

The Status of **Working Women** in the Middle East

June 2012



The Middle East's #1 Job Site



Research Background

YouGov and Bayt.com conducted a survey online amongst the working women in the MENA region with the objective of understanding the **perceptions and attitudes** of working women pertaining to their role and experience in the work place. This study also delves into the **motivations for employment**.

The exercise was conducted amongst working women, aged over 18, across the region in the following countries:

- 1) GCC: UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain
- 2) Levant: Lebanon, Syria and Jordan
- 3) North Africa : Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

The survey was conducted online with a sample of 2,185 respondents between the 17th and the 30th of May, 2012.

Key Findings

1. The main motivations for working are financial

Financial independence is the key motivation to start work as claimed by 57% of the region's working women. They also want to support or financially contribute to the household. Other important reasons are: to make good use of education (51%), to broaden perspective in life (50%) and to secure children's future (36%).

2. The 3 most important benefits to working women are: higher salary, opportunity for growth and health insurance

Salary takes the top spot when it comes to benefits of working. Three in five claim higher salary as an extremely important benefit, followed by 'Opportunities for long term career growth' (31%) and health insurance (28%).

3. Working with the opposite gender in the same space seems not to be a major issue

The majority of women (74%) claim to be working in a mixed-gender environment. 69% of those who work in mixed-gender environments assert that they are comfortable working in such an environment.

4. Gender of manager doesn't matter – for the most part

When asked about preference regarding gender of their manager, 68% of working women appear to not have any preference. Yet, 28% claim that they would prefer a male manager and only 4% would prefer a female manager.

Key Findings

5. Equal working hours in comparison to male colleagues

58% of the region's working women claim that they work an equal number of hours as their male colleagues. Meanwhile, 22% claim they work more hours than their male colleagues.

6. 41% of working women feel they receive less pay than male colleagues

When quizzed on the salary component, the opinion emerges to be divided equally amongst those who feel they 'receive less pay than male colleagues' and those who feel they 'receive equal pay' (41% each).

7. 31% of women feel that they have lower chances of being promoted because of gender

'Chances of Promotion' are seen to be dependent more on one's performance more than gender (40%). Yet, a large 31% feel they have lower chances of being promoted in comparison to their male colleagues.

8. Children have a negative impact on career choice

Not surprisingly, having children appears to have had a negative impact on career choice as per 57% of those with children.

Why Do Women Work in the Middle East?

Reasons, Benefits, and Challenges

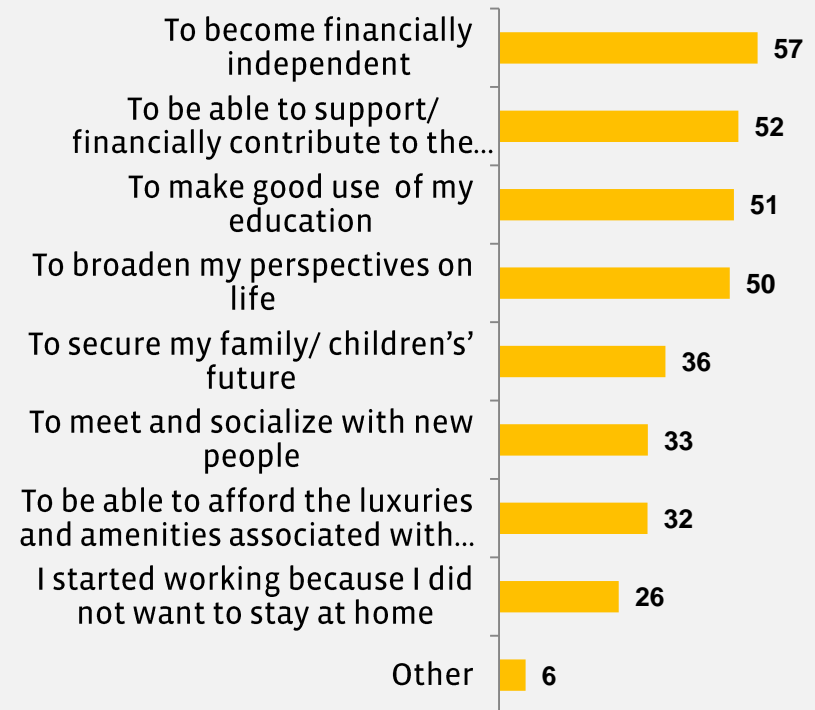
MOTIVATION: The main motive for working is to attain financial, intellectual and social independence, and thus make one self count

When asked about the key reason for working, 57% of women working in the MENA region stated that they work because they **seek financial independence**. Interestingly, this is most true in KSA, with 65% of respondents claiming to work for that particular reason.

The second most-cited reason is also financial, though related to support of household instead of independence: **ability to financially contribute to the household**, with 52% of women choosing this option..

Amongst the **younger audience** (25 years or below), financial independence still comes first, but is followed by good use of education. On the other hand, wanting to secure their children's future is the main intention for **the older age group** (36-45 years old).

Key Reasons for Working



Q. People like you have cited various reasons for seeking employment. Please select all those that apply to you.

Base: Total - 2185

Yet, reasons to work differ depending on where a woman is from.

When delving into country-specific statistics, it becomes clear that motivation is very much related to culture.

60% of women who hold GCC nationalities claim that they took up work to broaden their perspectives in life. Other Arabs women (58%) as well as Westerners (57%) were motivated by the fact that they would be financially independent. Meanwhile, the majority of Asian women sought work to support their household (63%).

BENEFITS: In terms of benefits, higher salaries, career growth and family health insurance plans are the most important benefits sought by working women.

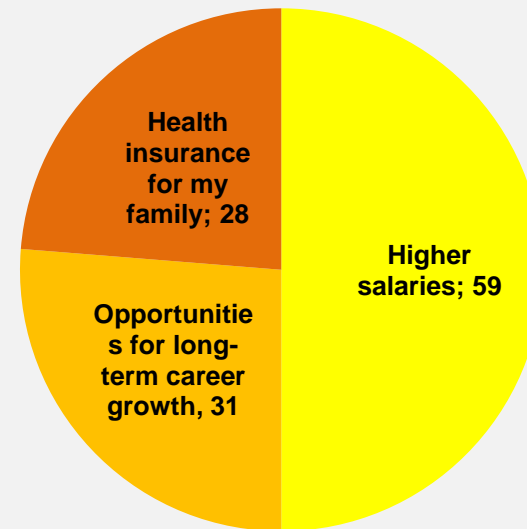
Across the board, **higher salaries** was the **main benefit** sought by working women in the Middle East. This goes well with the main motivator discussed earlier, as it helps them finance their needs and those of their families, as well as achieve financial independence.

Meanwhile, **'long term' career growth** is seen as extremely important, especially by the working women in the GCC and the Levant. 'Retirement benefits' on the other hand was mostly cited by women over 46 years old.

When asked about the three most important reasons that might influence a job change, the most cited reasons were better salary (65%), opportunities for career advancement (40%) and higher designation (33%).

Q. Please indicate the three most important reasons that might influence you to switch job? (Please tick any three). Base: Total - 2185.

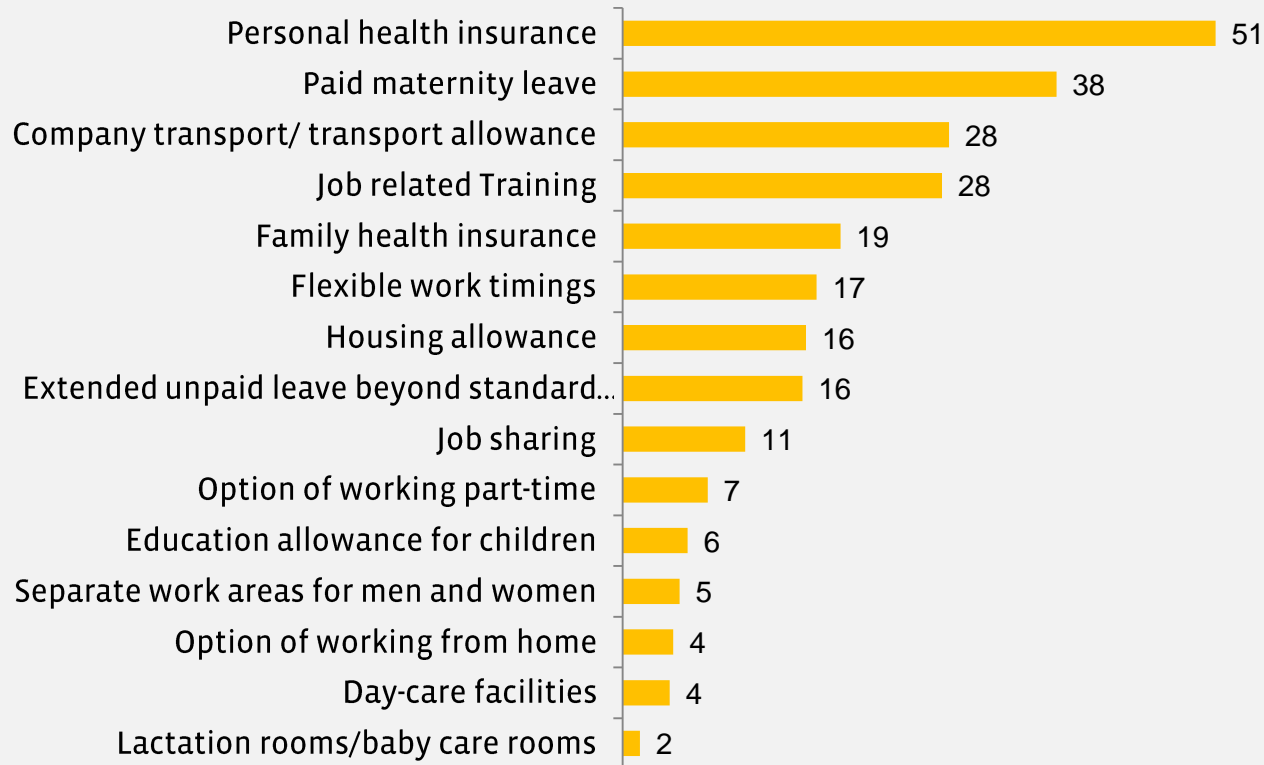
Top Benefits Sought by Working Women



Q. As a working woman, which three of the following benefits are most important to you? (Please select 3 answers)

BENEFITS: 65% of working women claim no 'special benefits' are available at their workplace to working women.

Benefits Received by Women

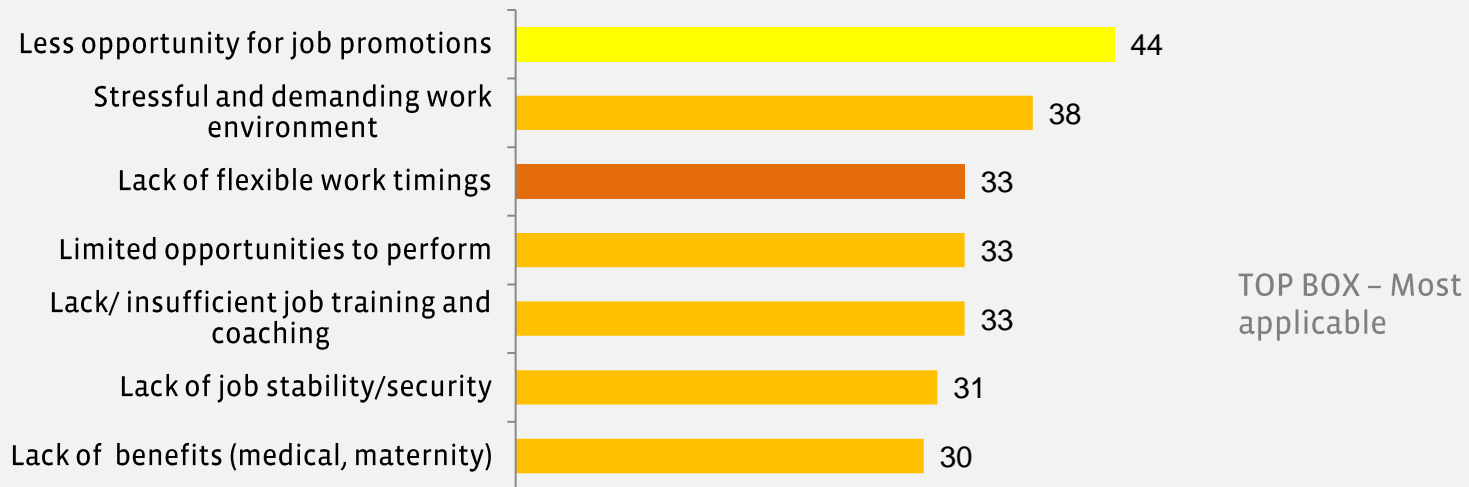


Q. Which of the following does your company provide? (Select all that apply)

Base: Total - 2185

CHALLENGES: ‘Less opportunity for job promotions’ is the key challenge faced by working women

Challenges Facing Working Women



Q. As a woman, what are the challenges you face in your work environment? On a scale of 1 to 3 please specify how applicable are these challenges to you.

Base: Total - 2185

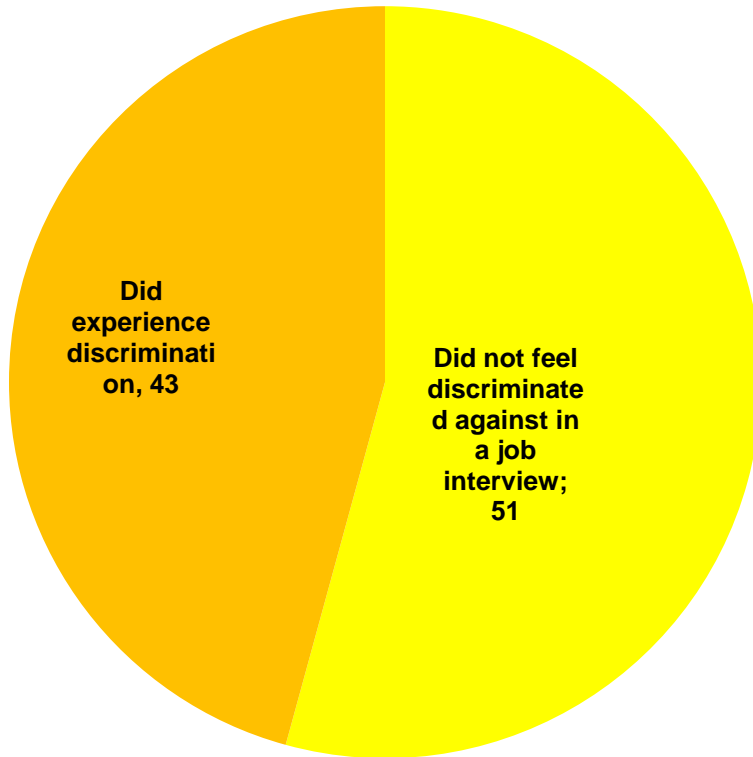
Are Women Treated
Equally at Work in the
Middle East?

Gender

Discrimination

INTERVIEW DISCRIMINATION: Two in five indicate having faced discrimination in a job interview.

Discrimination in a Job Interview



Q. Have you ever been asked questions in a job interview that discriminates you as a woman? (e.g.. Are you planning to get married? Are you planning to have children?)

Base: Total - 2185

EFFORT AND APPRECIATION IN COMPARISON TO MALE COLLEAGUES: The majority of working women claim to work equal or more hours, 2 in 5 claim to receive less pay, and 1 in 3 feel discriminated against at times of promotion.

There appears to be a clear perception of discrimination in the MENA workplace. When surveyed, 58% of working women claim that they work an equal number of hours as their male colleagues, and 22% claim they work more hours.

Yet, when asked about pay in comparison to male colleagues, **41% of female respondents felt that they 'receive less pay than male colleagues'**. Another 41% though feel they 'receive equal pay' (41%). The sentiment of **equality of pay is stronger in North African countries** like Algeria (50%), Egypt (49%), and Tunisia (49%). Lebanon also ranks high on the list (48%). On the other hand, working women in the **GCC countries feel that they 'receive less pay'**, with Qatar at 55%, UAE at 49%, and KSA at 49%.

Chances of **promotion are seen to be more dependent on one's performance than gender**, as claimed by 40% of respondents. Another 31% feel they have lower chances of being promoted in comparison to their male colleagues.

Q. When it comes to working hours, which of the following statements best applies to you:

Q. How do you feel your 'Salary' compares to those of your male colleagues in a similar position? (Please do not take into consideration other benefits provided by your employer)

Q. Which of the following applies best to you when it comes to receiving a promotion and career growth?

Base: Working in mixgender organization- 2041

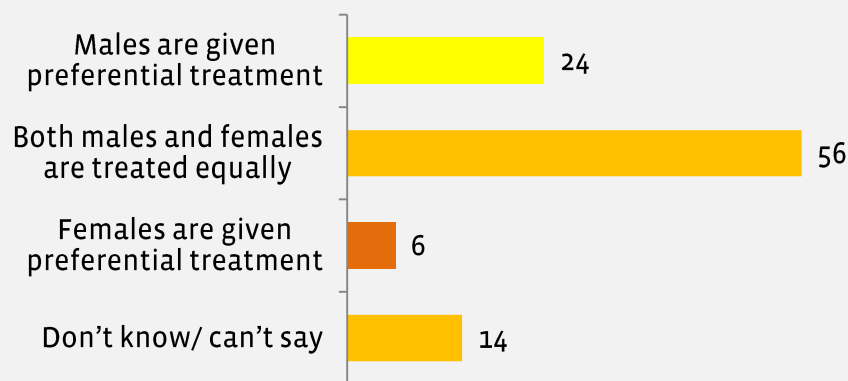
EQUAL TREATMENT: 56% of respondents feel that males and females are treated equally in their organization, and 70% feel that workplace equality in their country is at par with Western economies.

Higher percentage of women working in the GCC believe that males are given preferential treatment, with 24% of respondents in Qatar claiming so, 37% in KSA, and 31% in UAE.

Meanwhile, 44% of Tunisian working women indicate equality between the sexes to a large extent.

More respondents in Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia are of the opinion that they are not on par with Western economies.

Equality in Treatment

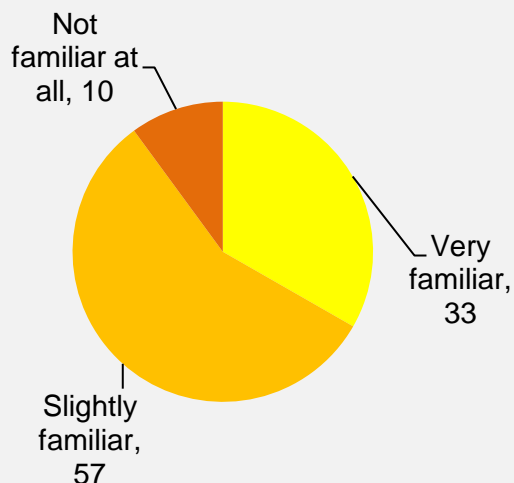


Q18. Which of the following statements describe your perception of equality amongst male and female employees in your organization?

Base: Working in mix gender organization- 2041

LABOUR LAW: Only one in three 'very familiar' with labor laws in their country

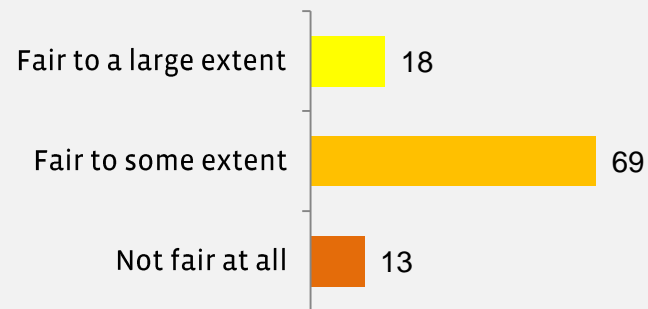
Familiarity with Labor Law



Q. How familiar are you with the labor laws of the country in which you work?

Base: Total- 2185

Perceived Fairness of Labor Law



Q. Do you think that these labor laws are fair to women?

Base: Those aware of Labor laws- 1965

Interestingly, respondents living in the GCC are most familiar with the labor laws of their countries, with 37% of women in the GCC claiming to be very familiar with them, as opposed to 33% from the Levant and 30% from North Africa.

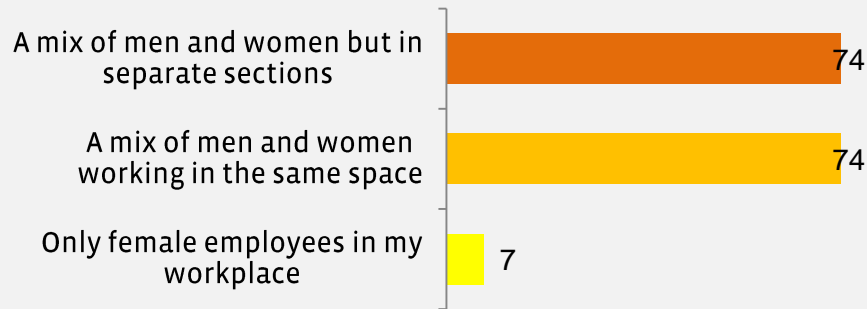
In terms of perceived fairness, women working in Lebanon have the strongest feelings towards their labor law as not being fair to women at all, with 27% of respondents from Lebanon claiming so. On the other end of the scale, respondents from Tunisia felt that their country's labor law was most fair towards women, at 37% believing so.

What is the Current Situation for Working Women?

Current Workplace

WORK ENVIRONMENT: Almost three fourth of female respondents (74%) say that they work in a mixed-gender environment, and 69% of respondents are comfortable working in a mixed-gender environment.

Current Working Environment

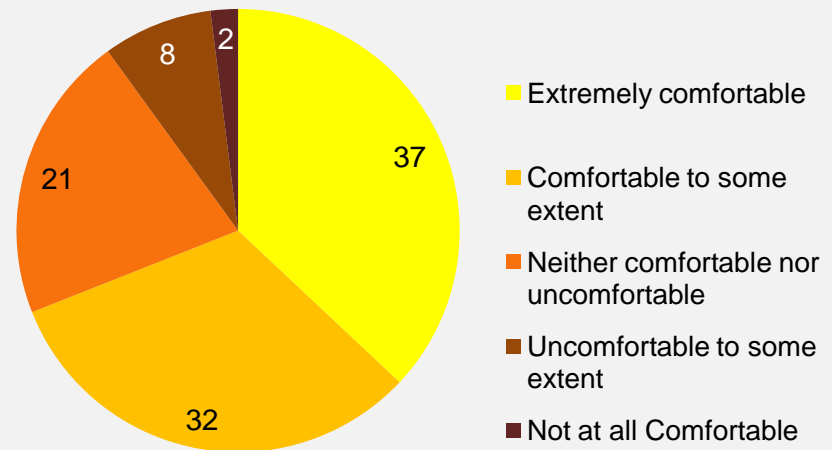


Q. Which of the following best describes your work place?

Base: Total - 2185

37% of working women in KSA claim they have a mix of men and women at the work place but in separate sections .

Comfort with Mixed-Gender Environment



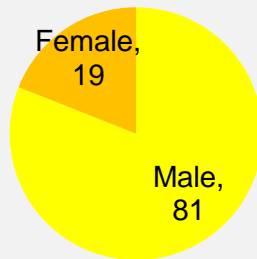
Q. How comfortable are you working in a mixed gender environment?)

Base: Working in mix gender organization- 2041

GENDER OF MANAGER: Most (68%) of the respondents felt no preference towards manager's gender, amongst those who expressed a preference : Male managers were their choice

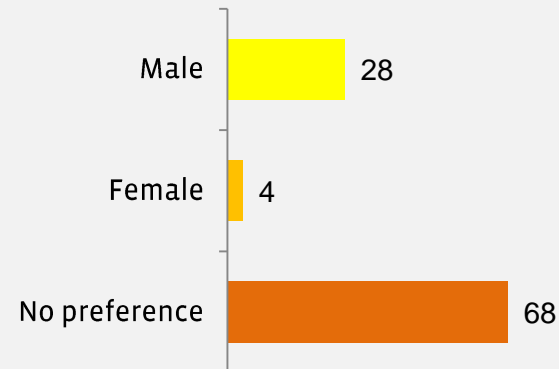
The highest numbers of female managers were reported in Lebanon (28%), Tunisia (24%) and the UAE (20%). Higher preference for male managers was reported in Jordan at 40%, and Egypt at 31%.

Gender of Current Manager



Q. Your current manager/ boss is
Base: Working in mix gender organization- 2041

Preference for Gender of Manager



Q. Would you prefer you manager/boss to be:
Base: Working in mix gender organization- 2041

The fine line...

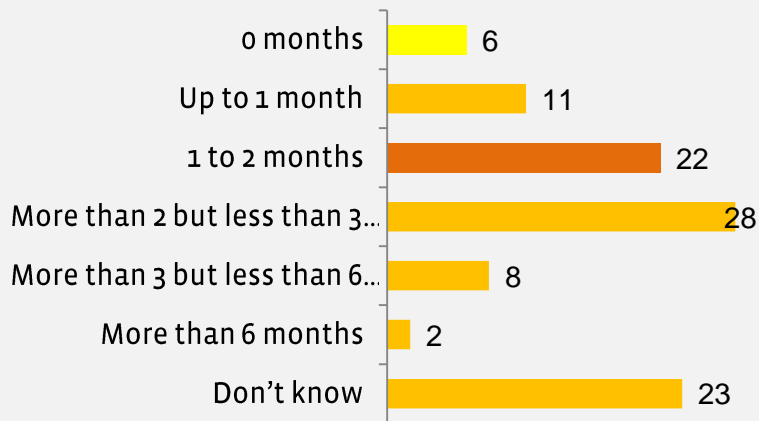
Work/life Balance

MATERNITY AT WORK: Satisfaction with Maternity leave and benefits is quite low in the region.

Half of the respondents say that their official maternity leave is between 1 and 3 months. Meanwhile, a fourth of respondents indicate unawareness of company policy with regards to maternity leave. Lack of awareness of policy is higher understandably amongst unmarried females.

Meanwhile, the highest prevalence of dissatisfaction with maternity leave is cited in respondents in Tunisia (43%), Lebanon (44%) and UAE(44%).

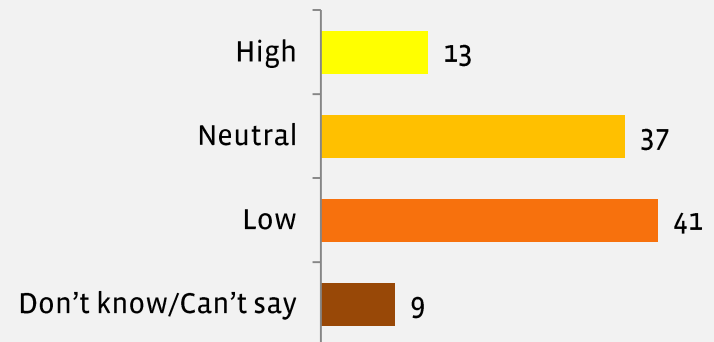
Maternity Leave



Q. How many months of official maternity leave are women granted in your organization?

Base: Total - 2185

Satisfaction with Maternity Leave and Benefits

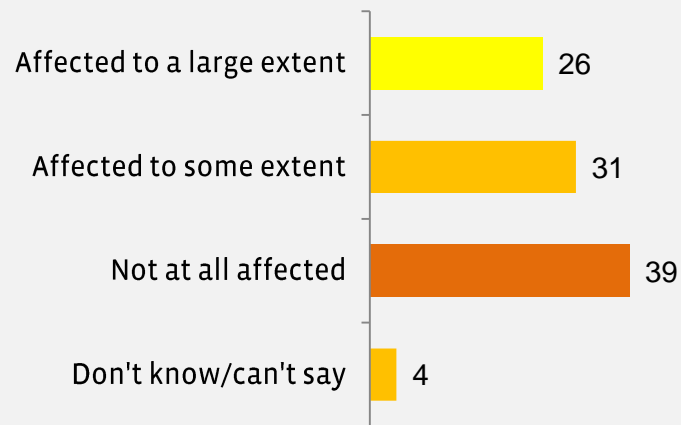


Q. How would you rate your satisfaction with the maternity leave and benefits available in your current job?

Base: Those of married status and aware of benefits - 674

CHILDREN: 57% claim that their decision to have children has affected their career. Not surprisingly, this sentiment is greater in the younger audience (35 years or less).

Career Affected by Children



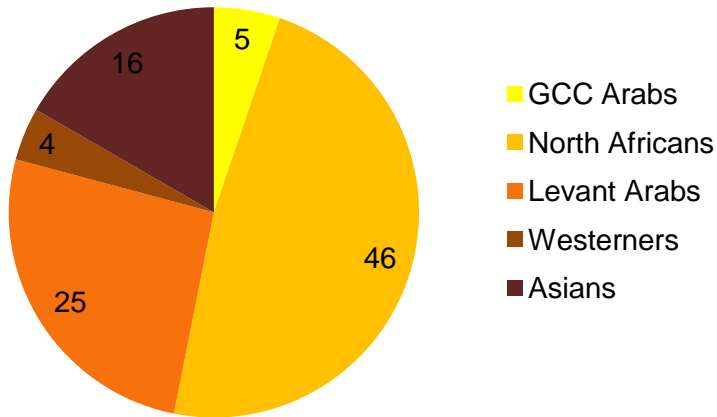
Q. To what extent has your decision to have children affected your career?

Base: Those with children-777

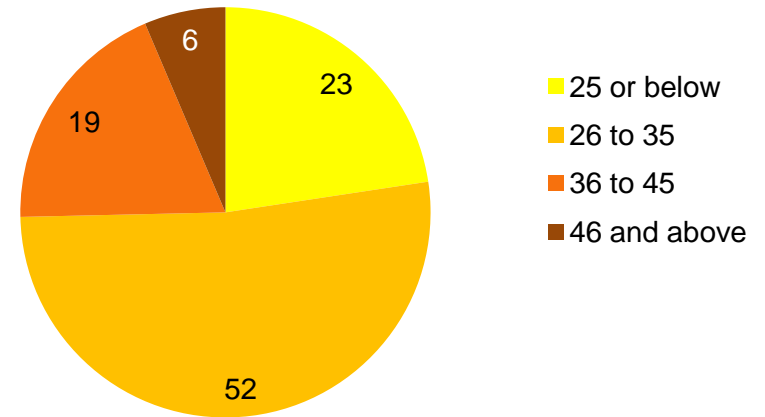
Appendix

RESPONDENT PROFILE

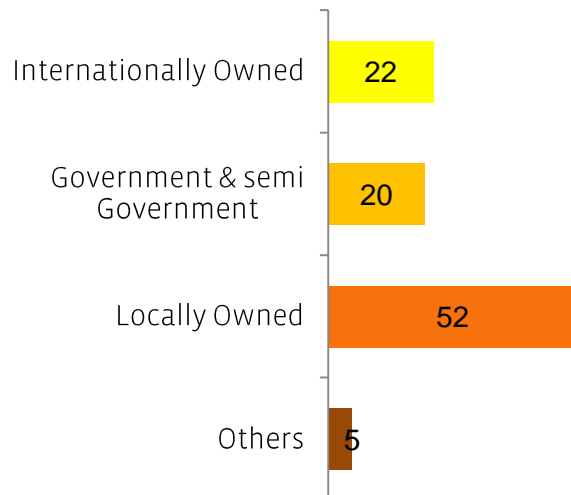
Nationality Group



Age Group

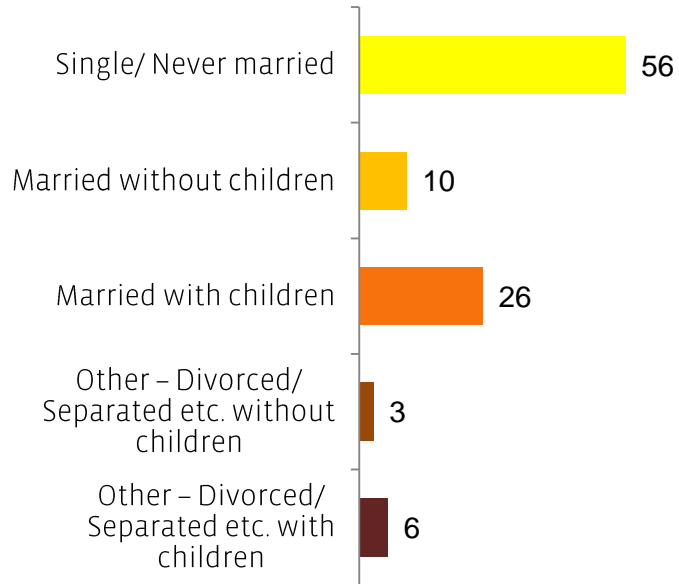


Work Sector

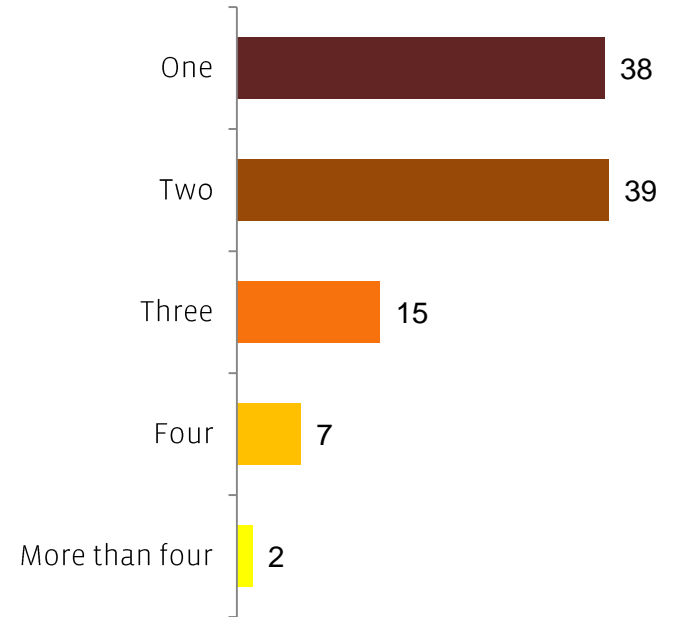


RESPONDENT PROFILE

Marital Status



Children (Those with children)



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