanation of the provisions of the Labor Law, fifth edition, without publishing house. P322.

41   Abdel Ghafour Kh, Women around the Prophet, First Edition, Amman, Dar Al-Isrã for Publishing and Distribution, 2003, p.17.

42   The Islamic Cultural Centre, What They Say about Islam, London, The Islamic Cultural Centre, 2002, p.4.

43   Dr. Mahmoud Gamal El Din Zaki, 2003, Individual Work Contract, Egyptian General Book Press.P.67.

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Maternity Leave

The New Law provides for 60 days paid leave and an additional 15 days unpaid (Article 32). Further – and significantly – working women with children under six years of age are now entitled to leave without pay for six months to care for their child. This leave may be taken on three separate occasions (i.e., for three children) during an employee's service. The period permitted for nursing has also increased to allow a female employee two one-hour periods per day to nurse her new born up until her child reaches six months of age, after which she is entitled to a further two and a half-hour period for nursing until her child reaches one year of age. A female worker may obtain an additional leave without pay due to her confinement for a period of 15 days in addition to the aforesaid leave. [44]

Working Hours

It shall be prohibited for a female worker to work during the forty (40) days following her confinement Employment with another employer during the maternity leave shall be subject to the provisions of Article (62) of this Law. Some people have argued that this provision may backfire on women employees, making numerous employers more reluctant to hire them, specifically if they have young children.[45]

The requirements of the Bahraini Labour Law with regards to the rights of working women are more favorable than those of the old labour law. The old law prohibited women from working during certain hours and in certain occupations (unless otherwise stated in an order by the relevant ministers). However, the New Labour Law does not enforce such restrictions, unless otherwise prohibited by a resolution of the minister of labour. Hence, the law persists that not to discriminate against working females and permits them to work during any hour of the day and in any occupation unless provided otherwise. A non-discrimination clause has also been explicitly introduced in the new law which provides that "female employees shall be subject to all the provisions governing the employment of employees without discrimination between them where their employment conditions are similar".

The New Labour Law does not discriminate salaries of both men and women, and in hence has impacted the calculation of employees' end-of-service indemnity settlements on the termination of their employment. As under the previous labour law, end-of-service indemnity was payable on the gross salary, which included all the employees' monthly allowances, in addition to their basic pay.

Fairness in Indemnity

The New Labour Law, however, provides that an employee's end of service indemnity calculated only based on the employee's most recent basic wage, in addition to social allowance, if exist. When it comes to leaves, the New Labour Law did not discriminate between men and women, and it provides that an employee who has completed at least one year of service is entitled to annual leave on full pay for a period of not less than 30 days, accruing at the rate of two and a half days for each month. [46]

The law also considered a similar Contingency leave for both men and women. The law gives the employee a right to take leave on a last-minute basis in the case of an emergency calling for their urgent need to remain off-duty. Such contingency leave may be taken for a period not exceeding 6 days during the year with a maximum of two days in each case and the same is set off against the employee's annual leave days. Regarding Sick leave, the law allows employees to receive enhanced sick leave entitlements which have

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44   Bahrain labour law article 32.
45   See article 34 from Bahrain labour law.
46   Dr. Mohammed Salameh,2008, Payroll and its Legal System in Bahraini Labor Law in the Private Sector, First Edition.P.78.

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increased to 15 days' sick leave on full pay, 20 days on half pay (previously 15 days) and 20 days on no pay (previously 15 days). The employee's entitlements to sick leave on full or half pay may be accumulated for up to 240 days during the employee's service. Employers are required to pay their employees their wages on time each month. Failure to do so shall require the employer to compensate the employee for any delays in payment of monthly salaries at the rate of 6% per annum for wages that are delayed for six months or less from the date of entitlement. The rate of 6% shall be increased at the rate of 1% for each month's delay thereafter up to a maximum of 12% per year.

Marriage or Maternity

Another women empowering law is that no employer is permitted to terminate the service of a female worker on the grounds of her marriage or during her leave due to pregnancy and internment. The Minister for Labour and Social Affairs shall make an Order prescribing the occupations and jobs in respect of which an employer may offer alternative employment to a female worker because of her marriage. A Muslim worker who has served his employer for a continuous period of five years shall have the right to leave on full pay for fourteen working days to perform his pilgrimage obligation (Hajj Al-Akbar). Such leave shall be granted once to the worker during his service period unless he has taken it during his employment with another employer. [47]

In addition, the Civil Service Bureau mentions first rate of Social Allowance shall be paid to single female employee, and second rate of Social Allowance shall be paid to married female employee and also to divorced or widowed female employee whenever she has children to support in both cases. It can be clearly seen that Bahraini working women do get fair treatment in this regard. Nonetheless an employer's termination of the contract of employment shall be deemed as unfair (unjustified) dismissal of the worker for any of the following reasons Sex, color, religion, belief, social status, family responsibilities, a female worker's pregnancy, child birth or breastfeeding her infant.[48]

A female worker is also entitled after her maternity leave and until her child is six (6) months of age to two periods of care to breastfeed her newly born child each of which shall not be less than one hour. She shall also be entitled to two periods of care for 30 minutes each until her child completes one year of age. A female worker shall have the right to combine these two periods and such two additional periods shall be considered to be part of the working hours without resulting in any reduction of the wage. An employer shall fix the time of the care period referred to in the preceding paragraph according to the female worker's conditions and the interest of business.

Conclusion

One can conclude that Bahrain laws have include the rights for women towards fairness in education, health, nationality and Job. In some countries, due to culture, women must not work or go to school. In some cultures, women cannot make decisions about life and family. Also, in some communities, women get brutally beaten if not fully obeying her husband. In addition, in the workplace, some companies pay less salary than men, so there is no equality. Also, we can see women cannot participate in politics or economics.

However, Bahrain laws enforces the right for women towards far job and salary, Economic and social benefits, equality before the law, and marriage and family. Also, Labor law in Bahrain has treated Bahraini

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47   See article 33 Bahrain labour law

48   Dr, Ahmed Algzale &Dr. Ahmed Altawe, 2012, Family provisions in the kingdom of Bahrain, university of Bahrain publishing. P89.

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women with fairness and respect in the workplace. It gives specific attention to the actions taken by governments to eliminate prejudices and encourages them to modify the discriminatory practices that are rooted in the idea of inferiority of women and in turn are directly related to their socio-economic status and relationship of their human rights and sexual and reproductive health. Nonetheless, Bahrain still thrive to give more empowerment to the working Bahraini women to ensure she succeed in many roles in private and public sectors. Also, there must be laws to protect working women from unjustly laying off due to pregnancy and maternity, as well as fighting employers who do not treat women fairly enough.

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CUSTODY PROVISION IN THE BAHRAIN UNIFIED FAMILY LAW OF 2017 COMPARISON STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Unified Family Law No. 19 of 2017 replaced the Previous Law No. 19 of 2009, that was only concerning the marital conflicts raised by Sunni citizens only. This paper aims at a comparative study on marital conflicts specifically focusing on custody between previous family law which was only addressed to Sunni citizens and contemporary unified family law which is subjected to both Sunni and Shia'a citizens. This paper will determine the definition of custody along with its elements and circumstances under the previous law and highlight the recent amendments to the unified law regarding child custody.

Keywords: custody, custody in Islam, best interest principles, determination of custody, child support and visitation rights

Introduction

Recently, child custody has been considered a vital matter, nationally and internationally. Examination of the present situation identifies the divorce percentage to be gradually increasing; thus, it is effecting children specifically. Due to the indifferences between divorced parents regarding who should be entitled with the custody right. In such cases most of the Islamic countries apply their own law on the basis of select schools of Islamic jurisprudence.[49] In line with the National Charter of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Bahraini legislator has amended Family Law No. 19 of 2009 in order to guarantee the rights of all families, especially the children, during marriage and even after divorce, by issuing a unified family law No .19 of 2017 which considers all citizens of Bahrain.

Before, Law No. 19 of 2009 specified a section on custody from Article. 127 through Article 143. Now, the unified family law No .19 of 2017 specified a section on custody from article 123 through article 139. Through these articles, it easily defined the term custody and all of its elements and circumstances under which the child custody shall be considered as lawful, considering and representing both main schools of Islamic thought in Bahrain rather than only one as before.

Definition of Custody

According to Article. 127 in the previous law and Article 123 of the current law, both defined custody as "Preserving the child, raising him and caring for him in a way that does not contradict the right of the guardian in the state to the self."[50] Meaning, reference to the legal right which provides a right to keep and look after a child. In other words, custody is a physical or factual possession of the children. In Arabic the word "hidhaana" defines custody as the training and upbringing of the child, especially the term is used when the parents are divorced. Hereafter, we may emphasize custody does not means to raise the hand of the guardian of the child at all, and does not limit his legitimate mandate, the guardian must take into

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49   Muhammad Sidqi al-Bourno, Encyclopedia of Juristic Rules, C6, p. 253, Al-Resala Printing Press, First Edition, 2003.

50   Bahrain Law No. 19 of 2009 on Family Law, Article. 127, Available in English version at: <http://www.moj.gov.bh/default7850.html?action=article&ID=1620>.

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account the conditions of the child along with the management of his affairs as well as, full undiminished mandate, and embrace the hand of conservation and education, while carrying out the necessities that cannot afford delay.[51]

Thus, the law created the jurisdiction to benefit the child and parents, because they are the closest kin to him. The legislation has considered what is best for the child, and the distributed the rights of custody to, or between the parents, if each of them, or one or the other is capable.

The Rightful Incubator

Custody is a responsibility of both parents together as long as a marriage exists between them. In fact, the responsibility of a child even after divorce is not only extended to an incubator but also to a guardian. Therefore, the responsibilities of both parents are divided due to their abilities based upon the mutual consent and counsel. However, in case of separation, the custody belongs to the mother as explained in the Holy Quran specifically in Verse. 233 of Surat al- Baqara stating, "Mothers shall breastfeed their children for two full years." The abovementioned verse highlighted, the right of custody shall be given to a divorced mother, then it is left to her discretion. If the mother cannot care for the child, next right goes to the maternal grandmother of the child, this scenario applies mostly in the case of mother's death, and the maternal grandmother came forward. In the case neither is available, there is a rank of relativity, with the paternal grandmother next in line to rights, and then the paternal grandfather.[52]

Additionally, custody may also be given to the sister of the child, then to the maternal aunt, paternal great grandmother and next to the daughter of his brother, and then the daughter of his sister, unless the court may consider custody on the best interests of the child as mentioned in Alsunnah fiqh in the previous and current unified family law.[53]

According to Ja'fari fiqh as mentioned in the unified family law No .19 of 2017 Article.128 which stated in the case of separation, the provision identified certain categories through which they can claim the right to custody. Firstly, the mother then the father, in case if the father died, or if the custody terminated therefore, it will refer to mother, then paternal grandfather, then to the guardian of the father, if found, and then the relatives of the children according to inheritance.[54]

It is to say that, there is no consensus among the juristic schools, but as a general rule according to Islamic Sharia's it granted first preference to a mother due to the physical custody of her young child provided she satisfies all the requirements of a female custodian.

Custody Requirements

The purpose of custody is to care for and raise a child with ability to fulfill all the necessities needed in the child's life. Therefore, jurist's stipulated general terms and conditions for whom "select from women, and conditions for those who choose men in the absence of women."[55]

The previous law and the current unified law specified five major requirements through which the incubator can claim his child's custody. Which includes:

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51   Dr. Algzale Ahmed &Dr. Altawe Ahmed, 2012, Family Provisions in the Kingdom of Bahrain, published at university of Bahrain.
52   Abu Bakr bin Mas'ud Amahad, 1982, Bada'id al-Sanayah, Dar al-Kut al-'Almiyya, c5., p205-210.
53   Alhtab Mohammed ibin Mohammad almgrebi, Mwaheb Aljlel fi sharia muktaser Kalel, c4, publisher scientific book, press 1, 1995.p215.
54   Article 128 unified family law No .19 of 2017.
55   Zen Alden ibin nujem ,1997, albher alraeg in explaining kenz aldageg, buruit, press1, c4, p597.

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- Islam, which means the incubator shall be Muslim in order to claim for a custody.

- Mind, refers to "Legal capacity" of an incubator in the sense he/she shall not be of those who are considered by Bahraini Legislation as exception to such provision. For example; if the incubator was suffering from any mental disabilities.

- Puberty, it means while incubator claiming for custody shall be mature and reached the legal age.

- Honesty with good reputation, means the incubator shall be trustworthy and responsible towards the child

- Ability to raise, preserve, care for the child and secure safety from serious infectious diseases.[56]

Based on above requirements, the incubator shall also fulfill below mentioned conditions, mainly stated by Article 131 in the previous law and Article 127.b from the unified law according to Sunni fiqh as: If an incubator was a woman, she should not be married to a foreigner from the child unless the court decides in the best interest of the child. It is clear, the court while granting a custody to mother there is a limitation which is to say she should not marry any person unless the court determines otherwise. However, If the incubator is a man; consequently, the father or grandfather or any other person who has the custody of the child shall have a woman present, whether as a voluntary or with a salary such as a mother, wife, aunt. This is because it is believed women are generally more aware and responsive of children's needs in comparison to a man. Moreover, if the child is a female then the incubator should be a relative which she is prevented to marry, for example, an uncle, as mentioned in sharia law. [57]

In addition, where there is an absence of parents and the custody is rejected from the above mentioned categories of relatives, the judge by his own initiative will designate the person whom is considered most adequate from the child's closest remaining relatives. Followed by, any other individuals who do not have a relation with the child, or any institution qualified for custody purpose.[58] In some circumstances, Article 134 in the previous law, now Article 130 in the unified law, specifies power of the judge in appointing specialists or expertise in child psychological affairs when deciding on the custody, bearing in mind the best interests of the child.

Child support and visitation and the child travel

In reference to the subject of this research, it is important to define child custody in terms of visitation within some restrictions imposed on the incubator. The most important concerns the right of self-guardianship in raising and education of the child. In addition, there should be some reference to the right of the parents and grandparents to visit the child and the impact on the freedom of custody along with traveling.

Rights of guardians and duties

The term of custody extends to the time of puberty in males, and for females, until she has married, or reaches the age of seventeen years. By this time, the stage of guardianship can become self-guardianship which merely requires follow-up of child raising and supervision of affairs. Also a compromise between the rights which were necessary to alert and the right of incubator does not mean a break between him and the guardian, the right of custody does not imply conflicts with the right of the guardian. Moreover, the

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56   Ibid (n 1), Article. 130.

57   Ahmad: Al-Musnad, part 2, p. 182, and Abu Dawood: Sunan, the book of divorce, the most deserving of the child, Hadith number) 2276), c. 2, p292.

58   Ibin algem, Mohammad bin abi bker, zad almead in hdi Ker alebad ,1993. berut, Lebanon, publisher alresalh, press3, part 4, p. 591

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child must be in accommodation of his incubator unless the judge decides otherwise, which confirmed by article 137 in the previous law and Article 133 in the unified family law.[59]

Furthermore, in several verses the Holy Quran declared that Muslim fathers should financially support their children after dissolution of marriage. Sunni and Shi'a jurisprudence agree, during and after termination of the marriage, father has a certain role to be played in order to raise the children regardless of the mother's financial abilities.

The right of visitation

Without violating the right of custody, the other party has the right to visit the child on the basis of mutual understanding and consent. It sometimes occurs, the party whom has the right of custody may use the child as a means to punish the other party by depriving them of visitation rights, something which is completely against the concept of Islam.[60]

Sunni and Shi'a jurisprudence agree each parent shall have the right to see and visit the child and to accompany him, and the non-parents of the first rank relatives (mahram) shall be given parental custody with the present custodian of the parents in the absence of the other, the living in the case of the death of the other. If the custody belongs to non-parents, due to their absence together, or their death, the judge appoints the deserving of the visit of his relatives at the first rank.

In accordance with article 143 of the previous law and article 139 of the Unified Family Law, the judge shall determine the time and place of visitation during the time of dispute, and decide whether or not to stay overnight would be based on the best interests of the child.[61]

Place of custody and traveling with the child

It is to say that, for the incubator it is essential to be determine the place of custody, along with rules of travel for the child, this is clearly expressed within the provision of Article 138 in the previous law and Article 134 in the unified family law is:

- If the custody belongs to the women, in this case we will make the distinguish between the mother custody and the non-mother custody.

- If the mother is an incubator, then she is allowed to travel by the child to the nearest places which not violate to the fathers' rights in seeing the child, and return back in the same day while always taking in consideration the interest of the child. All this is if the child father gives her the permission to travel for a long distance.

- In the event custody belongs to someone other than the mother, such person is not allowed to travel with the child to the nearest place only, but the guardian is unable to move to a distant place, even though this place is their homeland, unless given permission from the father.

- If the custody belongs to the father, he does not have permission to move the child to a distant place. The mother needs to be able to see the child and the child see her, because preventing them from seeing one another would be damaging.

These provisions include article 138 of the previous law and article 134 of the unified family law, and the

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59   Ibin godamh, Abdallah bin Ahmed, 2005, almugne, alreath, sudia Arabia, publisher world scientific book, press 5, p. 170.
60   Ibn Taymiyah. Abd al-Salam ibn Abdullah, almuhrar of the jurisprudence of Imam Ahmad, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, p. 120.
61   Look at article 142, law No 19,2009. And article 139 unified family law No 19, 2017.

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most important decision is travel abstention is a travel for residence, not a travel for a picnic, and influential residence is what was outside Bahrain.

End of Custody

The custody of the child under articles 128 and 129 of the previous law and article 124 in the unified family law regarding to alssuna fiqh, custody continues until the male reaches 15 years of age, and the female until she is married, or once she reaches seventeen years of age, whichever is earlier. Moreover, if the boy reaches fifteen years old and the girl 17 years old without marriage, the option will be granted to the children to choose with whom they wish to live, taking in account the provisions of the fall of custody which stipulated in article 140 in the previous law and article 136 in the unified family law.[62]

While in Ja'afari fiqh according to article 124 in unified family law, mother has the right of custody till seven years of age for both son and/or daughter. After this age, the right of custody is transferred to the father. Furthermore, with reference to Article 125 on the jurisprudence of Ja'afari it provides the right for daughter and son to choose their incubator. Meaning that once the daughter completes her ninth year she shall be entitled with such right, on the other hand, the son shall enjoy similar right when he already reaches 15 years with their guidance.

According to Article 140 of the previous family Law and Article 136 of the unified Family law, the right to custody shall be terminated before the expiry of its duration. in the following cases:

- If it was found one of the requirements stated by the law has been infringed.

- Or it was defined the incubator has been resident of a country where it is difficult for the guardian to perform his responsibilities.

- Or if the beneficiary of the custody is silent about the claim for one year without an excuse, as states in fiqh alsunah.

- If the new incubator is living with a woman whose custody has been ceased for a reason other than physical disability, unless the recipient of the custodian accepts it explicitly or implicitly, as states in fiqh alsunah.

- If the mother leaves the marital home for a dispute or other, she does not lose her right to custody unless the judge decides otherwise for reasons of concern.[63]

Conclusion

The amended unified family law is not only addressed to Sunni marital matters, but now also Shia'a marital affairs. This being the major difference between the previous and contemporary law. In conclusion, the unified family law has been considered a legislative instrument used to harmonize and unify both, Sunni and Shia'a jurisprudence, law No. 19 of 2017, has specified a section on custody from Article 123 until Article 139.

The legislation intended through the unified law to guarantee the rights of child in terms of custody when both parents are legally separated, it also highlighted the role of unified regulation concerning both jurisprudences regarding custody and age of choice to the child. Finally, existence of unified law concerning family matters has been considered as an achievement in Bahrain to regard and represent all citizens.

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62   Look articles 129 ,128 family law 2009. And articles 124,125 unified family law 2017.
63   Al-Sarkhasi, Shams bin Mohammed bin Abi Sahl, 1986,Al-Mabsout, publisher the House of Knowledge, Beirut, Lebanon, first edition, part 2, p. 1521

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IMPLEMENTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: THE BAHRAINI LAW N. 17/2015

Dr. Pasquale Borea, Dean of College of Law, Royal University for Women

ABSTRACT

Violence against women and, particularly domestic violence, continues to represent one of the main violations of women's rights. During the last four decades, violence against women in general and domestic violence in particular have witnessed an increasingly normative action at both national and international level. In particular, with reference to the international instruments aiming at the protection of women's rights, there is no doubt that the implementation of international normative instruments across the years generated a domino effect. This allowed many countries to borrow from international normative provisions and adapt them to single, national legislative frameworks providing, in many cases, reinforced legislative measures towards the protection of women's rights. The international legal framework for the protection of women's rights and the elimination of gender-based discrimination primarily set by the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), has been enriched by other normative instruments often established at regional level. In this respect, the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted by the Council of Europe, certainly represents a landmark normative framework which spread its approach on the protection of women's rights also beyond the boundaries of the regional organization by which it was developed. This determined a process by which the Istanbul Convention's approach has been often reflected in national legislative frameworks strengthening the protection of women from gender-based violence and domestic violence which have been successfully implemented within and beyond the signatories States of the Istanbul Convention. One of the successful cases is certainly represented by the Kingdom of Bahrain which, though without acceding so far the Istanbul Convention, established a fairly advanced normative framework to protect women from domestic violence through the Law n. 17 of 2015.

Based on these premises, this research intends to provide an analysis of the Bahrain Law n. 17 of 2015 in the light of the International legal framework set to protect women from domestic violence. In particular, the analysis will focus on the similarities of the Bahraini legislation with the consolidated approach based on prevention, prosecution and punishment of domestic violence.

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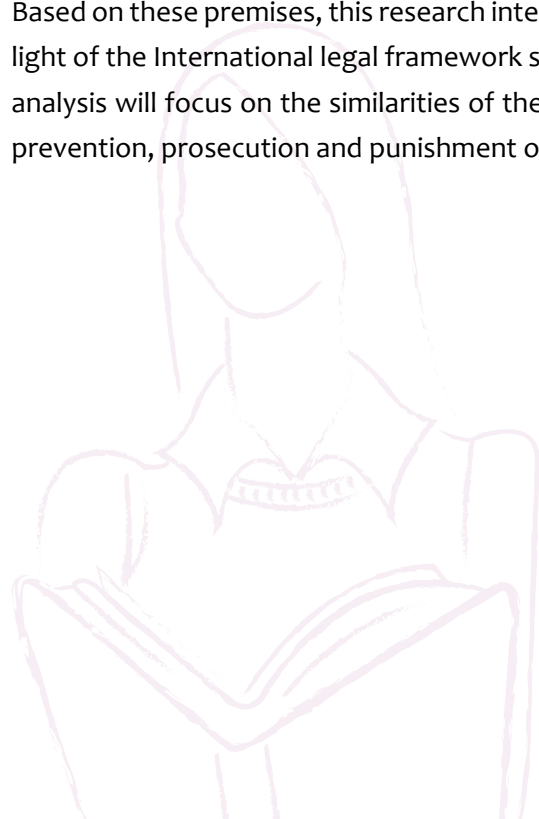
GUARANTEEING EQUAL ACCESS OF WOMEN TO JUSTICE IN EUROPE: OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Paolo Bargiacchi, Professor of International Law at Kore University of Enna, Italy

ABSTRACT

Achieving effective gender equality is a foundation of good governance and a key-element for promoting the rule of law. In the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 guaranteeing equal access of women to justice was a strategic objective because accessing justice is more difficult for women than men due to gender inequalities, stereotypes and other legal and socio-economic barriers. After the completion of the Strategy the paper takes stock of certain solutions implemented by States to reduce these barriers and facilitate women's access to justice. The 2017 "Training Manual for Judges and Prosecutors on Ensuring Women's Access to Justice" which provides guidance on practical and daily actions to improve women's access to justice and it is also a capacity-building tool for state institutions when training and educating judges and prosecutors is also analysed as well as some brief references to the new Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 are made.

Keywords: Gender equality; Women's access to justice; Gender Equality Strategy; Training Manual for Judges and Prosecutors; Council of Europe.

Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017

In his Foreword to the Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 adopted in November 2013 by the Council of Europe, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe underlined that 'achieving gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy, respect for the rule of law and economic growth and sustainability' (Council of Europe, 2014). Gender equality is a foundation of societies and good governance, a cornerstone of inclusive sustainable development and a key-element for promoting the rule of law. Its effective realisation requires a holistic and integrated approach made up of measures, actions and activities able to develop new cultural strategies and change old mentalities and negative gender stereotypes in the medium to long-term.

To achieve these challenging goals the Gender Equality Strategy was built upon five strategic objectives including guaranteeing equal access of women to justice (objective 3)[64]. Access to justice without discrimination is an integral element of promoting the rule of law because it is an essential precondition for the enjoyment of those fundamental procedural rights (the right to a fair trial and to an effective remedy) whose full implementation can guarantee respect and protection of all other substantive rights. In fact, all people can stand equal before the law only if men and women can access to justice without discrimination.

The Strategy recognized that in Europe accessing justice is more difficult for women than men due to gender inequalities, stereotypes and other socio-economic, cultural and legal barriers as confirmed by a survey on cases brought by women before the European Court of Human Rights. All the statistics (applications lodged, decisions on their admissibility, judgments handed down, etc.) clearly show that a serious gender imbalance exists with regard to the place of women in disputes. The most striking data is about cases found inadmissible and cases which were judged over the period 1998-2006: the number of applications lodged by women (1,300) is only 16% of the total (Council of Europe, 2010).

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64   The other strategic objectives set forth by the GES 2014-2017 were: 1) combating gender stereotypes and sexism; 2) preventing and combating violence against women; 3) achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making; 4) achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

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Statistics reflect 'a certain vulnerability with regard to the law' of women (Tulkens, 2007) because lodging an application requires 'a certain degree of emancipation which the majority of women in Europe have not achieved' (Buquicchio-de Boer, 1995). Of course, statistics on access to international justice are a direct consequence of obstacles experienced by women in accessing national courts and law-enforcement authorities. This is the real problem to be addressed, particularly in case of rape and sexual abuse in respect of which fear and shame often prevent women from reporting cases to the police or lodging complaints before a court.

Socio-economic and legal barriers hindering women's access to justice

The Gender Equality Strategy takes stock that a number of barriers hinder women's access to justice in Europe.

Some of them are socio-economic and cultural in nature while others are legal and procedural.

Among socio-economic and cultural obstacles one should remember: traditional gender stereotypes (for instance, looking at men as the 'strong sex' with the only legitimacy of claiming rights and authority); fear and shame in reporting cases and lodging application; cultural and social expectations and values (particularly in cases of domestic violence and family proceedings); lack of knowledge about rights and available remedies and procedures; economic dependence from men and/or lack of financial resources due to lower wages and greater poverty; childcare and care-giving in the family (in particular when there is a detrimental distribution of tasks within the family); impact of austerity measures (as long as they might downgrade women's human rights in the political agenda and cut human and financial resources allocated to gender equality mechanisms and bodies); political opposition to gender equality and women's rights from some policy makers, parliamentarians and civil society groups.

Furthermore, vulnerable groups of women face specific challenges about accessing justice. Vulnerability may depend on several factors (living in rural areas, being elderly or with disabilities, belonging to a minority or ethnic or religious groups, being trafficked or in need of international protection, etc.) which are often linked to the lack of higher or even primary education (let alone legal education). As a result, vulnerable women are seldom aware of their rights or the legal services at their disposal. Stereotypes and insensitivity as well as lack of awareness of specific needs of vulnerable groups are also common among law enforcement officials and professionals working in the judiciary. All of this may result in further discrimination, secondary victimisation or inadequate legal counsel for women.

The implementation of the Strategy 2014-2017 has highlighted how specialised assistance from independent women's support services is crucial to overcome socio-economic and cultural barriers. They include, among the others, free counselling and legal assistance, access to legal aid, free helplines, specialised centres to assist vulnerable women, campaigns to increase their awareness, etc.

To name a few examples, in Armenia the Women's Rights Centre launched the National Hotline service (providing free counselling, legal assistance and social help to women victims of domestic violence), the Women's Support and Drop-In Centre (providing confidential face-to-face help and support) and the Women's Support Groups (holding psychological group therapy meetings). It is also of particular interest the creation in 2012 of the Men against Violence against Women Network because the involvement of men may be 'a ground-breaking step for changing the attitude towards the issue of domestic violence among different layers of society' (Gender Equality Commission, 2015).

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In Cyprus the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training provides free legal advice and representation to victims of gender-based discrimination in employment (above all in career development) and vocational training for implementing the principle of equal treatment 'with respect to employment, access to vocational guidance, vocational education and training', encouraging women to lodge complaints and changing Cypriot legislation and case-law 'on gender equality in employment, which is currently very poor' (Council of Europe, 2016).

In Estonia the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality and Equal Treatment – an independent and impartial expert - assist and advice parents of small children and pregnant women in discrimination disputes before labour committees. The Office prepares complaints and acts before these committees as a representative free of charge.

In Italy the Law No. 199 of 15 October 2013, in compliance with the Istanbul Convention, provides for the prompt granting of legal aid for women (within ten days from the application) irrespective of their income allowing both prompt access to justice and specialised assistance from a lawyer.

In Malta the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) targets women who are discriminated against on any grounds in employment, education and institutional life. These women are supported and assisted by the NCPE since when they start filling out the complaint and cultural mediation is also guaranteed.

In Georgia cities and municipalities have been asked by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure to appoint and train advisors on gender equality to support implementation of the Law on Gender Equality and assist women living in rural regions and villages.

Among legal and procedural barriers due attention should be paid to three of them.

First, the international legal framework does not address the issue of women's access to justice in specific and comprehensive way. Many related or prerequisite rights (such as the right to a fair trial, the principle of equality before the law and the prohibition of discrimination) are dealt with by international treaties but a comprehensive set of specific legal standards and rules on women's access to justice is still missing.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2015) has tried to fill this gap by defining such right as 'multidimensional' because it encompasses 'six interrelated and essential components - justiciability, availability, accessibility, good-quality, accountability of justice systems, and the provision of remedies for victims' and by encouraging State parties to implement these components to ensure full and effective access to justice.

Accordingly, in its General recommendation (§ 14, let. a-f) the Committee (2015) defines 'justiciability' as the opportunity to have unhindered access to justice[65]; 'availability' as the establishment of courts and other quasi-judicial bodies in both urban, rural and remote areas; 'accessibility' as the security, affordability and physical accessibility of justice systems for women[66]; 'good quality' as the adherence of justice systems 'to international standards of competence, efficiency, independence and impartiality' and their

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65   '(a) Justiciability requires the unhindered access by women to justice as well as their ability and empowerment to claim their rights under the Convention as legal entitlements'.

66   '(c) Accessibility requires that all justice systems, both formal and quasi-judicial systems, are secure, affordable and physically accessible to women, and are adapted and appropriate to the needs of women including those who face intersectional or compounded forms of discrimination'.

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being 'contextualized, dynamic, participatory, open to innovative practical measures, gender-sensitive'[67]; 'provision of remedies' as the ability of justice systems to provide women with viable protection and meaningful redress; 'accountability' as 'the monitoring of the functioning of the justice system' to ensure their compliance with the other components of the multidimensional right to access to justice.

The second major obstacle to women's access to justice is represented by gender-neutral or gender-blind laws. Neutrality does not guarantee de facto or substantive gender equality because it applies to a reality where men and women are not still equal in terms of opportunities. As a result, gender-neutral laws - as well as legislation that has not been assessed for its gender impact - may paradoxically turn into an unintended comparative advantage to men and produce systemic inequalities. Negative measures and formal proclamations on equality and non-discrimination principles are no longer enough to fill the gap between the 'law in the book' and the 'law in action' (Pounds, 1910) and effective access to justice for women requires more than that, i.e. a strategic approach built upon positive measures and policy-oriented actions.

As highlighted by the Gender Equality Commission (2017), 'achieving substantive gender equality requires political will, targeted resources and a change in mentalities' in order to tackle stereotypes and gendered or discriminatory attitudes. To this end several measures are being suggested against negative consequences of gender-neutral legislation such as ensuring that gender impact assessment is always conducted when drafting legal provisions or promoting 'an equal representation of women in legal and law enforcement professions' and an 'increasing number of women legislators/parliamentarians to optimize chances for legal reform to expand women's rights' (Gender Equality Commission, 2013).

The third major obstacle is represented by the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) procedures such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration. In Europe, particularly within the European Union, there is a strong policy in favour of ADR procedures for several reasons (reduce court backlog, cost and time of litigation, etc.) and they are often applied in disputes on divorce and child custody and sometimes in criminal cases on violence against women. ADR procedures take place out of courts with flexible rules and limited judicial safeguards because their main goal is to facilitate a quick settlement or compromise, whatever it is, between the parties.

In family law ADR procedures are seen 'to better serve family relations and to result in more durable dispute resolution' (Council of Europe, 2011) notwithstanding the risk that they might 'prioritise family unity over women's access to justice' (Heise, 2011). Yet, the lack of judges with strong institutional charisma, the lack of binding rules and clear procedures as well as the need to settle the dispute at any cost may put women under considerable strain when domestic violence or family issues are at stake. Such informal framework of justice, so far and different from formal court litigation processes, may leave women without protection against stronger parties such as violent partners and abusers or, more in general, anytime a power imbalance exists. Furthermore, ADR procedures assume that both parties would find a compromise for a quick resolution of the dispute but such assumption is paradoxical when a victim/perpetrator or an uneven relationship exists between parties.

For all these reasons, addressing the effective power dynamics between men and women is of the utmost

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67   '(d) Good quality of justice systems requires that all components of the system adhere to international standards of competence, efficiency, independence and impartiality and provide, in a timely fashion, appropriate and effective remedies that are enforced and that lead to sustainable gender-sensitive dispute resolution for all women. It also requires that justice systems are contextualized, dynamic, participatory, open to innovative practical measures, gender-sensitive, and take account of the increasing demands for justice by women'.

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importance in ADR procedures to have women's voices and concerns duly heard. To this end the Istanbul Convention, i.e. the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, prohibits mandatory ADR proceedings in cases concerning violence against women and domestic violence and the Gender Equality Commission (2013) has highlighted the 'need for public justice' in this field, i.e. public sanctions and punishment. Even the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2015) has urged State parties that 'cases of violence against women, including domestic violence, are under no circumstances referred to any alternative dispute resolution procedures' because to not refer these case to the mainstream justice system would be a serious breach of women's equality before the law.

Caution is also required before applying ADR procedures to family law and divorce cases because unaddressed domestic violence often lies behind these disputes. To this end the Training Manual for judges and prosecutors on ensuring women's access to justice (Duban and Radačić, 2017) urges courts to develop screening procedures and to refer family disputes to mediation only when the lack of violence is for sure: in fact, 'ADR can offer women a means to overcome barriers to formal justice, but only when programmes are voluntary, context specific and very carefully developed to reflect the specific needs of women'.

Gender stereotypes in the judiciary affecting women

The existence of so many different barriers hindering women's access to justice confirms that such problem is 'a complex social phenomenon that combines a series of inequalities at the legal, institutional, structural, socio-economic and cultural levels, and that particularly affects women among the most vulnerable social groups' (Gender Equality Commission, 2013). Achieving de facto equal access for women is a tough challenge because the real goal is not guaranteeing the efficiency of justice systems (European justice systems are already efficient) but making them responsive to needs and realities of women.

The implementation of the objective 3 of the Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 has therefore paid particular attention to gender stereotypes in the judiciary (judicial stereotypes) affecting women because of their relevance in terms of blocking women's access to justice and of their being widespread given that 'the justice system, which should be the guardian of fairness and human rights, very often replicates the stereotypes and obstacles present in society as a whole' (Council of Europe, 2016).

Judicial stereotypes affecting behaviours and decisions of legal practitioners who are part of the judicial chain take often precedence over law and facts in evidence. This is a serious breach of the right to equal access to justice because judicial stereotypes affect the impartiality of the judgment, the judge's very understanding of the nature of the discrimination or crime and the presentation of evidence. Judicial stereotypes also affect witness credibility because those who have the moral or legal duty to hear women's stories (families, churches, schools, police stations, tribunals) often mistrust or shame them to the extent that most victims of violence never report to authorities and the majority of reported violence does not end in a conviction (in some countries conviction rates are as low as 5%). The idea that violence against women is a 'private', 'family' matter is still well-rooted in European societies and the fear of being exposed or dismissed prevents most women from going to courts that are not sensitive for their vulnerable position.

The struggle against judicial gender stereotypes is shared and pursued by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2015) that has underlined how stereotyping distorts perceptions and results in decisions based on preconceived beliefs and myths rather than relevant facts. Often judges adopt rigid standards about what they consider to be appropriate behaviour for women and penalize those who

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do not conform to these stereotypes. Stereotyping as well affects the credibility given to women's voices, arguments and testimonies, as parties and witnesses. Such stereotyping can cause judges to misinterpret or misapply laws.

By highlighting the risk of judicial stereotypes 'upholding a culture of impunity' all along criminal proceedings (investigation, trial and final judgment) and by declaring the right of women 'to rely on a justice system free from myths and stereotypes, and on a judiciary whose impartiality is not compromised by these biased assumptions', the Committee recalls States Parties' obligation to expose and remove gender stereotypes 'that prevent women from exercising and claiming their rights and impeded their access to effective remedies' in line with Article 5(a) of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women[68].

Even the Council of Europe (2016) recommended to its member states to adopt comprehensive reforms 'to address judicial stereotyping through research, monitoring, education, capacity building and the promotion of good practices' (recommendation 6) and ensure 'gender-sensitive data collection and knowledge building' on the judicial stereotyping (recommendation 8) and urged national equality bodies and justice and law enforcement authorities to develop gender-sensitive training tailored to the needs of legal professionals for the purpose of raising awareness and providing better understanding of multiple issues related to women's access to justice (recommendations 11 and 14).

The Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 focused on raising awareness within justice systems about women's rights and needs and on training and engaging with legal and justice professionals to overcome judicial stereotypes and change mentalities.

Raising awareness has been mainly pursued by improving and increasing data collection on women's access to justice (disaggregated data by sex and age, data on geographic and economic accessibility of courts, elements characterising victims and perpetrators including the context in which the violence took place, etc.) because an improved measuring through clear variables and indicators may help relevant stakeholders developing more suitable strategies and policies and better monitoring and evaluating shortcomings, results and progress achieved. Furthermore, victims of gender-based violence or discrimination may be encouraged to go to courts by taking cognisance of their own rights and related courts' activities. Even Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention urges State parties to 'collect disaggregated relevant statistical data' and 'support research in the field […] in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates'.

To this end in Portugal statistics on domestic violence are collected and made easily available by the Ministry of Justice since 2014 while in Switzerland some databases collect judicial decisions on gender-based discrimination cases and make them available to the general public. In Germany since 2009 police crime statistics have been enhanced by additional data (sex, age, relationships between victims and perpetrators, etc.) which can be useful for investigations and crime-related questions. In Malta since 2013 several entities (the Commission on Domestic Violence, the Malta Police, the General Hospitals, NGOs, etc.) collect and share data on domestic violence through multiple variables (gender of perpetrator, location where violence happened, victim-perpetrator relationship, level of education, type of report being lodged, etc.). The aim is not only to better understand which forms of violence affect women but also to assess how dedicated services are accessed and used by victims for the purpose of improving their efficacy.

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68   Article 5(a): 'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women'.

Training of legal and justice professionals on women's human rights and substantial gender equality is important because it may improve women's access to justice by limiting or eliminating the negative impact of stereotypes and old mentalities. Initial and in-job training on these issues is essential to ensure 'a more gender-sensitive administration of justice' and it should also involve female professionals. In fact, 'being a woman does not necessarily guarantee the use of "gender lenses" [given that] women, just as men, function on the basis of male dominated social and cultural values and norms, and thus may also engage in discriminatory and insensitive practices' (Gender Equality Commission, 2013).

Yet, legal training is still a problematic instrument in Europe. Even if training on the topic of violence against women is provided more and more, training on all other matters related to gender equality (including gender-based discrimination) is still not always satisfactory or is not a 'standard practice across Europe'. For instance, in Austria until a few years ago judges and prosecutors were 'not obliged to attend any training following appointment' and in Sweden matters related to gender equality had limited relevance in legal training. In Portugal the problem was even more serious given the country's lack 'of institutional or judicial culture on women's rights' (Gender Equality Commission, 2013).

The implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 has however produced remarkable results throughout Europe. In Portugal law enforcement authorities (and migrant support staff) now receive awareness-raising and training activities on gender equality while journalists are trained on the elimination of stereotypes against women in information and advertising. Specific and enhanced training is also provided to all professionals (including social workers, mediators, journalists, educators, etc.) working in the field of domestic and/or gender-based violence. In Sweden gender equality and discrimination issues are 'to some extent integrated in all training programmes for judges' and prejudices and stereotypes are also addressed (Gender Equality Commission, 2015). In Georgia judges, employees of state institutions and law enforcement state authorities are actively involved in training on gender equality issues. For instance, employees of the Ministry of Penitentiary and Probation undergo training on treatment of women prisoners while State's financial departments are trained on the gender budgeting methodology. Furthermore, prosecutors and patrol officers are regularly trained on domestic violence and gender-based crimes. In Moldavia intensive and continuous training programmes for judges, prosecutors and lawyers are being developed on issues such as domestic violence, gender equality and gender-based discrimination in the labour market with the active support of the OSCE Mission.

The Training Manual for Judges and Prosecutors on Ensuring Women's Access to Justice

To fight against judicial stereotypes and any other shortcoming of the judicial chain, in 2015-2017 the Council of Europe implemented a specific EU-funded regional project with six Eastern Partnership Countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus). One of the most valuable results of the project has been the publishing in September 2017 of the Training Manual for Judges and Prosecutors on Ensuring Women's Access to Justice, an important tool not only for the six States but also for all the other European States.

It is the Training Manual's understanding that 'de jure or formal gender equality becomes meaningless without de facto or substantive equality' and justice institutions 'once viewed as gender neutral (and even gender blind)' are not equally accessible to women and men. Accordingly, the Training Manual aims at providing guidance for judges and prosecutors 'on steps that can be taken in their daily practice to improve women's access to justice' and making available a capacity-building tool for national training institutions

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(Duban and Radačić, 2017). Module IV of the Training Manual especially focuses on administering justice in a gender-sensitive manner by outlining the best practices that throughout the different stages of legal proceedings judges and prosecutors should follow in their day-to-day activity on the assumption that even gender-neutral laws and policies may hinder women's access to justice if not properly applied.

Cases concerning violence against women are especially addressed in the Training Manual but best practices and guidance are generally suitable for any other case of gender-based discrimination and unequal access to justice. Main suggested best practices and guidance are as follows.

In criminal cases, victims are witnesses for the prosecution but in many justice systems they lack support and protection from the risk of new abuses and threats on behalf of the offender (who has very often an intimate relationship with the victim) because of not being formal parties to the proceedings.

The European Union tackled this delicate issue by adopting the Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. It aims at ensuring that victims of crime 'receive appropriate information, support and protection and are able to participate in criminal proceedings' and are 'recognised and treated in a respectful, sensitive, tailored, professional and non-discriminatory manner' (art. 1, par. 1)[69]. Victims are therefore granted with several rights such as the right to be heard (art. 10), receive information about the case (art. 6), access victim support services (art. 8) and avoid contact with the offender (art. 19). A general duty is imposed on competent authorities to provide all needed information to victims, including all rights set out for them by the Directive (art. 4). Article 25 deals with training of practitioners such as police officers, court staff, judges, prosecutors and lawyers. They have to receive 'both general and specialist training' to increase their awareness of the needs of victims and police officers and court staff must be enabled to deal with victims 'in an impartial, respectful and professional manner'.

In Sweden, for instance, the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority offers training programmes to legal professionals on the treatment of victims of sexual crimes for the purpose of eliminating prejudices and stereotypes about them while the Prosecution Authority offers courses on sexual and domestic violence in order to guarantee women's equal access to justice. Witness support is also available through the 'witness support person', i.e. someone 'working on a not-for-profit basis who assists witnesses and victims of crime with humanitarian support and practical information in conjunction with a criminal trial' (Gender Equality Commission, 2015).

In Malta since 2012 social workers of the Domestic Violence Unit (part of 'Appogg', the national psycho-social support agency) attend hearings next to the victims to provide them with support and assurances and they are also consulted by judges. In Germany advice and psycho-social support for victims and witnesses during a trial is now mandatory after the Code of Criminal Procedure has been amended by the 2nd Victims' Rights Reform Act. In the German Länder of Hesse, women who are victims of violence are supported and protected through multiple measures whose implementation is coordinated by a specific Office against domestic violence established in 2006. A specific court assistance model (the 'Marbourg model') has been developed and a dedicated office (Gerichtshilfe) interviews and deals with victims, provides them with specific services (family and marriage counselling, advice centres, etc.), works alongside and reports to judges, prosecutors and police officers and gets in touch with the suspect.

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69   Pursuant to Article 2(1)(a) 'victim' means '(i) a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence; (ii) family members of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence and who have suffered harm as a result of that person's death'.

Among the non-EU States, in Moldavia there is a strong focus on capacity building of law enforcement authorities to ensure effective and prompt response to cases of domestic violence. Major shortcomings such as the lack of information to victims about their rights and poor understanding and inconsistent application of legislation on domestic violence by law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges are targeted through specific training workshops whose results have been positively evaluated in terms of improved skills and knowledge 'on the dynamics and root causes of domestic violence' and enhanced ability 'to more effectively identify and respond to cases' (Gender Equality Commission, 2015).

In the phase of investigation, decisions taken by prosecutors or judges have the greatest impact on women's access to justice because such phase 'is a critical turning point in terms of whether the case enters the criminal justice system' (Duban and Radačić, 2017). Prosecutorial discretion in moving forward or not the criminal case to adjudication may be improperly influenced by gender stereotyping such as that gender-based violence or sexual crimes - let alone non-violent discrimination cases or crimes - are less important than others or are 'family matters' or victims cannot be trusted.

Moreover, victims of discrimination, sexual crimes and gender-based violence face difficulties, sham and reluctance to share their stories with male police officers and prosecutors. A gender-sensitive approach for prosecutors is therefore not only mandatory but victim's preferences about the sex of the prosecutor assigned to her case or the assistance of a female officer in the course of investigations should also be accommodated whenever possible. Regardless of sex, however, prosecutors should always consider very carefully individual circumstances of victims while providing evidence about gender-violence crimes. Some women will cooperate in order to recover from the crime experience while others may experience secondary traumatisation. Accordingly, prosecutor's assessment must be tailored to the needs and specific situations of each single victim.

Prosecutors are also required to oversee police-led investigations with care and special vigilance so as to avoid that police attitudes, myths or gender stereotypes might influence investigation and/or compromise evidence collection (procedural errors, fail to observe due process requirements or to collect all available evidence, etc.) and/or weaken the case given that an incomplete investigation ends up relying only on the testimony of the victim so increasing the risk of failure at trial or having to drop the charges.

To prevent the risk of collecting weak or incomplete evidence the Training Manual also reminds judges and prosecutors that 'a victim's testimony remains crucial but is by no means the only type of evidence that should be considered' and that cases must be constructed both by using alternative forms of evidence (i.e., non-victim or corroborating evidence) and being pro-active 'in instructing police to collect specific types of evidence and in exploring the range of potential pieces of evidence' (Duban and Radačić, 2017). Following the same line of reasoning Article 55 of the Istanbul Convention requires State parties to ensure that investigations into or prosecution of gender-based violence 'shall not be wholly dependent upon a report or complaint filed by a victim' and can also proceed ex officio.

In Belgium a joint circular of the Minister of Justice and the Board of Prosecutors General sets forth guidelines for evidence collection in domestic violence cases according to a victim-centred approach (informing victims of their rights, referral to support services, etc.) aimed at creating 'an enabling environment that allows victims to provide the best possible evidence'. Good practices for creating a victim-friendly environment and introducing strong and reliable evidence in court may involve collecting 'a clear and comprehensive victim statement in the case file that can be used as evidence if the witness does not testify in court',

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introducing pre-recorded video testimony with cross-examination's testimony given via video conference and dealing carefully and sensitively with the female victim/witness in court in case she would retreat or contradict her previous testimony to the police or prosecutor (Duban and Radačić, 2017).

Another evidentiary issue that may hinder women's access to justice concerns prejudicial, embarrassing or harmful evidence introduced by the defence or intrusive questioning based on stereotypes and assumptions against the victim/witness for discrediting her (private life and behaviour, dress, etc.). Admitting irrelevant evidence relating to the victim's prior sexual conduct as a means to challenge her credibility is a serious breach of logic and law because there is no 'logical or practical link between a woman's sexual reputation and whether she is a truthful witness' (R. v. Seaboyer; R. v. Gayme, 1991). To this end Article 54 of the Istanbul Convention permits 'evidence relating to the sexual history and conduct of the victim […] only when it is relevant and necessary' while the Training Manual urges prosecutors to shield victims/witnesses from any evidence which is unrelated to the crime prosecuted and judges to intervene against 'questioning the victim's credibility, rather than establishing the guilt or innocence of the accused' (Duban and Radačić, 2017). For its part, also the European Court of Human Rights stated 'cross-examination should not be used as a means of intimidating or humiliating witnesses' (Y v. Slovenia, 2015). Adoption of 'rape shield laws' is therefore considered a very important good practice. In Canada, United States and United Kingdom, for instance, rape shield laws prohibit or limit the use of evidence concerning the victim's sexual history, behaviour or reputation when unrelated or irrelevant for the case prosecuted.

From a more general point of view, the Training Manual takes note that criminal procedure and rules of evidence in rape and violence cases 'are often infiltrated by strong gender stereotypes' (such as women fabricate violence allegations) which can promote 'gender-biased behaviour by court officials and discrimination against women' (Duban and Radačić, 2017). An indirect proof is given by some evidentiary rules, developed ad hoc for cases of sexual violence, that clearly rely on gender stereotypes such as the prompt complaint requirement (based on the assumption that a real victim would report the violence quickly) and the corroboration principle requiring other evidence supporting the testimony of the victim (based on the assumption that women might lie and therefore imposing a higher burden of proof compared to other violent crimes in which conviction may depend on victim's testimony only). Furthermore, in cases of rape of women in prostitution the consent of the victim is sometime taken for granted or in cases of gender-based violence the victim is required to prove her physical resistance rather than offender to prove her consent on the mistaken assumption that women may easily fabricate claims of violence: as a result, the existence of crime is often denied.

As regards sentencing, finally, the Training Manual reminds judges and prosecutors that sentences must reflect the serious nature of the crime and their primary goals must be 'to prevent the reoccurrence of the violence, to protect the victim, and to hold the perpetrator accountable' and not to rehabilitate the offender (Duban and Radačić, 2017). In the United Kingdom, for instance, sentencing guidelines list a certain number of factors which judges should always consider when dealing with domestic and sexual violence cases. Guidelines are based on previous research and evidence and urges judges to consider a 'first-time' offender might actually have already used violence in the past without being reported by the victim or charged by the judicial.

Looking ahead: The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023

The implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 has resulted in significant progress in

the field of gender equality and the legal status of women throughout Europe generally improved. Yet, 'progress is very slow as regards women's [...] access to justice and the elimination of harmful gender stereotypes' including judicial stereotypes, i.e. the main obstacle for effective equality between women and men in accessing justice (Council of Europe, 2018).

To further strengthen and achieve substantive, comprehensive and full gender equality in all spheres of public and private life, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted on 7 March 2018 the new Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 that build upon the achievements of the previous Strategy 2014-2017. While the Strategy 2014-2017 had focused on five priority areas (ensuring access to justice was one of them), the Strategy 2018-2023 will focus on six strategic areas and, once again, ensuring the equal access of women to justice is the third strategic objective[70].

On the premise that 'there are a multitude of obstacles which prevent women from having equal access to justice' and cultural barriers, fear and shame as well as 'discriminatory attitudes and the stereotypical roles of women as carers and men as providers, which still persist in civil and family law in many jurisdictions', are part of them both during investigations and trials, the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 will therefore seek among other things to:

1) 'encourage research and standardised data collection to tackle gaps and lack of data disaggregated by sex concerning women's access to justice, including women's participation in the judiciary';

2) 'continue to address the harmful impact of gender stereotypes on judicial decision-making [...] through research, monitoring, training, education, capacity building and the promotion of good practices at the national level';

3) 'monitor and follow up court decisions to raise awareness and ensure a better understanding among legal professionals of issues related to women's access to justice, including judicial stereotypes and the protection against gender-based violence and discrimination';

4) 'identify and disseminate existing victim support tools and good practices to empower women in the process of accessing justice';

5) 'develop information tools [...] to promote women's access to justice taking into account the needs of women in particularly vulnerable situations, such as survivors of violence, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, targets of sexist hate speech, and Roma women'.

The ultimate goal of the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 is to eliminate - or at least significantly lower – one by one all those barriers obstructing access to justice which are as many 'pieces in a "justice jigsaw" that exclude women' (Council of Europe, 2018).

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70   The other five strategic areas set forth by the GES 2018-2023 are: 1) prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism; 2) prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence; 4) achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making; 5) protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls; 6) achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

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Role of STEM Education in Women Empowerment

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The STEM fields: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, are the leading, most vital fields in the innovative modern world. Women remain underrepresented in these areas; although, there has been a recent push towards ensuring women have more equal access to pursue studies and careers in this arena. Nearly every company must employ persons within the STEM fields in order to function at the highest levels, creating a vast job market, almost guaranteeing employment. Furthermore, those in STEM programmes tend to generate higher salaries and greater job security. Hence, more prevalently women are choosing these fields due to factors which increase their independence and their abilities to contribute to society. STEM curriculum is becoming a priority focus in K-12 school, allowing young girls to gain the same competencies as males and enabling them to compete on an equal basis for jobs in high demand. Thus, encouraging and enabling women to access STEM programmes will not only close in on the gender gap, and void out job based gender stereotypes, it will empower women further by providing more opportunity to lead and contribute to the revitalising futures of their societies and economies.

DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE IT CONTROL FRAMEWORKS: A STUDY OF EXECUTIVE GENDER DIVERSITY

Dr. Humam Elagha, Royal University for Women, Kingdom of Bahrain

ABSTRACT

IT control frameworks set out best practices for IT actions, processes and monitoring within organizations, and are believed to lead to more effective IT governance. This research evaluates the awareness and understanding of IT control frameworks in public and private organizations in Bahrain and aims at adopting a flexible definition of IT control frameworks. This study seeks to examine empirically the individual IT governance mechanisms that are required to establish and implement effective IT control frameworks, by taking into account the role of 'Executive Gender Diversity' within organizations in implementing effective IT control frameworks and the link between Gender Diversity in Senior Positions and Firm Performance. Thus, the general research question of this study is: What factors are required to establish and implement effective IT control frameworks? Two specific questions arising from this are:

1. *What are the key determinants in developing and implementing IT control frameworks in public and private organizations in Bahrain?*

2. *To what extent does Executive Gender Diversity influence the implementation of effective IT control frameworks?*

This research contributes to literature by studying the role of Executive Gender Diversity in influencing the implementation of effective IT control frameworks and examining the relationship between gender diversity in senior positions and firm performance.

Keywords: Control Frameworks, Gender Diversity, Internal Controls, Internal and External IT Audits

Introduction

IT governance is the structure of relationships, processes and mechanisms used to develop, direct and control IT strategy and resources so as to best achieve the goals and objectives of an enterprise. It is a set of processes aimed at adding value to an organization while balancing the risk and return aspects associated with IT investments. IT governance is ultimately the responsibility of the board of directors and executive management. In a broader sense, IT governance encompasses developing the IT strategic plan, assessing the nature and organizational impact of new technologies, developing the IT skill base, aligning IT direction and resources, safeguarding the interests of internal-external IT stakeholders as well as taking into account the quality of relationships between stakeholders (IT Governance Institute, 2007a; Korac-Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2001; Kordel, 2004). IT governance today concerns how the IT organization is managed and structured and provides mechanisms that enable the development of integrated business and IT plans, allocation of responsibilities within the IT organization, and prioritization of IT initiatives (De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2005a; Larsen, Pedersen, & Andersen, 2006; Wiell & Ross, 2005).

IT control frameworks set out best practices for IT actions, processes and monitoring within organizations, and are believed to lead to more effective IT governance. This research evaluates the awareness and understanding of IT control frameworks in public and private organizations in Bahrain and aims at adopting a flexible definition of IT control frameworks. This study seeks to examine empirically the individual IT governance mechanisms that are required to establish and implement effective IT control frameworks, by

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taking into account the role of 'Executive Gender Diversity' within organizations in implementing effective IT control frameworks and the link between Gender Diversity in Senior Positions and Firm Performance.

Theoretical Background

IT Governance Mechanisms indicate the design and implementation of a coordinated set of governance mechanisms for ensuring effectiveness of IT governance. According to (Wiell & Ross, 2005) enterprises generally design three kinds of governance mechanisms: (1) decision-making structures, (2) alignment processes and (3) formal communications. With respect to decision-making structures, the most visible IT governance mechanisms are the organizational committees and roles that locate decision-making responsibilities according to intended archetypes. Different archetypes rely on different decision-making structures (i.e. Archetypes were explained in section 3.1). Anarchies (which are rarely used — or at least rarely admitted to!) require no decision-making structures at all. Feudal arrangements rely on local decision-making structures. But monarchy, federal or duopoly arrangements demand decision- making structures with the representation and authority to produce enterprise wide synergies.

Alignment processes are management techniques for securing widespread and effective involvement in governance decisions and their implementation. For example, the IT investment proposal process delineates steps for defining, reviewing and prioritizing IT projects, in determining which projects will be funded. Architecture exception processes provide a formal assessment of the costs and value of project implementations that veer from company standards. Service-level agreements and charge backs help IT units clarify costs for IT services and instigate discussion of the kinds of services the business requires. Finally, formal tracking of business value from IT forces firms to determine the payback on completed projects, which can help firms focus their attention on generating intended benefits (Wiell & Ross, 2005).

With respect to formal communications, a huge barrier to effective IT governance is lack of understanding about how decisions are made, what processes are being implemented and what the desired outcomes are. Management can communicate governance processes in a variety of ways: general announcements, the institution of formal committees, regular communication from the office of the CIO or the office of IT governance, one-on-one sessions, intranets and so on.

Wiell & Ross (2004) describe some commonly used governance mechanisms in their study and their typical objectives. Also included are examples of the desirable behavior when the mechanism is effectively implemented and undesirable behavior when poorly implemented.

Vaswani (2003), whose respondents were 80 auditors in Queensland, Australia, found that certain individual mechanisms, such as an IT steering committee, involvement of senior management and corporate performance measurement systems, were correlated positively with the overall level of IT governance effectiveness.

Research Framework and Hypotheses

Based on reviewing the related literature, an operational definition of each independent variable of the research model was developed. Later on, the items of the questionnaire were derived from these definitions. In this section, the researcher tries to extract the research hypotheses in the light of previous studies results and recommendations as discussed below. The reviewed studies declared that, a significant relationship is found between IT governance domains (focus areas) and IT governance maturity (IT Governance Institute, 2003; Dahlberg & Kivijärvi, 2006; Dahlberg & Lahdelma, 2007). According to the IT Governance Institute (2003), IT governance is defined as:

"IT governance is the responsibility of the board of directors and executive management. It is an integral part of enterprise governance and consists of the leadership and organizational structures and processes that ensure that the organization's IT1 sustains and extends the organization's strategies and objectives."

Fundamentally, IT governance is concerned about two things: IT's delivery of value to the business and mitigation of IT risks. The first is driven by strategic alignment of IT with the business. The second is driven by embedding accountability into the enterprise. Both need to be supported by adequate resources and measured to ensure that the results are obtained. This leads to the five main focus areas for IT governance, all driven by stakeholder value. They are Alignment of Business and IT, Monitoring of IT Resources, Risks and Management, Monitoring of IT Performance Measurement, Evaluation of Value Delivery, and IT Governance Development (IT Governance Institute, 2003; Dahlberg & Kivijärvi, 2006). IT governance is also a continuous life cycle, which can be entered at any point. Usually one starts with the strategy and its alignment throughout the enterprise. Then implementation occurs, delivering the value the strategy promised and addressing the risks that need mitigation. At regular intervals (some recommend continuously) the strategy needs to be monitored and the results measured, reported and acted upon. Generally on an annual basis, the strategy is reevaluated and realigned, if needed. (IT Governance Institute, 2003). In this study, the researcher proposes that the maturity of IT governance domains (focus areas) will affect the level of IT governance maturity. IT governance domains will be searched as the independent variables and IT governance maturity is a variable potentially dependent on these domains.

Thus the first main hypothesis can be presented as follows:

H1: The maturity of IT Governance Focus Areas (Domains) will positively influence the level of IT Governance Maturity.

The reviewed studies declared that, a significant relationship is found between IT governance mechanisms and IT governance performance. Such studies examining the effectiveness of IT governance mechanisms have produced interesting results (Vaswani, 2003; Weill & Ross, 2004; Ali & Green, 2007). Vaswani (2003), whose respondents were 80 auditors in Queensland, Australia, found that certain individual mechanisms, such as an IT steering committee, involvement of senior management and corporate performance measurement systems, were correlated positively with the overall level of IT governance effectiveness. Weill and Ross (2004) surveyed CIOs from 256 enterprises in the US and identified fifteen of the most common IT governance mechanisms, such as a senior management committee, an IT executive committee, an architecture committee, etc.

Modifying and extending the work of Vaswani (2003), this study will examine other additional individual IT governance mechanisms (IT strategy committee, ethics/culture of compliance in IT and corporate communication systems) and their influences on the overall effectiveness of IT governance.

In this study, the researcher proposes that IT governance mechanisms will affect IT governance performance. IT governance mechanisms will be searched as the independent variables and IT governance performance is a variable potentially dependent on these mechanisms.

Thus the second main hypothesis can be presented as follows:

H2: The existence of IT Governance Mechanisms will positively influence the level of IT Governance Performance.

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The major hypothesis of this study is dealing with the relationship between IT governance maturity and IT governance performance. To the best of our knowledge, little studies declared that, a significant relationship is found between IT governance maturity and IT governance performance (Simonsson & Johnson, 2008).

Simonsson & Johnson (2008) studied the correlation between IT governance maturity and IT governance performance. A framework for analysis of IT governance maturity and IT governance performance was created. Data collection was made through 35 case studies, and the hypotheses were tested for the IT governance of the 34 IT processes of the COBIT framework. They have found a significant relationship between IT governance maturity and IT governance performance.

Even though little research had previously shown the existence of a direct link between IT governance and organizational performance, some progress has been made. A number of studies have focused on finding different linkages, e.g. Weill and Ross' survey on how financially top-performing companies manage IT decision rights (Weill & Ross, 2004), Dahlberg & Lahdelma's study on IT governance maturity and the degree of IT outsourcing (Dahlberg & Lahdelma, 2007), De Haes & Van Grembergen's research on IT governance and IT business alignment (De Has & Van Grembergen, 2008), and Schlosser et al. (2010) evaluated how a firm's internal alignment and governance processes impact the service quality received from an external IT outsourcing provider.

In this study, the researcher proposes that mature IT Governance will enhance IT Governance performance. Thus the third main hypothesis can be presented as follows:

> **H3: The Level of IT Governance Maturity will positively influence the level of IT Governance Performance.**

Methodology

Obtaining the sample data by surveying 250 respondents at 20 Bahraini and Emirati organizations within financial services, manufacturing, telecommunications and public service, with a 60% response rate, the collected data was analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS 2.0 software. Different methods of analysis were used to assess the data gathered through the questionnaire. The main method used is the Partial Least Squares (PLS) Path Modeling. Other methods used are Descriptive Statistics, Internal Consistency Reliability, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Composite Variables, Tests for Normality, Transformation, Test for Outliers, and Correlation Analysis.

The instrument used in this study is the questionnaire to measure the research's different variables. A 5-point likert scale is used to increase distinction between different levels. The survey instrument was validated through a pilot test with a sample of 30 organizational participants who were not included in the sample frame for the subsequent data collection.

The Results Discussion

The first main hypothesis (H1) deals with the positive direct relationship between the five domains of IT governance and IT governance maturity. To assess the robustness and reliability of the relation between IT governance maturity construct and its indicators (i.e. the indicators are five IT governance domains), we calculate through SmartPLS software the Communality, Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

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The computed communality for IT Governance Maturity (ITGM) was .973 reflecting a high capacity for the indicators to describe their corresponding latent construct. The recommended threshold for communality is .5 (Chin, 1998). The computed composite reliability was .732. It is concluded that the construct was adequately described by its indicators. The recommended threshold for composite reliability is .7 (Chin, 1998). The computed Cronbach's Alpha was .932, reflecting that all of the indicators explain 0.932 of the construct. Alpha values > 0.7 indicate good reliability (DeVellis, 2003). The computed AVE of the measurement model was .354 for IT Governance Maturity (ITGM). This AVE value implied that the latent variable was able to explain about one third of the variance in its corresponding indicators. Dillon et al., (1984) suggested a minimum AVE of .5 to indicate good convergent validity. It is concluded that the convergent validity of the model was relatively moderate.

The second main hypothesis (H2) deals with the positive direct relationship between the five mechanisms of IT governance and IT governance performance. To assess the robustness and reliability of the relation between IT governance performance construct and its indicators (i.e. the indicators are five IT governance mechanisms), we calculate through SmartPLS software the Communality, Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

The computed communality for IT Governance Performance (ITGP) was .961 reflecting a high capacity for the indicators to describe their corresponding latent construct. The computed composite reliability was .700. It is concluded that the construct was adequately described by its indicators. The computed Cronbach's Alpha was .911, reflecting that all of the indicators explain .911 of the construct. The computed AVE of the measurement model was .320 for IT Governance Performance (ITGP). This AVE value implied that the latent variable was able to explain about one third of the variance in its corresponding indicators. It is concluded that the convergent validity of the model was relatively moderate.

Five sub hypotheses were derived and tested as clarified in the previous chapters. In the following sections, a brief discussion for the testing results of these sub hypotheses will be presented.

Conclusion

This study advances our understanding of the roles of IT governance domains and their impact on the level of IT governance maturity. In particular, this study found robust empirical evidence that the maturity of Alignment of Business and IT; Monitoring of IT Resources, Risks and Management; Monitoring of IT Performance Measurement; Evaluation of Value Delivery; and IT Governance Development greatly enhance the level of IT Governance Maturity. Moreover, this study advances our understanding of the roles of IT governance mechanisms and their impact on the overall effectiveness of IT governance. In particular, this study found robust empirical evidence that the implementation of Communication Systems; the existence of Ethics/Culture of Compliance in IT; IT Steering Committee; and IT Strategy Committee greatly enhance the overall effectiveness of IT governance. Also, the findings suggest that the involvement of senior management in IT positively influences the overall effectiveness of IT governance.

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BAHRAINI WOMEN ENGINEERS: FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR CAREER SUCCESS LADDER

Adel Ismail Al-Alawi University of Bahrain, Bahrain; Shurooq Husamaddin Ebdaa Engineering, Bahrain; Fatema Khaled Mejeran Ministry of Works, Bahrain; Fatema Kadhem Madan Al-Taweel Engineering, Bahrain

ABSTRACT

Bahraini women have proved competent to hold significant roles in various sectors; they even hold 32% of the leading executive positions especially with the support of Kingdom's ministries, departments, and institutions. In the engineering sector, Bahraini women have achieved much over the last 50 years, but they still face the challenge of how to strengthen their proportion in high management. The purpose of this study is to constitute a reference to the current status of Bahraini women in the engineering sector in leading positions, identifying their representation, role, and positions they occupy in this sector. Also to identify the difficulties confronting Bahraini women who work in the engineering sector in leading positions, and the impact of these difficulties on their status in this sector. With discussing some factors that affect women's access to leading positions, and looking for ways to increase the status of Bahraini women leading in this sector, which will consequently contribute to reinforcing their role in this extremely important sector.

The research is approached through a quantitative study conducted in the public and private engineering fields. Available data were collected from the engineering organizations and some information was derived from conducting visits and distributing questionnaires. Two forms of questionnaires, printed and electronic, were distributed among 120 women engineers; responses were received from 57 of them. The questions focus on factors that influence, positively or negatively, the opportunities for women in leading important positions and creating an effective entity in engineering. These factors are divided into three different aspects: factors related to society, work-related factors, and personal factors. The society-related factors to be studied are equality in opportunities, rules and regulations, and lack of highlighting the role and participation of role models female engineers in society. For work-related the factors to be studied are nature of work, the ability to participate in decision-making, management, and leadership stereotypes, and fringe benefits regarding the Gulf region. Balancing between being in a leading position and home responsibilities are related to personal related factors. Results show that in order to enable and empower Bahraini women, institutions should provide more professional courses and workshops, especially in leadership and management. There is a lack of support services for employees and their children in many institutions, such as medical insurance, a nursery for children, flexible working hours, etc. regarding the equality of opportunities, the results show no differences between women and men. However, they stated that the chances for progression are fewer in all sectors. It is also recommended that institutions' top management must break the obstacles that prevent women from reaching leading positions. Many women stated that they are encouraged to participate in decision-making in their institution. However, some of them claim that they are not involved in deciding new policies and critical issues.

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STATUS OF WOMEN IN STEM FIELD OF STUDY

Prof. Mazin M A Jumaah, President, Royal University for Women, Kingdom of Bahrain

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to highlight the status of women in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the Arab region, by focusing on the Kingdom of Bahrain. It outlines the current situation and examines the challenges obstructing women's engagement with STEM. It highlights the vision, strategies and policies of Kingdom of Bahrain for encouraging and promoting the position of Bahraini women in higher education, particularly, in STEM, and the provision that the Royal University for Women (RUW) makes available to realize those strategic aims and ambitions.

Preview of global status of women in STEM

The progressive development experienced in the field of science in the world, has alerted both the developed and the developing countries to the importance of people taking part in the process and promoting an indiscriminatingly conducive environment for male and female graduates' innovations and prosperity. The involvement of women in STEM is amongst the substantial platforms to foster their contribution and development. Nevertheless, the actual outcome of women contribution has not been equivalent to the progress they have achieved in higher education across the world. This is revealed in statistical terms as also in qualitative analysis conducted on all age groups of females – from early school age up to higher education. Looking at highest levels of scientific achievement, it appears that the number of the awardees of Nobel Prizes between 1901 and 2016, was 911 but women were only forty-eight. Sixteen of those women won the Peace Prize, whilst fourteen won the Prize for Literature. Only in 2014, that a woman, hails from the Middle East[1], won the Fields Medal, the world's greatest honour in Mathematics.[2]

The data in Table 1 details the number of women who won the Noble prizes up to 2014.

Table 1: Nobel Laureates in STEM-related fields

	Nobel Prize in Chemistry	Nobel Prize in Medicine	Nobel Prize in Physics	Nobel Prize in Mathematics
Female	4	11	2	1
Male	165	196	197	55

Source: Nobelprize.org, 2014; IMU, 2014

Similarly, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) indicates that between 2000 and 2012, the number of researchers around the world increased from 1.9 million to 6.9 million. Despite this global rise in interest, predominance of men over women in this field still remains as an issue of concern, as only 1/3rd of researchers around the world were female in 2011. Averaged across regions, women accounted for less than a third (28.4%) of those employed in scientific research and development (R&D) across the world even in 20133 with following details:

- Central Asia (47.1%)
- Latin American and the Caribbean (44.3%)

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1   The Iranian, Maryam Mirzakhani, professor of mathematics at Stanford University.
2   Saini, A. (2017). Inferior. How Science Got Women Wrong – and the New Research That's Rewriting the Story. 4th edn. Estate: London

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- Central and Eastern Europe (39.9%)

- The Arab States (36.8%)

The Arab Region

Box 1

Enas Mostafa, the supervisor of the multipurpose unit for biotechnology and genetic engineering at the National Research Centre (NRC) in Cairo, says her decision to study science was opposed by her family and friends who argued that a scientific career was an "unpractical choice." Against this stereotyped perception, she joined the chemical engineering department at Cairo University where two-thirds of her graduating classmates were women, scoring high graduate grades. Upon graduation, Mostafa and her female mates toured some of the major petroleum companies in search for work.

After screening their resumes, the HR recruiter of one petroleum company asked if there were any men in their class. When they explained that the males in the group did not score as high as them, he declared "I'll hire them." "We were shocked," says Mostafa. "A petroleum company would rather hire a man who did not score well in his studies over high grading females."[3]

The testimony in Box 1 above concurs with the UNESCO statistical reports[4] that despite the relatively low level of women population in science and science-related occupations and research across the Arab region, compared to the wider world, the number of women studying science at undergraduate level often outweighs that of men in most of the Arab states. Women graduates in STEM constitute over 60 percent. But, this number thins out in marching towards employment and in pursuing postgraduate engagement. For instance, in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), two thirds of university science students are women; but, in research institutions, women constitute only 12%. Likewise, in Morocco, women comprised 70% of the students attending science-specialized Universities and institutes, yet only a few succeed in assuming prominent research positions in the field.

Despite the underrepresentation of women in the field of STEM, some talented female figures have broken through the 'glass ceiling' to prosper and thrive as aspirant scientists. Female innovators and pioneers in their fields in the United Arab Emirates University, UAEU, for instance, Laila Hareb, Assistant Director-General of Aviation Strategies and International Affairs at General Civil Aviation Authority, GCAA, are but an example. In Dubai, the aviation sector is estimated to contribute 37.5 per cent to its GDP and support over 750,000 jobs by 2020. Hareb's position enabled the convergence of international female leaders from the aviation industry for the 2nd Women in Aviation General Assembly (WAM) on May 15th to promote the higher participation of women in the progressively developing aviation sector in the Middle East'. The forum also aspires to nurture and cement cooperation between government and the private sector to enhance women's opportunities and professionalism in the aviation industry. Similarly, Sama Tarek Sayed Taha Aly Research student of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Al Ain University, whose research contributes to environmental sustainability as it shows that more environmentally-friendly concrete could be created by adding ceramic waste powder to the mix, with the potential to cut CO_2 emissions.[5] Overall all, there are strides into the right direction, albeit, with less needed concerted effort.

3   Sarant, L. (2013, 7 May) Empowering Arab female scientists. [Online]. Available at:<http://www.natureasia.com/en/nmiddleeast/article/10.1038/nmiddleeast.2013.67>, [Accessed on 5 October 2017].

4   UNISCO, 2017.

5   Emirates News Agency. Mon 03-04-2017. 60% of STEM graduates in Arab countries are women. Online. Available at: <http://www.wam.org.ae/en/details/1395302606617>. Accessed on 20 October 2007

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Challenges for Women's Engagement in STEM

A recent survey shows that STEM degrees are among the most lucrative for graduates. Looking at the gender breakdown of students entering these fields, about 60% are male and 40% are female and at PhD level numbers are closer. Over time, those talented women with their PhD in STEM start to drop out to technical and Industrial careers. By the time careers reach leadership levels, as few as 15% of those talented women remain.[6] This underrepresentation and underachievement of women in the STEM in the Arab world does not come from a vacuum; however, as there have been global institutional, cultural and legislative challenges that contribute to this alienation of women from the STEM field. These include such policies, trends and legislations as:

1. Educational policies:

Gender differences in STEM fields do not start in the labor market, nor do they in higher education. Indeed, they manifest themselves at early age of the female students when they start constructing and visioning their future prospects, when a child would say: 'When I grow up, I want to be such and such.' It is thus important that the counselling of these girl students about the STEM fields is initiated at the early school level. The formal educational attitudes and policies that appear to estrange girls from the field of industry-related subjects at secondary schools on the pretext that these are the domain for boys/men and would not necessarily suit them, need to be addressed by the society. There has been a general lack of interest in pursuing STEM among male and female students in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA); as about 65% of students in higher education, opt to study humanities and social sciences and less than 30% pursue pure and applied sciences (Figure 1). For instance, "enrollment in Agriculture studies in the region was the second lowest field of study after services management in 2008."[6]
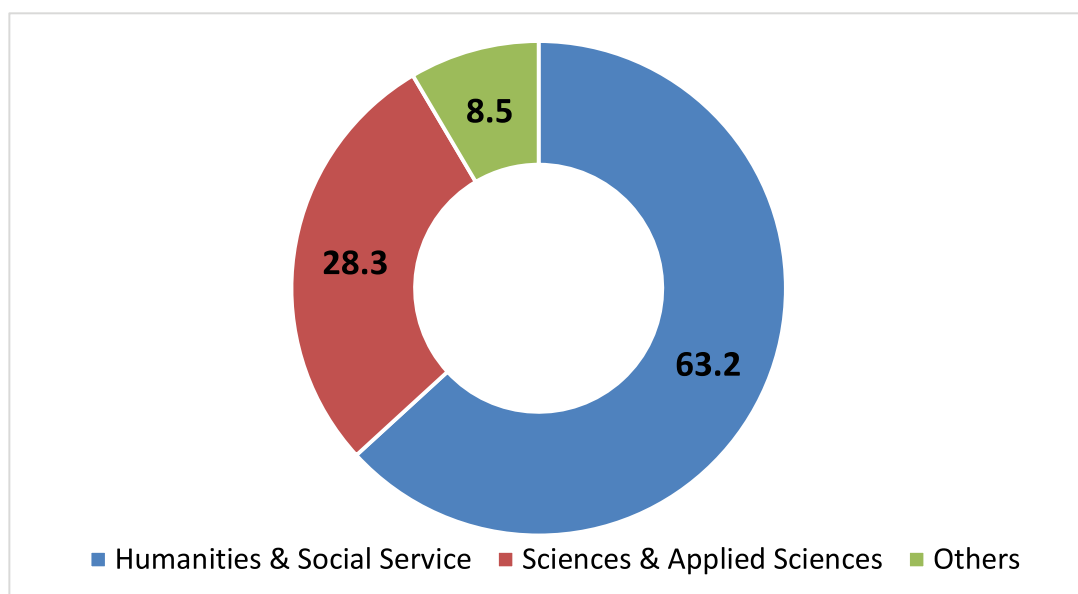
Figure 1: Enrollment Percentage by broad Fields of Study

Chart values: 8.5, 28.3, 63.2

Legend: ■ Humanities & Social Service ■ Sciences & Applied Sciences ■ Others

2. Workforce Policies

Even though several Arab countries tend to express enthusiasm for building greater knowledge-based societies, women are sometimes not considered among the scientific and economic workforce. Part of this

6   Macrow, Anthena Vongalis (2016), What it will take to keep Women from leaving STEM, Harvard Business Review.

7   UNESCO (2009), Regional Report: A Decade of Higher Education in the Arab States: Achievements and Challenges, Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education, Cairo.

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disengagement is manifested in the employment policies and regulations that are not entirely sensitive to women's gender practical and strategic needs, such as maternity leave, flexible working hours and childcare. Private sector officials, usually prefer men to women, because of such reservations. In addition, this recurrent stereotyping that women encounter, often drains their confidence and lowers the ceiling of aspirations, as they are made to understand that they are not at par in terms of skills and performance with their men counterparts in the STEM domain, as indicated by a research conducted at the University of Delaware[7].

The discontent of women with financial compensation and conditions of promotion may also drive them to either give up jobs or desert the idea of getting employed in the field in the first place. As a consequence, a gender-retention gap has been created.[8] These research findings are comparably similar to an earlier survey of female college graduates conducted in 1979 to compare the experience of women's engagement in occupations within STEM to others outside the field. The survey findings reveal that women in STEM, especially those early-career scientists, are more prone to give up their jobs than women in other professions. This relative lack of commitment among female STEM occupants was induced by what they perceived and witnessed as inadequate incentives such as job rewards, training and job satisfaction that could encourage them to stay.[9] This glass ceiling effect, is equally manifested in the Arab region though interventions have been made to redress its impact.

3. Family and Personal Laws

In some countries family laws recognises the man as the main family guardian. Accordingly, wives are required to follow their husbands' choices. The legislation therefore limits the rights of professional women and their opportunity to choose the right job, at the right time and location. Though in countries like Kingdom of Bahrain the family laws emphasize on the equal opportunities for women leading to more participation of women in all fields.

4. Socio-cultural Beliefs and Practices:

Socio-cultural norms and beliefs often obstruct women's engagement in STEM. Gender stereotyping and patriarchal barriers often impact the engagement of female graduates in work relevant to their specialization. Yet, the socialization of girls that their end destination in life is a housewife constitutes a psychological hurdle towards believing in themselves as human with equal rights to aspire, innovate and prosper. It is a hurdle that is often difficult to wash off. With changing times and breaking the gender stereotypes this situation is changing in most parts of the world.

5. Working Environment - Employability skills

Sometimes due to inadequate policies to promote the presence of women in the STEM field, as specialists and as researchers, their presence is limited. This is because women often lack necessary workplace experience that can enable them to compete with males and therefore, they instantly face rejection. The repeat experience of rejection often promotes a sense of disengagement towards the subjects and perpetuates a culture of advising daughters to opt for specializations perceived as having higher

7   University of Delaware (2013). UD researcher gets to the root of why women leave STEM fields. Online; available at: <https://phys.org/news/2013-10-ud-root-women-stem-fields.html>. Accessed October 23, 2017
8   Hunt, J. (2010). Why Do Women Leave Science and Engineering? Working Paper 15853. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research. Online; available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15853>. Accessed October 23, 2017
9   Jennifer L. G., Sharon, S., Yael, L., Katherine, M. 2013. What's So Special about STEM? A Comparison of Women's Retention in STEM and Professional Occupations. Social Forces, Volume 92, Issue 2, 1 December 2013, Pages 723–756. Online; available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sot092>. [Accessed 23 October 2017]

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employability rates for females. These barriers are constructed either by the requirements for a researcher (with reference to advanced degrees) and/or for employees in other STEM institutions.

6. Limitation in study areas and opportunities to accommodate talented female candidates also constitutes a fundamentally limiting factor.

7. Lack of role models and enthusiastic female teachers in STEM-related subjects at the secondary level is another limiting factor in girls taking up STEM subjects at school level. Young women taking up careers in STEM related fields lack role models in their careers. The high involvement of males in challenging projects helps them build their career profile and a reputation in the market thus becoming successful role models. On the other hand, few women are granted opportunities to participate in high profile projects or to take on tasks that require more involvement and decision-making. This problem begins during the college years; as female students often report of the lack of motivation they receive during their internship programs compared to their male classmates. Thus, there are only limited role models available to them and thus are unable to compete competitively with their male counterparts.

8. University and Higher Education Institutions

University and higher education Institutions are associated with a substantial role to promote social diversity and appealing platforms for innovation for students to lead a positive social change process. Conversely however, many universities lack necessary awareness of women's subjects, women and gender studies and STEM related subjects. Due to lack of awareness many women students are not able to pursue these subjects at higher education level leading to low numbers.

9. Weak linkage with Industry

Despite the growing industry in the Arab region, especially the Gulf, there is, paradoxically, a weak linkage with Industry, both in terms of applied education and learning and in conducting industry-based research.

10. Limited research centers both at university level and at National level suggest that talented females are often less likely to be considered that their male counterparts. Underfunding for research and field studies is another reason for women not taking up research in STEM fields.

The Case of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain is among the countries observing and upholding the development objectives and agendas recommended by its regional partners and the international institutions, such as the United Nations, for instance, the UN Sustainable Development Goals for Bahrain Vision 2030. Since the beginning of the new millennium, Bahrain has progressively endeavoured to mainstream gender perspective in the Kingdom's plans and strategies through promoting women's political participation at all levels of the Kingdom decision-making apparatuses and incorporating gender sensitive planning and budgeting in pursuing development initiatives. Promoting meaningful presence of women in STEM has also received significant attention from the Kingdom authorities, but as yet has to gather pace to bear fruits. This state support is summarized below.

The Kingdom's Methods for empowering women in STEM

1. **Role of Education:**
   - Stimulating interest among female students in STEM-related subjects, ensuring that educators are equipped to take more gender-responsive approaches and encourage female students to pursue

STEM fields and taking policy measures that are conducive to increasing the number of women in these fields.

- Stimulating, encouraging and supporting fair and equal opportunities for girls and boys to perform in STEM-related subjects at school, therefore, would equate to more girls and women in STEM fields of study in higher education and the world of work.

2. Policy and legislation

Higher Education Council (HEC) has been established to cater for higher education and research in the kingdom. Its main objectives are centered around the following:

- Pursuing regular institutional reforms and promoting research culture in Kingdom of Bahrain in all areas of

- Reinforcing and supporting the research capacity in University

- Promoting and strengthening collaboration and integration between academic institutions & market or the Industry.

- Raising students and public awareness and understanding of scientific research and innovation in areas of Petrochemical, Industrial Health Services & Public Health, Gulf Region Health & Translational Medicine, Environment, Marine Science, Waste Water Management, ICT, Media, Telecom, Archeology, Social Sciences, Economics, Public Policy and Admin, etc. Such awareness raising would contribute to developing a positive perception and appeal among both females and males of the STEM field and hence more involvement in future.

3. Supreme Council for Women

Since the beginning of the millennium, the Kingdom has pursued significant practical actions towards empowering women and promoting their role in the development of the state. This was launched through the formation, in August 2001, of the Supreme Women Council[10], under the leadership of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al- Khalifa, President of the Supreme Council for Women and Wife of His Majesty the King, to serve as the focal point for mainstreaming women's social, economic and political participation in the planning and execution of development initiatives in the state. The purpose and aspirations of this Council are communicated through clear and ambitious vision of 'equitable partnership to build a competitive and sustainable society.' Its mission has thus been to empower Bahraini women and mainstream their perceived needs in the development programs and to heighten the principle of equal opportunities to ensure Bahraini women acquired necessary skills that pave the way for them to be fully integrated, institutionally and legislatively, in the development process.

The Council has developed a clear action plan, which includes among its main strategies, the pursuance of quantitative and qualitative research in all development areas. The research is primarily geared towards analyzing the multidimensional traits affecting women's sustainable integration, as a threshold for effective planning and problem solving. For instance, the Council has conducted an action research on the distribution of graduates, by specialization in Bahrain (2013-14), which reveals the following figures (Table 2 below):

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10   https://www.scw.bh/en/Pages/default.aspx

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Table 2: Graduates by Specialization in Bahrain (2013-14)

	Education	Arts	Business Management	IT	Engineering	Science	Law	Medicine & Healthcare
Women	207	353	1,797	371	262	84	194	312
Men	94	135	1,026	224	348	21	141	125

Source: Supreme Council for Women

Obviously, these figures suggest that women in Bahrain are more inclined, compared to men, to pursue study in all kinds of educational specializations, including STEM.

SCW continues to acknowledge the role of Bahraini Women in STEM fields and Engineering in particular, offering numerous arears of support to these women. In this regard SCW has declared the year 2017 the "Year of The Bahraini Woman Engineer" to bring much required focus to women pursuing their studies and careers in STEM fields. Many activities have taken place throughout the year and great efforts have been set forth to celebrate these women and to research, study, and discuss the obstacles women Engineers face in the workplace. They have discussed the means of providing support to help women Engineers overcome these obstacles and further enhance their work experience, allowing them to be productive members of the profession. As part of the activities organized by the Supreme Council for Women in this occasion numerous "Focus Group" discussions have been organized throughout 2017. It has been seen (Fig 2) that all Engineering programs at University of Bahrain (UOB) are open to both female and male students. Statistics obtained of the numbers of graduates indicate that women in STEM fields are significantly represented, though some of those programs/fields seem to be more popular and desired by female students.

	Architecture	Interior Design	Civil	Electrical	Electronic	Chemical	Mechanical	Control
Women	223	166	190	15	46	31	5	3
Men	46	2	234	84	56	77	139	47
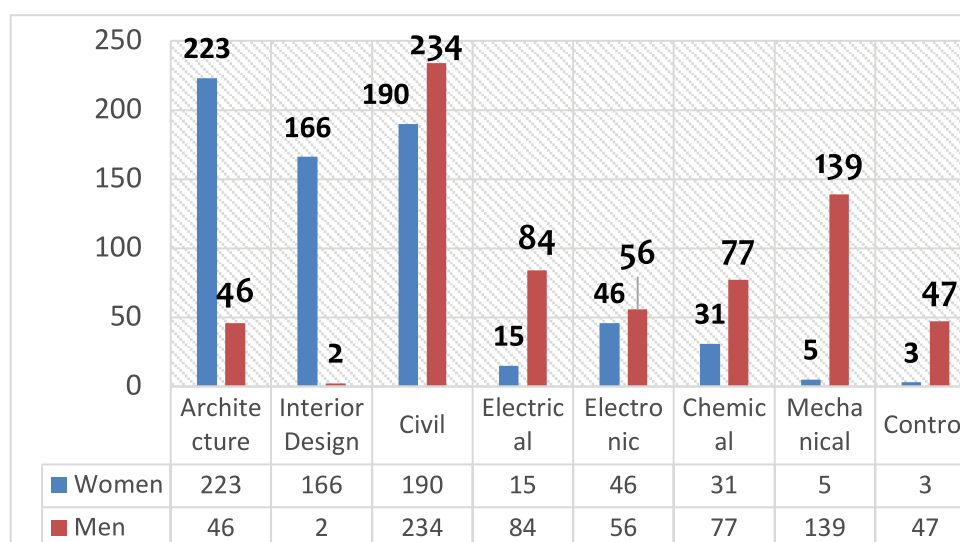
Figure 2 - Graduates from UOB in different fields of engineering in the years 2012-2016

Source: SCW Statistics of BAH Women in Engineering, 2017

Focus groups have addressed the state of Bahraini Women Engineers, the issues they have in the Oil and Gas Sector, Women Engineers with Disabilities, the role of Bahraini Laws and Regulations in the field of engineering, and others. In addition, a variety of symposiums and conferences have been taking place in 2017 which further address issues related to the state of Bahraini Women Engineers and their role in the future development of the Kingdom of Bahrain. This support offered by SCW will definitely play a great

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role in promoting Bahraini Women Engineers allowing them to achieve their aspirations and professional dreams and to create awareness of taking up STEM fields of study in higher education.

This atmosphere of growing tendency and awareness towards engagement with various higher educational fields, especially STEM, has prompted the establishment of several public and private educational institutions in Bahrain to accommodate aspirant females and enhance their participation in STEM and their contributions to its development. A striking example, has been the recent establishment of the College of Engineering in the Royal University of Women in Bahrain in October 2017, hosting the WVU Civil Engineering programme. Further a team of researchers from RUW worked on a research for SCW on "Bahraini Women in Engineering" in 2017 highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by women engineers in Bahrain.

Royal University for Women (RUW)

RUW is a unique university that has been established in 2005 (Figure 3). RUW is committed to quality education for Women, and is the First Private University in Bahrain to achieve HEC accreditation. It is a profound initiative aiming to provide a multi-cultural environment to students from all over the globe that is conducive to quality learning, social interaction and mutual exchange.
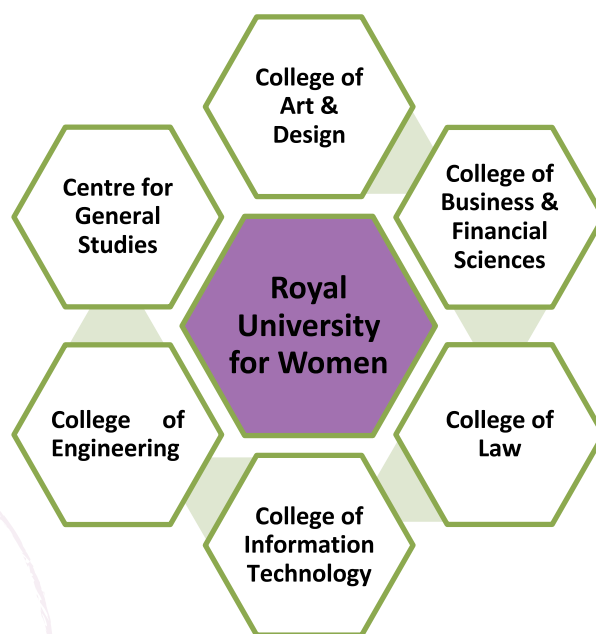
Figure 3: Royal University for Women-Colleges and Centre

It is a strategic initiative to build and strengthen linkages with the growing industry and research outlets within and outside Bahrain. Industry-focused training is an important strategy and objective. Work-based learning is practiced, and employable graduates are ensured.

Initiatives of the Royal University for Women (RUW)

RUW is providing multi-cultural international environment to students. Linkage with Industry is an important consideration (Projects with the Supreme Council for Women, Northern Municipal Council and applied research projects). Work based learning is practiced and Employable graduates are ensured. RUW is committed to quality education for Women, and is the First Private University in Bahrain to achieve HEC accreditation.

1.   RUW has the License to offer Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Technology since 2005

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2. It has been offering Science related courses in Liberal Arts, which include Math course and Women and health course

3. In 2013-14 Bachelor of Architecture in Architectural design was added to the offerings based on the market needs of the Kingdom.

4. Recently, from October 2017, RUW has launched the West Virginia University (WVU) Civil Engineering programme. This is a co-ed programme from WVU and hosted by RUW.

5. More STEM specializations in Engineering program are in the University pipeline.

6. Different colleges have identified specific interdisciplinary research themes to be conducted by faculty and across faculty (Table 3). Students will have great chance to engage in theoretical and practical learning of conducting cutting-edge research, as summarized in the table below.

Table 3: RUW Research Themes

College	Research Theme
CAD	• Sustainable Design • Contemporary Issues in Art, Architecture, and Design • History of Art, Architecture and Design
CBFS	• Women, Management and Leadership • Islamic Banking • Family Business • Quality Systems in Higher Education
CL	• National, International and comparative legal studies • Arab Regional legal studies • Women and legislation
CIT	• Next Generation of Internet Governance, Intelligence, and Security
CGS	• Literary and Cinematic Studies • Language and Communicative Developments in the Middle East • Socio-cultural, Cross-cultural and Multicultural Studies • Historical and Comparative Developments in Societies in the Region • Psychological Studies in Culture and Society

Advocacy and Partnership for research in STEM

In partnership with relevant institutions, the university pledges to encourage, stimulate and ingrain positive and inspirational attitudes towards engaging with STEM studies and research among the students at the school level and students at university. This would be carried out through the following methods:

• Promoting the quantitative and qualitative presence of higher education institutions in Bahrain dedicated to Science & Engineering

• Introducing STEM studies at Master's and PhD level

• Assisting the Kingdom for establishing a National Research Centre to promote research on STEM-related issues

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- Advocating networking and launching a taskforce with representation from various stakeholders to support research in STEM in Bahrain

- Encouraging research activities among the faculty, students and alumni and challenge them to research at the cutting edge of their field

- Promoting awareness of research in women and gender studies

- Establishing a research funding scheme and activating the Research Centre (see below)

- Developing partnership with industry to help in conducting research and utilizing research findings

Students' Internship

Linkage with Industry is an important consideration for the university. They allow students to gain work-related experiences while they are still students. It helps the student gain that exposure that helps builds her personality and work ethics. In many cases internships provide the students with future employment opportunities, as may be seen a lot these days in Bahrain. Industry-focused training is an important strategy and objective of the university, which has been indicated through various projects which included, such as SCW projects, Northern Municipal Council projects and real projects. Work-based learning is among the best practice of the university where graduates are provided with real-life work experiences to test their academic and technical skills. It is meant to prepare students for work, ensuring and strengthening their employability.

The Research Centre

The university has just launched its planned research Centre which would primarily promote and coordinate research in women and gender issues but to encompass other research areas later. It is aimed to ingrain and foster the culture of research in the university and across the wider educational community through networking with local, regional and international research-oriented institutions. The Centre would serve as a bridge between the university represented by faculty and students, and the local institutions that take into account the enhancement of Bahraini women's professional and scientific development in their strategic planning for sustainable development. These institutions include other universities in Bahrain, UAE and the Middle East, as well as from elsewhere. The alumni constitute a valuable partner for fostering the Centre's research plans and community outreach in Bahrain at large.

The Centre plans to organize regular events which include workshops, seminars and open roundtable discussions, for faculty and students, on various aspects of research including gender-sensitive methodology, gender-sensitive budgeting of research, extracting the best practice drawn up from conducting research by faculty, students, alumni and partners outside the university. It is planned to become a platform for learning, advice and enrichment of culture of research. The center has ambitious plans towards promoting the position of Arab women graduates in the field of research in STEM and other fields and it aspire to become a leading institution in the region.

Conclusion

Preparing and turning out rounded workplace-responsive female graduates is the mission of the Royal University for women. As outlined in this paper, the university strives to provide for women the opportunity to break through the glass ceiling of barriers that are persistent in nature and worldwide. It will do so through taking into its stride innovation in quality teaching and training, fostering positive attitudes and

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ambition, and advancing in learning facilities and equipment. It will evolve and develop the partnership(s) it has already struck with similar higher education institutions in Bahrain and worldwide with the local industry and with the local community, as a priority. In line with the Strategy of Bahrain Higher Education (HEC), the university has, and will, continue to look at good practices locally, regionally and globally and incorporate them into its STEM provision for women. Along the way, it aspires to place its fingerprint on the pursuit of advancing women and maintain their rights. Based on these following recommendations can be drawn.

Need for Attracting, Supporting & Maintaining more Women in STEM fields by

- Presence of Role models in the STEM fields starting from school teachers, university teachers and researchers, to colleagues at workplace and successful pioneers in STEM fields.

- Family and Personal Laws to provide opportunity to women to choose the right job, at the right time and location.

- Socio-cultural Beliefs and Practices about perception of husbands and fathers on the role of wives as primarily household-oriented need to be worked on.

- Effective Counselling starting at the school level about the opportunities available in education, research and profession.

- University and higher education Institutions to promote social diversity and appealing platforms for innovation for students to lead a positive social change process.

- Linkage with the Industry both in terms of applied education and learning and in conducting industry-based research

- Workforce policies to support maternity leave, flexible working hours and childcare.

Policy makers and Companies together can work on:

- Initiatives to encourage STEM studies to be launched at the school level

- Establish higher Education Institutions dedicated to Science & Engineering

- Encourage STEM studies at Master's and PhD level

- Linkage with Industry to provide quality Internship experience

- Placement of Graduates in good companies

- Establishing a National Level Research Centre to promote STEM research

- Provide adequate funding opportunities for STEM related research through National funding policies.

- Initiate a taskforce with representation from various stakeholders to support research in STEM in Bahrain

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Women
Employability and
Entrepreneurship

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Women Employability and Entrepreneurship

According to the 2014 UNESCO World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education, the number of women enrolled in higher education institutions has grown almost twice as fast as that of men over the last four decades. The International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT 2017 database shows however that women have a lower labor force participation (61% versus 76% according to The World Bank). Graduates attributes are a key to understand this disparity. What makes women graduates less or more successful than male graduates in job placement or is youth unemployment an issue across the world and actually have nothing to do with gender gap?

Female entrepreneurship has been often mentioned as a productive outlet for a well-educated and underutilised talent pool. In the Arab world for example, female entrepreneurship has been increasing and becoming more visible over the last decade. According to Ernst and Young Global Job Creation Survey 2016, Women-owned businesses are growing faster than men-owned businesses **(10.9% compared to 8.3% among male entrepreneurs). Younger female entrepreneurs predict even higher workforce growth (16%) in the year ahead.** Women entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth and wealth creation and creates employment opportunities for other women (and men as well). Yet women entrepreneurs around the world face obstacles to set up their business and often still lack the skills, technology, networks and access to financial services they need to thrive.

A recent trend across the world has been the increasing involvement of higher education institutions in enhancing women's economic empowerment and help understand the constraints that women face in the business world.
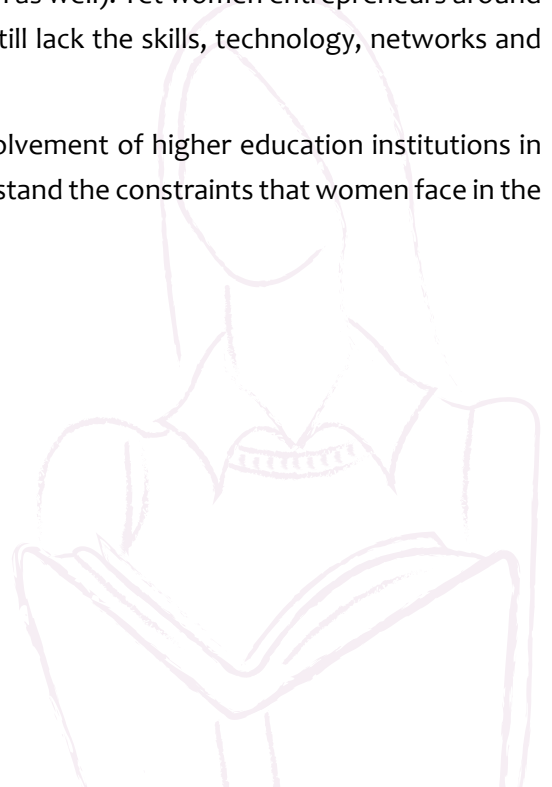
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the academic performance of female students in the College of Business Administration at the University of Bahrain. We use a sample of 118 students enrolled in a 400 level Finance course during the fall semester 2017/2018. The results indicate there is no evidence for a statistical difference between the academic performance of female students and male counterparts. However, female students outperform the male counterparts in their presentation and IT skills, but the difference is statistical insignificant.

1. Introduction

Students' academic performance in higher education has received a significant attention due to its importance and effect on the society and economy. As these students represent the future workforce in a country. This paper investigates the academic performance of women in Business higher education at the Kingdom of Bahrain. As far as we are aware, no study explores the academic performance of women in Business Education at the Kingdom of Bahrain. Although, for instance, in the College of Business Administration at the University of Bahrain, female students represent almost 71% of the student population. This fact sheds light on the need to investigate the academic performance of female students especially since they represent the majority of the graduates of the College of Business Administration and consequently the employees in various business sectors.

We use a sample of 118 students enrolled in a 400 level Finance course during the fall semester 2017/2018. The evaluation of female students' performance is examined using various types of assessment including midterm 1, midterm 2, written report, Excel assignment, presentation and final exam. The findings show there is no evidence for a statistical difference between the academic performance of female and male students. However, female students outperform the male counterparts in their presentation and IT skills, but the difference is statistical insignificant.

The findings of this paper have several implications. First, it sheds light on aspects which require further improvement in the academic performance of female students during their higher education

journey. For instance, the writing skills of female students needs further improvement and should be given more attention. Second, the results highlight some guidelines on ways to enhance the employability of female graduates through, for instance, the focus on further development of their soft skills, such as presentation and IT skills.

The paper is organized as follows, we review the literature in section 2. We discuss the data and methodology in section 3. We present the results in section 4 and finally, we conclude the paper in section 5.

2. Literature Review

Prior literature shows academic performance is affected by several factors. These factors include class attendance (Devadoss and Foltz, 1996), the number of credit hours enrolled (Ellis et al., 1998), note taking (Cohn et al., 1995) and financial status ((Devadoss and Foltz, 1996). Harb and El-shaarawi (2007) argue the cultural factors play an important role in students' academic performance. Therefore, the findings

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of international studies cannot be generalized to the MENA region and hence we only review studies conducted on the MENA region.

Harb and El-shaarawi (2007) investigate the performance of UAE students using a sample of 864 Economics students. The results show female students outperform male students, as well as class discussions positively affected the students' academic performance. On the other hand, missing lectures and living in a crowded household have a negative impact on student performance.

Edrem et al. (2007) examine the academic performance of Turkish students. Their results indicate the gender, type of high school graduates, number of siblings in school, education level of parents, family expectation about the school and study time are the main determinants of students' academic performance. While, Al-Twaijry (2010) find mathematical skills and number of registered hours are the main determinants of Saudi accounting students' academic performance.

Almunais et al. (2014) examine the academic performance of accounting students in Kuwait. The findings show high school major and class participation are the main determinants of student's academic performance. Furthermore, gender, age, frequency of doing the homework, peer interaction and number of days studying before exam have a positive effect on student's academic performance.

The impact of gender on academic performance has been explored previously in the literature. Cheesman et al. (2006) find female students outperform their male counterparts, similar evidence is found

by Al Mutairi (2011). However, Anderson and Benjamin (1994) document male students outperform female students. Whereas, Williams et al. (1992) find there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female college students.

Prior literature has identified several factors which affect student's academic performance as well has documented the importance of gender among these factors. However, as far as we are concern there is no study which investigates the academic performance of women in business higher education at the Kingdom of Bahrain.

3. Data and Methodology

The population used in this study comprises of students majoring in Finance at the College of Business Administration at the University of Bahrain in the fall semester 2017/2018. The choice of Finance major students was due to the importance of financial industry at the Kingdom of Bahrain. Research shows more than 14,600 Bahraini people work in such industry, out of which 37% are women. Our sample consists of 118 students enrolled at a 400 level Finance course. The choice of this course is because of the diversity of its assessment which allows us to investigate the academic performance in terms of midterms marks, writing skills, IT skills, Presentation skills and final exam marks. The data is collected from the course's records and is analyzed using quantitative methods.

4. Results

In this section, we discuss our main results. The data is analyzed using t-test to examine whether there is a statistical difference between the performance of female and male students across the various types of assessments.

Table 1: T-test results of Midterm 1

Test 1 (out of 20)	Female	Male
Mean	17.063	17.850
Variance	7.486	5.153
N	88	30
T-statistics	-1.554	

Table 1 reports the results of the t-test of midterm1 marks. The findings indicate the male students slightly outperform their female counterparts, however, this difference is statistical insignificant.

Table 2: T-test results of Midterm 2

Test 2 (out of 20)	Female	Male
Mean	14.843	15.500
Variance	13.068	12.664
N	88	30
T- statistics	-0.868	

Table 2 presents the results of the t-test of midterm 2 marks. As shown from the table, similar to midterm 1, the male students outperform the female counterparts by about 0.7 mark. This difference is statistically insignificant as indicted by the t-test.

Table 3: T-test results of writing skills

Writing skills (out of 6)	Female	Male
Mean	5.409	5.450
Variance	0.273	0.213
N	88	30
T- statistics	-0.405	

Table 3 reports the results of the t-test of writing skills marks. This was a written report for a case study which the students have conducted during the semester. The findings show the male students outperform the female counterparts with a very small difference. This difference is statistically insignificant.

Table 4: T-test results of presentation skills

Presentation skills (out of 4)	Female	Male
Mean	3.739	3.717
Variance	0.167	0.184
N	88	30
T- statistics	0.245	

Table 4 presents the results of the t-test of the presentation skills marks. The findings reveal the female students have slightly performed better than the male counterparts. However, the difference between the two means is statistically insignificant.

Table 5: T-test results of IT skills

IT skills (out of 10)	Female	Male
Mean	9.244	9.033
Variance	0.613	0.921
N	88	30
T- statistics	1.087	

Table 5 reports the results of the t-test of the IT skills marks. This was an Excel assignment where the students had to apply the theoretical concepts studied in the course in to real data. The findings indicate the female students performed better than the male counterparts by about 0.2 marks, however, this difference is statistically insignificant.

Table 6: T-test results of final exam

Final Exam (out of 40)	Female	Male
Mean	28.966	30.883
Variance	48.907	52.839
N	88	30
T- statistics	-1.259	

Finally, Table 6 presents the results of the t-test of the final exam marks. The findings show the male students outperform the female counterparts by about 1.9 marks, however, this difference is statistically insignificant.

Overall, the results show there is statistically insignificant difference between the performance of female and male students. These results are in line with the findings of Williams et al. (1992), Brookshire and Palocsay (2005), Rochelle and Dotterweich (2007) and Byrne and Flood (2008). Moreover, the female students tend to possess better abilities in presentation and IT, however, the difference between them and the male counterparts in these abilities is statistically insignificant.

5. Conclusion

This paper investigates the academic performance of female students in Business higher education at the Kingdom of Bahrain. The academic performance is measured by various types of assessments including midterm 1, midterm 2, written report, Excel assignment, presentation and final exam. We use the t-test for difference of means of these assessments between female and male students.

We find there is no statistical difference between the academic performance of female and male students. However, female students outperform the male counterparts in their presentation and IT skills, but the difference is statistical insignificant. The results reveal female students should receive additional support and help to further improve their presentation and IT skills especially considering these are soft skills which are essential and significant in the employment of fresh graduates during the current period.

Future research can use a larger sample to include various courses at the college of business administration to be able to generalize the results. Furthermore, it would be interesting to include other determinants of students' academic performance to segregate the effect of gender as well as this will allow the estimation of regression models of students' academic performance.

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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper will examine how Saudi women are finding their niche and voice within the business sector through social media platforms. In a male dominated society such as Saudi Arabia it's an interesting phenomenon to find more female owned businesses entering the market and succeeding through social media. It's an important platform that provides opportunities for a lot of women, which didn't exist previously. The cultural restrictions that were considered obstacles for women employment are now eliminated due to social media. Also, the flexibility of these new jobs creates a market that didn't exist before as an alternative of full time jobs. The number of users of social media in Saudi also plays a role, which will be addressed. As an educator and researcher, I analyzed how this job market change affected student-learning outcomes in branding and the overall academic experience, plus the impact on society. The topic will be investigated through analysis of female led businesses that were part of an academic project, plus the analysis of two of the most important concept stores in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia that showcases Saudi based brands. I will address the issues, factors and predictions of this phenomenon that already led some women to become influential entrepreneurs.

Key words: women's employment, social media, branding

Introduction

The number of women employed in Saudi Arabia has **increased by 48%** since 2010, according to the country's Central Department of Statistics and Information (Chew 2015). This number is expected to increase even more with the new facilitation of women driving (Saudi Arabia driving ban on women to be lifted 2017) and the new changes in the laws and regulations regarding women employment. This is all driven forward by the recently announced Saudi development guideline "Vision 2030", which is a document laying out the future of Saudi Arabia. One of the main guidelines of the document is to emphasize and facilitate the country's mission to empower women specifically by increasing female work participation, along with other aspects that are expected to fundamentally change the country's future (Vision2030 2016). As an educator and a researcher, the link between women employability and entrepreneurship, and its link to the social media was has been an area of interest to me. In the past couple of years, I have noticed an increase in women employability and entrepreneurship, and that trend was confirmed and solidified after a social media advertisement project was introduced in the Branding course last Fall 2017/2018. The course was part of the visual communication department at Dar Al Hekma University. Moreover, the large number of the Internet users standing at a whopping 23.21 million out of 32 million Saudis in 2017 and expected to reach 25.29 million in 2021 (Statista 2018).

Methodology

The department aspires to enrich the students learning experience and link the academic projects with the market therefore; a local non-profit organization that supports new local businesses was contacted. The students used that as a platform to work with real clients. The project brief was to create social media posts promoting these businesses via Instagram since it's the most common social media provider

amongst the choices. The non-profit organization provided the students with a list of 8 selected vendors. Out of the selected 8, 6 of them were owned and led by women with no male partnership whatsoever. The businesses ranged from products to services, and it also featured small uncommon emerging markets such as food vlogging (Reams kitchen 2013).

Figure 1 (a)   Figure 1 (b)   Figure 1 (c)

The question of selection criteria was raised and discussed with the organization founder and C.E.O. The main concern that he was bias towards women and targeted supporting them only. However, we where reassured that this was the natural outcome of their programs. A further analysis of the female led businesses had even more interesting questions to be raised about women entrepreneurship and employability as one of the vendors had the help of her husband to manage the account which mainly features hand clay made accessories, this is an interesting gender role to the researcher as we are used to having the men leading businesses and helped by women not the other way around.

The role of social media in starting and encouraging these businesses cannot be neglected as it created a platform that didn't exist before. Although cultural restrictions played a vital role in depriving women of their right to work and participate in the society's development, Social Media appears to have solved that issue. Allowing women to interact directly with the customers without the requirement of a physical presence has removed almost all the hindering factors from their opportunities. The concept of mixed gender working at the same place is being introduced further in all sectors gradually but it's still considered an obstacle to a lot of women, which is why they use social media platforms as a solution. As a graduation project supervisor at the visual communication department the researcher found a student's project linked to the paper and it's addressed.

Figure 2 (a)   Figure 2 (b)

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The project idea is a website designed to accommodate different graphic design jobs managed with a percentage taken from the designer. The student's idea emerged after analyzing the number of female graphic design freelancers and how she can facilitate their talents using social media primarily to promote for them. So the researcher did further analysis of female owned business mainly activated through social media platforms. The analysis was conducted on three concept stores in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia that promotes local business.

The first concept store is store A and it features female and male designers promoting and selling different products, ranging from home accessories to abayas plus other merchandise. The showroom is quite small bit they depend on social media for sales and promotions, and they capitalize on their shipping abilities, thus generating more profit from other cities throughout the Kingdom (Sinwan 2016).

The second concept store is store B that is also located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which offers a platform for local business over social media to showcase, promote, and sell their work with a percentage paid to the concept storeowner (Crateksa 2017). An analysis of the showed businesses' also showed a larger number of female led business compered to men. The businesses are varied and include food, accessories, and other products. A lot of these businesses like Folard started on Instagram and grew, they have an online store where they also offer shipping but its sill managed and promoted through social media. The brand is owned and managed by a woman that participated in London modest fashion week last year, which is considered a great jump to a business that started on Instagram (Folardstore 2017).

The last analyzed store is store C in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia that is a concept store and platform for Middle Eastern designers. A woman owns the store and it showcases a higher number of female led businesses. Almost all of them started on the social media and showcase their work at the store as a secondary option. The interesting observation about this store is the presence of a female barista. This female barista has been noticed to attract a large number of crowds, surprisingly primarily women.

It is important to note that not all of the stores were targeting only women as their main customers. The majority of the participating female led brands started on social media and grew to become well known and recognized internationally. One of those businesses is Yataghan jewelry brand by the Saudi female entrepreneur Sara Abodawood that has a showroom in Dubai. Even though her products are displayed internationally, she still continues to capitalize social media for her international sales.

Another analyzed shop is the social space in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which offers different rental packages for a range of social and private events, which is owned by a female Saudi entrepreneur who started as a social media influencer specializing in culinary related topics. Social media platforms gave her a chance to grow even further which led her to this project and recently she announced the opening of her own restaurant. The restaurant is called: The social kitchen. The last business owned by the same entrepreneur is the social kollective which she announced on her social media accounts (Thesocialkollective 2018).

The last method used by the researcher is a survey distributed to Fourth year graphic design students in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The analysis showed that 98% of the students use their social media accounts to exhibit their work. They have even highlighted Instagtram and Behance as the most prominent platforms to showcase the work. Also the same number answered yes to the questions: do you follow other graphic designers? When you are working on a graphic design project do you look up work on the social media accounts for inspiration.

Conclusion

The role of social media in Saudi women employability and entrepreneurship is undeniably supported by the above facts. The number of Saudi women entering the business sector though social media is changing the cultural scene, providing part time jobs and flexible working hours that didn't exist before and rarely found in Saudi Arabia. As a graphic design instructor in a local university this phenomenon is affecting design teaching and the outcome of local branding. The number of female graphic design students is increasing at a larger scale compared to males in the same sector. This is proven by the availability of graphic design programs within female universities versus than that of males. Jeddah Chamber of Commerce & Industry's design team has only female graphic designers. Kolood Attar is a female graphic designer founded the first magazine focusing on design in Saudi Arabia (Shikh 2013). Saudi women are participating and changing the cultural context through their social media outlets. These outlets are providing endless possibilities and opportunities. The outcome of the local branding is carrying a new shift that didn't exist before in terms of style and taste. Even though the number of male employees is higher than females in design agencies and branding consultancies, but the shift is clearly taking place as we speak. According to the new governmental laws of allowing women to start and open their businesses (Ministry of Commerce and Investment 2018) the participation of Saudi females and entrepreneurs is increasing. An employee at one of the big four auditing companies stated that there is a clear increase in the number of female led business competing in the Entrepreneur of the year award organized by the company. We are witnessing the definition of a new job market that emerged from the heart of the technological advances, guided by the cultural norms and traditions.

Acknowledgment

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FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS AND INNOVATORS—IN THEORY

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ABSTRACT

The research is based on a theoretical and practical need to highlight female actors in the economy as entrepreneurs and innovators. Innovation is a requirement for economic growth and development. To exclude women from innovation would prevent the use of human resources and the utilization of the innovative potential of the society as a whole. Entrepreneurship and innovation are closely related: new businesses are based on fresh, innovative business ideas. The topic is timely as the vision of Saudi Arabia, "Vision 2030", emphasizes innovation, entrepreneurship, and added female participation at the labor market.

There is a need to identify suitable theoretical frameworks for examining female innovation and entrepreneurship in KSA. The aim of this research is to suggest a framework and key elements for investigating the challenges and successes of female entrepreneurial innovators in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research questions are:

1) What is a suitable theoretical framework for investigating Saudi female entrepreneurial innovators' challenges and successes?

2) Which elements should be included in the framework?

The paper argues that not all preferred Western frameworks are a good fit for researching female entrepreneurial innovators in the Saudi environment.

The research presents a large body of international research as well as regional, including Saudi-based, literature to examine the research questions. The analysis is based on secondary sources to identify a suitable theoretical framework and elements for the research. The fit of the framework is evaluated against the Saudi context. The investigation has two stages: First, a suitable theoretical framework will be identified, utilizing earlier literature. Second, key elements to be included in the framework will be identified based on a representative body of literature.

The theoretical discussion is a follow-up and response to recent academic journal discussion on theoretical models for female entrepreneurship and innovation. The research will contribute to the academic discussion and their theoretical underpinnings of female innovation and entrepreneurship, suggesting a framework suitable for KSA.

Keywords: Female, innovation, entrepreneurship, KSA

Introduction

This research discusses theoretical frameworks and their suitability against the contextual background in examining female entrepreneurs and innovators in KSA. From a practical point of view, the topic is timely highlighting female actors' role in the economic development. The vision of Saudi Arabia, "Vision 2030" emphasizes innovation and entrepreneurship (Saudi Gazette, 2016). Innovation is a requirement for economic growth and development (e.g., Okoń-Horodyńska et al., 2016). The need for growth and the fight for survival challenge companies in developed and in developing economies (Suliman, 2013).

The Saudi Vision 2030 focuses on reducing dependency on the oil industry and diversification of Saudi economy (Vision 2030 Saudia Arabia, Goals, 2017) and emphasizes entrepreneurship and innovation: "We will also focus on innovation in advanced technologies and entrepreneurship… Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are among the most important agents of economic growth" (Saudi Gazette, 2016).

Women are an underutilized resource in developing nations' economies (Hayashi, 2015) and unrecognised as innovators and entrepreneurs (Rönnblom and Keisu, 2013; Poutanen and Kotalainen, 2013). The Saudi Vision 2030 also emphasizes increased female participation in the labour market: "Saudi women are yet another great asset….We will continue to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy" (Saudi Gazette, 2016).

In recent years, the Saudi society has seen major progress in the social positioning of women, such as the first women assigned into the Shoura Council in 2013 and the first municipal elections with women as candidates and voters in 2015 (BBC News 2015). The recent announcement of allowing women to drive (Abu-Nasr and Carey, 2017) has received plenty of attention because of its symbolic value.

In this paper, entrepreneurial innovation refers to innovators who become entrepreneurs. The paper argues that some Western frameworks, particularly feminist theories, are not a good fit for researching female entrepreneurial innovators in the Saudi environment. The purpose of the paper is to respond to recent discussion on such theories.

Significance of the research

Several countries, where female labour participation has been traditionally low are now emphasizing females' role. For example, in Japan women's participation in the work force is seen as a key growth strategy for the county (Hayashi, 2015). The government in Japan is targeting for 30% of women's participation in decision making by 2020 (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2016). The Saudi Vision 2030 aims at increasing the female labour force from 22% to 30% (Vision 2030, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Goals, 2016).

Academic discussion on females in organisations in the context of developing economies is fairly new (Metcalfe, 2008), but there is a growing interest in research on female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia. With the scarcity of research on female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia (Ahmad, 2011), this paper examines female innovation and entrepreneurship based on international literature and research carried out recently in KSA, aiming to response to academic discussion and highlight contextual constraints in building theoretical frameworks. More importantly, much of the research on innovation is of Anglo-Saxon origin (Alsos et al., 2013) and on female-owned businesses from developed countries (Ahmad, 2011), but there is a growing need for innovation research in the Gulf region caused by the demand to renew oil-dependent economies (e.g., Alfantookh and Bakry, 2015; Pervan et al.,2015).

Research objectives

The aim of this research is to discuss framework limitations and suggest an approach with key elements for investigating the challenges and successes of female entrepreneurial innovators in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research questions are:

1)   What is a suitable theoretical framework for investigating Saudi female entrepreneurial innovators' challenges and successes?

2)   Which elements will be included in the framework?

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Research methods

The paper is based on secondary data sources. Secondary source is data that is collected by someone else than the researcher him or herself for another purposes (Jacobson, Hamilton and Galloway, 1993). The secondary data in this research was collected from recent academic journals related to female innovation and entrepreneurship. The used literature represents international and regional (Middle Eastern region) research.

The investigation has two stages: First, a suitability of some theoretical framework will be discussed and a suggestion for a framework is made, utilizing earlier literature. The fit of the discussed frameworks is evaluated against the Saudi context. Second, key elements to be included in the framework will be identified based on a representative body of literature. The elements are divided into challenge and success factors and again into external and internal elements.

Responding to some theoretical models

A challenge for this research is that much of the research and presented theoretical frameworks are in the Western context where males and females have been part of the labour force for decades and have coexisted in organisational processes. This paper responds particularly to models that spring from feminist theories as presented mostly by Nordic researchers. A meta-analysis by Alsos et al. (2013) is used as a starting point for this research to examine female innovation in the KSA. These authors introduce three categories of theoretical frameworks to examine gender and innovation (p. 243):

1) gender differences and similarities in innovation;

2) gendered construction of innovation; and

3) gendering processes of innovation.

The gender differences and similarities in innovation approach treats gender as a variable. The approach has been utilized in businesses owned by men and women, examining such differences as patents and commercialization. Research with this approach has pointed to other factors explaining differences, such as responsibilities in personal life or organisational practices. The gender bias may also be explained by focus on different industries between men and women (Alsos et al., 2013). The gender as a variable approach may facilitate investigating policy measures regarding women and men. However, according to Alsos et al., this framework is not sufficient to explain the phenomenon of gender in innovation—in the Western context.

The gendered construction of innovation framework points to a strong male "connotation". The masculine connotation in areas, such as science or engineering, is manifested in public support for innovation. This connotation impacts the definition of innovation it the ways of operationalizing, measuring, or acknowledging innovation. However, the concept of innovation is broadening, including service innovation and soft innovation outputs, changes in products and processes (Alsos et al., 2013).

Gendering processes of innovation means examining the process of innovation or

"doing gender", which is creating or recreating gender in interactions. It also refers to the absence of women in innovation processes or to gendered innovation products (Alsos et al., 2013; Poutanen and Kovalainen, 2013) which may lead to marginalizing women as innovators. In other words, the women's innovation role may not be recognized. As a response, feminist resistance questions the masculine discourses (Alsos et al., 2013).

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The last two frameworks were not found to be fully suitable to the Saudi context: First, KSA does not have a long enough history of female participation in the labour market. Conservative traditions have kept women from the labour market for much of its industrial history and most jobs were just opened for women in the 2010s. A law was passed in 2006 granting that stores serving women should recruit women employees. However, the law was not enforced, and the late King Abdullah issued a decree to enforce the law. Until then, women mostly worked in the public sector (Zavis, 2015). In the three years between 2010 and 2013, female participation in the work force in the private sector rose from 55,000 to 454,000. Since 2013, Saudi women can now work in retail and hospitality businesses. The first Saudi female lawyers received practicing licenses in late 2013 (Redvers, 2015). However, still in September 2016, Saudi women formed only 10.1 percent of KSA's total work force compared to Saudi men with 35.6 percent (Alabdan, 2016)—which also means that over half of work is based on expats. The situation is changing steadily, and Saudi female participation in the labour market is growing as indicated by an increase of 130% between 2013 and 2017 (Saudi Gazette, 2017).

As it comes to entrepreneurial activity, it was not possible for women to attain a commercial license without having a male manager for the business until 2005 (Ahmad, 2011). The female absence is clear in the technical fields, but women now have started entering into these fields (See Mitchell, 2016). Thus, women in a larger scale have been absent from constructing innovation and creating innovation connotations.

Second, organisations in KSA mostly are gender segregated (See Metcalfe, 2008; Mitchell, 2016), including separate offices and educational facilities as in the KSA. The situation does not create a comparable environment with, for example, European or US organisations. There is not enough collective experience for examining the creation or recreation of gender in interactions and hierarchical gender settings. This research focuses on women in their often isolated environments without the idea of working alongside men and thus in potential gendered discourses. While there are major and rapid changes taking place in the Saudi environment impacting women, for example, the loosening male guardianship (Gulf Insider, 2017), the environment has been so gendered that it caused a long separation which ironically has created a lack in gendered discourses within organisations and in the society.

Gender and entrepreneurship theories are based on Western cultures, and these theories are not always applicable in other contexts (Marvel et al., 2015). As Alsos et al. (2013, p. 247) state: "A difference between men and women in innovation needs to be interpreted against contextual and structural arrangements." While these authors call for a new framework for researching innovation and gender, this research applies their first theoretical frameworks, gender differences and similarities approach where difference is considered broadly, including different circumstances facing women compared to men. The approach focuses on gender as a variable without the backdrop gendered discourses because of the special context of Saudi Arabia. This context has not developed similar gender connotations of innovation as the gendered construction approach in the Western countries would suggest. Neither is there a tradition of creating or recreating gender in interactions as the gendering processes approach in the Western sense would propose. However, the framework selected will be amended by taking into account "complex relationships" (Also et al. 2013, p. 243) in innovation and gender, including potential external and internal elements in building the theoretical framework.

The next section aims at identifying elements to examine the challenges and successes women may face in entrepreneurial endeavours, examining the elements from a Saudi perspective. The elements will be

divided into external and internal elements. Both external and internal elements of female innovator's challenges and successes are divided into several subgroups.

External elements of female innovator's challenges

Type of work and industrial roles

Men are more often than women in innovation-related occupations (Nählinder, 2010). Although in many parts of the world women's education compares well or surpasses the level of men's education, certain professional fields, such as engineering and natural sciences or technical fields, are more occupied by men (Marvel et al., 2015; OECD, 2017; Poutanen and Kovalainen, 2016). Marvel et al. refer to "knowledge corridors" which may create or shut down innovation opportunities (p. 560).

While women tend to occupy positions not related to innovation, such as non-technical occupations, women are found to be more creative and innovative when investigating the same occupations in the care sector, as measured by qualified innovation initiatives (Foss et al., 2013; Nählinder, 2010). Foss et al. (2013) report that women and men do not innovate differently, but innovations by males get implemented more often than innovations by females. In their case organisation, women work in services and research analysis, whereas men in technical research and planning jobs. This creates a setting where women's innovative ideas do not surface and get utilized.

It is noticeable that in the context of KSA, women were excluded in engineering training for a long time. Female engineers started entering the labour market in early 2010s, as reported in 2013 (Arab News, 2013). Also, female engineers disproportionally (90%) are working in administrative jobs instead of on-site (Arab News, 2016). Despite this, the future of Arab women pursuing engineering careers may be brighter than that of their Western colleagues. More women in the Arab world than for example, in the US are currently aspiring for technical fields. According to Iversen (2016), "startup culture, and the technology industry in general, can be, surprisingly, less gendered in the Middle East", and in Saudi Arabia, 80 percent of female students are interested in engineering

Collegial and organisational support

Lack of collegial support may be a challenge for female entrepreneurs. Poutanen and Kovalainen's (2013) case study of a female engineer reveals that her ideas were not initially listened to in a male environment and she ended up feminizing her product development by focusing on products geared for women. According to Foss et al. (2013), females receive less collegial support than males in idea generation. Nählinder (2010) reports that women innovators need encouragement, support and assurance that their ideas are worth taking forward.

The literature and research on gender perspective on innovation policy and innovation support systems is rare (Alsos et al., 2013, p. 240). In KSA organisations, such as the Jeddah Chambers of Commerce and Industry, support entrepreneurs by informing and advising them in the entrepreneurial processes (Metcalfe, 2008; S. Baghdadi, 2017, personal communication, 29 November). Also a governmental organisation, Monsha'at (Small & Medium Enterprises General Authority), provides support for beginning entrepreneurs, both men and women (Monsha'at, 2017). However, there is a need for support from "state agencies and banks" for female entrepreneurs in KSA (Danish and Smith, 2012, p. 226).

Environment and culture

Situational and environmental factors explain innovativeness, including culture and gender stereotypes. Stereotypes—which tend to be culture based—play a role in how females orientate themselves towards certain professional fields, keeping girls (more often than boys) from pursuing careers in science and engineering (Marvel et al. 2015). Ahmed (2011) points out that gender biases are some of the obstacles that female entrepreneurs face in the MENA region. According to Özkazanç-Pan's (2015) analysis, structural and cultural obstacles are the main reasons for low female entrepreneurial activity in patriarchal societies. However, female entrepreneurship can be a means to increase gender equality. To accomplish this, states need to promote "supportive social, cultural, and political environment" (p. 57). Gender may be involved in discrimination in innovation. For example, measurements of innovation outputs do not sufficiently consider gender—e.g., type of innovation. Also societal roles of men and women may impact the innovation paths individuals take (Okoń-Horodyńska et al., 2015). Saudi female entrepreneurs perceive lack of respect within the community as a challenge for them (Ahmad, 2011).

Metcalfe (2008) points to social norms and hesitancy of the private sector in employing women in the Middle East. However, Saudi women may not find the world perception of them as fair: the experience that the world deliberately perceives them as oppressed, which many are not (Zavis, 2015).

Women in Saudi Arabia are influenced by the social, political and economic development of the country (UNDP, 2014). As stated, there are rapid changes occurring in the Saudi society (Metcalfe, 2008). The reason for upcoming changes, such as loosening the male guardianship (Gulf Insider, 2017) or allowing women to drive in KSA (Abu-Nasr and Carey, 2017), are motivated by the economic needs (Abu-Nasr and Carey, 2017). At the same time these issues, guardianship and ban on driving, have been major challenges for females when pursuing their careers (UNDP, 2014). The need for economic boost may be the driving force to change the culture, including development of innovative female entrepreneurship.

Internal elements of female innovator's challenges

Entrepreneurial orientation

Attitudes towards development may differ between women and men (Milward and Freeman, 2012). This view is supported by Cesaroni and Sentuti (2014): Women were significantly less oriented toward innovation and development strategies than men. They identified several factors on why or why not females are part of innovation efforts and innovation success or whether the gender is a factor in innovation. They found that women had a lower tendency towards innovation, development and growth than men, utilizing a defensive strategic approach in economic crisis; whereas men took an offensive approach to economic crisis, including innovation, development or reorganisation strategies (pp. 106-107).

In contrast, a study by Lai et al. (2009) examined female entrepreneur's association among innovation conviction, innovation mindset, innovation creed and the need for achievement. Their findings indicated that women with an innovation mindset have a desire to achieve. Thus, instead of being a challenge, an innovative mind may be a success factor for some women. As has been stated, women aspire for entrepreneurial career paths in Saudi Arabia (Fareed, 2017). A research by Danish and Smith (2012) in KSA suggests that Saudi females have a strong orientation, "appetite" toward entrepreneurship.

Self-confidence

Lack of self-confidence, particularly in female sectors that are not considered innovative—such as nursing—may be a hindrance in innovation efforts. There are cultural ways of expressing oneself and one's innovative ideas (Nählinder, 2010). Women may not appear self-confident even if they are. Also, women may not present their innovative suggestions because of a lack of confidence in forwarding their ideas (Millward and Freeman, 2002; Nählinder, 2010). Lack of self-confidence may be manifested in the discontinuation of innovation projects. Women's innovation gets discontinued significantly more often than men's projects. Women appear to be more vulnerable than men to criticism, which may impact pursuing the innovative ideas (Nählinder, 2010).

Lack of self-confidence may overlap with the need for assurance of the innovation is worth, as described by Nählinder (2010). Her research in Sweden indicates that women may be restricted by self-confidence and cultural expectations on how women are supposed to act, and this is a nation that is considered one of the most gender equal countries in the world! In contrast to these findings, entrepreneurship itself can be a self-confidence boosting activity for Saudi females, as indicated by Danish and Smith (2012). In a similar vein, Ahmad (2011) asserts that women in his study in KSA manifested confidence in their business success.

Family and life plans

Family and life plans are found to have an impact on innovators' success (Alsos et al., 2013; Nählinder, 2010). If women discontinue an innovation process, it is for personal reasons, not product or market reasons. They may end innovative efforts and prioritize family over work. Women have time pressures because of their family care roles (Nählinder, 2010).

Foss et al. (2013) call for further research on work and life obstacles to gain added understanding of their impact on female innovation.

In the Saudi environment family has been the main responsibility of women. Traditionally women marry young and start families early in their lives (Metcalfe, 2008). According to Ahmad (2011), family responsibilities, which are seen mainly as female responsibility in KSA, cause lack of time to develop knowledge and skills needed in entrepreneurship. Similarly, as literature in other contexts suggest that women may discontinue innovation because of family duties (Nählinder, 2010), research in KSA proposes that entrepreneur activities may be stopped because of marriage and child-care responsibilities (Danish and Smith, 2012). However, there are child care opportunities available for Saudi working women in the form of day care centres, preschools, work place nurseries and live-in nannies. Tables 1 will summarize the elements discussed above, utilizing the theoretical framework of "gender differences and similarities in innovation" approach to investigate Saudi females, presenting female challenges within the selected framework.

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Table 1: Elements and literature associated with challenges in female entrepreneurial innovation

External elements and literature associated with challenges in female entrepreneurial innovation	
Elements	Literature
Type of work and industrial roles and	Foss et al., 2013; Hayashi, 2015; Iversen, 2016; Marvel et al., 2015; Nählinder, 2010; OECD, 2017; Poutanen and Kovalainen, 2013
Collegial and organisational support	Alsos et al., 2013; Danish and Smith, 2012; Foss et. al, 2013; Metcalfe, 2008; Nählinder, 2010; Poutanen and Kovalainen, 2013
Environment and culture	Ahmed, 2011; Abu-Nasr and Carey, 2017; Gulf Insider, 2017; Marvel et al., 2015; Metcalfe, 2008; Mitchell, 2016; Okoń-Horodyńska et al., 2015; Özkazanç-Pan, 2015; Poutanen and Kovalainen, 2013; Zavis, 2015; UNPD, 2014
Internal elements and literature associated with challenges in female entrepreneurial innovation	
Elements	Literature
Entrepreneurial orientation	Cesaroni and Sentuti, 2014; Danish and Smith, 2012; Fareed, 2017; Lai et al. 2009; Milward and Freeman, 2012
Self-confidence	Ahmad, 2011; Danish and Smith, 2012; Nählinder, 2010; Millward and Freeman, 2012
Family and life plans	Ahmad, 2011; Alsos et al., 2013; Danish and Smith, 2012; Foss et. al, 2013; Metcalfe, 2008; Nählinder, 2010

External elements of female innovator's successes

Nationalization (Saudization) and feminization of labour

Saudization, nationalization or replacement of foreign working force by Saudi nationals guaranteeing a certain percentage of Saudis in organisations, has been part of the rhetoric in KSA since its beginning but is being strongly enforced in the 2010s (Pakkiasamy, 2004; Koyame-Marsh, 2016). Well-educated Saudi women can respond to the demand to fill jobs by Saudi citizens. The Saudization program has provided employment for women in sectors that can accommodate the rules on gender segregation (Zavis, 2015). Along with the Saudization, a parallel force of feminization of labour is encouraging female participation in the economy. The goal of feminization in KSA is to provide employment for women for Saudi women (Habib, 2013). Feminization of labour, which is a current emphasis in economies that have been male driven, may be an essential element advancing female employment (Hayashi, 2015; Metcalfe, 2008; Mitchell, 2016; Saudi Gazette, 2016). Particularly a push for innovation and entrepreneurship is expected to further women's innovative behavior. Female entrepreneurship in developing economies is recognized as a significant component for economic growth (Özkazanç-Pan, 2015).

Social networks

Mekonnen et al. (2017) researched the impact of social networks and adapting agricultural innovations in Ethiopia. Their investigation strongly supports the role of social networks in knowledge transfer and adaptation of new innovations. This was particularly true for female agricultural entrepreneurs, more than

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for male farmers. Their research highlights the fact that networks need to be right and helpful in broadening knowledge sharing—reinforcing the significance of networks in knowledge transfer as emphasized in literature (e.g., Tortoriello et al., 2012).

However, the lack of networks or the right ones can be a disadvantage for women compared to men. Marvel et al. (2015) report differences in information sharing between the genders. According to their research, men have more heterogeneous networks than women, which facilitates in obtaining necessary, new knowledge for innovation processes. Danish and Smith (2012) have found networking to be a challenge for female entrepreneurs in KSA. Dealing with external networks, such as customers or with male employees continues to be a challenge. Also, Ahmad (2011) indicates that Saudi women use familiar mainly networks (family and friends) in their marketing efforts. Such close networks can be useful but also limiting for female entrepreneurs' activities. In the gender segregated environment, the question is how well females are able to penetrate into the male dominated society or if female networks will remain mostly within female circles.

Funding opportunities

Another resource for entrepreneurs, along with social capital, is financial capital. Funding plays a pivotal role in innovation, but funding has been traditionally awarded to those innovators who have somewhat similar backgrounds with investors. Males have dominated as funding recipients. Lock and Smith (2016) found that female entrepreneurs in Kenya are empowered by microloans. Also, in developing economies, entrepreneurs may need to rely on their social networks (Minniti and Naudé, 2010). A special feature of KSA is the large financial assets that some women have access to (Baxter, 2010). Another unique feature is the dependence of "traditional sources" for capital and funding: fathers, husbands or other family members (Ahmad, 2011). According to a study by Danish and Smith (2012), Saudi female entrepreneurs have started their companies with 88 percent of personal funding (solely or with additional sources): from oneself, family or friends. Similarly, the majority of the Saudi female entrepreneurs in Ahmad's study (2011) used personal funds for starting a business. In addition, over half of the women in his study had obtained external funds from money lenders or as bank loans. The Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry gives loans equally to women and men to support entrepreneurial activity (S. Baghdadi, 2017, personal communication, 29 November). Despite the unusual wealth that some Saudi females own, research indicates that access to capital and finance are among the major challenges for Saudi female entrepreneurs (Ahmad, 2011).

Internal elements of female innovator's successes

Life's experiences

The innovators' or entrepreneurs' personal life experiences, particularly role models in one's life, may enhance success in their endeavors. Women benefit from the role models on their career path (Nählinder, 2010). Role modeling appears strong for women in getting interested in independent careers, particularly if their mothers are entrepreneurs as well (Hoffmann et al., 2014 as cited in Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017). In Saudi Arabia, succeessful female entrepreneurs come from families with a business background (Danish and Smith, 2012; Vijaya and Almasri, 2016), indicating family involvement and support.

A case study (Marmenout and Tassabehji, 2010) about Reem Al-Shemari, head of the Office of the Brand of Abu Dhabi illustrates the significance role models in the development of a female leader. Reem's home life provided support and role modelling: Reem's mother worked while raising a large family and Reem's

father believed in independence of women. Similarly, Nählinder (2010) points that fathers may act as role models: successful female entrepreneurs' fathers were independent employees. Reem had also mentors during her professional life to assist her in her career advancement (Marmenout and Tassabehji, 2010). Reem herself may be the perfect role model for modern entrepreneurial, innovative and contributing women in the Gulf region!

Education

Entrepreneurial ability is associated with educational status and work experience (Minniti and Naudé, 2010). Educational attainment is higher among entrepreneurs than among the rest of population (generally in the population, not referring to females separately), and university education correlates with entrepreneurial success (Goedhuys and Sleuwaegen, 2000). According to Lock and Smith (2016), education is essential for success of female entrepreneurs. The educational attainment of Saudi women is high: women form almost 60% of university graduates (Fatany, 2016)—which may provide headway for women in successful innovation and entrepreneurship activities in Saudi Arabia. As international statistics of entrepreneurs' educational attainment suggest (Goedhuys and Sleuwaegen, 2000; Minniti and Naudé, 2010), similarly Saudi female entrepreneurs are well educated: two thirds have received a degree-level education and nearly one third hold a post degree. However, women's attained degrees in technical areas, such as computer science, are not yet reflected in KSA's high tech businesses (Danish and Smith, 2012).

Personality

In literature on female entrepreneurs, personality is one factor identified as explaining entrepreneurs' success. Cabrera and Mauricio (2017) categorize success factors to include personality, which can be labeled also as individual factors, such as persistence (Sullivan and Meek's (2012) or psychological capital, including self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience (Pease and Cunningham, 2016). Such factors are expected to be essential, particularly in the light of research results suggesting higher discontinuing tendency for female innovators (Nählinder, 2010). A study of Saudi female entrepreneurs reports that these women have entrepreneurial qualities, including independence and innovativeness (Vijaya and Almasri, 2016). Whilst there is little available literature about personality factors among Saudi female entrepreneurs, what is known is that women are interested and choosing entrepreneurial careers in KSA (Fareed, 2017)—which itself may be an indication of a personality type inclined to self-efficacy, hope and optimism. Table 2 lists potential elements to investigate Saudi female entrepreneurial innovators' successes within the selected framework.

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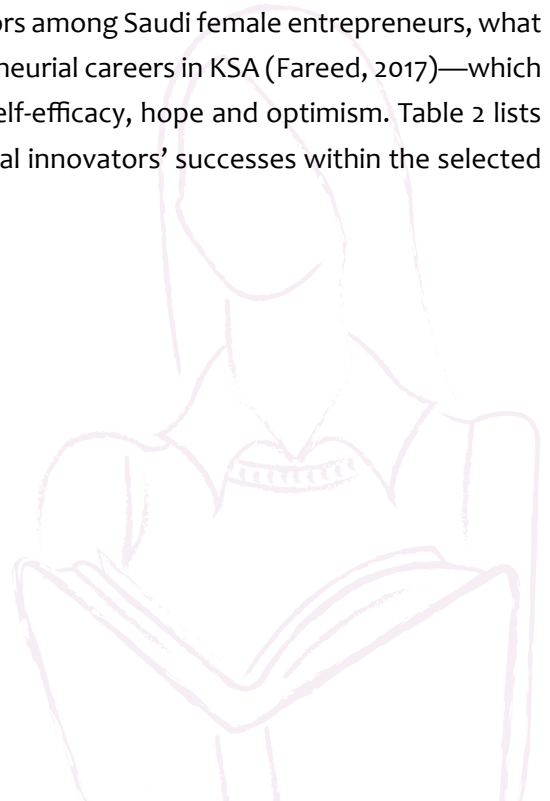
Table 2: Elements and literature associated with successes in female entrepreneurial innovation

External elements and literature associated with successes in female entrepreneurial innovation	
Elements	Literature
Nationalization (Saudization) and feminization of labour	Habib, 2017; Hayashi, 2015; Koyame-Marsh, 2016; Metcalfe, 2008; Mitchell, 2016; Özkazanç-Pan, 2015; Pakkiasamy, 2004; Saudi Gazette, 2016; Zavis, 2015
Social networks	Ahmad, 2011; Danish and Smith, 2012; Marvel et al., 2015; Mekonnen et al, 2017
Funding opportunities	Ahmad, 2011; Baxter, 2010; Danish and Smith, 2012; Lock and Smith, 2016; Minniti and Naudé, 2010; Mollick and Robb, 2016
Internal elements and literature associated with successes in female entrepreneurial innovation	
Elements	Literature
Life's experiences	Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017; (Hoffman et al., 2014 as cited in Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017); Danish and Smith, 2012; Marmenout and Tassabehji, 2010; Nählinder, 2010; Vijaya and Almasri, 2016
Education	Danish and Smith, 2012; Fatany, 2016; Goedhuys and Sleuwaegen, 2000; Lock and Smith, 2016; Minniti and Naudé, 2010
Personality	Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017; Pease and Cunningham, 2016; Sullivan and Meek, 2012; Vijaya and Almasri, 2016

Discussion and Conclusion

The research emphasizes the importance of a theoretical fit with the research environment. The feminist approaches, while useful on some contexts with a Western history of female and male relations in society and organizations, were found to be unfit for the KSA environment. The *framework gender differences and similarities in innovation* (Alsos et al., 2013) without a feminist point of view was selected as a suitable framework for KSA. 'Difference' is considered broadly, including different circumstances facing women compared to men. In this approach, gender is used as a variable. The framework is suitable for female innovation and entrepreneurial context of Saudi Arabia. The country is a fairly new economy with increasing female labour force, where men and women often work in separate environments, avoiding creation of gendered connotations and gendered hierarchies and gendered discourse.

Existing literature helped in identifying elements for challenges and successes of female innovators. The identified elements were considered from a Saudi perspective. The list of potential elements is long and cannot be applied in one single research. The discussed theoretical framework to investigate the successes and challenges of female entrepreneurial innovators can be applied in areas with similar economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. Although covering several elements of female entrepreneurial innovation activity, this research has mainly theoretical implications in highlighting the need of contextual sensibility of theoretical frameworks.

Research and theoretical frameworks in the Western contexts where males and females have been part of the labour force for decades and coexisted in organisational processes, has revealed limiting gender discourses. The social setting of Saudi Arabia may not yet have "reached" the stage of gendered discourses.

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Therefore, a difference approach was implemented to investigate female innovation in Saudi Arabia or in the Middle East. The urgent need for economic development and for nationalization of the labour force in these countries may hugely and rapidly advance women's roles in economy and society. Reiterating what Alsos et al. (2013, p. 242) argue, "the context of developing economies seems to contribute to the visibility of women as innovators!" (Exclamation mark added). Thus, developing economies actually seem to improve female visibility in innovation. The question is if Saudi Arabia may pass the gendered stage of innovation in its sudden inclusion of women in the labour market.

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FACTORS AFFECTING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

A MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROPOSAL
SUBMITTED AS A PARTIAL REQUIREMENT

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ABSTRACT

The prime purpose of the research is to develop a clear understanding of the concept of CSR and its model; in addition, to examine factors needed to implement a model for corporate social responsibility activities in the companies located in the kingdom of Bahrain.

The research will based on the existing literature to proposed the variables of the hypothesis; Additionally; in order to get the primary data for the research, the study will collect reliable and accurate data from main players in the company, which are administration, employees, customers and shareholders, though distributing surveys which would comprise both closed and open-ended questions and having interviews by snowball technique, focused group method, and personal interviews; consequently, subjecting them to quantitative method which consists of multi-regression model; besides the research will investigate the corporate social responsibility adopted by foreign companies, which are located in the Kingdom of Bahrain then the research will come up with results and recommendations.

Based on previous researches they have found a positive correlations between independent variables of Company Size, Board Size, number of Board Meeting, Board Independence, Women on the Board, Internationalization, Industry Type and dependent variable of corporate social responsibility; in contrast, another researchers have found a negative correlations between Board Independence and corporate social responsibility ; besides to that another researchers found that there is no correlation between independent variable of Woman on the Board , Board size and dependent variable of CSR level.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development.

1. Introduction

The idea of social responsibility is quite ancient (Hussainey et al., 2011). The origins of this idea go back to 1917, when Henry Ford declared that the purpose of the Ford Motor Company is "to do as much as possible for everybody concerned, to make money and use it, give employment, and send out the car where the people can use it, and incidentally to make money" (Lee, 2008, p. 54). After eighty years, William Clay Ford Jr confirmed that "we want to find ingenious new ways to delight consumers, provide superior returns to shareholders and make the world a better place for us" (Meredith, 1999, p. 157). The concept was not kept away for too long from the commercial sector as Henry Ford launched the activities of social responsibility (Hussainey et al., 2011). Bowen (2013) was of the opinion that businesses must add social involvement into their decisions. This was the first action for arguing the connection between corporations and society (Carroll, 2016; Wartick & Cochran, 1985).

Since the 1960s and 1970s, Europe and, especially, the United States, have witnessed a remarkable

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rise in consumer protection and civic society associations that began to influence the behavior of companies and to monitor the quality of their products and their conformity with specific environmental and industrial standards. This period witnessed the rise of multiple pressure groups which deal with the rights of persons with disabilities and obliges companies to reconsider their policy. Furthermore, ethical scandals of large companies around the world, such as those related to bribery or professional negligence, have encouraged companies to show greater transparency in order to polish their image. With technological advancements, many organizations preferred the use and implementation of machines over human resources with the intention of increasing the profit (Alqoud, 2016). One such tool taken into consideration for reaching the economic objectives of each company is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR has served a great many companies in building their image and establishing themselves to maintain their position in the competitive global world, and providing these companies with a competitive edge (Friedman, 1970).

CSR has no universal definition; it is defined in different ways depending on the scope of each company. Nevertheless, generally it is a strategic management theory that a company will merge concerns of social and environment, and will balance multinational economic (making profits and sustainable economic development) with environmental and social obligations in their activities, considering interactions with their suppliers by taking their expectations and assisting them to have a premium effect on people and planet (Chan, 2014). Furthermore, social responsibility is defined as a series of pre-planned administrative processes that seek to achieve a set of objectives that lead to potential for optimal interaction and exploitation, stimulate the efforts of the state and its public sectors and establish social ties between them and the private sector and citizens (Alqoud, 2016). The goals of social responsibility adopted from (Alqoud, 2016) are stated as follows:

1. Stimulate the continuous change that stems from the dissatisfaction experienced by individuals in society.

2. The desire to seek to assume new roles in society so that society becomes socially and materially advanced.

3. Raise the social situation of individuals and help them to solve their problems.

4. Create radical solutions to the economic problems, especially the high unemployment rates.

5. Support the family and deepen the bonds of cohesion and stability in them.

On the other hand, the barriers to social responsibility are categorized into several types (Alqoud, 2016):

1. Administrative corruption, which prevents the realization and implementation of social responsibility processes, considered destructive phenomena.

2. Social Obstacles: the society may be reluctant to implement some practices related to social responsibility which contravene beliefs it believes in.

3. Exploitation and conflict of interest: some citizens believe that they will lack stability and safety in the case of the implementation of social responsibility projects.

4. Social status: society does not accept to take a role other than the role referred to already.

5. Cultural Obstacles: the structure of society should be placed under the microscope before embarking on projects of social responsibility so as not to result in the failure of these projects.

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6. Psychological Constraints: the individual is related to the extent to which he is able to engage in the new projects in his environment.

7. Planning obstacles: lack of balance and integration between the various sectors included in the development plan.

8. Low levels of schematic awareness: ignorance of the necessary technical and scientific knowledge to draw the dimensions of failed planning.

9. Absence of cooperation: lack of coordination between the competent authorities in the development process.

The prime purpose of this research is to develop an impractical understanding of CSR and its model. In addition, to examine factors needed to implement a model for corporate social responsibility activities in the organization.

The structure of the research proposal will be divided as follows: introduction, literature review, research problem, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, the conceptual model used, and methodology for this research. The following part will shed light on the related literature review.

2. Literature Review

A cohesive background for the study investigation will be developed, based on the literature reviews, which will interpret and discuss old information that was published in trusted sources regarding CSR from several sides. In addition, literature reviews may combine new information with old to have more effective interpretation. Moreover, the literature reviews will contain more than one section in order to follow the research goals.

The next part of the literature review section will focus on the definition of CSR, previous conceptualizations about CSR, the definition and evolution of sustainable development (SD) and CSR in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and proposed hypotheses to be used in the study which are likely to affect the extent of CSR, and through which will be achieved the objectives of the study. This part will end with Literature on CSR Models.

2.1 Definitions of CSR

CSR has been defined by more than one (Wang,2015). Dahlsrud (2008) has categorized CSR into five main categories, starting with the voluntary responsibility, the environmental responsibility, the social responsibility, the economic responsibility and the stakeholder responsibility. Also, the (European Commission, 2011., para.1) defined CSR as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society". Moreover, Rexhepi et al., (2013) claimed that CSR will be beneficial to society, innovation and competitiveness. In addition, Matten and Moon (2008) said that CSR can be defined only through organizations so they can know exactly which action will reflect directly to their responsibility in addition to developing social interest. Also, Hopkins (2003) claimed that CSR is something related to an organization's stakeholders to raise their return. Furthermore, Mc Williams and Wright (2006) mentioned that CSR is the way to develop society interest through corporation even if it diverts from laws. In addition, CSR clarified as "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis." (European Commission, 2011., para.1).

2.2 Previous Conceptualizations about CSR

CSR has too many terms related to it, for example, corporate social responses, corporate social responsiveness, corporate philanthropy, corporate social performance and corporate citizenship, and all of these terms are produced from management since 1950 (Carroll 2016; Matten and Moon, 2008). A variety of CSR scholars have investigated that CSR results from social obligation, marketing obligation, stakeholder-relation obligation, integrated strategy obligation and leadership themes (Wang,2015) as follows:

2.2.1 Social

Bowen (2013) introduced the concept of CSR as the social obligation to keep track of policies, decisions and actions which are the basic terms for the society value and objectives. Furthermore, Bowen stated that social obligation is the establishment for new investigation of CSR; on the other hand, the Carroll model is illustrated as four components of CSR which are economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities of CSR in (Figure 1) and these are not mutually exclusive.
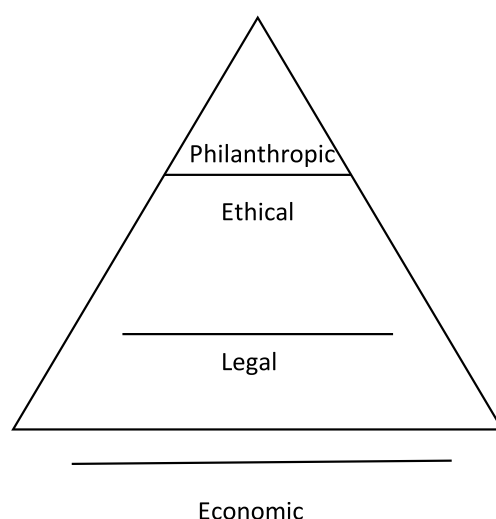
Figure 1: General Components of CSR

Source: (Carroll, 2016)

By applying the pyramid of Carroll (2016), which is based on Economic Responsibilities, organizations need to think first about their business's sustained provision (goods or services), and how to meet their profit in a competitive business world, in order to increase their wealth. Otherwise, organizations will not last for long in their industry which will lead it to lose their employees, suppliers and customers (Chron, 2017). In addition, companies can ensure their profitability by "conducting themselves as law-abiding corporate citizens and fulfilling all their legal obligations to societal stakeholders" (Carroll, 2016), which are Legal Responsibilities, when responsibility for economic and legal matters have been met, companies should start focusing on Ethical Responsibilities, all the players in the companies should comply with the ethical requirements through applying written or unwritten codes of values, norms and standards that will assist companies to take ethical decisions or actions (UK Essays, 2017). Management should play a massive role in setting those codes and also apply them in their daily operations and behaviors. Also, management should have a standard for their internal players, which includes what kind of behaviors are accepted, so they will be rewarded and what are not so they will be penalized (Barin and Avila,2009). Furthermore, companies should embrace Philanthropic Responsibility in their activities through use of their human

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resources, capital resources and natural resources to build a positive effect in the society as per their goals and interests (Carroll, 2016).

2.2.2 Marketing

Scholars involved in marketing begin to consider CSR only by assuring the social commitment that relates to marketing activities without considering the remaining terms of CSR. For example, corporate reputation (Berens et al., 2005; Lichtenstein et al., 2004), communicating with consumers concerning CSR issues (Caruana and Crane, 2008), cause-related marketing (Barone et al., 2000) that means "a form of horizontal tie-in between corporate philanthropy and sales promotion, as synonymous with corporate sponsorship of charitable causes, and as the initiation and funding of deserving causes" (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988, p. 59), social sponsorship (Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006), customers' response to organizational CSR behavior (Ellen wt al., 2006; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001) and environmental marketing (Crouch, 2006). Furthermore, in order to increase the market value, companies need to make their customers satisfied by exploiting CSR (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006).

The above researches mentioned that marketing obligations are actually investigating the correlation between marketing management and CSR, and they considered CSR as one aspect of marketing that focus on consumers.

2.2.3 Stakeholder

One of the basic theories of CSR is stakeholder theory, which consist of two approaches; the first one is a moral approach that means, according to Donaldson and Preston (1995) "all persons or groups with legitimate interests participating in an enterprise do so to obtain benefits" and the other one is an instrumental approach, that in order to confirm companies' continuous operations in their resources, they have to consider CSR (Barney, 2000). Moreover, a framework has been established by Maignan and Ferrell to figure out the feedback of companies' behavior through their stakeholders, and they say that "organizations act in a socially responsible manner when they align their behaviors with the norms and demands embraced by their main stakeholders" (Maignan and Ferrell, 2004, p. 6). In addition, Aguilera et al., (2007) introduce a figure to analyze the relationship between stakeholders and the company, stakeholders' role and stakeholders' influence during the social fluctuations. Also, some researches investigate CSR as a main factor in emphasizing communication with companies' stakeholders (Basu and Palazzo, 2008), the relationship between stakeholder and corporate sustainability (Choi and Wang ,2009), the relationship between CSR awareness among stakeholders and employee loyalty, corporate financial performance and corporate investment (Sen et al.,2006). Lastly, Mitchell et al., (1997) introduce a new concept of stakeholder salience in order to emphasize the relationship between CSR and stakeholders.

2.2.4 Integrated Strategy

A lot of researchers have indicated the CSR concept from the integrated strategy, such as Maignan and Ferrell (2004). If CSR is rooted with an integrated strategy then it will be considered as strategic CSR which participates in the competitive advantages of the organizations (McWilliams and Siegel, 2011); other researchers investigate the integrated corporate tasks in political situation and cite "the need to pay more attention to the ethical aspects of their subject, as failure to do so will weaken the community conceptually and thereby undermine its credibility and legitimacy" (Lawton et al.,2013, p. 8).

2.2.5 Leadership

Some researchers try to merge CSR into leadership theory (Waldman and Galvin, 2008). Maak and Pless (2006) titled their research as leadership based on the CSR concept as "responsible leadership"; additionally, Waldman and Dorfman (2006) investigated the correlation between CSR and CEO leadership style and their results stated that CEOs' vision of CSR might influence the view of CSR for subordinate managers.

2.3 The Definition and Evolution of Sustainable Development (SD)

Sustainable Development (SD) began to surface in the early 18th century. In that period, it allowed the cutting of trees in specific numbers, so the concept of a long-lasting protection for the tree population was assured; therefore, for the coming generation the supply of the wood would be continued (Ebner and Baumgartner, 2006). The term 'sustainable development' first appeared in a publication issued by the International Union for the Protection of the Environment in 1980, but it was widely circulated only after it was reused in the "Our Common Future" report, known as the "Brundtland Report", issued in 1987 by the World Commission for the environment and development of the United Nations, under the supervision of the President of the Ministry of Norway. Sustainability means "meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Rees, 1990). On the other hand, the idea of social responsibility is to follow Sustainable Development (Ebner and Baumgartner, 2006). Another meaning of SD is a criterion applied to take the powerful decisions regarding the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental responsibility). Besides, to evaluate the performance. The three pillars of sustainability as is shown in (Figure 2) are described as follows:

1. Environmental Responsibilities (planet) involve procedures to protect air, water, and land from any harmful effects. Additionally, make sure that the used resources (Energy and renewable fuel sources) can be replenished smoothly in the future, and also decreasing usage of greenhouse gasses which will badly affect the atmosphere, which is another area of interest in environmental sustainability (Frontstram,2013).

2. Social Responsibilities (people) involve procedures to improve education, worker rights, peace, social justice, the minimization of exploitative child labor, reducing poverty, the political empowerment of women and projects that provide clean water. In addition, create a balance between needs of individual and needs of society to reach sustainability (Frontstram,2013).

3. Economic Responsibilities (profit) refer to socio-economic resources that need to be exploited in efficient and effective ways in order to reach sustainable long term profit. Socio-economic resources represent the human capital, stocks, human ecosystems (quantity and quality of work that can be accomplished by an individual) and distribution of poverty and wealth (Frontstram,2013).

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The Triple Bottom Line will be showed as a figure in the following page:
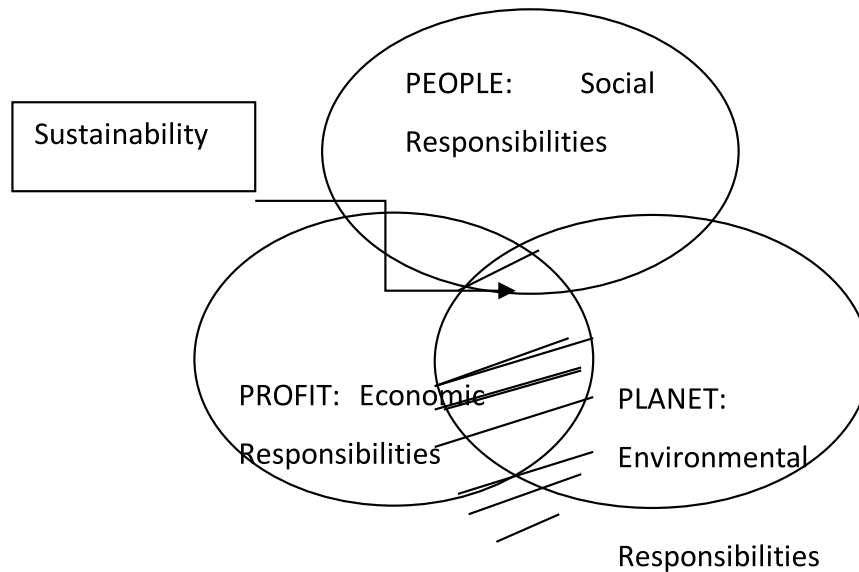
Figure 2: The Triple Bottom Line

Source: (Hammer and Pivo, 2017)

2.4 Corporate Social Responsibility in the Kingdom of Bahrain Adopted from (Alqoud, 2016)

In the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Ministry of Industry and Trade has established a technical committee to study the draft international standard of social responsibility. The specification includes a guide to the principles of social responsibility and partnership within enterprises of all kinds, including governmental, private, industrial and commercial, to have the social relations between company and society, and the aspirations to extend the lines of communication between them at various levels. As an example, one major company in the kingdom of Bahrain, Bahrain Airport Services (BAS) discovered that besides focusing on how it can use its business activities to economic effect. BAS decided to start a new game focused on society through taking a wide part of activities specified in culture, charity, environment and sports that will provide adequate support to Bahrain's local community (Bahrainairport, 2017., para. 1). Besides, as per to(Alba, 2014., para. 1). Aluminum Bahrain (Alba) has a main purpose that considers steps in their operation to serve and bring value to the communities (client, employees and local community in Bahrain). The steps contain activities of practical support and considerable financial in culture, sport, charity and environment as well. Examples of Alba's annual event under the CSR topics are:

1. Support athletes with special needs to leave a mark in sporting events such as Alba's sponsorship of the World Juniors Table Tennis Federation.

2. "Alba Community Services Team" contains participation of Alba's employees in the local community in Bahrain, charitable and national fund-raising activities which include visiting elderly homes in Muharraq and Isa Town, and distributing gifts to children in the Salmaniya medical complex on the occasion of Eid.

3. An effective example of Malkiya beach which is considered as a social partnership between industry and government.

4. "Bahrain International Garden Show" as a reason for Bahraini commitment towards a greener world.

5. "Bahrain Environmental Month" as a reason for Bahraini commitment towards a greener world.

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2.5 Determinations of CSR

There are many factors that are needed to explain CSR (Dyduch and Krasodomska,2017). In this study, the factors will be divided into two main categories, starting with firm characteristics such as firm size, profile of the industry and corporate governance characteristics and ending with Internationalization (Dyduch and Krasodomska,2017). These factors will be discussed in detail as follows:

2.5.1 Company Size (CS)

CSR mostly relates to large companies rather than SMEs; because they can easily use media to attract society (Smith et al., 2013), resources (Smith et al., 2013), (Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017), more protection to their reputation (Smith et al., 2013), (Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017) (Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017) and ease of investment in CSR (Smith et al., 2013), (Dyduch and Krasodomska,2017) and they have more resources related to finance , the cost related to preparation of CSR will be decreased due to economy of scale (Jennifer and Taylor, 2007).The researchers show a positive correlation between CSR and company size (Reverte, 2009), (Veronica and Bachtiar, 2010), (Hawani, 2011), (Haniffa and Cooke, 2005), (Khan, 2010), (Hossain and Reaz, 2007). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between company size and level of CSR.

2.5.2 Board Size (BS)

The first significant factor of corporate governance characteristics is board size which is focused on CSR disclosure researches (Naseem et al., 2017). Moreover, large boards are varied according to gender of directors, education and expertise (Laksmana, 2008); also studies found positive correlations between board size and CSR disclosure (Ntim and Soobaroyen, 2013); (Esa and Anum, 2012). Additionally, Chapple and Moon (2005) came up with a positive relationship between experiences and ideas of board size and CSR disclosure in the annual report. On the other hand, Dienes and Velte, (2016) and Cheng and Courtenay (2006) found no correlation between board size and CSR disclosure. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between board size and level of CSR.

2.5.3 Number of Board Meetings (BM)

The second significant factor of corporate governance characteristics is board meeting (Laksmana, 2008), which will have direct impact on the level of effectiveness and control for the board activities (Laksmana, 2008). Giannaraki (2014) found a positive correlation between CSR and the number of meetings handled by the board of the business operations in order to achieve organization objectives. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between number of board meetings and the level of CSR.

2.5.4 Board Independence (BI)

The third significant factor of corporate governance characteristics is board meeting (Naseem et al., 2017). Haniffa and Cooke (2005) stated a negative correlation between CSR disclosure and board independence. On the other hand, Barako and Brown (2008) stated a positive correlation between the mentioned two variables. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between board independence and level of CSR.

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2.5.5 Women on the Board (WB)

Complex issues can be solved with diverse boards rather than homogenous boards (Carter et al.,2003); in addition, boards that care about social responsibilities encompass more women than the boards with no social responsibilities (Webb, 2004). Moreover, Williams (2003) found a positive correlation between number of women in board and CSR activities. Additionally, Hyun et al., (2016) claimed that females on a board consider the CSR issue more than males; also, Daily and Dalton (2003) and Zhang et al., (2013) investigate a positive relationship between the existence of females on the board and the existence of CSR. In contrast, Khan (2010) found no correlation between CSR disclosure and females on the board. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between the presence of women on the board of director and level of CSR.

2.5.6 Internationalization

Internationalization has been defined by Zahra and George (2002)as 'the process of creatively discovering and exploiting opportunities that lie outside a firm's domestic market in the pursuit of competitive advantage'; for example, Kolk and Fortanier (2013) argued that the relationship between CSR level and internationalization is the main relationship that balances activities between home and host country environmental institutions; besides, Murcia and Souza (2009) found positive correlations between CSR disclosure and internationalization in Brazilian firms. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between the company's internationalization and level of CSR.

2.5.7 Industry Type

In this research, industry environmental sensitivity will be used as a moderator variable (Figure 3, 4) which is the features of the industry that vary from one industry to another. These features are related to their percentage of risk and competition which the industry will depend on to settle their policies (Dye and Sridhar, 1995). Moreover, industries are different in their accounting methods which depend mostly on tradition (Holthausen and Leftwich, 1983), different proprietary costs (Verrechia, 2001) and different information as well (Verrechia, 2001). Previous researchers used to focus on industries to check the environmental reporting (Halme and Huse, 1997). Besides this, some researchers have started to consider organizations that are only categorized as environmentally sensitive industry (Neu et al., 1998). Also, studies figure out the positive relationship between the environmentally sensitive industry and concerns of shareholders regarding environmental information (Wilmshurst and Frost, 2000). On the other hand, industry environmental sensitivity starts to be considered in the CSR research; for example, Dyduch and Krasodomska, (2017) mentioned that if industry has a bad effect on the environment then the industry will supply the information more than other industries. Additionally, Patten (1991) studied the impact of the industry profile to the CSR disclosure; for example, industries relating to chemicals, paper production and petroleum are integrating CSR into their operations to have positive impact on the social profile and this study has been tested through a regression analysis for 128 companies. He comes up with an optimistic relationship between CSR disclosure and CSR profile. Furthermore, Gamerschlag et al., (2011) said that companies which are categorized under energy or consumer industries are more suitable to offer information related to CSR; in addition, (Jennifer and Taylor, 2007) found a different relationship between

the CSR disclosure and manufacturing and non-manufacturing companies. From previous researches, the proposed hypothesis in this research is:

Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between industry environmental sensitivity and level of CSR.

An explanation of moderator variable will be showed in below figure:

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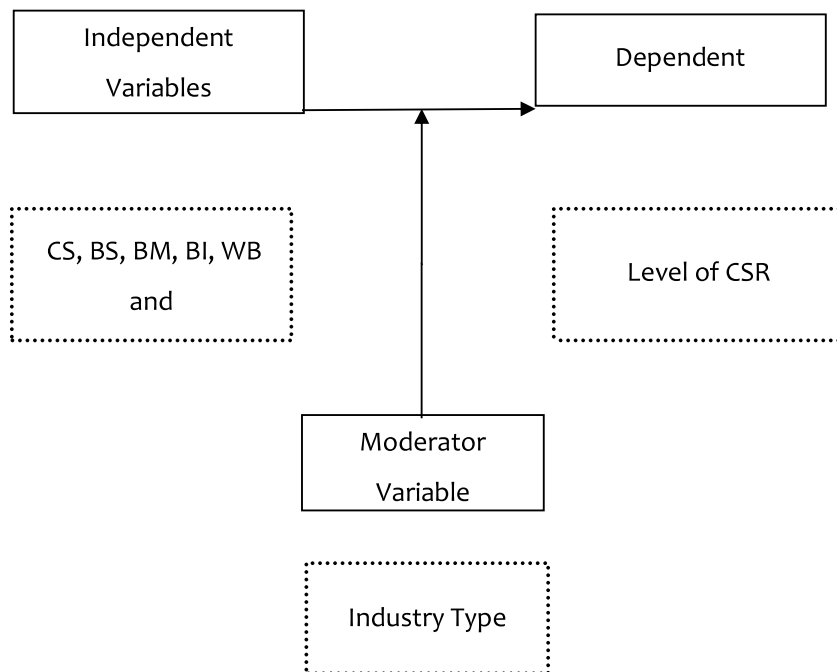
Table 1: Summary of Determinations of CSR							
Types of Variables	Research Variables	Definitions	Sources	Measurements	Sources	H	RQ
Dependent Variable	Level of CSR	Strategic management theory, that company will merge concerns of social and environmental, and will balance multinational economic (making profits and sustainable economic development) with environmental and social obligations in their activities	(Chan, 2014)	Business model, policies, risks related to CSR issues based on the pyramid of (Carroll, 2016) and Sustainability framework adapted from(Hammer and Pivo , 2017)	(Carroll, 2016) (Hammer and pivo , 2017) (Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017)	H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7	Q1
Independent Variables	Company Size	Corporate size, if it is small or large in size, larger organizations, for example, will provide more data and make a more positive impact on society than smaller corporate	(Manaf et al., 2006)	Number of Employees	(Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017)	H1	Q2
	Board Size	First characteristics of corporate governance , the larger the board size the larger the ideas developed and experiences	(Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017)	Gender of directors, education levels and experts, number of directors on the company's board	(Naseem et al., 2017); (Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017)	H2	Q3
	Number of Board Meeting	Second characteristics of corporate governance, checking the number of meetings that have been conducted	(Naseem et al., 2017)	How many meetings of the board have been conducted in a year	(Naseem et al., 2017)	H3	Q4
	Board Independence	Third characteristics of corporate governance, their board majority are outside directors	(Lexicon, n.d,para19)	Percentage of independent directors	(Naseem et al., 2017)	H4	Q5
	Women on the Board	Important in corporate governance is gender diversity on the board	(Naseem et al., 2017)	Proportion of female directors on the board	(Naseem et al., 2017)	H5	Q6
	Internationali-zation	'The process of creatively discovering and exploiting opportunities that lie outside a firm's domestic market in the pursuit of competitive advantage'	(Zahra and George, 2002)	Number of foreign countries the company is active in	(Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017)	H6	Q7
Moderator Variable	Industry Type	Industry environmental sensitivity is the features of the industry which are different between each type of industry	(Dye and Sridhar, 1995)	Dummy variable: value 1 if a company is from an industry with a negative impact on environment, otherwise value 0	(Dyduch and Krasodomska, 2017)	H7	Q8

Figure 3: A conceptual model

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2.6 Summary of Determinations of CSR

Summary of determinations of CSR as a part of literature review will be shown in the following table:

3. Problem Statement:

The problem of this research is developed after reviewing the literature; where the researcher came across various CSR practices, implementations and measures; (Delai and Takahashi, 2011) mentioned that there are a lot of methods to measure sustainability initiatives but there isn't an agreed one to follow also these methods have limitations. Furthermore, the certificate of ISO14001 cannot measure CSR (Juscius and Snieksa, 2008); in addition, (Lyon and Maxwell, 2008) stated that the prior empirical studies were not able to have perfect measurement of firm environmental performance. Moreover, Turker (2009) investigated there are few scales to measure CSR and they are not adequate.

Moreover, the problem of this research was initially promoted through In-depth Interviews with two experts in two organizations who explained the state of CSR in their organizations in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The first respondent was Mr. Khalid AlQuod (Chairman of the Bahrain Society for Social Responsibility), he mentioned in the interview which has been conducted on 26 November 2017that Bahrain has a special reputation of CSR and is highly known by private companies rather than government companies, some of them not all are applying the concept of CSR in their field; However, they are traded the concept of social responsibility as a onetime practice, as it known as a community service(temporary) to the Bahraini society which is not sustainable development (see Appendix A).

The Second respondent was Mr. Talal AlMahroos (Marketing Manager of M. H. Al Mahroos), he mentioned in the interview which has been conducted on 15 January 2018, that they adopt CSR through a shop classified as a coffee shop located in our branch of Bab Al-Bahrain which is the old Bahraini Market and it is always open to receive poets and writers without any return but their main purpose of that was to promote the company market additional to promote awareness of Bahrain's culture and literature and writing and poetry and art (see Appendix A).

And hence, the problem of this research lies in the research gap about the level of understanding and practice of CSR in organizations especially in the Kingdom of Bahrain where there is insufficient research in this area.

4. Research Questions:

The research questions are general and highly depend only on literature review; the research questions are as follows:

Major Research Questions (RQ1): What is the CSR practice of companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain?

Minor Research Questions: the following questions address the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable:

RQ2: Is there a positive relationship between Company Size and the Level of CSR?

RQ3: Is there a positive relationship between Board Size and the Level of CSR?

RQ4: Is there a positive relationship between Number of Board Meetings and the Level of CSR?

RQ5: Is there a positive relationship between Board Independence and the Level of CSR?

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RQ6: Is there a positive relationship between Women on the Board and the Level of CSR?

RQ7: Is there a positive relationship between Internationalization and the Level of CSR?

RQ8: Is there a positive relationship between Industry Environmental Sensitivity and the Level of CSR? (As moderator variable)

5. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this empirical research is:

1. To understand the CSR practice and implementation of companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The minor objectives of this empirical research are:

1. To examine the relationship between Company Size and the Level of CSR.

2. To examine the relationship between Board Size and the Level of CSR.

3. To examine the relationship between Number of Board Meeting and the Level of CSR.

4. To examine the relationship between Board Independence and the Level of CSR.

5. To examine the relationship between Women on the Board and the Level of CSR.

6. To examine the relationship between Internationalization and the Level of CSR.

7. To examine the relationship between Industry Type and the Level of CSR.

6. Significance of the Study

The research will be investigated to show the definitions of CSR, dimensions of CSR and implementations and models used in the Kingdom of Bahrain and if the companies located in the kingdom of Bahrain are applying CSR as a onetime activity, based on that, the research then will propose to the companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the model to be applied and used in their daily operations. The study will also come up with recommendations for companies which will design their operations and procedures according to the feedback of the research.

7. Definitions of the Terms

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility.

SD: Sustainable Development.

BAS: Bahrain Airport Service.

ALBA: Aluminum Bahrain.

CS: Company Size.

BS: Board Size.

BM: Number of Board Meeting.

BI: Board Independence.

WB: Women on the Board.

H: Hypothesis.

RQ: Research Question.

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8. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will apply a regression analysis to investigate the correlations between CSR and CS, BS, BM, BI, WB, Internationalization, Industry Type for companies located in the kingdom of Bahrain, and to appraise the sustainability performance as well. As is shown in below figure 4 (Trencansky and Tsaparlidis, 2014); (Keen et al., 2013); (Sanane et al., 2017).

Independent variable

- Company Size
- Board Size
- Number of Board Meeting
- Board Independence
- Women on the Board
- Internationalization

Dependent variable

Level of Corporate social Responsibility

Sustainable Development

Industry Type

Moderator variable
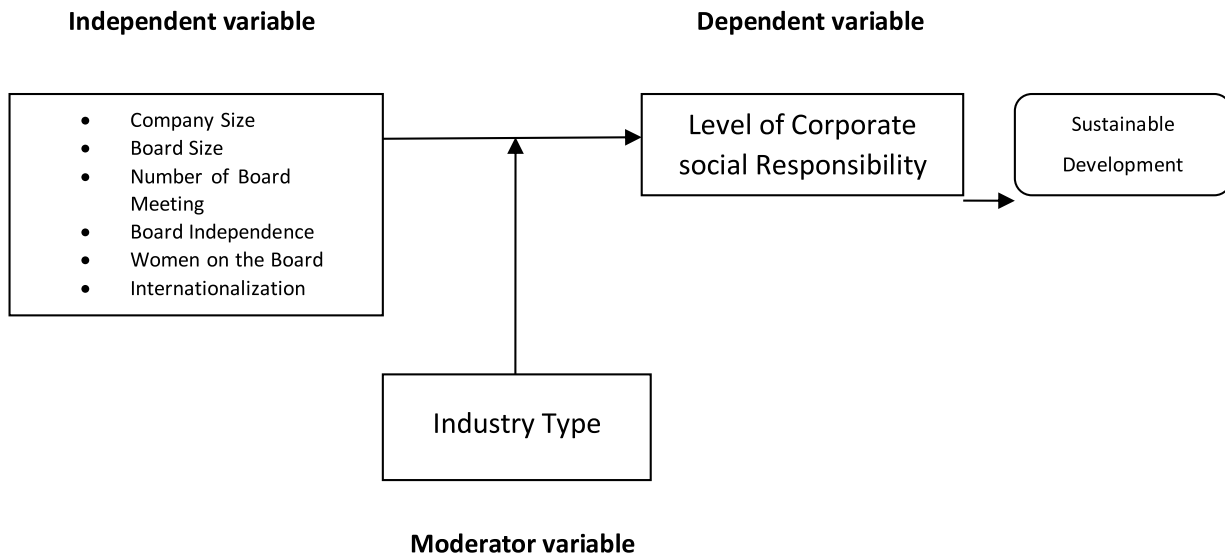
Figure 4: Factors Affecting CSR

9. Research Methodology and Analysis

In context to the type of the research topic, the research methodology will be a quantitative approach, which will consider the earlier records for the purpose of interpretation of statistical results. In addition, this part is needed to confirm the data collected from the interview and also, to collect the required data to be able to accomplish the research objectives set earlier. The methodological steps will be guided as the following research assumptions:

1. Review the existing literature for definition of CSR and SD. Additionally; confirm the one-time activities of CSR inside the Kingdom of Bahrain if this is happening.

2. Collect and analyze primary and secondary data which have been collected from the main players of companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain which are administration, employees, customers and shareholders, as follows:

   • Interviews, observations and documentation to have a clear view of the participants.

   • Questionnaires built from literature review.

3. Investigate the CSR level adopted by foreign companies, which are located in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

4. Set up recommendations that are built from the research feedback.

Furthermore, the suggested dependent variable in this research will be represented by the component of CSR which will be discussed according to the basic pyramid presented by Carroll (Figure1) because Carroll's pyramid has been t he most cited in the literature (Crane and Matten, 2008). Main reasons behind that are specified according to (Visser et al.,2005) as follows:

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1. The simplicity of the model (Visser et al., 2005).

2. Carroll model has been remanufactured by Carroll, administration and CSR journals (Carroll, 2016).

3. Carroll model has absorbed diverse themes into the model; such as corporate citizenship (Carroll, 2016) and stakeholders (Carroll, 2016).

4. Carroll model has been empirically examined and backed up by the findings (Pinkston and Carroll, 1994).

5. Carroll model illustrated favor to the economic dimension as an aspect of CSR (Wayne Visser, 2005).

On the other hand, the suggested independent variables and moderator variable will be taken from the literature reviews, which are Company size, Board size, Board meetings, Board independence, Women on the board, Internationalization and Industry Type as a moderator variable. In addition to that, the value of these independent variables and moderator variable will be collected from questionnaires and interviews. Besides, Likert-scale statements will be used to measure all independent variables. For studying the relationship between dependent and independent variables, the multiple regression models will be the most appropriate method to be applied. The analysis method is expected to also include pilot test, ANOVA, Factor analysis using SPSS tool, Correlation coefficient in the MS- Excel, and some other techniques as well. Tools used for descriptive analysis like that of mean, median and mode would also be implemented while performing the analysis of the data. Both the dependent and the independent variables would be taken into consideration for further analysis of the data gathered and these variables would lead the research a step ahead.

9.1 Data Collection

Since the research focuses on the CSR practices and implementations in companies located in the Kingdom of Bahrain, accurate data needs to be collected this contains numeric and nonnumeric values. The data will be collected from several players from organizations in the kingdom of Bahrain. The main goal of data collection is to get the primary data, and to confirm the value of each independent variable and moderator variable, which has been collected from the literature review. Also, to add new variables if needed. The study will collect reliable and accurate data through:

- Conducting interviews: Interviews would be conducted through snowball technique, focused group method, and personal interviews. Besides, carried out with the main players in organizations in the Kingdom of Bahrain which are administration, employees, customers and shareholders.

- Distributing questionnaires: Questionnaires will be distributed to the main player for organizations in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which are administration, employees, customers and shareholders. Surveys would be undertaken with the distribution of questionnaires which would comprise both closed and open-ended questions, which would help the researcher in generating statistical feedback.

Table 2: Gantt chart of Thesis proposal				
MBA Thesis		Days	Beginning	End
1	Check library to find interesting topics	3 days	2	01-11-17	02-11-17
2	Take Dr.Adel approval on one topic	1 day	1	06-11-17	06-11-17
3	Prepare the proposal			07-11-17	07-11-17
	Check library again to find researches for the topic selected	10 days	10	08-11-17	17-11-17
	Identify research problems	1 day	1	18-11-17	18-11-17
	Interview with concerned person to know the problems	1 day	1	19-11-17	19-11-17
	Submit the research proposal To Dr. Adel for review	1 day	1	20-11-17	20-11-17
	Modify the proposal	2 day	2	21-11-17	22-11-17
	Take Dr.Adel final approval	1 day	1	23-11-17	23-11-17
4	Submit proposal to the department	1 day	1	24-11-17	24-11-17
5	Present the proposal to the department	1 day	1	25-11-17	25-11-17
6	Waiting for department approval	30	30	26-11-17	26-12-17
7	Thesis writing			27-12-17	27-12-17
	Modify literature review (if needed)	10 days	10	28-12-17	07-12-17
	Developing survey questions	5 days	5	08-12-17	13-12-17
	Developing interview questions	5 days	5	14-12-17	19-12-17
	Distribute the questionnaire	30 days	30	20-12-17	18-01-18
	Conduct interviews	30 days	30	19-01-18	18-02-18
	Analyze the questionnaire results	30 days	30	19-02-18	18-03-18
	Analyze the interviews feedbacks	30 days	30	19-03-18	18-04-18
	Write conclusion	15 days	15	19-04-18	05-05-18
8	Final submission of Report to the department	1 day	1	06-05-18	07-05-18
9	Prepare for defense	15 days	15	08-05-18	23-05-18

9.2 Population and Sample

The area of research will be mainly focusing on the Kingdom of Bahrain. Besides, the target population would be the medium sized and large companies operating in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which will be selected according to specific criteria such as number of employee or years of operations. The targeted sample should be representative of the population and the sampling model probably will follow a SRS, Non probability sample, in order to avoid errors in classification, represent the population, be free from bias and the method is more appropriate to apply and assess the sampling error.

9.3 Data Analysis

The research will apply all analysis and techniques suitable to collect data needed, for quantitative methodology.

9.4 Schedule and Duration

The arrangement of each section in the proposal will be sequential; therefore, the schedule and duration of this research is planned as follows (Table 2), in the form of a Gantt chart.

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RUW PERSPECTIVE ON EMPOWERING WOMEN: EMBEDDING EMPLOYABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Royal University for Women

ABSTRACT

Education is a key part of strategies to improve individuals' well-being and societies' economic and social development. The Empowerment of Women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century both at national and international level. It is very essential for the harmonious development of the country that women should be empowered. And for empowering the women, higher education plays a vital role. Royal University for Women (RUW) is the only women university in Kingdom of Bahrain and is in a privileged position to contribute to women's development by supporting them to be strong well rounded personalities, who can contribute the economic development of the country. Employability is the set of skills and attributes that make graduates likely to gain employment and be successful on their chosen career path. RUW values employability as a key constituent that prepares graduates to become leaders who are engaged members of their society, demonstrating initiative and lifelong habits of learning and individual development.

At RUW students receive an outstanding academic education in a multi-cultural environment and a student experience that supports effective personal and professional development. The curriculum provides the highest quality of education in a breadth of academic disciplines, which gives students the opportunity to enhance their employability skills in an ever changing and competitive graduate labour market.

A systematic framework for the development of personal, professional and employability skills for students needs to be developed and implemented that will contribute to their profile and will make them employable. RUW is working in this direction of embedding employability in curriculum, having more extracurricular engagement, developing career guidance and management activities, and engaging with all stakeholders. Through giving greater focus to the development of employability skills linked to high levels of academic achievement, our graduates will have the opportunity to become outstanding global citizens and to contribute to the community, and will value life-long relations with the University.

Key words: Employability, Employment, Framework, work based learning, lifelong learning, stakeholders

Introduction

Royal University for Women (RUW) established in 2005, is the first private, purpose-built, international university in the Kingdom of Bahrain dedicated solely to educating women and provides a comfortable environment to produce leaders, dynamic decision makers, independent thinkers and community-conscious individuals with a focus on academic excellence and personal development. RUW is a unique higher educational institution that has, at its very core, the key objectives that will help students to grow intellectually, to develop socially, and to become a strong, capable individual in possession of the essential skills needed to lead a productive professional and personal life. RUW celebrated its 10 years of Journey of excellence and has won many accolades in the areas of HEC Accreditation, listing on National Qualification Framework, Mapping of programmes on NQF, Programme-within- college-reviews, expanding the offerings

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of programmes and National Skills Competition. In its endeavor to excel RUW is working in the direction of enhancing Employability related initiatives.

Employability is a set of achievements- skills, understanding and personal attributes -that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Knight & Yorke, 2004).

The Higher Education Council (HEC) in Kingdom of Bahrain has a crucial and central role to play in facilitating, supporting and guiding Universities to focus on future employability of graduates. Embarking on strengthening linkages between Universities and Industry will lead to a long term, positive impact for Bahrain and also set the breakthrough standard for other GCC and Arab countries. Thus efforts need to be made by universities to bridge the gap between Higher Education and Industry. This will lead to employable or work ready graduates. The RUW Employability Strategy aligns with this HEC Strategy and with the Mission, Vision and the Strategic Plan of RUW, with a particular focus upon the goal that 'Ensures graduating work-ready students.' It also aligns with the teaching & Learning policy with specific reference to 'Enhancing both employability and lifelong learning'. The RUW Graduate attributes also focus on employability where in addition to creativity and Enterprise 'Preparedness to work in a culturally diverse society' is an important attribute.

RUW Employability Strategy: A Beginning

As per a study reported by HEC 75 million under the age of 25 are Unemployed globally. Further, half of graduates do not believe that higher education has improved their chances of finding a job. 40% of employers say a lack of skills is the main reason for vacancies and it is estimated that by 2020 there will be a global shortfall of 85 million workers (World Bank). The jobs of the future are increasingly unlike those of the past as employers, educators and students have different frames of reference. This is primarily due to lack of engagement and collaboration between the higher learning Institutions, Industry and other Stakeholders.

Taking into account the HEC directive and Vision and Mission of RUW an Employability strategy was developed in AY 2015-16. The RUW Employability Strategy provides a framework for employability across the University. It outlines general principles that are applied in more specific policies in areas relating to employability at the University. It reflects the alignment of employability to strategic goals and objectives of the University.

The purpose of the RUW employability strategy is to:

a. Develop employable graduates, who are regarded highly by employers, and who, have completed their academic programme and have had the opportunity to acquire the full range of Graduate Attributes that allow them to become creative, confident and forward thinking.

b. Prepare graduates to become leaders who are engaged members of their society, demonstrating initiative and life-long learning habits and individual development.

c. Support the vision and mission of the University's Strategic Plan and Teaching and Learning Policy. RUW graduates are provided with many opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, behaviours and confidence that will enhance their employability in the world of work and their competitiveness in the global economy.

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d. Ensure that university staff and students share a common understanding of employability in the context of both the formal academic curriculum and the co-curricular activities.

The Employability framework acknowledges that effective teaching & learning, research and Community Education play an important role in employability development in our students. The framework provides a process for reflecting on and addressing employability provision in a systematic and holistic manner and can be adapted and used as appropriate. The framework is an integrated, institution wide approach to ensure that:

• RUW provides excellent multi-cultural teaching and learning environment to its students

• RUW graduates experience quality students experience with more employer related initiatives

• Students are supported to develop a range of attributes/ qualities over and above the knowledge and skills developed through degree programme

• Students and stakeholders are provided with the information about a range of performance indicators including employability measures for the programme they want to pursue.

The key features of the Framework are

• It Identifies the key employability skills in addition to strong knowledge base as:

Fig1: Employability Skills

• It aligns with RUW Teaching & learning Operational plan

• Aligns with RUW graduate attributes

• Required support in terms of Infra structure and related activities is provided by the University

There are 7 key employability Strands:

Employability Strand 1: Awareness and Information for all Stakeholders

Making all stakeholders aware about the Employability Strategy and, thrust of RUW's Vision, Mission, Strategic plan, Teaching & learning policy on employability and informing them at all levels.

- Student and Staff Orientation programmes

- RUW website, Newsletters and other published communication

- Lectures and workshops about the Employability skills and attributes

- Career Guidance provided in a comprehensive way
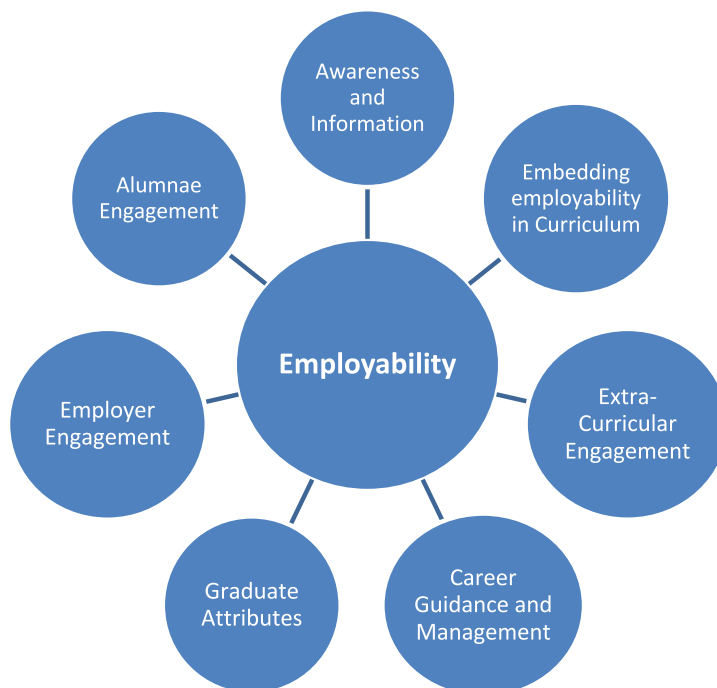
Fig 2: RUW Employability framework

Employability Strand 2: Embedding Employability in Curriculum

The University is committed to ensure that programme design is geared to enhancing employment prospects of RUW graduates

- Efforts to be made to ensure there is an involvement of employers in the design, delivery validation and review of programmes

- Employability skills and attributes are embedded within the programmes of study. Students will acquire skills and develop a wider set of attributes through their course - some directly related to their subject, some to do with the process of learning, or study skills, and some explicitly relevant to a subsequent career.

- Development and delivery of credit bearing employability courses like Entrepreneurship, and Innovation; Leadership; Professional Practice methods; Languages on a regular basis.

- Departments will be able to demonstrate how the curriculum helps students recognize and further develop knowledge, skills and behaviours that contribute to 'well rounded personalities' and 'work ready graduates'.

- Disseminating effective employability teaching and assessment practices through staff development programmes.

- Utilizing the College Advisory Committee network to enable employers to input into revision of programme curriculum.

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Employability Strand 3: Extra Curricular Engagement

Develop and promote employability as part of the co-curriculum and the RUW student experience through:

- Continuing to recognize and reward a wider range of student co-curricular achievements.

- Raising the profile of co-curricular opportunities and student participation in study abroad programmes, enterprise & entrepreneurship initiatives and the Internship Programme.

- Enhancing and expanding the University's Career Guidance Programme by working in partnership with organisations, Employers and professional bodies.

- Recognizing co-curricular learning and achievements within the graduate transcript using 'A Credit' initiative.

- Organizing workshops and lectures for soft skills development amongst students. Using simulation as a mode to motivate students take up effective employment.

Employability Strand 4: Career Guidance and Management

Deliver effective career development learning opportunities through:

- Supporting students and graduates in exploring their employment and further study options through a range of careers education, information and guidance services.

- Delivering a range of co-curricular initiatives which help students to develop their employability skills.

- Enabling students to connect with employers from a wide range of sectors through Career fairs, employer presentations and employer-led workshops.

- Expanding the range of online interactive career planning resources to complement traditional careers service provision.

- A dedicated, pro-active careers service is fundamental to improving student employment prospects through the provision of one-to-one advice and guidance and employer introductions. Need to initiate this in RUW.

Employability Strand 5: Employer Engagement

Raise the profile of the University and its capabilities to a range of employers through:

- Using the network of College Advisory Boards as a channel to communicate with graduate recruiters and professional bodies.

- Enhancing links with local, national and international employers and having a coherent approach to employer engagement in line with labor market requirements.

- Enhancing work based learning through Internships, workshops and real life projects with employers.

- Increasing the number of employers involved in various stages of the student experience by organizing Forums, lectures, workshops, talks, visits etc.

- Undertaking joint projects with the Employers to facilitate linkage of academia with the Industry.

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Employability Strand 6: Graduate Attributes

Support a culture of Graduate Attribute engagement and its development in both the curriculum and co-curriculum through:

- Raising student and staff awareness of the values, competencies and skills which are characterized through the RUW Graduate Attributes listed below

RUW GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES	TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
Achievement of the goals and objectives of their learning programme	Multi-tasking Time management
Creativity and enterprise	Leadership
Critical thinking and reflective practice	Problem solving
Independence in learning including awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses	Enterprise IT and quantitative/qualitative Analysis skills
Self-motivation	Project management
Appropriate Communication skills	Communication (oral, written) Report writing
Commitment to lifelong learning	Reflection
Preparedness to work in a culturally diverse society	Interpersonal skills
Good citizenship	Team working
Clarity of vision and planning	Planning and organization

Employability Strand 7: Alumnae Engagement

Investigating opportunities to work more with alumni for the benefit of current students through:

- Organizing lectures/ workshops conducted by Alumnae

- Recognizing successful alumnae through awards, sharing their success stories with current students

- Participation in College Advisory Committees (Add data)

- The alumni of the University can provide opportunities for our students to develop professional networks and to participate in formal mentoring schemes.

- Maintaining links long after graduation, particularly through Alumni Associations, enables universities to develop brand loyalty and provide income generation opportunities.

Employability Framework Evaluation

The effectiveness of RUW's Employability Framework is monitored using a diverse range of indicators which are assessed and evaluated on an annual basis and include:

- Tracking the progression of students into employment or further study, taking into account the type of employment concerned, its relevance to the student's future career plans and the current economic climate. Evaluating feedback from students on the support they are given and its value to them in identifying and making appropriate career decisions through Exit surveys.

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- Feedback from employers on the suitability of our students for employment through Employers survey.

- Annual programme review to consider discipline-specific employability provision.

- Comments and feedback from students undertaking credit-bearing careers education using Course evaluations

Conclusion

With the rise in expectations from universities around the world to produce work-ready graduates, and considering the requirements Set out by Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies for universities to ensure employability of graduates, and also the dissatisfaction of the employers with the functional and transferred skills of graduate hires, employability and work-readiness has become the focal point for many Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as well as Higher Education regulatory bodies. Such a focus is seen around the world and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in the UK is an example of the shift in focus on educating the next generation. The Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in its National Higher Education Strategy, has also placed great emphasis on embedding employability into the curriculum. This emphasis on employability of graduates, sparked the idea for exploring similarities in the way embedding employability is planned and executed, especially as a step towards empowering women. To this end, the authors used the case of Royal University for women as an example of a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Bahrain that has developed a framework in this regard and has taken major steps in ensuring employability and leading to employable graduates. This research discussed the challenges faced and the Critical Success Factors for embedding employability in a Higher Education Institution in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Further work needs to done in an organized way to enhance employability at RUW.

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REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE SENATE

12TH PARLIAMENT

PREPARATION OF STUDENTS FOR EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

Senator (Arch.) Sylvia M. Kasanga

INTRODUCTION:

According to the United Nations World Population Prospects[1], there were 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 years globally in 2015, accounting for one out of every six people worldwide. In Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Northern America and Oceania, youth populations have stabilized in size and are projected to change little over the coming decades. In Africa however, the number of youth is growing rapidly. **In 2015, 226 million youth aged 15-24 lived in Africa, accounting for 19 per cent of the global youth population. By 2030, it is projected that the number of youth in Africa will** have increased by 42 per cent. As Africa's youthful population continues to rise, there is uncertainty over the continent's preparedness to tap this resource for economic growth.

The above statistics indicate just how much we cannot afford to ignore the needs of the youth. We have such a huge number of youth and for there to be global development we must address challenges faced by this important group. Young people should acquire the education and skills needed to contribute to a productive economy and get access to a job market which can absorb them.

Among the greatest challenges facing many countries today are inadequate human capital investment and high unemployment rates among youth. Some countries are struggling currently to educate and employ their young people, yet they are also anticipating substantial growth in the number of youth. These countries will be doubly challenged in their efforts to assure universal high-quality education, productive employment and decent work for all.

A number of countries, such as South Africa, Spain and Greece, face extremely high youth unemployment, with rates above 50 per cent.[2] Kenya recorded 39.1 percent unemployment rate according to recent report by United Nations[3].

The Aga Khan University in Kenya conducted a survey in 2015 across Kenya on attitudes of the Youth in a range of attributes including entrepreneurship. They found out that the majority of the youth would like to start their own business, rather than pursue careers in law, teaching, medicine or engineering. They were largely positive and optimistic about the future and were confident that it will be more prosperous, offering more jobs and better access to health and education.[4] Overall, the Kenya Survey found out that unemployment among youth was 55%. Unemployment was highest among women (62%), and even

1   United Nations (2013) World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision
2   Ibid
3   United Nations; Human Development Index (HDI) 2017.
      https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001253818/unemployment-in-kenya-what-you-should-know
4   The Kenya Youth Survey Report

higher among rural women (68%). Employment rates were lowest among those without post-secondary education (15%). By comparison, 32% of those with post-secondary education were unemployed. 1 in 2 graduates were unemployed and only 1 in 5 youth with university degrees were in self-employment. Youth aged between 18 and 25 were twice more likely to be unemployed compared to their counterpart aged 26 to 35 years.

It is unfortunate that some of the unemployed youth are graduates. This is sometimes as a result of institutional ineffectiveness and inefficiency. Students today learn academic and core subjects which are useful but they are not gaining all the knowledge they need to seamlessly integrate into the employment environment or the entrepreneurial environment.

Educated unemployment or underemployment could also be due to a mismatch between the aspirations of graduates and employment opportunities available to them. Unemployment and underemployment of graduates is a devastating phenomenon in their lives.

1. Causes of Youth Unemployment

a. Financial crisis

The tough economic times have led to many companies and organizations laying off staff and/or implemented hiring freezes in the last few years.

Even without formal hiring freezes, it's not uncommon for companies to decide not to fill a position when someone leaves, to save money. And then, rather than reducing workload accordingly, frequently employers simply expect the remaining employees to cover that work in addition to their own.

b. Skills mismatch

The skills mismatch is a youth unemployment cause that affects young people everywhere. There are millions of young people out of school and ready to work, but businesses needs skills these young people never got. Young people end up experiencing a difficult school-to-work transition, and businesses are unable to find suitable candidates for their positions.

c. Lack of entrepreneurship and life skills education

Tertiary institutions have neglected vocational, entrepreneurial and employability training in favour of more traditional academics which do not harness life skills most students already have.

d. Lack of access to capital

Young people who want to make their own jobs by starting businesses often struggle to find access to affordable loans, or loans in general. This is partially due to a lack of collateral. High interest rates also make it difficult for young people to repay their loans on time.

e. A digital divide

In some low-income countries, the skills mismatch is compounded by a lack of access to technology or the internet. If the institutions are unable to afford the tools to educate young people in the digital sector, these young people are at a disadvantage in the job market.

2. How Tertiary Institutions Can Prepare Students to be Employable and Entrepreneurial

Young people view many higher educational systems and institutions as inadequately tailored to the actual

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dynamic needs of the labour market.[5] Interviewed for Putting Education to Work, young people said that formal education curricula are often overly theoretical, leaving students feeling ill-prepared and lacking the necessary practical skills for the labour force.[6]

Learning at a tertiary institution should be a time and place to develop an area of expertise, figure out a career path, and prepare for it. The idea is that those years are one's chance to develop the skills needed so that when they enter the workforce, they are well prepared.

Tertiary Institutions therefore should in the following ways prepare students for employment or entrepreneurship:

a. Skills Education and training programmes

Tertiary Institutions should come up with initiatives that target the skills gap which can focus on areas like employability skills, job hunting skills, interviewing, entrepreneurship and vocational education.

b. Provide Information on Youth Access to Capital and Opportunities

Some countries e.g. Kenya have funds set aside for the youth which are given out as loans at a very low interest rate. In Kenya the fund is known as Youth Enterprise Development Fund . Kenya also has government procurement opportunities for the youth, persons living with disability and women.

Most students leave tertiary institutions without this information and therefore get stuck on getting funding to start their businesses. Tertiary Institutions should therefore provide students with this information to enable them benefit from the available resources.

c. Provide internet access

Internet access is very important in tertiary institutions.

Internet access has many advantages such as increasing access to information all over the world, providing scholars and academic institutions with an avenue to disseminate information to a wider audience worldwide, enables scholars and students at different locations on the globe to exchange ideas on various fields of study, enables the growth of distant learning, both within nations and across international borders and it provides students and lecturers with a communication system that they can use to communicate with each other irrespective of distance.

d. Skills matching

The tertiary institutions should collaborate with the private sector and government to determine what knowledge and skills young people should be taught in order to find rewarding work. Considering businesses are suffering from the skills mismatch, too, they need to take a more active role in promoting appropriate education and skill-building for young people.

e. Promoting Collaboration between Industry and Tertiary Institutions

Most tertiary institutions have a great deal of theoretical learning, studying of history, and exploring of ideas. But it would add more value if the students would also spend some time in the job market doing the actual job. Most universities currently don't connect students to experience and workplace skills.

5   UNDP youth strategy 2014-2017
6   UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013.

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Tertiary institutions should therefore come up with means to connect their students to the job market and ensure actual job experience as well.

3. Challenges Facing the Higher Education Sector

Africa has an estimated 1,650 higher education institutions[7], many of them facing challenges that require the intervention of various stakeholders, national governments and development partners in order for the students to maximize their learning outcomes and contribute effectively to the workforce.

These challenges include:

a. Demand for Access

The continued demand for access which has doubled and even tripled in some countries has led to a shift from elite to mass higher education which has greatly compromised the quality of education.

b. The rapid expansion of higher education

This has been experienced by many countries globally and has brought a conflict between quality and quantity. For example, in some countries such as China and Kenya, the growth of funding could not balance with the ever-rising enrolments, leading to quality issues related to congested facilities that were initially designed to accommodate only a few students as well as poor working conditions in most institutions.

c. Privatization of Public Universities

The growing privatization of the public higher education system is a growing concern for scholars and administrators. The main concern is that as private interests take over a public university, their business interests may not serve the public good.

d. Financial Crisis

The continued reduction of financial resources and growing accountability measures imposed by governments has left most tertiary institutions struggling financially.

e. Maintenance of quality and relevance

The institutions are struggling to maintain quality and relevance and the measures required for their assessment due to high number of student intake.

4. Preparation of Women for Employability and Entrepreneurial Activity

a. Statistics on Women Graduates

Higher education institutes have traditionally been dominated by men over the centuries. Howeve,r there has been a big shift in the gender balance and **women have outnumbered men in university enrollments.** This is not just the case in the European Union, United States and Australia. Many countries in Asia like Brunei, China, Burma (Myanmar), Hong Kong, and the Philippines also show this trend, with Malaysia and Thailand being extreme cases in this region.

This gender imbalance is not restricted to the traditional women's areas of study like law, arts, language, nursing, social work, and psychology, etc. Although men still dominate fields like business, engineering, science, and ICT in the 'Western countries', women in Asia are now also beginning to dominate these traditional male fields as well.

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7   https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/challenges-and-prospects-africas-higher-education

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In Kenya, the Ministry of Education statistics indicate that more women are going back to school for undergraduate, masters and PhD degrees compared to men who are lagging behind.

According to an OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) report in 2015, young men are significantly more likely than young women to have low levels of skills and poor academic achievement, and more likely to leave school early, often with no qualifications.

According to the UNESCO Science Report: towards 2030[8], **women now account for 53% of the world's bachelor's and master's graduates and 43% of PhDs.** This is a remarkable progress and should be encouraged.

The above statistics indicate remarkable progress towards **sustainable development goal 4** which provides for inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

b. Statistics on Women in the Job Market

It is very encouraging to see how women are now making a remarkable achievement in higher education. However, women continue to face challenges in accessing jobs after graduating.

In the Middle East, **only 13.2 percent of young women are active participants in the labour market, compared to 46.5 percent of their male counterparts. In North Africa, the female youth participation rate stands at 19.7 percent compared to 46.8 percent** for young males.[9]

In Kenya, the modern or **formal sector employment has 880,000 women compared to 1.68 million men in 2016,** according to a study by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS). This shows **women trail men by 65.6 percentage points in formal employment**. The study, which collates data from the economic survey since 2010, shows that more men than women have been employed in majority of key sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing indicating they work less in formal wage employment than their male counterparts.

Women in Kenya are also less than men in corporate boardrooms.

According to 'the World's women 2015' report[10], only **50 per cent of women of working age are in the labour force, compared to 77 per cent of men.**

The gender gap in labour force participation remains especially large in Northern Africa, Western Asia and Southern Asia. Overall participation in the labour market is only slightly lower in 2015, compared to 1995.

Female students outperform male students at universities but unfortunately this is reversed at workplace.

c. How to Increase women graduates in the Job market and Entrepreneurial field

• Tertiary Institutions should provide entrepreneurship training

An entrepreneurship training will empower women to become entrepreneurs and make them able to fend for their families even without formal employment.

• Enactment of policies and legislation that seek to give women equal opportunities in the work place.

The structural problems of bringing more women in the job market can be overcome through right type of policies, environments and attitudes at workplaces. Women sometimes find it hard to get employed

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8   http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002354/235406e.pdf
9   ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013.
10   https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter4/chapter4.html

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due to societal values and cultures. There is a glass ceiling for professional women. They feel it irrespective of their positions and institutional affiliations. Thus, they try to work harder than men to advance their careers and reach leadership positions.

- **Tertiary Institutions should partner with employment industries to train on work life balance.**

The need of work and family life balance is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. Wherever possible, through flexible working arrangements female employees can be retained.

- **Recognition of Well performing Women**

Organizations and companies can initiate a program where hardworking and deserving women are recognized. This will motivate women to work extremely hard to get there as well as give them an opportunity to be recognized as equal players in the industry.

5. Life skills Necessary for the Youth to become Efficient Employees or Entrepreneurs

The youth also need to be advised on the need to empower themselves with skills which are very essential within the workforce after the university. Employers want employees/ graduates backed by real world experience and life skills. These are skills best learned through extracurricular involvement.

They include:

a. Communication

It is important for the youth to have good communication skills. Good communication skills means they can articulate thoughts clearly, express ideas through oral, written, and non-verbal cues, and listen to ultimately gain understanding.

b. Team work and collaboration

All employers require some sort of teamwork and collaboration between their employees. Students must therefore have the ability to work in a team structure while learning to adapt to different personalities and accommodate diverse perspectives which requires discipline, maturity and patience.

c. Professionalism

Good and efficient employees are professional. The youth should therefore form good work habits such as being on time, being responsible and organized. This will ensure they are responsible in meeting deadlines and completing projects assigned to them.

d. Self-Management and Initiative

Employers want workers who have leadership qualities. Youth need to take up leadership roles in school and out of school so as to train themselves to be leaders and acquire leadership qualities. This will help them with self-management in the workplace including the ability to plan, organize, prioritize their work, follow-through and have discipline to stay on track with assignments and projects.

e. Creative and Critical Thinking

Young adults need to be able to make decisions and solve problems using their creative and critical thinking skills. This may be examining data and providing an informed analysis to report to their boss or coming up with a creative solution to a project hurdle.

f. Global Fluency and Perspective

The youth also need to learn to have a global perspective which means respecting diversity, and being open, inclusive, and sensitive to all people. They must be able to interact with and be respectful to people from different cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, political ideologies, and religions.

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Generation Z: Women's Advancement

Generation Z: Women's Advancement

Today, more than ever, the power of women is emerging forcefully through the pursuit of education and the robust interest in technology. Moreover, to meet the demands of global citisenship, women of Generation Z are advancing their credentials through leadership roles, entrepreneurship, the acquisition of second languages, and first-hand experiences in their fields of interest. Societal growth and advancement are inextricably linked to innovation and adaptability to an ever-changing environment that is influenced by Psycho-Social factors present through all times. Therefore, for optimal development and sustainability, informative academic research is needed to support a balanced society.

CASE STUDY: THE USE OF BLENDED LEARNING AT ROYAL UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning is a learner-centered approach that integrates face-to-face learning with a technology-mediated learning environment (Garrison, 2004; Deepwell and Malik, 2008). This pedagogical method incorporates various teaching methodologies and an array of synchronous and asynchronous technology-mediated learning modalities both inside and outside the classroom. Blended Learning is one of the teaching models adopted by Royal University for Women (RUW). This action research examines (1) the use of blended learning at RUW, (2) The modalities that are used or not used at RUW, and (3) ways to expand the use of blended learning within the university. I will be analyzing the data both quantitatively and qualitatively to draw conclusions that will help enhance the teaching and learning at RUW.

Keywords: Blended learning, m-learning, technology, teaching models, projects

Background

Blended learning is a learner-centered approach that integrates face-to-face learning with a technology-mediated learning environment (Garrison, 2004; Deepwell and Malik, 2008). This pedagogical method incorporates various teaching methodologies and an array of synchronous and asynchronous technology-mediated learning modalities both inside and outside the classroom.

In the light of the blended learning definition and in alignment with The Teaching and Learning Policy at the Royal University for Women (RUW), RUW is adopting this approach as part of its pedagogical practices. This is to prepare the students to become lifelong learners and active members in the society by possessing the skills and attributes needed in a world with rapid technological advancements. It also facilitates the role of the instructor in achieving the Intended Learning Outcomes utilizing a range of teaching methods to cater to individual differences and enhance the learning process.

Royal University for Women Blended Learning

The Royal University for Women is committed to optimizing the students' learning experience through adopting innovative teaching methodologies. Therefore, RUW academic staff understands that to improve the students' abilities, facilitate their learning process, and enhance both their employability and lifelong learning skills, teaching is to be in a learner-centered environment. RUW ensures that all the program offered embed blended learning models, with at least 30% of the program dedicated to technology-mediated learning.

Blended Learning and Teaching models at RUW

Instructor-led instruction

RUW learning environment is learner-centered, where students are encouraged to become autonomous independent life-long learners. The Role of the instructor is to facilitate the learning process. The Instructor stimulates the student's critical thinking and enriches their skills and attributes. Guiding the accessibility to information, monitoring the student's apply their skills and knowledge, offering them constructive feedback, and fairly evaluating their performances are the instructor's responsibility whether face-to-face

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or through the use of technology. All course specifications state the instructor-led teaching methods used to achieve the course intended learning outcomes.

Project-based Learning (PBL)

RUW programs aim at enhancing the student's higher order skills. Therefore, students are engaged in interesting projects that are done individually, in pairs or in groups. In a team-working environment, students enhance their critical thinking, foster their collaboration and leadership attributes, and promote their communication skills by being actively engaged in doing a project. PBL also provides the students the opportunity to develop their decision-making skills starting from selecting their project type and topic to the method of presenting the accomplished project. It is also one of the effective assessment tools that are used to measure the student's skills.

Research-based Learning

Students at RUW are encouraged to conduct research. Generating and testing hypothesizes are key elements in their learning. In the early years of college, they learn how to analyze, evaluate and integrate secondary sources. After being familiar with various research methods and field related biography, they are support to collect their own data, interpret it, and present it. This learning process allow students to determine goals, broaden their intellectual capabilities, work cooperatively, offer and accept feedback, and maintain academic integrity.

Inquiry-based Learning

Through asking challenging questions learners get involved in finding ways to address these inquires and propose possible answers through the exploration of new knowledge paths. Students are also encouraged to synthesize the data they gathered into a textual knowledge.

Workshop/lectures

Students at RUW benefit from a number of hands-on workshops and guest lectures that are offered by specialized people in the field. RUW believes that these activities expose students to valuable experiences and directly involve them with experts and subject specialists.

Field-trips

RUW highly recognizes learning outside the classroom methods. Educational field trips are an integral part of RUW programs. They provide students with firsthand experience that is directly linked to the concepts they are taught. Students are provided a unique opportunity for learning that can never be provided within the four walls of the classroom. RUW aims at increasing the students' factual understanding and conceptual knowledge by participating in the educational field trips RUW organizes.

Work integrated learning

This model allows the students to apply what they have learned in a work-place whether it is done in firms, online or simulations. RUW uses work integrated approach to enable students be career-ready graduates who possess the required employability skills and can transfer them to their daily on-job performances.

Peer-based learning

Learning from peers is manifested on a daily basis. Seizing this informal learning opportunity and framing it in a formal setting helps students develop vital skills. Peer- feedback, peer tutoring, and peer-evaluation are

powerful tools to scaffold the students' learning experience. The process of sharing knowledge and ideas provide mutual benefit. Instructors monitor the students to ensure that they have access to the sufficient requirements to accomplish the task and provide them with formative feedback to guide their learning. Art and Design students, for example, evaluate and critique other students' work. Likewise, students who are enrolled in the English for Academic Success program do peer-review and give peer-feedback. Not only that, but in some Liberal Arts Requirement courses each group of students prepare a topic and teach it to their peers. All these practices support the student's autonomy, objectivity and leadership skills.

Role-play

Role-plays and simulations provide the students the opportunity to deploy their knowledge and explore their potentials in a familiar environment that with components that are similar to reality. This model helps the students overcome the barriers they might have in applying their knowledge for the first time in the real situation. One of the activities that RUW takes pride of having to enhance the role-play activities is the Moot Court. Law students, for example, simulate court proceedings and prepare memorandums for the case and conduct a mock trial.

Game based learning (GBL)

Game-based learning is an innovative practice that engages students in learning via games specially designed for learning purposes. Students are intrinsically motivated and have fun learning, where the instructor engage and guide the students as they are applying the concepts learned.

Flipped learning

By definition, it is a pedagogical approach, which the direct instruction moves from the group-learning environment to the individual environment, and the group-learning environment is used for creatively applying what was learned individually. This helps the student to come to the classroom after learning the concepts and get involved in a dynamic, interactive learning through application environment. This approach allows students a flexible learning environment that is very learner-centered. Technology can be utilized to communicate the intentional content to the students, which will maximize the time devoted for monitored application in class.

Technology-mediated learning environment

E-learning and mobile-learning Technology is an integral part of teaching and learning at RUW. Instructors at RUW incorporate in their courses technology-mediated learning activities to achieve the course intended learning outcomes (CILOs). For instance, to achieve the CILOs instructors use podcasts, wikis, forums, threaded discussions, blogs and online software or programs. Instructors can also assign online tasks. These kinds of tasks allow time flexibility and in-depth reflection. Since one of the objectives of blended learning and teaching is to create a flexible personalized learner- centered, these online tasks will be customized taking into account the personal characteristic of each student.

Online portal- Self-service

At RUW, technology is also used for instructor-student link, which is done mainly through Self-service. Self-service Course home page allows instructors to easily communicate information, update material, and use the page as a portal for other technologies used in the class. As part of RUW commitment towards having transparency with the students, students can view their own grades on Self-service and know their

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attendance states as well, which help them keep track of their progression. Through Self-service students, instructors and advisors get access to see the student's 'Projected Grade,' which help in taking the right measures and seeking ways of improvements.

Computer-mediated assessments

Online assessments are effectively utilized at RUW. Starting from the RUW Online Placement Test to in course online quizzes and assessments. Turnitin.com is used as a plagiarism-detection tool. Since it checks the documents' level of originality, the results are used to identify similarities to existing sources or can be used in formative assessment to help students learn how to maintain their academic integrity and improve their academic writing skills. RUW students are required to submit their academic work through TurnitIn. com, as part of the RUW Plagiarism Policy. E- Portfolios are also one of the electronic means of assessment, as students assemble evidence of progress in electronic form.

Online resources

RUW provides its students with a collection number of electronic resources within a wide range of disciplines. Besides, students get access to full texts of articles from over 5000 journals, and over 80,000 electronic books on all subjects.

Blended Learning and Teaching Implementation at RUW

All RUW program shall embed blended learning. The office of Academic Vice President (AVP) arranges a series of blended learning workshops to equip the faculty members with all updated blended learning tools and skills. Instructors have the flexibility to select the appropriate models as per the nature of the course, its requirements, and the CILOs. The Teaching and Learning Committee monitors the implementation of this policy through colleges and faculty members, and reports its feedback to the AVP.
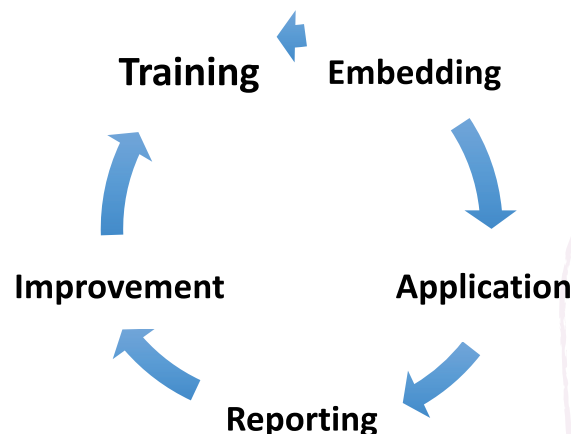
Figure 1: RUW Implementation Procedure

Methodology

The data collection was done on two parts; analyzing the blended learning reports of the past 4 semesters submitted to Teaching and Learning Committee and that was followed up with individual interviews. Data was both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed.

Results

It was found that 100% of the instructors use self-service as a learning management system. They all upload the course materials, however, only 40% use it for group discussions. Only 20% of the instructors used

game-based learning. While 60% used m-learning. Field trips were included in 80% of the courses, most of which were project passed field trips. 98% of the courses included the university's online resources.

Conclusion

It is evident that RUW curricula embed blended learning with more than 30% in each program. It is suggested that the underutilized modalities should be revisited in a series of workshops to promote their use. RUW can benefit from existing calibers who use updated techniques in sharing their good practices with other faculty members.

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GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING:
IMPLEMENTATION IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

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ABSTRACT

Gender disparities continue to be prevalent throughout our modern world. Hence, social and economic women empowerment is pertinent to both, human and economic development, and the observation of basic human rights. Gender equality and women empowerment is a major goal of the United Nations 2030 plan, and the international community engages actively with commitment to accomplish such goal. It is noted, women have made remarkable strides throughout the twentieth and early twenty first centuries. However, gender gaps remain and women have not attained equivalent rights to men in all areas, such as: access to education, appropriate health care, paid employment opportunities, and political participation. While many countries have narrowed the gaps, disparity eradication has yet to occur. Gender inequalities and disparities are actually quite costly; consequently, eliminating them would be economically beneficial to all societies. Gender budgeting is a fiscal response to reform areas within the economy where women face inadequacies. Incorporating gender responsive budgets into fiscal national budgets is a means governments use to allocate funds and resource systems to empower women. Incorporation of gender responsive budgets produces sounder governmental budgets and more successful economies while simultaneously increasing gender equality. The Kingdom of Bahrain is taking initiatives to apply gender responsive budgeting approaches into its economic system; thus, Bahrain is a direct and active contributor towards achieving gender equality.

Key Words: gender, responsive, fiscal, budgeting, women, empower, economy/economic, employment, national, Bahrain, MENA (Middle East, North Africa), initiative, disparity, society, gaps, equality

Introduction

In definition, gender responsive budgeting (GRB) is the fiscal policy enactment of considering, then incorporating gender based needs into the national budget framework. Considering the budget is the most important policy tool of government, the area which handles money in order to successfully implement any policies. Allocation of funds and investments, through consideration of gender, is a way to stimulate equality and well-round societies as a whole. This budgeting approach begins on a microeconomic level which then results in national budget effects on a macroeconomic scale. GRB can be put into effect in a wide range of ways: from companies (public and/or private sector), schools (primary and higher education), healthcare industries, local community, state (governance) budgets, and to some extent, regional expansion in countries who share similar characteristics, the GCC for example. Whilst, this paper will primarily focus on the state Kingdom of Bahrain in later detail with some examination and comparison to the MENA region., the overall idea of gender responsive budgeting believes a more gender equal society will in turn cause societies, with inclusion of all of its members (male and female), to function more productively. The United Nations advocates for countries to implement gender responsive budgeting initiatives into their fiscal budgets as a means to eradicate gender inequality.

The United Nations 2030 Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. "Gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to achieving the Sustainable Development

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Goals" (UN Women). Empowering women and equating them across all levels and platforms of society will eventually establish just societies with the ability to function at the highest levels.

Gender responsive budgeting does not separate budgets for men and women, instead it examines the needs of each gender and brings gender awareness into the policies are budgets of all agencies. Gender responsive budgeting comes in stages: the first stage is to identify the different needs between men and women to be more productive, healthy, and functioning. Identification should mostly be determined through data collection to be most accurate and effective. First, the factor of identification: what each gender needs to function more highly in their environment/society. Identification, should analyze what each gender has more or less of in terms of comparison and equality. After taking into consideration such analysis's, it should be determined which types of programs, policies and/or initiatives will benefit each gender, and which are of highest priority. Some policies may focus on areas which benefit only one gender while others will examine how to equate genders in a selected area, either way the goal at large is to provide each gender with means to fulfill their needs, thus stimulate societal progression. "Through gender analysis on microeconomic levels, men and women, boys and girls, from all social groups are included in public budgeting. Such analysis advocates gender equality while also ensuring stable, productive public budgets" (GSDRC Maja Bosnic). In further explanation, gender based budgets can take a comprehensive approach to determine the needs of males and females together and separately within society. The approach identifies gaps which some genders face.

Another huge benefit which the International Monetary Fund has found to be a result of applying gender responsive budgets is the idea that, "Gender budgets may encourage the country instilling them to consider other social divides within the society in addition to gender." It could be inferred that gender responsive budgets go beyond the goal of equating just genders, but also allow societies to close in the gaps between other marginalized social groups.

Gender Responsive Budgeting in MENA and Central Asia

Despite their vast differences, some central Asian countries have enough commonalities with the Middle Eastern countries according to the International Monetary Funds (IMF) classifications. Therefore, the IMF groups some 31 countries together from these two closely related areas to assess gender responsive budgeting. It is known, gender inequality is deeply-seated in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. However, in more recent years the MENA region has made progress to improve conditions for girls and women. Still the IMF notices gender responsive budgets are "struggling to take hold" in this region. Although, two countries, Morocco and Afghanistan have rather well-developed and functioning GRB initiatives.

Gender Responsive Budgeting in Bahrain

Continuing on to concentrate on the Kingdom of Bahrain, despite the fact that it is lagging behind Morocco and Afghanistan, Bahrain is next in line to have made the most impactful gender responsive budgeting efforts in the MENA and Central Asian regions. Although there is little concrete information from a very wide variety of sources regarding Bahrain's implementation of GRB reforms, some information is available regarding this rather new strategy in the Kingdom. The official introduction of gender responsive budgeting happened sometime around 2010, an account shows from the Government of Bahrain, for example, 25 million Bahraini dinars were designated for the national recruitment and training program for 103 males and 231 females in the national budget. In the case of Bahrain, it has issued a circular from

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the Minister of Finance to intertwine GRB measures to all government organizations in 2011 and 2012. The Ministry of Finance then works in cooperation with the established Supreme Council of Women to develop more circulars, including a specific section for measuring gender mainstreaming in the national budget. Additionally, an Equal Opportunity Unit now exists in the Bahraini Ministry of Finance for this purpose. The MOF has issued a circular with procedures stating that all national organizations are to take into consideration the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and to issue budgets that are responsive to the needs of women." According the IMF, "several efforts have been made by the government of Bahrain to attain gender equality objectives." Strategies such as, establishing equal opportunity units within 24 different ministries and providing training, awareness raising, and capacity building to address and improve the area of mainstreaming the needs of women and the importance of equal opportunities.

The Supreme Council for Women is the main national gender institution. It acts as an advisory body to the government on women's issues, and its main goal is to promote women's rights in the Kingdom and women's full participation in the society (SCW). The body works with other women's organizations throughout the Kingdom which has the same goal at large to create unity, including the CEDAW body and the Bahraini Women's Union. SCW enables Bahraini women to be participatory in governmental elections and bodies. Furthermore, it develops research and coordinates with organizations, institutions and the education sector to be informative to Bahraini women as well as to inform the international world about Bahraini women.

The Supreme Council for Women attempts to make efforts both large and small, yet always impactful. For example, SCW identified a lack of free public female only gyms. Not only was this not giving women the opportunity to work out effectively, specifically those whom could not afford to buy private memberships or home equipment, but it was unequally providing males benefits which females weren't provided. In response, the Kingdom of Bahrain budgeted to add a female only free public gym in each of the Kingdom's four governances. This is a smaller scale example of providing equality and stimulating a more productive society, specifically in terms of health. A larger scale example is the more recent news, on April 30, 2018, Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa approved preparation of periodic reports to measure gender balance within public sector institutions. The Supreme Council for Women will collaborate with "competent authorities" to prepare and issue the reports. Furthermore, the Prince approved the establishment of a National Observatory for Gender Balance which the information and e-Government Authority will be responsible for.

The national model for mainstreaming women's needs in Bahrain reinforces the importance of setting budgets that are responsive to the needs of women. Bahrain Labour Law illustrates the Kingdom's efforts towards promoting gender equality in way of budgeting by setting guidelines for maternity leave pay (Law No. 36), and stating women should be given equal opportunities in all jobs which are respective to them with respectable working hours (Title V: Articles 29-36). first UN Millennial report from the Bahrain Ministry of Foreign Affairs focuses on "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women" in pages 8-11 which maps out the Kingdom's mission to pursue equality and empowerment. Furthermore, the Kingdom's 2030 Vision focuses heavily on increasing female participation in all employment sectors as a way to close the labour force gender gap. Still, it should be noted, due to the Islamic Jurisprudence, women are restricted from certain types of jobs and certain shifts (night shift). This is thought to maintain the respectability of women; however, this is often seen to be quite discriminatory in the eyes of more developed international countries.

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Although the Kingdom of Bahrain has set the bar for its GCC neighbors in terms of implementing gender responsive budgets and empowering women overall, there are still challenges. The IMF states the greatest challenges to be, "limited effective co-ordination mechanisms" and "a lack of awareness on gender mainstreaming." Each of these major challenges can be resolved with more developed GRB initiatives and understanding. Coordination mechanisms will eventually evolve with time and the continued governmental support and connectivity. As for awareness on gender mainstreaming, this can be resolved with research and exposure to the subject. Bahrain can humbly look to other countries which are more established in gender mainstreaming for example. Furthermore, the Supreme Council for Women is already inquiring to partner with international higher education institutions and research organizations to improve its efforts.

Another obstacle which Bahrain and other GCC countries face is their national budgets reliance on oil. Should these countries consider adopting GRB methods, given the current outlook on oil prices, they face highly circumscribed spending compared to the past according to the IMF statistics. Therefore, it is important Bahrain and other oil reliant countries invest in well-designed target spending programs to address gender equality. IMF suggests to create incentives for the private sector to reinforce government measures.

Conclusion

Upon conclusion, it should be understood how effectively gender responsive budgeting generates gender equality, women empowerment, and even closes gaps between marginalized social groups and the rest of society. Gender responsive budgeting efforts improves society on all spectrums when implemented properly. Not only does it stimulate women's participation in the societies which it is instilled, but it actually accesses the needs of both genders to provide each with reforms to improve their functions within their respective societies. It should also be noted, each country will adopt different methods of GRB pending on their national models, specifically their national budgeting structures and abilities to reshape them accordingly.

As for the Kingdom of Bahrain, it has made the greatest strides amongst its closer neighboring countries. In many ways, Bahrain has set the bar for the rest of the (Gulf) region in terms of women empowerment, women recognition and rights, increasing female labour participation and gender responsive budgeting methods. However, the Kingdom of Bahrain does have vast room for improvements on an international scale, as does the rest of the region. Nevertheless, the rather new country appears to be constantly moving in commendably achieving directions in the field of gender equality by applying gender responsive budget and other approaches to empower women.

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Empowering Women in Art and Design Education

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Empowering Women in Art and Design Education

As Scottish Sociologist Robert Morisson Malver (1882-1970) quotes, "If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation." In this light women empowerment through education has become a global quest and challenge. Inspiring women to become pacesetters in education, will result in them taking to the forefront of leadership in all fields. Art and Design education has a transformative role in achieving more just, sustainable and equal communities at large. For many years' women have been playing a major role in various fields of Art and Design by implementing their strong artistic expressions, critiques, and techniques. Women enrolled in Art and Design education are able to express themselves as individuals while simultaneously creating works which their communities and societies may benefit from.

SUSTAINING WOMEN IN DESIGN PROFESSION AND DESIGN EDUCATION: A DECADE OF INTERIOR DESIGN GRADUATES IN BAHRAIN

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ABSTRACT

In 2002 the first design related program patch started at the University of Bahrain with a group of 17 students enrolled in the BSc. of Interior Design Program. Since their graduation in 2007 many groups followed. A decade after the first group graduation the design profession market has changed and so did the education field linked to this profession. This research aims at reviewing the existing research on education and academic career patterns for the majority of women enrolled in the interior design program to enhance this profession and sustain women in this field. Moreover, the research paper gives an overview of a qualitative study done by semi-structured interviews targeting 58 out of 275 female interior design graduates from the year 2007- 2017. The study investigates the social, cultural and professional challenges that faced 22 female graduates of The Interior Design Program and their current role in either the design or the educational profession in the field. The results also shows a thematic graphical analysis of their current profession trajectories. The primary research results are then compared to secondary data of two ad hoc committee comments of students and professionals undertaken in 2017 along with an online survey result answered by more than 69 graduates. This study is of high importance as it is pioneering in documenting and predicting graduates' competitiveness and sustainability in the design profession. This complies with Bahrain economic vision of 2030, that requires investigations and investments in non-oil sectors, as design might be the way forward.

Keywords: Women in Design, Interior Design, Challenges.

Introduction and Literature Review

The history of interior design profession span for more than 100 years. It began in America as an art of decorating spaces and mostly homes relying on the 'decorator' common sense and perhaps good taste and natural talent as defined by IDLNY (2018). The "Interior Design and Decoration magazine published in 1930 combined the term 'Design' to 'Decoration' and the position of 'interior designer' not 'interior decorator'. Thus, redefining the role of designers to have more functional and critical thinking knowledge along with in-depth study of colours psychology and people behaviours.

However, Clerke (2010) notices that the past thirty years indicated a substantial increase in the numbers of women in Design education and innovative Design practices framed by feminism theory. The potentials of professional, cultural and social changes facing women in design can have many benefits and opportunities like improving the life of women and empowering them in order to realize their potential as assured by Malhotra et al (2009). But for that to happen many challenges may need to be overcome in changing social norms, behaviours and inherited gender attributes and responsibilities. Judith et al (1993) cited in Pasque and Wimmer (2011) relates the intersection between historical, professional and social challenges as well as institutional contexts of higher education and feminist theory which sheds light on the academic and educational process and how it may sometimes underserve or discriminates against women.

There is a very limited literature when it comes to the subject of 'Women and Design', and it is even more limited in the field of 'Women in Design Education' that Clerke (2010) consider as a neglection of a significant proportion of the academic design community. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to shed light

on women in design profession and education in local context to find the challenges and opportunities for empowering women in their countries. Therefore, looking into the female designers in the kingdom of Bahrain current situation and documenting their current challenges and opportunities is a key aspect to sustain them in their innovative profession and empower them in their society.

Although interior design is a popular major around the globe, yet it had only been officially started in Bahrain a decade ago. That is when University of Bahrain opened its BSc. Program in Interior Design on scholarships basis for the Ministry of Education. The program started as a part of the Civil Engineering and Architecture Department offered under the College of Engineering in September 2002 and shifted in 2015 as a section under the Department of Architecture and Interior Design. The program that was originally suggested by the Ministry of Education was meant to be part of the Women College proposal among other feminine design discipline like fashion and jewelry, but it never materialized. Before that the University had opened short diploma courses yet the graduates were not officially allowed to take over the role of design and construction of sites and projects.

Interior Design in reality, begun to take study steps few years earlier with some Architects or Artistes and Architecture engineering graduates since 1996 taking over interior design projects. Well known senior interior designers in Bahrain market today had also gained their degree from abroad and established companies with more than 15 years of successful design experience. Pioneering female examples includes Ms. Ghada Alsayed co-owner of Horizon Interiors that gained her BA degree in Interior Design from USA and Architect Abeer Akbari that is leading her flourishing business since 2006 branded as Abeer Akbari and Associates.

Studies about the importance of Middle Eastern women especially Bahraini women to the economic development has already been proven by Metcalfe (2006). He claims that this is possible if special consideration is given to the complex interrelations between gender, culture, profession and Islamic values. Moreover, Sadi and AlGhazali (2012) found evidences that the activity of female entrepreneurs (such as freelancing interior designers opening their firms) will make a distinguish difference in women economies and communities. Their study also highlights that profit motives is what drives Bahraini women to establish their start-up businesses.

This has been acknowledged by Bahraini Government and the Ministry of Commerce since 2016 when "Nawras" an online virtual commercial registrar service supported Interior Design consultations as a commercial activity that can be run from home or in freelancing basics but put into formal frames (Nawras 2018). This had attracted even more women to start their own interior design business.

In conclusion, the importance of understanding women roles in design profession and education is highly emerging in today's disruptive economy. Such research should be an annual action of the Bahraini design field and should be documented. This helps to harness the graduate's potentials and economic role and improve the academic positions of women in this filed. Moreover, harness the benefits from the significant opportunities for higher education provided by the government and align with Bahrain 2030 economic vision.

Methodology

The data gathered in this ongoing research relied on primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected during April 2018 by interviewing 22 University of Bahrain female graduates, out of a total

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of 58 contacted (response rate of 38%). All interview participants are either working today in design education either in schools or higher education or an interior design profession as adopted in Clerke (2010) methodology. There were 7 interviews with design academics and 18 professional designers all with different graduation years that ranged between 2007-2017. The semi structures interviews spanning 30-45 minutes via phone or email derived its questions from the major issues found in literature to sustain women in the design field. The interviews were piloted among senior colleagues in the university then conducted in English and Arabic after being verified using back translation, transcribed and analyzed using NVivo qualitative analysis program. Thematic coding was run after entering all the data to find emerging themes and look for professional, social and cultural challenges that refrain women from being sustained in the failed of design and cause them to majority of them to decide to either remain unemployed or shift careers.

The secondary sources of data relied on the information given by several administrative and academic bodies at the University of Bahrain. Data were gathered from the College of Engineering Quality Assurance Office, QAA reports, Registration and Alumni records, the University Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center (QAAC) records, industrial training coordinator records. The unpublished and partly un-updated data indicates the rate of employability, ratio of female to male graduates and type of profession graduates are employed at. Moreover, the researcher explored the informal feedback of two ad hoc committee comments of students and professionals recorded in 2017 along with an online survey result answered by more than 69 graduates out of the total of 275 female graduates and 3 male graduates. Since the response rate was only 25% it may not be taken as primary as it can be unsatisfactory.

Data Analysis and Discussion

According to University of Bahrain records 99% of BSc. In Interior Design graduates were females. The line chart demonstrated in Figure.1 showed the domination of 275 female graduates compared to only 3 male graduates. The first four years from 2002-2006 was subjected to female students and no males, yet academics from both gender (both from architecture and interior design backgrounds) where teaching the students. However, in the during the last 3 years all the interior design academics were females ranging between 4 BSc. In interior Design instructors, 10 Master holders, 2 PhD candidates and 7 PhD. holders between full time and part time academics. Figure .2 shows the gradual increase in PhD. holders as University of Bahrain stared employing the best of its graduates as teaching and research assistants and sending them to complete their higher education to obtain Master and PhD. degrees in Design
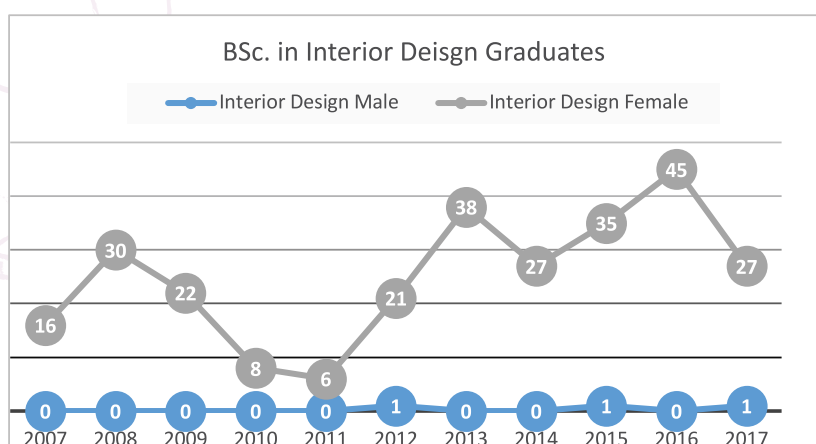
Figure 1. Interior Design graduate's data 2007-2017

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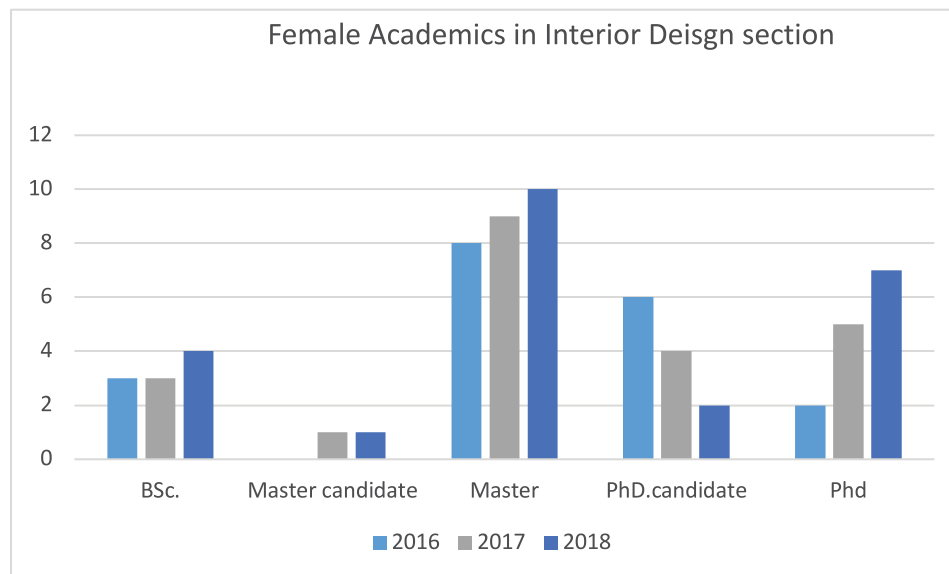
Figure 2. Female academics in UOB Interior Design Section 2016-2018

The data analysis was grouped under two main careers that female interior design targeted as found in literature which were the professional sector and academia. The coding identified the type of challenges that refrain female graduates from sustain their major in interior design and sometimes shift to academia or other teaching position in the governmental sector. The first set of interviews with academics varied in its feedback between PhD. holders answer to Master degree feedback.

Women in Academia and Design Education

The majority of academic interviewee stated the reason behind their career selection is the fact that it offered them a better position and income than their previous interior design offices with some much stable working hours. One of the senior academics interviewed stated that no sensible cultural diversity among the groups taught were found, or between colleagues, even the colleagues who came from different cultural background. However, the culture does not support female site visits although it is an imbedded role in the profession. While another pointed the challenge that design culture itself is not known in our community. She stated that:

> *"people are not aware of this profession, and the students can not relate their own culture context to this profession. They see it very superficially" …2009 female graduate and PhD candidate*

Balancing academic life with family commitments was the most ranked social challenge faced by female academics. Women in the Bahraini culture are hold the entire responsibility of their children and family. The back to back lectures and the long studio hours especially in the afternoon as well as course preparation time can "steal" married academics time at home as stated by interviewee #1, 3 and 4. Unfortunately the academics regretted that the men-led department could not take any extra measure to help women in that sense. Informally however women are excused from taking courses during the semester the aligns with their maternity leave. Another social phenomenon is noticed in the Bahraini community that investigates Interior Design as a 'female profession only'. This gender issue harmed the profession and made an unbalance in the employment of academics. Another social phenomenon looks at interior designers as only 'decorators' which is a struggle to change in the students and parents' minds as stated by interviewee #6. Another social challenge comes from society that is against women

continuing in Design education as it is thought of as a career with any prosperous future.

Professional challenges are noticed in the other hand to be connected to the social ones. As the pressure to publish research while maintain a good teaching evaluation is another pressure female academics take along their family commitments. Also a common theme was found in regard to the fact that design academics are not allowed to practice design. This role denies the academic in the design field the chance to be updated with new design trends and market styles and suppliers. Even attending special design exhibitions, workshops or events are the responsibility of the academic herself and ends to be paid form her own budget if self-improvement is desired as stated by interviewee #2, 3 and 4. Interviewee #6 highlights an alternative professional challenge that is facing young academics bringing new design teaching ideas or injecting new methods to an inherited curriculum which gets rejected by senior academics teaching in the department. Some interviewees linked this to their young age and limited teaching experience that caused the rejection of their ideas leading to a negative feedback received.

Other challenges respondents had reported ranged between work overload, the increasing number of students in a section and the financial challenges facing part time academics especially that payment is made at the end of a semester. Moreover, lack of interactive activities, events, innovative workshops and facilities as well makes the working environment more stressful.

While some of these challenges are common with ones found in other universities around the globe. Cultural and social challenges are however more related to the context and the Middle Eastern region here. Perhaps it can be resolved if awareness and better administrative decisions are made taking into consideration the above challenges, while opening doors to hear from the academic women in design education.

Women in Design profession

Most of the 18 professional female graduates interviewed refrained from continuing their higher studies and were satisfied with the BSc. in Interior Design degree. Nevertheless, 4 only targeted master studies to shift slightly in their career or steer to being teachers while freelancing interior design in which they needed a diploma in Education. Their current job titles varied as illustrated in figure 3. Two main themes emerged when it came to the reason for selecting design as a profession. Mostly, interviewed assured that their love for art and shaping better environments were a deriving factor and secondly the full sponsored scholarship offered from the Ministry was convenient.
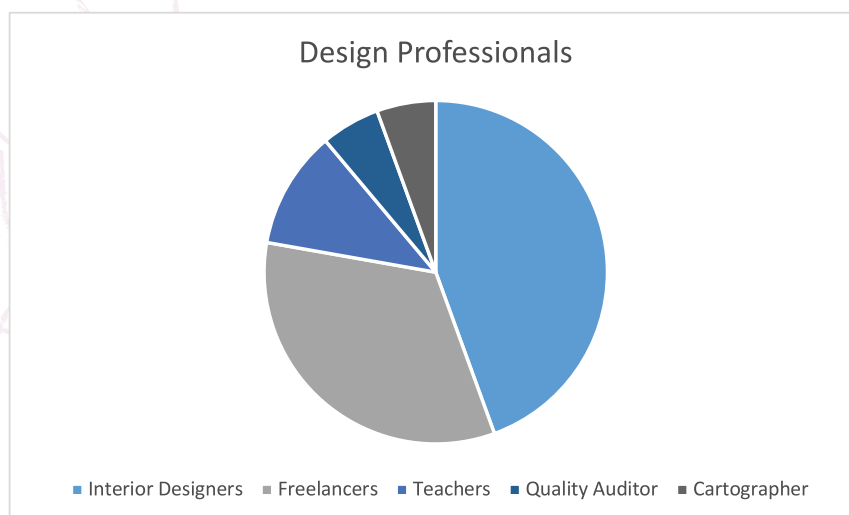
Figure 3. Design professional's current jobs

The cultural challenges facing these professionals varied. They ranged between lack of community and client's awareness about the true role of interior designers and its job requirements and the assumption that it is 'a female only' discipline. It was found culturally inappropriate for women to stay late at the office, travel alone to attend clients or suppliers meeting or even visit exhibitions and also dress code (especially with he traditional abaya or black gown) issues were involved.

Optimistically, some interviewee assured that cultural change accelerated during the past 3 years in a way that benefited women in the profession. One interviewee stated:

"... المشكلة التي واجهتني في إحدى الشركات في كوني ارتدي العباية... لإنها كانت تفضل أرتداء الملابس ..كذلك في مجال العمل يكون انخراط المرأة أكثر مع الرجل و هذا يمكن أن يكون مشكلة لبعض الثقافات في البلد"

"… the problem I faced with one of the companies was with me wearing the black gown… as they preferred I dress casually… also in this profession women mangle more with men with might be a problem with some cultures in this country"

From an alternative perspective another interviewee assured that her casual dress does not conflict with the religious dress code practiced in Bahrain and by its Muslim majority. She emphasizes that 'designers' are expected to have a specific image and dress code that 'reflect a level of elegance and fashion'. She also highlighted that some locals underestimate women wearing the traditional abaya which made women avoid it in work, while it is totally acceptable in other nearby countries like United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabiya.

Figure 4: Left: Bedor Rajab owner of BR interiors. Right: Fatima Alansari design office owner and designers. Source: Social media.

On the social level the challenges faced were related to the culture image and the social norms expected form women in Bahrain. Challenges included context and amount of responsibilities that shaped these female professional's social life. Many families and husbands rejected their daughters or wives doing site visits at first although it is a major task in a professional interior designer work. One interviewee said '… they used to accompany me in meetings'. While some families were more open minded to the late working hours and mix gender office culture, still oppositions happen in marriages and even more when single moms are the subject. An interviewee declared:

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"After getting married my husband did not accept studying abroad, refused late working hours and did not understand the nature of work and for sure did not accept it."

Maintaining a stable social life and achieving all the professional commitments is burden professional women challenged. Correspondingly, finding a job first then satisfying the different clients style and preferences or low budget required more design skills and regularly learning new software's or apps updates. Financially, junior interior designers are paid less than 400BHD ($1060) in private sectors mostly, when working from 8am -6 pm or 9am – 5 pm with 30 minutes or even no breaks. Some still suffer from monthly delays on payments. When these problems accumulate female interior designers decide to quite their job and take freelancing opportunities or sometimes do both. Yet, these professional challenges are more sever when working as freelancers in a very competitive market. This is because most of the design and renderings as well as execution details and presentation are required form the designer herself and not a company team. Despite all the effort freelance interior designers take they compensate with price and drop it to attract more demanding clients.

Another problem appears when the clients are not knowledgeable enough and cannot read plan drawings or understand the importance of interfering with design in a very early stage of a project and how this can relate to cost. On the other bright side, interviewed designers assured the design culture is evolving and benefiting from social media that changed how design is perceived. The Instagram, whatsup and Farah Alhumaidi snapchat (a popular Kuwaiti interior designer) made influenced unique design culture and educated the public. Social media had also opened quick networking opportunities, region- across projects collaborations and a free gallery of design ideas in a low-cost and easily accessible by society different age members and backgrounds.
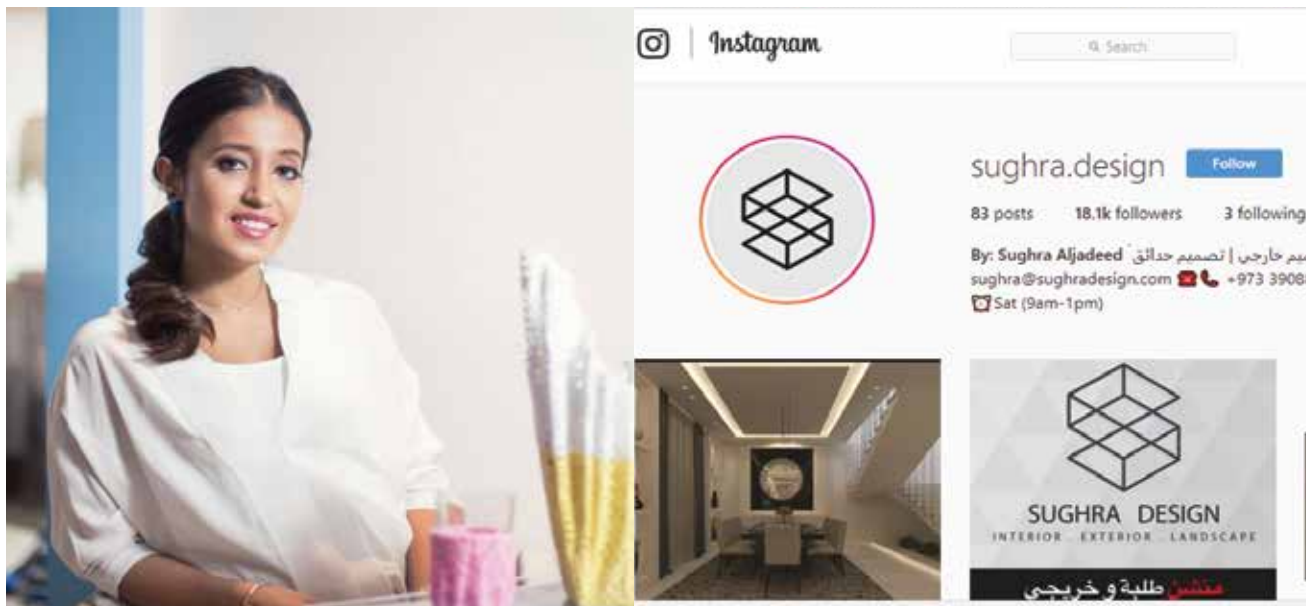
Figure 5. Social media effect in solving some of the design professional's challenges. Left: Kuwaiti interior designer Farah Alhumaidi . Right: Instagram profile of Sugra Aljadeed interior design office. Source: internet.

Other challenges faced by professional female designers varied between minting an up to date technical skill and exposure to different markets and products and getting the appreciation after all their hard work is not always provided.

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Women Interior Designers trajectories

Looking into all the discussed challenges facing Women in interior design and design education today many of them had already thought or made steps towards other career trajectories. Running an nalysis using NVivo word query over all the interviewee answers showed the different careers or topics UOB female graduates would like to take if they would shift form interior design profession or academia. The word cloud illustrated in figure 6 shows that most of the choices were design related. With a strong presence of graphic and furniture designs as well as art and architecture as possible careers. This is since graduates already gain these soft skills and come from an artistic background that enables them to flourish in these careers. Documenting these possible trajectories is highly important as it can influence the way design is taught in the University of Bahrain. This can benefit the following graduates and enhance their skills and allow them better chances in fining alternative jobs.

Figure 6. Women in interior design possible new trajectories generated by Nvivo

Conclusion

As predicted by Clerke (2010) a decade after lunching Interior Design degree in Bahrain, 275 female graduates are now facing many challenges in their career. Although there is no published data yet regarding the number of unemployed alumni's hitherto the increased number of women studying and professionally practicing interior design today requires an in-depth study of the challenges they face. This study utilized primary data obtained from interviewing 22 female graduates and secondary data from official data collected by different sectors in the University of Bahrain. Data analysis discussed and summarized the cultural, social and professional challenges facing these women. While finding solutions and making strategic plans is a subject of another ongoing research paper it was very important to highlight these challenges and take measurable actions to solve as much of them as possible within academia first and then private and government sectors to sustain women in design. As true empowerment of women in design as assured by Sadi and Al-Ghazali (2012) can play a role in Bahrain economic growth and comply with Bahrain 2030 vision.

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Figure caption

Figure 1. Interior Design graduate's data 2007-2017.

Figure 2. Female academics in UOB Interior Design Section 2016-2018.

Figure 3. Design professional's current jobs.

Figure 4: Left: Bedor Rajab owner of BR interiors. Right: Fatima Alansari design office owner and designers. Source: Social media.

Figure 5. Social media effect in solving some of the design professional's challenges. Left: Kuwaiti interior designer Farah Alhumaidi . Right: Instagram profile of Sugra Aljadeed interior design office. Source: internet.

Figure 6. Women in interior design possible new trajectories generated by Nvivo .

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MODEST FASHION: IS IT A TREND OR A REVOLUTION?

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"Modest Fashion: Is it a trend or a Revolution? A study of the new Modest Fashion Phenomenon, and how it impacted International Fashion Weeks, and influenced Fashion Designers, and what is its impact on the Fashion Industry"

'A study of the new Modest Fashion Phenomenon, and how the first Modest Fashion show was presented during London Fashion Week, and how it influenced Fashion Designers, and what is its impact on the Fashion Industry'

Abstract:

As Fashion designers always seek to come up with new silhouettes every season, the modest silhouette continues to gain popularity with influencers. The effect of online networking is certain and its impact has changed the way the world works. The basic demonstration of sharing pictures online, and web-based social networking, has given the world access to a generally obscure inside to the universe. Modest fashion started to gain media attention several years ago with the rise of the millennial bloggers who - for the most part - sought to use social media as a creative outlet. On demonstrating that dressing conservatively could correspond with being trendy, they have challenged the notion that modest dressing can be extremely fashionable. For many women seeking modest yet trendy clothing is quite a challenge, the lack of availability of such clothing has made it difficult to put together outfits that would look trendy and serve the purpose of being conservative at the same time, without compromising the high fashion look. Fashion influencers such as Dian Pelangi and Ascia Akf who have harvested over a million followers on social media, provide fashion direction for these women, teaching them how to mix and match high street clothing in very innovative ways. For example, by pairing long-sleeved tops with sleeveless dresses, or wearing kimonos, or tunics over straight-cut jeans, they're indulging in fashion without sacrificing the concept of being modest. Speaking to Haute Elan, Canadian blogger Hanan Tehaili, said that "Modest fashion is a way of expressing your style parallel to your way of life. It is beautiful because of the varying styles and beliefs that are intertwined to create this phenomenon." Fatima Kasu, Dec, 01, 2017. This research paper will look into the origin of the Modest Fashion Phenomenon, and how and when it was introduced to the International Fashion world, its influence on Fashion Designers, and how it impacted the Fashion Industry?

Key words: Fashion Week, London, modest, conservative, Islam, religious, hijab, covered, modern, culture, fashion designers

Introduction:

While people can be quick to make the assumption that women who choose to cover themselves do so due to social, cultural or religious pressure, social media provides women with a platform that has demonstrated quite the contrary. On partaking in a recent campaign with YouTube, hijab-wearing British YouTube Dina Tokio, brought to light the way the platform is 'made for breaking stereotypes.' Arguably, the modest fashion movement has further provided an opportunity to empower all women, marking a shift away from the sexualiation of the female form, while in turn, personifying it. These young tech-savvy women who are influenced by mainstream fashion are not a niche community; they will emerge as one of the biggest global communities of women, driven largely by high Muslim population growth. According to

Pew Research, Muslims will shortly grow to approximately 2 billion of our global population and by 2030 will become nearly 30% of the global population, with over 50% of them under the age of 30. Although Muslims form the majority of the modest dressing community, there are many other groups of women outside the Muslim population that also dress conservatively. Without a doubt, it is a global market that is largely underserved. Platforms like Haute Elan and Hijup cite the lack of an ample product offering as the only constraint to their visitor growth. While global interest in the platforms continues to grow, supply must meet demand if modest fashion is to expand. The rise of modest fashion has resulted in an increase in awareness that women don't need to be 'sexy' and naked to be considered attractive; this is impacting and creating an evolution of the global fashion scene. Modest trends include palazzo pants, long-line shirts and long tunics - items that continue to dominate runways and collections season after season. While bloggers may have forged the path towards a reinvention in the way we perceive fashion, designers have been unsurprisingly delivering on this shift. Just last year, Dolce and Gabbana launched a collection of luxury hijabs (headscarves) and Abayas (full-length, loose dresses), tapping into the Muslim market. High street brands have also acknowledged the billion-dollar market, with H&M collaborating with Dina Tokio, and featuring Mariah Idrissi in a recent campaign. New York Fashion Week SS/17 saw Indonesian designer Anniesa Hasibuan receive international acclaim for being the first designer to present a collection which featured models wearing hijabs with each outfit. Arguably, the high street has been slow in catering directly to the modest market, allowing the flourishing community of modest fashion entrepreneurs to break into the market. As a movement that is inspired by the inherent values held by conservative Muslims, Jews and Christians alike, it's rooted in an entire system of values. For Saima Khan, a modest fashion influencer: "Modest fashion is the way you carry yourself. It is a movement that allows you to express who you are and what you stand for. It is a form of expression based on the individual's religious and cultural values." Although styles will shift, we can be sure that the modest silhouette will remain. The real question is; how long will it take for everyone to realize? Multi-brand e-commerce platform, Haute Elan, sought to make modest fashion more easily accessible. Founded in 2012, the company houses over 200 designers and ships to over 220 countries. They are set to host the inaugural London Modest Fashion week at the Saatchi Gallery, Chelsea, London, on 18th and 19th February, which will bring together designers from across the globe and local and international bloggers alike.

Meaning of Modest Fashion:

The term Modest Fashion refers to a fashion trend of wearing less skin revealing clothes. The exact interpretation of 'modest' varies across cultures and countries. There is no unambiguous interpretation as it is influenced by socio-cultural characterizations of each country. Beyond the various interpretations, all agree on the idea that modest fashion means loose clothing, comfortable dressing and covering of the body according to person's own comfort. There are a lot of misconceptions surrounding modest fashion or modest styles. People tend to believe that modest fashion is similar to boring and dull attires. They also tend to believe that modest fashion is just hijab fashion. The term "modest" may have diverse interpretations across religious boundaries and even within them. What modesty or modest fashion may stand for a Muslim woman, can be quite different from that of a Hindu or Christian. For example, a Muslim woman may express modest fashion by wearing loose-fitting pants and covering one's head with a scarf, while a Jewish woman may wear skirts or dresses only and cover her head with a wig. It is the shared interest in staying covered up, while still looking fashionable that is common to define modest fashion. "There's a general misconception that modest clothing is not pleasant or pleasing to the eye," said Michelle

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Honig, an Orthodox Jewish fashion journalist and the keynote speaker during fashion month at New York University for the Meeting through Modesty Fashion Symposium. "But if women in so-called 'liberated countries' still choose to cover their bodies, then they have made a choice. In general, people may have different standards in regards to modest fashion, as long as it does not involve showing the flesh. Today, modest street Fashion is thriving and can be visibly noticed during fashion weeks and high-end events. Brands are indulging in mixing out designs and collections that an orthodox Muslim, Jew, Christian, Hindu can wear in style. Dolce & Gabbana, H&M, and Uniqlo are just a few names that have entered the modest fashion segment, making clothes that seriously cover most parts of the body, while allowing women to experiment with the latest trends. Modest fashion came to fame due to many fashionistas like Dina Tokio and websites like Unique Hijabs, Haute Hijab, MODE Style, etc. Some new startups like wore.io/ are making it easy for women to find modest fashion from the high street brands by curating it on their website. The kick-start of Istanbul Modest Fashion Week, London Modest Fashion Week, and Singapore Modest Fashion Week has helped modest fashion to boom. Not to forget, Indonesian designer Anniesa Hasibuan who has created history at the New York Fashion Week by presenting an extremely modest collection where every model walked in a hijab.

Modest Fashion: How Covering up Became Main Stream?

Following the trends of 2018, or looking through the racks in a high fashion store, we notice that the wrist-length sleeves and high necks have appeared on dresses, and became apparent features in the clothing. Hems are a little longer, and corsets are showcased beneath plain polo necks and crisp, white shirts on mannequins. The concept of layering is geared towards a theme, which is an indication of the rise of something called modest-wear, or modest fashion. As the name suggests, modest-wear is clothing that conceals rather than accentuates the shape of the body. Recently, mainstream brands have found themselves playing catch-up to appeal to women who dress modestly for religious and cultural reasons, including Muslims, Jews and Christians. This phenomenon was parallel with the natural fashion cycle which has predicted, flowing and lose-fitting clothing as a contrast to the boundary-pushing, revealing outfits that were in vogue a decade ago. Reina Lewis, professor of cultural studies at the London College of Fashion and author of Muslim Fashion: Contemporary Style Cultures, has been studying modest looks since the mid-2000s. In the past two seasons in particular she has noticed modest fashions hitting the high-street. Skinny jeans have been abandoned in favor of wide-legged trousers and other genderless looks. Sometimes women just don't want to show flesh regardless of their beliefs.   Kashmira Gander, October 16, 2017. At the same time, Muslim fashion designers and influencers in the UK and Jewish and Christians in the US are filling gaps that they have spotted in the market, using social media to gain influence and set up online stores. Elements in brands attempting to appear more aware of this phenomenon so they appeal to millennial consumers in an uncomfortable political climate. For example: The Pepsi ad that uses a young girl wearing Hijab. The Federalist. 04, 04, 2017. "Today, individuality is celebrated and again social media has been a key platform for people to express their individuality," says Altaf Alim, the co-founder & commercial director of Aab, a modest fashion brand that launched in 2007. "Ten years ago it was very difficult to find clothing that was both suitably modest but also trendy." Now, Aab is working with the Debenhams - the first major UK department store to sell Muslim clothing. Recently, their swim wear collection sold out within days of going online. "What was available was either frumpy or boring and this is really how the industry came about. It's fair to say it started out as a cottage industry with designers making dresses with a modest silhouette but with personality. Today there are many choices

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from independent designer's right through to the high street. Consumer choice is always a good thing," Reina Lewis argues. Independent, October 16, 2017. There are still plenty of revealing clothes in stores, and Alim stresses that Aab isn't trying to replace those outfits. The collision of modest fashion designers attempting to appeal to a wider audience while mainstream brands are trying to appear more inclusive has somewhat put to bed this question, argues Alim. "Ironically this is no longer an argument any more as all the mainstream designers are championing modest fashion as the 'go to' look. It's all very en vogue at the moment. However, in the earlier days you always wanted to be careful when talking about modest fashion so as to be sure that you weren't implying that any other fashion was immodest," she says. Simi Polonsky who founded The Frock NYC, an orthodox Jewish fashion brand, with her sister agrees. "I feel that society is slowly taking a turn in that they are focusing less on the nuances of a modest woman's specific dressing guidelines and honing in on the truth behind the 'modest movement'." Alim says she's had "so many" responses from women who say Aab dresses have given them a renewed sense of confidence, adding: "we want our brand to be inclusive of everyone be they faith or non-faith." Independent, October 16, 2017. It would of course be naive to ignore the fact that modest clothing is another way to market towards consumers from Muslim-majority countries with young populations and many, many petrol dollars. That might explain why the movement has grew so fast. From a dearth of stylish modest clothing, in the space of a year or so, London hosted its first Modest Fashion Week, Uniqlo teamed up with fashion design Hana Tajima to release a collection of hijabs. DKNY, Oscar de la Renta, Tommy Hilfiger have all tested the water by releasing one-off collections during Ramadan and Eid. Dolce and Gabbana meanwhile launched a permanent range of hijabs and lose robes, or abayas. But the luxury fashion house was criticized for using white models, proving that cashing in on a cultural sensitive area of the market can be tricky. "I think there are pluses and minuses," says Lewis. "In terms of being constricted as a consumer segment you need to be careful of what you wish for. It's potentially great if you are fashion conscious Muslim. But if you go to iftar [the breaking of the fast during Ramadan] every day and you start to need a different outfit because it becomes a fashion parade that might be unwelcome and oppressive to some. She adds: "It's all very well to cover but if the clothes were produced by sweated labor and have a terrible impact on environment then how does that fit in with your ethics?" But for women who have felt ignored by the mainstream for decades, modesty as a movement is an exciting new frontier in fashion. "Modesty is about an attitude, it is all-inclusive to any woman from any faith, background or age who chooses to take a stand in how they present themselves," says Polonsky. "Seeing that there is a strength and respect in that, is changing the perceptions surrounding modesty, and a modest woman in general."

The first Department Store that holds Hijabi Clothing:

Debenhams has partnered with Aab, one of the world's leading modest-wear brands. In some exciting news for Muslim fashionistas, Islamic fashion brand Aab is finally coming to the Middle East. It's also great news for anyone who cares about tolerance and diversity. The collection will be stocked at Debenhams, which will become the first major UK department store to sell Islamic clothing. The full collection was rolled out across 14 stores in the Middle East and Asia Pacific regions in May, 2017 including the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iran, Indonesia and Malaysia. The brand will then be introduced to select UK stores, including Debenhams Oxford Street in London. Emarati Woman, February 13, 2017. According to Arab News shoppers in the Middle East can find the range at Debenhams stores in Red Sea Mall in Jeddah, the Mall of Emirates in Dubai, Avenues Mall in Kuwait, and Yas Mall in Abu Dhabi. The brand is expected to stock wardrobe staples for Muslim women, including abayas and hijabs. Aab was launched in 2007 by

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London native Nazmin Alim. She was having trouble finding abayas for work that were stylish yet practical, so decided to make her own and sell them online. The brand now has two boutique stores in London and Bradford in the UK, and is one of the world's leading online retailers in the modest clothing sector – an industry which is expected to be worth US$327 billion by 2020, according to a State of the Global Islamic Economy report. Alim said: "We started Aab almost a decade ago as a label that redefined modest fashion and one that caters for everyday modern wardrobe staples that are thoughtfully designed with the highest quality. "Debenhams understand the thinking and creativity behind our collections including the quality in fabrics and construction and we feel there is no better place to begin our global retail journey."

Fashion Designers Who Designed Modest Fashion:

Eight Modest Fashion Designers who were the first to design Modest Fashion. Modest Fashion has turned into a buzzword recently as it harvests more and more attention both from average consumers and international fashion houses. From **Atelier Versace's** SS14 collection that centers around draped hoods to **Dolce & Gabbana's** new range of hijabs and luxury Abayas. Major fashion houses are either taking inspiration from or designing for modest fashion. Western society tends to look at modest fashion as a literal translation, "to dress modestly". A good example is **Adele** altering her emerald green **Givenchy** red carpet dress to the Grammys 2017; Adding sleeves and a higher neckline. Their icon for modest fashion is **Kate Middleton,** with her impeccable yet reserved style, which is a stark contrast to **Bella Hadid's,** which is a more provocative approach to her outfits. However, from a Singaporean's point of view, modest fashion is intricately linked to religion, particularly Islam. When we think "Modest Fashion", we think hijabs, loose fitting clothes and traditional clothing such as kaftans. In 2017, with the rise of social media and the increase of the internet, faith and fashion don't have to be mutually restricted. The web and social media platforms have empowered independent modest fashion designers, created hijabi influencers and allowed the spotlight to shine on hijabi models, resulting in increased public awareness and more options for the average Muslim girl. No longer do women have to choose between faith and fashion. The leaders of the modest fashion world that have transformed how millennial *Muslimahs* view dressing themselves. They are no longer restricted by options. From structured peplums to couture pieces, these designers have created silhouettes and colors that aren't the typical dress code. When viewing the creations of these designers, religion isn't the first thing that pops into one's head. Instead, one can think, "Wow. That's a gorgeous look". And that is something to be celebrated.

1. Dian Pelangi

Djamaloedin and **Hernanl** are a husband and wife tag-team from Indonesia that have turned their humble beginnings in 1991 into a full-fledged brand. Now they have over 500 employees under them and 14 retail stores strategically scattered all over Indonesia and Malaysia. Dian Pelangi came from their vision to make traditional Indonesian clothing and Muslim Fashion more desirable. Their designs embrace mixing traditional colors and techniques such as batik and beadwork with modern silhouettes. Every piece is handmade and textiles are meticulously dyed and woven to create unique pieces that re-define modest fashion. Old-school batik patterns are revamped to become geometric patterns with unique color combinations

2. Nurita Harith

A fine arts degree holder, **Nurita Harith,** a designer from Malaysia, has always had a passion for design and beautiful things. Her designs consist of soft layers and drapes that create an ultra-feminine silhouette without the need to bare skin. Mixing lace and intricate beadwork to accent necklines and hems, Nurita

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adds another layer of femininity to her pieces. She tends to go for more muted and sophisticated color tones that are flattering for every skin tone, and they look perfect for polished ladies. Her more elaborate pieces are particularly popular amongst brides and bride's-maids with lace and detailed beaded hems.

3. Rico Rinaldi

Rico Rinaldi's collection is truly impressive. This award-winning designer from Kuala Lumpur combines haute couture and modest fashion in the best way possible, creating sparkling images and interesting silhouettes for the modern women. A combination of couture dresses, bridal gowns and ready-to-wear fashion, Rico has something for everyone. He uses colors in a bold, almost graphic manner and while his runway pieces are more conceptual and not 100% "modest", his ready-to-wear pieces are both unique and wearable at the same time. His bridal collection is especially breath-taking and inattentive. They would make any bride feels like a princess, regardless if one wears modest garments or not.

4. Anniesa Hasibuan

When it comes to modest fashion, designers who are paving the way, **Anniesa Hasibuan** is the one that comes to mind immediately. This Jakarta-born designer has received international attention for her stunning runway collections shown at the New York Couture Fashion Week. Her designs are unlike anything you have ever seen and a total pleasure to look at. Her collections center around glamour and drama with the use of feathers, sequins, pearls and Swarovski combined with a metallic color palette. Besides, Muslim couture fashion, Anniesa also has a ready-to-wear collection that is equally impressive stocked at Debenhams, Zalora and more.

5. Diana Kotb

Diana Kotb comes from the land down under. Before becoming a full-fledged designer, she had a 10-year career in the fashion industry working for a number of top Australian Fashion Designers and wrote for Marie Claire Australia for 4 years. In those years, she was exposed to luxury fashion and fell in love. However, "as a Muslim woman who wears the hijab, not only was it difficult to find modest clothing, but virtually impossible to find luxury designer modest wear" she said. This prompted her journey to design chic luxury pieces specifically for the modern modest woman. Her pieces focus on the quality of the fabric, finishes and construction of the garments. Her designs are sophistication and can be worn by any woman on a day to day basis.

6. Fiziwoo

Since 2009, fashion duo **Mohd Hafizi Radzi Woo** and **Izree Kai Haffiz** have come a long way with their brand "FIZIWOO". Incorporating a "less is more" motto in their designs, they focus on timeless creations with sleek silhouettes and modern lines. Perhaps due to their architectural background, their pieces play with balance, proportion and texture in an elegant manner. With social media, FIZIWOO has, in recent years, risen to new heights, garnering a large fan-base that includes celebrities and modest fashion influencers. Their collection is a combination of modest-wear and couture pieces so, there's something for everyone.

7. Lulu Alhadad

Lulu Alhadad designs tend to be more traditional. This local designer has been designing clothes for muslimahs in Singapore since 2005. Tapping into her Middle Eastern heritage, her designs focus on effortless and easy-to-wear jellabiyas, kaftans and abayas. She places emphasis on designing pieces for

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women of all ages, even introducing kid's collections in the recent years. Her collection is a parade of patterns embellished and embroidered in vibrant colors that celebrate her Arabic heritage. Her pieces pay homage to her roots, making her creations not at all showy, but very accessible and honest, which explains her popularity amongst the Malay community in Singapore. Her Fashion style is for the everyday Muslim woman and a salutes to a long-standing heritage.

8. Mimpikita

Malaysian brand, Mimpikita (which translates to "Our Dream") is the brain child of three sisters; **Nurul, Mira** and **Syera Zulkifli**. To them, Mimpikita is "all about removing the old ideologies and stereotypes that prevent us (Muslim women) from having it all," said Mira. That is their dream, and they have come a long way since their humble beginnings. On top of showcasing their collection at 2016's London Fashion Week, they are reportedly in talks with behemoth online retailer, ASOS in efforts to make modest fashion more accessible. Their pieces are all about wear ability and comfort, without compromising chicness and modernity. Tailored trousers and wrap dresses in the trendiest colors, Mimpikita is all about understated sophistication for the average woman.

Can modest wear spark a fashion revolution?

The hijab officially became fashionable last month when an exclusively hijab-filled collection featured on a catwalk at New York Fashion Week (NYFW) for the first time. The designer, Jakarta-born Anniesa Hasibuan, wowed the crowd with her regal designs that didn't show any flesh but incorporated a variety of classical and contemporary cuts and materials. Bloomsburg, Feb, 3rd, 2017. All the outfits, which ranged from kimonos and wide-leg trousers to ball skirts and cropped jackets, came with a carefully chosen headscarf, adding to the spectacle of the collection and making history at the same time, and amazingly enough, it received a standing ovation. In May 2017 Istanbul hosted the first International Modest Fashion Week (IMFW). The two-day event showcased the collections of 70 designers from countries including Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey. Kerim Ture, CEO of Modanisa, a major Turkish fashion retailer that hosted the event, said the goal of the event is "to create mainstream fashion out of modest fashion and to energize Islamic communities to produce for Muslim women." Designer Annah Hariri said, "I see IMFW as a statement to prove that modest fashion has its demand worldwide and that Muslim designers are the ones dictating the narrative of modest fashion." Bloomsburg, Feb, 3rd, 2017. The spending power of the Muslim consumer has already been acknowledged by big brands in recent years, with Dolce & Gabbana and DKNY bringing out Ramadan collections. Last year, UNIQLO launched a special modest-wear collection created in collaboration with well-known designer Hana Tajima and is currently displaying hijabs in its retail outlets. Globally, Muslims spent about £180bn on clothing and footwear in 2013 – more than the total fashion spending of Japan and Italy combined, according to a recent report by Thomson Reuters. The report mentions that 101K was spent on modest fashion alone in 2016. Global Islamic Economy Report, 2016. No company wants to miss out on this untapped market. Last autumn, H&M featured its first female Muslim model, Mariah Idrissi, in a promotional campaign and Dolce & Gabbana have now stepped up their game by designing Abayas and Hijabs.

Muslim Women Inspiring a Modest Revolution:

Something inquisitive has happened to the fashion industry in the last few years. It is called modest fashion. This phenomenon has started to take off. Designers and retailers are producing clothing that's often a little longer and slightly looser and tend to have a higher neckline. That's good news for an eager generation of

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young women who want to look great while respecting their religious values. Burberry, DKNY, and other brands have released special Ramadan collections, timed to coincide with the Muslim holy month. Uniqlo sells a line from British designer Hana Tajima described as fusing "contemporary design and comfortable fabrics with traditional values." And last month, an event billed as the first "modest fashion" week was held at the Saatchi Gallery during London Fashion Week. Bloomsberg.com 2017. Behind this shift in tastes and preferences are a team of unprofessional designers and bloggers who accumulated millions of followers on social media and grabbed the attention of big brands. "It's not like we just started to wear hijab," said Mariah Idrissi, 24, who in 2015 became the first person to wear a hijab in an H&M ad campaign. CNN Style, August, 26, 2016. "We've had this industry for a very long time, and they never really took notice." March 2, 2017. That seemed to change after bloggers proved they could attract huge followings. Dina Torkia, 27 years old, started out posting pictures of her own clothing designs on Facebook five years ago, but people kept asking about how to style a hijab. She turned to YouTube, where she showed people how to create a style with volume. In one video, she showed viewers 20 different ways to tie a scarf. "Think of it like a haircut," she said. "People get bored of their hairstyles, so we get bored of our hijab styles." Bloomsburg.com 2017. Torkia—known as Dina Tokio to her 1.1 million Instagram fans and more than half-million YouTube subscribers—blogs about finding clothes that reflect her faith-based values of dressing modestly. She has released her own lines and worked with a number of brands, including London high-end department stores Liberty and Harvey Nichols, as well as French luxury house Lancôme. The market has been obvious for years. In 2015, Muslim women are estimated to have spent $44 billion on modest fashion alone, according to a Thomson Reuters report, 2016. Muslims make up 23 percent of the world's population, and the Pew Research Center expects the figure to grow to 29.7 percent by 2050. Religious women, not just Muslims, but Jews and Christians as well, have long struggled to find clothes that are both modest and trendy. Rabia Zargarpur, one of the pioneer designers in the modest-fashion world, said that when she started wearing a headscarf around 2001, she drew styling inspiration from Erykah Badu, who isn't Muslim. In 2009, Zargarpur opened an online store selling her own designs, including long-sleeved shirts and tops that would cover hips. Zargarpur, or Rabia Z as she's known, showed off her first runway collection in 2007 at the Dubai International Fashion Week. Big retail brands started to get in touch, but she said she thinks they weren't ready to make the leap. "The regional stores were super-excited because they knew that it would sell well," she said. "But I would go to headquarters, and they would always hesitate. They said 'Oh, we're busy with other projects,' but I know that it was the hijab aspect." It was around the time Torkia started posting her designs on Facebook that some of today's most prominent fashion bloggers started to express themselves online. Kuwait-based Ascia al-Faraj, 27 years old, started blogging in 2012 and has quickly become one of the region's most influential fashion writers, gathering more than 2.1 million followers on Instegram. Al-Faraj has worked with a series of premium brands, and she expressed that her latest collaboration is with Net-a-Porter, the online luxury retailer. The company didn't return requests for comment. Robbie Sinclair, women's-wear editor of the trend-forecasting service WGSN, said that beyond the potential for sales growth, companies are purposefully trying to stand out by making bold statements that can change course into the political dominion. Nike released two ads in February featuring women wearing headscarves. The company also changed its bio on Twitter to simply read: "If we can be equals in sport, we can be equals everywhere." The second statement targeted the Middle East, and highlighted five female athletes from the region. Sinclair said it's only a matter of time before more companies incorporate modest fashion into their collections. "Something's always just an idea until someone does it," he said. Adele Jackson Gibson, Mar 7, 2017. It's more than just headscarves. While the event in London mostly

attracted Muslim women, Torkia thinks modest fashion can be for anyone. "I think we need to take Muslim out of it," she said. "I'm pretty sure every religion promotes modesty."

Conclusion:

This study of the new Modest Fashion Phenomenon explained the meaning of Modest Fashion. It is the Fashion that refers to the trend of wearing less skin revealing clothes. Beyond the various interpretations of this new phenomenon, all agree on the idea that modest fashion means loose clothing, comfortable dressing and covering of the body according to person's own comfort. What modesty or modest fashion may stand for a Muslim woman, can be quite different from that of a Hindu or Christian. For example, a Muslim woman may express modest fashion by wearing loose-fitting pants and covering one's head with a scarf, while a Jewish woman may wear skirts or dresses only and cover her head with a wig. We started to notice the trend coming in the stores, as Brands are indulging in mixing out designs and collections that an orthodox Muslim, Jew, Christian, Hindu can wear in style. Dolce & Gabbana, H&M, and Uniqlo are just a few names that have entered the modest fashion segment, making clothes that seriously cover most parts of the body, while allowing women to experiment with the latest trends. Interestingly enough, the Department Store Debenhams started to carry modest fashion and hijabi clothing for the first time, to be the first store that carries the Muslim Fashion. The full collection was rolled out across 14 stores in the Middle East and Asia Pacific regions in May, 2017 including the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iran, Indonesia and Malaysia. Dian Pelangi, Nurita Harith, Rico Rinaldi, Anniesa Hasibuan, Diana Kotb, Fiziwoo, Lulu Alhadad, and Mimpikita, are the most noticeable fashion designers who designed modest fashion. Hijab (Head covering for women) officially became fashionable when an exclusively hijab-filled collection featured on a catwalk at New York Fashion Week (NYFW) for the first time, by the designer, Jakarta-born Anniesa Hasibuan. She wowed the crowd with her magnificent designs that didn't show any flesh but incorporated a variety of classical and contemporary cuts and materials. Bloomsburg, Feb, 3rd, 2017. Behind this shift in tastes and preferences are a team of unprofessional designers and bloggers who accumulated millions of followers on social media and grabbed the attention of big brands.   Mariah Idrissi, 24, who in 2015 became the first person to wear a hijab in an H&M ad campaign, and Dina Torkia, 27 years old, who started out posting pictures of her own clothing designs on Facebook, and helping people on how to style a hijab. These influencers and more have created a revolution, and targeted a gap in the market that the top fashion houses have ignored for a while unless they felt the pressure, and the need to address this Muslim market in particular, which consists of 23 percent of the world's population, and the Pew Research Center expects the figure to grow to 29.7 percent by 2050. Muslim women are estimated to have spent $44 billion on modest fashion alone, according to a Thomson Reuters report, 2016. No smart company or a fashion designer wants to miss out on the opportunity to design for this big market. Modest Fashion week is now official and was introduced during London Fashion Week in 2016 for the first time. The question remains: Will this phenomenon stay in the market for a long time, or will it fade away?

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HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN EMPLOYABILITY; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN IN ART AND DESIGN IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Dr. Janon A.W. Kadhim, Dean of College of Art and Design
Royal University for Women, Kingdom of Bahrain
AND
Ms. Khadija Saeed, Master of Design Management
Royal University for Women, Kingdom of Bahrain

ABSTRACT

All over the world employers seek to hire graduates with the appropriate skills set for the job. In a global perspective, embedding employability in a creative curriculum is the integration of practice, behaviors and qualities to sustain and develop a rewarding profession or career which as a result will generate benefits for both the new graduate and for their communities.

Graduates, specifically in Art and Design disciplines, have clear intentions and desires in engaging in enterprise by using their employability skills after graduation in the work place. However, it should be well comprehended what they can really offer as fresh graduates in the industry. Preparing the students for employment in Art and Design begins with their higher education experience which should incorporate explicit learning, teaching, and curriculum design to make employability a prominent, inclusive and valued part of the discipline and its practice.

In the contemporary realm of higher education Employability has been identified as one of the four main objectives of higher education. There is a clear relationship between the employability of university graduates and the actual learning activities that they engage in and are exposed to in their university degree programs.

This research addresses the topic of Employability for Women in Art & Design in Kingdom of Bahrain, which is an important issue to study in the dynamic market of the Kingdom of Bahrain for the Art and Design. The research will mainly focus on the role of higher education institutions in Bahrain in preparing women for a profession in Art and Design by providing them with the essential employability skills. A literature review will focus on HEI around the world prepare their graduates for a career in Art & Design. This will be followed by a review and field study that researches how local institutions prepare their graduates in a very competitive and highly-skilled environment. Women graduates in Art and Design in Bahrain face different challenges and issues in finding a suitable job and place to succeed in their profession. The challenges women face in their career is also addressed in this research.

Higher education is facing new challenges in preparing students for the workforce. As demand increases, for students to differentiate themselves when seeking employment, it becomes necessary for higher education not only to understand these challenges, but also to provide a pathway for students to develop the skills necessary to become sought-after employees.

In addition, this paper will investigate the different issues of employability in the Art and Design industry in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the role of Local HEI in addressing market needs and embedding employability skills for Art and Design in their curriculums. The example of the College of Art and Design at the Royal University for Women will be used as a case study in this regard.

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The paper concludes with a number of findings on the role of HEI in Bahrain and at RUW in particular to address the issue of Women Employability In Art and Design and presents suitable recommendations to make use of this experience and to further enhance it.

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Invited Speaker Presentations

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN
Ministry of Education

كلمة
سعادة الدكتور ماجد بن علي النعيمي
وزير التربية والتعليم

Speech By
His Excellency Dr. Majid bin Ali Al Noaimi
Minister of Education

في

at

المؤتمر الثاني للجامعة الملكية للبنات بشأن
"المرأة والمجتمع – تمكين المرأة عبر التعليم
العالي"

The Royal University for Women 2nd Conference on
Women and Society – Empowering Women
through Higher Education

Kingdom of Bahrain
April 18th, 2018

مملكة البحرين

**Former UN Secretary-General
Kofi Annan says:**

"There is no tool for development more
effective than the empowerment of
women."

يقول كوفي عنان الأمين العام الأسبق
لمنظمة الأمم المتحدّة:

"ليس من سبيل لتنميةٍ أكثر فاعلية من
تمكين المرأة".

The progress of societies is measured by the extent of women's education and culture, and a number of other criteria which include:

► Percentage of female graduates from higher education institutions.

► Percentage of women of working age who are in the labor market.

► The percentage of women entrepreneurs in society.

► Availability of training and rehabilitation opportunities for girls and women.

► The extent of women's participation in public committees, leadership sositions and decision-making.

► The extent of women's participation in administrative and technical professions and in parliamentary life.

أصبح رقي المجتمعات يُقاس بدرجة تعليم المرأة وثقافتها، وبعدد من المعايير منها:

◄ نسبة الإناث من عدد المتخرجين من مؤسسات التعليم العالي.

◄ نسبة مشاركة النساء في سوق العمل ممن هنّ في سنّ العمل.

◄ نسبة رائدات الأعمال في المجتمع.

◄ مدى إتاحة فرص التدريب والتأهيل للفتيات والنساء.

◄ مدى مشاركة المرأة في اللجان العامة والمواقع القيادية واتخاذ القرارات.

◄ مدى مشاركة المرأة في الوظائف الإدارية والمهنية وفي الحياة البرلمانية.

The American politician Brigham Young says:

"You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation."

يقول السياسي الأمريكي برقهام يونغ:

"إذا علَّمت رجلا، فقد علَّمت رجلا؛ وإذا علَّمت امرأة، فقد علَّمت جيلا".

The Kingdom of Bahrain is among the countries with high performance in the achievement of EFA Goals according to UNESCO reports for the years 2012-2017:

- The highest school attendance rate - About 100%
- The highest gender parity ratio – About 100%
- The lowest illiteracy rate among adults - About (2.46%)
- The lowest dropout rate – About 0.4%

تصنيف مملكة البحرين من الدول ذات الأداء العالي في تحقيق أهداف التعليم للجميع، حسب تقارير اليونسكو للأعوام ما بين 2012 – 2017م؛ إذ حقَّقت مملكة البحرين:

- أعلى نسبة تمدرس في المرحلة الابتدائية حوالي (100%)
- أعلى نسبة تكافؤ بين الجنسين حوالي (100%)
- أقل نسبة أمية لدى الكبار حوالي (2.46%)
- أقل نسبة تسرّب من التعليم حوالي (0.4%)

► Diversifying the programs and specialties that are relevant to the needs of the labor market and suitable for both boys and girls, in addition to gradually expanding their enthrallment in such programs and specialties .

► Seeking to achieve a balance between academic theoretical disciplines and practical applied disciplines, and linking the higher education system to the needs of development.

► Seeking to establish centers of excellence that nurture students' innovations and connect their talents to the needs of society.

◄ تنويع البرامج والتخصصات المرتبطة بحاجات سوق العمل، والملائمة للبنين والبنات مع التوسع في استيعابهم فيها.

◄ السعي نحو تحقيق التوازن ما بين التخصصات الأكاديمية النظرية والتطبيقية العملية، وربط منظومة التعليم العالي بحاجات التنمية.

◄ السعي نحو إرساء مراكز تميّز ترعى ابتكارات الطلبة وتربط مجالات الريادة لديهم بحاجات المجتمع.

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Learning Areas	Males	Females	Total	% of Females	نسبة الإناث	المجموع	الإناث	الذكور	مجالات التعليم
Education	207	1066	1273	%84	%84	1273	1066	207	التربية
Sciences and Humanities	810	3661	4471	%82	%82	4471	3661	810	العلوم والإنسانيات
Social Sciences, Journalism and Informatics	902	2000	2902	%69	%69	2902	2000	902	العلوم الاجتماعية والصحافة والمعلوماتية
Business Administration and Law	7810	10847	18657	%58	%58	18657	10847	7810	إدارة الأعمال والقانون
Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	175	1015	1190	%85	%85	1190	1015	175	العلوم الطبيعية والرياضيات والإحصاء
Health and Social Welfare	1110	2480	3590	%69	%69	3590	2480	1110	الصحة والرعاية الاجتماعية
Total enrolled students	17374	25343	42717	%59	%59	42717	25343	17374	مجموع الطلبة المسجلين

Steve Mraboli, the author and behaviorist, says:

"The empowered woman is powerful beyond measure and beautiful beyond description."

يقول المؤلف وعالم السلوك
ستيّف مرابولي:
"المرأة المتمكنة قوية فوق كلّ حدَ،
وجميلة فوق كلَ وصف".

Thank You

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SPEECH BY HER HIGHNESS PRINCESS MADHAWI BINT FAHAD BIN FARHAN AL SAUD

Your Excellency, Minister of Education Dr. Majid Al Nuaimi, His Excellency the President of the Royal University for Women, I am pleased and honored to participate with you in this educational forum in its second edition and I will try to shorten as much as possible so as not to prolong you.

In our talk today on empowering women through education, I would like to tell you the endless chapters of the story in a country that recognizes that women are partners in the development and advancement of the country. This is confirmed by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, His Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the wheel of development to achieve the vision of 2030, one of which is to activate the role of Saudi women in society, as well as granting them the full rights guaranteed by the Sharia, and always seeks to empower and support. His most prominent statement was: "Women are an essential component of Saudi society and have an important role in achieving this Vision".

Saudi Arabia praised the role of women in work and production, and harnessed the potential for them to educate, health, develop and adopt the highest positions and occupied a great deal of interest in the leadership, a story that began in detail since the time of the founder King Abdul Aziz Al Saud. Princess Noura bint Abdulrahman Al Faisal has a great position with the founder. He used to say, "I am the brother of Nora." She was receiving the guests of the homeland of foreign women, to line the first letters in the reign of King Saud by the issuance of the decision to educate women officially in 1379

Educational and social support for women continued during the reign of King Faisal and King Khalid.And during the reign of King Fahd, girls were sent to study abroad. And the journey of empowerment began during the reign of King Abdullah when woman submitted to the Shura Council.

During the reign of King Salman, Saudi women lived their golden era which include women's empowerment decisions, as well as political, economic, social and educational positions, in addition to their effective participation in the Consultative Council and its representation of the Kingdom in diplomatic work and participation in national service. And breaking Man's monopoly of leadership positions.

The Kingdom has provided educational and health facilities in all its urban and rural areas and has been keen to provide mobile clinics to reach women in remote areas and provide them with health care.

Saudi Arabia believes in women's capabilities. And considers them an important component of society's strength. Our government has endeavored to empower women socially, economically and politically, and to provide a safe environment and services to facilitate their national duties while ensuring their full rights in all fields. , To achieve the Kingdom's vision for sustainable development 2030.

The last two years of Saudi women are the most important years of achieving their ambitions, after a series of supporting decisions. This development touched upon important aspects that conveyed the former form of life in the Kingdom to both men and women to other levels.

The change in the social dimension has been evident through the decrease in the level of illiteracy and the successes of successive Saudi women in education. The number of female graduates exceeds the number of graduates. In terms of health, the Kingdom achieved great success by reducing the mortality of women.

The physical acceleration of women's empowerment in the Kingdom has been demonstrated. Physical and health education has been provided to girls, and education and awareness-raising courses have been

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provided for girls' safe driving within the programs of women's universities, which emphasize the expansion of women's participation in national development and the elimination of all obstacles.

The Kingdom has invested equally in the education of women and men through the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Program of Scholarship. The study abroad has been funded by tens of thousands of Saudi youth from the best universities in the world. Saudi women constitute 56% of the total university graduates. The number of Saudi women who have been sent to study Out of the Kingdom, 205,000 students from the Kingdom's regions represent a huge investment in the future of the Kingdom. Saudi talented young people have been equipped with excellent education, international development and a broad perspective that will be a major contribution to achieving the goals of Vision 2030.

Saudi women's participation in the labor force is 22% and we aim to raise the employment rate to 30% in 2030. We are also working to increase the share of women in the labor market in 2020 to 24%, which currently stands at 21.2%.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia affirms that empowering and advancing women economically, socially and culturally is an absolute right and the Kingdom will continue to promote the rights of women and girls in line with their national privacy.

Empowering Women
Through Higher Education

Dr. Jawaher S. Al Mudhahki
Chief Executive – BQA

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EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

APRIL 18th – 19th, 2018 ║ Kingdom of Bahrain

Education

Education is the process to facilitate learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skill, values, beliefs and habits.

Education is considered the most significant factor for individual advancement in life.

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2

Higher Education

Higher Education includes teaching, research, and social services activities in both undergraduate and graduate levels. It positively influences individual's personal development, promoting autonomy, forming cultural identities and creating career or occupation and eventually promoting society's general economic development.

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The World's population is 7.6 Billion Now
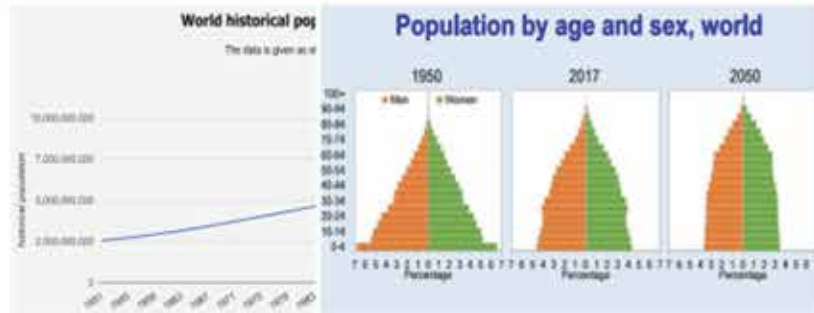
Women are 3.77 billion (49.6%)

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UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030:

Goal 4.
Ensure inclusive & equitable quality education & promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5.
Achieve gender equality & empower all women & girls

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Gulf Cooperation Council

Developing Countries

Young Population

Strong Infrastructure Development Programs

Diversifying Economies

Keen to meet the Needs of 21st Century

Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) Map

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الجامعة الملكية للبنات
ROYAL UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN
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أول جامعة خاصة "معتمدة من مجلس التعليم العالي"

Gulf Cooperation Council

GCC Population 53,452,000*   Including 50% Youth   Need for   Good Quality HE Institutions
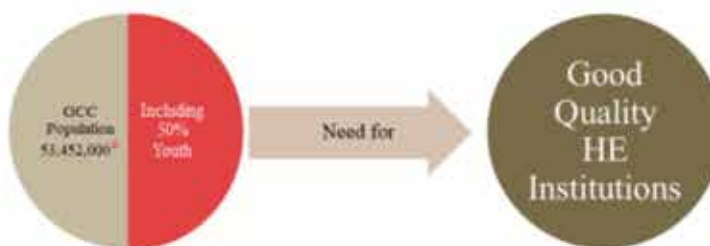
* As per the GCC statistics centre

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Growth in GCC HE Institutions
in the Past 10 Years

Country
Bahrain
Kuwait
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
UAE
TOTAL

Sources: Each appropriate government/quality assurance website
* 2007-2008 totals taken from Abouammoh (2010: 82)

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Challenges Facing HE

Huge enrollment numbers of students	Low quality and quantity of scientific research
Low Admission Standards	Lack of scientific research activities and its impact on sustainable development
Inadequate Infrastructure	Insufficient Student Support
Poorly Qualified Faculty	Narrow Disciplinary Programs
Low quality of education due to the inflation of students no. and limited no. of available staff members.	Profitability rather than Quality

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Roadmap to Improve Higher Education

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Quality Assurance (QA)

Quality assurance (QA) in higher education is a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements (Harvey 2004). It involves systematic structured and continuous attention to all those activities within an institution that are used to set up, maintain and improve quality and standards.

(AUN QA Manual 2006)

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Quality Assurance Authorities in the GCC

Country	Name of Agency Responsible for public and/or private higher education institutions	Established	Type of Entity
Kingdom of Bahrain	Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) (public & private)	2008	Independent Reports to the Cabinet
Kuwait	Private Universities Council	2001	Government Entities Chaired By Minister of Higher Education
	National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance (NBAQ)	2010	
Sultanate of Oman	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	2001	Independent And following Education Council
United Arab Emirates	Commission for Academic Accreditation	2000	Ministry of Education
	Knowledge & Human Development Authority*	2006	Dubai Government
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment	2004	Ministry of Higher Education
Qatar	Not Established Yet		

* For institutions opening in the free zone

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Qualifications Framework (QF)

An instrument for the development & classification of qualifications according to the set of criteria for levels of learning achieved.

(Ron Tuck, An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks, 2007)

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Bahrain Qualifications Framework (BQF)

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Regional Qualifications Framework

GCC are currently working on establishing a Regional Qualifications Framework while continuously working on national capacity building.

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Bahraini Women In Numbers

No. of Students* by Level of Tertiary Education
in The Kingdom of Bahrain

Men Women

Doctoral**: 56 / 79
Master**: 1793 / 2002
Bachelor**: 11656 / 18225
Short Cycle HE: 1780 / 2522

* For the academic year 2013/2014
** or equivalent

No. of Students* at the Bachelor's Level
in The Kingdom of Bahrain
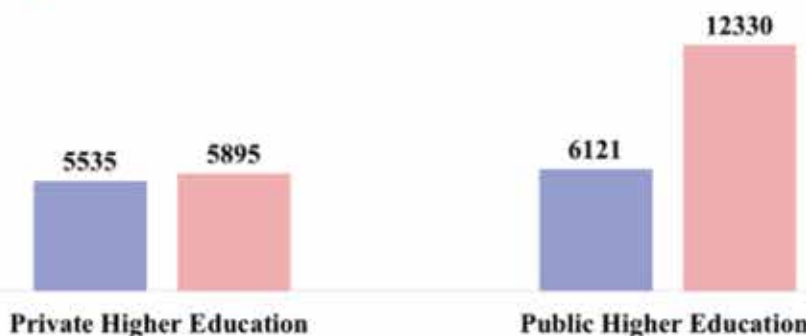
Men Women

Private Higher Education: 5535 / 5895
Public Higher Education: 6121 / 12330

* For the academic year 2013/2014

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No. of Students by Field at the Bachelor Level

- Social Sciences, Business & Law
- Engineering, Manufactring & Construction
- Humanities
- Sciences
- Education
- Health & Welfare
- Services

55%, 13%, 12%, 6%, 5%, 5%, 5%
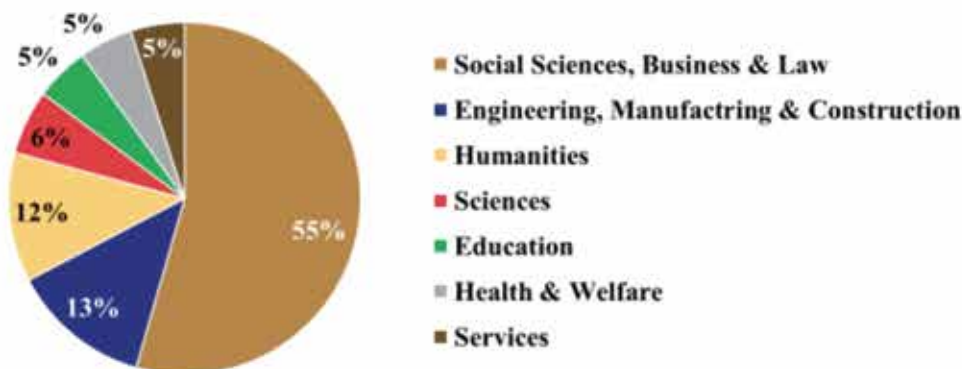
* For the academic year 2013/2014

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No. of Students by Field at the Bachelor Level

Men   Women

Field	Men	Women
Social Sciences, Business & Law	6750	9774
Engineering, Manufactring & Construction	2521	1469
Humanities	501	3080
Sciences	589	1056
Education	444	1036
Health & Welfare	212	1078
Services	639	732
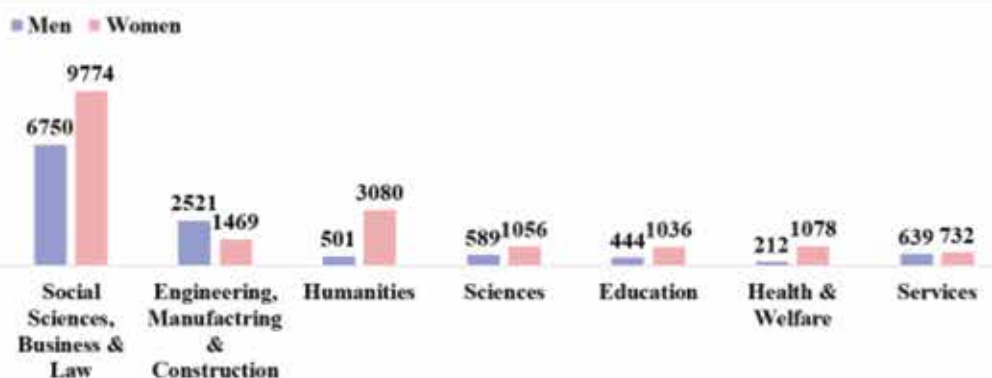
Source: Higher Education Council (2014) – Kingdom of Bahrain

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Women Ratio in the Bahraini Workforce
(Above the Age of 15) (1971 – 2013)

Men%   Women%

Year	Men%	Women%
1971	95.1	4.9
1981	84.9	15.1
1991	80.6	19.4
2001	74.2	25.8
2010	66.5	33.5
2013	68.2	31.8
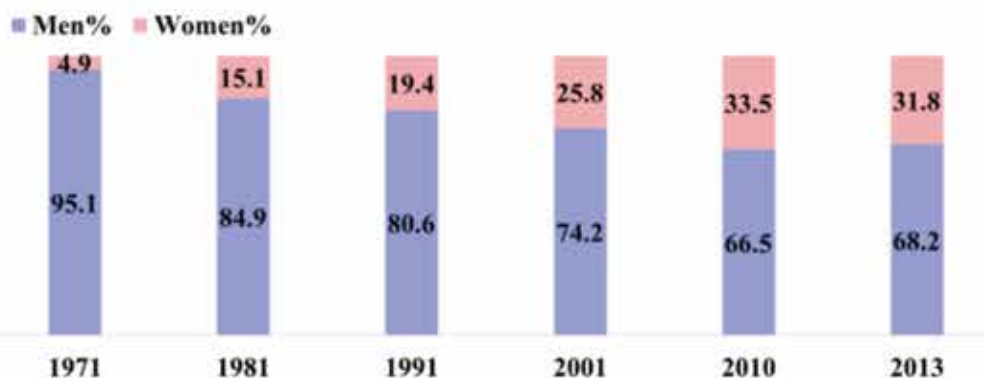
Source: Supreme Council for Women – Bahraini Women in Numbers (2015)

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Exploring the Future of Higher Education
in the Kingdom of Bahrain
From the Gender Balance Perspective

BAHEEJA AL-DAYLMI
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR,
SUPREME COUNCIL FOR WOMEN, KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

APRIL 2018

Who would like their
son/daughter to work
within their
sector/profession?

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Women in Labor Market
Kingdom of Bahrain

- female workers in the public sector of Bahrain's total workforce in the public sector
- private sector workers out of total Bahraini private sector employees
- Bahraini women owning commercial records of Bahrain

2017 2016 2015 2014 2013 2012 2011 2010
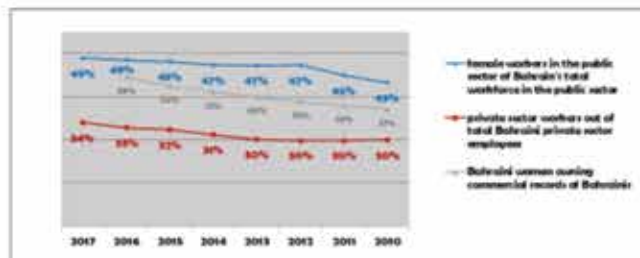
Proportion of female employees in the public and private sectors and entrepreneurship has been increasing since 2010, with 49% in the public sector, 34% in the private sector and 45% in entrepreneurship.

واقع المرأة في سوق العمل

The Future of Careers:
Higher Education Requirements

World Bank: Up until 2020 the world will need 600 million new jobs that were predicted according to two criteria:
1- Expected population increase.
2 - rapid and unprecedented technological and demographic changes.

وحتى عام 2020 سوف يحتاج العالم إلى 600 مليون وظيفة جديدة تم التنبؤ بها وفق معيارين:
الزيادة السكانية المتوقعة.
التغيرات التكنولوجية والديموغرافية السريعة وغير المسبوقة.

World Council for the Future of Jobs of the Economic Forum: The most prosperous and demanding occupations in the coming period to 2030 are closely related to technical skills such as data analysis, software development and applications, Communications and Information Technology
اكثر المهن ازدهارا في المتعلقة بالمهارات التقنية

World Summit Dubai 2017: highlighted the fact that 45% of today's jobs will be extinct, and new careers related to digital and technical development, self-driving, cloud computing and three-dimensional printing will appear.
من المهن الحالية سوف تنقرض 45%

Studies of the future of space are accelerating dramatically and the production of robots suggests that the four areas of (STEM) have become very important for the future jobs.

Thomas Frey, author of "Communicating with the Future,": 60% of job opportunities that will emerge 10 years later have not yet been created, and 65% of those aged 12 now will be working in jobs that do not currently exist.

The Future of Careers:
Kingdome of Bahrain

وظائف المستقبل على الصعيد المحلي

The first factory in the Kingdom of Bahrain to produce solar panels
كواح الطاقة الشمسية

National plan for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Adopted
الطاقة المتجددة

Discovery of the large field of oil and gas
حقول النفط

Encouraging investment in various sectors
تشجيع الاستثمار

Human development and enhancing the labor market competition
تنمية الكوادر الوطنية

Teaching 3rd Language in the government schools
تعليم لغة ثالثة في المدارس

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The Future of Careers: Role of Universities

دور الجامعات والتعليم العالي

Quality jobs and unique fields are a major challenge and require rapid development in academic and academic institutions to produce individuals capable of responding to future job requirements. Otherwise, the gap between the skills of graduates and the demands of the labor market will increase, leading to a large increase in the number of unemployed university graduates due to the rapid development in the labor market.

✓ Universities should be more flexible and responsive to current and future labor market requirements المرونة والسرعة.

✓ Think of dual or three-dimensional disciplines that combine scientific specialization with technological skills and business management skills تخصصات مزدوجة وثلاثية.

✓ Creating a comprehensive national framework for academic guidance and vocational guidance that adopts advanced mechanisms and non-traditional methods اطار وطني شامل للارشاد والتوجيه.

Recommendations
التوصيات

1. Evaluate STEM public policies and integrate the needs of women in all categories to ensure her effective participation.

2. Raise awareness of equal opportunities in STEM, particularly in training and promotion.

3. Diversification of scientific and professional fields in universities

4. Develop and intensify national efforts in higher education institutions in accordance with the latest scientific and technical methods needed by the labor market.

5. Provide flexible and supportive systems for women in higher education to help them reconcile their scientific ambitions with their family obligations.

6. Accelerate the development of programs and academic curricula, intensify the practical and technical aspect, and focus on future science and technology.

7. Add optional courses on women's studies and gender balance applications.

Who **still** would like their son/daughter to work within their sector/profession?
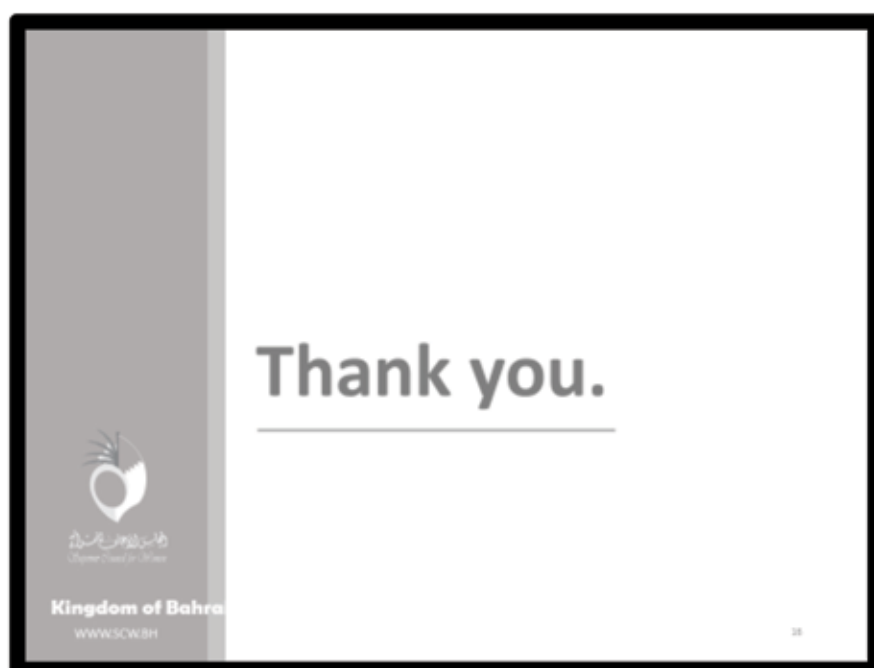
Community based activities as **integral** part of academic programs

Empowering Women through Higher Education
Prof. Balghis Badri

It is known that higher education plays an important role in national development inclusive of enabling women to become leaders. Women become part of a nation skilled human resource and make significant contribution to the process of human development in particular, as decision makers by influencing policies and legislations related to gender equality and socio-economic development at national, community and household levels.

The main benefits of higher education for women are:

1- First, as a human right and for national benefit higher education enhance

access to information, skills, resources and opportunities for women self-

development.

2- It promotes positive thinking to encompass peace building, gender equality,

diversities integration and human rights values.

3- Develop decision making capacities and power and give women more control

over their lives.

4- To enhance self-worth and confidence and reduce violence against them

If these are benefits from higher education, then we need to remove the obstacles to women access to higher education by the following:

1- Enhancing general education opportunities and access

2- Remove financial constrains by special funds and scholarships system

3- Reduce family responsibilities both by changing social norms to promote co-

sharing of reproductive roles and by availing load reducing technologies, low

cost day care for children , prepared meals and laundry

4- Advocacy for the need for achievement, boosting ambition through female

role models in media of all kinds.

5- Reduce constrains on mobility both physical and social by establishing hostels

and women only universities as key; to that process.

The last point leads me to answer the question why do we need women only colleges and universities.

First:

* To elevate our society to a level where women feel free to decide for

themselves, allowed to make their own choice and be assertive.

* To discover the strength of oneself

* To enhance access to higher education especially for those who do not favor

co-education.

* To remove the bias against them and achieve gender equality in certain

specializations.

Women Universities:

1- They have a social belief that higher education is the means to achieve comprehensive women empowerment

2- They develop a vision and mission for women empowerment as fundamental to be attained.

3- Their core values are to meet the substantive social needs and serve their societies and achievement of sustainable development paths that are not discriminatory encompassing all diversities and respect to human rights.

4- Also their main strategies used are to have a participatory bottom up approach to achieve change with several renewal and transition approaches.

5- They create a core of future women leaders and role models to increase female students participation in higher education in particular and education in general.

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6- Studies in the United States have shown that many women who prevailed are graduates of women only universities:

* In the world of politics we have Madeleine Albright first secretary of state and Hilary Clinton.

* In the world of business CEO in many companies in USA and in top company management and banks in Sudan are graduates from a women university.

* In the world of media, science, medicine and in the world of literature, Arts also many are from women universities.

* Noble Peace Prize and Noble prize in literature winners also serval are graduates of Women Universities.

* In the world of universities more female professors are in women only universities. The first vice president at universities in Sudan was at Ahfad University for Women in 1995. Also University presidents in USA are graduate from women university".

We are speaking of Women Universities and colleges that are approximately 200.Fourty six are in America, 90 on Japan, 6 in Europe, around 40 in other Asian Countries, 14 in the Arab world 5 of them are universities and 3 in Africa. Hence, we are dealing with a phenomena that stated in 19th century to date.

Then we need to answer the question how and what is particular about women's only university context that needs to be analysed to understand how these achievements are reached:

What is special about them to have these outcomes?

1- Both female only class room and interaction with faculty who are mostly women empower female students and that staff engage more with each other to build personality and create assertiveness, orderly thinking and desire for academic achievement.

2- They set high Standard and expectations from students by ear marking prizes for Excellency in disciplines, researches, and active civic engagement and extra-curricular activities.

3- The only women universities campus community is supportive, free for girls to express themselves in class and outside.

4- Studies have shown that students at Women College earn PhDs more than those in other co-education universities.

5- Leadership roles in all students clubs and associations are automatically held by women cultivating leadership roles and ambition. In a study in few universities in Sudan in co-education universities, it was found that all heads of students associations are males and few females are Vice presidents of these associations and in many no females are in the association's board.

6- Finally, it creates more bonds between girls and stronger alumni bonds as well (Carrie Wofford 2013 and Badri 2007)

I would like last to highlight the needed strategies and indicators to be used to empower women in women only and co-education universities:

Universities vision and mission, to state clearly that Women empowerment at all levels is central. Ahfad University for Women established in 1966 as an example it's:

University Vision:

To be a nationally prominent university and a leading institution worldwide recognized for its academic excellence, research, women empowerment, civic engagement and social responsibility.

University Mission:

To provide quality education for women to strengthen their roles in national and rural development, and in seeking equity for themselves and fellow women in all facets of Sudanese society using a combination of well-articulated academic programmes, professional training, research, and community outreach activities.

University Core Values

To achieve AUW's mission and vision, we adhere to the core values of social responsibility, academic freedom, leadership, innovation, excellence, respect, integrity, ownership, commitment, diversity, inclusiveness, partnership, and autonomy.

Recommendations to empower women in universities:

1- To establish centres/ programme of gender studies that undertake and guide gender sensitive research in both themes and methodology to be used and offer master and PhD programmes on various Gender and Women studies issues so as to have a bulk of needed gender specialist in the labour market and create more demand for them.

2- Main-streaming of gender and women studies courses as university requirements is also crucial to prepare students future change agents and policy makers.

3- Moreover, the specialized centre should build links with all relevant ministries and others to advice on policy both by evidence based research, advocacy and by capacity-building to ministries/ parliaments /civil societies personnel.

4- The universities to undertake several community based activities of raising awareness on issues of relevance for women empowerment, gender equality and condemning all forms of discriminatory or gender based violence. These centres can develop such massages.

5- To enhance staff and students engagement in media channel (radio, TV or social media) by engaging in programme planning, writing, preparing and presenting of different programmes.

6- To enhance the production of special women magazines and to document women pioneer role models and activism in media programmes in TV and radio. The power of media can contribute to change cultural barriers if appropriately used to show models of empowered women. Women only universities have that massage to send.

7- Lastly, I recommend a special web site of Arab women universities linked to international women universities is greatly needed

In Arab countries at universities which are co-educational, we have 18 specialized master programmes in different gender and women studies themes at 16 universities and 3 master programmes in one Women University. Hence, there is more work to be done to increase these programs in women universities and colleges.

Moreover, the following indicators to asses/establish Gender Mainstreaming at universities is recommended to enhance the processes of engendering our universities both women only and co-education one.

Indicators for gender mainstreaming at universities to include the following:

A- University policy:

To indicate:

* Any policies to address the gender gap, or discrimination issues.

* Policies to enable increase in gender publications.

* Policy to create a data bank with gender aggregated information.

* Policy to create and increase the pool of experts who can implement

monitor and evaluate GMS policies and programs.

2- Intake policy of students undergraduate and postgraduate levels:

Close gender gap in students' access in different departments/specialization at

undergraduate, postgraduate and continued education programs.

3- Staff policy:

* Intake policy: affirmative action to increase intake of the disadvantaged gender.

* Promotion policy: is based on equal opportunities and individual competition

and we need policy indicating affirmative measures to enhance the promotion

of the gender with less representation at high academic levels.

* Policy to enhance women participation in decision making bodies.

* Policy for participation in conferences.

* Policy for holding academic administrative/management positions.

* Policy to encourage publication: based on individual initiative and special

measures to help those with fewer publications.

* Access to research funds: free completion and affirmative action to encourage

the disadvantaged.

* Gender equity target policies for research and publications.

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B- Budget analysis:

    * Budget for targeted outreach activities on gender /women empowerment

      issues.

    * Budget allocated to women institutions, departments, courses and programs

      compared to others.

    * Budget to establish gender focal points to audit GMS in the university and

      publications for women staff.

C- Facilitating environment: physical, system and level of awareness:

    * Prizes: on gender issues or women's topics
    * Honorary degrees offered to women and men.
    * Establishment of structures for the implementation, monitoring and

      evaluation of GMS in the university.
    * Rules and remedies against violence and/or harassment

Your Excellency, as you know the picture is not that Rosy and the challenges that face universities are many that we need to collectively address:

  1- The gender gap in females holding professorship titles, the gender gap in high

    positions at the universities management within co-education or women

    universities only is to be closed.

  2- Diversity management and achieving peace and democracy are crucial to be

    addressed in the complex current context of our countries. Gender and Women

    specific issues need to be integrated.

  3- Countering extremism and fundamentalism through innovative teaching

    methods and curricula, as well as extra curricula, and civic engagement

    programme need to be developed and promoted.

4- Brain drain or under use of national / regional capacities have to be
   addressed.

5- The current minimum net working nationally, regionally and
internationally
   need to be highlighted for urgent action.

6- The threat of un-employment for graduates is crucial for planning
and needs
   attention.

7- Promoting research particularly and publication by women staff is a
further
   challenge that we need to make a target to close the gender gap.

   Universities programme need to address these challenges.

How to address some of the above challenges:

1- Established specialized women studies units in 1986, then it became
   Institute of women gender and development studies then promoted to be
   the Regional Institute of Gender, Diversity, Peace and Rights. Another
   centre on Gender Reproductive Rights and Advocacy Centre GRACs was
   established in 2013.

2- New programme, projects to enhance, networking, nationally and
   internationally through staff and students exchange, holding international
   summer school, workshops and conferences in a policy and funds are
   earmarked.

3- Expand the students extra curricula activities such as having public speeches,
   debates, dialogues so as students to be open to difference, cultivate critical
thinking
   and alternative solutions.

4- The use of narrative theatre to enhance learning, sharing, helps healing
   and establish solidarity for action.

5- Engage students in civic and social responsibility projects and through
   internship family attachment, Rural Extension trips, and students
training
   courses linking with UN agencies, NGOs, INGOs and business sector to
   open up for them future employment.

6- Include different courses and programmes on women and gender studies
   such as Women and Media, Gender and Migration, Gender and
Governance
   inclusive of Public Administration, Women and Business, Visionary
   Leadership, Gender and Development Gender and health etc.

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7- Celebrating most of UN international days organized by the students and

staff engaging the community to raise awareness about the massages behind

these International Days.

8- Establishing a research unit of a special journal: Women and Change and a

staff training centre.

9- Links with alumni (graduates) nationally and internationally through their

office at the university to address increase of women graduate links to

home land, under use of capacities and for fund raising.

Thanks for your listening
Prof. Balghis Y. Badri

Women's leadership development work in the GCC: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

Dr Liza Howe-Walsh
Dr Sarah Turnbull
2018

Global Leadership development programme in UK Universities: Catalyst to explore development of women in GCC

Enablers and challenges

Exploring the enablers and the challenges for females working in SET in Qatar and The United Arab Emirates: An overview of the research being undertaken in the Middle East countries by The University of Portsmouth

Howe-Walsh, L. and Turnbull, S. (2014)

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Times are changing...

Assessing leadership competence

- GCI
  - Using the a global leadership assessment helped to highlight the strengths of women either working in a leadership role or working towards a leadership role.
- Confidence
  - Whilst the assumption may be that women in the UK are confident and facing less challenges to obtain leadership roles there was a distinct difference in perceptions.
  - Women in the GCC displayed high levels of confidence.

Howe-Walsh, L. and Turnbull, S. (2016).

Challenges

- The physical environment
  - Region specific?

- Localization policies
  - Expatriates
  - Perception of national workforce

- Nurturing talent

Howe-Walsh, L., Turnbull, S., and Boulanouar, A. (2015).

Results from research

- Government sponsorship
  - We had many Universities where we could take scholarships...they were offering lots of scholarship programmes at the time around career needs
- Equality
  - If you are educated it is the expectation that you will work...work hand in hand with men in terms of being equal
- Role models
  - I have to give my kids the same sense that your mummy is a successful IT engineer and they can do better than her in the future.

Results from research

- Work life balance
  - I am very happy, but I am not happy with the pressure, when my daughter goes to school she will need more support. I may have to leave in order to balance this pressure.

Howe-Walsh, L., Turnbull, S., Papavasileiou, E. and N. Bozionelos (2016).

Results cont...

- Company reputation
  - We wanted to join this organisation because it is respected.
  - Our families are proud we work here.

- Mentors
  - My mentor is from finance...sometimes I had some challenges in communication with my manager by a certain point and he (mentor) was really helpful because coaching is all about asking the right questions, not only giving me the answers
  - Mentoring provides me access to discuss career issues.

The importance of Higher Education

- Higher education provides an essential platform to equip women with the academic knowledge and skills to enter the job market.

How can creative thinking help?

- Thinking outside of the box
- Creative people think laterally, key to problem solving
- Devising new ways to resolve issues
- Knowing your key strengths to aid creative problem solving

Encouraging more women into Leadership in HE

- Enablers
  - Planned development, know your starting point
  - Networks
  - Mentors
  - Champions
  - Job sharing: co-chairing
  - Exchange visits
  - Visibility
  - Role models

  Thompson-Whiteside, H., Turnbull, S, and Howe-Walsh, L. (2018)
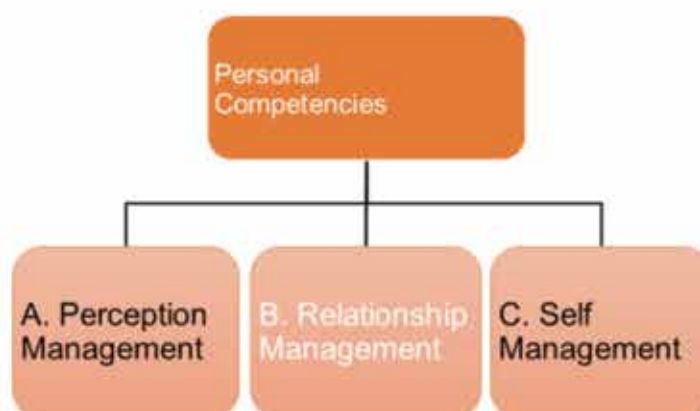
Overview of GCI

- The **Global Competencies Inventory (GCI)** measures 16 dimensions associated with effective intercultural behavior and dynamic global managerial skill acquisition across three factors:
  - **Perception Management** (learning effectively);
  - **Relationship Management** (managing relationships);
  - **Self Management** (managing oneself in challenging situations).
- The **GCI** contains 159 items and is administered online (a paper-and-pencil option is available).

References

Thompson-Whiteside, H., Turnbull, S. and Howe-Walsh, L. (2018) Developing an authentic personal brand using impression management behaviours: exploring female entrepreneurs' experiences. Qualitative Market Research: An international Journal. In press).

Turnbull, S., Howe-Walsh, L. and Boulanouar, A. (2016) The advertising standardisation debate revisited. Implications of Islamic ethics on standardisation/localisation of advertising in Middle East Islamic States. Journal of Islamic Marketing, 7 (1), 2-14. (Highly Commended in Emerald Literati Network 2017 Awards for Excellence)

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Howe-Walsh, L., Turnbull, S., and Boulanouar, A. (2015). International Human Resource Management: implications for Multinational Corporations Operating in the Arab Middle East. International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management, 15 (2/3/4), 258 – 274.

Turnbull, S. Howe-Walsh, L. and Shute, J. (2014). Women in Science and Technology: A Global Development Leadership Pilot Scheme, Journal about Women in Higher Education, 7(2), 252-254.

Questions?

The Republic of Kenya
Senate

THEME: UNIVERSITIES APPROACH TOWARDS EMPLOYABILITY AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
TOPIC: PREPARATION OF STUDENTS FOR EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL
ACTIVITY

Senator Sylvia M. Kasanga
MCIArb, Arch, MAAK, MBA

1. Statistics on Youth Population

According to United Nations World Population Prospects 2015;

Youth Globally- 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 years

Youth in Africa- 226 million = 19 % of the global youth population.

2. Statistics on Youth Unemployment

According to the United Nations World Population Prospects unemployment rates, South Africa, Spain and Greece have rates above 50%.

The United Nations Human Development Index, recorded Kenya to have 39.1% unemployment rate.

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5. Challenges Facing the Higher Education Sector

1. Demand for access

2. The rapid expansion of higher education.

3. Privatization of Public Universities.

4. Financial Crisis

5. Maintenance of Quality and Relevance

6. Preparation of Young Women for Employment and Entrepreneurial Activity

Empowering
WOMEN NOW

a) Statistics: Young women graduates

❖ UNESCO Science Report: women now account for 53% of the world's bachelor's and master's graduates and 43% of PhDs.

❖ The Ministry of Education in Kenya fact: more women are going back to school for undergraduate, masters and PhD degrees compared to men.

b) Statistics: Young employed women

❖ World's women 2015 report: Only 50% of women of working age are in the labour force, compared to 77 % per cent of men.

❖ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics: the modern or formal sector employment had 880,000 women compared to 1.68 million men in 2016.
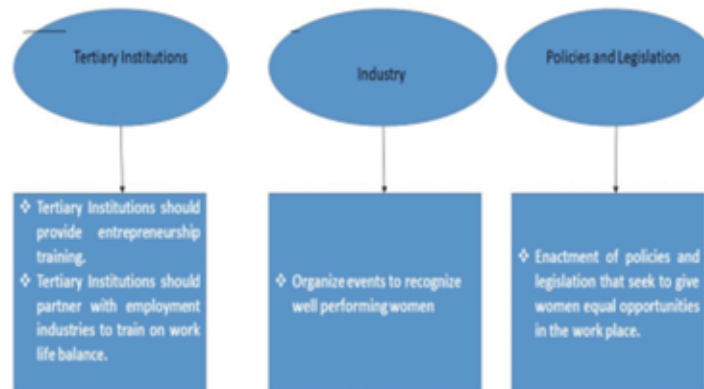
The 8th Annual Gulf Education Conference

Women Employability

Essa Almulla

The Challenges for Emiratisation

- National population growth
- Existing jobs market
- Socio- cultural barriers

TOTAL EMIRATIS EMPLOYED IN DUBAI in 2016 IS 68,716
(63% Males and 37% females)

25,458

43,258
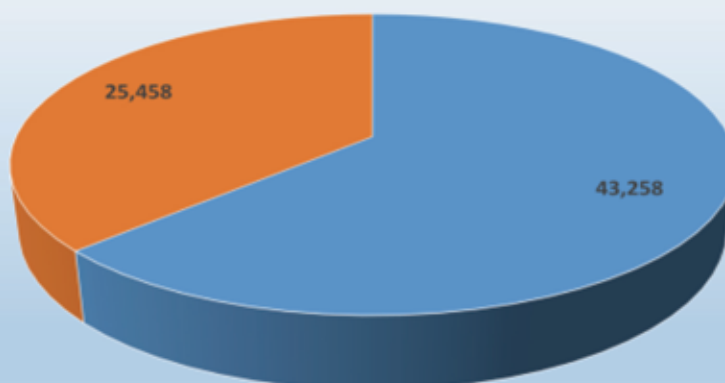
Source: Dubai Statistics Centre 2016

■ males   ■ females

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The type of Emirati employed

Source: Dubai Statistics Centre 2016
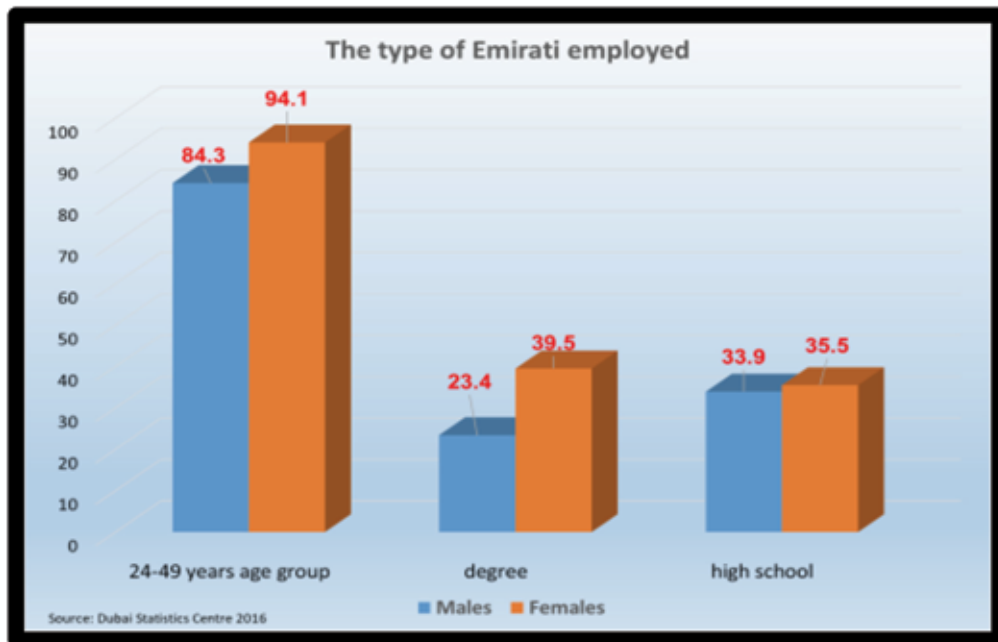
Unemployment for UAE Nationals in Dubai 2016

- Unemployed : 1,819 of which 848 Male 971 female
- Female unemployment: 3.67% Young females (9.19%)
- Male unemployment:1.92% Young Males (5%)

Source: Dubai Statistics Centre 2016

4

ENDP Database

- **Number of Women on ENDP's Database (all categories) : 44,300**
- **Number of Women Jobseekers on the database: 22,967**

5
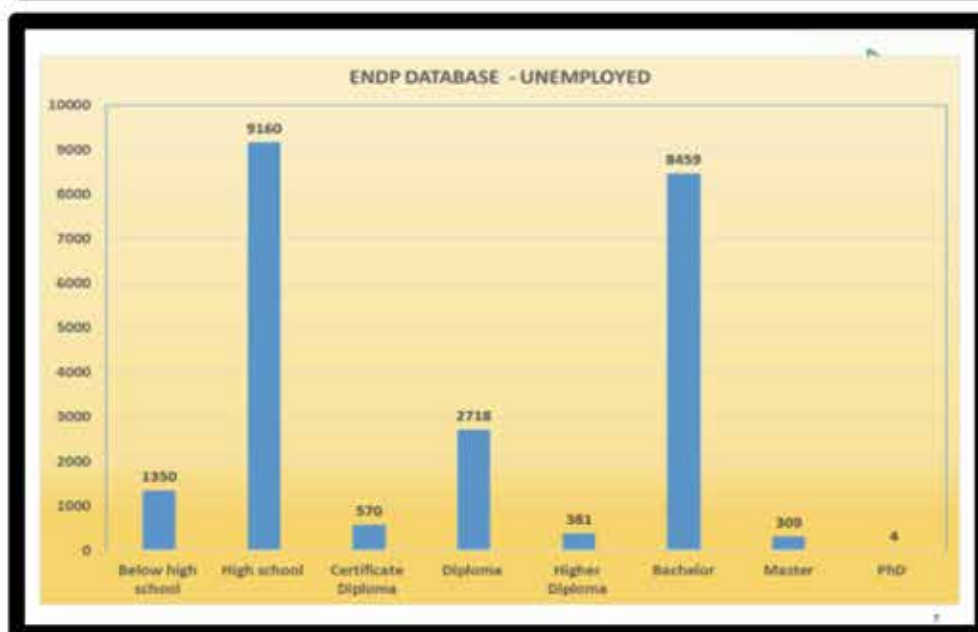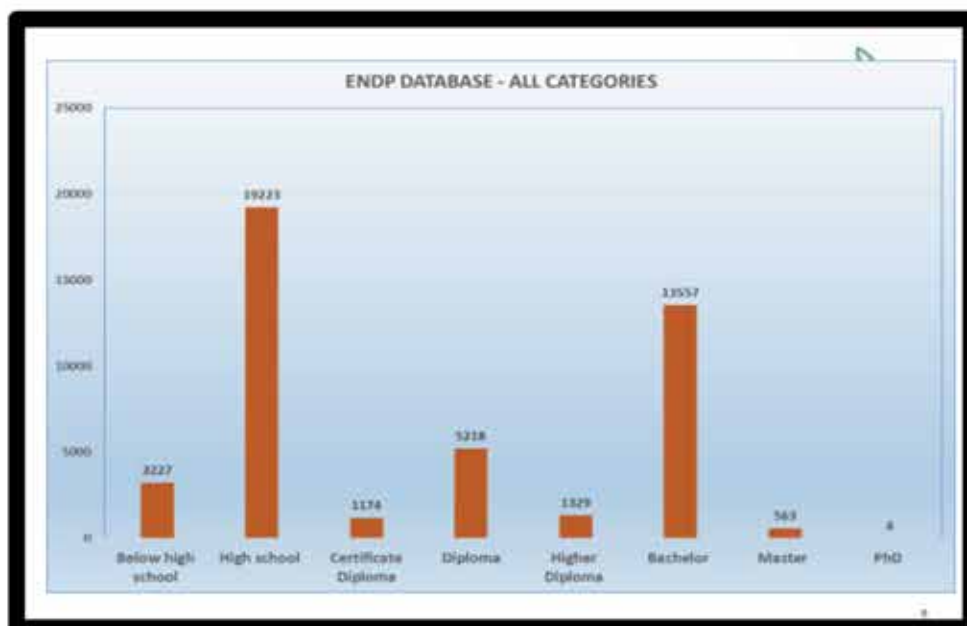
Facts about the job market

- Employers want motivated candidates (Female)
- There are many programmes available for getting Emiratis into private sector jobs
- There is strong demand for Emiratis to consider 'non – traditional' jobs
- Most Emiratis females don't want to consider such jobs

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

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Women are taking the lead into 'non-traditional' careers

It can be done!

Even after recruiting women into jobs, the story is not over…

- We need to ensure they are **retained…**
- They need a work/ life balance for **family…**
- They need support to develop their **careers…**

THANK YOU

☺

CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND EQUITY RESEARCH

Women and Higher Education Leadership: An Object of Desire or Something to be Avoided?

Professor Louise Morley

Making Women Intelligible as Leaders?

- Why so few?

- What is it that people don't see?

- Why don't they see it?

- What do current practices reveal and obscure?

Women Vice-Chancellors: Leading or Being Led?

SWD	UK	EU	HK	JAP	USA
50%	22%	15.5%	0%	2.3%	26%

Explaining the Absences

- Poor assessment practices of merit/leadership suitability
- Gender Bias/ Misrecognition
- Management & Masculinity
- Institutional Practices
- Greedy Organisations
- Socio-cultural messages
- Gendered Divisions of Labour
- Women's Missing Agency/ Deficit Internal Conversations

- Counting more women into existing systems, structures and cultures ■ an unquestioned good/ transformative?

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A Two-Way Gaze?

- How are women being seen e.g. as deficit men?
- How are women viewing leadership e.g. unliveable lives?
- What narratives circulate about:
- ✓ Women's Capabilities?
- ✓ Leadership?

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Gender as a Verb

Gender:
- Not just a **noun** or demographic variable.
- Formed/ Reformed in
- ✓ Organisational Cultures
- ✓ Social contexts

Sociology of Absences?

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Building Capacity for Women in STEM subjects

Prof. Mazin M.A. Jumaah
President, Royal University For Women

Kingdom of Bahrain

Number of Nobel Laureates in STEM

	Nobel Prize in Chemistry	Nobel Prize in Medicine	Nobel Prize in Physics	Nobel Prize in Mathematics
Female	4	11	2	1
Male	165	196	197	55

Source: Nobelprize.org, 2014; IMU, 2014

Global Status of Women in STEM

- **Women remain under-represented** in STEM areas
- Data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) indicate that between 2000 and 2012, the **number of researchers around the world increased from 1.9 million to 6.9 million.**
- Averaged across regions, **women accounted for less than a third (28.4%) of those employed in scientific research and development (R&D)** across the world in 2013
  - Central Asia (47.1%)
  - Latin American and the Caribbean (44.3%)
  - Central and Eastern Europe (39.9%)
  - The Arab States (36.8%)

Degrees earned by Women in STEM fields

Percentage (%) of Degrees Earned by Women in Post secondary Institutions

	Bachelors	Masters	PhD
Biological and biomedical sciences	58.5	56.5	53.2
Math and Statistics	43.0	41.5	28.9
Engineering	18.4	24.4	22.7
Computer and information sciences	18.0	28.7	21.0

In 2013–2014, women in the United States earned more than half of degrees in the biological and biomedical sciences, but a smaller share of other STEM field

Worldwide Status of Women in R&D

Countries	Percentage of researchers who are female
World	30%
Central Asia	46%
South and West Asia	20%
East Asia and the Pacific	20%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Database, accessed in 2015

Challenges for Women's engagement in STEM

- Educational and Workforce Policies
- Family & Personal laws
- Socio-cultural Beliefs and Practices
- Working Environment
- Lack of Role Models
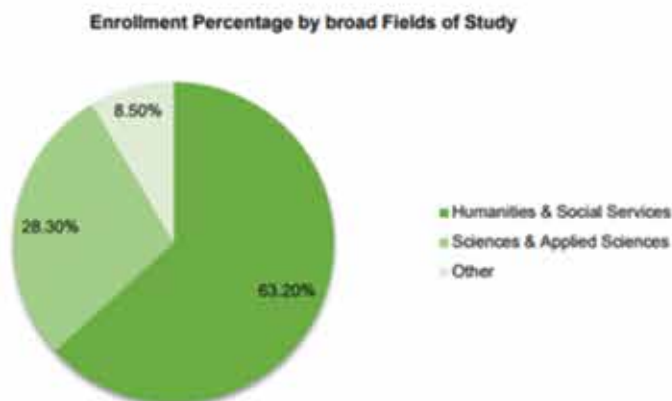- Limited universities offering STEM education

Gender differences in STEM fields do not start in the labour market, nor even in higher education – they begin in student performance as young as 15 years old.

Figure 2.2: Distribution of Students in MENA region in Higher Education by broad Fields of Study

Enrollment Percentage by broad Fields of Study

- Humanities & Social Services
- Sciences & Applied Sciences
- Other

Role of Education

- Stimulating interest among female students in STEM-related subjects,
- Ensuring that educators are equipped to take more gender-responsive approaches and encourage female students to pursue STEM fields
- Taking policy measures that are conducive to increasing the number of women in these fields.

Stimulating, encouraging and supporting fair and equal opportunities for girls and boys to perform in STEM-related subjects at school, therefore, would equate to more girls and women in STEM fields of study in higher education and the world of work.

Policy & Legislation

- Establishment of Higher Education Council (HEC)
- Bahrain Vision 2030
- HEC Strategic plan
- HEC Research Strategy
- Raising Student and Public awareness of STEM
- Promoting Research Culture in HEI

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Supreme Council for Women

Launched in 2001 under the leadership of
HRH Princess Sabeeka Bint Ebrahim Al Khalifa, President of SCW and
Wife of His Majesty the King

- Focal point of mainstreaming women's social, economic and political participation in develop initiatives in the State

- Empowering Bahraini Women

- Heighten the Principle of Equal Opportunities

- Declared 2017 as the year of 'Bahraini Women Engineers' to support Women in STEM

Graduates by Specialization in Bahrain (2013-14)

	Education	Arts	Business Management	I.T	Engineering	Science	Law	Medicine &healthcare
Women	207	353	1,797	371	262	84	194	312
Men	94	135	1,026	224	348	21	141	125

Source: Supreme Council for Women

Royal University for Women

- Established on 2005

- Committed to quality education for Women

- First Private University in Bahrain to achieve HEC accreditation

College of Art & Design

Centre for General Studies

College of Business & Financial Sciences

Royal University for Women

College of Engineering

College of Law

College of Information Technology

RUW Received

Her Royal Highness Princess Shaikha Sabeeka Bint Ebrahim Al Khalifa Award for Bahraini Women Empowerment award in 2015

Royal University for Women

- Providing multicultural international environment to students
- Linkage with Industry is an important consideration (Projects with SCW, Northern Municipal Council etc.)
- Work based learning
- Employable graduates
- Committed to quality education for Women
- First Private University in Bahrain to achieve HEC accreditation

Initiatives by Royal University for Women

- Licensed to offer BSc in Computer Science and Information Technology since 2005
- Science related LAR courses (eg. Math and Women & Health)
- Based on the Skill Gap analysis by HEC highlighting the need for STEM the offerings at RUW were expanded
    - B Arch in Architectural design is offered since 2014-15
    - RUW is hosting WVU Civil Engineering Programme from October 2017
    - More STEM programmes are being conceptualized
- Interdisciplinary research themes are being pursued in colleges

Recommendations to stimulate STEM in Bahrain

- Initiatives to encourage STEM studies to be launched at the school level
- Establish more Higher Education Institutions in Bahrain dedicated to Science & Engineering
- Encourage STEM studies at Master's and PhD level
- Establishing a National level Research Centre to promote STEM research
- Initiate a taskforce with representation from various stakeholders to support research in STEM in Bahrain

Thank you

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Slide 1
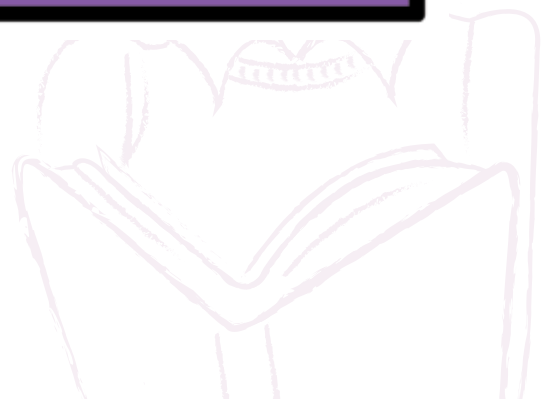
RUW Perspective on Empowering women: Embedding Employability in Higher Education

Dr Mona Suri, Academic Vice President
Mr Parsa Zoqaqi, Director, Quality Assurance & Accreditation Unit
Royal University for Women
Kingdom of Bahrain

5/27/2018   RUW 2nd conference on women & Society   0

Slide 2

Background

- Royal University for Women (RUW) was established in 2005
- The first private, purpose-built, international university in the Kingdom of Bahrain
- Dedicated solely to educating women
- Celebrating its twelve years of Journey of excellence
- Has won many accolades in the areas of Accreditation, NQF, Quality systems

5/27/2018   RUW 2nd conference on women & Society   1

Slide 3

RUW values employability as a key constituent that **prepares graduates** to become leaders who are **engaged members of their society**, demonstrating **initiative and lifelong habits** of learning and individual development.

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Employability Skills

A combination of knowledge, skills and attributes (attitudes & values) that result in capable people who will be effective in their chosen occupation.
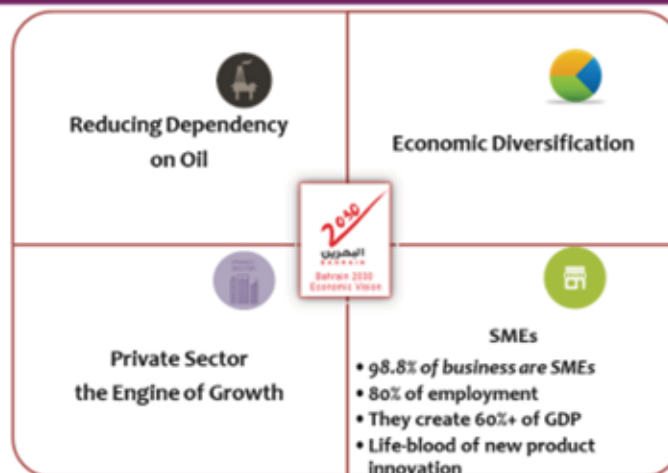
Scottish Funding Council (2004)

Bahrain's 2030 Economic Vision

Reducing Dependency on Oil

Economic Diversification

Private Sector the Engine of Growth

SMEs
- 98.8% of business are SMEs
- 80% of employment
- They create 60%+ of GDP
- Life-blood of new product innovation

Labour Market Research

Bahraini Unemployment & Underemployment
A Fragmented Labour Market

Many SMEs want to employ Bahrainis but...
- Skill gap
- Social & cultural issues

Graduates lack Employability Skills:

Top 5 responses out of 20 choices

Skill	%
Teamwork	47%
People Management	48%
Written Communication	48%
Practical Skills	57%
Problem Solving	63%

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Employability Skills needed by Employers

Communication	• Communicate effectively in ways that contribute to productive and harmonious relationships across stakeholders.
Team work	• Work effectively independently and in collaboration with others through a common approach towards a common goal.
Problem solving	• Analyse a problem critically and respond appropriately to organisational and societal needs.
Initiative and enterprise	• Apply resourcefulness, innovation and strategic thinking in an organisational context.
Planning and organisation	• Efficiently and effectively plan and manage work commitments
Self management	• Demonstrate self-discipline, resilience and adaptability, and be able to plan and achieve personal and professional goals
Learning	• Understand the need for and engage in life-long learning
Technology	• Utilize information technology effectively and ethically in their personal and professional lives

www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/jobs-careers/planning-your-career/employability-skills

Delivery of Employability Skills

PBL	• Well-designed work related problems stimulate learning to ensure students develop technical knowledge & skills plus employability skills
Work Integrated Learning	• Educational activities integrate theoretical learning with its application in the workplace (industry projects, work experience, simulations)
Employability Skills	• Generic Competencies: teamwork, problem solving, communication, initiative & enterprise, planning & organisation, self-management, learning & technology
Relevant Teaching Skills	• Facilitating knowledge, Visiting and adjunct professors, enhanced use of technology in teaching, soft skill development • Improved teaching Competencies

RUW's Journey towards Employability

- Regulatory bodies' requirements
- RUW's Vision and Mission
- University's Strategic Plan
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- RUW Employability Strategy
  – integrated, institution-wide approach

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Status of Employability at RUW

- **What we did?**
  Prepared Employability Strategy and Framework

- **How we did it?**
  Implemented Employability Strategy & Framework at university level
  i.e. map ILOs to employability skills, embed skills into the curriculum

- **By when?**
  Programmes are reviewed & employability is embedded in curriculum
  Effectiveness review started from AY 2017-18

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Purpose of RUW Employability Strategy

- **Develop employable graduates,** with Graduate Attributes that allow them to become creative, confident and forward thinking.
- **Prepare graduates to become leaders** who are engaged members of their society, demonstrating initiative and life-long learning habits and individual development.
- **Support** the University's vision, mission, Strategic Plan and Teaching and Learning Policy.
- Ensure that university staff and students share a **common understanding of employability** (both the formal academic curriculum and the co-curricular activities)

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RUW Employability Strategy

5/27/2018

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Transferable Skills

Collective Effort

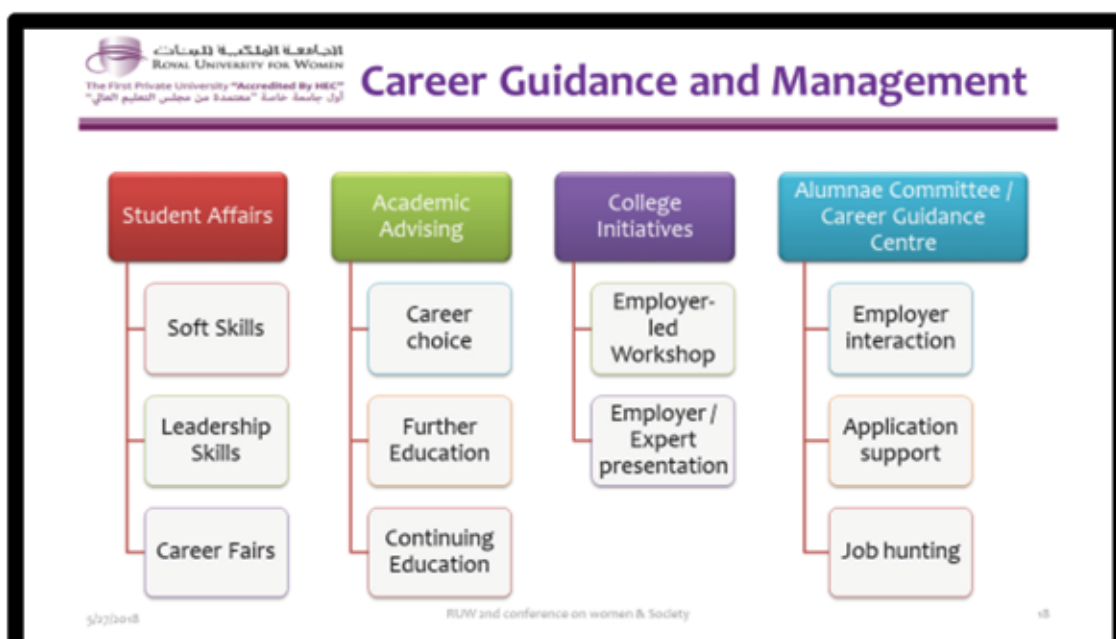Ensuring that the teaching staff have the key skills required to deliver new curricula with a focus on employability
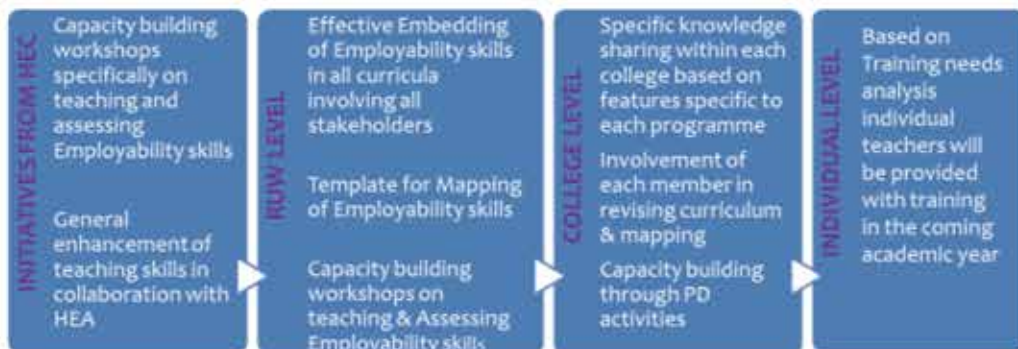
Extra Curricular Engagement

- Raising the **profile of co-curricular opportunities** and enterprise & entrepreneurship initiatives and the Internship Programme.
- Enhancing and expanding the University's **Career Guidance Programme** by working in partnership with organisations, Employers and professional bodies.
- Recognizing co-curricular learning and achievements within the graduate transcript using **'A Credit' initiative**.
- Organizing **workshops and lectures** for soft skills development amongst students.

Career Guidance and Management

Student Affairs	Academic Advising	College Initiatives	Alumnae Committee / Career Guidance Centre
Soft Skills	Career choice	Employer-led Workshop	Employer interaction
Leadership Skills	Further Education	Employer / Expert presentation	Application support
Career Fairs	Continuing Education		Job hunting

College Level Initiatives

- **College Advisory Committees** is a channel to communicate with graduate recruiters and professional bodies
- **Work based learning**, Internships, workshops and real life projects with employers
- **Employer surveys** used to ask question about employer expectations and satisfaction
- **Joint projects with employers** to facilitate linkage of academia with industry

Multi-body Initiatives

Colleges, OSA, and Alumnae Committee have together achieved:

- Meeting of about 20 successful alumnae with HRH Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, President of the Supreme Council for Women
- Inviting distinguished alumnae to speak at the Student Orientation
- Featuring a distinguished alumnae each month on the RUW newsletter
- Membership of an alumna in the College Advisory Committee

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Career Guidance Components

Employability skills link to Graduate attributes

RUW GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES	TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
Achievement of the goals and objectives of their learning programme	Multi-tasking Time management
Creativity and enterprise	Leadership
Critical thinking and reflective practice	Problem solving
Independence in learning including awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses	Enterprise IT and quantitative/qualitative analysis skills
Self-motivation	Project management
Appropriate Communication skills	Communication (oral, written), Report writing
Commitment to lifelong learning	Reflection
Preparedness to work in a culturally diverse society	Interpersonal skills
Good citizenship	Team working
Clarity of vision and planning	Planning and organization

Employability skills & link to Graduate attributes

- Graduate attributes are clearly outlined and aligned to employability attributes and skills
- Graduating students are being offered courses on
  - Entrepreneurship,
  - workshops on writing CVs,
  - preparing for Interviews and other soft skills

Measuring employability effectiveness

- **Alumnae tracking** (into either further education or career paths)
- **Exit survey;** Evaluating feedback from students on the academic and career development support they receive to make appropriate career decisions
- **Employer survey;** feedback from employers on the work-readiness of graduates
- **Periodic programme reviews;** consider discipline-specific employability provisions
- **Course Evaluations;** feedback from students for credit-bearing courses and their relevance
- **Internship reports;** highlighting strengths and shortcomings

Status of RUW Graduates

Status	Sem. 1 AY 2016-17		Jan. 2018*	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Employed	365	48%	417	44.5%
Own Business	81	8%	131	14%
Not Employed	110	19%	170	18%
Not employed by choice	92	9%	82	8.7%
Higher Education or Certificate	64	7%	59	6.1%%
Not reachable	89	9%	85	9%
Total	801	100%	936	100%

Status of RUW Graduates

Semester 1 2016-17 — January 2018
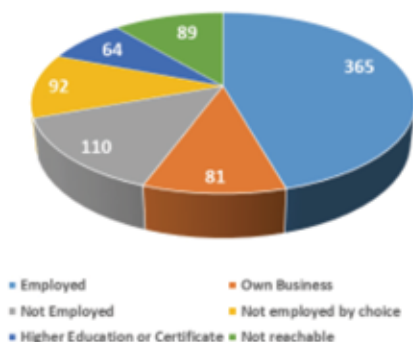
Future Plan

Based on effectiveness of the current practices:
- Revise the employability framework
- Enhance practices in place
- Improve tracking of alumnae
- implement the role of the Career Guidance Centre
- Build positive reputation and sound relationship with industry and employers to allow for graduate job placement
- Keep in close contact with alumnae for feedback on their perceived work-readiness

Thank you!

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