

## **Attitudes Towards Females in the Oil and Gas Industry in the UAE**

سلوكيات تجاه الإناث في قطاع النفط والغاز في دولة الإمارات  
العربية المتحدة

**By**

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## **Abstract**

Attitude towards women is a very important subject that has been discussed all around the world. Unfortunately, in the Arab countries, a limited number of researches were done on that subject despite the fact that Arabs possess a conservative attitude towards women. This paper described the situation of the attitude towards women around the world but more focus was given to the UAE. In the UAE, a specific industry, Oil and Gas, was studied due to an assumed negative attitude towards women.

A 3-page questionnaire was submitted amongst Oil and Gas employees as well as the general public to get a better understanding about the attitude toward women in the region. Women As Managers Scale (WAMS) was used to quantify the attitude towards women and to ultimately find the direction of respondents; whether participants have a positive, neutral or negative attitude towards women. The total number of responses collected was 237 where at least half of them were filled by Oil and Gas employees and the remaining were filled by the public. After receiving the responses, all the data were quantified and fed to SPSS. Using the software, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, means comparison, etc. to measure the attitude towards women against three variables namely: gender, age and nationality. Furthermore, analysis was made on the barrier that impacts females the most in the workforce.

Findings were that the Oil and Gas Industry had a rather positive attitude towards women. It was also found that females had a more positive attitude towards women when compared to men. On the other hand, participants from different ages and different nationalities did not have exhibit significant differences in their attitude towards working women. Furthermore, Work-Family Conflict was found to be the biggest barrier inhibiting the advancement of women in the workplace. Based on these findings, short term and long term recommendations were addressed that included having flexible timings for mothers working in the industry.

## الخلاصة

الموقف من المرأة هو موضوع هام جدا التي تم مناقشتها في جميع أنحاء العالم. للأسف، في البلدان العربية، تم القيام بعدد محدود من البحوث حول هذا الموضوع على الرغم من أن العرب يملكون موقفا متحفظا تجاه المرأة. وصف هذه الورقة حالة الموقف من النساء في جميع أنحاء كلمة ولكن تم إيلاء المزيد من التركيز على دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، وفي قطاع محدد، النفط والغاز، درس الموضوع بسبب موقف سلبي افتراضي تجاه المرأة.

فقد تم توزيع الاستبيان بين موظفي النفط والغاز و على عامة الناس أيضا للحصول على فهم أفضل حول الموقف تجاه المرأة في المنطقة. استخدم مقياس ال(WAMS) لتحديد الموقف من المرأة والبحث في نهاية المطاف باتجاه المشاركين؛ ما إذا كان المشاركون يكون لهم موقف إيجابي أو محايد أو سلبي تجاه المرأة. وكان العدد الكلي للردود التي تم جمعها 237 حيث امتلأت على الأقل نصفهم من الموظفين من النفط والغاز والبقية امتلأت من قبل الجمهور. بعد تلقي الردود، كانت كل البيانات كاملة وتم وضعها في برنامج ال(SPSS). باستخدام البرمجيات ، وتحليل البيانات باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي، T-test ، يعني على سبيل المقارنة ، وما إلى ذلك لقياس الموقف من المرأة ضد ثلاثة متغيرات هي : الجنس والعمر والجنسية. وعلاوة على ذلك، تم تحليل على الحاجز الذي يؤثر على معظم الإناث في القوى العاملة.

وكانت النتائج أن صناعة النفط والغاز كان لها موقفا ايجابيا تجاه المرأة. كما تبين أن الإناث كان موقفهن أكثر إيجابية تجاه المرأة بالمقارنة مع الرجال. من ناحية أخرى، فإن المشاركين من مختلف الأعمار ومختلف الجنسيات لم تكن هناك خلافات كبيرة في موقفهم تجاه المرأة العاملة. وعلاوة على ذلك، تم التأكيد بأن " الصراع بين العمل والأسرة" لتكون أكبر عائق يحول دون النهوض بالمرأة في مكان العمل. واستنادا إلى هذه النتائج ، تم درج بعض التوصيات قصيرة الأجل وطويلة الأجل التي شملت تناول وجود مواعيد مرنة للأهميات العاملات في هذه الصناعة.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Brief Background about Company X	8
1.2 Introduction to the Issue	9
1.3 Aims and Objectives	11
1.3.1 Aim:	11
1.3.2 Objectives:	11
<b>2. Literature Review</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 A Comparison Made	13
2.2.1 Female Labor Force Comparison	13
2.2.2 Mentality Comparison	13
2.2.3 Research Comparison	14
2.3 Situation Around the World	15
2.3.1 Situation in the USA	15
2.3.2 Situation in Europe	17
2.3.3 Situation in Africa	19
2.3.4 Situation in Asia	20
2.3.5 Situation in the Arab Countries	22
2.3.6 Situation in the UAE	24
<b>3. Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1 Introduction	26
3.2 Factors Contributing to Negative Stereotypes	26
3.2.1 National Culture	26
3.2.2 Gender Stereotype	27
3.2.3 Work and Family Conflicts	29
3.3 Theoretical Understanding	31
3.3.1 National Culture vs. Women Career Advancement	31
3.3.2 Gender Stereotype vs. Women Career Advancement	32
3.3.3 Work and Family Conflict vs. Women Career Advancement	34
3.4 Conclusion	35

<b>4. Research Methodology</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.1 Type of Methodology Used</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.2 Scales Used</b>	<b>38</b>
4.2.1 Women As Managers Scale (WAMS)	38
4.2.1.1 Brief Description of WAMS	38
4.2.2 Barriers of Women Advancement in the Workforce Scale	39
<b>4.3 Distribution of Questionnaire</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4.4 Data Analysis Tools</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>5. Data Analysis and Discussion</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>5.1 Sample</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1.1 Gender	41
5.1.2 Age Range	41
5.1.3 Nationality	42
5.1.4 Employer	43
<b>5.2 Reliability of Scales</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>5.3 Hypothesis 1</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>5.4 Hypothesis 2</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>5.5 Hypothesis 3</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>5.6 Hypothesis 4</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>5.7 Hypothesis 5</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>5.9 Discussion</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>6. Recommendations and Conclusions</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>6.1 Recommendations</b>	<b>63</b>
6.1.1 Short Term Recommendations:	64
6.1.2 Long Term Recommendations:	65
<b>6.2 Conclusions</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>6.3 Limitations</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>6.4 Future Research</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>78</b>

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1.1: Ratio of Males to Females in Company X-----	9
Figure 2.1: Situation in the USA. Source: Owen and Todor (1993)-----	17
Figure 3.1: Macro and micro barriers to the advancement of women-----	37
Fig 5.1: Gender Ratio -----	41
Fig 5.2: Age Range -----	42
Fig 5.3: Nationality Ratio -----	43
Fig 5.4: Employer Information -----	44

## **List of Tables**

Table 5.1: Cronbach's Alpha for Barriers To Female Advancement Scale -----	45
Table 5.2: One Sample T-Test for H1-----	47
Table 5.3: Group Statistics for H2-----	48
Table 5.4: Independent Sample t-test for H2 -----	48
Table 5.5: One-Sample Test for H2 -----	49
Table 5.6: Group Statistics for H3-----	50
Table 5.7: Independent Samples Test for H3 -----	51
Table 5.8: Group Statistics for H4-----	52
Table 5.9: Independent Samples Test for H4 -----	52
Table 5.10: One-Sample Test for H5 -----	54
Table 6.1: Women, Learning and Leadership Development-----	64

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Brief Background about Company X**

Company X is a non-profitable organization that is responsible for the refining of crude oil and uses its products for local use as well as export. It belongs to a larger mother company that is controlled by the government of Abu Dhabi. This larger company, the Mother Company, has around 15 daughter companies that it has control over all of them. This Mother Company comprises of the full oil and gas industry in the UAE and yields a big amount of the GDP of the UAE (CIA, 2009).

Company X is sectioned into four sections namely: Headquarters (HQ), Abu Dhabi Refinery (ADR), Ruwais Refinery (RR) and Research Centre (TRC). In the near future, another enormous refinery will also be built which will be called Ruwais Refinery Expansion (RRE).

The HQ is located in Abu Dhabi downtown where it holds around a mere 700 employees. ADR is located at the suburbs of Abu Dhabi city in an island called Sas Al Nakheel and it holds around 600 employees working 24/7. RR is located in Ruwais Industrial City where it holds the most number of employees amongst the other two locations; it employs around 900 employees working 24/7. As we have mentioned earlier, RRE is yet to be built and since it will have a larger capacity than RR, it would employ as much employees as RR, if not more.

Therefore, in total, the number of employees working for Company X is around 2,200 employees distributed in three different locations. Amongst those 2,200 employees, 360 of them are females and the rest are males. Figure 1.1 below represents the percentages of males to females in Company X.

The reason behind this relatively low number of female employees in Company X is that most females don't prefer working in refineries where the job is very physical. Furthermore, females don't want to be put working in night shifts, as this will be against the laws of the government.



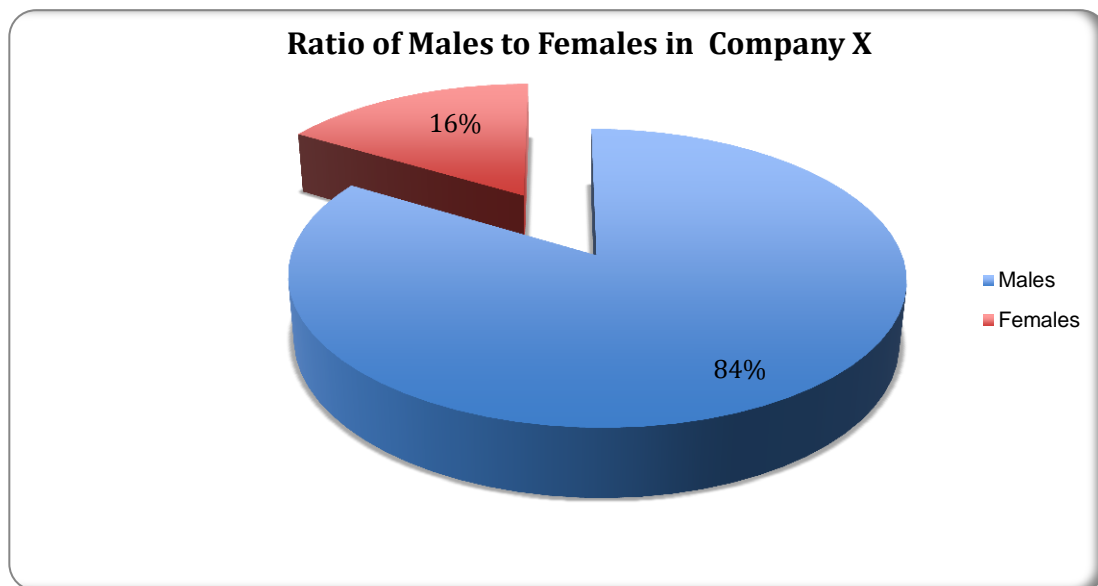


Figure 1.1: Ratio of Males to Females in Company X

## 1.2 Introduction to the Issue

From the above statistics, we can clearly observe that females in Company X are considered to be the minority where they only add up to 16% of the total number of employees. But this is not the case in the other 15 companies under the Mother Company where female employees are found in abundance.

The issue that will be addressed in this document regarding Company X and its other sister companies is gender. In Company X, it is clearly seen that male employees are given more confidence and yet more work and higher positions than female employees regardless of what the job title is. Consequently, the attitude toward women in the management positions has seen a negative stereotype from both males and females. Furthermore, misconceptions and assumptions are made from certain managers that discourage women employees from proceeding to higher managerial position is another issue that will be touched upon in this paper. The phenomenon by which women cannot reach high managerial positions is known as “breaking the glass ceiling”; Al Khoori (2008).

One incident happened four years back in one of the sisters companies of Company X where a female environmental engineer was working under a male manager and two male subordinates. She was clearly the best in the department in regards to job professionalism, attitude, punctuation, etc. After the manager decided to resign, the place was left vacant and one of the male subordinate took the job due to the fact that he was there for a longer period of time when compared to his colleagues. He clearly lacked professionalism but nevertheless, took the job.

The female environmentalist questioned the upper authority about that decision and when her superior managers confronted her, they stated that females are bound to get married, stay at home and raise kids. This was the response she got; four months after that, the newly employed male manager found a better offer and left his job, only to be taken by his other male counterpart and leave the female engineer neglected. Two weeks after that, the female engineer resigned and left the company. This is one of many cases that continuously occur in the organization context of Company X and its sister companies.

On the other hand, some managers have successfully promoted female employees to lead their subordinates in the Mother Company and some of its daughter companies as well.

What we can conclude from this short story is the fact that some managers, not all of them, do not have a positive approach towards female employees and that leads to drastic downward results in the efficiency of the company as some female employees are more responsible, ethical and hard working than male employees.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 Aim:**

- To identify the existence of negative stereotype towards females and what are some of the reasons/misconceptions/assumptions made from upper management towards female subordinates.

#### **1.3.2 Objectives:**

- To perform a thorough literature review on the attitudes towards females that will include global regions but concentrating on the Middle Eastern countries since they have more or less the same traditions and follow the same religion.
- To conduct a survey regarding “Attitudes Towards Women” using WAMS and distribute amongst participants in the UAE and specifically in the Oil and Gas Industry.
- To measure the attitudes towards women whether it is positive or negative.
- To identify the biggest barrier to the advancement of females in the workforce.
- To improve the attitudes towards women in the UAE as a whole by finding and implementing short and long term recommendations.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Retaining competent female employees in a company can be considered a positive side to any firm regardless of the type of jobs the company possesses. The ultimate reason would be females, when starting their career in a company, get the know-how and expertise from the company they work in. Not only that, they also get paid in terms of salaries and wages and hence, the company actually spends money on females in order to hire them, employ them and train them.

So after spending a couple of years at the job, competent female employees will expect some kind of recognition/promotion from their respective companies in order to climb the organization ladder. The company itself will then refuse to award their female employees due to some negative stereotype towards them where some managers think that females are not capable of handling the job efficiently when compared to males. After all, it was the company's decision to hire female employees and train them in the first place.

In an era where female personnel rule the world (e.g. Angela Merkel as the Chancellor of Germany and Hillary Clinton as United States Secretary of State), it is absurd to think that female employees lack the skills to be equal to male employees; Al Khoori (2008).

In this section, we will firstly, explore the comparisons between the Arab world and the rest of the world in terms of the attitude towards women. Secondly, we will investigate the situation, both previous and current, in different parts of the world. Lastly, we will try to find some factors that contribute to this phenomenon in practice.

## **2.2 A Comparison Made**

### **2.2.1 Female Labor Force Comparison**

According to SCAD (2010), the percentage of UAE national female employees in the labor force of the UAE accounted for 15.5% when the census was taken in mid-2008. In 1980, however, the percentage was around 3.4% according to the United Arab Emirates Yearbook (2001). That accounts for an increase in 12% in the last 3 decades.

In a paper presented by Al-Shaikh (2004), the author stated that the involvement of women in the global labor force was around 40-44%. Comparing this number to a mere 10% in the UAE clearly shows that women are not given the chance to start their career as professional employees; this raises a second dilemma. Fortunately, this is not the case in the UAE.

Alittihad (2011) published an article stating that the UAE has the most number of working females, both UAE nationals and expats, in the Gulf region where it accounted for 59%. That was an astonishing number that implied; more than half the female population in the UAE are involved in the workplace. Kuwait and Qatar came in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> where they accounted for 49% and 42% respectively.

### **2.2.2 Mentality Comparison**

Many authors have come out explaining the dilemma mentioned above that discourages women from starting their careers; these authors include (Abdalla 1996, El Ghannam 2001 and El-Ghannam 2002). They all claim that Arab societies view that the primary job for women is to raise children and look after the household and family, not to work in jobs for companies, firms, etc. So it's not only hard for Arab females to get promoted and get up the organization ladder; it is even harder for some of them to start off their career. In the UAE, when the number of national female graduates was twice the number of national male graduates, the unemployment rate amongst female nationals reached a

shocking 19.7% where the normal rate of unemployment had a benchmark of 6% Fahem (2005).

In the other parts of the world, Western countries and Europe specifically, women have been viewed as gentle, sensitive, passive, illogical and emotional whereas males were viewed as objective, independent, logical and competitive (Stephens and DeNisi 1980, Donnell and Hall 1980, Dubno 1985 and Lirtzman and Wahba 1972). As can be seen from the authors and dates of publications, extensive research was done on that subject.

### 2.2.3 Research Comparison

So many studies regarding attitudes toward women were undergone in the West. Dubno (1985) managed to distribute a scale, called Managerial attitudes toward women executives (MATWES), to MBA students to three graduate schools of business throughout a course of 8 years. He chose MBA students because they would be the managers of the future when they are done with their degree and start their career-life, given that they graduate in 8 years. His aim was to find a shift in the attitudes towards women from negative to positive. Unfortunately, there was no improvement in the trend of positivity. However, one of the findings was that females have better attitudes towards their female counterparts when compared to men.

In their paper, Terborg et al. (1977) examined negative stereotype towards women as managers through a scale that they have constructed. They called it Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) and in this paper; Terborg et al. validated this instrument.

One of the longest studies that was done on this subject was performed by Twenge (1997). He has studied the attitudes towards women for 25 years starting from 1970 all the way to 1995. He has then published his paper in 1997 giving outstanding results.

Amongst the research that was done in the USA only, include the following; (Owen and Todor 1993, Gorland and Price 1977, Cordono et al. 2002, Terborg et al. 1977, Tomkiewicz and Bass 2003, Day and Hadley 1997). As can be seen from the number of authors and the dates of publications, we can confidently say that “extensive research” has been done on this subject in the West. Needless to say, these authors are only a few of the ones who have deeply studied this subject.

On the other hand, Arab countries were not very enthusiastic about that subject. From the 22 Arab countries in the world, several studies were performed regarding the attitudes towards women; these include (Mostafa 2005, Abdalla 1996, Abd El-Latif 1988, Askar and Ahmad 2003, Mostafa 2003, Neal et al. 2005). This limited number of studies has been conducted across 22 countries whereas 6 studies have been conducted only in the United States of America; and these 6 studies in the USA are not the only ones obviously. Therefore, this paper will present a survey that will be conducted in one of the Arab countries, i.e. UAE, in order to shorten the gap and have more results regarding the attitude towards women in Arab countries. Thus, being one of the objectives of this paper.

## **2.3 Situation Around the World**

This section will address the past and present situation of the attitude towards women in a global aspect. More emphasis will be made on this subject in the Middle East although extensive research has not been made in this part of the world.

### **2.3.1 Situation in the USA**

Terborg et al. (1977) examined negative stereotype towards women as managers through a scale design using 280 employees. The paper indicated the construction of Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) and in this paper; Terborg et

al. validated this instrument. After examining the different reasons of why men assume women as bad managers, the following assumptions rose: women lack the aggressiveness and leadership abilities to become managers. However, Terborg et al. also suggest through (Day and Stogdill, 1972; Hansen, 1974) that women have the skills and qualifications, just like men, to attain high managerial positions. This theory made Terborg et al. come up with this scale to be used to measure the attitude towards female managers.

Out of the 280 employees that were chosen to conduct this survey, 180 were males and 100 were females working for an international distributing company. Results of this paper indicate that WAMS is a useful way to determine the negative stereotype possessed by some male managers on female managers.

Owen and Todor (1993) suggest that even though there was a slight increase in the number of females in top management positions, there wasn't a significant change in the number of females in executive positions. Heilman et al. (1989) conducted a research by having male managers assess male and female managers. The researchers found that male managers had a negative stereotype towards female managers where they all had a trend of the same answer. Two of the stereotypical answers were: firstly, women have a tendency to favour raising their children over the interest of their job and secondly, women are too emotional for top management positions where they lack aggressiveness. These answers always lead to assumptions regarding this subject and these assumptions usually turn to be against female workers. Wentling (1992) reveals a case where a woman, highly qualified for a top position, was denied because the higher authorities assumed that she would not stay for a very long time in the company and have children instead.

The survey methodology in Owen and Todor (1993) included the use of WAMS (Terborg et al., 1977) for two different categories; one being experienced HR professionals in the Midwest and the second being a group of students in a Midwestern university in the United States of America.



The results obtained from the paper were as follow: the more experienced HR professionals had a high score for WAMS (indicating a positive stereotype towards women) whereas the university students had a fairly low score (indicating a negative stereotype).

The authors suggest that the preconceptions driven by some managers can vanish through early training and education.

The picture below represents the situation in the USA.

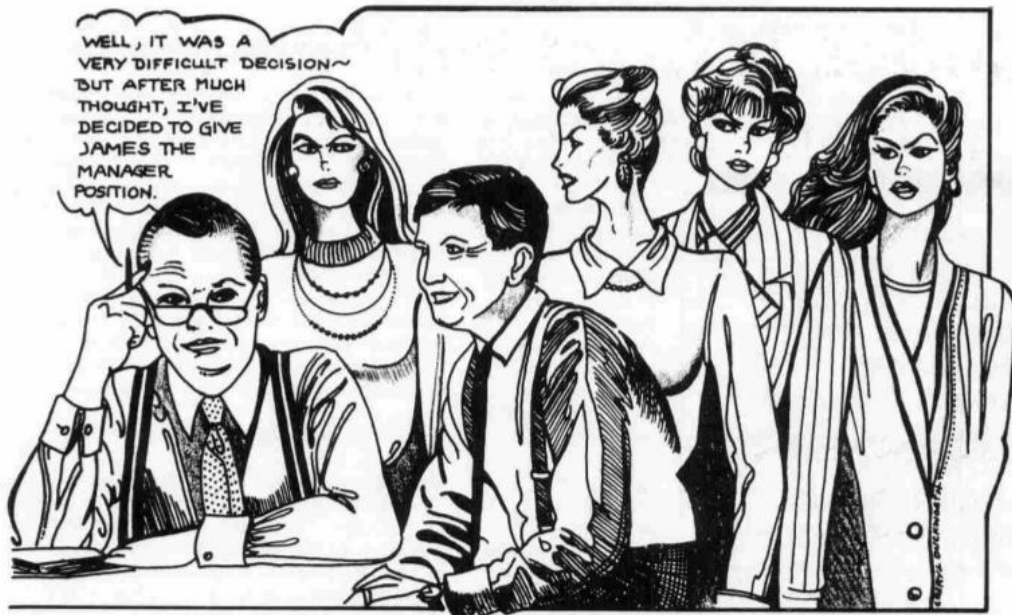


Figure 2.1: Situation in the USA. Source: Owen and Todor (1993)

### 2.3.2 Situation in Europe

Sakalli-Ugurlu and Beydogan (2002) assessed the attitude toward women in a Turkish university. The authors took the initiative to perform this survey due to the fact that the Turkish society is somehow regarded to be highly patriarchal and favouring men over women in many disciplines. This belief causes many preconceptions toward women and the prejudice can be a critical factor in the workplace.

The survey consisted of two ways to measure the attitude toward women involving 183 undergraduate students in a technical university in Turkey; 92 being men and 91 women. Firstly, a new 18 item questionnaire was constructed that was appropriate for the Turkish society and secondly, WAMS was used to validate the findings of the first method. The correlation between both methods was high and hence, the 18-item questionnaire turned out to be a useful way of measuring attitude toward women.

The results were that men had a negative stereotype to female managers in many fields. Some other results showed that women are less 'sexist' than men plus they had a more positive attitude towards women, their own sex, than men did.

In Greece, and according to Mihail (2006), women were not given positions in higher managerial positions despite having the skills, charisma and qualifications. Mihail also cited through Ntermanakis (2003) and European Foundation (2002) that women were kept in "contingent jobs and within lower managerial ranks". An explanation for this issue is that women in Greek culture are under-represented despite the fact that Greek women are highly honoured in undergraduate and graduate business programs. (Owen and Todor, 1993; Kottis, 1996; Cordano et al., 2002; Tomkiewicz et al., 2004) mentioned in Mihail's document that males are promoted faster and in greater amount than "equally qualified females to the influence of sex based stereotypes".

The method used in this literature search was conducting a survey among 323 undergraduate students studying business administration in the University of Macedonia. Undergraduate students were chosen because they are expected to be future managers to ease the path for women managers. Women as Managers Scale (WAMS, Terborg et al., 1977) was chosen as the main instrument to conduct this survey where it tends to ask a set of 21 attitude statements relating to women in management.

The findings were that male students held negative stereotypes toward female students and they tend to judge them not according to age, work experience and cooperation but according to their gender.

Another paper studied the attitude towards women in Greece, performed by Papalexandris and Bourantas (1991). The authors targeted a wide range of organizations; small to large, private to state, Greek to foreign, etc. The authors found out in NSSG (1987) that the population of Greece consists of 51% female; yet, only a mere 36% of them have participation in employment. Moreover, they have found out that the wage of a woman is equal to 65% of that of a man.

Based on these observations, a survey was conducted in Greece where two kinds of tools were used; the first was WAMS (Terborg et al. 1977) and the second was a questionnaire for gathering organizational and personal information. The results showed a slightly positive attitude towards working women. However, the authors argued the results by stating that respondents were favoring “equality of opportunities between men and women” rather than the “actual ability of women to respond to managerial roles”. Therefore, their conclusion was that respondents were “socially forced” to give out positive answers to the survey but in reality, they care less about attitudes towards women as working professionals.

### 2.3.3 Situation in Africa

Africa did not have extensive surveys on the subject of attitude towards women managers; Adayemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz (1997) came up with the survey after being convinced that negative stereotype existed toward women as managers in Nigeria. This country was chosen because of the little research done in Africa regarding this issue and the other reason falls in the domain that Nigeria is a developing country since it is part of OPEC and produces approximately 2 million barrels of oil a day. The authors observed that Nigerian women are highly regarded to be less capable than men in terms of handling

high managerial positions within organizations. This is why preconceptions of this sort led to women being assigned jobs with lower pay, status and responsibility and yet become a subject of discrimination regarding employment and promotion.

A survey was conducted where two sample were chosen; the first batch consisted of 70 subjects, mostly undergraduate students in the business field from a university in Nigeria. The second batch involved 61 subjects mainly professionals including academics, bank employees, etc. These two batches were given the WAMS survey and were set to answer them and give their opinion in regards to the issue discussed earlier.

The results showed that not only males had a negative stereotype towards women but also women had a negative attitude towards their own gender in regards of being managers. This result clearly suggests that women seeking high managerial positions will face obstacles in this part of the world.

#### 2.3.4 Situation in Asia

Thanacoody et al. (2006) wanted to study the carrier path for academic women in two different universities in different regions of the world namely: Australia and Mauritius in order to gain a more detail perceptive of the factors that are responsible for the female progress in the career ladder. Not only that; Thanacoody's paper also examined, in the two universities, the cultural differences, leadership styles, work and family conflicts, etc. relating to women's progression in academia.

The study involved 30 academic women, 15 from each university, to undergo an interview having to answer 15 open-ended questions regarding childhood, parental involvement in early education, previous working experiences, appointment as an academic, mentoring system, networking, work and family responsibilities and events that have made an impact on their career.

The findings were women in both countries faced similar problems and that is gender stereotypes prejudices. Out of the 30 women academics, 24 thought that they were victims of gender prejudices but obviously, the impact was more noticeable in the West Indian culture (i.e. Mauritius) than Australia.

Entering one of the most powerful economical markets in the world, China, Bowen et al. (2007) conducted a research where he linked historical, cultural, social and legal aspects to the attitude towards working Chinese women. Interestingly, the Chinese culture was found to be very close to that of Arabs in terms of their views towards women; not only that, but their mentality of women is also similar. For instance, women in China are viewed to be responsible, primarily, for the household and caring for the family. Part of the Chinese culture is that Chinese women are responsible for “private affairs” whereas males, on the other hand, are responsible for “public affairs”. Those examples describe, slightly, the Chinese culture.

Shifting to the social aspects of China, the ‘one child policy’ restricts Chinese families to only one child per family. Consequently, this relates to one historical point of view of the Chinese where male offspring are preferred over females. So going back to the ‘one child policy’, families will tend to abort their fetus when they discover that the fetus is a baby girl through gender selective abortion methods. This has led the ratio of males to females in China to be 107 to 100 respectively whereas the worldwide ratio was found to be 101 to 100.

One of the legal systems that disparage Chinese women when they start their career life is the early retirement age gap between males and females. In other words, females have to retire by the age of 50 when compared to 55 in the case of males. This 5-year age gap makes it a bit unfair for the Chinese women in regards to climbing the ladder of promotion in Chinese firms.

All these historical, social and legal observations have led Bowen et al. (2007) to undergo a study regarding the attitude towards women in China by targeting two sectors of people; students and workers. The instrument used to

undergo this study was a back-translated WAMS and then distributed amongst males and females students and workers.

The results showed that, similar to Papalexandris and Bourantas (1991), students were influenced by 'society's acceptance of women managers' and not 'women's ability to succeed as managers'. The authors suggest that the reason behind this is the fact that students still did not experience women in the workplace and hence, gave a more idealistic result rather than rational ones when compared to workers who have actually experienced working women.

The authors also found that male students had their perception towards women based on stereotype, traditions and social norms. This showed a negative stereotype towards women, given the culture and historical data of the Chinese. On the other hand, female students were found to be more open and liberal towards professional women.

Male workers had similar views to male students since they come from the same country and follow the same history and culture. Female workers, however, had a more realistic response when compared to more "enthusiastic" students responses.

All in all, Chinese are progressing in their attitudes towards working women, when a phrase like "equal pay for equal work" is often cited in their legal system, but just like Arabs, they have a long way of accepting women managers and changing their attitude towards women to a more positive way.

#### 2.3.5 Situation in the Arab Countries

Research on attitude toward working women Arab countries was minimal compared to other European or Western countries. Mostafa (2005) relates this observation on the fact that women were introduced at a late stage in the labor force. However, some researchers have undergone some papers on that subject; these papers will be addressed below.

A paper was prepared that demonstrated the attitudes towards women in management in two different Gulf countries namely Kuwait and Qatar; research was performed by Abdallah (1996). The reason behind choosing Kuwait and Qatar is the socio-political system of the latter being more liberal than the later and yet providing a better occupational and educational freedom despite having almost the same culture. The author also suggests the fact that the oil wealth has had a negative impact on women's opportunities as it discourages them in participating in workforces and being absent from economic needs. After looking at the statistics of workforce in the Gulf region, Abdallah found that these societies are reluctant to abandon their traditional viewpoint of women being committed to the house and raising their children; that is considered to be a negative stereotype towards female from a Western point of view. This created a shortage in terms of native workforce and depending on expatriate men to fill the gap was the consequent idea.

The survey was conducted in the aforementioned countries over two groups namely: professional employees from different sectors (e.g. bankers, university researchers, accountants, etc.) and freshmen year college students plus their parents. Two methods were used namely Attitude Towards Women Scale Spence et al. (1973) and Bem's Sex Role Inventory, Bem (1974).

Both scales showed similar results regarding the attitude of professionals and freshman graduates on the subject of attitude toward women. The author found that Arabian Gulf women are locked in their traditional roles as being just housewives to take care of their children and that this characteristic is found in all Arab countries because most of them share the same culture. All this was created from the negative attitude towards women as managers because professionals and undergraduates do not influence women in seeking high managerial positions and hence, have a negative impact on their roles.

Mostafa (2003) discussed the different attitude toward women in Egypt. The author states that women earn less compared with men in the same occupation as well as find high level of promoting very difficult to achieve. He

continues proclaiming that gender roles lead to discouragement of women employment in non-traditional job. Therefore, a survey was performed to students from a university in Egypt as well as randomly selected participants from older generations (40-60 year olds) from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities to test whether religion might be an effect in this study. An Arabic version of Multidimensional Aversion to Women Who Work Scale (MAWWWS) has been the method used to conduct this survey.

The results were that the direction of the point of view towards women changed moderately to a more liberal view. The author expects that in near future, there might be a change in favor of women in management. Thirdly, women tend to be more supportive than males in terms of their attitude toward women managers. Last but not least, there were no differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in their attitude towards working women and hence, we could say that all factors were eliminated and the only aspect that has been tested was the attitude towards women who work.

#### 2.3.6 Situation in the UAE

Fortunately, a survey was made by one of the researchers that was based in the UAE. The scarcity of research paper on that subject in the Middle East made it a bit troublesome to find a paper conducted in the UAE. Fortunately enough, a paper was undergone by Mostafa (2005) where he conducted a research involving a new type of instrument called Multidimensional Aversion to Women Who Work Scale (MAWWWS), which is a newer version of (AWWWS) constructed by Valentine and Mosley (1999), amongst two categories of age participants. The first category consisted of 92 students studying Business Administration that were chosen from a well known university in the UAE and the second category consisted of randomly chosen participants (ageing 45 and above).



The findings suggest that there has been an improvement in the way the younger generation think about female managers when compared with the older generation but still following the traditions and cultures of the Islamic society.

So in order to attack this dilemma of such negativity towards women, we should first identify the factors contributing to such stereotype. These factors will be addressed in the conceptual framework section.

### **3. Conceptual Framework**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

According to the above literature review, several factors were found that contributed to negative stereotype towards females in the UAE. Authors around the globe have suggested many factors that were not found related to our context. Therefore, only the ones that were directly correlated to the context of negative stereotype towards working women were taken into consideration.

#### **3.2 Factors Contributing to Negative Stereotypes**

##### **3.2.1 National Culture**

Key (1999) defined national culture by the aid of an anthropologist point of view; she stated that anthropologists defined culture as “patterned way of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols.” Goffee (1997) had a similar definition of culture when he termed culture as “historically created guides for living and collective mental programming, and these are derived from deep assumptions that are not directly accessible but may be reflected in the values, attitudes and behavior of individuals and groups.”

Many authors have agreed that the main characteristic that is common amongst culture is that it is “shared” rather than born. For instance, Goffee (1997) continued his definition of culture by stating that “the assumptions are learned, not innate, they have a pattern, are *shared*, and passed down through generations”. Another description of culture was that of Hofstede (1980) when he stated that the building blocks of culture are *shared* norms and values. Heckathorn (1990) claimed that the essence of a culture is a set of beliefs, norms and practices that is *shared* by the individuals in a group. According to Newstrom and Davis (2002), social culture is an environment created by humans that consists of beliefs, customs, knowledge and practices. Since social culture is consistent within a nation, it is often called National Culture.

But the question is how is national culture related to the behavior of individuals at work? This question was answered clearly by Newstorm and Davis (2002) when they stated that people depend on their culture because it gives them stability and security. The reason behind this is the fact that people can understand what's going on around them in their cultural community and accordingly, will know how to respond while in it. Therefore, they will take their culture with them in their day-to-day interactions with colleagues at work. This, in turn, can have dramatic effects on behavior at work.

Hofstede (1983) came up with a four-dimension scale that national cultures may vary namely: power distance dimension (POW), masculinity-femininity dimension (MAS), individualism-collectivism dimension (IND) and uncertainty avoidance dimension (UNC). In regards to this paper, MAS is the only dimension that is applicable.

The author went on to explain that in male prevailing cultures like UK, Japan, South Africa and Italy, emphasis was put on money, material possession and ambition with clear lines drawn between male and female roles. Whereas when femininity prevailed in Scandinavian countries and The Netherlands, emphasis was placed on cooperation, friendly atmosphere, job security, caring, and quality of life with greater sexual equality.

What we can conclude from this section is that national culture does have a direct relationship with the behavior of people at work. In the theoretical understanding section below, a deeper look will be put on the UAE where a hypothesis will be developed.

### 3.2.2 Gender Stereotype

Every time that gender stereotype was mentioned in a paper, it was accompanied by women characteristic, especially leadership; Thanacoody et al. (2006), Gregory (1990), Jain and Mukherji (2010) and Billing and Alvesson (2000). In some papers like the ones of Thanacoody et al. (2006) and Cleveland

et al. (2000), the authors have segregated gender stereotype from leadership and addressed them as two individual points to be considered as barriers to female advancement. However, in this paper, we have found that leadership styles of women were considered stereotyped and hence, we will address them as one barrier under the umbrella “gender stereotype” pertaining the work of Jain and Mukherji (2010).

In Jain and Mukherji’s (2010) paper, the definition of gender stereotypes was introduced as a representation of a typical picture that comes to the mind of people when thinking about a specific social group; Lippmann (1922). The reason behind stereotyping is to reduce the information processing demands amongst people. Instead of finding the qualities of the individual, i.e. wasting time and energy, people tend to take short cuts by simply stereotyping a group of people and basing their judgment on it; Basu (2008).

Women have traits associated with them being homemakers, they do not have the necessary traits to enter and compete with higher masculine status occupations; Falkenberg and Rychel (1985) stressed the before-mentioned statement where it was adapted from Gregory’s (1990) paper. That is to say, women don’t have the leadership skills, traits or style to become leaders in the workforce.

Regarding leadership styles, men were found to be more transactional in their way of dealing with people hence, being more autocratic and assertive in their decisions. On the other hand, women were found to be more transformational hence, more supportive and empathetic; Jain and Mukherji’s (2010) and Billing and Alvesson (2000). The real ordeal was found when women leaders became more transactional in their style, they were the called ‘too masculine’, the authors explained.

Billing and Alvesson (2000) put out a great point regarding leadership styles used by men and women. According to the authors, men have different varieties of leadership styles to choose from and adapt to; they can be

transactional at times and transformational in others. And whatever style male managers choose to act upon, it is considered to be 'natural'. On the contrary, female managers are perceived to be transformational in their style and when they opt to adapt to a more of transactional style, they end up being called 'non-feminine'. As a result, the authors have suggested allowing diversity in styles to flourish and not allowing stereotypical 'sex rules' to constrain them.

Competence, assertiveness, self confidence are all traits touched upon by researchers that women often face stereotyped of. Male managers perceive women to be less competent than men even though both sexes have same qualifications. They also believe that women 'shy away' when competition exists. Assertiveness was found mainly attached to male managers and not female ones. And finally, it was also found that women were stereotypically perceived to have lower self-confidence when compared to their male counterparts; Jain and Mukherji's (2010).

To negate the above-mentioned stereotypical traits, Kanter (1977) stated that traits and/or behaviors were found to be shaped by the individuals' position in the organizational hierarchy. Therefore, putting women in high positions in the organization will eventually lead women to adapt to their positions and exhibit similar behaviors and attributes to men.

### 3.2.3 Work and Family Conflicts

The definition of work-family conflict was given by Kahn et al. (1964) as a form of interrole conflict where role pressures from either work or family demands are mutually unable to coexist in some respect; Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). In the literature review, it was mentioned that men were presumed to be the 'bread winners' where their primary role was public affairs and vice versa for women; Read (2003) and Darwiche (1999). Traditionally speaking, women should be placed at home taking care of the household, children and private affairs only. In other words, this is their primary role in life.

So what if women wanted to enter the workforce to compete, to lead and to gain life experience that they will never gain by taking care of the household solely? And let us say, for arguments sake, that they did enter the workforce and started off with their career; eventually, they would marry, conceive children and then? They will have to opt for either work, home or balance between the two; Bowen et al. (2007).

Some of the antecedents of work-family conflicts include family demands (number and age of children); Neal and Hammer (2007), family distress; Vinoklur et al. (1999), spousal and family support; Neal and Hammer (2007) and satisfaction with childcare arrangements; Goff et al. (1990). Those same authors found out that work-family conflicts have a direct relationship to job dissatisfaction and absenteeism.

In the later theoretical understanding section, a deeper look into work-family conflicts will be presented in terms of the UAE and a hypothesis will be depicted.

### **3.3 Theoretical Understanding**

After examining and defining the direct factors contributing to negative stereotypes, it is only logical to address them in terms of women advancement in the workplace. Based on these relationships, the hypotheses for this paper were introduced.

#### **3.3.1 National Culture vs. Women Career Advancement**

Neelankavil et al. (2000) stated that organizations exist within a context of cultural aspects and as a result of that fact, Hofstede (1983), came out with a conclusion that the following factors were influenced by national culture and they were namely: management, employee assumptions/behaviors and organizational structure/functions.

Previously, the national culture of the UAE was similar to that of Arab societies where people have rather conservative, strict, non-liberal, traditional viewpoints towards women. Al-Lamky (2007) described Arab societies as “bastions of patriarchy and male chauvinism”. The author stated that more emphasis was to given to male children rather than female ones. Jabeen (2010) also backed up what Al-Lamky (2007) stated but she also included psychological aspects to the issue. However, nowadays, the UAE has been exposed to globalization where traditions got affected, significantly, to a more liberal attitude towards females.

Jabeen (2010) claimed that because of the different treatment females get when compared to their males counterpart, the latter end up developing “anemic personalities”. This was mainly due to inadequate feedback and care females got to bear from their own parents.

Many authors, when conducted studies in Arab societies, agreed upon the fact that most of the people feel reluctant to abandon their traditional viewpoint of women primarily committed to internal affairs like committing to he household,

raising children and be involved in domestic activities only. To an extent where some of them still educate their sons rather than their daughters thinking that boys are a greater economical asset than girls (EL-Ghannam 2001; El-Ghannam 2002; El-Jardawi 1986; Abdalla 1996; El-Rahmony 2002).

### 3.3.2 Gender Stereotype vs. Women Career Advancement

In regards to gender stereotypes, Cleveland et al (2000) defined them as “socially shared beliefs about the characteristics or attributes of men & women in general that influence our perception of individual men and women”. Although Johnson (2000) addressed the fact that women and men are equal in terms of charisma, vision, innovation and initiation of ideas, Thanacoody and Bartram (2006) found that one of the major hurdles facing women in academia is gender stereotyping.

Management sometimes feel reluctant to hire women to be in key managerial positions; Eyring and Stead (1998), due to misconceptions regarding women’s abilities, preferences and under-valuation of their skills; Mott(1998).

Jabeen (2010) related a woman’s self esteem and enhanced competency to her treatment at home from her parents. She stated that a good family environment, socially, promotes self-esteem in girls from a young age. Moreover, when a girl is given positive feedback from people close to her, her ego and motivation gets fueled up significantly. Therefore, it is important to enhance self-esteem in girls because it is not a trait but a structure developed by interaction with the family; Chauwdhry and Kumari (1996).

Given the traditional viewpoint of Arabs, their odd preference of educating boys over girls, giving boys more attention than girls and building an image to girls being responsible for the household only; Al-Lamky (2007) found that Arab women take roles at the end of organizational hierarchies in areas of education, health and clerical jobs.

Curran (2001) and Carli and Eagly (2001) both discovered that in areas where women occupy the majority of the workforce, e.g. social work, education,



etc. they are still kept in 'doers' positions with low paying salaries whereas men lead, organize and direct with high paying salaries.

This contradicted what Crampton and Mishra (1999) found about women when they stated that women have transformational leadership styles when compared to a more transactional leadership in men. The authors also found that selecting women to lead would enhance team-building greatly.

Barriers to women in management exist worldwide in the workplace; Schein (2001). After carrying out a number of studies, the author came out with the conclusion that a "think manager-think male" view exists globally, especially amongst males.

It has to be mentioned that gender stereotypes is different than culture due to the fact that gender stereotype happens all around the world despite the different cultures around the globe. But tradition, culture, and religion can influence gender stereotypes significantly in the workplace.

This statement was clearly demonstrated by Al-Jenaibi (2010) when the author stated that women have been demanding equality in the workplace for some number of years excluding any kind of injustice no matter what the circumstances were.

So how does tradition, religion and/or culture influence stereotype? The author went on to explain that huge communication gaps in a professional position occur between men and women. The reason being that women feel unease when communicating with men and have a sense of discomfort because it's against the norms of society to accept it. To backup that statement Neal et al. (2005) explained that according to tradition, women are excluded to interact with men. The authors also described it as "a growing unease at the trend throughout the region of women working closely with men".

However, the good news is, the UAE, considered among the less conservative societies in the Arab world has begun to lift codes of that kind of stereotyping to a certain extent; Al-Jenaibi (2010).

### 3.3.3 Work and Family Conflict vs. Women Career Advancement

The subject of women balancing between their work requirement and family needs have been discussed widely by White (2003), Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004), Thanacoody et al. (2005). All of the above mentioned authors discussed that issue in regards to academia but the situation applies in all industries.

As mentioned in the previous sections, women in Arab societies were perceived to commit to the household as their primary activity, Read (2003) and Darwiche (1999). This kind of perception was not only found amongst Arabs but amongst Americans as well as illustrated in Hoschilds' (1989) observations. The same phenomenon was found in Egypt when Japer (2001) conducted a small research amongst Egyptian women where he found that some women were "pressured" to quit their jobs and become full time mothers.

Not surprisingly enough, the Chinese culture explicitly hold the perception that women are solely responsible of private affairs and vice-versa with men; Bowen et al. (2007). Therefore, it is more appropriate for men to seek their careers where women have to find a way to balance between work and family demands, if not, then they rather stay at home. Jabeen (2010) claimed that women were forced to consider between family and career or opt for both.

Another perception that might hinder the advancement of women in the workforce is the idea of women starting their careers but quitting their jobs after conceiving the first child, Stroh & Reilly (1999). This might cause upper management to opt for men from the start. Upper management has the perception that women would work for a period of time after completing

education then marry, raise children and have double thoughts of continuing with their career; Jamali and Nejati (2009).

Why do women quit their jobs after conceiving children? The question was answered by Jo et al. (2004) when he claimed that motherly emotions get involved in their jobs and for some types of upper management jobs, this was not accepted.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Based on the literature review section, a certain trend was present in most of the papers. The trend went as follows; firstly, some personal information were collected from the respondents, e.g. gender, age, workplace industry, etc.

Secondly, a scale was used to determine the attitudes of the respondents towards working women. That scale only showed the direction, positive or negative, of attitudes towards women. Examples of these scales include WAMS, MAWWWS, etc.

The following papers reflected to the above-mentioned trend; Owen and Todor (1993), Sakalli-Ugurlu and Beydogan (2002), Mihail (2006), Bowen et al. (2007).

After identifying the direction of the attitudes towards working women, the authors started analyzing their work by having different hypotheses to prove. In this paper, one hypothesis will be a re-confirmation of the work of Mostafa (2005) where he stated that university students had more liberal views towards the presence of women in the workplace.

The other hypothesis will be to test the views of female employees towards their female co-workers in the workplace. This hypothesis was famously discussed in many papers and there were so many mixed reviews regarding that; Mostafa (2003), Bowen et al. (2007), Adayemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz (1997), Mihail (2006), Sakalli-Ugurlu and Beydogan (2002).

Hypothesis number three will be based on the religious issues that the UAE might be facing due to its Arabic culture and tradition. The hypothesis takes into account what Mostafa (2003), Abdalla (1996), Mostafa (2005), El Ghannam 2001 and El-Ghannam 2002 stated about the Arabic culture being closed minded, conservative and traditionalistic.

Therefore, based on the above trends, the following hypotheses were made:

**H1: Participants will exhibit a negative approach towards working women.**

**H2: Females attitudes towards working females are more positive than males.**

**H3: Young generation (<45 years) will have a more liberal attitude towards working females when compared to the older generation (>45).**

**H4: Arab participants will report a rather traditional/conservative attitude towards working women.**

Then, in the theoretical understanding section, 3 macro barriers to the advancement of women were found and they were namely: National Culture, Gender Stereotype and Work-Family Conflict.

Some micro barriers were also obtained from the literature review section; e.g. Konek and Kitch (1994), Rosser (2004) and Wise and Bond (2003), and were added under the umbrella of the macro barriers. These macro and micro barriers are illustrated in Fig 3.1 below.

According to the above-mentioned barriers, the following hypothesis was put under experiment:

**H5: National culture will have the biggest effect on the advancement of women in the workforce.**

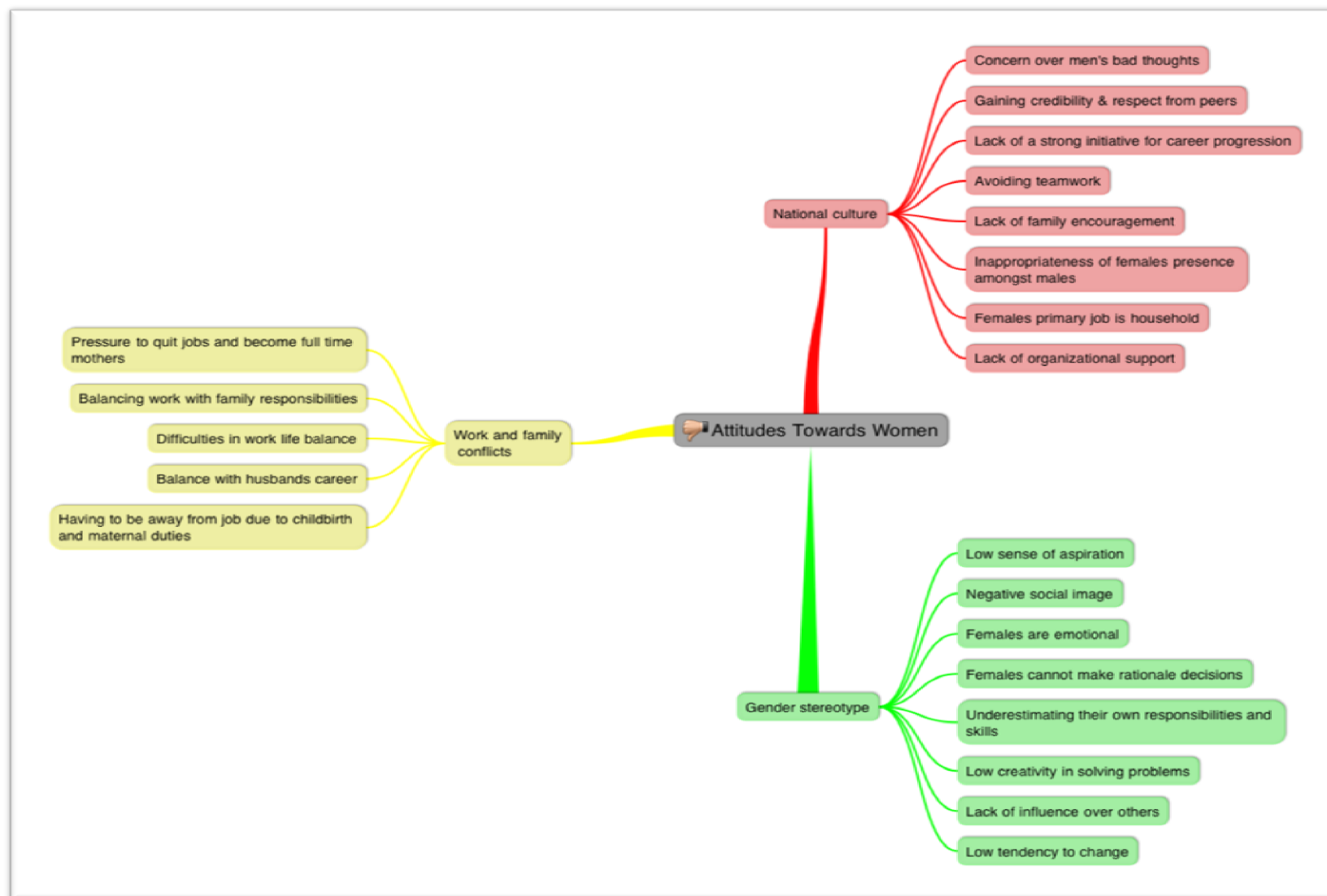


Figure 3.1: Macro and micro barriers to the advancement of women

## **4. Research Methodology**

Research methodology consisted of the following parts:

### **4.1 Type of Methodology Used**

The type of methodology chosen for this paper was quantitatively based. Previous quantitative analysis was carried out regarding the attitudes towards females; Terborg et al. (1977), Thanacoody (2006), Mostafa (2005), Mostafa (2005). Therefore, the scale used for the analysis was readily available; i.e. WAMS.

Another reason why a quantitative approach was used was to do with the number of respondents. This paper was intended to test the attitudes towards females in the Oil and Gas Industry in the UAE which comprises a huge number of employees, given the fact that the Oil and Gas Industry is the main source of GDP in the country.

Dawson (2002) claimed that quantitative analysis has quicker contact to respondents when compared to qualitative. That was an important aspect of the research given the date of submission.

### **4.2 Scales Used**

#### **4.2.1 Women As Managers Scale (WAMS)**

Women As Managers Scale (WAMS), Terborg et al. (1977), will be distributed amongst respondents in order to get the current situation of the attitudes of both males and females towards female employees in the company. In other words, WAMS will only indicate whether the attitude towards women is either positive or negative.

##### ***4.2.1.1 Brief Description of WAMS***

Women As Managers Scale (WAMS) was adapted, tested and validated by Terborg et al. (1977). The authors' aim of the scale was to create a meaningful scale that incorporates many managerial situations in a logical

manner that will help identify the trend of people's perception towards working women.

It consisted of a 21-item questionnaire where 11 questions were positively worded and 10 were negatively worded. Respondents had to rate the questions using a seven point Likert format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). To further explain WAMS, it was found noteworthy to quote Bowen et al. (2007) when he stated that "negatively worded items were reverse coded so higher scores reflected more favorable attitudes toward women as managers".

The complete WAMS is presented in the Appendix section.

#### 4.2.2 Barriers of Women Advancement in the Workforce Scale

A questionnaire having the micro-barriers to woman advancement, illustrated in Figure 3.1, will be distributed amongst the participants. By doing so, the most factors contributing to the in-advancement of female employees will be identified and tackled in the recommendation section of this paper. Respondents had to rate the questions using a seven point Likert format ranging from 1 (significantly irrelevant) to 7 (significantly important). The complete scale is presented in the Appendix Section.

### **4.3 Distribution of Questionnaire**

Both scales mentioned above had to be distributed among a relatively large number of people. After assessing the situation, it was found that collecting mail survey in the Arab world has been very difficult (Harzing, 1997; Nasif et al., 1991). Electronic mails (E-mails) were avoided because it would have consumed so much time to manually enter all the results from the respondents to the software. Therefore, technology was utilized, and a survey engine was used to create, distribute, collect and feed results to the software.

The survey was created using the following online engine:

[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

The population frame was mainly focused on employees in the Oil and Gas Industry in the UAE but it was distributed to a large number of participants from the public as well. Sampling technique used was a Random Sampling that focused on employees of all job positions ranging from technicians all the way to top managers in the Oil and Gas Industry. Random sampling was also used among participants from the public. The sampling size was decided between the supervisor and the executor of the dissertation to be not less than 150 participants.

In this paper, the total number of participants who have completed the full questionnaire was 237. Out of which, almost 50% of them were participants from the Oil and Gas Industry and 48% were amongst the general public; the other two percent were missing data.

#### **4.4 Data Analysis Tools**

A software, mentioned in the previous part, was used to analyze the results. This software is called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, mostly known as SPSS.

This software was chosen because of previous experiences in former modules within the curriculum of the British University in Dubai (BUiD). Plus, this software is very user friendly as it simplifies all analysis to be made. The interface is very friendly and so many people are aware of the existence of that software.

Some of the analyses include; t-tests, regressions, correlations, ANOVA, etc. In this paper, however, a huge focus was given to t-tests as it was the main analysis required to test the attitudes towards women in the UAE.

In this paper, t-tests were primarily used to get the attitudes towards women among different variables such as gender, age and nationality. Then after, the 95% confidence interval was compared and analyzed to get the direction towards women whether it is positive, neutral or negative.



## **5. Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **5.1 Sample**

As mentioned before, the survey was distributed using an online engine from the following website:

[www.surveymonkey.org](http://www.surveymonkey.org)

In total, around 320 responses were collected in the website but only 237 were accepted as the rest were not fully completed by the respondents; hence, they were discarded.

#### **5.1.1 Gender**

Subjects in this study were 237 participants (N=237). Of these, 122 males and 117 females. The following pie chart depicts the ratio of males to females in the study.

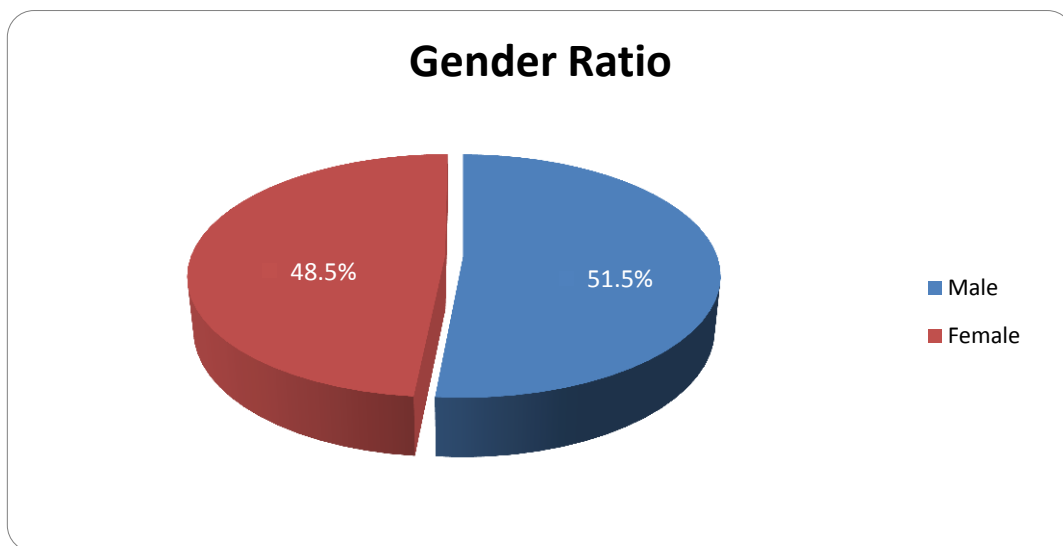


Fig 5.1: Gender Ratio

#### **5.1.2 Age Range**

Age range was an important factor in this study because it was used as a dependant variable in Hypothesis 2 which will be discussed in later stages. There were two categories for the age range used in this study namely: old generation

(>45) and young generation (<45). The following figure represents the percentages of the two groups:

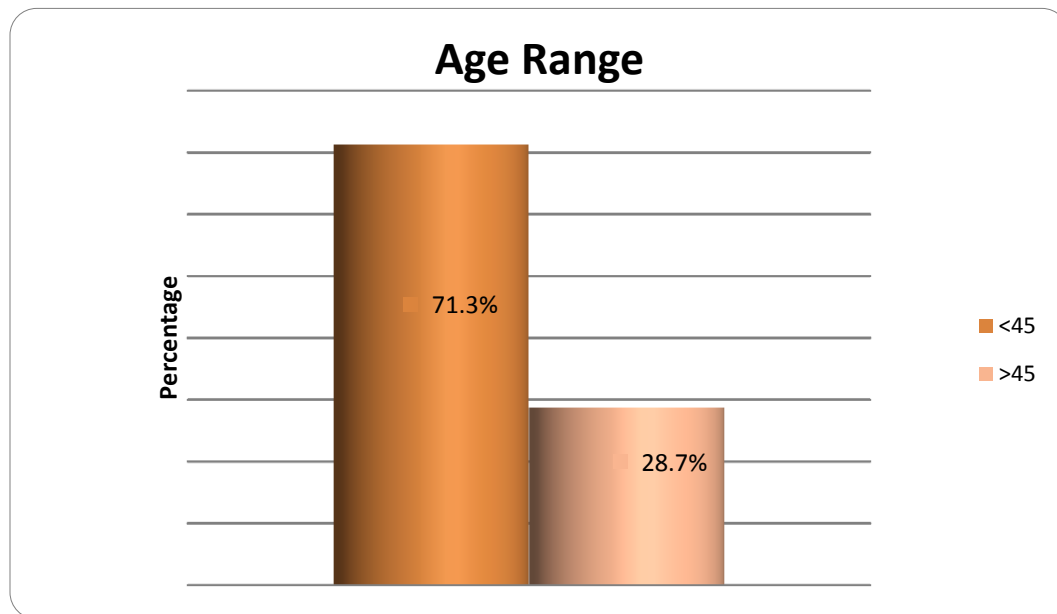


Fig 5.2: Age Range

As can be seen from the figure above, young generation participants had the highest percentage which accounted for a mere 71% where the balance was accounted for the older generation.

### 5.1.3 Nationality

The nationality of the respondents was also used for one of the hypothesis (H3) as an independent variable. Participants have answered from all around the globe but at the end, they were filtered out to two groups only; Arabs and Non-Arabs. The following figure illustrates the percentages of the respondents in terms of nationality.

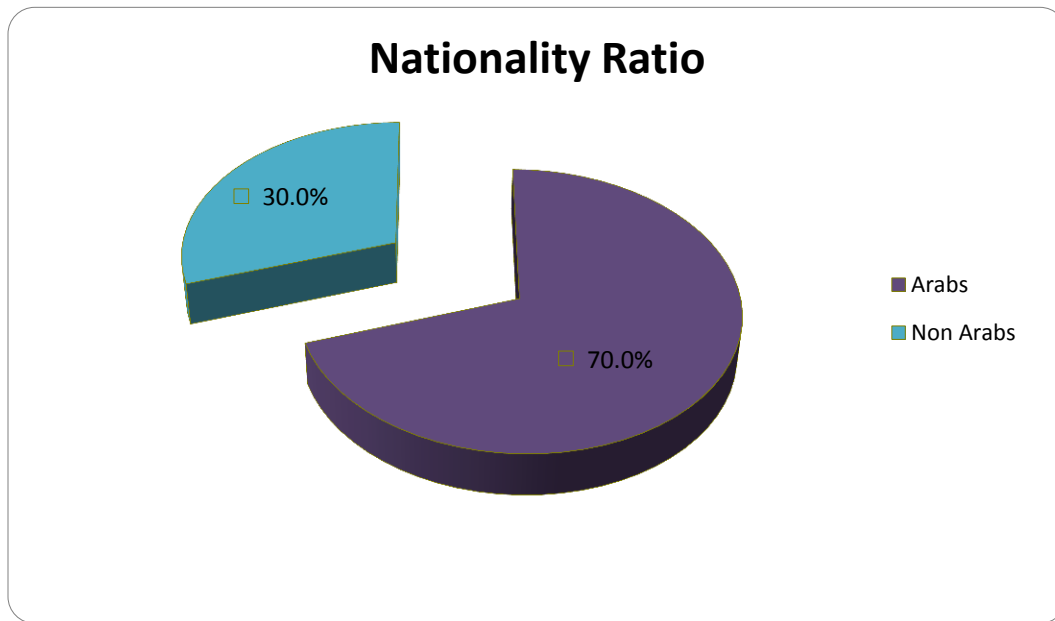


Fig 5.3: Nationality Ratio

Exactly 70% of the respondents were Arabs and the rest were Non-Arabs; this accounted for 166 and 71 respectively.

#### 5.1.4 Employer

In Hypothesis 4, current employer will be put under the microscope to clearly understand the attitude towards female employees in Company X, OPCO's and around the world.

Regarding employers details, this factor was sectioned into 6 sections; where Company X accounted for 4 sections, OPCO's for one and Others as the final section. The following figure summarizes the findings:

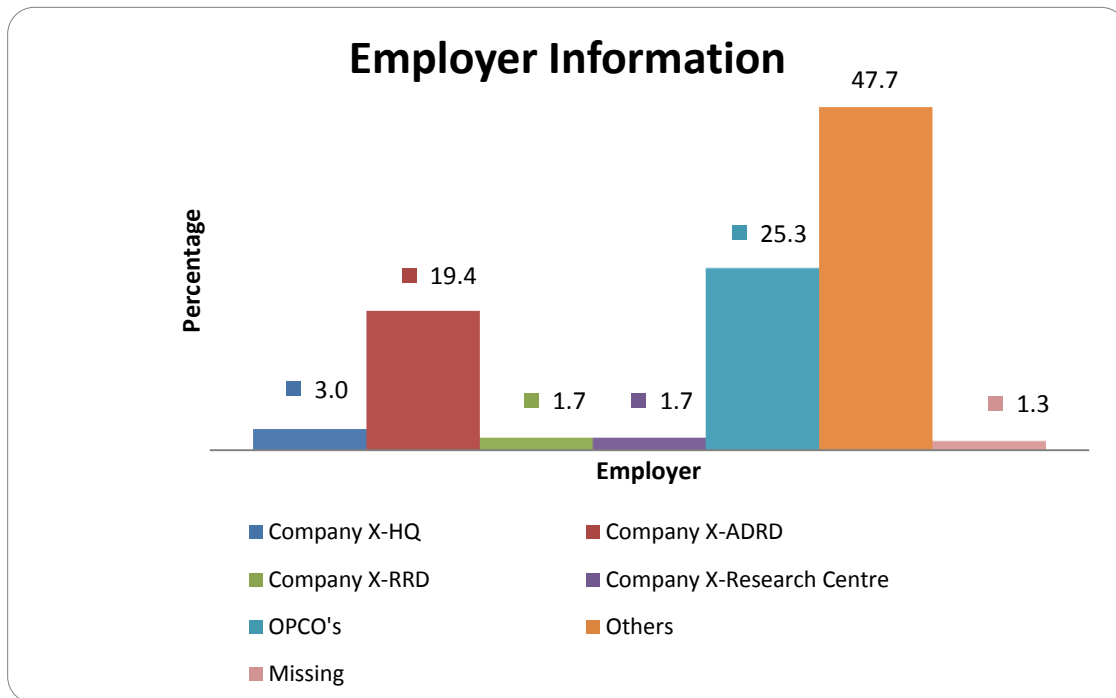


Fig 5.4: Employer Information

The lion's share of the participants was found to be from the 'Others' group which accounted for almost half the responses, OPCO's participants for 25% and Company X-ADRD accounted for approximately 20%. It has to be pointed out that 3 responses (1.3%) were not answered but normalized when the analysis was made.

The analysis was made using the programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, mostly known as SPSS.

## 5.2 Reliability of Scales

In this study, two scales were used; one being Women As Managers Scale (WAMS) and the other was Barriers To Female Advancement in the Workplace.

In order to have confidence in the empirical findings so that they can reflect the proposed constructs, a reliability analysis was made for both of the above-mentioned scales. Furthermore, Flynn et al. (1994), has stated that empirically validated scales can be used in other studies for different populations

and/or longitudinal studies. Therefore, a reliability analysis was performed for both scales to ensure the validity and reliability of both scales.

Regarding WAMS, Cronbach's Alpha was found to be ( $\alpha=0.879$ ) and hence appear to have excellent consistency. Regarding Barriers to Female Advancement Scale, Cronbach's Alpha was found to be ( $\alpha=0.859$ ) indicating good consistency as well.

It is noteworthy to mention that the second scale, i.e. Barriers To Female Advancement in the Workplace, was sectioned into 3 sections namely: National Culture, Gender Stereotype and Work-Family conflict. The items under each category are illustrated in Fig 3.1. As a result, the scale was put under 3 reliability tests; a test for each of the sections. The table below summarizes Cronbach's alpha for the three sections in the second scale.

Table 5.1: Cronbach's Alpha for Barriers To Female Advancement Scale

Barriers to Female Advancement Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
National Culture	0.725
Gender Stereotype	0.824
Work and Family Conflict	0.769

According to Nunnally (1978), the author suggested that a Cronbach's-Alpha value of 0.6 is sufficient to make the scales reliable. Given that the values of all the scales were well above that mark, we can **confidently** conclude by saying that the scales used in this study were **all reliable**.

### 5.3 Hypothesis 1

In the first Hypothesis (H1), the overall approach of attitudes towards women was to be put under the test and was expected to be negative.

**H1: Participants will exhibit a negative approach towards working-women.**

Only the first scale, i.e. WAMS, was used to measure the attitudes towards women in the workforce. It has to be mentioned that WAMS is a 21-item questionnaire having a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1 strongly disagree) to (7 strongly agree). A higher score represents a more liberal attitude towards women employees. A mean average score of 1 will pertain an extremely negative attitude, 4 will give a neutral attitude and 7 will depict a highly positive attitude.

It is noteworthy to mention that WAMS consisted of 10 negatively worded statements; in order to have consistent results, the results of those negatively worded statements were all reverse coded.

After feeding all of the responses to SPSS, the average score of each respondent was calculated. After that, a one sample T-Test was carried out in order to find the mean average responses for all the participants. Table 5.2 below represents the scores of the participants in relation to H1.

As can be seen from the table below, the average mean value for all the participants was 5.41 when the Test Value was taken to be of (value = 0). The 95% confidence value of the “Average of all respondents” ranged from 5.3 to 5.5. This indicated a **slightly positive** attitude towards women employees amongst all participants.

The highest range of score was given to the item “Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programmes” where responses scores ranged from (6.10 to 6.42).

The lowest score, however, was related to the item “On the average, a woman that stays at home all of the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half the time”. The range was scored to be between (3.73 and 4.28); this was one of the items that were reverse coded. Hence, what it implies is that we have 95% confidence that the participants “Agreed” to that statement and that has led this item to be negatively affecting working females. The rest of the items all indicated a **slightly positive** range (4.0-6.0).

Table 5.2: One Sample T-Test for H1

	Test Value = 0		
	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
1. It is less desirable for women to have a job that requires responsibility, when compared to men	5.233	5.01	5.46
2. Women can evaluate business situations properly	5.708	5.55	5.87
3. Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women	4.928	4.68	5.17
4. Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programmes	6.263	6.10	6.42
5. Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers	6.013	5.84	6.18
6. On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organization's overall goals than are men	4.945	4.70	5.19
7. It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men	5.042	4.81	5.27
8. The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions	6.059	5.90	6.22
9. Society should give equal values to work done by men and women managers	6.190	6.03	6.35
10. It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions	6.000	5.83	6.17
11. The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men	4.650	4.40	4.90
12. Women should not allow their emotions to influence their managerial behaviour than would men	5.506	5.31	5.70
13. Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as employees	5.565	5.38	5.75
14. To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice some of her femininity	5.232	4.99	5.47
15. On the average, a woman that stays at home all of the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half the time	4.008	3.73	4.28
16. Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men	5.219	4.98	5.46
17. Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world	5.678	5.46	5.90
18. Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it	5.295	5.10	5.49
19. Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader	5.235	5.03	5.44
20. Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world	5.603	5.40	5.80
21. Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it	5.153	4.93	5.38
Average of WAMS respondents	5.40675	5.2933	5.5202

## 5.4 Hypothesis 2

The objective for the second hypothesis was to test the relationship between gender and their subsequent approaches to working females. It was claimed that females would have a more liberal approach towards their female counterparts than would males.

### **H2: Females attitudes towards working females are more positive than males.**

Again, to test the attitudes towards females, WAMS was used to test that hypothesis. So a one sample t-test analysis was performed on the “Average of WAMS respondents” where the grouping variable was Gender. Table 5.3 and 5.4 below summarize the results of the analysis.

Table 5.3: Group Statistics for H2

Gender		N	Mean
Average of WAMS respondents	Male	122	5.1994
	Female	115	5.6267

Table 5.4: Independent Sample t-test for H2

		t-test for Equality of Means		
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Average of WAMS respondents	Equal variances assumed	.000	-.64798	-.20655
	Equal variances not assumed	.000	-.64708	-.20745

The mean for females M was found to be (M=5.63) exhibiting a slightly positive attitude; whereas the mean average for males was found to be (M=5.20). This meant that both genders had a positive attitude towards women but **men** exhibited it at a **lesser degree**.

Looking at the p-values of the analysis, it can be operationally seen that (p-values < 0.05) at a confidence level of 95%. Therefore, we can confidently say that the two groups had statistically different responses. To what extent they



were different? This is answered in Table 5.5 by comparing the 95% Confidence Interval for both genders.

Table 5.5: One-Sample Test for H2

	Test Value=0			
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
	Males		Females	
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
1. It is less desirable for women to have a job that requires responsibility, when compared to men	4.79	5.42	5.05	5.70
2. Women can evaluate business situations properly	5.16	5.66	5.84	6.19
3. Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women	4.36	5.05	4.82	5.52
4. Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programmes	5.75	6.25	6.35	6.72
5. Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers	5.48	6.01	6.08	6.50
6. On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organization's overall goals than are men	4.61	5.24	4.56	5.32
7. It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men	4.53	5.20	4.88	5.52
8. The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions	5.50	6.00	6.21	6.55
9. Society should give equal values to work done by men and women managers	5.84	6.30	6.09	6.55
10. It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions	5.51	6.02	6.04	6.46
11. The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men	3.86	4.54	4.77	5.49
12. Women should not allow their emotions to influence their managerial behavior than would men	5.27	5.80	5.14	5.75
13. Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as employees	5.05	5.55	5.55	6.07
14. To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice some of her femininity	4.59	5.25	5.24	5.90
15. On the average, a woman that stays at home all of the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half the time	3.17	3.91	4.13	4.91
16. Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men	4.85	5.53	4.90	5.61
17. Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world	4.96	5.60	5.82	6.37
18. Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it	4.85	5.41	5.21	5.74
19. Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader	4.89	5.43	5.00	5.64
20. Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world	5.11	5.67	5.55	6.11
21. Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it	4.86	5.45	4.82	5.49

As can be seen from the above table, male respondents had different perception towards working women indicating a less positive attitude when compared to female respondents. For example, the item that said "On the

average, a woman that stays at home all of the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half the time”, males had a response that ranged from (3.17-3.91) indicating a very low score whereas women had a more positive approach in response to that item; female scores ranged from (4.13-4.91).

Taking a look at the table above, we can clearly see that there were so many variations that indicated a more positive attitude from female respondents. This ultimately **supports H2**.

### 5.5 Hypothesis 3

The purpose of the third hypothesis (H3) was to test the attitudes towards women in relation to age. It was assumed that the older generation, i.e. participants with age > 45, will exhibit a more traditional and conservative attitude towards female employees when compared to the younger generation participants.

**H3: Young generation (<45 years) will have a more liberal attitude towards working females when compared to the older generation (>45).**

As shown in Fig 5.2, 71% of the participants were < 45 years of age and the balance were > 45; that was equivalent to 169 and 68 respondents respectively. WAMS was used as the basis of measuring the mean average scores for respondents in identifying the attitude towards women. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 below show the results after performing an Independent T-Test for the above hypothesis having “Age Range” as the Grouping Variable.

Table 5.6: Group Statistics for H3

	Age Range	N	Mean
Average of WAMS respondents	<45	169	5.3683
	>45	68	5.5022

Table 5.7: Independent Samples Test for H3

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
Average of WAMS respondents	Equal variances assumed	.294	-.38458	.11685
	Equal variances not assumed	.312	-.39519	.12746

Looking at the p-values of the analysis, it can be clearly seen that the P-value > 0.05 when the confidence value was taken to be 95%. Therefore, the values indicate **statistical insignificance**. This denoted that the attitude towards working women exhibited by the participants of both age ranges are not significantly different from each other.

Turning the focus to the mean average score for participants <45 years of age was found to be (M=5.37) compared to (M=5.50) for participants of >45 years. This meant that both groups exhibited a **positive** approach towards women employees with a slight **increment** of the **older generation** participants.

There was no need to compare (95% Confidence Interval) for both groups since the statistical difference was not significant. Therefore, we **do not** support **H3**.

## 5.6 Hypothesis 4

In regards to the fourth hypothesis, H4, nationality was tested against the approach towards female employees. Participants have responded were from all over the globe but they were then filtered out in 2 groups namely: Arabs and Non-Arabs.

It was assumed that Arabs would exhibit a more conservative attitude towards female employees compared to their Non-Arabs counterparts due to religious reasons, culture, traditions, etc.

**H4: Arab participants will report a rather traditional/conservative attitude towards working women.**

An independent sample t-test was carried out in order to test the “Average score of WAMS respondents” against the grouping variable Nationality. Tables 5.8 and 5.9 below summarize the results of the test.

Table 5.8: Group Statistics for H4			
Nationality		N	Mean
Average of WAMS respondents	Arabs	166	5.3541
	Non Arabs	71	5.5299

Table 5.9: Independent Samples Test for H4

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
Average of WAMS respondents	Equal variances assumed	.162	-.42288	.07136
	Equal variances not assumed	.175	-.43108	.07955

Looking at the significance (p-value) of the independent t-test, p-values were found to be >0.05 indicating statistical insignificance. In other words, the score of WAMS by the respondents from both groups did not reveal significant difference. This statement can be supported by looking at Table 5.8, mean column, and comparing the results; means for both groups were almost identical.

As illustrated in Fig 5.3, exactly 70% of the respondents were Arabs and the balance were Non-Arabs; that was equivalent to 166 and 71 respectively. The mean average score for Arabs was found to be (M=5.35). Non-Arabs had a mean average of (M=5.53). Both groups exhibited **positive** attitudes with a slight **increment** of **Non-Arabs** over Arabs. Therefore, we **do not** support H4.

## 5.7 Hypothesis 5

Three macro barriers were mentioned in Fig 3.1 which included, National Culture, Gender Stereotype and Work-Family Conflict. In the four previous

hypotheses, WAMS was used to test the attitudes towards women. In this hypothesis, the second scale “Barriers To The Advancement of Women in the Workplace” will be used to test which one of the three barriers inhibits the advancement of women the most.

Based on the literature review, Jamali and Nejati (2009) being one of them, a certain direction was found where researchers have showed that National Culture had the biggest impact on the advancement of women in the workforce. This hypothesis will be tested in this paper.

**H5: National culture will have the biggest effect on the advancement of women in the workforce.**

It is noteworthy to mention that the scale was ranged from 1 “Significantly Irrelative” to 7 “Significantly Important” and hence, a higher result indicates a more important barrier and yet bigger resistance to the advancement of women. In other words, the higher the score, the more resistance it has on the advancement of women in the workplace.

Furthermore, the scale consisted of 21 micro-barriers under the umbrella of 3 macro-barriers. The first 8 items were items under the first macro-barrier “National Culture” followed by the next 8 items under the second macro-barrier “Gender Stereotype” and the last 5 items come under “Work and Family Conflict”.

In order to find out which of the three barriers inhibited the advancement of women the most, a one sample t-test was carried out. The test included all items in the “Barriers to the Advancement of Women” scale where the (95% Confidence Interval) was compared for all items. Table 5.10 below summarizes the findings.

Table 5.10: One-Sample Test for H5

	Test Value = 0		
	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper
<b>National Culture</b>			
1. Women tend to avoid teamwork	3.398	3.20	3.60
2. Lack of family encouragement faced by women	4.648	4.46	4.83
3. Inappropriateness of females presence amongst males	3.864	3.67	4.06
4. Women have their concerns over men's views about their participation in the workforce.	4.063	3.88	4.25
5. Women find difficulties gaining credibility/respect from peers, supervisor and senior managers	4.352	4.12	4.59
6. Women lack a strong initiative for career progression	3.730	3.50	3.96
7. The primary job of females is the household	3.778	3.54	4.02
8. Lack of organizational support faced by women	4.606	4.37	4.84
<b>Gender Stereotype</b>			
9. Women have low sense of aspiration	3.026	2.84	3.21
10. Females have negative social images (gender stereotyping of jobs)/difficulty gaining access to higher posts	3.717	3.48	3.95
11. Females are emotional	4.122	3.91	4.34
12. Females cannot make rational decisions	3.129	2.92	3.34
13. Females underestimate their own abilities and skills	3.764	3.55	3.98
14. Women have low creativity in problem solving	2.877	2.68	3.07
15. Women lack influence over others	3.277	3.08	3.47
16. Women have a low tendency to change	3.268	3.06	3.48
<b>Work-Family Conflict</b>			
17. Pressure to quit jobs and become full time mothers	4.801	4.57	5.03
18. Balancing work with family responsibilities (children, elderly relatives, etc.)	5.371	5.18	5.57
19. Women face difficulties in work-life balance	4.789	4.58	5.00
20. Wives have to balance their career with that of their husbands	4.847	4.64	5.05
21. Women tend to be away, for extended period of time, due to childbirth and maternal responsibilities	5.143	4.93	5.36
<b>Average of all respondents</b>	4.00157	3.8877	4.1154

From the table above, looking at the mean values, it can be seen that the barrier having the highest resistance is actually Work-Family Conflict when

compared to the other two. Looking at the upper 95% confidence interval of Work-Family Conflict, it is clear that they all cross the 5.0 mark indicating a relatively high resistance. The upper 95% Confidence Interval for the other two barriers did not reach the mark of 5.0; the highest one had a score of 4.59 for the item “Women find difficulties gaining credibility/respect from peers, supervisor and senior managers”.

Looking at the mean values of National Culture and comparing it to the mean values of Gender Stereotyping, it can be deduced that the former barrier had a slight more resistance to females when compared to the latter. Four of the items under National Culture exceeded the 4.0 mark indicating slight resistivity whereas only one item under Gender Stereotyping crossed the same mark.

The overall score did not reveal a high resistance to females where the score for the average score of all respondents ranged from 3.89 to 4.12 indicating a relatively neutral resistance. So, all in all, we can state that **Work-Family Conflict** inhibited the advancement of women the most. Therefore, we **do not** support H5 but the fact that we have found Work-Family Conflict to have the biggest impact on the advancement of women; we would focus on that aspect in the next coming sections.

## 5.9 Discussion

In the previous section, 5 hypotheses were analyzed statistically and a certain direction was found in the responses of all participants. Fortunately, an **overall positive** attitude towards females was found amongst participants when WAMS was used to determine the approach of the participants.

Secondly, it was found that **females** had a slight **lead** over males in terms of attitudes towards females. Thirdly, it was **not proved** that **age** had an affect on the advancement of women as it had no significance whatsoever. Fourthly, **nationality** had **no influence** on the attitudes towards women as both groups (Arabs and Non-Arabs) exhibited the same score. By performing those four hypotheses, we obtained information about three variables namely: gender, age range and nationality.

In the literature review, we have demonstrated 3 macro-barriers that inhibit the progress of women in the workplace. They were identified to be National Culture, Gender Stereotype and Work-Family Conflict. In the fifth hypothesis, we wanted to discover which one of the mentioned barriers inhibited the progress of women the most and it was found to be Work-Family Conflict.

This section will entail the analyses in regards to Company X. Although Company X's percentage of participants accounted for 26%, OPCO's percentage accounted for 25%. It was mentioned earlier that Company X and OPCO's are sister companies under the umbrella of one Mother Company and hence, the two can be analyzed collectively due to the following reasons; one, mentality of the people is the same, two, there were so many interchanges in the past between managers from one sister company to another and three, all companies follow the same rules that are pertained from the Mother Company. Therefore, Company X and OPCO's will be collectively analyzed. As a result, we can say that participants from the Oil and Gas Industry contributed to almost half the respondents in this survey.



In regards to the first hypothesis, the results were significant where it clearly showed that participants had a positive attitude towards females in the workplace. That can be understood due to the fact that so many females have been introduced to the workplace in Company X and OPCO's. Not only that, but a good number of females are currently holding managerial positions in both places. Moreover, and specifically in Company X, female engineers and technicians have been employed in a remote area location that requires heavy-duty tasks and activities. Despite the somewhat late introduction of females in these remote area locations, specifically in 2008, female employees have proven to be more knowledgeable, more proactive and more worthy of handling big tasks when compared to the more experienced male employees. Some male employees may argue with the above statement due to the presence of a "Female Protocol" in Company X and OPCO's that states a number of rules that managers should abide to. One of the rules being, females have the option to do field work or not. Second rule restricts females from attending night duties in case of emergency. Therefore, females will tend to stick to administrative and clerical jobs even though their job requires field activities. Contradicting to that, females have proven that they can do field jobs as well as administrative/clerical.

OPCO's, however, have introduced female employees long time ago in administrative and clerical tasks but they have also introduced female engineers in their remote area locations a number of years ago. Those female engineers are now holding engineering and audit related positions in OPCO's.

For that reason, females have proven to the upper management in Company X and OPCO's that they can handle the job even if it requires engineering aspects. This has led to the slightly positive attitude in Company X and OPCO's. It is totally understandable to have a "slightly" positive attitude given the fact that both Company X and OPCO's are going through a transition period. More time is required to see the attitude towards females soaring up in its positivity. Those findings corroborated with the findings of Mostafa (2005).

In regards to the second hypothesis, as expected, females showed a more positive attitude towards their female counterparts when compared to males. Needless to say, females will support other females to get up the promotion ladder to prove to upper management that they are worthy of these positions. If more women were found at the top level of Company X and OPCO's, a more positive attitude towards females will be perceived. Those findings corroborate to the studies performed by Mostafa (2003), Mostafa (2005), Bowen et al. (2007).

The third hypothesis involved the testing of attitudes towards females between two groups of participants (<45 years of age and >45 years of age). Those two age groups corresponded to two different generations. The attitude toward females came out to be interestingly the same for both age groups; these results came out to be totally contradicting to many studies that included Mostafa (2003), Mostafa (2005), Papalexandris and Bourantas (1991), Sakalli-Ugurlu and Beydogan (2002) and many more.

The p-value for that analysis came out to be >0.05 but the mean of the score indicated a slightly more liberal attitude for the older generation. Therefore, we **cannot confidently** say that the older generation participants showed more positive attitude. But if that was the case, these results could be explained due to the fact that the older generation experienced dealing with females in the workplace and exhibited a positive attitude whereas the younger generation who still did not get the chance to deal with women had a more conservative and cautious perception.

In the fourth hypothesis, nationality was put under the test where Arab participants were expected to pertain a less liberal view towards females when compared to Non-Arabs. This hypothesis was based on research done by Mostafa (2003), Mostafa (2005) and Abdallah (1996). An independent t-test was carried out on the average of all respondents having Nationality as the grouping variable. Arabs exhibited, to a minute extent, more conservative attitude towards females when the mean score of both groups were compared, however, p-value was >0.05 indicating that both Arabs and Non-Arabs had a similar attitude

towards females. Therefore, we **cannot claim** that Arabs exhibited a more conservative attitude towards females.

Argumentatively speaking, if that is the case, then the reason behind Arab participants exhibiting a more conservative attitude towards females is to do with their traditions, culture and religion. Some Arabs still feel that women should not be enrolled in the workforce because they have to take care of the household and private affairs. Therefore, exhibiting a less liberal attitude is expected. But the overall approach towards females from both groups was positive.

What are the barriers that caused this kind of negative approach towards females? They were identified to be three: National Culture, Gender Stereotype and Work-Family Conflict. The fifth hypothesis had the objective to identify which of these three barriers affected the progress of women the most. It was found to be Work-Family conflict. This supports the studies carried out by Jabeen (2010), Stroh & Reilly (1999), Jamali and Nejati (2009), Jo et al. (2004), Bowen et al. (2007) and Read (2003) and Darwiche (1999).

In company X, an unofficial face-to-face discussion was carried out with some of the survey participants regarding Work-Family Conflict. They all agreed upon one aspect and that was; females are encouraged to start their career path, gain a few years of experience and establish them selves as professionals but quit their jobs as soon as they get into marriage.

The participants added that it will be very hard for females to balance between the household and career activities; especially taking care of the children. This supported by the fact that the highest mean score of all the barriers under Work-Family Conflict was accounted for “Balancing work with family responsibility (children, elderly, etc.)”. A high result in that case contributes to more resistance towards females.

Furthermore, going back to the first scale, WAMS, a low result indicates a negative attitude and vice-versa. It consisted of 21 items on a 1 to 7 Likert Scale. The least mean average response, indicating the most negative attitude, was

pertained for the item “on the average, a woman that stays at home all of the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half the time”. This supports what the respondents had to say about females quitting their jobs after they get married and become mothers. In other words, male participants who were questioned preferred having their wives to be full time mothers after gaining some time of work experience. Scott (2004), conversely, has stated that our region loses 0.7 percent of GDP per capita by not involving women in the workforce.

## **6. Recommendations and Conclusions**

After carrying out analyses to six hypotheses and discussing them critically, conclusions were entailed that addressed the attitudes towards women in the Oil and Gas Industry. In the section that follows, recommendation have been put in order to further enhance the attitudes towards women in the Oil and Gas Industry in the UAE.

### **6.1 Conclusions**

A negative attitude towards female employees was assumed and perceived by some females working in Company X and some of its sister companies. This perception was brought to life because of some unfair incidents that affected a few female employees working in these companies.

A quantitative analysis was used for this paper where it involved a questionnaire consisting of three pages. Page 1 included some personal information, Page 2 involved a scale that was used to measure the attitude towards women called WAMS and Page 3 entailed another scale that included three macro-barriers perceived to be affecting career progression amongst females. The survey was distributed amongst a wide group of participants, by the use of a website called [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), where in total, 237 responses were attained. From there, analyses were carried out on 6 hypotheses.

Regarding the first hypothesis, we can confidently say that the Oil and Gas Industry in the UAE exhibited a rather liberal and less traditional approach towards working women. This was clearly seen after the participants filled in the Women As Managers Scale (WAMS) and the respondents got a relatively positive mean score.

Using the same scale, it was found that females had a more positive approach to their female counterparts when compared to males. Although both groups depicted positive mean scores, females had a slight advantage over males.

WAMS was used to again to differentiate between the views of young participants and that of old ones. The young generation age had to be <45 years whereas the old generation age span had to be >45. Interestingly, it was found that the younger generation exhibited the same approach to working women when compared to the older generation. Finding the mean score of both groups gave a slight lead to the older generation's approach. The reason behind this observation was justified by relating the interaction of the older generation with working females and having full understanding about their potential and capabilities at work.

Arabs participants were then tested against Non-Arabs in terms of their open mindedness towards females; WAMS was used as well. Again, no difference in the approach was found between the two groups. Despite showing positive attitudes towards females, Arabs had a relatively more conservative approach when compared to Non-Arabs. This could have been explained due to the fact that Arab participants still think that females should be responsible for the household and private affairs when the males are the ones who are responsible for public affairs.

Fifthly, the biggest barrier to females in the workplace was identified to be "Work-Family Conflict". This barrier was related to the previous hypothesis were some participants believed that women should take care of their family before thinking of getting a career. Family responsibilities like taking care of the household, taking care of the children, etc. were viewed by some participants to be more important than females establishing themselves in the workforce.

Some short term recommendations were listed which involved communication between upper management and female employees, establishing a task force team to discuss issues related to females, etc. Long term suggestions were also listed that involved putting emphasis on future female managers as part of the AMV of the company, collaborating with the government of the UAE to empower women managers, etc.

All in all, we can say that the objectives and aims of the paper were attained. It was found that Company X and its sister companies exhibit a fairly positive approach towards working women. This could be further enhanced by applying the recommendations mentioned above.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

This part will address some recommendations found from literature and some general recommendation that can be implemented in Company X.

One of the most important factors that aid women in advancing in their career is the help of upper management in the company. Eyring and Stead (1998) carried out a study and found that the contribution of upper management to the advancement of women in their organization is the first and most crucial aspect if the attitude towards women is to be solved. They also argued that in companies where management support was seen to be greater, women actually represented on standing committees and addressed strategic business issues. This is another point Company X and its sister should take that into consideration companies; that is to involve women in key managerial decisions at the top hierarchy of the companies.

The active involvement of women in executive training programs was another point mentioned by Eyring and Stead (1998) coupled by the facilitation of movement of women into line positions. The authors went on to explain the importance of Task Force or Special Committees in order to break the glass ceiling. Moreover, the authors came up with a 6-step system that mainly involved proper communication between senior officials and women employees. Needless to say, communicating the goals of a company that relates to women succession programs is not beneficial if it was not communicated to female employees.

In this paper, Work-Family Conflict was identified to be the biggest barrier facing women in advancing in their careers; this was proved in H5. Dickens (1997) and Hakim (1996) argued that Middle Eastern countries should start helping women to balance between work and family responsibilities by allowing

flexible hours, part time jobs, use of family leaves, etc. The authors stated that this aspect was the primary characteristic of the development of equal opportunity policies in western nations.

Metcalf (2008) came up with a development model to enhance the leadership of women in the workforce. The author tackled the problem on three levels; organizational, governmental and individual. The table is presented below:

Table 6.1: Women, Learning and Leadership Development

<b>Organizational</b>	<b>Governmental</b>	<b>Individual</b>
Diversity and EO policies	Legislation	Women's networks – local and international
Learning and knowledge transfer	Active role of women's councils	Commitment to lifelong learning
Support women's networks	Development and training and support for vocational provision	Political participation
Collaborations and enterprise development with Chambers of Commerce	Entrepreneurship support	
	Political empowerment	

Source: Metcalfe (2008)

Metcalf pointed out a very important factor that can contribute to the betterment of females in the workforce; that factor involved government laws and regulations. Government can also join hands with the education system in the country in order to teach the young generation about females potential and capabilities. Early training and education plays a big role in vanishing gender stereotype in future managers (Owen and Tudor, 1993).

After studying some valuable recommendations obtained from literature, it is up to Company X and its sister companies to deploy and implement some of these recommendations. Those recommendations will be enlisted as short term and long terms.

#### 6.2.1 Short Term Recommendations:

1. Since the biggest barrier for females was identified to be Work-Family Conflict, management are requested to ease the way for females to



- balance between work and family responsibilities by having flexible hours, part time jobs, use of family leaves and working from home facilities.
2. Establish a task force, led by a senior female leader, to address issues important to women.
  3. Clearly communicate goals regarding the movement of women in managerial positions.
  4. Make women active in making managerial decisions by having them taking initiative and authority but being under close supervision.
  5. Involve women in executive training programs that can lead to increasing leadership skills.
  6. Have mentoring programs that can help females gain confidence in key managerial decisions.

#### 6.2.2 Long Term Recommendations:

1. Have women managers to be part of the Aim, Vision and Mission (AMV) of the company.
2. Learning and knowledge transfer from current male managers to future female managers.
3. Provide succession planning for females to be aware of their career paths.
4. Collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce.
5. Since Company X and its sister companies are governmentally owned, an understanding between the two parties should be in existence in order to empower women employees not just in the Oil and Gas Industry but in the country as a whole.

### **6.3 Limitations**

This paper addressed some valuable barriers regarding the attitudes towards women in the Oil and Gas Industry in the UAE. However, it did not mention all barriers. Some barriers that were not included in this paper included religious views of participants, labor laws of the UAE, etc.

In this study, only quantitative analysis was analyzed after distributing a questionnaire amongst participants. Qualitative analysis could have been used as a back up to the quantitative analysis. Qualitative methods could have included group discussions, discussion forums, and interview with employees.

Thirdly, only one sector was looked at in this paper; that being Oil and Gas Industry in the UAE. Hence, a limited number of responses came through. Other sectors such as banking, construction, etc. could have been involved to have a better understanding about the attitude towards women in a variety of sectors.

#### **6.4 Future Research**

Further research can be done to this paper by relating the three barriers mentioned beforehand by relating them to the variables tested in the first four hypotheses, i.e. Gender, Age Range and Nationality.

The questionnaire was distributed, primarily, amongst Oil and Gas employees in the UAE. Other participants also had the chance to participate in it. Future research can involve not only employees but university students and retired employees as well. This will give a deeper and more reliable understanding to the aspect of working women in the UAE.

One other potential research can be the comparison between Oil and Gas Industry in the whole region, i.e. Middle East. The reason why Oil and Gas Industry was put under the test is due to the fact that it deals with heavy equipment and more masculine jobs than the other industries that favor men employees over women.

A deeper understanding can also be attained if a comparison between the Oil and Gas Industry was made with other industries such as banking, construction. Manufacturing, etc. Moreover, a broader study can be performed in the UAE and then compared to another Western country. This requires two or more authors to collaborate and test the attitudes towards women in different countries around the world.

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## **Appendix**

### **Women As Managers Scale (WAMS)**

1. It is less desirable for women than men to have a job that requires responsibility.
2. Women have the objectivity required to evaluate business situations properly.
3. Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.
4. Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programs.
5. Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers.
6. On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organization's overall goals than are men.
7. It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.
8. The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.
9. Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers.
10. It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.
11. The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.
12. Women should no more allow their emotions to influence their managerial behavior than would men.
13. Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as employees.
14. To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice some of her femininity.
15. On the average, a woman that stays at home all of the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half the time.
16. Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.
17. Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world.
18. Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.
19. Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader.
20. Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world.
21. Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it.

Source: Terborg et al. (1977)

## Barriers to Female Advancement

### National Culture

Concern over men's bad thoughts about their active participation in job-related activities  
Gaining credibility/respect from peers, supervisor and senior managers  
Lack of a strong initiative for career progression  
Avoiding teamwork  
Lack of family encouragement  
Inappropriateness of females presence amongst males  
Females primary job is the household  
Lack of organizational support

### Gender Stereotype

Low sense of aspiration  
Negative social images (gender stereotyping of jobs)/difficulty gaining access to higher posts  
Females are emotional  
Females cannot make rationale decisions  
Underestimating their own abilities and skills  
Low creativity in problem solving  
Lack of influence over others  
Low tendency to change

### Work-Family Conflict

Pressure to quit jobs and become full time mothers  
Balancing work with family responsibilities (children, elderly relatives, etc.)  
Difficulties in work-life balance  
Balance with husband's career  
Having to be away from job several times due to childbirth and maternal responsibilities

Source: Konek and Kitch (1994), Rosser (2004) and Wise and Bond (2003)