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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Tabatabaei, Ghazalehsadat (1); Pajares, Javier (2); Lopez-Paredes, Adolfo (2)

(1) INSISOC, (2) Universidad de Valladolid

In this study, an attempt has been made to examine important aspects of the situation of women in the workplace in different groups, especially the project management working group. What is the main focus of the research is not limited to women's problems and we try to cover all dimensions. Our hypothesis is the direct impact of culture, religion, family principles, social patterns ,education, governments and their methods in the development of social principles and laws in the working life of individuals, especially women in any society. It is not possible to examine all these, but we have tried to identify the direct and indirect effects by examining the main sections and in this paper we review the state of the art of some particular topic (Glass ceiling, the women at workplace in some geographical area, etc). The research method is considered to review the most important articles and related books in this field, as well as the use of questionnaire and interview methods in at least 3 companies in two areas of developing and developed companies. Finally, using SOM and PCA tools, the received information will be analyzed and displayed in certain formats.

Keywords: Women;Project Management;Middle east;Glass ceiling.

EL PAPEL DE LA MUJER EN LA GESTIÓN DE PROYECTOS EN ORIENTE MEDIO

Este estudio ha intentado examinar aspectos importantes de la situación de las mujeres en el lugar de trabajo en diferentes grupos, especialmente en el grupo de trabajo de gestión de proyectos.Cuál es el foco principal de la investigación no se limita a los problemas de la mujer y tratamos de abarcar todas las dimensiones. Nuestra hipótesis es el impacto directo de la cultura,la religión,los principios familiares, los patrones sociales, la educación, los gobiernos y sus métodos en el desarrollo de los principios y leyes sociales en la vida laboral de los individuos, especialmente de las mujeres.en cualquier sociedad.No es posible examinar todos estos, pero hemos tratado de identificar los efectos directos e indirectos examinando las secciones principales y en este artículo revisamos el estado del arte de un tema en particular (Techo de cristal,mujeres en el lugar de trabajo en Algunas áreas). geográfica, etc.). Se considera como método de investigación la revisión de los artículos y libros relacionados más importantes en este campo, así como el uso de métodos de cuestionario y entrevista en al menos 3 empresas en dos áreas de empresas en desarrollo y desarrolladas.Finalmente,utilizando las herramientas SOM y PCA,la información recibida será analizada y mostrada en ciertos formatos.

Palabras clave: Mujeres;Gestióndeproyectos;Oriente Medio;el techo de cristal.

Correspondencia: Ghazaehsadat Tabatabatabaei

Correo: ghazaal7889@gmail.com ghazalehsadat.tabatabaei@alumon.uva.es

1. Introduction

In this paper, we suggest to examine an important part of the situation of women in the workplace in different groups, especially the project management working group (Daren, 2019). What is the main focus of the research is not limited to women's problems and we try to cover all dimensions including: current problems, job opportunities, job limitations, effects and dimensions of family life, marriage, child custody, physical and mental problems, cultural patterns, social life habits, social relations, pregnancy etc. (Lion & Michel, 2016)

Our hypothesis in this study is that the direct impact of culture, religion, family principles, social patterns as well as the direct impact of education, governments and their methods in the development of social principles and laws in the working life of individuals, especially women in any society and project management environment. We know that it is not possible to examine all these dimensions in one study, but we are trying to identify the direct and indirect effects by examining the main sections of each of these cases, and expressing them as much as possible in the form of comparative reports. The research method is considered to review the most important articles and related books in this field, as well as the use of information from two companies in Iran that are some of the most popular companies in Information technology in this country. Finally, with using statistical tools, the current situation, the improving path and changes in different sections will be displayed.

To date, there are many studies have been conducted on the role of the women at workplace, the problems they face, and more research on the status of women in project environment, work justice and specially growth conditions in the Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, what will distinguish this research, will be the focus on real work environment, the path taken in recent years and the rest of the real information as well as providing solutions to improve and upgrade the current level.

The existence of all the limiting of the elements of social, work, family and life environment as a whole is very rare, so study, analysis and achievement of results of this kind of study is very special and this is exactly the possibility of this research in our geography in the Middle East. The Middle East is prominent religion of the world to focus on.

There are women living in Afghanistan who have been deprived of owning a home and personal business. Women in Iran whose identity in law is base on half of a man`s identity.

In this research, an attempt has been made to examine issues from a more realistic perspective with the view of the researcher, who is one of the working women in Iran, the main author of this article is a woman who has seen Western culture and equal opportunities and on the other hand has experienced her working life in the traditional and religious Iranian society.

In this research, we study and provide reliable information about the current situation of women's employment conditions in Iran. Among other Middle Eastern countries, we focus on Iran because it is one of the most actives countries in the area, and has natural resources, different industries and job opportunities

The present study has been prepared by studying and reviewing some articles that are related to this issue and have been published in recent years and preparing real statistical reports from two large Iranian companies (Tosan techno & Saman Kish Electronic Payment) in the field of information technology.

The result of this research will help not only to examine the employment conditions of women in these two companies as a comprehensive goal, but also suggestions for improvement and achieving better results will be made available to senior managers of these organizations. Preparing this research and presenting it at international conferences has provided opportunities for other cultures to get acquainted with the current conditions of Iran and other

similar countries, and may be an opportunity for joint cooperation to improve, change and proactively develop the entrepreneurship and creating future ideas.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows:

In section two, we report some statistical data about woman at work in the two companies included, Tosan Techno and SEP and in whole situation in Iran workplace with focus of availability for project management role for women in this area, so that we can understand the context of the proportion of women working in Middle East. In section three, we report the main characteristics of the influential variables in woman`s carriers based on literature about the issue and some of their reasons, their effectiveness and influence in different dimensions of society. In the last section, we have tried to present the direct impact of the parameters announced in the case study and their analysis as much as possible.

2. Statistical data about two companies as a big sample in Iran and all work population in Iran as a most popular Islamic country in the Middle East

In this research, 3 sections have been used as a statistical population for the study. Two private companies, Tosan Techno (www.tosantechno.com) and Saman Kish Electronic Payment with abbreviated name, SEP (www.sep.ir) and the working community of the whole country of Iran in 2020.

These statistical communities will be selected for the purpose of accurate study of women's working conditions based on specific parameters of age, level of education, job rank, opportunities to participate in project management position and the results of the study and research will be used for exploitation in these statistical communities.

The reason for choosing Iran was job diversity, its strategic importance in the Middle East and its high population. On the other hand, the direct effect of the parameters considered in this research can be well observed and analyzed in this country.

The reason for choosing Tosan techno & Saman Kish Electronic Payment companies is the active role of these two companies in the field of information technology in the country, the high number of staff with a variety of jobs, education and age.

These analyzes and reports are collected and presented based on the classification and segregation of men and women in both companies in the sections of age, education and job rank.

In table 1, we show the distribution by age and gender for the two companies we have studied. We see that in all the age groups, the proportion of men is much higher than women. But we can also see that the proportion of women is higher for the lower age range.

In table 2, we show the distribution by education and gender for the two companies we have studied. We see that the level of doctoral education in both organizations is higher among men, and this will mean more opportunities for personal and academic advancement. This difference in opportunities for men is also well seen in Table 3. In the table 4 we show the real opportunities for women in comparison with the men for project management role in both companies.

The same difference can be observed and examined in tables 5 and 6 and figures 1, 2 and 3 with a higher ratio in the total working population of Iran. Women make up only 24% of Iran's total work history. The same population has a very small share in terms of growth opportunities and employment levels, and the majority of them have been successful in the private sector. All 24 million work force in Iran, only 24% are women with the highest distribution of women in private companies and product and services sectors (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2020, population and workforce). This report shows that private sectors in Iran market, have more freedom of action to create equal opportunities for women. This equality includes growth, salary and authority. Due to the separation of income and expenses of private companies from

the public and governmental sector, education and organization chart, authority of CEO and board of directors, the freedom of action in this regard is greater.

2.1 Analysing employee distribution in 2 Iranian Companies (Tosan Techno & SEP)

Table 1: Employee Distribution Group by "Age"

COMPANY	GENDER	AGE			
		20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60
TOSAN TECHNO	WOMAN	30	69	10	0
	MAN	106	346	63	11
SEP	WOMAN	74	131	16	0
	MAN	493	801	139	32

Note: In this diagram the real information of distribution of personnel in both companies in the statistical community is presented separately in the normal age range starting work in Iran (20 years old) in specific deciles.

Table 2: Employee Distribution Group by "Education"

COMPANY	GENDER	ECUCATION				
		Diploma	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree
TOSAN TECHNO	WOMAN	7	6	74	22	0
	MAN	91	85	293	47	2
SEP	WOMAN	11	5	149	56	0
	MAN	324	276	751	109	5

Note: In this diagram the real information of distribution of personnel in both companies in the statistical community is presented separately in the accepted study groups are offered in the workplace.

Table 3: Employee Distribution Group by "Job rank"

COMPANY	GENDER	Job Rank	
		MANAGER	SUPERVISOR
TOSAN TECHNO	WOMAN	3	6
	MAN	20	30
SEP	WOMAN	5	10
	MAN	17	46

Note: This table contains information of both companies in the form of comparison and segregation of men and women. In this way a very brief distribution of the ratio of women and men in the main managerial and supervisory rules has been tried.

Table 4: Employee Distribution Group by "Project Management Position"

COMPANY	GENDER	Project Management Position
TOSAN TECHNO	WOMAN	1
	MAN	20
SEP	WOMAN	7
	MAN	50

Note: This table contains information of both companies in the form of showing the share and opportunity of men and women to participate in the project management position. The share of women compared to men to participate in this position in both companies is less than 10%.

2.2 Analysing employee distribution totally in "IRAN"

Table 5: Employee Distribution in Iran and Group by "Gender type in Iran"

COUNTRY	GENDER	GENDER TYPE	
		AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
IRAN	WOMAN	5,760,000	24%
	MAN	18,240,000	76%

Note: The chart shows the overall distribution and percentage share by gender in total number of people are working in Iran (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2020, population and workforce).

**Figure 1: General Comparative Chart in Iran According to "Gender"**
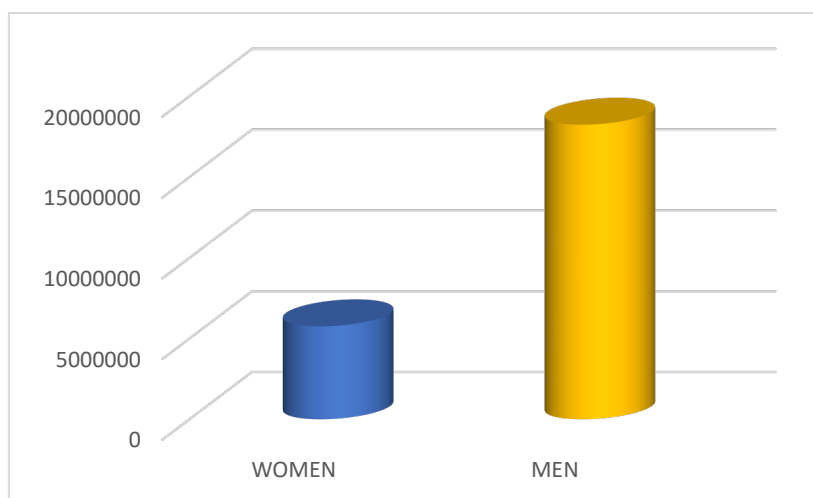
Note: The chart shows the overall distribution as a simple comparative form by gender in total number of people are working in Iran (24 million person), (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2020, population and workforce).

Table 6: Employee Distribution in Iran and Group by "Company Type"

COUNTRY	GENDER	COMPANY TYPE		
		Government	NOT Government	Inter National
IRAN	WOMAN	1,036,800	4,435,200	288,300
	MAN	3,283,200	14,044,800	912,000

Note: The chart shows the overall distribution and percentage share by gender according to company type (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2020, population and workforce).

Figure 2: General Comparative Chart in Iran According to "Company Type"
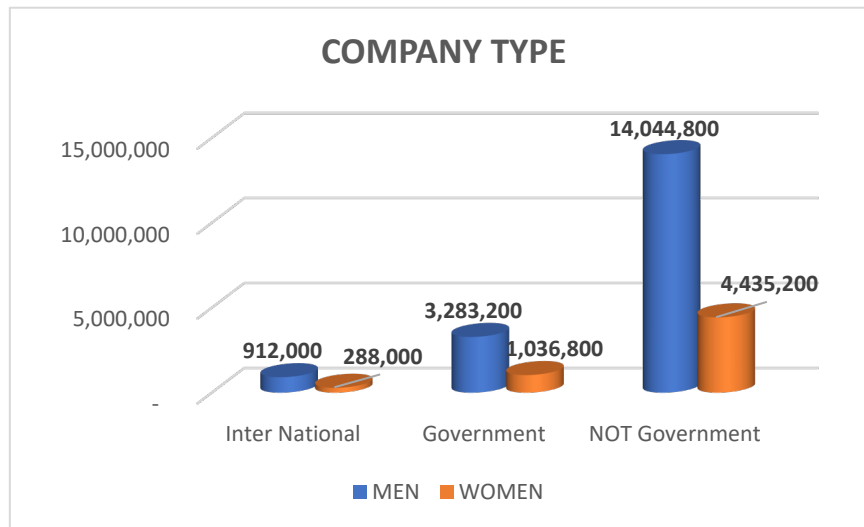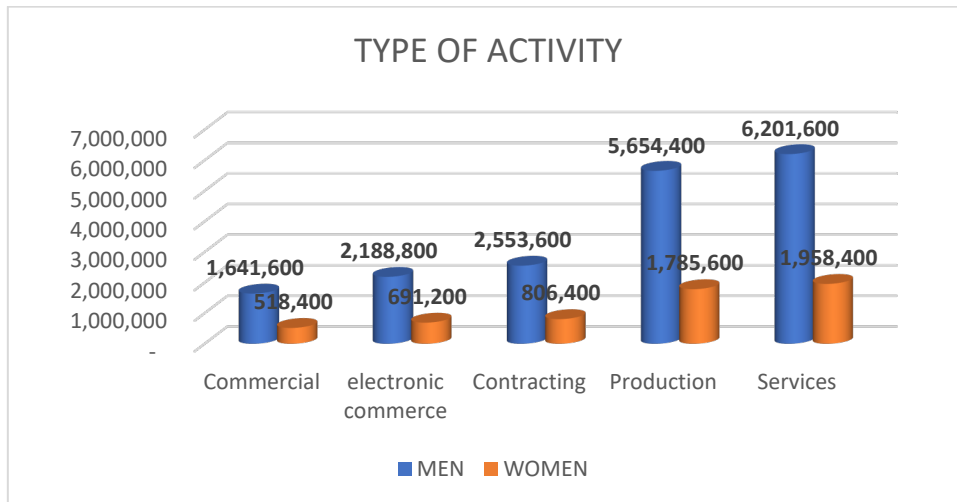

COMPANY TYPE

Note: The chart shows the overall distribution as a simple comparative form by gender and company type at the same time (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2020, population and workforce).

Table 6: Employee Distribution in Iran and Group by "Activity"

COUNTRY	GENDER	ACTIVITY				
		Commercial	Electronic Commerce	Contracting	Production	Services
IRAN	WOMAN	518,400	691,200	806,400	1,785,600	1,958,400
	MAN	1,641,600	2,188,800	2,553,600	5,654,400	6,201,600

Note: The chart shows the overall distribution and percentage share by gender according to the main activity group in the companies (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2020, population and workforce).

Figure 3: General Comparative Chart in Iran According to "Activity"

TYPE OF ACTIVITY

	Commercial	electronic commerce	Contracting	Production	Services
MEN	1,641,600	2,188,800	2,553,600	5,654,400	6,201,600
WOMEN	518,400	691,200	806,400	1,785,600	1,958,400

■ MEN ■ WOMEN

Note: The chart shows the overall distribution as a simple comparative form by gender and activity type in the most popular activity group in Iran (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2020, population and workforce).

3. An Overview and analysis on the data in part 3

A systematic literature review of all papers and the results of them began at the beginning of the study by using keywords related to the role of women in the working community, women's problems, equality, family, the impact of culture and religion on the future of women and similar keywords, during the studying It became clear that each of these words provided a lot of content to continue the work, so we decided to focus on examining the current situation based on the employment rates of women in a particular community and Iran, as one of the most important countries in the Middle East and accessible in terms of statistical information, was targeted. This study has shown that due to world conditions and cultural changes, even in this limited Islamic country, new opportunities have been created for women, but, on the other hand it shows that this topic is still limited. (Muhammad & Rakibuddin, 2020). We will need future development in this segment and mentoring is one of the strategies to use the experience and guidance of successful women and men in changes. Modelling and supporting entrepreneurship women and men who, despite all the restrictions in recent years, have created the necessary credibility and space for women of Middle Eastern land. Considering the studies on other researches and articles in this field in Iran and also the review of current and legal laws of Iran, shows that the path to improve the current situation is very long and requires more studies and sustainable research.

We should pay attention to physical (Hirao & Kajiyama, 1994), mental and behavioral abilities of women when choosing a person for career opportunities, based on the results of psychological research, women are better than the men in interpersonal communication, team work and influence other ones. (Francesca & Caroline, 2015)

Having religious laws such as Islamic and hijab societies (Tariq Munir, 2014), does not mean restrictions, but non-observance of equal rights and the lack of suffrage and related restrictions will have a direct impact on job opportunities and women`s growth. Therefore, adjusting the religious aspect, raising the right to choose, creating a culture, separating politics from religion.

Unfortunately, organizational processes for progression that open up are not equal (Laura Jones, 2019), Despite changes in some areas, men will be given priority in terms of choice, or if a woman is chosen, material and spiritual rights in the workplace will not be equal. (Morreti & Turatti, 2020), Although this inequality exists in all over the world but in the Islamic countries

and Middle Eastern countries, this difference is much greater and the path of change and improvement in harder. (Eisner & Harvey, 2009)

As a result of research, we have achieved some of the main influential variables in woman`s careers. These variables can be discussed and improved due to their effectiveness and influence in different dimensions of society and each of them can be the source of a separate research and article. The most important of these are:

- According to the information presented in Table 4, the share of women in the opportunity to attend and obtain project management roles in both organizations is completely different from men. The share of women in SEP and TOSAN TECHNO companies in managerial positions is more than the men and in project management positions in the same companies is different and less than 10%. According to the organizational structure and human resources laws of both organizations, the reason for more opportunities for women in managerial positions is the privacy of the structure of this organization and the reason for the limited opportunities for project management is the structure of projects and organization`s lack of trust in managing industrial projects such as production lines and operations with women. Therefore, one of the solutions to improve the situation to create balance and equal opportunities for women in project management positions is to review organizational structures and create opportunities for women to attend and train in industrial and operational jobs. Attending rare opportunities and gaining experience will build the organization's confidence in creating future opportunities for women. (Tosan techno & Saman Kish Electronic Payment)

- One of the concepts that we became familiar with in reviewing other articles is the Educating "Mommy Track" (Burke & McKeen, 1992), This concept is used when teaching women ang girls is the basis of having children and giving importance to their children. So, you shouldn`t be your priority and you don`t have any distinct and valuable identity as a woman, the women are merely a mother and wife. Therefore, the absence of women in higher education (Timo & Leo, 2017), level and job opportunities are the natural phenomenon. For example, the share of 32% of all women participating in the PMI examination in 2008, changed to 41.9% in 2011.

- Separation of the physical environment of men and women in Middle Eastern countries with religious views known as the "Sexual Zone" (Mir-Hosseini, 2012, p. 352) and existence of requirements for hard clothing such as hijab for women in Islamic countries such as Iran, Qatar, etc. Hijab is an essential part of women`s clothing in Islamic society because wearing hijab is considered a means to protect women, and this is not a choice, is a compulsion from family, men, government and society. (Dounia, 2020)

- Existence of a reality called "Thorny Floors" (Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2012) in the workplace and in the path of growth and employment of women that according to our case study, Tosan Techno company and SEP tried to increase the participate and survival of women in occupations in men`s culture and positions. (George & Sefa, 2018). For example, the sales manager of Tosan Techno company is a young woman, however in Iranian market, there have been many difficulties in supporting a female sales manager.

- The reality of the existence of social harms to women in the workplace called "Sexual Harassment (Abrina Yaqoob, 2019) and "Gender Discrimination" (Brian & Henk & Path, 2011), that this issue is not limited to developing countries and according to people`s opinions the most important solution for solving this problem is forcing countries to

develop rigorous legal rules. Globally 30% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

- Significant differences in "job challenges" and "essential behaviours" for women and men in the workplace. According to conversations with some women professional world in Iranian companies, they have used three main techniques to manage their challenges: using influencing strategy, emphasizing that there is no difference between them and a man and the last one is about conversation techniques, explain everything with more details.

- The most obvious solutions that women use for solving their problems and challenges in project environment is focusing on "social leadership" and strength then their professional dimension. In recent years women around 50 years and over who hold PMI certification are 2.23 times more likely to have manage large projects with 1 million $ cost or more. (Henderson & Stackman's, 2010)

- Comparison between men and women salaries at the same position shows that normally woman earned 29% less. For solving the gap, we need to participate higher percentage of women in the work and projects. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 disease and changing economic condition, the rate of women`s activity and presence in various sectors, decrease.

- The women have different managerial style, women priorities based on social skills and for men based on authoritarian approach. The leadership style of women is "social leadership" and for men is mainly "intellectual leadership" style. (Moran & Rodriguez, 2017)

- Education, culture, modification of current Islamic laws in society and family, creating equal rights in the basic laws of marriage, the right of children, the right about divorce and etc. (Salma & Mouna & Amina & Malik, 2021). Which will create and equal intellectual atmosphere in society, will be one of the strong tools for the development of the equality in industries and areas of work, sites and communications with the aim of privatization, education and empowerment of the private sector and government investment in this sector. (Amat Suroso, 2021), examining how it will be work and analyzing all details, requires teamwork and joint research among experts in the economic, political, cultural and literary fields and psychology. Having more women in the workplace actually makes an organization a better place to work, for people of all genders and women really need leadership opportunities (Miriam Schmitt, 2019) and giving this equal situation is a hard work for managers in Middle Eastern countries. One of the limitations of this study or research on women's rights in the Middle East and Islamic countries is the lack of truth or freedom of expression by women. Social rules and coercion, inner fears and life habits have kept them from participating in this research group and expressing real problems, so what is very difficult for us in this research is to find the real facts and data in the prevailing situation. The women and economic history still are challenges for gender studies (Violaine Sebillotte Cuchet, 2016).

4. Conclusions

According to the information that we obtained from our research method, data mining on the available information from the Statistics Center of Iran and personnel information in the two companies announced in the case study section, this information was finally classified,

analyzed and specific ratios by data mining method. Classified and displayed using SPSS and Excel tools.

Our next step in developing this research is to design a questionnaire and design an interview structure for direct communication with women and men in the two companies declared as the statistical population of the research. Direct contact with this working group will help us to examine the views of these organizations as two useful examples in this research, interviews and questionnaires are not limited to the staff layer and with the received approvals, in the senior managers layer, the strategies of these organizations and CEO management will also be examined.

We hope that the results of these studies will help to provide effective solutions for creating organizational models with the aim of developing the role of women and social equality.

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