

Abstract

PALESTINIANS ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS WOMEN HOLDING UPPER-LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS: THE CASE OF MIDDLE AND SOUTHERN PART OF THE WEST BANK

The discrepancy between the number of women in senior-level positions and the number of women who are qualified to hold those positions rings a bell in the Palestinian society. The fact remains that women are neither moving quickly enough nor in sufficient numbers into strategic positions. Women seem to experience the most difficulty in obtaining executive jobs, even though they often have greater opportunities at junior and middle management levels in the same organizations. An extensive search of the literature found that there is a scarcity of empirical research examining women in management in Palestine. This study pinpoints the attitudes and perceptions towards women holding upper-level administrative positions using the middle and southern part of West Bank as an example, so as to highlight the potential obstacles, and eventually come up with recommendations. This study was conducted on the Palestinian public sector institutions in the middle and southern part of the West Bank.

To accomplish this research, the researcher used a combination of primary and secondary data collection sources. A questionnaire was used as a main data collection tool. Before adopting the questionnaire, it was validated by researcher's supervisor who supplied his own modifications concerning some items, and then it was sent to some referees for the purpose of testing and approval. All the Palestinian Public sector institutions operating in the middle and southern part of West Bank (Ramallah, Jericho, East Jerusalem, Hebron, and Bethlehem) were selected as a sample for the study. The researcher distributed a total of 1300 questionnaires. The researcher received back 1079 questionnaires out of the 1300 questionnaires that were distributed, which represents 83% of total surveyed public institutions. Out of 1079 questionnaires that were collected 1074 questionnaires were analyzed and five questionnaires were excluded because they were not usable.

After analyzing research findings, it was found that Palestinians believe that woman should work in professions that should enable her to perform her household obligations and this is considered as the most effective issue on the occupation of higher administrative posts by the woman. They also believe to a great extent that woman's first assignment is taking care of the family. Palestinians agree that the woman is serious about her work and that she is capable of performing works that require mental skills. It was also found that women must be in possession of the required educational qualifications in order to obtain higher administrative posts. Finally, it was found that Palestinians don't believe that woman's work outside her home is inconsistent with the traditions.

The researcher recommended that academic institutions should develop communication strategies to promote public debate on the new roles of men and women in society and that they should conduct further studies concerning attitudes towards women leaders analyzed by gender and occupations. The researcher also recommended that the Palestinian National Authority should ensure full protection of equal rights in the areas of work, ownership of property and political participation, including the decision making process. In addition, it is recommended that women's organizations should develop a strategy to convince Palestinians that female employment is an essential component to sound economic planning and prosperity rather than a matter of rights. Finally women's organizations should develop mechanisms to nominate women candidates for appointments to senior posts.