

Research on Emirati Women Business Leaders: Implications for Leadership Education

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Welcome

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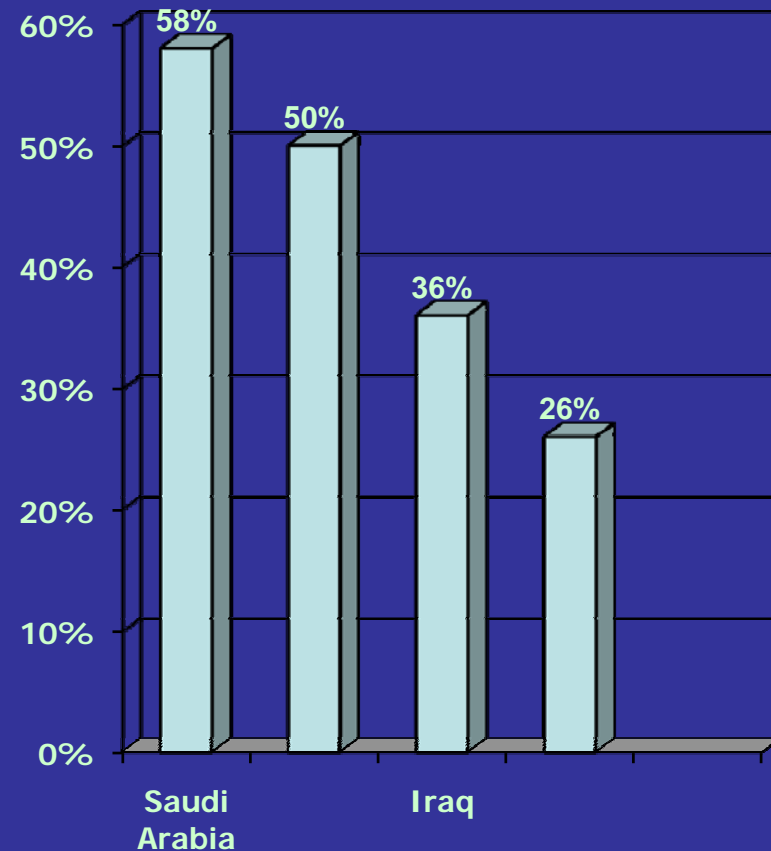
Agenda

- Background & Statistics: Education and Labor Force
 - Women in the Middle East
 - Women in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regions.
 - Women in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Prior Research
- Research Agenda
- Preliminary Thematic Results from Research in progress
- Observations
- Implications for Leadership Education and Development

Women's Education in the Middle East

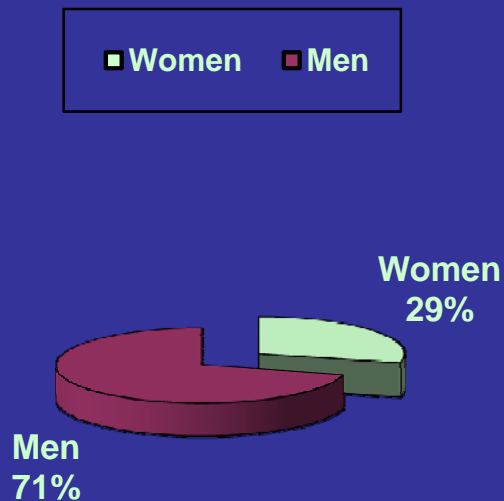
- Data illustrating the education of women in the Middle East as a whole can be misleading.
- Ranges of enrollment vary significantly between various countries.
 - 32% enrollment difference between the countries with the highest and lowest rates.

Percent of Female Tertiary Students in Middle Eastern Countries (2005)

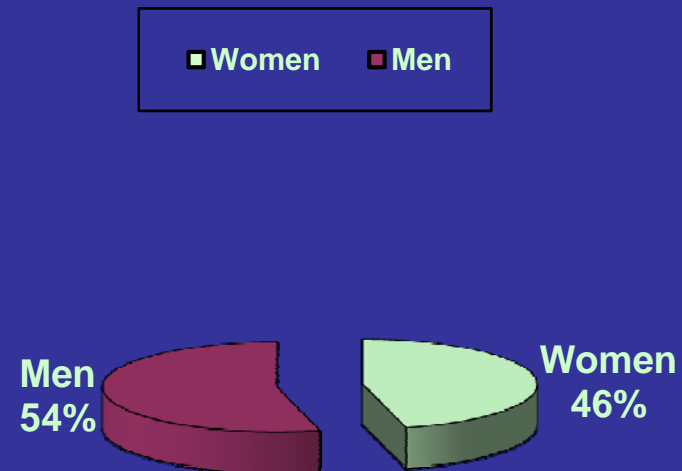


Women's Labor Force Participation in the Middle East

Labor Force Participation in the Middle East (2005)



Labor Force Participation in the United States (2005)




Labor force participation by women in the Middle East lags significantly behind many other nations, including the United States.

Women Entrepreneurs in the Middle East

World Bank interviewed 5000+ firms owned by both men and women.

- 13% firms were owned principally by a woman.
 - Women owned more medium/large* sized firms.
 - 50% of these firms are managed by its female owner.
 - Women owned firms employ more women; and at professional + managerial levels.
- 19% of women entrepreneurs interviewed had professional competencies, vs. 16% of men.



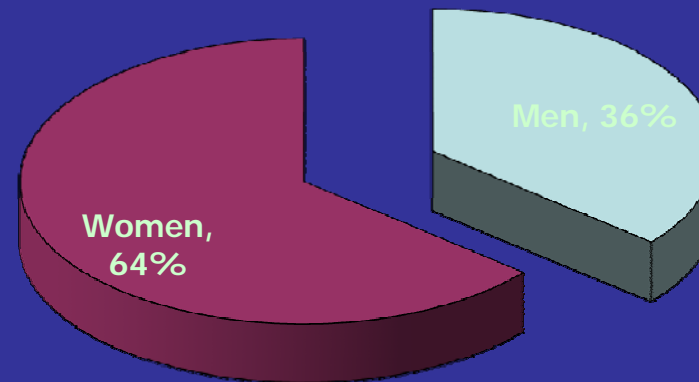
Although research shows these women are highly qualified, they still represent a very small number of economic participants.

*100+ employees

Women's Education in the GCC

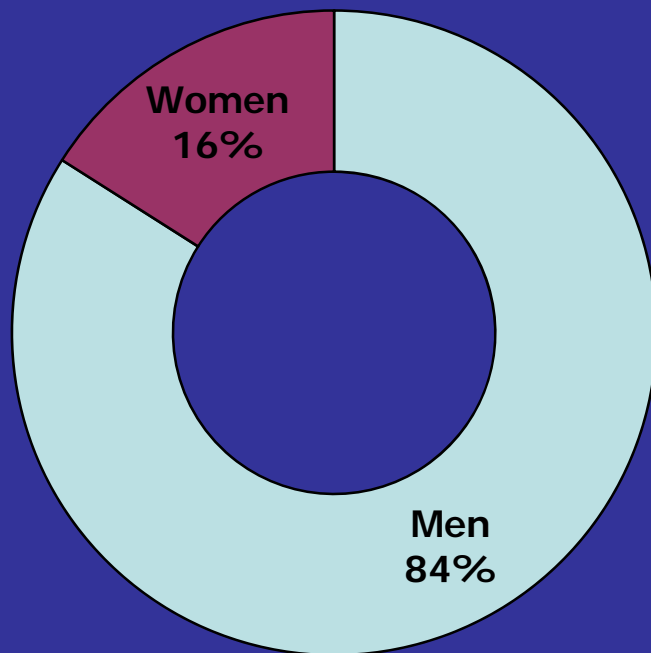
- This data shows the average enrollment by gender amongst GCC countries.
- Statistics range from 56% in Saudi Arabia, to 73% in Qatar.
- One explanation for the lack of male students in national universities is men are often encouraged to study abroad for tertiary education.

Tertiary Students in GCC Countries by Gender (2003)



Women's Labor Force Participation in GCC Countries

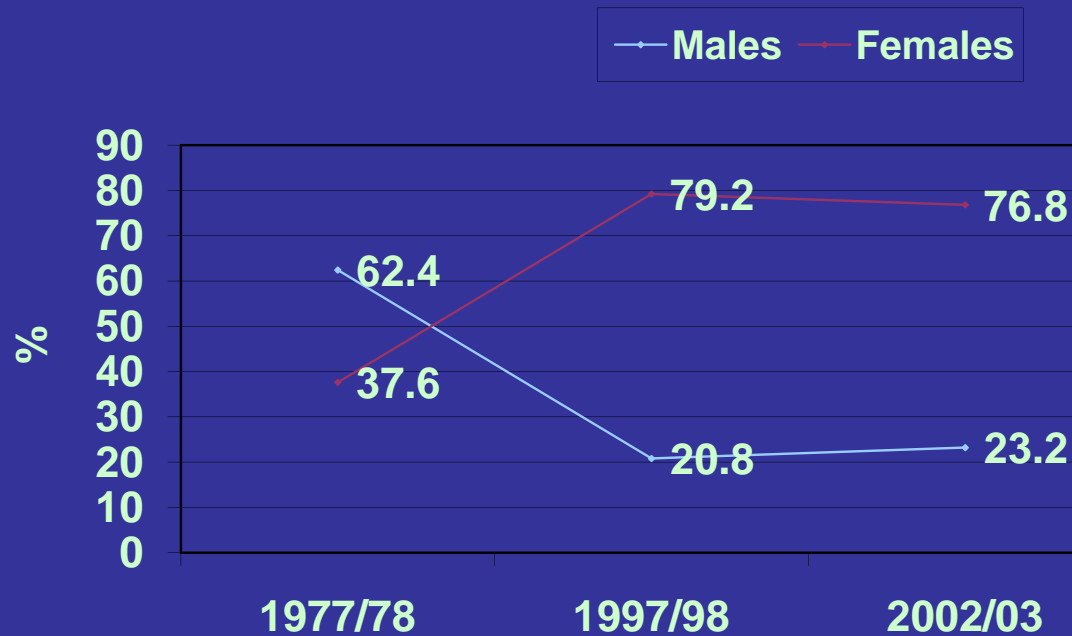
Labor Force Participation
in GCC Countries
(2003)



- Although women are exceeding men in university enrollment, their participation in the labor force still significantly lags behind the world average of 40-50%.

The Good News: Women's Education in the UAE

Enrollment by Gender at UAE University 1977-2003

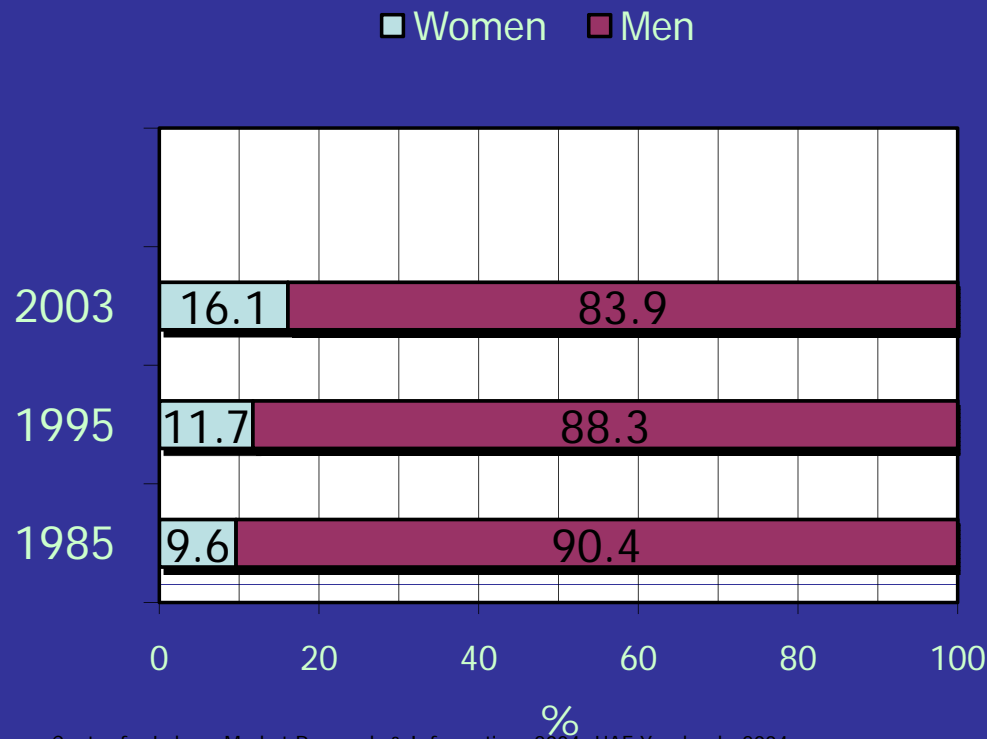


"The UAE is Singular in registering the highest rate of females in higher education in the entire world, 77%."
-UAE Yearbook 2007

"In particular, women have embraced education with particular fervor and are outperforming males at every educational level."
-UAE Yearbook, 2007

Concerns About Women's Economic Participation in the UAE

Women's Contribution to the Workforce 1985-2003



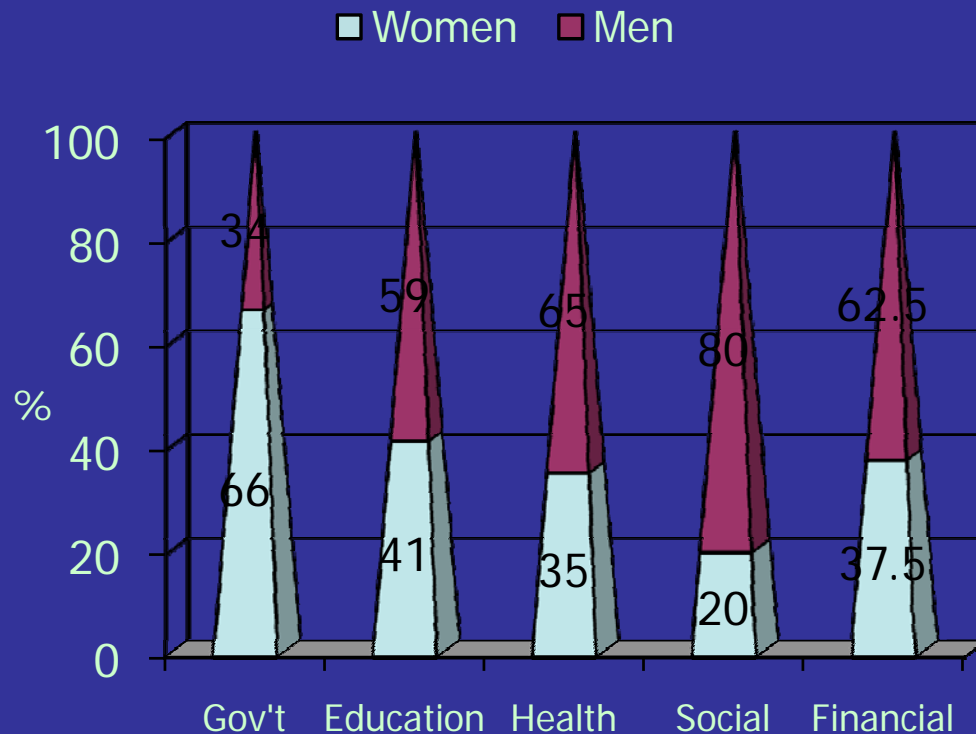
- Trends in growing enrollment of female students in higher education have not been mirrored by similar growth trends in women's economic participation.

- Women's economic participation has increased less than 7% since 1985, while enrollment in tertiary education has grown nearly 40% since the 1970's.

UAE Women's Sector Employment

Significant Female Presence by Sector

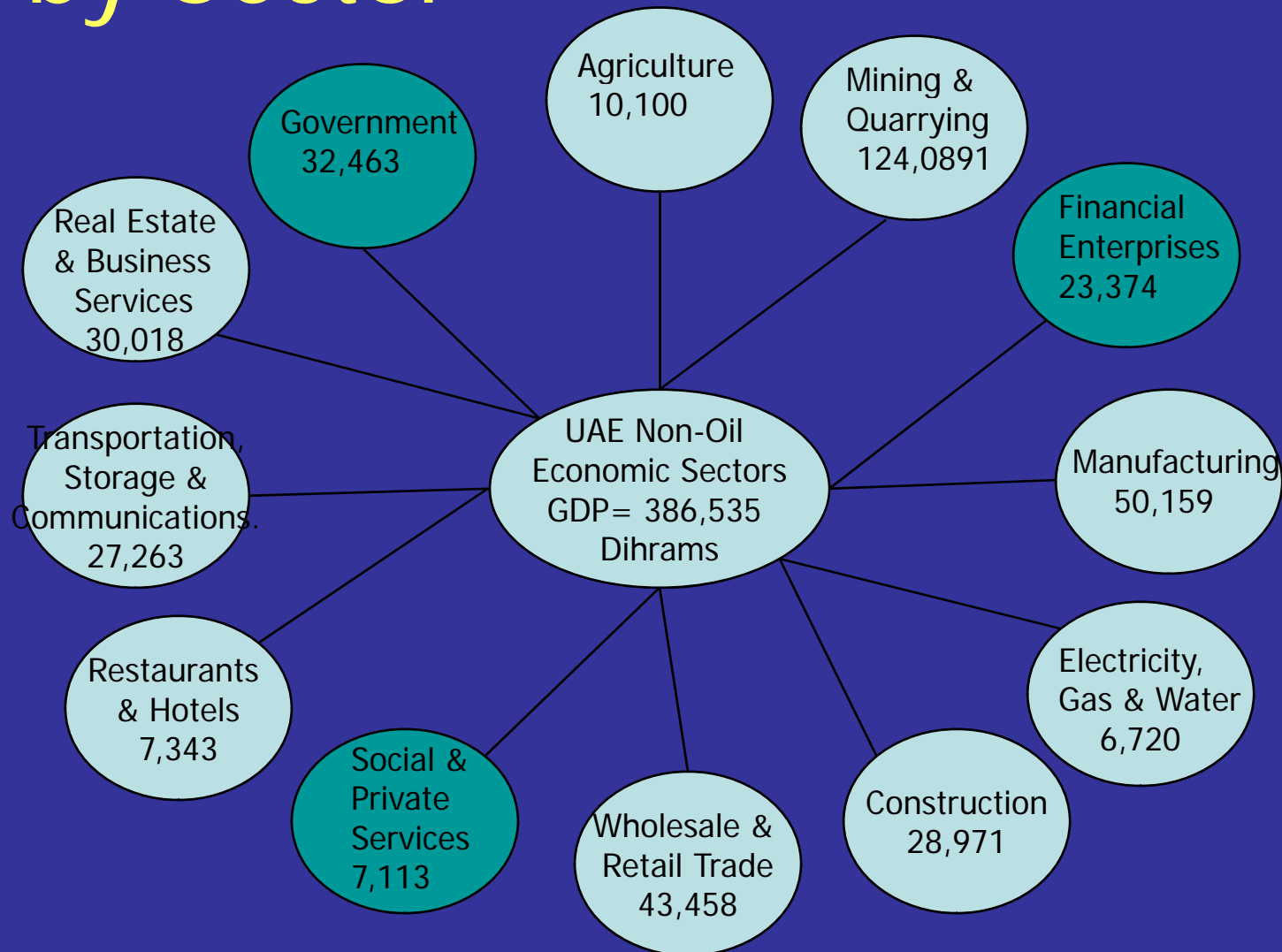
- Women are observed in significant numbers in 5 specific economic industries.



- Women constitute 20% of the public sector.
- Women most prominently hold positions in the Government and Education sectors.

- 30% of women in the government sector hold decision-making positions.

UAE Non-Oil Economic GDP by Sector



- UAE women comprise only 4% of the private sector employees, and mostly in private financial enterprises.

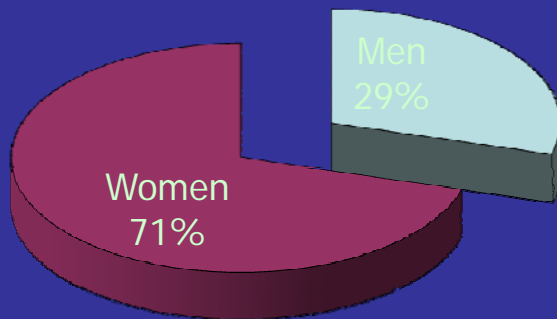
- The non-oil economy of the UAE is comprised of many industries.

- Total GDP = 386,535 million Dirhams.

- Female prevalent industries constitute only 16.2% of the net Non-oil GDP.

Unemployment in the UAE

Unemployment of Women vs. Men



- Women have more difficulty finding employment, despite statistics that show high prevalence of education amongst UAE females.
- 2004 Study of job seekers who applied to TAMNIA* found:
 - 66% of applicants were women.
 - Women constituted 79% of the applicants with secondary education or higher.

Prior Research

- Limited empirical research on women leaders in the UAE
- Outside the UAE, there is a paucity of published empirical research on the region's female leaders.
- 10% of managerial positions in the Arab world are held by women
 - “65% of GCC graduates are women, although most work in clerical positions in governmental offices after graduating”

UAE is making progress for national women, but still needs improvement

- UAE is best in region for treatment of women - but gender equality is a severe problem in Middle East
- “UAE society is patriarchal and the changing of traditional views concerning a woman's place in the family is a slow process”

Emerati Women Business Leaders Project Research Agenda

- To identify cultural context and impact of identity as women's influences, leadership journey and perceptions of success.
- Assess the status of research on women business leaders in the UAE as well as women leaders in the Middle East
- Ascertain perceptions of women's changing roles in business and the connection with social and political advancement

Methodology

- Interdisciplinary literature review
 - Used to assess the status of research on women business leaders in the UAE as well as women leaders in the Middle East
- In depth interviews
 - Will provide data for short cases and descriptive and thematic analysis will be used to identify and interpret issues. These cases will be useful to interpret their leadership narratives within a culturally appropriate context.

Major Emerging Themes

- Definitions of Leadership:
 - Leaders share their experiences and are passionate about their work.
 - Proving yourself to others; being democratic and accepting ideas from others.
 - Vision against three factors; sense of role and responsibility, (family and business) sense of faith, ability to give back.
 - “Every woman is a leader in her own way, raising a family is much more difficult than making a business work”.

Major Themes: Key Success Factors

- Key success factors included:
 - Self confidence.
 - Dedication.
 - Positive thinking.
 - Listening to and accepting ideas from others.
 - Action oriented strategy: *“ideas cannot wait, go and get them...”*.
 - Forward looking: “no regrets”.
 - Having the right team.
- Definition of “success” includes family success
 - Having a sense of responsibility in all aspects of life.
 - *“It’s what you hear people say about you”*.

Major Themes: Barriers to Success

- Lack of self confidence
- Work/family conflict
- Long working hours
- Stereotyping

Major Themes: Role of Cultural Heritage

- Historical roles of Emirati women depicted as self-reliant, independent, resilient businesswomen and negotiators.
- When oil was discovered women retreated into their homes; recently, they have started to reemerge.
- All felt as women religion acted as a support system, not a barrier to business success.
- Religion gave women a sense of identity.
- Themes of giving back to others were embedded in their notion of leadership. They focused less about “I” and more about “we”; showing a strong collectivist orientation.
- Religious values: Kindness, simplicity, generosity,

Observations

- Definitions of leadership run counter to embedded cultural notion as ascribed, patriarchal, and hierarchical
- Leadership cannot be understood without understanding religious values:
- Adl: equilibrium; Nasab: importance of family roles in organization and mgt; Wasta: connections or contracts; Shura: consultation

Impact of Religious and Cultural Values on Leadership

- Quiwama: protection and care of employees; Hadith: learning, knowledge and development; Modesty (Surah): humility and benevolence
- All these cultural values influence the context of women's leadership in the UAE and the region
- Previous research points to reluctance to challenge gender and social relations, support of traditional gender roles, male connections and networks dominant and emphasized in consultation and decision making, protective attitude toward women and family, encourage education but emphasize private role more, gender segregated work environments
- Confluence of religious, cultural and "feminine" traits create integrated and overlapping sources of influence on leadership.

Recent Research on UAE Women

- ✓ Moderate change from expected restrictive traditional attitudes towards women managers in the UAE to a more liberal view.
- ✓ Gender gap in attitudes towards women managers persists even when other factors held constant with females consistently more supportive than males.
- ✓ UAE society is generally regarded as highly patriarchal with clear gender role differences.
- ✓ Students held more favorable attitudes toward women managers in the UAE than older generations.

Implications for Women's Leadership Education and Development

- Additional research to identify emerging issues for new generations of women leaders, move beyond individual success stories; explore generational, ethnic and socio-economic class differences and similarities
- Post secondary and executive programs survey women and identify needs, customize curriculum and programs to focus on individual issues and address managerial responsibility for creating cultures and policies that retain and advance women into leadership positions
- First generation issues as women enter into professions and positions never previously held by women: self confidence, career planning and goal setting, managing work/life balance, dealing with stereotypes...global issues confronting women

Leadership Education

- Address positive role of gender segregated education and address need for male-female professional interaction; also create curriculum to address issues in co-ed environment
- Research should identify needs of men in the region regarding attitudes and behavior towards women in professional roles as colleagues and peers and as managers and leaders
- Examine role of government in providing impetus for cultural and gender sensitive management and leadership education for women and men

Implications for Leadership Education

- Encourage strategic and collaborative/systemic thinking and alliances between higher education, NGO's and government sponsored programs educating women for leadership to conduct research, examine best practices from the West but integrate and adapt to regional context
- Differentiate between leadership and management or business ; training and education, career stages and design programs accordingly

Thank you



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