
“We Cannot be Ignored Anymore”: Calling and Coping in the Career Path of
Emirati Women Managers

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To the soul of my late husband!

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This dissertation marks the end of a beautiful journey that I am very proud of. It is the fruit of a restless effort to research on women managers from a far different culture and context from Europe. It is a life journey for me as a woman from the Arab world to pursue a calling ambition. I hope my dissertation would carry you to that part of the world where women are perceived as different from women in Europe. Leading a managerial career over there has its various contexts and peculiarities. This experience has given me the chance to know brilliant people who have influenced me along the way.

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Abstract

This study addresses a significant gap in the career literature examining how UAE women managers perceive their work: a job, a career, or a calling. It is an inductive research based on the analysis of interviews with 22 Emirati women managers. The study draws on social cognitive career and preference theories as lenses for highlighting Emirati women's career development towards managerial positions. The research is significant in identifying three career path models: "my life is not in another place," "taking opportunities," and "what she does is for the country." Significantly, the findings also extend our understanding of Emirati women managers' coping strategies to overcome career challenges. Furthermore, the findings offer a compelling insight into a career calling that results in women's career maturity and enables Emirati women managers to occupy prominent managerial and governmental positions. A theoretical model is identified that expands our comprehension of "career calling" in the UAE context. The study portrays a cultural change in the UAE society towards liberalization, which has theoretical and managerial implications also addressed in this research.

Keywords: Women managers, career, gender, career calling, career coping, career paths.

Resumo

Este estudo aborda uma lacuna significativa da literatura sobre carreiras, examinando como as mulheres gestoras dos Emirados Árabes Unidos percebem o seu percurso profissional: como um trabalho, uma carreira ou uma missão/chamamento. Trata-se de uma pesquisa indutiva, baseada na análise de conteúdo às entrevistas com 22 mulheres gestoras dos Emirados. O estudo parte da teoria sociocognitiva da carreira e da teoria de preferências vocacionais como ponto de partida para destacar o desenvolvimento de carreira das mulheres nos Emirados em direção a posições de gestão. A pesquisa é significativa pela identificação de três modelos de carreira: “a minha vida não está noutro lugar”, “aproveitando as oportunidades” e “o que ela faz é pelo país”. É importante ressaltar que os resultados também ampliam a compreensão das estratégias de *coping* que as gestoras dos Emirados usam para superar os desafios de carreira que encontram localmente. Além disso, os resultados oferecem uma outra perspetiva sobre a missão profissional destas mulheres que resulta numa maior maturidade na carreira e permite que elas ocupem importantes posições governamentais e de gestão. Neste estudo é identificado e desenvolvido um modelo teórico que amplia a nossa compreensão do "chamamento da carreira" no contexto local. Por fim, este estudo retrata uma mudança cultural na sociedade dos Emirados Árabes Unidos em direção à liberalização, que tem importantes implicações para o estudo das carreiras de gestão, aspetos também abordados nesta pesquisa.

Palavras-chave: Gestoras, carreira, género, vocação profissional, *coping* na carreira, percursos de carreira

Codes:

ADNB	Abu Dhabi National Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
DE	Deductive
EIU	Economic Intelligence Unit
FNC	Federal National Council
GGG	The Global Gender Gap Report
GRO	Government Relation Officer
GTCC	Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise
GWE	Dubai Women's Establishment
GWU	General Women's Union
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
H.H.	His/her Highness
HRM	Human Resource Management
IN	Inductive
FNCA	Federal National Council Affairs
MHRE	Ministry of Human Resource and Emiratization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PT	Preference Theory
QR	Qualitative Research
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
WEF	World Economic Forum
WE	Work Experience

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3 Introduction

3.1 Background to the research

Women's participation in working life has increased in the last decades, and scholars have tackled this topic concentrating on Western countries' experience (Diaz, 2005; Ghodsee, 2004; Rindfleish & Sheridan, 2003). The female workforce now represents approximately 50 percent of the global workforce (Davidson & Burke, 2011; Juhn & Potter, 2006). Studying women as individuals in addition to their involvement at work and the subsequent effects in organizations (Maanen & Schein, 1977) is essential, adding to that the change in society (Kanter, 1983). However, top managerial and leading positions are still male dominance (Ford & Pande, 2011). This gender segregation and under-representation of women in management have called for implementing gender quotas for some positions aiming towards changing this condition (Alstott, 2014; Armstrong & Walby, 2012).

In the Middle East, North Africa, and Gulf countries – mostly Muslim countries – the culture of male superiority is noticeable and significant (Fagenson, 1993; Roald, 2003). While the feminism movement grew (UNIFEM & ADB, 2004), the resistance to women's equality became a challenge in the region (Mernissi, 1991; Metcalfe, 2007; Moghadam, 2005). However, women are challenging the dominant social ethics, which entails submission to their roles as mothers at home and inhibits any career effort (Metcalfe, 2008). Such evolution has moved women in the Arab world from being followers of the male head of the family to have a role and share decision-making in most sectors and at all levels (Kabasakal, Dastmalchian, Karacay, & Bayraktar, 2012; Okin, 1998). Despite these efforts, men are still preferred as women progression towards managerial positions in private and public domains remains limited (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010), due to gender stereotypes (Roald, 2003) and biases in recruitment and selection processes (Burke & Davidson, 2004; Fagenson, 1993). Furthermore, having a few female role models who have exceptional training opportunities is significant (Wirth, 2001) but still scarce.

As economies are developing, more women become involved and getting to higher managerial positions despite gender discrimination (Man, 2004). They face several situational and cultural challenges that dictate coping strategies to facilitate women's career progression (Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003). Such efforts, however, need further research to determine what strategies women follow.

In the Middle East, the presence of women in public and private organizations, including managerial roles, is increasing the recognition of their talent, and raising the interest for their working-life, which underscores a potential “*career calling*” (Dik & Duffy, 2015a). This study follows Dik and Duffy (2009, p. 427) tripartite definition of calling that involves (1) an external force order to an individual who feels called to a sort of work; (2) work then becomes a drive-in life or a living area; so that (3) one’s career is a source of personal motivation and life-satisfaction. In this assertion and bearing in mind the UAE context, work and calling are essential for women because they face more opposition than men to work and follow their call. Yet, much of the research on managerial careers has thus far been focused on, predominantly driven by traditional (male) Western models, and career calling remains understudied (Lysova, 2019). Furthermore, most career and coping models are based on the Occidental culture, which disregards the experiences and theoretical contributions from other parts of the world. To address these research gaps, and earlier calls for more contextualized career research (Mayrhofer, Smale, Briscoe, Dickman, & Parry, 2020), this study tackles women’s managerial career development in the Arab region - specifically women managers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) - including their career paths, coping and calling.

3.2 Research questions

The UAE's oil discovery has entitled a significant change in local women's life (Sabban, 2002). The local culture embodies interesting contradictions, such as: a tribal ethos, the Muslim religion, and an urban and modern living style. Such contradictions within a suddenly wealthy country forced a change accompanied by some vital components of the socio-institutional structure (Sabban, 2002). Gendered roles are determined by gender perceptions, social concepts, and leading social communication according to specific norms and values, such as: religious, social, and cultural customs. Such norms and values have traditionally positioned Emirati women at home as mothers and wives (Farrell, 2008). However, the rapid development of the UAE economy that led to a dramatic change in economic circumstances has revolutionized several characteristics of female Emirati lives, such as: living in a modern house, being educated, and getting healthcare. Despite the basic patriarchal culture of the Emirates is preserved (Vine, Al Abed, & Hellyer, 2010), the strategy of UAE leaders to involve women in the country development has been dubious. On the one hand, it encouraged and supported women’s participation in workplaces (Al-Abed,

Hellyer, & Vine 2006); on the other hand, it follows tribal origins and traditions that require submission to the leaders' demands and orders (Onley & Khalaf, 2006). A positive attitude towards empowering women in the UAE has been highlighted despite the constraints local women still encounter (Gallant & Pounder, 2008). Women have attained managerial roles in public, private, and family business sectors (Shallal, 2011), although not much is known about these women in the UAE and their careers. This study addresses the question of knowing *how UAE women have managed to occupy managerial positions within this context?* And four subordinate-research questions follow, which are:

1. How do UAE women managers describe their career paths?
2. How have UAE women managers been chosen for their managerial positions?
3. What career challenges have they faced and how have they coped?
4. How can calling explain UAE women in managerial jobs?

3.3 Justification for the research

The study of Selva, Sahagún, and Pallarès (2011), about women's professional careers and access to top management positions, reported a growing interest towards publishing articles about females' professional jobs supported by government enhancement of gender equality at work. This phenomenon encouraged academic research, but the main focus on the individual, while essential, remains too narrow (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). This calls for more career research about the influence of the context on women's career paths. Therefore, to widen our understanding of what UAE women managers regarded as meaningful and context-specific on their career path to a managerial job, a qualitative-methodological approach is required and used (Selva et al., 2011).

Because the UAE is one of the leading countries in empowering women and involving them in the Country's evolvement (Shallal, 2011), it is necessary to observe and analyse the challenges Emirati women encounter and the means they follow to overcome them throughout their career development (Tlaiss, 2014). In the UAE, the year 2002 has witnessed the establishment of the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, which actioned women participation in eight major areas: education, economy, social work, information, health, government, environment, and political and executive arenas (Vine, et al. 2010). Due to the fast evolution of women empowerment in the UAE, local women managers' research has become both timely and relevant (Metcalf, 2011). Furthermore, such

an approach contributes to our understanding of the careers of female managers in a cultural environment where career research is insufficient.

3.4 Methodology

The present research uses an inductive qualitative approach. The data was collected through several semi-structured interviews with female UAE citizens occupying middle and top managerial positions in public, private, and family business institutions in the UAE. The interview questions were structured to be related to the research questions, and the data was subject to content analysis with the aid of the NVIVO software. This tool is specially designed to help analyse large amounts of qualitative data from interviews, case studies, and focus groups.

3.5 Definitions of terms

This research addresses the topic of women's career path development. For that purpose, a few concepts are herein used, such as career, career development, career coping, and calling.

According to Hall (1976a), a **career** is “the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of a person's life” (Hall, 1976a, p. 4). This definition frames our approach to the study of women UAE career paths.

Career development is herein defined following Greenhaus, Callanan, and Godshalk's (2000) definition as an *on-going series of phases categorized by unique concerns, themes, and tasks*. Getting a higher position in a career path leading to management is complicated (Kotter, 2000). It involves higher responsibilities, such as planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and solving problems. According to Turk (2007), a manager can gain his/her position by being loyal to the organization or being on good terms with top management. Furthermore, s/he usually follows the regulations and policies of the organization.

In addressing the challenges women managers encounter in balancing work-life responsibilities, women handle internal liabilities in both family and work, and contextual ones respecting the local cultural values. Accordingly, they follow some **coping strategies** (Skinner et al., 2003), which represent intended actions to support their career development up to a managerial role. This study addressed these strategies. As a result of their coping,

these women are more likely to feel attached to their jobs and loyal to their organizations. This loyalty results in having a **“calling,”** which is a sense of attachment to their jobs and belonging to the organization, which in turn is likely to reinforce their motivation and influence their well-being and satisfaction (Dik & Duffy, 2015a). Such pride raises commitment so that the woman manager tends to support other (women) subordinates carrying out the organization’s mission. This is what has been named: *“the manager has a calling”* (Dik & Duffy, 2009), which means a profound entrenchment into one’s job. Therefore, and for the purpose of this research, **“career calling”** is not a “vocational choice” or a specific “occupational interest or aim”, but instead, it is *“a transcendent summons . . . to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation”* (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p. 427).

Drawing upon this theoretical framework, this research studies how UAE women managers define subjectively their career path, their coping strategies in the Emirati context, and how they manage work and family life demands within the constraints of the local cultural values and priorities. In addition, one examines how central their careers are and how *“calling”* might explain their orientation to a managerial job.

3.6 Delimitations of scope and key assumptions

This study focuses on Emirati women in middle and top management levels in varied public and private sectors, including family businesses. This scope is intended to frame and follow women’s career path development. It is the view and personal interpretation of their prominent agentic roles – the UAE women managers – that this research is delving for; by analyzing these women’s stories.

Central to this research are some assertions. Firstly, one cannot fully understand women’s career paths out of the context in which these careers unfold. Therefore, the career models developed in other social and cultural settings might not picture UAE women managers’ challenges and coping strategies, so the local context and the Emiratization efforts are described and discussed in the following chapters.

Secondly, one cannot fully understand how women progress to a managerial job without understanding their views and interpretations of their career paths. Therefore, this research was designed to capture UAE women managers’ views from diverse sectors,

including how women progressed to and feel about their managerial role in the public and private sector, as well as the family business.

Thirdly, one cannot continue to rely solely on women's career experiences from the most developed Western world countries as the predominant means through which gendered careers are addressed. By examining an insufficiently explored but relevant context and segment – the UAE women managers – this research puts forward a career path model and career calling that contributes to our understanding of gendered careers in a distinct cultural setting.

UAE women are potentially important to the country development put forward by UAE leaders, but they are insufficiently tapped as part of the local talent pool. Thus, understanding the opportunities, barriers, and challenges that UAE women managers face is critical to addressing a significant gap in the career literature, by highlighting their access to and experiences within a patriarchal cultural context. While it is also important to recognize that other social relational factors might influence other UAE women, including their access to education, and their social class and place of residence (such as living in major cities or the suburbs), this research focuses specifically on the experience of being a woman manager in the UAE. Therefore, the terms 'UAE women managers' and 'Emirati women managers' are used interchangeably to accurately reflect the focus and sample of this research: the UAE women who built up a professional career to attain a managerial position.

3.7 Overview of the remaining chapters

After introducing the topic and objectives of this research, the following chapters address the purposes mentioned. First, a review of gendered careers' current literature and 'modern' career models is presented. The theoretical framework explores career coping, calling, women in the Arab culture and the UAE, and Emiratization. The methodological approach, the research participants, and the procedure of data collection and analysis are explained. Next, the empirical insights emerging from the data are described. Afterward, the observed data and implications of the research are presented. Finally, the research's limitations, theoretical, and practical contributions are discussed before concluding the present research.

4 Literature review

A plethora of literature on Arab women and their involvement on employment and career development has been produced. This empirical research provides a theoretical point of departure for the present study in examining UAE women managers' experiences through the lens of women's career theories, calling, and career coping. Women's path to a managerial job in the United Arab Emirates is highlighted, especially how they were positively discriminated through an Emiratization policy.

4.1 Gendered careers and women career theories

Gender refers to the socio-cultural structures of male-female differences and the principles about what is suitable or typical for one gender more than the other, including emotional states, behavior, and interests (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011).

The issue of gender equality has been noticeable in the USA since the 1990s (Cohen, Huffman, & Knauer, 2009), and an increase in women's interest in managerial occupations. However, this interest somewhat faded in the late 1990s due to the rise of the gender earnings gap. As women were rewarded by becoming managers and being accountable for all responsibilities, but at the end, they were still less cited financially than male, that might have forced women to retreat (Cohen, et al. 2009). By the same time, and regarding management style, Heilman (2001) showed that men were evaluated as better suited to occupy executive positions, for their objectivity and authoritative manner, compared to women who were thought to lack these necessary skills to be good managers.

In Europe, a study by Brink and Benschop (2012) on recruitment and selection of university professors in the Netherlands inspected how gender inequalities are instilled in the evaluation of academic excellence. Academics depend on three selection criteria: (1) the professional qualification based on the publication track record ('men are more intelligent' despite women long teaching experience and other relevant administrative/managerial positions); (2) the perceived personality and leadership potential ('men are more competent' as they have no interruptions in the career, unlike women); and finally (3) network connections ('men are more competent' as they are more outside home than women are). The authors concluded that academic excellence indirectly implemented the social concepts that are inherently gendered, which reflect the disadvantages for women contrary to the privileges for men.

Empirical research shows that women are as capable as men, and women's participation in the labor market has been considered a significant social change (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, Greene, & Hart, 2004; Carter & Williams, 2003). As a result, the traditional gendered roles have been subject to change, from the traditionally male breadwinner role to male and female participation in fulfilling the family's needs. Such growth has been the result of a different lifestyle that is burdening both breadwinners with more roles than they had in the old times when the woman was the homemaker, and the man was the sole responsible for financing the family (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Clarkberg & Moen, 2001; Moen & Yu, 2000; Risman, 2009; West & Fenstermaker, 2002; Williams, 2000).

Since the 1980s, legislation against discrimination and in favour of equal employment have paved the way towards levelling the work positions for women (Guy & Newman, 2004). However, women are still under-represented in several professional domains like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Hill, Corbett, & Rose, 2010). Hakim (2006), in a provocative paper about women, careers, and work-life preferences, indicated that not all occupations '*could be domesticated*.' She argued that some jobs depend on continuous traveling activities, sometimes for long and at short notice. Most senior-level management jobs require often traveling on an unpredictable schedule. Such positions are not appealing for women with children and force them to move on to different careers. Tarr-Whelan (2009) presents a strong argument aiming to increase the number of women on corporate boards. She sees women as half of the population whose talents have been neglected and require empowerment.

Overall, there are five key benefits for the organizations that have more women in senior positions (Davidson & Burke, 2016, p. 3): (1) better revenues, less risk, less hyper-competitiveness, and a more remarkable ability to endure financial crisis; (2) personal benefits on all levels: education, families, entrepreneurship, etc., (3) higher work-family balance leading to higher productivity and better quality of life, (4) improved commitment to both personal and corporate liabilities, and more long-term planning; and (5) increased teamwork and participation in decision making.

Despite these advantages, several studies document the persistence of gender stereotypes that still plague the corporate world and affect women negatively (Davidson & Burke, 2016). Although the discourse of gender equality has spread, at least in the Western world and among middle-class workers, women are still underrepresented in many jobs,

including managerial occupations. And the question of knowing how women are getting to the top, especially in other cultures, remains open to debate and further research.

Career is a critical concept that underlines an individual's work choices and experiences within a timeframe and actual settings (Bourne & Özbilgin, 2008). So far, the majority of career research has been centered within the WEIRD countries (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic), which contributes to a general lack of understanding of women's careers in other settings (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). Therefore, it is without surprise that the documented career challenges faced by women are rather similar (Inkson, Khapova, Parker, Lirio, Lituchy, Monserrat, & Punnett, 2007), and include getting married, relocating, and balancing work-family life. Furthermore, it seems that several Human Resource Management (HRM) policies can help working women; however, it is women's *'flexible nature'* that supports their adaptability to new situations.

Likewise, most career models were built on men's experience. According to Mavin (2001), some women career theories focus explicitly on the experience of women (Derr & Laurent, 1989; Hall, 1976b; O'Leary, 1997; Powell & Mainiero, 1992; White, 1995), but they were drawn on sociological reflections and were not included in the management literature, nor in the organization strategy and policy (Evetts, 2000). Hence, the need for new modern career theories has risen in the 21st century, particularly new conceptual approaches that bring together the latest research findings on women's career development. Given that the following career development theories may adequately interpret women's career paths, they are herein discussed and are: (1) the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, 2005; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002), and (2) the Preference Theory (Hakim, 2006).

4.1.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

SCCT builds on Bandura's (1977, 1997) self-efficacy theory, which sustains that people and the environment influence each other (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Walters, 1977; Betz & Hackett, 2006). The theory proposes three related progression models of career development (Lent, 2005; Lent et al., 2002). The first model elaborates on the development of academic and professional interest. The second model describes how people choose their educational and career paths. And the third one shows how education and profession spheres relate towards stability. These related progression models embody cognitive skills development, which includes self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Leung, 2008).

Self-efficacy can be defined as a set of principles related to specific performance areas and activities (Lent, 2005). Self-efficacy affects the beginning of actual action and the preservation of behavior in response to constraints and problems. SCCT included four learning experiences: personal performance achievements, indirect learning, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. *Outcome expectations* are personal principles about the results of acting a particular behavior, relating extrinsic rewards to actual actions, consequences, and outcomes of task performance (Lent et al., 2002). *Personal goals* refer to one's purpose to involve in a specific activity to produce a particular outcome (Lent, 2005). SCCT differentiated between the choice of exercises to perform and the level of performance.

Lindley (2005) has defined the SCCT as a complex and widely researched theory of career choice and performance. His study explored how related are the variables of SCCT: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and perceived barriers to career choice. Results revealed that outcome expectations for career topics were certainly correlated to women's career and educational challenges. For men, self-efficacy for jobs was more correlated with principles about coping with difficulties, unlike women who found coping easier. The study resulted in finding higher correlations between participants' career choices, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations, which are the primary contribution of SCCT.

Coogan and Chen (2007), in their study of North American women's career development and counselling, have discussed some internal and external barriers which complicate and limit women's career choices and growth. The study tested the relevance of career development theoretical models reviewing some of the key elements from three career development theories, and SCCT is one of them. In the framework of SCCT, the role of the identified barriers to career development is significant when choosing a profession. It might lead to avoiding a career, despite having high self-efficacy towards it, positive outcome expectations, and matching interests (Brown & Lent, 1996). Such interpretation indicates that barriers are separate elements in the SCCT model that are related to contextual factors.

To the purpose of this study, the SCCT will help understand how Emirati women managers have come to occupy their managerial positions, particularly what barriers they have faced and how their cognitive skills affected their professional choice and development despite the obstacles encountered.

4.1.2 Preference Theory (PT)

Preference Theory (PT) from Hakim (2006) aims to address women's career needs in the twenty-first century and be a "*modern career theory*". It highlights women's work preference between workplaces and the home-based one.

Lifestyle preferences are defined as causal factors in modern societies related to women's career choices that deserve observation. PT describes how people's behaviors result from the historical context (Hakim, 2006). In male-dominated societies, social attitudes create a particular climate in the public opinion about women's roles (Hakim, 2003a; McPherson, 2005), so patriarchal values might influence public attitude towards female roles (Hakim, 2003b, 2004). Inversely, in well-off modern cultures, women's preferences are open, so they convert into an essential life choice – choosing between work and non-work roles or combining all. The theory records that four historical changes present a qualitatively new set-up for women in rich modern cultures in the 21st century, as illustrated in Table 1. PT employs the principal values of the historical background in a way these principals became effective means to foresee others' actions.

Tomlinson's (2006) study, drawing on this theory, explored women's contradictory experience who choose part-time work despite being less rewarding than a full-time one. Constructing on Hakim's (2006) preference theory, four factors were suggested to shape women's preference to transition towards a part-time job after maternity: (i) care networks, (ii) employment status, (iii) the UK welfare policy context; and (iv) work-life balance. The study revealed that the first three contexts often challenge women's choice taking work and family life balance into consideration, which results in women making strategic, reactive, or compromised choice transitions that preserve their careers and managerial chances. Such results indicate women's diverse abilities to balance their work and family life. Another study from Kan (2007) explored married/sharing women's work histories and their gender-role attitudes using work-life data history from the British Household Panel Survey of 1991–2001 (Bartley, Sacker, & Clarke, 2004). Findings revealed that preferences and barriers are the key elements women are affected by. Moreover, having independent children has lessened the barriers and favored full-time work for women with a more focused attitude than other women. Consequently, women who have a continuous career path are recognized as childless, which leads to the result that preferences are changeable according to labor market

experience. Moreover, it was found a correlation between gender-role attitudes and women's labor market participation.

I. Five separate historical changes in society and in the labour market which started in the late 20th century are producing a qualitatively different and new scenario of options and opportunities for women. The five changes do not necessarily occur in all modern societies, and do not always occur together. Their effects are cumulative. The five causes of a new scenario are:
(1) the contraceptive revolution which - from about 1965 onwards - gave sexually active women reliable control over their own fertility for the first time in history;
(2) the equal opportunities revolution, which ensured that for the first time in history women had equal right to access to all positions, occupations and careers in the labour market. In some countries, legislation prohibiting sex discrimination went further to give women equal access to housing, financial services, public services, and public posts;
(3) the expansion of white-collar occupations, which are far more attractive to women than most blue-collar occupations;
(4) the creation of jobs for secondary earners, people who do not want to give priority to paid work at the expense of other life interests; and
(5) the increasing importance of attitudes, values and personal preferences in the lifestyle choices of affluent modern societies.
II. Women are heterogeneous in their preferences and priorities on the conflict between family and employment. In the new scenario, they are therefore heterogeneous also in their employment patterns and work histories.
III. The heterogeneity of women's preferences and priorities creates conflicting interests between groups of women: sometimes between home-centred women and work-centred women, sometimes between the middle group of adaptive women and women who have one firm priority (whether for family work or employment). The conflicting interests of women have given a great advantage to men, whose interests are comparatively homogeneous; this is one cause of patriarchy and its disproportionate success.
IV. Women's heterogeneity is the main cause of women's variable responses to social engineering policies in the new scenario of modern societies. This variability of response has been less evident in the past, but it has still impeded attempts to predict women's fertility and employment patterns. Policy research and future predictions of women's choices will be more successful in future if they adopt the preference theory perspective and first establish the distribution of preferences between family work and employment in each society.

Table 1 - The four central tenets of Preference Theory

Source: Hakim (2006, p. 287)

Rodrigues, Guest, and Budjanovcanin (2013) discussed the need to tackle subjective criteria indicating individual desires, beliefs, and objectives boosting people's career preferences and behavior. Their study promotes the debate by exploring the fundamental features of career preference theory. The findings show that career orientations develop over time. They are partially formed according to the social and family environment. People can have principal and minor tendencies; that tendencies are adaptable to people's work and life

circumstances; and that career preferences are, to a greater scope, context specific limiting generalizations across national and occupational cultures.

Interestingly, the PT implicitly blames women for the social engineering policies' failure, since they cannot agree on a single and joint preference, as men do. Notwithstanding this biased view of women's careers, the PT has the advantage of including women/men's preferences, despite overlooking how cultural and social values frame and bound individual preferences. As for this research, the PT theory provides a starting point to further understand UAE women's preferences and how they have developed and influenced their career paths.

Moreover, a significant study by Burks, Carpenter, Goette & Rustichini (2009) drew on the SCCT and the PT and focused the link between cognitive skills (CS) and preferences (P). They showed that the individuals with high CS are more accurate and successful when following their choices and choosing their careers. The study showed that CS can develop with training, which has a positive effect on employees' retention because the more workers develop their CS, the better their professional performance. These findings questioned the traditional economic theory that considered CS as bequests that boost the set of feasible options for an individual. The results also showed a static pattern of correlations between CS and the different preferences and behaviors at work (Burks, Carpenter, Götte, & Rustichini, 2008; Burks, et. al, 2009). This study contributes to illustrate the significance of both the SCCT and the PT, by showing how cognitive skills can be developed by focusing on three essential variables, which are (i) workers' self-efficacy, (ii) outcome expectations, and (iii) personal goals (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Leung, 2008). It also contributes to extending the validity of the PT (Hakim, 2006) by highlighting the link between CS and work preferences in the workplace.

Following this approach and drawing on the contributions of the SCCT and the PT, this research examines how UAE women fared to occupy a managerial position by learning how they developed their cognitive skills and which barriers they faced. How have these barriers influenced their preferences, professional choices, and career path? Understanding their options and career transitions is relevant, so the following section further elaborates on significant gendered career transitions and models.

4.1.3 Career Transitions and Models

Even though the divisions between men and women in the workplace are diminishing and real progress is being made towards gender equality, women still hold a secondary role in workforce (Hu, 2015; Huffman, 2002). The stereotyped view of gendered work has always considered women's careers to be concerned with an individual's life's endurance activities. At the same time, men are expected to work to finance the household. (West & Fenstermaker, 2002).

Despite career development theories, women's careers and management positions remain influenced by the prejudices towards their 'especial need' to balance between their family responsibilities and their leadership duties (Godoy & Mladinic, 2009). The debate on female managers executing managerial tasks points out that they are still responsible for family life, which hinders their chances of achieving higher executive positions (Godoy & Mladinic, 2009). Eagly and Carli (2007) argued that family responsibilities force women to interrupt their careers and often work part-time. As a result, these women have less experience and working hours than men, which affects their career maturity. Therefore, the main problem lies in the limitations and restraints women still encounter rather than their lack of interest (or ability) in occupying managerial positions.

In the USA, the increasing number of working women has not been followed by a consistent increase in the number of women in top management roles. Several anecdotal arguments have been advanced to explain this under-representation. Firstly, the alleged women's genetic and social interests do not match time and effort devotion needed for a top managerial responsibilities. Men are becoming promotable and successful as managers because their behaviors are perceived as more credible and adequate to a managerial role than women's (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007). Secondly, women's limitations in networking and mentoring due to their family responsibility or cultural constraints result in lower access to valuable information that would help them progress (Wajcman, 2013). Finally, women must balance family and work roles as working mothers (Muñoz, Pankake, Ramalho, Mills, & Simonsson, 2014). Women have to set their career objectives and develop their skills to beat all challenges that still constraint their success and gain managerial positions (Wajcman, 2013). This gendered development and distinct career progress result in career transitions and models that differ according to gender, as illustrated by the following significant studies.

For example, Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) have suggested a career transition model for a new generation called "*Kaleidoscope Careers*." Despite the noticeable changes in societal

and workplace standards as well as progress in gender equality, a few dramatic differences between male/female careers have been detected throughout their research. Contrary to men, the history of women's employment is relational. Their career decisions are usually part of a most significant and more complex web of consistent matters, individuals, and features to join in a carefully balanced package. Women's career choices always consider the impact of their decisions on others. Mainiero and Sullivan (2005, p. 112) have illustrated eight career transition stages, in which they have noted representational differences between women and men, corresponding to each stage. The first career transition – *"I made the change due to family demands"* – reflects the experience of 24.4% men and 41.1% women. Women sacrifice more than men for the family. The second stage – *"my spouse moved to another geographic location, and I followed"* – is three times more frequent among women than men (42 % vs. 15%): women follow the spouse sacrificing their jobs. The third – *"I wanted to simplify my life"* – is mentioned by 19.3% men vs. 30.1% women: women like simple, uncomplicated life, given that they handle many other issues in addition to work. The fourth – *"I was bored and wanted greater challenge"* – is referred by 17.3% men vs. 23.5% women. It seems that when bored, women are more into finding another job than men. The fifth – *"An opportunity presented itself for more money, greater flexibility, greater security"* – is mentioned by 30.7% men vs. 24.4% women: finance is essential, so men and women are close in valuing this aspect. The sixth – *"a risky opportunity presented itself that has a greater long term pay off"* – is mentioned by 18.1% men vs. 11.8% women: they are both risk averse, but women are less risky than men. The seventh, – *"my firm decided for me"* – is referred by 13.8% men vs. 9.8% women, suggesting that men may subordinate their interests to organizational decisions often than women. Lastly – *"corporate policies got in the way"* – is referred by 12.2% men vs. 14.6 women, which suggest that both are affected by corporate policies, but women are affected to a more considerable extent (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

Another essential qualitative study by Olid (2013) described the career path of women towards management, which resulted in showing four career models that characterize the women's evolution while facing personal and cultural challenges. Olid noted the obstacles that hinder women's access to managerial positions. A significant reason is a difference between gender and knowledge that embodies a lack of human capital, which is caused by lacking both support and exclusion of social stereotypes. The existence of social stereotypes and the absence of support are obstacles to attaining a transition towards positions that necessitate more accountability (Olid, 2013). The four career models are:

- (1) *"My life is in another place"* (Olid, 2013, p. 1243). It is an ascending progression of the career path until a challenge occurs for a personal or family reason that results in a backward step. This model's typical characteristics are the Transition Patterns of Step Forward, Relocalisation, Re-prioritization, and Step Backward, combined with the career phases of Learning and Waiting, Enduring, Parenthesis, and Working and Enjoying. This model reflects the importance of private life to a woman who, despite her desire to keep working, prioritizes her personal life. That is why she takes a backward step in her career path to enjoy both work and family life.
- (2) *"Taking opportunities"* (Olid, 2013, p. 1244). It is the aspiration to achieve the career prospects of reaching a management role by overcoming new challenges. The career path can develop in the same organization, taking the opportunities that may occur there; or moving from one company to another to achieve higher career prospects. This model's typical characteristics are the Transition Patterns of Expansion; Turn; Step Forward; Moving and Reset; combined with the Career Phases of: Learning and Waiting, Enduring, and Working and Enjoying.
- (3) *"Everything for the organization"* (Olid, 2013, p. 1246). The main idea is to be committed to the organization and its needs; escorted by an attitude of seizing the new managerial opportunities the organization might offer to loyal women. The common characteristics of this model are the Transition Patterns of Moving; Step Forward; Turn; Re-localization; Re-prioritization and Backward Step; merged with the Career Phases of Learning the job; Learning and Waiting; Working and Enjoying; Enduring and Parenthesis.
- (4) *"Dead End"* (Olid, 2013, p.1248) The central idea of this model is the inaction (evidently with no way back) that happens in a career path as a result of a change in the organization, accompanied with frustration. This model's typical characteristics are the Transition Models Reset and Step Forward, shared with the Career Stages of Learning the career, Learning and Waiting, and Enduring.

In sum, these models and career stages combine seeking career path development, which is evidenced by some 'persistent conditioning aspects' - i.e. family obligations - that can lead the profession to a halt. Another evidence is the career phase of enduring, when sticking to middle management with the choice of no progress. This model is distinguishable because it does not presume one single career direction or path and accepts (as happens in life) that people might not know where their career path is headed to. The agent herself feels

perplexed, as career changes can be frequent and caused by external events, including an organizational change.

According to Olid's model (2013), a career change means: (1) the transition from one function, section, profession, industry or organization to another, in order to change the physical place and/or job of an individual, or (2) a change in the drives and professional opportunities, or (3) a change in both dimensions resulting from gender social stereotypes (Olid, 2013).

Drawing on these models of career transitions, this study addresses and extends our understanding of UAE women managers' job transition throughout their career path.

4.2 Career coping

Women are frequently described as less adaptable than men by theories of coping (Banyard & Graham-Bermann, 1993). Because coping literature lacks sufficient gender consideration and depends on stereotyped hypotheses about gender, theory and research inquiry often use methods to preserve women's silence. For a long, gender was unnoticed in coping with stress, as research mainly dealt with male samples (Bramson, 1985; Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983). An illustration of the theory of sex differences in coping focuses on support-seeking behavior. For instance, Taylor and colleagues supported the argument that women seek to support more than men by referring to their different biological foundations (Taylor, Klein, Lewis, Gruenewald, Gurung, & Updegraff, 2000). Tamres, Janicki, and Helgeson (2002), in their study about sex differences in coping, discovered that women used most coping strategies following the role constraint theory. Unlike men, they obtain emotional and social support using techniques that involve talking to others, contemplating, and thinking about challenges, and using positive self-talk. Conversely, men are more into problem-focused coping and avoidant coping than women.

Skinner and Wellborn (1994) have proposed a significant coping theory based on three basic psychological needs: (i) relatedness to others, (ii) competence, and (iii) autonomy or self-determination. Several dimensions of stressful events can jeopardize or destroy the three mentioned fundamental psychological needs. Thus, three universal stressors are suggested: (1) *neglect* since it threatens relatedness; (2) *chaos* since it undercuts competence; and (3) *coercion* since it affects autonomy. Therefore, coping defines how people adjust their behavior, emotion, and motivational orientation under psychological stress (Skinner & Wellborn, 1994).

According to Skinner et al. (2003), coping is related to the way people manage stressful situations and react positively or negatively in a specific situation. The authors analyzed over 100 past studies on coping. Over the massive number of ways of "coping," they have distinguished some that share similar characteristics. They identified two bilateral coping types that are most cited in correlated literature: "(1) *problem-focused vs. emotion-focused style and avoidance*, which is the most common one (Skinner et al., 2003); and (2) *primary control vs. secondary control coping*". Authors have identified four main conceptual problems concerning ways of coping: (1) lack of clarity in type characterizations, which resulted in unclear understandings; (2) consequently, problems of comprehensiveness occurred; (3) difficulties in defining efficient consistency and functional particularity; and (4) finally, elasticity in types of coping. The vital dilemma in coping studies has been the credentials of the principal categories (Skinner et al., 2003), mainly because coping is a multidimensional behavior that counts on different insights, cultures, and behaviors (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978).

To address these gaps, Skinner et al. (2003) suggested a structure of coping composed of four levels representing a hierarchical conceptualization of the design of coping. The bottom level – "*coping instances*" – corresponds to people's responses when being stressed out. Two middle levels in the structure were distinct. The top one is known as "*families of coping*" and represents the nature of different coping ways. In contrast, the bottom level is defined as "*ways of coping*" or coping strategies. When the cognitive and behavioral efforts reach maturity, the top level is achieved, which is the "*adaptive process*," indicating that a more extensive process will result from coping, generating more established responses after a specific stimulus.

Drawing upon former studies and scales (Skinner, 2002; Skinner & Edge, 2002; Skinner & Wellborn, 1994, 1997; Steinberg, Skinner, & Young, 2002), Skinner et al. (2003) proposed a module presenting 12 groups of higher-order action types characterized according to three challenges or threats that invite an individual response: Relatedness, Competence, and Autonomy, as illustrated in Table 2. Each challenge or threat presents a set of coping strategies, whether behavioral, emotional, or orientation related, on both self and contextual levels. For example, the groups of coping with challenges concerning **Relatedness behavior** are support and comfort-seeking in terms of context, and self-reliance in terms of self. While with threats, they are isolation, withdrawal, or freeze in terms of context, delegation, dependency, demanding, clinging, or pestering in terms of self. In contrast, coping for **Competence behaviors** concerning challenges are information-

seeking and study-observe related to the context. Problem-solving and strategizing related to self. While with threats, the coping behavior related to context is to escape, and helplessness related to self. Furthermore, coping for **Autonomy behaviors** concerning challenges comprises negotiation related to the context. Accommodation, cooperation, and commitment are related to self. While threats, opposition, and aggression are contextual. And submission, preservation, and rigidity are related to self-behaviors.

	Relatedness		Competence		Autonomy	
	<u>Challenges to</u>		<u>Challenges to</u>		<u>Challenges to</u>	
	self	context	self	context	self	context
	Self-reliance Shouldering	Support-seeking Comfort seeking	Problem solving Strategizing	Information seeking Study observe	Accommodation Cooperation Committed Compliance	Negotiation Compromise
Emotion	Self-soothing Accept responsibility Concern for others	Trust	Encouragement Determination Confidence	Interest Optimism Hope	Acceptance	Blamlessness Taking other's perspective
Orientation	Protection Shielding Positive self-talk	Appreciation	Repair Mastery	Prevention Planning	Commitment Conviction Endorsement	Decision making Goal setting Priority setting
	<u>Threats to</u>		<u>Threats to</u>		<u>Threats to</u>	
	self	context	self	context	self	context
	Delegation Dependency Demanding Clinging Pestering	Isolation Withdrawal Freeze	Helplessness Random attempts Falling Falling down the stairs	Escape Flight Avoidance	Submission Preservation Rigidity Unresponsiveness	Opposition Aggression
	Self-pity Whining Shame	Loneliness Desolation Yearning	Self-doubt Discouragement Guilt	Pessimism Despair Fear	Self-blame Disgust	Projection Blame others Venting Explosion Anger
Orientation	Abandonment Irritation	Cutting off	Panic Confusion	Procrastination	Obsession Rumination Intrusive thoughts	Reactance Revenge

Table 2 - Twelve families of coping

Source: Skinner, Edge, Altman & Sherwood (2003, p.239)

Twelve coping strategies have been recognized by Skinner et al. (2003). Table 3 contains their definitions.

Coping strategies	Definitions
Self-reliance	Promote constructive self's reactions to stressors and contribute to the construction of resources such as Confidence, perceived control, and personal trust. (Skinner & Wellbom, 1994)
Support seeking	Support seeking family is based on an action tendency that is organized around the urge or desire to come into contact with an attachment figure and includes active attempts to signal and reach the support provider as well as a characteristic emotion (yearning) and an attentional focus away from the stressor and toward the support provider. (Skinner, Edge, Altman & Sherwood, 2003, p. 238)
Problem Solving	Active, constructive, and approach strategy aiming to change the stressful situation or changing the self's perspective on it. (Skinner et al., 2003)
Information seeking	"Information seeking refers to attempts to learn more about a stressful situation or condition, including its course, causes, consequences, and meanings as well as strategies for intervention and remediation". (Skinner et al., 2003, p. 242)
Accommodation	"Adjusting personal preferences to situational constraints" (Brandtstadter & Renner, 1990, p. 58).
Negotiation	"Negotiation refers to active attempts to work out a compromise between the priorities of the individual and the constraints of the situation". (Skinner et al., 2003, p. 242)
Delegation	Delegation and included lower order categories such as dependency, maladaptive help seeking, complaining, whining, and self-pity. (Skinner & Wellbom, 1994)
Isolation	Self-Isolation and social isolation encompass avoiding others, concealment, stoicism, and emotional withdrawal. (Skinner et al., 2003)
Helplessness	"Helplessness refers to a set of actions organized around giving up or the relinquishment of control. Lower order ways of coping include passivity, confusion, cognitive interference or exhaustion, dejection, and pessimism". (Skinner et al., 2003, p. 242)
Escape	"includes efforts to disengage or stay away from the stressful transaction. ... it includes lower order ways of coping, such as cognitive avoidance, avoidant actions, denial, and wishful thinking". (Skinner et al., 2003, p. 242)
Submission	"Refers to a passive and repetitive focus on the negative and damaging features of a stressful transaction; it includes lower order ways of coping, such as intrusive thoughts, negative thinking, catastrophizing, anxiety amplification, self-blame, and fear". (Skinner et al., 2003, p. 242)
Opposition	Opposition describes a family that includes lower order ways of coping such as projection, reactance, anger, aggression, discharge, venting, and blaming of others. It is controversial as a higher order category because of its overlap with symptoms of psychopathology, specifically externalizing behaviors. (Skinner et al., 2003)

Table 3 - Definition of coping strategies

Source: Skinner, Edge, Altman & Sherwood (2003, p.239)

Skinner et al. (2003) added that the more one understands the structure of coping, the better one understands the adaptive process's evolution. Individuals' response to threats is no more considered as an impulse, but as a group of actions to avoid risk. Moreover, individuals respond to stress is now considered a way to improve humanity's comfort with the environment and not just a reaction. To this study, the strategies Emirati women use to adapt and cope with the working environment and deal with the challenges inherent to a managerial career are further examined following the Skinner et al. (2003) model.

The following section addresses the conceptualization of "*work as a calling*," how it is defined, and who the agents that enhance "*career calling*" are.

4.3 Calling

Given the UAE context, culturally different from most occidental countries, one wonders how local women's preferences and tenacity were nurtured, so some could attain a managerial career. Some authors have coined this steady work orientation as a form of "*calling*" (Hall & Chandler, 2005; Horvath, 2015). However, what does "*calling*" mean, and how has it been addressed to explain individuals' work and career behaviors?

The conceptualization of "*work as calling*" is old and can arguably be traced back to former protestant activists' influence in the sixteenth century (Weber, 1930). A recent wave of interest has emerged (Duffy & Dik, 2013; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; Twenge, 2014; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010), although no standard definition exists, since calling is more related to an emotional state rather than a rational choice (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019).

The importance of calling in popular culture is comparatively easy to identify (Duffy & Dik, 2013). For instance, Vincent van Gogh said: "*Your profession is not what brings your weekly paycheck, your profession is what you're put here on earth to do, with such passion and such intensity that it becomes spiritual in calling*" (Lysova, 2019, p. 113). However, and before 2007, very few research studies on calling were available in social science literature. Since then, empirical studies on the concept have increased, resulting in a body of findings across psychology-related fields, such as organizational behavior and management. Most findings highlight how calling relates to superlative work and welfare variables. Dik and Duffy (2015a) concluded that a high sense of calling is associated with positive career-related outcomes and general well-being.

In her latest article, Lysova (2019) stated that calling had become an important emerging research topic on occupational psychology and organizational behavior, with some

significant developments regarding: (1) the conceptualization of calling, (2) the emergence and development of calling, (3) positive and negative effects of calling, and (4) further theoretical development related to the concept. Although prior studies on calling were based on Western individuals' experience, the most significant developments relevant to this study are herein revised. Bringing in the calling perspective helps tackle UAE women managers' career paths because it emphasizes their emotional orientation towards work.

4.3.1 Career calling

Few early studies have discussed the link between vocational choices and calling. For instance, Davidson and Caddell (1994) invited participants to read and chose their job from three different paragraphs that described it as (1) not permanent, and based on a monthly salary; (2) a career, achieved through a lifetime; and (3) a calling, that is, a job people feel they were meant to do. The results showed that the respondents who thought of their jobs as a calling felt more secure and were more satisfied than the participants who saw their work as an hourly job or a career.

Another similar study was conducted by Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997), who examined the employees' and managers' opinions about their work approach, whether it is a *job*, a *career* or a *calling*. A *job* referred to something that is done mainly to make a living. A *career* is something that is somehow satisfying but involves continuous efforts seeking promotion. Finally, a *calling* serves a prominent purpose, which is referred to as a self-initiative that supports society rather than being ordered by a higher authority. After analysis, the participants who described their work as a calling expressed significantly higher well-being levels than those in the other categories and revealed higher work-life satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Duffy and Dik (2013) added that appreciation, knowing the organization's skills, interests, and values, results in placing the employee in the right position. Calling can then be expressed by doing creative and noticeable tasks.

To the present study, one will explore how women managers in UAE perceive their jobs and role in society: Is it '*a job*,' '*a career*,' or '*a calling*?' The following section elaborates on what career calling means and highlights the definition of calling that informs this study.

4.3.2 What does calling mean?

Despite the fact that calling has been defined as an orientation attitude (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 2007) or viewpoint (Dik & Duffy, 2015b; Duffy & Dik, 2013), scholars consider career calling a psychological theory that should be included into more extensive career theories rather than form a new theory of career development.

So far, there is not a standard definition of calling. Praskova, Hood, & Creed (2014, p. 125) classified two conceptualizations of career calling: "*While there is no standard definition of career calling, conceptualizations can be categorized as either traditional or neoclassical (i.e., religious, or another external source of a calling, and a sense of destiny or prosocial duty) or modern (an internal drive for self-fulfillment and happiness).*" The same conceptualization was followed by Gazica & Spector (2015), Rawat & Nadavulakere (2015), and Xie, Xia, Xin, & Zhou (2016). The neoclassical view gave calling a religious frame, which indicates that a person can be predestined for a specific work, whereas the modern view grounds calling on an expression of individualism that focuses on self-fulfillment and self-actualization.

The definition of calling that frames the present research is by Dik and Duffy (2009, p. 427). In that calling is "*a transcendent summons . . . to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.*"

Dik and Duffy (2009) have acknowledged three elements that are illustrative of calling at the workplace. First, the '*caller*' is an 'external force order' to an individual who feels called to work. S/he certainly needs a "*caller*," such as a higher power: the needs of the country, society, or family heritage, etc. Second, there is the "*wisdom*," which means that one approach to work goes parallel with comprehensive wisdom of life's purpose. For such individuals, work is either the drive-in life or a living area. Third, there is a "*path*"; that is, one's career is seen positively. In other words, those who use their position or role to assist others unintentionally - directly or indirectly, as if it is a moral obligation - have a calling (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). Therefore, career calling is an attitude towards work that reflects how central one's career is and how work is used to help others. It may arise from an external caller, from an inner sense of destiny, or a sense of fit with one's passions (Duffy, Allan, Bott, & Dik, 2014).

Commonly, calling has been associated with career maturity and commitment, work gist, job, and life satisfaction (Dik & Duffy, 2009). So far, few studies have been conducted on calling conceptualization, its emergence, and development, in addition to its positive and

negative effects. For instance, Shimizu, Dik, and Conner (2019) have classified two research strategies to understand the hidden structure of calling and the differences among people who find the concept personally relevant. These strategies are: (1) one variable-centered (taxometric analysis); and (2) one-person centered (cluster analysis). However, results have shown that calling is probably a multidimensional construct, which allows for different manifestations among people who perceive a calling.

Another study on the emergence and development of calling (Lysova & Khapova, 2019) investigated the meaning of presenting a calling in the context of start-up professions, where no precise organizational setting and career structure exist. The study sample was composed of 24 founders of video game development businesses in the Dutch video game industry. The study findings revealed a *creative calling* that focuses on a creative process rather than a precise profession. Another recent study on the positive and negative effects of calling is from Hirschi, Keller, and Spurk (2019). They compared the positive outcomes of having a calling and the potential adverse impact on the work-nonwork interface. The findings suggest that having a calling is vividly associated with the work-nonwork interface among senior workers in both positive and negative effects at non-work — the increase in calling leads to increased workaholism and work-nonwork conflict.

A pioneering study on career calling in the Arab world was run on successful Lebanese women (Afiouni & Karam, 2019). The study focused on how the perception and experience of contextual hardships lead to career calling. The main findings reveal that negative and external contextual hardship experiences provoke affective responses that result in a successful career by following a career calling drive. With the notable exception of this study, the literature on career calling in the Arab world remains limited. Such fact invites more research on calling in the region, which gives additional significance to the present study.

In sum, career calling refers to one's entrenchment into a job derived from an external caller, and inner sense of obligation and/or fit with a passion. It is related to a host of positive work and well-being outcomes. The link of calling to these variables is especially marked when people are living out their calling at work. Numerous in-depth qualitative studies have highlighted how the lives of people doing so became meaningful. Overall, the calling literature state is much like that of a preschool infant who can barely stand on her/his own legs but has great potential for future growth. To this research, one will explore how work is meaningful to Emirati women, whether it is a job, a career, or a calling. In this latter

case, whether career calling is driven by religion – UAE women managers are predestined for certain work – or if it is a modern orientation and an expression of individualism that seeks self-fulfillment and self-actualization.

The next section refers in more detail the characteristics of the local context.

4.4 Women in the Arab culture

While liberalism is becoming increasingly universal as egalitarianism prevails (Allan & Coltrane, 1996), the Arab Middle Eastern and North African countries have been showing reluctance to abandon the traditional viewpoint of women as mothers and homemakers (Abdalla, 1996; El-Rahmony, 2002). The women who entered the labor market aiming at managerial positions have faced constraints that prevented them from achieving this goal; society has restricted them, the family, and sometimes women themselves, by following the rooted traditions of their Arab culture (Crampton & Mishra, 1999).

The Arab culture is a traditional, collectivist, and patriarchal culture (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011), and these features persist in all Arab countries (Barakat, 1993; Bierenbauer, 1992; Mikulincer, Weller, & Florian, 1993; Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990; Sharabi, 2002).

In general, men control the political, legal, economic, and religious institutions (Glick & Fiske, 1997), and UAE is no exception. The family unit is masculine: the husband is the household ruler, and his role is authoritarian. Such characteristics hinder the fast move towards change for women (Ramzy, 2002), and this culture has prevailed before and after Islam spread in the Arabian Peninsula.

In the Middle East, gender hierarchies are firmly embedded in everyday cultural and organizational practices (Metcalf, 2006, 2007, 2008). Women are discriminated against and disadvantaged in the workplace, depending on the Islamic jurisprudence level followed in each country. For example, in Egyptian culture, the woman has been expected to help her husband in agricultural work while performing her main tasks in the house (Hale, 2018). In the Gulf societies, women are placed at home, and culture is described as patriarchal (Al-Lamky, 2007). This situation remains in the Gulf countries (GCC), despite the number of women: they are the majority of nationals enrolled in the higher education institutions, and they outpace men in terms of grades and skills (Rutledge, E., & Shamsi, F. A., 2016; Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi, 2012; Karoly, 2010;). So far, they still comprise a small percentage of the national workforces.

The following Table shows gender statistics in some Arab Gulf countries gathered from the Human Development Reports of 2005, 2007, 2010, and the World Economic Forum (WEF) gender report of 2010 (Metcalf, 2011). No recent statistics could be found, but anecdotal evidence confirms women under-representation in most Gulf countries.

	Seats in parliament		Minister Position	Labor force Participation Rate (%)		Female legislator manager (%)	Profess. tech. workers (%)
Country	2005	2010	Actual number	UN 2007	UN 2010	2007-2010	2007-2010
UK	17.9	19.6	3 (1924)	55.5	69.0	33-35	54-47
USA	14.8	17	5 (1952)	59.6	68.7	46-44	55-57
Bahrain	7.5	13.8	2 (2000)	39.3	33.5	10-22	19-18
Saudi Arabia	0	0	1 (2009)	20.1	21.8	31-8	6-27
Oman	7.8	9.1	3 (1995)	22.7	26.1	9	33
Kuwait	0	3.1	5 (1996)	49.0	45.6	14	43
UAE	1	22.5	7 (1996)	38.1	42.5	8-10	25-22
Qatar	1	-	3 (1996)	36.6	49.3	7	20

Table 4 - Gender statistics in selected Arab Gulf countries

Source: Gathered from human development reports 2005, 2007, 2010 and WEF gender report of 2010; Metcalfe (2011, p. 134)

The figures from Table 4 are likely to change in the near future as women's participation in management and leadership is increasing. Women in Saudi Arabia were first elected for a minister position in 2009 - as shown between brackets. Although it is recent, it is considered a significant achievement. Moreover, the figures from 2010 are from the (ILO) International Labour Organization and the (UNDP) United Nations Development Program reports, so calculation differs significantly from 2008–2010, as those who were seeking work are included while previously they were not (Metcalf, 2011).

Table 5 represents the gender gap and indicates the cultural context effect on closing the gender gap. The patriarchal context still contradicts the closure of the gender gap. Nonetheless, the Arab countries in the Gulf have lifted in ranking in both educational attainment and political empowerment, as Table 5 expresses. The UAE is on the top of Arab countries in the Gulf in women's political empowerment (Forum, 2017; Hausmann, et al. 2012).

Global ranking of closing the gender gap 2010-2017																
	Economic Participation				Educational Attainment				Health Survival				Political empowerment			
Year	2010		2017		2010		2017		2010		2017		2010		2017	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
USA	6	0.7992	19	0.776	1	1	1	1	38	0.9792	82	0.973	40	0.1861	96	0.124
UK	34	0.721	53	0.705	1	1	36	0.999	90	0.9698	100	0.971	22	0.2933	17	0.404
Bahrain	115	0.4967	120	0.537	60	0.9915	75	0.991	110	0.9612	136	0.961	120	0.0376	137	0.037
Kuwait	107	0.5369	125	0.518	83	0.9858	52	0.996	110	0.9612	117	0.969	114	0.0435	141	0.027
Qatar	116	0.4829	122	0.523	74	0.9887	33	1	126	0.9522	127	0.965	131	0	143	0.06
Saudi Arabia	132	0.3351	142	0.32	92	0.9739	96	0.975	53	0.9762	130	0.965	131	0	124	0.077
UAE	120	0.4605	130	0.459	37	0.9977	62	0.994	110	0.9612	129	0.965	60	0.1394	67	0.18

Table 5 - The Global ranking 2010 & 2017 of closing the gender gap in selected Arab Gulf countries.

Source: Forum (2017); Hausmann, R., Tyson, L. D. A., & Zahidi, S. (2012)

Since the Arab spring, chaos prevailed in several Arab societies accruing the problems of lack of development, failure of justice, institutional collapse, and illiteracy (Nuruzzaman, 2013). However, change for Arabs has become inevitable: power structures are shifting, and male-female relations are developing (Metcalf, 2011). A desperate need for a new identity that does not pluck the Arabs from their roots is seriously needed. The following section highlights the role of women before and after Islam.

4.4.1 Women before and after Islam

Anecdotal evidence and movie representations always portray Arab men as aggressive, primitive, violent, and unsympathetic; moreover, dominant, and too selfish. And Arab women are shown as mistresses or dancers, one of the veiled '*Harem of the Sultan*', or an oppressed individual not allowed to utter a word and treated like a number instead of a valued human being (Issa, 1990).

To approach the present evolution of working Emirati women in the UAE, one should look at their past (Sidani, 2005). Centuries ago, and long before westernized societies did, Islam gave women spiritual, social, political, and economic rights (Ahmad, 2003). Islam had significant prominent women figures who took part in most social, political, and spiritual affairs (Sidani, 2005). AlButi (1996), for instance, told the story of Umm-Sharik, who was the companion of Prophet Mohamad (peace be upon him). She used to work as a hotel manager so that she might have been the first known woman manager in the history of the region (Al-Buti, 1996). Many other stories about Arab women working in the trade, nursing, agriculture, and other professions could be brought upon (Abu-Shaqua, 1990).

Islam has not discriminated between men and women regarding faith issues (Turabi, 1988) as it is generally agreed that women can carry out God's commands. In this religion and under this cultural tradition, men and women descend from the same tree and represent two branches, both the children of Adam and Eve (Ahmad, 1974; Ruffle, 2013). Their unity and equal accountabilities reinforce the equality between them (Al-Qaradawi, 1998).

Gender differences surfaced only when knowledgeable religious figures used them intentionally. These individuals are spiritual and know all details about Islam religion, and they preach people about the right practices. They eventually were divided into two currents of opinion: one that regards the details of women's work and her participation in public life. The other focuses on the antagonism related to the mixing sexes in society and women's dress. One group represents the most common traditional Islamic view, present in some Arabian Gulf countries, although not exclusively (Sidani, 2005). The other group includes modernists, whose views are relatively more liberal. The terms *traditionalist-modernist* are used for identification purposes as both groups are considered part of the mainstream 'Islam' (Sidani, 2005). An excellent example of this traditionalist-modernist view is portrayed by Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1990), as he was a prominent knowledgeable religious preacher (Sidani, 2005). He pointed out that Islam grants a powerful sense of equity between the two genders. Any differences are related to the human instinct's nature and the different roles assigned to each gender. He maintained that certain traditions are put by people and not by God, limiting women's development and keeping them in the ignorance that prevailed before Islam (Al-Ghazali, 1990). An example from Saudi Arabia that represents the traditional view is Sheik BinBaz (Al-Qasimi, 2010). He was officially appointed as Head of "Ulama'," which is the Head of knowledgeable religious figures "Ulama" (Meijer, 2010). His vision range reflects the concept that women's involvement in "male's domains" abstracts them from their innate nature, leading women to misery and despair (BinBaz, 1985).

Women's issues have occupied a considerable part of much knowledgeable religious thinking since the nineteenth century (Golley, 2004; Kingsbury, 2007; Ong, 2006). Change in the way religious people and religious representatives interpreted Islam instructions took place at several levels (Zaman, 2010). Notably, at the cultural level and educational upbringing of Muslims, which conveniently authorized women education and encouraged them to work (Omair, 2010). However, the idea of protecting women and held the men accountably has been maintained. Islam has committed men to protect and preserve their

wives, children, and other disadvantaged family members – such as a divorced, unmarried, or sick sister or other female family members. This is what is called “*the Quinwama*” (Del Papa, 2012, p. 11)

However, Islamic feminist literature noted the lobbying of gender in *Sharia law* as compared to Westernization. For instance, Sharia law encourages male-female segregation in workplaces (Cooke, 2004), while Westernization is in favor of having open offices where all employees are visible and together (Stewart, 1996). Islamic gender discourse brings together both traditional and conservative notions of the female role; enriching the debate and focusing the status of women in Islam, rather than focusing on the political status, work, family, education, health, sexual control, and cultural appearance, which are essential and influential social conditions (Farrell, 2008). In addition, such gender discourse acknowledges and appreciates the existence of modern economic needs because they position women differently in different societies (Connelly, Li, MacDonald, & Parpart, 2000).

In sum, any study of Emirati female workplace participation must be framed within the local UAE-specific cultural conditions. The following section addresses the female careers in Arab culture before widening our understanding of women in the UAE.

4.4.2 Arab women in the workplace

Due to a strict code of gender segregation in public and private places, including prayer times and home, women's work activities in the Gulf countries have been exclusively directed towards nursing, teaching, and secretarial work (Metle, 2002). Alternatively, women can have their small businesses as entrepreneurs focusing on the service sector and the local market. These activities initially require less capital and experience, which provides a kind of privacy that enables women to abide by society's tradition and remain separated from men in the workplace (Guthrie, 2013).

Omair (2008) believes that the past dramatic change in Arab societies has been more notorious for women. They can no longer be labelled as frightened, lower, or domestic housewives (Omair, 2008). Females are progressively joining the workforce and are being promoted to managerial positions. Nowadays, they occupy ministerial and parliamentary positions. They are entrepreneurs and deans in universities. A working Arab woman is no longer a rare case but rather a rising trend (Omair, 2008). For example, Yaseen (2010) explored Arab women's leadership style based on transformational, transactional, and "laissez-faire" or delegating men's and women's styles. The study revealed that women in the Arab world surpass men on four transformational measures: They exceed men on

inspirational motivation by being positive and enthusiastic about what could be done to accomplish the firm's vision. They express confidence in achievement. Moreover, Arab women exceed men on intellectual stimulation in assessing critical expectations to question their appropriateness when seeking different views in solving problems. They exceed men on customized consideration by devoting more time coaching, teaching, assessing individual needs, and helping team members develop their strengths.

According to the statistics by a UNDP report of 2003, 29% of Arab women contributed to the national economies of the Arab region (UNDP Programme, 2003). Female employment participation over all the Arab countries changed 47% from 1960 to 2000 (UNDP Programme, 2003). Some states had a higher percentage due to the decreasing fertility rate and women's improved education participation and accomplishment, notably in the Gulf countries (Metcalf, 2007, 2011). For instance, in Bahrain, women's labor participation has increased by 66.8%. In Kuwait, this rate increased by 48.6%, and in UAE, 54.8%. While in Yemen, female labor participation increased by only 15% (UNDP Programme, 2003).

This diversity means that women's participation and recognition in the labor market are changing at a different Arab country pace. Still, in the UAE, the change seems to be steady. The following section provides an overview of the UAE as a country and describes Emiratization law and its impact on women in the workplace.

4.5 UAE and Emiratization

This section provides a glimpse of the United Arab Emirates (UAE Government, 2015) in the Gulf area and how its population evolved to the extent of employing expatriates from all nationalities in the world. The growing economy and education improvement are pushing the need for hiring national Emiratis too. The Country's leaders had the vision to involve all UAE citizens in the development of the Country. The policy of Emiratization emerged to fulfill this vision. It aims to help all UAE citizens to find a suitable workplace. Females were not excluded from this change, and they have shown significant participation in this empowerment process.

4.5.1 United Arab Emirates - UAE

The UAE can be positioned within the "*patriarchal belt*" (Caldwell, Orubuloye, & Caldwell, 1992) or the geographical "*belt of classic patriarchy*", (Kandiyoti, 1988, p. 274). The husband's reputation and honor rely on his wife and daughters; in respecting his word and submitting to his will (Caldwell, 1982). The Country's culture embodies fascinating contradictions: "*tribalism, Islamism, urbanism, modernism, consumerism, and the welfare state are all vital components of the socio-institutional structure*" (Sabban, 2002, p. 2). The influence of extended life family is substantial. Consequently, endogamy and cousin marriage is favored (Moghadam, 2004). Gender perceptions and social ideas determine gendered roles in the UAE community. Men are breadwinners and work outside, and women are mothers, housewives, and stay at home. Such an environment guides social communication in the UAE society according to specific norms and values (Sabban, 2002).

The UAE system benefits men and women regarding education, occupational choice, health, and family welfare (Nelson, 2004; Omar & Davidson, 2001). Yet, due to how men and women seem to have different roles and personalities in the society, gender segregation is still imposed in a few essential educational settings, such as UAE University, Sharjah University, and other technical institutions in UAE (Abdulla, 2007). Some workplaces have segregation as well, taking into consideration the traditions that are related to Islam, which is the prevailing religion. Moreover, abandoning work is common among women after getting married or having a baby (Watkins, 2006).

The Country is a federation formed by seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah, Um al Quiwin, and Sharjah. Abu Dhabi is the capital and was established in 1971. UAE is an Islamic country with Arabic as its official language, even though English is widely spoken (MOIC, 2001). In 1981, the Gulf states, including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia – formed the Gulf Cooperative Council. These states share environmental proximity, geographical location, language, social and religious values, and other commonalities that rose by discovering oil and subsequent economic boom (El-Haddad, 2006). Al Rifai and Van der Merwe (2002, p. 728) detailed that the UAE has made a great deal of progress since the early beginnings of pearling, fishing, simple agriculture, and nomadic life. The oil discovery in the UAE made the Country reliant on this resource.

Consequently, an unbalanced number of expatriates flooded the Country and constituted over 80 percent of the total population (Matherly, Amin, & Al Nahyan, 2017).

In the year 2017, and according to the Federal Authority for Competitiveness and Statistics, about 9.304.277 million people lived in UAE: 2.888.335 million of which are women and 6.415.942 million men. Less than 10% of the total population are Emirati women, which is about 900.000. The entire labor force in the UAE in 2019, according to the International Labour Organization and the World Bank reports, was 6.904.890: 0.17% were women, including the total population aged 15 years and above (Forum, 2020). Table 6 presents the population of UAE by each Emirate.

Emirate	Year	Emiratis			non-Emiratis			Total			% non-nationals
		Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	
Abu Dhabi	2016	282,632	268,903	551,535	1,574,986	781,652	2,356,638	1,857,618	1,050,555	2,908,173	81
Dubai	2016	n.a.	n.a.	233,430	n.a.	n.a.	2,465,170	n.a.	n.a.	2,698,600	91
Sharjah	2015	86,325	89,098	175,423	834,542	395,875	1,230,417	920,867	484,973	1,405,840	88
Ras Al -Khaima	2012	49,860	49,662	99,522	215,140	107,338	322,478	265,000	157,000	422,000	76
Ajman	2017	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	504,847	n.a.
Al-Fujairah	2016	43,991	43,823	87,814	104,821	32,725	137,546	148,812	76,548	225,360	61
Umm Al - Quwain	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
UAE	2016							6,298,294	2,822,873	9,121,167	

Table 6 -Estimates of UAE population by nationality (Emiratis/ non-Emiratis), Emirate of residence, and gender estimations of 2016

Source: Center (2018)

In 2016, Abu Dhabi had 2,908,173 people, Dubai had 2,698,600, and Al-Fujairah had 225,360. Ajman, in 2017, had a population of 504,847. In 2015 (last data available), Sharjah had a population of 1,405,840. And in 2012 (latest data available), the Ras Al-Khaima population was 422,000. According to the National government report, updated in June 2015, the Country's total labor force rose from about 300,000 in 1975 to more than 6.4 million in 2015, representing an average growth of about 7.7 percent.

The data from Table 7 shows the total population for Abu Dhabi and Dubai, which are the largest and most significant Emirates (De Bel-Air, 2015).

	Abu Dhabi		Dubai	
	Total population	Av. annual growth rate per period (%)	Total population	Av. annual growth rate per period (%)
1968	44,552		59,000	
1975	196,539	21	183,187	16
1980	420,455	15	276,301	8
1985	553,668	6	370,788	6
1995	920,271	5	689,420	6
2000	1,112,716	4	862,387	4
2005	1,374,169	4	1,321,453	9
2006	1,461,478	6	1,421,812	7
2007	1,574,281	7	1,529,792	7
2008	1,695,788	7	1,645,973	7
2009	1,826,674	7	1,770,978	7
2010	1,967,659	7	1,905,476	7
2011	2,161,619	9	2,003,170	5
2012	2,314,819	7	2,105,875	5
2013	2,492,518	7	2,213,845	5
2014	2,656,448	6	2,327,350	5
2015	2,784,490	5	2,446,675	5
2016	2,908,173	4	2,698,600	10
2017			2,994,003	10

Table 7- Evolution of population and demographic growth rates in Abu Dhabi and Dubai *for the* selected years of 1968-2017

Source: De Bel-Air (2015)

According to a report from the Women Official Portal (WOPG) of the UAE Government, the female workforce's growth from 1975 to 2015 was from 1.000 to about 135.000 in 2015 (Kemp, 2015). Comparatively, men's employment grew from 44.000 in 1975 to nearly 207.000 in 2015, which meets the National Strategy favouring Emirati (women and men) empowerment. The governors have planned to fulfill their vision for years to come (from 2015 to 2021) to include women in the Country's development process, as illustrated by the following governmental quote: "*The strategy aims to provide a framework for all federal and local government entities, private sector, as well as social organizations, to set plans that will provide a decent living for women and make them creative in all sustainable and developmental fields*" (UAE Government, 2015).

In the 1970s, and before the oil discovery, the Emirati women - like the other Arab women - were active members of the society, involved in agriculture and related services. After the oil discovery, women's participation in the UAE economy outside their homes decreased due to the improvement of most citizens' living standards (Metcalf, 2006). However, and regarding higher education, the situation differed, as women were allowed to

get tertiary education. By the first decade of the twenty-first century, women have gradually joined the workplace (Itani, Sidani, & Baalbaki, 2011) after they attained a higher literacy rate than men (80.7 percent in 2003 compared to 75.6 percent for national men).

With the government heads and leaders' support, more private business activities were started by Emirati women, who were engaged in UAE society's crucial development. This has resulted in an increase in the women's national participation rate in the public sector workforce to achieve 41.5% of total employees in education, 35% in the health sector, and 20% in social affairs (Erogul & McCrohan, 2008). Such fields were preferred for women as they can easily be gendered; otherwise, sacrificing work remained vital if it conflicts with their leading traditional roles as mothers and housewives (Itani et al., 2011).

Besides, women engaged in entrepreneurial activities seeking independence and freedom from the cultural constraints that still prevail in the collectivist patriarchal culture deeply rooted in the UAE and the Gulf area (Erogul & McCrohan, 2008). Emirati women's participation in different sectors of the economy was enhanced. For instance, Her Highness Sheikha Fatima - the wife of late Sheik Zayed, ruler of UAE - in 2003, stated: *"UAE women have proved themselves and today are seen in every sector of the economy - (Gulf News, 2003b, p. 3)"* (cited by Gallant & Pounder, 2008, p. 27). Her Highness has even enhanced the women's achievements by making them part of the decision-making process: *"Women must surpass their conventional roles and become decision-makers participating more effectively in the development of UAE society"* (Bibbo, 2002, p. 7). Before that, in 1987, His Highness Sheik Zayed exhorted women: *"Young women have the right to work in all spheres; there are no obstacles before them. We expect young women to support and to proceed with everything undertaken by their brothers, the youth of the United Arab Emirates, and that there will be fruitful cooperation between the young women and their brothers in the different spheres"* (Al-Nahyan & Sultan, 1987, p. 109). He also asserted that women should be allowed to study abroad and be considered for employment opportunities, including managerial positions. Such a declaration influenced Emirati women greatly (Al Nowais, 2004, p. 2).

Mecalf (2011), in her comparative research about *"Women's human resource development in the Gulf States,"* described how the year 2006 was exceptional for UAE women. In December 2006, one woman was elected, for the first time, to the Federal National Council (FNC), and seven more were selected to be council members in the first limited elections UAE held to choose half of the members of the FNC (Mecalf, 2011). Following the same vision of women empowerment, according to the most recent resolutions of 2019, on the

official website of the government social affairs (UAE Government, 2019), the President of the UAE has ordered that women must have 50% of the FNC's seats. They now occupy 20%: 8 out of 40 members. In fulfilling this vision, Sheikha Lubna al Qasimi was appointed to be the Minister of Economic (she is presently the Foreign Affairs Minister), and Sheikha Mariam Mohammed Khalfan al Roumi was appointed Minister of Social Affairs (UAE Women, 2015). Within this context, the following section details Emiratization law, its strategy, the challenges women face when entering the UAE worksites, and the fields they became interested in.

4.5.2 Emiratization

Emiratization policy is a medium to a long-term strategy to treat UAE national unemployment (Godwin, 2006). This policy's primary feature is introducing an employment quota system, which has been applied primarily in the banking and insurance sectors (Randeree, 2012). In a short time, statistics were expected to positively change Emirati employability, in both the public and private sectors (Randeree, 2012).

The "*Tanmia*" report – by the UAE National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority – highlights the local cultural value system (Tanmia, 2004). It discourages birth control and affords substantial social welfare for Emiratis, such as child benefits, free education, and access to social services, and other subsidies (Tanmia, 2004). Another important role the "*Tanmia*" report plays is distinguishing between the two intended outcomes of the current Emiratization strategy: (1) replacing non-National incumbents in their existing positions by qualified Emirati candidates; and (2) placing Emirati job-seekers in newly-created positions derived from the expansion of economic activities in which they compete with non-National candidates (Nelson, 2004). Due to the national UAE women outnumbering men in higher education, they have held the key to the Emiratization policy's success, aiming to increase the entry of both UAE women and men into the labor market (Randeree, 2012).

A plethora of research has been conducted about Emiratization and the challenges Emirati women face when entering the labor market (Dickson, Riddlebarger, Stringer, Tennant, & Kennetz, 2014; Nelson, 2004; Randeree, 2009; Raven, 2011). Massive native workforce participation, in particular, female participation (Vine et al., 2010), has been observed as a process aimed to lessen the UAE dependency on expatriate labor. There are more expatriates occupying positions that exceed the number of Emirati women available for work. As a result, the current Emiratization drive is expected to accommodate all those

wishing to enter the workforce (Randeree, 2012) because the government sees expatriates as an adverse influence on the demographic structure, the economy, and national security of the UAE (Farrell, 2008). However, and despite state efforts, the unemployment rate among national women remained "at a high of 19.7 percent" in 2010 (last data because of the paucity of local statistics) (Vine et al., 2010).

It could be argued that women are affected by Emirati unemployment more than men (Farrell, 2008). The job seeker records, during 2004, revealed that national women were represented over 66% of nationally registered job seekers (Nelson, 2004), and 68% of them have completed secondary education (Nelson, 2004). Surprisingly, the less educated Emirati males are, the more employable due to the options available, such as joining the military service or the potential preference for hiring men over women (for family reasons and the perceptions of traditional gender roles).

Notwithstanding the low rate of female participation in the labor market, there have been some progress measures. The contribution of UAE national women to economic activities has significantly increased from 5.4% in 1995 to 16.1% in 2004 (Nelson, 2004). Moreover, national women's participation in the labor force improved over three times more in 2003 than in 1995 (Nelson, 2004), with a slight change of the UAE male/female population ratio during this period. Such an increase is due to female higher educational accomplishments and positive attitudes towards working women. Nonetheless, national women's share of the total labor force remains less than 27% (Yearbook, 2006, p. 242), which remains weak compared to women in Europe and the USA. In the UK, for example, women made approximately 50% of the labor force in 2008. In France, they made 47.6% (Service des Droits des Femmes et de l'Egalite, 2008). In the Netherlands, they made 43% (Statistics Netherlands, www.cbs.nl/statline, accessed 29 April 2009). In Portugal, they made 56.2% in 2008 (EU, 2009), while in the USA, women have scored the highest percentage of 71% (US Department of Labour, 2008) (Burke & Richardsen, 2016).

The following Figure illustrates the job areas Emiratis men and women prefer to work in. They do not go to the low-level jobs, blue-collar ones, the skilled agricultural and fishy, or craft workers jobs. They like to be managers, professionals - professors, teachers, judges, doctors, or engineers - associate professionals who support other professionals in administrative roles, such as clerks and market sales workers. The Figure highlights how lately, Emirati women have become involved in different fields as technicians, clerks,

associate professionals, legislators, senior officials, and managers. More details are given below when extending UAE women's Emiratization (De Bel-Air, 2015).

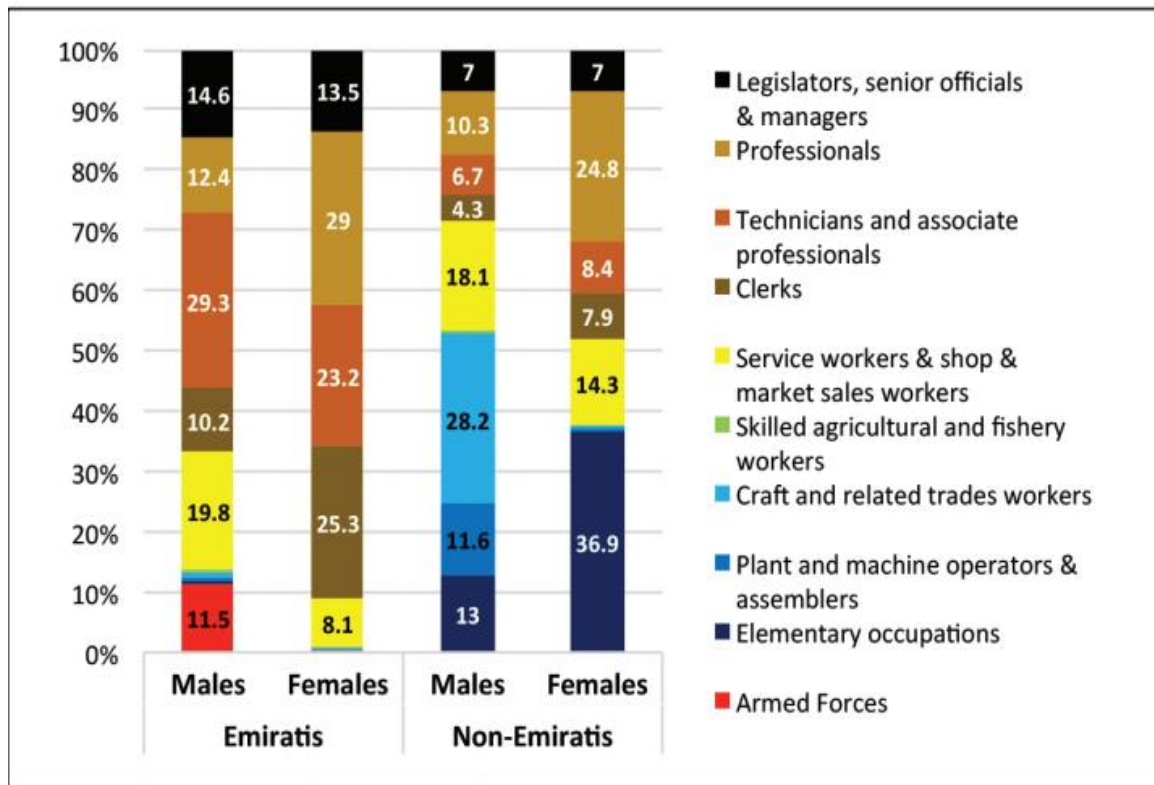


Figure 1- Dubai: Employed population by nationality (Emirati/ non-Emirati)

Source Center (2018)

Figure 1 also illustrates female to male participation in the workforce as relatively low for several reasons. Firstly, the number of men between the ages of 15 and 65 (2.12 million in 2005) outnumber the number of women (838.941) because foreign workers are mainly men. Secondly, some corporations still limit the employment of women. Thirdly, changing traditional views regarding women's place in their families is a slow process due to UAE society's patriarchal values. Fourthly, lack of early training for young women to qualify them to align with the labor market needs and despite the degrees they might have got after school (Pech, 2009).

Through the Emiratization policy, several resolutions have been issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, aiming at providing work opportunities to Emiratis. Such solutions intend to increase women participation depending on the economic development pace and the labor market's needs. According to the official website of the

Ministry of Human Resource and Emiratization (MOHRE, 2019), the following are resolutions dated from 2005 but still in effect regarding the Emiratization policy:

1. Ministerial Resolution no. 41, for 2005, dated 30.01.2005, on the quota system for the Trade sector- Article one: *"Trade sector firms employing 50 or more workers shall undertake to employ Nationals at an annual rate of 2%, according to the Council of Ministers' Resolution No. 259/1 for 2004"* Ministerial resolution no. 42, for 2005, dated 30.01.2005, on the quota system for the insurance sector - Article one: *"Firms engaged in insurance activities shall undertake to employ Nationals at an annual rate of 5%, according to the Council of Ministers' Resolution No. 202/2 for 2003."*
2. Ministerial resolution no. 43, for 2005, dated 30.01.2005, on the quota system for the banking sector - Article one: *"Banks operating in the UAE shall undertake to employ Nationals at an annual rate of 4%, according to the Council of Ministers' Resolution No. 10 for 1998."*
3. In the private sector: *"All companies with more than 100 employees are required to appoint a UAE national to the post of government relation officer (GRO). A GRO liaises between the company and the Ministry of Labour."*

Overall, these resolutions have forced different industries to follow the recommended percentage of Emirati workers. Several federal ministerial decisions in the banking, insurance, and other business sectors expected percentage thresholds for local hiring, usually in the range of 3 – 5% of the total workforce (Squire, 2019).

As Emiratization is being implemented, women's interests have been towards being clerks, professionals, and managers, mainly in the public sector. As for the private sector, updates on the resolutions are being issued to guide the private sector in providing qualified Emiratis opportunities. Thus, the following section elaborates on the national Emiratization approach's characteristics to the public and private sectors.

4.5.3 Public versus private sector

UAE nationals have more significant employment opportunities in the private sector (Forstenlechner, Madi, Selim, & Rutledge, 2012). However, the majority are employed in the public sector, enjoying the high remuneration, shorter working hours, and greater job security. Those highly educated prefer the public sector, although it is getting saturated (Farrell, 2008). The private sector's stereotype is that it is the choice of a small portion of job applicants due to long working hours and less remuneration than the public sector institutions. Despite that, the private sector faces a few additional challenges by applying pay per performance incentives, promotion opportunities, and career development (Farrell, 2008). Nonetheless, the private sector's share of employment opportunities within the UAE is 52.1%. As a result, the Emiratization strategy's major element involves increasing the nationals percentage within this sector (Nelson, 2004). However, functioning in a multicultural atmosphere can cause stress and strain (Yang, 2002). Emirati women in the private sector are less at ease in their jobs than their counterparts in the public sector and joined venture workplaces (Porath, 1984). It was noted that women went first to the public sector and the private sector was left to the younger and unmarried women, who work for long hours and are paid lower (Glass, 2007; Nelson, 2004). Private sector enterprises often require nine to ten working hours a day, six days a week, and offer fewer holidays than the public sector. On the other hand, the private sector provides better possibilities for career advancement as it grows faster. Besides, they offer the opportunity to work and learn from expatriates, which enhances learning and enriches women's experiences, adding more to their competences (Nelson, 2004).

Research has shown that remuneration and benefits are the primary motivators for Emirati employment seekers. Al-Ali (2008) demonstrated that one of the reasons for Emiratis to prefer the public sector is the better pay. Randeree (2009) has assured that better remuneration, benefits, and shorter working hours are incentives for the Emiratis to seek work in the public sector. However, Emirati women are disadvantaged in sharing higher positions and earning higher incomes (Farrell, 2008; Nelson, 2004). Although they are similar to or better than men regarding the level of education, they are negatively stereotyped in the private sector for being less productive, more costly, and more likely to leave for better opportunities (Nelson, 2004).

In UAE, nepotism – "*wasta*" – produces negative social capital by blocking the process of improvement and good governance (Al-Ali, 2008). It remains a traditional

negative influence on individuals' career development (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011), and it is unlikely to diminish regardless of the common perception of an unfair practice. Emirati women tend to use their family network to search for a nearby work location, a well-paid job, and flexible working hours (Nelson, 2004). So - "*wasta*" - is still a preferred way to find a good job opportunity (Kafaji, 2011; Yount & Rashad, 2008). Therefore, fulfilling the objective of increasing Emirati women's workforce participation in the private sector is evolving. On one level, the opportunities the private sector can provide should facilitate the hiring of locals, increasing Emirati human capital, acknowledging the government and the support of local families. On another level, barriers exist from the private sector employers when they do not provide '*a proper position*' wished by the Emirati women. This clash has forced Emirati women to occupy 'a second-class employment' in the private sector, after failing to acquire a desirable public sector position (Nelson, 2004). Therefore, while the number of Emirati women is increasing in the labor market, changing private strategies is becoming urgent to support the long term strategy of Emiratization (Randeree, 2012). This change aims to re-align the private sector working conditions with UAE social values, facilitating special workplace conditions for women with an emphasis on industry and educational responses (Nelson, 2004). Locally it prevails that the women who work in the private sector are usually less qualified and/or are conducting their temporarily until they get a better opportunity in the public sector (Nelson, 2004). National UAE employees have more trust in the public sector than the private one because expatriate managers do not see national employees as skilled technically, and therefore, are less receptive. That also explains the UAE nationals' preference for public sector employment (Tanmia, 2004; Freek, 2004).

Moreover, for private companies,' it is costly to employ an Emirati, according to Emiratization. The local government has been investing in post-employment training – related to doing the job tasks - to ease nationals' private employment, and the pre-employment training is being offered following achieving a university degree. The practice is general and aims to develop the skills that are less developed among locals, such as communication skills, computer skills, and others (Al-Ali, 2008). The requirements for a professional career are high. They include an excellent education, sophisticated technical know-how, employability skills, and continuous training seeking continuous compliance with the changing surroundings (Al-Ali, 2008).

Nonetheless, the family business remains a sector that is growing, and its sustainability is needed. Oudah, Jabeen, and Dixon (2018), in their study about family

business sustainability in the UAE, showed that large family businesses have long-term planning for their succession plan as they are aware of the Country's developmental change. Unlike the medium-sized family firms that jeopardize their sustainability by having no succession plan, the larger the family businesses are, the more family members they need to be involved in the family business's management and leadership. Consequently, women cannot be excluded from this process, and they are becoming more involved in the management of family businesses.

Given the aforementioned characteristics of the public, private, and family businesses, one purposefully sought Emirati women managers working for these three sectors (public and private sectors including family businesses and entrepreneurial ventures), aiming to understand their career paths in these contexts.

The open policy agenda about work opportunities has given UAE females the chance to contribute to their society's growth (Shallal, 2011). The influence of national women in the economy improved expressively from 9.6% in 1986 to 33.4 % in 2007, representing a 3.5% average annual growth (Al Gurg, 2006). According to a National UAE report updated on 5 June 2018 (UAE Government, 2018), education has resulted positively on the growth of national UAE women joining the workforce between 1975 - 2015 in various fields such as healthcare, commerce, university, media, engineering, science, computer technology, law, government, and the oil industry. The flexibility to change the attitude towards females' employment and see their work as part of personal and professional identity, rather than a source of income, made its path. Also, some female role models have encouraged other women to approach employment areas different from the traditional ones (FNCA Affairs, 2018, p.7).

The UAE continues developing more strategies regarding women's empowerment (Metcalf, 2011), including building a partnership with the private sector to encourage companies to promote women, their merits, and their organizational positions. In fact, with the Emiratization policy and the quota system that officially exists, UAE has occupied a prominent role in implementing gender empowerment in the Gulf region (Randeree, 2012). Leaders of UAE believe that positive discrimination towards women, and active involvement in taking positions previously dominated by men, is an essential step towards an equal society (Al Marzouqi & Forster, 2011). Women must first be given a platform to achieve, to prove themselves in their chosen careers (FNCA Affairs, 2018, p. 12)

To promote women's interests in politics, the rulers assembled the General Women's Union (GWU), a woman body that is not part of the governance regime (Metcalf, 2011). The GWU objectives are: (1) enhancing Arab women's divine, cultural awareness, and societal standards that make them able to contribute to UAE growth, led by the values and instruction of Islam religion; and (2) linking them to the Arab and International women's organizations worldwide. Consequently, (3) achieving the objective of involving Emirati women in the Country's development moves (Unies, 2009). The GWU has played a significant role in supporting women to appreciate their full potential, emphasizing community progress and development. The presence of 22.5% of women in parliament indicates such fast-paced social change (Kabeer, 2009). The UAE University, a segregated university, has also contributed to changing women's cultural insights as managers and leaders. It hosts the *Women as Global Leaders* conference, which takes place bi-annually (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider, 2010).

The UAE has witnessed a notable growth in social entrepreneurship by women (Unies, 2009). Women are using evolving strategies in the current Islamic context and developing leadership and business opportunities out of the umbrella of government support systems. And they are equally active in growing their networks with Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah women's organizations (Metcalf, 2011). Targeting the objective of issuing new legislation to support UAE women in all fields, Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum announced Dubai Women's Establishment (DWE) in October 2008 own Presidency, along with a five-year plan for women's leadership talent development in Dubai. Continuous planning is taking place in DWE as they go on (Metcalf, 2011).

In sum, UAE women are now being trained and asked to be present in the local labor market. They are being required to replace expatriates both in public and private institutions. Women have always preferred the public sector, especially to work in the education and health sectors. In the private sector, women mainly work in the services and trade sectors. They are represented in the labor market where they work as professionals (29%), clerks (25.3%), technicians, and professionals (23.2%). Overall, 13.5% are managers, senior officials, and legislators. Only 8.1% work as service workers and shop and market sales. One may then conclude that UAE women are not performing elementary occupations as they are hardly found in agricultural and fishery jobs (0.9%). So far, these lower-level jobs go to expatriates. To further know about UAE women in the local workplaces, the following section highlights UAE women's the research studies.

4.5.4 Research on UAE women

After the oil discovery, the prosperous lifestyle the UAE citizens had enabled them to hire domestic maids to help in the housework. As a result of such wealth, the economic need for women's work has lessened. However, the last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed women's gradual return to the workplace (EIU, 2007).

A Federal National Council Affairs (FNCA) report from 2008 prides the UAE's achievement presented by the growing prominence of Emirati women in the Country's remarkable development process (FNCA, 2008). The report emphasizes the growing share of UAE women in the workforce and their active contribution to the Country's government and economy (FNCA, 2008). According to Tanmia reports, more young Emirati women have joined the labour force (Farrell, 2008). They are more than 40% of the education sector workforce and almost 35% in healthcare (Vine et al., 2010).

A few factors have contributed to Emirati females' participation in the labor market: the availability of low-cost expatriate domestic workers and strong extended family relationships, which altogether provide extensive support in domestic work and childcare. Enhancing UAE women's image was also reflected in women's tendency to attend reputable institutions to enhance their professional image (Wilkins & Huisman, 2015). Furthermore, leaders were the primary influencers of women's meaningful choices (Madsen & Cook, 2010). Their Highness, the Royal Sheiks who ruled the country starting from the late Sheik Zayed – the first ruler of UAE – has provided education for free and all (Bibbo, 2002). Moreover, employment has been actively facilitated by Emiratization resolutions (Farrell, 2008).

Nonetheless, educated UAE women are still subject to unemployment. Patriarchal attitudes in family and gender inequality in the workplace are still persistent issues in the UAE. Because the family should be the primary concern for UAE women (Omair, 2010), the government has focused on facilitating employment, considering this priority. Leaders of the country privileged women with respectful maternity leaves' decrees. According to the government's official website (UAE Government, 2015), the maternity leave decrees slightly differ in each Emirate. In Abu Dhabi, mothers are entitled to three months of fully paid maternity leave, and for the first year, they are given two hours' reduced working hours to nurse their children. In Dubai, mothers have the right to have a compulsory fully paid maternity leave from 60 to 90 days, annual leave and unpaid leave can be added to the maternity leave up to a maximum of 120 days. In addition to two hours' reduced working

hours to nurse their children. In Sharjah, the total maternity leave period is 120 days, comprising 90 days paid leave and 30 days unpaid leave, adding to that the annual leave and two hours for nursing the child for six months. The yearly break could always be added to the maternity leave (UAE Government, 2015).

Gallant and Pounder (2008) highlighted a great deal of development of Emirati females' education – since the late nineties – and despite the constraints of segregation that still apply in the public sector and higher education institutions. According to the UNDP report of (2002), UAE females' literacy level was 77% in 1997, which makes a three-time growth from 1970. In 1997, women outnumbered male students in universities: they counted 75% of the universities' enrolled students. Gallant and Pounder (2008) stated that women's barriers to their family life account for UAE women's modest employment. Despite the government policies, the progress in women's literacy level, and the labor market needs of qualified workers, the cultural constraints related to gender, marriage, and family still significantly impact Emirati female employment. Such cultural factors are mainly responsible for lowering the level of employment of Emirati females in the UAE. Therefore, although women are progressively participating in economic, social, and political developments, occupational changes are still stressful (Farrell, 2008). Another study involving graduates of the American University of Sharjah found that local women are not welcome as managers in the UAE workplaces, mainly by Emirati men who view women as incapable of holding leadership positions, and being incompetent and too emotional (Vine et al., 2010). The authors shed light on the rapid development of the economy that resulted in a dramatic change in economic circumstances, and revolutionized countless characteristics of female Emirati lives, such as housing, education, and healthcare; however, the primary patriarchal Emirati culture is still preserved.

In studying Arab women career development in UAE, Omair (2010) classified four women careers:

(1) *A progressive career*, in which the lack of nepotism (wasta) or family connections lead women managers to strive hard to be steadily promoted to middle or top managers.

(2) *The moderate career*, usually in public sector employment, starting from administrative work and in the long-term moving up to a middle management position, but rarely getting to top management.

(3) *Facilitated careers*, best represented by the women who work in the family business and feel protected from sexual harassment or being bullied by top managers. Besides, they have a rapid career development towards a high managerial position.

(4) *Idealistic career*, such typology was applied to a limited number of interviewees who were relatives of one of the ruling families - the Country's highest social status. Omair (2010) noted that having the motivation and being responsible is essential in UAE, as women can get a top managerial position in the government immediately after graduation.

Another study about female employment in the UAE found that women have been allowed to work outside the home on the condition of taking specific occupations. These occupations are expected to enable them to build a career without conflicting with their traditional roles at home; otherwise, they are likely to sacrifice their careers (Itani, et al. 2011). Therefore, women have entered the workforce as university professors, teachers, administrators, lawyers, engineers, doctors, secretaries, civil servants, media personnel, police force, army members, ministers, and businesswomen (Itani et al., 2011). Nonetheless, regarding decision making, they are still seen under the umbrella of men. In a collectivist culture, the decision is expected to remain in the superior male hands (Goby & Eroglu, 2011).

Emirati women remain underrepresented in the engineering field (Mahani & Molki, 2011) despite the support they receive from their parents, and the need to have more university professors in the engineering field for females in the gender-segregated faculties. Similarly, gender discrimination remains a structural and attitudinal barrier against Emirati women's career progression in the IT sector (Al Marzouqi & Forster, 2011). The "*think male/think manager*" stereotype is still common in the organizations placed in the Arab countries (Al-Lamki, 1999; Omair, 2010; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010).

Another study following female managers' career paths in the UAE identified how women managers adopt some aspects of contemporary occupations to stand against gender discrimination, inequality, and bureaucracy inherent in their traditional professions (Tlaiss, 2014). The study demonstrates how women's careers in the country evolve to a multidimensional perspective, within the unique context of the Country's overall organizational culture. Following this approach, Marmenout and Lirio (2014) conducted a study about the challenges of retaining Emirati women in the workforce in the UAE emerging market. The results have shown that Emirati women face particular challenges in the Gulf region and identify the everyday difficulties working women experience. For

instance, the inconsistency of social standards toward working women, the desire to have large families, and their desire to contribute financially to the house while remaining humble and preserving the husband's image as head of the family. The study disclosed interesting strategies the women adopted, such as: (i) continuing their education, (ii) looking for more appropriate work opportunities in the public sector, or through entrepreneurship, added to (iii) having domestic help, which is available to most Emirati women, in addition to (iv) profiting from the HR policies of extended maternity leaves, flex time, and working from home.

Ibrahim and Al Marri (2015) also examined the effects of gender and satisfaction with organizational support on work-family conflict among UAE accountants. The results revealed a significant relationship between gender and work-family conflict and satisfaction with corporate backing. The authors concluded that female accountants suffer more than males from work-family conflict. Local organizations are offering extended maternity and parental leaves to support UAE employees in such a dispute. And the presence of close family relatives help overcome such strife.

4.6 Summary

So far, prior research on UAE women has well documented the local perils women still face in order to be accepted and recognized in the labor market, despite the Emiratization policy. The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradictions between Emiratization goals and the local reluctance toward women in management. It seems that Emirati men are generally less receptive to work under the supervision of a female manager, and expatriates are less tolerant toward local managers, especially women, who they see as inexperienced, and albeit well connected.

In sum, the research to date on UAE women managers overlooked (1) How do UAE women managers describe their career paths; (2) How have UAE women managers been chosen for their managerial positions; (3) What career challenges have they faced, and how have they coped; and (4) How calling explains the UAE women managerial jobs.

This study aims to address and answer these research questions by inquiring about the UAE women who built up their careers to attain a managerial position in the UAE context. The Social Cognitive Career Theory (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Walters, 1977) and the Preference Theory (Hakim, 2006) are herein used to frame women's careers' path and professional life theoretically.. Besides, the Skinner et al. (2003) model of coping is used to

guide our understanding of how female managers cope with the many specific challenges they encounter along their career paths. Finally, this research tackles how work is meaningful to Emirati women, whether it is '*a job*,' '*a career*,' or '*a calling*,' thus drawing upon Dik and Duffy (2009) work on calling. In this latter case, one seeks to know whether career calling is driven by religion or by a modern expression of individualism that seeks self-fulfillment and self-actualization.

5 Methodology

To address the aim of this research, which examines how UAE women became managers, by analyzing (1) how they describe their career paths, (2) how they were chosen for their managerial positions, (3) what were their career challenges, and how have they coped, (4) and how can calling explain UAE women managerial jobs; a qualitative and interpretive approach was adopted. Therefore, this section describes the methodological approach used, data collection procedures, the sample, and data analysis procedures.

5.1 Methodological approach

This empirical study about Emirati women managers' career development depends on a qualitative paradigm and a qualitative inquiry based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with UAE women managers. The Qualitative Research (QR) approach uses data from written documents, direct information-gathering, observations, and in-depth, semi-structured open-ended interviews. Qualitative scholars contribute to genuine inquiry, examining actual settings inductively to produce rich narrative descriptions (Patton, 2005). The researcher, following an interpretative process, exerts efforts to make sense of a situation without imposing pre-existing assumptions on a set, starting with specific observations and building on them as more insights emerge throughout the analysis of the raw data until a general pattern is achieved: "*Qualitative analysis is guided not by hypotheses, but by questions, issues, and a search for patterns.*" (Patton, 1987, p. 15).

A QR approach and the use of semi-structured interviews for data collection have the advantage of addressing contributors' views, which serve the objectives of this research by considering the significantly examined complex inter-relation between work, family, and career while exploring women's business relations (Cohen, Duberley, & Mallon, 2004). Moreover, this approach responds to the calls for more qualitative input to women's career studies (Cohen & Mallon, 2001) and more contextualized research (Flum & Kaplan, 2012).

In the following quote, Jackson (2015) clarifies the human science view of QR:

"... to discover, facilitate, and support the full range of personal and symbolic forces that naturally impel participants to seek psychological and social well-being ... and its aspiration to individual autonomy and social integration" (Jackson, 2015, p. 189)

Patton (1987) presents two preliminary inquiries of the QR designs: (1) the naturalistic investigations, which is useful for studying program implementation changes for

different stages or periods; (2) the inductive one, in which the researcher tries to make use of the situation without forcing expectations. Such inductive designs start with specific explanations and construct towards general patterns. More insights emerge as the open-ended interviews are analysed to come to the existing practice.

One aspect that could be a limitation of qualitative research is that the outcomes are not meant to be generalizable to a large population. And it is up to the reader to decide if the findings are applicable in other contexts. Consequently, a qualitative researcher has to present explicit information about the context in which the study happened, who the participants were, how they were approached, and how the interaction was between the researcher and the participants (Morrow, 2005).

Sampling in qualitative research is defined as “*selecting specific data sources from which data are collected to address the research objectives.*” (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015, p. 1775). This study's purposes were to use a qualitative approach and an inductive design to understand further Emirati women managers' views working in different sectors: public, private, including family business and the public-private joined venture. This approach is adequate because it aims to explore the viewpoints of Emirati women managers about their career paths and the strategies they adopt to cope with work-life challenges. Furthermore, this approach is valuable in capturing their own understanding of their work as they participate in the evolving UAE economy, whether seen as a job, a career, or a calling.

5.2 Procedure of data collection

For this study, face to face semi-structured interviews have been conducted, according to the females' preference for the place, whether in their offices, local cafes, or private homes. All interviewees were assured of anonymity. The researcher respected the wish of some not to reveal their real names. Instead, this document refers to each participant by the initial of the Emirate followed by an ordered number (i.e., A 1, 2, 3, Abu Dhabi; D1, 2, 3, ... Dubai; S1, 2, 3, 4, Sharjah). The interviews were digitally audio recorded - with the participants' permission - and transcribed. The language of the interviews was English. Before beginning each interview, the study's purpose was explained to each participant, and they were encouraged to speak about their career development and from their own perspective. Open-ended questions were asked to explore their career choice, changes, and how they came to their current managerial positions. Questions also addressed how they felt

about their achievements, what obstacles they have faced, and their prospects (see appendix 1 for the interview guide).

All interviews were run face-to-face in UAE, between January and March 2017. Interviews duration ranged from 45 to 80 minutes, taking the availability and time Emirati female managers allowed for the interviews.

5.3 Interview guide

As the current study is mainly data-driven and follows an inductive approach, an interview guide was designed to list the research questions' topics. Overall, the interview guide contained four sections, including some central areas of inquiry and subordinate questions as follows.

Interview Guide														
Main Research Question														
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?														
Sub - research questions														
How do UAE women managers describe their career paths?				How have UAE women managers been chosen for their			What career challenges have UAE women managers faced & how have they coped?					How can calling explain UAE women managerial jobs?		
Areas to dig deep into														
Education & history	Employment & employability	Current mng. Position	Type of work	Family status Influencers	Nepotism	Challenge & achievements	Competence s needed	Other skills distinguished her from other	Whether it is a ladder or self effort	Foreseen obstacles	Career path coping	Proud	Having callers	Loving work

Table 8 - The main research question, the sub-research questions, and related themes

Throughout the interviews, the conversation led to questioning other areas, which enriched our knowledge about UAE women's careers. Each of the four sub-questions was asked, then they were followed by more detailed questions to cover the topic of the research holistically.

To address the first area of inquiry – *How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?* - the interview guide included questions related to:

(1) *Education and history*, in which the ladies explained their educational course, where they studied, who supported them, why they have chosen their major, who influenced them, what difficulties they have experienced, how the university's system was, and the outcomes of their study.

(2) *Employment and employability*: women talked about who supported, helped, and facilitated their work, whether finding a job was taken for granted or not, and who opposed the idea of working, the challenges they faced, the workplaces they went to, the privileges of UAE citizens in general and UAE females in particular.

(3) *Current managerial position*: included questions about their career path ever since they started, the first job and other places they worked in, the decisions are taken, and the perceived credibility among peers.

Main Research Question		
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?		
1st Sub - research question		
How do UAE women managers describe their career paths?		
Areas observed		
Education and history	Employment & employability	Current managerial position
Educational path of the interviewees: Influencers Vocational preferences Family education Education outcomes.	Ways of getting employed. Supporters who helped them get their opportunities. Getting an opportunity is taken for granted. Challenges: Travelling abroad on a work mission is not possible due to family commitment. Lack of male support / approval in order to travel abroad on a work mission.	They make or share decision making Their family network helped gaining the position, They have the competences relevant to the position,

Table 9 - The interview guide questions related to the first sub research question

To address the second area of inquiry, how *have UAE women managers chosen for their managerial positions?* Three areas were observed related to this question, such as knowing how they become promotable, giving details about the skills relevant to the present position, and how their family network endorsed that, as illustrated in the following Table.

Main Research Question		
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?		
2nd Sub - research question		
How have UAE women managers been chosen for their managerial positions?		
Areas observed		
How did they become promotable?	Which skills are relevant to the present position?	The family network

Table 10 - The interview guide questions related to the second sub research question

Concerning the third study research question - *What career challenges have UAE women managers faced, and how have they coped?* – the interview guide included questions about: (1) challenges and achievements, which invited their elaboration on work-family, life-balance, job suited to a lady, changing workplaces, unwillingness to work, and male objections; (2) the competencies needed for the job; (3) skills that distinguished them from others to qualify for the management position; (4) how the upward progression evolved; (5) foreseen obstacles and future difficulties; (6) and career path coping; which included the aspects that helped

women cope with fulfilling managerial responsibilities, the challenges and their willingness to overcome them. Table 11 details these subordinate questions.

Main Research Question					
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?					
3rd Sub - research question					
What career challenges have UAE women managers faced & how have they coped?					
Areas observed					
Challenges and achievements	Competences needed for the job	Skills that distinguished them from others	How the upward progression evolved	Foreseen obstacles and future difficulties	Career path coping

Table 11- The interview guide questions related to the third sub research question

According to the fourth study research question – *How can calling explain UAE women managerial jobs?* As the conversations went on, three essential aspects were detected related to how they view their work. They feel proud being recognized in family and community, having prominent figures as callers, whether the Sheiks or the family's respected head - the father, brother, or husband, and loving work to consider it a part of life. The Table below illustrates the questions related.

Main Research Question		
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?		
4th Sub - research question		
How can calling explain UAE women managerial jobs?		
Areas observed		
How do they express their pride?	Who are the callers?	How do they express their feeling towards their work?

Table 12 - The interview guide questions related to the fourth sub research question

Overall, the interview guide has helped develop and control the topics being investigated within the female managers' timeframe. Appendix 2 presents the interview guide and the themes that emerged from the participants' extended conversations.

5.4 Research participants

To answer the research questions - how Emirati female managers describe their career paths, as well as the difficulties they have faced and how they have been chosen for their managerial positions - 22 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with actual Emirati female managers from the largest Emirates in UAE - Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. These are the locations of the main public and private sector institutions.

The study was designed to target UAE women in middle and top management positions in different industries and sectors. It uses a one-point-in-time design and follows a purposeful sampling strategy (Patton, 2015). Therefore, to gather rich and illuminating

information on UAE women managers the following criteria were used for selecting the subjects: (1) being a UAE women citizen; (2) perform a middle or top management job at the moment of data collection; (3) and being available to take part in a research interview about Emirati women in management. One sought to have participants from the most populated Emirates and work for public and private sectors, including family business and entrepreneurial ventures. Therefore, most participants were approached following a snowball or chain sampling technique, which starts with one participant and multiplies at each step (Patton, 2015). The first interviewee was suggested by a bank manager, who then recommended two of her acquaintances, and they suggested more and so on. The interviewees sometimes called the company HR manager to identify and suggest other female managers as this network is reliable. Twenty-eight ladies were approached, and six were excluded. Four of them owned their businesses, but they were not managing them at the moment of data collection. The other two were not available to discuss their career path. However, they have facilitated meetings with other participants.

The advantage of this sampling is getting a convenient pool of knowledgeable participants and having access to a useful network that would not be available otherwise. It also puts the participants in a relaxing and cooperative mood when the interviews were run, as they received the recommendation from someone they already knew. A possible disadvantage could be suggesting candidates from the same industry and/or similar role, and friends at work, for example. However, for this research, the participants varied according to their workplaces, and they come from different industries as illustrated in Table 13 below.

On the whole, the sample of this study comprises 22 women who adequately portrait UAE women managers. They are all professional managers, whether working for their family business or employed in the private or public sectors. None of the participants is a relative of the UAE ruling family in UAE or family related. Moreover, they originate from several geographical areas in the UAE.

The interviewees were aged between 34 and 55 years old. Five of them are from Abu-Dhabi, 13 from Dubai, and four from Sharjah. The ladies from Dubai were more flexible and open to do the interviews, which justify their larger number in the sample. Seven interviewees are single, and 15 are married and have between two to seven children. Four ladies had children less than three years old, eight had between three and six, 14 had children between six and 18, and three women had older children. All participants had university degrees, and a few had post-graduate studies. Most women have bachelor's degrees, three

have master's degrees, one has an MBA, and another has a PhD. Most ladies studied in segregated system institutions, while seven studied in American universities in UAE, and four studied abroad. Eight married women finished their studies before getting married, and seven completed their studies after marriage.

Regarding their family members' education, most fathers (14) and only six mothers are educated. Most participants have educated brothers and sisters, which confirms local equality in education in the past years. When asked about their mothers' and sisters' work experience, only four said that their mothers work. As for sisters, eight had working sisters, four non-working ones, and ten did not provide this information. They most likely did not work as all interviewees were proud to mention their working mothers or sisters.

In their current positions, these women work for different employers: five companies have 0-100 employees, 14 companies are more massive and employ 100-500 workers, and three work for large companies with more than 500 employees. Regarding the number of subordinates under these female managers' supervision, four female managers supervise a team of up to 10 employees, eight had larger groups (between 10-50), and five women supervised larger teams with more than 50 employees. Most participants reported to a male supervisor, but four reported to female managers. Only one lady is an entrepreneur, managing her own business.

The industries varied and their experience in the current managerial position ranged from two years to more than ten years. Eight women were managers in the public sector, 12 in the private sector, and two worked for public-private joined-ventures. Regarding the management level, 14 are middle managers, and eight are top managers, including an entrepreneur and CEO of her own private group. Regarding the interviewees' first job, six started with training, and three females started by an internship: two in the public sector and one in a family company. The other five started in the family business, and two did their internships abroad. Overall, family businesses represented a key initial milestone for these women. More details on the participants' sociodemographic characteristics are provided in the following Table.

Location	Name	Age	Educa tion	University	Marital status	No. of Children	Children age/yea	Present position	Mng. Level Mid/Top	Sector	Type of Industry
Abu Dhabi	A01	38	BA	AUS	Single	0	None	Head of Insurance Department	Mid	Public	Banking
	A02	34	BA	Tec. College of Sharjah	Married	5	6y-20y	Assistant Manager	Top	Private	Constructions
	A03	40	BA	UAEU	Married	5	3y-20y	Head of Development	Top	Public	Oil & Gas
	A04	38	BA	UAEU	Married	4	3y-18y	Public Relation Manager	Mid	Public	Oil & Gas
	A05	34	BS	AUS	Married	3	3y-18y	Development engineer	Mid	Public	Oil & Gas
Dubai	D01	37	BA	Higher Institute of Quality Banking&Finance	Married	2	1y-6y	Head Islamic Segment Retail	Mid	Private	Banking
	D02	42	BA	Higher Institute of Quality Banking&Finance	Single	0	None	Senior Credit Manger	Top	Private	Stocks & Shares
	D03	40	MA	UAEU& AUS	Married	3	3y-18y	Investment Consultant	Top	Private	Stocks & Shares
	D04	35	BA	UAEU	Single	0	None	Customer relations manager	Mid	Joined venture	Telecommunica-tion
	D05	38	BA	UAEU	Single	0	None	HRM	Mid	Joined venture	Telecommunica-tion
	D06	35	MA	DAU	Married	6	2y-18y	Board member	Top	Private	Construction & Realestate
	D07	38	BS	London University	Single	0	None	Executive Manager	Mid	Private	Construction & Realestate
	D08	42	BS	MIT in USA	Single	0	None	Chief Eng. Of designers	Mid	Private	Construction & Realestate
	D09	55	BA	University of South California	Married	7	18y-28y	Enterprenuer - CEO	CEO	Private	Varied Business; Interior design, Sales and Marketing, & Organizing exhibitions
	D10	43	BA	AUS	Married	5	6y-20y	Head of Institutional Marketing, Director	Mid	Private	Retail
	D11	40	BA	AUS	Married	3	6y-18y	Marketing & Public Relations Manager	Mid	Private	Retail
	D12	38	MBA	UAEU	Divorced	3	6y-18y	Managing the training team	Mid	Private	Training Centre
	D13	35	BA	Cinquième Sens Institute Paris.	Married	4	3y-18y	The perfumer of the plant	Mid	Private	Perfume
Sharjah	S01	35	BA	UAEU	Married	4	2y-18y	Head of quality department in Bank of Sharjah	Mid	Public	Banking
	S02	43	BA	Higher Institute of Quality & Management	Married	2	6y-18y	Dean Assistant of Student Affairs	Mid	Public	Higher Education
	S03	44	PhD	UAEU Cairo	Single	0	None	Chargé d'affaires & a Professor	Top	Public	Higher Education
	S04	35	MA	AUS	Married	3	6y-18y	Director of Sharjah women club	Top	Public	Services

Table 13 - Characteristics of participants (The research sample)

5.5 Data analyses

After the interviews, a total of 189 pages of transcripts were generated from the 22 managers' conversations. For data analysis, NVivo 12 software and Excel spreadsheets were used to assist in data coding. NVivo 12 software helps to classify, sort, and arrange non-numerical data, such as word documents (the transcripts in this research), Excel files (the detailed features of participants), and PDF files (the literature review articles), including the field notes (the transcripts in this research), Excel files (the detailed features of participants), and PDF files (the literature review articles), including the field notes. It helps examine the relationship between the data allowing the researcher to uncover data patterns and new topics emerging from the participants' responses. NVivo provided an organized storage file system where one can quickly search and locate the material and determine the relationships between themes. It assists in visualizing the data and drawing models and charts to represent the findings. It also helped the researcher to keep closer to the data and conduct an in-depth and systematic analysis that is impossible to do manually (Bandara, 2006).

There are three techniques for content analysis in QR (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005). (i) a conventional analysis, in that the coding categories are derived from reading the data (interview scripts) word by word highlighting specific stories from the text that illustrate the key thoughts or concepts. Next, the researcher approaches the text by noting his or her first intuitions, thoughts, and initial analysis. While this process continues, labels for codes emerge, reflecting a few key thoughts, which become the initial coding scheme. Consequently, the tree diagram would be developed to help organize these categories hierarchically. After that, definitions for each category, subcategory, and code are formed. Then the findings are reported, adding examples for each code and category from the interviews' scripts. According to the research objective, the researcher identifies the relationship between categories and subcategories based on their concurrence, backgrounds, or significances (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005). (ii) a directed approach, in that the analysis starts with a theory that serves as guidance for initial codes (i.e., deductive). (iii) A summative content analysis involving a quantitative method depends on identifying and counting certain words or content in the text to understand the contextual use of the words or content to explore usage.

Conventional content analysis is the most appropriate to this study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) because the results of conventional content analysis support concept development and model building. Such a data analysis technique suits the flow of data categories that would add to the limited literature on a phenomenon (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). According to Mayring (2004, p. 1279), “*It is an inductive category development*”, which is suitable for open-end interview questions and data discussions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The following step of data analysis included an initial codification: the transcripts were read and reread. An initial structure of 14 thematic categories (from the NVivo – the stem nodes) were employed streaming from the interview questions. Out of the 22 transcribed interviews, 14 main thematic categories emerged: six were deductive (DE) and derived from the literature, and eight were inductive (IN) and derived directly from the raw data. Besides, 86 thematic subcategories and 1547 references were obtained (see Appendixes 2 and 3 for details). Table 14 sums the main coding structure.

No	Theme	Category	No	Theme	Category
1	History of Education	DE	8	Influencers	DE
2	Employment & Employability	DE	9	How Influencers Affected Careers	IN
3	Career Path	IN	10	Career Path Distinguishers	IN
4	Current Managerial difficulties	IN	11	Feelings-Emotions on Career Path	IN
5	Career Path Difficulties	DE	12	Future Prospects	IN
6	Career Path coping	IN	13	Work /Life Interface	DE
7	About Superiors	IN	14	Women/Men Relationship Images	DE

Table 14- The main thematic contents.

Interviews were read repeatedly to capture a more comprehensive understanding of the content, list the main thematic categories and develop codes (Miles, Huberman, Huberman, & Huberman, 1994; Morgan, 1993; Morse & Field, 1995). To this, catchy words from the scripts were gathered (e.g., entrance in the labor market, career influencers, career stages, etc.). Then the researcher added her own comments and understanding of the data. The process continued until more themes emerged and were labelled as thematic codes that reflected more than one critical thought, making the preliminary coding system (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Codes then were reorganized into broader categories or smaller subcategories based on how much related or different they were. Such categorization helped

grouping codes to create significant thematic groups – between 10-15 thematic groups is an adequate number (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Patton, 2002). A tree diagram was developed, then each category and subcategory were defined in the findings. Finally, they were related to existing literature and theory to facilitate data interpretation and discussion (Morse & Field, 1995).

As aforementioned, the data analysis followed a conventional content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It aims to describe UAE women managers' career paths, challenges, coping strategies, and how they perceive their work: if '*a job*,' '*a career*,' or '*a calling*.' This analysis feeds the literature with more theoretical knowledge, for instance, on how the Preference Theory helps understand the preferences of UAE women and how their preferences have developed and influenced their career paths. In addition, it helps understand how Social Cognitive Career Theory can explain the career development of UAE women managers. Furthermore, this research extends existing knowledge on the barriers Emirati women managers face and how they limited their professional choice and development.

What is optimistic about qualitative research and conventional content analysis is getting direct insight from the study participants. However, this poses two significant challenges. The first is failing to develop a complete understanding of the context, and thus missing the identification and interpretation of key themes/categories. And the second challenge is that conventional content analysis can easily be confused with grounded theory, which is far more demanding in requiring a true inductive approach that follows systematic instructions for collecting, combining, analyzing, and conceptualizing qualitative data with the objective of theory building (Duriau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007; White, & Marsh, 2006). Building a new theory is not a purpose in this study, but instead, it aims to gather new insights that extend our contextualized understanding of UAE women managers' careers. To this purpose, the following Table includes the key 14 thematic categories used in the codification of the data with their definitions. More detailed information about the remaining coding structure is presented in Appendixes 2 and 3.

Main Themes	Description
01. Education History	All reports mentioned information about participants' educational paths, influencers, vocational preferences, family education and education outcomes.
02. Employment & Employability	Means of employment and how was it facilitated, the difficulties participants faced, privileges of UAE citizen and women in particular taking cultural issues into consideration.
03. Career Path	The means to get their current managerial positions, and the jobs the participants went through; whether an internship, first job, the job transitions, and attended advanced trainings that resulted in career development.
04. Current Managerial Position	How have the participants' decisions received or implemented. The possibility of family network that helped gaining the position and competencies relevant to the managerial position. Has she been offered the position, or she changed the worksite to gain it.
05. Career Path Difficulties	Obstacles that were encountered throughout the lady's career path; such as, work personal life balance, proving self-efficacy as managers, the job doesn't suit females to do, unwilling to commit to a career, living distantly, and people around may frustrate the participant.
06. Career Path Coping	Participants talked about the elements that helped coping with their managerial career; such as the interpersonal skills, work atmosphere between expats and nationals, the family support, the need to work and thinking of work as a challenge they should succeed in and progress in their career.
07. About Superiors	The direct manager male or female
08. Influencers	Sheikhs & their wives, family members (father, mother, uncle...), Leaders, UAE business managers
09. How influencers affected careers	Influencers affected the participants' level of commitment, participants increased the level of follow up which minimised the mistakes and they had the tendency of loving their work.
10. Career Path Distinguisher-Factors	Perceived factors for career success, participants commented on their personality traits (confidence, interactive skills, commitment, ...), work behaviour, environment factors (colleagues, having a relative in the sector, work atmosphere, ...), secured family situation, loving what they do, initiatives they did, former experience and the government training, flex-time allowed. expats helped, and wide network
11. Feelings-Emotions on Career Path	Feeling proud about privileged and positively discriminated, having a wider network and women are becoming influencers to their peers in their community. Participants expressed how being married or single affected their passion towards work.
12. Future Prospects	Participants expressed future expectations of career on several levels, such as: owning a business, being promoted in the same organization, or getting a higher position in the public sector. The foreseen obstacles are getting jobs for those who live in the remote areas, necessity to update their skills due to the rapid development in the country, and in some positions men are still privileged. Most participants alluded to the better circumstances ladies now have, and few mentioned that it depends on their will to join the workforce.
13. Work-life Interface	Prioritizing responsibilities between work and family commitments
14. Women-Men Relationship Images	The impact of the managerial positions of working ladies on their relations with males in regard of image, style of living, marriage, family tasks and men's attitude towards women managers. And the future movements of women

Table 15 – Main thematic categories used for data codification

6 Research Findings

The present research was undertaken to examine how UAE women have managed to occupy managerial positions. Therefore, for clarity, the results are presented in different sections addressing each subordinate research question separately:

1. How do UAE women managers describe their career paths?
2. How have UAE women managers been chosen for their managerial positions?
3. What career challenges have they faced, and how have they coped?
4. How can calling explain UAE women managerial jobs?

6.1 UAE women career paths

The career path of the females interviewed includes themes related to: (1) Career background/education history; (2) Entrance in the labour market; (3) Career path, including initial internships, first employment, job transitions, and further training and development; (4) Current managerial position. These themes are addressed separately to understand the career path of these women better.

6.1.1 Career background/Education history

All women were highly educated. They have either a university degree of four years (BA), of five years (BS), master's degrees (MA), or Ph.D. Half of them studied in segregated system institutions, such as UAE University, the Technical College of Sharjah, and the Technical College of Dubai. The remaining went to non-segregated universities, namely: the American Universities of Sharjah and Dubai (AUS, AUD), and universities abroad. This indicates the evolvement of society towards being more liberal regarding women's education.

All reports detailing the interviewees' educational path, from influencers to vocational preferences, to family education and education outcomes are illustrated in the following Table.

Career Background			
Includes references from all reports mentioning information about the educational path of the interviewees, from influencers to vocational preferences to family education outcomes.			
Family members education	Early education	Segregated education	Education outcomes
Most of the interviewees' brothers and sisters finished their university degrees. Their fathers are more educated than mothers because of lack of close by educational institutions for females.	Two streams affected the females' education namely: (a) Influencers; females were supported by family; father, brother, educated mother or husbands. They encouraged and financed their education inside or outside the UAE. Their Highness Sheikhs and leaders of UAE also had a significant role in supporting females' education by providing internal and external scholarships, and (b) vocational preference; choosing the major has indicated a desire for independence; half of the interviewees chose a major that provided more employability such as: "Banking or Business management" where they were employable in banks and public sector ministries and institutions.	Due to the conservative and reserved society the UAE females live in, some institutions have established a segregation system where they have gendered faculties except for lecturers; such as UAE University and both Higher Technical colleges in Sharjah and Dubai.	The impact of education on the interviewees lives varied on six levels: (1) Image or Prestige; (2) Professional development (3) Personality development; (4) Social benefits; (5) Transition into the labour market; and (6) Positive impact on own family and society.

Table 16 - Female career background

(1) Family members education

In big families, there are educated and non-educated members. Higher education in the UAE is approximately 50 years old (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010). The first university started with UAE University in Ain-Abu Dhabi, in 1976, followed by other higher education institutions (HEIs) in 1983, 1988, and the following years. In the beginning, the chance of education was exclusively for males because they could bear commuting, which was not easy then. Later, females who lived in Ain-Abu Dhabi and close to the UAE University, or other institutions, were able to complete their education but only if they were not married. In this context, it is not surprising that all interviewees spoke proudly about their family members' education. They had more educated fathers than educated mothers. In big families, only young siblings are educated. All women who married young could not complete tertiary education, to be able to take care of their family and children. A2, a top assistant manager, said that her brothers (from her mother's side) are all educated while the ones from her stepmother (in UAE, the first wife is traditionally older), who are the elder ones, are not. D6, a top manager and a board member, explained that her family is large: they

are nine brothers and fourteen sisters. Because the father was not educated, he wanted to educate his younger children after the spread of universities in the UAE. Five of her brothers and four of her sisters completed university education.

In smaller families and among children from younger parents, all family members were educated. For instance, D10, a mid-manager and head of institutional marketing, has proudly elaborated that all her family members are educated:

“.... my father studied in the US business, my mom is a graduate of Cairo University faculty of letters, Arabic department, she studied there while her father was a diplomat there. I have three brothers and two sisters; two of my brothers studied in the USA civil engineering. The rest have all studied AUS; my youngest brother studied Business management, my sisters studied Literature, Psychology and the youngest one she studied in UAEU Psychology also because she got married before starting her university education, ...”

Overall, all interviewees received higher education by family influence, despite having family members who were not formally educated.

(2) Early education

All interviewees studied in reputable universities. In the UAE, American Universities are very presentable, and going abroad to study is impressive. The image was always considered as it is prestigious to be a graduate of such institutions. For instance, D12, the Director of a training center, commented:

“Studying at UAE University is more prestigious, you know, I preferred to go to UAE University for its reputation. It is the best university in the UAE, and it is only for UAE citizens.”

American Universities are considered the best in education; besides, they do not have the segregated system, and AUS was the first to open in UAE. In the sample A1, A5, D10, D11, and S4 women attended this institution.

In addition to the university, two other features affected the interviewees' major choice: (a) education influencers, and (b) vocational preference.

(a) Education influencers. The family supported most females: father, brother, educated mothers, or husbands. They encouraged and financed education inside or outside the UAE. Their Highness Sheiks and Leaders also had a significant role in supporting females' education by providing internal and external scholarships. Female Sheiks followed up by paying visits to universities to provide the moral support that motivates women. S3, who had the freedom of choice of her major, got a scholarship to do her MA and PhD. in Egypt. She explained how pampered she was by the government when she went abroad:

"Then, for the postgraduate studies, my dad had his fears because I was very young then, just 23 years. But our government — Sheiks and those in the decision making — actually, when I wanted to go to Egypt, my dad told me to call the Cultural Representative in UAE embassy in Egypt and ask him what the procedures are taken to guarantee my arrival at the airport, my residence, and transportation are.... I called the Cultural Representative in the UAE embassy, and he really cooled all the fears of my father and mine; he told me once you leave your family, you will find another family here waiting for you, we will meet you at the airport, and we will take you to the students' residence. You will be under our supervision."

Despite the motivating environment, without family support, women would not have completed higher education.

(b) Vocational preference and major choice. In a patriarchal society where the women are used to depend on the father, brother, husband, or son, the interviewees' choices of a major were naturally influenced by their male supporters. However, choosing a major was also an expression of independence, as half of the interviewees chose their major for vocational reasons. They studied "Banking" and "Business Management" because they were more employable in banks and public sector ministries and institutions. For instance, D2, who studied Banking and is a top manager in a bank, elaborated on her will to be independent financially:

"... For me, I wanted to have my own finance. I didn't want my brothers to be responsible for my finance. And for me, working in the government means a great deal."

Others followed the family business requirement, such as D7 and D8, who studied "Architecture engineering" to work in the family real estate business. A1 — the Head of an insurance department in a bank has a BA in Business from AUS — she explained why she chose the banking sector:

"... it is a sector where we are employable, and we are encouraged to work for the government."

A3, who is a top manager in a ministry, for example, states:

"When I wanted to go to university, my dad suggested 'Management'. He said it is needed and required, and the government is focusing on women empowerment".

D6, a procurement manager, explained that studying business was her husband's suggestion for being more comfortable than architecture, which was her wish as management did not require one hundred percent attendance in the university for classes. S4, who is the Activities Club Director, followed her father's selection of the American University to study

"Management" because of her shyness. This university benefits from a non-segregated system, improving her communication skills and becoming more confident and interactive:

"My dad directed me to the American University of Sharjah because I was in a segregated school. I was timid. So how would I be with men sit next to them, chitchat to them? I don't know them; they are strangers. Then my father told me something is like, "I can guarantee that you are going to be one woman in front of all men, you are going to be a man next to them, I can assure you that," so he gave me the strength to be there. Alhamdulillah, four years, and I graduated."

Likewise, S4 remarks her educated mother's encouragement, as her mother proudly wanted them to get the best education:

"... Yeah, my education where my mother wanted me to get the best, she wanted us to get the best education we graduated from the best school. She said I want you to go to the American University of Sharjah."

A2, a top manager in the family business company, studied accounting, alluded to her mother influence in choosing her major to work in the family company:

"... but then my mom convinced me; she said you would be taking care of something you have a share in,"

Overall, this finding reveals a somewhat '*liberal way*' of thinking conveyed by parents to children. In this sample, the influence on female vocational choices is still more decisive on the part of the fathers and husbands because fewer mothers were highly educated.

(3) Segregated education

In the UAE, several higher education institutions (HEI) have a segregated education system. Women and men attend to separate university campuses – two campuses next to each other: one for men to attend their faculties of different majors, similar to the other campus for women to attend their faculties. This system is used exclusively to Emiratis, and now expatriate students can register, but they pay for their education. UAE University was the first to implement it, as it is the first university in the UAE. Its students are exclusively national citizens who study for free. The interviewees highlighted these characteristics of UAE university: "*it has this segregated system.*" (A4, BA in History); "*UAUEU was like our home*" (A3 BA in Management). Consequently, all their friends were females. Some interviewees studied in both Technical Colleges in Sharjah and Dubai, but both adopt the segregated system.

(4) Education outcomes

The perceived impact of education on their lives focused on six levels: (a) Prestige; (b) Professional development; (c) Personality development; (d) Social benefits; (e) Transition into the labor market; and (f) Positive impact on family and society.

First, most participants highlighted the prestige of studying at the university, generally, and at their faculties or colleges in particular:

“Well UAE University is the first and best university in UAE” (A4),

and:

“the American University of Sharjah is one of the best-ranked universities in the world” (A1).

Second, the interviewees explained how their education had developed their professional skills, such as negotiation and convincing skills, interactive and soft skills, and technical skills. A1 said:

“... the American University in Sharjah is a very good university, we’ve learned a lot from our perfect professors, the American system whether in the US or AUS taught me how to be a creative and innovative person...”

Third, some interviewees mentioned how their personalities have developed by getting less introverted and more outgoing, having more friends, and changing towards being more independent and prouder. A5 summarized these personal achievements and noted:

"the system of education helped me get rid of my shyness. By the time I graduated, I was able to discuss and convince others with my point of views and ideas. Even now, the ability to make decisions — sometimes they are critical at work — and bearing the responsibility, I owe it to AUS. They have built our interactive skills, problem-solving, negotiation, and convincing skills."

Fourth, regarding the social level, some participants have stated that studying in their reputable universities has enhanced their network with their Highness Sheiks and colleagues of different nationalities, in addition to interacting with more friends.

Fifth, five females emphasized that their degrees have qualified them to enter the labor market. The internships and training provided have facilitated finding a suitable and prestigious job in the local labor market.

Finally, the interviewees have expressed how being educated has affected their image within the extended family network, both with children and other relatives. D9, the CEO of her group, said that the more ambitious the mother is, the more ambitious her children are. She explained how she used her major's study, "History" to educate her little children:

"They grew with so many stories they have memorized while I was telling them before going to sleep, they tell me:" we've learned things from your mum about Americans, British, and Indians that we wouldn't have known without reading a whole book about each nation. UAE is a country that has all nationalities in the world, and in my opinion, they needed to know a lot about those nations. I didn't mean that at the time of telling the stories, my intention was that I want them to learn real stories that make them value their homeland and not tell unrealistic fairy tales."

D2 expressed the same idea when she said:

"Of course, even my nieces and nephews tend to refer to me whenever they wanted to do something. And if I suggest something, they would do it with no discussion. Even my sisters do the same."

Moreover, D13 expressed how proud her family was and how they listened to her opinions. She said:

"Certainly! They felt proud, and they appreciate my opinion, especially when I am in the plant, and I suggest something or disagree about something..."

In sum, all interviewees have completed higher education similar to most of their brothers and sisters. Fathers are more educated than mothers because of the lack of convenient institutions for women. Half of the interviewees studied in segregated system institutions, while the rest studied in American universities in UAE or abroad accompanying their families. Influencers were both family members and Sheiks. Sheiks influenced not because they belong to the family's networks but because they were inspirational role-models. Overall, higher education has brought social and family prestige, increased networking with the sheiks, and high leaders, and the development of their professional skills and personal growth.

6.1.2 Entrance in the labour market

UAE citizens and women, in particular, are encouraged to enter the labor market. According to the interviewees, the transition to the local labor market was coined by (1) UAE citizens' privileges, (2) women privileges, and (3) social and family network. The following Table summarizes these findings.

Entrance in the labour market		
Includes references on how females are employable and they are encouraged to enter the labour market and family network and relations help in this respect.		
UAE citizens' privileges	UAE female privileges	Social and family network
The law of Emiratization which aims to provide national citizens with jobs and replace expats by nationals to have UAE citizens occupying managerial positions and filling the employment vacancies available.	Four privileges were mentioned: (a) regulations and maternity leaves, (b) having domestic workers, (c) having flex-time or location, (d) UAE women are respected.	Social network plays an important role in ensuring a good and suitable position that guarantees career path development and takes females' circumstances into consideration.

Table 17 - Entrance in the labor market

(1) UAE citizens' privileges

On top of UAE's privileges is the law of Emiratization, which aims to provide national citizens with jobs and replace expatriates, especially in managerial positions. Ten interviewees have elaborated on the process of implementation of resettlement law. They seemed to be satisfied, as they all mentioned that women always have priority in being appointed to a managerial position. Specifically, in the public sector; as D11, a middle manager in private sector marketing and retail company, who came back to work after leaving the public sector job to build a family, as detailed according to her previous experience in the public sector:

“... in the public sector it is a fulfillment of the law of replacing expatriates with UAE citizens, and females are privileged in general. Besides, a female manager can depend on the employees under her supervision to do her job in some public sector places. So even when she is not qualified, doing the job is manageable,”

Another group was happy to express that jobs are secured, and there is no fear of losing them in both the public and private sectors. They explained that the government had secured its stability and high salaries. D2, a top senior credit manager in a private banking sector company, said:

“It is a secured job. In the government, we have a stable job, and no one can dismiss us. Even in the private sector like me here”

And D3, a top-level investment manager in a private financial services company, elaborated:

"Do you know that we can't be dismissed from our jobs in the government? They made our salaries much higher than the expatriates, what security more they could give?"

Another professional practice implemented by the government is the UAE graduates' training at the beginning of their careers, which tackled all the skills needed. S1, a middle manager in a public banking sector, elaborated on this by saying:

"After graduation, I had to join training made for us – the UAE citizens. The training enhanced our presentation and communication skills, problem-solving, integration into a job site with different expatriates' nationalities and cultures. it was an interesting course knowing different cultures, gaining decision making and management skills, and other training related to financial issues."

Expatriates are a means for the women managers according to the participants' comments. Some mentioned how, depending on expatriates under their supervision have helped them. A2, a top-level assistant manager in a family business company, illustrated:

"I have three Indian accountants who are very good and two other ladies, a Syrian and a Palestinian - I depend on those five, they are my dear team." She continued: "I have to admit that I was relaxed by having the Indian experienced accountant as my mentor. When I was skeptical about something, I've always asked him."

A5 also expresses her gratitude to her supervisor:

"I owe my supervisor, who was a Syrian engineer — a very smart person, though — he helped me a lot. He always mentored and advised me."

S4, a top manager in a public activity club, summarised her career path development when she said:

"I didn't start as Director of the club. I started as an assistant marketing manager. Eventually, I got promoted to the business development manager and the assistant general Director, so her highness's vision to nurture the youth was really excellent. She didn't let us take the young candidate and place her in a managerial position right away."

In fact, the interviewee clarified that there is a career ladder she had to go through, and unless she was qualified, she would not have occupied a higher position. In sum, females expressed confidence regarding employment, referring to the reputable institutions they have graduated from. They all took for granted, developing their careers in management.

(2) UAE female privileges

The participants mentioned four privileges assigned to women: (a) regulations and maternity leaves, (b) having domestic workers, (c) having flex-time or work location preference, and (d) the respect assigned to UAE women and the bright expected future.

(a) Regulations and maternity leaves. All interviewees have expressed their content about their maternity leaves. They mentioned that they are privileged to take longer unpaid leaves (up to one year) and keep their positions despite the convenient leaves they legally have. A3, who is a top manager and has five children, mentioned: *“I had several maternity leaves every time for six months...”*. A2, a top manager in a private sector company and has five children, also added:

“I was absent for three months minimum and five max. Although I could have taken much more, the financial issues are sensitive and critical...”

She emphasized her ability to take leave for up to one year if she wished. Maternity leave in the public sector, as they have explained, is ninety days fully paid, and forty-five days half paid. While in the private sector, sixty days are fully paid, and thirty half paid. There are exceptions for longer leaves in some workplaces. The participants highlighted the fact that the leaders are in favour of women empowerment and, as a result, they have facilitated maternity leaves, and they tended to be flexible in case a mother needed to stay home longer.

(b) Having domestic workers. Most interviewees mentioned having domestic workers who have supported them as working women and have facilitated their employability ever since they had children. They noted that their lives have become more stable and easier to manage. For instance, A4, a middle manager in an oil and gas company, emphasized that women have no excuse to be excluded from work:

“Now, every lady has a maid even before having kids, so no excuse for women not to be part of the future labor plans.”

And D4, who is a middle manager in a telecommunication company, said:

“Usually, a working mother has at least a maid and a driver. I mean, she can’t work if she doesn’t have this option. She would prefer to stay at home.”

The interviewees took for granted having a maid, minimum. D12 repeated the same idea that women are encouraged to work as they can have maids to help, drivers to take the children to school, and other activities, and some even have Cooked as well. These are the essential privileges for working ladies or for those who want to work.

(c) Having flex time. The participants who work for the family business or a private company have also considered having this privilege. They explained how their flex-time worked: one said she could leave at two in the afternoon, another one could work from home and not leave her family, while the third said that her work does not require coming early morning to the plant, so she could arrive late and take care of her family in the morning. The fourth participant said that she was given the privilege of coming late or leaving early depending on her circumstances.

(d) The respect assigned to UAE women and the bright expected future. Finally, S4, the GM of an Activity Club, expressed how UAE women are respected, and she expressed her optimism about Emirati women in the future:

"I'm glad and proud that we UAE ladies are positioned in a place we don't really feel threatened, we don't really feel that challenged in a bad way, we don't even feel that we are competing with others. And we will be more representative in higher positions".

In sum, all participants were content with the privileges they had regarding the possibility for extended maternity leave, having flex-time, and having maids that facilitated accessing the labor market.

(3) Social and family network

Although UAE national females' employability is taken for granted, discussing this issue with them has highlighted that social network plays a vital role in ensuring a fair and suitable position that guarantees career progression while considering women circumstances. Therefore, they still depend on fathers, brothers, or husbands in this regard.

According to eight of them, they were confident the network was the way of getting an excellent managerial position. As illustrated by D1, who is a middle manager in a private bank:

"All my opportunities, I have been offered and not me applying really, I have to go through the channel of filling in the application form... I mean, but someone would discuss it with me first, of course."

And she added that because Emirati citizens are not many, they are connected in a way or another, so they support each other:

"We all connect on social media, even if you sit in public and tell or ask about an Emirati, they will say to work is to attend a full training program; communication skills, interpersonal yes I've heard about him or her we are not many.... in banking, all people know each other".

Their path to a managerial position was supported by either the husband or brothers' and parents' connections. S1, who is a middle manager in a public sector bank, stated:

“I did fill in an application, of course, but the bank was hiring a lot of employees, and my dad was a branch manager in it, so he told me to go and apply in a branch in Alien, close to my family’s house.”

That is why they did not apply to get the job, but on the contrary, they were contacted and offered the position to which they then applied, to follow a routine procedure:

“My husband told me about a post in the branch of Bank of Sharjah very close to our house. It is at the end of my street. It sounded more practical as the branch of ADNAB is half an hour far from my house in Sharjah. I applied for the post.” (S1 elaborated).

In short, UAE women are motivated to take their roles as managers in the labor market. Their family network supports them, and social connections facilitate working in the best places.

6.1.3 Main career stages

The means to get the current managerial positions and the jobs these women went through, whether an internship, the first job, other job transitions, and advanced training, are herein included. As illustrated in the following Table, the UAE women career path comprises four main stages: (1) internship, (2) first job, (3) following job transitions, and (4) further training and development.

Main career stages+A1:D4			
Includes references on how the interviewees have started their career with the internship as a requirement of their university degrees. They got their first job either in the family business or in the public sector to then move to several job locations while climbing their career ladder, taking their family commitment into consideration. Meanwhile, their managerial skills have been developing through continuous training and development.			
Internship	First job	Job transitions	Further training and development
It was a requirement of their university degrees - “work placement”. The interviewees have done it either in the public/private sector, in the family business, or abroad. It was an easy procedure for them and they had a variety of choices. The internship has enriched their communication skills and some management skills.	One-third of the interviewees worked in the family business first, the rest have referred to their social and family network's positive effect on getting their first work opportunity, whether in the public sector or the private one.	Positions have always been offered for UAE national females whether in public, private sectors or family business, due to the small population of nationals and to the will to empower women. Changing the place of work is related to either getting an opportunity to work closer to the family, or getting a better position, and it was always by being informed by someone close to them; the husband, a brother, or a friend.	The continuous training the interviewees have done in all sectors: public, private and family business, aimed to develop specific skills that enabled them to have more responsibilities and higher positions.

Table 18 - Career stages

(1) Internship

Most females started their career path through an internship that was a requirement of their university degrees. The term they used is “work placement.” Their social network also played a role in arranging those internships. Half of the participants did their work placement in the public sector institutions, two abroad, and one in the family business. Despite these, all mentioned that this was not a difficult procedure, and job choices were varied. Most of them preferred the first work placement in banks. These internships have enhanced their communication skills, problem-solving, decision making, and developed some management skills. They added that such work placements have helped them integrate into job sites that employed expatriates from different nationalities and cultures. They felt ready and confident to enter the labor market, as D1 illustrates:

“I attended the training provided for us in the ministry of social and labor affairs. It was a comprehensive training that focused on our soft and technical skills related to different fields of financial or social work.”

S3 added:

“Of course, it is part of our habituation to work is to attend a full training program, communication skills, interpersonal and computer skills, and leadership skills. It was a very useful training program; all of the graduates are subject to attend it before starting work.”

(2) First job

Most females have emphasized that family network has always been a source of valuable support so that one-third of the interviewees started working in the family business, which was something taken for granted. A1 stated:

“When I graduated, I started as a loan officer at my uncle’s bank.”

A3 had her first job in the ministry of trade:

“I wanted to come to this company a long time ago, but there were no vacancies. When there was one, my husband told me, and I applied.”

The rest have also alluded to the social and family network's positive influence on getting the first work opportunity. S1, who is a mid-manager and head of quality department in a bank, mentioned that her father had supported her first job in the same bank he worked in as a branch manager:

“My dad suggested I do more internships while studying, so I did one more. He was a bank manager in ADNB. I started working in the customer service department there.”

S4, who is the Director of the women activity club, expressed proudly how her family network and good relations with their Highness Sheik Sultan and Sheikha Jawaher have facilitated her first job in Dubai Municipality:

“... due to her Highness knowing us, knowing me, and knowing my family, my mom, it was like I wanted to start, and they recommended me. I applied first to the Dubai municipality. I worked there for 2.5 years. I travelled twice with work to Munich in Germany and Barcelona.”

(3) Job transitions

The interviewees reported two main career paths: those who remained working in the family business, and those who sought the public sector. The father or brothers supported the ones in the family business. They were in charge and have facilitated the females' career development through training in the company and the assignment of experienced expatriates to shadow and help them until they acquired the business know-how and the skills needed to attain a top managerial position.

For the females who started in the public sector, they kept progressing to better positions. However, they had to change locations, and some had interruptions when having babies and taking long maternity leaves. In any case, they kept coming back to a better work situation, as S1, who is the Head of the Quality department in a bank, explained:

“I applied for the post it was in the HR department, I stayed two years in the HR department, through which I had my twins and had to stay at home for a year and a half maternity leave. Then I came back to the treasury department as I did not enjoy the HR very much. However, after nine months in the treasury, I was offered a position in the quality department, then after one year, I was offered my position now, and I loved it, this is where I find myself.”

The usual career move for these women is to a higher position. Despite that, some prefer to stay in their positions longer because that suits best their families' circumstances. Such as A4, who has a middle management position as a public relations manager in an oil and gas company, and reports:

“Yes, in fact, I was suggested for a higher position in another gas company, but here for the moment is very much suitable for my circumstances as a mother.”

Unmarried women have expressed more flexibility in this respect. D2, a senior credit manager in an investment bank, explained her continuous career path, which led to a constant climb until she got to her current top managerial position. It was a challenge for her, as she mentions:

“After one year, I was offered a higher position in the National Bank of Dubai, section head; I stayed in it for three years. But then Sheikha Fatima wanted me to work with her on a project supporting and encouraging women to work.. It was a challenge I wanted to succeed in. I was the finance officer of the project. Working on this project was enjoyable. During the project activities, I met the Investment Bank owner, who was looking for a department head – customer service department. He offered me the position. I liked it because I wanted to come back to banking. I worked hard to organize the department and systemize the process to facilitate the user's online services skills. Then I moved to the treasury department. The owner's objective was to make sure that I understand all bank operations. Two years ago, I was offered my current position as a senior credit manager.”

Positions have always been offered to UAE women, whether in public, private sectors, or family business, due to nationals' small population and the will to empower women. As a result, the interviewees often mentioned:

“I was offered,” “I was suggested,” or “my name was suggested,” “I was chosen,” “I was promised,” and “I was assigned.”

D3, who is a top manager and investment consultant in a private sector company, is an excellent example of that as she said:

“I was offered my current position as a consultant ... I was asked to train some employees in the Investment bank, so I went there for nine months” (...) “When I started my career, I moved in three branches; each move was for a better position.”

Changing the workplace is related to either getting an opportunity to work closer to the family or ascending to a better position, which was always attained through someone close: the husband, a brother, or a friend. For instance, A1 did three internships and had her first job in ADCB where her uncle worked as bank manager:

“I stayed for three years in ADCB, before that I did about three internships...in it, then moved to the National Bank of Abu Dhabi NBAD, my dad told me about the position. I have been here since the beginning of 2007. But in my current position, I have been for four years. I am the assistant branch manager now.”

Another example is provided by D5, who explained that after working for a year in the Ministry of Labour, she was offered the department head position at Dubai airport, where she stayed for ten years. A friend suggested she take her current part in a telecommunication company as head of training in the public sector.

S3 described her career path as varied and exciting: she started as an employee in the Ministry of Health, she was promoted to be a health educator, her job was to go to families living in the desert to raise their health awareness, then became head of the statistic department in the Preventive Medicine Department. After that, she joined Sharjah University after getting the PhD. to end up in her current position as Dean of Students' Affairs.

Moreover, as females elaborated on their career paths, they emphasized that their jobs are stable by law. D3 noted:

"For me, my job was well defined regarding the place because of the scholarship; it was one of the scholarship conditions that when I finish, I work in this bank... we can't be dismissed from our jobs in the government..."

In the family business, work is usually stable, and the working hours are suitable for a family commitment. A2, an assistant manager in a family business, mentioned that all job transitions have been inside the company, by carrying more responsibilities:

"... after three years, the business grew a lot, and my two brothers had to travel many times throughout the year, and they noticed how I am capable of handling accounting issues in general, and particular cases, so they started to delegate decisions in this department to me."

(4) Further training and development

Some females elaborated on the continuous training they have done in all sectors: public, private, and family business, which developed the cognitive skills to carry more responsibilities and attain higher positions. A1, who is head of the insurance department in a bank in the public sector, said:

"We started to attend professional training that enables women to be managers. In the bank, we had an American lady trainer who trained the ladies in the bank from different branches, enhancing our freedom of choice of the following positions we would get."

S3 elaborated on the training she received when she was working in the Ministry of Health. She added that training had enriched her health knowledge, which became her top interest. S4 mentioned that she had travelled twice, while working in Dubai Municipality, to Barcelona and Munich, to learn from these municipalities, compare and decide what to do in Dubai.

D2, a financial company's credit manager, said that she had attended special training programs on customer relations and services. The focus, she added, has been on developing women managerial skills. D12 said that she got her 'Trainer of Trainers' certificate from Britain:

“I have travelled several times to attend advanced training programs in the UK; I gained the TOT certificate from Britain.”

D6, who is a board member in her family’s company, explained:

“This kind of engineering really interests me. And I follow its development, I go to conferences, and two engineers go with me at least to those conferences. We like to keep our architects developed and updated with updates in this field, which is our business.”

All women described their careers with pride and the conviction that they had fulfilled their ambition along their career path. S1 sum up by emphasizing:

“I feel proud because I am a UAE female citizen, the trust Sheik Zayed had put in us; he was a man of vision. I am proud because look at UAE female citizens now: they are all educated; this is the least they have reached. But look how ambitious we are and what we have gained and where are we.... We deserved trust. And we still have a lot to give.”

In sum, the females expressed proudly how managerial positions have always been offered to them, whether in public, private sectors, or family business, due to the will to empower UAE women. And the training they received focused on developing their managerial skills, which enabled them to carry more responsibilities and attain higher-level jobs.

6.2 UAE women in managerial jobs

In answering the question of knowing how UAE female managers have been chosen for their managerial positions, the following content categories emerged: (1) career influencers, (2) career distinguishers, (3) gendered relationships, and (4) how influencers affected women careers.

6.2.1 Career Influencers

Three categories of influencers have been revealed from the interviewees’ reports: The Royal family members (Sheiks, wives of Sheiks and daughters), family members, and leaders or managers, as shown in the Table below.

Career Influencers		
Includes references on the women managers influencers, whether they are their superiors; the Sheikhs, the family members, or their direct managers or leaders.		
Royal family	Family members	Leaders/Managers
All their highness Sheikhs, their wives, and their daughters were their icons who affected their performance positively, they are a good example they wish to be like.	Mainly fathers are the icons, very few educated moms, and brothers sometimes.	Some managers are leaders by nature, so they become influencers of the UAE working women. They are motivated by their hardworking managers.

Table 19 - Career influencers

(1) UAE Royal family

While the influencers varied, most participants mentioned Sheiks, namely the late Sheik Zayed, Sheik Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Sheik Sultan, Sheikha Fatima, Sheikha Lubna, and Sheikha Jawaher. They said that all leaders are icons for the vision they had and accomplishments for UAE. Specifically, Late Sheik Zayed, who had the idea to empower women, and His Highness Sheik Mohammed -Governor of Dubai and the Prime Minister. The interviewees still repeat his words and admire his vision for the future. Sheik Sultan works hard to fulfill the late Sheik Zayed's vision, and Sheikha Fatima is known for her support for women. Many reported that during their studies at the UAE University, her Highness has visited and inspired them. And Sheikha Lubna is respected for her hard work and commitment and abilities to handle the title of Minister of Economy in 2004 and recently Minister of State for Tolerance.

A2, a top manager in a family business company, considered women participation a mission they should fulfill, alluding to the late Sheik Zayed vision:

"Sheik Zayed was really in favour of women employment, and best practices and regulations are set for us to join the workforce with family responsibility, we have to make it happen..."

D12, who is a middle manager in a private sector institution, expressed, proudly, her respect to his Highness Sheik Mohammed:

"I admire Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid a lot, and he is my icon, he is a man of great vision. Look at Dubai now; it became one of the distinguished tourists' attractions. I don't think my parents expected it to be like that in such a short period. That is why his word means a lot to all UAE"

citizens. And I do like his way of respecting UAE women and their role in the UAE society. He describes the woman as the core of UAE society.” She also added: “... now no objection from the father, brother or husband if one of us wants to work as it is recommended by their Highness, our Sheiks. All women’s participation in work is appreciated and encouraged.”

Finally, D6, a top manager in a family business, elaborated on her Highness Sheikha Lubna when she said:

“She is a person you can’t do but admire, a very hard working, we are proud of her. She is one of those who has a vision for UAE. Despite being well-off, she never stops working hard. She manages many projects, and she favours women’s development in UAE, which is why she insists on giving the best image ever of a UAE lady.. She is my icon. I like her a lot, and I follow her steps.”

The interviewees articulated that if their Highness the leaders give instructions, neither men nor women could ignore them. D5 said:

“It is an order delivered as a desire. The men wouldn’t contradict such desires. And we are happy to participate in achieving such desires at the end; it is for our development and our country.”

(2) Family members

Half of the interviewees considered family members as their icons, mainly fathers. They said that they had encouraged them to continue their higher education and facilitate their family business work. D4, who is a middle manager in a telecommunication company, said:

My dad is my icon, despite his position, yet he is humble, he appreciates all his employees in all positions. He is my leader; I want to be like him. If I want to describe him with one word, I would say he is a genius man.”

Three females considered their mothers their icons. S4, the top manager in an activity club, said proudly,

“....., my father used to be a diplomate in seven-eight countries. And she (the mother) decided to raise us on her own. It wasn’t easy at that time while working and raising her kids; she struggled hard to build our personalities right; she is a pleasant, well-educated, and hard-working woman. I want to be like her, and I’m getting there.”

Most participants considered the fathers and less considered mothers as their icons, which is related to the acceptance of women's wish to work as submission to leaders' desire to empower women and their being educated fathers. Very few mentioned brothers, husbands, and sometimes relatives as examples to follow as they have seen their career path fruitful.

(3) Leaders/Managers

Leaders other than Sheiks are also working on fulfilling the vision of their highness, so they deserve the females' respect. Most participants have male managers, whether in the family business, the public sector, or private ones. Five interviewees had female managers, and they were content to have them for being considerate and supportive.

A2 and D10 referred to the entrepreneur and their manager, who they see as an example they would love to follow in the future. D10 said:

“.... I admire this lady because she started to have her own business in her fifties. She is an icon, and I want to be a good example for another but for a young lady entrepreneur. Mrs. D9 represents a motivation for us, young ladies, and this gives us optimism and confidence in our abilities and future achievements.”

D1 said that her icon is her male manager, who was tolerant and coached her:

“He was my x manager at City Bank, and today he is a CEO. I really respect this guy; it's just the way he led us, how passionate he was, how positive, how he motivates others This is the key I think in those people, they have the passion, and they motivate people, they push others to improve and perform well.”

Overall, the interviewed females think that they will influence other fellow women with their successful career path. D9, who is an influencer, already expressed her happy feelings to see researchers care about UAE working women:

“I am very happy to see researchers care about UAE women who have so far proven themselves successful in their careers.”

In short, Sheiks and their wives, family members, mainly fathers, and leaders - UAE business managers or business owners and women influencers - have all been the interviewees' influencers in their actual careers.

6.2.2 How influencers have affected careers

Influencers have affected positively the inquired females on different levels, through: (1) commitment, enthusiasm, and persistence; (2) zero mistakes, (3) and growing network, as illustrated in the following Table.

How Influencers Have Affectd Careers		
Includes references on how influencers have affected females positively on different levels.		
Commitment, enthusiasm and persistance	Zero mistake	Growing network
Knowing their icons and watching the development of the country made them more persistent and hardworking to share this development. They feel that they must make their leaders proud of them and their acheivement.	Performance perfection has been expressed by some interviewees. They pride this achievement.	The participants first jobs have facilitated their current better opportunities -positions they are occupying- whether in the family business, the private or the public sectors.

Table 20 - How influencers affected female careers

(1) Commitment, enthusiasm, and persistence

Females have expressed how knowing their icons and watching the Country's development made them more persistent and hard-working to share this development. They feel that they must make their leaders proud of them and their achievements. D5 elaborated on this:

"When I feel tired, I immediately think of Sheik Mohammed and his hard work, and I feel ashamed to say I am tired or stressed out."

D7, who participates in organizing exhibitions under his Highness Sheik Mohammed's supervision, said enthusiastically:

"His Highness Sheik Mohammed wouldn't accept for a woman in UAE to be excluded from participating in building UAE. So, I don't think we would."

D9, the CEO of her group, alluded to the Sheiks' role in developing women's careers and involving them in the country development:

"The reason behind the support of women in the UAE is the Sheiks of the state who have pushed government institutions to empower women and make them an integral part of the state's structure and an essential and effective component of our society. Thanks to them, today we see many women in parliament, in the departments of government institutions and executive centers. "

S4, the women activity club Director, explained how she sees her generation being given the trust at a young age. In contrast, the older ones do not appreciate them and will always see them very young to carry responsibilities:

"That was the challenge in my generation. I think we were all given the trust and support, but it is the perception of the older people that they don't believe in our abilities." Then she added: "Well, I managed to keep my job while having a family, my career is developing fast. I do my best to maintain and keep progress with no retreat."

D3, the investment consultant, expressed her enthusiasm when she mentioned:

"my aspiration is having a role in the government in sha Allah, this is what Sheik Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum wants, and this is the vision of his Highness late Sheik Zayed Al Nahyan. I see myself qualified; I am already a member of the women business chamber in Dubai."

Overall, the women have found and expressed higher commitment due to the support and trust their Highness and the leaders have given them.

For A1, the Head of an insurance department in a bank, her uncle is her icon, as she explained:

"I feel guilty if I am distracted from my work when I remember my uncle, who is never distracted ever since he enters his office. He is a very committed Manager; he taught me how dedication is."

A5, the development engineer, detailed her overwhelmed feeling when she received an award from Sheik Mohammed:

"I forgot all about the idea of quitting, and I started to really do good. The trust our leaders put in us is really of high value. I don't see myself putting them down."

D2, the senior credit manager, said that the secured feeling the leaders have provided them is a valuable thing that makes them dedicate all their time to work. She said:

"The support of our leaders, we have to admit that this secured feeling makes you dedicate your whole time to work. I feel the bank is my second home."

(2) Zero mistake

Influencers' attitudes and examples resulted in performance perfection. Some interviewees expressed that they have reached a zero level of mistakes, resulting from leaders' follow up, support and trust. A1 expressed how she follows up the details to avoid mistakes:

"I always observe and follow up and care for the details to avoid any mistake. I have reached a level of zero mistakes most of the time at work."

(3) Growing network and political capital

The interviewees illustrated how their first jobs had facilitated better opportunities, whether in the family business or the public sector. D7, who is currently an executive manager, expresses her gratitude to the period of her work in the family business that has enabled her to make more connections and gain a higher position in the government, she said:

“I wouldn’t feel guilty to leave. I would always have this gratitude for being blessed to gain all this great experience from our family business; I’ve known many key figures. But there is always time to move to a higher position, and what is a better place than sharing building the country and taking part in the governmental sector.”

D8 explains how leaders have been taking care of women’s empowerment when she mentioned:

“you are talking about leaders who are keen on developing women in UAE. All their Highness, our Sheis, are in favour of women empowerment. They believe in the ability of women. So even if a lady is not qualified, they would train her....”

S2 detailed that she used to work very hard to gain a good reputation, and when she got it, His Highness the Governor and Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher suggested her name to be a member in Sharjah parliament:

“because of the very good performance evaluation - I had – I was promoted to be a general member in the community of family affairs, and I was the representative of Sharjah universities in the parliament. His Highness the governor and Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher suggested my name to be a member in Sharjah Parliament, which consists of 45 members approximately – I was the youngest then.”

To summarize, their Highness the Sheiks, their wives and daughters, the interviewees’ fathers, and managers have had a positive effect on women managers by prompting their commitment, enthusiasm, and persistence by enthusiastic zero-tolerance to mistakes and loving for work. They also provided a growing network and political capital.

6.2.3 Current managerial position

A manager must have the qualification and competencies that make the person suitable for the position. In performing a managerial job, the interviewees valued their capabilities and actual performance, highlighting their skills in dealing with clients, their strategic opinions, and the flexibility in dealing with different personalities and cultures. D12 stated:

“... if you are well qualified, then yes, connections and network can support gaining a managerial position.”

Nepotism has been flagged as an essential means to start in management. It facilitates offering the position. The participants also mentioned the segregation in offices and the mechanisms of career progression, as illustrated in the following Table.

Current managerial position			
Includes nepotism as a means that facilitates a good managerial position, references on the qualification and competencies a manager must have that make her suitable for the position. All interviewees were qualified, they expressed being offers, having segregated offices in workplaces, and three mechanisms of career progression have been detected.			
Nepotism	The offer	Segregation	Mechanisms of career progression
The interviewees expressed two ways of nepotism that contribute to gaining a managerial position: (a) The family business and the network of the family business, (b) and having a relative or a friend in the sector. Both ways are helpful and exist in all sectors.	Emiratization has enhanced offering UAE national citizens managerial positions. The private sector needs a UAE citizen to sponsor the business. Consequently, it became an opportunity for the women.	There is no obligation on organizations in the UAE to have segregated offices. It is more a cultural practice. This phenomenon is noticed more in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah than in Dubai.	There are four mechanisms: (a) changing jobs, (b) family delegation, (c) sharing decision making, (d) entrepreneurial activity.

Table 21 - Female current managerial position

(1) Nepotism

The interviewees expressed two types of nepotism that contributed to gain a managerial position: (a) the family business and respective network, and (b) having a relative or friend in the sector.

(a) Family business and network are guaranteed ways for employability. Some women work in the family business led by either the father or brothers or other male relatives. In this environment, everything is facilitated: the leaves they need, they could take, and single females are well pampered being with the family. Such is the case for D13, who is the Perfumer in her father's plant:

“I worked in my family's business. I was in the perfect professional atmosphere, with flex time that suited my family life as well.”

D8, the chief engineer of designers, and D6, who started as a Procurement Manager, elaborated:

"I work in our company, which gives me a flexible time and a relaxing atmosphere. Despite the responsibilities I have at work, I don't feel stressed out, and I don't complain. So, my work doesn't affect my family life."

Moreover, their social network with their Highness Sheiks results in being recommended to critical positions.

Due to the small size of the national population, it is easier to find a suitable candidate just by using *"word of mouth."* Consequently, females are contacted to apply, or they are offered a management role directly. D9 -the CEO- has illustrated this point:

"Look, my dear, when we need a UAE candidate, we always look at the pool of our relatives and friends, the population is small it's very easy to find a qualified candidate."

And this is how D10, who is the Head of the Institutional Marketing department, and D11, who manages Marketing & Public Relations, got their managerial positions at D9's group.

(b) Having a relative or a friend in the sector. The females have highlighted that having a connection in the sector is an essential factor. D9, the CEO, said that her father and brothers' business was generous support when she was helping them before she established her business. D12 explained that a friend told her about the center when the owners were looking for a female citizen to sponsor them to open it. S1, Head of Quality Department in Bank of Sharjah, said: *"Having my father in the industry has allowed me to start right"*

(2) The offer

As aforementioned, initial jobs were offered after graduation, and the social and family networks facilitated subsequent job transitions. In addition, and according to the law of Emiratization in UAE, if a foreigner wants to open a business, he/she must have a UAE citizen to sponsor it, which constitutes a managerial opportunity. D12 illustrates this practice. After leaving her job in the public sector due to personal circumstances, she found herself a private company's management position:

"I was once with my friend in Dubai Mall, and a friend of hers was supposed to join, she came, and as we were talking, she expressed her dissatisfaction in finding a UAE citizen as a sponsor to open her business. When I knew they would open a training center, I told her I could be the person you are looking for, but on one condition: I need a good job in this center. I was bored sitting at home, and I don't want to work in the public sector anymore, and I came to my position I am managing now."

D3, who is an investment consultant, alluded to how she was offered her managerial position:

"because I had a good and convincing way with customers, I was offered my current position as a consultant,"

All participants got their positions through their network and relatives.

(3) Segregated offices

There is no obligation on organizations in the UAE to have segregated offices. Nonetheless, it is a common practice in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, as Dubai segregation is unusual. Therefore, when asked about the job sites, some interviewees mentioned they have segregated offices. S1, who is the Head of the quality department in a bank- said:

“In Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, offices are open, but employees are segregated. Like in my departments, I have 55 employees: Ladies are together, and men are together, and there is a small transparent short partition between them, and they are like half men and half women.”

D10, who is head of the institutional marketing department, explained being happy having only ladies in the company:

“being only women makes us all feel free to take away our veils and makes the atmosphere less formal.”

On the whole, segregated offices remain an organizational practice that extends to the workplace the local culture and is positively perceived by most women managers, even when they manage mixed-sex teams.

(4) Mechanisms of career progression

The UAE women interviewed reported three main mechanisms of career progression: (a) changing jobs, (b) family delegation, (c) sharing decision making, and (d) entrepreneurial activity, as further explained.

(a) Changing jobs and family networks and friends. Benefiting from UAE Emiratization, some interviewees have stated that it was always possible for women to get a managerial position if they change to another company, organization, or institution where they could be trained to fit in one. S3, who is a top manager in a university, is an example of a UAE female citizen who has worked in many places climbing up the ladder in the public sector. She explained:

“... after being Head of Quality Department, I was deputy head of development, then Deputy Head of HR Department in the ministry of health. Experience, as you might know, is accumulative. Wherever you go, you receive training, and you gain new experience; then ... I came to university I have both teaching and management experience.”

The interviewees emphasized the importance of the family network to facilitate access to a managerial position. The easiest way to gain access to a management position is in the family business, such as D13, who is the Perfumer in her father's plant, or D8, who is a Chief Engineer of Designers, and D6, who started as a procurement manager. Network

with their Highness Sheiks also results in being suggested to occupy important positions, like S4, the GM of an activity club.

In sum, if progression is not achieved directly within the first employing organization, it can be attained indirectly, through employer change and job rotation. Besides, working in the family business is the fastest path towards a top or middle managerial position, considering the network of family and friends that will remain the means that aids in this respect. However, women managers working in other sectors also had promotion opportunities.

(b) Family delegation. The participants who worked in the family business had exciting stories of their experience until they got to their current managerial positions; A2, who is a top manager in the family business, explained:

“I started as an accountant in the accounting department, and I was like this for five years with more responsibilities being added gradually. Then I was head of the procurement section. After three years, the business grew a lot, and my two brothers had to travel many times throughout the year. They noticed how I am capable of handling accounting issues in general and particular cases, so they started to delegate decisions in this department to me. And four years ago, I was appointed the Director of the accounting department, and two years ago, I became the assistant general manager of the company, the AGM.”

D8, who is an architecture and a top manager in the family business, detailed her experience since she was in the USA working in a company that she got an excellent experience from until they came back to UAE and her father established the company. She was given her position that she seemed thrilled about:

“...the business is massive, and it took all my mind. I sometimes stayed till 1:00 after midnight drawing the designs. My dad often came to the company to get me back home, and he told me you don't go tomorrow to take good sleep, but I couldn't. Then one day, he came and said, look, you will be the chief of designers! BANG! You know this feeling when you are shocked and WOW! The news was startling. I mean, this is a huge responsibility. I have to agree on all the designs before going to the execution phase.”

This delegation indicates the trust women managers are getting from their male superiors, including male family members.

(c) Sharing decision making. Participants reflected on three manners of making decisions. First, if their Highness Sheiks are in charge, the Sheiks' final decision is after

consulting the female managers they have. S4, who is the GM of an activity club, illustrated the mechanism of making decisions in the club when she said:

"Well then, if the decision is technical, I mean it is related to the club's activities I take it with my team. But if there is something bigger, they come and say: "S4, what do you think if we choose so and so to handle so and so"; I think and give my feedback. This is how they have shaped us to give our opinion and ideas to be engaged with them. And when communicating with them, I always put two options, and I always put the consequences of each option, then make up their minds and choose whether A or B because they can't think about everything, I should do that this is my job. I never embark on my decision on them."

Second, in the family business where the father, brother, or husband is in charge, the final decision is his after consulting the female manager who is also a family member. In general, decisions are discussed with the participants, and most of the time, the female managers' suggestions are approved, which makes them feel happy. A2, who is a top manager in a construction company, expressed that:

"... my brother -the CEO- always discuss issues with me before the meeting, and in many cases, he considers my opinion, and I feel so happy about that."

I asked whether male superiors feel hesitant to approve their suggestions in making decisions. D8, who is the Chief Engineer of Designers, gave a significant reply indicating a notable development on females' efficiency in sharing decision making, and on a considerable change in male superiors' attitude towards their female subordinates in the family:

"Now they don't, but they did before. But my dad always admired my opinions, and he always referred to that when he approved them; he always said, "we'll take D8's opinion, it is the best. He gave me credit and the image I owe him that. I love him. He believed in me. But he is a man of vision; he knows that his trust is put in the right place."

D9, the entrepreneur, explained her approach of the decision making in her group when she said:

"For each company, I have a GM, if the decision is technical, the GM with her department managers take the decision and inform me. But if the decision needs financial support, then I have to agree or disagree, she presents what the finance for and we discuss it then I finalize the decision."

Third, in the public sector and banking industry, decision abide by regulations as D2, who is a senior credit manager in a bank, alluded happily:

"Well, in the bank, we have laws, and our decisions should be compatible with our laws. So, when we need to decide, we always refer to its relatedness with the legislations if it is right or wrong. And I do take very good care of this issue so that my steps are solid, and the task is accomplished. For the branch manager, I am a reference ... (laughs thanking God for that)"

S3, who is the Chargé d'affaires and a Professor in a university, explains the mechanism of making decisions as follows:

"We make decisions in reference to university regulations; those regulations frame our decisions. We can't ignore them. But in some cases that need to be studied well, the student's situation with regulations and from a humanitarian perspective, we have committees; I am the Head of all of them, we meet and decide. I prefer it to the university Chairman for approval."

Participants expressed their content on the way they share decision-making because their suggestions are always considered.

(d) Entrepreneurial activity. Another way of attaining a managerial role, as illustrated by D9, who has started an entrepreneurial career after growing her children. She is the owner and CEO of a group of companies that holds different cosmetic sales and events management activities. She enjoyed telling her career path transitions; the following are parts of her fluid description:

"I helped my family manage the company's real estate business ... I did all my work from my first office, which is my kitchen hababa... after a period helping in the family business, I had a lot of knowledge and a lot of relationships in different sectors I then joined the assembling Emirates Women Business Council team, and I am a member of it now. I also assembled the Dubai Women Business Council, and now I am a board member. In addition to managing my business group."

In a nutshell, four mechanisms have been distinguished in the participants' career progression: changing jobs in the public sector, family delegation in the private family business sector, and a total change towards entrepreneurial activities establishing one's own business. In any case, nepotism remains a persistent phenomenon through family, friends, and acquaintances network. These social and extended networks are always a source of support and openness to a suitable female managerial position.

6.2.4 Career distinguishers - Factors of development

The perceived factors for career development according to the interviewees were summed up in three subcategories: (1) individual factors, such as confidence, interactive skills, commitment, or being able to cope with multinational environments; (2) family factors, such as combining work and family roles; and (3) contextual factors, such as having helpful colleagues and supportive leaders. The following Table sums this information.

Career path distinguishers		
Includes references on the three perceived factors of career success: individual factors, family factors, and contextual factors.		
Individual factors	Family factors	Contextual factors
Work experience (WE) has enhanced the women's confidence, interactive skills, commitment and varied experience made them compassionate and reasonable.	Being able to fulfill their duties towards their children is a major success factor in their career life. In addition to the families support as they like the image of the working daughter, sister, or aunt.	The friendly atmosphere their colleagues help create, and the support of their leaders are important success factors.

Table 22 - Main career path distinguishers

(1) **Individual factors** include: (a) confidence, (b) interactive skills, (c) commitment, (d) varied experience, (e) compassion and reasonableness, and (f) ability to cope with multinational environments, explained as follows.

(a) **Confidence.** The women have shown their confident nature throughout their career path, which has positively impacted their careers. For example, D3, a top manager in an investment bank, sounded proud when she said:

"Alhamdulillah (thank God), during the past years of work, no one had consulted me about trading with stocks and shares and lost. I think I am blessed in this respect probably, but I think I gained my position because of that."

A5 full of confidence, said about her future objective:

"It is not about skills; it is about will, I have the will to be a distinguished figure in our government, and I will be...."

(b) **Interactive skills.** The females expressed their interactive skills; they showed a friendly nature, understanding, courtesy, and good communication skills. A3, the top manager in an oil and gas company, said:

".... I am able to accept my colleagues as they are, and I can communicate my ideas with them and accept criticism, as I believe it is a means to develop my skills."

D11, the marketing and public relation manager added:

".. being outgoing enables me to speak to anyone as if we've known each other for long, like I am talking to you now and this is the first time we meet, do you feel I am formal with you, or do you feel there are any borders between us? I am with everyone like I am with you now, exactly."

(c) Commitment. The females emphasized their commitment to work. This was a built-in feature in their personality, such as D8, the designer's chief engineer, illustrated:

"I used to work all day and night many times; my dad came to the company to drive me home. I often left my car in the company and went with my dad because I was exhausted and unable to drive my car."

And D4, a customer relations manager, added:

"This work has drawn my identity; it is my life. I have worked hard; even when I had doubts, I kept trying again and again."

(d) Varied experience. A few interviewees considered the various experiences a kind of advantage to succeed in their current managerial positions. Gaining knowledge is an accumulative process and S1, a middle manager in a bank, presented a good example:

"Changing from customer service in ADNB to HR in BS, treasury, then quality, it wasn't easy to learn new things every time I changed my place. Moreover, changing the bank also, after getting used to the place and having friends, starting all over again. But I have to say it was a good experience I use it in my current position. I feel I am a complete manager; ... I know all HR regulations, I am familiar with all quality measures regarding performance evaluation and system improvement. I know all the monetary system in the treasury, which is why our work in the department rarely encounter mistakes nowadays."

(e) Compassion and reasonableness. D5 and D12 mentioned how important these traits are in dealing with their colleagues:

"Yes, I am compassionate about the human being. I see them as assets of the company. At the same time, they need to work hard because I don't want the company to lose and workers being sacked. This balance is not easy to hear." D5 said.

"Working and making decisions with my team, humbly dealing with them, unlike what they think. They think that we treat them arrogantly, but here they experience reality and respect me for it." D12 said.

(f) Ability to cope with multinational environments. A4, a middle manager in an oil and gas company, has noted her significant role in communicating the international staff's messages and needs with the top management presented by Emirati managers. She noted:

"... I am aware of each foreign colleague Country's history, which enables me to approach them easier; they are very happy with that and feel comfortable to ask for my help rather than others they feel distant from. Consequently, I am a key person in the company to communicate all with our UAE manager, who is my fellow citizen, of course."

(2) Family factors

The interviewees importantly alluded that being able to fulfill their children's duties is a success factor in their lives. A3, who is a top manager in the public sector, has elaborated on this by saying:

"... moving to this company has motivated me because I was close to my house, the working hours suit my time and activities at home. It has put me at ease. And contributed to my success thus far."

Having the family secured puts these working women at ease and encourages them to hold more professional responsibilities.

(3) Contextual factors

The work environment is essential to be successful as a manager, so the interviewees have named two main factors: (a) their expatriate colleagues and (b) leaders' support.

(a) Colleagues. Half of the interviewees emphasized having good team members, managers, colleagues, and employees is a means of success. A5 expressed being lucky to have the expatriates under her supervision, who are keen on supporting her. D9, the CEO, stated:

"My GMs are qualified, dedicated, and love their work. They work hard to make it the best. Our employees are happy, so they work with loyalty. All those things have contributed to building our successful Group."

The females mentioned the friendly atmosphere at work helped to succeed. S3, the Director of an activity club, said:

"Besides, all my colleagues and employees, we all have the same objective to make our university the best. We are given all the support needed from Sheik Sultan, the president of the university."

Interestingly, A2, a top manager in the family business, expressed her safety feeling by having her brothers and husband around. It is cultural; men are the ones to take care of their women:

"... no one can hurt me with my brothers around. My husband is protective like my brothers are ..."

(b) Leaders support. Includes direct supervisors as well as country leaders, as S4 noted:

"It is the trust that Sheikh Jawaher has given us. She was the Chairperson of the Sharjah ladies club. Even her daughter Sheikh Bodour, we learned a lot from her. I learned how to take risks and succeed. I learned how to delegate from her. She has a business mentality, a vision for the club to be an international one. It has been a huge challenge for me, but we made it the club is one of the best internationally."

In short, the leading career distinguishers for the interviewees were: individual-related factors like their self-confidence, interactive skills, commitment, varied experience, compassion and reasonableness, and ability to cope with multinational environments. The family factors were also essential and the number one priority, given that all women agreed that a successful career could not be built over a fruitless family. Finally, contextual factors such as helpful colleagues and supportive leaders provided an extra push to their careers.

6.2.5 Gendered relationships

Includes references on the impact of the managerial positions of working women on their role in (1) decision making, (2) women's image, versus (3) men's image.

Gendered relationships			
Includes references on the impact of the managerial positions of working women on their relations with males in regard to the decision, and women/men image, in addition to nepotism as a means that facilitates a good managerial position.			
Decision making	Women image	Men image	Nepotism
The interviewees presented three different norms; in terms of the family business, females' opinions count, but the final decisions are to the CEO who is still either the father, the brother or the husband. In Banks and universities, decisions are related to fixed laws and regulations. As for other organizations or companies, financial issues are in the hand of the GMs or CEOs who are all men.	Women have a respectful image, and they can no longer stay at home unproductive. They said that they see themselves sharing decision-making and occupying prominent positions. Their lifestyle depends on the ladies and how they want to live, whether they choose to be working or resting and enjoying the luxury of shopping life. For family tasks, all females agreed that they are the ones who carry the responsibility of the children.	Men are the heads of their families Regarding attitude, some interviewees said that men act as superiors and like to control their wives' lives Regarding family tasks, men do not help. However, they facilitate help when they bring maids, drivers, or cooks With the existence of a few helpful husbands, as stated by the interviewees.	The interviewees expressed two ways of nepotism that contribute to gaining a managerial position: (1) The family business and the network of the family business, (2) and having a relative or a friend in the sector Both ways are helpful and exist in all sectors.

Table 23 - Female gendered relationships

(1) Decision-makers

The cheerful conversation about the participants' career path led to the question of their credibility as managers and decision-makers. They presented three different referents:

(a) within the family business, (b) in banks and universities, and (c) in other organizations or companies.

(a) In the family business. Women's opinions count, but the final decisions are from the CEO, who is still a male figure: the father, a brother, or the husband. Only D8, the Chief Engineer is a decision-maker, and she proudly owed that to her father:

".... He gave me credit, and the image I owe him that. I love him. He believed in me."

And D13, the family business plant's Perfumer, clarified that her decisions are technical - related to the fragrance formulas – she is thoroughly followed.

(b) In banks and universities. Laws and regulations frame decisions. In case of critical matters, the branch manager decides, and this is a predominantly male role.

(c) In other organizations or corporations. The CEO might be a woman – a Sheiks or an entrepreneur - so she deliberates on money and technical issues. D9, who is the CEO of her own group, explains her managing decision-making in the group:

"For each company, I have a General Manager (GM), so if the decision is technical, the GM takes decisions. But if the decision needs financial support, then I must agree or disagree".

A1, ahead of the insurance department, named several ladies and related positions who are now decision-makers and have well-established roles in their families. She said:

"They have improved a lot; we have several women in prominent positions. Such as Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Minister of Foreign, Reem Ibrahim Al Hashemi, Minister of State for International Cooperation, Mariam Al Mansouri, the first female flight pilot in the UAE, Amina Al Rustamani Tecom Group's chief, Noura Al Kaabi chief of the Abu Dhabi-based media group, and Dr. Amal Abdullah Juma Karam Al Qubaisi has been elected Chairperson of the UAE Federal National Council, the first for an Emirati woman to hold this title. You can imagine how this movement of women changed their position within their families. They are the decision-makers in their positions, so how come in their families... Men can no longer deny that women are not only their followers, but they are the drivers of the family's future. They can't be ignored anymore..."

(2) Women image

Regarding their image, the interviewees expressed that now women have a respectful public image and can no longer stay at home and be unproductive. They all said that they see themselves sharing decision making and occupying prominent positions.

The living style has explained that non-working women live luxuriously, and A1 mentioned that some UAE women still prefer spending their time shopping top brands and

hanging out with friends rather than going to work. Having maids, usually expatriates – from Philippine, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and other less developed countries (Sabban, 2002), is also taken for granted for all UAE women. D5, an HRM, described her life before going to university and how much pampered she was:

"I mean all my life before entering the university was dependent on my father, who provides all my expenses, needs, and all I love to do, like traveling. My mother is the source of emotional support every day, sisters and brothers I love to be with, the maids at the house who do all the cleaning, washing clothes, and pressing them. I was really pampered at home. "

This is the lifestyle of many UAE women. Regarding family tasks, all women agreed that they are the ones who carry the responsibility for the children. D12 summarized it:

"... it is normal, we don't rely on men helping hand with the kids, it is always our responsibility, and we mothers are taken for granted in this regard. "

Only D11, a marketing and public relations manager, provided a different answer because her husband is helpful and shares the parenting role by taking care of the children. However, there is a reason for that:

"J. (the husband) doesn't like having a maid in the house, and I respect his wish. Besides, he never leaves me stressed out because children are naughty. He immediately interferes and helps. The boys and the girl love him being around, and they always show off that at school between friends."

(3) Men image

Regarding the men's image, D10, a middle manager in a private sector company, has summarized the style of living of UAE men by saying:

"Men in our community have a private world with their friends. It doesn't mean wives are neglected, they have everything they need, and women too can have their activities with their female friends and their siblings and parents." Also, D11, a middle manager in a private sector company, resumed the UAE men's image in the family: "we still have male dominance in most UAE families, and this has a traditional background. Men are counted as heads of their families."

Regarding attitudes, some interviewees admitted that men act as superiors and like to control their wives' and daughters' lives. A1, a middle manager in the public sector, said:

"I mean, I needed my father's approval on working in my uncle's bank... it is not that I expected his refusal. That is why I asked ... No! It is just that I have to ask him first though I knew 100% he would accept the idea, and he would encourage it. But I had to tell him. It is a culture thing, you know."

Others commented differently, stating that men are now more understanding, respectful, and open-minded. D1, a middle manager in a bank, elaborated:

"that is different from one person to another ... eeeee... It is personal. I cannot tell how men are really. I can see my brother, my husband, my manager, my friend. A man to man is different; even ladies are not the same; it is about who they are and how they think. It is more about personality, but men are more understanding now if you look at it."

Regarding family tasks, men do not help. However, they facilitate help when they bring and pay for maids, drivers, or cooks, as recognized by most women:

"I think we all know what kind of support the man would give ... (she smiles). If I talk about our UAE culture, the man supports if he agrees on having a maid, he probably would collect the kids from school for once occasionally and not regularly." (A4, a middle manager in the public sector, said).

Few added that men only help when the situation is critical, and they have time. D9 and D11 are the only two whose husbands help. For D9, her husband did it when they were in the USA, where she had no family support, and the husband of D11 loved taking care of children and hated to have a maid.

To summarize, gendered relationships in UAE are characterized by increasing acceptance and respect for women as decision-makers in the family, private, and public sectors. However, the final decision remains in the hands of a male figure. As for the women's image, all inquired females felt they have a respectful role and mission in UAE that does not allow them to stay unproductive at home. They see themselves sharing decision making and occupying prominent positions. Although men are still dominant, some of them were described by the interviewees as open-minded and appreciative of their working wives. They also facilitate domestic help (having maids, drivers, etc.).

6.3 UAE women career challenges

The obstacles the participants encountered in their career path were classified in four subcategories involving: (1) Individual contradictions such as unwillingness to work and low self-efficacy; (2) work-family contradictions; (3) cultural contradictions, and (4) work contradictions. The following Table sums this information.

Career challenges			
Individual lack of desire to work and to prove self-efficacy, work-family conflicts, cultural conflicts, and work conflicts.			
Individual lack of desire to work and to be effective	Work/Family conflicts	Cultural conflicts	Work conflicts
Despite the opportunities to empower women, still, there are those who are not willing to work. Others were under stressful pressure to prove themselves efficient whether in the family business or in the public sector.	The family is a priority over work. Mothers are taken for granted being the ones who care more for the children. Consequently, to achieve the balance between work and family is not an easy challenge.	A job doesn't suit a lady: Men preferred, long working hours, or living far from work, frustration around: friends, male responsible and unappreciation.	Mainly Changing the workplace and expats /nationals communication.

Table 24 - Career challenges

6.3.1 Individual contradictions

These include women's unwillingness to work and self-efficacy.

(1) Unwillingness to work.

The interviewees emphasized that despite the facilities and opportunities of employment the government is providing, women's enthusiasm remains a significant challenge for females. To have a career, whether she wants to be empowered, have a career life, and climb to higher positions, or instead stays at home, travel, and hang out with friends. D7, a top manager in her family business, alluded to the fact that some ladies do not like to work or have a career having the preference of:

“go shopping with friends, watch TV till late at night and wake up midday....”

D1, a middle manager in a bank, said about her educated relatives who do not want to commit themselves to work:

“I have some educated relatives who studied in universities, and they are not working, they don't want to. It's all about you, for it is not about only studying.” Then she added: “The only thing that would binder my career path is that if I don't want to do it. It all depends on me.”

A3, a top manager in an oil and gas company, emphasized:

"Many females are educated, but they don't work, not because they are prevented from working but because they don't want to work."

D11, a middle manager in a private sector company, added:

"The only thing that hinders career development is the lady herself. Honestly, when you have all facilitations you need to make your life easy, who else would cripple you? It's you..."

(2) Self-efficacy.

The interviewees faced the challenge of showing how effective they were at work, which put them under pressure. In the family businesses, the participants felt they had to impress the father or brothers; in banks, understanding the need to minimize making mistakes; and working for private companies and Sheiks, demonstrating their efficiency. As one participant puts it:

"The challenge was to prove myself efficient and a good learner at the beginning, I wanted to prove to my brothers that I am able to handle the accounting task given to me at the beginning, then I wanted to have more tasks, but my brother wanted me to be pretty well in executing the first stage. I was a bit shy, and this was a barrier for a while". (A2)

"My work is related to customer service, and many times, tellers make mistakes, and correcting the mistake requires cooperation from the customer to come to fix the mistake. This was a hassle; many times, the customer refuses to cooperate, and solving this problem means penalizing the teller who made a mistake. To minimize the mistakes, I told them I would share bearing the employee's mistake for the first time; however, the second time he/she bears it and will be in his employment file. Now mistakes are marginal ..." (D2).

"The only thing that I felt was difficult is that I am not tall and have a small body, I always had many suggestions to give in meetings; so I wasn't taken seriously sometimes, this was a challenge which forced me to excel a lot of efforts in order to convince others with my point of view. I have always prepared PPT to justify my work, and this has developed my PPT skills. And it added to my confidence actually" (A4).

6.3.2 Work-family life conflicts

When considering family and work, the family always wins, as the interviewees illustrated. They believe that the mother is the one who cares more for the children. The fathers are always busy, and mothers would sacrifice their jobs to stay with the children. D9, the CEO who started working after her children have grown up, emphasized the priority of family despite her encouragement of women's aspiration to work:

"I support working women and encourage them to pursue themselves through professional development. However, women who choose to establish a family and have children have to organize their priorities and be able to balance their family life and professional life."

A4, a public relations manager in the public sector, left her work for five years when the children were little and living far from Abu Dhabi. She said:

"The only thing that worries me is that when going to a higher position, will it prevent me from taking care of my children? Because the change will happen soon, and I have been delaying it for two years. I have some fears about that."

D11 expressed her children's priority:

"Well, When I got married, and after having my second son and Saif was only two years old, I found it impossible to go on with work with two, and I have no one to help, so I quit my job to be with my children."

For A3, the difficulty lied in the inconvenient working time during the afternoon, as for her leaving the children to go to work in the afternoon is not right:

"My husband always ended the conversation when we talk by this, 'If you are uncomfortable with this situation, you can leave anytime and stay at home, you don't have to stress yourself.'"

In sum, these quotes show that achieving this balance between family and work remains a challenge, and their male supporters are still with females' leaving their jobs to stay with the children and run family issues.

6.3.3 Cultural conflicts

Despite the women's desire to work, there are still some cultural barriers. Such as *"a job that does not suit a lady."* Men are preferred for long working hours, working far from home, and for the frustration caused by people around like acquaintances and other unappreciative men.

Although the interviewees' aspirations had grown higher, they know they are still excluded from a few managerial positions, such as bank managers and field engineers, which are positions exclusively for men. They mentioned that some circumstances even limit them; for instance, a mother cannot travel for work without the father, husband, or older brother's permission:

"... the positions that require a lot of traveling, a married woman would find it difficult to travel frequently. We participate in international exhibitions. Sometimes if a female needed, we hire an Asian instead to go abroad to the exhibition", D9 said.

Another reason that conflicts with UAE women's career development is the long working hours. Most interviewees expressed their discontent with long hours of work that could lead to rejecting a higher managerial position. For instance, D7, who is an executive manager, said:

"I thought of leaving the company and get a relaxed job in the public sector with limited working hours, which was very easy." And D8, the chief engineer of designers, repeated: "Well, here we have very long working hours, and the work is stressful and hectic."

Living far from the workplace is another difficulty in the development of UAE women's careers. Some females have experienced living far from big cities. They had detailed this issue when they were talking about their career path. For instance, A4 felt bitter about leaving her job because of living far from her work, especially when she had a baby:

"When I got married, and I had to live far from Abu Dhabi, I had to leave my job."

D8 also described the difficulties of commuting from remote areas in the desert to cities where jobs are: *"... there is no way for a lady to have a career life while living there."*

Two interviewees have also mentioned the challenge and frustration caused by those around them, who dispute their professional capacities:

"Common, you are not going to start a business now; you are not very young" my reply was always the age is only a number, and there are no limits for an ambitious person" (D9).

For S4, who is much younger than D9, the perception is similar:

"it is not an obstacle, I can't put it this way, it is about competitors, of course, you will always have those people that could demean you, that could break you down, you know, but you will continue." She admitted that she was perplexed about continuing or quitting, but she got over it: "I can tell what did I feel; for some days, I felt I don't know whether I continue, or I should quit ... I didn't know".

Men still represent a potential challenge in facilitating or hindering the career of working women. For example, suppose the wife's job requires traveling, and the couple has two-three kids. In that case, the wife needs the husband's permission to go because, culturally, a lady cannot travel without her male tutor (father, husband, or brother). A5 further explained:

"If my husband decides I stay at home and don't go on a business trip, sometimes for a reason and other times for no reason, then I can't go."

D4, who is also single, emphasized the same idea:

"If males, responsible for the ladies, do not approve their work, they could easily hinder their career path development; in fact, they could freeze it."

Finally, D5 mentioned unappreciation as a career path difficulty, not only at work but also from the husbands:

"Lack of motivation and this should be from her family as well. I mean, I have many of my friends who left their jobs and stayed at home because they were not appreciated. We ladies like to be praised when we are doing something we think is a good thing to do. So, if she is not appreciated by the husband who is the most important person for her, she gets upset and decides to leave, and she would say, why am I excelling efforts outside my house when I am not appreciated for that?"

6.3.4 Work conflicts

These conflicts are mainly related to changing the workplace and communicating with expatriates.

Although changing the workplace is a way of climbing and attaining a managerial position, it is not a favoured practice. The interviewees were not pleased to change the workplace and experience new management. D3, an investment consultant, considers it troublesome:

"for me changing the management, the colleagues around was a bit of a hard effort. Every time I had to prove myself. Although it wasn't that difficult, it was a little bit troublesome with my family and little kids."

In addition, and according to A1, expatriates avoid talking to citizens:

"The difficulty was always with expatriates avoiding communicating with us UAE citizens. I felt there was always a barrier to communication between them and me. And every time an expatriate was dismissed from his job to be replaced by a UAE citizen all the rest were very much reserved with us, this has been an obstacle."

A2, an assistant manager in a construction company, added:

"I don't know how to say that, but I mean other nationalities tend to sit together; they don't join us.."

The resettlement law application gives employment priority to UAE citizens, so sometimes expatriates are replaced by citizens, without a just cause. D10 left her work in the public sector because her job was involved in such implementation, which made her feel wrong about expatriates:

"Watching people sacked not for being bad at work, but to be replaced by citizens This has been a challenge that I couldn't take really. I was responsible for sending all the positions that will be replaced by nationals."

In a nutshell, the main obstacles that were encountered throughout the career path of these women were: individual contradictions, such as unwillingness to work and self-efficacy, work-family contradictions related to being able to balance work commitments and good motherhood; cultural contradictions, which involved performing a job that suits a woman, with neither long working hours nor far from home. Finally, the interviewees reported some frustration related to the lack of appreciation for their work. They need to change jobs and continuously demonstrate their self-worth, in addition to some workplace difficulties caused by the replacement of expatriates.

6.4 UAE women career coping

The factors that helped these women cope and progress in their careers are: (1) having the support of the family, certainly from parents, brothers, or husband, who financed household staff; (2) having the competence and skills required to perform the job; (3) having a positive workplace environment and relationship with expatriates at work; in addition to (4) accepting the challenge and learning the needed skills to succeed in a managerial job. The Table below illustrates these findings.

Career path coping			
Includes references on the factors that helped the female to cope and progress in her career path. Such as: having the support of her family. Parents, brothers, or husband who finance having maids to help at home. The positive attitude and good relations between them and the expats. In addition to having their developed interpersonal skills, accepting the challenge and succeeding.			
Family support	Work atmosphere Expats/Nationals	Interpersonal skills	Accept challenge, succeed, and have relevant competencies
Support was provided by mothers if they lived close by. Fathers, brothers, and husbands financed and facilitated domestic workers to help in the house and with the children.	The work atmosphere between them and the expats was positive, although some had difficulties at first, then there was a way and friendly cooperative atmosphere prevailed. The expats helped them to cope and perform their jobs well.	Their good interpersonal skills have helped them cope with work. They have related those skills to the training they got after university, their universities, and majors or life abroad.	Every work has challenges, an individual can overcome all of them as he/she learns from his/her mistakes and learns from others. The interviewees have given importance to having suitable qualifications: their skills in dealing with customers, their strategic opinions and the result of their performance.

Table 25 – Female career path coping

6.4.1 Family support

The females have expressed how they have coped with their career path. Some had their family's support like S2 and A4's mothers helping and supporting them. The majority have solved their problems by having maids, drivers, and some have Chefs. It is the typical situation for working wives in UAE; "... usually, a working mother has at least a maid and a driver." according to the D7 statement, she described it as an absolute solution. However, the most important for females is their husbands' support. S1, Head of quality department in a bank, said importantly:

"If the husband encourages rather than suggests leaving work, it will make a difference, I mean if the man sees the working woman more attractive for him, I think all women would work for sure."
A5 stated proudly, "... he encouraged me very much. He appreciates my work and education. He wants me to have more experience in my work and take higher positions."

D4 emphasized the necessity of men encouragement and support when she said:

"Men should be more flexible, and instead of frustrating her by preventing her from work, they should encourage her and facilitate circumstances for her to work. They are better than before, but we need to go further, and in all Emirates."

6.4.2 Working atmosphere between expatriates and nationals

All participants' comments on the work atmosphere between them and the expatriates were positive. However, some had difficulties first, then there was away, and the work atmosphere became more cooperative. The expatriates helped them perform well and cope with their jobs. Moreover, their replies have shed light on a sensitive issue: the expatriates' bitter feeling when a colleague leaves his/her career, and a UAE female replaces him/her. For example, A5, a development engineer in a gas and oil company, praised how her expatriate supervisor treated her when she was on maternity leave and after returning to work.

"I have to admit that during my maternity leave and two months after, my supervisor was very supportive, he took over my work to facilitate my leaves."

D7 commented on how her expatriate mentor has excelled hard to learn everything about her family's work.

"... having my expert mentor who was always cooling down my fears and explaining all details one step by another helped a lot; he took me to locations to help me imagine the place, he explained all the drawing of the big project he was in charge of managing."

6.4.3 Interpersonal skills (competencies)

The interviewees mentioned the right competencies that have helped them cope with work and its challenges. They have related those skills to the training they got after university, their universities, and their study or life abroad.

S3, the Ph.D. holder, is the best example of taking challenges and facilitate success by overcoming them. In her opinion,

"Every work has challenges ... but a person can overcome all of them as we learn from our mistakes and benefit from others' mistakes. There are no obstacles; we create them. But the obstacles are the natural thing to have in all places, whether at home or work"

The interviewees have given importance for having suitable qualifications, their skills in dealing with customers, their strategic opinions, and their performance.

In a nutshell, participants gave the most significant credit to the family's support, specifically the husband, which indicates the significance of the male figure and family life. They highlighted the work environment's positivity, which shed light on the expatriates' support to Emirati women, in addition to focussing on their competencies related to their performance as managers. The following section contributes to highlighting the participants' career calling as they express their emotions towards their work as managers.

6.5 Career calling

Feeling proud is the prevailing emotion, due to their outstanding achievements as the interviewees see them. Such feelings are drivers to have a more comprehensive network with Sheikhs, who are local motivators (callers) in their leadership role. Consequently, the participants were trusted to carry more responsibilities and be accountable for them. Loving work resulted from the achievements the participants were proud of; they alluded to that expressively. The following Table summarizes the information.

Career Calling		
Feeling proud is the prevailing emotion, due to the great achievements as the interviewees see it. Such emotions are drivers to have a wider network with Sheikhs who are motivators (callers); consequently, the participants were trusted to carry more responsibilities and be accountable for them. Loving work was a result of the achievements the participants were proud of, they alluded to that expressively and they reached the point of considering their work as their identity.		
Proud	Motivators (callers)	Loving work
Being an example of a successful working female citizen, enhanced the feeling of pride which created the sense of commitment to their work.	While working women have grown their network and increased their connections through having more friends and getting involved in a variety of projects of Sheikhs in all spheres. Those figures become motivators (callers).	The interviewees were happy while expressing their positive feeling towards work. A sense of 'calling' existed in their verbal expressions. They kept repeating phrases, such as: "I love my work", "work is my life", "work has shaped my life", "work has drawn my identity...", which define the existence of " <i>career calling</i> ".

Table 26 -Female career calling

6.5.1 Proud

It is the prevailing feeling the interviewees have expressed. Reasons for pride varied. S4 said:

"I'm glad and proud that we UAE ladies are positioned in a place we don't feel threatened. We don't feel that challenged in a bad way; we don't even feel that we are competing with others."

S4 was proud of what the leaders have done to position them to be productive without being stressed or threatened; this is an optimistic discrimination privilege the women managers valued.

Participants were proud of occupying positions used to be for men exclusively. This is an example of a successful working female citizen, proving herself after five-years of maternity leave, their achievements. On top of all, they are proud of being UAE citizens and give credit to their Highness the Country's leaders. D6 said:

"I am proud, and I pride this success to our leaders who have been supporting our integration in the labor market for more than two decades, I think now they notice the success of their vision. UAE women have proved themselves successful in the labor market."

Furthermore, she proudly emphasized the success of women in their jobs when she added:

"You need to meet male managers and ask them about our performance; you would notice their trust in us and our performance."

D8, enthusiastically, had summarized her passion and pride in the hard work she excelled in when she said:

"I managed to be a positive effect on my team. They tell me, 'we are as workaholic as you are. I now have the best team ever of architects and creatives.'"

In short, this pride carries a positive attitude towards the callers' leaders in this respect. They gave the trust and believed in the participants' competences, which enhance their *"career calling."*

6.5.2 Motivators (callers)

Through work, women have grown their network and increased their connections by having more friends and getting involved in various projects of Sheiks in all spheres. A1, being motivated, mentioned that working has facilitated meeting their Highness the Sheiks and discussing critical issues related to the country and women, motivating her. The leaders enhance this positive attitude towards work in her. A3 has expressed her loyalty to the

leaders, and she committed herself and her female peers to help develop the UAE citizens in all UAE districts. She alluded to those living in the desert and remote areas.

"We need to please our governors who have really improved the image of our country, and we are now in the lead among Gulf countries in this respect," she said.

S2 said:

"... it allowed meeting significant people that in normal life you need many ways to get an appointment to meet them, they were our colleagues, I met them frequently in each parliament meeting. We were like friends, and I still keep this good relationship with them,"

In sum, being proud results from subordinates' joint efforts to leaders named "callers" as they have inspired them, trusted them, and motivated them once they met the women managers. As a result, the more the leaders delegate the responsibilities on women, the more motivated and involved they got.

6.5.3 Loving work

The interviewees were happy while expressing their positive feeling towards work. A sense of 'calling' existed in their verbal expressions. They kept repeating phrases, such as:

"I love my work," "work is my life," "work has shaped my life," "work has drawn my identity..."

A2, the assistant manager in her family business, said:

"I am used to my work now. I started in the accounting department now I am the Head of the accounting department, Assistant Manager, and a board member. I do love my work, and I feel financial issues are really my responsibility."

A4, a public relations manager in a gas and oil company, when asked whether she would leave her job for any reason, replied: *"I would never leave my work, I love it."* D4, the customer relations manager, stated, *"This work has drawn my identity; it is my life."* And D2, senior credit manager, confirmed: *"work for me is my beautiful life."*

In sum, such positive emotions have enhanced the concept of career calling. The participants consider their work as an identity. Adding to that, their networking with their Highness Sheiks highlighted their pride and made them accountable for the success of the UAE's leaders' vision and their fellow citizens.

6.6 Career prospects

Career prospects include career drivers and future difficulties. The interviewees have qualifications, a good reputation, varied experience, and determination in their current position, which count for them in the future. Their connections and participation in his Highness Sheik Mohammad's projects gave them credit to be distinguished. In the family business, new companies, product lines, and branches can be open in the future, as the following Table illustrates.

6.6.1 Career drivers

Career drivers include: (1) women's vision, (2) better circumstances, (3) easier employment and management possibilities, and (4) women further movement.

Career prospects	
Includes career development drivers and the foreseen obstacles.	
Career Drivers	Future Difficulties/Obstacles
Working women have become effective planners for their future career, and they aspire to have their own business, having a political role like being a minister, and being a GM in the family business, they referred to the better circumstances they have: such as, their good leaders, their free education, the good salaries and having domestic help that facilitate their work out of the house. Their further movements: now that they are employed, skilled and given high positions at work, they look forward to developing a more liberal community less masculine and capable of giving the chance to make decisions and be accountable for them.	The interviewees envisioned future difficulties: (1) women taking men managerial positions, the women aspire positions internationally because they would face a cultural barrier to get such position as Bank Manager in UAE as it is usually occupied by men. (2) higher positions entitle harder effort and longer working hours away from family, and family is always the first priority. (3) developing women involvement in remote areas, other difficulties due to the hard desert life which provokes people's inflexibility.

Table 27- Female career prospects

(1) Women's vision

Women's vision for their future career differed. Some would like to establish their own business, while others would like to have essential government roles. For example, A2, an assistant manager in a construction company, mentioned:

"I want to establish my accounting firm. Next year taxation will start in UAE; companies will need accounting firms to manage their taxes... so, this is my next step."

D7, an executive manager in a real estate company, aspires to be a Minister:

"I would like to be a minister, I started to take projects under his highness' supervision, and I do enjoy working in those projects. His Highness - Sheik Mohammad Bin Rashid - is a leader I am learning a lot from him. All of us working in his projects are highly qualified."

D4 said:

"I will be the GM of one of our companies, I look forward to that, and I will not leave my father at all. I know how he manages his business, and I can be a big help."

(2) Better circumstances

These include: (a) the education the government has provided for free for national citizens, (b) higher salaries, (c) having professional leaders, (d) considerate maternity leaves regulations, and (e) having maids.

Interestingly few stated that it all depends on women's preference and will power: Those who have high aspirations are gainers. The others who are reluctant remain in the traditional housewife role or in the spoilt self-indulgent daughters/sisters.

(3) Easier employment and management possibilities

The females' opinion sheds light on the idea of employment for ladies as vital. A5 noted:

"Nowadays, women have a golden opportunity to develop their career; our leaders want us to take part in this move of development in UAE, and in my opinion, we ladies should not lose this opportunity. The time has come for UAE women to prove efficiency in this move."

D10:

"Work now for a lady is no longer difficult; she doesn't need her family to be close to her to help. Other facilitated means can provide all the help needed, besides law and regulations have also been so supportive for working mothers."

(4) Women further movements

Now that the women have been employed, trained, and given high positions at work, A4 suggests another responsibility of developing the UAE society's masculine culture:

"We need to improve the image of our masculine culture and prove that we are open to having women sharing decision making."

D5 illustrates how she could influence her brothers' decisions in their family business and the family:

"Many times, I discuss issues with my brothers, and I manage to influence their companies' decisions. My nieces always refer to me in their education issues."

D12 expressed her healthy attitude towards males when she said:

"It is time they are faced with their mistakes. I'm probably one of the minorities, but soon there will be more cases of rejection of men's abuse of our feelings."

S1 reflects another attitude when she said:

"We want to be independent financially ... This might not suit all men. But sooner or later, they will get used to and will submit to it."

6.6.2 Future difficulties/obstacles

Few women envisioned future difficulties that included: (1) women taking men managerial positions, (2) higher positions entitle more challenging effort and longer working hours away from family, (3) developing women involvement in the remote areas.

(1) Women taking men managerial positions.

For instance, about taking men's roles, A1, who is Head of the insurance department in a bank, looks forward to gaining an international branch manager role abroad. She observed:

"If I won't have the opportunity to be a branch manager in UAE as it is always Men's position in our bank so far, then abroad will be fine."

(2) Ascending to higher positions:

A4 – a public relation manager in an oil and gas company – illustrates her hesitation to go to a higher managerial position and noted:

".. In fact, I was suggested for a higher position in another Gas company, but here for the moment is very much suitable for my circumstances as a mother."

(3) Developing women involvement in remote areas:

S3, who is Chargé affairs and a Professor - noted:

"If you go far from the big cities a bit deep into the desert, you will notice that the community remains tribal, and the customs and traditions of this society are hard, they don't prefer much the civil society that our country is going fast towards."

A3 – an investment consultant - emphasized this:

"I believe we all have to collaborate and be part of the development of those remote places in UAE; we need to upgrade all UAE citizens regardless of their location in big cities or remote areas deep in the desert.. "

To summarise career prospects, as they have all aspects of growing their vision big, they tend to establish their own companies, being in critical public positions and share in future women's development movements. Despite that, they still foresee future obstacles, such as: taking high positions that have exclusively been for men to manage, ascending to higher positions, and developing women's involvement in remote places.

7 Discussion

To be parsimonious, the discussion will address each research question. Each category of the findings will be compared to the previous literature to define the similarities, and the gaps that the findings could fill in, and how applicable are the SCCT and PT theories to understand UAE women managers' career path development

7.1 How do UAE women managers describe their career paths?

In answering this first research question, the interviewees have explained their (1) educational history, (2) entrance in the labor market, and (3) the main career stages they have experienced.

7.1.1 Educational history

The participants proudly explained their educational path as the first step into having a managerial career. All of them have finished their university degrees, and some completed their post-graduate studies, which indicate their growing desire to develop themselves. They emphasized the fact that most women are now highly educated. This finding is consistent with earlier reports from Gallant and Pounder (2008), who observed UAE women's continuous development since the late 1990s. Importantly, the UAE's culture remains a conservative and reserved Muslim country, as evidently expressed by the participants who studied in segregated system institutions (Sabban, 2002). However, the findings also indicate a change in the UAE society towards being fewer conservative or having a "*controlled openness*," as half of the participants have studied in American universities in the UAE or abroad.

Nonetheless, all shared the cultural and Islamic "*Quiwama*" practice (Del Papa, 2012) of men being protective of women by requiring women to travel with a male figure (the husband, a brother, or male cousins studying in the same city or university abroad). This finding mimics an earlier study of El-Haddad (2006), who noted the Country's growth movement towards generalized higher education for UAE citizens. As education is for free, women outnumber men in higher education enrolment. Education became a means of development for women as they see it. Moreover, due to the wealth the UAE society has been exposed to, preserving a prestigious image continues with the participants attending reputable universities like UAE or AUS. Such finding is consistent with an earlier report

from Wilkins and Huisman (2015), who observed that women tend to attend reputable higher educational institutions to preserve their social image.

The findings also showed two features that affected the interviewees' university major choice: an educated father or mother, and other early influencers, such as the Royal family. These results are consistent with the findings from Gallant and Pounder (2008) and Madsen and Cook (2010), who noted the effect of the support and encouragement of UAE Royal family members and leaders of the country.

Regarding UAE women's education, one observed that they are highly educated, and their society is changing towards being more liberal. However, this is a "*controlled openness*" due to the cultural and Islamic "*Quivama*" practice. Their educated parents still influence their major university choice in addition to the influence of the Royal family. Moreover, women engineers remain to be in the minority compared to other majors. The participants graduated from as they were affected by their fathers' education or family business. Such finding is consistent with Mahani and Molki (2011) study results, who noted the fathers' influence on women. However, in the current study, not all fathers were from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) backgrounds, although their businesses relate to engineering.

7.1.2 Entrance in the labour market

The findings identified three elements that facilitated the participants' entrance into the labour market: (1) UAE citizens privileges, (2) UAE female privileges, and (3) social and family network. Overall, privilege is a common denominator that not all women entirely acknowledged. Instead, some prefer to interpret it as an expression of their mission to contribute to the Country's common good.

(1) UAE citizens' privileges

The participants alluded to the positive Emiratization laws implemented in the country and how policies have been set to facilitate their entrance into the labor market, which was acknowledge before by Godwin (2006). Specifically, in the public sector, the law has facilitated women's managerial positions, and expatriates were helpful when the Emirati women lacked suitable qualifications.

(2) UAE female privileges

In the findings, the participants commented on four privileges: (a) regulations and maternity leaves, (b) having flex-time, (c) work location preference, and (d) domestic support.

The participants alluded to the privilege of having extended maternity leave until their babies are secured enough to be left, which was found before (Ibrahim & Al Marri, 2015). They have noted organizations' practice in extended maternity leave to minimizing work-family conflict women suffer in the UAE.

It is evident that prioritizing the family and having more children are cultural and contextual practices that can conflict with a career focus and development. However, having domestic maids (mostly migrants from less developed countries) is feasible and considered a local privilege for the UAE women. This finding is consistent with Marmenout and Lirio (2014) work about the challenges related to maintaining Emirati women in the workforce in the UAE emerging market. The authors noted that having domestic help is a means that helps women focus on their work while their children are secured and well pampered. The participants were at ease addressing the house management's questions.

(3) Social and family network

All the participants emphasized the role of *nepotism* in gaining their positions, and such finding is consistent with the previous studies on nepotism in the UAE (Kafaji, 2011; Yount & Rashad, 2008). All reported nepotism and "*wasta*" as a common practice, a fundamental prerequisite for the Country's development and success. Interestingly, the finding is not consistent with the findings from Omair (2010). She observed and classified four types of UAE women careers. Two were free from nepotism and depend on the woman's effort to climb the career ladder, which is the progressive career that leads to top management. The moderate career starts from the primary admin work and rarely gets to the top management level.

In the present study, these patterns were not observed. Such inconsistency in findings might be justified because now there is a larger pool of working Emirati citizens. As a result, everyone has a relative or a friend who can push their employability to facilitate fellow UAE citizens. While at the time of Omir's (2010) study, working ladies were much less, so the social network was much smaller.

7.1.3 Main Career Stages

In answering the question of knowing how do UAE women managers describe their career paths, the findings highlight a career model that contains four main stages: (1) first, the women started with an internship or government training (Nelson, 2004), then (2) their first job, which is either in the public sector or in the family business, after (3) some completed their careers in the family business, while others (4) had to change their workplace till they got to their current managerial position. Meanwhile, all received advanced training related to their position. These career stages somewhat resonate with the stages identified by Olid (2013) with significant differences. Firstly, and while Olid found many women identified with a *life that was in another place* – notably taking care of the family – and thus work assumed a subsidiary role; in this research, one found managerial work taking a central life role so that “*My life is **not** in another place.*” Actually, the interviewees visualize their career path as a progressive (and successful) ladder, starting by an internship or government training immediately after graduation, then moving into a first job in the public sector, which provided more training while climbing the career ladder to a middle management level position. Herein, Emirati women encountered, for the first time, the challenge of balancing work and family roles. Then they tend to freeze their career and enjoy their middle-management position along with the family before moving to the upper levels of management once they have better family circumstances (e.g., grown children). Such a career trajectory is not entirely consistent with Olid's model. Her participants were all reluctant to keep progressing to a higher management level or even keeping up a middle management position. Instead, they stepped back and left work to stay at home. So, they retreated backward to remain at home for work-family issues, while in this sample, those who did that were few and have taken just a temporary halt.

As for the second career model found in this study: “*Taking opportunities,*” this sizes two paths, such as (a) start working in the family business: through an internship, training, and getting the know-how of the business; to then either continue in the family business; or (b) get a managerial opportunity in the public sector. Such findings are in line with Olid's (2013) career model. However, while in Olid's model, Emirati women-only climbed to the middle management level, in this study, one found sizable opportunities for career development towards the top management level.

Finally, and different from Olid (2013), who found that “*Everything is for the organization,*” in this study, one found that “*What the woman manager does is for the country,*” which

is a step higher in the aspirations of Emirati women. As shown, the woman manager aims to fulfill the institution's objectives, which contributes to the Country's economic development, with an attitude of being continuously ready for new managerial opportunities, for the institution or for other organizations that may profit from their skills. The findings are consistent with Olid's (2013) study in facing the challenges and somewhat prioritizing career choices. However, the Emirati women from this study reported: (1) more career options, such as changing from a family business to the public sector for a national need of her expertise; and probably coming back to family depending on the managerial opportunities available; (2) different priorities: while having a family and growing children remains a local requirement, it has to be compatible with a professional and competitive career, for which national and institutional regulations (e.g., maternity leave, segregated offices, flexible work-time) provide the required support; (3) a higher-level career purpose, which is not bounded to individual preferences and/or organizational needs but is linked to the developing the image of the country. Also different from Olid (2013), none of the participants have experienced career path paralysis due to the merger and absence of mentors, so the Dead-End model does not apply to this sample. Furthermore, all participants were optimistic and happy for their career achievements and nurtured different but competitive prospects.

Figure 2 conceptualizes the Emirati women managers' career path models that can be drawn from the findings. This model is based on Olid (2013) models of UAE women's careers but was inductively extended by the present study's data. As shown, and comparatively to the original (Olid, 2013), the current model includes three career models that highlight Emirati women committed to their managerial careers and engagement into the economic and social development of the UAE, herein named: (1) "*My life is not in another place*"; (2) "*Taking opportunities*"; (3) "*Everything for the country*." Contrary to Olid's model, this study findings show that UAE women managers did not choose to go back to their careers in the first model. Instead, they froze it in a middle management position for some time, until they get freer from childbearing and family commitments. Besides, in the "*Taking opportunity*" model, two paths are recognized: one that starts in the family business and continues there. The other takes a managerial opportunity in the public sector and might return to the family business (if applicable). These distinct patterns reflect Emirate women's heterogeneous options regarding educational and work preferences. And the third path model revealed by this study, "*Everything is for the country*," highlights women's career path in the public sector and the generalized objective to grow high the UAE's image.

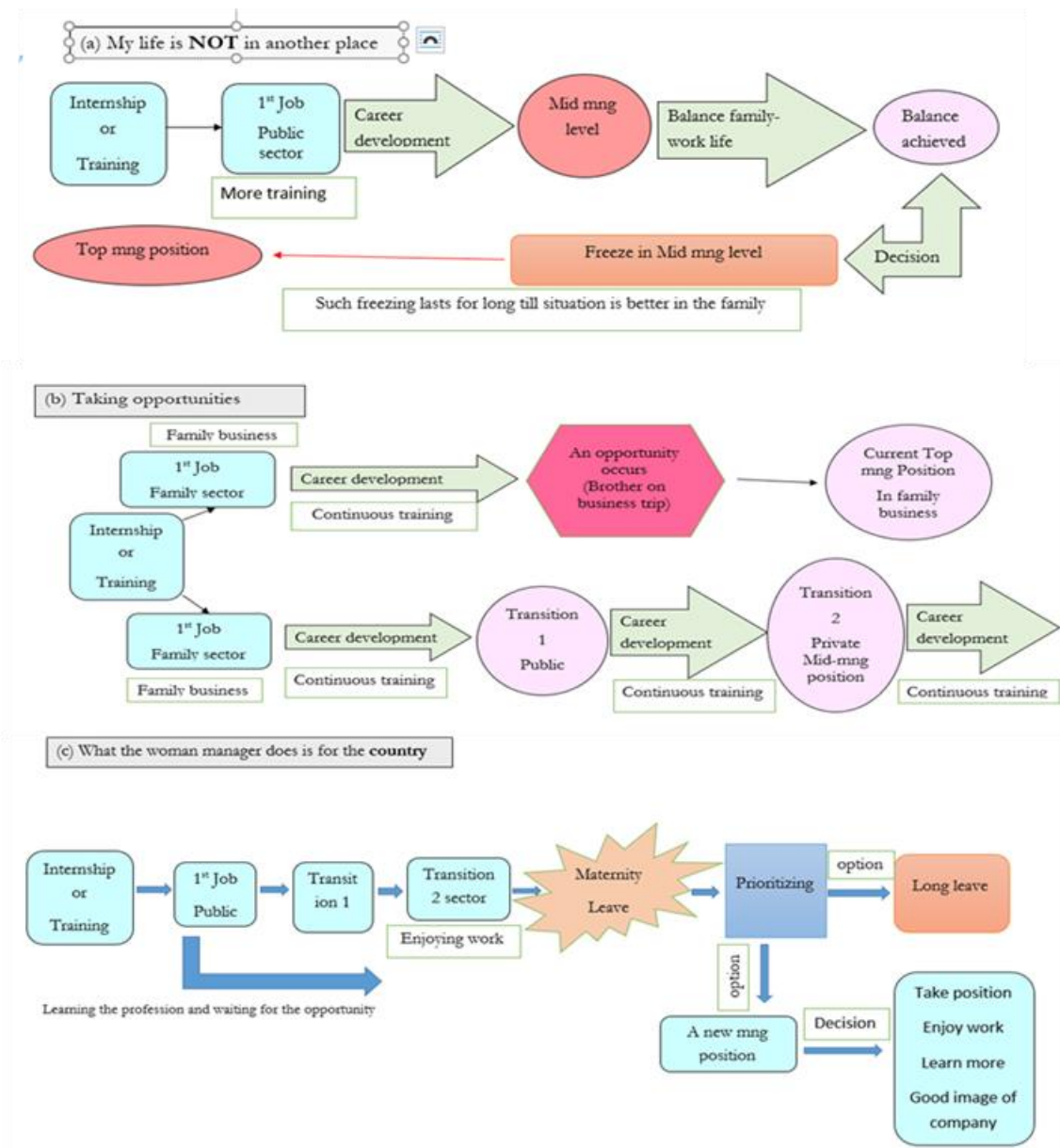


Figure 2 - Emirati Women Managers Career Path Models - My life is not in another place, Taking opportunities, and What she does is for the Country

Furthermore, it is noted that the career models of UAE women managers that emerge from this study match with a few career transitions drawn in the "*Kaleidoscope Careers*" model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005) and mismatch with others in the same model. In their path, the change is always related to the family needs and local expectations about women's roles, especially for married participants. They choose to stay in the same middle management position for a more extended period and/or stay in a workplace closer to the family location. And some, mostly those unmarried, expressed their enthusiasm to go to a new challenge the Sheikhs wanted them to go to as they get used to their previous job and

aspire other unique experiences. According to the UAE's culture (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011), the woman accompanies her husband if his career entitles relocation; however, none of the participants experienced that, nor the reverse: so far, no UAE husband relocated to follow the wife managerial career.

Moreover, none of them explained their career transitions based on being offered a larger salary or greater security. Having greater flexibility in time, for example, was frequently mentioned as a good reason to change. According to the interviewees, once offered a new position, no one decided for them. They felt free to accept it or not. Finally, another mismatch with the "*Kaleidoscope Careers*" model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) is that corporate policies are never in the way of UAE women's career development. On the contrary, they favor facilitating women empowerment as it is elaborated later on.

7.1.4 In sum

In answering the first research question – *How do UAE women managers describe their career paths?* – one found that the Preference Theory (Hakim, 2006) is partially applicable to interpret our findings on Emirati women managers. Women managers are heterogeneous in their preferences and priorities, especially on the conflict between family and employment. In the context of a wealthy UAE culture, they hold distinct preferences, successful academic achievements, and, thereafter, heterogeneous employment patterns and work histories. However, all Emirati women spell out their desire to develop themselves, which took place by choosing a major for vocational preference to finance themselves and to be less dependable on male superiors. Such aspiration signals a change in traditional attitudes in the Gulf area. More open-minded parents are receptive to educating women abroad and are supportive of their career choices (e.g., engineering majors), despite having prominent universities in the Country.

This study's findings also show that Emirati women managers have a very positive and proud view of their career paths. Although they started with no plans for their careers (no clear expectations), their cognitive skills developed through higher education, which was key to their ambitious aspirations. Furthermore, the political efforts toward decreasing the dependence on expatriates, especially in powerful managerial positions, triggered their entrance into the labor market, which was depicted as a mission to contribute to the common good.

7.2 How have UAE women managers been chosen for their managerial positions?

Data analysis revealed that Emirati women were able to secure a management position through career influencers, a few mechanisms of career progression, some personal career distinguishers, and gendered relationships. The findings generally confirmed earlier reports (Al Nowais, 2004; Kafaji, 2011), who showed that nepotism is essential for gaining a managerial position. However, this study findings add to our understanding of women in management careers, the importance of contextual factors, which, in this case, are essentially represented by the Emiratization strategy.

7.2.1 Career influencers, and how they affected female careers

Among the critical career influencers identified in the findings is the UAE Royal Family, which is similar to the study of Al Nowais (2004), whose participants considered the leaders' vision a way of local indoctrination. This leads to subordination to attain a higher and common good to regain control of the UAE economy from expatriates' hands. Interestingly, most women elaborated on their admiration towards Her Highness Sheikha Lubna for her hard work and vision. She is considered a referent model and a source of inspiration for Emirati women managers, who see her as a hardworking woman, and a model of dedication to a cause.

This shows how much the careers of UAE women managers are embedded in the local culture and the Country's legacy. Emirati women managers own the mandate to work and replace expatriates in local workplaces. When they observed the women role models within the UAE patriarchal culture, they enhanced their motivation and ambition to higher positions. Such observation is also an indication of the useful role of female managers who are leaders. HH Sheikha Lubna is a significant active and influential female figure in the government now. Although she is not one of the research participants, she has been alluded to by many participants in different contexts. This referent towards leader figures is not common in the literature. However, in this research, one found that most qualified women in management roles have become familiar with women members of the Royal family because the number of qualified women in the UAE is still small and because Royal members often come to university campuses. This closeness-built women empowerment: their ambition grew as they aspired higher positions in the government. As a result, they have had access to challenging work opportunities, including in private contexts. They have pursued a

management career that is difficult to build in other countries with different labor needs. Given the significance of this finding, future research might extend this approach by examining the *forms of influence* wielded by Highness females and their contribution to the UAE success. Moreover, future research might explore women managers in other Gulf countries to determine how other female Sheiks' impact (or not) women's career progress.

Family members are also prominent influencers for all participants, determining their career path and progression. In previous studies (Bahwan, 2017; Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, Ajaif, & McKeown, 2014), the family's role was more of a controlling source: controlling the choice of major and work, by focusing on male influencers. Instead, this study underscores the parents' role, are icons of dedication and performance, and the focus is on the father and mother. Several interviewees noted how the parents were (and still are) models of respect and appreciation of all employees. Actually, three participants considered their educated mothers their icons for the responsibility they handle in building their personalities, in addition to their commitment to a professional job. This reflects the developing image of women in UAE society. Parents' role is moving from a "controlling form" to set an "admirable example" for the women who participated in this research. One should note, however, that not all participants belong to wealthy and politically connected families. Several interviewees have built their career paths by actioning the social network of extended family and building their network based on the attended universities' alumni.

The literature about Emirati women managers has not tackled their (top) managers' role as career influencers, which was an intriguing issue to explore. The findings have shown that superiors – both national and expatriates – acted upon accepting women's presence in the workplace, supporting, and mentoring them. Furthermore, they aided in case women need to take care of the family and then return. Also, respecting the local tradition of bearing segregated offices was acknowledged as a sign of respect.

This study findings document the remarkable development of Emirati women managers, which reflect the maturity of their professional experience and partially explains how they were appointed managers. While now they are well educated and experienced women who are able to discuss, convince and share decision-making with masculine employers, top managers, and political decision-makers, all started by following the call of the Royal family. In a patriarchal culture, they represented their highnesses' orders, so execution was deemed necessary (Al Nowais, 2004).

These Emirati women managers are rational in their analysis and sharper in their observations, as was reported throughout their quotes. They took benefit from the available opportunities and pushed for progression. Therefore, and to fully understand women's access to a managerial position, one needs to identify in more detail the mechanisms of career progression, which are discussed following.

7.2.2 Mechanisms of career progression

In previous studies (e.g., Itani, Sidani, & Baalbaki, 2011; Tlaiss, 2013), career development, motivation, and entrepreneurial activities were related to values and culture. What makes this study significant, however, is the revelation of other mechanisms of women career progression in management, in addition to entrepreneurship, such as: (1) changing jobs, (2) delegated tasks, (3) sharing decision making, as well as (4) entrepreneurial activity.

(1) Changing jobs

Being flexible to change jobs helped knowledge accumulation through continuous training until women get to a top managerial position. Emiratization law has facilitated gaining managerial positions in the public sector, but women climbed the ladder upward. "*Taking opportunities*" contribute to attain a managerial position's rapidly, whether in the family business or elsewhere. This career progression mechanism shows that despite the "Emirate privileges," women need to be agentic to accept the challenge and cope with increasing expectations towards women's roles in UAE society.

(2) Delegated tasks

This behavior was acknowledged as essential to the participants who work in the family business. Gaining "trust" has facilitated gaining access to top managerial positions after proving efficiency in executing the managerial tasks delegated to them successfully and in the absence of their father or brother, who are the top managers in the family business. The delegation, which is a leadership requirement in Western societies, was herein mentioned as a required mechanism for career advancement: either because women performed successfully the tasks delegated in them or because they start delegating to others (e.g., expatriates and trustful subordinates) to be ready for higher accomplishments.

(3) Sharing decision making

Unlike Goby and Erogul's (2011) study, sharing decision-making is a powerful career progression mechanism, especially in a collectivist culture where the men are the sole

decision-makers. The findings have identified three mechanisms pushing shared decision-making:

(a) Political leaders' role models in that they consult women's opinions and engage them in the decision-making process even if the final decision is made by their Highness Sheiks (males or females).

(b) Family role models, in that within the family, business decisions are discussed, and women's opinions are valued and included in business making, although the final decision is presented by the male head of the family. This is a significant result that addresses earlier calls to examine family members' roles, including women, in family business' sustainability (Oudah et al., 2018). As found, the larger the family, the higher the chances to grow in the company, so women managers' presence in family businesses is noticeable, making 30 percent of the participants in this study.

(c) The official regulations and laws followed in local institutions and private organizations like banks, universities, or other private businesses, facilitate standardizing decision making, so women managers can make the decisions that follow the law and comply with the rules. As a result, whether a man is managing, or a woman does not make any difference. This marks a significant enhancement of career progression, for the fact that women can be top managers and decision-makers in institutions like banks, universities, and similar industries, which follow the rules by the book.

(4) Becoming an entrepreneur

The last mechanism of acquiring a managerial position was by changing one's career and became an entrepreneur. Previous studies have reported this mechanism on women entrepreneurs in the UAE (Davidson & Burke, 2016; Itani et al., 2011; Majumdar & Varadarajan, 2013). Herein, the only entrepreneur participant started her business after growing her children, which was a significant determinant for the timing but not for the aim of owning a business. Interestingly, however, she expressed her wish to hire Emirati female managers from the pool of qualified relatives around her, enhancing the continuation of nepotism in hiring women managers.

7.2.3 Career distinguishers

Similarl to previous findings (Omair, 2010; Tlaiss, 2013), three career distinguishers were identified related to the individual, the family, and contextual. However, participants elaborated at length on the individual distinguishers that made their success: the right level of education, skills, and abilities that were further developed through career progression. Confidence was the most significant individual attribute mentioned by all interviewees. They are able to stand alone and stop depending on the man responsible for them. Besides, the participants also showed a sense of "entitlement." They think of themselves as they were born to be good; therefore, they are good, and all participants recognized that. It is a form of the *self-serving bias* in that "*my skills are responsible for my success.*" The participants expressed how much their interpersonal skills have contributed to their success, and they described these skills in detail: being able to deliver ideas clearly and confidently, accepting criticism to develop themselves later, being outgoing, and open to others' opinions. In this regard, they were less reserved than before, which once more conveys a sense of "entitlement": they can professionally communicate with expatriates ignoring the fact of being Emirati and superior to them. The participants who have experienced several jobs and workplace changes elaborated proudly on their varied experiences as a means of success. They end up becoming closer to expatriates and learning from them, along with their multiple jobs and work changes.

They also elaborated on their commitment level as a success factor, which is quite phenomenal in the context of the wealthy Emirati society, where most educated women do not really need to provide for themselves. Therefore, they conveyed the conviction that such commitment and hard work from successful women deserve recognition. In describing their way of dealing with colleagues and expatriates, these women managers sound quite enlightening: "*given that we are naturally so divine, hardworking, committed and capable, obviously we need to be magnanimous and tolerant towards other less capable humans.*" UAE economic and social change is then a remarkable accomplishment for all Emirati, working women included.

Finally, and in line with previous research (e.g., Tlaiss, 2013), this study's findings show leaders' support as one key contextual factor. Participants also mentioned that the colleagues' and employees supported them because they all have the same objective of attaining the best institutional performance. In the following section, then, men-women relations are highlighted.

7.2.4 Gendered relations

In the UAE, the gendered style of living is culturally and religiously embedded. The segregation policy persists in public higher education institutions (Abdulla, 2007) as in the workplace, which means that most women build gendered friendship networks. In spite of these "*segregated friendships*," most women were indicated to and appointed to relevant positions by male connections, which indicate that women are still building their own managerial network.

The findings reflect the nature of the patriarchal UAE culture according to the participants' descriptions of men and women images in society. Men have a private world of their own with their friends. It does not mean wives are neglected, as they have everything they need, including their own activities with their female friends, siblings, and parents, as illustrated by several participants. However, male dominance persists in most UAE families, and this has a traditional root. Men are counted as heads of their families, and the legacy continues.

Interestingly, having the wives responsible for homes is similar to what has been documented in Western culture, where working women accumulate household chores (West & Fenstermaker, 2002). According to the participants' feedback, they do not rely on men helping hand with children, as mothers are taken for granted in this regard. Helping at home, as one interviewee reported, is a new and rare phenomenon for Emirati men. Such observation entitles more research to be done to determine if this is a new trend at the level of male attitudes towards their role in helping wives at home or still an exceptional behavior.

7.2.5 In Sum

In answering the second research question – *How have UAE women managers been chosen for their managerial positions?* one found that Emirati women are now more educated and qualified. Although the participants mentioned career distinguishers similar to other women in the world and already documented in the literature, they have lengthily explained how their individual characteristics accounted for their progressive career paths. Overall, they portray themselves as open to new opportunities and highly agentic, which is in sharp contrast to the individual reserved nature known for the UAE culture. After all, they acknowledged that nepotism continues to be the means to have a good managerial opportunity. None-the-less, challenges exist, as summed in the following section, which made UAE women managers employ some significant coping strategies.

7.3 What career challenges have they faced, and how have they coped?

The findings identify four challenges Emirati women have faced, (1) individual contradictions, (2) work-family life conflicts, (3) cultural conflicts, and (4) work conflicts. Despite such challenges, they demonstrated effective coping strategies to overcome them.

7.3.1 Individual contradictions

Such challenges include: (1) women unwillingness to work, and (2) self-efficacy.

(1) Unwillingness to work.

The interviewees recognized that other educated Emirati women prefer not to commit to work. They would rather have a free life by either raising their children if married or have fun with friends if single, following an *"escape coping strategy."* This is the housewife's style of living that often entails lower-order coping methods like cognitive avoidance, avoidant actions, denial, and wishful thinking (Skinner et al. 2003). This finding is consistent with the patriarchal culture that places women at home (Sabban, 2002). Actually, Emirati's prosperous life does not require women to work or have a career to finance their family (Al-Sayegh, 2001). Unlike women in the West, who frequently cannot choose and need to work to support the family, especially if they are single parents, the interviewed women emphasized their most exceptional contribution. According to the report of OECD countries, 2014 (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014), family database (the latest data available), the average rates of working single mothers across OECD countries vary from 39.5% on average for those with low educational achievement to 79.4% for those with high academic achievement. According to the interviewees, no comparable data is available for the UAE, but financing the family is still a "male job" even for dual-earner couples like them. So, in their case, they had no need to provide for family expenses (solely upon male members), which affords them to build a managerial career founded on their preferences and skills.

These findings are consistent with the fifth historical change of PT (Hakim, 2006) illustrated in (Table 1). The new setting Emirati women are in now is having new policies and a rapidly developing economy that facilitates their employment without having financial responsibilities to provide for the family. This is why some Emirati women prefer not to work or have a career. Their heterogeneity is reflected in their responses to social engineering and policies in the modernized UAE by being more involved in their careers and growing aspirations to gain prominent positions and higher managerial positions. Their careers flow according to the social and family environment. This corresponds to Budjanovcanin's (2013)

study; the participants expressed their primary and secondary orientations, family, and work. To then explain their strategies in adapting to work-life circumstances, with the remaining national occupational cultures.

(2) Self-efficacy

The findings show how proving efficiency at work was a challenge for the participants. This is cultural, as many men still see women as incompetent in handling managerial tasks (Vine et al., 2010). Such women stereotypes invited a persistent attitude of proving ones' self-efficacy by succeeding in education, mainly to demonstrate the skills and ability to stand-out among male brothers or cousins. Their determined attitude personalizes the progression models of SCCT and the development of their cognitive skills (Lent, 2005). The participants chose their academic path to help them get a job after graduation, follow their career plans to achieve more ambitious goals, considering their jobs as identities. There is a high level of self-efficacy in the participants' persistence to challenge women stereotypes. They have fulfilled their own expectations as they have worked hard and built their network by conquering their leaders' trust to occupy prominent positions (Lent et al., 2002). In addition, they seek higher work and career standards that are also identity goals (Lent, 2005), which relates to career calling.

Although Emirati women managers have been privileged by policies of work placements and maternity leaves, and nepotism that guaranteed them good managerial positions (Kafaji, 2011; Yount & Rashad, 2008), they still strive to cope with showing their efficiency. Regarding how they coped with these tensions and drawing upon the Skinner et al. (2003) model, illustrated in (Table 2), the participants used their problem-solving competence. Moreover, they were self-reliant in building strong bonds with leaders, managers, and colleagues, seeking information and knowledge. In addition, they were cooperative and committed.

7.3.2 Work-family life conflicts

The findings have illustrated how the family is always prioritized overwork and how this is socially expected and enacted. The interviewees actually believed that the most important person to be with are their children. They mentioned that mothers should/would sacrifice their jobs to stay with the children. This was illustrated by some women who changed jobs or left their work (for five years or longer) when they were young. Some were even obsessed with the idea of getting to a higher position, which might keep them distant

from their children. To avoid that conflict, they prefer to freeze in a middle management career until children free them to climb. This career model has been reported by Gallant and Pounder (2008). They noted how women are always the ones who compromise in favour of the family.

Emirati men's preference for women at home, as long as children need, is consistent with Farrell's (2008) findings and confirms that women's change in this regard is not easy. However, in the participants' case, they sought family support (from the mother) who provided emotional support, or domestic help, or both. Two coping strategies have been detected regarding work-family challenges: (1) "*support seeking strategy*" and (2) "*problem solving*" (Skinner et al., 2003). Both coping strategies change the stressful situation and facilitate the participants' focus on their managerial career. Interestingly, however, these women's coping strategies are additional burdens to other older or lower status women. It is like some women's organizational success, related to their higher education and related opportunities, is gain at the expense of less educated, less privileged, and less "Emirati" women.

7.3.3 Cultural conflicts

The findings regarding local cultural conflicts are consistent with previous literature on the UAE and the Western world. The participants alluded to some cultural barriers such as "*a job that does not suit a lady*." In a previous study, Tlaiss (2013) has highlighted the boundaries of Emirati women's experience. Men and women are being located in separate worksites, or women being more emotional and concerned about their staff's well-being, while men are more into organizational well-being. Likewise, another study in UAE (Vine et al., 2010) emphasized that men are preferred in managerial positions and for long working hours. As shown, this study's participants also mentioned that some circumstances still limit them. Such as they cannot travel on work trips without permission (of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, depending on their familial situation).

Consequently, high top managerial positions are still given to men. Such an image of women as less qualified than men for a high corporate role is still common among male management students in the USA, the UK, Germany, China, and Japan (Schein, 2007). This preconception was mentioned by some participants too, who proved their persistence in showing their efficiency, for instance, when the male family members were abroad.

To overcome such cultural challenges, the participants believed the more achievements they attain, the better their management presence will be. This is an illustration of a "*self-reliance coping strategy*," meaning that participants were confident in how they could

lead the business. Such finding challenges their "entitlement" and suggests that despite the existence of the remaining male chauvinist culture, they are adaptive, able to cope, and prove themselves effective.

7.3.4 Work conflicts

Although the findings showed that changing jobs has a positive impact on women's career paths, for some participants, it was troublesome. They found it a challenge to cope with new workplaces, managers, and colleagues, including expatriates. When replacing an expat's position, they encountered some communication problems with other expatriates' colleagues, they needed to deal with, and it was not as smooth as they expected.

The participants followed an "*accommodation coping strategy*" (Brandtstädter & Renner, 1990) to cope with these challenges. They tended to adjust their preferences to the situational constraints using their interpersonal skills in approaching the new challenges, so that a friendly atmosphere prevailed.

In answering the third research question - *What career challenges have UAE women managers faced, and how have they coped?* - one found that despite the privileges sanctioned by Emiratization, local women managers still face a set of challenges that range from cultural and work conflicts to work-family struggles and individual contradictions. To handle these challenges, Emirati women managers chose several coping strategies that only partially resumes the model of Skinner et al. (2003). According to Skinner et al. (2003), coping refers to "*efforts, both cognitive and behavioral, to manage environmental and internal demands and conflicts affecting an individual that tax or exceed a person's resources.*" Interestingly, the findings reveal that Emirati women managers are adaptive and are able to balance between family and work requirements. Despite putting their family's first, they coped through a problem-focused vs. emotional focus approach.

Inspired by Skinner et al. (2003) coping structure, the following figure represents the participants coping structure, which extends our contextualized understanding of Emirati women's managers. The bottom level is "*coping instances.*" This level represents the participants' varied responses to the challenges they have encountered and include:

(1) Individual challenges that consist of two categories: (a) unwillingness to work, where some qualified women followed an "*escape coping strategy.*" (b) Instead, the women managers inquired persist in presenting their professional work impressively following a "*problem-solving coping strategy*" and proving self-efficiency. This relates to SCCT's principle that people and environment influence each other (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Walters, 1977;

Betz & Hackett, 2006). Work challenges have influenced the participants, and their cognitive skills developed to become self-efficient (Lent, 2005). The coping strategies they follow prove their adaptation; consequently, they experience better work conditions as they cope effectively.

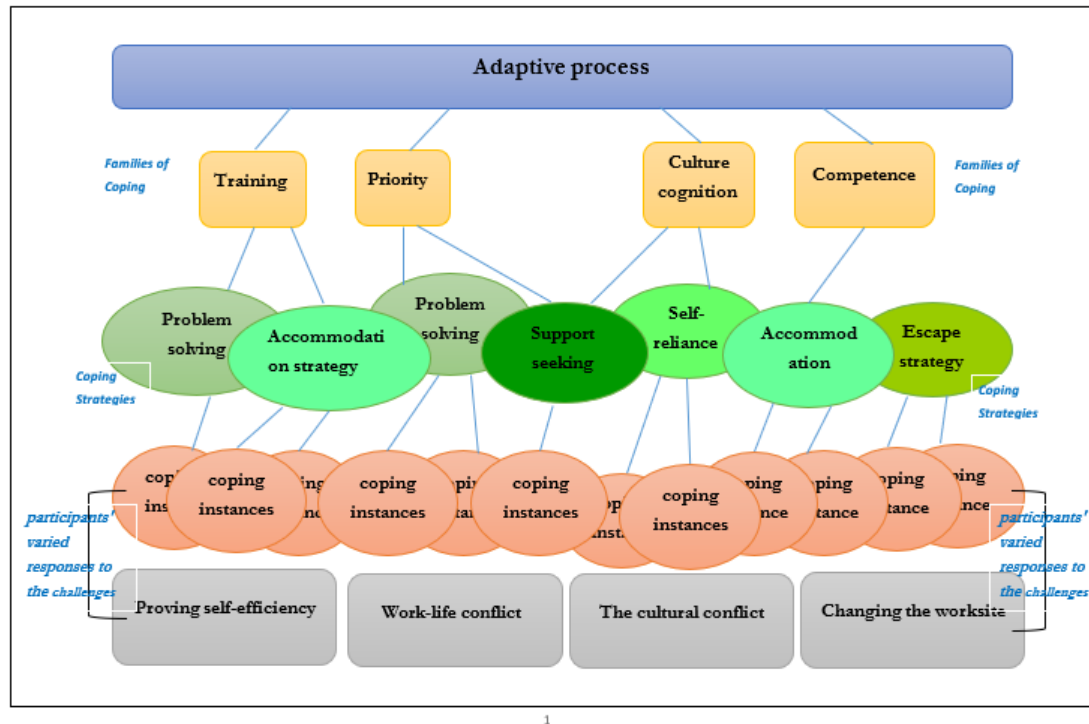


Figure 3 - Emirati Women Managers Career Coping

(2) Work-life conflict, choosing either leaving work for a while, which is a "escape coping strategy," or choose to go on following the "support seeking coping strategy" that leads to "problem-solving coping strategy" as they seek another solution like having domestic help.

(3) The third challenge is the cultural conflict, when the job is not suitable for a woman and men are better suited. The participants were keen on achieving success while considering the cultural context by following a "self-reliance coping strategy."

(4) The last challenge that some participants encountered was work-related when they changed the worksite. This includes changing the environment, managers, and colleagues, some were expatriates and less receptive to being managed by an Emirati woman. Therefore, communicating with them was somewhat problematic. The participants coped with this challenge following an "accommodation coping strategy", by adjusting their personal needs to the constraints they were surrounded with at work.

Given that all participants were optimistic about their challenge, the remaining coping strategies from Skinner et al. (2003) were not adopted. Emirati women managers are not subject to be desperate. As shown, they are positively discriminated against. Despite the patriarchal society they live in, they do not encounter cultural hardships that lead to self-isolation. They are not helpless, and they do not have to submit to any obligation. Moreover, with Emiratization laws that favoured the Emirati national workforce, the opposition coping strategy was not adopted by the participants. They are well qualified and welcomed for employment, so the delegation strategy is useless, except as a progression mechanism. In some situations, the delegation of tasks was required before women become prepared (and trusted) for career advancement.

In Skinner's model, there are two middle levels in the structures that are herein named "*ways of career coping*" (Skinner et al., 2003) and "*career coping strategies*," as illustrated in Figure 3. The strategies encompass the career activities women perform that are named "*families of coping*" and are illustrated in the upper-middle level of Figure 3. They are the families of "*training*," "*priority*," "*culture cognition*," and "*competence*" (i.e., having the relevant interpersonal skills to communicate with new colleagues effectively when changing the worksite).

Overall, the study findings identify five coping strategies used by UAE women managers when dealing with individual, work-family, cultural and professional challenges; four of them were actively followed by the participants, such as problem-solving, support seeking, self-reliance, and accommodation. And the fifth is an escape strategy, followed by those women who do not desire to pursue a career life, as described by the participants. The career coping strategies followed by the participants have enhanced their career calling, which involves a great deal of cultural awareness, positive emotions, and enlightenment towards their work and country. This led to the last emerging research finding related to calling, as discussed in the following section.

7.4 How can calling explain UAE women managerial jobs?

This research's findings indicate that participants feel proud of being known and recognized for their work, which is part of their identity. This finding is consistent with the result of an earlier study by Wrzesniewski et al. (1997), who concluded that having a calling expresses high well-being levels. Furthermore, the participants experienced three elements of career calling. Firstly, the Emirati women managers named a few "*callers*," among them the Royal family and their own family. Both have the vision of empowering women (Bibbo, 2002; Al-Nahayan & Sultan, 1987), so the rulers set decrees of Emiratization to support women's tertiary education, enhance women's work opportunities and facilitate maternity leaves.

Emiratization policies were aimed at decreasing expatriates' presence and their business power to support the UAE development process, but ultimately benefitted women representation in the labor market. A neoclassical conceptualization of calling is detected in this context (Praskova et al., 2014). While one has not noticed a true religious calling, women's recruitment comes from a highly respected external power and is religiously sanctioned.

Secondly, the participants feel their careers as their identity after coping and overcoming all challenges proving their self-efficacy and their ability to balance work-family life. In this context, a kind of modern conceptualization of calling is also uncovered (Praskova et al., 2014), where the participants experience an internal drive of self-fulfillment and self-actualization.

Thirdly, Emirati women managers were confident and satisfied with their management roles by achieving a valuable objective: being self-fulfilled by changing the female image into an effective professional rather than just emotional.

Overall, these findings are consistent with Dik and Duffy (2009) calling approach, who have acknowledged three factors that are illustrative of calling at the workplace:

(1) The concept of an external force order to an individual who feels called to a sort of work. He/she certainly needs a "*caller*," such as a higher power: the needs of the country, society, or family heritage, etc.

(2) One's approach to work goes parallel with comprehensive wisdom of ones' purpose in life: work is either the drive-in experience or a living area. For Emirati women, a managerial job permits them to apply their personal and career preferences along with excelling beyond the highest expectations of their role to the UAE society.

(3) A positive perspective of one's career path. As shown, the participants consider a moral obligation to develop and empower Emirati women all over UAE, which also lies on their shoulders as Emirati educated women managers. This finding illustrates a career calling consistent with other study findings (e.g., Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), which implies a career progression towards maturity. Furthermore, the participants were satisfied with the leaders' appreciation of their skills and involvement in decision-making, which further drives their career engagement and calling. This finding is consistent with the previous study of Duffy and Dick (2013). They noted that appreciation, knowing the skills, interests, and values result in placing the employee in the right position.

Overall, this study findings expand prior research by providing empirical evidence about the careers of Emirati women managers, which extend career development theories. As shown, all Emirati women managers expressed positive emotions towards their jobs and related their success to a "***career calling***." Their achievements resulted from the confluence of contextual hardships related to cultural issues (Afiouni & Karam, 2019) and balancing work-family life. Achieving such balance has motivated them, so they kept progressing to now having no intention to leave their managerial career or lessen down their acquired power. They all share a real attachment to the concept of "***working woman***," and all emphasized a serious concern about their work. Some unmarried and younger women even evidenced workaholism - an optional excelled effort of considerable time at work, stemming from internal demands (Snir & Zohar, 2000). This resonates with earlier findings on the positive and negative effects of calling (Hirschi et al., 2019). Such a degree of calling indicates how capable the participants are of their work and how advanced they have become.

The career calling reported by this study participants is both modern and neoclassical (Praskova et al., 2014; Gazica & Spector, 2015; Rawat & Nadavulakere, 2015; Xie et al., 2016). It is modern because they were not predestined to be in the positions where they are now. However, they reached greater career maturity, commitment, work gist, job, and life satisfaction, which relates to a modern conceptualization of career calling. Nevertheless, their career calling roots are deeply embedded in moral values and love for the country and leaders. It is their way of expressing gratitude. The leaders' vision of women empowerment is considered a caller for the participants. Their work approach parallels with comprehensive respect and obedience towards authority, conformity, and indoctrination to regain control over expatriates' economic activity. Such an approach relates to a neoclassical conceptualization of career calling. Leaders require the effort of all Emiratis (including

women). Women have been instrumentally educated and employed for political, economic, and social purposes. The special purpose is to regain the Country's control in all spheres, representing a "*nationalistic call*." In such a context, women are tolerated; others are pampered until they take the "opportunities." Many follow this call and cope effectively with it, which means that they surpass the best expectations of fathers, brothers, husbands, and political leaders. As a result, women's career calling conveys a positive and socially acceptable perspective of a female career path. Their managerial position underscores a moral obligation, so Emirati female figures occupying leading positions were proudly named models of how much developed Emirati women have conquered. And how much women's image has changed in the UAE society. So far, Emirati women managers have remained obedient (to God, to the leaders, to the fathers, brothers, and husbands), so they are being phrased.

However, and despite being tolerated and commended, they remain closely scouted by men. And men are not changing that much. This might nurture and open future political and social conflict whenever an increasing number of educated women push to be listened to and lead (now mainly in social contexts and at home, in the future might be everywhere). Given that their managerial career underscores a moral obligation, this might be further used by some women who already recognize that "***We can't be ignored anymore.***"

This is a significant quote from one of the participants. It reflects the past when women were placed at home and taken for granted. Besides, it foresees UAE women managers' future because fostering their calling is placing them in leadership positions and enhancing their attachment to share the Country's economic growth by all means. If and how that will be balanced in the future, as more locals demand diversity and sustainable management and democracy, are questions worthy of future scrutiny. So, what will follow from this is to be built by Emirati society and followed by academics and scholars.

In conclusion, the career calling of the UAE women managers, resulting from this study, can be defined as follows:

"UAE women managers career calling is both neoclassical and modern because they are requested by the leaders and destined to share in the Country's economic development; and likewise, women are progressively pursuing their internal drive for self-development and self-actualization."

The figure below advances a model for Emirati women managers' career calling, in that the leaders have dictated their vision for Emirati women empowerment and the Country's economic development. They have set the policies - Emiratization laws. Then,

women commit themselves to fulfill the leaders' vision, which increases female educational development and women's work participation, building up their own identity. Once they reach this level of attachment, they climb to top-level management, which involves higher autonomy in suggesting business activities to share the leaders' conquering vision. Consequently, the women expressed their intentions to participate in projects that address other Emirati women's empowerment as a social mission that contributes to the Country's development in general, and Emirati women in particular. How women's career calling retroacts into influencing leaders and Emiratization will depend much on the level of control they will keep over well-positioned and educated women.

In short, this research extends the limited career calling research published to date and, in particular, contributes to understanding women's career development in the Arab World, specifically in the UAE context, starting with a career calling. Given this study's significance and uniqueness, the following section further elaborates on its theoretical contributions.

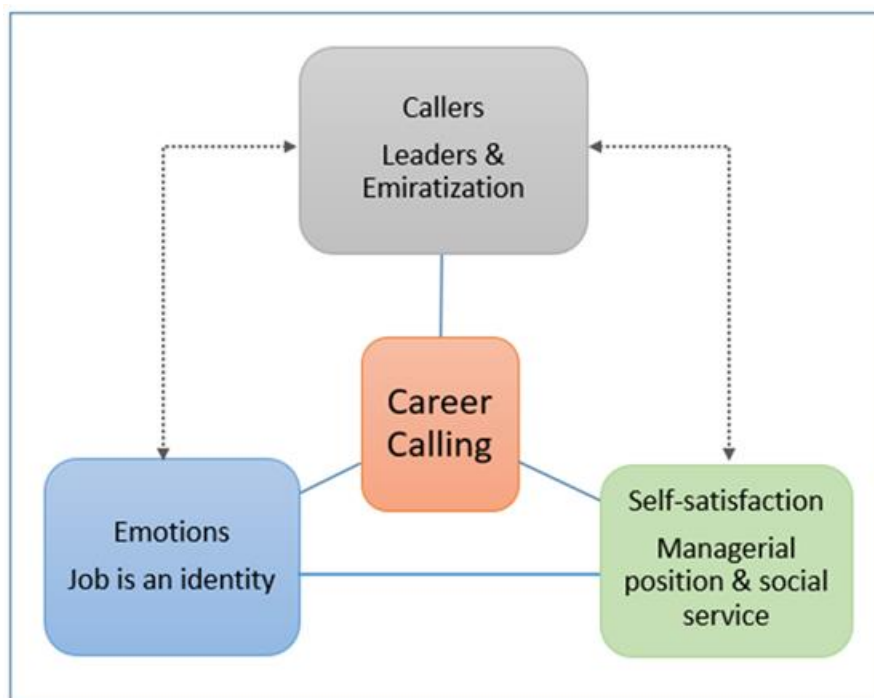


Figure 4 – Towards a conceptualization of Emirati women's managers career calling

7.5 Towards a (re)conceptualization of Emirati women's managers career development

This study's findings only partially confirm the adequacy of the SCCT (Lent et al., 2002; Lent, 2005) to understand the Emirati women's career path in management. Overall, the participants have expressed their development on different levels, from choosing their higher education majors to the construction of a successful career path. The participants have illustrated a level of maturity in their career development that conveys stability in their careers and family lives. They revealed a high self-efficacy and elevated cognitive skills, which were developed along with their academic education, subsequent training, and successive jobs, which were seen as learning opportunities. They also reported impressive achievements and competitive self-reported performance throughout their career path, somewhat surprising given the local patriarchal culture. Half of the participants assured choosing their major based on their vocational preference. They chose their major, keeping in mind the future work experience they wanted to have, their financial income and independence, as well as the image they want for them in the local society. These findings are consistent with the predictions of the SCCT (Lent et al., 2002; Lent 2005) and the Preference Theory (Hakim, 2006), in that expectations and personal goals (related to individual educational preferences, achievements, indirect learning, social persuasion, and the physiological and affective states) are elements to include when choosing a career path. Moreover, SCCT assumes that the environment influences career development. And it is affected by extrinsic rewards and the outcomes of task performance, which was also found.

However, this study contributes to extend SCCT as it sheds light on two distinct aspects: (1) the coping strategies the participants followed to overcome the contextualized challenges they faced; and (2) the career calling that illuminates women's career paths. While coping strategies paved the way to climb up to a top management level, a career calling guided their aspirations and opened up new doors. In this regard, Figure 5 presents a graphical representation of the conceptual career model that is advanced by the inductive findings of this study.

The proposed theoretical model of Emirati women's career path development starts from the bottom with educated Emirati females. After graduation, they enter all labor market sectors through two means: (1) Emiratization decrees; (2) nepotism. They are then trained and gain experience to progress (upon them "taking opportunity") to a middle management position mostly through networking and nepotism. As they positively face middle

management's challenges, they adopt different coping strategies according to their circumstances and business context (public and private, including family businesses).

In this study, five key coping strategies were identified. Except for the escape strategy, which leads to either lagging, ending the career path, or not having a career, all four strategies were experienced and led to career progression. After coping with gendered challenges, such as (1) individual contradictions; (2) work-family life conflicts; (3) cultural conflicts; and (4) work conflicts, Emirati women can climb up to a top managerial job. At this level, as along the entire career path, women became involved in decision making, which is a source of content and positive self-image, career achievements, and leaders' recognition. As for calling, the model benefits from a retroactive row linking education to calling (and inversely). Furthermore, and before education, "Nationalism" or "Political Calling" paved the way towards raising nationals' education, including women. As a consequence, Emirati women managers' calling towards their work increases, and their professions become a significant part of their own identity. They can carry higher responsibilities at this stage of career maturity and occupy prominent managerial and/or governmental positions.

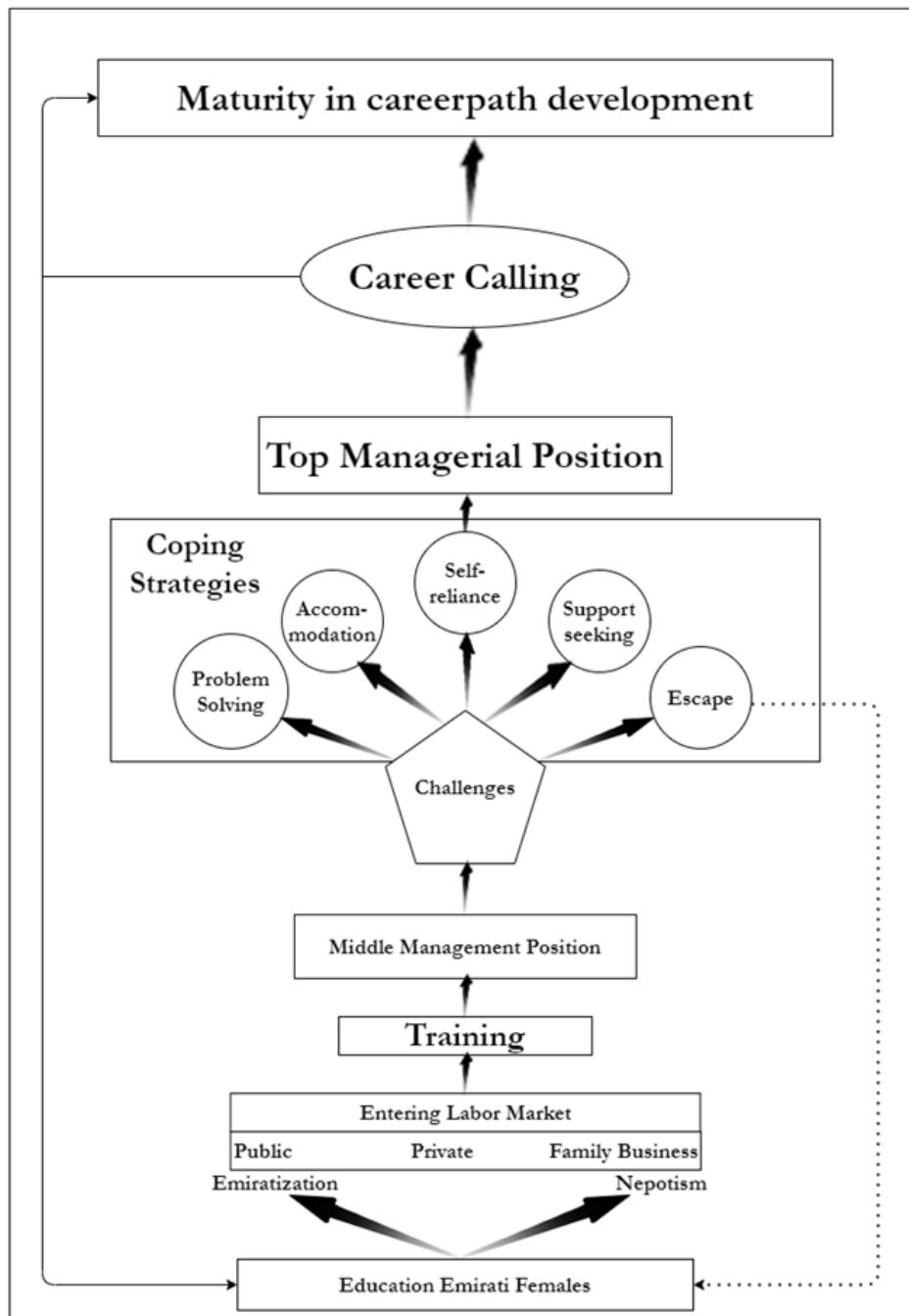


Figure 5 - Theoretical model of Emirati women career path development
 ource: Own elaboration

8 Conclusion and contribution

This dissertation aims to deepen our understanding of *how have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions*. As shown, the results highlight Emirati women's desire to develop themselves educationally and professionally and reveal their career calling.

Their educational path is chosen according to their professional career interests and highlighting the tendency to be less dependable on male superiors. A change in traditional attitudes towards females' education abroad and studying engineering majors have been detected. However, following cultural practices, nepotism continues to be the means to have a good managerial opportunity. Following Olid (2013), three career path models were identified: "*my life is **not** in another place*," "*taking opportunities*," and "*what the woman manager does is for the country*." Altogether, these three career models highlight new features: 1) managerial work takes a central life role while Olid models are marginal. (2) While Olid noted women were climbing to middle management level, in this study on Emirati women managers, one observes considerable opportunities to go to top management level in the public and private sectors. (3) Finally, unlike Olid's model, there is a higher level of career purpose in this study, which is also developing the Country's image rather than the personal or institutional alone.

Emirati women succeed in challenging the dominant submission of staying at home for the family and seizing their career development. They are highly educated and more visible in decision making, marking their success by facing the challenges that range from cultural and work conflicts to work-family struggles and individual contradictions. For that, they identified five coping strategies that local women use to achieve their aspirations that partially resonate with Skinner et al. (2003) model. These coping strategies reflect their persistence, and they started by "*pursuing a national calling*" that, in turn, becomes their "*own work and identity ethos*." Such engagement contributes to Emirati women empowerment and the common national good. And their career goes parallel with their family life, building up a significant identity as an icon of Emirati woman manager.

The career calling that prompts and leads to women's career development enables Emirati women to occupy prominent managerial and governmental positions. Their calling is defined as neoclassical because the leaders' vision empowers them, and modern because they end up loving work, feeling happy, and considering their work as a key element of their identity.

The results extend our comprehension of Emirati women managers as positive and proud of their achievements. They developed their cognitive skills through higher education and with Emiratization laws that facilitated their entrance into the labor market seeking country's development by following a career calling. In such a context, Emirati women who seize the opportunities can attain higher managerial positions.

In addition to the literature's contributions, the study findings have practical implications for companies and governmental entities, as addressed in the following. However, these contributions should be interpreted considering the limitations of this research.

8.1 Research limitations

The limitations of this research can be classified into two main categories: theoretical limitations and methodological ones.

Theoretically, this study draws on earlier career and coping models that do not entirely fit the Emirati context. While women represent half of the world population, they remain under-represented in the labor market and many occupations, including management. Albeit some positive trends indicate that more women are becoming engaged and getting to higher managerial positions, gender discrimination persists (Ferrant et al., 2014). It has been repeatedly reported that women face several cultural and situational challenges that dictate coping strategies to facilitate their career progression (Skinner et al., 2003). Such efforts, however, need further research to determine what strategies women follow, especially in contexts outside the occidental world. So far, women's career paths in the Arab world remain largely undocumented. The career and coping models based on Western countries likely disregard women's experiences living in this part of the world. This is one of the research gaps that is addressed by this research, so the data provides a contextualized and valuable extension of existing career models that might be further tested in other Arab countries. While the findings are not meant to be generalizable, the (re)conceptualization offered and illustrated in Figure 5 might be further tested by employing other methodological approaches. Further research is now required to test the theoretical model's propositions inductively derived from this study.

As shown, three career path models unfolded from the participants' descriptions of their careers. They represent the views of women managers from Abu-Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah Emirates. The sample was not meant to be representative of all local managers but

was purposefully selected to extend our understanding of local women managers theoretically. While this aim was achieved, one recognizes the need for more research uncovering UAE women's experiences who are not living in the largest Emirate, and therefore, who might not find the same educational support to start, and who might be out of the influence of UAE leaders. Furthermore, more studies are recommended to compare this research's findings to the women's experiences in other Arab countries, where they might be less politically empowered. Such contextualized research may empirically test and extend the career, coping, and calling models emerging from this research, contributing to our understanding of women representation and career development in other Arab countries.

Regarding the methodological limitations, one has to note that a qualitative and inductive approach was used to answer the research questions. This is an adequate approach that contributes to a genuine inquiry by examining actual settings and producing rich narrative descriptions (Patton, 2005). However, such a study is bounded by the context and limited by the number of participants being part of a convenient sample, as used in this study. While all participants were intentionally targeted to include Emirati women professionals in the middle and top management ranks, employed in the public and private sectors, the sample is not representative of all Emirati women managers. Therefore, a more comprehensive sample representation, including women managers from all Emirates, might be used in the future to examine further the propositions drawn from this study. Furthermore, extending the current approach to the study of non-skilled Emirati women's work-life might extend our understanding of gendered careers in the local context.

Second, living far away from the UAE has not allowed for other contacts and observation of the participants' career development, which would have given valuable insights into how calling is being reflected on their coping strategies, especially at higher management levels. Data interviews were also collected in English, which is not the native language of many interviewees. However, given their education level and international exposure, this was not a major issue either during the interviews or in interpreting their stories' symbolic meaning.

Finally, qualitative research is too dependent on researcher interpretations and, therefore, potentially biased. However, could this topic be attractive to the researcher if she were not an Arab woman who has been coping with many of the same challenges?

In whole, the findings of this research suggest several future avenues for research tracking and analyzing female Sheikhs' contribution to women's career development in the

UAE and empowerment in social service projects. Another suggested avenue is how male managers evaluate the Emirati women in the top and middle management positions under their supervision. Some interviews with top managers who have women managers under their supervision would be excellent data for inductive research that could complement this study and provide a fruitful comparison of women managers' perception of work and men managers' one. Furthermore, it would be insightful to examine women managers in other Arab countries, whether they share similar challenges and follow likewise coping strategies. Moreover, career calling is a new theoretical lens for understanding women's career development requiring further examination, notably on its consequences in the long-term and towards the new generations in the UAE and other Arab countries.

8.2 Theoretical contributions and suggestions for future research

This study contributes to the management and career literature by advancing a new career development model that builds and extends the SCCT and PT's frameworks by incorporating new insights about Emirati women managers.

Firstly, SCCT was noted as a useful lens to interpret the development of Emirati women managers' cognitive skills. As shown, local women presented a visible and high level of self-efficacy, nurtured by their wealthy and somewhat flexible upbringing. This personal trait boosts their professional development by challenging local women stereotypes and facing the many local challenges. They fulfilled their own outcome expectations through hard work and leaders' trust. Moreover, they have lifted their own personal goals by seeking higher work standards and leading positions. However, the SCCT failed short to accommodate the local specificities related to the UAE context. Its cultural and patriarchal values come across Emiratization policies aimed at regaining the country's economic control. In such a context and historic moment, women become valuable human assets, thus bridging the gap between tradition and modernity.

Secondly, the PT was used to define how local women's behavior results from core values in a historical context. However, PT is only partially applicable to Emirati women in their contextual wealthy UAE culture. Women are heterogeneous in their preferences and priorities regarding family and employment. In the present scenario, achieving a balance between work and family remains an obsession for women despite their wealthy life that provides them domestic help to facilitate their work. This might lead to the decision to freeze the career in a middle management position until children go to school and free them to go

up. However, the higher the managerial position they occupy, the higher the chances their career preferences change, towards influence, leadership, and power. Such change is an opportunity for future research exploring how UAE women's preferences and behaviors change along with their career progress to higher managerial positions'. Are they really competing with other (male/female) managers? Are they really heard, or resistance mechanisms emerge to limit and control their autonomy and ambitions?

Thirdly, the coping model of Skinner et al. (2003) provided the lens to identify the strategies Emirati women adopt in facing their challenges and developing their careers. As shown, the model explains Emirati women's behavior in facing challenges, the five coping strategies they follow, and the mechanisms they use - families of coping – to reach adaptive processes. Other coping strategies in Skinner et al. (2003) model – mainly negative - were not observed due to the somewhat rich life women managers live. It would be insightful to conduct research on Arab women managers' coping strategies in other Arab countries and test this study's model if it is similar.

Finally, the career calling literature helps understand women empowerment in the UAE and the increasing representation of women in the top and middle managerial jobs. The calling model in figure 4 shows the three elements that contributed to Emirati women career calling; the callers who are the leaders who set policies in their favor, having emotions towards their work as they consider it an identity, and reaching self-satisfaction as they get promoted to higher managerial position that involve them in decision making. However, the fulfillment of their growing aspirations remains unknown and subject to future research.

The specific theoretical contributions of this research are following detailed.

8.2.1 The career path of the Emirati women managers

This study contributes to the literature about Arab women's career development by addressing earlier calls to study careers in context. In this case, the data reflects a change in the UAE society towards being less conservative by allowing single females to study abroad and study scientific majors like engineering. Another evidence of change is females' choice of their major based on their vocational preference and aiming to finance themselves and lessen their dependence on males. So far, local families remain large with many children, which is still justified as the Emirati population is small, and they have rich resources and facilities.

Men's "Quiwama"– the Islamic concept of protecting women – persists as UAE is a Muslim country that preserves its culture. Therefore, husbands, brothers, or cousins have to accompany women abroad, despite the positive discrimination laws empowering women and

domestic workers' provision to support women in their household chores. In spite of these contradictions, and in part because of them, women persist in developing their careers and making their voices heard, so they are being noticed for their effective approach.

Women's participation in the family business is also quite significant. While the father finances their daughters through high education, women skills enable them to show efficiency at work and signal their career development and maturity. Moreover, this study answers earlier calls (Oudeh et al. 2018) to address family business sustainability. According to the findings, Emirati families are employing all their members, and women are included.

As refers to women's access to middle and higher-level positions in management, nepotism, or *wasta*, remains the most effective tool. Nepotism is a snowball technique that facilitates good opportunities for females and valuable trade-offs. In detail, this study further reveals three models by which Emirati women managers attain top management positions taking contextual elements and priorities into consideration through their career path.

Firstly, ***"My life is not in another place"*** in which after getting to middle management level, the females freeze their career progress for a while until their family circumstances (e.g., bearing children) are suitable to go on to a top management position. Therefore, and while committed to the family, their life is not out of the workplace.

Secondly, the ***"Taking opportunities"*** model has two paths: a fast one that leads to top management and is totally based on the family business. And the other involving transitions between family business, public sector, and private sector institutions until the top.

Finally, the third career model, ***"What she does is for the country,"*** reflects the high level of dedication and commitment Emirati women managers feel in performing their managerial roles. This self-reinforcing mechanism not only opens up new opportunities to skilled Emirati women but also reinforces their engagement.

This research highlights the role of UAE society and 'respected leaders' in expanding the number of educated Emirati women. The Sheiks influence this first step, along with the parents of these prominent women, and women themselves. Moreover, recognizing the participants' managers as influential icons in their careers is an addition to the literature. The ladies remarkably feel and see the dedication, persistence, and the professional behavior of such influencers. Such observation indicates how professional they have become, and consequently, and how their new role is getting noticed.

Another addition to the literature of UAE women career path development is the contextual influence of UAE work transitions, in that changing jobs and worksites do not lag

females' career development. Instead, job rotation and employment change develop a variety of experiences that fit them best for the next managerial position. Consequently, women are using the option of long leaves or quitting their jobs to raise their children, after gaining professional experience, to be ready to go back to the field. Will this experience promote their ambitions to reach the top, or will they discover, above, a glass ceiling? These questions remain open for future research.

8.2.2 UAE women managers coping

The study findings add to the career coping literature, four challenges: individual contradictions, work-family life conflicts, cultural conflicts, and work conflicts. It also contributes to the literature on career coping strategies. It introduces a career coping model of Emirati female managers that identifies five main coping strategies: (1) the escape strategy of not willing to pursue a career (which was mentioned but not followed by any interviewee); (2) the problem-solving strategy striving to show self-efficacy (which was the most popular approach among Emirati women managers); (3) the support seeking strategy dealing with work-family conflict; (4) a self-reliance strategy facing some cultural conflicts; and finally (5) an accommodation strategy dealing with new worksite's conflicts. While Skinner (2003) identified twelve coping strategies, five of them were significant in the career path of Emirati women. Such strategies can be tested in other Arab and Western countries, leading to more informative comparative research. How different or similar women managers are in regard to career challenges and coping strategies? How the local context bounds the careers of women managers? As mentioned, more research on women's career paths has to be done in other Arab countries before we can have a clear picture of the career models that apply in this context.

8.2.3 UAE women managers calling

Reaching the level of career calling indicates maturity in Emirati women's career development. This study is one of the first to address career calling in the literature of women's career development in the Arab world, making it significant. It places this study as a reference for future studies on career calling in other Arab countries in the region. Such studies might challenge the stereotype of "*think manager think man*," as calling is related to the emotional state that women are more likely to experience in performing their job. Consequently, when women managers have a "calling," it is considered a plus for a managerial position, so women would be privileged to take the lead.

As shown, calling from political leaders was instrumental in attracting UAE talent wherever and whoever is, decreasing the number of foreigners in power and control positions. Families and women followed the call. Women acquired tertiary education and took a few opportunities. They have been building on that success while still being humble and following male authority in the country, workplace, and family. Marking this study's results, the three calling elements – *the caller* | *the wisdom* | *and the path* – were highly visible (Dik and Duffy, 2009). Emirati women managers undertake a managerial career as a *calling*, which is new in the corporate business world, and unexpected. This calling is both neoclassical and modern (Praskova et al. 2014), as it is influenced by external and powerful callers (UAE leaders, family leaders) and women themselves. While the empowerment of women in the UAE has been ignited by political and ethnocentric reasons, many women managers feel this is a movement that cannot be stopped. What the future will reserve to them depends on how much empowerment the government would invest in UAE nationals of both genders. Therefore, a few questions remain unanswered with this study and beg for further research: How are locals cohabiting with a decreasing number of expatriates in power positions? How are multinationals dealing with an obvious increase in workplace nationalism? How is the management of joint-venture companies dealing with the tensions between locals and foreigners? How do Emirati women personalize the emergence and development of calling in their consultancy start-ups businesses? These are just a few research questions that are worthy of further inquiry.

8.3 Managerial contributions

The present research provides some practical contributions that may be significant for several stakeholders, such as academics and researchers on women's career development. It provides insights too for decision and policymakers who employ UAE women managers who pursue a career calling, by creating more development projects and delegating management to such mature female careerists who may play a crucial role in the UAE economic development. This study opens the horizon for training careerists designing training courses on coping with career challenges to have a calling that leads to management and organizational development. Involving experienced women managers in such businesses helps women with calling to fulfill their aspiration of developing all females in the UAE.

To local universities, as UAE society is opening up to women's education, including studying abroad and/or choosing engineering and other challenging majors, they should be

prepared to offer STEM and other majors following the UAE evolving needs. This will contribute to the human development of the country, including the development of Emirati women.

To UAE families and parents, in particular, the findings support a more permissive approach towards women's education, in that more flexibility, delegation, and trust are expected to give to their daughters and sisters the self-efficacy they need to stand-alone and be independent. The questions remain; how would women's independence affect their careers? Would financial independence affect men's image or position in the family? How would such independence affect the children? How would it affect men's attitude towards giving a hand at home?

To UAE women, in general, the study findings confirm the importance of tertiary education and the role played by significant influencers. While women's personal (cognitive and emotional) skills play a critical role in opening up new opportunities, social networks and nepotism remain definitive. This call for a wider awareness of the professional image, status, and reputation of female managers. To Emirati women managers, the findings warn for the effects of their continuous career progress, autonomy, and representation on top management positions. While women cannot be ignored anymore, increased power is likely to bring increased attrition and conflict.

8.4 Conclusion

The present research deepens our understanding of how UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions: (1) how they describe their career paths, (2) how they have been chosen for their managerial positions, (3) what career challenges they have faced, and how they have coped. Moreover, (4) how calling can explain UAE women in managerial jobs.

This study has drawn upon the literature on gendered career models, coping, and career calling to address the existing research gaps regarding the absence of empirical evidence on the career models Emirati women managers draw from throughout their career paths. It defines coping strategies when facing and overcoming challenges, while most career and coping models are based on the Occidental culture, which disregards the experiences and theoretical contributions from other parts of the world. Bearing in mind the UAE context, work and calling are essential for women because they face more opposition than men to work and follow their call. Such career calling remains understudied, which gives this study a great significance.

Furthermore, this research targeted 22 Emirati women managers' experiences, following a qualitative and interpretive approach. Their career path anecdotes were extensively described and interpreted within the theoretical framework selected for this research. The description of their career paths has shed light on their career models, challenges, and the way they coped with them. Besides, their career calling was detected while expressing emotions towards the significance of their work. The findings show that Emirati women managers have chosen their majors according to their work preferences. They have developed their cognitive skills and proved self-efficacy. They consider their work an identity, which marks their career calling.

The results underscore three career models Emirati women managers have had; (1) *"My life is not in another place"*; (2) *"Taking opportunities"*; (3) *"Everything for the country."* They followed four coping strategies to cope with challenges, including cultural, work, work-family struggles, and individual contradictions, such as: *"problem-solving," "support seeking," "self-reliance,"* and *"accommodation strategy."* And a fifth one, which is the *"escape strategy,"* followed by Emirati women who prefer not to work or leave work for the family.

The study projects positive discrimination implemented through the Emiratization policy drawn by the country's Leaders to provide national citizens with job opportunities. Nepotism remains the primary means to have good managerial opportunities. Moreover, the study marks Emirati women perceiving their managerial work as a neoclassical and modern calling. It is influenced by external and powerful callers (UAE leaders, family leaders) and women themselves. While political and ethnocentric reasons have provoked women's empowerment in the UAE, many women managers feel this is a movement that cannot be stopped. They consider working an identity.

This study contributes to the management and career literature by presenting a new career development model that builds and extends the SCCT and PT's frameworks by integrating new insights about Emirati women managers. The findings show that Emirati women managers' career experiences are not like the experiences of other women living in Western countries, nor are the conventional career models directly applicable to interpreting UAE women managers' career path. As shown, this study has tackled new streams in career development research. It marks the starting point of research on women's career management **modeling, coping, and calling** in other countries in the region.

The findings have several managerial implications to different stakeholders, including academics and researchers on women's career development, decision, and

policymakers, who employ Emirati women managers who pursue a career calling and can play a crucial role in the UAE economic development. The study opens the horizon for training careerists to design training courses on coping with career challenges to have a calling, which leads to management and organizational development.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – The Interview guide

The Research Question	sub-Research Questions	Topics/Themes	Questions Women Managers
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?	1- How do UAE women managers describe their career paths?	Studies / Education	1- Let 's start with your education background, can you tell me about it?
			2- Why or how did you choose this major? When was that? (to know the age)
		knowing the history of the candidate	3- According to my knowledge, you've been working in this organisation, but for how long? (If she hasn't changed it) How long have you been working in this company? (if she has changed her place of work) . In the same position or other?
			4- What type of organization is this? Family or private? How many employees are in the company? (size of the company)
			5- How did you arrive here? I mean to be in this company?
			6- Has your study helped in your career path? How?
			7- How long have you been in your position as a Manager....?
		knowing the history of the candidate	8- How was your career path until today?
			9- Who influenced your career choice, i.e. occupational choice? How has he/she influenced your career?
		Promotion/progression to the first management position	10- How have you taken this managerial position being a female here in this company?

The Research Question	sub-Research Questions	Topics/Themes	Questions Women Managers
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions? 2- How have UAE women managers been chosen for their managerial position? 2- What difficulties have they faced and how they coped?		Challenge and Achievements	11- Tell me about the challenges you have faced throughout your career? How have you overcome them?
		Competences needed (Other skills distinguished her from others Whether it is a ladder or self effort If self effort, then there is will to change (related to career theory development)	12- Are you most proud of your achievements throughout your career? Why?
			13- Is now different from before (I mean - is it easier or more difficult for another woman to have a similar path)?
			14- What are the other skills that distinguish you from others and privileged you for the position?
		Obstacles In relation to career theory development	15- Has your career path been developing automatically or you had to exert self-effort to get what you have looked forward to gain?
			16- What initiative have you had to make a difference? Did/Do you have doubts about succeeding? What are they?
			17- In your opinion, Are there major obstacles women in Egypt specifically face which hinder their development? Specify please? Do you have same obstacles here in this company?
			18- What could be done to avoid such obstacles?
		Gender issues	19- Have you felt this kind of transformation from doubts to certainty? how?
			20- How do you think you are regarded about making decisions and implementing them?
			21- How do you see your career path development so far and your expectations for the future?
			22- How being a female influence your participation in decision making?
			23- Which HRM policies have promoted and hindered the possibility for you to gain a senior managerial position at work?

The Research Question	sub-Research Questions	Topics/Themes	Questions Women Managers
How have UAE women managed to occupy managerial positions?	3- What difficulties have they faced and how they coped?	Politics, influential friends, traditions, religion, others	24- which factors contributed to your current success? Why?
		Type of work	27- Are you in this position because it is a female job? Kindly elaborate.
		Family status	28- How your marital status has contributed to gaining your managerial position?
		Nepotism	29- How being a family or friend is appraised for choosing you for a managerial position in the organization?

Appendix 2 – Coding structure

The following appendixes consist of the 14 thematic categories that were identified and built into using NVIVO 12 software, which has been the tool used to support the data analysis. : (1) Education History; (2) Employment and Employability; (3) Career Path; (4) Current Managerial Position; (5) Career Path Difficulties; (6) Career Path Coping; (7) About Superiors; (8) Influencers; (9) How Influencers Affected Careers; (10) Career Path Distinguishers_ Factors of Success; (11) Feelings or Emotion on Career Path; (12) Future Prospects; (13) Work-Life interface; (14) Women-Men relationship images. Appendix 2 demonstrates the main 14 thematic categories with their definitions. And the following Appendix 3 shows each of these 14 thematic categories separately, illustrating the inductive process followed to generate the subcategories. Moreover, a detailed description follows all steps of inserting the data in the NVIVO software.

The first step consists of the import of the interviews' transcripts. They are then creating the thematic categories according to question classification. As the interviews' coding went on, more themes emerged that involved creating various subcategories for each main thematic category. The following is the detailed description of each thematic category, its subcategories, and the number of references coded for each.

(1) Education History, each subcategory represents a question in the interview; for example, when the participants were asked about their major choice, whether it was related to vocational preference, 11 related their choice to that, the number 14 under references refers to the quotes that were codified under the subcategory. When asked to talk about their career path, all 22 participants preceded with that; 39 references were codified. When asked about influencers, they were influenced by their major, 15 replied, and 21 references were codified. Seventeen participants mentioned their education supporters, and 40 references were codified. Twenty participants talked about their family members' education, and 34 references were codified. Only nine ladies talked about the obstacles they faced while their study and 16 references were codified. Nineteen participants talked about having segregated or non-segregated system in their universities, and 22 references were codified. Seventeen participants elaborated on the outcome of their university study, and 50 references were codified. So, 22 files and 236 references resulted from the first thematic category.

(2) Employment _ Employability: Eight participants spoke about how their network supported them at work, and 11 references were codified. Eleven ladies expressed how easy it was to get an opportunity as it was taken for granted, and 17 references were codified. Five ladies elaborated on the difficulties they have faced at work, and nine quotes were codified. 17 mentioned in detail about UAE citizens' privileges, 42 references were codified. And All of them commented on women's privileges, and 68 quotes were codified. Eight of them mentioned having segregation in offices or employees, and 15 references were codified. Five participants talked about their family business contribution, and seven quotes were codified. In total, 22 files and 169 references resulted from the second thematic category.

(3) Career Path's subcategories, participants, and references were coded as follows: 14 participants talked about their internships, whether in the public sector, in a family business or abroad, and 21 references were codified. Twenty-one participants elaborated on their first jobs, and 27 quotes were codified. 15 Talked about their following jobs, and 22 references were codified. Fifteen explained their job transitions, and 21 references were codified. And six ladies alluded to the further training and development they are getting, and eight references were codified. In sum, 22 files and 99 references resulted from the third thematic category.

(4) Current Managerial Position's subcategories participants and references coded are as follows: All the 22 participants elaborated on the question related to their decision-making credibility, and 38 references were codified. Seventeen elaborated on the family network's effect on urging the employability and helping in gaining a good managerial position, and 33 references were codified. Ten participants mentioned having the relevant competencies to get the current managerial position, and 12 references were codified. Also, 10 participants mentioned how they have been offered or suggested for their current managerial position, and 17 references were codified. Eight ladies elaborated on how they have changed their work to gain their managerial positions, and ten quotes were codified. Six participants explained the initiatives they did and qualified them to get their current managerial positions, and nine quotes were codified. And only two ladies said that they were offered partnership and their managerial position in their current positions. Three quotes were codified. In sum, 22 files and 122 references resulted from the fourth thematic category.

(5) Career Path Difficulties; 13 participants detailed 16 types of challenges; work/family life balance was on top of them. And 28 references were codified. Unwillingness to work subcategory, 14 participants elaborated on their sisters, friends, or relatives' reluctance to work, and 19 references were codified. 13 participants spoke about proving themselves efficient as a challenge, and 17 quotes were codified. In total, 22 files and 107 references resulted from the fifth stem node.

(6) Career Path Coping: 16 participants explained how they have coped with their managerial positions and demanding work circumstances, and 37 references were codified. Ten ladies mentioned the support of their family members; seven referred to the work atmosphere between expatriates and nationals, and five highlighted their developed interpersonal skills. Only one lady noted that work is needed, and another one only mentioned persistence on facing the challenges and succeeding.

(7) About Superiors whether their managers were males or females; eight participants had male managers, and five had female ones. 11 participants and 16 references resulted from the seventh thematic category.

(8) Influencers' subcategories according to the participants' comments were four; 18 ladies noted Sheiks or leaders of the country, and 31 references were codified; 11 noted members of their families – a parent, a sibling, or a relative, and 21 references were codified; four noted wives of Sheiks; and three mentioned their managers or business owners as their influencers. In sum, 22 files and 62 references resulted from the eighth thematic category.

(9) How Influencers Affect Career: 18 participants explained how influencers affected their careers, and 57 references were codified. Eleven mentioned the increase in the level of commitment and 15 references; 11 stated the growth in enthusiasm and persistence, and 20 references were codified; nine said they love their work, and 12 references were codified; four revealed achieving zero mistake level; four mentioned facilitating another good opportunity, four references were codified, and two mentioned male submission and acceptance to women desire to work, and two references were codified. In total, 18 files and 57 references resulted from the ninth thematic category.

(10) Career Path Distinguishers-Factors of Success: Eight subcategories have evolved according to the participants' conversation as success factors. 19 Ladies elaborated on personality traits, mainly, confidence, interactive skills, and commitment, and 63 references were codified. 12 Mentioned work behaviors, and 21 references were

codified. 18 Noted environmental factors, mainly colleagues and having a relative or a friend in the sector, and 38 references were codified. 13 Alluded to loving what they do, and 15 references were codified. Ten participants referred to the secured family situation, and 14 references were codified. And 8 explained their initiatives that made a difference and resulted in being distinguished for them, and nine references were codified. In total, 12 files and 181 references resulted from the tenth thematic category.

(11) Feelings/Emotions on Career: Twenty participants talked about their feelings towards their managerial work and position. Nineteen expressed feeling proud of their achievements and themselves, and 23 references were codified. Five liked the wider network they got, and five references were codified. Four reflected on their civil status, and how it affected them positively and made them love their work, and five references were codified. And three expressed their content for setting a good example of UAE women who could be icons for others, and three references were codified. In sum, 20 files and 36 references resulted from the eleventh thematic category.

(12) Future Prospects: Twenty-one participants have elaborated on four subcategories that evolved, and 78 quotes were codified; 18 elaborated on the future expectations of their careers, and 31 references were codified. Fifteen Spoke about the facilities their current managerial position presents for the future, and 23 references were codified. Eleven were certain that circumstances are better for a female to work, and 18 references were codified. And six talked about foreseen obstacles, and six references were codified.

(13) Work/Life Interface: Twenty-one participants elaborated on this thematic category, and 54 references were codified. Twenty-one prioritize family, and 33 references were codified. Fifteen Explained how and when they prioritize work on the family, and 18 references were codified. Two ladies levelled both families and work as even, and two references were codified, and only one lady mentioned herself first and then work or family, and one reference was codified.

(14) Women/Men Relationship Images: 21 participants commented on how has work affected women/men relationship, and 146 references were codified. Nineteen explained how their work had affected women's image, style of living, marriage life, responsibility towards family tasks, and their desire to have more children or not, and 50 references were codified. Twenty-one participants noted how women's work had affected men's image, style of living, attitude towards women, and whether they help in family

tasks or not, and 77 references were codified. Thirteen commented about further women movements and whether it is easier for women to find their managerial opportunities or more difficult, and 19 references were codified.

Appendix 3 – Thematic categories of analysis

Main Themes	Description
01. Education History	All reports mentioned information about participants' educational paths, influencers, vocational preferences, family education and education outcomes.
02. Employment & Employability	Means of employment and how was it facilitated, the difficulties participants faced, privileges of UAE citizen and women in particular taking cultural issues into consideration.
03. Career Path	The means to get their current managerial positions, and the jobs the participants went through; whether an internship, first job, the job transitions, and attended advanced trainings that resulted in career development.
04. Current Managerial Position	How have the participants' decisions received or implemented. The possibility of family network that helped gaining the position and competencies relevant to the managerial position. Has she been offered the position, or she changed the worksite to gain it.
05. Career Path Difficulties	Obstacles that were encountered throughout the lady's career path; such as, work personal life balance, proving self-efficacy as managers, the job doesn't suit females to do, unwilling to commit to a career, living distantly, and people around may frustrate the participant.
06. Career Path Coping	Participants talked about the elements that helped coping with their managerial career; such as the interpersonal skills, work atmosphere between expats and nationals, the family support, the need to work and thinking of work as a challenge they should succeed in and progress in their career.
07. About Superiors	The direct manager male or female
08. Influencers	Sheikhs & their wives, family members (father, mother, uncle...), Leaders, UAE business managers
09. How influencers affected careers	Influencers affected the participants' level of commitment, participants increased the level of follow up which minimised the mistakes and they had the tendency of loving their work.
10. Career Path Distinguisher-Factors	Perceived factors for career success, participants commented on their personality traits (confidence, interactive skills, commitment, ...), work behaviour, environment factors (colleagues, having a relative in the sector, work atmosphere, ...), secured family situation, loving what they do, initiatives they did, former experience and the government training, flex-time allowed. expats helped, and wide network
11. Feelings-Emotions on Career Path	Feeling proud about privileged and positively discriminated, having a wider network and women are becoming influencers to their peers in their community. Participants expressed how being married or single affected their passion towards work.
12. Future Prospects	Participants expressed future expectations of career on several levels, such as: owning a business, being promoted in the same organization, or getting a higher position in the public sector. The foreseen obstacles are getting jobs for those who live in the remote areas, necessity to update their skills due to the rapid development in the country, and in some positions men are still privileged. Most participants alluded to the better circumstances ladies now have, and few mentioned that it depends on their will to join the workforce.
13. Work-life Interface	Prioritizing responsibilities between work and family commitments
14. Women-Men Relationship Images	The impact of the managerial positions of working ladies on their relations with males in regard of image, style of living, marriage, family tasks and men's attitude towards women managers. And the future movements of women

Appendix 3 – cont.

History of Education	Reports all mentioned information about the educational path of the interviewees, from influences to vocational preferences to family education and education outcomes.	
	Education Path	All women were highly educated. They have either university degree of four years BA ₁ of five years (BS), master's degrees (MA) or Ph.D.
	Family Education	Participants mentioned that most fathers were educated, and few mothers. In big families, only young siblings are educated.
	Segregated system in the university	Yes Half of the participants studied in segregated system institutions, such as: UAE University, the Technical College of Sharjah and the Technical College of Dubai. No The other half went to non-segregated universities, namely: the American University of Sharjah and Dubai (AUS, AUD), in addition to universities abroad.
	Education Outcomes	Higher Education has affected female lives on six levels: (1) Prestige; (2) Professional development; (3) Personality development; (4) Social benefits; (5) Transition into the labour market; and (6) Positive impact on family and society. Prestige Their studies at highly reputed universities, local and American. Developed professional skills Their education has developed professional soft and technical skills. Personality Studying in American universities has contributed to developing their personalities by getting less introvert and more outgoing, and changing towards being more independent and proud. Social benefit Regarding social level, some participants have stated that studying in their reputable universities have enhanced their network with their Highness Sheikh, and colleagues of different nationalities; in addition to interacting with more friends. The participants emphasised that their degrees have qualified them to enter the labour market. The internships and training provided have facilitated finding a suitable and prestigious job in the local labour market. They have expressed how being educated has affected their image within the extended family network, both with children and other relatives. Children The more ambitious are her children too. Other relatives in the family were proud Network of the participants and they were focused on and listened to.
	Support towards education	Females were encouraged and supported directly by their family members and their leaders. They has this personal interest to develop the mothers and some went abroad while being married or to pursue their university studies. Family support The mothers motivated, the fathers facilitated and few husbands encouraged. Leaders support Leaders provided females with internal and external networking for post graduate studies and free university studies in public universities in UAE. Personal interest Some participants had the desire to complete their university studies and they decided on their majors themselves. To live abroad Some had the desire to live abroad so they went with a family member to complete their study in America or in England.
	Education influencers	Within family fathers were mainly the influencers, in addition to their Highness Sheikh's and their wives.
	Vocational preferences	Choosing the major has indicated a desire for independence. These four, half of the interviewees chose their major for vocational reasons, so they studied "Banking" and "Business Management" where they were employable in bank's and public sector ministries and institutions. Despite the obligation from leaders and facilitation from the fathers of female education some obstacles still exist and prevent some females from completing their higher education as the participants stated.
	Obstacles against education	Getting married very young All female's who married young could not complete their higher education, to be able to take care of their family and children. Parents dis agreement for cultural reasons Parents found it not possible to let the girl stay in the university residence and be separate from the family.
	Participants interventions	All participants contributed to this theme and were content and happy to present their education path and its good outcome on their image in the society.

Means of employment and how was it facilitated, the difficulties participants faced, privileges of UAE citizen and women in particular taking cultural issues into consideration.	
Women privileges Maids - drivers - cooks Flex time or location Women are offered managerial positions more than men in the public sector Not threatened and respected	Four privileges were mentioned: (1) regulations and maternity leaves, (2) having maids, drivers, and cooks, (3) having flex time or work location preference, and (4) the respect assigned to UAE women.
	Regulations and Maternity leaves Regarding regulations and maternity leaves, participants have expressed their content about their maternity leaves. Despite the convenient leaves they legally have, they are privileged to take longer unpaid leaves (up to one year) and keep their positions.
	The participants mentioned having maids, drivers, and cooks who have supported them as working women and have facilitated their employability ever since they had children. They noted that their lives have become more stable and easier to manage.
	The participants who work for the family business or for a private company also considered having flex-time as a privilege. They explained how their flex-time worked.
	As females outnumber men in the population of UAE, they were offered positions in the public sector
UAE privileges Government training for UAE citizens after graduation High salaries for UAE citizens Dependency on expats	UAE Rulers have given several privileges to their national citizens; on top of privileges is the law of Emiratisation, secured jobs, government training, high salaries in both public and private sectors.
	Emiratization- expats are replaced by nationals This law aims to provide national citizens with jobs and replace expatriates, especially in managerial positions.
	The job is secured - no fear of losing it Emiratis can not be dismissed from service in all sectors.
	Government training for UAE citizens after graduation All Emirati graduates are subject to attend a training that enhance their soft and hard skills.
	High salaries for UAE citizens Salaries of Emiratis are much higher than expats in both sectors.
Taken for granted Segregation Supporters of working Family business Women difficulties	Expats are meant to help and support national employees, few participants mention how supportive and helpful expats were to them.
	All Emirati females who wish to work will have an opportunity; either through training, their network or their scholarships.
	Yes Some participants were working in segregated desks, not offices, in both sectors.
	No Some who worked in Dubai and Abu Dhabi had no segregated system.
	Either family members, relatives or friends, Emiratis are small in population, they are all related and know each other in one way or another and they all support each other in finding a nice suitable position for a female.
Work needs travelling	Some mentioned their beginnings in the family business and are still there. While others started with the family and moved to a good managerial position in the government.
	Preventions of working Participants mentioned several preventions of working; the male disapproval because the job doesn't suit her, or living far from big cities and males perspective is always preferring the wife to be at home with children.
	If the job requires travelling a female cannot commit to it, she will not be able or given permission from the husband or other male to travel.
Participants interventions	All participants were detailed their employability steps and highlighted the privileges and challenges they faced in their employment process. They all think it is now much easier for a female to join the workforce.

Career Path	The means to get their current managerial positions, and the jobs they went through; whether an internship, first job, the job transitions, attended advanced trainings that resulted in career development.		
	Internship	Most females started their career path through an internship that was a requirement of their university degrees. The term they used is “work placement”. These internships have enhanced participants' communication skills, problem-solving, decision making, and developed some management skills.	
		Internship in public sector	Most females did their workplacement in banks as it was facilitated for them.
		Internship abroad	Two participants went abroad: the first was granted by the Government to do it with Microsoft and the second in a bank in London as she was married and living there at that time
		Internship at a family business	Only one participant, and it was a financial service family business.
	First job	A considerable part of the participants started in their families' business, the rest got their opportunities through family networks in the public ssector.	
	Following jobs	Following jobs were always to better positions	
	Job transitions	In family business, it was within the company getting the training and support of the father. In public sector, transitions were either to a higher position or to another very good position after returning from a long maternnity leave.	
	Further training and development	Some females elaborated on the continuous training they have done in all sectors: public, private and family business, which developed specific skills that enabled them to carry more responsibilities and attain higher positions.	
Participants interventions		All participants contributed in details to this theme openly, proudly and happily.	

Current Managerial Position	In the current managerial position whether her decision is implemented. The possibility of family network that helped gaining the position and competencies relevant to the managerial position.	
	Decision making	Participants reflected on three manners of making decisions: First, if their Highness Sheikhs are in charge, the final decision is the Sheikhs'. Second, Second, in family business, the decision is the father's, the brother's or the husband's. Third, in public sector and banks industry the decision abides by the system regulations.
	Family network	The interviewees emphasized the importance of the family network- Sheikhs or other leaders in different institutions- to facilitate the access to a managerial position.
		Network facilitates gaining a managerial position Network with their highness Sheikhs and other connections in different institutions also results in being suggested to occupy key positions
		Faster to get in family business The easiest way to gain access to a management position is in the family business,
	Has been offered or suggested for the position	Initial jobs were offered after graduation and subsequent job transitions were facilitated by the women networks. In addition, and according to the law of Emiratization in UAE, if a foreigner wants to open a business, he/she must have a UAE citizen to sponsor it, which constitutes a managerial opportunity.
	Relevant Competencies	All participants mentioned the importance of their related competences to the managerial positions they have.
	Changing the place of work to gain a mng position	Some participants mentioned that changing the workplace is a means to gain a higher managerial position is one of the practices followed by them.
	The initiative that contributed to gaining the managerial position	Some talked about their personal initiatives they did that resulted in a better business situation; more clients, employees satisfaction, and better teamwork. This lead to gaining their current managerial position.
Participants interventions	Offering partnership and managing the institution	As a result of Emiratization law few participants elaborated on being offered a partnership in the business as a national citizen is needed to establish a business in UAE.
	The participants gave weigh to family network, being qualified, and being offered the position.	

Career Path Coping	Participants talked about the elements that helped coping with their managerial career; such as the interpersonal skills, work atmosphere between expats and nationals, the family support, the need to work and thinking of work as a challenge they should succeed in and progress in their career.	
	Husband, father, brother, mother or having a maid help and support	Family members have helped participants to cope with managerial work life; some mothers helped with taking care of children, other male members helped when the financed having maids to help at home (most participants used such help), and motivating and showing a kind of appreciation to their achievements.
	Working atmosphere between expats and nationals	All of the participants' comments on the work atmosphere between them and the expats were positive, although some had difficulties first, later there was a way and work atmosphere became more cooperative. The expats helped them perform well and cope with their jobs.
	Interpersonal skills	The interviewees mentioned the good competences that have helped them cope with work and its challenges. They have related those skills to the training they got after university, their universities and their study or life abroad.
Participants interventions	The participants gave the biggest credit to the family's support which indicates the significance of family life for them. They highlighted the positivity of the contextual significance which shed light on the expats support and the back up they have received. In addition to focussing on their competences related to their performance as managers.	

About Superiors	Most of the participants' direct managers were males and few had female managers.	
	Male	Most managers were men. The majority were in the family business the father or the brothers were managers.
	Female	Very few have female managers. The managers were either a Sheik's wife, a business owner or others in the public sector. Participants elaborated more on the style of management followed when the female manager was a Sheikh's wife or an enterprenuer.
Participants interventions	Most participants had male managers and were content with that and few had female managers. However, their extended comments on how they were managed was when they had the Sheikh's wife or the female enterprenuer, while not much was said about the female managers they had in the public sector.	

Influencers	Participants were influenced by Sheikhs & their wives, family members (father, mother, uncle...), Leaders, UAE business managers	
	Sheikhs, wives of Sheikhs	Most participants mentioned Sheikhs; namely late Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Sheikh Sultan, Sheikha Fatima, Sheikha Lubna, and Sheikha Jawaher. They said that all leaders are icons for the vision they had and accomplishments for UAE.
	Family members	Half of the interviewees considered family members as their icons, mainly fathers. They said that they have encouraged them to continue their higher education and facilitated their work in the family business, and less considered mothers as their icons as they were educated or valued education. Very few mentioned brothers, husbands and sometimes relatives as examples to follow as they have seen their career success fruitful.
	Leaders (other than Sheikhs); UAE business managers or entrepreneurs	Leaders other than Sheikhs are also working on fulfilling the vision of their highness, and so they deserve the respect of the females.
Participants interventions	Sheikhs and their wives, family members, mainly fathers, and leaders - UAE business managers or business owners and women influencers - have all been the interviewees' influencers in their actual careers.	

How Influencers Affected Careers	Influencers affected the participants' level of commitment, participants increased the level of follow up which minimised the mistakes and they had the tendency of loving their work.	
	Commitment growth in enthusiasm and persistence	Females have expressed how knowing their icons and watching the development of the country made them more persistent and hard-working to share this development. They feel that they must make their leaders proud of them and their achievements.
	Loving work	The interviewees were happy while expressing their positive feeling towards work. They kept repeating expressions, such as: "I love my work", "work is my life", "work has shaped my life", "work has drawn my identity..."
	Zero mistake level	Influencers attitudes and example resulted in performance perfection. Some ladies expressed that they have reached a zero level of mistakes, resulting from leaders' follow up, support and trust.
	Facilitate other good opportunities	The interviewees illustrated how their first jobs have facilitated for better opportunities, whether in the family business or the public sector.
	Male submission and acceptance to women desire to work	Males in the females life do not contradict with their wish to work as it is the desire of the Sheikhs and leaders of the country, participants alluded.
Participants interventions	Influencers have affected positively the inquired females on different levels, they are more committed, achieving quality results, getting higher positions and getting the approval of their desire to work from their superior males due to fulfilling the wish of the leaders to empower Emirati females.	

Career Path Distinguishers - Factors of Success	The perceived factors of career success are individual factors; family factors, and contextual factors.		
	Individual factors	Work experience (WE) has enhanced the participants' personality traits	
		Confidence	WE has enhanced the participants confidence in their abilities to present their ideas in impressive and convincing ways.
		Interactive skills	WE has enabled the participants to be effective and have good rapport with colleagues and in their teams at work.
		Commitment	The participants expressed commitment towards their work, one described her work as an identity to her.
		The varied experience	A means of success in their career as they have grasped different angels of work.
		Compasion and reasonableness	The participants see their subordinates as valuable company assets the company should maintain. So they share making decision with their teams to make those assets feel their importance to the company
		Ability to cope with multi- nationals environment	WE enabled participants towork with coworkers and colleagues from different nationalities and cultures
		Former experience	Previous work experience has also enriched their skills and widened their scope at work.
			Previous training or internship has been the means that facilitated entering the labour market and some were quite noticed for their good performance.
	Contextual factors	The friendly atmosphere the colleagues help creating, and the support of their leaders are important success factors.	
		Colleagues	The interviewees emphasized the fact of having good team members, managers, colleagues and employees are means of success.
		Having a relative or a friend in the sector	The participants have highlighted that having a connection in the sector is an important success factor.
		Work behavior and initiatives that made a difference	The participants expressed their dedication, keeping the good rapport with the network they had and their loyalty to the place they work in. And they described their initiatives that contributed to their carree progress and success.
		Work atmosphere here	The participants commented on how they were protected and supported by their father, brother or husband, they were also supported by their managers and team members at work.
		Support of leaders	The network they grew from work is a successfactor. They commented on the trust the leaders have given them that enhanced their creativity, and confidence.
	Family factors	Being able to fulfill their duties towards their children is a major success factor in their career life. In addition to the families support as they like the image of the working daughter, sister or aunt.	
		Secured family situation	The participants alluded to the way their children and family are secured having the needed help, long with the support of family members which affected their career success positively.
		Flex-time allowed	They reflected about the impact of flex-time on their family's stability being able to be with children at their convenience within the allowed time according to regulations.
	Participants interventions	The participants detailed their career distinguishers on all personal, contextual and family levels.	

Feelings - Emotions on Career Path	Feeling proud is the dominant feeling due to the great achievements as the participants see it, such feeling is a driver to having a wider network with Sheikhs; consequently, carry more responsibilities and be accountable for them.	
	Proud	The participants see themselves as examples of successful working female citizens, which enhanced the feeling of pride that created the sense of commitment to their work.
	Wider network	While working women have grown their network and increased their connections through having more friends and getting involved in a variety of projects of Sheikhs in all spheres.
	Contribution of civil status on gaining the position	The participants expressed how being married or single affected their passion towards work.
	Women influencer	The participants are becoming influencers to their peers in their community.
Participants interventions	All participants expressed their pride and their influence on their relatives and friends around them happily and confidently.	

Future Prospects	Participants expressed future expectations of career on several levels, such as: owning a business, being promoted in the same organization, or getting a higher position in the public sector. In addition to the foreseen obstacles.	
	Career drivers	The participants aspire to have their own business, having a political role by being a minister, and being a GM in the family business, they referred to the better circumstances they have: such as, their good leaders, their free education, the good salaries and having maids who facilitate their work out of the house. Their further movements: Now that they are employed, trained and given high positions at work, they look forward to developing a more liberal community less masculine and capable of giving the chance to make decisions and be accountable for them.
	Circumstances are better for a woman to work	Most participants agreed on the better circumstances women have to work and few expressed that it depends on the female herself if she prefers to work or not.
		Yes The majority of the participants emphasized the existence of better circumstances.
	Depends on women preference	Few participants said that it depends on the females if they wish to work and have a career or not
Participants interventions	Forseen obstacles	The interviewees envisioned future difficulties: (1) women taking men managerial positions, the women aspire positions internationally because they would face a cultural barrier to get such position as Bank Manager in UAE as it is usually occupied by men. (2) higher positions entitle harder effort and longer working hours away from family, and family is always the first priority. (3) developing women involvement in remote areas, other difficulties due to the hard desert life which provokes people's inflexibility.
	All participants were expressive regarding career drivers and foreseen obstacles, they have become effective planners for their future careers.	

Work- Life Interface	Prioritizing responsibilities between work and family commitments.	
	Family	All participants expressed the family priority except one. Whether this responsibility is having
	Work	Work was given second priority by the majority of participants.
	Even	Two expressed their ability to balance between work and family.
	Myself	Only one participant expressed herself as priority number one to keep her positive attitude and success in what she does.
Participants interventions	Participants put family as priority number one, and work in the second stage with few who could balance both equally and one who puts herself as first priority, work second and family third.	

Women-Men Relationship Images	This theme clarifies the impact of the managerial positions of working ladies on their relations with men in regard of image, style of living, marriage, family tasks and men's attitude towards them as female managers. In addition to the future movements of women.				
	Men	This sub-category includes all references related to men's attitudes towards their working women, how men contribute in family responsibilities, how their style of living and image are.			
		Attitude towards women	Some participants admitted that men act as superiors and like to control their wives and daughters lives. Others commented differently stating that men are now more understanding, respectful, and open minded.		
		Help in family tasks	Most participants confirmed that men do not help. However, they facilitate help when they bring and pay for maids, drivers, or cooks. Few mentioned that men only help when the situation is critical, and they have time.		
		Style of living and image	The participants emphasised that men in UAE community have their private world with their male friends. Added to that the male dominance in the majority of the UAE families still exists, and this has traditional background as men are counted as heads of their families.		
	Women	This sub-category includes all references related to women's image, family responsibilities, and style of living.			
		Responsible for family tasks	All participants agreed that they are the ones who carry the responsibility of the children. Except for one who provided a different answer, because her husband is helpful and shares the parenting role by taking care of the children, because he doesn't prefer to have a strange maid in the house.		
		Want more kids	Majority of participants prefer having more kids, due to cultural preference.	Yes	Those who have three or less children wanted more.
				No	The ones who have four or five children were content and didn't want any more
		Image	The participants expressed that now women have a respectful image and they can no longer stay at home and be unproductive. They all said that they see themselves sharing decision making and occupying prominent positions.		
		Style of living	They have explained that non-working women live luxuriously, that some UAE women still prefer spending their time shopping top brands and hanging out with friends, rather than going to work. Having maids is taken for granted for Emirati ladies.		
	Women in field	This sub-category includes all references related to the participants justifications of the employment and management possibility and other future movements.			
		Easier employment and management possibility	Participants have expressed that it is much easier now to find an opportunity to work and even a managerial position.		
		Women further movements	Participants expressed their will to go on and work harder to change the prevailing male dominant attitude and be financially independent.		
Participants interventions	All participants shared in this theme, Although they have alluded to the superiority of males, they have also mentioned minor change on few males' behavior towards being hand in hand with their working wives which is a new phenomenon in their culture.				

Appendix 4 – Sample demographics

Name	Age	Education degree	Education background	Management level	Location	Duration of interview	Title Job	Current Job	Years in the current Management Position	Current Supervisor	Current Subordinates	Type of Industry	Sector	Organization Size (if of Employees)	Upward Family				Child's name	Child's gender	No. of children	Age of Children			
															Paternal	Maternal	Spouse	Other				<3	3-6	6-18	>18
A01	38	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Abu Dhabi	50	Marketing in Abu Dhabi	Head of Insurance Department	3-5 Years	Male	10-50	Banking	Public	>100	YES	YES	YES	YES	Single	NO	3				
A02	34	BA	Before Marriage	Top Manager	Abu Dhabi	70	Head of family business	Assistant Manager	3-5 Years	Male	>50	Construction	Private	>100	NO	YES	NO	NO	Married	YES	5	1	1	3	
A03	40	BA	After Marriage	Top Manager	Abu Dhabi	60	Head of the Ministry of Trade	Head of Development	3-5 Years	Male	10-10	Oil & Gas	Public	100-500	YES	YES	YES	YES	Married	YES	5			3	2
A04	38	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Abu Dhabi	70	Manager for training & development	Public Relations Manager	5-10 Years	Male		Oil & Gas	Public	100-500	YES	NO	YES	YES	Married	YES	4		2	2	
A05	34	BS	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Abu Dhabi	60	Manager in Microsoft in USA	Development engineer	< 1 Years	Male	10-10	Oil & Gas	Public	100-500	YES	YES	YES	YES	Married	YES	3		1	2	
D01	37	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	60	Manager in banking and financial services	Head of Finance	< 1 Years	Female		Banking	Private	100-500	NO	NO	YES	YES	Married	YES	2	1	1		
D02	42	BA	Before Marriage	Top Manager	Dubai	50	Head of the National Bank	Senior Counsel	5-10 Years	Male	10-50	Shocks & Shivers	Private	100-500	NO	NO	YES	YES	Single	NO					
D03	40	MA	Before Marriage	Top Manager	Dubai	60	Manager in Public in Abu Dhabi	Assistant Consultant	5-10 Years	Male	10-50	Shocks & Shivers	Private	100-500	YES	NO	YES	YES	Married	YES	3		1	2	
D04	35	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	70	Head of a client company manager	Customer Services manager	3-5 Years	Male		Other construction	Joint venture	100-500	YES	YES	YES	YES	Single	NO					
D05	38	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	70	Manager in the public sector	CEO	5-10 Years	Male	10-10	Other construction	Joint venture	100-500	YES	NO	YES	YES	Single	NO					
D06	35	MA	After Marriage	Top Manager	Dubai	50	Procurement manager	Board member	5-10 Years	Male	>50	Construction & Real Estate Co.	Private	100-500	NO	NO	YES	YES	Married	YES	4	1	1	4	
D07	38	BS	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	60	Manager in the Public Sector	Business Manager	5-10 Years	Male	10-50	Construction & Real Estate Co.	Private	100-500	NO	NO	YES	YES	Single	NO					
D08	42	BS	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	50	Chief Eng. Of the USA company in Dubai	Chief Eng. Of design	>10 Years	Male	10-50	Construction & Real Estate Co.	Private	100-500	YES	NO	NO	YES	Single	NO					
D09	55	BA	After Marriage	Top Manager CEO	Dubai	70	Highly known in the family business	Entrepreneur	>10 Years		>50	Other Business: family design, Shocks & Shivers, & Organizing activities	Private	>100	YES	NO	YES	YES	Married	YES	7			1	6
D10	43	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	60	Manager in the public sector	Head of construction Management Director	3-5 Years	Female	10-10	Real	Private	10-100	YES	YES	YES	YES	Married	YES	5			4	1
D11	40	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	50	Head of a company that operated at 50 establishments in Abu Dhabi and in Dubai	Marketing & Public Relations Manager	3-5 Years	Female	10-50	Real	Private	10-100	YES	NO	YES	YES	Married	YES	3			3	
D12	38	MSA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	80	Manager in the public sector	Manager of the training team	3-5 Years	Male	10-50	Training Center	Private	10-100	NO	NO	YES	YES	Divorced	YES	3			3	
D13	35	BA & TIC	After Marriage	Mid-management	Dubai	70	The partner of the public sector	The partner of the public sector	>10 Years	Male	10-50	Real Estate	Private	100-500	YES	NO	YES	NO	Married	YES	4	1	1	3	
S01	35	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Sharjah	40	ADNOC is the customer service department	Head of quality department in Bank of Sharjah	5-10 Years	Male	>50	Banking	Public	100-500	YES	NO	YES	NO	Married	YES	4		1	1	2
S02	43	BA	Before Marriage	Mid-management	Sharjah	80	Assistant in Sharjah Library	Chief Assistant of Social Affairs	3-5 Years	Male		Higher Education	Public		NO	NO	YES		Married	YES	2			2	
S03	44	PhD	Before Marriage	Top Manager	Sharjah	50	an employee in the Ministry of Health	Chief of Education & a Professor	3-5 Years	Male		Higher Education	Public		NO	NO	YES	YES	Single	NO					
S04	35	MA	Before Marriage	Top Manager	Sharjah	80	Dubai marketing	Director of Sharjah tourism club	5-10 Years	Female	>50	Services	Public	100-500	YES	YES	YES	YES	Single	YES	3			3	

