

# Factors Influencing Females Work Participation and Work Performance in the Jordanian Public Sector

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## Abstract

With the current development and increasing participation of women in work in developed countries, we find it important to study this issue in Jordan. The objective of this study was to explore the reasons behind the lacking representation of females and their work participation in the Jordanian public sector despite the high percentage of education attainment among them. In general around the world, the increase in women's labor force participation over the past few decades was the main driving force of economic growth. Engaging women into the work sphere as much as possible is considered part of the solution to economic problems and poverty. To achieve this, the researchers employed a comparative and experimental approach to explore the reasons behind the lacking representation of females and their work participation in the Jordanian public sector, based on the outputs and recommendations published from previous studies in this. The results reveal that economic conditions, legal frameworks that cover employment matters, social prejudices and norms towards females work outside of the house, the existence of, religious beliefs are the main specific reasons for women's participation in the labor market. The social view that females are homemakers, mother, and dependents has led to the development of public policies that while aimed at providing protection, have led to the raise in discrimination against them. It is vital to work on building awareness and attitude change about women and men's roles among the general population, in order to facilitate the increase of female work participation.

**Keywords:** Females, Work Participation, Work Performance, Jordan, Public Sector.

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## 1. Introduction

Increased global attention on women's participation in the labor market and its social dimensions has been an incentive to increase studies on the gender and labor participation (Ackah, Ahiadeke and Fenny, 2009; Al-Abdallah and Bataineh, 2018) Where there is greater participation of women in the labor market in developed countries (Ackah, Ahiadeke and Fenny, 2009; Suhaida, Nurulhuda and Faizal, 2014). Certainly the participation of the labor force in the labor market is of great importance in the development of the economic and social aspect. Note that there is an increase in the rate of participation of women in the labor market, but we still note the division of some global markets by gender category where the number of women is few compared to men and can also be observed a large difference in wages between men and women, which indicates that the highest proportion of women participating in the work In the informal market or among the poor, many countries still impose restrictions on women's employment and the development of their potential (Pettersson, Mariscal and Ishi, 2017) According to (Women, 1997; The Council of Europe., 2017)A reference to the importance of equality of rights and opportunities between men and women as it is an important principle of human rights and a key condition for lasting development. It is considered both, a human rights principle and a precondition for sustainable, people-centered development. Inequality remains a major obstacle to the development of the human race We still note that inequality between men and women is a major impediment to human development and there is difficulty in applying equality as many women are discriminated against in favor of men in the work areas and this is a negative motivation in the development of their potential (The Council of Europe., 2017). In the past years, developing countries in the Middle East and Africa have increased the participation of women in the labor market, especially in the health and education sector, and the proportion of female students in schools and universities has increased. (Tara, 2012) at present, the proportion of educated women in the Middle East and Africa has increased, but their participation in the labor market and in supporting the economy has not been significantly appreciated the percentage of their participation in these countries, according to the report of the organization (ILO) 26%, but globally reached 56%. The participation rate of men in the labor market reached 76% in these countries, higher than the world average of 74% (Al- Ghwell, 2015). The lack of participation of women in the practical sector will have a negative impact on the economic growth of any country, as there will be less productivity and operational

capabilities, where many scientific researchers have confirmed that economic aid recently working women in support of education and health for their children and this is a catalyst in overcoming Poverty in developing countries. For example, in the UAE, the GDP will rise to 12% if women participate in the labor market and in Egypt 34% (Al- Ghwell, 2015) Therefore, the participation of women in the labor sector has not yet been widespread (Ruth Eikhof, 2012). In addition, low-income jobs remain confined to women are (Marlow and McAdam, 2013) Even higher administrative positions also do not include women but are more restricted to men These signs show that there is still a distinction between men and women (Warhurst *et al.*, 2009; Stefanović and Stošić, 2012) In spite of the development of the participation of women in the work sector, we find that we still need to support them, which shows that there is an inequality between men and women, therefore we find the need to deepen more in the social beliefs and skills and abilities possessed by both gender and explain the role of women and men in Countries and Communities (Banyard, 2010; Goodman, Smyth and Banyard, 2010).

## 2. Methods

The paper is divided and organized as follows: In the third section will review the previous studies in this particular area. In the third-one section will deal with Female Work Participation in Jordan and then discuss the results / conclusion section (4-5).

## 3. Literature Review

Managing the role of women in societies varies from country to country, so the study of economic and social factors has been expanded (Powell, 2018) Many researches have confirmed that there is a significant impact of social factors on people (Attanasio, Low and Sánchez-Marcos, 2008; Albanesi and Olivetti, 2016; Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum, *et al.*, 2018; Habes, Salloum, *et al.*, 2018; Motteh saleh al-shibly, 2018; Rahi, 2018; Alghizzawi, 2019b; Rahi *et al.*, 2019; Salloum, Al-Emran, Habes, *et al.*, 2019) Women's participation in economic activities increases overall productivity (del Mar Alonso-Almeida, 2014) The increasing participation of women in the job enhances the economy and enables women, family, so the participation of women in employment is important (Kabeer, 2005; Bussmann, 2009) Recently, there has been a significant change in the structure of the global workforce with the participation of women in the labor sector. However, according to many indicators, there are still limitations in women's employment by salaries and positions (Mon, 2000; Naqvi, Shahnaz and Arif, 2002; Evers and Sieverding, 2014) according to (McDougall, 1996) indicated that The participation of women in work is largely related to social status, educational level and family size. While There is a relationship between the educational level and the extent of women's participation in the labor market sector, (Yakubu, 2010; Moeeni, 2019) Through modern information technology and communication, it is possible to balance men and women in the work because it will facilitate many tasks (Ruth Eikhof, 2012; Salloum *et al.*, 2017; Alghizzawi, 2019a; Alghizzawi, Habes and Salloum, 2019) The higher the proportion of education, the greater the proportion of women in the labor market (Lechman and Kaur, 2015). Education and wages are factors that affect women to participate in the labor market in addition to social factors and unemployment, so it is necessary to operational programs and financial funding and laws (Sorsa *et al.*, 2015) The likelihood of women's participation increases with the level of education and may decline with family size and marital status. These influences vary by community and country (Hosney, 2016). A study of (Beqa, 2015) in Kosovo found that the labor law and the lack of capital are key factors affecting women's participation in the labor market, and that organizations avoid the extra cost of maternity leave. In Australia, many researchers have found that men are the biggest participants in the labor market and there is a reduction in the role of women (Beqa, 2015) Education is an important factor in women's participation in the labor market (Abraham, Ohemeng and Ohemeng, 2017; Kim and Kim, 2017) Among the laws imposed for equality between men and women include equality in employment (Lai and Sarkar, 2017) In Taiwan, despite many laws to empower women in the labor market, full-time workers have not been activated Act (GEEA), enacted in 2002). When looking comprehensive overview of previous studies, we find that the determinants of women's participation in the labor market and economic activities are affected by different determinants from one society to another and from one country to another, most notably demographic factors and unemployment and GDP.

### 3.1 Female Work Participation in Jordan

Jordanian women are one of the most educated women in the Middle East, where the percentage of female students in universities is higher than that of men. Jordan has 95% of women writing and reading. However, the percentage of women who work and seek work is only 16%, as 70% of Jordanian women Have a bachelor's degree and do not work compared to 25% of men (Schwartz, Mosharafa and Wallace, 2016; Fathi, 2018). Decision makers in Jordan believe that the GDP can rise by 5% if women participate in the labor market by 24% as a plan until 2025. (Schwartz, Mosharafa and Wallace, 2016) Studies attribute this lack of participation in the labor market to many reasons, of which we mention the following:

1. Direct and indirect discrimination due to the reproductive role of the females, sexual harassment, female

- victimization (Tesfaye, 2011) , There are few job opportunities in the government sector, which has not increased for several years, especially in the educational and health sector (Rich, 2014)
2. There is a difference of skills and scientific specialties with the needs of the labor market required (Bank, 2014)
  3. There are no deterrent laws for organizations that distinguish men from women in the labor market in terms of salaries, positions and opportunities (Hosney, 2016).
  4. The existence of the “glass ceiling”, a term that explains the promotion gap that discriminates against females, where the bias is usually in favor of men rather than of women (Tesfaye, 2011)
  5. Economic and infrastructure hurdles, pertaining to the cost of preschools, domestic helpers, low wages, nonexistent public transportation. (Bank, 2014)
  6. Certainly, religious and social beliefs about women's work have a significant impact in many countries (Norris, 2009). In Islam, some believe that the work of women should be confined to the home and family, while others believe that women have a great role in supporting society, work and the economy (Caputo *et al.*, 2016)

The Jordanian government did not stand without any action as it has developed policies that help in the equality between men and women on different levels since the nineties, where it worked on several plans, the first of which is the economic development plan, which aimed to prevent discrimination and violence against women (Alnawafleh, 2019; Habes, 2019; Salloum, Al-Emran, Khalaf, *et al.*, 2019) This was followed by the National Plan and the National Committee for Women worked on several development strategies as well (Cámara *et al.*, 2015; Al-Shibly *et al.*, 2019; Habes *et al.*, 2019) The Social norms for Jordanian women are changing, though slowly, over three decades, the role of Jordanian women was restricted to domestic activities, teaching in schools and working in the nursing sector. Recent decades have seen increased women’s participation in the labor force, increases in women’s life expectancy, improved educational attainment, and decline in fertility rates. Inequities remain in participation in economic and political spheres, as well as in legal rights related to marriage, inheritance, divorce and employment (Cámara *et al.*, 2015; Alghizzawi, Salloum 2018) as well as she shares it with men in the academic and educational sector, (Habes, *et al.*, 2018; Alghizzawi *et al.*, 2019; Habes *et al.*, 2019) therefore the Discrimination between men and women is the main reason for the lack of empowerment of women in Jordan, where there are limitations governing women in the exercise of their lives.(Alghizzawi *et al.*, 2018).

According to the Human Development Report (2018), the calculated gender development index (GDI) for Jordan was (0.868) as shown in the below table 1. the GDI measure, its measures the extent of discrimination between men and women through three important trends of human development (Jahan and Jespersen, 2016):

- I. Health. Measured by life expectancy for men and women
- II. Education. It is measured by the average years of schooling for men and women
- III. Control of economic resources is measured by the ratio of GNI to men and women

Table 1 Jordan’s GDI value and its components

	Life Expectancy at birth		Expected years of schooling		Mean Years of schooling		GNI per capita		HDI values		F-M ratio
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	GDI value
<b>Jordan</b>	76.2	72.7	12.1	11.6	10.2	11.6	2,734	13,668	0.654	0.754	0.868

Source: The Human Development Report 2018 (UNDP, 2019)

In 2010 the Gender Inequality Index (GII) was introduced by the Human Development Report, this index reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions as follows:

- I. Reproductive capacity Maternal mortality and birth rates
- II. Empowerment. Proportion of women in education and participation in parliamentary seats
- III. Economic Activity Extent of participation of men and women in the labor market

This indicator shows the percentage of missed opportunities in human development due to the existence of discrimination between women and men according to the previous dimensions mentioned. Jordan's index is 0.469, ranking 113 out of 162 other countries in 2018. Jordan’s indicators on the three aspect of GII are shown in the below table 2:

Table 2 Jordan's GII value and its components

	GII Value	GII Rank	Maternal Mortality Rate	Adolescent birth rate	Female seats in parliament	Population with at least some secondary education		Labor force participation rate %	
						Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Jordan</b>	0.469	113	58.0	25.9	15.4	82.0	85.9	14.1	64.0

Source: The Human Development Report 2018 (UNDP, 2019)

#### 4. Result / Discussion

The previous study reveal that economic conditions, legal frameworks that cover employment matters, social prejudices and norms towards females work outside of the house, The existence of what so called “glass ceiling”, religious beliefs and attitude towards females work outside of the house, it's the effect on Female work participation and productivity (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Naqvi, Shahnaz and Arif, 2002; Dawn Metcalfe and Afanassieva, 2005; Attanasio, 2009; Tesfaye, 2011; Ruth Eikhof, 2012; Evers and Sieverding, 2014; Beqa, 2015; Sorsa *et al.*, 2015; Davis and Maldonado, 2015; Ezzedeen, Budworth and Baker, 2015; Hosney, 2016; Kim and Kim, 2017; Smith McKoy *et al.*, 2018; Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum, *et al.*, 2018; Campbell, 2019) Women in general have accesses to jobs that offer low wages, and require long and hard working hours, and sometimes do not provide social security. In addition to that the high cost of hiring someone else to help working women with childcare and domestic work creates a barrier for women to seek jobs (Rich, 2014) Furthermore, the social view of women in the Jordanian society still confines them to the reproductive role, which is a dominant idea in the mindset of many employers. Therefore many companies still prefer to employ single young women. This might lead to a situation where many women tend to leave their jobs after marriage; those who remain in the work force are assumed to have high commitment to their careers. Consequently when decisions are made regarding access to training or promotion potential, women are less likely to be considered. Social attitude also affects the decision of the job that they seek, where sometimes the night shift is considered not appropriate for a female. These kinds of factors restrict access to jobs and limit the areas of work. Moreover there is no significant effect of religion on female work participation and productivity (Haghighat, 2005; H'madoun, 2010) Indicating that the Intensity of belief and religious participation employ an opposite effect on the likelihood of employment with the latter being positive and smaller in magnitude than the previous. Research indicates that the Muslim denominations stand out in their negative effect on women's engagement in paid work. While (Nnoromele, 2017) argue the opposite that religion does not influence female labor force participation when controlling for national and environmental cultural factors. Which suggests that a country's institutions, socio-political context, and geographic cultural heritage matter in the way that religiosity is expressed in women's economic participation.

#### 5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to shed light on reasons behind the lacking representation of females and their work participation in the Jordanian public sector despite the high percentage of education attainment among them as explained above. The researcher reviewed the previous studies on the subject of the research In general view in the world we find that the participation of women in the work helps in the advancement of the economy and solve many economic problems, but nevertheless the percentage of participation of women at work is low, so it is important to researches more broadly on the factors affecting the decisions of women's employment and has shown many studies on the subject of factors Affecting the process of labor supply and the rules set by organizations such as the impact of life at home and private and social life and labor market policies and level of economic on the decision of women in the job offer and the main objective of this study to explain the reasons for factors affecting The participation of women in the Jordanian public sector The social view that females are homemakers, mother, and dependents has led to the development of public policies that while aimed at providing protection, have led to the raise in discrimination against them. It is vital to work on building awareness and attitude change about women and men's roles among the general population, in order to facilitate the increase of female work participation especially in Developing countries.

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