

Managerial Gender Discrimination in Jordanian Workplaces: two case studies

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Abstract

Background: According to the United Nations, gender discrimination is one of the crucial issues that face women around the globe. Discriminative attitudes against women are still reported worldwide, despite the presence of international laws that prohibit such practices (e.g. Civil Rights Act of 1964), (Allen, 2005; Miller, 1966).

Aim and Objectives: The aim of this research was to assess the gender discrimination phenomena in Jordanian firms by undertaking two case studies. This was done by examining the impact of managerial gender discrimination, determining the factors that lead to gender discrimination and investigating the public attitudes towards managerial gender discrimination; all of which were studied in the Jordanian context.

Methods: The study was a cross-sectional qualitative study conducted using in-depth interviews. Sixteen senior managers were purposefully and conveniently selected from two firms in Jordan. The interviews were anonymously and privately transcribed, and a thematic analysis was conducted to explore insights and thoughts about gender discrimination in managerial level in Jordan.

Results: It was found the participants demonstrated a good and adequate understanding of gender discrimination issues and how it is dealt with in Jordan; however, they showed to be less aware of the glass ceiling effect. The interviews identified how deep and intense is the role of religion, culture and traditions in creating a conflicting atmosphere of gender equality in Jordan. However, participants expressed positive views on the progression of gender equality that Jordan has done and predictively will have in future.

Introduction

Gender discrimination is “Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” [United Nations, 1979; Article 1] In other words, it is a bias towards one gender over the other gender that often results in the suppression of one gender; throughout the period of world history, this particular suppressed gender has been the females. Generally, there are two main kinds of gender discrimination; first, disparate treatment or overt gender discrimination which represent a public statement from individuals or companies to overtly prejudice against women; for instance, refusing to hire a woman just because of her gender type (Dipboye and Colella, 2013). This mistreatment could be even with customers; for instance, evidence of gender discrimination was reported in transportation companies worked in Boston in the American United States as drivers were found to burden long and more expensive rides when the passenger is female (Ge et al., 2016). The second type is the disparate impact which includes the presence of procedure or protocol that affect women opportunities in workplaces, although these procedures or protocols did not intend to discriminate between men and women (Dipboye and Colella, 2013). Jordan is selected as the context for this research since there is not sufficient literature related to gender discrimination in this Arabic region. In contrast, different categories of literature related to gender discrimination worldwide emphasize on western areas, even though political and cultural values within these regions differ vastly from those found in the Middle East area; which highlight the importance of the investigation of gender discrimination in the context of Middle Eastern country like Jordan. The study has selected two case studies; one is an NGO and the other is local private multi-branches organization. This selection was to cover different type of firms who admitted non-discriminatory policies in Jordanian culture. The study evaluated the perception held by managers on the ideal characteristics for a manager, the characteristics associated with female employees and their interpretations if or why for women, there is gender discrimination in Jordanian organizations.

Chronological Progress toward Gender Equality in Jordan

Since the creation of the kingdom, women's integration into the public sphere has been seen in Jordan as a necessary and unavoidable step towards modernization and growth. However, this was not as well received as was desired; although some supported the rise of women's independence, others opposed it and believed that women's traditional roles should be preserved. For this reason, Jordanian women fought for their political and civic rights. It began to plan a number of rallies and demonstrations between the 1940s and the 1970s, demanding justice and equality as well as the right to vote in elections. Even though the government put restrictions on some of these rallies and demonstrations, they ultimately succeeded in starting a law reform movement. Nevertheless, Jordanian women never achieved complete and equal rights. For example, in 1955 the Jordanian parliament passed legislation granting women the right to vote—but only if they meet certain educational requirements. Even though Jordanian males of various educational backgrounds were eligible to vote, only women were required to meet the minimum educational requirement of an elementary education. As a result, women's movements continued to advocate and protest (Massad, 2001). Things started developing slowly but significantly in 1974 when King Hussein II issued a royal order giving the right to vote to all adult Jordanian women. However, these improvements ended in 1976 with the announcement of the Personal Status Law, which defined Jordanian women as dependent and continually upheld their traditional roles as mothers and wives. As a result, women in Jordan were positioned along a "dual axis of tradition and modernity" (Massad, 2001; p. 54), and as compared with males, women were less likely to be employed across all age groups. As reported by the Department of Statistics (2018a), rates decline sharply as women age, suggesting that fewer women pursue jobs in management. Women are also known to work in particular fields and industries; most often, they serve in the public sector, including in the fields of social work, health, and education (Department of Statistics, 2018b). Additionally, women's participation in politics remains restricted. a total of only 15 seats reserved for women in the Lower House of Parliament under the 2003 quota system. The same has been observed in senate membership, where women make only around 12% of the membership, and municipal councils, where women make up about 25% of the membership (Jordanian National Commission for Women, 2017). In terms of politics as a whole seven women—or 25% of the total number of ministers—were appointed to

the government's cabinet of ministers in 2018. Nearly 55 years later, gender discrimination remains one of the primary obstacles limiting Jordan's efforts to achieve gender equality. In Jordan, gender norms are still tight, and stereotypes prevent women from fully integrating into the public and political spheres. Take a look at Table 1.

According to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Committee (CEDAW), observations on cultural stereotypes and gender roles have not changed since the year 2000. In the most recent report, the Committee revealed its concern over the endurance of deep-rooted prejudicial stereotypes concerning the women's and men's believed roles and responsibilities in terms of family and in all society, which exaggerate the traditional role of women as mothers and wives, whereby weakening women's social status, independence, educational opportunities and professional occupations. It also highlighted the role of patriarchal attitudes which they on the rise within society, which makes gender equality wildly and frequently challenged by conservative and traditional groups (CEDAW, 2017; p3). Appendix 1 summarizes chronological progress toward gender equality in Jordan.

Methods

This study aimed to interpret gender discrimination by gaining insights into the humans' meanings and actions toward these phenomena, thus we adopted an interpretive inductive approach as we conducted the research to identify and explore different views on these phenomena. Accordingly, two case studies were selected depending on criteria that ensure: (i) a solid background to give information, (ii) diverse outcomes that cover the majority of Jordanian culture (iii) a significant contribution to research and practice. Appendix 2 illustrates how these case studies met the above criteria. 16 participants from two organizations were allocated for the interviews in the purpose of conducting the current research. For each organization, 8 participants were assigned in which they were half males and half females. Two main features were constant across all participants; first, the age category where all of them were mature adults aged from between 40 to 61 years old. Second, the hierarchical position where all of them were in managerial positions (e.g. manager). Actually, the researcher did not target a specific range of age; instead, he targeted the occupied hierarchical position to match the research requirements. Despite that, it is remarkable to notify that senior-level employees should have a significant number of experience years to reach that level of

hierarchical positions, which in turn explains why all participants are in same age category. All participants were assigned code numbers for ethical purposes. These code numbers were selected in a way to indicate two main features; first, the gender type where females have odd numbers and males had even numbers. Second, the organization or firm status where the international firm had the sequence from 1 to 8 and the local firm had the sequence from 9 to 16. Using this method of coding participants; the author found it easy to detect the similarities and differences based on these two features during analysis. In Table 2, participants' profiles are clearly illustrated.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Techniques

One-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted as it helps in discovering new insights and attributions to the phenomenon and more convenient with open-ended questions which allows the interviewees to expand and explain their answers (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). During the interviews, interviewees were asked about their opinions in the gender equality status in Jordan, their actual experiences with gender discrimination attitudes, their thoughts and beliefs on how culture, religion and mindsets influences gender discrimination behaviours in Jordanian workplaces and how did they view the progression of gender equality in the present and future. Questions were asked one following the other with giving spaces between questions for additional follow-up; furthermore, breaks were given whenever required for the participants. All interviewee's responses were in English languages and were recorded and scripted later by the researcher for analysis.

The researcher intended to use a data analysis approach that allows understanding the words of participants as they are meant to be as it just as standing in the shoes of the participants. Depending on these desires, thematic analysis was chosen, which the analysis tool that identifies, analyze and interpret patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data (Clarke and Braun, 2017). It is also acknowledged to be profoundly reliable in analyzing primary source data, such as interview transcripts (Golinski, 2018). In this study, we followed Braun and Clarke (2006) framework of thematic analysis where we got a final thematic map that has four master themes and eleven sub-themes was developed, as shown in figure 1

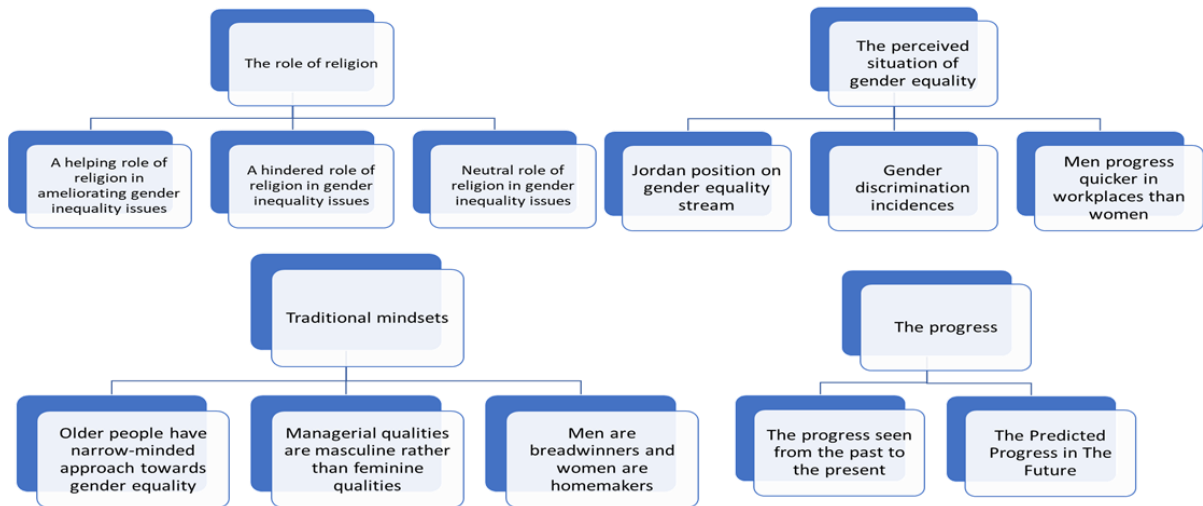


Figure 1: Master themes and sub-themes of gender discrimination in Jordanian organizations. Source: author

Results

Theme One: The Perceived Situation of Gender Equality

Jordan Position on Gender Equality Stream

In comparison to American and European experiences; the progress of the Middle East and Jordan, in particular, in developing gender equality concepts still lags behind; this was the opinion of all participants in the current study. In some point of views; this situation was related to the undeveloped level of the economic and political structure as participant number 2 said *"Gender equality agendas depend on the political and economic situation in the countries(...)"* and participant number 6 said, *"European and North American countries have sophisticated economic balance that allows them to concentrate on human development (...)"*. And others related to the complex cultural and social structure as participant number 10 stated: *"(...) these evolved rules do not align with our culture, I am afraid (...)"*.

Gender Discrimination Incidences

Some participants shared their gender discrimination experiences, whether it happened with them or with someone they know; all of which happened with women. Deselecting job applications for women just because of their marital status (new married or with little children) regardless of their qualifications and experience was one of the mentioned gender discrimination forms. In fact, marital status discrimination is a common bias facing women opportunities in the hiring process in many countries around the world. Women faces challenges in getting equal salaries and maternal rights which was also mentioned by participants of the current study as participant number 7 said, *“I was refused just because I am newly married”*, and participant number 13 said, *“they refused my application because I have children who need care”*. In Jordan, women face social stereotyping which prohibits them from having the same treatment men have; furthermore, some women are not aware of the women-friendly laws and policies that protect their rights (Mehtap et al., 2016). In the current study, this was observed when two participants said that they did not know where to complain because they were "young" and "naïve". Other mentioned gender discrimination forms were discriminative violence and using gender stereotyping language; however, these were solved immediately because of anti-discriminative policies that almost all companies adopt in Jordan. Participants praised the role of companies in dealing with gender discrimination issues, in which, eleven participants declared with a positive notion on how companies used *“protocols”*, *“restrict rules”* and *“punishment”* against discrimination incidences and had adopted *“diversity policy”* in recruiting employees.

From another aspect, the most repetitive gender discrimination incidence mentioned by participants was when they were talking about how they were hindered from being promoted to higher positions in the hierarchical workplace structure; although, all of which argued their eligibility to reach these positions. They were also accusing the workplaces' systems that neglected to deal with such kind of gender discrimination and underestimated its consequences. They used phrases like *“(…) for promotion equality nothing is done!”* – participant 11, *“(…) but no company have a policy to protect women from glass ceiling”* – participant 9, *“(…)some people do not see how such event could be a discrimination (…)”*- participant 5, *“(…) we still need more development to make more women reaching leadership and managerial position”*- participant 3 and *“some*

women are not aware they are discriminated by not being promoted, and that is why companies in Jordan neglected" – participant 1. Participants also expressed their thoughts on how these gender discrimination events affected them and their workplaces environment. They mentioned the negative consequences on the productivity, loyalty and even the personality of employees whatever the position they are holding in the company. They also pointed out how gender discrimination incidences can "kill" the creativity, spirituality and positivity of the work environment. Furthermore, some participants confessed to leaving their previous employment because they felt unapprised and neglected and wanted to prove themselves elsewhere.

Men Progress Quicker in Workplaces than Women

All participants, including men and women, agreed that men progress quicker than women in workplaces which indicates the discouraging pattern of women engagement in Jordanian workplaces that became the focus of some studies lately. Case studies conducted on Arabic countries, including Jordan, revealed that female professionals face considerable social pressure that deprives them of getting opportunities for career advancement (Metcalf, 2006). But the interesting part of the current study revealed that people, especially men, were unconsciously not aware of the glass ceiling effect on women career progression in Jordan. This was observed when male participants undoubtedly believed that men progress quicker than women in workplaces due to their natural superiority by being "*confident*", "*flexible*", "*strong*" and "*focused and concentrated on achieving tasks*" as stated by participants number 2, 8, 6 and 14, respectively (these thoughts will be discussed in detail in theme three). While female participants showed discontent from such phenomenon of career progression, and some of them considered it gender bias and described it as "*discrimination*", "*underestimation*", "*inequality*", "*injustice*" and "*glass ceiling*"; however, none of the male participants showed the same. But instead, men acted as it is normal for them to progress quicker than women. Therefore, this highlighted the lack of awareness toward the glass ceiling effect in Jordan; which described the laggard Jordanian public attitude toward detecting, addressing and solving glass ceiling in workplaces in Jordan.

Theme Two: The Role of Religion

A Helping Role of Religion in Ameliorating Gender Inequality Issues

Some participants refused to link religion to gender inequality issues and viewed Islam as the salvage for solving gender discrimination issues in Jordan; in which they used examples of Islamic literature and history to prove their thoughts. They used Quran verses like “I never fail to reward any worker among you for any work you do, be you male or female – you are equal to one another.” (Qur’an, p.76) and “And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women.” (Qur’an, p.36), and they mentioned behaviors that Muslims usually do regardless to the gender as participant number 6 stated, *“(...) women and men are praying together in mosques during occasions of the annual pilgrimage or Eid (...)”* and participant number 8 said, *“(...) regarding to duties; both male and female are responsible equally”*. From another aspect; some participants argued Islam is misused and misunderstood to reach unknown goals; which may also bear the truth. For instance, participant number 15 related this religion misuse to political and tribal influences, and she proves that by saying *“(...) you can see how this situation is also seen in neighboring countries; all of them have the same political agendas and all of them have the same tribal rules”*.

A Hindered Role of Religion in Gender Inequality Issues

On the other hand, some participants considered religion to be a part of the big picture that urged gender inequality. As mentioned earlier, these blaming views were not stated clearly by participants as supportive views did; but instead, their talks were covered with reasons and thoughts on the whole culture effect on the perception of gender discrimination. For example, Participant number 2 stated *“(...) unfortunately the impact of the culture is higher than the impact of the religion, now of course both have impact, but the culture impact is higher”*, and participant number 3 said, *“Culture more than religion has impact on the workforce environments and it can limit the ability of women to progress in their careers; however, it is changing now as we can see more presence of women in decision making positions”*.

Neutral Role of Religion in Gender Inequality Issues

A small number of participants (three participants) stated their neutral view where no relationship could be drawn between religion and gender system. They tend to refuse the whole reality by rejecting any role of religion, neither positive nor negative. However, these participants might be uncomfortable to describe the role of religion as others did; this was observed because they prefer to have a small talk about this topic. Another possible reason is that they might be uninterested in philosophical thoughts or theological beliefs in a way that they prefer not to rationalize lived scenes to intangible reasons, but instead to find tangible reasons which able to be fixed. For example, participant number 13 said, *"No, I don't think that religion has an arm in all of that; see, gender discrimination is a global issue, you can detect many cases of discrimination even in atheist countries!"*.

Theme Three: Traditional Mindsets

Older People Have Narrow-minded Approach Towards Gender Equality

All participants agreed, without any exception, on the age factor as a non-modified factor that shaped old fashioned view on gender equality rules. They described the old generation views as *"close-minded"*- participant 2,5,7,11 and 15, *"old-fashion"*- participant 1,8,9 and 14, *"retro thinking"*- participant 3, *"strict"*- participant 6, *"restrict"*- participant 16, *"complex"*- participant 10, *"complicated"*- participant 12 and *"rigorous thoughts"*- participant 4. As Connell (2005) revealed; older men showed a significant level of doubt and opposition toward gender equality concepts, comparing to younger men. This may be due to the fact that older generation adheres more strongly to what they used to, in comparison to the younger generation who are prone to learn and adapt new ideas (Mannheim, 1970; Miles, 2002). Thus, younger generations are open to acknowledging the emerging human rights and positively applied it; in contrast to the older generation who demonstrates unwilling to do so. Another possible reason behind this "close-minded" attitudes is that the older generation lived before the introduction of feminist activities.

Managerial Qualities Are Masculine Rather Than Feminine Qualities

Participants responses on the mindset that allocates managerial qualities as masculine rather than feminine qualities were varied between supporters and opposers which indicates the presence of unconscious bias that creates glass ceiling against women promotion to managerial positions in workplaces in Jordan. While the supporter group consists mostly of men; the opposer group consists mostly of women. In which, women participants extremely (5 out of 8 women) denied such mindsets; for instance, participant number 1 said, *"(...) it is sad to hear that someone divide human characteristics into two categories; male-based and female-based, when both are human!"* and participant number 3 said, *"Those qualities are for all humans not masculine specifically and it doesn't make women in any lesser role in any profession"* and participant number 9 said, *"(...) there is no rule that put one gender in specific box of skills"*. In contrast, men were arguing the natural reasons that differentiate between women and men, which make such mindset true in their opinion, as they describe women to be like *"sensitive"*- participant 2, 10, *"delicate"*- participant 6, *"moody"*- participant 16, *"less diplomatic"*- participant 8 and *"less serious"*- participant 14. Interestingly, there was a significant variation in responses between women and men participants when they were asked about this mindset. This gives a clue of the cold war between women and men that hinders managerial positions to be held by women in Jordan. In fact, glass ceiling effect stumbled Jordanian women career progress more than family and social commitments did, as mid-level women managers responded when they were asked about career progress barrier by questionnaires (Al-Manasra, 2013).

Men Are Breadwinners and Women Are Homemakers

The assumption that argued the prevalent of stereotyping gender roles in Jordan, where men are breadwinners and women are homemakers, got the agreement from almost all participants; even those who doubted it confessed the presence of villages which still adopted such mindset. In fact, this mindset is prevalent in many countries around the world; precisely after the industrial revolution in the 19th century where the family structure and duties have been changed to adapt to that era challenges (Meadow and Stacey, 2006). The outcome of these changes redeveloped the family roles where

women are the first responsible for almost all family commitments, and men are only responsible for the family financial commitments (Goode, 1963; Meadow and Stacey 2006). In the current study, most of the participants (including women and men) not only confess the dominance of this mindset but also showed a deviation toward believing, applying and justifying this mindset. As participant number 15 stated "*(...) denying sexual difference will overturn the organization of our society and call into question its foundations*", participant number 10 said, "*(...) without this way of thinking we will not be an Eastern culture!*" and participant number 5 said, "*it is not easy for women to reach higher hierarchical position because they have family duties (...)*",

Theme Four: The Progress

The Progress Seen from The Past to The Present

There was a general agreement from all participants on the incremental progression in dealing with gender equality theories and establishing preventative laws and policies. Participants also emphasized the role of government and human right institutions in reducing the stereotypes-based gender discrimination in workplaces. They also showed awareness of the evolution that was brought by the Civil Rights Act in 1964 which strictly prohibited all kinds of discrimination on the basis of sex, color, religion, race or national origin in all aspects of employment (Miller, 1966).

The Predicted Progress in The Future

In the future vision, nearly all participants had an optimistic vision and expected more improvement in gender equality issue in Jordan. Even the cultural ideologies and the behavioral patterns of the individuals have received positive growth, and there has been immense progress in the country's social development. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender discrimination in Jordan is facing a downfall leading to social development as well as the economic development of the nation.

However, some participants were not expecting further improvement due to the unstable political and economic situation that the era lives in these days as participant number 2 said, "*political instability would have a negative impact on the society in*

various fields, including the empowerment of women". This was also investigated by Helfont and Helfont, (2012) who refer to the unstable circumstances of the Middle East that have a negative impact on gender equality implementation. Another gloomy view of a participant of the current study mentioned the critical impact of social pressures and stereotypical restrictions that did not only create gender discrimination issues but also retracted the perception of women rights by women themselves. In fact, despite the Jordanian governmental and private initiatives, programs and policies; women in Jordan are shown to be unaware of their rights or simply afraid to ask about these rights due to social pressure and restricted freedom (Mehtap et al., 2016).

Discussion and Conclusions

The impact of managerial gender discrimination in Jordanian organizations

Managerial level women's equality and sovereignty in their political, educational, economic and health status are essential goals in itself for many countries around the world (Adams and Funk, 2012). In active and reproductive lives, complete cooperation and collaboration between men and women are required, including shared responsibility for the treatment and education of children and household maintenance which allow for both to progress and succeed in workplaces. However, managerial level women who participated in the current study confessed the challenges that women face to reach managerial positions in Jordan as a consequence of norms and standards, in which pressure is placed on them in some cases to comply with the "norms", and in other cases, there is a loss of authority and control. Some of them shared their previous experiences in gender discrimination, the most common views were "not being promoted" and "restrained in the same position". Furthermore, some participants including men viewed the awareness, expertise and management strategies of women are still overlooked, and the ties of influence that preclude women from enjoying a stable and satisfying existence still existed across several social layers, from the most intimate to the extremely visible.

In the current study, participants (including men and women) expressed how gender discrimination affected the productivity, loyalty and even the personality of employees whatever the position they were holding in the company. There was general agreement

on how gender discrimination incidences can "kill" the creativity, spirituality and positivity of the work environment and in some cases create tensioned relationships with other employees. Indeed, some participants declared that gender discrimination was the reason that encouraged them to leave the workplace as it excluded them from being advanced in hierarchical positions or getting promotions and that made them feel depressed and unsatisfied and encourage them to see other workplaces that appreciate their productive performance

Achieving gender equality is considered to be the essential factor for competitiveness and growth of any organizational body. Moreover, it is crucial to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed to create an inclusive and dynamic environment that offers productive performance and satisfied employees. Furthermore, gender-equality reputation in any workplace preserves a bright image of the employer and sustains a good employees retention rate. Integrating women as an integral part of the workforce in general, adds more skills and ideas, improves decision-making process and develops perspectives that are essential to address the global issues and to harness new scopes and opportunities (Chuang, 2006; Goldman et al., 2006)

Consequently, gender discrimination has been associated with many adverse outcomes, in which some of the participants in the current study have mentioned and affirmed the discussed literature review. These adverse outcomes are the following:

- Diminished productivity: employees' attention will be shifted from focusing on work objectives and performance to deal with gender discrimination issues.
- High employee turnover: organizations or companies that do not assign and apply gender equality policy, will make employees disappointed and thinking to leave the workplace broke the creativity and productivity of the work culture and make employees change the workplaces.
- Damaged morale: organizations or companies that do not assign and apply gender equality policy, will break the creativity and spirituality and widespread a discontent atmosphere throughout the workplace.
- Relationship damage: gender discrimination issues can massively affect personal relationships and reputation or even cause mental or physical problems.

The Factors that Lead to Stereotypical Gender Discrimination in the Work Culture in the Country of Jordan

The current study was concerned with the predisposing factors of gender discrimination in Jordanian workplaces, especially those related to stereotyping. Participants, whether they are aware or not, elaborated and extensively underlined the possible factors that lead to stereotypical gender discrimination, precisely in the Jordanian workplaces. The three key factors identified were: Cultural values and standards, Prevalent stereotypical mindsets and Dominant family structure.

Cultural Values and Standards

The current study found that Jordanian culture adopts strict traditions and standards, whether they are socially or spiritually originated. These traditions and standards helped to maintain the stereotyping issues in Jordan and so restricted female rights by the normalization of discrimination and stalling the reactions of the observers and public attention. The traditions and standards also revealed the complex structure of Jordanian culture, which is influenced and shaped by Islamic and Arabic identities. The Islamic identity had a great controversial ground between participants; as some totally disagreed with accusing Islamic values to be contributing in endorsing stereotypical and discriminative behaviours in Jordan, others perceived the unreliable extraction of Islamic teachings impacts in Jordanian culture in inducing stereotypical and discriminative behaviours. However, in regard to tribal standards derived from the Arabic identity or the Bedouin norms as referred by Koburtay and his team (2020), participants of the current study had a complementary view on how these tribal standards or Arabic social norms eased the ability to discriminate or/and vanished the sensation of oppression when discriminate. In which, these strict standards and norms empower the stereotyping and the rigid social gender roles over the Jordanian mindset in accepting some forms of discrimination against women in workplaces; for instance, some participants viewed women as not eligible for managerial positions due to their feminine traits that are not compatible with the managerial qualities, and other participants, including women, affirm that women are homemakers who should give her children and husband, her first priority. Furthermore, as discussed in the literature review, the Arabic code of modesty compresses women in workplaces to conceal their

selves in order not to show spiritedness, excitement and affection as these expressions would have the social disgrace of being immodest, and this, in turn, suppresses women from engaging in workplaces which men can freely do as they are not committed to the code of modesty.

The current study identified the difference between tribal standards or social norms and spiritual principles (Islamic values). While the first involves the ideologies and the practices of individuals that are accepted in the society, the second involves faith and worship in the pursuit of certain interests which are the Islamic principles in case of Jordan. Although both of them structured, affected and were affected by the culture developing (Saroglou and Cohen, 2011); the influence of tribal standards or social norms are more extended and obvious towards the suppression, and the oppression of the female gender empower the stereotyping and the rigid social gender roles over the Jordanian mindset. And even with religious principles where Islamic standards are dominant in Jordan, it is actually interpreted in a way to be in line with the tribal standards or social norms (Koburtay et al., 2020; Bukhari and Ramzan, 2013). Thus, it can be said that there is an attribution of tribal standards or social norms towards gender discrimination more than religion.

Prevalent Stereotyping Mindsets

The current study found the patriarchal regulations and stereotypical conceptions of the gender system in Jordan affected not only family-life but also the work-life of women, including the limitations of access to work or progression in their careers. The marital ties that still exist and the expressly prescribed gender obedience with the negative impact of rigid gender norms and roles for women in Jordan; there was a general agreement from nearly all participants that a stereotypical role mindset that considered men are breadwinners and women are homemakers is widespread in Jordan. Jordanian society tends to view women workers as they are in their secondary jobs while their first job is their family responsibility; in contrast to male workers who are viewed as they are in their primary job which corresponded with their family responsibility (the financial support). Consequently, this way of thinking contributed to the low employment rate of women in Jordan, especially after marriage (Mehtap et al., 2016; Assaad et al., 2014). More than that, the mindset that allocates managerial qualities as

male qualities more than female qualities are also prevalent. This mindset underestimates Jordanian women abilities and capabilities in leading managerial positions and reduces women presence in leadership and managerial positions.

Dominant Family Structure

The current study found that older generations (people aged more than 65 years) in Jordan have a different stance on gender equality concepts and view some gender discrimination events as normal events. It also identified how the older generations who had lived in hard circumstances and poor situations in the past, were now facing problems in coping and adapting to the new applied gender-equal approaches now expected by most of the younger generations (youth and mature adults populations). This generation gap it was found not only create a tense atmosphere in applying and encouraging gender equality in Jordan but also hinders the progression wheel turning in Jordanian developments in gender equality implementation. Furthermore, it was found that extended families, rather than nuclear families, are the core structure of Jordanian society and so amplifies the issue, as extended families in Jordan have the dominance and power of the older generation over the younger generations even in recognizing and perceiving concepts and beliefs (Kawar, 2000).

Public Attitudes towards the Gender discrimination

One of the most spreadable gender discrimination issues in workplaces is allocating second class positions for women; where women employees work peacefully alongside with men employees in many job positions in workplaces, but women employees are hindered from reaching managerial positions although they are fulfilling the job requirement. This type of discrimination or the so-called glass ceiling effect is inconsistent with the equality of women (Cotter et al., 2001). In fact, men are continuously followed by women in structured engagement in jobs, access to credit, investments, income levels, innovation rates as well as legacy and property privileges.

The current study found the presence of the Gender discrimination that hinders Jordanian women from reaching leadership and managerial positions. Participants in this study -mainly females- claimed their exposure to discrimination when they were excluded from holding leadership positions, although they were fulfilling the position

requirements. It also described how weak are the systems and policies adopted by Jordanian firms and bodies in detecting and protecting women from Gender discrimination. Jordan as many eastern countries in the world has low participation of women in the leadership field due to the discouraging environment for women involvement even in organizations that served high percentage of female (Banihani and Syed, 2020; Dandan and Marques, 2019).

Importantly, the current study revealed the lack of awareness toward the Gender discrimination and its consequences on women at the individual level and on the civilization and modernization process at the country level. People, especially men, in Jordan are not conscious of the presence of barriers toward women progression in workplaces, but instead, they believe in the natural superiority of men that advance them to lead and manage better than women; this thought is widespread in Jordan even some women acknowledge it. The study found that some people in Jordan are more comfortable to have a male leader than a female leader because the perceived leadership traits resemble more male traits than female traits. Furthermore, some participant in the current study revealed that female leaders appear to some employees as bossy and bitchy because they express assertive and power traits and that contradicts the stereotypical role of the female in Jordanian culture as to be communal and warm.

And finally, the current study also found two contradictions in Jordanian thoughts; first, people in Jordan encouraged and praised women workers for working and proving themselves; meanwhile, they did not accept the idea of female leaders. As if they are really wanted women to have second-class jobs and left the leadership and executive jobs for men. Second, people in Jordan, including men and women, acknowledged that men progress quicker than women in workplaces; meanwhile, a minority of them considered this phenomenon as a discriminative issue, which highlights the lack of awareness toward the Gender discrimination in Jordan and reports the laggard Jordanian public attitude toward detecting, addressing and solving Gender discrimination in workplaces in Jordan.

The Current State of Gender Discrimination

The current study found how some people in Jordan still view the Jordanian position on gender equality stream as undeveloped and late compared to Western countries;

however, they are happy with the progression that Jordan has had from the past to the present. It also revealed how Jordanians are aware of their rights and knowledgeable of the role of government and human right institutions in reducing the stereotypes-based gender discrimination at workplaces. Meanwhile, some people -including women and men- are not aware of the invisible barriers that deprive women of being leaders or holding high hierarchical positions. This can be due to social pressure and restricted freedom which highlights the critical impact of these pressures and restrictions not only in creating gender discrimination issues but also in retracting the perception and recognition of women rights; even by women themselves. And finally, people seem to be optimistic when viewing the future vision for gender equality implementation in Jordan.

Recommendations

The current study provides a deep understanding of the perception and experience of a group of managers on the gender equality concept in Jordanian firms. It gives clues on the negative consequences of managerial gender discrimination and explores the factors behind stereotyping bias in Jordanian organizations. Furthermore, it detects and examines the glass ceiling effect on women career progression and finally describes the current situation and the expected vision for gender equality implementation in Jordan. Depending on that, the researcher sets some recommendations to enhance gender diversity and promote women career progression in Jordanian firms and organizations. Which are therefore as follows:

- I. Establishing well-defined diversity and inclusion program; this might include legislation that encourages companies (public or private) to implement initiatives for increasing women access to work, achieving proper retention rate for women's employees and facilitating women career development.
- II. Making work/life balance a priority for all employees; this might include affording flexible working hours, accepting part-time work and even permitting working from home for whom needed.
- III. Re-evaluating job specifications and descriptions for the senior management positions; This does not mean to change requirements but instead, to simplify it; for instance, reducing the accumulated years of management experience (e.g. to be less than ten

years) or expanding the range of experiences (e.g. to accept experiences in multiple industries).

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Appendix 1: Chronological Progress toward Gender Equality in Jordan. (This was created by the researcher using secondary data from various resources)

Time Period	Status/Event in Jordan
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1920s – 1930s	Jordan was in developing phase. Gender equality concepts were valued but not welcomed as expected by society; as some people countered the progression advancement for the liberation of women and thought that the traditional role of women should be conserved (Gender Discrimination in Jordan, 2019).
1940s	Active women movements were seen as women supported organization started to demonstrate and protest calling for justice and equality, requesting their right to suffrage and their right to vote for elections (Massad, 2001).
1955	Jordanian parliament enacted for conferring Jordanian women the right to vote; however only if they have at least a specific level of education (Massad, 2001).
1974	Legal shift was produced when King Hussein II issued a royal decree to admit all adult Jordanian women the right to vote (Massad, 2001).
1976	The Personal Status Law was announced; where it characterized Jordanian women as dependent and repeatedly preserves the traditional role of Jordanian women, as wives and mothers (Gender Discrimination in Jordan, 2019).
1992	Jordan has ratified CEDAW in 1992 with reservations on Articles 9.2, 16(1-c-d-g), and 15.4 (Discrimination in Jordan, 2012)
2003	The quota system was introduced, possesses only 15 seats for women in the Lower House of Parliament.
2007	Ratification on CEDAW was published in the Official Gazette (Discrimination in Jordan, 2012)
2010s - nowadays	Gender discrimination still one of the main issues that hinder Jordan's progression in terms of gender equality. Gender roles

remain rigorous and stereotypical mind sets in Jordan restricted women to entirely integrate into the public and political sphere

Appendix 2: Case study selection criteria

	Organization 1	Organization 2
Brief description -	A branch of an international non –profit organization operated in Jordan. It began its work in 1974 in Jordan and has around 200 employees in Jordan	A local financial organization with multiple branches across Jordan. It began its work in 1960 in Jordan and has around 250 employees.
Criteria (1) Background- <i>Does the case study have sufficient history to give information on their status of gender equality and how do they react to gender discrimination episodes?</i>	Since it instituted 46 years ago, It would have sufficient history and can give information on their status of gender equality, how do they react to gender discrimination episodes and can fairly describe the progress of application in terms gender equality over the time	Since it instituted 60 years ago, It would have sufficient history and can give information on their status of gender equality, how do they react to gender discrimination episodes and can fairly describe the progress of application in terms gender equality over the time

<p>Criteria (2)</p> <p>Outcomes- <i>Do the case studies cover different types of organizational cultures that are available in Jordan?</i></p>	<p>Organization 1 is a branch of international NGO where it utilizes international policies for recruiting, diversity, gender equality and has a well-defined diversity, equality and inclusion strategy. This will cover how an organization with international standards in Jordan would perceive gender equality concept.</p>	<p>Organization 2 is a local financial firm where it utilizes simple human resource policies that committed to exclude biasness and discrimination; however, it does not have a well-defined diversity, equality and inclusion strategy as the international one do. This will cover how an organization with simple, immature standards in Jordan would perceive gender equality concept. The differences between these organizational culture (Organization 1&2) will give us a clue on how much is the effect of the organizational culture on the perception and recognition of gender equality. It also magnitude the role of Jordanian culture/traditions in this perception; will the Jordanian culture dominate or will fairly influence in such</p>
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		perception of gender equality
<p>Criteria (3)</p> <p>Contribution to research- – <i>To what extent does the case study provide insights, observations and best practices?</i></p>	<p>Organization 1 is good source for getting insights and observations as it has a valuable history in Jordan and would have satisfactory information on gender discrimination status. It also can be a representative of firms with international standards in Jordanian culture.</p>	<p>Organization 2 is good source for getting insights and observations as it has a valuable history in Jordan and would have satisfactory information on gender discrimination status. It also can be a representative of firms with simple standards in Jordanian culture.</p>