

## Evaluating the Impact of Trade Openness on Women's Job Opportunities: An Analysis for Middle East Countries

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### Abstract:

The level of employment is an important determinant of economic welfare. Since social protection systems are weak in developing countries, the effect of trade liberalization on the employment structure determines the level of poverty and the distribution of income and wages. These variables are strongly associated with trade liberalization. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the relationship between openness to international trade (resulting from trade liberalization) and changing employment opportunities for women in the 16 Middle East economies.

In this study, we consider the trade share as (%) of GDP as a measure of openness. To measure women's absolute employment rate we used female employment rate data. To analyse the effect of trade openness on the gender gap we used gender inequality in education (gender parity index (GPI)); namely the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary enrolment. Female labor force as a percentage of the total shows the extent to which women are active in the labor force. A simple linear regression used to measure the impact of openness on women's employment opportunities in Middle east countries. All data are from World Development Indicators based on International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market database.

Results indicated a statistically significant impact for the trade openness on women's absolute employment rate for all countries being involved except (Egypt, Israeli entity, Jordan, and West Bank and Gaza). The results also shows statistically significant impact for the Trade openness on the Female employee ((% of Total Labor Force) for all the countries being involved except(Egypt, Israel entity, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and West Bank and Gaza). Finally, The results indicates statistically significant impact for the Trade openness on Gender gap for (Iran, Lebanon, Oman, Syrian Arab Republic, and Turkey) and that the Gap was in favour of (Males), while the Gap for (Kuwait) was in favour of (Females). While the countries (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Qatar) had not significant impact of Trade openness on Gender gap.

**Keywords:** Trade Openness, women's absolute employment rate, Female labor force, gender gap, Middle East economies.

## 1. Introduction

Over the past years, many developing countries have undertaken a number of economic reforms, including trade liberalization policies. Trade policies are an economic policy and often have different gender effects due to differing access and control of resources by women and men and their different roles in the market economy and households (Fontana, 2003).

The level of employment is a key determinant of overall economic welfare, especially in developing countries where systems of social protection are weak. In particular, the impact of trade liberalization on the level and structure of employment determines, to a large extent, its impact on poverty, wage and income distribution and the quality of employment. These latter variables are clearly among the central points of contention in the debate over trade liberalization.

Feminists have made a major contribution to the literature, evaluating the effects of liberalization of trade, investment, and finance on several aspects of women's absolute and relative well-being (Irene van Staveren, Diane Elson, Caren Grown, and Nilufer Cagatay 2007).

This study aims to assess the relationship between increased openness to international trade (resulting from trade liberalization) and the change in employment opportunities for women in 16 Middle East economies namely (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, Arab Rep., Iran, Islamic Rep., Iraq, Israeli entity, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen, Rep.)

The study also aims to answer the following questions:

- Is commercial openness a reason to increase women's employment opportunities compared to men's employment opportunities?
- What is the effect of the increase in trade openness on gender inequality in the countries under study?

The other sections of the study are as following: Section two reviews the main findings of the recent literature on trade and gender. Section 3 presents the description of the main indicators of trade openness and gender gaps for the study sample since the 1990. Section 4 explains the empirical methodology and the data used in the study, while Section 5 presents and discusses the results. Section 6 concludes and presents some policy recommendations.

## 2. A Review of Selected Literature

Theoretically different studies that were employed to show the relationship between trade openness and employment in general and women's job opportunities particularly. The main foundations of the traditional trade theory framework rest on the distinction of various labour inputs based on skill differences. The Heckscher-Ohlin theory predicts that, since developing countries have a large pool of low-skill labour, opening up to trade will involve them exporting goods and services that are relatively more low-skill labour intensive and importing goods and services that are relatively more intensive in high-skill labour. This process depends on the fact that trade liberalization will raise the relative price of low-skill labour intensive goods and services which, in turn, increases the demand for low-skill labour. The Stolper-Samuelson theory takes the analysis further to prove that, in such a scenario, low-skill workers will see a more than proportional increase in their wages. Hence, trade reforms are expected to lead to a decrease in the wage differential between high-skill and low-skill workers in developing countries.

The following table summarizes these studies and its results.

**Table (1) Summary of a selected literature**

<b>Authors/ (year) Study Aim</b>	<b>sample</b>	<b>Study Period</b>	<b>Main Results</b>
<b>Banerjee and Veeramani (2015)</b> analyses the role of trade liberalization and technology-related factors in determining female employment intensity in selected manufacturing industries in India	India	1998–2008	A negative effect of import tariff rates on female employment intensity.
<b>Wamboye, E., &amp; Seguino, S. (2012)</b> Identify whether there is an impact of economic and trade structure on women's Relative access to work	Sub-Saharan Africa	1991-2010	Trade liberalization has gendered Employment effects, with the direction depending on the structure of the economy
<b>David Kucerra , Leanne Roncolato (2011)</b> estimate the effects of trade expansion on employment and incomes in India and South Africa	India and South Africa	beginning of 1990s	Employment results identify winning and losing industries and examine sex and skill biases.
<b>Tejani and Millberg (2010)</b> the impact of globalization on Manufacturing Employment in Middle Income Countries	60 high-income developed countries and middle-income developing countries	1985–2007	The relative employment of women in the manufacturing sector increased in developing countries but decreased in high-income countries as a result of increased exports.
<b>Oostendorp (2009)</b> analyses the impact of globalization on the occupational gender wage gap	cross-country study	1983–1999	Increased trade openness and net inflows of foreign direct investment have a significantly narrowing impact on the occupational gender wage gap for rich countries, but finds little evidence of such a narrowing effect for poorer countries.
<b>Cockburn et al. (2009)</b> examine the effects of trade liberalization policies on gender inequality in Senegal	Senegal	2004	trade reform has little effect on gender differences within skill categories but substantial effects on wage differentials across skills
<b>Lulit and Claude (2008)</b> The effects of trade liberalisation on female labour	South Africa and Ethiopia	2001	negative effect of trade liberalization on gender wage inequality
<b>Nicita A (2008)</b> examine the effects that export growth in the textile and apparel sector have had on social welfare and the gender wage gap in Madagascar	Madagascar	-	From a gender perspective, women are found to benefit substantially less than men. Although total welfare effects are significant, the benefits are largely reaped by non-poor households.
<b>Mina, Lutz (2007)</b> Explores the effect of trade liberalization on gender equality of literacy in the SSA region compared to non-SSA developing countries	41 African and Arab countries	1974-1977	Gender inequalities in literacy have a statistically significant negative effect that is robust to changes in the specification.
<b>Arndt et al. (2006)</b> the impact of trade policy reform on male and female labor in Mozambique	Mozambique	2001	trade reform has little effect on gender differences within skill categories but substantial effects on wage differentials across skills

<b>Lee E (2005)</b> Reviews both multi-country and country studies on the impact of trade liberalization on growth and employment in developing countries.	Literature on developing countries	Before 2005	The contrasting experiences of developing countries suggest that perhaps mere openness to international trade cannot solely ensure job gain and other domestic policies to increase the competitiveness of low-skilled, labour intensive industries also play an important role
<b>Black and Brainerd (2004)</b> examining the effects of increased trade openness on the change in the wage gap in the United States	United States	1977–1994	increased competition through imports improved women’s relative pay in previously-highly concentrated industries, but increased the wage gap in industries that were already competitive
<b>Haouas et al. (2003)</b> Investigate the short- and long-term employment and wage effects of trade reforms (adoption of an export promotion strategy in 1970) in Tunisia	a panel-data estimation for 11 manufacturing industries in Tunisia	1971- 1996	trade liberalization caused an increase in women’s participation in the formal labour market (in both the exportable and importable sectors) as well as a rise in real wages
<b>Raquel Artecona (2002)</b> examines the change in the gender wage gap in the manufacturing sector in urban Mexico over the trade liberalization	Mexico	1987-1993	Trade liberalization was found to be associated with higher gender wage gaps in the Mexican manufacturing sector, but this is likely due to an increased premium to men’s higher (experience) skills; the discrimination component of wage differentials seems to fall with competition that is brought about by international competition
<b>Seguino (2000)</b> investigates the sources of divergent trends in gender wage differentials in two important newly industrialised economies (NIEs), South Korean and Taiwan	South Korean and Taiwan	-	gender wage differentials in Taiwan's manufacturing sector have widened, while in Korea they have narrowed
<b>Marzia and Adrian(2000)</b> Modeling the effect of trade on women, at work and at home	Bangladesh	1993 and 1995	Labor market institutions and socio-cultural norms shape the way in which trade expansion affects gender inequalities, resulting in more favorable effects in Bangladesh
<b>Ozler S (2000)</b> investigate the relationship between export orientation and female share of employment in the Turkish manufacturing sector	Turkey	1983–85	female share of employment in a plant increases with the export to total output ratio of its sector
<b>Wood (1991)</b> the impact of North-South Trade on Female Labour in Manufacturing sector	35 developed and developing countries	1960- 1985	A strong relation between increased exports and increased female employment in manufacturing in the developing countries. However, no counterpart reduction in the demand for female workers in developed countries.

Source: Authors’ studies

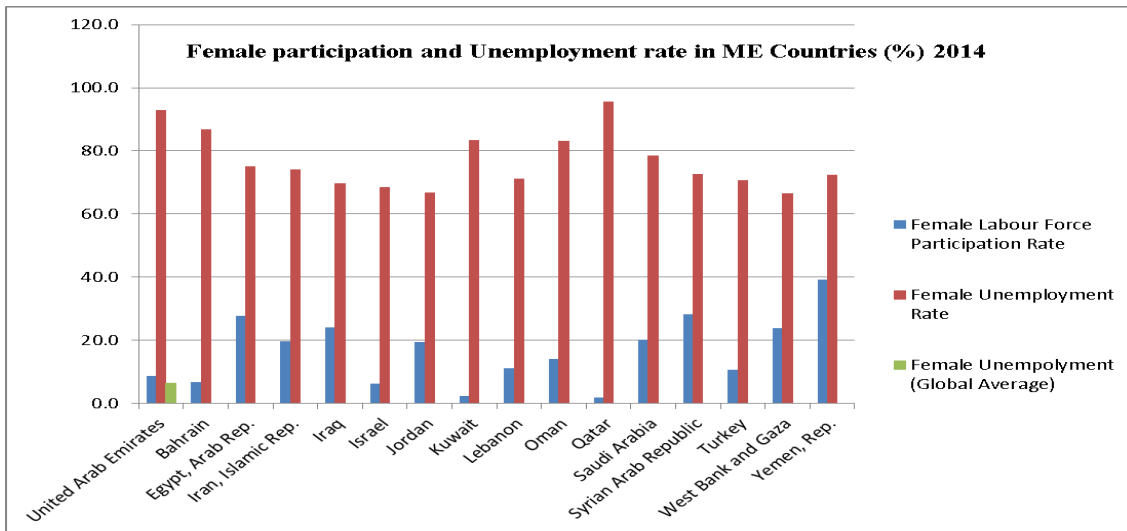
### What does the evidence tell us?

The preceding overview of the theoretical literature has identified a number of mechanisms through which trade opening can affect employment and wages. In most cases, trade reforms increase the incidence of employment, but their impact on wages is ambiguous and depends on circumstances and country specificities.

## Female participation in Middle East Region

Women face particular challenges in the labour market in the ME region, in particular in GCC countries. Female unemployment rates are high and the gender unemployment gap is large. Female labour market participation rates are lower than in any other region. Nevertheless, an increasing share of the female population has now attained tertiary level education, but so far it remains underutilized. Taken together, high unemployment and low participation rates leave a large employment gap and a huge catch-up potential should more women decide to enter the labour market (figure 1)

**Figure (1) Female participation and Unemployment rate in ME Countries (%) 2014**

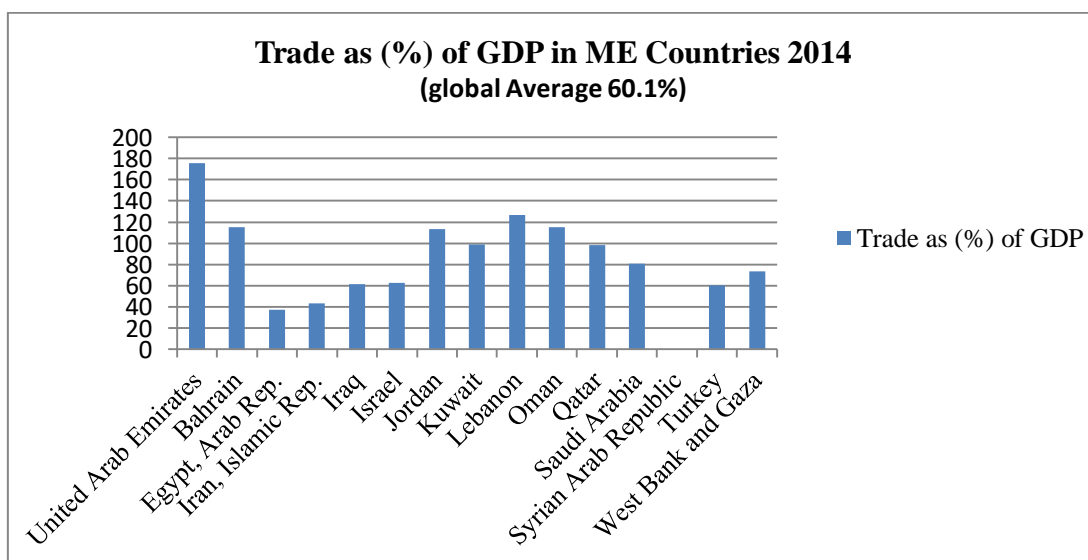


Source: World Bank

- **A snapshot of trade performance in Middle East Region**

Middle East Region trade (imports + exports) excluding oil is at about the world average but exports alone are below the world average. Conditioning on GDP, Middle East are under-traded with other countries (figure 2).

**Figure (2) Trade (%) of GDP in ME Countries 2014**



Source: World Bank

A standard measure of trade openness is trade (exports plus imports) relative to GDP. By this measure, which is reported in Table 2, ME Region is more open than the world on average and even than Europe & Central Asia. This should be considered as an advantage point for Middle East Countries.

**Table (2) Measures of Openness**

Region	Trade % GDP	Exports	Imports
East Asia & Pacific	63.7	32.1	31.2
Europe & Central Asia	80.4	41.7	38.7
Latin America & Caribbean	41.0	19.3	21.7
Middle East Countries	<b>90.7</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>41.9</b>
South Asia	47.1	21.5	25.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	59.8	28.4	31.4
World	<b>60.1</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>29.8</b>

Source: WDI based on IMF DOT. 2014

### 3. Methodology and Data used

Broadly, trade openness measures can be divided into two categories: measures of openness in practice and measures of openness in policy (UNCTAD, 2010). Measures of openness in practice indicate the actual importance of trade in the economy, while measures of openness in policy indicate the extent of policy measures that aim to restrict or enhance trade. While the former mostly refer to trade-intensity ratios, the latter include import tariff rates, export taxes on international trade, and indices of non-tariff barriers. From a policy point of view, a comprehensive form of trade barriers appears to be best suited to ascertain the impact of trade policy (Harrison and Hansen, 1999; Yanikkaya, 2003). Unfortunately, data about such measures of openness in policy are rarely available for developing countries. In this study, we therefore consider the trade share as (%) of GDP as a measure of openness. Trade is the sum of exports and imports of goods and services measured as a share of gross domestic product.

To measure women's absolute employment rate we used female employment rate data. Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period.

To analyse the effect of trade openness on the gender gap we used gender inequality in education (gender parity index (GPI)); namely the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary enrolment<sup>1</sup>. Female labor force as a percentage of the total shows the extent to which women are active in the labor force. A simple linear regression used to measure the impact of openness on women's employment opportunities in Middle east countries.

All data are from World Development Indicators based on International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market database.

#### Hypotheses

The main goal of the present study is to address the impact of Trade openness on women's employment opportunities in Middle east countries . For this purpose, the three following hypotheses are stated and tested as below:

<sup>1</sup> A GPI equal to 1 indicates parity between females and males. In general, a value less than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of boys and a value greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of girls. However, the interpretation should be in the other way round for indicators that should ideally approach 0% (e.g. repetition, dropout, illiteracy rates, etc). In these cases, a GPI of less than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of girls and a value greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of boys

<b>H<sub>01</sub></b>	There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the trade openness on women's absolute employment rate.
<b>H<sub>02</sub></b>	There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the trade openness on Female activity in labor force.
<b>H<sub>03</sub></b>	There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the trade openness on Gender gap

#### 4. Statistical analysis of data and discuss the results:

##### - First Main Hypothesis:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the trade openness on women's absolute employment rate.

In order to test the 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis validity was used the simple linear regression analysis. As shown in table (1) and (2) below:

**Table 1. Results of the simple linear regression to measure the impact of trade openness on women's absolute employment rate**

Country	Correlation (r)	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Sig. F	$\beta$	T-value	Sig. t	Result
United Arab Emirates	0.971	0.942	375.415*	0.000	0.184	19.376*	0.000	S
Bahrain	0.865	0.748	68.352*	0.000	- 0.136	- 8.268*	0.000	S
Egypt, Arab Rep.	0.209	0.044	1.054	0.315	0.043	1.027	0.315	NS
Iran, Islamic Rep.	0.731	0.535	26.432*	0.000	0.330	5.141*	0.000	S
Iraq	0.439	0.193	5.503*	0.028	0.012	2.346*	0.028	S
Israeli entity	0.191	0.037	0.872	0.360	- 0.121	- 0.934	0.360	NS
Jordan	0.288	0.083	2.080	0.163	- 0.044	- 1.442	0.163	NS
Kuwait	0.606	0.367	13.328*	0.001	- 0.163	- 3.651*	0.001	S
Lebanon	0.528	0.279	8.900*	0.007	0.040	2.983*	0.007	S
Oman	0.752	0.565	29.848*	0.000	0.205	5.463*	0.000	S
Qatar	0.450	0.202	5.833*	0.024	0.235	2.415*	0.024	S
Saudi Arabia	0.606	0.367	13.344*	0.001	0.088	3.653*	0.001	S
Syrian Arab Republic	0.470	0.221	6.528*	0.018	- 0.206	- 2.555*	0.018	S
Turkey	0.448	0.201	5.787*	0.025	- 0.165	- 2.406*	0.025	S
West Bank and Gaza	0.375	0.127	3.355	0.080	- 0.109	- 1.832	0.080	NS
Yemen, Rep.	0.606	0.367	13.323*	0.001	0.107	3.650*	0.001	S

**Dependent variable:** women's absolute employment rate (Female employee rate (ages 15<sup>+</sup>)).

**S:** It means significant. , **NS:** It means not significant.

The results contained in the table (1) indicate to existence statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the trade openness on women's absolute employment rate for each country of the countries being involved. Also, the results showed that the other countries had not existence statistically significant impact of trade openness on women's absolute employment rate for the countries (Egypt, Israeli entity, Jordan, and West Bank and Gaza), which it is supported by the statistical significance values contained in ANOVA and (F) results which were greater than ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) as mentioned in the above Table.

**Table 2. Results of the simple linear regression to measure the impact of trade openness on women's absolute employment rate for all the countries**

Independent variable	Correlation (r)	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Sig. F	β	T-value	Sig. t	Result
Trade openness	0.812	0.660	44.595	0.000	0.261	6.678	0.000	S

**Dependent variable:** women's absolute employment rate (Female employee rate (ages 15+)).

The results contained in the table (2) indicate to existence statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for openness on women's absolute employment rate for all the countries being involved.

**- Second Main Hypothesis:**

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the trade openness on Female activity in labor force.

In order to test the 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis validity was used the **simple linear regression analysis**. As shown in table (3) and (4) below:

**Table 3. Results of the simple linear regression to measure the impact of the trade openness on Female activity in labor force**

Country	Correlation (r)	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Sig. F	β	T-value	Sig. t	Result
United Arab Emirates	0.817	0.668	46.316*	0.000	0.021	6.806*	0.000	S
Bahrain	0.681	0.463	19.868*	0.000	- 0.034	- 4.457*	0.000	S
Egypt, Arab Rep.	0.240	0.057	1.401	0.249	0.037	1.184	0.249	NS
Iran, Islamic Rep.	0.671	0.450	18.829*	0.000	0.311	4.339*	0.000	S
Iraq	0.476	0.227	6.740*	0.016	0.013	2.596*	0.016	S
Israel	0.188	0.035	0.840	0.369	- 0.053	- 0.916	0.369	NS
Jordan	0.230	0.053	1.287	0.268	- 0.041	- 1.134	0.268	NS
Kuwait	0.354	0.125	3.285	0.083	0.037	1.812	0.083	NS
Lebanon	0.389	0.151	4.089	0.055	0.016	2.022	0.055	NS
Oman	0.078	0.006	0.140	0.711	0.015	0.375	0.711	NS
Qatar	0.083	0.007	0.160	0.693	- 0.013	- 0.400	0.693	NS
Saudi Arabia	0.395	0.156	4.241	0.053	0.052	2.059	0.053	NS
Syrian Arab Republic	0.461	0.213	6.222*	0.020	- 0.131	- 2.494*	0.020	S
Turkey	0.086	0.007	0.170	0.684	- 0.016	- 0.412	0.684	NS
West Bank and Gaza	0.379	0.143	3.849	0.062	- 0.118	- 1.962	0.062	NS
Yemen, Rep.	0.561	0.314	10.541*	0.004	0.085	3.247*	0.004	S

**Dependent variable:** Female activity in labor force (Female employee (% of Total Labor Force)).

The results contained in the table (3), indicate to existence statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the Trade openness on the Female employee ((% of Total Labor Force) for the countries being involved, which are (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen). Also, the results showed that the other countries had not existence statistically significant impact of the Trade openness on the Female employee ((% of Total Labor Force) for the countries (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and West Bank and Gaza), which it is supported by the statistical significance values contained in ANOVA and (F) results which were greater than ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) as mentioned in the above Table.



**Table 4. Results of the simple linear regression to measure the impact of the Trade openness on Female activity in labor force, for all the countries**

Independent variable	Correlation (r)	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Sig. F	β	T-value	Sig. t	Result
Trade openness	0.788	0.621	37.614	0.000	0.124	6.133	0.000	S

**Dependent variable:** Female activity in labor force Female employee (% of Total Labor Force).

The results contained in the table (4) indicate to existence statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the Trade openness on the Female employee ((% of Total Labor Force) for all the countries being involved.

**- Third Main Hypothesis:**

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the trade openness on Gender gap.

In order to test the 3<sup>rd</sup> hypothesis validity was used the **simple linear regression analysis**. As shown in table (5) and (6) below:

**Table 5. Results of the simple linear regression to measure the impact of the Trade openness on Gender gap**

Country	Correlation (r)	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Sig. F	β	T-value	Sig. t	Result
Egypt, Arab Rep.	0.154	0.024	0.561	0.462	- 0.001	- 0.749	0.462	NS
Iran, Islamic Rep.	0.458	0.210	6.119*	0.021	0.004	2.474*	0.021	S
Israel	0.281	0.079	1.971	0.174	0.001	1.404	0.174	NS
Jordan	0.007	0.000	0.001	0.973	0.000	- 0.034	0.973	NS
Kuwait	0.457	0.209	6.067*	0.022	- 0.002	- 2.463*	0.022	S
Lebanon	0.696	0.484	21.583	0.000	- 0.001	- 4.646	0.000	S
Oman	0.411	0.169	4.682*	0.041	0.001	2.164*	0.041	S
Qatar	0.198	0.039	0.941	0.342	- 0.001	- 0.970	0.342	NS
Syrian Arab Republic	0.584	0.341	11.899	0.002	0.004	3.450	0.002	S
Turkey	0.769	0.591	33.300	0.000	0.007	5.771	0.000	S

**Dependent variable:** Gender gap.

The results contained in the table (5), indicate to existence statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the Trade openness on Gender gap for the countries being involved, which are (Iran, Lebanon, Oman, Syrian Arab Republic, and Turkey) and that the Gap was in favour of (Males), while the Gap for (Kuwait) was in favour of (Females). Also, the results showed that the other countries had not existence statistically significant impact of the Trade openness on Gender gap for the countries (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Qatar), which it is supported by the statistical significance values contained in ANOVA and (F) results which were greater than ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) as mentioned in the above Table.

**Table 6. Results of the simple linear regression to measure the impact of the Trade openness on Gender wage gap, for all the countries**

Independent variable	Correlation (r)	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Sig. F	β	T-value	Sig. t	Result
Trade openness	0.637	0.405	15.687*	0.001	0.002	3.961	0.001	S

**Dependent variable:** Gender gap.

The results contained in the table (6) indicate to existence statistically significant impact at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), for the Trade openness on Gender gap for all the countries being involved, and that the Gap was in favour of (Males).

## 5. policy recommendations

Understanding the relationship between gender and trade policy is important for policymakers so they will be better able to identify areas where trade liberalization may advance broader domestic goals, and where trade agreements might actually undermine other public policy priorities. Gender impact analyses can help policy-makers take into account not only the complementary policy measures that need to be implemented alongside trade commitments, but also the pace, scope and sequencing of trade liberalization.

as mentioned by World Bank documents, In the absence of public policy, globalization alone cannot and will not make gender inequality go away. Despite significant increases in agency and in access to economic opportunities for many women in many countries, large gaps remain in some areas. Public action aimed at closing existing gender gaps in endowments, agency, and access to economic opportunities is therefore necessary for countries to fully capitalize on the potential of globalization as a force for development and greater gender equality. Middle East countries needs to Eliminate unequal treatment of men and women in the labour market , Promote an enabling environment for gender equality in the labour market , Make work pay, hold regular dialogues with women’s organizations as part of their process, and improve job quality and reduce informality Promote entrepreneurship.

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## تقييم أثر الانفتاح التجاري على فرص عمل المرأة: تحليل لدول الشرق الأوسط

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### المخلص:

مستوى العمالة عامل محدد هام للرفاه الاقتصادي، وبما أن نظم الحماية الاجتماعية ضعيفة في البلدان النامية، فإن تأثير تحرير التجارة على هيكل العمالة يحدد مستوى الفقر وتوزيع الدخل والأجور. وترتبط هذه المتغيرات بقوة بتحرير التجارة. لذلك، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى فهم العلاقة بين الانفتاح على التجارة الدولية (الناجمة عن تحرير التجارة) وتغيير فرص العمل للنساء في 16 اقتصادا في الشرق الأوسط.

في هذه الدراسة، نعتبر حصة التجارة (%) من الناتج المحلي الإجمالي كمقياس للانفتاح. ولقياس معدل عمالة المرأة المطلق، استخدمنا بيانات معدل عمالة الإناث. ولتحليل أثر الانفتاح التجاري على الفجوة بين الجنسين استخدمنا عدم المساواة بين الجنسين في التعليم (مؤشر التكافؤ بين الجنسين)؛ وهي نسبة الفتيات إلى البنين في الالتحاق بالمدارس الابتدائية والثانوية. وتبين القوة العاملة النسائية كنسبة مئوية من المجموع مدى مشاركة المرأة في القوة العاملة. انحدار خطي بسيط يستخدم لقياس تأثير الانفتاح على فرص عمل المرأة في بلدان الشرق الأوسط. جميع البيانات مأخوذة من مؤشرات التنمية العالمية استنادا إلى قاعدة بيانات منظمة العمل الدولية، المؤشرات الرئيسية لسوق العمل.

وأظهرت النتائج وجود أثر ذي دلالة إحصائية على الانفتاح التجاري على معدل العمالة المطلق للمرأة في جميع البلدان التي تشارك فيها باستثناء مصر والكيان الإسرائيلي والأردن والضفة الغربية وغزة. كما أظهرت النتائج وجود تأثير ذي دلالة إحصائية على الانفتاح التجاري على الوظائف (%) من إجمالي القوى العاملة) لجميع الدول المعنية باستثناء مصر، إسرائيل، الأردن، الكويت، لبنان، عمان، قطر، المملكة العربية السعودية، تركيا، والضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة، وأخيرا، تشير النتائج إلى وجود تأثير ذي دلالة إحصائية على الانفتاح التجاري على الفجوة بين الجنسين (إيران ولبنان وعمان والجمهورية العربية السورية وتركيا) وأن الفجوة كانت لصالح (الذكور) في حين كانت الفجوة بالنسبة للكويت لصالح الإناث، في حين أن البلدان (مصر وإسرائيل والأردن وقطر) لم يكن لها تأثير كبير على الانفتاح التجاري على الفجوة بين الجنسين.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الانفتاح التجاري، معدل العمالة المطلقة للمرأة، قوة العمل النسائية، الفجوة بين الجنسين، اقتصادات الشرق الأوسط.