Differences Between Gender Treatments in the Work Force

LES DIFFÉRENCES DE TRAITEMENT ENTRE LES SEXES DANS LA POPULATION ACTIVE

Badreya Al-Jenaibi[1]

Abstract: This research focused on gender differences as one of the most important issues in all aspects of life. Gender discrimination is a global issue, not a local one, particularly in the workplace. Although an important focus in the 1990s, which included important anti-discrimination laws being created in places like the United States and the European Union, unfortunately, in recent years, as globalization has had a dramatic effect on organizations, the issues of gender discrimination have taken a "back burner." Over the last decade, we have heard the term "knowledge worker" to describe the type of worker who will have an advantage in the new economy. Brown (1999) explains that blue collar workers will be replaced by "information specialists called knowledge workers who are equipped to maintain and expand our technological leadership role in the next century" (Stockard, J., Wood, J.W., 2008, pp.1). With the "Information Revolution," many cultures are seeing the fruition of this prediction. However, women still lag behind, especially in conservative cultures like the Arabian Gulf nations. This causes a drain on the amount of knowledge that can be contributed because women are often limited in their occupations, even when highly educated as the majority of women in the Arabian Gulf are. The investment made in education for Muslim women is often unrealized in creating the knowledge workforce because of customs, tradition and even religion. Stereotypes regarding gender are still strong around the world, but are exemplified in Muslim cultures.

The Literature Review includes different thinking, attitudes, reactions, behaviours, physical and biological characteristics that make each gender perceived in a distinctive, but often stereotypical way (Bravo, M.J., et. al., 2008). The focus will be on the Arabian Gulf cultures. The researcher used the interview method of P.R. practitioners in the UAE to compare their realistic expectations and/or assumptions about gender.

Key words: Gender in Arab organizations; UAE organizations; Public relations Practitioners; Interpersonal Conflict Theory

---

[1] Assistance Professor, Department of Mass Communication, United Arab Emirates University, aljenaibi@uaeu.ac.ae.
Address: P.O Box 17771 , Al-Ain City, United Arab Emirates University, College Of Humanities and Social Science, Mass Communication Program, United Arab Emirates.

Résumé: Cette recherche a visé sur les différences entre les sexes en tant que l'un des phénomènes les plus importants dans tous les aspects de la vie. La discrimination sexuelle n'est pas un phénomène local, mais global, et en particulier dans le milieu de travail. Malgré une mise au point importante dans les années 1990, qui comprenait des lois anti-discriminations importantes en création dans certains endroits comme les Etats-Unis et l'Union Européenne, malheureusement, ces dernières années, comme la globalisation a eu des effets spectaculaires sur les organisations, les phénomènes de discrimination sexuelle ont pris un "retour". Au cours de la dernière décennie, nous avons entendu parler du terme "travailleur de la connaissance" désignant le type de travailleur qui aura un avantage dans la nouvelle économie. Brown (1999) explique que les cols bleus seront remplacés par des "spécialistes informatiques, nommés également comme des travailleurs de la connaissance, qui sont équipés à fin de maintenir et étendre notre rôle de leader technologique dans le prochain siècle " (Stockard, J., Wood, J.W., 2008, pp.1). Avec la "révolution de l'information", de nombreuses cultures démoignent les fruits de cette prédiction. Cependant, les femmes restent toujours à la traîne, en particulier dans les cultures concervatrices comme les pays du Golfe arabique. Cela provoque une fuite dans l'amont de la connaissance parce que les femmes sont souvent limitées dans leurs occupations, même si la majorité des femmes dans les pays de Golfe arabique sont très instruites. Les investissements dans l'éducation pour les femmes musulmanes sont souvent latents dans la création de population active de la connaissance, à cause des coutumes, de la tradition et même de la religion. Les stéréotypes liés au sexe sont encore forts dans le monde, mais exemplifiés dans les cultures musulmanes.

La Revue de la littérature comprend de différents pensées, attitudes, réactions, comportements, caractéristiques physiques et biologiques qui font que chaque sexe est perçu de manière distinctive mais souvent stéréotypée (Bravo, MJ, et al. Al., 2008). L'accent sera mis sur les cultures du Golfe arabique. Le chercheur a utilisé la méthode de l'entrevue de praticien R.P. dans les Émirats arabes unis à fin de comparer leurs attentes réalistes et / ou leurs hypothèses sur le sexe.

Mots-Clés: sexes dans les organisations arabes; organisations dans les Emirats arabes unis; praticiens de relations publiques; théorie de conflits interpersonnels

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender difference is an important issue. Gender is defined as a "classification of sex" (Al-Lamky, Aysa. 2007, pp.49) and as "the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex" (Neal, Mark, Jim Finlay, Richard Tansey, 2005, pp.478). Gender has always been an issue of debate when it came to differences between men and women in all aspects of life. Each is purported to have different thinking, attitudes, reactions, behaviors, physical (Biagi, S. 2005) and biological characteristics that make each gender perceived in a distinctive way. With all these differences, both inherent and/or learned, the workplace is definitely affected by the idea of gender.

Despite all the development and technology that the world enjoys nowadays, gender differences still play an unfair role as the skills and qualifications of women are lost when gender type interferes with perception. Thinking that women are lesser and unequal to men, however, (Cutlip, Scott, 1994) has proven to be an inaccurate perception as shown by women who have reached far beyond the ordinary lines of success.

In spite of many advances in most societies regarding women and work, in 2003, the U.S. Federal Glass Ceiling Commission released a report showing that 49% of employers were not as likely to risk

hiring females over males, especially married women (Askew, S. Ross, C. 2008). They thought that married women who had children were affected by their motherly emotions and responsibilities (Jo, S., Hon, L.C., Brunner, B.R. 2004) which were undesired in some jobs. Nevertheless, there are some professions that have embraced female employees because of their special skills. The field of Public Relations is one of those professions where women have had a good deal of success.

Public relation is defined as the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and the public on whom its success depends (Bravo, M.J., et. al. 2008). Maintaining such relationships comes with communicating the image of the company correctly through a network of communication skills inside and outside the company. For this reason, the public relations practitioner should be socially well trained and a persuasive speaker as well. From this point of view, public relations should develop (Al-Lamky, Aysa. 2007, pp.49). Qualifications and not gender must be the judge on who is to work in the field of public relations.

Women, in fact, proved to be more effective than men in this field. They are more demanded by employers for they can communicate better; consequently, they can attract more customers (Cutlip, Scott 1994), and they have the power to convince (Crocco, M. S. 2008). A recent study showed that 70% of P.R practitioners in America were women. In 1979, 41% of PR practitioners were women, yet after only one year, the average increased by 10% to reach 50.1% (Gender. 2010).

The research includes a literature review of the important findings and assumptions of four general themes related to public relations practices in general, practitioners, their development, women's roles, and differences between both genders.

The main research questions are: what are the differences between genders among P.R practitioners? What are the cultural differences that affect them? What are the difficulties that face female practitioners in the P.R field in different UAE organization?

One aim of this research is to focus on the way both males and females are treated in the workplace and the differences between both. UAE is the place where this research is taking place because it is a conservative society that is bound by traditions.

The researcher found that in the UAE, the word "gender" is not widely used, yet gender traditions are used to control women in their workplace.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Public Relations practitioners and activities

One of the Public Relations definitions is "a management function that creates, develops, and carries out policies and programs to influence public opinion or reaction about an idea, a product or an organization " (Grunig, J.E., Hon, L.C. 1999, pp.1). Another definition is "a form of communication that is primarily directed to image building and that tends to deal with issues rather than specifically products or services" (John A. Daly, John M. Wiemann. 1994, pp.1). Dave (2007) defined public relations as the practice to shape and maintain the image of a company or organization in the eyes of the clients' various publics.

Public-relations practices in any organization include different activities such as:

Internal Relations: PR plays a significant role since it specializes in building and maintaining important relationships between managers and employees, which is crucial to the success of organizations. The section of internal relations has a hand in informing the employees all about the organization's work (Bravo, M.J., et. al. 2008). It is responsible for transferring the organization's messages to the employees.

Publicity: It is an important source of information that is uncontrolled because it is unpaid. It is defined as "information that concerns a person, group, event, or product and that is disseminated through various media to attract public notice"(Bruning, Stephen D, Castle, Janessa D, Schrepfer, Erin. 2004, pp.435).

Advertising: Unlike the former, advertising is controlled because it is paid for. It mainly aims at persuading customers of purchasing the company's products or dealing with the company (David M. Dozier. 1995).

Press Agency: It creates newsworthy events so as to attract the media and customers (Bruning, Stephen D, Castle, Janessa D, Schrepfer, Erin. 2004, pp.435).

nvestor Relations: It is basically responsible for keeping the shareholders aware of all the information related to financial matters, and other inquiries (David M. Dozier. 1995).

2.2 Women and Education in the Arabian Gulf

Everywhere in the Arabian Gulf, women are rising up in the ranks of leadership positions in both politics and the workplace, although some places are slower to progress than others. Still, there is no doubt that the role for women is changing.

Before recent developments that have opened doors for women in the Arabian Gulf, as more and more families gained wealth from private business and the general wealth from oil, the need for women to be involved in working outside of the home lessened. In some ways, women became more segregated from the public workplace. At the same time, however, more and more women were receiving higher education because the governments were willing to pay for all education costs and provide students with a monthly income while in school also. (Roberts, Lynne. 2007, pp.3). Women gained many scholarships just like men. So, more and more women were getting their bachelors and Masters Degrees, and when they graduated, they had no where to go to fulfil their goals of a career except in very traditional jobs. The governments had invested high amounts of money in education, and started to open more doors for women and private companies were encouraged to do the same. Nevertheless, there is limitation in the number of jobs available for women, even those that are more than qualified to work in advanced positions; women with their doctorates often work as clerical assistants or assistants to managers. (Roberts, Lynne. 2007, pp.3)

2.3 Women and Work in an Arab Culture

Through history, Arab women often worked outside of the home as men traveled or were gone for long periods of time. But in recent decades, it has become "unseemly" for women to participate much in the public sphere. During the 1980s, and especially the 1990s, the attitudes about women working began to change, especially as women became more educated, but were limited in their opportunities, and also because of the drive toward nativization of the workplace. In other words, most countries, especially in oil-wealthy countries, have wanted to end their reliance on an immigrant workforce as much as possible. Nevertheless, conservative attitudes still cause barriers for women in the workplace. Al-Lamky (2007) described the Arabian Gulf societies as "bastions of patriarchy and male chauvinism"(Phillips, David, 2001, pp.49). Many in the societies still believe that a woman's place is at home. In a Muslim culture, when a person deviates from tradition, especially a woman, this is seen as an act against sacred principles, at least to a degree. Lamky (2007) states, "In the minds of many - men and women alike - a departure from that orientation is almost a religious deviation from divine will. Thus, in addition to what is clearly a form of structural gender discrimination at work in terms of fields, levels and quality of work, there is an internalized mind set which gives preferential treatment, justification and acceptance for professional and leading men over women" (Phillips, David, 2001, pp.49).

Although advances have been made for women in all Arabian Gulf nations, for most of the modern century, Arab women have had difficult lives in many ways. For example, especially in more recent times when there has been fear of too much western influence, there has been sort of a conservative pressure for women to become even more "religious." Because women are seen as the keepers of morality, they have been expected to make more of a show of their loyalty to Islam. "The appearance of being religious has become as important as maintaining the essence of Islamic spirituality" (William W. Wilmot, PhD and Joyce L. Hocker, 2001, pp. 2). Women must not appear as if they are resisting their religion in any way. So, unlike in the past, more women are seen wearing the hijab/veil, especially in the

more conservative societies like Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, women have gained ground in certain professions in the Arabian Gulf, especially in those jobs that seem best suited for them. Public Relations have become a valuable opportunity for many women in the Gulf, especially in places like the UAE. However, at the same time, a woman is expected to have different behaviors and standards than the men, and even in the field of PR work, there are still limitations that keep women from contributing their expertise and knowledge to this sector.

2.4 Gender Gaps

In addition, the gender gap may contribute to the fact that women face difficulties in their work place. Employers may refuse to hire women, customers may underestimate women's work and abilities, or male co-workers may refuse to co-operate with their female co-workers (David M. Dozier. 1995). Such negative attitudes are mainly directed at women in higher positions. Men don't object to women's working for them, but they object when women are their superiors. Seitel (2006) agreed that statistical discrimination is another problem when it is believed that one woman has the average characteristics of all women (Malaya, 2009). Although women in America and the EU and other places have reached high-level executive positions, the numbers of women in these types of positions are still much less than for men in the Arabian Gulf countries.

2.5 Women in PR and work assignments

In America, women hold a majority of the positions in the PR sector. This is due to the fact that they are more social, convincing, attractive and communicative. They are ideal in jobs like journalism, marketing, and public relations. According to the US Department of Labor Statistics for PR practitioners, 66% of PR practitioners were women in the 1990s (Crocco, M. S. 2008).

PR includes multiple tasks such as writing and editing, media relations, research, management, counseling, special events, speaking, training, and developing campaigns, crisis management, publicity, advertising and several other related tasks (Bernardi, Richard A., Bosco, Susan M. and Reis, Kate M. 2004, pp.1-10). In the UAE, women have made advances in PR, but with limitations.

2.6 Differences between gender treatments in the work force

One of the known differences between genders is their work position. It is common worldwide that men hold higher and more distinguishable jobs than women, although this gap is gradually changing (David M. Dozier. 1995). In the UAE, however, the change has taken longer and there is much left to be done to create more opportunities and equality for women. Al-Lamky (2007) states about Muslim women, "If professionally inclined; their participation is expected to be in the areas of education, health (mainly nurses) and other support or clerical jobs primarily at the lower end of organizational hierarchies; leadership positions are typically reserved for men" (Seitel, Fraser. 2006, pp.50).

Another difference in most societies between genders is the salary gap. Men are usually paid more than women for performing the same type of jobs, even though laws for equal pay for equal work exist in most places (Macnamara, Jim 2005). It is true that the phenomenon is disappearing, yet there remains evidence of ongoing discrimination regarding pay. Interestingly, equal pay is a principle found in the Quran over 1400 years ago, but it is a principle that is often ignored. If following a true Islamic approach, organizations in the Arab world would treat women equally to men. The Prophet wrote the ways in which people should live and treat each other. Women were allowed to own and inherit property, and they could choose to divorce under difficult circumstances. Passages in the Quran promote education for both men and women. The Quran has a passage that says women should receive equal pay as men when doing the same kind of work. (Roberts, Lynne. 2007).

2.7 Gender, communication and the workplace

Although communication seems easy, people have problems communicating with one another; they might not know how to do so effectively. A message that is not communicated effectively could easily be misunderstood by the receiver. A communicator should always make sure that the message is sent properly so there won't be any misunderstanding.

Over the years, women have demanded that they be treated equally no matter what the circumstances are. However, in the UAE, the ability for women to communicate in a professional position is plagued by the norms of the society, causing her to tread lightly and even feel uncomfortable in situations that have been seen to be inappropriate for her. Neal (2005) explains that traditionally, women's work activities exclude interaction with men. Until recently, most Arab nations have maintained a strict gender code of segregation in public. Less conservative societies, such as Bahrain, the UAE and Kuwait have begun to lift these codes to a certain extent. Nevertheless, there is a "growing unease at the trend throughout the region of women working closely with men - a simple man-woman business handshake can be controversial in some circles, as it breaks through the historical/cultural norms of segregation, and the absolute proscription on being touched by a man other than one's husband" (Phillips, David, 2001, pp. 478).

2.8 Interpersonal Conflict theory

Conflict between individuals is usually a struggle over claims to scarce interpersonal resources such as status, power and competition with others. Another way of looking at conflict is to see it as a struggle between people who have different and/or incompatible goals, and there is interference from the other in reaching their goals. In understanding interpersonal conflict, Wilmot & Hocker (2005) who wrote *Interpersonal Conflict*, use what they call the Lens Model which is a metaphor for the way that people view conflict with a different "lens" with a different perspective (Grunig, J.E., Huang, Y.H. 2000, pp.23-53). According to the Lens Model, there are two things that are found in all conflicts. One is that there are communicative behaviors involved, and the other is that there are different perceptions of those behaviors from the different parties involved. Each person has a view of himself or herself, they have a view of the other person, and they have a view about the relationship they are involved in. Each person assigned meanings to the different aspects of their relationship, including past events, current events and future interactions. Unfortunately, these differences in perspectives, in the "lens" used to perceive events and exchanges, are often very different and keep people from understanding the views of the other, which causes misunderstanding, distrust and conflict. The type of lens a person has is influenced by culture, gender, race, age, and so forth. For example, each generation will have a lens based on the social and historical events of that era, which influences how they perceive the world and its events. Gender can also affect how people perceive conflict behaviors. High-context, low-context, individualistic and collective cultures all respond to conflict in different ways and often do not understand the responses to conflict from people from other cultures, increasing the likelihood of cross-cultural conflict.

To change the conflict requires a change in perception or concept in one or more of the people involved. To manage conflict, some experts like Wilmot (2001), who wrote *Relational Communications*, argue that a full assessment can best be done by using a systems framework (Marshall, C.S. & Reihartz, J. 2008, pp.333-338). This is necessary because it is important to evaluate the workings of the overall system and how this contributes to the conflict. For example, questions to ask are, "what kind of recurring patterns are in the system that are associated with the conflict, and how do individuals contribute to the overall system? The systems theory is important in addressing conflicts and how to resolve them because the framework provides a way to understand those patterns, interlocking sequences, functions of the participants, and the way information is processed within the system (Marshall, C.S. & Reihartz, J. 2008, pp. 181). Another important question is how does the conflict being expressed serve the system?

Conflict is related to power and how power is manifested in a society. Wilmot & Hocker (2002) use the relational theory of power to explain how power works between individuals and genders (Grunig, J.E., Hon, L.C. 1999). They describe, for example, that power is relational in that it is not found in the individual but is found in the relationship that the individual has with his or her environment. Power is

always interpersonal. In conflict, power is given from one person to another. A person's power is directly tied to the relationship with another person. To understand how conflict manifests itself in a culture, it would be important to understand the way power is distributed in a society based on cultural values and how these power relationships may manifest in communication methods. With P.R practitioners, for example, the field of practice has become very popular, in part because it challenges the current regimes and status quo of the region where it is appended, besides challenging gender views. However, gender roles and expectations are rarely criticized in the UAE—they are a part of the unbalanced power relationship between genders that remains unspoken.

The systems theory could be used to identify conflict patterns that are seen in different organizations regarding gender relations, such as differences in expected behaviors and culture. The systems approach asks for such ways of understanding conflict by using metaphor/dramatic analysis, charting conflict triangles, identifying system rules, making observations and conducting interviews. It is important to focus on the communication systems within the system to understand the way conflict is created and reinforced by the communication system. The personal communication system in different organizations is a perfect place for this.

3. METHOD

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the department of public relations in some organizations. This method of interviewing employees was the most suitable so as to collect answers of important questions from those who have enough knowledge about the topic. Through the face-to-face interview, the interviewer got all the information, details, and elaborations that she sought by focusing on the interviewees' attitudes, facial expressions, and body language. These interviews were made with ten public relation employees aging between 20 and 40 from both genders at their workplace and during day time.

One of the best ways to understand conflict in communication is to observe what happens in a conflict situation—who says what about what topics. What kinds of nonverbal behaviors are taking place? There are many questions that could be asked that might reveal certain patterns about conflict. Wilmot recommends gathering a conflict history and conflict context through interviews and observation. Some answers might be found such as what attitudes toward conflict do the people seem to have? Do they perceive conflict as positive, negative or neutral? What metaphoric images do conflict participants use? How might gender roles, limitations and expectations be operating in this conflict? Wilmot and Hocker have developed a Conflict Assessment Guide which can be used to bring aspects of conflict into focus (Grunig, J.E., Hon, L.C. 1999). The questions as stated above, along with many others, are part of this assessment guide and can be used to evaluate various situations such as power and gender relations in the UAE organization.

The research includes a literature review of the important findings and assumptions of four general themes:

Women and their duties in P.R department

Interviewee #1 said that her main work is the coordination between internal departments in the hospital and acting as the organization coordinator between external actors, as well as coordinator of the celebrations and exhibitions, whether external or internal, and she is responsible for the students' academic summer. Other activities include coordinating the reception of delegations to the hospital, along with the reception of new staff, orienting them not only to the workplace but their new location if they are from outside the area.

Interviewee # 2-- her job is to coordinate trips for staff members to the Dubai and Abu Dhabi islands, as well as the supervision and coordination and organization of trips. She supervises the photography of newborns and the placement of the pictures in the private site of the hospital, as well as photographing the special events in the hospital.

Interviewee # 3-- takes tours within the wards to check and see what is required, and she's held responsible for the banks and companies, as well as the preparation for conferences, meetings and to participate participating in some activities in case of the director's absence. She also addresses the needs of follow-up daily newspapers and daily live broadcasts...But Interviewees # 4 and 5 said that she covers all of the activities and events held by the Center in coordination with the local newspapers.

Interviewees # 7 and 10 write essays of a social nature, especially regarding family issues, to be published in newspapers and the center's website.

Interviewee # 12 is responsible for the preparation of advertising campaigns and participates in various activities and events.

The differences between male and female preferences in the PR department

The majority of women interviewed prefer to work as administrators, bankers, and accountants. They believed that women enjoy nonverbal jobs, but men, on the other hand, feel more comfortable in verbal tasks (Interviewee # 7, 2010). Women are shy and would rather work alone than communicate with the outside world. Interviewee # 7 agreed that men are more flexible working indoors and outdoors. She stated, "but of course it is very important for the gender to choose what they suits them so they can do their best in their jobs" (Interviewee # 7, 2010). Also, they believed that many women prefer their traditional occupations such as secretaries, clerks and telephone operators. The majority of men probably gravitate toward physical work (Interviewee # 6, 2010). But "in our society things aren't like that anymore" (Interviewee # 6, 2010). There is a lot of opportunity for women to work in any field she interested about, but of course by respecting her culture and traditions (Interviewee # 3, 2010). Sometimes females in the P.R department meet people who were not respectful or do not have cultural understanding of how to deal with women (Interviewee # 2, 2010). Also interviewee # 2 and # 5 agreed that there are some tasks that women do not fit, such as providing drinks for the guests or carrying the baggage of passengers. There are some actions that do not benefit the women in public relations, such as going out with customers or participating in their habits.

Women's difficulties in P.R

Some women faced difficulties in dealing with people from other cultures. For example, they cannot stand dealing with the foreign customers because they find difficulties in communicating with them (Interviewee # 9, 2010). The environment played a big role in women's jobs. For example interviewee # 5 said that "if I felt satisfied and comfortable in my work, I will give more but if not, my performances will be negative." No, I don't receive any encouragement; that's why sometimes I feel I don't want to make an extra effort" (interviewee # 7, 2010). But interviewee #2 said "Yes it really a supportive environment and I personally get the support I need as a female employee, and before I started my job, I knew that I will be asked to work with male employees, and I totally agreed. I am happy because they treat me with all respect and kindness, and we are being motivated all the time to improve our job performance". On the other hand, interviewee # 10 agreed that the mixed gender in her work is a problem; sometimes she can't deal freely with them because of the thinking and assumptions regarding differences between male and female. All interviewees agreed that there are no salary differences between genders in the UAE, but the difference is on the grade of each employee. Men are more likely to have a higher grade. On the other hand, interviewee # 12 said "There are no differences at all; males have the same females roles and duties and vise versa. From my prospective, I guess maybe in the last years there were some concerns about the female's duties and especially with those who are a bit conservative, but now they all share the same duties and holding same position without looking to the gender". She added, however, that most of the female employees have difficulties with direct communication. Since they work in PR department, they have to deal with people, and they should be able to communicate with them with ease. But many women feel shy or conservative in dealing with different kinds of people and different nationalities. Culturally, there are customary limitations for women. "I guess that they can not go to international meetings and stay in a hotel without any of her family members. Also they can not attend a meeting with only male attendees as an Emirate and Muslim woman" (Interviewee # 12, 2010)

In conclusion, it is quite well known that a public relation job requires a person to be social. Women have always proved to be more social than men, yet on the other hand, this job needs a lot of effort and time; the thing which women, especially mothers, can't fully give because of other commitments towards

family. In this sense, men are better able to carry out such a job since they have more free time.

Gender and Public Relations in the UAE

Women of the UAE have proven themselves in different fields; they hold positions such as engineers, doctors, lawyers, professors, ambassadors, and even pilots. According to Jaber Al Khaiari, general director of the National Human Resources Development and Employment Authority in Tanmia, the numbers of women in the public sector in PR are the highest in the whole country (Al Khaiari, personal communication, 2010).

Gender issues exist in the PR profession for both men and women. More is expected from a man's performance in most male-oriented professions in the UAE, but PR has become a good fit for women. However, men have been recognized for their achievements in PR and have attained distinguished positions, while women's achievements have often gone unrecognized. So, it is time to respond to women and their personal achievements, especially because a woman's role is more difficult as they have to score more than one goal in work and in family.

It has been proved that the most success for women in the PR sector is working with public, government organizations rather than private firms. This is because the public sector has fewer working hours, more breaks, less amount of work that is guaranteed, and more stable and suitable opportunities (Interviewee # 11, 2010).

The case is completely the opposite in the private sector.

No one can deny the huge change in thought that started to occur 60 years ago when the Emirates society let women take part in work. The Emirates women are now teachers, pilots, doctors, and college professors (Al Khaiari, personal communication, 2010). It is true; however, that some traditions still govern women's choices of what to do for a living, yet there is more freedom than before.

The work done by both men and women in the field of PR is almost the same. However, there are still some errands that only men are entitled to do such as outside coverage of special events (Interviewee # 3, 2010). That is because women, according to traditions, can't travel alone to distant places (Interviewee # 6, 2010) where it is not safe for her to be alone. In general the work of both male and female in the PR section is co-related since they work together as a team.

4. IMPLICATION OF THEORY

The interpersonal conflict theory, at least as presented by Wilmot and Hocker, relies almost completely on systems theory to create a detailed framework with which to analyze, evaluate and try to resolve conflict in communication and interpersonal relations (Gender. 2010). For example, the conflict serves the system in some way. It may even be that members of a system do not want the conflict to be solved because it would no longer be serving its function. Conflicts are often reflections of indirect dissatisfactions which are being expressed through the conflict, but not being resolved because people are not recognizing the true source of the conflict. Systems also develop ways to address conflicts, and the rules are adhered to even if they are not working very well. The dynamics of conflict in a system are repeated and reinforced in hierarchal relationships.

The authors also introduce theories regarding power and interpersonal relationships as being integral to understanding conflict issues. They argue that communication skills are "power currencies," which can be used to gain power and/or be a source of power. They consider power issues by looking at resource control, interpersonal linkages, communication skills and expertise as examples of various power currencies. These are directly connected to interpersonal conflict. For example, conflict means that people are struggling over scarce resources, and power is related to resource control.

5. CONCLUSION

The issue of gender differences, especially in the UAE, is important yet neglected. This research came out with some findings that relate to women in the PR field. There is a clear discrimination against women whose abilities are often doubted and who are always treated unequally to men. For example, women in the P.R departments in the UAE are not accepted 100% in many places like travel agents, hospitals, hotels...etc

The researcher has also found that in the UAE, the word "gender" is not widely used, yet it is through assumptions and perceptions of gender roles that control women in their workplace. The goal of this research, as mentioned earlier, is to focus on the way both males and females are treated in the workplace and the difference between both. The UAE was chosen because it is a conservative society that is bound by traditions. Conducting research in the UAE is often difficult because data collecting in different public and private sectors in the UAE creates challenges, and doing interviews with many employees must be completely confidential. For example, many females will not provide their names and work places in order to be able to speak freely. The researcher coded and numbered them to distinguish the information in the research themes. Therefore, the research covered different points of the topic, but also relied on information coming from the internet, books, e-books, articles, and interviews with PR practitioners to make a connection between gender and realties in the UAE as a case study. The researcher suggests that future research should focus on diverse of personality factors and self-efficacy in communication that might influence leadership behavior. It is also recommended that researchers should concentrate on what responsibilities tend to be gendered and the impact of this gendering on workplace behavior. These studies should include Arab P.R women practitioners and stereotypes. In future studies, sex must be a key issue in criteria in order to represent gender-based conclusions particularly in public organizations.

REFERENCES

Al-Lamky, Aysa. (2007). Feminizing leadership in Arab societies: the perspectives of Omani female leaders. *Women in Management Review. Vol. 22, Iss. 1*, pp. 49.

Ali Kanso, Abdul Karim Sinno, William Adams. (2001). Cross-Cultural Public Relations: Implications for American and Arab Public relation Practitioners. *An International Business Journal incorporating Journal of Global Competitiveness, Vol.11, No. 1,* pp.65-82.

Askew, S. Ross, C. (2008). *Boys Don't Cry: Boys and Sexism in Education.* Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Bernardi, Richard A., Bosco, Susan M. and Reis, Kate M.. (2004). Corporate Leadership in the Fortune 500: Women in Executive Management Positions. *Journal of Business & Economics Research, Vol.2, No.12,* pp.1-10.

Biagi, S. (2005). *Media/Impact: An Introduction to Mass Media.* Chicago: Thomas Wadsworth.

Bravo, M.J., et. al. (2008). Interventions for Promoting Gender Equitable Technology Use in Classrooms. *Teacher Education Quarterly, Vol.30, No.4.*

Brown, Bettina. (2007). Knowledge Workers. *Trends and Issues. Alert No. 4. [Online]*: Avalable:www.calpro-online.org/eric/docs/tia00072.pdf+Robert+Reich+and+the+knowledge+worker&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESiM30bk3tioaKbW4nUefLcp5GMJ_t1ZiTN582-vSNwoiYM98NI0hUnt0XZAP7DIp3YqjvttqI68v8EhWXm13AsaAc69sZFZtX4DXXEOWdfJ9T_ddi4

Bruning, Stephen D, Castle, Janessa D, Schrepfer, Erin. (2004). Building Relations between Organizations and Publics: Examining the Linkage between Organization-Public relationships, Evaluations of Satisfactions and Behavioral Intent. *Communication Studies, Vol.55, No.3*, pp.435.

Cutlip, Scott (1994). The Unseen Power: Public Relations, *A History. Hillsdale, N.J.*

Crabtree, A., Hemmings, T. and Rodden, T. (2003). The Social Construction of Displays, In Public and Situated Displays. *K. O'Hara, M. Perry, E. Churchill and Russell, D. (Eds), Kluwer,* pp.170--190.

Crocco, M. S. (2008). The Missing Discourse About Gender and Sexuality in the Social Studies. *Theory into Practice, Vol.40, No.1.*

Dave Roos. (2007). *How Public Relations Works.* Retrieved on Dec, 2009 from http://communication.howstuffworks.com/how-public-relations-works.htm/printable

David M. Dozier. (1995). Evolution of the Manager Role in Public Relations Practice, *Journal of Public Relations Research,No. 7.*

Gender. (2010). *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary.* [Online]. Avalable: www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gender

Grunig, J.E., Huang, Y.H. (2000), From organizational effectiveness to relationship indicators: antecedents of relationships, public relations strategies, and relationship outcomes, in Ledingham, J.A., Bruning, S.D. (Eds),*Public Relations as Relationship Management: A Relational Approach to the Study and Practice of Public Relations, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ,* pp.23-53.

Grunig, J.E., Hon, L.C. (1999). *Measuring Relationships in Public Relations,* Institute for Public Relations, Gainesville, FL.

Jo, S., Hon, L.C., Brunner, B.R. (2004), Organisation-public relationships: measurement validation in a university setting, *Journal of Communication Management, Vol. 9, No.1.*

John A. Daly, John M. Wiemann. (1994). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Joyce Hocker & William Wilmot, Interpersonal Conflict (5th ed.,Wm. C. Brown 1996).

Macnamara, Jim (2005). *Jim Macnamara's Public Relations Handbook (5th ed. ed.).* Melbourne: Archipelago Press.

Malaya (2009). *Kingfisher Airlines and its PR 2009,* Retrieved Dec 12, 2009 from http://curlybubble.wordpress.com/2009/07/20/kingfisher-airlines-and-its-pr/

Mansfield, Peter. (1992). *The Arabs.* Penguin Books.

Marshall, C.S. & Reihartz, J. (2008). Gender Issues in the Classroom. *Clearinghouse, Vol. 70, No. 6,*pp.333-338.

Nature and scope of PR. (2007). [Online]. Avalable:http://www.managementparadise.com/forums/public-relations-management/17006-nature-scope-google-page-ranking.html

Neal, Mark, Jim Finlay, Richard Tansey. (2005). My father knows the minister: A comparative study of Arab women's attitudes towards leadership authority. *Women in Management Review. Vol. 20, Iss. 7/8;* pp. 478.

Stockard, J., Wood, J.W. (2008). The Myth of Female Under-Achievement: A Reexamination of Sex Differences in Academic Underachievers. *American Educational Research Journal, Vol. 21, No.4,* pp.825-838.

Phillips, David (2001). *Online Public Relations.* London: Kogan Page.

Seitel, Fraser. (2006). *The Practice of Public Relations.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: 10 ed.

William W. Wilmot, PhD and Joyce L. Hocker (2001). *McGraw-Hill*, New York, pp. 344.

Roberts, Lynne. (Sept. 18, 2007). *Arab women defy western stereotypes.* [Online]. Avalable: Arabian Businss.com.

    http://www.arabianbusiness.com/500515-arab-women-defy-western-stereotypes?ln=en