

Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Dealing with the Attitudes of Palestinians toward Women Holding Leading Administrative Positions

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine Palestinian attitudes toward women holding leading administrative positions. A structured questionnaire was used to examine attitudes, and to identify the main impediments to women's promotion and advancement to leading administrative positions. Employees in the Palestinian public sector institutions operating in the West Bank were surveyed. Results indicate that respondents generally show negative attitudes toward women in top administrative positions. Findings also revealed that cultural attitudes posed significant impediments to women's advancement to these positions. Other barriers include gender stereotypes and work-family conflicts. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Key words

attitudes, national culture, gender stereotype, work-family conflict

Introduction

Palestinians have long struggled for a national independent entity. Unlike the Arab countries, which gradually gained independent states, Palestinians were thwarted first by the British Mandate and then by the Zionist plan for a Jewish homeland in Palestine in 1948. When the new state of Israel came into being, the majority of the Palestinian population was forced into exile. Of the former territory, only the West Bank and Gaza Strip remained. These two fell under Israeli control in the Six-Day War of 1967. At the end of 1987, the Palestinian uprising, known by its Arabic name as the *Intifada*, erupted.

The signing of the peace agreements between the Palestinians and the

Israelis, known as the Oslo Agreement, created a new reality in Palestine. This new reality meant creating a transitional Palestinian National Authority (PNA) with executive and legislative authorities limited and constrained by those agreements (Giacaman, 1998). Throughout the entire period, and until the present day, women have been active in various types of organizations, the nature of which have changed over time (Shirin & Geraldine, 1996).

Palestinians face many challenges. These include developing a participatory democracy based on human rights, and dealing with problems of security and the right to self-determination. At the societal level, there are additional challenges. Women's presence in employment and in leadership is lacking. While there have been some improvements in both the private and public sectors, the pace is slow considering the number of Palestinian women who are qualified for these posts in the upper levels of organizations.

Statistics show that Palestinian women comprise just 10.7% of public sector employees at General Director A4 grade and above (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). There is a lack of research about the reasons for this lack of presence in the Palestinian context, and especially studies concerning women as top executives. Most of the studies of Palestinian women have been directed to studying gender and development (Abu Nahle, Nasser, & Kuttub, 2006; Rought-Brooks, Duaibis, & Hussain, 2010; Rubenberg, 2001; Sabbagh, 1998). This is, of course, not enough to understand the lack of representation of women in leading administrative positions. Scholars have emphasized the need to conduct more studies in the region to better understand and explain the low representation of women in managerial posts (Kausar & Tlaiss, 2011).

The discrepancy between the number of women who are qualified to hold senior-level posts and the number of women who currently hold those is alarming. It is important to understand the reasons behind this phenomenon and uncover the most important obstacles to women's advancement to leading administrative positions. Thus, this study gauges the attitudes toward women holding such positions in the Palestinian public sector institutions in the West Bank. It also aims to highlight the potential obstacles, and eventually provide relevant recommendations.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

There are several factors which hinder women's advancement to leading administrative positions (Ali, Khan, & Munaf, 2013; Asbah, Nasra, & Abu-Baker, 2014; Bajdo & Dickson, 2001; Guney, Gohar, Kilic, & Akinci, 2006). These factors create negative stereotypes about women. We are mainly concerned in this study with the three that we consider to be the core factors. They are: national culture, gender stereotypes, and work-family conflict.

National culture. It is fundamental to recognize the challenges facing women on the basis of Arab culture, including norms, values, customs, practices, traditions, and religion. Since the start of the Islamic civilization, different aspects of the people's daily lives have been prescribed. For instance, Islam does not give the right to a woman to be a leader of an Islamic nation. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) stated that "A nation which has entrusted its leadership to a woman cannot be successful" (Hadith – Sayings and Conduct of Prophet Muhammad PBUH). One can claim that this is an indication that women lack some of the qualities for holding leadership positions. This type of understanding has rapidly spread among scholars and Muslim communities. Over time, it has formulated the attitudes of this civilization. These attitudes may be right or wrong in certain respects, but a particular attitude formation has been established and has become prevalent in the national culture.

Culture is "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 13). Other definitions view culture as "a shared meaning system" (Shweder & LeVine, 1984, p. 110) or patterns of "shared basic assumptions" (Schein, 2004, p. 17). Culture is transferred from one generation to another through different patterns of meanings characterized by symbols. These symbols are the means people use to communicate, maintain, and develop their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions toward life (Geertz, 1993). All these definitions imply that culture is learned in very many ways.

Gender stereotypes. It is also important to study the influence of gender stereotypes on women's attainment of leading administrative positions.

Stereotypes are among the obstacles women face in a variety of organizational contexts (Dines, 1993). Gender stereotyping is explained as “preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex” (Bohan, 2011, p. 3). Stereotypes in a given society may not only be perceived between men and women, but may also be perceived between members of the same gender. For instance, the stereotype may be inculcated in the minds of women themselves. Women may have conflicting points of views and negative beliefs about other women holding senior positions in some situations (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004).

In most countries, there is the attitude that to think manager is to think male (Schein, 1989). This attitude is dominant in Arab culture (Sidani, Konrad, & Karam, 2015). Gender stereotypes impacting the attitudes and perceptions of people toward female employees are still frequent in societies (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Valian, 1999). Arab countries are patriarchal. Thus, women are perceived as homemakers, mothers, and wives. They also hold a great number of jobs in positions claimed to be most suitable for them in sectors such as education, health, and social services. It is notable that Arab women are employed at the bottom of organizational hierarchies in positions perceived as appropriate for them in the areas of health, education, and clerical jobs. Despite the qualifications needed for both men and women to lead organizations, conflicting views regarding men’s and women’s leadership styles exist (Al-Lamky, 2007).

The structure of Palestinian society is also patriarchal (Shalhoub-Kervorkian & Daher-Nashif, 2013). Parents prefer not to have female children because the girls do not carry the name of the family and do not guarantee the family’s economic stability. As in many Arab countries, girls are seen as inferior to boys and are not given preference in education or with respect to other rights (Hamdan, 2005). However, in recent years, there has been a gradual change. The change in the attitude of Palestinian parents may partly be attributed to reasons related to the demand in the labor market for females and the family’s need for financial support from their daughters. At the professional level, women suffer from discrimination, which prevents them from being ambitious or expressing the wish to take on leadership roles.

Work-family conflicts. One of the most important determinants that have an influence on women’s access to employment opportunities is the role

of the family. As is the case in most Arab countries, the Palestinian family places authority in men more than in women (Haj-Yahia, 2000). This does not mean that all women are passive in relation to their roles within the family. Women are allowed to leave their homes for work. They are skilled in their jobs, despite the fact that they usually find themselves in subordinate positions more often than men (Joseph & Slyomovics, 2001). However, women are perceived as the caretakers of other family members. Thus, many members of Arab communities believe that the main duty of a woman is to look after her home, while the husband is to look after the external affairs of the family. The reference for this view is rooted in the Islamic system, which is heavily dependent on Islamic teachings (Badran, 2005). This view is not necessarily true although it is practiced extensively. The variations of practices and interpretations of Islamic teachings in the Arab countries contribute to the formation of attitudes toward women's attainment of jobs (Sidani, 2005).

Review of Research

In a study aimed at investigating barriers hindering Maltese women from achieving managerial positions, it was concluded that employees showed stereotypical attitudes toward women in management (Cortis & Cassar, 2005). In another study conducted to examine the views of male employees working in some selected organizations in Ghana, it was revealed that almost 70% of male employees preferred to be headed by male managers (Preko, 2012). An examination of the influential factors of Finnish women in leadership careers indicated that women's managerial job development depended on organizational culture and traditional gender roles (Lahti, 2013). Some of the factors hindering women from occupying leading positions were revealed in a study conducted on gender perceptions about female managers in Turkish sport organizations. Findings showed that gender and education had a significant role in forming gender stereotypes and attitudes toward women's career advancement (Koca & Öztürk, 2015). In Japan and Korea, a study showed variations in attitudes toward married women's employment. Gender discrimination was one of the institutional differences in the employees' experiences of women managers (Lee & Eun, 2005).

A number of studies have examined the barriers facing Arab women in

management. For example, one study examined the barriers and opportunities for lower and middle female managers in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. The study examined attitudes regarding the leadership abilities of Arab women (Abdalla, 2015). Some of the barriers and perceptions were discriminatory practices, underestimation of knowledge and skills, and lack of access to important social networks. Unlike in the West, work and family conflict was not found to have a great influence. Another study examined the reasons that hinder Lebanese women from attaining top leadership positions (Hejase, Haddad, Hamdar, Massoud, & Farha, 2013). Some of the reasons uncovered were negative stereotypes, discrimination, and the so-called glass ceiling. It was also found that an important factor affecting women's advancement to managerial jobs is their multiple roles at work and family. An examination of the difficulties facing Palestinian working women in the public sector was conducted by Jaber (2005). It was found that favoritism, nepotism, and personal connections were the biggest difficulties likely to affect woman's work. The difficulties that hinder women from occupying senior-level positions in the Jordanian ministries of education and higher education were also examined (Khasawneh, 1992). The major results showed that women face social, personal, occupational, educational, technical, and institutional difficulties. Similarly, Al-Rasheed and Abu Dawlah (2001) found that the social domain, professional qualifications, weak management support, and inequality are the main obstacles keeping women out of the top administrative positions. In a study about teachers' attitudes toward the appointment of women as school leaders in Arab society in Israel, it was reported that women principals were seen as inferior to men, who lacked the abilities to form and maintain relations with external bodies (Arar & Abramovitz, 2013).

In a study on Arab women managers, Kauser and Tlaiss (2011) found that national culture, gender role stereotypes, and family play a major role in hindering women from obtaining senior-level managerial posts. One of the major findings emphasizes that inequality is fostered through discriminatory practices against women in different organizations. The study also showed that women's advancement to top administrative positions depended to a large extent on friends and social networks. Another study explored the attitudes of Egyptians toward women in managerial posts (Mostafa, 2003). This study asserted that women earn less than men in the same jobs. It was also found that women find various difficulties in ad-

vancing to higher jobs. Other studies in Kuwait and Qatar found that women are primarily seen as protectors of the family inside the home, in addition to their childcare tasks (Abdalla, 1996).

The above studies highlight the most important barriers to women's advancement in reaching top administrative positions. These include the influence of national culture, gender stereotypes, work conflicts with family responsibilities, and discriminatory practices against women. These results suggest that women are underrepresented in managerial posts. However, these studies do not indicate that women lack the personal traits required for holding leadership positions.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the studies above, our research hypotheses are as follows.

Many concepts reflecting negative attitudes toward women in management have to be understood. Various career/job schemas specify whether managers are favorable or unfavorable candidates for occupying the required positions in the organizational hierarchy (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). These schemas are influential in creating attitudes toward women in administrative positions. It is expected that Palestinians do not support the occupation of executive positions by females.

H1: Palestinians show a negative attitude toward women holding leading administrative positions.

The researchers expect that Palestinian national culture is one of the dominant factors that hinder women from approaching the top of job hierarchies. This is partly because the characteristic concepts held by Palestinians toward women in management are not supportive. These concepts include the ideas that women lack organizational support, women's primary role is the household, women avoid teamwork, and women's presence among men is not appropriate. These concepts presumably affect the attitudes of Palestinians in a negative manner.

H2: There is a negative and significant relationship between national culture and Palestinians' attitudes toward women holding leading administrative positions.

Gender stereotypes about women include elements such as low aspirations, negative social images, greater emotionality, less rationality, fewer skills, poorer problem solving, low degree of influence, and tendencies to change. These items are expected to be negatively correlated with the attitudes of Palestinians toward women holding leading positions.

H3: There is a negative and significant relationship between gender stereotypes and Palestinians' attitudes toward women holding leading administrative positions.

Work-family conflict is expected to be one of the barriers that limit upward mobility for women in organizations. The researchers expect that the Palestinian family still pressures females to quit jobs and become full-time mothers. One of the other pressing issues that need to be understood is the ability of Palestinian females to balance work and family. Another concern is to understand the relationship between obtaining a high managerial position and taking leave for maternal responsibilities.

H4: There is a negative and significant relationship between work-family conflicts and Palestinians' attitudes toward women holding leading administrative positions.

Method

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Part one of the questionnaire requests the respondents to provide demographic data. The second part uses the Woman As Managers Scale (WAMS), which was adapted, tested, and validated by Peters, Terborg, and Taynor (1974). The scale includes 21 items which represent three main factors. Ten statements focus on the overall acceptance of women as managers (e.g., *Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers*). Five statements focus on the impediments that women face in assuming full-time jobs (e.g., *Society should give equal value to work done by men and women managers*). Six statements focus on the managers' character attributes (e.g., *Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it*). The main orientation of this scale is to examine the attitudes of both males and females toward women in leading administrative positions. The respondents are asked to rate the items on a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Ten statements are favor-

ably worded to describe women managers as welcomed like men, while 11 are unfavorably worded to show that women are inferior to men.

The third part uses the Barriers to Female Advancement in the Workplace scale (Konek & Kitch, 1994; Rosser, 2004; Wise & Bond, 2003). The scale includes three variables: National culture, gender stereotypes, and work-family conflict, and consists of 21 items. National culture includes eight items. A sample item assessing national culture is *Inappropriateness of females' presence among males*. The gender stereotype variable includes eight items. A sample item assessing gender stereotype is *Females are emotional*. Work-family conflict includes five items. A sample item assessing work-family conflict is pressure to quit work and become a full-time mother. The main concern of the scale is to identify the main barriers to women's advancement to leading administrative positions. The respondents are asked to rate the items on a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from significantly relevant to significantly irrelevant.

Gender, age, and educational level are control variables used to assess their effect on the relationship between the dependent variable (Palestinians' attitudes) and the three independent variables (national culture, gender stereotype, and work-family conflict). For this purpose, a robust model was chosen. The models are introduced in the following order: Model 1: Gender, age, and educational level; Model 2: Gender, age, educational level, and national culture; Model 3: Gender, age, educational level, national culture, and gender stereotype; and Model 4: Gender, age, educational level, national culture, gender stereotype, and work-family conflict. Multiple regression analysis was performed on the mean scores data collected from the respondents. A convenience sample of the Palestinian public sector institutions operating in the West Bank was undertaken.

In total, 800 questionnaires were distributed. The questionnaires were collected directly. In total, 628 questionnaires out of the total that were distributed were returned, which represented a response rate of 78.5% of the public institutions surveyed.

Results

Demographic Statistics

The data showed that 51.3% of the respondents were males, while 48.7% were female. The data also indicated that 40.6% of the respondents were

aged 20–29 years, 46.2% were aged 30–39 years, 9.9% were aged 40–49 years, and 3.3% were aged 50–60 years. This means that 86.8% of the respondents were between 20–39 years. Only 13.2% of the respondents were within the ages of 40–60 years. These findings revealed that the workers in the Palestinian public sector institutions are predominantly from a younger generation. This may be attributed to the recent job opportunities offered by the PNA after the Oslo Accords. It can also be attributed to the fact that Palestine has a young population. According to the formal statistics until mid-2015, 13.1% of the Palestinian population is under the age of 15 years, while 30.0% are between 15–29 years. The elderly over the age of 65 years comprise 2.9% of the population (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Data also indicated that 14.7% of the respondents received at most 12 years of elementary and secondary education, 53.5% completed a post-secondary stage, and 31.8% completed university study (Master's and Ph.Ds). The results are congruent with the ongoing fact in Palestine that education is a key component of life. Palestinians regard it as a way of compensating for the lack of other resources and the Palestinian family continues to invest in education to empower its members. Also, most of the jobs at the Palestinian public sector institutions require workers to have certain educational qualifications.

Table 1.
Sample Distribution of Demographic Variables (N=628)

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	322	51.3
	Female	306	48.7
Age	20–29	255	40.6
	30–39	290	46.2
	40–49	62	9.9
	50–60	21	3.3
	Elementary or Secondary School	92	14.7
Educational Level	College	336	53.5
	Postgraduate (MA or Ph.D.)	200	31.8

Descriptive Statistics

As explained earlier, the WAMS scale was used to examine the attitudes of Palestinians toward women holding leading administrative positions. Table 2 below shows the relevant descriptive statistics. The highest mean value is 5.61 reported for the item *Society should give equal value to work done by men and women managers*, while the lowest score of 3.25 is reported for the item *Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world*.

Table 2.
Descriptive Statistics

Item		Mean	Std. Deviation
It is less desirable for women to have a job that requires responsibility than for men.	6	3.54	2.060
Women can evaluate business situations properly.	6	4.79	1.802
Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.	6	3.79	1.929
Men and women should be given equal opportunity to participate in management training programs.	6	5.12	1.777
Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers.	6	5.45	1.607
On average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organization's overall goals than men.	6	3.35	1.680
It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.	6	3.86	1.833
The business community should someday accept women into key managerial positions.	6	5.27	1.514
Society should give equal value to work done by men and women managers.	6	5.61	1.350
It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.	6	4.71	1.938
The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.	6	3.95	1.891
Women should not allow their emotions to influence their managerial behavior more often than men would.	6	5.06	1.691
Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as employees.	6	4.66	1.802
To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice her femininity.	6	4.29	2.044
On 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.	6	3.54	1.924
Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.	6	3.31	1.941

Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world.	6	3.26	1.830
Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.	6	3.35	1.699
Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader.	6	4.77	1.961
Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world.	6	3.25	1.728
Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it.	6	3.45	1.942

Factor Analysis - Measure of Sampling Adequacy

Bartlett's test was employed to analyze the attitudes' groups of questions. It was found that the approximate chi-square value was 5406.633, the degree of freedom was 210, and significance was $< .001$. Findings showed that the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy (KMO) was 0.862. This result shows that the data were adequate for factor analysis.

Table 3.
Factor and Reliability Analysis for Attitudes

Variable	Items	Factor Loading	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Attitudes	It is less desirable for women to have a job that requires responsibility than for men.	0.509	0.786
	Women can evaluate business situations properly.	0.602	
	Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.	0.669	
	Men and women should be given equal opportunity to participate in management training programs.	0.638	
	Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers.	0.752	
	On average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organization's overall goals than men.	0.701	
	It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.	0.615	
	The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.	0.590	
	Society should give equal value to work done by men and women managers.	0.656	
	It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.	0.550	
The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.	0.665		

Women should not allow their emotions to influence their managerial behavior more than men would.	0.684
Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as employees.	0.666
To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice any of her femininity.	0.684
On 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.	0.575
Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.	0.655
Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world.	0.582
Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.	0.600
Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader.	0.688
Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world.	0.629
Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it.	0.647

Bartlett's test was also used for the national culture group of questions. It was found that the approximate chi-square value was 1060.650, the degree of freedom was 28, and significance was $< .001$. Cronbach's Alpha of *National Culture* showed 0.775. Results showed that the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy was 0.805. This result also shows that the data were adequate for factor analysis.

Table 4.
Factor and Reliability Analysis for National Culture

Variable	Items	Factor Loading	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
National Culture	Concern over men's negative thoughts about their active participation in job-related activities	0.751	0.775
	Gaining credibility/respect from peers, supervisors, and senior managers	0.589	
	Lack of strong initiative for career progression	0.592	
	Avoiding teamwork	0.698	
	Lack of family encouragement	0.563	
	Inappropriateness of females' presence among males	0.612	
	Females primary job is the household	0.506	
	Lack of organizational support	0.528	

Bartlett's test has also been used for the gender stereotype group of questions. It was found that the approximate chi-square value was 1557.291, the degree of freedom was 28, and significance was $< .001$. Results showed that the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy was 0.818. Cronbach's Alpha of *Gender Stereotype* showed 0.807. This result also shows that the data were adequate for factor analysis.

Table 5.
Factor and Reliability Analysis for Gender Stereotype

Variable	Items	Factor Loading	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Gender Stereotype	Low sense of aspiration	0.551	0.807
	Negative social images (gender stereotyping of jobs)/difficulty gaining access to higher posts	0.702	
	Females are emotional	0.572	
	Females cannot make rational decisions	0.505	
	Underestimations of their own abilities and skills	0.648	
	Low creativity in problem solving	0.772	
	Lack of influence over others	0.720	
	Weak tendency to change	0.570	

Table 6.
Factor and Reliability Analyses for Work-Family Conflict

Variable	Items	Factor Loading	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Work-Family Conflict	Pressure to quit jobs and become full-time mothers	0.573	0.715
	Balance of work with family responsibilities (children, elderly relatives, etc.)	0.547	
	Difficulties in work-life balance	0.565	
	Balance with husband's career	0.524	
	Having to be away from the job several times owing to childbirth and maternal responsibilities	0.531	

Bartlett's test has finally been employed for the work-family conflict group of questions. It was found that the approx. chi-square value was 585.169, degree of freedom was 10, and significance was $< .001$. Findings

show that the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy was 0.736. Cronbach's Alpha of *Work-Family Conflict* showed 0.715. This finding shows that the data were adequate for factor analysis.

According to the factor analysis tables above, all the variables are well fitted to the factor solution. This is because all of the factors have a loading value of more than 0.50. The results of factor analysis provide evidence supporting the proper use of the instrument, which measures the variables of attitudes, national culture, gender stereotypes, and work-family conflict. The results also support proceeding to data collection. The reliability of the scales was tested by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Results showed outcomes higher than 70% (attitudes: 0.786, national culture: 0.775, gender stereotype: 0.807, and work-family conflict: 0.715), which indicate the reliability of the present measure of the scales. Factor analysis tables shows that the determinant is more than 0.00001, which indicates the absence of multicollinearity.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analyses were performed (see Table 7). In model 1, the R square value is 0.520, which means that the control variables of gender, age, and educational level account for 52% of the variation in Palestinians' attitudes. The coefficient value for the gender variable is 0.165, for age -0.081, and for educational level 0.014. Therefore, age is negatively and non-significantly related to Palestinians' attitudes, while gender and educational level are positively and non-significantly related to Palestinians' attitudes. In terms of collinearity diagnostics, the results of the tolerance value confirm the absence of perfect multicollinearity because they are higher than 0.02. The results of the value of the variance inflation factor (VIF) are less than 5.00. Hence, they show that there is no multicollinearity between the control variables (gender, age, and educational level). Each one of them has a distinct relationship with the dependent variable (attitudes).

The robust model is taken into consideration to analyze the impacts of the demographic variables on the variables of national culture, gender stereotypes, and work-family conflict by their relationship to the variable of Palestinians' attitudes. Results of the R square in all models are close: 0.801 for model 2, 0.851 for model 3, and 0.909 for model 4. Considering the hypotheses of the research, this is an indication that the sample has approximately the same characteristics in terms of national culture, gender

stereotypes, and work-family conflict. In models 2, 3, and 4, the value of the *F*-test is highly significant at a 1% level of significance.

In models 2 and 3, the variables of national culture and gender stereotype are negatively and significantly related to Palestinian attitudes, while work-family conflict is negatively and non-significantly related to Palestinian attitudes. In model 4, the national culture is negatively and significantly related to Palestinian attitudes, while the variables of gender stereotype and work-family conflict are negatively and non-significantly related to Palestinian attitudes. In terms of collinearity diagnostics, the values of tolerance in models 2, 3, and 4 confirm the absence of perfect multicollinearity as they are greater than 0.02. Also, the values of the VIF show that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables.

Our research shows that Palestinians do not support women attaining leadership positions. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted. Moreover, the Palestinian national culture is demonstrated to be one of the barriers that hinder women's career development, therefore the second hypothesis is accepted. The research findings also indicate that gender stereotypes play a significant role in preventing women from attaining upper-level administrative positions, thus the third hypothesis is accepted. However, the fourth hypothesis is rejected. It is clear that work-family conflict is a non-significant factor in forming the attitudes of employees toward women at the top of hierarchical organizations.

Table 7.
Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses (N=628)

Dependent Variable: Palestinians' Attitudes				Robust Model								
Independent variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>Collinearity Diagnostics</i>			<i>Collinearity Diagnostics</i>			<i>Collinearity Diagnostics</i>			<i>Collinearity Diagnostics</i>		
	Tolerance	VIF		Tolerance	VIF		Tolerance	VIF		Tolerance	VIF	
Constant	4.047 (0.267)			3.040 (0.308)			2.869 (0.309)			-1.748 (0.117)		
Gender	0.165 (0.118)	0.949	1.053	0.178 (0.108)	0.949	1.054	0.224* (0.108)	0.923	1.083	0.005 (0.032)	0.922	1.085
Age	- 0.081 (0.079)	0.942	1.062	- 0.081 (0.072)	0.942	1.062	- 0.091 (0.071)	0.939	1.065	0.010 (0.002)	0.902	1.109
Educational Level	0.014 (0.010)	0.968	1.034	0.016 (0.009)	0.967	1.035	0.014 (0.009)	0.959	1.042	- 0.003 (0.002)	0.934	1.071
National Culture				- 0.249** (0.046)	0.999	1.501	- 0.148** (0.060)	0.577	1.734	-0.459** (0.017)	0.588	1.701
Gender Stereotype							-0.149** (0.057)	0.561	1.784	-0.061 (0.034)	0.526	1.901
Work and Family										-0.009 (0.025)	0.812	1.231
R square	0.520			0.801			0.851			0.909		
Adjusted R square	0.493			0.782			0.822			0.905		
F-test	1.652			8.723**			8.612**			236.773**		

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Inferential Statistics

It is obvious from Table 9 that the Sig. (2-Tailed) value is less than .05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean number of attitudes for male and female conditions. It is also clear from Table 8 that the mean value for male condition is greater than the mean value for female condition. It was concluded that participants in the male condition had stronger negative attitudes toward women as managers than participants in the female condition.

Table 8.
Difference in Mean Scores Between Males and Females' Attitudes Toward Women as Managers

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	322	5.2177	1.80256	.54473
Female	306	4.1995	.77846	.04450

Table 9.
Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	.036	.849	.288	626	.010	1.0182	.50023
Equal variances not assumed			.288	625.736	.013	1.0182	.50023

Discussion

Results appear to indicate that the Palestinian public sector employees report a negative attitude toward women holding leading administrative positions. They also reveal that Palestinians have prejudiced conceptions about women in leading positions. However, the results are not surprising because other Arab studies have shown the same negative attitudes (Abdalla, 1996; Abuznaid, 1993; Mostafa, 2003; Saleema & Tlaiss, 2011). Women are still experiencing difficulties in reaching the top of organizational hierarchies. Owing to many varied factors, women are not seen as competitive with their male rivals. They need to develop their capabilities by learning new management and leadership skills. Palestinian women also

have to contribute more to achieving the organizations' objectives. Other reasons for holding such attitudes toward women may be attributed to women's ambition, which is still low when compared with that of men; women's level of accepting challenges, which is still not convincing; and the social views of women, which are negative in different respects. It is not obvious from the results whether Palestinians hold their views based on actual evidence of women's ability to lead or if these views were constructed according to traditional expectations.

Women have to work harder to compete or prove themselves as leaders and managers. One of the major characteristics of the Palestinian family is lack of support to females to reach the top of hierarchical organizations. This attitude is rooted in culture not only because men are dominant, but also because women lack the tools and mechanisms to participate in professional life. It is also because Palestinians still see women as inefficient managers. This is related to the patriarchal structure of Palestinian society where parents often give full support to boys rather than girls. In addition, women are seen as inferior to men.

However, Palestinian society has become somewhat aware of the role of women in management. One could claim that there is a growing recognition, although still insufficient, of the gender diversity challenge in Palestinian workplaces. Palestine has witnessed a very essential transitional period in the last 20 years, especially since the signing of the peace process with Israel. Palestinian females have become more educated and knowledgeable as they enter colleges and universities. They have access to different job opportunities, particularly in the public sector institutions. Their numbers in these institutions have increased dramatically and some of these females are advancing to top managerial posts. After acquiring experience in management, and receiving training in management and leadership skills, they have started to use different leadership styles and develop their managerial behavioral skills. These are some of the positive points that may contribute to improving attitudes toward them as leading administrators in the future.

Results also show that the majority of the participants' views emphasize the role of Palestinian culture in hindering women's advancement to the top administrative positions in organizations. This result supports the current literature, which suggests that women's presence in leadership is lacking. This result is also in line with Abdalla (2015), Khasawneh (1992), and Al-Rasheed and Abu Dawlah (2001). They clearly show that women's career develop-

ment depends on national culture, which in this case is not supportive. The results may be related to some of the main factors affecting this view which include: male perceptions of women in top management; the role of women in teamwork; the appropriateness of women's presence among men in the workplace; the low level of women's ambitions toward advancement at work; the ability of women to gain respect and credibility from their peers; the lack of family support; and the lack of organizational support.

The results of the study imply that men are seen as better administrators than women. Men may tend to take the time to develop different relationships so as to support their professional success, especially in obtaining upper-level positions. In contrast, women may tend to be more precise in carrying out their job responsibilities and getting successful results. However, in Palestinian culture, this may not be a sufficient reason for their promotion. In addition, the same culture prescribes the way women should live in various aspects of their life. Palestinians generally discourage contact between males and females. For instance, there is a continuous debate about women's presence among men, especially in the workplace. There are also different traditional interpretations that contribute to keeping their numbers low at the top of hierarchical organizations. One of these interpretations is related to sex segregation.

Moreover, results indicate that gender stereotypes keep women underrepresented in leading administrative posts. This finding is similar to the results of other studies (Arar & Abramovitz, 2013; Hejase et al., 2013; Kauser & Tlaiss, 2011). The results are also consistent with the perspective of Dines (1993) who points out that stereotypes are one of the obstacles to women attempting to advance to leading positions. One of the most accepted interpretations for this may be attributed to the glass ceiling against women as leading administrators. Palestinians place labels on women, one of the most important of which is the ability of women to solve problems in a creative way. Men are seen as more able to solve problems. One perception is that women have less influence on subordinates and peers than men. There is an extensive perception in society that women have an inclination to be emotional in their decision-making process. This is an attempt to suggest that women are not rational. Another stereotype is that women do not have the skills and abilities required for success in management. Instead, they are seen to work in jobs appropriate to their nature. Women are also seen to be lacking in their aspirations toward achieving the top managerial posts.

These are some of the cultural prescriptions that maintain discrimination against women in the Palestinian context.

The results reveal that work-family conflicts do not play a significant role in preventing women from accessing managerial posts. This confirms the continuous improvement of women's access to management. This finding is similar to the finding of a recent study (Abdalla, 2015), which indicated that work and family are not barriers to women's advancement to managerial positions. Instead, it refutes the finding of another study conducted by the same author in 1996, which showed that women were seen as protectors of the family as well as taking care of children. In the past, many families pressed women to leave their jobs to become full-time mothers, bring up children, look after the elderly, clean the house, prepare food, and manage the house. Some women willingly decided to leave their jobs to raise children and take care of their families. However, this hinders the upward mobility of women in organizations. This hindrance often makes heads of organizations hesitant to promote women to higher positions because they are afraid that women will select their families first at certain times.

The current study clarifies that women's situation is improving in this respect and prejudiced conceptions of their roles are decreasing. Women enjoy more freedom to work and to take care of their homes. However, they also have to consider the social and cultural impediments imposed on them to balance their careers and family responsibilities. Palestinian women are primarily acting as family caregivers for children, the elderly, and husbands. Sometimes, women are seen as unavailable to carry out their work responsibilities without the influence of their families. Moreover, managers may be afraid that women will stay away from their jobs for reasons related to childbirth or maternal responsibilities. Therefore, women are seen as unable to balance work and life challenges in many respects. This glass-ceiling phenomenon often impedes women's advancement to top managerial posts.

Effects of Control Variables

The relationship between national culture and Palestinian attitudes is not affected by considering gender, age, and educational level. Thus, it can be concluded that the relationship is a robust relation, not affected by other factors. This distinct relationship may be attributed to the strongly prevailing national culture which is not supportive of women taking steps to ad-

vance to leadership administrative positions.

With respect to gender stereotyping, the control variables of age and educational level do not play a crucial role in liberating the kind of attitudes toward women in management. In other words, the stereotypes remain constant. However, gender stereotyping is changed considering the element of gender. Gender has an effect on the relationship between gender stereotypes and the attitudes of Palestinians toward women holding leading administrative positions. It is highly possible that females show a more liberal attitude toward women advancing up the corporate ladder. This is obvious in the results where men were seen as more influential in affecting attitudes toward women in leadership positions; this may be attributed to Arab culture, which stipulates that leadership is a realm of activity for men (Arar & Oplatka, 2014). It can be said that men do not support women's occupation of senior positions because they consider such women a threat to their aspirations of being promoted to these positions. Another likely explanation is that Palestinians still have very conservative views about women's work.

It was also found that the three control variables: gender, age, and educational level have no effect on the relationship between work-family conflicts and the attitudes of Palestinians toward women holding leading administrative positions. In other words, the relationship between work-family conflict and attitudes cannot be explained by the control factors as they do not play an essential role in changing attitudes toward women obtaining top positions. Although employees may place a strong emphasis on progression at the early stages of their work, one could argue that this attitude alters on the part of women as they acquire more domestic responsibilities. It might be argued as well that there are gender-based differences that influence attitudes toward women getting their fair share of roles at the top of hierarchical organizations. Males may tend to emphasize women's roles as housewives, and caregivers to children and the elderly. Most probably, females may have the opposite view. As people become more educated, they tend to acquire more liberal and supportive attitudes to women's advancement on the corporate ladder.

Conclusions

Arab society does not accept women's advancement over men either at work or at home. Arab women are still seen as inferior to men. Some of the prevailing social expectations do not support women's participation in

different areas of life. This is very clear from the percentages of women who hold senior positions in the workforce. Women still need to find solutions to their social and professional problems. One of their responsibilities is to prove themselves in professional life so that they can pave the road for those who follow. They have to create their own roadmap to networking with males and females because networking is one of the pressing issues for promotion and access to top managerial posts. In addition, it is the responsibility of women to rearrange their lives as required to create the necessary balance between work and life.

Implications and Recommendations

Although the findings of the study suggest several implications for individuals and organizations in the West Bank, there are some further suggestions and recommendations that should be mentioned. It is necessary that the research be replicated over time to observe changes in Palestinians' attitudes toward women in top management, and to ensure that the findings and conclusions of this study can be generalized beyond the sample. It is recommended that further studies concerning career inhibitors and enablers for Palestinian women should be conducted. Different sectors of Palestinian society have to encourage greater involvement of indigenous women in decision-making at all levels. Doing so is essential to developing a strategy to convince Palestinians that female employment is an essential component to sound economic planning and prosperity rather than a matter of rights. Differences in attitudes toward women holding leading administrative positions between and among various cultures create the need for extensive cross-cultural research.

Limitations

The researchers would like to acknowledge some of the limitations regarding the present research. The nature of the topic is very extensive. Therefore, the task is challenging because it includes diverse factors that could potentially be relevant to analysis of the topic. The conclusions of this study are drawn only from Palestine's public sector; they do not include the views of those who work in the private sector. The study is also confined to the West Bank, thus excluding the Gaza Strip, which is also part of Palestine. However, these limitations do not reduce the study's value and importance.

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