

Women in Leadership Positions, Road to Success, A Case Study, Bahrain

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Abstract

Bahrain is a Muslim Arab tribal society, where women play a significant role in the countries' development, and the number of female business leaders is increasing rapidly. Understanding the circumstances that brought these women to the forefront of business in their country will lead to constructing a better business environment for women in the future. The aim of this study is to explore these women in terms of: the secret behind their successes, their beliefs, and motivation towards leadership. The study tries to identify the "gap" in the scholarly literature on Bahraini women in business, and to provide in-depth data on female leaders in the region.

The study employs the inductive approach, using an in-depth qualitative open-ended interview, developed and based on the *contingency leadership theory*. And the Weber framework of authority.

The results indicate that the main factors contributing to the success of women leaders are social status, cultural, gender, struggle, and difficulties from women leaders' point of view. This is a pilot study for further in-depth quantitative research in Bahrain and the GCC countries. This study is made up of eight samples. It is anticipated that future comparative research will be extended to a further quantitative study to cover a wider sample of Bahrain and GCC countries.

The paper is considered as one of the first to discuss the factors affecting the success of businesswomen in Bahrain, rather than the factors that empower them.

Keywords: Women, Leadership, Bahrain, GCC, Business

1. Introduction

1.1 Female Leadership

To include or not to include woman in leadership positions? That is the question being asked all around the world in the 21st century.

Women still suffer underrepresentation in leadership positions in politics and management. Some researchers explain that the discrimination against women has evolved from no participation to so-called second-generation forms of gender bias. Women face a group of invisible, salient and subtle barriers that have risen from cultural beliefs about gender, as well as workplace structure, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favor men (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011, p. 475)

1.2 Relevance

There is a lack of studies on the role of women in leadership positions in business in this region. This research explores the factors that contribute to the success of businesswomen in Bahrain, to improve female participation in the corporate world and empower them to reach controlling positions, thus paving the road for more women to pursue top positions, and start their own businesses.

1.3 Scholarship

The contingency theory recognizes various authority dimensions, which connect the leader's performance to the followers and the situation. It combines the three aspects of the leader, followers and situation (in various degrees to give the five theories) that explain the creation of a leader, the leader-member exchange, the normative decision model, the situational leadership model, the contingency model, and the Path-Goal theory (where all assume that leader, follower, and situational interaction can create a leader) (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012, pp. 520-521).

The Path-Goal theory is about expectancy: it is a cognitive approach, or state of mind that the leader adopts as a strategy to achieve end goals. Leaders tend to change their style of leadership in line with situations or subordinates. A leader's behavior can be categorised into four types: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. (Hughes et al., 2012, pp. 542-543).

Women authority dimension is a controversial issue between two schools of thought. One supports the existence of differences between men and women. It believes that women tend to be more participative, supportive, and transformational leaders, and place more emphasis on communication, cooperation, affiliation and nurturing, while, men adapt more directive and transactional, and achievement-oriented styles of leadership (Andersen, & Hansson, 2011; Levy, 2010; Patel, 2013, p. 22).

Eagly & Karau (2002, pp. 574-575), relate these differences to the social role theory, where prejudice of the perceiver stereotypes towards a certain social group that attributes success to certain social roles. Nemark (1993) recognized gender differences and emphasized its

importance. This influenced the researcher to create a sound theoretical research design.

The other school thinks that the differences between men and women are minimal. It describes the female style of leadership as “alternative feminine leadership”, characterized by “cooperativeness, and collaboration of managers and subordinates, lower control of the leader, and problem-solving, based on intuition and empathy as well as rationality” (Loden, 1985, pp. 18-19).

Others base the differences in authority dimension on biology, personality traits, or childhood experiences that can create the differences (Moran, 1992, p. 475; Money & Ehrhard, 1972), and (Maccoby, 1988).

Kanter (1977) thinks that these differences do not exist, or cannot be considered as gender related but are individualistic factors. Although others believe that, in general, both men and women behave in the same way as leaders; both schools agree that the differences are very minor, and the data available does not indicate gender-stereotyping.

The geographical aspect or where a woman is located can affect her perception of the lack or abundance of power and opportunities available to her, and suggests that men and women in similar positions and rank behave per the guidelines of the job, and not their gender. Organizationally accepted behavior can override gender roles in the organization.

Trying to settle the argument (Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992, pp. 234-235), explain that what creates the difference between the two points of view is the setting of the experiment. The findings of any experiment or data collected varies according to the place the data is collected from, the organizational premises or lab.

The study of a woman’s leadership style, cannot be separated from the effect of her family on her professional life. Women managers define their professional success in subjective terms: their career success is part of a broader life context. They solve the work-family conflict by sometimes choosing one of them. However, in a study in the United Arab Emirates, where women are considered the care takers, they measure their career success by integrating business and family, they do not have to choose (Tlaiss, 2013, p. 760).

In the Arab world, where Islam dominates and shapes the values, norms, and culture “Islam is not only a religion that provides the relationship between people and Allah (God) but to believers, it organizes all features of life including business, economic, political and social issues” (Rees & Althakhri, 2008, p. 124).

Women in Islam have very well established legal rights; the right to own property and businesses as a single or married individual. Her husband has no right to her wealth earned or inherited without her consent. She has the right to keep her maiden name, divorce, inherit work, and get an education (Al-Munjjed, 2011; Al-Barghouthi, 2016, pp. 287-288).

What differentiates Arab women from others, is that there are distinct lines between men and women in the work place, “Arab societies sustained a strict code of gender segregation in public, at prayer and even at home” (Neal, Finlay, & Tansey, 2005, p. 479). This statement is true regarding prayer segregation in all Muslim societies. Muslims do not challenge what is

the core of Islamic heritage. However, the issue of work and home segregation is valid in Saudi Arabia only and is very limited in other Arab countries like Egypt, Jordan, and Bahrain.

The value of the consultative and participative decision concepts in Islam also coincide with the Arab tribal norms that shape the life of the Muslim.

In the Arab world, tribalism is the dominating socio-political structure, it appears minimal in Egypt and Lebanon but is quite intense in the GCC countries. Still, Arabs have many binding factors between them, in culture, religion, history, language and social structure.

The culture and resources of the Arab nations have gone through huge social transformation processes related to globalization, modernization, and openness to other cultures. Hence, they are facing many challenges regarding the structure of their societies as they tend to be group oriented, male-oriented, strong uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation (Rees & Althakhri, 2008, p. 130). Ibrahim Dabdoub says we have a tribal culture... people always need a tribal chief in the Arab world” (as cited in Zen-Ruffinen & Kaynar, p. 10).

Hisham Sharabi explains the Arab family structure, where mothers are the means of communication between the children and their fathers. Sons do not address their fathers directly, but through their mothers. This is a slight on the son who carries the family name, protects his mother and sisters, and keeps the family honor. These should give him authority over female members of the family. Daughters get less attention, and social obligations in the family, which make them more independent, and self-confident, able to face and challenge difficulties more easily than men (Sharabi, 1967, p. 39).

Rooted in Islamic and tribal tradition (Gates, 2015), business people in the Arab world are “hard on issues, but soft on people”. They are very concerned with hospitality, face, integrity, and sense of honor when leading subordinates.

There is evidence of the effect of globalization on the female work force in the Middle East. The Arab world has provided more opportunities for women to get educated and get more diverse jobs. Furthermore, in oil-rich countries, women have more chances to work in the public sector. For instance, in Bahrain, and the UAE, where there is more entrepreneurial development. On the other hand, these openings have increased inequalities between men and women (Metcalf, 2008, pp. 86-87).

In the GCC region, there are great similarities in leadership values in the six countries. Managers from different national cultures tend to have different perceptions about management and leadership, adhering to their values, norms, and beliefs (Laurent, 1968).

After the economic transformation of the region, urbanization and modernization processes that swept traditional Gulf cities had an impact on family relations and family functions (El-haddad, 2003, p. 7).

Families are still large and extended, kinship ties the families, and tribes are still a dominating authority in society. However, now Gulf families depend on foreign help (maids/servants). This has changed the functions and structure of the family and in the value systems governing its relationships. Many researchers defend this as the only way to enable

women in the Gulf to practice their right to go to work (El-haddad, 2003, pp. 3-4). Without a foreign helper, women will be confined to their homes to take care of the family. This would be detrimental as a woman's participation in supporting the family gives her the power to participate in the decision making, either at home or at work place.

Studying women leadership development is an under-researched topic in GCC countries. The researcher and scholars around the world are more and more concerned about the importance of providing society with more competent leaders from both sexes (Madsen, 2010, pp. 78-79).

Religion, tribalism, and chauvinism are main factors that are shape the society in the GCC countries, and affect the role of women in all aspects of society in the UAE, (an environment like Bahrain) Bahrain has a long history of trade in the region, and maintains its Muslim Arab culture (Mostafa, 2005, p. 532).

Women in Bahrain are unique in the area, as they have overcome many cultural and social obstacles on their way to leadership positions. They were the first in the GCC to: go to schools (1928), get university degrees (1937) (Al-Barghouthi, 2014, p. 22), get driving licenses (1945) (Bu Hajji, 2013), (twenty years ahead of Kuwaiti woman), vote (2002), be elected to public office, become teachers, and, occupy different unfamiliar careers, e.g. female taxi drivers. Women employment in Bahrain is the highest among the GCC countries and makeup 30% of the work force in the public sector (Al-Barghouthi, 2016).

Incremental theorists consider leadership as a growing process that can take from factors in the environment, such as the role models effect on women leaders (Hoyt, Brunette, & Innela, 2011, p. 258). Identifying with a role model can lead people who are new to their leadership positions. However, women in the region do not present themselves as role models with a feasible style for younger generations (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011, p. 477). In this study, leadership style will be examined on the Weber framework of authority, traditional, rational-legal, charismatic, interactive authority (Neal, Finlay, & Tansey, 2005, p. 481).

Research Questions:

Through interviewing eight female leaders, who run medium and large businesses, the study will try to answer its main question:

What factors have contributed to the success of female business leaders in Bahrain?

In order to, achieve the study's main goal, several sub-questions were answered throughout the study: How women leaders in Bahrain identified the role of culture, family, gender role perception, authority dimension and the role model effect on their success?

1.4 Research Design and Hypotheses

Yin (2014) suggests that to reflect the conditions in a certain surrounding, designing at least two or more studies is sufficient (p. 65).

All information was recorded directly after each interview and was categorized to historical, autobiographical, statistical, informational and opinionated ideas. The study handled and

exposed the idea of business succession in a very careful way, as the topic in Arab culture is very much affected by religious concepts, tradition, and skepticism. To achieve the most objective answers without giving the interviews a formal interrogative style, the researcher always started with an introduction about her life and goals to draw a better understanding of Arab women and confirm the participant's acceptance of the interviewer's findings to make sure that both the interviewer and participants were on the same page.

2. Method

The study employed the inductive approach to collect empirical data on female leadership in Bahrain. It adapted the qualitative methodology to collect primary data in in-depth open ended semi-structured interviews with eight female business leaders who run companies of different types and sizes.

The candidates are mainly members of the Bahrain Business Women Society which consist of 130 members. Most of them women who own their own businesses, that vary between small, medium and big in size. The interviews were developed and based on the *contingency leadership theory* and the Weber framework of authority. They were conducted by the researcher at their business premises. The study conducted in-depth semi- structured one to one interviews; questions focused on answering the sub questions of the study aiming to answer the central question of the study. The sample consisted of eight leading Bahraini businesswomen. The sample members age groups are: one in her thirties, one in her forties, five in their fifties, and one in her sixties.

All interviews were conducted in the Arabic language.

The interviews revolved around four concepts, authority dimension, family commitment, cultural factors, and role models.

The interviewer started with asking for some demographic information and general questions, then different questions in five categories:

- 1) Culture effect/ religion.
- 2) Family/ social status, commitment.
- 3) Authority dimension / traditional, rational-legal, charismatic, interactive authority.
- 4) Gender role.
- 5) Role model effect.

To study the authority dimension, a brief explanation of each of Weber's four dimensions of authority was given to each participant, then she was asked which dimension she identified with the most (Neal, Finlay, & Tansey, 2005, p. 481).

2.1 Participants

The sample included eight women leaders from Bahrain

Table 1. Demographic data

Participant	Age	Education	Employees	Marital status	Other information
1	50s	(completing) Ph.D. (USA)	17	Divorced 3 children	considered a pioneer in her field of training
2	50s	2 degrees (Bahrain and Egypt)	32	Married 1 child	high ranking bank officer prior to starting own business
3	30s	2 degrees (UK and USA)	25	Single	left the family business to pursue her own career
4	50s	Degree (Egypt)	54	Married 4 children	left the family business to pursue her own career.
5	60s	Degree (Syria)	35	Married 3 children	Family's status did not stop her from exploring new business ventures
6	60s	Degree from the UK	450	Married 2 children	started her own business independently, her brother asked her to run part of the family business along with her business, due to the exceptional retail business success
7	40s	High school	42	Married 3 children	started a project with 3 employees three branches (one outside Bahrain).
8	50s	High school	25	Divorce (In process)	Started from home to support the family.

Note. Participant's demographic data.

2.2 Sampling Procedures

The Bahrain Business Women Society secretary provided the researcher with a list of its members to the researcher who selected 50 names, considering the diversity, nature, and size of their companies.

Letters were sent, followed by phone calls and text messages. 28 replied (5 emails, and 26 by phone). However, many could not participate due to their business, family, or travel commitments.

Four made appointments for interviews and cancelled at the last minute. Twice the researcher arrived at the meeting to be informed that the interview would not take place.

12 participants that agreed to be interviewed, though in the total the researcher succeeded to conduct eight interviews.

2.3.1 Sample Size, Power, and Precession

This is a qualitative case study which attempts to understand the factors leading to the success of women in leadership positions. It is also an exploration of the actual relevant categories that can form the basis for further detailed quantitative studies. The sample of eight women is sufficient to fulfill the aim of the study, considering the redundancy of the answers after the fifth interview (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 84; Morse, 2000, p. 4).

3. Results

Interviews took a semi-structured style; the conversation encompassed the four main questions of the study.

During the interview, many general questions and answers were given, which were very informative about the women.

To get an impression of the participant's perception of herself, they were asked five general questions. *first*, whether they were satisfied with their achievements, *second*, the most important personal decision they ever made, *third*, how she identified herself, *fourth*, the motivation behind starting her own business, *fifth*, the most important professional decision she made.

In general, women were satisfied with their achievements. The most significant answers regarding personal decisions concerned getting divorced (two participants), and one answered "following my heart and passion".

3.1 Period of the Study

The study recruitment took seven months from September 2016 through to March 2017. This involved searching for candidates, contacting them and conducting the interviews.

3.2 Data Analysis

All participants identified themselves as powerful, unbeatable, 'super lady', courageous and ambitious, leaders, and strugglers and hard workers.

Their motivation to have their own businesses and to excel varied from the need to change, the challenge and to be their own bosses. Two participants from very wealthy families answered that they did not want to be like their mothers.

One of the participants' motivation was her father's refusal of her participating in the family business:

My father is the best caring father, he gave us unconditional love, sent me to a western country to get my education, but, after graduation, he refused to let me work in any of his businesses. All my brothers were working with him; he thought that the best place for me is at home taking care of my children. It was the first time for me ever to feel the gender role, it was my motivation to succeed and excel. I made myself, no help from him at all, (participant 6).

One of the participants said:

I was the first in everything, the first in my family to get my degree, the first to study abroad, the first woman in the family to go to work, the first to start the first training center in Bahrain of its kind, the first to get a divorce, the first to live alone, (participant 1).

3.2.1 Culture/ Religion

All the participants are Muslim, Arab and Bahraini. The only differences are their family background, Business, and wealth. Five of them come from very wealthy families who are business owners and the rest are either from modest or medium wealth families. 6 of them are married with children, one is a divorced mother, and one is single.

The participants were asked about culture, the effect of religion and the social status of the family. All participants said that religion had a major impact on her success and that religion with hard work was the reason for any success.

My Strong faith is my motto in life and business, what I have is from God, what I don't have is also from God, I just work hard, and God gives me in return, (participant 2).

(Participant 1), showed a very interesting interpretation of religion:

I was brought up in the very religious family, so strict, but when I succeeded to take Islam from rituals and practices to ethics and spirituals, I was able to be successful, (participant1).

3.2.2 Family and Social Status/ Commitment

The next question was on culture and the family social status (which shapes one's life in the Arab world).

Table 2. Question 1

Participant	What was the effect of your family's social status on your career?
1	My social status was a burden on me
2	Not really any
3	Added a lot of pressure
4	Critical
5	Gave me balance
6	Nothing
7	No direct effect
8	No direct effect

Family social status effect

Being from a wealthy family, it is very critical to leave the family business and have my own business. Social status was always at the back of my mind, I was always worried. My father told me, if you decide to be independent, there is no excuse but to succeed, failure is not accepted. I am always under pressure (participant 3).

(Participant 8) started her own business from home, to help her husband and support her family:

I started from home, I have no degree, I design everything from scratch, I own a chain of businesses now, with 25 employees, when I look back to all those years, it was a real struggle, but I don't accept failure. There is always an alternative solution, (participant 8).

Table 3. Question 2

Participant	How did your family commitment affect your family success and visa-verse?
1	I wanted to excel
2	More dedication to Both
3	Wanted to impress them all
4	I can do it all and succeed
5	To be example to my children
6	Devotion to husband and children
7	Double burden
8	I had no other choice

The other participant said:

I used to arrive in Paris at 9 AM, finish my meetings 6-7 PM, early morning I fly back to Bahrain, finish my work commitments, and be ready for my daughter's homework in the afternoon, (participant 2).

3.2.3 Authority Dimension

To explore the style Bahraini women use to lead their own businesses, four questions about their authority type were addressed, as per Weber's authority dimensions (Neal, Finlay, & Tansey, 2005, p. 481).

Question 3:

To examine the leadership dimension, the participants were asked four questions about each dimension:

Q3- a. Traditional: Do you use a systematic pattern in your leadership style that you have learned?

Q3- b. Rational-legal: Do you lead by strict rules and regulations and efficient operation?

Q3- c. Charismatic: Do you have any simple or complicated relations with employees?

Q3- d. Interactive: Do you have an informal relationship with your employees? (Do you delegate authority, negotiations and consult)?

Table 4. Leadership dimension

Participant.	Leadership type
1	Rational
2	Interactive
3	Charismatic
4	Traditional
6	Traditional
7	Interactive
8	Rational-legal

Participant's leadership dimension

The two women working in their family businesses follow the traditional, systematic authority:

I am very traditional, I follow my father's steps literally, and I also have a formal, kind of contact with my employees, (participant 6).

The divorcee (Participant 1) and the Participant in the process of divorcing her husband (Participant 8) are the most highly educated and least educated, respectively. Both follow the rational leadership authority.

Participant 8 whose work requires least professionalism:

My work type is abundant in Bahrain, employees keep jumping from one place to another, I have difficulty in employee retention, (participant 8)

The only woman who is charismatic is single, comes from a very wealthy family, the youngest in the group, who followed her heart and passion, and wants to change the images about her life.

The three interactive women leaders are the entrepreneurs who they started their businesses from scratch. The first has two degrees, two diplomas and many training hours in her field. She quit her promising job, to start her own business:

Another interactive leader started her business to be able to drop out of the university, she doesn't regret it, I had a big challenge to succeed, all my brothers and sisters have their degrees, I had to work hard.

My work is my passion, my employees are my friends, we all share decision making, we are on a WhatsApp group, we discuss everything and every detail, I travel every week twice to Dubai, once to Qatar, they keep me posted and I update them with everything, we are a team, (participant 7).

3.2.4 Gender Social Roles

The last part of the interviews is about these leaders view on gender roles, comprising of four

questions: two about being a woman and how it contributed to her success, and two about their own perceptions on female employees.

Table 5. Question 4

Participant	How did people perceive you, being a woman in business?
1	Challenge
2	Respect
3	Care and support, gender career prototype
4	gender career prototype
5	gender career prototype
6	gender career prototype
7	gender career prototype
8	Respect

Perception about women leadership

The most significant answer on gender social role was from Participant 3

Most of the business people we deal with welcome me as a daughter, they give me the best words of support, but when “push comes to shove”, they become hesitant. I, usually take the male project manager with me, I can see the difference in their reactions when they see the male engineer. They still need time to trust women in the execution of big, (participant 3).

All participants think that being a woman is the main reason to succeed in their businesses. They all agree that they had to put much more effort, dedication and devotion to their business to be able to achieve what men did.

Two of the participant had the same comment:

Failure is haunting us all the time (participant 3), we must succeed inside our homes, in the business, in the eyes of the society, in the eyes of one’s self, (participant 6).

3.2.5 Role Model

The last question was about gender role, where the answers were quite similar, very specific to Arab culture, where the concept of role model does not go out the family or religious personalities.

Table 6. Question 10

Participant	Who is your role model?
1	Prophet Mohamad
2	Father
3	Oprah Winfrey and Richard Branson
4	Prophet Mohamad
5	No body
6	Father/husband
7	Nobody
8	Father

Participant's role model

Again, Participant 3 differs from the others:

Oprah such a great woman, I have admired her since childhood, she started from a very poor family but could make all the charity, schools. Richard Branson is also a great entrepreneur; he made himself from nothing, (Participant 3). (Note 1)

The answer to the study's main questions, and understanding the effect of culture, social status, authority style, gender role and role model on the participant's road to success, can be summarized in the flowing table:

Table 7. Summary of the findings

Participant	Culture/ Religion	Authority dimension	Social status	Gender role	Role model
1	The maximum	Traditional	Burden	Challenge	Prophet Mohamad
2	The maximum	rational	Support	Respect	Father
3	The maximum	Charismatic	Pressure	Care and support, gender career prototype	Oprah Winfrey and Richard Branson
4	The maximum	Interactive	Critical	gender career prototype	Prophet Mohamad
5	The maximum	Interactive	Balance	gender career prototype	No body
6	Not really	Rational	opportunities	Respect	Father
7	The maximum	Interactive	Acceptance	Respect	Nobody
8	The maximum	Traditional	Acceptance	Respect	Father

4. Discussion

The information gathered in the eight interviews showed significant results on the five questions of the study.

4.1 Culture/ Religion

The participants agreed strongly that religion and faith are the most dominating factors in Bahraini culture. They are also the most important factors in achieving anything. The participants even accept failure as God's way of testing their tolerance and making them stronger. Most of the participants used verses from the Quran during the conversation, even while discussing other topics.

All the participants were religious regardless of their background, age or leadership type (traditional or charismatic).

4.2 Family, Social Status / Commitment

Participants 1, 3 and 4 all come from high status families and think negatively of the effect of their family's status on their career: burden, pressure, and critical. They explained that the status puts all eyes on them, giving a feeling of being under observation all the time.

The other three (2, 5, 6), expressed positive feelings about the family status effect, describing it as supportive, balancing, and providing opportunities. Participants 5 and 6 who have similar backgrounds, chose to get out of the family business, and be independent of it.

Two of the participants (7, 8) describe the family status effect as acceptance, or having a neutral effect, which is considered positive, without criticism, or awkwardness.

4.3 Authority Dimension

Two of the participants (1, 8) showed a traditional authority dimension, they have very different backgrounds, education and family statuses. Their married lives are similar. Participant 1 identified herself as the unbeatable, challenged family traditions and norms to make the change. Her social status was a burden on her. The second identified herself as a hard worker and confronted the economic difficulties in her life.

Participant 3 is charismatic. She inspires her employees, believes in their abilities, trusts them, sees them as assets, and credits them with making the difference with competitors. She is the youngest in the group, identified herself as a dreamer. Her motive for going into business was to not be like her mother. She shares this motive with Participant 1. Both of them, come from very wealthy families and have received western education. One is in her fifties and the other in her thirties, one of them is a traditional leader and the other is charismatic.

25%- two of the participants (2- the ex-banker and 5- who runs her business within her family business) are rational leaders. They stick to rules and regulations.

Three of the participants (4, 6, 7) have an interactive style of authority. They have good relations with their employees and listen to them, delegate authority and take longer vacations than the others.

4.4 Gender Role

Five of the participants (3, 4, 5, 6, 7), **expressed** that there is a gender career prototype, regardless of the social status and background. They all perceive that people want to see

women in certain jobs only, that some jobs are intended for men, and that women in construction, shipping, and financial consulting are not as recognized as men.

Only two responded that their businesses accepted as female oriented. Participant 1 stated that people's perception was a challenge.

4.5 Role Model

Two of the participants (1, 4) named Prophet Mohammad as their role model, three participants (2, 6, 8), cited their fathers and two had no role models (5, 7).

5. Discussion

After analyzing the information collected from the participants, the study reached the following conclusions;

Religion affects female leaders in Bahrain as they all agreed that following God's orders is the key to success but belief must be accompanied by hard work.

On authority dimension, interactive authority dimension is the most represented in the sample, (3 participants). Only one is charismatic. So, 50% of the sample is into a less authoritarian style of leadership.

Three feel that family status can have a negative effect on success as they feel under observation most of the time and carried the burden of being judged by family and society. The other two share the experience but with less intensity. They feel their family status is accepted but has no positive impact.

Most of the participants think that there is a gender role prototype in the society, people tend to accept women in certain careers.

The main motivation for female leaders in Bahrain to succeed is the challenge to achieve self-actualization.

Most of the sample either cited Prophet Mohamad as their role model or their fathers, which is a very conventional view of the role model in life. Only one participant named a role model out of the circle of religion or family.

Finally, the study has answered all its questions, on the five aspects of culture, authority dimension, family social status, gender role, and role model.

The study has also answered its central question on the factors affecting women leaders success in Bahrain.

The study found a combination of factors affecting success. However, the most significant factor is the woman herself: her personality, need to change, need for independence and achievement. Regardless of background and family status, they all showed very strong personalities, and strong determination to reach their goals.

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Notes

Note 1. Question by the researcher: your background is not like Oprah; how can you compare yourself to her? You have started from a very wealthy family. Answer: It doesn't matter, I want to be like her in her achievements.

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