AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MOBILIZATION TOWARDS FEMALE'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN LEBANON

by
WALID ALI ALI

A project
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Human Resources Management
to the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
April 2019

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MOBILIZATION TOWARDS FEMALE'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN LEBANON

by
WALID ALI ALI

Approved by:

_____   First Reader

Dr. Fida Afiouni, Associate Professor
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

_____   Second Reader

Dr. Yusuf Sidani, Professor
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

Date of project presentation: April 24th, 2019

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name: Ali   Walid   Ali

                      Last   First   Middle

◯ Master's Thesis   ☑ Master's Project   ◯ Doctoral Dissertation

☑ I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

☐ I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes

after: **One -year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation or project.**
      Two -years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation or project.
      Three -years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation or project.

Waf   06|05|2019

Signature   Date

This form is signed when submitting the thesis, dissertation, or project to the University Libraries

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for providing me with the power, knowledge, talent and chance to start this research study and to continue and complete it adequately. Without his blessings, this achievement would not have been possible.

Moreover, I would also like to thank my mother, who has supported me financially and emotionally, and has dedicated massive resources and energy for me to pursue a Master's education at AUB, for without her, this would have been difficult.

Last but definitely not least, I would like to give special thanks to my dissertation committee and faculty members at OSB, especially my principle investigator Dr. Fida Afiouni, for her constant support and guidance throughout the research process.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

Walid Ali Ali   for   Master of Human Resources Management
Major: Human Resources Management

Title: Towards A Better Understanding of the Mobilization towards Female's Economic Empowerment in Lebanon.

Objectives: Critical aspects of development priorities have come to center on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The SGDs demands that countries achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls to achieve social and economic stainabilities of societies. This project sought to focus on economic empowerment because of its low ranking across global gender gap index and contribution it has on Lebanese GDP, income, and earnings. Four key objective areas included; understanding different forms of mobilization to achieve economic empowerment, key stakeholders and drivers of mobilization, achievements made up to now, and key challenges that face women economic empowerment efforts in Lebanon.

Methodology: The study conducted in-depth interviews through Key informant interviews from 11 groups of people working in NGOs, INGOs, financial institutions, and private businesses. Nviro Version 12 software was used to analyse and present quantitative data.

Results: The findings showed that key mobilizations involve providing hands on experience, increase women on boards, fund programs, create educations awareness, capacity building, and scholarship programs. Organizations corporate with different stakeholders including International agencies, NGOs, private companies, embassies, and financial institutions. Major drivers of mobilization include creation of stronger economies, reduce domestic violence, provision of quality education, and create successful leaders. Major beneficiaries of programs are Lebanese women, girls, and SMEs. Major achievements made up to now covers training for women, policy endorsement, brought more women on boards, created jobs for women, signed pledges, and reduced gender gaps. However, participants pointed out that key challenges include insufficient funds, strict rules and policies, logistics reaching remote areas, increased gender discrimination, and political interferences.

Keywords: Empowerment; mobilization; drivers; achievements; stakeholders

CONTENTS

Appendix

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFUND   Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Organizations

CEDAW   Convention on Elimination All Forms of Discrimination against Women

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GGGI   Global Gender Gap Index

ILO   International Labor Organization

INGOs   International Not-for-Profit Organizations

KIIs   Key Informant Interviews

LLWB   Lebanese League for Women in Business

NCLW   National Commission for Lebanese Women

NGOs   Not-for-Profit Organizations

OECD   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDGs   Sustainable Development Goals

UN   United Nations

UNICEF   United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNIFEM   United Nations Fund for Women

UPU   Universal Postal Union

WEF   World Economic Forum

To

My Beloved Family

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Critical aspects of development priorities have come to center on gender equality and the empowerment of women. As indicated in goal number five of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (UN), countries should always seek to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The major role of gender equality is to ensure that countries achieve social development toward a more sustainable economy and advancing societies.

The Republic of Lebanon forms one of the countries with a high number of middle-income people with the latest census in 2013 showing a population of 4.6 million people. Furthermore, the World Bank estimates that the current gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is at US 17,400 in Purchasing Power Parity terms (Avis, 2017). Lebanon continues to benefit from the significant human capital, economic environment, and open social atmosphere whose support comes from constitutional and parliamentary committees (Ayoub & Mahdi, 2018). According to Stephen, Hourani & Horn (2015), Lebanon has made limited progress to achieve the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. This also extends to providing opportunities for women's development.

The only evident progress that has been made in Lebanon involves reforms in the constitution and legal areas where it became one of the first countries in the Arab regions to give women the equal rights for them to participate in politics in 1953 (Avis, 2017). Despite this, the political and economic participation of women is still low. For instance, Najib (2018) points out that Lebanon has continued to score lower in terms of women political empowerment. The last three governments only saw two female ministers. Out of the 128

legislators, the number stands at six in the 2018 elections. This is still embarrassing owing to the fact that Lebanon has had only one active woman legislator (Domat, 2018). Besides, the majority of parties have tried to support the participation of women in the parliament, but unluckily none of them has come up with plans that would assist the women in overcoming many obstacles and witness their empowerment. The cultural belief that women are and should remain weak is the main impediment (Catalyst, 2006). In fact, a working woman is seen as a threat to the masculinity of men, with most proponents claiming that it could overturn the traditional setting and overall structure of the Lebanese people (Christabell, 2009).

Lebanon achieved a ratification of the Convention on Elimination all Forms of Discrimination against CEDAW by the United States on July 26, 1996. As one of the members of the CEDAW, Lebanon ensures that it abides by all the charters and most importantly, those that deal with the International Declaration of Human Rights. The Lebanese legal system is making fair progression, as the legal system has no restrictions limiting women in engaging in income-generating activities (Avis, 2017). For instance, in the past, Lebanese women had no right to work or engage in any income-generating activities or businesses. Their place was in their homes, cooking and cleaning as they wait for their husbands to return from work. The constitution stipulates in the introduction section under paragraph (a) that the state represents the belief of the egalitarianism of men and women in their nation-wide constitutions or other suitable lawmaking if not yet integrated therein and to ensure, through law and other proper means, the practical recognition of this principle (Freeman, 2009). Furthermore, paragraph (c) lays out equal treatment of all citizens without any form of favoritism or discrimination.

However, just like other Arab countries, Lebanon has also had several reservations concerning some fundamental articles of the convention (Khalifeh, 2006). The country has

had to voice its reservations on article 9 and 16 that deal with citizenship laws and equality in family laws respectively. In regard to Article 9 and 16, the government entered into reservations about choosing a family name. In addition, the Lebanese government recognized the negative impact of national laws on the Lebanese women married to the foreigners and the children of those women.

Lebanon aaccordingly revised its nationality and removed reservations to article 9, paragraph 2. The government also removed reservations of article 16, paragraph (c), (d), (f) and (g) of the convention and ensure equality among women. According to Kelly & Breslin (2010), its dissolution gave women rights to property accumulation during the marriage. General recommendations to article 16 are equal to women and family relation. While the former article stipulates security for women to transfer their nationality to their children, it ignores the rights of women to grant the children Lebanese citizenship (Khalifeh, 2006). The rejected articles show continued violations of women's rights on equality in family relations. The reservations give women the same rights as those of men, for instance, in marriage, divorce, family matters and help Lebanese women from passing their nationality to their children and husbands. The reservations intend to protect the current personal status law, which is under the mandate of religious courts, rather than civil courts.

Research Problem

The World Economic Forum (WEF) published Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) index elaborating on four dimensions of female empowerment: economic, educational, health, and political empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2017). The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index Report 2017 indicate that Lebanon ranks in position 137 out of 144 countries with an overall score of 0.596 "where 0 represents complete gender inequality and 1 represents complete equality" ahead of other countries such as Saudi Arabia,

Mali, Iran, Chad, Syria, Pakistan, and Yemen. Additionally, Lebanon has achieved high rankings on educational and health empowerment scoring 0.956 and 0.957 respectively. However, when compared to other indicators, it is apparent that Lebanon has only scored 0.44 and 0.019 on economic and political empowerment (Avis, 2017). Hence, education and political spheres within Lebanon experience greater differences gender. This study, therefore, sought to focus on economic empowerment based on its low ranking across the global gender gap index and the major contributions that it makes on Lebanon GDP, people's income, and their earnings.

Since 1995, Arab nations including Lebanon have made tremendous efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. A considerable progress in the social, political and cultural area has been made as the country attempts to remove the basic obstacles in the implementation methodologies. Two critical areas that Lebanon has made tremendous change is the education and training of women and health as well as the start of women under the Lebanese laws (Stephen *et al.*, 2015). Lebanon has been in conflict and continues to suffer impacts arising from Israel`s occupation on its territory. As a result, there have constant obstacles in swift succession (Stephen *et al.*, 2015). In addition, due to changes in policies and programs, women are given less priority. Nonetheless, despite all these obstacles, a group of Lebanese women rose in an attempt to bring change and fight for the protection of women against discrimination. The Lebanese women participated for the Beijing Conference so that Lebanon plays an active role in the global event. National committees and non-government organizations were formed to set work on women`s issues in action.

After the Conference, Lebanese applied to be part of CEDAW that has various parameters, which were widened year after year. The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) is the official body that fought for and catered for women issues. NCLW

was formed in 1998 whereby the first lady was the chair. NCLW has been focused on achieving objectives set at the Beijing Conference through working together with non – governmental bodies, international organizations and various ministries (Ayoub & Mahdi, 2018).

These collaborations have played a vital role in improving the status of Lebanese women. In 2001, the National Commission worked with United Nations International Children`s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) from Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) and worked on a project that aimed at disseminating information on rights of women. In addition, the National Commission worked with United Nations Fund for Women UNIFEM focused on empowering women in decision making. This led to the establishment of the communication network by appointing gender focal point officer in each institution or monitory (Avis, 2017). The Council of Development and Reconstruction has also been involved in a number of projects such as empowering training courses for women, providing support to small projects run by women and assists the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop plans for gender –mainstreaming. Some of the organizations include. Nongovernmental societies in Lebanon in coordination with the National Commission for Lebanon is working together to introduce gender as a term in civil society. According to Kelly & Breslin (2010) apart from achieving their objectives in societies, the current high level of women empowerment has been because of their dedications and efforts.

However, in as much as we already know about their contributions, little research has been conducted to gain a better understanding of mobilization towards Female's economic empowerment in Lebanon. The purpose of this study is to explore how respondents working in research institutions, NGOs and INGOs working on women's empowerment have succeeded to mobilize and empower women in Lebanon.

In order to explore above broad objective, the study seeks to understand different forms of mobilizations that organizations have used to achieve economic empowerment of women in Lebanon. The second area of study involves understanding the key stakeholders that play a key role in driving this mobilization and some of the drivers of such mobilization. By looking at what the stakeholders have achieved, help in exploring some of the challenges faced in order to propose some of the areas that future researchers could focus on in their studies.

The study uses a qualitative methodology to collect primary data through open ended interviews. The study uses interviews to collect data that answer several open questions in the form of "what?", "who?", "how?" and "where?". The approach allows the collection of qualitative data to analyze qualitatively through content analysis using NVivo Version 12.

Objectives

- To understand different forms of mobilization that are used to achieve economic empowerment in Lebanon

- To explore key stakeholders driving this mobilization and available drivers of such mobilization

- To explore what organizations have achieved so far in terms of female economic empowerment

- To explore the key challenges facing women's economic empowerment in Lebanon

Research Questions

More specifically, the project seeks to apply a qualitative research approach through

structured interviews to answer the following questions:

- What are the various forms of mobilization towards female's economic empowerment?

- Who are the key stakeholders driving this mobilization and what are the drivers of such mobilization?

- What has been achieved so far in terms of female economic empowerment?

- What are the key challenges facing women's economic empowerment and what are some avenues for further research?

Significance of the Study

The qualitative findings from this study are utilized by several stakeholders involved women empowerment. For example, the first groups of people were respondents that work in research institutions, NGOs, and INGOs working on women's empowerment. They findings formulate policies around forms of mobilizing economic women empowerment, drivers to achieve empowerment and possible challenges they are likely to experience. Furthermore, the government agencies in Lebanon and other countries will also understand what has been achieved. They can they rely on the findings to formulate appropriate approaches to increase the current level of economic empowerment.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various Forms of Mobilization towards Female's Economic Empowerment

According to Forrester (2012), female empowerment involves women attaining control and power over their lives. This approach entails increased access to as well as control over resources, raising awareness, expanding choices, building self-confidence, and the actions of transforming the institutions and structures that perpetuate and reinforce gender inequality and discrimination (Community Empowerment, 2014). Forrester (2012) defines community mobilization as the process whereby a community stimulates the actions by itself or by others, whose planning, people, organizations, and groups of the community on a sustained and participatory basis to enhance overall community's living standards carry outperformance and evaluations. Mobilization also refers to a collective action by the leaders of the prospective or actual movement to attain control of the resources of the population groups which are previously un-mobilized in the place of their perceived or actual values or interests (Ferree & In Tripp, 2006). Therefore, mobilization for women's economic empowerment aims at empowering women from the communities around the world.

Several studies have been conducted to examine different types of mobilization in the communities around the world. This process has been undertaken in various forms. The first form of community mobilization used to attain economic empowerment the identification of the vulnerable groups by the taxonomy from the vulnerability research and to seek to devise ways and get resources to assist them (Lussier & Hendon, 2013). The prior studies on this subject indicate that women have been the most vulnerable group in developing countries. ILO (2016) reveals women involvement in economic matters only comprise 27 percent as opposed to men who account for 73 percent in the Middle East and

North Africa (MENA) region.

The research also presents the formation of community groups as a way of mobilization in the community (Forrester, 2012). In this case, men and women have been represented and included from the community deemed the most vulnerable based on the taxonomy as well as the results of the gender equality and human rights assessment. Moreover, citizens have formed groups that have focused on the development of external links based on a unified voice and group identity (Hedditch & Manual, 2010). It is important to note that such groups would be the beneficiaries of the activities of capacity building, which will be supported in the initiatives of design, analysis, and implementation in response to their own core needs.

The Universal Postal Union (UPU, 2014) presents resource mobilization as another way of empowering the community regarding the economy. Mobilization of resources comprise all the actions which are undertaken by a firm to see to it that has access to the resources it requires for the proper implementation of its strategy. In this case, most of the approaches that have been adopted have focused on the socio-economic development of women, especially in the rural areas, as a core factor for financial inclusion (UN Women, 2015). At this point, the government or organizations mobilize donors to support their objective of fostering economic empowerment of women in the society. There is also extraordinary evidence that donors are searching for the integration of their actions into the policies of poverty eradication and national development for their partner governments (UPU, 2014). Therefore, there is a need for the countries around the world to include women's economic empowerment in their national policies of mobilizing resources to support the vulnerable groups.

Several studies have also examined the concept of networking as a form of mobilization to empower women in society (Krause, 2012). Networking makes it possible for

the people in the community to share experiences and learn from others as well. Researchers

suggest that there should be understanding the organizations of women, multilateral agencies,

and development entities (governmental or non-governmental) (Medel-Anonuevo, 1995).

This approach further involves networking at regional, national, and transnational levels

(Moghadam, 2000). The area allows the government and organizations to bring donor

agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to spearhead their agenda of

empowering females in the society. Also, through networking, there is the establishment of

the credit schemes that will enable women to access funds to empower them economically.

Moreover, this approach has also made it possible to connect the movements of women

across the world in pursuit of attaining socio-economic development and gender equality in

the countries.

Rogers, Goldstein & Fox (2017) further posit that social networking immensely

contributes to the mobilization of people to carry out other behaviors that are benefiting with

the aim of impacting the society ahead of those who are directly targeted. In this case, there is

the propagation of influence and information from one person to another in a social network.

This form of mobilization has involved the strategy of leveraging close links among the

people. In this strategy, women may be directly encouraged to participate in the socio-

economic and political matters in the society for them to be empowered (Gender Tool Box,

2015). Additionally, the connectedness can be exploited by targeting the influential people

within the social networks to get resources or any assistance that would help in achieving the

goals of women's empowerment in the countries around the world. The researchers further

indicate that mobilization entails the identification as well as targeting people based on online

networks (Rogers *et al*., 2017). In this case, the social media forums such as Facebook have

been intensively used to mobilize groups that support the initiatives that promote women's

empowerment. The researchers also noted that some measures of the strength of the network

between two people have a more significant impact on the focal person (Aral & Walker 2012). Therefore, a focal person contributes to sharing with a target person where such an influential individual makes connections with those within the social network to mobilize funds and other resources necessary for empowering women.

In the Middle-East, although it remains unsatisfactory, several civic and gender groups are working towards the empowerment of women by lifting most of the culturally-installed barriers limiting the actions and activities women can engage in. A quest for unlimited access to education and employment positions portray the tremendous steps made in the Middle-East, as far as female empowerment is concerned. Unlike in the past where females could not do anything without the direct permission of a male figure, Middle-Eastern women now have the power to remain independence by managing their finances, made possible by the freedom to access and even open bank accounts (Kelly, Freedom House Staff & Breslin, 2010).

Key Stakeholders Driving Mobilization & Drivers of Such Mobilization

The quest to empower women demands that various stakeholders come on board for a concerted effort to be achieved towards women attaining empowerment. Like any other social movement, the success of female empowerment relies on the support of a variety of groups. Governmental and non-governmental organizations, the male gender, civic groups, the justice system, the economic society, and females themselves (Hemment, 2007), make up the list of most important stakeholder needed in the empowerment of women, all over the globe. For one, as the affected entity women have had to band together in a bid to combat the social and economic challenges that they face as a gender. Alemu, Kempen & Ruben (2018) argue that women groups have proved as active channels for mobilization. Through their respective groups, women have been able to address some of the problems that they have

grappled with all along, which neither the traditional nor the government institutions have been able to address adequately. Even though in most instances, the women groups are formed with the objective of merely surviving and helping one another boost their self-esteem, they end up becoming quite a useful tool for social and economic empowerment of women.

Capacity building is the need to provide women with training and funds for them to start up their enterprises has seen to the micro-finance institution playing an integral role in the mobilization women for social and economic empowerment (Christabell, 2009). Notably, before micro-finance institutions came into the scene, women had no option to seek funding from conventional banks, which could not provide them with loans because they did not have collateral. Obeng-Odoom (2012) notes that the micro-finance institutions leveled the playing ground for women as they came up with programs that were not just geared towards promoting economic empowerment of women but also develops them in their broader social and political spheres. Through their plans, the micro-finance institutions have significantly contributed to the ability of women to earn an income, thereby improving their social and economic status. More specifically, the provision of loans and grants have enabled women to start up small enterprises through which they have made an income out of selling their goods and/or services.

The non-government organizations are also a significant stakeholder in the quest for mobilizing women for empowering them both socially and economically. Tanusia, Marthandan & Subramaniam (2016) note that NGOs are better placed at providing women in marginalized communities with information, financial resources, and the facilities that they need for their collective mobilization and personal development. The presence of NGOs in certain localities invariably connects the people in those communities with the global network, a factor that brings in some form of power, new meaning, resources and broad

scope of other influences to bear in those particular places. Obeng-Odoom (2012) argues that most NGOs operate under the premise that through increasing the access and control of women to resources and by improving on their capacity to take part in economic activities, they invariably facilitate their empowerment while at the same time they also contribute towards gender equality and poverty reduction. Through providing financial assistance, which is accompanied by group meetings, workshops and training sessions the NGOs develop the capabilities and confidence in women, providing them with the capacity for making informed decisions.

Governments have also gone out of their way to promote the empowerment of women, mainly through formulating policies that take into account the need for providing women with incentives. Grey & Sawer (2010) give the example of the Korean government that has simplified the contractual processes that are undertaken when making contracts with women entrepreneurs. The Korean government has made it compulsory for its public institutions to buy at least 5 percent of the products and services that are produced by women entrepreneurs. This measure is aimed at increasing the market share for businesses that are owned by women. One of the drivers for the empowerment of women is their low-income levels. According to Tanusia *et al*. (2016), the fact that the income of women is in most cases low as compared to that of their male counterparts acts as a competent driver for them to take part in entrepreneurship as a way of making their social and economic status better. Women have resorted to entrepreneurship as their way of attaining more economical and social independence and developing careers that provide them with a sense of purpose.

The level of women who are educated has increased over time, and this has provided them with the basis for demanding better working terms as compared to those of their male counterparts. This makes education a critical driver for mobilization given that the more women are educated, the more their prospects in the labor market improve. Tanusia *et al*.

(2016) argue that this is not just restricted to the labor market, but that education has helped instill in women qualities such as self-confidence. Women have been found to launch their skills into various entrepreneurial initiatives. Kalpana (2011) further notes that education has served as an effective enabler for women in regards to running their groups effectively. Since the leadership of the groups is educated, they are then able to keep records of their organization, such as minutes of meetings and financial records, which enhance their transparency and accountability.

Across MENA countries, Mobilization of empowerment programmes across MENA countries has been achieved through support from different stakeholders. For example, according to the recent research conducted by OECD (200), explains that institutions involved in different economic empowerment projects includes among others, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Industry for Morocco, the Ministry of labour for Lebanon, the Ministry of Trade and Industry in for Egypt, as well as the Ministry of Industry and Commerce that operates in Tunisia. The study also selected six national women's association. Out of these, they were selected depending on their benefits and counterparts. Stakeholders play a role of executing a number of activities. In addition, the also help bring together private and public partners in order to support political dialogue and continued promotion of synergies with other programs that are already underway. Gesellschaft Internationale Zusammerbeit (2019) explain that stakeholders across MENA countries provide continuous support towards achievements of empowerment among women as well as ensuring that they gain gender equity. In addition, stakeholders promote an inclusivity and sustainability of economic growth, decent work, and employment for every girl. United Nations (2012) explain that it is an essential part of stakeholders to increase women's labour force participations and continued access to decent jobs. This can only be achieved when countries ensure inclusivity in the work environment that respond to sexual harassment and

promotion of an equal job opportunity for all. For example, UN women's work that work in the rural areas in MENA countries, has shown having a gender-inclusive as well as harassment-free environment makes a majority of women to participate in economic activity.

Achievements in Female Economic Empowerment

The quest to provide women with an opportunity to participate in the economic development of society has been given priority in many contexts. Cannon (2017) posits that it is considered that communities cannot regard themselves as being progressive if they deliberately ignore to device incentives and initiatives for elevating the status of their women. Due to this, numerous programs and initiatives that have been started across the globe in a bid to improve the economic conditions of women. These programs and initiatives have brought with them numerous benefits, all of which have improved the financial standings of women in various communities. For instance, the formulation of policies that take into account the enterprises that are owned by women has helped to expand the market share for Korean women. As Tanusia *et al*. (2016) points out this was achieved after the Korean government made it mandatory for the public organization to set aside 5 percent of their purchases for the women enterprises. With this measure, the Korean government was able to give the women enterprises a competitive edge in their respective industries. This was critical in a society where women could not be considered as competent suppliers of services to formal organizations and could not, therefore, be able to apply for any such tenders successfully.

The empowerment of women in Nigeria through education has enabled them to play an inclusive role in the development of the political, social and economic aspects of the country. Naigwe (2014) notes that through ensuring that the women at the grassroots levels provided with opportunities for education, the women have been thus provided with the

capacity to actively participate in economic, social and political issues that affect the country at large. More importantly, they have also given the ability to educate their children and engage in the enhancement of their living standards and therefore, the quality of their families' lives and that of the society at large. Furthermore, the mothers in the rural areas have through education become more knowledgeable and thus able to adopt effective strategies through which they are employing in maximizing their life chances in marital, medical, family planning, child-rearing and economic aspects (Najib, 2018). Through the education of women, the development programs that are provided by the various stakeholders who are interested in empowering women have become effective. This is critical because all the development programs rely on education, which imparts skills to the learners to be able to manage their knowledge and apply it in their contexts effectively. In this way, the provision of education to the Nigerian women has opened more doors of economic opportunities through which their lives have been enhanced as a result.

Women groups have also proved to be efficient regarding mobilizing the human and little financial resources that women have in a bid to elevate their economic status. Alemu *et al*. (2018) notes of Ethiopia where the community development strategies for empowering rural women through both education and small-scale economic activities have positively impacted on their economic outcomes. The community initiatives provided the women with cognitive skills, which broadened their perspectives about life and they were able to appreciate the capabilities and potentiality. Through their groups they put together their resources and started up small enterprises producing craft products or services to their local communities, thereby developing the capacities for contributing financially to the development of their families (Kanso, 2018). The self-help women group model in Ethiopia demonstrated that through becoming members to such groups, the women could bridge the gender inequality gaps in the economic sense, as they can create a synergy that helps them to

tackles their financial challenges as a group.

In other countries, the economic empowerment of women has come in the form of expanded opportunities in the workplace, a trend that is primarily attributed to the fact that women have been empowered through education. For instance, Cannon (2017) notes that in Kenya women are enjoying the opportunity for competing with men for job opportunities in diverse industries. Through accessing regular jobs, women in Kenya are now able to have a continuous income; this has positively affected the quality of their lives, and they are also able to invest in passive ventures such as land and the equity markets. However, this does not mean that the gender equality gap has been erased as there are some industries such as construction where women are still marginalized in spite of their technical qualification. Nonetheless, the fact that the women in Kenya have the same educational opportunities for advancing their education has, in turn, expanded their chances at the labor market.

The empowerment of women has also translated into benefits to business firms, which have endeavored to level the playing ground for women to join their corporations. This is especially evident in the OECD countries as Adema, Ali, Frey, Kim, Lunati, Piacentini & Queisser (2014) observe that many business firms in these countries have appreciated the need for strengthening the role that women play in their organizations. They note that these firms have realized that the benefits for expanding the participation of women in their companies far outweigh the costs. They have, therefore, streamlined their human relations processes and functions such as recruiting, staffing and compensation to reflect the unique needs that their women staff have. This has meant equal pay for equal job rendered by both male and female employees; equal promotion opportunities for either gender, primarily based on merit (Alemu *et al*., 2018). Many companies have also adjusted their policies in regards to flexible working environment and re-entry, which have gone a long way in removing the potential biases that women have experienced at the workplace. These positive trends have

not just made it possible for women to thrive in their careers; they have also benefited

companies given that the working environments have inspired commitment from the women

personnel. In this environment, women have also managed to rise to leadership positions

within their industries.

     The Middle-East presents a good example of a culture that had for a long time

suppressed the rights and freedoms of women. There are several activities that Middle-

Eastern women would not dare do, citing the level of fear instilled into them if they dared to

go against the directions of their culture (Community Empowerment, 2014). Not only were

they not allowed to participate in economic developmental activities and work, but were also

denied the freedom to do basic social activities such as self-driving. It is only until recently

that the world celebrated the directive to allow Middle-Eastern women to own driving

licenses and even drive themselves (Al-Sharif, 2018).

     Only a minority of Arab countries presently meet the international standard of

ensuring a minimum of 14-weeks of maternity leave (UNESCO, 2015) and the length of

maternity leave established by the law falls below this mark in most Arab States. According

to the OECD report (2014), only 23% of MENA countries have stablished the recommended

ILO length of maternity leave (14 weeks). Another significant thought is that the costs of

maternity leave are abided by the employer in the majority of Arab countries.

     Although there is global widespread awakening of the female gender, even in the

Middle-East, the efforts are yet to hit the intended target. There are still over a dozen of

things that women in the Middle-East, especially Saudi Arabia that independent females

cannot do (Cuno & Desai, 2010). Women are also restricted from interacting with their male

counterparts, or visiting public spaces, a retrogressive culture that seeks to alienate women by

limiting them from accessing positions of power and influence.

     It is the mobilization and actions of global feminist and gender empowerment

groups that yield the tremendous strides made in the Middle-East, when it comes to respecting the rights of all genders, especially those of women (Ferree & In Tripp, 2006). MENA countries have made major achievements in economic empowerment across a number of matrices. The findings provided by GIZ (2011) show that a majority of women can now experience increased changes in income and savings. Women participate in different projects making it easier to earn higher incomes. Secondly, women have gained more awareness concerning their roles in the households. They can now make decisions that relate to household expenditures, a say in resources they bring to into the home, and decisions involving changes in responsibilities and activities. There is now a great diversity concerning the way that women are now able to increase their paid jobs.

The Key Challenges Facing Women's Economic Empowerment

The efforts made to achieve the economic empowerment in the world today have encountered a myriad of challenges. The research presents some key challenges, where each of them is connected to gender parity and female empowerment (Parpart & Rai, 2002). The first challenge is the demography issue, where women are the determinants of the trends in population by making decisions concerning the number of children that families should have and when to get them (The Pacific Community, 2017). The World Economic Forum (2013) reports that married women of the productive age, accounting for 55 percent, were able to do family planning by use of the latest contraceptives. A majority of childbearing women either belong to the segments of poor people middle-income or high-income nations or live in low-income countries.

Within this context, a study was initiated at the American University of Beirut "OSB, Business School" by Dr. Dima Jamali, Dr. Yusuf Sidani and Dr. Assem Safieddine to assess the constraints encountered by Lebanese women managers throughout their careers

and to assess comparability/divergence from restraints reported in the literature. The research capitalized on an interview-based qualitative approach with fifty-two Lebanese women managers in different fields of occupation (Jamali, Sidani & Safieddine, 2005). The findings of this study suggest that the restraints reported by Lebanese women managers are related to those reported worldwide, some researchers point women's under-representation in management places to their socialization into custodian roles and the continual classification of women's remunerated work as marginal and transitory (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994). From this viewpoint, women's power to top management positions has been methodically, traditionally and culturally destabilized by their prescribed socially built roles and male control over organizations.

Furthermore, as the region is tackled with political and economic encounters, there is space and certainly necessity for mobilization and change. Moghadam (2013) noted that within: "the context of democratic conversions, the challenges of the new governments comprises the incorporation of a gradually educated female population and women's claims for economic contribution in the new policy frameworks" (Moghadam, 2013, p.17). This context, while offering mainly glaring challenges for local women, is a context that may flash a future of change.

In the Arab Region, gender parts are mostly standardized within the home, and women who select to have a job and involve dynamically in the public sphere often face diverse kinds of implicit and explicit opposition (Karam & Afiouni, 2014). Most radically perhaps are the boundaries on admission to employment (Metcalfe, 2008; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010) and on continual dissimilarity in pay, position and decision-making positions (Karam & Jamali, 2013; Omair, 2008).

Even in these economic times with the global increase in rates of joblessness and with a cumulative social adequacy of double earner households as a matter of requirement

(Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004), we see hidden constraints on women's careers such as that which has been labeled as the 'Double Penalty'. Penalty One happens when women chasing a career involvement negative feedback from family and society because they are opposing from the expected gender roles of homemaker, mother, and caretaker. The penalty faced by women who work out of choice (not need) is often particularly severe (Karam & Afiouni, 2014; Karam, Afiouni & Nasr, 2013).

The second penalty arises when women are excluded from particular developmental activities, funds, or positions at work because it is presumed that they will not remain in the job for long or because they are not perceived as devoted or dedicated as their male counterparts. Women are often considered a riskier deal that might walk out of the door as soon as they marry and found a family. Therefore, Penalty Two occurs when women are punished at work because of gender stereotypes and intensely rooted gender-based beliefs. The double penalty has been found to be predominantly drastic in the Arab Region and other nonpatriarchal states (Karam & Afiouni, 2014; Karam *et al*., 2013). Taken together, and in conclusion, these examples propose that many women in the Arab Region are not cheered to have a career. In fact, women who do chase a career often grieve from an overt double penalty as well as a plethora of other challenges Thus, assumption two: that choosing to have a career is a positive and encouraged choice for women does not hold. However, the low rate of female employment in the region has often been interpreted by observers as due to a lack of an internalized desire to work (Jamali *et al*., 2005; Omair, 2008) and/or due to structural constraints which force women to stay at home (Abdalla, 1996; Al-Lamky, 2007; Fargues, 2009; Marmenout, 2009).

Women also hardly have the same rights as men to pass on their pension benefits to their families (ESCWA, 2016). Moreover, the sensation of fierceness and sexual harassment against women at the workplace remains a prevalent problem in many Arab countries, with a

lack of national and international legislation to address this grave rights violation. In a report published by the UNFPA in collaboration with the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (Aboul Comsan, 2009), it was found that 30% of working women in Qatar faced some sort of sexual harassment at their workplace. Surprisingly, approximately 90% of Yemeni female respondents reported sexual harassment incidents in either public places or at work.

A study by Afiouni (2014) further approves the significance of context in affecting women's careers in the region. The findings of her study highpoint both organizational (i.e., lack of mentoring and organizational provision) and cultural factors (i.e., Islam, patriarchy, and family centrality) that affect women's careers picks and shapes allowing thus for a better understanding of local restrictions to women's careers in the Arab Region.

Additionally, women who have given birth to children at a young age have been denied the chance to advance in other activities like employment and schooling (Aral & Walker, 2012). In spite of the remarkable reductions in the fertility in the world, people still differ on this aspect, making the country to realize increased population and thus impeding the efforts economic empowerment. Therefore, women need to control the reproductive lives and focus on the economic development of society for them to be economically empowered.

Effective leadership is the second dimension, which has presented the challenges facing female's economic empowerment. Despite the leaders being aware of diverse culture, ethnicity, and increased population among others, they have not been able to provide adequate resources to address the challenges faced by the community (World Economic Forum, 2013). Such problems include the need for improved education, health, economic development, and political stability, where women are the most vulnerable group in these dimensions. Additionally, there has been a barrier to women's advancements at the places of work. For instance, female employees with impressive records of performance in the area of work may be prevented from getting to the top since people see that as lacking the potential

of leading other senior employees.

In most cases, males who fear being overtaken by females take such senior positions. Notwithstanding the situation where women are rated highly compared to male peers across a variety of leadership behaviors, people still rate them lower as opposed to men on the aspects of envisioning. Thus, this dimension is nearly related to effective leadership at senior management levels. Further findings indicate that senior-level females are affected by this point of view when making appointments to the top positions of leadership. Additionally, Catalyst (2006) study has proved this argument valid, especially in the cultures where the vision involves the leadership's top-rated characteristic. Therefore, there is a need for the exposure of the female leaders to address such stereotypes.

The third dimension of measuring such challenge has been sustainability and scarcity of resources. The prior studies argue that population growth and improved standards of living have been realized for a growing portion of the population of the world (World Economic Forum, 2013). Thus, this growth has placed pressure on existing resources like energy and water that play a critical role in the activities of women in society. As an illustration, women depend on a vast range of sources of energy such as firewood, charcoal, and fossil fuels among others to use cooking and lighting. Additionally, they use water for a variety of domestic purposes. In developing countries, women work for a longer time in survival activities, such as collecting firewood, hauling water, cooking, and processing food. Research also shows that they carry the invisible burden of the energy crisis in humans, where their efforts and time are invested in transport and agricultural processing (Parpart & Rai, 2002). In effect, the use of these resources has exerted much pressure on the local and international environment. In this case, resource scarcity has resulted from the overuse, or the local carrying capacity having been outstripped. This issue has also occurred because of the adverse effects related to unintended consequences of the resource use scale, like the

connections of climate change to the fossil fuels' combustion (Hedditch & Manual, 2010). Some studies posit that women have less access to land, credit, training, and extension needed to enhance energy access and as well support their income generation from microenterprises and livelihoods as compared to men. Therefore, there is a necessity for women to be empowered by providing them with modern sources of energy that are more efficient for the improvement of their work and quality of life.

Moreover, conflicts have been another measure of the issues facing the efforts of economic empowerment of women. It is worth noting that during and after wars, most of the people who are displaced are women and children, who turn out to be the targets of atrocious deeds. After the wars, women and girls are left suffering from trauma, having lost their livelihoods and their families, have no skills to secure jobs or source of income and suffering from HIV and AIDS (Naigwe, 2014). Women empowerment in post-conflict environments brings about value maximization for their stakeholders and contributes to their condition called "triple bottom line" (World Economic Forum, 2013). This measurement exceeds the traditional determination of return on investment, shareholder value, and profit, where social as well as environmental measures may be included.

Countries in MENA countries depend on slim resources to support empowerment activities of women. Organizations and other stakeholders depend on each other to support several activities. Besides, GIZ (2011) points out that a majority of women leave in remote areas making it hard to reach every women and household. Furthermore, the study found that organizations also experience difficulties of logistics.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology approach used to collect data and present the findings. The key areas that this chapter focuses on includes the research design, the sampling process and sample size, data collection procedure, analysis, as well as the ethical considerations.

Research Design

Research design plays an important role in facilitating the smooth sailing of different research operations. It is from this that a researcher can achieve efficient research and collect maximum information at a minimum cost, effort, and time (Kothari, 2004). Research design occurs at three categories; exploratory studies, descriptive research, and explanatory study. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) refers to exploratory studies as the process of findings out what is already happening in order to gain new insights. This is also important when a researcher does not understand the nature of the problem. Three major ways of conducting such a research involves archival research through review of literature, conducting interviews through key informant interviews on the subject of the study, and conducting focus group interviews. Explanatory research on the other hand, seeks to establish the existing relationship between variables. Researchers use quantitative approach to collect data through surveys to test inferential statistics such as correlations. Descriptive research seeks to portray the accurate profiles of situations, persons, or events. A researcher must gain a deeper understanding of the problem at hand through literature review before collecting data through either qualitative or quantitative approaches.

Depending on the above explanation, the nature of this study involves the use of exploratory research design. The study sought to use formulative research method in order to formulate a problem in the most precise way to investigate how different organizations mobilize women to participate economic empowerment activities. More importantly, the study seeks to discover ideas and insights. The advantage of using exploratory research design depends on what Kothari (2004) explains as the need to increase understanding by gaining more knowledge about the subject matter. Because of lack of statistical strength, this study determines why and how organizations achieve empowerment of women in Lebanon. In addition, the study seeks to check concepts before they can be adopted by other organizations. The study design is also flexible and adaptive to changes. Future studies could also rely on this study to expound on their areas of research revolving empowerment of women in other countries or sectors in an economy.

Interview Design

According to the above explanation, the current research used key informant interviews (KIIs) to collect data from respondents that have more understanding around forms of mobilization to achieve economic empowerment, key stakeholders in the organizations that drive mobilization and availability of drivers, what the organizations have managed to achieve so far in terms of female economic empowerment, and some of the challenges that women in the target organizations experience in Lebanon. The interview presented in the appendix section shows that the study used 11 questions.

The Sampling Process & Sample Size

The study used non-probability sampling through snowball sampling approach. Saunders *et al.* (2009) explain that this technique is mostly used by researchers when they

cannot identify the members within the desired population. Furthermore, the study provides four key procedures to use to identify the target groups within a population. The first step involves making contact with one or two cases within the target frame. Therefore, my first step was to approach a manager working in one of the NGOs in Lebanon within Beirut. The second procedure then involved asking the first contact person to help identify one or more other potential research participants that could be of help to the study. The study considered other participants that had inclusion characteristics or sets of characteristics of being involved in charity organizations. The third process also involved asking them to help identify other potential participants. This procedure was repeated until all the 11 participants were reached. This was considered to be a sufficient number of participants that could help provide all reliable and credible information. Besides, it was considered as being a representative sample.

There are several advantages that made it possible for the study to apply snowball sampling technique. Christensen, Johnson & Turner (2015) explain that snowball sampling is important when a researcher seeks to select from a hard-to-find population in a case where one does not have a sampling frame.

Key Informant Interviews

Data collection procedure involved the use of key informants to help collect all key informative data. An in-depth interview was conducted with a group of people working in NGOs and INGOs that deal with women empowerment. The managers in these organizations helped in responding to questions on how they mobilize female economic empowerment. In overall, the interview was conducted on 11 participants.

Data Analysis

The study applied Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) through Nvivo 12 to manage, sort, and organize large volume of qualitative data. Nvivo 12 is a powerful software that has the capability to analyze non-numerical data. The study used thematic analysis approach to identify and interpret patterns of meanings (in terms of themes) in qualitative data. The analysis procedure involved importing all 11 KIIs into the program. Broad-brush coding helped generate nodes around themes with similar content from interviews. Sources were coded based on words and phrases with similar meanings or around same subject of discussion. Besides, the study used the figure below to organize and interpret themes across all files.

Figure 1

Path taken to explore themes
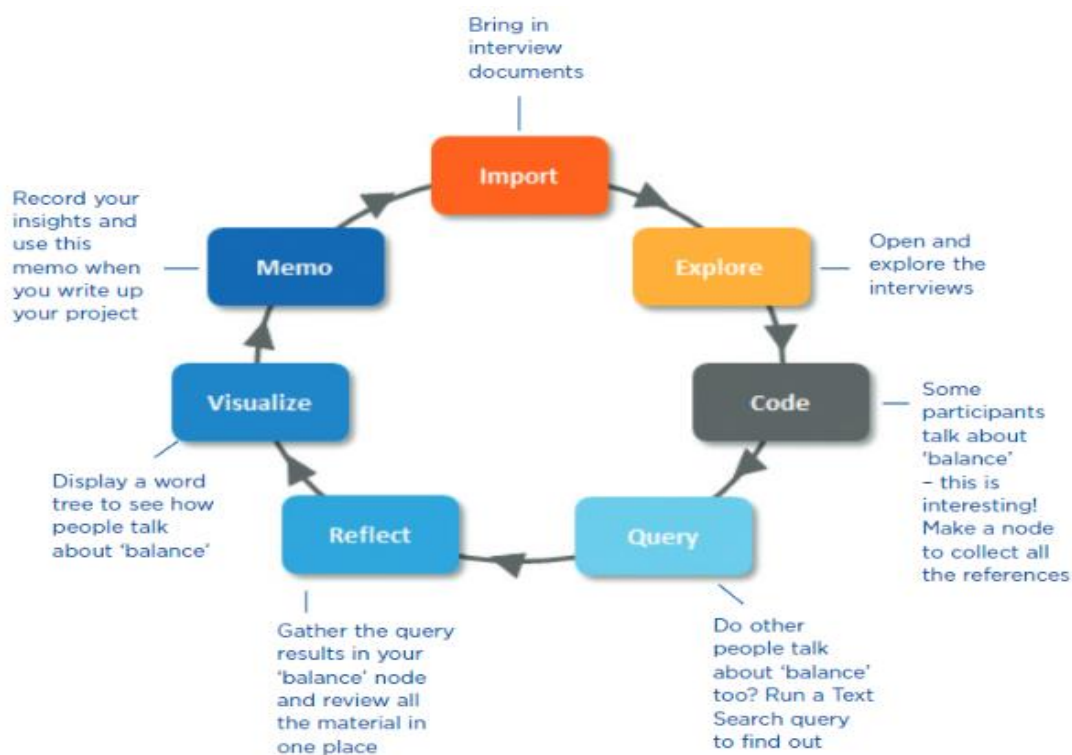
Source: Nviro Pro Version 12 for windows (2018). Getting Started, p.6; available from http://www.lib. uoguelph.ca/sites/default/files/NVivo10-Getting-Started-Guide.pdf; Internet; accessed on 16 January, 2019.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This section of the thesis presents all the qualitative findings. Specifically, this section covers the four key objective areas including the forms of mobilizations that organizations use when they want to achieve economic empowerment of women, stakeholders that drive mobilization as well as the drivers of such motivation. Third, this section explores a number of things that organizations have achieved in terms of female economic empowerment. The last section looks at the major challenges that continue to face women towards achieving economic empowerment in Lebanon.

Year of Establishment

Figure 2

Sampled organizations that participated in the study by code ID

No of Organizations	Organization code ID	Interviewee ID Number	Area of Operation	Year of Establishment
3	R01, R02, R03	1, 2, 3	A non-profit association whose goal is to empower women in the economic division	2006
2	R04	4	A non-governmental organization based in Beirut	2007
3	R05	5	A private organization based in Beirut	2008
4	R06	6	A private organization	1982
5	R07	7	Public organization	1998
6	R08	8	Secular non-governmental women organization	1976
7	R09	9	A non-governmental organization	2015
8	R010	10	Non-governmental organization, whose aim is to assist qualified students	2011
9	R011	11	Private company; its main business is manufacturing high quality paints and coatings	1956

Number of Women Helped during Operation

The study asked the participants to state the number of women that the organization had helped to achieve its operation. Figure 3 below shows the number of women assisted by organizations to achieve economic empowerment. A majority of the participants indicated to have helped many women during their operations. 5 participants said that they had helped hundreds of women while two said thousands of women. For instance, some of them said as follows;

"*RF helped hundreds of women during its operation" interviewee#1*

"We don't have an exact number, but we hired hundreds of women during our operation since 1982". Interviewee#2

Furthermore, others also said that they had helped thousands of women to participate in their empowerment programs. For example, three of the interviewees said;

"During its operations, our organization has helped thousands of business women". Interviewee#4

"During its operations, our company has helped more than thousand women". Interviewee#6

"During its operation, our company has helped thousands of women". Interviewee#7

Figure 3

Number of women helped

Word	Count
hundreds	5
thousands	2
200	1
436	1
500	1

Only each participant said they had helped 200, 436, and 500. All these can be grouped into those who indicated to have helped hundreds of participants on the basis that they could not pinpoint on the exact number of women.

Different Forms of Mobilization

The study sought to understand different types of projects that are currently underway. This question helped understand how the organizations are mobilizing women in order to achieve their economic empowerment. As shown in Figure 4 below, it is clear that a majority of the respondents indicated that major efforts to mobilize women to participate in empowerment programs involved giving them hand on experience (7 interviewees with 9 cases of references mentioning the theme hands on experience). For example, some of the participants reiterated that;

> *"Girls' day: The aim of Gilrs' Day is to offer hands-on experience in the STEAM fields to student girls." Interviewee#1*

> *"RF is committed to women`s empowerment, and has developed internal and external programs to become the employer of choice to Lebanese women." interviewee#3*

> *"provide social, psychological, and legal consultancy for women who are in need for such support through specialists ... A third project whose aim is to conduct adult literacy sessions for beginner and advanced levels." Interviewee#7*

The second majority of interviewees were those who mentioned that major mobilizations came from the need to make a majority of women participate in worklife balance from five references. For instance, interviewees states that;

> *"Worklife balance is a priority for our employees". Interviewee#10*

on boards (3 interviewees made reference to 4 themes about women being on boards). In addition, 3 interviewees said that they empower women by funding different programs oganized by women.

"Gender and Sexuality knowledge centers (GSCR): whose aim is to share research knowledge and update further research struggles carried out by other regional NGOs, individual activists, as well as academics, with a strong stress on Gender and Sexuality. Thus, the GSRC pursues a well-trusted research center that can guide, check and connect people interested in researching Gender and Sexuality matters, in addition to Human Rights issues in general.

M-coalition: The M-Coalition works to guarantee an operational reaction to the speedily escalating HIV epidemic among men who have sex with other men" Interviewee#4

"Different projects whose aim is to give awareness on sexual harassment, early marriage, gender violence, women rights…etc..." Interviewee#3

An equal number of participants mentioned a number of themes capacity building (3

references, educational awareness (3 refereces)

Figure 4

Mobilization efforts to achieve economic empowerment

Nodes\\Forms of Mobilization	Files	References
Hands on experience	7	9
Work Life balance	2	5
Scholarship programs	2	4
Women on Boards	3	4
Capacity Building	2	3
Educational Awareness	2	3
Funding programs	3	3

The findings show that every organization has own programs that make women to

participate in different activities. For example, the following are some of the despondences;

Respondent *1: "R01is currently working on the following projects: Lebanese Women Angel Fund (LWAF) … to create chances for funding by women and for women, Join and Grow program, and reach program.*

Respondent *2: R02 focuses on gender equality and diversity, mainly egalitarianism in education to give women the chance and the voice to*

become leading creators and entrepreneurs in their community through governance and managerial role

Respondent 3 from the R03 said that;

"We are is currently working on the following projects: Gender and Sexuality knowledge centers (GSCR): whose aim is to share research knowledge and update further research struggles carried out by other regional NGOs, individual activists, as well as academics, with a strong stress on Gender and Sexuality.

The second project is Capacity Building: this platform takes place through the Social Change Program, a 12 months' capacity building program that depends on creating learning spaces, experience sharing spaces, as well as useful work.

The third program is M-coalition: ... guarantee an operational reaction to the speedily escalating HIV epidemic among men who have sex with other men (MSM) in the Arab world. We also have M-powerment: ... to lower HIV danger and expand sexual health and identity affirmation among Young Men who have Sex with Men by building community standards and support for safer sex, HIV testing and feeling good about one's sexuality.

"Another project, to outreach other small NGOs who are working on empowering women, assess their financial needs, and fund them from donors." Interviewee#5

"Lebanese Women Angel Fund (LWAF): this platform was launched in July 2017, and its purpose is to create chances for funding by women and for women." Interviewee#3

"RF is working on introducing different new types of accounts and credit/debit cards with special discounts and benefits for women." Interviewee#9

Cooperation with Stakeholders

The study sought to understand the nature of stakeholders that participate on the

mobilization process to empower women in Lebanon. As indicated in the appendices section,

question 8 asked the respondents on whether they were working on their own or in

corporation with other NGOs/Organizations. A text search query result preview shown in

Figure 5 below shows clearly the nature of partnerships. A majority of respondents indicated

that they are currently working with organizations, NGOs, regional and international

agencies, embassies, local private organizations, and communality-based organizations
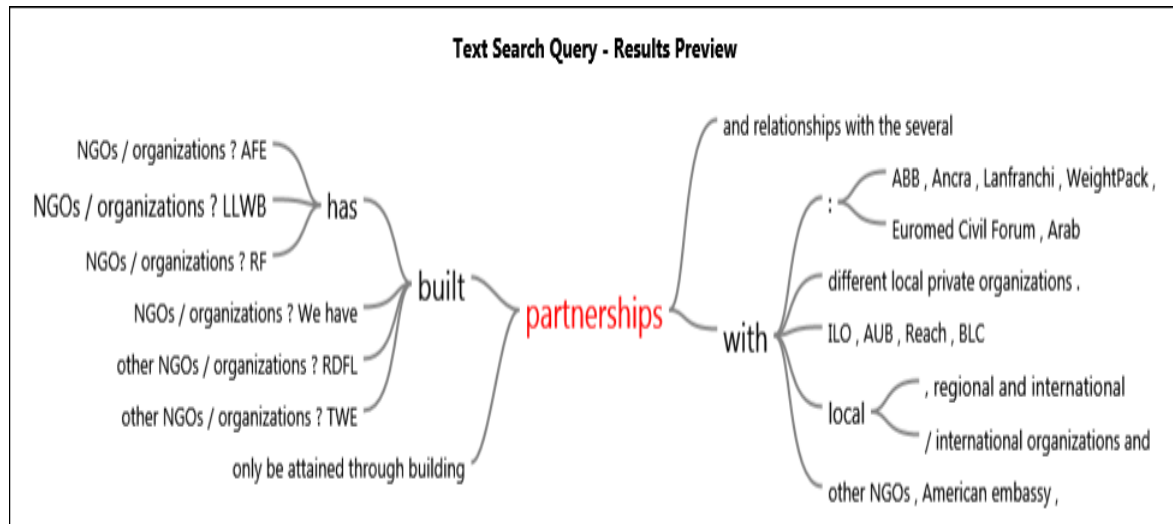
(CBOs).

Figure 5

Partnerships

Figure 6 below expresses the descriptive statistics in terms of the number of

respondents that indicated specific stakeholders to participate in mobilization process. All

participants indicated that they do not work alone but in cooperation with other organization.

Several themes on the number of stakeholders/partners came up from the interview. Out of

11 participants, 6 indicated to be working with international organizations. They made

reference to 8 cases. For example, a majority of the respondents said;

> "*Mostly, we get funds from international donors*" Interviewee#1

> "*R04 has built partnerships with local/ international organizations*"
> *Interviewee#4*

The second majority were 7 who said that they were cooperating with non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) with reference to 7 references. For instance, for

instance, some of them said that:

"R03 has built partnerships with local organizations" Interviewee#3

The third majority of 5 respondents who indicated that they have partnered with private companies. Besides, an equal number of respondents indicated that they are already cooperating with Financial institutions (2 references), embassies (2 references), and local community (2 references). Only a small number of respondents show that there is lower preference to partner with CBOs and learning institutions such as universities and colleges.

Figure 6

Cooperation

Nodes\\Cooperation	Files	References
International Agencies	6	8
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	7	7
Private Companies	5	5
Community Based Organizations (CBOs)	1	3
Community	2	2
Embassies	2	2
Financial Institutions	2	2
Learning Institutions	1	1

Drivers of Mobilization

According to the third objective, the study sought to understand what drives respondents to participate in economic empowerment of women. Question six asked the respondents – what are the main drivers of your actions? The nodes created in Figure 7 below reaves that major themes from the interview included the need to achieve of stronger economies, reduction in the level of violence, create successful leaders, and develop quality education. Out of 11 participants, a majority consisting of 7 indicated that the need to create

stronger economies made them empower women. Besides, 13 references were made around

the same theme. The following refers to some of the responses;

>*"We believe that more empowered women mean more safety and security. Empowering women can also reduce poverty in the country and lead the latter to becoming a bigger player in the global market."* Interviewee#5

>*"We believe that employment of women can help to boost economic growth and reduce domestic violence."* Interviewee 6

>*"Our trust and confidence that change can`t be driven without empowering women entrepreneurs, and this empowerment is essential to build stronger economies."* Interviewee#7

Reduction of domestic violence in households ranked second with three participants

talking about it. Besides, they made reference of 4 different aspects around reduction of

violence in homes. Some of them indicated as follows;

>*"We believe that financial considerations and gender discrimination should not become barriers to quality education for students who meet our academic criteria."* Interviewee#1

>*"We believe that sustainable development relies on ending discrimination toward women and providing equal opportunities for education and employment."* Interviewee#3

An equal number of participants indicated that drivers to empower women included

making women receive quality education with reference to only two terms and make them

become successful leaders in areas where they serve.

Figure 7

Drivers of Mobilization

Nodes\\Drivers of Empowering women	Files	References
Stronger economies	7	13
Reduce Domestic violence	3	4
Successful Leaders	2	3
Quality of Education	2	2

Beneficiaries

The study asked the participants to name a number of stakeholders that benefited from their projects. Four major themes were identified from the interviews. Out of 11 participants, 10 said that Lebanese women were the major beneficiaries from different empowerment projects. The also made reference to several terms. For instance, some of the respondents said;

> *"Everybody can benefit from our programs, and as I mentioned earlier we always develop special programs for women in order to empower them" Interviewee#3.*

> *"Our beneficiaries are Lebanese professional women". Interviewee#4*

The second majority said students also benefited from the projects. Those that helped students reiterated as follows;

> "*Our beneficiaries are student girls". Interviewee#4*

The lowest beneficiaries were media and SMEs at 1 and 2 references respectively.

Figure 8

Beneficiaries of Projects

Nodes\\Beneficiaries	Files	References
Lebanese Women	10	10
Students	4	4
SMEs	2	2
Media	1	1

Tangible Achievements

Achievements also play an important role for organizations to guide whether they have succeeded in their empowerment projects. The study asked the participants to explain

some of the tangible achievements. According to Figure 9 below, it is apparent that a majority of organizations had succeeded in training women to achieve empowerment (7 participants) with reference to 9 different related words about training.

Five out of 11 participants indicated that they had succeeded in endorsing policies that would see increased economic empowerment for women in Lebanon. For example, five of the participants said:

> *"Recommendations for Private Sector Companies: In 2017, united with Shareholder-Rights by Capital Concept s.a.l. for the drafting of policy endorsements for safeguarding 30% women on boards in private sector companies." Interviewee#1*

> *"Flexible policies for women." Interviewee#2*

> *"Setting policies ensuring a quota of 30% women on boards. Executing and training around women on boards, in collaboration with IFC/ Tamayyaz and PWC." Interviewee#4*

The second indicated that they had achieved by bringing more women on board (5 participants with reference to 7 related items around board). Similarly, 5 participants said they had succeeded in endorsing policies in the country to assist empower women in Lebanon. In addition, 4 participants said that their organizations had created jobs for women with 5 references around the same theme. 3 participants indicated that their organizations had succeeded in filling the gender gap in employment and signed numerous pledges with other organizations across Lebanon to help absorb several women. However, only 2 said that they had succeeded in providing financial aid to either students or women at 2 and 1 participants, respectively.

Figure 9

Tangible achievements

Nodes\\Achievements	Files	References
Training for Women	7	9
Brought More women on Board	5	7
Policy Endorsement and Pledges	5	7
Created Jobs for Women	4	5
Filled Gender Gap	3	3
Financial Aid to students and women	3	3

Key Challenges Facing Women's Economic Empowerment

Figure 10 below presents the results for key challenges that organizations experience in their efforts to make women achieve economic empowerment. The key nodes created from the qualitative data appeared around several themes. Out of 11 participants, 7 said that they experienced challenges of insufficient funds with reference to 7 different terms around funds. Two participants said that that their organizations experience the challenge of strict rule and policies from the government. Besides, participants also noted that some of the challenges revolved around difficulties in collection of data, gender discrimination, logistics to reach remote areas, and political interferences.
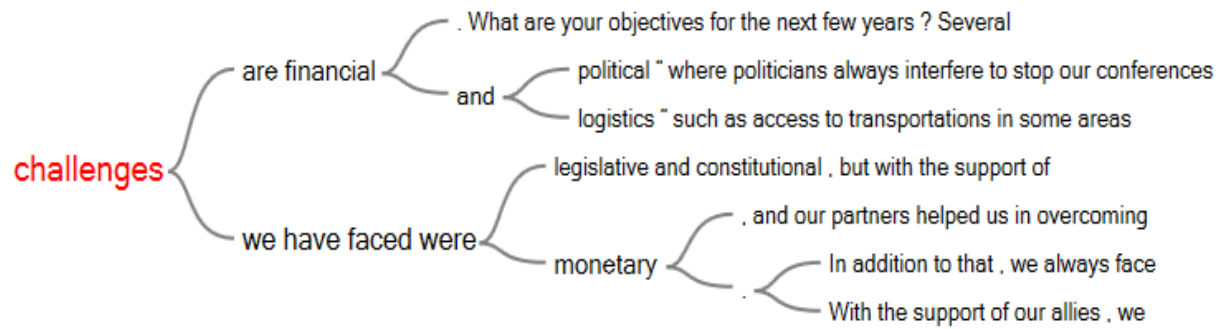
Figure 10

Key Challenges

Nodes\\Key Challenges	Files	References
Insufficient Funds	7	7
Strict rules and policies	2	2
Difficulties in Collecting Data	1	1
Gender discrimination	1	1
Logistics to reach remote areas	1	1
Political Interference	1	1

The Text search query below shows what some of respondents said around the challenges on financial, political, logistics, and legislation.

Figure 11

Text query on key challenges

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In order to develop a better understanding of the mobilization towards female's economic empowerment; qualitative approach was used to collect data through in-depth interviews. The findings presented in the Figure 2 reveals that organizations have succeed to assisting a number of women in Lebanon. A majority of participants had assisted hundreds of women. The nine target organizations that participated in this study ranged from non-profit associations (R01, R02, R03, R05), private organization (R011, R06, R04), to a public organization (R07). The findings from the above target organizations reals that different organizations have now taken up the mandate to empower women in Lebanon. The scope of organizations is now extensive and goes beyond what is believed to be the role of NGOs. Some of the organizations now INGOs, public organizations and private organizations.

According to the first objective, the thesis sought to develop a better understanding about numerous projects that organizations implement when they want to mobilize and empower women economically. The findings presented in Figure 4 shows efforts that organizations do when they want to achieve economic empowerment. Qualitative analysis brought out seven different themes on projects/mobilization efforts. For example, out of 11 interviews, 7 said indicated that they organize for programs that allow women to gain hand on experience. Besides, participants used a number of phrases when referring to hand-on-experience. For example, the following statements were in support of the above findings;

Several studies conducted in the past also support this finding. Most of the support comes from the literature that focuses on the concept of networking as a form of mobilizing women to get empowered economically (Krause, 2012). According to Krause for example, is that when women are networked by participating in different programs that give them

experience, they are likely to share their hand-on experience and learn from others as well. In addition, Rogers *et al*. (2017) explain that social networking mobilizes women and makes them participate in different activities that they have never experienced in their live.

Apart from the hands of experience, organizations in Lebanon also mobilize women to achieve economic empowerment by creating educational programs to create awareness in the society. This finding was supported by two of the interviewees who said;

Funding programs to achieve entrepreneurship and development of private sector. The priority for organizations to implement mobilization programs is to remove all types of barriers that hinder women from becoming entrepreneurs. The programs are meant to promote access to finances and participation in trade policies. Three interviewees said;

Female entrepreneurs therefore, serve an important role among developing economies such as Lebanon. In Lebanon for instance, women in businesses account for more than one-third of companies and a majority of them are found in informal sectors. Studies have also found that female-owned businesses achieve positive impact to the society hence, enhancing self-confidence among women, increasing the level at which they participate in in the household activities as well as making economic decisions. The fact that a majority of women in Lebanon experience limited obstacles that limit them from education, access to funding, participation in boards, and enjoy work life balance, they are less likely to become empowered economically. This explains the reason as to why interviewees stated that now come in to bridge the gap by implementing programs meant to achieve capacity building, educational awareness, funding, give hands on experience, scholarship programs for those that have performed well, increased participation of women on boards, and benefits from work-life balance.

Key Stakeholders in Driving Mobilization

Organizations can only achieve mobilization of women to participate in economic empowerment through cooperation. More importantly, when asked as to whether the interviewees worked alone to achieve their projects, none of the interviewees gave a confirmation answer. The findings presented in the Figure 5 and 6 showed how organizations have succeeded to create partnerships and corporations. The themes created from the interview showed 8 categories of cooperation between organizations and external stakeholders. Out of these for example, a majority of the interviewees indicated they cooperate with NGOs followed by International agencies and private companies. Besides, other external stakeholders that also play a major role include financial institutions, embassies, the community itself, and CBOs.

This study is also supported by findings presented in literature. A previous research conducted by Hemment (2007) indicates that the quest to empower women calls up different stakeholders to come together through cooperation, to achieve women empowerment. The involvement of public, private, NGOs, INGOs, as well as the community in achievement of economic empowerment in Lebanon shows how importance it is to everyone. Stakeholders also understand that economic empowerment of women in a society play an important role in achieving economic benefits for the entire society and economy at large.

Available Drivers of Mobilization

The findings presented in Figure 6 led to four themes around what drives organizations to implement economic empowerment in Lebanon. The key themes include quality education, reduction of domestic violence, create stronger economies, and make women become successful leaders. Out of these four however, the participants gave more weight to creation of stringer economies. 7 out of 11 interviewees explained gave several

reasons that made them to implement economic empowerment with 13 related phases around economic empowerment.

The above findings show clearly that women play major roles in shaping the lives of those in the society and overall economy. Just as explained in the foregoing section under mobilization efforts, it is apparent that entrepreneurship and development of private sectors come to the fore to affect the society and economies at large. A majority of organizations that partner with women are always driven by the urge to increase the number of women who participate in most of economic activities. According to Christabell (2009) for instance, key areas of women economic empowerment includes participation in entrepreneurial activities and development of private sectors, access to land and property rights, participation in productive employment and decent work, skill development, awareness, as well as agricultural and development of an entire society.

In addition, reduction of domestic violence was also another prominent theme from the interview. Out of 11 participants for example, three expressed different phrases that were linked to reduction in domestic violence. The findings also show that economic empowerment extend to the level of education and skill development. The findings show that a majority of organizations are driven by the fact that in order to participate in other economic activities, women in Lebanon also need to gain education and develop their skills. The priority that organizations put towards education involves increasing the number of women who access quality primary and post-primary education. In addition, education is meant to increase the number of children that get enrolled in early childhood education. For example, two of the members said that:

Organizations in Lebanon now understand that primary education offers women with solid foundation from which they can develop their resources. However, it is imperative to point out that the primary education alone cannot be sufficient to deal with numerous

structural inequalities that occurs in the country. Other studies have found a strong correlation between an improvement in gender equality, empowerment, and well-being with how women access second education as well as other higher level of education (Ferree & In Tripp, 2006). Most importantly, when women gain access to higher level of education, it will increase the chance of securing formal employment and reduction in gender inequality that arises from wages. Forrester (2012) explains that women have a higher chance and opportunity of acting as agents of change in a society when they achieve post-primary education. It is therefore, important for the country to continue promotion of measures directed towards increasing post-primary education for both girls and women. Freeman (2009) recommends that increasing the rate of school enrolment and adopting polies that retain girls in school beyond their primary levels, should become the key priority towards educational interventions.

What Organizations Have Achieved in Terms of Economic Empowerment

Figure 8 shows a number of tangible achievements that have been made by organizations involved in women economic empowerment. The findings from the in-depth interview provided several themes coded under the node achievements. For example, 7 out of 11 interviewees said that they have already succeeded in providing different training programs to women across Lebanon. Participants made reference to 9 different phrases focusing on training. Success in implementing different programs that support vocational training provide girls and women with training not reinforcing occupational segregation and focus on women that work in low-skill and low-wage jobs. It creates that an opportunity for women to start getting better salary, offers an opportunity for them to also advance in their career and increase the number of women that participate on board. These are occupations that have been considered to be out of reach for many women in Lebanon.

This study also gains support from previous studies. According to the recent study conducted by Gender Tool Box (2015), vocational trainings that organizations implement, provide women with numerous options. This is based on the foundation that a majority of women in societies cannot pursue higher educations. Women found in developing countries also experiences challenges that limit them from accessing more funding that could see them advance their educations and hence, achieve status to work in higher positions such as board positions. In addition, studies also maintain that women who go through vocational training to advance their skills, as more likely to secure employment in organizations.

According to Grey & Sawer (2010), training programmes provide girls and women with multi-dimensional understanding. They are placed in a position where they can develop their technical skills and job-readiness skills as well as supporting people on how to search for jobs that suit them. Similarly, Hedditch & Manual (2010) explain that integrated business support services and ICT skills have become important aspects for women for women to gain through vocational education and training. Hemment (2007) conducted a study in Russia to explore the major achievements made by the National Plan of Action towards gender equality and economic empowerment. The findings showed that four key achievements included elimination of all types of negative economic practices and some of inappropriate laws. The organization also enhanced health status of women by promoting educational training on reproductive health and rights. In addition, the findings showed that the organization had succeeded in promoting a number of women to go through educational and skills training programmes. In overall, the findings presented in figure 8 shows clearly that organizations in Lebanon are striving to ensure that a majority of women now gain training to secure job opportunities, work on corporate boards, as well as fill numerous gender gaps found in the society.

Currently, the Lebanese labour market experience low activities and employment

rates for women. A report by the World Bank (2015) revealed that there is an increased

influx of foreign workers. A majority of skilled Lebanese workers now obtain employments

in other countries abroad. The 1965 Lebanese law clearly indicates that women and men

working under the same job need to receive similar remuneration. However, according to the

recent study conducted by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW,

2016), this is far from becoming a reality. The country lacks tangible laws and policies that

are supposed to support women participation in labour force. Consequently, this has made it

possible for employers to discriminate against women in the workplace especially when

providing medical services, social benefits, and taxation. The findings presented in Figure 8

therefore, are a true reflection of how interviewees are trying to fill the gaps by

recommending a number of policies.

Key Challenges Facing Women Economic Empowerment in Lebanon

There are several challenges that interviewees experience when implementing

economic empowerment for women. The findings presented in figure 9 revealed that key

themes include insufficient funds, strict rules and policies, political interference, logistics to

reach remote areas, difficulties in collecting data, as well as continued gender discrimination.

Organizations that participated in this study all indicated that they support their programs

through funding from other partners. However, despite such support, they still have

insufficient funds. This is a clear indication that these organizations design several programs

meant to improve the lives of vulnerable groups in the society. This also explains the reason

as to why none of the participants can work alone without depending on contribution from

other stakeholders. The findings expressed in this study supports the findings in previous

research on challenges that affect stakeholders among MENA countries in ensuring that

women achieve stronger economic empowerment (OECD, 2011).In his study for example,

Aral & Walker (2012) found that learning financial management skills, finding good employees, access to capital, as well as high cost of public services. Besides, Cannon (2017) maintains that such challenges varied among countries like Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and UAE. Another study by Ayoub & Mahdi, D. (2018) also revealed that women try to seek for financing but major challenge revolves around lack of access to back credit. MENA experience additional challenges such as registration of their businesses and going through licensing procedures. In addition, women also experience problems of access to networks, difficulties to identify and access relevant agencies through transportation, structures, as well as insufficient logistics to travel to other remote areas.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

Conclusion

This thesis sought to develop a better understanding of the mobilization towards achievement of female's economic empowerment. Lebanon has scored high ranking on educational and health. However, the country still ranks lower on political and economic empowerment. This study, therefore, sought to focus on economic empowerment based on its low ranking across the global gender gap index and the major contributions that it makes on Lebanon GDP, people's income, and their earnings.

The finding from in-depth interviews reveals that the organizations have already helped hundreds of women who participate in a number of mobilization programs. A majority of organizations seek to give women hands on experience by enrolling them into different training programs and scholarship. A reduction in the number of women who serve on board also makes it possible for organizations to think about involving women in their programs. Furthermore, other areas that organizations plan their programs include capacity building, creation of educational awareness and increased funding towards women programs.

The second findings show that organizations that work towards empowering women do not work alone but corporate with other stakeholders. Key stakeholders in Lebanon include NGOs, private companies, international agencies, financial institutions and embassies. Such a massive and willingness of organizations to partner together shows how importance empowerment towards women matter in the society. For instance, most of the organizations get motivation from the need to create stronger economies, reduction of domestic violence, improve educational status as well as make women become successful leaders.

Organizations involved in women empowerment have already made numerous tangible achievements. The need to create stronger education shows how organizations have succeeded in training several women in matters to do with entrepreneurial in order to gain more skills and knowledge for independency. In addition, the findings show that a majority of respondents have already made policy endorsements, made a majority of women to start serving on boards. Consequently, this explains as to why a majority of women have been able to get employment in a society where gender gap still ranks high.

However, despite above achievements, the findings show numerous challenges that respondents continue to experience. For instance, even though organizations achieve economic empowerment for women through partnership, they still experience a bigger challenge of insufficient funds. This aspect has made it harder to a majority of organizations to achieve their long-term objective of uplifting women out of poverty. Besides, other challenges include strict rules and policies, political interferences, continued gender discrimination, and logistics from reaching most remote areas where a majority of women live.

Policy Implication

According to the general viewpoint, women are often described as submissive, pathetic, and sensitive. This affects how women collaborate with larger culture, and how organizations in turn cooperate with women. Thus, women are fatalities of the gender-based organizational structure. And in order to adjust the discriminatory views that organizations hold towards women, action has to be taken.

 Organizations must embrace the suitable mechanisms, practices, and systems in order to adjust the way they function towards gender inequality, and to boost other organizations to do so as well. Organizations can apply change through forcible mechanisms

on gender equitable HRM practices which relate to the nonappearance of many rules and procedures regarding women's equality in the workplace, such as tiny maternity leave for women, the role of wasta and nepotism, and no laws regarding equal pay. Organizations can further embrace normative mechanisms which assist in creating employment openings for women, and this can become the norm, and more organizations would want to do so as well in order to preserve a certain standard. This can be done when organizations start accepting international normative standards to increase awareness on gender equality. In addition, mimetic mechanisms can also be adopted, when organizations follow other organizations who are adopting strategies and practices towards reaching gender equality in the workplace for women.

On another hand, a research was done in Kenya in April 2017 on Analysis of Policy Environment for Women's Economic Empowerment. The researchers explained that NGOs, Governments agencies and other organizations increase the economic empowerment of women thus solving the challenges faced by women. The issue of insufficient funds can be addressed through the provision of catalytic funds; for instance, Women enterprise funds can be channeled purposely to empower women financially. The government commitment, of gender equality and empowerment of women is recommended because it helps in providing affordable credit s to the women in boosting small business enterprises. There is a sense of capacity building among the women as this could help in the establishment of women-based business ventures. Moreover, there is the essence of supporting international and domestic marketing of their goods and products. Lastly, the issue of insufficient funds could be solved by Catalytic funds in facilitating marketing of the women enterprises both international and at local markets since it targets the marginalized rural poor women's who cannot access credit.

The policymakers should come up with some alternatives to the strict rules and

policies that motivate women, to assume some of the responsibilities in the community development. This will make the women empowered and ready to nature their leadership skills. Creating opportunities towards bright future and eradicating poverty and gender-based discrimination. Additionally, there is a need of coming up with proper measuring to collect data evenly, from all the marginalized communities to identify the needy and how to solve them.

A research done on Women's Economic Empowerment Enterprise Challenge Fund in January 2013 shows that Logistics to reach remotes area the policymakers should come up with programs and strategies aimed at improving infrastructure. The researchers proposed that this would help in fostering and ensuring there is easy logistics and supply of goods from one point to another. Having better logistics will help to enhance the secure supply of products and services to the local remote areas. Women and the poor could be challenged to travel to the city centers to get the goods and services, but when there are better logistics, many will have access to the products and services.

Administrative interfaces can be a problem towards women development since some political leaders may be biased or discriminating women. The political leaders need to empower women by involving them in political forums and creating awareness of women leadership roles. The researchers highlighted that there is a need of understanding the significance link that exists between women empowerment and economic growth. As the researchers stress it, women economic empowerment accelerates the country's economic growth. Additionally recognizing the role of women in economic development both locally and internationally is a sign of progress.

This strategy gives women the opportunity of participating and contributing and benefiting women in society. The moment the community has a population of women having higher income and bargain power consequently reducing poverty. A survey done by the UN

shows that women have highlighted that investing in both girls and women has resulted in

higher effects in production and efficiency in economic growth and development. NGOs and

government agencies should come up with; strategies focusing on bring gender equality. This

could be done through pilot programs such as setting workshops, business chambers and

creating awareness on gender equality. Setting women business groups linked to

microfinance and non-governmental organizations could help in empowering women. The

policymakers should as well come up with strategies aimed at educating women on focusing

on industries having gender opportunities that facilitate pro-poor results. People in society

should be as well trained and encouraged on gender equality.

Limitations

Just like any other study, this project was no exception. It also experienced a number

of limitations. One might feel that generalization of organizations could become a suspect

based on the fact that the study collected data from managers of organizations only.

However, we were must interest in understanding the efforts that organizations have done so

far in as much as economic empowerment in Lebanon is concerned. Also, Freeman (2009)

argues that failure to include the key beneficiaries of economic empowerment should not

lessen the practical aspect of effect sizes. In essence, management sample had greater impact

on understand what they have done and challenges that organizations experience.

A second potential limitation experienced by this study involved the nature of

design adopted (single methodology vs. mixed methodology). This could bring out concerns

of internal and external validity because of the type of design. The use of quantitative

approach helps researchers understand the causal effect between variables. However, the

study focused on in-depth interview with the understanding that participants already have

deeper understand around concepts of study.

The third concern of limitation of this study involves the use of a small sample. While some people might question the validity and credibility of our overall sample (k = 11), it is important to note that this study succeeded in comparing the findings with other previous studies around the topic of study (Alemu *et al*., 2018; Aral & Walker, 2012; Avis, 2017; Christabell, 2009). However, most of the analysis conducted on every objective depends on numerous studies.

Research Agenda for Further Research

Future research that seeks to use exploratory approach should expound the scope by incorporating women employees working in NGOs, financial institutions, and private businesses. More is needed to understand about objectives from the perspective of beneficiaries. Extending the working of Christabell (2009) for example, we need to understand more on how organizations conduct capacity building and how they have benefited from such programs. Furthermore, we also need to understand the empirical aspect concerning the number of women working as leaders or in organizational boards (Aral & Walker, 2012).

Also, as shown within the introduction section under research problem statement, other areas that Lebanon has scored low in its GGGI includes political empowerment (Avis, 2017). Other studies need to expound their future research by understanding political empowerment of women in Lebanon with focus on positions that women hold in societies.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

What is the Name/type of your organization?

_____

_____

_____

For how long has your organization been in operation?

_____

_____

_____

How many women has your organization helped during its operation?

_____

_____

_____

What are the various projects you`re working on?

_____

_____

_____

Who is the main beneficiary of your projects?

_____

_____

_____

What are the main drivers of your actions?

_____

_____

_____

How do you get funding for your initiatives?

_____

_____

_____

Are you working on your own or cooperating with other NGOs/organizations?

_____

_____

_____

Tell me about some of your tangible achievements and how were you able to do that?

_____

_____

_____

What are some of the challenges you faced and how did you overcome them?

_____

_____

_____

What are your objectives for the next few years?

_____

_____

_____

END

REFERENCES

Adema, W., Ali, N., Frey, V., Kim, H., Lunati, M., Piacentini, M. & Queisser, M. (2014). *Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship and Business Leadership.* Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); available from http://www.oecd.org/gender/Enhancing%20Women%20Economic%20Empowerment_Fin_1_Oct_2014.pdf; Internet; accessed on 19 November, 2018.

Alemu, S.H., Kempen, L.V. & Ruben, R. (2018). "Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups: The Bittersweet Fruits of Collective Apple Cultivation in Highland Ethiopia". *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, 19*(3).

Al-Sharif, M.A.N.A.L. (2018). *Daring To Drive: A Saudi woman's awakening*. Simon & Schuster Press.

Aral, S. & Walker, D. (2012). "Identifying influential and susceptible members of social networks". *Science*, *337*(6092), 337–41.

Avis, W. (2017). "Gender equality and women's empowerment in Lebanon"; available from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/175-Gender-Equality-and-Womens-Empowerment-in-Lebanon.pdf; Internet; accessed on 19 April, 2019.

Ayoub, B. & Mahdi, D. (2018). "Making Aid Work in Lebanon: Promoting aid effectiveness and respect for rights in middle-income countries affected by mass displacement"; available from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/bp-making-aid-work-lebanon-050418-en.pdf; Internet; accessed on 16 March, 2019.

Cannon, A. (2017). *Life of One's Own: Women's Education and Economic Empowerment in Kenya*; available from https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/3739/Final%20Thesis.pdf?sequence=3; Internet; accessed on 22 March, 2019.

Catalyst, (2006). *Different cultures, similar perceptions: Stereotyping of western European business leaders*. New York, NY: Catalyst.

Christabell, P.J. (2009). *Women empowerment through capacity building: The role of microfinance*. New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co.

Christensen, L.B., Johnson, R.B. & Turner, L.A. (2015). *Research methods, design, and analysis.* 12th Ed. Pearson Education Ltd.

Community Empowerment. (2014). "7th global conference on health promotion: Track themes". World Health Organization; available from http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/7gchp/track1/en; Internet; accessed on April 17, 2019.

Cuno, K.M. & Desai, M. (2010). *Family, gender, and law in a globalizing Middle East and South Asia*. Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press.

Deloitte. (2016). "View from the top: What business executives really think about women leaders in the GCC"; available from http://30percentclub.org/assets/uploads/Deloitte_and_30__Club_Study_-_View_from_the_top_(2).pdf; Internet; accessed on February 22, 2019.

Ferree, M.M. & In Tripp, A.M. (2006). *Global feminism: Transnational women's activism, organizing, and human rights*. New York: New York University Press.

Forrester, S. (2012). "Community mobilization for empowerment of vulnerable women and men". *Guidebook.*

Freeman, A.M. (2009). "Reservations to CEDAW: An analysis for UNICED"; available from https://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Reservations_to_CEDAW-an_Analysis_for_UNICEF.pdf; Internet; accessed on April 4, 2019.

Gender Tool Box. (2015). "Supporting women's economic empowerment: Scope for Sida's Engagement". Edita.

GIZ. (2011). "Women's economic empowerment in the MENA region: Rapid assessment of household-level results." Gesellschaft Internationale Zusammarbeit; available from https://www.enterprise-development.org/wp-content/uploads/giz2016-womens-economic-empowerment-in-the-MENA-region.pdf; Internet; accessed on 12 January, 2019.

 Governance & Social Development Resource Centre. (2010). "Helpdesk research report: Measuring women's economic empowerment"; available from http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/hd706.pdf; Internet; accessed on 31 May 2018.

Grey, S. & Sawer, M. (2010). *Women's movements: Flourishing or in abeyance?* London: Routledge.

Hedditch, S. & Manual, C. (2010). "Gender and Investment Climate Reform Assessment". World Bank and IFC in partnership with AusAID.

Hemment, J. (2007). *Empowering women in Russia: Activism, aid, and NGOs*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

ILO. (2016a). "World employment social outlook". International Labor Organization; available from https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwjquJTynKXcAhUSQhoKHROXCKEQFgguMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ilo.org%2Fwcmsp5%2Fgroups%2Fpublic%2F---dgreports%2F---dcomm%2F---publ%2Fdocuments%2Fpublication%2Fwcms_443480.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3LtdKIUktv8f7pBf7aY-9D.pdf; Internet; accessed on 14 February, 2019.

ILO. (2016b). "Women in business & management: Gaining momentum in the Middle East and North Africa." International Labor Organization; available from http://www.

ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---or-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_446101.pdf; Internet; accessed on 31 May 2018.

IWSAW (2016). "Gender profile Lebanon". Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World; available from http://iwsaw.lau.edu.lb/publications/documents/Country%20Gender%20Profile%20Lebanon-Online%20.pdf; Internet; accessed on 16 January, 2019.

Jamali, Sidani & Safieddine. (2005). "Constraints facing working women in Lebanon".

Kalpana, W. (2011). "Ace', Gender and Neoliberalism: Changing Visual Representations in Development". *Third World Quarterly, 32*(2), 315 - 331.

Karam & Afiouni. (2014). "Debunking Myths Surrounding Women's Careers in the Arab Region".

Kelly, S. & Breslin, J. (2010). *Women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress amid resistance*. New York: Freedom House.

Khalifeh, N. (2006). "Lebanon's reservations to the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women"; available from http://www.alraidajournal.com/index.php/ALRJ/article/view/274/272; Internet; accessed on 12 March, 2019.

Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods & Techniques.* 2nd Ed. New Age International Publishers.

Krause, W. (2012). *Civil society and women activists in the Middle East: Islamic and secular organizations in Egypt*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Lussier, R.N. & Hendon, J.R. (2013). *Human resource management: Functions, applications, skill development*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Medel-Anonuevo, C. Ed. (1995). *Women, Education and Empowerment: Pathways towards Autonomy*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

Moghadam, V.M. (2000). "Transnational feminist networks: Collective action in an era of globalization". *International Sociology*, *15*(1), 57-85.

Murthy, R., Raju, K. & Kamath, A. (2017). "Towards Women's Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: Lessons from the participatory impact assessment of South Asian Poverty Alleviation programme in Andhra Pradesh, India"; available from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPOWERMENT/Resources/13338_murthy_etal.pdf ; Internet; accessed on 31 May 2018.

Naigwe, S.C. (2014). "Education as a Tool for Women Empowerment in Nigeria". *Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction, 9*(1), 1-10.

Nvivo Pro Version 12 for windows (2018). Getting Started; available from http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/sites/default/files/NVivo10-Getting-Started-Guide.pdf; Internet; accessed on 16 January, 2019.

Obeng-Odoom, F. (2012). "Neoliberalism and the Urban Economy in Ghana: Urban Employment, Inequality, and Poverty". *Growth and Change, 23*(1), 85 - 109.

OECD. (2011). "Women's economic empowerment forum 2018." Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; available from https://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/Draft-Agenda-WEEF-2018-overview-EN.pdf; Internet; accessed on 18 March, 2019.

Parpart, J.L. & Rai, S.M. (Eds.). (2002). *Rethinking Empowerment: Gender and Development in a Global/Local World*. London, Routledge.

Rogers, T., Goldstein, N.J. & Fox, C.R. (2017). "Social mobilization". *Annual Review Psychology, 69*(16), 1-25.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students.* 5th Ed. Pearson Education Limited.

Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach.* 7th Ed. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Stephen, R., Hourani, G.G. & Horn, C.B. (2015). *In line with the divine: The struggle for gender equality in Lebanon*. Warwick, R.I: Abelian Academic.

Tanusia, A., Marthandan, G. & Subramaniam, I.D. (2016). "Economic Empowerment of Malaysian Women through Entrepreneurship." *Barriers & Enablers. 12*(6), 81-94.

The Pacific Community. (2017). *"*Women's economic empowerment in the Pacific: Regional overview". The Pacific Community for the13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 6th Meeting of Ministers for Women.

UN Women. (2015). "Increasing empowerment in women, increasing prosperity for all". *The Magazine for Gender-Responsive Evaluation.*

UN Women. (2018). "Economic empowerment for rural women in the MENA region"; available from https://esango.un.org/SideEvents/documents/2524; Internet; accessed on 16 January, 2019.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization. (2017). "Promoting women empowerment for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the Mena region"; available from https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2017-11/RAB-140026_EvalReport_WomenEmpowmt.pdf; Internet; accessed on 16 April, 2019.

UPU. (2014). "Resource-mobilization approach for development cooperation". Universal Postal Union Discussion Paper.

World Economic Forum. (2013). "Five challenges, one solution: Women". Global Agenda Council on Women's Empowerment 2011–2012.