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Labour Market Segmentation and Change: The Case of Female Workers in the Higher Education Sector in Saudi Arabia

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Declaration

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism and intellectual property.

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"Human knowledge is never contained in one person. It grows from the relationships we create between each other and the world, and still it is never complete."

Dr. Paul Kalanithi

Abstract

Research indicates that female workers in the Middle East experience barriers in their labour market access and mobility. However, little is known about the impact of labour market modernization on the job and labour market experiences of this group of workers. This qualitative study was designed to explore, with a sample of female academics, the impact of labour market change on their jobs and working conditions. The rationale for this research emanates from the researcher's desire to understand labour market change and the ways this change is impacting the job and labour market experiences of female workers. It was the researcher's assumption that gaining a deep and holistic understanding of female workers' job and labour market experiences would support the development of effective policy interventions that are attuned to the reality of female works in a changing segmented labour market and mitigate unintended negative consequences on their wellbeing. The purposefully selected sample was composed of 30 Saudi-national female academics who were drawn from different higher education institutions across Saudi Arabia. The primary data collection method was in-depth semi-structured interviews. The data was systematically coded and thematically analysed. Analysis and interpretation of findings were based on the literature review and answering the research three questions: (1) female workers' mobility patterns and the labour market structure for female workers, (2) the ways institutional factors shape and impact academic jobs, and (3) psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs, their impact by labour market change, and implications for faculty wellbeing. This research found that female workers face a structural

obstacle of limited job opportunity upon their entry to the labour market which forces them to compromise on the quality of their early career jobs. However, institutional change in the labour market is expanding their labour market opportunity. Second, public higher education institutions constitute internal labour markets where access to employment is controlled whereas private higher education institutions operate in an external competitive labour market where employment is subject to market factors. Third, the relationship the higher education institution has with state funding and the employment system followed in the employment of female academics differentiate compensation, employment stability, and employee training for this group of workers across the higher education labour market. Fourth, academic jobs are meaningful, include social support, and provide opportunity for development while at the same time lack job clarity in some areas, include restriction in job autonomy as well as time pressure. Nevertheless, academic jobs are considered good jobs by labour market standards and resourceful by organizational psychology standards and these characteristics combined render them supportive of faculty wellbeing. Recommendations are offered for future research, policy, and practice. Given the institutional complexity of the research context and acknowledging that context varies across cultures and economies, the research findings should be transferred to situations sharing key characteristics and the recommendations considered for their appropriateness for the situation of interest.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This opening chapter of the thesis introduces this research and provides background information that contextualizes the research investigation. The chapter outlines the key features of the research—research problem, purpose, questions, methods, and significance. It also includes the researcher perspective and assumptions. Lastly, the chapter concludes with definitions of key terminology used in the thesis and an outline of the thesis structure.

1.2 Research Background

The large dependence of Saudi Arabia's economy on oil revenues proved challenging and unsustainable in recent years. A series of events going back to collapses in oil prices in 2008 and 2014 exacerbated by the recent hit of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 (*The Gulf Economy Post Covid-19*, 2020; *Statement of the State General Budget*, 2021) urged serious economic reform and adoption of new economic models in public policy (i.e. neoliberal). Currently pursued economic transformation involves economic diversification, regulatory liberalization, and capitalizing on educated young nationals to create a competitive economy (*Economic Developments in the Six GCC Countries*, 2018). Institutional change in the labour market seeks to support the growth of the private sector. A bigger private sector would support the state in lowering public spending, employment of national workers, and contribution to the country's GDP.

The higher education sector falls within the scope of that transformation. Regulatory liberalization in the sector started in 2020 (Alkhattaf, 2020) after the proposal was approved by the council of ministers in 2019 (*Universities' New System*, 2019). The transformation started with three large public higher education

institutions in three different cities and is expected to have implications for the working and employment conditions of national faculty in higher education institutions.

Labour market indicators for national workers and national female workers, in particular, are far from ideal and call for special attention. Unemployment rates for national workers have been rising over the last five years from 12.3% in 2016 to 15.4% in 2020 (*Labour Market Survey 4th Quarter 2016*, 2016; *Statement of the State General Budget*, 2021). The rates are worse for national female workers standing at 30% in 2020 from 35% in 2016 (*Labour Market Survey 4th Quarter 2016*, 2016; *Labour Market Survey Third Quarter 2021*, 2021). A similar gendered pattern exists for labour market participation in which national females exhibit low participation rates compared to their male counterparts, albeit with some improvement over the last five years—rising to 34% in 2021 from 19% in 2016 vs. national males participation rate at 65% for the same period (*Labour Market Survey 4th Quarter 2016*, 2016; *Labour Market Survey Third Quarter 2021*, 2021). Furthermore, national females are more educated at the tertiary level than national males (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019). However, their employment rate does not reflect a similar pattern. The employment rate of tertiary-educated females stands at 41% compared with 94% for their males counterparts (OECD, 2019). This is one of the lowest employment rates for tertiary-educated adults among OECD and partner countries. It indicates an underutilization of females' human capital in the labour market and economy at large. To achieve desired economic transformation, a number of specific objectives at different levels have been identified by the state—two of which have motivated this research (*Vision 2030*, 2016). One, increasing female labour market participation—an objective at the labour market level. Two, creating high-performing work cultures—an objective at the organizational level.

1.2.1 Global and local transformation of the higher education labour market

Economic pressures are a key driver of transforming the academic labour market into a market-led sector. Higher education institutions are increasingly receiving less government funding and the working and employment conditions of workers are, as a result, becoming more susceptible to economic and market processes. Scholars in the field contested this orientation and referred to it as corporatization, marketization, and commercialization of higher education (Mitchell, 1999; Smith, 2000; Gill, 2016). This market-driven orientation created precarity in the working conditions of academic staff (Courtois and O'Keefe, 2015; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019) and gave rise to flexible cohorts in the academic workforce (Cardozo, 2017) or what is referred to as casualization of academic labour (Shelton *et al.*, 2001).

A neoliberal orientation in the academic labour market is not a new trend internationally. Academia in developed Western countries, at least, have preceded the Saudi academic labour market in that experience (e.g. Mitchell, 1999; Smith, 2000). Founded on principles of free markets, individualism, and privatization, a neoliberal ideology is expected to bring a set of market values and norms into public higher education institutions. This would create a private-sector-like work culture driven by competitiveness, efficiency, and revenue. In higher education, it would also create an audit culture (Linková, 2017) and instability or cuts in public funding (Shore and Wright, 2015). While internationally a new managerialism in higher education was brought about by change in the welfare state in the 1980s (Ferejohn, 1991; Deeming and Johnston, 2018; Barr, 2020) which intensified after the 2008 financial crisis (Hazelkorn, 2017; Sowa, Staples and Zapfel, 2018), in Saudi Arabia, it was only recently embraced by similar economic pressures.

A significant implication of this neoliberal transformation in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia relates to state funding. Public higher education constitutes the predominate segment in the higher education labour market. The largest funding source in public higher education institutions (HEIs) is state funding while in private HEIs it is tuition fees (Jamjoom, 2012). State funding plays a crucial role in the economic stability and, consequently, quality of working conditions in

that segment. Privatization of public HEIs would mean cutbacks in public funding (i.e. less protection from market processes). Cross-cultural evidence shows a clear relationship between cutbacks in public funding and deteriorating working conditions in higher education (Fumasoli and Goastellec, 2015; Linková, 2017). Thus, transformation in the academic labour market raises concerns for the quality of working conditions in the sector and consequently employee wellbeing.

The employment system is the bedrock of the employment relationship. It defines employment status (permanent vs. fixed-term) (i.e. employment stability) and basic working conditions (i.e. wages, employment stability, job training and progression). In Western HEIs, the employment system of faculty varies between a tenure vs. nontenure track (Castree, 2000) and permanent vs fixed-term employment (Shelton *et al.*, 2001). In Saudi HEIs, the employment system slightly varies from that. Citizenship and sector of employment (private vs. public) play the biggest role in differentiating the employment system for faculty in Saudi HEIs. The common employment case is that national faculty, both male and female, in public HEIs would have permanent employment on the civil service system. On the other hand, national faculty in private HEIs and foreign faculty in both public and private HEIs would have fixed-term employment on the social insurance system.

In the same vein, a new type of public HEIs recently emerged in Saudi Arabia in 2005 and 2009, respectively (*The History of KAUST*, no date; *KSAU-HS in Brief*, no date). These are public institutions but differ from conventional public HEIs in their high-performing work cultures and employment conditions for national faculty. National faculty in these institutions have fixed-term employment on the social insurance system just like their peers in private HEIs. Moreover, privatization of conventional public HEIs includes a transformation in the employment status of national faculty from permanent to fixed-term employment. In other words, the historical permanent employment status of national faculty in Saudi HEIs might disappear.

1.2.2 Transformation in higher education labour markets and faculty wellbeing

Economic pressures for higher and more competitive economic and organizational performance, reflected in changing working and employment conditions, have the potential to create problematic work environments in which the wellbeing of workers is compromised. Evidence shows that market orientations in higher education constitute a critical source of stress for faculty (Shin and Jung, 2014) taxing their psychological health (Gill, 2016). Furthermore, evidence shows a clear relationship between cutbacks in public funding and deteriorating working conditions (Fumasoli and Goastellec, 2015; Linková, 2017).

Neoliberal transformation in other academic labour markets created segmentation in the working conditions of academic workers along the lines of gender (Cardozo, 2017; Zheng, 2018; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019) and employment status (Bauder, 2006; Courtois and O'Keefe, 2015; Vohlídalová, 2021). The working conditions of female academics can become more precarious with family responsibilities (Cardozo, 2017; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019). Furthermore, job precarity and insecurity can exacerbate in transitioning economies (e.g. Kalleberg, 2009). In the same vein, evidence shows that the wellbeing of female academics was more impacted by precarious employment conditions than that of males (Vohlídalová, 2021). Thus, it is in this context of labour market change and market values that a concern for job quality and employee wellbeing emerge, particularly for female workers.

1.3 Research Problem

Meeting the aforementioned labour market objectives requires addressing barriers to females' labour market participation, an understanding of their mobility patterns, and knowledge on the quality of their working conditions. However, evidence on female workers in Middle Eastern labour markets is scare and fragmented. Existing evidence indicates structural (Rutledge *et al.*, 2011) and

institutional barriers (Alselaimi and Lord, 2012; Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018) to female labour market participation as well as inferior working conditions compared to men (Al-Waqfi & Al-Faki, 2015). In other words, evidence indicates gendered labour market segmentation. Furthermore, evidence from GCC labour markets—Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - indicates segmentation along sector and nationality lines (Abdalla *et al.*, 2010; Thompson and Wissink, 2016).

Creating high-performing cultures, on the other hand, is closely linked to psychosocial factors in the work environment which are posited to influence employee wellbeing at the individual level (Christian, Garza and Slaughter, 2011; Bailey *et al.*, 2017). As organizations do not operate in a vacuum from their social and economic context, factors at both the job and organizational level are expected to be influenced by institutional change in the labour market. It is through that link that a concern for employee wellbeing emerges. Economic pressures for higher and more competitive economic, organizational, and individual performance, translated through change in public policy and employment terms and conditions, is likely to create problematic work environments in which the wellbeing of workers is compromised. Therefore, this research includes an exploration of the psychosocial working conditions in higher education impacted by change in the labour market. Focus on higher education gains heightened significance as the sector has historically attracted academically distinct females in the labour market through attractive working conditions that now might change as a result of labour market change. In addition, exploring the psychosocial factors in the jobs of female faculty would enable drawing conclusions on the supportiveness of higher education environments of female faculty wellbeing.

In the organizational psychology literature, psychosocial factors in the workplace are commonly investigated through the job-demands resources model (JD-R) including the higher education sector (e.g. Vera, Salanova, & Martin, 2010). The model has also been used for employee wellbeing investigations in both developed (e.g. Mudrak et al., 2018) and developing countries (e.g. Cao & Zhang, 2021). However, very few studies contextualize psychosocial work factors in the

broader labour market context (e.g. Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, Witte, & Alarco, 2008).

Workers' job behaviours and labour market outcomes are shaped by the interaction of institutional, individual, and job factors. Evidence on the interaction of labour market change on one hand and the jobs and working conditions on the other is scare. More interdisciplinary research is needed for better and more holistic understanding of females' work experiences. This research combines two research traditions at two different levels: institutional labour economics at the labour market level (i.e. macro level) and organizational psychology at the individual level (i.e. micro level). This theoretical combination attempts to provide a strong basis for analysis and interpretation of female workers' experiences in a transforming labour market—a framework that is attuned to the evolving dynamics in the labour market.

1.4 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the mobility patterns of female workers relative to structural and institutional dimensions of an institutionally changing labour market. The research also seeks to explore the working conditions of female faculty in a transforming higher education labour market for their job quality and wellbeing implications. The research aims to gain a better and more holistic understanding of female workers' job and labour market experiences in a changing segmented labour market. This understanding is expected to inform public policy and support the development of effective interventions that are attuned to the reality of female workers in the labour market.

1.5 Research Questions

To address the research problem and fulfil the research aim the following research question was developed:

What is the impact of institutional change in the labour market on female workers in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia?

To answer this question, three sub-questions were identified:

1. What does the employment history of female workers in the higher education sector look like? And what does that tell us about the labour market for female workers?

2. Do institutional factors in the labour market, including change in those factors, have an impact on academic jobs held by females in the higher education sector? If so, in what way?

3. What psychosocial factors exist in academic jobs held by females in the higher education sector, including change in those factors? And what do they tell us about female academics' wellbeing?

1.6 Methodological Approach

The research employs a case study design using qualitative research methods. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirty national female faculty selected purposively from different higher education institutions, segments of the sector, and career levels in Saudi Arabia. Collected primary data was analysed thematically. The researcher systematically compiled and coded interview transcripts and then examined patterns, relationships, and interactions in the data to identify areas in females' work experience that were impacted by labour market change (i.e. working conditions, job mobility patterns, career choice).

A qualitative case study design is appropriate for research investigations grounded in human experience (Sandelowski, 2004) and emphasizes real-life context (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Yin, 2018). It allows for the examination of underlying mechanisms and contingencies—a deeper level of reality (Tsoukas, 1989; Gerring, 2007; Tsang, 2014). Qualitative investigations at the individual level are a valuable approach for exploring the impact of interacting factors from different levels on factors at the job and individual level (Dickens and Lang, 1985; Howell and Reese, 1986). They allow for the collection of detailed data on workers' experiences and gaining familiarity with their work context. Qualitative methods also provide clarity on areas of divergence and convergence in workers' experiences and potential causes. This, in turn, allows for the drawing of closer conclusions about a group of workers in a particular labour market. More importantly, in a context of change, a qualitative approach is more capable to detect and capture change and its impact on concerned parties (Piore, 1983).

1.7 Significance of the Research

Cross-cultural knowledge on female labour market experiences in segmented and rapidly evolving labour markets is scarce. This research explores the employment history of national female faculty to learn about the mobility patterns of this group of workers and their working conditions. Gaining a close and more holistic understanding of female workers' job and labour market experiences supports the endeavour of creating a positive social impact in both theory and practice.

The research extends cross-cultural scholarship on labour markets modernization in the Middle East and female labour market participation in segmented and changing labour markets. The research uses labour market segmentation theory as the overarching analytical framework in interpreting labour market structure and change; female workers' mobility patterns and their working conditions; and the impact of institutional change in the labour market on the jobs held by female workers. This framework is supplemented with the job demands-

resources model (JD-R). This lower-level theoretical lens adds to our understanding of females' work experiences in terms of their psychosocial working conditions and their implications for wellbeing.

The theoretical contribution of the research lies in extending the boundaries of labour market segmentation theory by applying the theory to a context that is qualitatively different from the one it has emerged from—urban American labour markets in the 1960s and 1970s to understand issues of economic inequalities despite economic prosperity. The context of this research is underpinned by a process of change—rapidly evolving labour market through public policy, in a developing country and an emerging market. According to Whetten (1989), applying the theory under these conditions renders it a legitimate and value-added contribution to theory development. Similarly, a qualitative exploration of the psychosocial working conditions in jobs through the JD-R model extends the boundaries of conceptualized job demands and resources and contextualizes psychosocial work factors and their implications for wellbeing in a bigger context (i.e. the labour market). That is, beyond the common organizational level. Furthermore, a qualitative application of the JD-R model contributes to the model development methodologically. The model is commonly employed quantitatively in the empirical literature. A qualitative application of the model provides a deeper understanding of the psychosocial work environment in higher education as it allows for the detection of change in working conditions and learning about causes of variation, if existing.

In the context of the Saudi labour market, the study is expected to have significance for two primary stakeholders—labour policymakers and leaders at all levels in the higher education sector. Policy makers in Saudi Arabia can benefit from the knowledge generated by this research in areas related to structural and institutional dimensions of the labour market and their impact on female workers' participation, mobility, and career decision-making (i.e. career choice, work adjustments). Generated insights can also inform revisions and refinements to active and passive labour policy and labour law. Furthermore, the research conveys

the thoughts and attitudes of female workers toward labour market change and recent employment legislation which provides useful feedback for policymakers in future labour market improvements.

For leaders in higher education institutions, the research provides a bottom-up feedback on the wellbeing of female faculty in the higher education sector. It highlights the psychosocial factors that faculty value, miss, or complain about as well as the factors that are impacted by labour market change. Findings from this research can support leaders at different levels in the higher education institution to create a healthy work environment where faculty can actualize themselves and function optimally without compromising their psychological health. It would also assist leaders in making informed decisions with regard to HRM practices and working conditions (e.g. flexible work arrangements, wellbeing policy, paid leave, rewards, development opportunities, etc.) that can lead to positive organizational outcomes (i.e. organizational commitment, lower turnover intention, and work engagement).

On a national level, the research would support the country in its socio-economic development plan *'Vision 2030'* that was introduced in 2016. In particular, the two objectives identified in its *'Thriving Economies and Rewarding Opportunities'* dimension—increasing female labour market participation and creating high-performing work cultures (*Vision 2030*, 2016).

1.8 The Researcher Perspective

I received my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resource Management from King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia. I then joined the labour market by working in the HRM department at two large private sector companies. The first job was an HR coordinator at an international company in the transportation sector and the second job was a recruitment analyst at a national company in the construction machinery sector. After that, I joined academia by a government appointment as a teaching assistant at King Abdulaziz

University—a public university in Saudi Arabia. In that job, I had permanent employment and relatively good working conditions. Shortly after my appointment, I left Saudi Arabia to the United States to obtain my Master of Science degree in Human Resource Management from Marshall University in West Virginia which was funded by my employer. Upon my return, I was promoted to a lecturer rank in the Human Resource Management department in the Faculty of Economics and Administration. There, I started teaching business and HRM courses to undergraduate students. At the same time, I worked briefly, as a part-time lecturer in the School of Business and Law at Dar Al Hekma University—a leading private university in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. A few years later, I came to Ireland to obtain my PhD degree in a subject combining the disciplines of institutional labour economics and organizational psychology. At this academic level, it became clear that looking at HRM practices separately from the larger socio-economic context might not yield deep understanding that would enable positive social impact.

My personal work experience in the private and public sector in the Saudi labour market, in both academia and the industry, expanded my perspective and enriched my understanding of the workings of the labour market for women. I experienced myself the impact of structural and institutional dimensions of the labour market on my career choice and work experience. Also, my first-hand experience of different work environments in the labour market gave me invaluable insight on how different combinations of job demands and resources vary between workplaces and how they playout for workers' performance and wellbeing.

Coming from a Human Resource Management background, adopting an institutional perspective on workers' employment affairs and wellbeing challenged my previous perception limits. It allowed me to see a bigger picture of the labour market—origins of current structure and problematic areas. This, in turn, enabled me to have a better understanding of current rapid labour market reform. Incorporating an institutional level in my research made me aware of the challenges and advantages this labour market transformation might bring to female workers in the labour market and how it can affect their work experiences at the individual

level. In other words, an institutional perspective expanded my interpretation scope of the work experiences of female workers beyond the common organizational level.

1.9 The Researcher Assumptions

As a qualitative researcher, the researcher recognizes that she is an integral part of the research process and acknowledges that her background and perspective have the potential to influence the research process. Therefore, the researcher engaged in different reflexive activities in the course of this research to limit bias and enhance research trustworthiness. One activity included providing a reflexive account in which the researcher reported her position, assumptions, and reflections on data collection and analysis.

The researcher reported her insider and outsider position in the research and reflected on its impact on the research process. She also reported the professional and cultural similarity she shared with the research sample and the impact of that on the research process. Lastly, the researcher reported the actions she took during the research process to address those issues (a detailed reflexive account can be found in Chapter Five Section 5.13.1).

1.10 Definitions of Key Terminology

The following table summarizes the definitions of key terminology used in this thesis:

Table 1.1 Definitions of Key Terminology in this PhD Thesis

Terminology	Definition
Academic labour market	Academic jobs in the higher education sector.
Higher education labour market	Academic jobs in the higher education sector.
Private higher education institution	A private higher education institution in which national faculty, both male and female, have fixed-term employment on the social insurance system.

Public higher education	Includes both government and semi-government higher education institutions.
Government higher education institution	A public higher education institution in which national faculty, both male and female, have permanent employment on the civil service system.
Semi-government higher education institution	A relatively new form of public higher education institutions where national faculty, both male and female, have fixed-term employment on the social insurance system. The term semi-government is used instead of public or government for distinguishing and clarification purposes—to avoid confusion with conventional government higher education institutions which are also public. The distinction pertains to the employment system which has implications for employment and working conditions.

1.11 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into ten chapters. The first chapter is the current introduction. It outlined the key features of the research project—research problem, purpose, questions, methods, and significance. The chapter also included the researcher perspective and assumptions and concluded with definitions of key terminology used in the thesis and the thesis structure.

Chapter two of the thesis is an overview of the economic, legal, educational, and social context of Saudi Arabia. It paints a picture of economic transformation and social change in the country which involves the higher education system, the court system, and household patterns.

Chapter three of the thesis is an overview of the Saudi labour market. The chapter is organized into two parts. Part one provides an overview of labour market indicators and covers in-depth labour legislation and regulation relevant to labour market transformation. Part two gives an overview of segmentation in the Saudi labour market and its historical origins.

Chapter four of the thesis constitute the theoretical underpinning of the research. This chapter is organized into two parts. Part one reviews the literature on labour market segmentation theory while part two reviews the literature on working conditions and employee wellbeing.

Chapter five is methodology. This chapter discusses the research paradigm, approach, methods, and sample. It also discusses ethical considerations and trustworthiness strategies applied. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the process followed in the analysis of collected data including the researcher reflexive account.

Chapter six reports the first theme emerging from the data analysis. It reports the experiences of participants' entry to the labour market and the characteristics of their early career jobs where verbatim quotes are used to illustrate those experiences. The findings are then discussed in light of the literature review and research context and related back to the research questions.

Chapter seven reports the second theme emerging from the data analysis. It reports participants' experiences in accessing employment in the higher education labour market and verbatim quotes are used to illustrate those experiences. The findings are then similarly discussed in light of the literature review and research context and related back to the research questions.

Chapter eight reports the third theme emerging from the data analysis. It reports the differences in participants' employment conditions—compensation, employment stability, and employee training. Verbatim quotes from the dataset are used to illustrate similarities and differences in those conditions. Similar to the previous two chapters, the findings are then discussed in light of the literature review and research context and related back to the research questions.

Chapter nine reports the fourth and final theme emerging from the data analysis. It reports the psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs as experienced by

participants from different career levels and segments of the higher education labour market. Verbatim quotes used to illustrate participants' working conditions. Similarly, the findings are discussed in light of the literature review and research context and related back to the research questions.

Chapter ten is conclusion and recommendations. The chapter includes a comprehensive conclusion of this research grounded in the research findings and analysis. It also highlights the research limitations and includes recommendations for future research, labour policy, and practice.

Chapter Two: The Economy and Society of Saudi Arabia

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two of the thesis provides an overview of the economic, legal, educational, and social context of Saudi Arabia. It covers factors driving economic transformation, reform in the court system and the introduction of labour courts, change in the higher education system, and lastly household patterns and women empowerment.

2.2 Economic Context

Saudi Arabia is the 14th largest country in the world. It possesses around 18% of the world's proven petroleum reserves and ranks the largest exporter of petroleum in the world (OPEC, 2018). The country's population is approx. 33 million and the median age is approx. 30 (*The Human Development Reports*, 2017). Absolute monarchy is the form of government; the king is the head of state (Aydin, 2013).

The economy of Saudi Arabia is a capitalist economy. Property rights, wages system, profit system, accumulation of wealth, and externalities exist in the Saudi economy. In the same vein, the economy of Saudi Arabia heavily relies on revenue from oil exports. However, there has been notable change in that regard recently. In 2020, revenue from oil exports comprised 53.5% of total state revenue down from 90% in 2014 (*Statement of the State General Budget*, 2021). The high economic dependence on oil has led some scholars to refer to Saudi Arabia as a rentier state (Mahdavy, 1970; Beblawi, 1987). That is, a state that accrues most of its national wealth through renting its local resources (i.e. oil) to external entities (i.e. other countries). The government would be the main collector and distributer of rent while citizens and residents take part in the utilization of that rent (Beblawi, 1987). Through this economic model, the government has been able to provide relatively generous welfare (e.g. healthcare, education, energy subsidy, housing

support, citizens' employment in the public sector) without the need to enforce domestic taxes or have a competitive private sector. This welfare arrangement became part of the social contract between citizens and the state—political stability and allegiance (Hertog, 2015). However, recent collapses in oil prices in 2008, 2014, and 2020 exacerbated by the hit of the global Covid-19 pandemic necessitated rapid and far-reaching economic reform. The existing welfare system started to become a burden on the state and was no longer sustainable.

In 2016, a plan for socioeconomic reform and development was set out (i.e. Vision2030). The plan has three pillars: social, economic, and governmental (*Vision 2030*, 2016). Economic reform focuses on lowering the economy's high dependence on oil exports. It seeks to diversify and transform the economy to become more market-led and finance that transition through lower public spending which includes an emphasis on privatization and foreign investment (Credendo, 2018). It is noteworthy that the reform includes a few austerity measures. The government implemented freezes in some of public employees' compensation; cuts in energy subsidies; reduction in public investment; halt of nonessential projects; and privatization of some public services (Credendo, 2018). In addition, a GCC-wide 5% value added tax (VAT) was introduced in 2018. Saudi Arabia and the UAE were the first two GCC countries to implement the tax in January 2018 (Credendo, 2018). Before that no form of taxation existed. Furthermore, in July 2020, the rate of the VAT increased from 5% to 15% (*Saudi Ministry of Finance: Additional Measures to Confront the Financial and Economic Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic*, 2020; Reuters, 2020).

Saudi Arabia has also experienced some significant economic progress. In 2019, Saudi Arabia joined two international emerging markets indexes— namely London Stock Exchange Group (FTSE) and Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) (Egan, 2019). Both indexes render Saudi Arabia a fast-growing economy. There are also projections for higher job creation and labour force participation (Al-Kibsi *et al.*, 2015; Rashad and Kalin, 2018). In their report, McKinzey & Co. (2015), predicted that eight sectors—manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, tourism,

finance, health care, mining and metals, petrochemicals, and construction would lead most of the country's economic growth in the next decade (Al-Kibsi *et al.*, 2015). Although the Covid-19 pandemic might have caused a little deviation from the course of reform, the economic context is experiencing rapid and drastic change.

2.3 Legal Context

The law in Saudi Arabia is Islamic law, also known as 'Sharia law'. It has developed between the 7th and 10th century and represents the basis of the legal system in modern Saudi Arabia. The primary sources of Islamic law are the *Holy Book of Quran* and *Sunnah* (practices of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him). Secondary sources include *Ijma'* (Consensus) and *Qiyas* (Analogy) (Kettell, 2011) which were developed after Prophet Muhammad's death. Islamic law has been Saudi Arabia's constitution law since its foundation in 1932. It was confirmed in the Basic Law of Governance Chapter one/Article one by Royal Order No. A/90 in March 1992 as the following:

> *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic State. Its religion is Islam. Its constitution is Almighty God's Book, The Holy Qur'an, and the Sunna (Traditions) of the Prophet (PBUH). Arabic is the language of the Kingdom. The City of Riyadh is the capital.*

Law is not codified in Saudi Arabia and there is no judicial precedent system. Rulings are issued by jurists after consulting Islamic jurisprudence texts. In addition, government regulations cannot contradict the primary sources of law—*Quran* and *Sunnah*. However, there recently have been serious government efforts to codify the law. A sourcebook on precedents and judicial principles was published in 2018 (*Arab News*, 2018). In addition, in March 2022, a new personal status law, organizing family matters, was passed (Naar, 2022). This new law is a one-out-of-four steps in a comprehensive codification of the law in Saudi Arabia. The remaining three laws are the civil transactions law, the penal code discretionary sanctions, and

the law of evidence. Codification of the law would constrain judges' discretion which was producing inconsistency in rulings. Reform in the legal system aims to enhance the efficiency, integrity, and transparency of the judicial system.

As modern global labour law has its roots in the industrial revolution in the 18th century (Schregle and Jenks, 2018), the first labour regulation in Saudi Arabia was introduced in 1969 (*ILO*, no date a). Regulations, thereafter, have been limited to contractual issues (Mellahi, 2007) and areas of the employment relationship that were not clarified in the sources of Islamic law (Saudilegal, no date). In September 2005, Saudi Arabia issued its first labour law by Royal Decree No. M/51, and it was in effect in 2006 (Saudi Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2005).

The employment relationship in Saudi Arabia is governed by two laws depending on sector of employment (public vs. private) and form of employment (permanent vs. fixed-term). Permanent employment in the public sector (or the government sector) is governed by public law in which the state, or any of its bodies, is a party in that relationship. Employers and employees in that employment relationship abide by the civil service rules and regulations. A fixed-term employment relationship, whether in the public or private sector, falls under private law which organizes the relationship between individuals. Employers and employees in the private sector follow the rules and regulations of labour law ('Labour Law', 2015).

To understand the legal framework for labour disputes is to understand the Saudi court system. The court system in Saudi Arabia comprises three levels in addition to enforcement courts (*Justice and Judiciary: Levels of Courts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, no date). The Supreme Court constitutes the highest appellate court in Saudi Arabia and is located in the capital Riyadh. The jurisdiction of the court includes reviewing *Hudud*— fixed religion-based penalties for specific crimes (e.g. murder, robbery, adultery), reconsidering decisions issued by appellate courts in very specific cases as well as by the Supreme Court itself, and examining requests for litigation resumption after a plaintiff's two-time no show with an

acceptable excuse to the court. Appellate Courts come second and hear appealable judgments issued by first instance courts based on the laws of civil and criminal procedures. Each province in Saudi Arabia has at least one appellate court. The jurisdiction of appellate courts include: legal rights, criminal, family status, commercial, and labour (Al Hamidani, 2014). First instance courts are the start point and comprise five types: general, criminal, personal status, labour, and commercial. Enforcement courts, on the other hand, resolute execution disputes and have the power to compulsory enforce and supervise execution.

2.3.1 Reform in the Labour Legal System: Introduction of Labour Courts

The labour law was amended in 2015 to introduce specialized labour courts for labour disputes. However, it was not until October 2018 that these specialized courts were established. Before that, labour disputes were heard by the Preliminary Commission for the Settlement of Labour Disputes which were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour. These commissions are not official courts. They have semi-judicial authority but do not rule based on the law of civil procedures which apply in other civil courts. Furthermore, they are not presided by judges but counsellors with no legal qualifications. Appeals were considered by the High Commission for the Settlement of Labour Disputes. Decisions issued by both, the preliminary and high commission for the Settlement of Labour Disputes, were commonly criticized for their inconsistency, unpredictability, and lack of legal sophistication (Naar, 2022).

Following Royal Decree No. 20712 issued in January 2018, specialized labour courts were established in October 2018 under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. The jurisdiction of labour courts covers labour disputes (e.g. employment contracts, wages, work injuries, compensation and social insurance claims, etc.) which get judged based on the law of civil procedures. Labour courts and circuit courts have been created across the country and a number of appellate courts were assigned with reviewing decisions issued by first instance labour courts. Furthermore, more than 50 judges whom received specialized training in labour law and regulations were appointed to preside labour courts. Typical proceedings of a labour dispute would start with raising a claim

with the Labour Office. The parties are then given a 21-day amicable resolution period. If no settlement is reached during that time, the Labour Office would electronically report the claim to the labour court. The aim of this legal reform was to enhance the efficiency of the judicial process in labour disputes (*General / The Minister of Justice Officially Announces the Start of Work of Labour Courts*, 2018).

2.4 Educational context

2.4.1 Development of the education system in Saudi Arabia

Modern education in Saudi Arabia traces back to the establishment of the Ministry of Knowledge in 1953. However, primary education, mainly for boys, preceded that in the 1930s (Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date). The Ministry of Knowledge was concerned with boys' general education. It was not until 1960 that interest in girls' education grew with the establishment of the General Presidency for Girls' Education. The first public school for girls opened in 1964. Thus, boys' education in Saudi Arabia preceded girls' education. In addition, the education of each sex was administered by a different body—Ministry of Knowledge for boys' education and the General Presidency for girls' education (Al-Hariri, 1987). This was the case up until 2002. In 2002, the two entities were combined under the Ministry of Knowledge (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2019). Today, there are around 30,000 schools and the Saudi government continues to allocate the largest share of the annual budget expenditure [17.5%] to education (*Statement of the State General Budget*, 2021). The World Bank latest available data shows that the Saudi government expenditure on education totals 5.1% of GDP (World Bank, 2008).

The general education system in Saudi Arabia follows a three-stage model. It starts with six years of elementary school beginning at the age six followed by three years of intermediate school, and then three years of upper secondary school (i.e. high school) (Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date; Clark, 2014). Movement between stages is contingent upon passing examinations. Early childhood education and care

(ECEC) for children between the age of 3-5 years old is not compulsory in Saudi Arabia (OECD, 2019). After completing intermediate school, students choose to join either a regular or vocational high school for their upper secondary education. In regular high schools there are three streams of study: religious (for boys-only), scientific, and literary. The Ministry of Education sets overall standards and oversees the educational process. National curricula are taught in schools and examinations are administered by schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date).

General education is free at all levels for citizens and residents. The student-to-teacher ratio is 12.5 to 1, one of the lowest in the world (Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date). The main language of instruction in public general education is Arabic. However, in September 2021, the Ministry of Education brought forward the teaching of the English language in public schools from previously seventh grade to first grade (*The Start of Teaching the English Language from Grade One Enhances Students' Abilities Early and Prepares them for the Skills of the Future*, 2021).

2.4.2 Development of higher education in Saudi Arabia

Interest in higher education began in the 1970s during the period of oil discovery and rapid development. The Ministry of Higher Education was established in 1975 to oversee tertiary education separately from the Ministry of Education (Al-Youbi, 2017). However, in 2015, the Ministry of Higher Education was merged with the Ministry of Education to standardize education policy.

The first university in the country - King Saud University in Riyadh (formerly known as Riyadh University) was founded in 1957 with 21 students (all-males) and 9 instructors. On the other hand, the first college for girls, Girls' College of Education, was established in 1970 with an initial enrolment of 80 students (Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date). Today, there are 1 million students spread over 29 public

universities and over 40 accredited private universities and colleges (Ministry of Education, 2018; Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date). Over half of those students are females. There is high demand for higher education in Saudi Arabia. In 2014, a public HEI—University of Jeddah, was established to increase the intake of high school graduates.

Private HEIs are a relatively new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia. After the single failed attempt in 1967, no private HEI existed in the country until 1998. In 1967, the first private university in Saudi Arabia was founded by a few businessmen in the city of Jeddah. It was called King Abdulaziz University. However, four years later, in 1971, the university failed to sustain itself financially as a tuition-free institution and asked the government to take it over which transformed it into a public university (Jamjoom, 2012). In 1998, the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the second private HEI in the country which was founded under the umbrella of Al-Riyadh Philanthropic Society of Science (*About PSU*, no date). This seemingly successful attempt was then followed by the establishment of many others private HEIs.

Table 2.1 Evolution of Education in Saudi Arabia

Year	Event
1930s	Beginning of formal primary education
1953	Establishment of Ministry of Knowledge
1957	Foundation of first public university – King Saud University
1960	Establishment of the General Presidency for Girls' Education
1964	First public school for girls
1967	First private university
1970	First college for girls - College of Education
1975	Establishment of Ministry of Higher Education
2002	General Presidency for Girls' Education & Ministry of Knowledge United under Ministry of Knowledge
2003	Name change of the Ministry from 'Ministry of Knowledge' to 'Ministry of Education'
2015	Ministry of Education & Ministry of Higher Education United under Ministry of Education

The higher education system in Saudi Arabia includes two-year associate degrees, four-year bachelor degrees, and two-year master's degrees (Clark, 2014). PhD degrees require a minimum of 30 credit hours of coursework and a major dissertation taken over two full-time academic years. Admissions to university-level programmes is based on stream of study in high school, accumulative GPA of final two years in high school, and scores on aptitude and proficiency tests.

Vocational and technical education are administered by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) along with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date). There are technical colleges for both males and females and industrial institutes for males. The Ministry of Education, on the other hand, is responsible for overseeing vocational secondary schools (also known as technical institutes). There are other government bodies involved in education such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defence (Clark, 2014). The Saudi Commission for Health Specialties oversees private health institutes as well as professional licensing of healthcare practitioners (Clark, 2014).

2.4.2.1 Sector characteristics

The vast majority of the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia comprises universities [81%] while colleges make up [19%] of total HEIs (*Private Higher Educations Institutions*, 2020; *Public Higher Education Institutions*, 2020). Public HEIs make up [46%] of total HEIs (*Public Higher Education Institutions*, 2020). They are almost[1] all co-educational and large in size—operating through sex-segregated campuses. They also offer diverse programmes and specializations, have high admission capacity, and some have multiple branches. Most research activity takes place at large public universities. With regard to funding, public HEIs depend almost completely on state funding. They receive full, direct, and stable funding from the

[1] All public higher education institutions are co-educational except for Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University which is the world's largest female-only university.

state. In addition, students are paid a monthly stipend (approx. 240 USD) during the academic year (Alamri, 2011). In 2019, a proposal for regulatory liberalization of public HEIs was accepted by the Council of Ministers and was in effect by 2020 (*Universities' New System*, 2019). The new system includes change in governance in which a council for universities' affairs was created and chaired by the minister of education (*Universties' New System*, 2019). The council administers academic, financial, and regulatory affairs in HEIs among others.

Private HEIs, on the other hand, constitute 54% of total HEIs in Saudi Arabia. However, the majority of those institutions [65%] are colleges and range between small and medium in size with single branches (*Private Higher Educations Institutions*, 2020). Some of those institutions are single-sex while others are co-educational. Private HEIs tend to offer less programmes and have less admission capacity than public HEIs—their intake of high school graduates does not exceed 6% (*Higher Education Statistics (2017-2018)*, 2018). With regard to funding, private HEIs receive some indirect funding from the state in the form of land leasing, soft loans, and government-funded scholarships for students to study in private HEIs (Jamjoom, 2012; *Local Scholarship to Students of Private Universites and Colleges*, 2021). However, funding received remains minimal and non-comparable to that received by public HE institutions. The main source of funding in private HEIs is tuition fees.

Lastly, although the number of public HEIs is slightly smaller than that of private HEIs, public higher education constitute the largest and predominant segment in the higher education sector. Private higher education is still perceived as a somewhat experiment (Jamjoom, 2012).

2.4.2.2 Gender differences in students' enrolment

Female students outnumber male students in all higher education degrees. The largest difference is at the associate degree level. In addition, female students do

not only outnumber male students in the humanities and social sciences but also in technology and the natural sciences (*Higher Education Statistics*, 2017). The following tables show the numbers and majors of Saudi graduates from public higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia for the academic year 2016/2017 (Ministry of Education, 2017):

Table 2.2 Saudi Graduates from Public Educational Institutions for the Academic Year 2016/2017 – Associate Degrees

Degree	Field of Study	Male	Female	Total
Associate Degree	Education	324	328	652
	Arts & Humanities	41	189	230
	Business & Law	1,326	4,304	5,630
	Natural Sciences, Math, & Statistics	33	0	33
	Communications & Information Technology	707	1,206	1,913
	Engineering, Construction, & Building	79	0	79
	Health & Wellness	50	35	85
	Services	29	0	29
	Total	2589	6062	8651

Source: Adapted from the Saudi Ministry of Education, Higher Education Statistics (2017). Available from https://departments.moe.gov.sa/PlanningDevelopment/RelatedDepartments/Educationstatisticscenter/EducationDetailedReports/Pages/default.aspx

Table 2.3 Saudi Graduates from Public Educational Institutions for the Academic Year 2016/2017 – Bachelor's Degrees

Degree	Field of Study	Male	Female	Total
Bachelor's	Education	6,249	20,270	26,519
	Arts & Humanities	13,169	27,828	40,997
	Social Sciences, Journalism, & Media	11,190	13,271	24,461
	Business & Law	27,882	23,589	51,471
	Natural Sciences, Math, & Statistics	5,441	11,288	16,729
	Communications & Information Technology	2,324	4,714	7,038
	Engineering, Construction, & Building	4,889	198	5,087
	Agriculture, Fisheries, & Veterinary	211	0	211
	Health & Wellness	3,872	6,523	10,395
	Services	255	1,089	1,344
	Other	248	89	337
	Total	75,730	108,859	184,589

Source: Adapted from the Saudi Ministry of Education, Higher Education Statistics (2017). Available from https://departments.moe.gov.sa/PlanningDevelopment/RelatedDepartments/Educationstatisticscenter/EducationDetailedReports/Pages/default.aspx

Table 2.4 Saudi Graduates from Public Educational Institutions for the Academic Year 2016/2017 – Post-graduate Degrees

Degree	Field of Study	Male	Female	Total
Higher Diploma Master's Fellowship PhD	Education	2,023	3,549	5,572
	Arts & Humanities	394	330	724
	Social Sciences, Journalism, & Media	224	161	385
	Business & Law	1010	559	1,569
	Natural Sciences, Math, & Statistics	83	253	336

	Communications & Information Technology	37	80	117
	Engineering, Construction, & Building	84	8	92
	Agriculture, Fisheries, & Veterinary	14	0	14
	Health & Wellness	201	334	535
	Services	0	0	0
	Total	4,070	5,274	9344

Source: Adapted from the Saudi Ministry of Education, Higher Education Statistics (2017). Available from https://departments.moe.gov.sa/PlanningDevelopment/RelatedDepartments/Educationstatisticscenter/EducationDetailedReports/Pages/default.aspx

Females' enrolment in higher education has significantly increased over time. In 2008, only 30% of female students pursued university-level education in Saudi Arabia. In 2018, the percentage increased to 50% (Zahidi, 2018). Saudi Arabia also ranks very high on gender parity in tertiary education enrolment (*Global Gender Gap Report*, 2020). Furthermore, while women worldwide represent a small proportion in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, reports show that female students in STEM in Saudi Arabia constitute 38% compared to 36% in the United Kingdom (UK) and 30% in the United States (US) (Zahidi, 2018). Also, a good number of Saudis get their postgraduate qualifications from foreign universities. In 2005, the Saudi government launched the King Abdullah External Scholarship Program, which is still in effect today. The number of Saudi students in foreign universities was estimated at 130,000 in 2014 and about 50% of them were studying in the United States (UNESCO, 2018).

2.4.2.3 Gender differences in education opportunity

The education opportunity at the tertiary level varies between male and female students. There are majors that are available to males but not females such as Agriculture, Fisheries, and Veterinary. There is also a big gender difference, exceeding 90%[2], in the gender composition of graduates' from the Engineering,

[2] Percentage of Female Graduates Obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering, Construction, and Building = $\frac{\text{female graduates with a Bachelor's degree}}{\text{total graduates with a Bachelor's degree}} = \frac{198}{5{,}087} = 0.039 \times 100 = 3.9\%$

Percentage of Female Graduates Obtaining a Post-graduate Degree in Engineering, Construction, and Building = $\frac{\text{female graduates with a post-graduate degree}}{\text{total graduates with a post-graduate degree}} = \frac{8}{92} = 0.087 \times 100 = 8.7\%$

Construction, and Building majors at all degree levels. This can be partly attributed to the fact that those majors only became available to female students in public HEIs in 2012 with the first batch of female engineers graduating in 2017 (Alruwaili, 2017).

The education opportunity has been historically limited for females compared to males in Saudi Arabia. For a start, males' both general and higher education preceded females' education by over a decade. In the 1970s, Saudi Arabia faced the challenge of teaching staff scarcity, particularly female teachers (Al-Hariri, 1987). This situation disadvantaged the education opportunity available to girls at the tertiary level—limited compared to boys (Al-Hariri, 1987) which was aggravated by the single-sex educational system. Male and female students, from primary throughout higher education, are taught in separate facilities by same-sex instructors. In higher education, and before video conferencing technology, this social norm meant that fields of study available to females were dependent on the availability of qualified female instructors to teach them. Furthermore, the purpose of female's higher education at the time was to qualify them for service jobs mostly in education and health. In other words, jobs that were an extension of their conventional gender roles. The recommendations of the first conference for Islamic education, which was held in 1977 in Saudi Arabia, emphasized the separation of girls' education from boys' and to take into account the natural differences between the sexes in some courses (Al-Hariri, 1987). The Saudi education policy explicitly stated that the aim of females' education is to enable them to fulfil their roles as successful homemakers, ideal wives, and good mothers as well as work in nature-appropriate jobs (Al-Sanabary, 1994). The education policy was also developed in line with the country's religious status in the Islamic world as home to two of the three holy mosques in Islam (Al-Hariri, 1987). Separation between the sexes was also emphasized to encourage females' enrolment in general and higher education and ease families' acceptance. However, while the institutionalization of the separation tradition in education was supported by societal culture and the country's religious position in the Muslim world, it was reproducing gender division. In the same vein, alignment between females' education and what was perceived

as female-appropriate perhaps shows in the type of the first female college established which was a college of education. Today, fields of study available to females at the university-level are wider and more diverse.

Two areas of gender differences in the education system existed: one at the secondary level and another at the postgraduate level. In secondary education, there is almost no vocational or technical education track for female students—only a few institutes that provide tailoring, clerical, and technical support training. This remains the case today. In postgraduate education, in the early 1980s, females were denied opportunity to pursue graduate studies abroad which their male counterparts were granted (Al-Sanabary, 1994). This has changed with the recent external scholarship programme being equally available to males and females (*The Custodian Of The Two Holy Mosques' External Scholarship Program: Qualifying Competencies To Compete In The Labor Market And Scientific Research Globally And Locally*, 2020).

Female students in the 1970s and 1980s were concentrated in humanities' majors in college (Al-Hariri, 1987). Concentration of female students in the humanities and the social sciences seems to persistent today albeit to a lower degree (*Back to Work in a New Economy: Background Paper on the Saudi Labor Market*, 2015).

Female students in the 1970s and 1980s generally came from urban families of middle-class or higher standing and working women during that period worked mainly in health and education (Al-Hariri, 1987). Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's economic standing enabled it to afford this sex-segregated social norm through separate educational facilities for boys and girls. This tradition still exists today in both general and higher education. However, some change can be noted in tertiary education in that regard in recent years. King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, established in 2009, was the first public mixed-sex university in Saudi Arabia (Laessing and Alsharif, 2009). King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), a public males-only university, started accepting female

students in its post-graduate programmes for the Fall semester 2019/2020 for the first time since its inception in 1963. The university have also announced academic job opportunities for female PhD holders (Saudi Gazette, 2018; KFUPM, 2018). Dar Al-Hekma University, a private females-only university established in 1999, started in 2018 to accept male students in their Master's programmes (DAU, no date).

There are keen government efforts to overcome shortage in the skills and competence of national labour supply and to qualify citizens for jobs in the global economy. Universities are working diligently to improve the school-to-work transition by equipping students with good education and job-relevant skills for labour market needs. Some public HEIs have created international cooperation offices (e.g. King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals) for student exchange programmes with universities in the United States and research partnerships with top international institutions such as MIT, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology (CIT), and University of Cambridge (KFUPM, no date). King Abdulaziz University, another public HEI, collaborated with Oxford University in 2017 and 2019 to train students in the biotechnology and precision medicine fields. Results of efforts have been witnessed in the improvement of rankings of Saudi public universities in global academic charts in the last few years. Private universities, on the other hand, do not yet feature in those charts. Table 2.5 shows the rankings of three public HEIs in Saudi Arabia over the last three years:

Table 2.5 QS World University Rankings for Saudi Universities (2020-2022)

University	Year		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals	200	186	163
King Saud University	281	287	277
King Abdulaziz University	186	143	109

Source: Adapted from QS World University Rankings (2020-2022). Available from https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2022

2.4.3 Change in Higher Education Globally

Economic pressures are a key driver of transformation in higher education labour markets around the world. In developed Western countries, major change in the welfare state in the 1980s (Ferejohn, 1991; Deeming and Johnston, 2018; Barr, 2020) included austerity policies to reduce government spending and debt which played a big role in pushing the higher education sector to become market-led (Hazelkorn, 2017; Sowa, Staples and Zapfel, 2018). Change in economic policy, in essence, was about higher efficiency in the distribution of public resources (Cave and Kogan, 1990). Privatization was one alternative available to governments to reduce public spending. That is, the private sector becoming more involved in the provision of public services including higher education (Ball, 2007). In the privatization of higher education, the government would still have some control through licensing and accreditation of private HEIs.

This institutional change in higher education seemed to materialize more clearly in the late 1990s and aggravate after the 2008 financial crisis. This economic context gave rise to the adoption of neoliberal and managerialist values in higher education policy (e.g. Collins, 2007; Mitchell, 1999). Founded on principles of free markets, individualism, and privatization, a neoliberal ideology in higher education brings a set of market values and norms into HEIs. On one hand, it creates a private-sector-like work culture in which performance is driven by competitiveness, efficiency, and revenue. In addition, it introduces an audit culture in the workplace (Linková, 2017). On the other hand, HEIs increasingly receive less government funding (Shore and Wright, 2015) and the working and employment conditions of workers, as a result, become more precarious (Courtois and O'Keefe, 2015; Cardozo, 2017; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019). Evidence shows a clear relationship between cutbacks in public funding and deteriorating working conditions in higher education (Fumasoli and Goastellec, 2015; Linková, 2017). It also shows that market orientations in higher education create segmentation in the working conditions of academic workers along the lines of gender (Cardozo, 2017; Zheng, 2018; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019) and employment status (Bauder, 2006; Courtois and O'Keefe, 2015; Vohlídalová, 2021). With regard to wellbeing, as mentioned in chapter 1, evidence shows that market orientations in higher

education increases job stress for faculty (Shin and Jung, 2014) taxing their psychological health (Gill, 2016). A neoliberal transformation in higher education raises serious concerns for the wellbeing of academic staff around the world. Scholars in the field have contested this orientation and referred to it as corporatization, marketization, and commercialization of higher education (Mitchell, 1999; Smith, 2000; Gill, 2016).

On a related note, impact of change in the higher education labour market exhibits a gender difference. Evidence shows that the working conditions of female academics were more precarious than their male counterparts (Cardozo, 2017; Zheng, 2018; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019) and their wellbeing was more impacted by employment precarity than their male peers who share the same conditions (Vohlídalová, 2021).

2.4.4 Change in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia

The higher education sector falls in the grand scope of economic transformation taking place in Saudi Arabia. Change in higher education involves regulatory liberalization of public HEIs through privatization. The state has historically exercised control over the higher education sector. In public HEIs, control is exercised more directly through funding and ports of entry (i.e. job creation and availability). In private higher education, it is most notable in the nonexistence of private HEIs in Saudi Arabia until 1998 after the single failed attempt in 1967[3]. Control in private HEIs is exercised indirectly and to a lesser extent. It occurs through education policy and regulations as well as institutional licensing and accreditation. State involvement in private HEIs also extends to decision-making at the organizational level. Appointments of college deans and members of college councils require approval by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Board of

[3] In 1967, the first private university in Saudi Arabia was founded by a few businessmen in the city of Jeddah. It was called King Abdulaziz University. However, four years later, in 1971, the university failed to sustain itself financially as a tuition-free institution and asked the government to take it over which transformed it into a public university (Jamjoom, 2012).

Trustees must include representatives from the ministry and any change in curriculum must be also approved by the Ministry of Education (Jamjoom, 2012). Some argue that this extent of control would make private HEIs quasi-government as opposed to private (e.g. Zumeta, 2011). In the same vein, transformation in higher education is referred to as 'independence' as opposed to 'privatization' in the media (e.g. Alkhattaf, 2020).

Actual privatization in higher education started in 2020 (Alkhattaf, 2020) after the proposal was approved by the council of ministers in 2019 (*Universities' New System*, 2019). The first stage of the transformation involves the transformation of three large and prominent higher education institutions in three different cities. These universities have a one year transitional period which can be extended by the council of universities' affairs to a maximum of three years after the end of the first year (*Universities' New System*, 2019). In the newly independent universities, the board of trustees would directly administer the HEI academic, financial, and administrative affairs in accordance with national public policy. This would include matters of funding generation and competition with other HE institutions whether in quality of education outcomes or talent recruitment among others. This transformation is expected to have implications for the working and employment conditions of faculty in higher education institutions.

In the same vein, there have been keen efforts by the Ministry of Education to improve the outcomes quality of the Saudi tertiary education. In 2009, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Higher Education was established by the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) (Clark, 2014). The NQF was created to ensure consistency and standardize quality of education and learning outcomes across the country as well as facilitate international equivalencies. NCAAA is the main higher education regulatory and quality assurance body in Saudi Arabia.

2.5 Social Context

The social context in Saudi Arabia is perhaps best described through household patterns and recent women empowerment which are discussed separately in the following sections.

2.5.1 Household patterns

Arab societies, including the Saudi society, are collectivist and patriarchal in nature (Barakat, 1993). Immediate and extended family represent an essential social unit. Women's role in caring for their families and children is prioritized over work and home responsibilities still largely rest on women (Zahidi, 2018). Men, on the other hand, are strongly expected to be the breadwinner (Metcalfe, 2007). In the same vein, fertility rates in GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia, are declining. A primary reason seem to be the delay of marriage to an older age. This delay of marriage is argued to be affected by females' pursuit of higher levels of education, rising costs of living, and urbanization (Bean and Zohry, 1994; Khraif, 2002; Al Awad and Chartouni, 2014). Al-Qudsi (1998), in his study of Arab females' labour market participation, found that females' education was positively related to their labour market participation while higher fertility rates were negatively related. The following table illustrates the fertility rate of females in Saudi Arabia in the last few years:

Table 2.6 Fertility Rate for Females in Saudi Arabia

Fertility Rate (births per female)	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
	2.5	2.4	2.4	2	1.9

Source: Fertility Rate for Females in Saudi Arabia from 2015-2019. Adapted from the Saudi General Authority for Statistics and the World Bank. Available from https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistical-library/products-categories/health-statistics/household-health-survey and https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?end=2017&locations=SA&most_recent_year_desc=true&start=2015

On the other hand, dual-income households are becoming more common in middle-class families in the Arab and Muslim world (Zahidi, 2018). In other words,

there is change in the division of labour in the household. This new social reality gains higher significance in light of literature on social roles (e.g. Eagly & Wood, 2016). Socioeconomic change is posited to affect the development of social roles which includes gender role expectations within the household. In addition, women in Arab societies tend to have access to cheap domestic help and can rely on family members to care for their children if they choose to work. This constitutes a significant cultural work enabler.

In the same vein, the Global Gender Gap Index published by the World Economic Forum benchmarks 156 countries on their progress towards gender parity across four dimensions: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. In their recent report in (2021), Saudi Arabia ranked in the bottom 6%. The highest ranking dimensions were educational attainment and health and survival while the lowest were economic participation followed by political empowerment. The following table illustrates Saudi Arabia's rankings on each dimension of the index:

Table 2.7 Rankings of Saudi Arabia on Dimensions of the Global Gender Gap Index

Dimension	Rank
Economic participation and opportunity	149
Educational attainment	97
Health and Survival	123
Political Empowerment	138

Adapted from the Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum. Available from https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

2.5.2 Women Empowerment

At the heart of modernization in Saudi Arabia is women empowerment. Some of the most critical steps in that regard (i.e. political rights) were taken during the reign of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (2005-2015). In 2015, women for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia were allowed to vote in municipal elections and thirty women were appointed in the *'Shura'* Council—the formal advisory body in Saudi Arabia (SPA, 2013).

Today, both institutional and normative approaches are utilized to empower women and improve their social status. Institutionally, amendments to laws and public policy are made. Some of these amendments are directly related to their labour market participation (i.e. market-oriented) while others are related to their personal status (i.e. human rights-oriented). The latter include revisions of rights related to matters of guardianship, divorce, children custody, movement, and living arrangement among others. These resulted in a few changes in the living conditions of women. As mentioned earlier, in June 2018, the ban on women's driving, which was imposed in the 1950s, was lifted (SPA, 2017; Perper, 2018). This was followed by the removal of a male's guardian permission for women's international travel (commonly the father or, if married, the husband). In August 2019, the enforcement of this law was ceased (Molana-Allen, 2019). Before these changes, mobility restrictions and additional expenses associated with hiring a driver constituted a barrier to females' labour market participation (Aldawsari, 2016; Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018; Syed, Ali and Hennekam, 2018). Furthermore, in 2018, the requirement of a male's guardian approval for a female to start and register her business was also removed (Gulf Business, 2018).

In women empowerment, institutional change was coupled with normative change. The latter was mostly made through creating female role models in areas where women empowerment was sought. It largely focused on their economic participation. Many females, for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia, were appointed in top leadership roles. The roles included CEO of a listed Saudi commercial bank (Reuters, 2017); ambassador (*The Guardian*, 2019); deputy minister of labour (Alarabiyah, 2018); chair of Saudi stock exchange (Nereim and Martin, 2017); and executive director of the Federation for Cyber Security and Programming (*Saudi Gazette*, 2018). On the same note, lack of female role models was cited as a challenge in career advancement by Saudi female leaders (Abalkhail and Allan, 2015; Hodges, 2017).

2.6 Conclusion

The institutional setting in Saudi Arabia is undergoing rapid change on multiple levels—social, economic, and legal. The economic transformation is shifting the legal and social landscape. This, in turn, is creating a highly dynamic labour market. In the same vein, regulatory liberalization of public services would have implications for the employment and working conditions of employees in the public sector. In higher education, change in academics' working conditions is not implemented yet but is expected in the very near future as per government announcements. The following chapter will provide an in-depth overview of the Saudi labour market and the processes through which the labour market is changing.

Chapter Three: The Saudi Labour Market

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three of the thesis provides an overview of the Saudi labour market. The chapter is organized into two parts. Part one provides an overview of labour market indicators and policy. Part two provides an overview of segmentation in the Saudi labour market and its historical origins.

3.2 Part I: The Labour Market Context

3.2.1 Labour market indicators

Labour market indicators are an important tool to learn about the labour market and workers' characteristics. Worker concentrations and distribution in the labour market can convey structural issues in the labour market. The following table illustrates numbers of workers and job-seekers in the Saudi labour market in 2019:

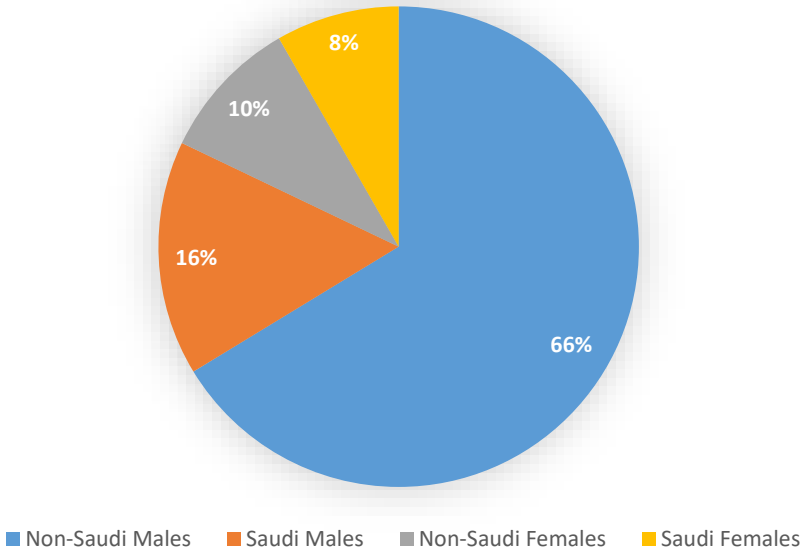
Table 3.1 Numbers of Workers and Job-seekers in the Saudi labour Market in 2019

Indicator	Males	Females	Total
Total Employed Persons	10,557,383	2,299,649	12,857,032
Saudi Employed Persons	2,027,964	1,062,284	3,090,248
Non-Saudi Employed Persons	8,529,419	1,237,365	9,766,784
Saudi Job Seekers	177,719	825,136	1,002,855

Adapted from the Saudi General Authority for Statistics Survey of the Labour Market (2019). Available from https://www.stats.gov.sa/sites/default/files/labour_market_second_quarter_2019ar.pdf

The following chart illustrates distribution of total employed persons by sex and nationality.

Figure 3.1 Distribution of Total Employed Persons by Sex and Nationality (%)



Adapted from the Saudi General Authority for Statistics Survey of the Labour Market (2019). Available from https://www.stats.gov.sa/sites/default/files/labour_market_second_quarter_2019ar.pdf

As indicated by the chart, the labour market is highly dependent on Non-Saudi male workers. Saudi workers constitute 24%[4] of total employed persons and the non-Saudi to Saudi worker ratio is 3.16:1[5]. The following table illustrates the main labour market indicators for both total and national labour force aged 15 years and above:

Table 3.2 Main Labour Market Indicators for Total and National Labour Force Aged 15 Years and Above

Indicator	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Unemployment Rate (Total)	6	6	5.7	7.4	6.9
Unemployment Rate (Saudi nationals)	12.8	12.7	12	12.6	11.0
Participation Rate (Total)	55.6	55.9	58.8	61	61.5
Participation Rate (Saudi nationals)	41.9	42	46.7	51.2	51.5
Employment Rate (Total)	94	94.4	94.4	N/A	57.3
Employment Rate (Saudi Nationals)	87.2	87.3	87.7	N/A	45.8

[4] Percentage of Saudi nationals employed from total employed persons = $\frac{Total\ number\ of\ Saudi\ nationals\ employed}{\text{Total number of employed persons}}$ = $\frac{3{,}090{,}248}{12{,}857{,}032}$ = 0.240 × 100 = 24%

[5] Ratio of non-Saudi to Saudi worker in the labour market = $\frac{9{,}766{,}784}{3{,}090{,}248} : \frac{3{,}090{,}248}{3{,}090{,}248}$ = 3.16 : 1

The following table illustrates the sex distribution in labour market indicators for total and national labour force aged 15 years and above:

Table 3.3 Sex Distribution in Labour Market Indicators for Total and National Labour Force Aged 15 Years and Above

Labour Market Indicator/Year	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Unemployment Rate (Total)	3.2	21.1	2.9	22.6	N/A	N/A	4.0	20.2	3.3	18.7
Unemployment Rate (Saudi females vs. males)	7.5	31	6.6	32.5	4.9	30.8	7.1	24.4	5.2	22.5
Participation Rate (Total)	79.0	20.9	78.7	21.9	N/A	N/A	80.6	32.1	79.5	34.9
Participation Rate (Saudi females vs. males)	63.4	19.4	63	20.2	66.6	26	68.5	33.2	66.8	35.6
Employment Rate (Total)	96.8	78.9	97.1	77.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	76.8	28.4
Employment Rate (Saudi females vs. males)	92.5	69	93.4	67.5	94	68.9	N/A	N/A	63.3	27.6

The tables above indicate a normal total unemployment rate. However, nationals' unemployment rate is problematic. The high unemployment rate of nationals is, in fact, largely driven by females' unemployment. The female to male unemployment ratio is 7.67 (UNDP, 2019). Females' unemployment rate stands at 22.5% (compared to 5.2% for males); their labour market participation rate at 35.6% (compared to 66.8% for males); and their employment rate at 27.6% (compared to 63.3% for males). The gender employment gap persists for tertiary educated males and females standing at 41% for females and 94% for males (OECD, 2019). Furthermore, females constitute only 18%[6] of total employed persons and occupy less than third of managerial positions in the labour market—indicating vertical segregation (i.e. glass-ceiling*)* (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter 2019*, 2019, p. 35).

[6] Percentage of female workers from total employed persons = $\frac{Total\ number\ of\ female\ workers\ employed}{\text{Total number of employed persons}}$ = $\frac{2{,}299{,}649}{12{,}857{,}032}$ = 0.17886 × 100 = 17.886% ~ 18%

On the whole, females' labour market indicators are problematic and incomparable with their male counterparts. Saudi Arabia ranks in the bottom 1% on female labour force participation in the Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum (*Global Gender Gap Report*, 2021) which gains greater significance when the same country ranks in the top 1% on female enrolment in tertiary education. On the same note, Saudi Arabia ranks in the top 20% on equal pay for equal work.

In the same vein, two labour market indicators exhibit notable change over the last five years: participation rate and employment rate. There is approximately 10% increase in the participation rate of both total and national labour force. For females, although their participation rate steadily increased over the last five years, it remains much lower than males'—less than half of males' participation rate. Employment rate, on the other hand, shows striking change. The employment rate dropped to almost half between 2019 and 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic might had a role in that drop. In general, the biggest improvement in labour market indicators (participation and employment rates) for nationals can be seen from 2018 to 2019. A possible explanation is that the objectives of the socio-economic development plan (i.e. Vision 2030), which were announced in 2016, began to materialize. This is in addition to the institutional support for female labour market participation (more on institutional support for female labour market participation can be found under section 3.2.2.1.1 in this chapter). In the same vein, the following two tables illustrate the distribution of employed persons by sector and citizenship status (national vs. non-national):

Table 3.4 Employed Persons by Sector, Nationality, and Gender (excluding domestic workers)

Public Sector				**Private Sector**			
1,498,798				8,249,061			
Saudi Nationals		**Non-Saudi Nationals**		**Saudi Nationals**		**Non-Saudi Nationals**	
1,419,348		79,450		1,670,900		6,578,161	
Males	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**
886,718	532,630	48,321	31,129	1,141,246	529,654	6,359,454	218,707

Table 3.5 Rates of Employment by Sector, Nationality, and Gender (excl. domestic workers)

Public Sector				Private Sector			
11.7%[7] (% of total employed persons)				64.2%[8] (% of total employed persons)			
Saudi Nationals		**Non-Saudi Nationals**		**Saudi Nationals**		**Non-Saudi Nationals**	
94.7[9]		5.3[10]		20.3[11]		79.7[12]	
Males	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**
62.5[13]	40.5[14]	60.8[15]	39.2[16]	68.3[17]	31.7[18]	96.7[19]	3.3[20]

Source: Adapted from the Saudi General Authority for Statistics Survey of the Labour Market (2019). Available from https://www.stats.gov.sa/sites/default/files/labour_market_second_quarter_2019ar.pdf

It can be noted from the tables above that the majority of the working labour force are employed in the private sector. Upon a closer look, citizenship and sex concentrations can be noted in the sectors. Saudi workers tend to concentrate in the public sector while non-Saudi workers concentrate in the private sector. In

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[7] Percentage of employed persons in the public sector from total employed persons = $\frac{\text{employed persons in the public sector}}{\text{total employed persons}} = \frac{1{,}498{,}798}{12{,}857{,}032} = 0.117 \times 100 = 11.7\%$

[8] Percentage of employed persons in the private sector from total employed persons = $\frac{\text{employed persons in the private sector}}{\text{total employed persons}} = \frac{8{,}249{,}061}{12{,}857{,}032} = 0.642 \times 100 = 64.2\%$

[9] Percentage of Saudi nationals in the public sector from total employed persons in the public sector = $\frac{\text{Saudi nationals in the public sector}}{\text{total employed persons in the public sector}} = \frac{1{,}419{,}348}{1{,}498{,}798} = 0.947 \times 100 = 94.7\%$

[10] Percentage of non-Saudi nationals in the public sector from total employed persons in the public sector = $\frac{\text{Non-Saudi workers in the public sector}}{\text{total employed persons in the public sector}} = \frac{79{,}450}{1{,}498{,}798} = 0.053 \times 100 = 5.3\%$

[11] Percentage of Saudi nationals in the private sector from total employed persons in the private sector = $\frac{\text{Saudi nationals in the private sector}}{\text{total employed persons in the private sector}} = \frac{1{,}670{,}900}{8{,}249{,}061} = 0.203 \times 100 = 20.3\%$

[12] Percentage of non-Saudi nationals in the private sector from total employed persons in the private sector = $\frac{\text{Non-Saudi workers in the private sector}}{\text{total employed persons in the private sector}} = \frac{6{,}578{,}161}{8{,}249{,}061} = 0.797 \times 100 = 79.7\%$

[13] Percentage of Saudi male workers in the public sector = $\frac{\text{Saudi male workers in the public sector}}{\text{total employed Saudi nationals in the public sector}} = \frac{886{,}718}{1{,}419{,}348}$ $= 0.625 \times 100 = 62.5\%$

[14] Percentage of Saudi female workers in the public sector = $\frac{\text{Saudi female workers in the public sector}}{\text{total employed Saudi nationals in the public sector}} =$ $\frac{532{,}630}{1{,}419{,}348} = 0.375 \times 100 = 37.5\%$

[15] Percentage of non-Saudi male workers in the public sector = $\frac{\text{Non-Saudi male workers in the public sector}}{\text{total employed non-Saudi workers in the public sector}} =$ $\frac{48{,}321}{79{,}450} = 0.608 \times 100 = 60.8\%$

[16] Percentage of non-Saudi female workers in the public sector = $\frac{\text{Non-Saudi female workers in the public sector}}{\text{total employed non-Saudi workers in the public sector}}$ $= \frac{31{,}129}{79{,}450} = 0.392 \times 100 = 39.2\%$

[17] Percentage of Saudi male workers in the private sector = $\frac{\text{Saudi male workers in the private sector}}{\text{total employed Saudi nationals in the private sector}} =$ $\frac{1{,}141{,}246}{1{,}670{,}900} = 0.683 \times 100 = 68.3\%$

[18] Percentage of Saudi female workers in the private sector = $\frac{\text{Saudi female workers in the private sector}}{\text{total employed Saudi nationals in the private sector}} =$ $\frac{529{,}654}{1{,}670{,}900} = 0.317 \times 100 = 31.7\%$

[19] Percentage of non-Saudi male workers in the private sector = $\frac{\text{Non-Saudi male workers in the private sector}}{\text{total employed non-Saudi workers in the private sector}}$ $= \frac{6{,}359{,}454}{6{,}578{,}161} = 0.967 \times 100 = 96.7\%$

[20] Percentage of non-Saudi female workers in the private sector = $\frac{\text{Non-Saudi female workers in the private sector}}{\text{total employed non-Saudi workers in the private sector}} = \frac{218{,}707}{6{,}578{,}161} = 0.033 \times 100 = 3.3\%$

addition, Saudi workers represent a minority in the private sector constituting 20% of total workers. In a similar way, non-Saudi workers represent a minority in the public sector constituting 5% of total workers. In the same vein, sex distribution is more proportionate in the public sector for both Saudi and non-Saudi workers. The same, however, does not apply in the private sector. Female workers are disproportionately less than male workers for both Saudi and non-Saudi workers. In other words, the private sector represents a male-dominated sector. In the same vein, the following table illustrates the economic sectors with the highest concentration of female workers in the labour market:

Table 3.6 Economic Sectors with the Highest Concentration of Female Workers in the Labour Market

	Sector of Economy	Females	Males
1	Public Administration, Defence, and Social Security	487,637	778,939
2	Retail, Wholesale, and Motor Vehicle Repair	192,032	1,808,336
3	Healthcare and Social Work	131,284	200,617
4	Education	105,553	151,429

As can be noted from the table above, even in sectors with conventional female occupations (i.e. healthcare and education) and the service sector which globally show overrepresentation of female workers (e.g. retail), female workers in Saudi Arabia are underrepresented.

3.2.2 Labour policy

Public policy, including labour policy, is a primary tool utilized by the state to make rapid and serious change in the labour market. The reform utilizes active and passive labour policy to achieve its labour market objectives which include increasing female labour market participation; lowering unemployment; standardizing working conditions and workers' rights; and growing the private sector to become the primary employer (Alarabiya, 2016b). Factors at various levels pushed for this change in the Saudi labour market. For oil economies, collapses in oil prices in 2008, 2014, and 2020 which intensified during the global pandemic Covid-19 had strong economic ramifications which extended to the labour market (*The Gulf Economy Post Covid-19*, 2020). Nationally, population growth, high

unemployment, and economic leakage resulting from foreign workers' transfer of wages outside the country are economic factors that called for intervention. Furthermore, citizenship-based clusters and gender concentrations in the labour market indicated issues with working conditions and workers' rights (i.e. work environment). Internationally, Saudi Arabia's membership in the International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Trade Organization (WTO)[21] places some pressure to meet international labour standards (Mellahi, 2007). A few government bodies are involved in labour legislation and labour market regulation. These include the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development (MHRSD) and the Ministry of Civil Service (MCS). Decrees issued by the king and the Council of Ministers are also of equal power in that regard. There are also relevant but non-legislative bodies such as the General Organization of Social Insurance (GOSI) and Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF).

The Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development, through labour law and policy, organizes the employment relationship and working conditions of workers hired on the social insurance system. Furthermore, the General Organization of Social Insurance (GOSI) provides social insurance (i.e. retirement, unemployment, and occupational hazards pensions) for workers hired on the system in both the private and public sector. The Ministry of Civil Service, on the other hand, organizes the employment relationship and working conditions of workers hired on the civil service system. Retirees on the system get paid their pensions through the Public Pension Agency. The Human Resource Development Fund supports the training and upskilling of Saudi nationals. This includes their on-the-job training in the private sector as well as qualifying unemployed nationals for work in the private sector (*About HRDF*, 2000).

3.2.2.1 Active labour policy

[21] Saudi Arabia joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2005 (WTO, no date) and has been a member in ILO since 1976. Saudi Arabia has ratified 16 labour conventions with the ILO which all have been in force since their ratification (ILO, no date). A complete table of ratified conventions can be found in Appendix (A).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2002) defines active labour policy or programmes (ALMPs) as all social expenditure aimed at the improvement of the beneficiaries' prospects of finding gainful employment or increasing their earnings capacity. In other words, active labour policy includes interventions that promote and support employment. Within that scope, common active interventions include, but are not limited to, spending on public employment services and administration; training programmes to support the employment of the unemployed; school-to-work transition programmes; and special programmes for the disabled (OECD, 2002). The composition of active labour policy differs between developed, emerging, and developing economies (Pignatti and Van Belle, 2018). Applying the definition provided by OECD (2002) to recent labour legislation in Saudi Arabia would highlight applied active labour policy which appear to revolve around employment, working conditions, and workers' rights.

3.2.2.1.1 Employment policy

A principal approach followed by the government to counter nationals' unemployment is job nationalization (or 'Saudization')—the replacement of foreign workers with national workers of similar skills. Although this approach was first introduced in the country's Sixth Development Plan (1995-2000) (Ministry of Economy and Planning, no date), it was not until 2011 that the state started to seriously implement it (Leber, 2019). The programme *'Nitaqat',* which means 'Ranges' in English, was introduced in 2011 and considered the first serious nationalization scheme. It uses a quota system in which it requires employers to employ a certain quota of Saudi nationals based on their company's industry, size, and primary activity. Based on how closely companies meet their assigned quota, they get classified into one of four ranges: platinum, green, yellow and red. Each range would have different implications for the benefits and restrictions on business operation (e.g. access to visas, government services, public-sector contracts) (Proven, 2017a; Leber, 2019). However, not all employers were able to meet quotas which led to the development of an alternative scheme called '*Parallel Nationalization'.*

The '*Parallel Nationalization'* programme was introduced in 2017 and included the option of paying a fee for every expatriate worker occupying a job that can be otherwise nationalized. Fees are paid to the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development which then gets used for the training and development of Saudi nationals in order to qualify them for employment in the private sector (Proven, 2017b). In 2012, a recruitment electronic platform called *'Taqat',* which means *'Energies'* in English, was launched. The mission of the platform is to match job seekers with employers. Under this platform falls the upskilling programme '*Tamheer*' which provides on-the-job training opportunity for recent graduates and unemployed nationals (*Tamheer Program*, 2021). The platform also utilizes the unemployment database '*Hafiz'* in matching job seekers with employers. Furthermore, the Human Resource Development Fund includes numerous initiatives aimed at the training and upskilling of citizens including an initiative called *'Doroob'* which provides free online training in various fields for nationals. In the same vein, although most of lowering unemployment efforts take the form of increasing nationals' employment in the private sector, the government launched an electronic recruitment platform in 2011 called *'Jadarah'* meaning *'Merit'* that matches job seekers with jobs vacancies in the government sector (MCS, *no date*). However, as the public sector is saturated (Mellahi, 2007), the effort has limited effectiveness in lowering unemployment.

To accelerate the replacement process in the labour market, in 2017 the Ministry of Finance imposed fees on family dependents of non-Saudi workers residing in the country. The fees would incrementally increase over a period of four years (Alarabiya, 2016a) with the purpose of driving out foreign labour and retaining only talent. The policy had pronounced effect as large numbers of foreign workers left the country (Balouziyeh and Burns, 2019).

In the same vein, employment policy to increase nationals' employment was made more specific. Job nationalization targets were identified by industry, profession, economic activity, and region. In 2019, two ministerial decrees were

issued to fully nationalize the Communications & IT industry (Alarabiya, 2019) and the tourism sector (MHRSD, 2019a). Pharmacists and accounting jobs are gradually being nationalized starting with a 20% target for pharmacists and 30% for accounting jobs (*Okaz Newspaper*, 2019b; *Ministerial Decree No. 86972 for Nationalization of Accounting Jobs*, 2020). HR-related jobs (MHRSD, 2011) and retail jobs have been restricted to Saudi nationals (MHRSD, 2018a). Memos of understanding between the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development (MHRSD) and provinces are also utilized to extend collaboration between the two in areas of implementation and monitoring (e.g. MLSD, 2018a - a memo of understanding between the MHRSD and the province of Almadinah Almunawarah). On the same note, in August 2020, the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development issued regulations organizing flexible work. This employment alternative (i.e. flexible work) is only available to nationals aged 15 and above. Workers would have no probation period and can work a maximum of 95 hours per month (SPA, 2020a).

Another approach followed by the state to lower unemployment was through removing barriers to females' employment. This involved legislation that is attuned to the sociocultural context (i.e. gender roles, social values). As an unaccommodating work environment in the private sector was a critical factor in females' unemployment, in 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development launched an initiative called "Standardized Regulations for Women's Work Environment". The initiative aimed to create an attractive work environment for women in the labour market to increase their participation and enhance their economic empowerment (Okaz, 2019). Furthermore, labour law (2005) included a few articles particular to women's employment. Article (149)/Chapter (9) prohibits employing women in dangerous or detrimental jobs and Article (150)/Chapter (9) prohibits employers from making female workers work eleven or more consecutive hours at night. Furthermore, Article (154)/Chapter (9) stipulates that after giving birth, mothers are entitled to a nursing hour for 24 months in addition to regular rest periods. Article (158)/Chapter (9) mandates employers to provide a private and independent workspace for women as well as chairs for rest regardless of job.

Lastly, Article (159)/Chapter (9) mandates employers who employ 50 or more female workers who have in total 10 or more children under the age of six, to provide babysitters in the workplace. However, in August 2020, Article (149) and (150) in Chapter Nine were removed from labour law to achieve higher gender equality (Al Debais, 2020) and comply with ratified ILO Convention 111 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in employment-related treatment (ILO, no date b). On the same note, it is noteworthy that in 2011 the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development has made employers' request of a male's guardian approval for females' employment unlawful. However, in 2017, that clause was removed from the guide organizing women's employment in the private sector leaving the matter up to employers (*The Saudi Ministry of Labour Restores the Male Guardian Approval Condtions for Women's Employment*, 2017). This amendment might be to lessen restrictions on employers and allow them to protect their interests. For example, if employers feel that a female's family might interfere and interrupt her employment, they can then decide if hiring her is a good business decision without incurring legal liability.

To further support females' employment, in 2017, the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF), in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development, launched two programmes aimed at increasing females' participation in the private sector. One is called *'Wusool'* which means *'Arrival'* in English. The programme provides a subsidy for transportation expenses for female workers based on meeting certain conditions (Wusool Program, 2019). The second initiative is called '*Qurrah*' which means '*Peace of Mind'* in English. The programme aims to resolve the childcare obstacle for working mothers and costs associated with childcare services. The programme provides a subsidy for up to two children per working mother, based on meeting certain conditions, in a number of childcare centres registered with the HRDF (Qurrah Program, 2019). On the same note, institutional barriers to females' self-employment (i.e. entrepreneurship) were revised. The requirement of a male guardian's approval for a female to start and register her business was then removed (Gulf Business, 2018).

In addition to employment policy, a few other legal changes played a role in female labour market participation. First, the lifting of the driving ban for women in Saudi Arabia (SPA, 2017). Mobility restrictions and transportation expenses have been cited by Saudi women as barriers to their labour market participation (e.g. Aldawsari, 2016; Alfarran et al., 2018; Syed, Ali, & Hennekam, 2018). Second, the removal of a male guardian's approval for a female to start and register her business (Gulf Business, 2018). This legal amendment supports females' self-employment and economic participation. Third, the retirement age of female workers was raised from 55 to 60 years old becoming equal to men's (Al-Khattaf, 2019). This amendment in the social insurance system (Article 38) would extend females' labour market participation. The following table summarizes employment policy and regulation in supporting nationals' employment:

Table 3.7 Legislation and Regulation Supporting the Employment of Nationals

Year	Action	Issuing Authority	Targeted Area
2000	Establishment of Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF)	King & Council of Ministers	Training & Development
2011	*Nitaqat* Program (Quota Nationalization)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2011	*'Jadarah'* Program (Recruitment e-platform)	MCS	Employment – Public sector
2012	*Taqat* Platform (Recruitment e-Platform)	HRDF	Employment - Nationalization
2017	Ministerial Decree (Parallel Nationalization)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2017	Transportation Subsidy Program 'Wusool'	HRDF & MHRSD	Employment - Females
2017	Childcare Subsidy Program *'Qurrah'*	HRDF & MHRSD	Employment - Females
2017	Policy (imposition of fees on dependents of non-Saudi workers residing in the country)	Ministry of Finance	Nationalization - Reduction of foreign labour
2018	Policy (increasing amount of fees imposed on dependents of non-Saudi workers residing in the country)	Ministry of Finance	Nationalization - Reduction of foreign labour
2018	Ministerial Decree (Nationalization by Economic Activity)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2018	Removal of male guardianship requirements in females' entrepreneurship activities	Ministry of Commerce and Investment	Entrepreneurship - Females
2019	Initiative (Nationalization by Profession)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization

2019	"Standardized Regulations for Women's Work Environment" Initiative	MHRSD	Employment - Females
2019	Employment Subsidy Program for Upskilling	HRDF	Training & Development
2019	Program to Nationalize Jobs in the Communications and IT Sector	MHRSD & Ministry of Communications and IT	Employment - Nationalization
2019	Ministerial Decree (Nationalization by Sector)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2019	Amendment to Social Insurance System (increase women retirement age)	GOSI	Equal Opportunity - Gender
2020	Amendment to Labour Law – Removal of two female-employment-related articles	Council of Ministers	Equal Opportunity - Gender
2020	Flexible Work Regulations	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization

3.2.2.1.2 Working conditions and workers' rights policy

Following the introduction of labour law in 2005 by Royal Decree No. M/51 (*Saudi Labour Law*, 2005), a number of labour policies aimed at standardizing working conditions and improving workers' rights have been issued. To protect wages, the wage protection system (WPS) was introduced in 2013 by the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development (MHRSD) to protect the wages of national and expatriate workers. The purpose of the system is to monitor employers' commitment in paying their employees in a timely manner and in accordance with their contracts (MHRSD, 2013). This is consistent with ILO Convention 95 which Saudi Arabia ratified later in 2020 (ILO, no date b). To support private employers in paying Saudi nationals fair and adequate wages, the HRDF introduced the 'Wage Additional Support Program' in 2012. The programme subsidizes nationals' salaries up to 4 years and to a maximum amount of 4000 SAR (equiv. to 1067 USD). The extent of support is linked to the company's range in the nationalization scheme *'Nitaqat'*. In the private education sector, the subsidy is extended to 5 years and forms 50% of workers' salary (Althunayyan, 2012). In 2019, a similar programme was introduced—the *'Employment Subsidy Program for Upskilling'* in which salaries are subsidized for three years in an annually decreasing rate -30%, 20%, and 10%,

respectively. The subsidy applies to employees' whose salaries range between 4000-10000 SAR (equivalent to 1067-2667 USD) (HRDF, 2019).

To standardize the work environment, a standard form for internal work rules was prepared by the MHRSD in 2016 for employers to follow (MHRSD, 2018d). The form covers areas of recruitment; training and development; compensation and benefits (i.e. gender equal pay); performance evaluation; promotions; complaints; discipline and code of conduct; working days and hours; paid leave; workplace health and safety; healthcare (i.e. health and occupational hazards insurance); social facilities (e.g. eating and prayer areas, accommodations for disabled workers, private area for female workers); and administrative inspection. Furthermore, in September 2020, the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development issued standardizing regulations for the work environment (i.e. working conditions and workers' rights) which fulfils the purpose of ratified ILO C111 (ILO, no date b). The regulations ban private employers from different forms of discrimination including in wages, recruitment, and work assignments (*Alsharq Alawsat*, 2020).

To improve occupational safety and health (OSH), legislation was also utilized. Most notable is the issuance of the Anti-Harassment law in 2018 which was followed by the Behavioural Infringements Regulations in 2019. The Anti-Harassment law was issued in May 2018 by Royal Decree No. (M/96) to protect the privacy, dignity, and personal freedom of individuals (Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2018). The law criminalizes any sexually suggestive verbal or non-verbal conduct from one person to another whether occurring directly or through technological means in any domain. The act stipulates that even if the plaintiff withdraw an accusation or did not file a complaint, the responsible authority maintains the right to do what it sees best for the public interest. In the workplace, the law mandates employers to have complaints reporting mechanisms and procedures to validate them. The sanctions for the offender can go up to 5 years in prison and a fine of up to 300,000 SAR (equiv. to 80,000 USD) if offense

occurred in a place of work, education, social care, or shelter, or if the perpetrator had direct authority over the victim. The Behavioural Infringements Regulations for the workplace was issued in October 2019 by a ministerial decree (SPA, 2019). Infringements refer to any form of abuse, including exploitation, threatening, harassment, blackmailing, fighting, cussing, contempt, deliberately being alone with the opposite sex, and any form of discrimination. In the same vein, the most recent OSH legislation was the introduction of a national policy for occupational health and safety in 2020 by the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development (MHRSD, 2020a). The document included principles, objectives, and a national governance structure but no action plan or timeline for policy implementation. Furthermore, recent OSH policy included the issuance of occupational safety and health regulations for industries to comply with (MHRSD, 2018c). The regulations represent a practical framework for employers to prevent injuries, accidents, illnesses, and diseases of workers as well as by-passers and visitors to the workplace. They align with ILO Convention 174 ratified in 2001 which seeks to prevent industrial accidents and limit their consequences if they happen (ILO, no date b). However, type of disease, whether physical or psychological, is not specified in the regulation. Furthermore, the application of many pieces of OSH legislation to public sector employees hired on the civil service system is not clear. The civil service system includes a section on work health disability where it specifies a process for proving the disability and another process for compensating a work injury (HRSD, 2016) with no specific preventive measures for public employers to follow. Other regulations concern the protection of workers who work directly under the sun (MHRSD, 2014) and the night shift (MHRSD, 2019b). The Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development is the responsible body for OSH in Saudi Arabia. Related OSH legislation is part of labour law and the social insurance system (ILO, 2013).

With regard to workers' protection from job loss, a recent legal amendment was made in attempt to improve the overall efficiency of the labour market. In 2015, article (77)/chapter (3) in labour law, which concerns service termination and

severance pay, was amended by royal decree (M/46) ('Labour Law', 2015). The amendment grants employers the right to terminate a worker's employment at any time for any reason without incurring legal liability[22]. Employers would only have to pay the worker a specified severance pay. The previous version of the provision considered a worker's termination without a legitimate reason to be wrongful dismissal and entitled the worker to compensation determined by the commission for labour dispute resolution. In other words, the amendment lessened workers' protection from job loss. The purpose of this amendment was to provide private employers with more flexibility to respond to market pressures as well as encourage their employment of national workers[23]. The following are the two versions of article (77) of labour law—the previous and current provision. The previous provision stated ('Labour Law', 2015):

> *If a contract is terminated for an illegitimate reason, the party harmed by this termination shall be entitled to compensation determined by the commission for labour dispute resolution. The compensation should consider the material and moral harm as well as the possibility and circumstances of the termination (p. 32)*

The amended version of article (77) states ('Labour Law', 2015):

> *Unless the contract includes a specific compensation for its termination by either party for an illegitimate reason, the party harmed by the termination of the contract shall be entitled to compensation as in the following:*
>
> 1. *The wage of fifteen days for every year of the worker's years of service, if the contract term is indefinite.*
> 2. *The wage of the remainder duration of the contract, if the contract is fixed-term.*
> 3. *The compensation referred to in sub-clause (1) and (2) of this article should be no less than the worker's wage of two months. (p. 23)*

[22] Instead of increasing the private sector share of national workers' employment, the amendment led to private employers' firing of numerous national workers.

[23] Private employers were resisting the employment of national workers due to the difficulty of terminating their employment. This has also had implications for the private sector role in alleviating unemployment.

It is noteworthy that further amendment to article (77) was proposed which involves increasing the compensation (i.e. severance pay) for the arbitrarily terminated worker from a fifteen-day wage to a one-month wage for every year of service. The amendment delineates the cases of termination in terms of initiating party and rights for the harmed party. It also permits parties to agree on compensation higher than that amount. The proposal was accepted by the council of ministers in 2019 but yet to be incorporated into the law. The statement of the revised article reads as the following ("Amendment of Labour Law," 2021):

> *First: unless the contract includes a specific compensation for its termination by the employer for an illegitimate reason, the worker whom his contract is terminated shall be entitled to compensation as in the following:*
>
> 1. *The wage of one month for every year of the worker's years of service, if the contract term is indefinite.*
> 2. *The wage of the remainder duration of the contract, if the contract is fixed-term.*
>
> *Second: unless the contract includes a specific compensation for its termination by the worker for an illegitimate reason, the employer shall be entitled to compensation as in the following:*
>
> 1. *The wage of fifteen days for every year of the worker's years of service, if the contract term is indefinite.*
> 2. *The wage of the remainder duration of the contract, if the contract is fixed-term.*
>
> *Third: the compensation referred to above, in sub-clause (1) and (2) of this article, should be no less than the worker's wage of two months.*
>
> *Fourth: it is permissible for parties to agree on a compensation in an amount that exceeds the amount specified above. (p. 20&21)*

In the same vein, the service termination provision in the civil service law, article (30)/chapter (6) (*Saudi Civil Service Rules and Regulations*, 2017), is provided below to highlight variation in this worker right between the two laws organizing the employment relationship in the labour market—labour law and civil service law.

Article (30)/chapter (6) on service termination from the civil service law (*Saudi Civil Service Rules and Regulations*, 2017) states:

> *With consideration of termination reasons stipulated by systems, an employee service shall be terminated for one of the following reasons:*
>
> *a. Resignation*
> *b. Request for an early retirement before reaching retirement age according to the retirement system.*
> *c. Cancellation of the job.*
> *d. Reaching retirement age unless the service is extended by a decision from the competent authority.*
> *e. Health disability.*
> *f. Inexecution of transfer decision, without legitimate reason, in fifteen days from the date of notifying the employee with the decision.*
> *g. Termination for disciplinary reasons.*[24]
> *h. Termination by a royal order or a decision by the council of ministers.*
> *i. Not showing for work, without legitimate reason, for fifteen consecutive days or thirty separate days over the year preceding the service termination decision.*
> *j. Withdrawal of nationality.*
> *k. Loss of an employee after a period specified by the council of ministers.*
> *l. Invalidity of incumbents of jobs that are excluded from competition and qualification.*
> *m. Incompetence due to receiving unsatisfactory performance appraisal three consecutive times according to regulations. (p. 12&13)*

It can be noted that reasons for termination are clearly identified and specified in the civil service law leaving almost no discretion for the employer in that matter. On the other hand, the labour law identifies no specific reasons for termination leaving it almost completely at the discretion of the employer. On a related note, the rights of migrant workers were targeted for improvement in a recent initiative by the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development. In November 2020, the ministry launched an initiative called '*Improving the Contractual Relationship',* as

[24] Disciplinary termination of service involves criminal or illegal action committed by the employee.

part of the national transformation programme, which was in effect in March 2021 (SPA, 2020b). The initiative targeted the job mobility and visa regulation (i.e. exit and re-entry visas) for migrant workers. Now migrant workers are able to move between employers within certain controls that consider the rights of both parties of the contractual relationship (MHRSD, 2020b). The following table summarizes labour legislation pertinent to workers' rights:

Table 3.8 Legislation and Regulation of Workers' Rights and Protection

Year	Action	Issuing Authority	Area of Improvement
2005	Labour Law	King & Council of Ministers	Workers' Rights
2012	Wage Additional Support Program	HRDF	Wages & Benefits
2013	Wage Protection System (WPS)	MHRSD	Wages & Benefits Protection of Workers' Rights
2014	Ministerial Decree (Work under the Sun)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health
2015	Amendment to Service Termination in Labour Law	King & Council of Ministers	Workers' Rights Service Termination
2016	Ministerial Decree (Standard Work Rules)	MHRSD	Standardization of Working Conditions
2018	Ministerial Decree (Health & Safety Regulations)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health
2018	Anti-Harassment Law	King & Council of Ministers	Occupational Safety & Health
2019	Ministerial Decree (Night Shift Work)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety and Health
2019	Ministerial Decree (Protection from Behavioural Infringements Regulations)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health
2020	Ministerial Resolution (Reform in Job Mobility of Expatriate Workers)	MHDSD	Workers' Rights
2020	Standardizing Regulations for the Work Environment	MHRSD	Standardization of Working Conditions
2020	National Policy for Occupational Health Safety	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health

3.2.2.2 Passive labour policy

OECD (2002) defines passive labour policy or programmes (ALMPs) as "unemployment compensation programmes and programmes for early retirement for labour market reasons" (OECD, 2002). Unemployment compensation include

unemployment insurance and unemployment assistance. Applying the definition provided by OECD (2002) to recent labour legislation highlights two social protection programmes. The '*Hafiz'* Program, which means *'Incentive'* in English, is a monthly unemployment allowance paid to citizens whom have been unemployed for at least 3 months (HRDF, 2011). The allowance is paid for a maximum of 12 months. The other programme is '*SANED*' meaning *'Support'* in English. *SANED* is an unemployment insurance scheme that applies to Saudi and expatriate workers alike in both the private and public sector. The scheme provides financial assistance to protect workers whom are unemployed due to circumstances beyond their control (ISSA, 2014). The assistance is provided for up to 12 months in a gradually decreasing rate every 3 months. The following table summarizes recent prominent passive labour programmes:

Table 3.9 Passive Labour Programmes

Year	Action	Issuing Authority	Area of Improvement
2011	*Hafiz* Program (Unemployment Allowance)	HRDF	Social Protection
2014	Unemployment Insurance Program *'Saned'*	GOSI	Social Protection

3.2.2.3 Labour policy pertinent to public sector employment

Legislative activity concerning the public sector is comparatively less and tends to decrease its historical attractiveness. Many of employee benefits are becoming contingent on merit (*Okaz Newspaper*, 2019a). In 2016, the annual raise and transportation allowance for public sector employees were suspended (*Alriyadh Newspaper*, 2016). The decision was driven by a strong need to lower government spending which was part of larger economic reform. However, the next year, the king issued a royal decree reinstating annual raise and financial benefits to their original form for all military and civil personnel in the government sector (Reuters, 2018). In 2020, in efforts to counter the economic ramifications of Covid-19, the high cost of living allowance was removed from all civil service employees (*Saudi*

Ministry of Finance: Additional Measures to Confront the Financial and Economic Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic, 2020; Reuters, 2020).

In 2018, amendments to the Civil Service rules and regulations, which aims to increase productivity and raise performance, started and are still ongoing. They include changes in the promotion system. That is, as opposed to their historical link to seniority, promotions will now be linked to merit and there will be a performance-based reward system in place for distinguished employees (*Okaz Newspaper*, 2019a).

In October 2019, the first step in the liberalization of the higher education sector was taken. A new system for public universities was introduced which grants public HEIs independence from the state in managing their academic, financial, and administrative affairs. Although public universities will continue to receive public funding, the funding will however become partial as opposed to previously full funding (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2019) which would lower public spending. It is also noteworthy that employees hired before the transition will be subject to previous civil service rules and regulations, at least during the transitional phase, while employees hired after the transition will follow different employment rules and regulations (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2019).

Lastly, in September 2021, the employment discipline law was issued by Royal Decree No. (M/18) and Ministerial Decree No. 85. Misconduct is identified as any work or refusal to work by the employee which includes departure from duties, commitment of job prohibitions stipulated in the law, or affects the honour and dignity of the public job. The law seeks to improve the performance of public sector employees as well as protect their rights by identifying a disciplinary procedures for management to follow. The following table summarizes recent labour legislations particular to the public sector:

Table 3.10 Labour Legislation and Regulation for Public Sector Employees

Year	Action	Issuing Authority	Area of Change
2016	Ministerial Decree (Suspension of Financial Benefits)	MCS	Compensation & Benefits
2017	Royal Decree (Reinstatement of Financial Benefits)	King	Compensation & Benefits
2018	Linking Promotions to Merit	MCS	Promotions
2019	Liberalization of Public Universities	King & Council of Ministers	Liberalization of Higher Education
2020	Ministerial Decree (Suspension of Financial Benefits)	Ministry of Finance	Compensations & Benefits
2021	Employment Discipline Law for Public Employees	King & Council of Ministers	Employee Discipline

A chronological table on prominent labour legislation and regulation in Saudi Arabia in the last two decades can be found in Appendix (B). To summarize, Saudi Arabia's membership in international organizations (i.e. ILO) plays a role in guiding the enactment and adaption of national laws and labour policies to comply with international labour standards. In the current labour market transformation, legislation and policy are used to supplement the legal framework and drive transformation—i.e. improve working conditions in the private sector, performance in the public sector, and nationals' labour market indicators. Ministerial decisions and royal decrees are equally utilized for that purpose. In addition to legally-binding instruments, non-binding instruments such as memos of understanding and government initiatives (e.g. national transformation programme, labour reform initiative) are similarly utilized in the labour market transformation.

The coverage level of instruments vary. While some are at the international- (i.e. ILO conventions) and national-level (i.e. national laws), most ministerial decisions address labour issues at lower levels (i.e. economic sector, occupation, category of workers) such as females' employment in the retail sector (e.g. ministerial decision no. 1/1/2473/P dated 10/08/1433H); nationals' employment in accounting jobs (e.g. ministerial decision no. 86972 dated *8/5/1442H*); and night shift work (e.g. MHRSD, 2019b). Furthermore, there are separate pieces of legislation that address working conditions such as equal opportunity in

employment, wage protection, and protection from harassment and abuse but no comprehensive frameworks at the national level exist to standardize the work environment in a way that supports employee wellbeing (cf. European Framework for Psychosocial Risk Management, the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC on Safety and Health of Workers at Work). In the same vein, there is ambiguity in some pieces of legislation. For example, there is no specification of occupational diseases stated in OSH policies—whether it includes psychological diseases or only physical diseases (e.g. MHRSD, 2018c). Occupational health and safety legislation seem to also lag in comparison to standards, best practices, and legal requirements applied in some OECD and G20 countries (cf. Leka et al., 2014; McCarthy, Joan, & Long, 2019). Psychosocial risks, for example, and the concept of employee wellbeing (including areas of work-life balance, work flexibility, and reducing work-related stress) seem to be absent from national OSH policies. However, OSH is an area that is receiving attention in the current labour market reform; a national framework is being developed but not yet finalized (e.g. MHRSD, 2020).

The implementation of labour policy and programmes is carried out by legislators, courts, and labour government bodies (i.e. MHRSD, HRDF). However, the main implementation mechanism is labour inspection (ILO, 2014). Where violations or noncompliance is found sanctions are applied, mostly in the form of financial fines. Incentives are also used to encourage employers' compliance with non-legally-binding initiatives such as meeting nationalization quotas which would grant them business advantages (Proven, 2017a; Leber, 2019). In the same vein, the impact of recent labour policy is reflected in labour market survey and evaluated by international labour organizations. Females' labour market indicators show significant improvement over the last five years (*Labour Market Survey Third Quarter 2021*, 2021) while the recent *Women, Business, and the Law* report by the World Bank notes Saudi Arabia's high score in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (*Women, Business, and the Law: Saudi Arabia*, 2022). The report attributes the high score to recent changes in the legal framework affecting females' movement, career decisions, and equality in employment affairs. However, institutional support for parenthood appear to be falling behind

international standards (e.g. ILO C183) and international best practices (e.g. "Employment Insurance Benefits," 2022; MLSA, n.d.). Labour legislators need to pay special attention to the work-family interface and facilitating reconciliation between the two in a traditional society such as in Saudi Arabia (Zahidi, 2018) if they seek to increase females' economic participation.

In conclusion, although regulatory activity accompanying labour market transformation is rapid (see Tables 3.7-3.10), there are gaps in coverage. On the same note, many aspects of labour rights and protection have been historically under-regulated in the private sector. Beyond the minimum protection level mandated by the legal framework, no serious frameworks at the national level exist for improving working conditions and the work environment. Thus, current efforts may seem fragmented before they come together and generate comprehensive frameworks at higher levels that would create wider standardization of working conditions in the labour market. For female workers in the Saudi labour market, this institutional change in the labour market is expected to have a positive impact on them. Removal of structural barriers and incentives for employing nationals is expected to facilitate national females' access to jobs while legislation improving working conditions is expected to enhance female workers' rights and protection in the workplace which is expected to encourage more females to join the labour market, especially the private sector. In the higher education labour market, efforts to lower public spending and increase productivity and performance in the public segment, through standardizing the employment system followed in the employment of faculty across the different segments of the sector, is expected to standardize working conditions, enhance faculty's job mobility, and alleviate rigidity in the labour market. The implications of that transformation for faculty wellbeing is unclear in publicly available data and this is a gap this research seeks to fill.

3.3 Part II: Segmentation in the Saudi Labour Market

3.3.1 Segmentation in the Saudi Labour Market

As showcased throughout this chapter, an understanding of present-day Saudi labour market entails an understanding of economic activity and state involvement in the labour market. The public sector is created by the state and provides public services (i.e. education, health, security, etc.). The private sector, on the other hand, comprises state-owned companies and family businesses (AlShehabi, 2020). The former dominates the energy, telecommunication, banking, and aviation sector. They also include special purpose vehicles or entities (SPEs) which are created to fulfil the needs of particular public projects. The economic activity of individual and family businesses ranges between providing services dependent on government contracts and goods importation. The latter depends on local consumption—mostly the consumption of public sector employees (AlShehabi, 2020). That is, there is no strong productive private sector besides the state-owned segment. The majority of family and individual businesses are labour-intensive; unstable; and as a consequence unable to provide good jobs (AlShehabi, 2020). The state's involvement in the labour market can be seen in the high regulation of the employment relationship in the public sector (through the civil service law) and the under-regulation of that relationship in labour law which applies to workers in the private sector. This disparity in workers' rights grants employers disproportionate power over workers in the private sector and makes workers more prone to exploitation (Mellahi, 2007).

Today's Saudi labour market is highly dependent on cheap foreign male labour. Strong sectoral and citizenship-based segmentation exist in the labour market along with under-representation of national workers which intensify for national female workers. This labour market segmentation is an outcome of historical interaction between economic needs, political concerns, and sociocultural factors. It has been institutionalized through the law and public policy to support the country's economic development and modernization objectives. For decades, labour market divisions were maintained and reinforced by labour market actors—the state, employers, and workers. The following sections highlight areas of

variation in working and employment conditions between different segments of the labour market as well as attitudes of labour market agents toward each other, namely workers and private employers.

3.3.1.1 Working Conditions

Working conditions vary in the Saudi labour market along the lines of sector, employment system, and citizenship. Working conditions and workers' rights are considered better and more generous under the civil service system commonly followed in the employment of nationals in the public sector. Compared to the public sector, wages in the private sector, on average, are lower; benefits are contingent; working hours are longer; and job security is less. Wages are 30-40% higher in the public sector for citizens, and the difference is even bigger for expatriates (Tamirisa and Duenwald, 2018). Financial incentives in the private sector are linked to job performance and promotions are linked to merit whereas in the public sector, promotions have been linked to seniority and benefits such as annual raises are granted in an almost automatic manner. The working week in the private sector is 48 hours and workers have one paid day of rest per week unless the employer states more (i.e. full weekend). In the public sector the working week is 35 hours and workers have two paid days of rest per week (*Saudi Labour Law*, 2005; MCS, 2019). Paid leave also varies between the two employment systems—civil service and labour law as well as between the sexes. Table 3.13 illustrates the difference:

Table 3.13 Paid Leave Days in the Civil Service System and Labour Law

Leave	Public Sector – Civil Service System		Private Sector – Labour Law	
	Males	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**
Annual Leave	36 days	36 days	21 days	21 days
Maternity Leave	-	10 weeks (70 days) After maternity leave ends - optional leave of up to 3 years (for the entire employment period) can be utilized with a 25% pay of salary.	-	10 weeks (70 days) After maternity leave ends - optional leave of up to a month with no pay.

Paternity Leave	3 days	-	3 days	-
Death of a Spouse	5 days	Muslim woman - 4 months and 10 days	5 days	Muslim woman - 4 months and 10 days Non-Muslim women – 15 days

Source: Adapted from Saudi Labour Law (2005) and Civil Service Regulations for Human Resource (2019)

The difference in the death of a spouse leave between Muslim and non-Muslim females in the private sector has religious basis[25]. The civil service system, however, does not specify the leave for non-Muslim women. That might be because non-Saudi females in the public sector would be hired on the social insurance system following the regulations of labour law. In addition, almost all Saudis are Muslims (CIA, 2015) which might have not necessitated differentiation in that regard. Thus, the leave in the Civil Service Regulations for Human Resources (2019) is only specified on religious basis '*Eddah*'.

Job mobility is a working condition that varies between workers on the basis of citizenship status. Foreign workers are employed under a sponsorship model called the '*kafalah'* system. Under this legal framework, work permits are issued for a specific occupation with a specific employer (or '*kafeel'*) and foreign workers cannot change jobs without the consent of their employer (the sponsor) (Longva, 1999; Wapler, 2001; Balouziyeh and Burns, 2019). That is, job mobility cannot be freely exercised by all workers in the labour market (Bhuian and Al-Jabri, 1996; Mellahi and Wood, 2002). The system grants employers disproportionate power over foreign workers which makes them more prone to exploitation. It undermines migrant workers' rights in many aspects of the employment relationship (i.e. turnover, residency visa, work permit, labour disputes). However, in November 2020, the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development launched an initiative called '*Improving the Contractual Relationship'* as part of the national transformation programme which was in effect in March 2021 (SPA, 2020b). One

[25] In Islam, if a Muslim woman's husband die, she has to stay home for 4 months and 10 days, leaving home only for necessities. This period is called *'Eddah'*.

area of reform under this initiative was job mobility. Now migrant workers are able to move between private employers within certain controls that consider contracting conditions and the rights of both parties of the contractual relationship—the employer and the foreign worker (MHRSD, 2020b).

3.3.1.2 Employment Conditions

Employment conditions in the Saudi labour market vary along the lines of sector, citizenship, and employment system. Form of employment varies between citizens and non-citizens in the private sector. The employment of citizens can be either fixed-term or at-will whereas for non-citizens it must only be fixed-term (Balouziyeh and Burns, 2019). Fixed-term employment terminates automatically upon the expiration of the term specified in the contract. That is, it is legally easier for the employer to discontinue the employment relationship once the contract is up. In the public sector, citizens are commonly employed on the civil service system which grants them a permanent employment status. Chances of losing employment (i.e. termination of service) are very minimal and only in the case of violating a few specified conditions in the civil service law. On the other hand, all foreign workers in the public sector, and some citizens in some public sectors, are employed on the social insurance system where they have fixed-term employment.

Similarly in higher education, employment conditions for faculty vary by sector (public vs. private), citizenship (national vs. non-national), and employment system (civil service system vs. social insurance system). A more detailed differentiation of the employment cases of faculty in the sector can be found in section 1.2.1. In summary, working and employment conditions have their basis in the legal framework. Variation in rights and protection under the laws organizing the employment relationship (i.e. labour law and civil service law) results in variation in working and employment conditions.

3.3.1.3 Attitudes of Labour Market Agents toward Each Other

3.3.1.3.1 Attitudes of national workers toward private employers

The historical disparity in rights and quality of working conditions between the public and private sector in GCC labour markets, including Saudi Arabia, have engendered negative attitudes in nationals toward employment in the private sector (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012). Over time, this led to citizens' ascription of lower status to private sector employment (Mellahi, 2007) and manual work (Baqadir, Patrick and Burns, 2011). In that socio-political context, sector of employment and type of work became markers of social status (Mellahi, 2000) and linked to individuals' sense of pride (Al-Salamah and Wilson, 2001).

Recent evidence from Saudi Arabia shows strong preference for public sector employment among Saudi male university students and graduates (Thompson, 2020). Job security tops their reasons for that preference. This is consistent with evidence from another GCC country in which young citizens (i.e. employed and unemployed graduates as well as senior students) also showed strong preference for public sector employment (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012). Better rights, job security, and advancement opportunity topped their reasons, respectively. On the other hand, salary and working hours were the most negatively perceived working conditions in the private sector. Furthermore, participants exhibited willingness to go as far as remain unemployed until a job becomes available in the public sector (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012). In interviews with unemployed Saudi women about working conditions in the private sector, they expressed negative perceptions of wages, sex-mixed work environments, long working hours, shift work, and the recruitment process (Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018). They also pointed out a mismatch between their high qualifications and level of jobs offered. In addition, they indicated the existence of a glass ceiling beyond mid-level jobs which limit their career advancement.

Leadership is a working condition to which nationals ascribe significance. Evidence from a neighbouring GCC country shows that young citizens place high value on the quality of the leader-member relationship and perceive it as an essential factor in the attractiveness of a workplace (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012). A consultative approach in decision-making, referred to as *'Shura'* in Islamic teachings, is argued to be preferred by Saudi nationals (Mellahi, 2007). However, this is not always feasible in large private firms. Workers' participation in the decision making would be minimal and an employer's decision is expected to be accepted without issues (Mellahi, 2007). Hence, this leadership style and clear hierarchy in the private sector might be in conflict with the values of a collectivist and relation-based society (Buda and Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1998; Hutchings, Metcalfe and Cooper, 2010; Jiang, Garris and Aldamer, 2018). In such societies, the interest of the group is commonly prioritized over the interest of the individual (Hofstede, 2001) and consultation between workers and management is expected. Furthermore, behaviour in these societies tend to be regulated more implicitly by relationships than by explicit rules (Hooker, 2008) (i.e. organization policy and procedures).

3.3.1.3.2 Attitudes of private employers toward national workers

Private employers seem to hold negative attitudes toward national workers (Mellahi and Wood, 2001, 2002; Mellahi, 2007). They tend to characterize GCC citizens as having too much pride (Baxter, 1998), a sense of entitlement to superior working conditions (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012), and less discipline compared to foreign workers (Mellahi and Wood, 2001; Mellahi, 2003). The skill and competence of GCC citizens were also perceived as needing development and strengthening (Abdalla *et al.*, 2010; Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010; Baqadir, Patrick and Burns, 2011; Elbanna, 2021).

Interviews with private employers in Saudi Arabia highlighted some issues with national workers. These included a supply/demand gap in skills and specialized knowledge; work ethics and job hopping; and nationals' negative attitude towards

manual work (Baqadir, Patrick and Burns, 2011). Findings show resemblance with evidence on national workers from another GCC country but rather than managers they were the perceptions of their expatriate colleagues. In a survey of 309 local and expatriate workers, expatriate workers held a strong negative perception of citizens' skills and competence and, to a lesser extent, work ethics (i.e. hard work and motivation) (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010). Interestingly, local workers in the sample expressed some acceptance of some of those perceptions. In summary, private employers seem to find it difficult to make a business case for the employment of national workers over foreign workers who are cheaper to employ and exhibit similar or higher productivity.

3.3.1.4 Tensions in the Labour Market

The same measures taken by the state to address labour market deficiencies seem to create tensions in the labour market. The strongest tension in the labour market is the resistance of private employers to some labour legislation, notably job nationalization policy. Private employers are not content with their extent of involvement in labour policymaking (Mellahi, 2007). They argue that recent job nationalization legislation is resulting in a one-size-fits-all mandate that lacks regard for economic activity or industry-specific characteristics. A manager in the construction sector stated that '[such] a unilateral decision will affect business and productivity especially at a time when there is shortage of manpower to execute real estate projects worth billions of dollars' (*Arab News*, 2004). In addition, private employers find it hard to make a business case for the higher cost of national workers over cheap foreign workers with similar or higher productivity (e.g. Baqadir et al., 2011). That is, the policy is creating a financial burden on private employers—higher labour costs. Businesses which are unable to comply with nationalization quotas or bear sanction fees are going out of business (Peck, 2017). Moreover, discontent managers expressed willingness to go back to hiring cheap foreign labour if the mandate is ever lifted (Mellahi, 2007; Baqadir, Patrick and Burns,

2011). Recommendations for addressing tensions in the labour market can be found in Chapter Seven: Recommendations and Conclusions.

In the same vein, job nationalization policy has been criticised for focusing on low-level jobs (e.g. cashiers, janitors, receptionists) rather than skilled jobs (Al Ekhbariya, 2019). That is, quantitative and not qualitative nationalization. Furthermore, in spite of efforts to grow the private sector and public sector saturation, data indicates that more jobs are being created in the public sector than the private sector (AlEkhbariya, 2019). This is problematic and inconsistent with the objectives of labour market reform.

Risks also emerge from some active labour programmes such as wage support and training and upskilling subsidies. These programmes can create inequality in working conditions based on citizenship status. That is, attempts to increase and support the employment of national workers in the private sector might, at the same time, create within-sector and within-organization segmentation between national and non-national workers. This would ultimately affect the efficiency of the labour market. In addition, it can create tension in Saudi Arabia's memberships in international organizations such as the ILO, WTO, and the United Nations (UN) which emphasize equal rights and standardized welfare.

In the same vein, nationals' high unemployment coupled with the private sector's slow growth, directed the state attention to entrepreneurship as a viable employment alternative. Wide promotion of entrepreneurship started in Saudi Arabia in 2016 with the establishment of specialized agencies such as *Riyadah* and *Monshaat*. *Riyadah*, meaning entrepreneurship in English, is a national institute that provides support for start-ups and small enterprises. *Monshaat*, meaning enterprises in English, is a general authority concerned with the support and development of the SME's sector. Other forms of support such as financial subsidies and expertise (e.g. consultations, workshops) are also available to entrepreneurs. These efforts were accompanied by legal amendments to support females' entrepreneurship such as the removal of the requirement of a male guardian's

approval for a female to start and register her business (Gulf Business, 2018). In education, although entrepreneurship courses are offered in business schools at the university level, they are yet to be introduced in general education (Azim and Hariri, 2018).

The final tension relates to gender. Legal mandate to ensure the privacy of women in the workplace (Article 158) and restrictions on the type of work females can perform (article 149) (*Saudi Labour Law*, 2005) seem to drive employers to refrain from employing women. Their accommodation requirements constitute high costs for employers (Al Omran, 2017; Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018). A delineation of the legal requirements (and prohibitions) can be found in section 3.2.2.1.1.

3.3.2 Origins of Segmentation in the Saudi Labour Market

A deeper understanding of today's Saudi labour market segmentation entails an exploration of its origins. There are three main divisions in the labour market—sectoral (public/private); citizenship-based; and gender-based divisions. The first two are intertwined and will be discussed together followed by origins of gender segmentation.

3.3.2.1 Sector and citizenship segmentation

Segmentation in the Saudi labour market has its origins in the 1970s when rapid development projects started after the commercialization of oil. That is when the Saudi economy joined the global capitalist economy. However, influx of foreign labour in Saudi Arabia precedes that time to the discovery of oil in 1938 ('Saudi Aramco', 2009). The characteristics of incoming labour, at the time, were skilled and semi-skilled workers concentrated in the oil sector. National workers, on the other hand, were unskilled (AlShehabi, 2014). This, in turn, created disparity in

income and living conditions between foreign and national workers—superior in the former. It is noteworthy that these conditions do not apply today as the vast majority of foreign labour in Saudi Arabia are low-skill low-wage workers (i.e. blue-collar workers) and their working and living conditions tend to be less privileged than those of nationals (Hertog, 2018). Since joining the global economy, oil revenue continued to grow and the economy continued to expand beyond the oil sector. Large scale development plans were set out and large-scale infrastructure projects commenced to modernize the country (i.e. roads, bridges, education system, and healthcare services). These projects required a large number of labour to meet demand which national labour were unable to meet both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Overcoming this labour shortage through foreign labour entailed addressing some national security and cultural identity concerns by the state. The state devised an immigration policy which can be summarized as 'restricted citizenship with unrestricted migration' (AlShehabi, 2014). The policy represents the bedrock of the guest worker model and sponsorship '*Kafala*' system existing today for the employment of foreign workers. The purpose of the policy is to prevent permanent settlement of expatriates, mainly for political and security reasons.

In the same vein, some of the objectives of the national modernization project of the 1970s might have contributed to presently held job attitudes by national workers. One objective of the project was to build a generous welfare system for citizens. This objective has a political underpinning in which a good welfare state would cultivate citizens' allegiance. For previous generations, the welfare state commonly included employment in the public sector. Up until roughly the 21st century, employment did not constitute a concern for citizens and the state alike as good jobs in the public sector were abundant. Politically, citizens' reliance on the state for income was assumed to diminish their clout in the business sector and in demanding participation in political affairs (AlShehabi, 2014). In addition, the historical absence of taxes for individuals supported their political

disempowerment.[26] Over time, demand for foreign workers in the private sector coupled with the state political interests created and reinforced the public/private sector division in the labour market which manifests in citizenship-based concentrations in the labour market. However, as growth in the public sector matured, the state was no longer able to absorb the growing population. This has, consequently, raised unemployment rates of nationals in recent years which necessitated a reconsideration of the economically beneficial and politically desired arrangement as it became no longer maintainable.

In the same vein, sentiment toward foreign workers in Saudi Arabia has changed over time by labour market actors. Citizens' sentiment was not very favourable of foreign workers in the 1950s and 1960s when they enjoyed better working and living conditions than them (AlShehabi, 2014). However, this later changed when citizens started to economically benefit from the labour importation business (mostly domestic workers) (AlShehabi, 2014). Citizenship was a requirement to conduct this business (Hertog, 2010). The state, on the other hand, exhibited positive sentiment toward foreign workers since the first rapid development wave in the 1970s. However, growing population, economic pressures, and rising unemployment necessitated a shift in that sentiment. Today, the state is aggressively discouraging the employment of foreign workers who can be replaced by national workers. Private employers, on the other hand, are the labour market actor that has not changed its sentiment toward foreign labour. They favour foreign workers today as much as they did back then. Thus, when the state no longer shared the same sentiment, resistance to the application of job nationalization policy by private employers emerged (e.g. Baqadir et al., 2011) (more detail on this under section 3.3.1.4 above).

[26] In January 2018, Saudi Arabia and UAE were the first two GCC countries to introduce and implement a 5% value-added tax (VAT) (Credendo, 2018). In July 2020, Saudi Arabia increased the VAT from 5% to 15% (Reuters, 2020).

3.3.2.2 Gender segmentation

Gender segmentation in the Saudi labour market is not mere concentration of females' in some occupations or gender disparity in labour market indicators but an acute underrepresentation in the labour market as a whole despite high levels of education. This phenomenon can be attributed to a combination of educational, social, and economic factors.

Males' education preceded females' education in Saudi Arabia by over a decade. The purpose of female's education was explicitly limited to fulfilling conventional gender roles in early education policy in the 1970s[27] (Al-Sanabary, 1994). Furthermore, education opportunity at the tertiary level was significantly limited for females compared to males' opportunity. In addition, the gap in education was combined with a sex-segregation social norm which was institutionalized in general[28] and higher education.

The segregation norm continues in public sector employment as the private sector tend to be more liberal or at least involve higher mixing between the sexes during the working day. This social norm disadvantaged females in both education and the labour market. In higher education, it limited the fields of study available to them as specializations were dependent on the availability of qualified female instructors. In the labour market, it made females exclude themselves from private sector employment where sex-mixing is a prevalent norm in the workplace. In other words, sex-mixing goes against their prior education, family, and religious institutionalizations. The sex-segregation social norm has its roots in Islamic teachings and the virtue of modesty. Modesty here extends to interaction between

[27] The policy stated that aim of females' education was to enable them to fulfil their roles as successful homemakers, ideal wives, and good mothers as well as qualify them for work in nature-appropriate jobs (Al-Sanabary, 1994)

[28] The recommendations of the first conference for Islamic education in 1977 which was held in Saudi Arabia, emphasized the separation of girls' education from boys' and to take into account the natural differences between the sexes in some courses (Al-Hariri, 1987). The policy was developed in line with country's religious status in the Islamic world as home to two of the three holy mosques in Islam.

males and females in which limited interaction is preferred to prevent extramarital relationships or any form of sexual involvement between unmarried individuals. This rationale is further supported by an Arab culture in which women are perceived to carry a family's honour and men having a responsibility to protect that honour (Banihani and Syed, 2017; Syed, Ali and Hennekam, 2018).

On the same note, the most segregated sector in the labour market is the education sector which happens to be one of the earliest sectors in which women worked in Saudi Arabia. Institutionalizing sex-segregation helped ease families' acceptance of their daughters and wives to work. Today, amendments to labour law are removing special treatment of women in the workplace (e.g. Article 149 & 150/Chapter 9) (Al Debais, 2020) (more on this can be found under section 3.2.2.1.1 above). Female workers, on the other hand, exhibit ambivalent attitudes toward sex-mixed work environments. While some view segregation as a form of inequality (Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017) others prefer a sex-segregated workplace (Metcalfe, 2007; Le Renard, 2008).

A crucial factor in the institutionalization of the sex-segregation norm was an Islamic revival movement called *'Sahwa'*. The movement started in the 1960s in Saudi Arabia and remained strong throughout the 1990s. The movement focused on the strictest interpretations of religious teachings which were then transmitted to individuals through social institutions (e.g. education, laws, mosques, and labour market). Furthermore, family is a social institution that plays a significant role in the underrepresentation of females in the labour market. Families in Saudi Arabia are largely conservative and religious and similar to other cultures in the Middle East in tending to support the education of females but not so much their employment (*Arab Human Developemnt Report*, 2003). That is, families' support of females' employment would usually have conditions for things such as occupation and work culture. Conservative values with regard to gender roles and household responsibilities are chief reasons for families' lesser support of females' employment compared to their education (Zahidi, 2018). This might explain the

contradiction in Saudi Arabia's bottom 1% rank on female labour force participation and top 1% rank on female tertiary education enrolment in the Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum (*Global Gender Gap Report*, 2021).

Another enabler for the institutionalization of sex-segregation in public spheres (i.e. education, government administrations, entertainment) was the country's economic affluence. The state was able to build parallel public spheres for men and women. Furthermore, women started to develop a negative attitude toward work outside the home. That is, they started contributing to the reproduction of the segregation norm. Good living conditions and a lack of financial need to work have become social markers of affluence and moral distinction among women (Le Renard, 2008). It was perceived a privilege to be protected from the cruelty of the work world in which other woman might need to do in order to support themselves.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter illuminated the processes through which the labour market is changing. The biggest reform in the labour market relates to tighter regulation of labour rights and addressing labour market inefficiencies. Regulation largely concerns enhancing worker protection and worker rights in the private sector in which active labour policy, change in the court system, and frequent amendments to labour law are being utilized to achieve. Female low labour market participation, and nationals' unemployment more generally, are being addressed both institutionally and normatively. Job nationalization policy is being enforced forcefully (Leber, 2019) and legal barriers to females' employment are being removed through change of law (labour and personal status law). Normatively, females are being appointed in leadership roles at various levels (*Saudi Gazette*, 2018; *The Guardian*, 2019) and successful female workers are being accentuated in the media to influence household patterns toward dual-income households. Origins

of segmentation in the Saudi labour market which gave rise to the current labour market structure illuminate the changing aspects of the labour market which help, in turn, understand the interactions and tensions arising because of that labour market change. Lastly, moving from context to theory, the following chapter will review the literature comprising the theoretical underpinning of this research.

Chapter Four: Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature in the research subject area— working conditions and employee wellbeing in segmented and changing labour markets. The reviewed literature constitutes the theoretical underpinning of this research through which findings are interpreted. It highlights the theories and research methods used in cross-cultural scholarship in the research subject area supporting an accurate situation of the research in relation to other scholars' work and existing debates in the literature.

4.2 Part I: The Labour Market

4.2.1 An Institutional Approach to the Labour Market

There are two traditions in labour market analysis: a classical and neoclassical tradition and an institutional tradition. The two traditions differ in their conception of the labour market and the mechanisms that determine labour market outcomes. Classical and neoclassical economics conceive the labour market to be single and competitive (e.g. Becker, 1964; Smith, 1937). In addition, they maintain that market forces (i.e. supply and demand forces) are the main mechanisms that determine labour market outcomes (i.e. employment, wages, and other job rewards). One prominent theory in this tradition is human capital theory (Becker, 1964). The theory emphasizes workers' characteristics in differentiating earnings. In particular, workers' investment in human capital—education, skills, and training which are typically acquired through formal general education (Cohen and Geske, 1990); informal education (Schultz, 1981); vocational education (Corazzi, 1967); and on-the-job training (Mincer, 1974). The theory posits that the higher the investment in human capital, the higher the productivity workers would signal to employers

which would translate to higher earnings (Becker, 1964; Mincer, 1974). Emerging from a neoclassical economics school of thought, the theory tends to ignore the role of non-market and institutional factors in differentiating earnings among other labour market outcomes. Furthermore, empirical findings not fully explainable by competitive market forces were reconciled through further development of human capital theory which included a hypothesized existence of competitive markets within jobs or occupations at a given skill level (e.g. Becker, 1971). In the same vein, the compensating wage differential hypothesis posits that jobs with unpleasant working conditions would be compensated with a premium (Abowd & Ashenfelter, 1988a). That is, a higher wage would be paid to workers in order to motivate them to accept those undesirable characteristics of the job, relative to other jobs (e.g. high risk of death in jobs of high rise window cleaning). The differential in this case would be positive. The wage differential can also be negative when workers are willing to accept a lower wage for a desirable job or a job that offers desirable benefits (e.g. health insurance, specialized training, high job security, etc.). The wage differential hypothesis stems from Adam Smith's argument that "the whole of the advantages and disadvantages of the different employments of labour and stock must, in the same neighbourhood, be either perfectly equal or continually tending toward equality" (Smith, 1937, p. 100). However, evidence testing this hypothesis has been inconclusive except for the risk of death (Brown, 1980). A related stream of research, emerging from the neoclassical tradition, is one on sex differences in labour market outcomes (Polachek, 1975, 1979, 1981).

Polachek (1981) attributes sex-based occupational segregation to females' utility maximization rationale which he argued is influenced by family responsibilities. Family responsibilities are posited to create intermittent employment in females' employment history (i.e. lower labour market attachment) and depreciate their job skills. Hence, to maximize utility, females choose jobs with lower penalty for intermittent employment which reflect on their occupational choice and earnings. Polachek's (1981) arguments agree with human capital explanations in that differences in labour market outcomes are attributed to the

supply side of the labour market—workers' characteristics and career choices. In the same vein, Polachek (1978) argues that sex differences in career choices can be related to sex differences in study choices at the tertiary level. Females' fields of study might be influenced by their perceived entry barriers to some occupations; perceived discrimination practices in hiring; and/or an innate sex preference in career choices.

An institutional approach to the labour market, on the other hand, rejects the conception of a single competitive labour market (e.g. Cairnes, 1874; Mill, 1909) and emphasizes the role of institutional rules in shaping and differentiating labour market outcomes. Furthermore, an institutional approach emphasizes gaining familiarity with the institutional setting of the phenomenon of interest—the legal, social, and political context of the labour issue. In other words, the origins and processes that gave rise to the existing phenomenon. More importantly, the approach proceeds on the premise that choice is proscribed by factors beyond labour market forces and actors (Woodbury, 1987). In other words, it assumes that alternatives in the labour market are historical and evolutionary as opposed to expansive as a given. One prominent theory in this tradition is labour market segmentation theory (Doeringer and Piore, 1971) which is reviewed in detail in the following section.

4.2.2 Labour Market Segmentation Theory

Labour market segmentation (LMS) theory (Doeringer and Piore, 1971) is a neo-institutional theory that originated in the late 1960s from qualitative studies of urban American labour markets. The theory sought to address issues of persistent poverty, unemployment, and income inequality (Piore, 1970; Thurow, 1975) in American labour markets despite general prosperity and provision of training programmes (Gordon, 1972). The theory has then moved from its American context to wider and broader applications in the field of labour market sociology. It has been applied in labour studies to understand labour market structures and transformation (e.g. Alfarran et al., 2018; Li, Zhu, & Wang, 2017; Thompson &

Wissink, 2016). As an institutional theory, labour market segmentation theory focuses on the demand side of the labour market and places high emphasis on institutional factors. That is, it focuses on jobs and job characteristics as opposed to workers and workers' characteristics. This analytical orientation has implications for public policy recommendations which tend to be structural in nature. Labour policy from this school of thought tends to focus on improving jobs and working conditions as opposed to human resource policies such as upskilling and more training.

A segmented conception of the labour market has its roots in the works of a number of scholars. Most notably, Cairnes (1874) and Mill's (1909) concept of non-competing groups; Kerr's (1954) concept of balkanized labour markets; and Dunlop's (1957, 1966) concepts of job clusters and wage contours. LMS theory also builds on the dual model used by Averitt (1968), Bluestone (1970), and Harrison (1972) in their analysis of labour markets and economic structures. Prior work points out the varying mechanisms, or rules, involved in setting wages and other labour market outcomes in different segments of the labour market as well as within single administrative units (e.g. Dunlop, 1957). However, the more direct theoretical seed of labour market segmentation theory can be attributed to internal labour markets theory (Kerr, 1954; Dunlop, 1957, 1966).

Labour market segmentation theory started with a dual conception of the labour market. The labour market was posited to be divided into broadly two distinct segments—a primary labour market and a secondary labour market with barriers to mobility between the two (Piore, 1969, 1970, 1975). Minorities and the poor are posited to disproportionately begin their careers in the secondary labour market and find it difficult to move upward—confined in the secondary market (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Non-market factors would differentiate access to employment (e.g. Darity Jr., Guilkey, & Winfrey, 1996). Another key hypothesis of the theory is the application of the human capital hypothesis in the primary labour market but not the secondary. Furthermore, job quality is posited to differ significantly between the two labour market segments—superior in the primary

segment and inferior in the secondary segment. Doeringer and Piore (1971) describe some of the key differences in job characteristics between the two markets in the following text:

> *Jobs in the primary market possess several of the following characteristics: high wages, good working conditions, employment stability, chances of advancement, equity, and due process in work rules. Jobs in the secondary market, in contrast, tend to have low wages and fringe benefits, poor working conditions, high labour turnover, little chance of advancement, and often arbitrary and capricious supervision (p.165).*

In addition to aforementioned differences, workers can experience greater job autonomy and personal participation in primary market jobs which would enhance their commitment (Osterman, 1975). On the other end, workers in the secondary labour market can experience job alienation. That is, they might experience a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, or/and self-estrangement in their jobs (Blauner, 1964) which can stem from the job characteristics and nature of the employment relationship. Further development of dual labour market theory included the introduction of a distinction between an upper and lower tier within the primary labour market (Piore, 1975). Jobs in the upper-tier are characterized by, comparatively, higher pay and status, more promotion opportunity, higher mobility, higher job autonomy, and more room for creativity. In addition, higher return on education and stronger prediction of the human capital hypothesis is expected in the upper tier of the primary labour market compared to the lower tier (e.g. Osterman, 1975, 1994).

Mechanisms setting wages and other labour market outcomes are posited to differ between segments of the labour market. While market forces are posited to be the key mechanisms setting outcomes in the secondary labour market, institutional rules are posited to interfere with, and even substitute, market processes (Cairnes, 1874; Mill, 1909) in the primary labour market. Thurow's work (1975, 1979) is also relevant here which posits that workers' order in the labour

queue—the queue to access job opportunity, depends on workers' training costs (i.e. trainability). Furthermore, the interaction of this labour queue with the national distribution of jobs is posited to affect the distribution of wages in the labour market which can create disparity in the wages of workers of similar characteristics. Therefore, differences in those mechanisms are argued to differentiate labour market outcomes. In the same vein, mainstream economics argues that non-market mechanisms in the primary labour market create rigidity in the labour market impeding a competitive working of the labour market (Leontaridi, 1998).

4.2.3 Internal Labour Markets Theory

Development of labour market segmentation theory included a linkage between dual labour market theory (Piore, 1969, 1970, 1975) and internal labour markets theory (Kerr, 1954; Dunlop, 1957, 1966). The two theories were linked through a conception of the primary labour market as comprising a series of internal labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). The term internal labour markets (ILMs) was first introduced by Kerr (1954) to address differences in labour market structures. The theory distinguishes between an external and internal labour market in which market forces set labour market outcomes in the former and administrative rules (whether at the organizational, industry, or sector level) set them in the latter. The role of administrative rules is emphasized in differentiating workers' outcomes. Doeringer and Piore (1971, p. 2) define an internal labour market as:

> *an administrative unit…within which the pricing and allocation of labour is governed by a set of administrative rules and procedures. The internal labour market governed by administrative rules, is to be distinguished from the external labour market of conventional economic theory where pricing, allocating and training decisions are controlled directly by economic variables.*

The mechanisms that govern the internal labour market would shelter workers from market processes which operate in the external competitive market (e.g.

fluctuations in product demand and business cycles) (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Berger and Piore, 1980). This reality creates higher employment stability in internal labour markets which supports higher investment by employers in employee training. Furthermore, an external and internal labour market can be distinguished through two key structural characteristics: ports of entry and job ladders (or lines of progression) (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). There are more ports of entry to the external labour market than the internal labour market where ports of entry are controlled and not immediately accessible. In fact, certain job classifications constitute ports through which workers can enter and exit the internal labour market. Job ladders or internal promotion ladders exist in internal labour markets and play a significant role in reducing employee turnover. As employers need to invest in developing specific skills in workers, job ladders bind workers to employers and increase employers' likelihood of recouping their investment in employee training. Jobs in the external labour market, on the other hand, do not always have job ladders and in that case, workers would have short or unstable employments. This outcome is expected to have negative consequences for workers' subsequent employment prospects (Bluestone, 1970; Gordon, 1972). Internal labour markets theory also includes the concept of internal submarkets (Doeringer, 1968). That is, an internal labour market might exist for different occupations or groups of workers within a single organization or firm. For example, a market might exist for unionized workers and another for non-unionized workers in a single firm. Or, in higher education, a market for academics and another for administrative staff in a single higher education institution.

The literature identifies a number of factors that are argued to create segmentation in the labour market. First, capital organization. The organization of capital is argued to shape the organization of labour markets (Bluestone, 1970; Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Gordon, 1972; Hodson & Kaufman, 1982). The primary and secondary labour market are hypothesized to emerge in correspondence to a core and periphery sector of the economy. Furthermore, the profit maximizing strategies followed by each labour market (primary and secondary) are assumed to differentiate their structures (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Second, product markets.

The stability and variability of product demand are argued to create dualism in the labour market (Berger and Piore, 1980). Stable product demand is posited to create a stable labour market segment whereas an unstable and unpredictable demand is posited to create a flexible labour market segment. In the latter, labour demand would respond more directly to product demand with no protection or sheltering of workers. Third, economic sectors' relationship with the state. O'Connor (1973) distinguishes between three sectors of the economy: a monopoly, competitive, and state sector. Each economic sector is argued to affect the structure and processes of its corresponding labour market. Fourth, employment rules. Phelps (1957) identifies three types of markets based on parties involved in setting employment rules: markets where employment rules are set unilaterally by employers; primarily by the government; and through union-management agreements. Pertinent to the latter, Osterman (1975) asserts that unions and unionization constitute a significant segmenting factor in the labour market. Other factors cited in the literature include technology (Galbraith, 1967); organization of work; and social relations of production (Edwards, 1979; Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973).

Doeringer and Piore (1971) identify two factors which they argue drive the emergence of internal labour markets: skill specificity and customs. In the former, employers who need to develop firm-specific skills in workers, to not lose their investment in employee training and retain a stable core personnel, are posited to create organizational structures that enhance employment stability and reduce employee turnover. These structures commonly include personnel strategies such as career ladders, on-the-job training, pension schemes, rewards and discipline systems, and monitoring and control among others. In other words, a hierarchical employment structure in which mutual investment and benefits are shared by workers and employers. Second, where industrial relations take an informal form, customs and customary law is posited to play a bigger role in the emergence of ILMs. In the same vein, while Doeringer and Piore (1971) argue that firms' optimization and economic efficiency strategies are the key drivers of the emergence of internal labour markets, Osterman (2011) maintains that efficiency strategies alone are not enough to justify their existence. Osterman (2011) argues

that internal labour markets are an outcome of a competition between different groups' interests—workers, unions, management, and the government. This different groups' interest argument exhibits similarity to Reich et al.'s (1973) description of the forces driving labour market segmentation more broadly:

> *…the historical process whereby political and economic forces encourage the division of the labour market, into separate sub-markets, or segments, distinguished by different labour market characteristics and behavioural rules. Segmented labour markets are thus the outcome of a segmentation process in which segments may cut horizontally across the occupational hierarchy as well as vertically. (p. 359)*

The structure of internal labour markets can change over time and the whole structure might even dismantle if the circumstances that gave rise to it or supported it change. Osterman (1994) identified three types of factors that can cause that change which he described in the form of an inner, middle, and outer ring. Inner ring factors include organizational performance factors (i.e. profitability, cost, and technological advancement). Middle ring factors include organizational and normative factors at the organizational level (i.e. norms, customs, and policies). Outer ring factors include institutional factors at the labour market level (i.e. labour policy, unions, and regulations). The last set of factors is particularly important in the context of this research as rapid institutional change is affecting the labour market structure.

In conclusion, the above sections reviewed prominent theories from the institutional tradition in labour market analysis. However, no theory or tradition is without limitation. The institutional approach tends to be criticized as being too descriptive or contextual (Woodbury, 1987; Osterman, 2011) while labour market segmentation theory tends to be criticized on the grounds of lacking an agreed upon operationalization for testing its arguments (Leontaridi, 1998). However, an institutional approach represents an appropriate analytical approach for the purpose of this research—understanding an institutionally-driven transformation of

the labour market. Emphasis on the reality of labour market change, including its legal, social, and political context, would yield richer understanding of the processes through which the labour market is evolving, their origins, and resulting interactions and tensions. Furthermore, Evans (1973) argued that labour market segmentation theory can be a useful framework for the analysis of labour markets in developing countries. This research uses labour market segmentation theory as the organizing framework for the analysis of labour market change. Labour markets in oil economies in the Middle East are highly segmented (Hertog, 2018, 2019; Thompson & Wissink, 2016) and going through rapid institutionally-driven change. Change is occurring simultaneously on different levels—socially, economically, politically, and legally which, in turn, is changing the job structure and existing segments. LMS theory is applied to this highly dynamic labour market as a vehicle to understand its evolvement.

4.2.4 Empirical Evidence

The empirical literature can, broadly, be divided into two parts: early classical evidence mainly from the American labour market and cross-cultural evidence in which LMS theory is applied to various labour issues. Early evidence focused on testing the theory hypotheses—differing wage-setting mechanisms and mobility barriers in different segments of the American labour market (e.g. Dickens & Lang, 1985; Howell & Reese, 1986; Tolbert, 1982). Cross-cultural evidence included applications of LMS theory to understand different labour market structures, their transformation process, and its impact on different labour market outcomes (e.g. Li, Zhu, & Wang, 2017; Rutkowski, 2006; Thompson & Wissink, 2016). Furthermore, LMS theory has been used to analyse the effectiveness of government intervention in addressing labour problems such as female labour force participation (e.g. Alfarran, Pyke, & Stanton, 2018; Lisaniler, 2010; Syed, Ali, & Hennekam, 2018); nationals' employment in oil Middle Eastern economies (e.g. Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014; Elbanna, 2021; Thompson & Wissink, 2016); and workers' protection (e.g. Hertog, 2020; Kim & Lee, 2014), among others. In addition, LMS theory constituted the analytical framework for various segmentations in the labour market including

gender segmentation (e.g. Ghilarducci & Lee, 2005; O'Sullivan et al., 2021); citizenship-based segmentation (e.g. Abdalla, Al-Waqfi, Harb, Hijazi, & Zubaidi, 2010; Adham, 2021; Hudson, 2007); work arrangement-based segmentation (standard vs. nonstandard) (e.g. Hudson, 2007; Kalleberg, 2000); and insider-outsider divisions in labour markets (e.g. Hertog, 2020).

Evidence from oil economies in the Middle East, in general, indicates that gender-based discrimination in employment practices (Hodges, 2017; Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018); lack of work-life balance policies and flexible work arrangements (Alselaimi and Lord, 2012; Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017); and sex-mixed work environments (Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018) constitute barriers to female labour force participation and career advancement. Evidence also points out that quality of private sector working conditions (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012; Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018) and attitudes of private employers and national workers toward each other (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012; Baqadir, Patrick, & Burns, 2011; Thompson, 2020; Thompson & Wissink, 2016) impact nationals' labour force participation and drive sector- and citizenship-based segmentation. The following sections give special attention to evidence from transforming economies and Middle Eastern labour markets. They also include a review of evidence on sex differences and transforming higher education labour markets.

Rutkowski (2006) applied LMS theory to understand labour force participation (i.e. employment, unemployment, and underemployment) in transitioning economies of Europe and Central Asia. The research found that economic transition led to scarcity of productive jobs and growing labour market segmentation. In European transition economies (ETE), scarcity of jobs led to persistent open unemployment while in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) it led to underemployment (i.e. low productivity employment). The availability of a social safety net in the former and not the latter seem to differentiate that outcome. Furthermore, labour market segmentation resulting from economic transition was found more pronounced in CIS than ETE. Segmentation was

characterized by sharp increase in earnings differentials and an accompanying increase in low-paid jobs; polarization of regional labour market conditions; and growth of the informal sector offering casual low-productivity jobs. Dong et al. (2004) used LMS theory to analyse the impact of economic transition, from a centrally planned to a market economy, on female workers in rural China. Dong et al. (2004) found that privatization of enterprises in rural China contributed to gender segmentation in the labour market. Women were segregated into production jobs in certain industries; had less job autonomy; did not receive return on experience; and were discriminated against in wages and shareholding. Their findings find support in an earlier evidence in which economic transition from a socialist to a market economy in Eastern Europe was found to negatively impact female workers (e.g. Grapard, 1997). In the same vein, Li, Zhu, and Wang (2017) used the LMS framework to examine forces driving segmentation in urban Chinese labour markets. Using organizational mobility as a vehicle to investigate segmentation drivers, the researchers found that market forces were playing a bigger role in workers' cross-sector mobility than the historical state control and planning factor.

On a related note, neoliberal economic policy followed in the current economic transformation in Saudi Arabia runs the risk of creating precarity in the working and employment conditions of workers. Kalleberg (2009) showed that precarious work and job insecurity can intensify in transforming economies. Moreover, a few of the reasons Kalleberg outlined as giving rise to this phenomenon in the American labour market, from 1975 onward, resemble some of the factors driving current economic transformation in Saudi Arabia. These include multiple collapses in oil prices in recent years pushing for wider economic diversification and regulatory liberalization (i.e. privatization of government services). This is accompanied with change in the legal framework organizing the employment relationship (gradual transfer of public sector employees from permanent to fixed-term employment) which allocates bigger room for market forces to determine labour demand (i.e. higher labour flexibility). This change in the

employment system could mean, in general, less worker protection and threat to existing internal labour markets (Cappelli, 1999; Osterman, 1999; Osterman and Burton, 2006).

In the same vein, evidence shows the impact of social change in the labour market on job structures and labour market segments. Early empirical studies show the role of union movements in transforming longshoring jobs in San Francisco from secondary to primary market jobs (Kahn, 1976) and steel industry jobs in Pittsburgh from bad to good jobs between 1900 and post WWII (as cited in Ghilarducci & Lee, 2005). On the other hand, technology in the American meatpacking industry played a significant role in the devaluation of meatpacking jobs since the early 1900s. More recent evidence shows the impact of labour legislation and efficiency strategies on employment practices. A study from South Korea showed that labour legislation mandating higher protection for temporary workers pushed well-developed internal labour markets in South Korea into transforming the employment of their temporary workers to become permanent (Kim and Lee, 2014). On the other hand, a study from the legal labour market in the United States showed that economic pressures and efficiency strategies were fracturing the long-established employment system for junior lawyers (Kuruvilla and Noronha, 2015). The jobs of junior lawyers in large American law firms were found to be offshored to India with no signs of return to the old system (Kuruvilla and Noronha, 2015). This change in employment practices have the potential to dismantle the internal labour market (Osterman and Burton, 2006) for a highly-skilled group of workers (i.e. junior lawyers).

Evidence from non-oil economies in the Middle East highlight the state's strong involvement in labour markets and intervention in the private sector which were argued to create rigid insider-outsider divisions in the private sector (Hertog, 2020). Furthermore, these labour markets were characterized by lack of cooperation between state, business, and labour and the relative size and rigidity of insider coalitions. Hertog (2020) labelled these economies 'segmented market economies' and identified a number of factors driving segmentation in their labour

markets. These include tight regulation of formal private employment; relative generosity and rigidity of public sector employment; contribution-based social security systems; and weak human resource management which includes nepotism. Furthermore, state resources and regulations were identified as tools through which informal state-business networks are developed leading to further divisions in the private sector. In the same vein, two World Bank reports on labour markets of non-oil economies in the Middle East indicate a queueing behaviour by nationals where they remain economically unproductive until a job, with good working conditions, becomes available for them in the public sector (Gatti, Morgandi and Grun, 2013; Gatti, Angel-Urdinola and Bodor, 2014). Moreover, the reports highlight that educated young females tend to queue longer for public sector jobs that would pay them return on their education as they can afford staying unemployed for longer periods. Another phenomenon was the large share of workers in those labour markets finding their jobs through personal connections (i.e. family and friends) (Gatti, Morgandi and Grun, 2013). This phenomenon indicates the absence of institutional mechanisms in the sorting and allocation of workers in the labour market and points to an employment mechanism that dismisses productivity signals (i.e. education, training, skill).

Evidence from oil economies in the Middle East highlights gender, citizenship, and sector-based segmentation in the labour market. A study from the labour market in the United Arab Emirates examining gender differences in the employment conditions of national and non-national workers analysed the Dubai labour market dataset (Al-Waqfi and Al-Faki, 2015). The analysed sample comprised 1403 full-time workers in which 81% worked in the private sector (the remaining in the public sector); 17% were nationals; and 68% were males. The study found that national and non-national female workers were paid less and experienced glass ceiling in job advancement in both the public and private sectors compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, national females were highly represented in professional jobs and those who had graduate-level education (Master's and above) received higher return on education than their male counterparts in the private sector. Another study from the Emirati labour market investigating the

determinants of labour market outcomes, analysed the Dubai labour market dataset (Abdalla *et al.*, 2010). The research sample included 1099 full-time workers in which 81% worked in the private sector; 83% were non-nationals; and 65% of total sample were males. The study found that in the public sector, nationals have greater chance of employment and receive higher wages compared to non-nationals. While in the private sector, wages were more aligned with human capital and nationals still received higher wages than non-nationals. Lastly, the wage gap between the public and private sector was estimated at 68% in favour of public sector workers. The study concludes that the UAE labour market is segmented along sector (public vs. private) and citizenship lines (national vs. non-national worker).

Social modernization in oil economies in the Middle East emphasizes increasing nationals' participation in the labour market. Job nationalization policy has been utilized in different GCC countries and its effectiveness has been assessed and analysed by researchers. Thompson and Wissink (2016) identified a number of structural barriers impeding a successful implementation of the policy in the UAE. These included rentierism, employers' negative perception of national workers, and nationals' sense of entitlement—underpinned by demographic imbalance. More relevant evidence comes from Saudi Arabia. A study on the institutional barriers to females' participation in the private sector, in light of the job nationalization program *Nitaqat*, found that barriers exist in the characteristics of jobs available and the cultural and legal setting (Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018). Using interviews, data was collected from 13 unemployed females and 10 government officials from both sexes and produced the following findings. First, jobs in the private sector pay low wages, have low status, and lack entry-level jobs for women. Second, their working conditions were not attractive for Saudi female workers as they required long working hours and arranging for transportation[29]. Third and more importantly, the jobs were a poor fit with females' qualifications (level of education and specialization) and females' strong preference for not mixing with

[29] Data was collected in this research before the ban on women's driving was lifted.

males in the workplace (cultural factor). The study concluded that the Saudi labour market is segmented along gender lines and that segmentation is institutionalized through law, culture, and the educational system. Furthermore, the study attributed the programme's limited success to inherent contradictions between the programme's aim and the legal and cultural setting. Although generated insights have great value in light of scare evidence on these issues from the Saudi labour market, it is important to note that the sample size is small and from one city.

Evidence on sex differences in mobility patterns and labour market outcomes indicates some disadvantage for female workers. In their early career, female workers were found to disproportionately go into peripheral industries compared to their male counterparts (Howell and Reese, 1986). Moreover, female workers were twice as likely to be there by midcareer regardless of where they started. However, early career sorting and allocation in the labour market seem to not only affect female workers (e.g. Howell & Reese, 1986) but also male workers. In examining the relationship between industrial sectors (oligopolistic and competitive) and males' career mobility, Tolbert (1982) found that sectors have a greater effect on males' job mobility in late career. Furthermore, he found that certain occupational origins enhance movement between sectors in early career but would change from early to later career. Females' disadvantage in the labour market was indicated in another evidence examining the relationship between industrial marginality and females' employment. Bridges (1980) found that females were underrepresented in capital-intensive industries. However, their industrial distribution was not strongly associated with marginality characteristics which Bridges (1980) argued could be attributed to occupational composition as opposed to industry marginality. In the same vein, Ghilarducci and Lee (2005) found that when employee benefits (health insurance and pension), as opposed to only wages, were included in the calculation of females' total compensation, more female workers were sorted in the primary labour market. Evidence exploring the changing structure of the labour market for female workers in the United States in the late 1970s, concluded the existence of a single labour market for females that was

distinct from the primary and secondary labour market (Friedberg, Lang and Dickens, 1988). Friedberg et al. (1988) described the labour market as an amalgam of pink and certain blue-collar jobs. Furthermore, they found that females' return on education in that segment was rising but not on experience. However, as females' labour market attachment was increasing at the time, the researchers expected return on experience to similarly increase. In the same vein, female workers showed greater attachment to internal labour markets than males even when males experienced greater upward mobility than them (Steinberg, 1975). On the same mobility patterns subject, evidence from a developed country labour market found that minimal human capital acquisition in jobs can impact the transition of workers to better jobs in the labour market (Turner, Cross and Murphy, 2017). In addition, early evidence identified different availability of job information can hamper workers' mobility in the labour market (Bluestone, 1970).

Cross-cultural evidence on the transformation and segmentation in the higher education labour market indicates that form of employment (permanent vs. flexible or short- vs long-term employment contract) is the strongest impacted and segmenting factor in the labour market (Bauder, 2006; Vohlídalová, 2021). A study from the Czech Republic examined the casualization of academics' working conditions in a transforming higher education labour market (i.e. neoliberal transformation) (Vohlídalová, 2021). The study analysed data collected from 1710 academics working in public higher education institutions and one public research institution through a questionnaire. Working conditions investigated included objective (i.e. employment contract, job description, wages) and subjective working conditions (i.e. leadership, social climate, work-life balance, job security, psychological health). The hierarchical cluster analysis applied, produced three segments in the public higher education labour market: core, periphery, and semi-periphery which appeared to correspond to the three career levels, late, early, and mid-career, respectively. The study found that gender plays a key role in determining working conditions in the semi-periphery segment while type of institution (public HEI vs. the public research institute) plays a similar role in the

periphery segment. In the core segment, however, gender effect appears only in the gender wage gap. In terms of differences in working conditions, the core segment had the highest wages, fewest part-timers, highest job security, highest job autonomy, and higher job satisfaction. However, females tended to occupy teaching-intensive positions which pay them much less than research positions in the same segment. In the semi-periphery segment, compared to the periphery, wages and job security are higher but also workload and exhaustion. In addition, females experienced the largest gap in wages and subjective job security compared to academics in the other two segments. Females' concern about job loss was almost double their male counterparts and their level of concern about not finding a job if they lose the one they hold was 60% higher than their male counterparts. Moreover, females were 1.8 times more likely than males to report physical and mental exhaustion. Lastly, females in this segment experienced the biggest gender difference with regard to time spent on housework and childcare. The periphery segment, however, included the highest part-timers, high mental and physical exhaustion, and the lowest job autonomy and job satisfaction. It is also the segment that had the smallest gender difference in working conditions. Another study from the higher education sector in Ireland examined precarity in academics' employment in a context of institutional change in the sector toward marketization (Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019). Using semi-structured interviews, data was collected from 102 participants from ten higher education institutions in Ireland. The sample comprised all types of workers in higher education (22% female academics) with a proportionate sex distribution (59% females). The working conditions resulting from the marketization of the higher education sector (i.e. high competitiveness, 24/7 availability, travel) were found to create conflict between the relational domain (i.e. care responsibilities) and career domain (i.e. employment quality) in the lives of female academics in which the prioritization of one would lead to precarity in the other (i.e. part-time, fixed-term employment).

Form and quality of employment differentiate many working conditions for academic staff (i.e. job security, workload, job autonomy, job stress) and the cross-cultural neoliberal transformation in the higher education labour market appear to

push for higher academic staff flexibility. Evidence indicates a more pronounced impact of this transformation on the job security, job autonomy, and wellbeing of female academics (Cardozo, 2017; Zheng, 2018; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019; Vohlídalová, 2021). These findings do not only come from empirical investigations but also conceptual. A conceptual research was carried out by Cardozo (2017) analysing the development of a teaching-only sector in the higher education labour market. Cardozo (2017) analyzed discourses on faculty contingency and diversity and found that socially reproductive work is devalued under capitalism which gets exacerbated through a neoliberal orientation toward contingent labour in employment. The paper concludes with a calling to revalue care work through forging alliances between faculty, care workers in other sectors, and members who benefit from care labour. Another conceptual research builds on Cardozo's (2017) work investigating the development of contingent academics. The scholar analyses the emergence and maintenance of this phenomenon through a feminist lens (Zheng, 2018) and concludes that gender and precarity reinforce each other. They argue that this dynamic goes unchallenged and perpetuates through ideologies of meritocracy and work as its own reward which she refers to as myths. The scholar also argues that organized effort among academics of all levels and privileges is needed to resist the resulting casualization of academics employment.

Lastly, the research methods employed in the empirical literature varied by context and labour issue. Studies concerned with wage and employment differences between different groups of workers (i.e. sex, immigration status, age, etc.) or labour market segments used statistical tools to test the theory hypotheses commonly on readily available large datasets (secondary data) (e.g. Abdalla et al., 2010; Al-Waqfi & Al-Faki, 2015; Howell & Reese, 1986; O'Sullivan et al., 2021; Tolbert, 1982). Where emphasis was on exploring institutional and structural barriers in the labour market, qualitative methods were utilized. These included collection of primary data (e.g. Al-Asfour, Tlaiss, Khan, & Rajasekar, 2017; Alfarran et al., 2018; Syed, Ali, & Hennekam, 2018) and an analysis of the institutional setting commonly through the review of public policy and government initiatives (e.g. Adham, 2021; Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014; Lisaniler, 2010). Cappelli (1985) argues

that labour problems associated with government intervention are best investigated inductively through case studies. These methods would generate thorough and specific explanations of those cases. The special case of the Saudi labour market involves the rapid state-driven evolvement of the labour market through public policy and regulations. This transformation is keeping issues of nationals' employment and working conditions on the public policy agenda. Hence, a qualitative case study would be an appropriate design to use in the investigation of those issues in that labour market.

In the same vein, many of the studies reviewed had a small sample size (e.g. Alfarran et al., 2018; Ivancheva et al., 2019); applied to single cities (e.g. Abdalla et al., 2010; Al-Waqfi & Al-Faki, 2015; Alfarran et al., 2018); focused on one segment of the labour market (e.g. Vohlídalová, 2021); or focused on differences in labour market outcomes and working conditions which assumes static labour market segments (e.g. Abdalla et al., 2010; Al-Waqfi & Al-Faki, 2015).

4.2.5 Conclusion

Regionally, evidence from oil economies in the Middle East indicate gender, citizenship, and sector-based segmentation in the labour market (Abdalla *et al.*, 2010; Al-Waqfi and Al-Faki, 2015). Female workers in the region tend to experience structural, cultural, and legal barriers (Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018) and experience some disadvantage in earnings and job advancement (Al-Waqfi and Al-Faki, 2015). Globally, findings from cross-cultural evidence on the consequences of transforming higher education labour markets show a negative impact on the employment and working conditions of academics (Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019; Vohlídalová, 2021) with no corresponding evidence from the Middle East. In light of this evidence base and its limitations, a research gap on the impact of labour market transformation on female workers in the Middle East becomes apparent. The gap intensifies in the case of oil-economies in the Middle East and when considering a particular labour market such as the higher education labour market. This research gap led to the development of the overarching research

question which explores the impact of labour market change in Saudi Arabia on female workers in the higher education sector in the following way '*What is the impact of institutional change in the labour market on female workers in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia?'.* Furthermore, three sub-questions were developed to assist answering this question. The first question explores the employment history of female workers in higher education to learn about females' mobility patterns (i.e. access, transitions, exit) and the labour market structure for female workers. The second question explores the working conditions of female workers in higher education to detect change in both the working conditions and the institutional factors impacting them. The third question explores the psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs and their impact by labour market change for their employee wellbeing implications. The first part of the literature review chapter (Part I: The Labour Market) drove the development of the first research question '*What does the employment history of female workers in the higher education sector look like? And what does that tell us about the labour market for female workers?*' while the second part of the chapter (Part II: Working Conditions and Employee Wellbeing) drove the development of the third research question '*What psychosocial factors exist in academic jobs held by females in the higher education sector, including change in those factors? And what do they tell us about female academics' wellbeing?*'. The second research question, however, was developed based on the research gap existing at the intersection of the two literatures (i.e. labour market segmentation theory and employee wellbeing theory) asking '*Do institutional factors in the labour market, including change in those factors, have an impact on academic jobs held by females in the higher education sector? If so, in what way?*'. Finally, answering these research questions aims to gain a better and more holistic understanding of female workers' job and labour market experiences in a changing segmented labour market.

Before moving to the literature on working conditions and employee wellbeing, it is important to understand the theoretical link between the labour market segmentation model and the Job Demands-Resources model (an employee wellbeing model). The link lies in the predictions or conjectures the segmentation

model carries for the characteristics of jobs in the primary and secondary labour market (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Reich, 2008; Wilkinson, 2013). The segmentation model predicts that primary sector jobs include job resources (i.e. good job characteristics and working conditions) that make them good jobs while secondary sector jobs are predicted to lack similar resources which would render them bad jobs. Also, segmented labour market theory assumes that there is little jobs security in secondary sector jobs and the jobs are of short tenure. This means that resources for training or upskilling and internal career and promotion ladders are usually only available in primary sector jobs. In the same vein, the JD-R model predicts that good jobs (i.e. resourceful jobs) would be supportive of employee wellbeing (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) while the opposite is predicted by jobs lacking resources and including poor employment conditions (i.e. bad jobs). Although job demands exist in both primary and secondary sector jobs (i.e. work tasks, working hours, job performance goals), it is the absence of job resources in secondary sector jobs that is predicted to increase psychosocial risks—higher likelihood of a negative impact on employee wellbeing (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Jobs in the secondary sector (or bad jobs) do not have enough resources to buffer the negative impact that result from high job demands and poor working and employment conditions.

On a relate note, to understand the structure of this chapter it is useful to understand the function of working conditions in this research. Working conditions represent a continuum trying the two levels of the research—the labour market and job level. Some working conditions get determined at the labour market level through market and non-market factors (i.e. wages, employment, employment stability). These working conditions (Part I in this chapter) are considered economic labour market outcomes and tell us about segmentations in the labour market and job quality by labour market standards. Other working conditions get determined at the organizational level, such as psychosocial working conditions, and are commonly non-economic (i.e. job autonomy, social support, workload, reward and recognition). However, little is known on if and how labour market change impacts

them. Thus, the following part of the chapter (Part II) will review scholarly work on psychosocial working conditions and their impact on employee wellbeing to learn about the ways labour market change can impact this psychological, non-economic, labour market outcome (i.e. employee wellbeing).

4.3 Part II: Working Conditions and Employee Wellbeing

4.3.1 Employee Wellbeing

Wellbeing in the work context is closely related to the conditions in and under which individuals work (Eurofound, 2019). These include job, organizational, economic, and social conditions (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Siegrist and Dragano, 2008; Mudrak *et al.*, 2018). Change in the labour market has shown to impact employee wellbeing through change in working and employment conditions (e.g. Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, Witte, & Alarco, 2008; Mauno, Kinnunen, Mäkikangas, & Nätti, 2005; Mucci, Giorgi, Roncaioli, Fiz Perez, & Arcangeli, 2016). Hence, employee wellbeing represents a psychological non-economic labour market outcome (Kalleberg & Sorensen, 1979). Although many labour markets are going through transformations globally, we know little about the ways this change impacts the working conditions in academic jobs and ultimately faculty's wellbeing. This knowledge gap grows bigger in Middle Eastern labour markets. The following sections provide a background on the development of employee wellbeing theory with special attention to the Job-Demands Resources Model (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) as it constitutes the conceptual framework through which conclusions about employee wellbeing in a changing labour market are drawn. Then, a review of evidence on employee wellbeing from changing labour markets; the education sector; and the Middle East takes place followed by a brief conclusion.

Working conditions can either result in negative (i.e. job stress, job burnout) or positive facets of work-related wellbeing (i.e. work engagement). The

predominant model in psychology used to focus on disease, disorder, and disability (i.e. the deficit model) before Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) introduced the positive psychology model which focuses on human strengths and optimal functioning (i.e. human flourishing). Luthans (2002, p. 698) describes this stream of research as 'the study of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace'. In this research, work engagement represents a facet of psychological wellbeing (Grant, Christianson, & Price, 2007; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002). This perception has its roots in a eudaimonic perspective of wellbeing where individuals' experiences of meaningfulness, self-realization, and optimal functioning are considered a form of wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2001). One overarching framework of psychological wellbeing in the positive psychology literature was introduced by Seligman (2011) and summarized in the acronym PERMA. The PERMA framework identifies five elements that are posited to influence individuals' wellbeing—Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Those elements include both hedonic (e.g. positive emotion) and eudaimonic (i.e. engagement and meaning) approaches to wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Although individuals' ability to experience positive emotion varies by their positive affect disposition (Seligman, 2011), successful attempts to increase their positive emotion at work are posited to support their wellbeing (i.e. higher work engagement). Positive emotion is posited to increase individuals' psychological availability at work through directing their attention outwardly (Rothbard, 2001). In the literature, positive emotion is associated with benevolence (Isen and Baron, 1991); taking initiative toward others and activities (Clark and Isen, 1982; Wood, Saltzberg and Goldsamt, 1990); creativity (Isen, Daubman and Nowicki, 1987); and expanding energy (Marks, 1977). Furthermore, positive emotion is posited to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources (Fredrickson, 1998; 2001). Meaning associated with psychological wellbeing adheres to positive meaning (Rosso, Dekas and Wrzesniewski, 2010) and the significance individuals attribute to the activities they perform (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003). In the same vein, relationships are a significant

source of meaning (Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe, 2003; Heaphy and Dutton, 2008; Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009). When the social context at work is positive, individuals are more likely to draw positive meaning which would support their wellbeing. Lastly, accomplishment includes feeling a sense of competence and mastery which, in addition to autonomy and relatedness, is posited to support intrinsic motivation, psychological growth, and wellbeing (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Today, research in the field of occupational health psychology in general and the employee wellbeing stream in particular investigates both demands and resources, stressors and relievers in the work environment to explore their effect on employee wellbeing. Furthermore, job demands and resources are explored in jobs, occupations, and workplaces to draw conclusions about their quality and support for employee wellbeing.

Roots of research on employee wellbeing can be traced to work on job burnout which emerged from care-giving and service jobs in the 1970s (e.g. Freudenberger, 1975; Maslach, 1976). Job burnout is a prolonged response to chronic job stressors (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001) and comprises three components: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness. Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996) define *emotional exhaustion* as feeling overextended and depleted of emotional and physical resources. *Cynicism* as feeling a negative and/or excessive detachment from various aspects of the job. *Ineffectiveness* as feeling a reduced sense of accomplishment. It is noteworthy that emotional exhaustion constitutes the central and most reported dimension of job burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). In the same vein, stress is defined as disruption to the equilibrium of the cognitive-emotional-environmental system by external factors (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). When individuals experience high demands and low levels of control in their jobs, they are expected to experience job strain (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). The health cost is posited to emerge from an inability to cope or a struggle to manage job demands and stressors as well as from lack of adequate recovery (e.g. Sonnentag, 2001; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2010). The link between job burnout and work engagement was perhaps more clearly defined by Maslach and Leiter (1997) in their conceptualization of burnout as an erosion of

engagement. Their conceptualization based the two constructs of job burnout and work engagement as direct opposites on a wellbeing continuum and their dimensions were, hence, similarly contrasted (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). Energy in engagement was postulated to turn into exhaustion in burnout; involvement into cynicism; and efficacy into a sense of ineffectiveness.

The construct of engagement in a work context was first introduced by Kahn (1990) in which he defined personal engagement as the physical, cognitive, and emotional employment and expression of the self during role performance. Contrastly, he defined disengagement as the physical, cognitive, and emotional withdrawal and defence of the self during role performance. Furthermore, Kahn (1990) identified three psychological conditions that support the experience of work engagement: psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. *Meaningfulness* refers to the feeling of 'receiving return on investments of one's self in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy' (p. 703, 704). *Psychological safety* refers to 'feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career' (p. 708). *Psychological availability* refers to the belief of 'having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular moment' (p. 704). Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Roma, and Bakker (2002, p. 74) defined work engagement as 'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption.' *Vigour* is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. *Dedication* is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. *Absorption* is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties detaching from work.

It is noteworthy that both concepts—personal engagement and work engagement, conceptualize engagement as a muti-dimensional construct comprising a physical, cognitive, and affective dimension. However, the concepts

are not similarly operationalized. Kahn (1990) did not provide an operationalisation of his construct. Although a few researchers attempted to develop scales based on his conceptualization in their empirical investigations (e.g. May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Soane et al., 2012), a lack of an agreed upon operationalisation in the literature seems to hamper the uptake of Kahn's (1990) work by other researchers. On the other hand, Schaufeli et al. (2002) supplemented their conceptual work with the development of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The first version of the scale comprised 17 items which was followed by the development of a shorter 9-item version showing good internal consistency, reliability, and construct validity (Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova, 2006). The UWES scale has been widely used and validated in various work contexts across the world (Bakker *et al.*, 2008).

The research purpose includes investigating the working conditions of academic jobs; their impact by labour market change; and the implications of that impact for faculty wellbeing. The Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) was deemed an appropriate model to use for that purpose. The model's classification of job factors, hypothesized relationships, and posited effect on employee wellbeing facilitates identifying areas of change in academic jobs, classifying resulting change in working conditions (resource or demand), and expecting impact on faculty wellbeing. The following section is dedicated to the review of the JD-R model.

4.3.2 The Job Demands-Resources Model

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model was first developed by Demerouti et al. (2001) to investigate job burnout. The model categorizes working conditions into two broad categories—job demands and job resources and associates each category with different psychological health outcomes. Job resources are defined as aspects of the job—whether physical, social, or organizational that support achieving work goals; personal growth and development; and/or reducing job demands and associated physiological and psychological costs. Job resources

include factors such as feedback, job control, social support, opportunities for development, and rewards and recognition. Job demands, on the other hand, are defined as aspects of the job—whether physical, social, or organizational that require sustained physical or mental effort that result in certain physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). Job demands include factors such as work overload, time pressure, job insecurity, role conflict, and role ambiguity. Furthermore, Bakker et al. (2003) identified physical demands under the broader job demands category. Physical demands concern the physical work environment and include working in a physically unpleasant environment.

The JD-R model was then extended by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) to include work engagement as another focus of the model. This development included the identification of two psychological processes—a motivational process and a health impairment process that underlie posited relationships in the model (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014b). The motivational process posits that work engagement results from the inherently motivating qualities of job resources through the achievement of work goals, reduction of job demands, or satisfaction of basic needs such as autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The health impairment process, on the other hand, posits that burnout is an outcome of experiencing high job demands and poor job resources. Thus, the model includes three main relationships: a positive relationship between job resources and employee wellbeing (i.e. work engagement) (e.g. Han et al., 2020; Mudrak et al., 2018; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004); a negative relationship between high job demands (with poor or inadequate job resources) and employee wellbeing (i.e. job burnout) (e.g. Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014); and a buffering effect of job resources on the negative relationship between job demands and employee wellbeing (i.e. job burnout) (e.g. Bakker et al., 2005; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). The diagram below (Figure 1.1) depicts the sets of factors

comprising demands and resources in the JD-R model and their relationships with employee wellbeing outcomes.

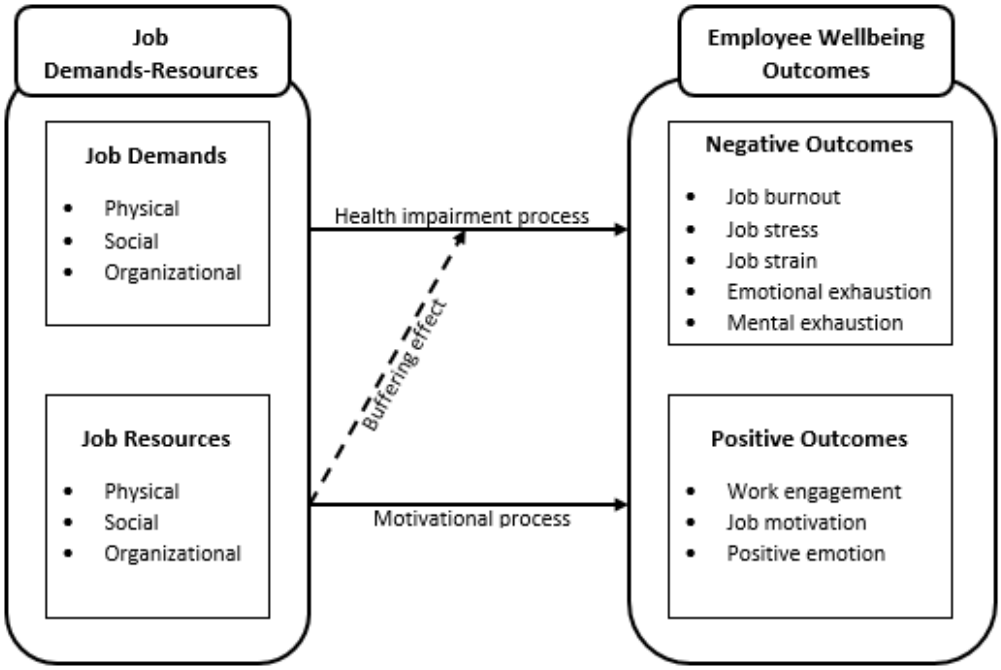

Figure 4.1 Conceptualizations of Demands and Resources in the JD-R Model

Applications of the JD-R model in the empirical literature included the introduction of other classes of variables, namely personal demands and resources. Personal resources are defined as 'aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency' and contribute to individuals' ability to control and impact their environment successfully (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003, p.632). Personal resources such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007, 2009) and mental and emotional competences (Lorente *et al.*, 2008) were added to the model and tested by researchers. Personal demands, on the other hand, are defined as 'the requirements that individuals set for their own performance and behaviour that force them to invest effort in their work and are therefore associated with physical and psychological costs' (Barbier et al., 2013, p.751). For example, perfectionism as a personal demand was tested by researchers using the JD-R model (e.g. Cao & Zhang, 2021). In addition, applications of the JD-R model in empirical studies included a distinction between two types of job

demands—challenging demands and hindering demands (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010). A challenging job demand is posited to 'promote mastery, personal growth, or future gains' (e.g. high workload, time pressure, and high levels of job responsibility) (Crawford et al., 2010, p. 836). A hindering job demand, on the other hand, is posited to thwart personal growth, learning, and goal attainment (e.g. role conflict, role ambiguity, organizational politics, red tape, and hassles).

In the same vein, scholars who developed the JD-R model urged researchers to supplement its use with other explanatory theoretical frameworks (Schaufeli and Taris, 2014; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Although the model is developed based on psychological theories, the scholars argued that it is primarily descriptive and lacks theoretical explanations for relationships and underlying mechanisms. A few theoretical frameworks have been used by researchers in empirical studies applying the JD-R model. Most notably, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976); conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018); and self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The key tenet of social exchange theory (SET) is reciprocation (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). The theory posits that when favourable economic and socioemotional resources are provided, individuals feel a sense of obligation, gratitude, and trust (Blau, 1964) and would want to reciprocate. Furthermore, an effective social exchange requires a condition of interdependence between the parties involved in that transaction. In the empirical literature, social exchange theory has been used to explain work engagement in relation to job resources such as employee voice (Rees, Alfes and Gatenby, 2013); organizational justice (Saks, 2006; Biswas, Varma and Ramaswami, 2013); HRM practices (Alfes *et al.*, 2013; Bal, Kooij and De Jong, 2013); and styles of leadership (Agarwal *et al.*, 2012; Alok and Israel, 2012; Brunetto *et al.*, 2013; Wang and Hsieh, 2013).

Conservation of resources (COR) is a resource-adaptation theory. Resources in the theory refer to valued entities either in themselves (e.g. self-esteem, health)

or as means to obtain valued ends (e.g. money) (Hobfoll, 2002). The theory posits that individuals seek to obtain, retain, and protect their resources (Hobfoll, 1988; 1989) and that stress occurs when those resources are threatened with loss, actually lost, or individuals fail to restore them after investing in their acquisition (Hobfoll, 2002). Furthermore, the theory emphasizes the process through which resources are acquired and restored and maintains that it has a positive motivational effect which strengthens in situations of resource loss (i.e., stress). COR theory has been used in organizational studies to explain outcomes such as work engagement and job performance (e.g. Leung, Wu, Chen, & Young, 2011; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Self-determination theory (SDT) posits that individuals are intrinsically motivated and possess an inherent tendency for activity and integration (Ryan and Deci, 2000). However, the theory identifies three specific innate psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000) in which their satisfaction is posited to enhance intrinsic motivation, psychological growth, and wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Furthermore, the theory distinguishes between two types of motivation—intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is posited to stem from the inherently motivating qualities of activities and would manifest in higher expression of motivation. Where activities lack motivating qualities, extrinsic motivation is posited to be more effective (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In the employee wellbeing literature, SDT has been used to explain the outcomes of work engagement (Van Beek *et al.*, 2012; Gillet *et al.*, 2013; Shuck, Zigarmi and Owen, 2014) and job burnout (Van Beek *et al.*, 2012).

4.3.3 Empirical Evidence

There is little research on the impact of labour market change on employee wellbeing.[30] Much of the research focuses on the consequences of labour market

[30] Labour market change here means labour market transformation, transition, and/or restructuring through mergers, downsizing, outsourcing, and/or flexible work arrangements.

change on labour market indicators such as employment, wages, and voluntary turnover (e.g. Li, Zhu, & Wang, 2017; Rutkowski, 2006) or investigates employee wellbeing at the organizational level with little regard to the larger labour market context (e.g. Cao & Zhang, 2021; Rees et al., 2013).

Empirical studies investigating employee wellbeing in a context of labour market change indicate that job security is the most impacted psychological factor. In particular, subjective job insecurity shows a strong and consistent effect on employee wellbeing (Mauno *et al.*, 2005). Individuals' perceived threat of job loss seems to be prone to labour market-related factors such as employment conditions, perceived job opportunity, and perceived job mobility. Evidence shows that type of employment (permanent vs. fixed-term) differentiates the impact of perceived job insecurity on employee wellbeing (Mauno *et al.*, 2005). High levels of perceived job insecurity showed a more pronounced effect on the wellbeing of permanently employed workers. They experienced lower levels of work engagement and job satisfaction and higher levels of exhaustion compared to fixed-term employees. On the other hand, low perceived job insecurity showed no difference in effect between permanent and fixed-term employees. Furthermore, perceived job insecurity was associated with decreased dedication (emotional dimension of work engagement) and job involvement (Mauno, Kinnunen and Ruokolainen, 2007). Another study from the Belgian labour market surveyed 559 employees from seven organizations and found that employability (perceived job opportunity and mobility) was positively related to work engagement whereas job insecurity was negatively related to work engagement and life satisfaction (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2008). It is noteworthy that 65.7% of the research sample were blue-collars and 64.7% were females. In the same vein, one study of labour market transformation indicate a gender difference in perceived job insecurity. Level of concern about job loss experienced by female workers was almost double their male counterparts and their level of concern about not finding a job if they lose the one they hold was 60% higher than their male counterparts (Vohlídalová, 2021).

The wellbeing of academic staff was investigated in transforming higher education labour markets.[31] Evidence based on analysing an international comparative survey from nineteen countries on academics' working conditions and wellbeing showed that market-oriented managerial reform constituted the strongest source of stress for academics while academic autonomy and academics' social reputation constituted the strongest sources of job satisfaction (Shin and Jung, 2014). Furthermore, the research indicated that both job stress and job satisfaction can be simultaneously experienced by academics. This evidence is consistent with another study from the Australian higher education labour market analysing a state-wide survey on tertiary education staff. In exploring the effect of managerialism on academics' job satisfaction, Fredman and Doughney (2011) found that management culture was the strongest driver of academics' decreased job satisfaction compared to a previous survey. In the same vein, studies on academics' wellbeing from the British higher education labour market reported rising intensification in academic work that was attributed to the multiple and sometimes conflicting demands of stakeholders (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004). Years later, a study from the same labour market showed that work only intensified more during the Covid-19 pandemic among other negative outcomes such as actual and possible job loss (Watermeyer *et al.*, 2021).

In summary, evidence from both the higher education labour market (Fredman and Doughney, 2011; Shin and Jung, 2014) and other labour markets (Mauno *et al.*, 2005; De Cuyper *et al.*, 2008) indicates a negative impact of labour market change on workers' wellbeing (i.e. work engagement, job satisfaction, job stress, life satisfaction). The impact appears to be closely related to subjective job security which tends to get threatened in transforming labour markets and intensifies for workers who have high security in their current jobs (Mauno *et al.*, 2005; Watermeyer *et al.*, 2021). However, the evidence base is highly fragmented. Studies come from different labour markets in different countries with no deep understanding of any of them. They tend to analyse large datasets (Fredman and

[31] Transformation in higher education labour markets globally through the introduction of neoliberalism (or new public management) in the higher education sector.

Doughney, 2011; Shin and Jung, 2014; Vohlídalová, 2021) and focus on different types of workers such as white-collar (Fredman and Doughney, 2011; Shin and Jung, 2014; Vohlídalová, 2021) and blue-collar (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, in studies that include mixed-sex samples (i.e. male and female workers), the sex distribution is not always proportionate (e.g. De Cuyper et al., 2008; Mauno et al., 2005). Thus, there is little understanding of the impact of labour market change on female academics in the Middle East. There is also little knowledge on the impact of labour market change on working conditions other than job security and the actual or expected impact of that on workers' wellbeing.

The JD-R model has been applied to the working conditions of academic (e.g. Cao & Zhang, 2021; Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021) and non-academic staff in the higher education sector (e.g. Bakker et al., 2005) to investigate their wellbeing. A study from the higher education system in South Africa showed a positive relationship between the job resources of supervisor support, role clarity, and task characteristics in academic jobs and academics' work engagement (Barkhuizen, Rothmann and van de Vijver, 2014). On the other hand, workload (as a job demand) and lack of job resources were positively related to job burnout. Furthermore, optimism (as a personal resource) showed a strong direct effect on perceived job resources and a strong indirect effect (through job sources) on burnout, work engagement, ill health, and organizational commitment (Barkhuizen, Rothmann and van de Vijver, 2014). Another study from higher education in China applied the JD-R model to investigate the relationship between the job demand of work–family conflict; the job resource of leader support; and the personal demand of a perfectionist personality; and their effect on academics' wellbeing (Cao and Zhang, 2021). The study found an indirect effect of work-family conflict on job satisfaction (via emotional exhaustion) and an indirect effect of leader support on job satisfaction (via emotional exhaustion and work engagement). Furthermore, the study found that the two dimensions of perfectionism (concerns and strivings) had different effects on academics' wellbeing—a positive effect of the concern dimension on exhaustion and a positive effect of the striving dimension on work engagement (Cao and Zhang, 2021). Contextualised in the larger transformation of

the higher education labour market, a study from the Czech Republic similarly applied the JD-R to investigate the relationship between the job resources of job control and social support; the job demands of workload, work-family conflict, and job insecurity; and their effect on the three wellbeing outcomes of job satisfaction, job stress, and work engagement (Mudrak *et al.*, 2018). The study found a positive relationship between job resources and work engagement and job satisfaction and a negative relationship between job demands and job stress, mostly through work-family conflict.

It is noteworthy that the JD-R model has been predominantly applied in the empirical literature using quantitative methods (e.g. Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Cao & Zhang, 2021). In the few studies that applied the model qualitatively, Naidoo-Chetty and du Plessis (2021) used the broad categories of job demands and resources to categorize job factors emerging in qualitative data collected from academics in South Africa about their jobs. The data analysis yielded three categories of job demands (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, and organizational) and two categories of job resources (i.e. organizational and personal). Quantitative job demands included publication pressure, work overload, and time pressure. Qualitative job demands included poor work/life balance, complex student support, organizational politics, and lack of mental health support. Organizational job demands included technology-mediated teaching tools and lack of structural resources. On the other hand, organizational job resources included social support while personal resources included autonomy, meaningful work, and personal support.

In the same vein, work engagement drives different positive discretionary job attitudes and behaviours. One critical behaviour is creativity and innovation. A study from the education sector in the Netherlands surveyed 274 female school teachers and principals to investigate the relationship between job resources, creativity, and charismatic leadership. The study found that work engagement fully mediated the relationship between job resources and creative task performance (Bakker and Xanthopoulou, 2013). Another study from the consumer goods and telecommunication sector in Pakistan surveyed 324 marketing employees to

investigate the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS), work engagement, and employee creativity. The study found that work engagement significantly mediated the relationship between POS and employee creativity (Inam *et al.*, 2021).

In summary, the cross-cultural evidence from the higher education sector indicates that social support and job control (or autonomy) constitute common resources in academic jobs while workload and work-family conflict constitute common demands in academic jobs (Barkhuizen, Rothmann and van de Vijver, 2014; Mudrak *et al.*, 2018; Cao and Zhang, 2021; Naidoo-Chetty and du Plessis, 2021). These job resources show a positive relationship with work engagement and job satisfaction (Mudrak *et al.*, 2018; Cao and Zhang, 2021) while job demands show a positive relationship with job stress (Mudrak *et al.*, 2018) and job burnout (Barkhuizen, Rothmann and van de Vijver, 2014; Cao and Zhang, 2021). Furthermore, the effects of job-demands and resources on academics' wellbeing tend to be explained at the organizational and individual level. In the few studies that contextualizes job-demands and resources in the broader labour market context, Mudrak et al. (2018) included job insecurity as a job demand. Job insecurity is a working condition that mostly gets determined by market forces at the labour market level. In addition, some studies investigate the psychosocial working conditions of academic jobs in a single higher education institution (e.g. Cao & Zhang, 2021; Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021). Hence, we do not have a comprehensive understanding of academics' wellbeing in the higher education labour market in a particular country or the interplay between labour market dynamics at the institutional level and working conditions of academic jobs at the organizational level. In the same vein, cross-cultural evidence tend to predominantly apply a cross-sectional design which limits knowledge of causality.

As can be noted from the evidence reviewed above, studies applying the JD-R model in the higher education section from the Middle East are scarce.. The existing evidence reports findings from different sectors in different Middle Eastern countries. A study from the energy sector in Saudi Arabia focused on the work

engagement aspect of employee wellbeing (Alkhalaf, 2017). The study collected data from 310 participants (90% male) to test the relationship between a number of job resources and demographic characteristics on one hand and work engagement and organizational outcomes on the other. The study found that autonomy, skill variety, and performance feedback had a statistically significant positive effect on work engagement. Furthermore, there was positive correlation between work engagement and job performance and negative correlation between work engagement and turnover intentions. For the demographic characteristics, older and more experienced employees were more engaged in work while educational level had a statistically significant positive effect on job performance. Another study from the hospitality sector in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) applied the JD-R model, in addition to another conceptual lens (i.e. cognitive appraisal), to test the effect of job stress and work-related curiosity on employee innovative behaviour (Bani-Melhem, Abukhait and Mohd. Shamsudin, 2020). Using a two-wave longitudinal design, data was collected from 311 frontline employees in a five-star hotel (63% of the sample were male). The study found that curious employees were more likely to engage in innovative behaviour and the effect of job stress would become positive on innovative behaviour when the latter was a response to job stress. Another study reports findings from the healthcare sector in Egypt (Ghazawy *et al.*, 2021). Using a cross-sectional research design, data was collected from 535 nurses (70% females) from three different hospitals with different affiliations. The study focused on nurses' work engagement and found that 54% of nurses have high work engagement levels. Hospital affiliation, holding specialty certification, and autonomy were found strong predictors of work engagement. Furthermore, work engagement significantly explained variance in the two organizational outcomes job performance and turnover intentions.

In summary, studies applying the JD-R model from the Middle East tend to focus on work engagement. Their findings are consistent with the theoretical postulations of the JD-R model (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) and cross-cultural evidence. Irrespective of sector, the studies show a positive effect of job resources on work engagement and organizational outcomes (i.e. job performance, turnover

intention) (Alkhalaf, 2017; Ghazawy *et al.*, 2021). As the research design used varied between longitudinal and cross-sectional, the data was predominantly collected through self-report surveys and was statistically analysed which is also consistent with the approach commonly followed in other cross-cultural studies. However, self-report tools raise issues of common method variance. Furthermore, evidence from the Middle East tend to be sector- and country-specific which makes it difficult to learn about workers' experiences in other sectors and countries in the Middle East. Moreover, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the evidence base on job-demands and resources from the Middle East includes no studies from the education sector or contextualizes job-demands and resources in the broader labour market context.

In conclusion, evidence applying the JD-R model to the working conditions of academic jobs across countries (and other sectors in the Middle East) verify the three main relationships postulated in the model—positive effect of job resources on work engagement; negative effect of high job demands (without adequate job resources) on job burnout; and a buffering effect of job resources on the negative effect of job demands on job burnout (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The effects varied between direct and indirect (i.e. mediated) (e.g. Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Cao & Zhang, 2021). However, the existing evidence indicates a lack of knowledge about the impact of labour market dynamics on the working conditions of academic jobs and the implications of the latter for academics' wellbeing in that context. Furthermore, this gap appears greater for labour markets in the Middle East. This research gap drove the development of the second and third research question which ask '*Do institutional factors in the labour market, including change in those factors, have an impact on academic jobs held by females in the higher education sector? If so, in what way?*' and '*What psychosocial factors exist in academic jobs held by females in the higher education sector, including change in those factors? And what do they tell us about female academics' wellbeing?*', respectively. Answering these research questions would highlight the changing working conditions in academic jobs and their expected impact on faculty's wellbeing (i.e. job stress, work engagement, job burnout).

4.3.4 Conclusion

Faculty wellbeing is treated as an indicator of job quality and a psychological (non-economic) consequence of labour market change. The JD-R model is applied in this research qualitatively to investigate the psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs and detect change that might result from labour market transformation. A qualitative application, as opposed to the common quantitative application, is deemed more appropriate for the purpose of this research. A qualitative application is deeper and more capable to capture change in the working conditions—identify working conditions impacted by change; extent of change; and most importantly processes of change. The theoretical relationships in the JD-R model, which have been empirically and cross-culturally verified, are applied to the psychosocial working conditions of academic jobs in order to draw conclusions about faculty wellbeing in a transforming higher education labour market. The following chapter will provide a thorough description of the research methodology and process followed in producing the research findings.

Chapter Five: Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the research methodology through which the research findings were produced. It discusses choice of research paradigm, approach, design, sampling, and data collection methods along with their rationale. Furthermore, the chapter provides a thorough description of the sample characteristics, research sites, and recruitment methods. Lastly, the chapter discusses ethical considerations and outlines strategies applied to enhance research trustworthiness.

5.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm implies a certain set of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of reality (i.e. ontology); ways knowledge is created (i.e. epistemology); the researcher's values (i.e. axiology); and processes of inquiry (i.e. methodology) that guide a research action (Bloomber and Volpe, 2019). Researchers conducting research from different paradigms would approach their research subject in significantly different ways. Therefore, a research paradigm should be clearly identified as it has critical methodological implications for the research process.

This research is guided by the social constructionism paradigm. Social constructionism is a sociological paradigm associated with the postmodern era in the 1960s and 1970s (Sismondo, 1993). The ontological position of social constructionism is relativism. Reality is assumed to be multiple, intangible, and mentally, socially, and experientially constructed (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) which, in turn, renders it local and specific (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, social constructionism lies in contrast to the early positivist paradigm which assumes a deterministic view of the world (Comte, 2009). In a positivist paradigm, reality is natural, given, and revealed (Schwandt, 2003). Accordingly, the researcher role

becomes to discover, test, and verify already existing causal relationships (Cruickshank, 2012) which renders positivism an acontexual paradigm. This research adopts a form of social constructionism referred to, by Sismondo (1993), as 'mild or contextual' social constructionism. This form has its roots in the seminal work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) '*The Social Construction of Reality'* and might be better explained by the definition provided by Wallance and Wolf (1999):

> *the process whereby people continuously create, through their actions and interactions, a shared reality that is experienced as objectively factual and subjectively meaningful* (p. 277)

The work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) is fundamentally concerned with social reality as opposed to natural or physical reality. However, although Berger and Luckmann (1966) do not make ontological claims, only epistemological, they postulate that social reality is both objective and subjective. Furthermore, this form of social constructionism maintains a distinction between what participants believe or claim about the social world and what is in fact already known (Sismondo, 1993 as cited in Andrews, 2012). This is different from strong social constructionism which assumes reality to be almost completely dependent on language and social habits denying brute facts—facts existing independent of the human thought (Searle, 1995). Reality in social constructionism is socially, culturally, and historically constructed (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and transmitted by people. This lends social constructionism an anti-realist perspective (Hammersley, 1992) and drives it away from deterministic and reductionist worldviews. Hence, context in social constructionism is imperative. It plays a fundamental role in shaping the social reality of people in a particular context. Therefore, a pluralist perspective that acknowledges multiple accounts of reality is intrinsic to social constructionism (Burningham and Cooper, 1999). In the same vein, this very characteristic of social embeddedness has implications for the research axiology. Research conducted within this paradigm is assumed to be value-laden by the researcher historical and social position (Denzin, 2001) as opposed to being value-free. That is, the researcher's own values are assumed to influence the research process. Wise

(1988), a professor in the history of science, argues that whenever there is social embeddedness there would be 'a fairly strong form of social constructionism of scientific knowledge' (p. 79).

The epistemology of social constructionism is transactional and subjectivist (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). There are two terms that are commonly and interchangeably used in the social constructionism literature: social constructionism and social constructivism. Although the two concepts do not inherently conflict as they both share that reality is multiple and subjective, they slightly differ in their epistemological orientation. Constructivism assumes that reality is constructed in the mind of individuals through cognitive processes (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2018). Hence, the construction process occurs at the individual level. Social constructionism, on the other hand, maintains that reality is constructed through interaction with others (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). That is, reality construction is a social, rather than individual, process (Schwandt, 1994; Young and Collin, 2004; Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2018). This research follows the latter epistemological orientation.

There are two conceptions central to social constructionism: meaning construction and social processes. Meaning is posited to be constructed through interactions between people in which they jointly ascribe subjective meanings and values to objects in the social world. The process of meaning construction in the definition provided by Wallance and Wolf (1999) above, builds on two assumptions. First, people are assumed to be agentic they have an active role in shaping their social world. Hence, reality can always be deconstructed and reconstructed (i.e. changed) through people's management of meaning. Second, meaning is shared. That is, social reality entails consensus or wide agreement among people on the meaning they ascribe to social objects for them to be experienced as reality (*Sociological Perspectives*, no date). Meeting this criterion, in turn, allows socially constructed realities to last over time.

The other central factor in social constructionism is social processes. Social processes are integral to the construction of social reality (Mendelsohn, 1977; Myers, 1990; Sismondo, 1993). Historical events and social relations, for instance, shape the present social reality of nations and communities around the world. In fact, the term *socially constructed* means, at a basic level, 'of social origin' (Sismondo, 1993). Social reality comprises institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) or what sometimes referred to as social objects. In this line of thought, Berger and Luckmann (1966) emphasize the social process of institutionalization through which a seemingly objective reality is produced. This process occurs when social activity is repeated enough to become patterns which then get institutionalized and subsequently reproduced as an objective reality for people to experience (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). This can be found in the form of culture, norms, typifications, beliefs, and social values among others (Lofland and Lofland, 1996). Furthermore, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that a person is born into an objective reality which then gets experienced subjectively through primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary socialization. The socialization process imbues an objective reality with subjective meaning which gets internalized by people (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). In the context of this research, the process of change in the labour market is integral to the construction (or more accurately partial deconstruction and reconstruction) of this social institution—the labour market.

On a related note, meaning construction through interaction is also a central conception in symbolic interactionism. However, the two paradigms, social constructionism and symbolic interactionism, differ in their level of analysis. While social constructionism focuses on *joint* meaning construction at the societal level (Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2018), symbolic interactionism focuses on a lower/micro level of interaction (i.e. one-to-one or small groups) (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969).

Critique of social constructionism as a research paradigm revolves primarily around the multiplicity of accounts produced where, as a consequence, no account can claim more legitimacy or superiority over another as they would all be equally

valid (Bury, 1986; Hammersley, 1992; Craib, 1997). This is mainly due to the relativist ontology underpinning the paradigm (Craib, 1997). Thus, arguing for the appropriateness of social constructionism as a paradigm for this research would depend on the ability to show its appropriateness for the research aim and purpose over other sociological paradigms.

This research aims to gain a better and more holistic understanding of females' work experiences in a changing labour market. A process of social change underpins this research context. The social reality of female workers in Saudi Arabia is being institutionally deconstructed and reconstructed through changes in labour and family laws; education; and the emergence of new economic sectors which are changing the job structure for female workers. To understand this new reality and its impact on female workers in the higher education labour market in Saudi Arabia, a social constructionist stance was adopted. The work reality of female workers in the higher education labour market is heavily influenced by laws and regulations that shape and impact their employment relationships and working conditions in the different segments of the labour market. These segments, in turn, entail a changing mix of characteristics. Because these legal and institutional factors are in a state of transformation, a social constructionist position explores the ways this change is shaping and impacting the work reality of female workers in the different segments of the higher education labour market and the meanings constructed and ascribed to their job and career experiences in the different segments and components of the labour market. In the same vein, while mild social constructionism underpins much of this research, the research explores female workers' perceptions of their employment and working conditions from a critical realist angle. As structural factors are changing in the labour market (i.e. laws, regulations, state control), the research is interested in how changing working conditions shaped by these factors are perceived and experienced by female workers. Both critical realism and social constructionism acknowledge subjectivity in the creation of perceptions and the production of knowledge (Gray, 2018). Furthermore, there is no conflict that impedes combining elements from the two paradigms (Elder-Vass, 2012; Bhaskar, 2014). Qualitative research can utilize a

critical realist stance within social constructionism, particularly mild constructionism which is the form used in this research (Parker, 1996; Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000). Some scholars even argued that for more coherent and productive constructionism, moderate social constructionism must be combined with a critical realist social position (Elder-Vass, 2012). This is argued to create a plausible connection between structural factors and human agency that makes up those factors. The critical realist position utilized in this research helps explore structural factors in the work reality of female workers while an overarching mild social constructionist stance dovetails the institutional approach to labour market change.

In planning this research, other sociological paradigms—symbolic interactionism, structural functionalism, and conflict theory were reviewed, assessed, and eliminated on the following grounds:

First, social constructionism showed higher appropriateness than symbolic interactionism in two areas: factors considered and level of analysis. Social constructionism recognizes and emphasizes the role of social institutions and structural factors in the social world. These factors are either ignored or paid little attention in symbolic interactionism (*Sociological Perspectives*, no date). For level of analysis, symbolic interactionism has a very narrow and micro level of analysis (i.e. one-to-one or small group). This was deemed incompatible with the level of analysis of this research which seeks to understand social phenomena not only at the individual level but the institutional level as well.

Second, social constructionism was a better fit than structural functionalism for its underlying epistemological claims about the social world. Structural functionalism assumes stability and an underlying unity and cohesiveness of society (Durkheim, 1933). Thus, as a paradigm, it would not be able to explain social change which is the fundamental process underlying this research investigation. Social

constructionism, on the other hand, in its recognition of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction processes is able to account for that change.

Third, social constructionism showed superiority over conflict theory as a research paradigm for its broader scope. Conflict theory (Marx, 1859) focuses primarily on power relations—conflict and its origins. Consequently, it fails to recognize social stability, if it exists, as it falls out of its scope. Social constructionism, on the other hand, does not identify with either stability or conflict. It accounts for any process or factor that plays a role in the construction of social reality.

Fourth and lastly, social constructionism as a paradigm does not concern itself with producing definitive conclusions but rather a convincing argument that can lead to change (Andrews, 2012). This is compatible with the aim and purpose of this research which seeks to gain better and more holistic understanding of social phenomena adding to other accounts about the social world.

5.3 Research Approach

This research follows a qualitative approach which aligns with the research aim for deeper and more holistic understanding of complex social phenomena. The approach is primarily concerned with understanding and interpreting as opposed to testing and predicting (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016; Bloomber and Volpe, 2019). Furthermore, a qualitative approach is commonly used to generate knowledge that is grounded in human experience (Sandelowski, 2004). It allows for the collection of contextual and detailed data (Bloomberg, 2007) through which the researcher gains familiarity with the context of participants' experiences. Qualitative methods also facilitate a closer look into areas of divergence and convergence in the experiences of participants which, in turn, supports a deeper analysis and the drawing of closer conclusions about the research sample. For the purpose of this research—exploring the impact of labour market change on the

working conditions of female workers, a qualitative investigation at the individual level is very valuable. It supports exploring the impact of interacting factors from different levels on factors at the job and individual level (Dickens and Lang, 1985; Howell and Reese, 1986). Furthermore, some scholars argue that in a context of labour market change, a qualitative approach would be more appropriate as it is more capable to detect change and capture its impact wherever it might exist in the work experience of workers (e.g. Piore, 1983). In the same vein, the researcher plays an instrumental role in qualitative research as the researcher constitutes the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Bloomber and Volpe, 2019). In the analysis, the researcher tries to describe the meanings in collected data from the perspective of participants. Charmaz (2015) describes the influence of the researcher on qualitative research as the following:

> *Just as methods we use influence what we see, what we bring to the study also influences what we can see. Qualitative research of all sorts relies on those who conduct it. We are not passive receptacles into which data are poured. We are not scientific observers who can dismiss scrutiny of our values by claiming scientific neutrality and authority.* (p. 27)

This extensive role of the researcher in qualitative research can raise some bias and trustworthiness concerns. However, these can be controlled for by the researcher being reflexive and meeting trustworthiness criteria developed by scholars for qualitative research (a detailed description of steps taken to meet those standards can be found under section 5.13 in this chapter**)**. Besides the fit of a qualitative approach for the research problem, purpose, and question, the approach provides the advantage of flexibility. This flexibility allows the research to be driven by the data and knowledge emerging from the data as opposed to constraining analysis to fit a strictly predefined conceptual framework. Flexibility in qualitative research means that the conceptual framework would be open to adjustments during analysis if the data suggests that.

The decision to conduct an exploratory qualitative research was driven by the research problem, purpose, and question. The research problem stems from the little knowledge we have about the working conditions of female workers in changing labour markets. The purpose of this qualitative investigation is to explore the impact of transformation in the higher education labour market, as part of larger economic transformation, on the working conditions of female faculty. This led to the development of the overarching research question which explores that through exploring the labour market structure, participants' job mobility patterns, and change in their working conditions. The decision to conduct exploratory qualitative research was also supported by the stage of knowledge development in this stream of research—working conditions in developing countries going through economic transformation. Knowledge is far from mature in this area and more knowledge is needed for a better understanding of workers' experiences in these contexts.

5.4 Research Design

As this research has a strong emphasis on context and seeks to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants, a qualitative interviews research approach using a stratified sample of female workers in the higher education sector was deemed an appropriate research design (more on the sampling strategy can be found in section 5.5 of this chapter). Interviews are one of the most common methods used for collecting data in qualitative research (Charmaz, 2015; Bloomber and Volpe, 2019). There are, in general, three types of interviews that can be used in qualitative research: structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). These types differ in their level of structure and extent of flexibility in the interviewing process. Structured interviews are the most structured and least flexible of the three types. They require having a predefined list of questions to be asked in a specific order with all interviewees. The emphasis in this interview type is more on standardizing the interviewing process than on collecting data that might be relevant to the

research but not included in the list of questions. In addition, questions in this interview type can be both open- and close-ended questions (e.g. dichotomous or multiple-choice questions). These interviews can be time-efficient and participants' answers can be more easily compared and contrasted in the data analysis. However, as the aim of most qualitative research is to gain a deeper and better understanding of investigated phenomena or issues, this interview type might not be the most appropriate for that aim. Furthermore, due to the highly structured nature of these interviews, interviewers would be restricted in their ability to ask questions that can come up during the interview and shed light on the interviewer's understanding of an issue. They also restrict the collection of contextual information that can be important to answer the research question effectively.

Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are the most flexible and least structured among the three interview types. These interviews require no predefined list of questions nor an order in which questions have to be asked. They mostly involve open-ended questions that tend to be conversational in nature. This interview type is characterized by spontaneity in that questions are expected to emerge as the interviewer interacts with the interviewee/s (David and Sutton, 2011). Furthermore, this interview type allows for the collection of rich data with minimal constraints in terms of identified issues to explore or direct the interview toward. It is also the type recommended for some qualitative research traditions (e.g. phenomenology) (Gray, 2018). However, this very characteristic can prove challenging when it comes to data analysis as data is not systematically collected on the same topics. These interviews also require a skilled interviewer (David and Sutton, 2011; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

Lastly, semi-structured interviews fall in between structured and unstructured interviews. They are focused explorations and typically involve having an interview guide or schedule that includes all the themes or topics the interviewer wants to explore with the interviewee (Bloomber and Volpe, 2019). However, the exact wording of questions and the order in which questions are

asked do not have to conform to a predefined structure. The emphasis in this interview type is more on ensuring the collection of data on the same themes from all research participants. This is supported by having an interview guide prepared in advance of the interview. In this way, researchers can utilize the flexibility granted by this interview type without risking missing the collection of data on topics pertinent to their research question. An interview guide would also help interviewers be in the driver's seat during the interview process and redirect interviewees back to the themes of interest if they deviate. As a result, the researcher would be able to not only collect background and contextual data which are crucial in qualitative research but also consistently collect data from participants on the topics central to the research question. This would support systematic data analysis in which participants' experiences can be compared and contrasted across the topics of interest (David and Sutton, 2011; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). This research used in-depth semi-structured interviews to collect data (more on the application of this tool and the data collection process can be found in section 5.9 of this chapter).

Critique of qualitative research commonly revolves around the generalizability of findings and sample size. Critique on the grounds of statistical or population generalizations does not significantly disadvantage this research. This research purpose is to explore and deeply understand a social phenomenon and its impact as opposed to uncovering universal patterns or relationships. Moreover, some scholars argue that findings from qualitative research should be generalized beyond the sample; to populations from which the sample was drawn and share defining characteristics (Firestone, 1993).

Similarly, qualitative research critique on the grounds of small sample size, does not undermine this research. In qualitative research, the emphasis is not on sample size but on the richness of information the sample holds relevant to the research subject and can bring to the researcher's understanding (Bloomberg, 2007). This is referred to as information power (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora,

2015). The more knowledgeable the participants are about the investigated phenomenon, the less emphasis on sample size. The concept was also operationalized in this research through the sampling strategy used (i.e. purposive sampling). Another concept the researcher took into account relevant to this matter was exposure (Small and Calarco, no date). That is, the amount of time the researcher spent engaging with participants and data. In this research, the researcher spent a total of 486.5 hours between interviewing (36.5 hours), transcribing and translating (300 hours), and coding (150 hours). These practices significantly serve the aim and purpose of this research. They facilitate a deep understanding of the investigated social phenomenon by increasing the researcher's familiarity with it.

5.5 Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy followed in this research is *stratified purposive sampling* (Bloomberg, 2007). A key advantage of this strategy is that it allows for the selection of participants whom the researcher believes, based on meeting identified inclusion criteria, are eligible to answer the research questions more effectively which, in turn, would inform the research more meaningfully. Another advantage of this strategy is that it creates subgroups within the sample which facilitates comparisons and adds to research triangulation (Bloomberg, 2007). In addition, it allows for the addition of other sampling methods to fulfil the purpose of the research, if needed. In this research, two other sampling methods were used under purposive sampling: maximum variation and referrals.

Maximum variation (or heterogeneity) widens sample characteristics which significantly adds to the rigour of analysis and research findings as themes recognized would be those that have cut across variation (Patton, 2015). This sampling strategy was enabled by the dimensions identified in the research design—career level and segment of the sector. Participants were recruited from different career levels working in higher education institutions from different

segments of the sector (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). To elaborate, the stratification of the research sample follows from the segmentation in the higher education sector examined. The higher education sector in Saudi Arabia is largely heterogeneous. The nature of the employment relationship tends to vary between the different segments of the sector based on key institutional factors such as a segment's relationship with state funding, state control, and laws organizing the employment relationship of workers. Career level, meanwhile, is a significant stratification dimension from a labour market segmentation (LMS) theory perspective (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). LMS theory suggests that female workers tend to find it difficult to obtain good jobs on their entry to the labour market and would experience obstacles when trying to move to better jobs during their careers, which is sometimes due to non-economic barriers. Furthermore, findings from the empirical literature highlight relationships between career level and female workers' employment and working conditions (e.g. Howell and Reese, 1986; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019; Vohlídalová, 2021). Hence, stratifying the sample across these two dimensions was assumed to enrich our understanding of the mobility patterns and the employment and working conditions of female workers in the higher education labour market. In other words, it is assumed to give a more comprehensive picture of what working in this sector looks like from the perspective of participants. Participants interviewed for this research were proportionately distributed across the three segments of the sector (i.e. gov., semi-gov., and private) and career levels (i.e. early-, mid-, and late-career). A full description of the sample employment characteristics can be found in section 5.6.1.2 of this chapter. The following table illustrates the stratification of the research sample in this research:

Table 5.1 Sample Stratification

Career Level/Segment of HE	Government	Semi-government	Private
Early	X	X	X
Mid	X	X	X
Late	X	X	X

The following table illustrates the characteristics of the segments comprising the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia:

Table 5.2 Characteristics of Higher Education Segments

Segment of HE	Characteristics
Government	These are traditional public HEIs that receive full funding from the government. Their employment terms and conditions for national faculty follow the civil service system and for non-national faculty labour law.
Semi-government	These are a relatively new form of public HEIs and very limited in number. They receive full funding from the government and their employment terms and conditions for both national and non-national faculty follow labour law.
Private	These are private HEIs that receive most of their funding from tuition fees followed by other sources such as donations and some indirect government financial support. The employment terms and conditions for both national and non-national faculty follow labour law.

In addition, the following table illustrates the career levels followed in the sample stratification:

Table 5.3 Years of Work Experience for Career Levels

Career Level	Years of Work Experience in Higher Education
Early	1 to 3 years
Mid	3+ to 7 years
Late	7+ years

Exploring the work experiences of female academics in different career levels helps explore the impact of labour market change on their jobs at different career stages. Early careers are perhaps the most exposed to changes happening in the HE sector. Mid careers are a group of female academics who today have wider labour market opportunity and career options than what were available to them when they first entered the labour market. Late careers are a group of female academics who entered the labour market at a different time and in different socio-economic conditions at the national level. Their labour market opportunity and career options were limited. However, today they seem to have opportunities that were not available to female workers before. Differences in the work experiences of this group and the experiences of early- and mid-career female academics help highlight areas of change whether in employment and working conditions or labour market experience more broadly.

Lastly, referrals were another technique utilized in the sampling of this research. Interviewed participants were asked if they know other persons who meet the inclusion criteria and would be a good source of information for the purpose of this research.

5.6 Research Sample

The research sample size is thirty participants. The population from which the sample was purposively drawn is Saudi female faculty working in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The researcher identified inclusion criteria for participants constituting the research sample and then proceeded to collect data from the ones who met the criteria. Table 4.4 illustrates the inclusion criteria:

Table 5.4 Inclusion Criteria for Research Sample

Criterion	Description
Nationality	Saudi nationals
Gender	Female
Age	20 and above
Job Position	Teaching Assistant, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Full Professor
Employment Status	Full-time and part-time
Work Experience	At least 1 year of work experience in higher education

As can be noted in the table above, males, non-nationals, and non-academic staff were excluded from the research sample. The decision to focus on female workers was driven by females' labour market indicators and sector concentrations. There is significant disparity in those factors between the sexes in the labour market. Furthermore, publicly available data on male workers indicate that, in the aggregate, male workers have broader job opportunity, accommodating work environment, and better working conditions. This was also evident by males' lower sector concentrations compared to female workers.

The decision to exclude non-national females was driven by the objectives of labour market reform. In spite of the state high investment in national females'

education, their labour market participation remains significantly low. Consequently, one of labour market reform main objectives is to increase female labour market participation. Therefore, including non-national females would not support addressing this research problem and purpose.

The decision to exclude non-academic staff (i.e. administrative staff and university teachers) was based on the fact that they have different employment and working conditions in which their inclusion would affect the accuracy of the research findings. Another factor relates to academic staff levels of education. Faculty members tend to have higher levels of education which are assumed to produce higher awareness and better understanding of institutional change in the work environment. This characteristic is crucial to fulfil the research aim. Furthermore, in addition to female physicians, female academics represent that vanguard of female workers in the Saudi labour market. From a theoretical perspective (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), change or reform in the labour market would typically impact primary workers first before it moves on to other workers.[32] In the same vein, the decision to include teaching assistants in the research sample was based on their equal status to faculty members in the civil service law. The decision to include both full- and part-time employment in the inclusion criteria was made to allow for more diversity in the working conditions. However, all participants had full-time employment at the time of the interview.

Lastly, starting the inclusion age at twenty years old was made to allow for the inclusion of participants who might have graduated from other education systems at a younger age. Students in Saudi Arabia commonly complete their Bachelor's degree (the lowest education level required for academic jobs) by the age of twenty two or twenty three depending on field of study. However, the age of the youngest participant in this research sample was twenty-six. The following table

[32] An example is the classic case of unionized vs. non-unionized workers in developed Western countries. Working conditions improved first for unionized workers before they were matched for non-unionized workers by employers and labour policy.

illustrates the allocation of the research sample by segment of sector and career level:

Table 5.5 Distribution of Research Sample by Segment and Career Level

Career Level/Segment of HE	Government	Semi-government	Private
Early	3	5	3
Mid	4	3	2
Late	3	4	3

5.6.1 Sample Characteristics

Three types of information about the research sample are provided in the following sections respectively: demographic information, employment information, and job information.

5.6.1.1 Demographic Information

The median age of the research sample is 36.17. The youngest participant was 26 years old and the eldest was 54 years old. Furthermore, the median age for each career level is illustrated in the following table:

Table 5.6 Median Age for Career Levels

Career Level	Median Age
Early	30.55
Mid	35.22
Late	43.20

The highest level of education obtained by the research sample was PhD degree 46.67% and Master's degree 46.67%, equally followed by Bachelor's degree 6.67%. The following chart illustrates the distribution of highest level of education obtained by the sample:

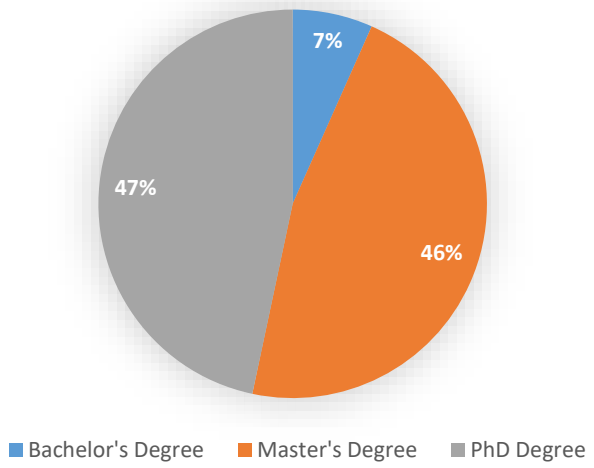

Figure 5.1 Distribution of Highest Level of Education Obtained by the Research Sample

In the same vein, it is noteworthy that 90% of the research sample obtained their highest level of education from a Western country. Furthermore, although 56.67% of the research sample are married, slightly more—60% of the sample, have family responsibilities. In addition, 10% are married but have no family responsibilities. That is, 13.33% of the sample are not married but have family responsibilities—either children from a previous marriage or taking care of an elderly parent. However, the researcher is more concerned with family responsibilities than marital status as caretaking responsibilities are the factor that tends to affect females' work-life balance and wellbeing. The following chart illustrates the latter factor:

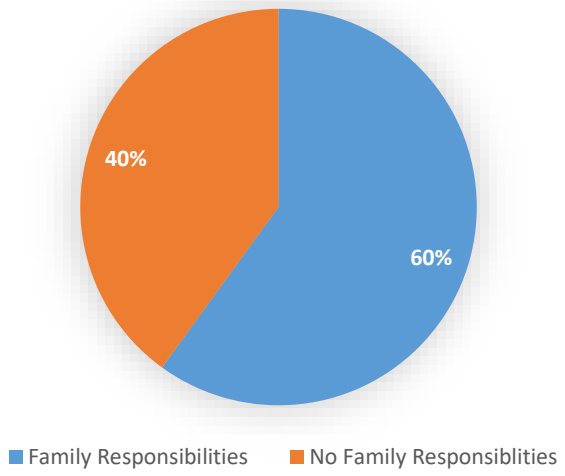

Figure 5.2 Distribution of Family Responsibilities among Research Sample

A complete table on the demographic information of the research sample can be found in Appendix (C).

5.6.1.2 Employment Information

The research sample distribution across segments of the higher education sector was relatively proportionate as illustrated in the following chart:

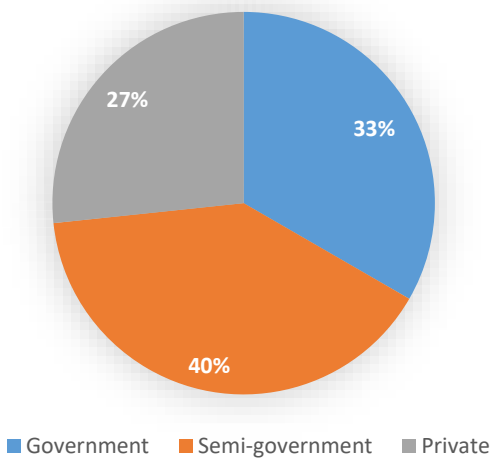

Figure 5.3 Distribution of Research Sample across Segments of Higher Education

The research sample distribution across career levels was also relatively proportionate as illustrated in the following chart:

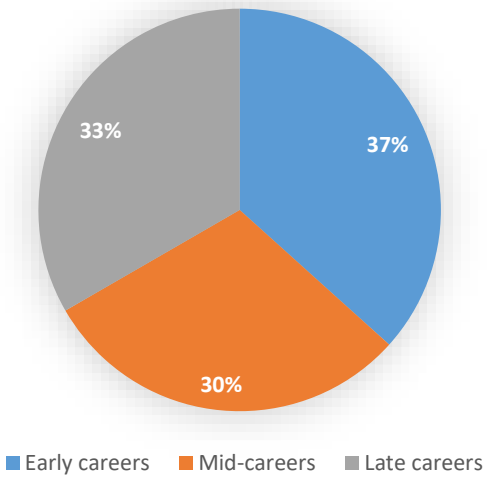

Figure 5.4 Distribution of Research Sample across Career Levels

In the same vein, all the research sample [100%] had full-time employment and the majority [63.33%] had fixed-term employment on the social insurance system. The sample's main employment conditions are summarized in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Employment Conditions of Research Sample

Segment of Higher Education	Employment Status	Employment Contract	Employment System
Government	Full-time	Permanent	Civil service system
Semi-government	Full-time	Fixed-term*	Social insurance system*
Private	Full-time	Fixed-term	Social insurance system

*One participant in this segment was employed on the civil service system and had a permanent employment status.[33]

In the same vein, the research sample comprised participants working in different regions in the country—central, western, and eastern. The majority of the sample [76.67%] worked in the city of Jeddah in the Western region of Saudi Arabia followed by 20% who worked in the capital Alriyadh in the Central region and 3.33% who worked in Alahsa governorate in the Eastern region. A complete table on the employment information of the research sample can be found in Appendix (D).

[33] This participant (P.16) was among the early hires in the semi-government university included. She was employed two years after the university was founded. In the beginning, the university briefly hired faculty on the civil service system before it switched to the social insurance system.

5.6.1.3 Job Information

The median years of work experience in higher education by career level was 1.71 for early careers; 4.61 for mid-careers; and 11.8 for late careers. Academic ranks of the research sample varied between 43.33% lecturers; 36.67% assistant professors; 10% associate professors; and 10% teaching assistants. The following chart illustrates the academic ranks of the research sample:

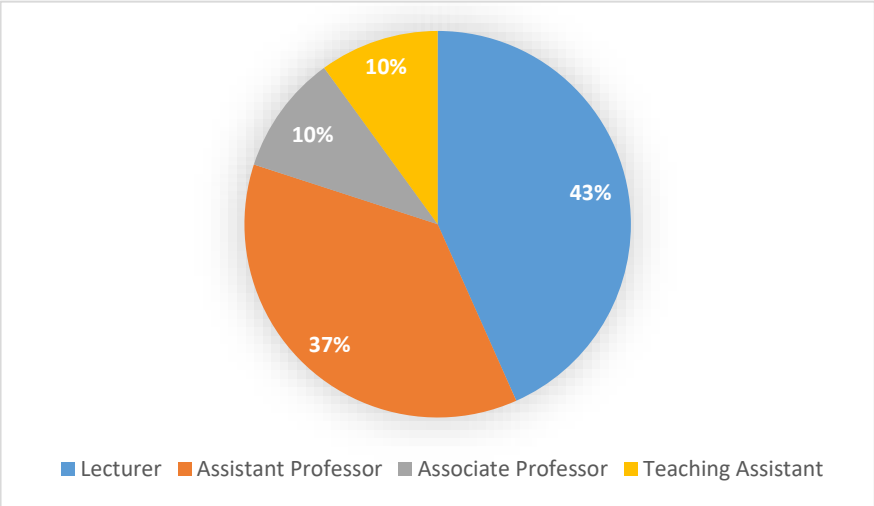

Figure 5.5 Distribution of Research Sample across Academic Ranks

In the same vein, 26.67% of the research sample had leadership roles in their institutions in addition to their academic responsibilities. Held positions varied from deans and vice presidents to vice deans and heads of administrative units. Lastly, the research sample comprised faculty from nine different colleges—*business; health sciences; law; design and architecture; computer science and information technology; humanities; advertising; natural sciences; and nursing.* A complete table on the job information of the research sample can be found in Appendix (E).

5.7 Research Sites

The research sample comprised participants from nine different higher education institutions—four government, four private, and one semi-government. All higher education institutions from which participants were interviewed are institutionally accredited by the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) and recognized by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia (NCAAA, no date). They are also all co-educational institutions operating with sex-segregated classes or campuses. With regard to institution size, all government higher education institutions [100%] were large institutions; the majority of private higher education institutions were medium [75%]; and the semi-government institution was also medium [100%]. A detailed table on the characteristics of higher education institutions from which participants were interviewed can be found in Appendix (F) and a table on the allocation of the research sample across higher education institutions by career level can be found in Appendix (G).

5.8 Recruitment Methods

The researcher successfully obtained the approval of the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC) at University College Cork (UCC) before any data collection commenced.[34] The ethical approval for this research can be found in Appendix (I). Different methods were used by the researcher to recruit participants. Methods included visiting the official website of universities and directly contacting faculty members who met the sample inclusion criteria through email. They also included contacting the research unit in universities to put a call out for faculty who might be interested to participate in the research as well as asking interviewed participants for referrals. In the same vein, consent was obtained from each participant. Consent was collected in writing by signing a consent form and returning it to the researcher before the interview took place. Furthermore, the researcher had no power, authority, or conflicting interests with any interviewed participant. A

[34] The Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC) at University College Cork (UCC) has granted the researcher an ethics approval number *'2020-074'* on April 7th, 2020 for her PhD research (Appendix I).

detailed table on the recruitment method used for each participant can be found in Appendix (H).

Initial contact with prospective participants was made by the researcher through email. In the initial contact the researcher introduced herself, provided an outline of the research and what the participation would involve, explained that participation was entirely voluntary, and asked for a suitable time to conduct the interview. Upon expressing willingness to participate, the researcher followed up with an email thanking them for their interest and attaching to the email the information sheet, consent form, and the Microsoft Teams link to the interview. Participants had to sign and return the consent form before the interview commenced.

This procedure documented participants' voluntarily willingness to participate in the research. In the case where Skype was the technological medium used to conduct the interview, Skype usernames were exchanged. For referrals, an additional step preceded and followed initial contact by the researcher. The referred person was asked for permission by the mutual contact to share their contact information with the researcher. After initial contact with the participant, the researcher had to ask the referred person a few questions about their employment to ensure meeting the sample inclusion criteria.

5.9 Data Collection

In-depth semi-structured one-on-one interviews were the main tool used in this research to collect primary data. In-depth interviews are a common method for collecting qualitative data (Charmaz, 2015) embedded in real-life contexts. They allow for the collection of background and contextual information (Creswell, 2014) which is crucial for this research aim which is deep understanding of a social phenomenon embedded in the social context. Through using this tool, the

researcher can elicit rich data and ask for clarifications or additional information when needed (Bloomber and Volpe, 2019). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews have the advantage of keeping an interview focused on the topics of interest through the use of an interview guide (Bloomber and Volpe, 2019).

In the same vein, the researcher in qualitative research plays a significant role in data collection. Data would be collected through interaction between the researcher and participants (Marshall and Rossman, 2016; Rossman and Rallis, 2017). That is, the researcher becomes the primary data collection instrument (Bloomber and Volpe, 2019) and makes significant decisions with regard to this process—e.g. depth, length, and amount of data.

The data collection commenced on the 8th of June, 2020 and ended on the 28th of June, 2021. Data collection was discontinued in the subcategories of the research design when no new information was emerging from further interviewing (i.e. saturation) in a subcategory as well as when the researcher felt that she had collected the data she needed to answer her research question (i.e. information power). Data saturation is when collected data start to become repetitive and redundant (Charmaz, 2006) or what Sandelowski (2008, p. 875) refers to as 'informational redundancy'. Although this criterion has its roots in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), it has been applied since in the collection of primary data in various qualitative research. Another criterion the researcher took into account in the decision-making of data collection continuation/discontinuation was information power (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora, 2015). That is, the richness of information participants held and brought to the researcher understanding about the research subject enabling her to answer the research question effectively. The researcher considered the fulfilment of these two criteria as signs to discontinue data collection.

Each interview lasted, on average, 1 hour and 13 minutes and produced, on average, 7068 words. With the consent of participants, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim (i.e. word-for-word) by the researcher to

prepare it for analysis. It is noteworthy that participants were given the option to choose their preferred language for the interview—Arabic or English. The majority of participants [93.33%] chose to do the interview in Arabic. This has greatly benefited the research. Using their mother tongue (i.e. Arabic), participants seemed more capable of expressing themselves more deeply which, in turn, enabled the researcher to analyse deeper meaning in their experiences.

5.9.1 Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

There are many advantages to the use of technology in data collection. One key advantage is the ability to reach participants anywhere in the world in a resource-efficient way (Lo Iacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016). It allows the researcher to recruit participants who otherwise might not be very accessible (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014). It enables the researcher to collect data from key sources—participants who have rich information or experience relevant to the research subject that can inform the research significantly, without having to compromise on the quality of the research sample for secondary reasons (i.e. logistic reasons). The availability of this technological alternative enabled the researcher in this research to collect data from highly knowledgeable participants in different cities in Saudi Arabia while residing in Ireland. Furthermore, the technological alternative in data collection accommodates participants who might be shy or introverted (Seitz, 2015) and the same for researchers who might find in-person interviewing challenging (Novick, 2008). Moreover, this alternative was very useful during the international travel ban which was imposed due to the global pandemic Covid-19 and lasted roughly a year. The travel ban coincided with the data collection phase in this research but due to the availability of this option the researcher was able to switch from in-person to virtual interviewing which enabled the progress of the research with minimal disruption.

On the other hand, use of technology in data collection does not come without concerns or challenges. Perhaps the main concern pertains to quality of the

interview. That is, participants' engagement in the interview and hence the richness of collected data. However, participants in this research were very engaged and rich data was collected. This is evident by the length of interviews (on average 1 hour and 13 minutes) and participants' additional comments at the end of the interview. This situation finds support in the findings of a health study in which in-person and online interviews produced a comparable number of words and codes (Krouwel, Jolly and Greenfield, 2019). On the same note, participants were given complete freedom in choosing the day and time of the interview (i.e. interview scheduling). The researcher accommodated both working days and weekend preferences as well as early and late hours of the day. Almost no interference in scheduling was made from the researcher side in attempts to avoid causing any pressure or discomfort for participants that might affect their engagement level later in the interview.

Another possible challenge with online interviewing is building rapport (Lo Iacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016) especially with absence of eye contact and facial expression (Hesse-Biber and Griffin, 2012). Rapport, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary (*Meaning of Rapport*, no date), is a friendly form of communication characterized by trust, understanding, and comfort. However, the researcher did not find building rapport with participants during data collection challenging. On the contrary, the researcher felt that participants opened up to her perhaps even more than they would if the interview was conducted in-person in the workplace. Participants were very generous with their time and extent of input in the interviews. The researcher also tried to listen carefully and paid increased attention to change in voice tone and non-verbal cues that can be detected through audio. She also tried to convey her understanding through using her voice tone. The researcher experience is consistent with findings from other studies in which participants felt more comfortable, talked longer, and provided richer data through phone (e.g. Carr, 2001) and online interviews (Lo Iacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016) than in-person interviews. This might have to also do with participants' familiarity with technology as their work involves using technology in communication.

Another possible challenge associated with the use of technology in data collection is not having access to the internet (Lo Iacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016) and technological illiteracy. In this research, the former did not represent an issue as participants were faculty members who had access to the internet either at home or their workplace. In addition, according to the World Bank, the internet penetration rate in Saudi Arabia stood at 95.7% as of 2019 (*Individuals Using the Internet Indicator*, 2019). For the latter, it also did not represent an issue with interviewed participants as they possess high technological and internet proficiency levels. In addition, online interviews took place during a time period where all Saudi higher education institutions have transformed to electronic education and online communication so participants were necessarily familiar with the software used for conducting the interviews—Microsoft Teams and to a lesser extent Skype. Microsoft Teams was the most used software by their institutions for work meetings and where Skype was used, it was proposed by participants and they found it easy to use.

Another potential challenge pertains to age in which older participants could be reluctant to use technology (Sullivan, 2012). However, this problem was not faced in the data collection in this research. This might be due to the nature of participants' job (i.e. academic job) which entails openness to and skilful use of technology.

A final possible issue associated with the use of technology in data collection is technological glitches or deletion of data from the electronic platform before the researcher is able to download and transcribe them. Fortunately, no technical issues were faced during online or phone interviews. Furthermore, connection and voice clarity were checked during a small chat the researcher had with participants before the recording started. In a few interviews where a participant's voice became unclear during the interview, the researcher pointed out the issue to the participant and it was usually a simple fix such as putting on headphones or getting closer to the device. Fortunately, no major technical issues were faced and no

effect of these minor adjustments were observed in participants' engagement or quality of data produced.

On the same note, the research subject is expected to influence the effectiveness of online interviewing. That is, exploring sensitive topics such as drug use or trauma might require building more layers of trust between the researcher and the participant (e.g. physical, psychological, emotional) in which technological means alone might not be able to suffice. However, for exploring work experiences, technological means was effective in collecting data the researcher was aiming to capture. Nonetheless, the researcher paid careful attention to all participants' verbal and non-verbal cues during the interview.

On a related note, as interviews were conducted online and through phone, the identity of participants was cross checked. This included checking participants' employer-affiliation on the university official website as well as their personal profiles on LinkedIn[35]. Sullivan (2012) argues that self-presentation online today is potentially more accurate than it was 20 years ago.

5.9.2 Interview Guide

The interview guide comprised three sections—immediate work environment; labour market experience; and career choice. The first section of the interview was the longest section as it sought to get a comprehensive sense of participants' working conditions and the psychosocial work environment. It included questions about different job and organizational factors such as job autonomy, development opportunity, compensation, job security, workload, and social support among others. It also explored the impact of institutional change in the labour market on those factors. The second section of the interview explored participants' employment history to learn about their labour market access, transitions, and

[35] LinkedIn is a world-wide employment-oriented professional network in which individuals sign up and create an online profile of their education and work experience (i.e. resume).

mobility patterns. The third and last section explored participants' career choices and factors influencing their career decisions. The interview guide used to collect data in this research can be found in Appendix (J).

5.10 Pilot Study

Before the actual data collection commenced, a pilot study was conducted with two participants from two higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia located in two different cities. The pilot study was a significant feedback tool on the structure of the interview, flow of questions, and participants' understanding of interview questions. Based on the researcher takeaway from the pilot study, the interview schedule was revised and an amendment was made. The amendment involved swapping the order of the first two sections of the interview schedule for a smoother transition and better flow. The revised schedule started with questions about current job and work experience (section on work environment) then moved to labour market experience and career choice, respectively. The previous version of the schedule started with questions about labour market experience then went back to ask about current job which seemed to befuddle participants a little.

5.11 Data Analysis

Some of the common methods used in qualitative research analysis are content analysis and thematic analysis. The main difference between the two lies in the level of analysis. Content analysis is carried out at a semantic level or what is referred to as manifest data—participants' explicit words (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). It can also be used to quantify manifest qualitative data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Thematic analysis, on the other hand, in addition to a semantic level, can be performed at a latent level (or interpretive level)—a deeper level of analysis which includes, but not limited to, assumptions, meaning, and mechanisms underlying

participants' words (Boyatzis, 1998). The latter is concerned with factors that give rise to manifest data. However, both methods require researcher familiarity with the data and coding (Gbrich, 2007). This research used thematic analysis as prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Thematic analysis was used in this research for two reasons. First, as the research investigates a socially embedded phenomenon, underpinned by a social constructionist paradigm, the analytical method used should be able to account for underlying mechanisms and meaning as they play a significant role in shaping participants' perception of social reality. Second, thematic analysis is not particular to any theory or epistemology (Braun and Clarke, 2006) that impedes its adoption in this research. Thus, it constitutes an appropriate analytical approach to use for this research inquiry and its philosophical underpinning.

5.11.1 Transcription

All interviews were transcribed and translated verbatim by the researcher. The combined transcription and translation of each interview consumed, on average, 9 hours and 44 minutes. The transcription process involved listening to the recordings of the interviews, translating participants' input from Arabic to English, and putting it into writing. Furthermore, produced transcripts were read multiple times to ensure the accuracy of both translation and transcription. In the same vein, no loss or noticeable variation in quality or detail was noticed between data collected online and through phone in the final transcripts. The researcher also noticed no difference between transcripts produced from audio and video interviews.

Once an interview was transcribed it was given a unique identifying code—the letter *P* followed by a number (e.g. P1). The letter *P* is short for *participant* and the number given represents the order of the participant in the list of interviewed participants. After this stage was complete, the transcripts were ready for coding.

5.11.2 Coding

Before coding started, the researcher familiarised herself with the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and writing down annotations and any impressions that came to her mind while reading them. Performing these steps repeatedly for each transcript enabled the researcher to engage more intimately with the data. Moreover, it enabled the researcher to notice subtleties in the data including nuances in tone, use of expressions, and meanings held by participants which significantly enriched subsequent analysis.

There are two main approaches to coding qualitative data, an inductive approach and a theoretical approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Inductive coding involves the coding of all relevant data without the requirement of adhering to a predefined conceptual framework or coding frame (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A theoretical approach to coding, on the other hand, is driven by a theoretical or conceptual framework. It emphasizes the coding and analysis of data relevant to the research theoretical framework. The coding strategy followed in this research was primarily inductive. The first level of analysis involved coding each interview transcript manually from scratch with no predefined list of codes or theoretical concepts to fit the coding process to. New codes emerging in subsequent transcripts were checked against preceding transcripts to approximate a systematic coding process. The researcher tried to stay as close as possible to the data at this stage and avoided interpretive or theorizing analysis. The second level of analysis involved looking for relationships between the codes to group them meaningfully into subthemes. This level was, similarly, conducted with no list of codes or concepts guiding the grouping process. The third level of analysis looked for a theme that cuts across subthemes. At this stage, the literature review was utilized in guiding this higher level of abstraction. Combining elements from inductive and deductive analysis is not uncommon in qualitative analysis and can strengthen analysis and following discussion of findings (Bingham and Witkowsky, 2022). Because the coding process was largely unconstrained by a conceptual coding

frame and included elements of open coding and constant comparative analysis, it renders the reasoning approach applied in data analysis largely inductive.

Once the coding of all transcripts was complete, two tables were created on the computer for each code. The first table included all extracts corresponding to the code in the dataset along with participants' ID numbers. The second table was a visual representation of the prevalence of a code in the dataset (or among the research sample). Table 5.8 illustrates the latter.

Table 5.8 Visual Representation of a Code Prevalence in the Dataset

P. ID	Segment	Career Level	Code
			Changing Job Security
10	Gov.	Early	
11			X
27			
2	Gov.	Mid	X
13			
21			X
25			X
12	Gov.	Late	X
32			X
35			
8	Private	Early	
22			
38			
26	Private	Mid	
37			
29	Private	Late	
34			X
39			
14	Semi-gov.	Early	
18			
20			X
24			X
31			
16	Semi-gov.	Mid	
19			
36			
15	Semi-gov.	Late	
23			
30			
33			
Total			9

The visual representation tables were created to ground the researcher impression of the data and emerging codes in evidence and prevent a distorted impression that might result from repetitiveness by the same participants. Those tables greatly assisted the researcher in noticing concentrations of issues or certain experiences across segments (and sub-segments) of sector and career levels. Furthermore, they facilitated conducting three levels of comparison for each code. Code emergence was compared between segments of the higher education sector (i.e. government, semi-government, and private); between career levels within each segment (i.e. early, mid, late careers); and between career levels across segments (e.g. early careers in government, early careers in semi-government, and early careers in private) and vice versa for the other two career levels. A level of special examination was performed on codes that were not necessarily prevalent in the dataset but significant in the context of the research. A closer look into which segment and/or by which career level the issue was cited the most was conducted. This analysis of emergent codes highlighted areas of similarities and variation within and between codes which, in turn, illuminated the ways and aspects through which the codes related to each other. In other words, it paved the way for the next level of analysis—a deeper level. The following table illustrates the types of comparisons conducted within and between codes:

Table 5.9 Types of Comparisons within and between Codes

Segment of HE	**Career Level**	**Comparisons and Contrasts**		
		By segment	By career level within segment	By career level across segments
Government	Early career			
	Mid-career			
	Late career			
Semi-government	Early career			
	Mid-career			
	Late career			
Private	Early career			
	Mid-career			
	Late career			

Once a general idea of codes in the data was created in the researcher mind, the researcher took a closer look into patterns, relationships, and/or contradictions

between codes. A starting point was attempting to identify the *what*, *why*, and *how* among the codes. This included exploring the origins, factors, and frames of reference giving rise to participants' experiences and held perceptions. Variation in those aspects was also explored along the lines of sector segment and career level. In the same vein, codes that did not directly relate to other codes were grouped under a category labelled 'miscellaneous' to return to for further examination (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The examination resulted in either finding a content or contextual relation to other codes; combining the code with another similar code which was not apparent in the earlier step; or discarding the code altogether as it exhibited no significant relation to the overall emerging framework. A complete list of codes, their description, and examples can be found in the codebook in Appendix (K). Once relationships between codes were identified, codes became ready for a higher level of abstraction (i.e. theme development).

5.11.3 Theme development

Theme development involved collating codes under a theme that cuts across all of them. This included a process of comparing the parts to the whole and ensuring that the whole (theme) is reflected in the parts (data comprising the code). This process yielded the following initial thematic framework:

Table 5.10 Initial Thematic Framework

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
Segmentation in the labour market at large	-	Limited job opportunity
		Low quality entry job
Segmentation in the higher education labour market	Labour market secondariness in private HEIs	No funded postgraduate studies
		Employment instability
	Segment-based variation in compensations	Competitive in private HEIs
		Uncompetitive in government HEIs
		Superior in semi-government HEIs
		Compensation cuts in government HEIs
	Segment-based variation in employment stability	Employment instability in private HEIs
		Employment stability in government and semi-government HEIs

		Employment stability uncertainty in government HEIs
Internal and external labour markets in the higher education sector	Internal labour markets in public HEIs	Controlled employment
		Funded postgraduate studies
	External labour markets in private HEIs	Easy access to employment in private HEIs
Job resources in academic jobs	-	Meaningful work
	-	Social support
	-	Development opportunity
	-	Open door policy
Job Demands in academic jobs	-	Role ambiguity
	-	Restricted teaching autonomy
	-	Time pressure
	-	Bureaucracy and rigidity
	-	Poor work organization
Working conditions impacted by labour market change	-	Threatened job security
	-	Compensation cuts

This framework was then revised and a more developed and better structured framework was produced. The revisions included the following five key amendments:

- Adding the overarching theme '*Females' labour market experience meets the classical conditions of segmented and internal labour markets theories'* to the new thematic framework.
- Rephrasing the first theme '*Segmentation in the labour market at large'* in the earlier framework to *'Disadvantaged entry to the labour market'* in the revised framework.
- Rephrasing the theme *'Internal and external labour markets in the higher education sector'* in the earlier framework to *'Structural variation in entry to the higher education labour market'* in the revised framework and removing previous subthemes.
- Rephrasing the theme '*Segmentation in the higher education labour market'* in the earlier framework to '*Structural variation in the employment conditions of academic jobs in the higher education labour market'* in the revised framework, removing subthemes, and adding the code '*funded postgraduate studies'* under this theme.

- Combing the three themes '*Job resources in academic jobs*', '*Job demands in academic jobs*', and '*Working conditions impacted by labour market change*' in the earlier framework into one theme '*Balanced psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs with varying susceptibility to labour market change*' in the revised framework.

Table 5.11 illustrates the final thematic framework along with exemplar extracts from the dataset.

Table 5.11 Final Thematic Framework

Overarching Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Exemplar Extract
Females' labour market experience meets the classical conditions of segmented and internal labour markets theories	Disadvantaged entry to the labour market	Limited job opportunity	*'when I graduated the job opportunities weren't many, they were limited so unfortunately I didn't continue in accounting…I would ask myself where would I work?'*
		Lower-level entry job	*'I started with a position that was lower than my qualifications just because of gender and then after maybe one year I found an opportunity in the IT and was able to move there.'*
	Structural variation in entry to the higher education labour market	Controlled access to employment in government HEIs	*'when I went to apply at [a government university] they didn't accept me because I had a Master's. They told me that we only take either Bachelor's and then we send you to do a Master's and PhD or you'd have a PhD.'*
		Easy access to employment in private HEIs	*'the process was very easy and very smooth and I got the job right away.'*

	Structural variation in the employment conditions of academic jobs in the higher education labour market	Competitive compensation in private HEIs	*'I'm in a private university so I get paid higher than public universities. I feel that my salary is excellent'*
		Uncompetitive compensation in government HEIs	*'I don't think this is fair at all and the salary itself is not compatible neither with the academic rank nor the hard work we did in the years of our life in order to get these degrees nor with the nature of work'*
		Superior compensation in semi-government HEIs	*'the salary is maybe among the highest salaries in the university education sector.'*
		Employment instability in private HEIs	*'regardless of the reasons which can be economic or downsizing or anything, you might not be renewed.'*
		Employment stability in government HEIs	*'The job security is high…The disciplinary and termination policies are almost non-existent unless the employee does something very big.'*
		Employment stability in semi-government HEIs	*'my contract is annual with [the semi-government university], not a civil service job, but…I feel job security. I don't feel that I'm threatened by anything.'*
		Funded postgraduate studies in government HEIs	*'I'm an assistant professor at [a government university]…I went to do my Master's and PhD and returned'*
		Funded postgraduate studies in semi-government HEIs	*'You are talking about a university that would send you to study abroad'*

		No funded postgraduate studies in private HEIs	*'I used to work as a TA for two years and then I joined the abroad scholarship program…and did my Master's…I got back I reapplied at the university and became a lecturer.'*
	Balanced psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs with varying susceptibility to labour market change	Meaningful work	*'You feel that you are actually giving, you are building, you are paying back your country'*
		Social support	*'I would find support starting from my colleagues, to the department head, to the dean's office and the dean.'*
		Development opportunity	*'our university is extremely great in providing developmental workshops, trainings, and even trainings outside the Kingdom'*
		Open door policy	*'The boss which is the vice dean and the dean. Both of them are very cooperative and listen to you. You don't have to call the secretary and make an appointment. You can just knock on the door and enter.'*
		Role ambiguity (or lack of job clarity)	*'when they assign us with a task we're not always given instructions that you will be doing 1, 2, 3. You have to ask and sometimes you get an answer and sometimes you don't.'*
		Restricted teaching autonomy	*'in assessment, assignments would have 20 points, finals 30, you can't change much in saying that I want to put 15 points for the finals*

			and points for the project.'
		Time pressure	*'You are required to fulfil 14 hours of teaching… At the same time you are required to do scientific research and also to get promoted but how to do with time?'*
		Bureaucracy and rigidity	*'bringing a guest speaker from outside the university is a two-month process to happen…with these complications in place…makes one don't follow on those ideas.' / 'whenever you want to do a new thing they tell you based on the regulations you can't'*
		Poor work organization	*'Planning in the work domain is very terrible…the distribution of tasks over the semester in that on this week you have a deadline for this thing and on that week you have a deadline for that thing and that week you have to submit that thing. Nothing is clear.'*
		Threatened job security	*'It [privatization] scares me, it threatens my job security which is one of the advantages that made me join academia. Now it might go away, disappear.'*
		Compensation cuts	*'the salary is not stable because of the allowances. There was the high cost of living allowance which got removed and there are still allowances that may*

			or may not get removed.'

5.12 Ethical Considerations

No major risks were anticipated from participating in this research including physical and psychological distress. This could be attributed to the research subject and the sample characteristics (i.e. non-vulnerable adults). The research did not involve sensitive topics, risky procedures, or vulnerable groups. However, there is hardly any research with completely no ethical risks.

One possible ethical risk is loss of participants' data or violation of their identity anonymity. However, the researcher took steps to address and minimize this risk. As soon as an interview ended, the researcher would shortly transcribe it, anonymize the transcript, and destroy the original recording. Anonymized transcripts were then stored on the university cloud storage which is approved by the university's ethics committee. They were also stored on the researcher's encrypted and password-protected laptop. Furthermore, any document containing participants' information which would not be used in data analysis was shredded.

In the same vein, information about the research was extended to persons who expressed interest to participate through an email sent to them prior to the interview containing an information sheet. The information sheet outlined what their participation would involve as well as their participation and withdrawal rights. The sheet assured them of confidentiality of their data and anonymity of their identity. Furthermore, voluntariness of participation in the research was ensured by requesting the signing of a consent form before the interview commenced confirming their voluntary participation.

On the interview call and before the recording started, the researcher gave participants a brief overview of the interview sections and topics. The researcher

also gave participants the opportunity to ask her any questions they might have about the research before the recording started as well as reminded them of their right to withdraw anytime during the interview or decline to answer any question they might feel uncomfortable answering. After that, participants were asked for permission to start the recording and were treated with utmost respect and impartiality throughout the interview. At the end of the interview, participants were debriefed on the research aim and the way their data will be used to achieve that aim. In addition, participants were invited to add any comments, ask any questions, and raise any concerns they might have about the research or their participation. This was communicated to participants in emails exchanged before the interview and at the end of the interview.

5.13 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Establishing trustworthiness in this research followed the widely recognized criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The criteria involve fulfilling the four components of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria were developed to enhance the quality of qualitative research and enhance readers' confidence in research findings.

The first criterion, credibility, addresses the fit between participants' perceptions and the researcher interpretation of them (Tobin and Begley, 2004). That is, producing a 'true' picture of the researched phenomenon (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Scholars have identified different tools to enhance credibility and limit bias in qualitative research. Common among them are triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement. There are four types of triangulation that can be applied in qualitative research—by methods, data sources, researchers, and theories (Patton, 1999). Although this research used interviews as the main data collection method, it applied the other forms of triangulation. First, in addition to interviews, the researcher reviewed documents pertinent to the phenomenon investigated (i.e. labour market change) which supports triangulation by sources.

Documents reviewed included labour policy, laws, royal and ministerial decrees, and labour market survey among others. Second, triangulation by researcher was applied in the research by having a team of researchers (i.e. three research supervisors), in addition to the principal researcher, as opposed to a single researcher. That is, research steps were discussed among a group of researchers in which better ways were suggested and blind spots were highlighted. This team arrangement supported making better decisions about the research process enhancing its credibility. Third, triangulation by theories was applied in this research through the different backgrounds of the research team. While the principal researcher comes from a human resource management background, the research supervisors came from organizational psychology, economics, and public administration backgrounds. This diversity of perspectives supported the research development and enriched subsequent analysis.

Furthermore, member checking was applied in this research through involving participants in the data analysis phase. The researcher returned to participants during data collection and analysis to ensure the accuracy of her understanding and interpretation of their experiences. On the same note, prolonged engagement with participants and the phenomenon under research is posited to add to research credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This applied in this research through an extended period of data collection—a year, from June, 2020 to June 2021, as well as through long individual interviews—interviews lasting over an hour, on average.

The second criterion, transferability, addresses the transferability of research findings to other settings or contexts. This involves case-to-case transfers (Tobin and Begley, 2004) and populations that share similar characteristics and settings (Firestone, 1993) as opposed to population generalizability commonly associated with quantitative research. Fulfilling this criterion involves providing thick description of the research sample and setting in a way that would enable anyone who might be interested in transferring the findings to judge transferability based on the description provided (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In other words, their

confidence in making that judgement would highly depend on the extent of detail and transparency in the provided description. To enhance this research transferability, the researcher provided a detailed description of participants and the economic, legal, labour market, and social context of the research. The researcher described the research sample in section 5.6.1 in this chapter and the research setting in Chapter Two and Three with as much detail as possible to enhance trustworthiness in the transferability of the research findings to cases that share contextual similarity.

The third criterion, dependability, addresses consistency of findings and consistency between findings and the data. It is also an outcome of following credibility strategies outlined above (i.e. triangulation, member checking, etc.). Dependability aims to produce a logical, traceable, and clearly documented research process (Tobin and Begley, 2004). In other words, an audited research process (Koch, 1994). This component involves providing detailed description of the data analysis (Ryan, 2007) as well as clear explanation of decisions made in relation to the different steps of the research process. Explanations are often supported by an audit trail or peer review (Letts *et al.*, 2007). To enhance the dependability of this research, in addition to followed credibility strategies, the researcher provided sufficient detail on steps of data analysis in this chapter. For example, the researcher utilized tables to illustrate the link between data and themes developed. Furthermore, the researcher provided justification for critical decisions made in the research process (e.g. choice of research paradigm, research design, data collection and analysis methods) in this chapter. In the same vein, during the research process, the researcher presented her work to other social researchers who were not specialized in the research subject for feedback (e.g. conferences, seminars, annual reviews). These evaluations by others are expected to enhance the research dependability.

The fourth criterion, confirmability, addresses findings' neutrality and researcher bias. It emphasizes demonstrating the link between the researcher interpretation and findings on one hand and the data from which they were derived

on the other (Tobin and Begley, 2004). Some of the strategies recommended in this regard include a detailed description of the data analysis (Ryan, 2007), member checking, peer review, and reflexivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition to member checking, peer review was applied throughout the research process. The research team (i.e. research supervisors) was consulted frequently throughout the research steps. An example of peer review in data analysis includes the extraction of parts from the dataset to be coded by the research team. The rationale for coding the same piece of data by multiple researchers was to explore and highlight any issues of bias in coding. Moreover, the researcher presented her work at scientific conferences for feedback from scholars in the field. A list of conferences attended and titles of work presented can be found in Appendix (L). Lastly, the researcher used visual representation (e.g. tables, charts, etc.) to demonstrate and make transparent the thought process in the data analysis (i.e. themes and findings).

In the same vein, reflexivity is an imperative step in building trustworthiness in qualitative research. It particularly supports the research confirmability. Reflexivity is a critical account of the researcher impact on the research process (Tobin and Begley, 2004; Charmaz, 2015). It involves the researcher awareness and vigilance of her assumptions, beliefs, and professional experience throughout the research process. Reflexivity gains greater significance in qualitative research as the researcher constitutes the primary data collection and analysis instrument (Bloomber and Volpe, 2019).

There are different ways to be reflexive in qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). First, through researchers. Involving multiple researchers in the research can effectively limit bias. Peer review, for example, exposes the work to others for discussion which can reveal unnoticed bias. Second, through keeping a journal. Keeping a reflexive journal in which the researcher records her reflections on the research process, decisions made or attempted in relation to the research as well as their rationale, scrutinizes the decision-making process and its underlying reasoning. Third, through reporting the researcher background and perspectives.

Reporting researcher perspective, preconceptions, and beliefs in the final research report adds to the research transparency enhancing its trustworthiness.

Reflexivity in data analysis involves approaching the data with an openness to explore without expectations. That is, engaging with the data and conducting analysis as an objective witness to participants' accounts (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). The main purpose of this strategy is to limit bias in data analysis and provide a true picture of the investigated phenomenon rooted in the data (i.e. from the perspective of participants) and not distorted by the researcher perspective. In the following section the researcher provides a reflexive account.

5.13.1 Reflexive account

As a qualitative researcher I was aware that I am an integral part of the research process and recognized that my background gives me theoretical sensitivity (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and has the potential to influence my interpretation. To address the sensitivity of my role in the research, I was very vigilant about my position during the data collection and analysis.

During data collection, I positioned myself as both an insider and outsider to participants. Starting with the latter, I presented myself as a social researcher conducting PhD research at a higher education institution in Ireland. I approached participants formally through email and provided confidentiality, anonymity, and ethical assurances for their participation. I also highlighted the significance of their input and contribution in informing the research findings. On the other hand, I communicated my insider status as a fellow academic. I shared with them information about my profession, scientific background, and employer.

I was aware that I share many similarities with the women I interviewed which partly constituted my insider status in the research process. I shared with them nationality, gender, and sector of employment (i.e. higher education). Furthermore, I shared with some of them age, education system, and country of

study at the postgraduate level. This familiarity marked the relationship between participants and myself with collegiality and supported building a faster rapport. When invited to participate in the research, some participants expressed excitement to support another Saudi woman in her career endeavours while others expressed empathy toward the PhD journey as they had been through it themselves. However, this sense of belongingness carried some risks.

During the interview, I noticed that in answering some of the interview questions, some participants were ending their responses with the phrase '*you know'*. This made me aware of a potential assumption on their end. That is, since they know I work in the same profession and labour market they seem to be assuming that I understand their work culture, labour market experience, or people's attitudes at their workplace which was not true. This posed the risk of participants not feeling the need to elaborate as I was assumed to already know. I addressed this issue during interviews by not agreeing to understand anything that was not explicitly communicated and asked for clarification and more detail where needed. Learning about not only their experiences but also their frames of reference was crucial for deep understanding and accurate interpretation. On the other hand, I was myself bringing a similar assumption to the interview. For example, I noticed that when I asked participants questions about change in higher education or their employment experience I would sometimes use the personal pronoun '*we*' and the possessive adjective '*our*'—e.g. the system *we* have, *our* labour market. I became aware of this issue early in the process and tried to eliminate their use in subsequent interviews and ask questions more objectively.

Although these instances implied a warm sense of closeness and sharedness between participants and myself, had I not been aware of them, they would have invited my subjectivity and bias in their analysis. It would become an analysis of assumption-laden experiences. To limit the interference of my assumptions in the data analysis, I maintained high awareness of this insider status throughout the data collection phase. I did not assume or lead with any preconception about participants' experiences and always asked for clarification when needed. I kept an

open-mind and approached each participant as she was my first and only participant whom I was excited to learn about her experience. I stayed curious during the interview and tried to create a safe and comfortable space for them to share their experiences. I was also mindful of verbal and non-verbal cues that indicated ease, discomfort, or confusion to interview questions and tried to rephrase and reframe questions where needed.

In data analysis, I approached the analysis as an outsider—an objective witness. I tried to describe meanings in the data from the perspective of participants and not mine. To reduce bias in my interpretation of the data, I followed the strategies recommended in the literature for that matter. The strategies I applied included triangulation, peer review, and member checking among others (a detailed description of those strategies can be found under section 5.13 in this chapter). Furthermore, I followed a systematic approach throughout the research process to limit bias and enhance the research trustworthiness.

5.14 Conclusion

The chapter provided detailed description of the research methodology, process, and research sample and setting. This serves a significant purpose in establishing the trustworthiness of the research and readers' confidence in the research findings. Furthermore, as the research investigates change in an institutionally complex setting, transparency of the research process was emphasized to enable interested readers to judge the transferability of findings to other settings for themselves. The following four chapters will report each theme in the thematic framework (Table 5.11) separately and in the same order as in the table.

Chapter Six: Disadvantaged Entry to the Labour Market

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the first theme in the thematic framework. It reports the experiences of participants' first entry into the labour market and the characteristics of their early career jobs. Learning about these experiences is crucial for understanding the labour market structure for female workers. Verbatim quotes from the dataset are provided to illustrate participants' experiences, highlight areas of convergence and divergence in their experiences, and make the link between raw data and the emergent theme clear. Lastly, this chapter is organized into three sections: a findings section, a discussion section, and a conclusion. The findings section reports the research findings by segment (i.e. government, semi-government, and private) under each subtheme. The discussion section interprets the research findings in light of the literature review and research context. Finally, the conclusion relates the findings to the research questions.

6.2 Findings

This section reports the research findings under two subthemes: limited job opportunity for female workers in the labour market and low quality entry jobs. The first subtheme reports the challenges participants faced when they first sought employment in the labour market after completing their tertiary-level education and the means through which they learned about job opportunity in the labour market. Findings under this subtheme are reported by segment—government, semi-government, and private. The second subtheme reports the characteristics of participants' early career employment experiences which include: type of employment (full-time vs. part-time and fixed-term vs. permanent); sector of employment (public vs. private); and employment system (labour law vs. civil service system). These findings under this subtheme are, similarly, reported by segment—government, semi-government, and private.

6.2.1 Limited job opportunity for female workers

Limited job opportunity was the strongest obstacle participants faced on entering the labour market after they completed their tertiary-level education. This existed in the labour market entry experiences of participants across the three higher education segments regardless of the sector or industry they were seeking to get employed in.

6.2.1.1 Government segment

This limited job opportunity obstacle is perhaps best illustrated by the experience of the following participant from the government segment:

> *'I was almost daily on LinkedIn and employment websites…I started applying in Riyadh, Dhahran and Dammam. All over the kingdom. I would wonder what's wrong, is this possible?... I would literally search every day.' (P.11 / gov. / early career)*

This obstacle led some participants to work in academia even when academia was not their preferred or desired career as expressed by the following participants:

> *'Originally I didn't want to be in higher education but by the time I finished my PhD and returned, there weren't many options…Most of the companies would tell you you're overqualified...this was the best available option' (P.35 / gov. / late career)*

> *'When I graduated from the Arabic language department, I said since there is no journalism work, I will work in the university.' (P.13 / gov. / mid career)*

In the same vein, some participants cited limited education opportunity at the tertiary level as a factor limiting their consequent career options and eventually directing them to a career in academia:

> *'All my life I used to say I'm a writer and poet and I will work in journalism. That was my main direction… when I went to [a college] they didn't have a journalism and media specialization for girls. I asked at [a government university] and they said we don't have it either, we only have it open for boys.'* (P.13 / gov. / mid career)

This structural issue in the labour market seem to create a rationale among participants in accessing the labour market. The rationale was to start anywhere in the labour market and then make their way up through finding better jobs as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'I felt you have to start somewhere and then look for other options.'* (P.35 / gov. / late career)

On the other hand, academic jobs in the higher education labour market seem to offer participants two attractive working conditions over other jobs in the labour market, namely flexible working hours and opportunity to continue education. The former influenced participants' career decision through its perceived role in facilitating a better work-life balance and meeting gender role expectations. This applied to participants with and without family responsibilities as illustrated in the following quotes:

> '*more flexibility for you as women, academia is much more comfortable, and your working hours would be light and you can have a good family life and you can also have a good career, and comfortable for you as a woman' (P.2 / gov. / mid career)*

'working in the private sector or.. other than education sectors, might lower your ability to create balance between your social life and worklife. Education jobs might be the most convenient from my point of view.' (P.32 / gov. / late career)

It is noteworthy that this factor was not cited by early careers in this segment. At the same time, all early careers in this segment were single and had no family responsibilities. Similar to flexible working hours, opportunity to continue education in academic jobs influenced the career decision-making of some participants as illustrated on the following quote:

'I want to continue, I want to do a Master's, I want to study abroad…I wanted that when I return I would have a job. So I was keen about that.' (P.25 / gov. / early career)

Another career-level difference in this experience is that opportunity to continue education was not cited by late career participants in this segment as a factor attracting them to work in higher education. On the other hand, early careers stressed the importance of job advancement opportunity and maintained that lack of job advancement opportunity in previous jobs made them quit those jobs and eventually join academia:

'I would not develop to something else…I submitted my resignation.' (P.10 / gov. / early career)

'A promotion or increase in salary was supposed to happen. I said I have to look for something else.' (P.11 / gov. / early career)

Lastly, the predominant source of knowledge about job opportunity in participants' first employment experience was family/friends, followed by in-person visits to employers and university/school, equally. No significant different at the career-level existed in that regard. In the same vein, participants' first job concentrated in the

higher education and healthcare sector, equally. The same sectors persisted when all their previous jobs were combined (all jobs held prior to their current academic job).

6.2.1.2 Semi-government segment

Participants in this segment experienced limited job opportunity in similar ways to their peers in the other two segments. The following participant graduated with a computer science degree but could not find a job that matches her qualification as she explains below:

> *'in the Bachelor's they were teaching us something very advanced and then we got shocked by the labour market…all they wanted was data entry, not programming or software engineering or any of these things.'* (P.16 / semi-gov. / mid career)

Part of limited job opportunity was lack of female-accommodating work environment in the private sector and non-conventional female occupations. Change in that regard was perhaps most witnessed by late career participants:

> *'It used to be only traditional work and teachers in Saudi. The traditional job was to be a teacher, even the nurse job, although there aren't many male nurses…it wasn't a traditional job for women in Saudi...The labour market has visibly changed for women in the last ten years'* (P.23 / semi-gov. / late career)

The limited job structure for female workers in the labour market led some participants to work in higher education even when working in this sector was not their preferred or desired career as expressed by the following participant:

'My original ambition wasn't educational at all and I never expected I would be an instructor one day…it was better than the other options that were available for me.' (P.19 / semi-gov. / mid career)

A noteworthy career-level difference in that regard is that for all early careers in this segment, working the in higher education sector was their career preference. At the same time, they cited limited education opportunity at the tertiary-level as a factor influencing their career options as illustrated in the following quote:

'In high school I had media ambition but we didn't have this specialization available in [her hometown university]…during my year, it was that if you graduated from a literature path you have two options open: Arabic or English. I chose English.' (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

These structural issues in entering the labour market created a rationale among participants that involved accepting to work in any job and then trying to find better jobs from there, as illustrated in the following quote:

'I went with my friends after we finished our Bachelor's. They said let's start at this institute until we find good jobs.' (P.16 / semi-gov. / mid career)

On the other hand, participants highly valued the flexible working hours in academic jobs. This appeared mainly for the perceived role of this working condition in facilitating a better work-life balance and meeting gender role expectations as illustrated by the following participant:

'It is honestly the flexibility of working hours. This was number one for me…didn't like staying in a job until 5:00 or 6:00PM, when would I get home? When would I sit with my children and see their studies?' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

'if I worked at a university, working hours would be less and I would have time to raise my children' (P.36 / semi-gov. / mid career)

Similarly, opportunity to continue education in academic jobs influenced participants' career decision-making and choice. This job characteristic was emphasized the most by participants working in this segment, as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'higher education also gives more opportunity to develop with regard to studying abroad…if I stayed five years in higher education. I would…get a higher degree, different than in the health sector or banks in which you may stay in the same level scientifically.'* (P.14 / semi-gov. / early career)

> *'the advantage in academia I wanted was to be able to continue my studies, to do my Master's and PhD. So this was an incentive for me to choose academia over the hospital.'* (P.36 / semi-gov. / mid career)

> *'that the [university] is sending people to Britain to specialize and this was what I wanted, to not stop at a Bachelor's.' (P.23 / semi-gov. / late career)*

Lastly, the predominant source of knowledge about job opportunity in participants' first employment experience was family/friends and training body (where they did their co-op training), equally, followed by newspaper ads. and job advertising websites, equally. No significant different at the career-level existed in that regard. In the same vein, the first job of participants in this segment concentrated in the higher education sector followed by the healthcare and technical and vocational training sector. The same sectors persisted when all their previous jobs were combined (all jobs held prior to their current academic job).

6.2.1.3 Private segment

Participants in the private segment of higher education also experienced limited job opportunity. The following quote illustrates the experience of a participant who could not find a job in her studied major when she graduated:

> *'when I graduated the job opportunities weren't many, they were limited so unfortunately I didn't continue in accounting and this is one of the things that I regret but I would ask myself where would I work? I didn't know. At the time the market wasn't open and opportunities were limited'* (P.34 / private / late career)

Lack of an accommodating work environment for female workers in the private sector was also an issue faced by participants in this segment. The experience of the following participant illustrates this obstacle:

> *'I went to many interviews, not all places were equipped to accommodate females in the right way…it used to be that this is the males' toilet and it is all we have, we never had females here, so you can use our toilets when no one is there. This is something not acceptable…but at that time it wasn't the case.'* (P.29 / private / late career)

This limited job structure for females in the labour market and lack of accommodating work environment directed participants to work in higher education even when it did not align with their career preference as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'It was the field available…If another sector, non-academic, called me and offered me a job I would've join that other field by the way.'* (P.38 / private / early career)

> *'I would have definitely chosen something else. I'm not one of the people whom their passion is teaching'* (P.34 / private / late career)

A segment-level difference exists in this misalignment between an academic career and personal career preference. This issue was the most pronounced for

participants working in the private segment. They were the highest, compared to their peers in the government and semi-government segment, to cite limited job opportunity and the lowest to cite personal preference as reasons for their academic career choice. Moreover, all early careers in this segment preferred to work in the industry. Similar to the rationale followed by participants in the government and semi-government segment, participants in this segment accepted jobs that were lower than qualification level and not aligned with their studied major with the aim to move to better jobs from there, as illustrated in the experience of the following participant:

> *'I ended up in the beginning working in a department that has nothing to do with my major...I started with a position that was lower than my qualifications just because of gender and then after maybe one year I found an opportunity in the IT and was able to move there…opportunities were few in the labour market at the time…we accept whatever.'* (P.37 / private / mid career)

On the other hand, flexible working hours in academic jobs was a highly valued factor in some participants' career decision-making. They emphasized the advantage of this job characteristic in facilitating work-life balance and meeting gender role expectations, as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'I thought academia would be a little bit flexible for me in terms of time; as a faculty member you only do your teaching and the things you need to do and that's it…I would give more time to other things such as other work, family, social, personal, everything.'* (P.26 / private / mid career)

> *'Flexibility in hours allow you to do more; I work a lot from home, I don't have to work from the college or university…So this might be the advantage of higher education; the flexibility for working mothers.' (P.39 / private / late career)*

In addition, participants cited flexibility in academic work and organizational support as factors supporting them in pursuing postgraduate education while on-the-job, even when the studies were not funded by their employer. This is illustrated in the experiences of the following participants:

> *'it is the flexibility to pursue training or education. There is cooperation and support from the university for that...this flexibility helped me to do my Master's and then I stayed a few years…and then decided that I want to do my PhD.'* (P.39 / private / late career)

> *'I started doing my PhD while working there [a private university] and they were also honestly very cooperative in the distribution of days.'* (P.13 / gov. / mid career)

On a related note, the higher education sector seemed to be the best labour market to appreciate and reward females' high levels of education. This might be best illustrated through the experience of the following participant whom initially sought employment in the industry but was directed to higher education as the most fitting sector for her educational aspirations:

> *'every time I did an interview I used to get a lot of comments that I was too ambitious for the job, that they were scared I would leave the job…because my ambition at the time was to also complete my studies. So I knew that I wanted to get my PhD in Business…everyone at the time was pointing me back to education as the best way…that would suit my ambition and I think they were right.'* (P.29 / private / late career)

Lastly, the predominant source of knowledge about job opportunity in participants' first employment experience was family/friends followed by in-person visits to employers. No significant different at the career-level existed in that regard. In the same vein, the first job of participants in this segment concentrated in the higher education sector but this concentration did not persist when all their previous jobs were combined. In the latter, jobs did not concentrate in any particular sectors but

spanned many sectors/industries (i.e. banking, architecture, diplomacy, fast-moving consumer goods, and technical and vocational training).

6.2.2 Low quality entry jobs

Three factors are explored in participants' early career employments to learn about their job quality and sorting and allocation in the labour market. These factors include: type of employment (full-time vs. part-time and fixed-term vs. permanent); sector of employment (public vs. private); and employment system (labour law vs. civil service system) (more on the difference between the two employment systems in workers' rights and protection can be found in section 3.3.1.1 in Chapter Three). These findings are reported below by segment (i.e. government, semi-government, and private).

6.2.2.1 Government segment

The first job for almost all participants in the government segment, except one, was a full-time job. In addition, the vast majority of jobs held by participants, prior to their currently held academic job, were fixed-term employment in the private sector. It is noteworthy that only one participant in this segment started in the labour market with permanent employment in the public sector and that was her currently held academic job. The following table illustrates the sectoral distribution of participants' prior and currently held jobs:

Table 6.1 Sectoral Distribution of Jobs held by Participants in the Government Segment of Higher Education

Job/Sector	Private Sector	Public Sector		Total
	Fixed-term	Fixed-term	Permanent	
First job Out of 10 participants	8 out of 10 80%	1 out of 10 10%	1 out of 10 10%	100%

All previous jobs (excl. 1st job if = current) Out of total 14 previously held jobs by participants	12 out of 14 85.71%	2 out of 14 14.29%	0 out of 14 0%	100%
Current academic job Out of 10 participants	0 out of 10 0%	0 out of 10 0%	10 out of 10 100%	100%

The high fixed-term employment in the private sector found in participants' early employment experiences (previously worked jobs) is more consistent with the sectoral distribution of *total* female workers at the national labour market level than *national* female workers. No consistent labour market data was publically available to benchmark participants' sectoral distribution over time except for this one data point in 2019 (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019). The following table illustrates the sectoral distribution of *national* and *total* female workers in the national labour market:

Table 6.2 Sectoral Distribution of National and Total Female Workers in the Labour Market

Worker/Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector
National Female Workers	532,630 [50.14%]	529,654 [49.86%]
Total Female Workers	563,759 [42.97%]	748,361 [57.04%]

The employment relationship in almost all jobs held by participants in this segment, prior to their currently held academic job, were organized by the social insurance system—i.e. the comparatively more flexible and less protective system. The following table illustrates the distribution of employment systems in jobs held by participants in this segment:

Table 6.3 Distribution of Systems Organizing the Employment Relationship in Jobs held by Participants in the Government Segment of Higher Education

Job/Employment System	Social Insurance System	Civil Service System	Total
First job Out of 10 participants	9 out of 10 90%	1 out of 10 10%	100%
All previous jobs (excl. 1st job if = current)	14 out of 14 100%	0 out of 14 0%	100%

Out of total 14 previously held jobs by participants			
Current academic job Out of 10 participants	0 out of 10 0%	10 out of 10 100%	100%

In comparing the distribution of systems organizing the employment relationship in participants' previously held jobs with data at the national labour market level in year 2017 and 2019 (*Labour Market Survey Fourth Quarter*, 2017; *Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019), the distribution appear inconsistent. While the systems distribution appear proportionate for *national* female workers and slightly higher on the social insurance system for *total* female workers, participants' prior employments were almost completely organized by the social insurance system. The following table shows the distribution of national and total female workers across the two employment systems (i.e. social insurance and civil service) in 2017 and 2019:

Table 6.4 Sectoral Distribution of National and Total Female Workers across the Employment Systems

Employment System / Year	2017 (Q4)	2019 (Q2)
Civil Service System National Female Workers	477,283	478,669
Social Insurance System National Female Workers	545,380	583,615
Civil Service System Total Female Workers	509,319	501,512
Social Insurance System Total Female Workers	749,762	810,608

In the same vein, the quality of early career jobs varied roughly proportionately between good and bad. Fixed-term jobs in the public sector varied between good, somewhat good, and bad. Good and somewhat good jobs in the public sector had good working conditions in general but varied in compensation—competitive in the former and low in the latter. Good jobs included academic jobs in higher education and health jobs in healthcare while somewhat good jobs included standard administrative jobs in governmental bodies. The characteristics of a somewhat

good job in the government sector are illustrated in the following quotes by participants:

> *'I worked before it in a ministry with a government contract and my salary was 3000SAR. I was an administrative employee…Just imagine that there was a time when a computer science graduate accepts getting paid 3000SAR, not even 3000 I think 2700SAR'* (P.37 / private / mid career)

> *'It [previous job] was at [government university] in the community service college and it was pure administrative work.'* (P.16 / semi-gov. / mid career)

On the other hand, bad jobs in the government sector included both poor wages and worker rights. In the data, bad jobs comprised part-time instruction jobs in the higher education sector. The following quotes illustrate the characteristics of these jobs:

> *'a collaborator English instructor…a temporary job, semester-based contract…It also doesn't have retirement pension or any consistent rights other than the monthly salary.'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)

> '*even its [the job] salary was very little, very little, but I was more like a guide for those students checking the steps with them so they can participate in contests in the university.'* (P.30 / semi-gov. / late career)

6.2.2.2 Semi-government segment

The first job for almost all participants in this segment, except one, was a full-time job. In addition, the vast majority of jobs held by participants, prior to their currently held academic job, were fixed-term employment in the public sector. It is noteworthy that only one participant in this segment started in the labour market with permanent employment in the public sector. This was a job she resigned from

for personal reasons and was not her currently held academic job. The following table illustrates the sectoral distribution of participants' prior and currently held jobs:

Table 6.5 Sectoral Distribution of Jobs held by Participants in the Semi-government Segment of Higher Education

Job/Sector	Private Sector	Public Sector		Total
	Fixed-term	Fixed-term	Permanent	
First job Out of 12 participants	3 out of 12 25%	8 out of 12 66.67%	1 out of 12 8.33%	100%
All previous jobs (excl. 1st job if = current) Out of total 11 previously held jobs by participants	4 out of 11 36.36%	6 out of 11 54.55%	1 out of 11 9.09%	100%
Current academic job Out of 12 participants	0 out of 12 0%	11 out of 12 91.67%	1 out of 12 8.33%	100%

The high fixed-term employment in the public sector found in participants' early employment experiences (previously worked jobs) is less consistent with the sectoral distribution of both *national* and *total* female workers at the national labour market level. While the sector distribution is proportionate for *national* female workers and higher concentration in the private sector for *total* female workers, prior jobs of participants in this segment were more concentrated in the public sector. No consistent labour market data was publically available to benchmark participants' sectoral distribution over time except for this one data point in 2019 (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019). The following table illustrates the sectoral distribution of *national* and *total* female workers in the national labour market:

Table 6.6 Sectoral Distribution of National and Total Female Workers in the Labour Market

Worker/Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector
National Female Workers	532,630 [50.14%]	529,654 [49.86%]
Total Female Workers	563,759 [42.97%]	748,361 [57.04%]

The employment relationship in almost all jobs, but one, held by participants in this segment, prior to their currently held academic job, were organized by the social

insurance system—i.e. the comparatively more flexible and less protective system. The following table illustrates the distribution of employment systems in jobs held by participants in this segment:

Table 6.7 Distribution of Systems Organizing the Employment Relationship in Jobs held by Participants in the Semi-government Segment of Higher Education

Job/Employment System	Social Insurance System	Civil Service System	Total
First job Out of 12 participants	11 out of 12 91.67%	1 out of 12 8.33%	100%
All previous jobs (excl. 1st job if = current) Out of total 11 previously held jobs by participants	10 out of 11 90.91%	1 out of 11 9.09%	100%
Current academic job Out of 12 participants	11 out of 12 91.67%	1 out of 12 8.33%	100%

In comparing the distribution of systems organizing the employment relationship in participants' previously held jobs with data at the national labour market level in year 2017 and 2019 (*Labour Market Survey Fourth Quarter*, 2017; *Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019), the distribution appear consistent. The employment relationship of the majority of both *national* and *total* female workers, at the labour market level, is organized by the social insurance system. In fact, the distribution difference appear more consistent with *total* female workers than *national* female workers. The following table shows the distribution of national and total female workers across the two employment systems (i.e. social insurance and civil service) in 2017 and 2019:

Table 6.8 Sectoral Distribution of National and Total Female Workers across the Employment Systems

Employment System / Year	2017 (Q4)	2019 (Q2)
Civil Service System National Female Workers	477,283	478,669
Social Insurance System National Female Workers	545,380	583,615
Civil Service System Total Female Workers	509,319	501,512
Social Insurance System Total Female Workers	749,762	810,608

In exploring the job quality of the first job held by participants in the semi-government segment, a segment- and career-level difference emerged in that regard. Almost[36] all late career participants in this segment started their career with good jobs in the public sector. Their wages were high and their jobs had well-developed career ladders. One shared characteristic between them is an educational background in the natural or applied health sciences (e.g. microbiology, nursing) and the jobs matched their education specialization.

6.2.2.3 Private segment

The first job for almost all participants in this segment, except one, was a full-time job. In addition, the vast majority of jobs held by participants, prior to their currently held academic job, were fixed-term employment in the private sector. No participant in this segment started in the labour market with permanent employment in the public sector. The following table illustrates the sectoral distribution of participants' prior and currently held jobs:

Table 6.9 Sectoral Distribution of Jobs held by Participants in the Private Segment of Higher Education

Job/Sector	Private Sector	Public Sector		Total
	Fixed-term	Fixed-term	Permanent	
First job Out of 8 participants	6 out of 8 75%	2 out of 8 25%	0 out of 8 0%	100%
All previous jobs (excl. 1st job if = current) Out of total 8 previously held jobs by participants	7 out of 8 87.50%	1 out of 8 12.50%	0 out of 8 0%	100%
Current academic job Out of 8 participants	8 out of 8 100%	0 out of 8 0%	0 out of 8 0%	100%

[36] Almost here means all except one participant who started with a bad job in the public sector, for a few months, before she got hired in one of the most-developed government healthcare institutions in the nation.

The high fixed-term employment in the private sector found in participants' early employment experiences (previously worked jobs) is more consistent with the sectoral distribution of *total* female workers at the national labour market level than *national* female workers. No consistent labour market data was publically available to benchmark participants' sectoral distribution over time except for this one data point in 2019 (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019). The following table illustrates the sectoral distribution of *national* and *total* female workers in the national labour market:

Table 6.10 Sectoral Distribution of National and Total Female Workers in the Labour Market

Worker/Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector
National Female Workers	532,630 [50.14%]	529,654 [49.86%]
Total Female Workers	563,759 [42.97%]	748,361 [57.04%]

The employment relationship in all the jobs held by participants in this segment, prior to their currently held academic job, were organized by the social insurance system—i.e. the comparatively more flexible and less protective system. The following table illustrates the distribution of employment systems in jobs held by participants in this segment:

Table 6.11 Distribution of Systems Organizing the Employment Relationship in Jobs held by Participants in the Private Segment of Higher Education

Job/Employment System	Social Insurance System	Civil Service System	Total
First job Out of 8 participants	8 out of 8 100%	0 out of 8 100%	100%
All previous jobs (excl. 1st job if = current) Out of total 8 previously held jobs by participants	8 out of 8 100%	0 out of 8 100%	100%
Current academic job Out of 8 participants	8 out of 8 100%	0 out of 8 100%	100%

In comparing the distribution of systems organizing the employment relationship in participants' previously worked jobs with data at the national labour market level in year 2017 and 2019 (*Labour Market Survey Fourth Quarter*, 2017; *Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019), the distribution appear inconsistent. The employment relationship is proportionately organized by the two systems for *national* female workers and more by the social insurance system for *total* female workers at the labour market level. In the jobs previously worked by participants in this segment, the employment relationship was completely organized by the social insurance system. The following table shows the distribution of national and total female workers across the two employment systems (i.e. social insurance and civil service) in 2017 and 2019:

Table 6.12 Sectoral Distribution of National and Total Female Workers across the Employment Systems

Employment System / Year	2017 (Q4)	2019 (Q2)
Civil Service System National Female Workers	477,283	478,669
Social Insurance System National Female Workers	545,380	583,615
Civil Service System Total Female Workers	509,319	501,512
Social Insurance System Total Female Workers	749,762	810,608

In the same vein, characteristics of some of the bad jobs participants held in the private segment included lack of advancement opportunity, misalignment with qualifications, and underdeveloped organizational structures that affected job responsibilities and future employability. The experiences of the following participants illustrate the characteristics of these jobs. The following participant holds a Master's degree in public health from the United States. She worked at a private clinic as a receptionist in hopes to make her way up from that job. However, when she found that there was no progression opportunity in that job she quit, as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'I would not develop to something else…I submitted my resignation.'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)

Her resignation created short-term tenure in her employment history which employers and HR professionals seemed to perceive with scepticism despite valid reasons, as she explains:

> *'They look at your work history…asking why only six months? I'm not playing by leaving here and there. Many question why I left a job. At the same time, if you stay long in a job…then they ask why did you stay that long in the same job?...this is one of the things in which you feel the labour market is a mess.'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)

Another participant had to quit an HR job at a private hospital due to lack of progression opportunity and misalignment with her studied major as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'A promotion or increase in salary was supposed to happen. I said I have to look for something else.'* (P.11 / gov. / early career)

However, she struggled to find a good job that matches her qualifications as her job title and responsibilities at that job were neither aligned with her specialization nor qualification. The following quote illustrates the difficulty in movement she experienced:

> *'I applied at the Health Sciences College in [government university]. They wanted a research analyst. I called them and told them that I have a Master's in Health Informatics. They asked me what my current job is, I told them Specialist. They asked about the one before it and I told them a coordinator. They said how come a coordinator? Isn't it supposed to be an IM Specialist? They asked me that. I told them unfortunately it is different here in the hospital and the grades are different. They were like mmm and they overlooked me. So I felt even the positions in the hospital are messed up and the organization is random.'* (P.11 / gov. / early career)

6.2.3. Summary

The findings above showed that limited job opportunity for female workers in the labour market was an obstacle experienced by participants, in all three segments of the higher education sector, when they first entered the labour market. The limited job structure for female workers included a lack of female-accommodating work environment in the private sector. This labour market structure compelled participants to accept jobs that were either lower than their qualification levels or not aligned with their career preferences, particularly when they first entered the labour market. This led participants to treat those bad starting jobs as temporary jobs while they look for better jobs. This rationale and behaviour were common among participants across the three higher education segments. Furthermore, limited education opportunity at the tertiary level played a role in limiting participants' career options. This pre-market factor, coupled with limited job opportunity, led many participants to seek employment in the higher education sector even when academia was not their preferred career choice. This was the most pronounced in the private segment. On the other hand, also for many participants across the three segments, the higher education sector provided two attractive working conditions, namely flexible working hours and opportunity to continue postgraduate studies. The latter in the private segment was more in the organizational support to continue studies while on-the-job as opposed to being funded and emptied from job responsibilities while pursuing studies as in the case in the government and semi-government segments. In the same vein, the majority of jobs held by participants before their current academic job, fell in the higher education, healthcare, and technical and vocational training sectors. The higher education sector existed in the employment history of participants across the three segments; the healthcare sector in the employment history of participants in the government and semi-government segments; and the technical and vocational training sector in the employment history of participants in the semi-government segment. It is noteworthy that the same sectors in the first job of participants in the government and semi-government segments persisted when all their previous jobs

were combined, except for the private segment. While the first job of participants in the private segment concentrated in the higher education sector, their subsequence jobs spanned various sectors and industries in the labour market. Lastly, participants utilized both objective (e.g. in-person visits to employers, newspaper ads) and subjective means (e.g. family/friends) in learning about available job opportunity in the labour market in their early career employments.

Second, the findings related to the quality of participants' entry jobs across the three segments indicate that, in the aggregate, these jobs are of low quality. The vast majority of participants' early career jobs, across the three segments, were full-time jobs. In the government and private segments, the majority of these jobs were fixed-term jobs in the private sector while in the semi-government segment, the majority of these jobs were fixed-term jobs in the public sector. The social insurance system organized the employment relationship in those jobs. Furthermore, the characteristics of bad entry jobs in the public sector included poor wages and worker rights. In the private sector, they included lack of advancement opportunity, misalignment with participants' qualifications, and underdeveloped organizational structures. On a related note, the entry jobs of late careers in the semi-government segment were good jobs. They included high wages, well-developed career ladders, and matched their education specialization. The following section will discuss these findings in light of the literature review and research context.

6.3 Discussion

The two findings reported above, namely limited job opportunity and low quality entry jobs, comprise the theme disadvantaged entry to the labour market. The first finding was invariably shared across all three segments of the HE sector—government, semi-government, and private. Therefore, it will be discussed collectively under the subheading '*All segments'* highlighting any segment-level variation. The second finding included some variation at the segment level.

Therefore, it will be discussed by segment (i.e. government, semi-government, and private) under the subheading '*Mobility patterns'*. In the same vein, the meaning of labour policy for female workers in the wider labour market is discussed holistically under the subheading *'Labour policy'*. Lastly, a '*comparative section by segment'* summarizes similarities and differences in female academics' experiences along segment lines.

6.3.1 Limited job opportunity

6.3.1.1 All segments

The labour market access experiences of female academics, across all three segments of the HE sector, indicate the presence of overarching structural obstacles of limited job opportunity for female workers in the wider labour market. Females' rationale in accessing the labour market after completing their tertiary education, by accepting whichever employment they can get and then looking for better jobs, as opposed to seeking a job that is a good fit from the beginning, implies a demand-side issue. Good jobs appear to be significantly limited or not easily accessible for fresh female graduates which seems to entail some compromise on the quality of starting jobs for this group. This experience is consistent with non-economic barriers to primary sector employment for certain groups of workers and the difficulty female workers are predicted to experience in obtaining primary sector employment (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Piore, 1980). It is also consistent with evidence from the Saudi labour market in which lack of entry-level jobs was a barrier to females' employment (Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018). In the same vein, female academics seem to need to accumulate some work experience before they are able to move to better jobs. Female job-seekers who do not succeed in getting employed in good jobs, in largely the government sector, would fall at least temporarily, into secondary labour market employments. Furthermore, the inability to choose or access a preferred job or career from the beginning, despite having the right qualifications, gives support to the role

institutional and structural factors play in the sorting and allocation of female workers in the labour market (e.g. Darity Jr., Guilkey, & Winfrey, 1996).

The characteristics of female academics' early career employments represent another indicator of labour market demand-side issues for female workers. Employment in bad jobs in the private and public sectors (or lower-tier jobs in the government sector) is consistent with early evidence from the American labour market on females' disproportionate entry to peripheral industries in their early careers compared to males (Howell and Reese, 1986). Theoretically, this agrees with one of dual labour markets' central hypotheses which posits that some groups of workers (i.e. minorities, females) would likely start their careers in the secondary labour market and find it difficult to access employment in the primary sector for non-economic reasons (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Rosenberg, 1976; Dickens and Lang, 1985; Howell and Reese, 1986). Accepting bad starting jobs to navigate the structural obstacle of limited job opportunity seems to have negative consequences for female academics' subsequent employments. These jobs create employment origins that can start a vicious cycle and make female workers' upward mobility challenging (Bluestone, 1970; Gordon, 1972). For female workers in the Saudi labour market, this seems to occur in relation to skill acquisition and employment history.

Working in underdeveloped organizations, with little attention to employee training and development, appears to result in minimal skill acquisition for female workers. This outcome appears to create challenges in female workers' movement to better jobs that might require higher or specialized skills. This can increase the likelihood of highly educated females becoming trapped in secondary labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). This finding is consistent with evidence from the Irish labour market in which minimal human capital acquisition in secondary labour market employment hampered workers' transition to better jobs in the primary labour market (Turner, Cross and Murphy, 2017). It is also consistent with evidence from the Saudi labour market in which limited opportunity for growth was a barrier to females' career advancement (Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, bad

working conditions in these starting jobs appear to make female workers quit those jobs relatively shortly. This behaviour creates short-tenure jobs (i.e. bridging jobs) as part of their employment history. This pattern seems to be negatively perceived by future employers. It seems to signal a lack of commitment (or job hopping) which translates to low productivity. An outcome that can, similarly, create challenges to upward mobility and increase the likelihood for highly educated females to become trapped in secondary labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). In the same vein, good starting jobs for late career female academics in health sciences colleges, in the semi-government segment, might be explained by a scarcity factor (labour supply-side factor) (e.g. Becker, 1964). There is demand for females in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in the Saudi labour market. However, there are few female graduates from the natural and health sciences compared to the humanities and the social sciences (*Back to Work in a New Economy: Background Paper on the Saudi Labor Market*, 2015).

The concentration of female academics' early career jobs in conventional female occupations (i.e. higher education, healthcare, and TVT), across all three HE segments, implies low entry barriers for female workers to jobs in those sectors. In addition, jobs for female workers in the Saudi labour market seem to largely concentrate in these sectors. The work environment seems more equipped to accommodate female workers in those sectors and hence attract female workers. In particular, flexible working hours and an opportunity to continue postgraduate studies in the HE sector seem to be greatly attractive job characteristics for female workers. They seem to significantly influence their career decisions. This finding is consistent with evidence from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in which a good work environment and working conditions in the government sector were strong factors influencing young citizens' desire for government sector employment (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012). On the other hand, the strong preference of early career female academics in the private segment to work in the industry, over the HE sector, implies that this group's job characteristics might not have much advantage over jobs in the non-HE private sector. This explanation finds support in

the fact that the two attractive working conditions for females in the HE sector, mentioned above, tend to be comparatively less in this segment. Work environments and working conditions that accommodate female workers are significant factors in females' career decisions in a traditional society where gender roles tend to be more pronounced (Zahidi, 2018).

The historically limited education opportunity for females at the tertiary level appears to play a role in their career options. The unavailability of an education opportunity to study desired major appears to lead females to study something different which, in turn, leads to working in a career or line of work that might not be the most desired. Hence, the tertiary education system constitutes a pre-market segmenting factor (Mill, 1909) that seems to mediate female workers' labour market outcomes (i.e. career options). In the Saudi labour market, this can be seen in the concentration of female workers in a few sectors (*Labour Market Survey*, 2019). However, tertiary education witnessed tangible improvements in the last decade in that regard; great expansion of specializations available to females at the college level (e.g. Alruwaili, 2017). In the same vein, the introduction of the government external scholarship program in 2005, equally available to national males and females, seems to counter this historical disadvantage in females' tertiary education (*The Custodian Of The Two Holy Mosques' External Scholarship Program: Qualifying Competencies To Compete In The Labor Market And Scientific Research Globally And Locally*, 2020).

Information about labour market opportunity is instrumental for entering the labour market. The availability of both objective and subjective means to learn about job opportunity to female academics when they first sought employment after completing their tertiary education, in all three segments, rule out issues of incomplete or different job information. Different availability of job information can hamper workers' labour market mobility (Bluestone, 1970) and females' labour market participation (*Back to Work in a New Economy: Background Paper on the Saudi Labor Market*, 2015). Utilizing social networks (i.e. family and friends) in learning about job opportunity is consistent with findings from multiple labour

markets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in which a large share of workers find their jobs through family and friends (Gatti, Angel-Urdinola and Bodor, 2014). In the same vein, the concentration of female workers in the education, healthcare, and TVT sectors might make information on job opportunity and employment benefits in those sectors more available to future female labour market entrants. This can reinforce and perpetuate females' concentrations in the labour market.

6.3.2 Mobility patterns

Mobility in the labour market is a movement between jobs, employers, or sectors/industries. For female workers in the Saudi labour market, job mobility seems to be a requisite for landing a good job. For female academics, across all three segments, their currently held academic job (i.e. good job) is not their first job. Upon tracing the sector of employment (private vs. public.); type of employment (i.e. fixed-term vs. permanent); system organizing the employment relationship (i.e. social insurance vs. civil service), among other working conditions, in the jobs worked by female academics (as part of their employment history), across all segments, two mobility patterns emerge: upward and lateral. It is important to emphasize that previous employment in the private sector is not necessarily associated with bad jobs (or secondary labour market employment) and vice versa for the other two sectors. Job quality is mainly inferred from the quality of employment and working conditions. Although the characteristics of female academics' early career jobs and currently held academic jobs imply in general upward mobility, factors influencing those patterns seem to slightly vary at the segment level as demonstrated below:

6.3.2.1 Government segment

In the government segment, there is an apparent upward movement in female academics' employment history. This seems to occur in relation to employment type (change from fixed-term to permanent); employment system (change from

social insurance system to the more secure and protective civil service system); and working conditions (change from a job security susceptible to market processes to sheltered job security, underdeveloped career ladders and minimal employee training to well-developed career ladders for female workers and high investment in employee training, and from poor fit jobs with qualifications to good fit jobs with qualifications) (discussions of working conditions in this segment can be found in sections 8.3.2.1 and 8.3.3.1 in Chapter 8). In the same vein, government sector standard administrative jobs in female academics' employment history represent lower-tier primary labour market jobs (Piore, 1975) whereas part-time instruction jobs in the same sector represent secondary labour market jobs. The human capital hypothesis does not appear to apply in these jobs (Doeringer and Piore, 1971).

6.3.2.2 Semi-government segment

In the semi-government segment, there is a similarly upward movement in female academics' employment history. However, this pattern is not similarly driven by type of employment and employment system as these remain largely unchanged. The upward pattern seems to be driven by working conditions which include better compensation; employment stability; career ladders and high investment in employee training; and jobs that are a good fit with qualifications (discussions of these working conditions in this segment can be found in sections 8.3.1.2, 8.3.2.2, and 8.3.3.2, respectively, in Chapter 8). Particularly, funded scholarships for postgraduate studies appear to be highly valued by female academics in this segment and significantly influence their career decisions. A possible explanation is that as female academics in this segment have fixed-term employment on the social insurance system, similar to other jobs in the private sector, positive working conditions such as this education opportunity would constitute a comparative advantage.

6.3.2.3 Private segment

In the private segment, movement in female academics' employment history appears more lateral. Both previous and current jobs are fixed-term on the social insurance system along with employers' economic and employment stability highly susceptible to market processes. Furthermore, although there is care for employee training in this segment, it is comparatively less than the other two HE segments (i.e. government and semi-government). This pattern might indicate entrapment in a type of secondary labour market employment for this group (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Perhaps the best advantage the HE sector offers female academics in this segment, over their previous jobs, is well-developed career ladders for female workers and jobs that are a good fit with their qualifications (discussion of this employment condition in this segment can be found in section 8.3.3.3 in Chapter 8).

Overall, female academics, across all segments, seem to experience a good level of mobility in the labour market despite high levels of education (or skills)—a feature commonly associated with low-skill jobs in the labour market (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). A possible explanation for this characteristic is that knowledge and skills acquired from higher levels of education seem transferable and not too specific in a way that restricts their mobility. Higher levels of education seem to facilitate females' mobility from secondary to primary labour market employments and between jobs in the primary labour market. This situation is consistent with Piore's (1975) prediction of higher worker mobility in the upper-tier of the primary labour market. Another possible explanation is that the Saudi labour market, one of a developing country and an emerging market, is evolving and there seems to be demand and appreciation for higher levels of education and advanced skills. In the same vein, although female workers in the Saudi labour market might find themselves having to compromise on the quality of their early career jobs, they seem to be able to move upward from there relatively quickly. It is noteworthy that no informal employment or downward mobility appears in the employment history of female academics across all three segments.

6.3.3 Labour policy

6.3.3.1 All segments

Job nationalization policy, coupled with financial policy taxing the dependents of non-national workers, seem to play an indirect role in expanding females' job opportunity in the wider labour market. Through a mechanism of replacing foreign workers with national workers of equal skill, these policies appear to impact both the demand and supply side of the labour market. On the demand side, they attempt to close the labour cost gap by making foreign workers expensive to employers (through taxation) and creating business incentives for nationals' employment (Hertog, 2018). On the supply side, the financial burden of payable fees for dependents pushes low- and mid-wage foreign workers out of the country. Consequently, jobs that are occupied by foreign workers become vacant and available for nationals including females, especially in the non-nationals dominant private sector (*Labour Market Survey*, 2019). This seems to apply in the private segment in the HE sector as female academics report easier access to academic jobs there (more on this finding can be found in section 7.3.3 of Chapter 7).

Females and racial minorities are commonly characterized as marginal or secondary groups of workers in the labour market segmentation (LMS) literature (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Howell and Reese, 1986; Hudson, 2007). This might make the role of job nationalization policy seems as merely replacing one marginal group (i.e. foreign workers) with another (i.e. female workers) which might not be very accurate in this research context. Institutional change in the labour market seeks to increase female labour market participation and attachment in a sustainable manner (*Vision 2030*, 2016). Furthermore, social change is not only occurring at the labour market level but also at the legal and social level (i.e. education, labour and family laws). There is special attention paid to career ladders for female workers in newly emerging labour markets (e.g. Alhashmi, 2018). Hence, females' career prospects show more potential than merely replacing low-skill low-wage foreign workers in the Saudi labour market.

Lastly, tighter regulation of worker rights to improve worker protection on one hand and education and upskilling policy on the other seem to enhance the quality of jobs available to female workers. Furthermore, some of the historically male-exclusive internal labour markets in Saudi Arabia are opening up to female workers (i.e. aviation, police, military, and ministry of justice) (Alhashmi, 2018). These are public sectors where jobs tend to be good and have well-developed career ladders. In other words, good jobs that were once only available to males are now gradually becoming accessible to females in the Saudi labour market. From a LMST perspective (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), this labour market change seems to be creating more ports of entry for female workers to well-developed labour markets. In other words, it seems to expand females' job opportunity in the wider labour market and improve the quality of jobs available to them. In the same vein, the removal of institutional barriers through changes in the law (e.g. lifting of the driving ban) and government initiatives aimed at facilitating female labour force participation (i.e. transportation and childcare subsidies for female workers) are expected to have a positive impact on the economic participation of females whom those factors used to constitute a barrier to their employment (e.g. Aldawsari, 2016; Hodges, 2017).

6.3.4 Comparative section by segment

A disadvantaged entry to the wider labour market characterizes female academics' labour market entry experiences in all three segments of the sector—government, semi-government, and private. Limited job opportunity for female workers in the Saudi labour market appears to be an overarching structural obstacle. Jobs for female workers seem to largely concentrate in conventional female occupations (i.e. higher education, healthcare, and TVT). This barrier appears to assign highly educated female job-seekers, in all three segments, to a type of secondary labour market employment, at least temporarily in their early career life. Low employment stability, underdeveloped career ladders, and lack of employee training characterize those jobs. Female academics' navigation of these structural barriers shapes their

job mobility patterns. Slightly different factors seem to influence those patterns at the segment level as demonstrated in the following:

In the government segment, the upward movement in female academics' employment history seems to be largely driven by changes in employment type and system from their previous jobs and current academic job. Furthermore, higher employment stability, well-developed career ladders, employee training, and job matching qualifications are working conditions that seem to equally drive their upward mobility in the labour market (for more on segment-level variation in mobility patterns refer to section 6.3.2 of this chapter).

In the semi-government segment, upward movement similarly characterizes movements between jobs in the employment history of female academics in this segment. However, this pattern seems to be largely driven by working conditions (i.e. compensation, employment stability, career ladders, employee training; and jobs matching qualifications). Employment type and system are largely unchanged in current academic job from previous jobs for this group (for more on segment-level variation in mobility patterns refer to section 6.3.2 of this chapter).

In the private segment, movement in female academics' employment history appears more lateral. There is no change in employment type and system in current academic job from previous jobs. Although compensation is competitive and there are well-developed career ladders for female workers in this segment, employment stability is not high and employee training is comparatively less than the other two segments. This pattern and working conditions might indicate entrapment in a type of secondary labour market employment for this group (Doeringer and Piore, 1971) (for more on segment-level variation in mobility patterns refer to section 6.3.2 of this chapter). The following table 6.13 summarizes the key findings on female academics' entry to the wider labour market across the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private).

Table 6.13 Key Findings on Female Academics' Entry to the Wider Labour Market across the Three Key Higher Education Segments

Disadvantaged Entry to the Wider Labour Market		
Government segment	**Semi-government segment**	**Private segment**
Limited job opportunity is the biggest structural obstacle females face in entering the labour market. Jobs for female workers concentrate in conventional female occupations (i.e. higher education, healthcare, and TVT)		
Limited job opportunity assigns highly educated female job-seekers to a type of secondary labour market employment in their early career life		
There is an upward movement in the current academic job from previously worked jobs that is driven by changes in employment system, employment type, and better working conditions in the current job	There is an upward movement in the current academic job from previously worked jobs that is driven by better working conditions in the current job	There is a lateral movement between previously worked jobs and current academic jobs. The similarity in the employment and working conditions of previous and current jobs shapes this pattern

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter reflected on the wider labour market structure for female workers in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the chapter explored female academics' labour market entry and mobility patterns and the characteristics of their early career jobs. These aspects were explored by investigating female academics' employment history across all three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). Hence, this chapter answers the first research question exploring the employment history of female academics and its implications for the labour market structure for female workers in Saudi Arabia. On the whole, a disadvantaged entry to the wider labour market seems to be largely driven by the structural obstacle of limited job opportunity for female workers in the Saudi labour market. This barrier has negative implications for female workers. It seems to assign highly educated female job-seekers to a type of secondary labour market employment in their early career life which creates challenges in their upward mobility. This barrier also creates concentrations in the labour market by sorting female workers into sectors with conventional female occupations. These sectors seem to have low entry barriers for female workers and comparatively more equipped to accommodate female workers.

Slightly different factors seem to shape female academics' job mobility patterns. Employment type and system appear to be the strongest factors driving upward mobility for female academics in the government segment. In the semi-government segment, upward job mobility appears to be largely driven by good working conditions (i.e. high compensation, career ladders, employee training, and employment stability) in current academic job. In the private segment, slight upward mobility exists in relation to well-developed career ladders for female workers in their current academic job compared to previous jobs. Other employment and working conditions indicate lateral movements which might indicate entrapment in a type of secondary labour market employment for this group. In the same vein, labour policy is predicted to expand females' job opportunity in the wider labour market by opening up new labour markets and replacing foreign workers. Finally, this chapter provided an in-depth discussion of the challenges faced by female academics on entering the labour market after completing their tertiary-level education and the characteristics of their early career jobs in light of the literature review and research context. The following chapter will report the second theme in the thematic framework.

Chapter Seven: Structural Variation in Entry to the Higher Education Labour Market

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the second theme in the thematic framework. It reports participants' entry experiences to the higher education labour market. Learning about these experiences is crucial for understanding the higher education labour market structure and entry to academic jobs for female workers. Verbatim quotes from the dataset are provided to illustrate participants' experiences across the three segments of the sector, highlight areas of convergence and divergence in their experiences, and make the link between raw data and the emergent theme clear. Lastly, this chapter is organized into three sections: a findings section, a discussion section, and a conclusion. The findings section reports the research findings by segment (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). The discussion section interprets the research findings in light of the literature review and research context. Finally, the conclusion relates the findings to the research questions.

7.2 Findings

This section reports the research findings on ports of entry to academic jobs in the higher education sector by segment—government, semi-government, and private. The findings reported under this subtheme, ports of entry, include the academic job rank participants were first hired on; length of employment process; change in quality of jobs held in the HE sector; and means of learning about job opportunity in the HE sector. The section is organized in the following way: government segment—controlled ports of entry; semi-government segment—mixed ports of entry; and private segment—uncontrolled ports of entry.

7.2.1 Government Segment—Controlled entry

Most participants in the government segment were hired as teaching assistants (TAs) [50%] followed by assistant professors [30%] and lecturers [20%], respectively. A few participants shared their experienced difficulty in accessing non-entry-level academic jobs in government HEIs—jobs above a TA job. The following participant applied for an academic job with a Master's degree at a government university but her education level obstructed her access to employment there:

> *'when I went to apply at [a government university] they didn't accept me because I had a Master's. They told me that we only take either Bachelor's and then we send you to do a Master's and PhD or you'd have a PhD.'* (P.33 / semi-gov. / late career)

This difficulty was echoed in another participant's experience in applying for an academic job at a government university with a PhD degree:

> *'I was applying for the university and it took a long long time for the papers to go through…because I wasn't sent on scholarship by the university. It is a really really slow process if you weren't sent by the university.'* (P.35 / gov. / late career)

The difficulty experienced in accessing employment in academic jobs in government HEIs included the long waiting time for a job to become available. The majority of participants working in this segment mentioned waiting a long time between applying for the job and getting hired on the job. Waiting time ranged between months to years as illustrated in the following extracts:

> *'They honestly took a long time. I did many interviews in Riyadh...About 5-6 months. Too long.'* (P.11 / gov. / early career)
>
> *'I applied for [a government university]…I went and did a personal interview and they never got back to me…and then suddenly after almost two years they called me and told me I was accepted. I thought they forgot about me. I was sure they found someone else.'* (P.13 / gov. / mid career)

'I was applying for the university and it took a long long time; it took a year and a half' (P.35 / gov. / late career)

The following participant explained the process of job creation in a government university as she experienced it:

'I sent them [the government university] my certificates, recommendation letters, transcripts, and the job application and statement of purpose. They checked them and called me back and told me we reviewed your papers and would like to have you with us but we don't have available jobs at the moment because in universities each college in the beginning of the year gets notified about the number of jobs available to hire for. So they told me when we get posts we will contact you and this is what happened; they contacted me after approximately three months and notified me about the job interview date. I showed up for the interview and passed it and about a month later I got the official hiring decision.' (P.32 / gov. / late career)

Academic jobs appear to be created incrementally in government HEIs which result in long waiting times to hear back on job applications. This situation drove some participants to seek employment in the private sector for the meantime as illustrated in the following quotes:

'I stayed for approximately over a year until I got hired to the point that I signed a three-year contract with the company I was working with.' (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

'I was waiting for the job after I got back from The States and it didn't come I was like okay what to do now? …while I have already applied…The people who called me about the newspaper job knew that I have applied at the university and said we know it is going to take a long time, work with us until you get the university job.' (P.35 / gov. / late career)

In the same vein, a participant in this segment experienced two different qualities of jobs in the higher education labour market. The following participant, we will call her case (A), started work in the higher education sector as a collaborator language instructor in the college of social sciences at a government university:

> *'I worked as a collaborator English instructor with them for one semester'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)

Her job had poor working conditions as demonstrated in the following quote:

> *'It was an impermanent job; a temporary job, semester-based contract…it was insecure…It also doesn't have retirement pension or any consistent rights other than the monthly salary'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)

Soon after that, she was offered a permanent academic job in another government university:

> *'I'm a lecturer in the English language department in the college of languages and translation at [a government university] in Riyadh.'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)

The working conditions of this subsequent job were much better than her previous job as expressed in the following quotes:

> *'[compensations] for TAs and lecturers it is very reasonable and suitable'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)

> *'The job security is high and this is in general for workers in the government sector. The disciplinary and termination policies are almost non-existent unless the employee does something very big.'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)

Lastly, the predominant source of knowledge about job opportunity in the higher education labour market utilized by participants in this segment was employer website followed by job advertising websites and family/friends, equally. No significant different at the career-level existed in that regard.

7.2.2 Semi-government—Mixed entry

The majority of participants in the semi-government segment were hired as TAs [67%] followed by lecturers [33%]. No PhD-holder was directly hired as an assistant professor or above in this segment. All PhD-holding participants were promoted internally after successfully completing their employer-funded studies. Furthermore, participants' experiences in accessing employment in this segment varied between easy and challenging considering the time passing between applying for the job and hearing back on job application. Some participants got hired fairly fast, two to three months since they applied as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'Two months after I graduated'* (P.18 / semi-gov. / early career)
>
> *'they said ok we will get back to you and at the time it was holiday because it was Shaba'an [month 8]. I got a reply from them around Thu Al-Qida [month 11] that you got accepted'* (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

While the process took longer for others, more than six months in some cases as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'eight months after applying, if not more, I get a message that there is an interview on that date.'* (P.36 / semi-gov. / mid career)
>
> *'I applied my papers and stayed for about six months until I started'* (P.33 / semi-gov. / late career)

There was a career-level difference in the employment experience of participants in this segment. The process appeared easier and faster for early careers while it was longer for mid- and late-careers. In the same vein, it is noteworthy that both the social insurance system and the civil service system are followed in the employment of national academics in the semi-government segment. Although the former appear to be the predominant system. Almost[37] all participants working in the semi-government HEI had fixed-term employment (i.e. annual contracts) on the social insurance system. However, every once and a while a few jobs would become available on the civil service system and faculty would be notified about them in case they wanted to transfer to the other system. This situation is best demonstrated in the following quote:

> '*the dean one time told us that by the way there are lecturer jobs on the civil service if you like to apply for.'* (P.15 / semi-gov. / late career)

Another participant was hired on a fixed-term basis but was promised permanent employment, through a transfer to the civil service system, once she leaves to continue her studies abroad:

> '*Mine is not contract because after we left for our studies abroad they changed our employment type to government employees…they told us then that if you leave [for studies abroad] you'll get permanent employment and this is what happened.'*
> (P.16 / semi-gov. / mid career)

She also pointed out that permanent employment was uncommon among academics in her institution by citing their small number across the university three branches:

[37] Almost here means all except for one participant.

'we were approximately 46 persons across the three regions' (P.16 / semi-gov. / mid career)

On a related note, a participant in this segment experienced two different qualities of jobs in the higher education labour market. The following participant, we will call her case (B), started work in the higher education sector as a collaborator language instructor in the language institute at a government university:

'I worked as a collaborator in [government university] for a semester and a month… A lecturer in the language institute.' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

Her part-time job had poor working conditions as illustrated in the following quotes. On compensation she commented:

'If you have a collaborating job with them it means you forget about your money. You get it after four or five years and this is what actually happened' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

Furthermore, her employment at the institute was terminated without notice:

'the following semester they also asked me to help them and I came and worked for a month but they then said we no longer need you through a WhatsApp message and this is how work ended.' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

However, her following job was a full-time academic job at a semi-government university:

'I work as a lecturer at [semi-government university] in the English department.' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

'it is a contract that gets renewed every year' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

This subsequent job had good working conditions as illustrated in her following comments:

> *'We only have transportation and housing allowance…our basic salary is excellent.'* (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

> *'I feel we have job security…no one can get you out of the job unless with a court order, in an ethical case or something like that'* (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

Lastly, the predominant source of knowledge about job opportunity in the higher education labour market utilized by participants in this segment was newspaper and family/friends, respectively. A slight career-level difference in that regard is that the newspaper was the predominant knowledge means for mid-careers while it was family/friends for early-careers, and no particular predominant means for late-careers.

7.2.3 Private Segment—Uncontrolled entry

Participants in the private segment were hired at various ranks of the academic job—i.e. TAs, lecturers, and assistant professors. The data indicate a more proportionate distribution in access to the various ranks of the academic job as the following: [38%] of participants in this segment were first hired as TAs; [37%] as lecturers; and [25%] as assistant professors. On the whole, participants' entry experiences to academic jobs in private HEIs appear to not be difficult, as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'three months after I got my Master's diploma, I joined [a private university]'* (P.29 / private / late career)

> *'there was big welcoming honestly from the private sector so it was a very easy access.'* (P.39 / private / late career)

'the process was very easy and very smooth and I got the job right away.' (P.26 / private / mid career)

Furthermore, previous private HE employers constituted a re-entry point for some participants who exited the labour market to continue their studies abroad and returned as illustrated in the following quotes:

'I work as a lecturer at [a private university], before, I used to work as a TA for two years and then I joined the abroad scholarship program…when I got back I reapplied at the university and became a lecturer.' (P.8 / private / early career)

'I started with [a private university] since 2013. I used to work there before, in 2006 and 2007, I was a lecturer, I had a Master's and was teaching and then left to get my second Master's and PhD and after that when I returned, I became the vice dean when the college had just been established' (P.29 / private / late career)

In the same vein, a participant in this segment experienced two different qualities of the same academic job within the same private HEI. We will call her case (C). This participant was first hired as a part-time lecturer for a year before she became a full-time lecturer in the same scientific department, as demonstrated in the following quote:

'they hired me as a part-timer for a semester and the next semester they also said we want you as a part-timer and the third semester they wanted to also hire me as a part-timer but I said if you'll hire me as part-timer I will leave…you either give me a full-job or leave me and I'll go find myself a job somewhere else. Here they said ok fine.' (P.38 / private / early career)

Her now full-time job has higher compensation with the addition of allowances as illustrated in the following extract:

'I feel that with the allowances it [the salary] is fair but without allowances it is not fair at all.' (P.38 / private / early career)

Furthermore, although objective employment stability in private HEIs is not the highest in the sector, she perceived it positively in her current job:

'There is honestly no threatening, I'm not afraid. I can tell you yes there is job security.' (P.38 / private / early career)

On a related note, the government external scholarship program appear to affect the career progression of almost all participants in this segment. In particular, it seems to facilitate participants' access to employment at the different ranks of the academic job in private HEIs. The following table illustrates the type of funding exploited by participants in continuing their postgraduate studies in this segment:

Table 7.1 Funding Exploited by Participants in the Private Segment to Continue Postgraduate Studies

P. ID	Career Level	Employer-funded Postgraduate Studies	Government-funded Postgraduate Studies
8	Early		X
22			X
38			X
26	Mid		X
37			X
29	Late		X
34			X
39			X
Total		0	8

It is noteworthy that availing of this program facilitated the job advancement of a few participants within the same private HEI. That is, participants exited the institution at one job rank (e.g. TA) and re-entered at a higher job rank (e.g. lecturer or assistant professor) after successfully completing their government-funded studies. This existed in the experiences of P.8 and P.29 above where they reapplied for the next-in-rank job at the same private HEI they left to continue their studies.

Lastly, the two predominant sources of knowledge about job opportunity in the higher education labour market utilized by participants in this segment were family/friends and contact by employer followed by in-person visits to employer. No significant difference at the career-level. No significant different at the career-level existed in that regard.

7.2.4 Summary

The findings above showed that access to employment in academic jobs, across the different job ranks, was the most proportionate in the private segment followed by the government segment. The semi-government segment exhibited the strongest preference for hiring at the entry-level (i.e. TA jobs) with more than half of participants in this segment hired, at first, as TAs and no participant hired as an assistant professor or above. In the same vein, participants' access to academic jobs in the private segment appear to be facilitated by their exploitation of the government scholarship program. Second, the employment process was the lengthiest in the government segment where it took up to years from applying to hiring. In the semi-government segment, it was common for the process to take months. In the private segment, the employment process ranged between immediate to a few months. Third, academic jobs were created by the state in the government segment and in one of the employment systems followed on the semi-government segment (i.e. civil service). In the private segment, jobs appeared to be created based on demand at the organizational level. Due to the increment job creation process and the resulting long waiting times to get hired, many participants in the government segment sought employment in the private sector, temporarily, as they wait for their desired academic job to become available. Fourth, there were three cases of change in job quality within the higher education labour market, one case in each segment. This change was in the form of transformation from a part-time fixed-term instruction job to a full-time permanent lecturer job in the government segment. In the semi-government segment, it was a transformation from a part-time instruction job to a full-time lecturer job, both

fixed-term. In the private segment, the change was similarly a transformation from a part-time lecturer job to a full-time lecturer job. Lastly, participants utilized both objective (e.g. websites, newspapers, in-person visits to employers, contact by employer) and subjective means (e.g. family/friends) in learning about job opportunity in the higher education labour market.

7.3 Discussion

This section discusses the research findings on ports of entry to academic jobs in the HE sector by segment—government, semi-government, and private. In addition, the impact of education policy on female workers in the Saudi labour market is discussed holistically under the subheading *'Education policy'*. Lastly, a '*comparative section by segment'* summarizes the key similarities and differences between the segments in relation to ports of entry and female academics' employment experiences.

7.3.1 Government segment

In the government segment, long waiting times to get employed in academic jobs imply control in entry to those jobs. The waiting time appears to be largely unrelated to a recruitment or selection process but jobs becoming available. The employment system seems to be a significant instrument in that process. The state appears to create a number of academic jobs on the civil service employment system which gets allocated to government HEIs. These HEIs would then have the discretion to recruit and select suitable applicants for those jobs. This incremental job creation indicates that jobs in this segment are not created in response to market factors but institutionally. Furthermore, this employment characteristic implies job rationing in this segment; a characteristic commonly associated with the primary labour market (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Berger and Piore, 1980). These institutional factors seem to create barriers to accessing upper-tier government jobs in the HE sector for highly educated female workers. This finding is consistent

with evidence from the American labour market in which structural factors differentiated employment for female workers (Bridges, 1980).

In the same vein, control of ports of entry in this segment is a strong indicator of internal labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Female academics' employment in jobs above TAs (i.e. above entry level) might seem inconsistent with the internal labour markets hypothesis about ports of entry at certain job classifications (commonly entry level). This finding might be explained from the labour supply side. There might be a scarcity of eligible female workers with the appropriate skills to occupy academic jobs. This supply-side factor might have necessitated an increase in ports of entry (i.e. hiring PhD holders as assistant professors) in this segment to allow for the recruitment of eligible females at whichever level they might exist. On the other hand, ports of entry for highly educated females are consistent with one of LMST hypotheses which posits an association between skill level and mobility (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Piore, 1975). What seems to apply, in particular, is the association between high skill and high mobility in the upper tier of the primary labour market (Piore, 1975)—i.e. academic jobs in the HE sector.

The long waiting times for jobs to become available in this segment seem to lead female applicants to develop strategies to navigate these barriers. A salient strategy appears to be to seek employment in the private sector as a temporary alternative while queueing for government academic jobs. This *per se* implies that the private sector has lower entry barriers. Queueing for upper-tier government jobs in the HE sector by female job-seekers does not seem to be based so much on training costs (Thurow, 1975, 1979) as much as on job availability—i.e. jobs created by the state (institutional factor). This queueing behaviour is partially consistent with evidence from labour markets in the MENA region where job seekers queue for government employment (Gatti, Morgandi and Grun, 2013; Gatti, Angel-Urdinola and Bodor, 2014). However, as they queue they tend to remain idle and unproductive while female job-seekers in the Saudi labour market appear to seek employment in the private sector meanwhile and not remain idle. Furthermore,

queueing for primary sector jobs is consistent with evidence from the American labour market (Dickens and Lang, 1985). In the same vein, job rationing in the government segment of HE does not seem to cause worker immobility. Female workers seem able to find employment in the private sector while they wait for their desired type of employment in the government sector.

Change in the quality of academic jobs held within the government segment of HE, namely employment type and job characteristics (change from a part-time fixed-term instruction job to a full-time permanent lecturer job), implies an existence of a two-tier system in academic jobs in this segment. This division is consistent with one of the dual labour market theory hypotheses which posit an existence of an upper and lower tier in the primary labour market (Piore, 1975). It is also consistent with evidence from the German labour market which found within-sector segmentation in public sector employment (Beck, 1998). This finding can also be an indicator of the difficulty experienced by female workers in accessing good jobs in this segment from the beginning. Gradual improvement in job quality seems to characterize female academics' careers in this segment. Work experience in the HE sector, albeit in lower-tier jobs, seems to support female workers' upward mobility in the sector. These jobs might be signalling commitment and productivity to future HE employers. They seem to bridge female workers' transition from secondary to primary labour market employments in the HE sector.

7.3.2 Semi-government segment

In the semi-government segment, entry to academic jobs seems to be similarly controlled. However, control seems to be exercised through employment practices as opposed to the employment system. The two employment systems followed in the employment of national academics in this segment (i.e. the civil service system and social insurance system), compared to the single employment system in the government segment, can be expected to create more ports of entry for female workers to academics jobs in this segment. However, this does not seem to be the case. The semi-government segment exhibits strong preference for employing

academics at the entry level and promoting internally. Although academic jobs are incrementally created on the civil service system in this segment, this system appears to be rarely used compared to the social insurance system. Hence, this normative employment practice seems to be a significant process of control in access to academic jobs in this segment. Apart from the employment practice, access to academic jobs in this segment appears to be a function of labour demand at the organizational level. This finding is consistent with evidence from the American labour market in which structural factors differentiated employment for female workers (Bridges, 1980). From a LMST perspective, this institutional practice represents a non-economic barrier to accessing upper-tier primary labour market jobs for highly educated females (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Furthermore, control in ports of entry and preference for employment at the entry level are both indicators of internal labour markets. In the same vein, the combination of this normative practice and the two employment systems might explain the mixed access experiences to academic jobs in this segment. The semi-government segment exhibits no signs of a two-tier system in academic jobs. This might be because this segment is comparatively smaller and relatively new in the sector. However, the change in female academics' job quality from part-time instruction jobs in other segments to full-time lecturer jobs in this segment evince the existence of a two-tier system in academic jobs in the wider HE sector.

7.3.3 Private segment

In the private segment, the comparatively easier and quicker access to academic jobs implies weak institutional control or barriers. Employment in academic jobs in this segment seems to be largely a function of market factors (or labour demand at the organizational level). This employment characteristic implies a competitive external labour market in the private segment (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). In the same vein, job queueing based on training costs seems to apply in this segment. Private HEIs seem to exploit the graduates of the government external scholarship program. This seems to occur not only in prioritizing their selection for the job but the segment's proactive recruitment effort which involves contacting graduates

about job opportunities. This program's female graduates seem to represent a high-skill low-training-cost group of workers as the government has incurred their training costs (i.e. postgraduate education). This worker characteristic substantially lowers their training costs for future employers and seems to make them attractive. This change of attitude by private HEIs toward the employment of national academics seems to be driven by policy (Proven, 2017b) and supply-side factors (i.e. workers characteristics) (cf. section 3.3.1.3.2 Attitudes of private employers toward national workers of Chapter 3 in this thesis).

Change in the quality of academic jobs held within the private segment of HE, namely employment form (change from a part-time lecturer job to a full-time lecturer job), implies an existence of a two-tier system in academic jobs in this segment. It might also be early signs of academic workers' casualization or the emergence of flexible teaching-only cohorts in the sector (e.g. Shelton *et al.*, 2001; Cardozo, 2017). This division is consistent with one of the dual labour market theory hypotheses which posit an existence of an upper and lower tier in the primary labour market (Piore, 1975). In the same vein, work experience in the segment, albeit in lower-tier jobs, seems to support female workers' upward mobility in within the same segment. These jobs might be signalling commitment and productivity to future HE employers. They seem to bridge female workers' transition from secondary to primary labour market employments in the HE sector and sometimes in the same HEI.

Finally, in all segments, the availability and utilization of both objective and subjective means in learning about job opportunity in the HE sector by female academics rule out issues of incomplete or different job information. Different availability of job information can hamper workers' labour market mobility (Bluestone, 1970) and females' labour market participation (*Back to Work in a New Economy: Background Paper on the Saudi Labor Market*, 2015). Utilizing social networks (i.e. family and friends) in learning about job opportunity is consistent with findings from labour markets in the MENA region in which a large share of

workers find their jobs through family and friends (Gatti, Angel-Urdinola and Bodor, 2014).

7.3.4 Education policy

7.3.4.1 All segments

The government external scholarship program is part of education policy to improve the skills of national labour. The program supported many females in attaining higher levels of education. This seems to facilitate females' access to good jobs in the wider labour market, including academic jobs in all segments of the HE sector. This outcome is consistent with evidence from the UAE labour market in which females' postgraduate levels of education significantly improved their earnings in the private sector and employability in the public sector (Al-Waqfi and Al-Faki, 2015). Furthermore, females' investment in education (i.e. human capital) seems to signal higher labour force attachment to future employers. This assumed direction of causation stands in contrast to evidence from the American labour market in which females' increased labour force attachment was argued to lead to an increase in their human capital investment (Friedberg, Lang and Dickens, 1988). In addition, the scholarship program seems to support females' upward mobility through overcoming labour market entry barriers. The program's impact on female workers in the Saudi labour market seems to resemble that of occupational origins (Tolbert, 1982) and migration (Howell and Reese, 1986) in the upward mobility of male workers and minority workers in the American labour market, respectively.

The scholarship program seems to not only affect the supply side of the labour market but also the demand side. Private HE employers seem to become motivated to employ qualified national females who received their postgraduate education abroad. This change of attitude by private HE employers toward the employment of national academics seems to be driven by labour policy and training costs benefits (i.e. postgraduate education costs incurred by the government) (for more on labour policy and females' job opportunity refer to section 6.3.3 of

Chapter 6 in this thesis). Graduates of the external scholarship program seem to represent an attractive group of workers for both public and private employers (i.e. high-skill low-training-cost group). This change on the demand side (i.e. private employers' attitudes) seems to benefit female workers in two ways, namely expanding their job opportunity and advancing their order in the queue for good jobs in the labour market including the HE sector (Thurow, 1975). Upskilled by the program, females seem to have more ports of entry to academic jobs across all segments of the HE sector which support their career advancement. Lastly, the return of large numbers of female graduates from the external scholarship program, with degrees in different fields, can *per se* impact the labour market structure for female workers in Saudi Arabia; expand job opportunity by creating new labour markets.

7.3.5 Comparative section by segment

Variation in female academics' experiences of accessing employment in academic jobs at the segment level implies heterogeneous ports of entry in the sector. In the government segment, access to academic jobs seems to be largely controlled through the civil service employment system—i.e. the common employment system for national academics in this segment. Academic jobs appear to be created incrementally by the state on that employment system. This practice implies job rationing in this segment. Furthermore, this situation appears to create job queuing by female workers that seems to be largely based on job availability in this segment. Furthermore, a two-tier system seems to exist in this segment through difference in job quality of similar jobs within the same segment. This characteristic can be considered an indicator of the difficulty experienced by female workers in accessing a good academic job in this segment from the beginning. Furthermore, work experience in the segment seems to support female academics' upward mobility—i.e. better job in the same segment. Lastly, control in ports of entry to academic jobs through the employment system implies internal labour markets in this segment.

In the semi-government segment, access to academic jobs seems to be largely controlled through a strong preference for employment at the entry-level (i.e. TA jobs). Although this segment has two employment systems for the employment of national academics, namely the civil service system and the social insurance system, it appears to largely use the latter. Hence, this normative practice seems to be a significant process of control in access to academic jobs in this segment. Apart from the employment practice, access to academic jobs in this segment appears to be a function of labour demand at the organizational level. Furthermore, the segment exhibits no signs of a two-tier system in academic jobs. This might be because this segment is comparatively smaller and relatively new in the sector. Lastly, control in ports of entry to academic jobs through normative employment practices implies internal labour markets in this segment. Furthermore, the combination of normative practices and the two employment systems might explain the mixed experiences with regard to difficulty in accessing academic jobs in this segment.

In the private segment, the comparatively easier and quicker access to academic jobs imply weak institutional control or barriers. Access to academic jobs appears to be largely a function of market factors (i.e. labour demand) which implies a competitive external labour market in this segment. Furthermore, this segment's large employment of the graduates of the government external scholarship program implies the application of job queueing based on training costs. As the government has incurred their training costs (i.e. postgraduate education), the program's female graduates seem to be attractive to private HE employers. They represent a high-skill low-training-cost group of workers. Furthermore, a two-tier system seems to exist in this segment through difference in job quality of similar jobs within the same segment. This characteristic might indicate an emergence of academic workers' casualization or flexible teaching-only cohorts in the segment. Furthermore, work experience in the segment seems to support female academics' upward mobility within the same segment.

In all segments, the utilization of both objective and subjective means in learning about job opportunity in the HE sector by female academics rule out issues of incomplete or different job information. Furthermore, education policy (i.e. government external scholarship program) seems to expand females' job opportunity and advance their order in the queue for academic jobs in all segments of the HE sector. The following table 7.2 summarizes the key findings on female academics' entry to academic jobs in the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private).

Table 7.2 Key Findings on Female Academics' Entry to Academic Jobs in the Three Key Higher Education Segments

Structural Variation in Entry to the Higher Education Labour Market		
Government segment	**Semi-government segment**	**Private segment**
The employment system is the strongest control process in access to academic jobs	The normative practice of employment at the entry-level is the strongest control process in access to academic jobs	No significant institutional control in access to academic jobs
Queueing for academic jobs is based on job availability. Academic jobs are rationed by the civil service employment system	Apart from normative employment at the entry-level, access to academic jobs is a function of labour demand at the organizational level	Queueing for academic jobs is based on training costs and labour demand at the organizational level. Graduates of the external government scholarship program are prioritized in access to employment in academic jobs
A two-tier system exists in academic jobs—i.e. different job quality of similar jobs	No signs of a two-tier system in academic jobs	A two-tier system exists in academic jobs—i.e. different job quality of similar jobs
Work experience in this segment bridges female workers' transition from secondary to primary labour market employments in the same segment	No transitions from secondary to primary labour market employments in this segment	Work experience in this segment bridges female workers' transition from secondary to primary labour market employments in the same segment

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter reflected on female academics' access to employment in academic jobs in the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). These employment experiences were explored for a deeper understanding of the HE labour market structure for female workers, focusing on ports of entry to academic jobs. This chapter answers the first research question exploring the

labour market structure for female workers through investigating employment experiences and the second research question exploring the impact of institutional factors on academic jobs. Variation in experiences of accessing employment in academic jobs at the segment level implies heterogeneous ports of entry in the sector. Institutional factors, namely employment system and normative employment practices, seem to differentiate entry to academic jobs in the different segments of the HE sector.

State control through the employment system appears to be the strongest control process in access to academic jobs in the government segment. In the semi-government segment, employment at the entry level, as a normative practice, appears to be the strongest control process in access to the same jobs. In the private segment, access to academic jobs seems to be largely set by market factors (i.e. labour demand). These characteristics of access to academic jobs point to the existence of internal and external labour markets in the HE sector. The private segment seems to operate in an external competitive labour market where access to academic jobs is largely a function of market factors. On the other hand, the government and semi-government segments exhibit internal labour markets characteristics where institutional factors significantly influence access to the same jobs. Furthermore, incremental job creation in the government segment through the employment system implies job rationing in this segment of the sector. Also, a two-tier system in academic jobs seems to exist in the government and private segments through differences in the job quality of similar jobs in these segments. Lastly, education policy (i.e. government external scholarship program) seems to impact the demand side of the labour market by expanding females' job opportunity and advancing their order in the queue for academic jobs in the HE sector. Particularly, it seems to create more ports of entry to academic jobs for female workers in the government and semi-government segments and more positive attitudes toward the employment of national female academics in the private segment.

Finally, combination of institutional, normative, and market factors differentiates access to academic jobs in the HE sector. This implies segmentation in the sector along ports of entry to academic jobs in the different segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private) through different processes. This chapter reported and provided an in-depth discussion of female academics' employment experiences in the three key HE segments in light of the literature review and research context. The following chapter will report the third theme in the thematic framework.

Chapter Eight: Structural Variation in the Employment Conditions of Academic Jobs in the Higher Education Labour Market

8.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the third theme in the thematic framework. The chapter reports the employment conditions in academic jobs (i.e. compensation, employment stability, and career ladders) as perceived by participants from different career levels and segments of the HE sector. Verbatim quotes from the dataset are provided to illustrate participants' employment conditions including similarities and differences. Quotes are also provided to make the link between raw data and the emergent theme clear. Lastly, this chapter is organized into three sections: a findings section, a discussion section, and a conclusion. The findings section reports the research findings by segment (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). The discussion section interprets the research findings in light of the literature review and research context. Finally, the conclusion relates the findings to the research questions.

8.2 Findings

This section reports the research findings on the employment conditions in academic jobs in the HE sector under three subthemes: compensation competitiveness, employment stability, and career ladders. Compensation competitiveness reports participants' perceptions of their salary and any financial benefits in their jobs. Employment stability reports participants' perceptions of job security in their jobs. Career ladders report the opportunity available for participants in their jobs for career progression. The findings under each subtheme are reported by segment—government, semi-government, and private.

8.2.1 Compensation competitiveness

Participants' perceptions of their compensation varied across segments of the HE sector—government, semi-government, and private. In general, compensation was perceived as competitive in the private segment; uncompetitive in the government segment; and superior in the semi-government segment as reported below:

8.2.1.1 Government segment—uncompetitive

The majority of participants in the government segment expressed dissatisfaction with their compensation and perceived it as uncompetitive. Participants from different career levels described their compensation as unfair as illustrated in the following ways:

> *'if you do a Master's and see how people like you are getting paid you get shocked, like in the Commission for Health Specialties; the Royal Commission for Jubail; and the Food and Drug Authority. Your peers in these places with the same qualifications are getting a higher basic salary. For us, with all the allowances and everything we don't reach their basic salary. So you get shocked here. It is unfair that you have a Master's and get paid this.'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)
>
> *'I don't think this is fair at all and the salary itself is not compatible neither with the academic rank nor the hard work we did in the years of our life in order to get these degrees nor with the nature of work and when you see people in your same age and same experience and same giving and same abilities and qualifications and everything and they are getting either double your salary or 60-70% more than yours. It is frustrating honestly.'* (P.25 / gov. / mid career)
>
> *'The basic salary is not aligned with neither the degree nor the job tasks.'* (P.35 / gov. / late career)

They also perceived their compensation to be insufficient and creating a need to supplement their income with other sources:

> *'It [the salary] is not suitable to the point that I'm seriously looking for.. seeking other opportunities outside the academic sector'* (P.25 / gov. / mid career)
>
> *'many people take on a second job and work on the side, like with a research centre because it is considered little…honestly it is not sufficient.'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)

Participants in the government segment seem to judge the fairness of their compensation by comparing it with other individuals who have similar qualifications in other sectors/industries; scientific degree; and effort. Furthermore, participants pointed out the need for adjusting the wage structure for their jobs to match changes in labour market opportunity:

> *'the pay scales have not been adjusted in many years…it needs to match the things we are now seeing; they removed the high cost of living allowance and increased taxes and all that. So there is change but it has not been adjusted to match it.'* (P.12 / gov. / late career)
>
> *'the pay scale needs some amendment, especially with the commissions and these things that are coming up.'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)

Participants also pointed out the considerable size of allowances comprising their compensation package and the fact that allowances are not stable:

> '*45% of our salary is allowances and allowances are not a constant part of the income. Officially allowances can be stopped for whatever reason. So this is a little scary'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)

'when you retire the salary is very low; the retirement salary. So after I work hard all these years in the end 60% of my salary is allowances, it would get greatly cut.' (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

On the other hand, participants who worked in the private non-HE sector before working in the government HE sector, perceived the stability and assurance of getting paid their salary in this segment an advantage:

'the salary might not be higher but it is stable. You wouldn't have that this month this happened or this month we will remove that from you. The ladder is clear. You know the increases you will get and the allowances. They are stable and no one can try to remove any of them or take away some of them under any circumstances.' (P.13 / gov. / mid career)

8.2.1.2 Semi-government—superior

The vast majority of participants in the semi-government segment expressed high satisfaction with their compensation. Big part of their satisfaction appears to be drawn from comparing their compensation to those paid by other segments in the sector and finding that they are paid higher, as illustrated in the following extracts:

'compared to other universities we have the highest salary' (P.20 / semi-gov. / early career)

'the salary is maybe among the highest salaries in the university education sector.' (P.19 / semi-gov. / mid career)

'For the same position in other places, it [the salary] is considered better and good.' (P.33 / semi-gov. / late career)

Moreover, as opposed to early-career participants in the private segment, early careers in the semi-government segment expressed satisfaction with their salary. The two late-career participants who were dissatisfied with their compensation did not hold a PhD degree. In the same vein, fringe benefits were exclusively mentioned by participants working in this segment. Participants cited health insurance and housing allowance as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'I've got health insurance for myself and my family.'* (P.36 / semi-gov. / mid career)
>
> *'providing health insurance for me and my family, also my parents, a comprehensive cover. And the places that provide health insurance for parents are few…I'm already comfortable and have a housing allowance.'* (P.15 / semi-gov. / late career)
>
> *'there is accommodation allowance and this is not available in other government universities.'* (P.14 / semi-gov. / early career)

It is also noteworthy that the compensation package of both PhD-holders and non-PhD-holders, in this segment, included a housing allowance. This is a benefit that is not shared by non-PhD-holding participants in the government segment.

8.2.1.3 Private segment—competitive

The majority of participants in the private segment perceived their compensation to be competitive. They were satisfied with their compensation as expressed in the following extracts:

> *'as an academic it is fair and satisfying.'* (P.39 / private / late career)
>
> *'I feel that with the allowances it is fair'* (P.38 / private / early career)

The following quote by a participant who worked in private HE and non-HE sector as well as HE government sector illustrates perceived competitiveness of wages in the private HE segment:

> '*I'm in a private university so I get paid higher than public universities. I feel that my salary is excellent*' (P.37 / private / mid career)

This was echoed by other participants in the segment as in the following quotes:

> *'It is reasonable and even when I compare it to other universities, it is good.'* (P.34 / private / late career)
>
> *'In comparison to other institutions it is fair'* (P.29 / private / late career)

Despite general satisfaction with compensation in this segment, the data indicated a career level difference between mid and late careers on one hand and early careers on the other. Early careers expressed dissatisfaction with compensation in the following ways:

> *'you get a lot of work to do but you're not getting paid for it'* (P.8 / private / early career)
>
> *'The salary is very bad compared to the same level of the job in other universities.'* (P.22 / private / early career)

Participants in this segment seem to judge the fairness of their compensation in comparison to other universities (i.e. same sector) and effort. In the same vein, although private HE employers commonly offer faculty health insurance, participants did not mention this benefit when asked about compensation.

8.2.2 Employment stability

Subjective job security is used as a proxy for employment stability in the different segments of the HE sector. The data indicates differences in perceptions of this employment condition at the segment level as reported below:

8.2.2.1 Government segment—high stability

The majority of participants in the government segment perceived high job security in their jobs which they felt was, at the same time, lessening (lessening job security is reported under section 9.2.1.1 of Chapter 9). The following quote is exemplary of the high job security experienced by participants working in this segment:

> *'You wouldn't suddenly find someone telling you goodbye under any circumstances.'* (P.13 / gov. / mid career)

Some participants attributed this high job security to the legal difficulty associated with employment termination in public institutions—i.e. burden of proving a legitimate reason for the termination, as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'The job security is high and this is in general for workers in the government sector. The disciplinary and termination policies are almost non-existent unless the employee does something very big.'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)
>
> *'This might be something pertinent to government jobs in general…the university cannot terminate anyone unless with a royal order or something like that so there is job security.'* (P.35 / gov. / late career)

Participants here are correct in attributing their high protection from job loss to their employment terms and conditions (i.e. civil service system) as opposed to the

misattribution of their peers in the semi-government segment as will be shown in the following section. In the same vein, participants also felt a high level of protection from the economic ramifications of the global pandemic Covid-19:

> *'It [job security] is actually pretty good considering the current situation with the economy and internationally in what we are seeing about the number of families that have lost jobs. Thank god there is job security.'* (P.12 / gov. / late career)

8.2.2.2 Semi-government segment—high stability

The majority of participants in the semi-government segment perceived high job security in their jobs in spite of their fixed-term employment (i.e. annual contracts) as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'Look my contract is annual with [the semi-government university], not a civil service job, but there is no.. We don't have this in which they would suddenly suspend my contract, unless there was a strong reason that make them lay me off and not renew my contract…I feel job security. I don't feel that I'm threatened by anything.'* (P.15 / semi-gov. / late career)

At the same time, participants pointed out that their job security is not granted but earned through hard work:

> *'my job is secure [emphasis/conditional tone] but I have to work hard so that it would be like that. I have to prove myself not like other universities that would tell you it is impossible to lay you off'* (P.20 / semi-gov. / early career)

> *'I never felt a lack of job security although we are on contracts which we sign every year. It is not civil service…but as long as your work is excellent and you don't have problems, you don't get scared.'* (P.19 / semi-gov. / mid career)

'as long as you do your job, the place would not dispense with you' (P.23 / semi-gov. / late career)

Other participants attributed their perceived high job security to the legal difficulty associated with employment termination in public institutions as illustrated in the following quote:

'no one can get you out of the job unless with a court order, in an ethical case or something like that, but other than that they can't.' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

It is noteworthy here that participants seem to misunderstand their protection under their employment system (i.e. the social insurance system which applies the regulations of labour law). They also seem to confound public sector employment with the employment terms and conditions of the civil service system which is not always the case evident by their own employment characteristics. According to labour law, an employer may not renew a worker's contract without having to provide any reason. In addition, the recent amendment to Article (77)/Chapter (3) in labour law states that an employer can terminate a worker's contract without a legitimate reason and has to only pay the compensation stipulated by the law ('Labour Law', 2015). In the same vein, even when high job security was perceived, fixed-term employment in the public sector was maintained a new reality to be realized:

'it was impossible for anyone to have this fear [job loss] a few years back, no one working in a government sector would worry about that' (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

Furthermore, the unclear consequences of a recent change in education policy at the high school level seem to lower the subjective job security of the following participant:

> *'Job security for me, before the announcement of high school paths, was 100%; that it is a permanent post but after the announcement of high school paths and the potential it may lead to the removal of the foundation year, it put a question mark in what is the future'* (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

On the other hand, labour market change and Covid-19 seem to have no effect on the job security of participants working in this segment as indicated by the following quotes:

> *'I feel nothing has changed because I already have my job.'* (P.18 / semi-gov. / early career)
>
> *'maybe because I'm working in a somewhat government organization. It is true that the contracting is annual but the institution itself is governmental, so I didn't feel there was a difference.'* (P.33 / semi-gov. / late career)

8.2.2.3 Private segment—lower stability

The majority of participants in the private segment perceived their job security to be low and this was more pronounced for early- and mid-career participants. Factors such as possibility of contracts non-renewal and employers having to respond to market forces through layoffs seemed to affect participants' job security in this segment as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'regardless of the reasons which can be economic or downsizing or anything, you might not be renewed.'* (P.37 / private / mid career)

'the department head once said if the registration continues to be this low we might need to downsize, because the number of students became less so we don't need to open more than one section' (P.38 / private / early career)

Moreover, the economic crisis caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic was cited by even high-performing highly-skilled late-career participants in this segment as a factor negatively impacting their job security as illustrated in the following quote:

'I know that at any point in time, even me, the university might dispose of me for any reason. It is something that is there…I see it everywhere whether in our university or other universities, even with faculty members who are good and competent for some reason they let them go…I have dear friends who left the college so I know it is happening…during Covid…Big part of it is the economic situation' (P.39 / private / late career)

The two participants who reported high job security in this segment were both late-career PhD-holders who also occupied leadership roles in their HEIs. In other words, they seemed to perceive themselves as valuable and not easily replaceable by their employers as illustrated in the following quote:

'yes there is a high level of security because as an associate professor, it is something scarce.' (P.29 / private / late career)

Job security appears to be earned through competence and merit in the private segment as opposed to being granted by employment system or type as in the government segment.

8.2.3 Internal career ladders

Career ladders are a prevalent working condition (or resource) in academic jobs across the HE labour market, irrespective of segment. However, extent of support to progress through the ladders seem to vary at the segment level. While opportunity to progress through administrative and leadership roles (i.e. administrative promotions) seemed available to qualified participants in all segments of the sector, funding for postgraduate studies to support their job advancement through internal scientific promotions seemed unequally available. Participants' experiences with regard to this working condition is reported below by segment:

8.2.3.1 Government segment—promotions and funding for postgraduate studies

Half of participants in the government segment advanced in their jobs through internal scientific promotions following their successful completion of employer-funded postgraduate studies as illustrated in the experience of the following participant:

> *'I'm an assistant professor at [a government university]…I went to do my Master's and PhD and returned'* (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

Some mid- and late-career participants in this segment did not avail of employer-funded scholarships—obtaining their degrees mostly through the government external scholarship program. They were employed directly in their jobs without going through internal scientific promotions. In addition to scientific promotions, late career participants in this segment progressed through administrative and leadership roles in their careers as illustrated in the following quote:

'I'm an assistant professor in the university…I'm also the vice dean of graduate studies and scientific research in the college for a year now. I progressed in administrative positions since I got hired in the university. I was first the vice dean of student affairs. Then the vice dean of graduate studies' (P.12 / gov. / late career)

8.2.3.2 Semi-government segment— promotions and funding for postgraduate studies

Half of participants in the semi-government segment advanced in their jobs through internal scientific promotions following their successful completion of employer-funded postgraduate studies. This is illustrated by the experience of the following participant who was hired as a TA and left to do her employer-funded Master's and PhD degrees and returned:

'I was employed in [semi-gov. university]…I went to the US in 2011. It was a scholarship from the university to do a Master's and a PhD. I did them and became an assistant professor in January 2020.' (P.18 / semi-gov. / early career)

Some early- and late-career participants in this segment did not avail of employer-funded scholarships and were employed in their jobs directly without going through internal promotions. Similarly, administrative promotions were available to participants in this segment as indicated by mostly late career participants:

'I have been in the college since 2006 and started as an assistant professor and an associate dean. In 2009, I became the dean of the college and remained a dean until May 2020...In 2015, I got promoted to an associate dean.' (P.23 / semi-gov. / late career)

In the same vein, non-science-major participants in this segment seemed to face a particular barrier in their job advancement through internal scientific promotions.

The barrier lied in the conditions for job advancement after successfully completing their funded studies. Participants who were hired as TAs (an entry level academic job) and obtained a Master's degree through their employer were offered two progression options upon return. One, to apply for a promotion from a TA job to a lecture job in exchange for forfeiting their right to another funded scholarship to do a PhD. This entailed signing a formal pledge stating agreement to these terms. A promotion would include a lecturer job title along with a higher compensation package. In other words, a promotion request would suspend a faculty's job advancement at a lecturer rank as articulated by the following participant:

> *'I wish to continue my PhD…I stopped because I signed that I want to be promoted from a TA to a lecturer and we have a condition that once you sign the promotion, you cannot demand to do a PhD after that. When you get promoted to a lecturer, you no longer have a chance. You may get your Master's and return and stay for a year, two, or three years and your title would be Teaching Assistant until you get a PhD admission and go. So it is connected; a TA and then you request a promotion for Assistant Professor but once you return and say no I will stay here two years I want to be promoted to a lecturer and then continue, no you can't. You choose, you either get promoted to a lecturer and then you no longer have a chance.'* (P.19 / semi-gov. / mid career)

The second option participants were offered was to not request a promotion and accept staying in a TA position and receiving a TA compensation package until they obtain a PhD, even though they hold a Master's degree. This option preserves an academic's right to another funded scholarship and prospects of higher job advancement as demonstrated in the experience of the following participant who chose that option:

> *'I retuned and my job title is still teaching assistant while I should be a lecturer, I did my Master's. If I want to become a lecturer, I have to give up the study abroad opportunity for the PhD and sign a pledge that I don't complete. So you feel this is*

very discouraging and even demotivating because I want to have a lecturer's salary but I can't have it because if I claim it I have to sign that I won't go for a PhD' (P.20 / semi-gov. / early career)

In the same vein, participants who obtained their Master's degree independent from their current employer—commonly through the government external scholarship program, got hired directly as lecturers and had to sign the pledge of not demanding funding to pursue further education. In other words, they were not offered the second option—to accept a lower-rank lower-wage job in exchange for another funded scholarship as illustrated in the experiences of the following participants who hold a Master's degree and got directly hired as lecturers:

'we signed a paper before we got employed that we will not request a PhD abroad scholarship' (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

'When I first got employed they made me sign a pledge that I would not request going for a PhD.' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

It is noteworthy that this issue emerged in the experiences of participants working in the English language department in a health sciences college. Therefore, these promotion terms and conditions might not apply to academics in other departments or colleges in the semi-government segment.

8.2.3.3 Private segment--promotions

Progression through administrative and leadership roles appeared to be a common career advancement path for participants in the private segment as illustrated in the experiences of the following participants:

'I started as a faculty member then I got promoted to a head of the accounting department then I got another promotion to a head of the finance department and then I became the vice dean of academic affairs and now I'm the dean of scientific research.' (P.26 / private / mid career)

'I'm the dean of the advertising college…before that I was an associate dean and before than I was the vice dean.' (P.29 / private / late career)

These promotions came with increases in wages and benefits as expressed by the following participant:

'there are opportunities and one had many opportunities, I spent 16 years here and there were always promotions which come with salary increases and advantages' (P.34 / private / late career)

In the same vein, there was no mention of internal scientific promotions in the work experiences of participants in this segment. Furthermore, there was no mention of utilizing employer-funded scholarships to do postgraduate studies. Mid- and late-career participants in this segment, whether lecturers or assistant professors, were employed in their jobs directly without going through internal promotions in their organizations or availing of employer-funded scholarships. In the same vein, some HEIs in the private segment follow a recruitment strategy that involves the re-employment of their ex-academics (i.e. TAs, lecturers) whom quit their jobs to pursue their government-funded postgraduate studies (refer to participants' experiences in section 7.2.3 of Chapter 7). That is, if a lecturer or teaching assistant succeeded in securing a government scholarship[38], the private HEI would make an agreement with her in that it would reserve the next-in-rank job

[38] That is, a scholarship through the *King Abdullah External Scholarship Program* which was launched in 2005 and is still running today. The program offers funded scholarships to eligible citizens for all tertiary level education in various majors across many countries, mostly western (*The Custodian Of The Two Holy Mosques' External Scholarship Program: Qualifying Competencies To Compete In The Labor Market And Scientific Research Globally And Locally*, 2020).

for her for when she returns she would occupy it. However, during her studies she would be removed from payroll and her re-employment process would be similar to that of a new applicant except for the selection part. The experience of the following participant illustrates this recruitment strategy:

> *'I left there as a [private university] employee who was going to do her PhD and return to the university.'* (P.29 / private / late career)

When asked about the funding body for her scholarship she replied:

> *'by the government.'* (P.29 / private / late career)

This is different from the case of an academic in the government and semi-government segments funded by her employer. During her studies, she would remain on the university payroll and receive approximately 50% of basic salary minus pension deductions.

8.2.4 Summary

The findings above showed some segment-level variation in the employment conditions in academics jobs (i.e. compensation, employment stability, and career ladders) across segments of the HE sector—government, semi-government, and private. In the government segment, compensation was perceived uncompetitive, unfair, and not matching other sectors, level of education, or effort. An issue with compensation there was the considerable size of allowances comprising the compensation package. Job security was perceived high and granted by protection under employment system. Participants in this segment had both scientific and administrative career ladders available in their jobs. In the semi-government segment, compensation was perceived superior, satisfactory, and including fringe

benefits. Job security was perceived high despite fixed-term employment. It was also perceived to be earned through merit as opposed to be granted. Participants in this segment had both scientific and administrative career ladders available in their jobs. However, English-major participants had barriers in accessing employer-funded scholarships for PhD studies affecting their scientific promotions. In the private segment, compensation was perceived fair and satisfactory. Early careers, however, were the least satisfied group with compensation in this segment. Job security was perceived to be low. Fixed-term employment and lack of protection from market processes were factors cited for creating this perception. Job security appeared to be largely competence-dependent in this segment. No funding was available for participants in this segment to continue their postgraduate studies affecting their internal scientific promotions. All participants in this segment availed of the government external scholarship program.

8.3 Discussion

The following sections will discuss the employment conditions in female academics' jobs by segment—government, semi-government, and private.

8.3.1 Compensation competitiveness

Compensation competitiveness seems to vary at the segment level. Compensation seems uncompetitive in the government segment, superior in the semi-government segment, and competitive in the private segment. A few factors seem to differentiate this labour market outcome for female academics in the HE sector at the segment level as discussed below:

8.3.1.1 Government segment

In the government segment, female academics' overall dissatisfaction with compensation indicates an issue with the wage structure. Compensation in the

government segment appears to be the least competitive in the sector. In addition, a considerable portion of the compensation is made up of unstable allowances. A possible explanation for compensation low competitiveness in this segment is that compensation is not largely set by market processes. Administrative rules seem to play a significant role in setting this labour market outcome—a characteristic of internal labour markets (Kerr, 1954; Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Being a recipient of large state funding, the segment seems to be able to offer academics its own set of employment advantages and disadvantages away from market processes. In other words, the segment has its own efficiency maximization strategy; a nonmarket mechanism setting wages and other job rewards (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). If this is the case, this would eliminate the need for competitive pay structures especially since the segment can offer non-pecuniary benefits such as employment stability and high investment in employee training (i.e. funded postgraduate studies). This would be explainable through a compensating wage differential hypothesis; a negative differential in this case (Smith, 1910; Abowd and Ashenfelter, 1988) (e.g. lower compensation in exchange for protection from job loss). However, as female PhD-holders represent a scarce commodity in the Saudi labour market [approx. 0.5%] (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019), the wage structure needs to be competitive enough to retain them. This gains greater significance in light of labour market change and females' expanding job opportunity. In the government segment, female PhD-holders expressed their openness to consider job opportunity outside of the HE sector. Hence, the more job opportunity is created for female PhD holders in the larger labour market, the higher this segment's risk of losing PhD holders through turnover along with investment in their training (i.e. postgraduate studies).

8.3.1.2 Semi-government segment

In the semi-government segment, female academics' overall high satisfaction with compensation and references to being the highest paid in the HE sector and the only to cite fringe benefits, imply being paid an efficiency wage (i.e. wages above market-level). Similar to the government segment, the semi-government segment

seems to have its own efficiency maximization strategy. Above-market compensation levels are assumed to be set based on both market processes and administrative rules—a characteristic of internal labour markets (Kerr, 1954; Doeringer and Piore, 1971). An efficiency wage strategy in this segment might be the best alternative considering the segment's high investment in employee training (i.e. funded postgraduate studies) coupled with fixed-term employment (i.e. annual contracts). A situation that creates vulnerabilities for both workers and employers (e.g. Schervish, 1983). While it is a higher risk of job loss for workers, for employers, it is a higher risk of losing their investment through employee turnover. Employed on annual contracts, academics can re-evaluate their stay each year and consider other employers who offer them a better job opportunity. Hence, paying academics efficiency compensation would bind them to their employers. This compensation mechanism implies an operation of the compensating differential hypothesis (Smith, 1910; Abowd and Ashenfelter, 1988). The risk of job loss, which constitutes an unattractive and strongly disfavoured employment condition by nationals in GCC countries (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012), is compensated with higher wages and fringe benefits. This compensation strategy would increase academics' satisfaction, lower their turnover, and reduce employers' risk of losing their investment. In other words, the strategy would turn vulnerabilities (i.e. job loss for workers and investment loss for employers) into resources for both parties by creating a situation of mutual benefit.

In the same vein, the dissatisfaction of non-PhD-holding late careers with their compensation in this segment might be explained by mobility barriers. As this group has spent many years in academia, their skill set might have become largely specific to academia and less transferable to other lines of work. Furthermore, as they already work in the highest-paying segment of the sector, there would only be little room for upward mobility in that labour market without further (or different) education or upskilling. The employer, on the other hand, is assumed to be aware of this mobility constraint and might, hence, be unmotivated to improve their compensation. In addition, the relatively high supply of highly educated females in

the labour market (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019), and consequently easier replacement, are also expected to play a role in their compensation levels.

8.3.1.3 Private segment

In the private segment, female academics' overall satisfaction with compensation implies the operation of the human capital hypothesis (Becker, 1964). Female academics seem to receive appropriate return on their education by economic standards. From a LMST perspective (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), this return renders academic jobs in the private segment part of the primary labour market. In the same vein, competitive compensation in this segment might be similarly driven by a compensating differential hypothesis (Smith, 1910; Abowd and Ashenfelter, 1988). The private segment seems to compensate academics for the risk of job loss as it operates in a competitive and unsheltered labour market. This can be contrasted with uncompetitive compensation in the government segment.

In the same vein, the dissatisfaction of early career academics with their compensation in this segment might be stemming from different compensation strategies followed for academics with different qualification levels (PhD-holders vs. non-PhD-holders). This would find support in the fact that all early careers in this segment did not hold a PhD while satisfied mid- and late-careers all hold a PhD degree. A reservation wage seems to be followed for non-PhD-holding academics while a competitive wage followed for PhD-holding academics. This explanation gains support in light of the high supply of national females with a Master's degree in the labour market who at the same time exhibit a relatively high unemployment rate at [13.9%] (*Labour Market Survey Second Quarter*, 2019). This factor would make the replacement of non-PhD holders easier than their PhD-holding colleagues. On the same note, the government external scholarship program is assumed to play a role in increasing the supply of highly educated national females in the labour market.

8.3.2 Employment stability

Employment stability, proxied by female academics' subjective job security, seems to vary at the segment level. It appears high in the government and semi-government segments and lower in the private segment. A few factors seem to differentiate this labour market outcome for female academics in the HE sector at the segment level as discussed below:

8.3.2.1 Government segment

In the government segment, the employment system seems to be the strongest factor engendering job security in female academics' jobs. The civil service employment system (the predominant system in the employment of national academics in government HEIs) grants national academics permanent employment status. Furthermore, high employment stability in this segment is largely an outcome of economic stability which seems to be largely supported by the segment's receipt of large stable funding from the state. These characteristics lend the government segment primary and internal labour markets characteristics (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). In the same vein, demand for higher education (as a public utility) is expected to also play a role in the employment stability of female academics in this segment. Demand for higher education in Saudi Arabia is high (Jamjoom, 2012) and is expected to remain high in the long term based on the country's socioeconomic development objectives (*Vision 2030*, 2016). Demand for public higher education, in particular, is extremely high as it is free. This would translate to high demand for academics and employers' endeavours to retain them. While the classical LMS literature argues that economic stability is largely a function of product demand (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), state funding received by this segment seems to be acting in place of stable product demand supporting the segment's economic stability. Thus, the employment system and state funding combined, seem to shelter female academics' jobs from market processes and economic crises (including the Covid-19 pandemic) which can necessitate adjustments such as downsizing or organizational restructuring. From a LMST

perspective, these factors create institutional protection (or sheltering) from uncertainty and demand variability (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Berger and Piore, 1980).

8.3.2.2 Semi-government segment

In the semi-government segment, high perceived job security by female academics despite fixed-term employment on the social insurance system seems to be mistakenly attributed to protection under the employment system. In particular, female academics seem to confound a public employer with the employment terms and conditions of the civil service system—the system commonly and historically followed in the employment of nationals in the government sector but not the semi-government segment in HE. The social insurance system applies the rules and regulations of labour law. According to labour law, an employer may not renew a worker's contract without having to provide any reason. Moreover, a recent amendment to Article (77)/Chapter (3) in labour law states that an employer can terminate a worker's contract without a legitimate reason and has to only pay the compensation stipulated by the law ('Labour Law', 2015). Nonetheless, fixed-term employment for nationals in public HEIs is a relatively new phenomenon. The small but growing semi-government segment in the HE sector implies transition in the sector along governance lines. What applies, however, is that the semi-government segment has high economic stability largely from receiving large stable funding from the state. This economic stability is assumed to, in turn, produce high employment stability and shelter female academics' jobs from market processes and economic crises (including the Covid-19 pandemic). These characteristics lend the semi-government segment primary and internal labour markets characteristics (Doeringer and Piore, 1971).

These characteristics might also explain the variation in the impact of the pandemic on female academics' job security in the private and semi-government segments despite that both segments employ national academics on a fixed-term basis on the social insurance system. The private segment seems ready to utilize

labour market flexibility granted by fixed-term employment while employment in the semi-government segment seems to be protected by stable state funding reducing the need to resort to such responses. From a LMST perspective, this inter-segment variation implies variation in extent of institutional protection (or sheltering) from uncertainty and demand variability (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Berger and Piore, 1980). It is noteworthy that under these employment conditions, if the semi-government segment relationship with state funding changes (e.g. from full funding to partial or minimal funding), female academics' employment would become more susceptible to markets processes and in no better place (or protection) than their peers' employment in the private segment. State funding seems to play the biggest role in stabilizing female academics' employment in this segment as they are employed on a fixed-term basis. In the same vein, demand for higher education (as a public utility) is expected to also play a role in the employment stability of female academics in this segment. Demand for higher education in Saudi Arabia is high (Jamjoom, 2012) and is expected to remain high in the long term based on the country's socioeconomic development objectives (*Vision 2030*, 2016).

8.3.2.3 Private segment

In the private segment, low perceived job security by female academics seems to be largely driven by the segment's operation in an external competitive labour market with barely any institutional protection from market processes (e.g. stable state funding supporting economic stability). These operation conditions are assumed to lower the segment's economic stability and, as a result, make HEIs in the private segment more prone to responses such as downsizing, restructuring, and even exiting the market if economic pressures proved too great to endure or overcome. Labour demand in this segment is assumed to respond more directly to market factors and demand fluctuations which would, consequently, result in lower employment stability for academics.

In the same vein, although both the private and semi-government segments commonly employ national academics on a fixed-term basis on the social insurance system, female academics' job security impact by the pandemic varies. The economic crisis driven by the global Covid-19 pandemic seems to have a direct impact on female academics' job security in the private segment—through the perceived threat of job loss (subjective) and actual layoff of colleagues (objective). The private segment seems to be ready to utilize the labour market flexibility granted by fixed-term employment in responding to economic and market factors created by the pandemic (i.e. downsizing). From a LMST perspective, this inter-segment variation in impact on job security by the pandemic implies variation in extent of institutional protection (or sheltering) from demand variability (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Berger and Piore, 1980). In particular, economic stability supported by state funding in the semi-government segment, but not the private segment, is assumed to play the biggest role in that variation. In the same vein, employers' contract non-renewal, as opposed to arbitrary termination, of female academics' colleagues in response to economic factors renders the private segment part of the primary labour market (Doeringer and Piore, 1971).

Furthermore, the employment system seems to also play a role in female academics' perceived job security in this segment. Having fixed-term employment on the social insurance system has implications for academics' extent of protection from job loss. This employment system applies the rules and regulations of labour law which provide, comparatively, less protection from job loss particularly in light of a recent amendment to Article (77)/Chapter (3) ('Labour Law', 2015). The amendment focuses on workers' aftermath compensation as opposed to specifying termination terms for employers. Hence, coupled with lower economic stability, academics in this segment are more vulnerable to job loss compared to their peers in the government and semi-government segments. Employment stability in this segment appears to be largely a function of market processes which lends the segment an external labour markets characteristic (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). In the same vein, as formal rules (i.e. employment system) organize the employment relationship of female academics in this segment, they render the segment part of

the primary labour market, albeit with secondariness elements in extent of protection from job loss (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Okun, 1981).

8.3.3 Career ladders

Career ladders seem to be a common employment condition in academic jobs, irrespective of segment. They tend to comprise two lines of progression for female academics: internal scientific promotions (including funding for postgraduate studies) and internal administrative promotions. While progression through administrative roles seems to be available to female academics in all three segments of the HE sector (i.e. government, semi-government, and private), funding for postgraduate studies which support female academics' scientific promotions appears to vary at the segment level as discussed below:

8.3.3.1 Government segment

In the government segment, employer-funded scholarships for postgraduate studies appear highly available to female academics and a well-established resource in their career ladders. Economic stability in the segment seems to enable offering this costly training opportunity to academics. The large and stable funding received by this segment from the state is assumed to create economic stability which is, in turn, assumed to support the development of career ladders and support employment stability—i.e. higher retention of academics (highly-skilled workers) and higher likelihood for HEIs in this segment to recoup investment in employee training. These conditions are argued to encourage HEIs in this segment to invest in academics training. The following illustration depicts the interdependent relationship between state funding, economic stability, and employee training in the government segment:

Stable state funding ⟶ economic stability ⟶ higher employment stability (i.e. academics retention) ⟶ higher likelihood to recoup investment in academics training ⟶ higher investment in academics training

8.3.3.2 Semi-government segment

In the semi-government segment, similar to the government segment, employer-funded scholarships for postgraduate studies appear highly available to female academics and a well-established resource in their career ladders. Economic stability in this segment seems to enable offering this costly training opportunity to academics. The large and stable funding received by this segment from the state is assumed to create economic stability. This economic stability and academics' efficiency wages are assumed to support the development of career ladders and support employment stability—i.e. higher retention of academics (despite fixed-term employment) and higher likelihood for HEIs in this segment to recoup investment in employee training. These conditions are assumed to, in turn, encourage HEIs in this segment to invest in academics training.

In the same vein, barriers in accessing funding for a PhD degree by English-major academics in this segment might be stemming from the role these academics are employed to fulfil in a health sciences college. Although those academics are not university language teachers, but lecturers of equivalent status to faculty in other colleges according to the HEI bylaws (*Organizing Regulations of Faculty Members' Affairs*, no date), their employer might have developed a specific personnel strategy with regard to their employee training. From an efficiency maximization perspective, the HEI might have perceived holding a Master's degree in English to be a sufficient level of education for the purpose of teaching health students the English language. Hence, investment in further education (or training) might not yield added value or utility for the HEI or students. The following illustration depicts the interdependent relationship between state funding, economic stability and compensation strategy, and employee training in the semi-government segment:

Stable state funding ⟶ economic stability & efficiency wages ⟶ higher employment stability (i.e. academics retention) ⟶ higher likelihood to recoup investment in academics training ⟶ higher investment in academics' training

8.3.3.3 Private segment

In the private segment, employer-funded scholarships for postgraduate studies appear unavailable to female academics. Two factors might be able to explain this segment-level difference: a segment's relationship with state funding and, relatedly, a segment's efficiency maximization strategy. The extent of investment in the training and skill development of academics' tends to depend largely on the HEI's economic stability and financial capability. In the private segment, economic stability is largely a function of students' registration and other market processes. HEIs in this segment are responsible for generating their own funding with students' tuition fees being the main source. Although HEIs in this segment receive some indirect funding from the state in the form of land leasing, soft loans, and government local scholarships for students to study in private universities, it remains minimal and non-comparable to that received by HEIs in the government and semi-government segments. These operation conditions lower the private segment's ability to retain academics, their likelihood of recouping investment, and hence the less investment in costly academics training (i.e. funding postgraduate studies). It is assumed here that it is largely for that reason that the private segment is the only segment in the HE sector to offer academics no funded scholarships for postgraduate studies. A working condition that impacts female academics' internal scientific promotions (or career progression). This might also explain the no mention of internal scientific promotions or utilization of employer-funded scholarships in the job advancement of female academics in this segment.

In the same vein, to meet their demand for highly-skilled female workers, the private segment seems to exploit the readily available high-skill low-training-cost female workers in the labour market. Those are the graduates of the

government external scholarship program (*The Custodian Of The Two Holy Mosques' External Scholarship Program: Qualifying Competencies To Compete In The Labor Market And Scientific Research Globally And Locally*, 2020). The following illustration depicts the interdependent relationship between economic stability and employee training in the private segment:

Unstable product demand (i.e. susceptible to fluctuations in students' registration) ⟶ lower economic stability ⟶ lower ability to retain academics ⟶ higher likelihood to lose investment in academics training ⟶ lower investment in costly academics training (i.e. funding postgraduate studies)

Lastly, the historical institutional sex-segregation norm in the HE sector created parallel jobs with parallel career ladders for male and female academics, particularly in the government and semi-government segments as HEIs tend to be co-educational. These sex-segregated organizational structures seem to support the career progression of female academics in this sector. This is assumed to occur through alleviating competition with male counterparts and eliminating sex discrimination in promotions. The latter represents a non-economic barrier that is predicted to impact labour market outcomes for marginal groups of workers in the primary labour market (Becker, 1971; Doeringer and Piore, 1971). From a LMST perspective (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), parallel academic career ladders would expand good job opportunity and hence the primary labour market for female workers. It is noteworthy that segregated structures tend to merge in above mid-level administrative roles (i.e. above vice deans) in the government and semi-government segments. These roles tend to be disproportionately held by males. This seems to be a largely normative practice as there are no formal rules against having female incumbents in high-level administrative roles in these segments. In the private segment, on the other hand, higher levels of leadership roles seem to be more proportionately held by females.

According to LMST (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Berger and Piore, 1980), the economic stability of labour markets is largely a function of product demand markets which, in this research context, seems to be stabilized by state funding in the government and semi-government segments and susceptible to demand fluctuations and other market processes in the private segment. Furthermore, the high investment in employee training (i.e. funding for postgraduate studies) in the government and semi-government segments implies internal labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Okun, 1981). Internal labour markets are assumed to invest more in employee training as they need to create the skills they need which would consequently lead to higher worker retention and job advancement. On the other hand, despite the unavailability of funding for postgraduate studies to female academics in the private segment (i.e. comparatively lower investment in employee training), the availability of internal promotion lines and other training and development opportunity (refer to section 9.3.2 for other training and development opportunity), lends the private segment internal labour markets characteristics and part of the primary labour market (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Thus, the existence of career ladders in academic jobs across all segments of the HE sector, lends all segments internal labour markets characteristics, despite variation at the segment level.

8.3.4 Comparative section by segment

In the government segment, receipt of large and stable funding from the state seems to support the segment's economic stability and shelter academic jobs from market processes. These conditions seem to, in turn, enhance job security and employee training in female academics' jobs in this segment. As the segment is more able to retain academics under these conditions, it tends to invest in costly employee training (i.e. funding postgraduate studies). On the other hand, these economic conditions, combined with a permanent employment status granted by the civil service employment system, seem to influence the compensation strategy followed for academics in this segment. In particular, the segment's ability to offer non-pecuniary benefits (i.e. job security, funding for postgraduate studies) along

with permanent employment seems to lower female academics' compensation competitiveness. Thus, institutional factors (or rules) seem to play a significant role in setting employment conditions in female academics' jobs in this segment. While state funding (institutional factor) seems to largely drive the high job security and training investment in female academics' jobs in this segment, the employment status granted by the employment system (institutional factor) seems to lower their compensation competitiveness.

In the semi-government segment, similar to the government segment, receipt of large and stable funding from the state seems to support this segment's economic stability and shelter academic jobs from market processes. These conditions seem to, in turn, enhance job security and employee training in female academics' jobs in this segment. As the segment is more able to retain academics under these conditions, it tends to invest in costly employee training (i.e. funding postgraduate studies). Furthermore, state funding combined with fixed-term employment on the social insurance employment system (i.e. annual contracts) seem to drive female academics' compensation superiority in this segment. Highly competitive compensation seems to be crucial for lowering academics turnover given the high investment the segment makes in their training (i.e. funding postgraduate studies). Hence, an efficiency wage strategy seems to be an appropriate strategy to increase employers' likelihood of recouping their investment. In the same vein, the significant difference in compensation competitiveness between the government and semi-government segment, despite both belonging to the public sector and receiving large stable funding from the state, seems to stem from differences in academics' employment status granted by the different employment systems followed in each segment. This difference seems to require different compensation strategies for academics under each segment's efficiency maximization strategy. Thus, employment conditions in female academics' jobs in this segment seem to be set by a combination of market and institutional factors. While state funding (institutional factor) seems to largely drive the high job security and training investment in female academics' jobs in this segment, market factors seem to largely set the highly competitive compensation.

In the private segment, operating in an external competitive labour market involves a higher risk of job loss for academics which seems to entail competitive compensation in order to retain academics. In the same vein, this segment seems to follow different wage strategies for PhD-holding and non-PhD-holding academics. Compensation seems more competitive for PhD-holders. The segment receives no significant or consistent funding from the state (i.e. no institutional protection from market processes). This seems to lower its economic stability and hence employment stability for female academics. These conditions, combined with fixed-term employment on the social insurance employment system, seem to drive comparatively lower job security and investment in female academics' training (i.e. no funding for postgraduate studies) in this segment. Furthermore, these operation conditions lower the segment's ability to retain academics and seemingly, as a result, its willingness to invest in costly employee training (i.e. postgraduate studies). These characteristics imply secondariness in the segment along the lines of employment stability and employee training. Thus, employment conditions in female academics' jobs in this segment seem to be largely set by market factors. The segment's operation in an external competitive labour market (with no institutional protection from market processes) seems to lower job security and investment in employee training but produce competitive compensation. In the same vein, career ladders for female academics in the private segment lend it internal labour market characteristics. The following table 8.1 summarizes the key findings on compensation, employment stability, and career ladders in female academics' jobs in the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private).

Table 8.1 Key Findings on Compensation, Employment Stability, and Career Ladders in Female Academics' Jobs in the Three Key Higher Education Segments

Structural Variation in the Employment Conditions of Academic Jobs in the Higher Education Labour Market		
Government segment	**Semi-government**	**Private segment**
Compensation is the least competitive in this segment. The segment's ability to offer female academics high job security influences	Compensation is the most competitive in this segment. Female academics' fixed-term employment and funding for postgraduate studies	Compensation is competitive in this segment. Employers' desire to retain academics and academics' higher risk of job loss influence

<table>
<tr><td>compensation competitiveness</td><td>influence compensation competitiveness</td><td>compensation competitiveness</td></tr>
<tr><td>Employment stability is sheltered in this segment through state funding and the civil service employment system</td><td>Employment stability is sheltered in this segment through state funding</td><td>Employment stability is a function of market processes in this segment</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Internal scientific and administrative promotion ladders exist for female academics in these segments</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Funded scholarships for postgraduate studies are available to female academics. State funding received by these segments plays a key role in the availability of this opportunity</td><td>Funded scholarships for postgraduate studies are unavailable to female academics. The high susceptibility of the segment's economic stability to market processes plays a key role in the unavailability of this opportunity</td></tr>
</table>

8.4 Conclusion

For a deeper understanding of the HE labour market for female workers, this chapter reported employment conditions in academic jobs (i.e. compensation, employment stability, and career ladders) across the key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private) and attempted to explain segment-level variation through the LMST lens. This chapter sought to answer the second research question exploring the impact of institutional factors on academic jobs. Different mixtures of market and institutional factors seem to set as well as differentiate employment conditions in academic jobs in the different segments. Market factors seem to play the biggest role in setting employment conditions in the private segment while institutional factors seem to play a significant role in setting employment conditions in the government segment. A more proportionate mixture of market and institutional factors seem to set employment conditions in the semi-government segment. Each segment seems to develop its efficiency maximization strategy, including academics' employment conditions, in light of those factors.

Apart from market factors, two key institutional factors seem to differentiate employment conditions at the segment level, namely state funding and employment system. Segments' relationship with state funding seems to be a strong factor driving segmentation and creating internal/external labour markets divisions in the HE sector. These divisions seem to, in turn, differentiate employment stability and employee training in female academics' jobs across the sector. Shelter from market processes through state funding, in the government and semi-government segments, seems to enhance employment stability and employee training in these segments. In addition, state funding seems to be the strongest factor stabilizing female academics' employment in the semi-government segment, through economic stability, as they have fixed-term employment. Similarly, the two systems followed in the employment of national academics in the HE sector vary in the extent of protection from job loss which seems to differentiate female academics' job security and hence compensation across the sector. The civil service system grants female academics permanent employment and makes their termination difficult through the burden of proving a legitimate reason for termination by employers. While this factor enhances female academics' employment stability in the government segment, it seems to lower their compensation competitiveness. On the other hand, employment on the social insurance system is largely fixed-term and employment termination is relatively uncomplicated. While this factor lowers female academics' job security in the private and semi-government segments, it seems to enhance their compensation competitiveness.

Finally, despite the variation in employment conditions at the segment level, the HE sector, in the aggregate, represents a primary labour market for female workers albeit with secondariness elements in the private segment along the lines of employment stability and employee training. First, the human capital hypothesis applies in all segments of the sector where female academics receive a return on their education and skill. Second, formal rules (i.e. employment systems) organize female academics' employment relationship in all segments of the sector albeit with variation in the extent of protection from job loss between the systems. Third,

career ladders in academic jobs across all segments of the HE sector lend all segments internal labour markets characteristics and part of the primary labour market. In the same vein, the employment conditions of national female academics in the small but growing semi-government segment imply regulatory transition in the HE sector. This chapter reported and discussed differences and similarities in female academics' employment conditions across the three key HE segments to understand the factors and processes that set and differentiate these conditions at the segment level. The following chapter will report the fourth and final theme in the thematic framework.

Chapter Nine: Balanced Psychosocial Working Conditions in Academic Jobs with Varying Susceptibility to Labour Market Change

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the fourth and final theme in the thematic framework. The chapter reports the psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs as experienced by participants from different career levels across the three segments of the sector. Verbatim quotes from the dataset are provided to illustrate participants' working conditions including similarities, differences, and changes in them. Quotes are also provided to make the link between raw data and the emergent theme clear. Lastly, this chapter is organized into three sections: a findings section, a discussion section, and a conclusion. The findings section reports the research findings by segment (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). The discussion section interprets the research findings in light of the literature review and research context. Finally, the conclusion relates the findings to the research questions.

9.2 Findings

This section reports the research findings on psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs in the higher education sector under two subthemes: academic psychosocial demands and academic psychosocial resources. Academic psychosocial demands are stressful or challenging working conditions in participants' jobs or work environments that are creating a negative impact on their work experience. Academic psychosocial resources are working conditions in participants' jobs or work environments that are creating a positive impact on their work experience. The findings under each subtheme are reported by segment—government, semi-government, and private.

9.2.1 Academic psychosocial demands

Participants from all career levels and segments of the higher education sector reported some stressful or challenging factors in their jobs. These factors are reported by segment in the following subsections:

9.2.1.1 Government segment

Lack of clarity in assigned work was a common issue reported by participants in the government segment. This issue appeared to occur through incomplete communication of job responsibilities as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'there was no communication. So it was that you are the one who have to go and find out'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)
> *'when they assign us with a task we're not always given instructions that you will be doing 1, 2, 3. You have to ask and sometimes you get an answer and sometimes you don't.'* (P.21 / gov. / mid career)

This working condition consumed participants' time and effort in trying to navigate this ambiguity and understand what is required from them and how to execute it:

> *'we keep asking and looking and going around asking how to do the report. So this is one of the problems.'* (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

It also increased participants' likelihood of making errors in their work:

> '*This is also the reason that sometimes there would be mistakes in work because you take your information about work from people in your same level not from the ones higher*.' (P.21 / gov. / mid career)
> *'you have no idea of what it is that they are expecting of you. So you are probably going to make a mistake.'* (P.12 / gov. / late career)

Absence of proper induction and job orientation in the early stages of employment was another factor creating ambiguity in the work experience of participants. This issue was cited the most by early careers as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'We discovered everything on our own; no one taught us. We asked, we looked for and we searched. There is no real orientation such as you have to do this, you are entitled to this, and you can't do this, you know.'* (P.11 / gov. / early career)

Second, participants in the government segment appeared to disproportionately suffer from poor work planning as expressed by the following participant:

> *'I don't feel that the work is structured. One day you do this, the other you're not doing that'* (P.2 / gov. / mid career)

Poor work planning manifested in participants' experiences through having to deal with short notice work assignments and lack of a timeline for work submission as illustrated in the following quotes:

> '*You would get things suddenly during the semester. They would tell you you're nominated for this thing and you have to do this during this period. These things would not be clear in the beginning and no one tells me about it and I would get surprised by them.*' (P.11 / gov. / early career)
> '*Planning in the work domain is very terrible…the distribution of tasks over the semester in that on this week you have a deadline for this thing and on that week you have a deadline for that thing and that week you have to submit that thing. Nothing is clear.*' (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

Another manifestation of poor work planning was assigning new faculty with responsibilities too early in the process when they were still adjusting and familiarizing themselves with the new workplace:

> '*It was my first week and I was welcomed by the head of the female department and she said 'I'm going to introduce you to your staff' and I was like I don't*

understand what you are talking about. She said 'oh well, you are the new vice dean'. I said no…I just graduated.' (P.12 / gov. / late career)

Participants reported struggling and feeling stressed working under these conditions and norms:

'*when they put me a supervisor…I was struggling…it is a nice experience for me but I'm new at this and I'm barely preparing for courses*.' (P.10 / gov. / early career)
'*I was very stressed…It was very bad because I'm relatively new*.' (P.11 / gov. / early career)

Poor work planning also affected participants' work-life balance and non-work time as explained by the following participant:

'*they throw tasks at you…when you fit it in it disrupts everything else. It disrupts the time you allocated for class preparation, the time you allocated for research, the time you allocated for your family, the time you allocated for your workout, everything, everything falls on each other.*' (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

Third, restriction in teaching was experienced by participants in this segment in areas related to students' assessment and curriculum as illustrated in the following quotes:

'*in assessment, assignments would have 20 points, finals 30, you can't change much in saying that I want to put 15 points for the finals and points for the project.*' (P.27 / gov. / early career)
'the boss impedes you when he doesn't give you the freedom to pick the curriculum, for example, you see suitable.' (P.21 / gov. / mid career)

Furthermore, autonomy in teaching appeared to be restricted the most in the experiences of participants who worked in colleges where the curriculum was

developed in partnership with foreign universities as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'because we are with [foreign university]…you would have your file on Blackboard, PowerPoint presentations for all the weeks; the assignments; the videos; and everything even all the external educational materials you want students to review. So you have to follow it precisely. You can't do anything additional…or if you see that something is more effective for students, you can't'* (P.11 / gov. / early career)

Participants in this segment attributed restriction and rigidity in teaching to quality assurance measures that are enforced by national and international academic accreditations as expressed below:

> '*quality measures are limiting your freedom in designing your course the way you see suitable…some of the quality measures should have more flexibility.*' (P.27 / gov. / early career)

These restrictions combined with a bureaucratic culture in the HE sector appeared to hamper participants' creative and innovative initiatives in this segment as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'bringing a guest speaker from outside the university is a two-month process to happen…with these complications in place, starting the process two-months prior and writing a letter and do this and that makes one don't follow on those ideas*.' (P.27 / gov. / early career)
> *'our program now is in Arabic we want to change it to English the process to do it is such a lengthy process that makes you say I'm done I don't care what language we speak, we cancel, we no longer want to do it'* (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

The disproportionate mention of administrative barriers in the work experiences of participants working in the government segment indicate that the work culture in this segment of the sector might be the most bureaucratic. Fourth, time pressure was a common experience by participants in this segment. Multiple roles in

academic jobs and trying to meet expectations of each job role was cited a key driver of this pressure by participants, as illustrated in the following quote:

> '*You are required to fulfil 14 hours of teaching… At the same time you are required to do scientific research and also to get promoted but how to do with time? How will I be able to reconcile? At the same time you are required to do some admin work and activities and stuff…it is an issue of balancing different aspects of the job'* (P.35 / gov. / late career)

Furthermore, time pressure was affecting job performance. Time consumed in fulfilling the responsibilities of one job role, with no help from teaching assistants (TAs), was negatively affecting participants' performance in the other roles such as scientific research:

> '*The admin work takes up a lot of time and effort. So it is honestly affecting teaching and it is also affecting research a lot. Research became minimal for us. We are not able to focus on our research because of the extreme busyness with admin work*.' (P.25 / gov. / mid career)
> *'when the teaching load is high with some admin work there is then no time for research…If you ask me what I wish they do, it would be to provide me with time to do other things. If they, for example, provide TAs as in America…This would really be a good thing.'* (P.27 / gov. / early career)

This working condition intensified during the global pandemic Covid-19 when higher education transformed to online and the adjusting that was involved in that transformation by participants:

> *'when Covid-19 started and it was Ramadan…we were almost doing double the work because everything was electronic…It was very hard.'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)

Fifth, favouritism in development opportunity was an issue that emerged almost exclusively in the experiences of participants in this segment. This working condition is perhaps best illustrated in the following quote:

> *'if the dean approves of you, your matters will pass. If the dean doesn't like you, your matters might get obstructed…I experienced it personally…You may be nominated for a particular position, they stop the nomination because they got angry with you.'* (P.25 / gov. / mid career)

Participants highlighted lack of transparency in the mechanisms followed in nominations and selection for development opportunity which appear to consequently affected their fairness perceptions as illustrated in the following quotes

> '*there is a type of workshops or trainings or development opportunities…you get selected for; so through nomination. Here I have some reservations because the nomination mechanism is honestly not clear…because you get surprised that particular persons would get frequently nominated and others might not get it or even know that there was a workshop...I hope that the mechanism gets clear and transparent so people don't get sceptic about the existence of things like favouritism or cronyism.*' (P.35 / gov. / late career)
> '*opportunities are not fairly given…They are based on whom the person likes. There is no objectivity, feelings are involved a lot in work…this is one of the most things I hate because it affects your work, your performance, your opportunities, and your promotion'* (P.21 / gov. / mid career)

Lastly, institutional change in the HE labour market appeared to affect two psychosocial working conditions in the jobs held by participants in this segment, namely reward and job security. Reward was impacted through compensation cuts which were experienced by participants of all career levels in this segment. The cuts

pertained to allowances[39] as no cuts were experienced in the basic salary. The following quotes illustrate this change in participants' total compensation:

> *'they removed the high cost of living allowance. It wasn't big but still it is called high cost allowance'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)
>
> *'There was the high cost of living allowance which got removed and there are still allowances that may or may not get removed.'* (P.21 / gov. / mid career)
>
> '*when they removed allowances from faculty. That made a significant difference…I personally lost around 40% of my salary. The scarcity allowance alone for me was 40%. It was a strong hit honestly.'* (P.12 / gov. / late career)

Second, change in subjective job security emerged almost exclusively in the experiences of participants from all career levels in this segment. Change manifested through expressions conveying feelings of uncertainty and lessening security. Participants attributed this psychological condition to labour market transformation and the many decisions being issued by officials around it:

> *'we wake up every day and think oh my god what is up? Let's see what the most recent decisions are and what is happening in academia? So I think job security is not good.'* (P.21 / gov. / mid career)
>
> *'There is change in the new system of universities that it may become annual contracts. But…it is not very clear how exactly this is going to happen.'* (P.12 / gov. / late career)
>
> *'there are new decisions being issued around this matter [job security]. So I don't know. We got scared a little…Until now it is ambiguous for me honestly.'* (P.11 / gov. / early career)

[39] Allowances in the civil service system are set in percentages based on the basic salary (*Salary Structure for Faculty Members, Lecturers, and Teaching Assistants in Universities*, 2011). Hence, the total compensation of a late career faculty member would get a stronger hit by cuts in allowances than an early career faculty member, for example, as their basic salary would be higher.

Moreover, some participants perceived labour market transformation to mean less job security and higher competition as demonstrated in the following quotes:

> *'now we all know that with the new system, there isn't anything.. there is no.. it [job security] no longer has that value'* (P.25 / gov. / mid career)
>
> *'especially now, recently, with the idea of privatization and universities going into this sector I feel…there will be higher competition so one has to be ready for that competition.'* (P.32 / gov. / late career)
>
> *'It [privatization] scares me, it threatens my job security which is one of the advantages that made me join academia. Now it might go away, disappear.'* (P.2 / gov. / mid career)

It is noteworthy that labour market change showed a negative impact on the psychosocial working conditions of participants in this segment. No positive perceptions of labour market change existed in data collected from participants in this segment.

9.2.1.2 Semi-government segment

Lack of clarity in assigned work was a common issue reported by participants in the semi-government segment. This issue appeared to occur through lack of specification in job responsibilities as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'I wish that there were written guidelines in the beginning; what are the tasks exactly [emphasis], what are the responsibilities I have fulfil, what are the voluntarily things which I can volunteer in for example.'* (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)
>
> *'I have a job description as an associate professor but I cannot say they are specified. When I tell you that your job is to promote research but on what scale? It*

is not measurable. I think at this level you decide what you want to do with your job description and how to take it to the next level.' (P.23 / semi-gov. / late career)

Similar to their peers in the government segment, this consumed participants' time in trying to navigate this ambiguity and ask for clarification:

'I used to ask the employees or an administrative assistant to understand what is required and what to do especially that there is no procedures guide at all.' (P.14 / semi-gov. / early career)

Lack of proper induction when first joining the workplace was cited by particularly early careers in this segment as a factor contributing to the ambiguity they experienced in their jobs as illustrated in the following quote:

'I would've also liked that there was an introductory week before I started; the jobs I have to perform; how to use the technology that is part of the work, you know we have Blackboard and things we have to deal with…what is my schedule? who is my group? I didn't know anything and this is what perplexed me a little.' (P.31 / semi-gov. / early career)

Second, restriction in teaching was experienced by participants in this segment across curriculum and students' assessment lines as illustrated in the following quotes:

'the questions would be unified; the references unified. So the autonomy extent would be a little limited; I can say from 15-20%' (P.16 / semi-gov. / mid career)

'we get the block books for the courses, now we call them course books, and it would have all the topics we should teach, number of tests, number of questions in exams, and all that' (P.15 / semi-gov. / late career)

As can be noted from the quotes above, the requirements for strict compliance with course books in teaching are part of the partnerships colleges have with foreign universities to improve education quality. Similarly, quality assurance measures that are enforced by national and international academic accreditations are intensifying restriction in job autonomy as expressed in the following quote:

> *'There are more guidelines so the autonomy decreased…quality standards and the things you need to do, the requirements, what to include and what not to.'* (P.33 / semi-gov. / late career)

Third and last, time pressure was, interestingly, not a common experience by participants in this segment. It was only in the context of Covid-19 when participants had to familiarize themselves with the electronic transformation in their work that this issue emerged in the data as illustrated in the following quote:

> '*The days where we were pressured the most were during Covid especially when we first shifted to online teaching. Those days were crazy*.' (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

It is noteworthy that labour market change showed no impact on the psychosocial working conditions of participants in this segment.

9.2.1.3 Private segment

Participants in the private segment reported lack of clarity in assigned work. There was a career-level variation in this experience as early careers appeared to experience ambiguity and sometimes conflicting demands in their jobs responsibilities as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'So you have administrative work but what is the criteria of that work? It is only that as a lecturer you have 17 hours of teaching, ok what's after that? You know.'* (P.8 / private / early career)

'they write things such as to assist in teaching methods then it is written that we are not allowed to give any feedback but how can I assist if I can't give any feedback? So the whole job description was conflicting.' (P.22 / private / early career)

On the other hand, mid- and late careers appeared to have better job clarity as illustrated in the following quotes:

'We now have governance, job responsibilities, everyone one knows what to do and what exactly is needed from them. So these set rules help you in knowing what is expected.' (p.26 / private / mid-career)

'tasks would be distributed and every one would handle something or review something or is responsible to bring something or provide input on a particular thing. So there is clarity' (p.34 / private / late-career)

It is noteworthy that there was no mention of lack of job orientation or induction by participants in this segment. Second, restriction in teaching autonomy in this segment mainly pertained to curriculum and the bureaucratic procedure involved in making changes in that, as illustrated in the following quote:

'*for the curriculum any modification is tied to department council, scientific council, etc.*' (P.34 / private / late career)

Furthermore, national quality assurance measures were cited by participants in the segment a factor affecting job autonomy:

'the accountability for the quality work you do in your classes, these are the things which we need to follow strict policies and procedures coming from the ministry of higher education' (P.29 / private / late career)

Third and last, time pressure was experienced by participants from all career levels in this segment. Multiple job roles (especially administrative responsibilities) and

lack of TAs were factors cited by participants for creating this issue in their work experience and affecting their performance in other job roles as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'more pressure for people who do administrative work because administrative work take a lot of time out of one's schedule yet teaching is a must'* (P.29 / private / late career)

> '*I'm busy with teaching stuff because I don't have TAs…I get busy with teaching and I forget about research.*' (P.37 / private / mid career)

It is noteworthy than there was no mention of this working condition intensifying during Covid-19 in this segment. In the same vein, labour market change showed no impact on the psychosocial working conditions of participants in this segment.

9.2.2 Academic psychosocial resources

Participants from all career levels and segments of the higher education sector reported positive work experiences that were equally driven by factors in their job and work environment. These factors are reported by segment in the following subsections:

9.2.2.1 Government segment

Participants in the government segment perceived their job to be highly meaningful. They loved what they do as expressed below:

> *'what makes me happy is when I teach and find that the girls are happy and when they come to thank me that they really benefitted, and when their eyes sparkle when they understand something I said. These things really really makes me happy.'* (P.2 / gov. / mid career)

Furthermore, the prosocial effect in their jobs was cited a factor enhancing their work meaningfulness and sense of reward through perceiving their job as giving back and contributing to building their country as illustrated in the following quote:

> '*developing and investing in the people of my country. You have knowledge and you want to give it to them.*' (P.27 / gov. / early career)

In particular, participants who availed of the government external scholarship program returned with a sense of debt and a desire to payback their country as illustrated in the following quote:

> '*I have also had the opportunity to continue my education so I feel that I have responsibility to give back to my community'* (P.12 / gov. / late career)

Participants also enjoyed the social interaction aspect in their job with students:

> **'***the best part of my week when I actually walk into a class…and just enjoy the subject material and go in very deeply with the students and talk about their own experiences.*' (P.12 / gov. / late career)

Second, good relationships with bosses and colleagues was a positive social working condition experienced by participants in this segment. Participants perceived their bosses to be supportive and there for them when they need them:

> '*I have a good relationship with my department supervisor. When I need anything she responds quickly and helps*.' (P.27 / gov. / early career)

Furthermore, participants perceived the work culture in their scientific departments and the relationship with their colleagues to be highly cooperative as illustrated in the following:

> '*there is a lot of cooperation in the department between us. We all lift each other.'* (P.2 / gov. / mid career)

This work culture was even more appreciated by participants when work intensified during the Covid-19 pandemic and the abrupt electronic transformation that accompanied it:

> *'When it became all electronic during Covid they would be there online through Blackboard…Their support was always there. We would even have their personal phone numbers if we need anything…it is nice. Very professional.'* (P.10 / gov. / early career)

Moreover, participants experienced a sense of community and belonging at work which they perceived to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of their work:

> '*it makes me happy to have people I know and they love me. When I go to work I'm happy to see them and they are happy to see me. This is one of the best things.*' (P.2 / gov. / mid career)

It is noteworthy that participants did not only experience social support at the interpersonal or departmental level but also the college level. In the same vein, voice emerged in the data as a factor through which participants felt supported and respected at work. This included having a voice in meetings, proposing ideas, and sharing work-related suggestions or opinions as illustrated in the following:

> '*There is also respect in meetings, that you are present and hear others and voice your opinion.*' (P.21 / gov. / mid career)

Third, opportunity for development was a common resource in participants' jobs in this segment. In addition to internal promotions and funding for studies (reported in section 8.2.3 of chapter 8), participants had other development opportunities such as funding to attend scientific conferences and on-site workshops to develop job-related skills such as teaching and technological skills:

'They also tell us about conferences and that they would fund us if we choose to go.' (P.10 / gov. / early career)

'There are many workshops and there is always focus on training. When they get new software they train people on it.' (P.21 / gov. / mid career)

However, most offered development workshops lacked specialization in participants' scientific fields as expressed below:

'There are many trainings given to faculty in terms of teaching, etc. but I might aspire that they give workshops when one wants workshops in very specialized things and new things.' (P.27 / gov. / early career)

9.2.2.2 Semi-government segment

Participants in the semi-government segment perceived their job to be highly meaningful. They loved what they do; they loved teaching as expressed below:

'*I like the teaching profession…I enjoy it when I have an information I want to say while I explain it, draw it, and try to deliver it; to make it understood. I enjoy that.*' (P.15 / semi-gov. / late career)

They also valued the prosocial effect in their jobs through their sense of giving back and paying back their country:

'*You feel that you are actually giving, you are building, you are paying back your country*' (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

This feeling appeared to be amplified for participants who availed of the government external scholarship program as they returned with a sense of debt and a strong desire to payback their country. The following quote illustrate what participants felt and thought when they were returning back to their country:

> ‘*The abroad scholarship filled me with big feelings, strong deep feelings...in the sense that my country invested in me, I feel the debt, I want to repay…I want to return to build. I want to return to improve. I want to return to develop*.’ (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

Participants also enjoyed the social interaction aspect with colleagues in their job:

> ‘*the people I work with which makes me come to work because I want to work with those people; the team I work with*.’ (P.33 / semi-gov. / late career)

Second, good relationship with bosses (or department heads) characterized the experiences of participants in this segment. They perceived their bosses to be supportive and there for them when they need them:

> ‘*Our boss is excellent and we actually learn from her anytime we meet her…she is always there if we needed to ask her about something*.’ (P.14 / semi-gov. / late career)

Support and cooperation also characterized relationships with colleagues and the work culture in scientific departments as illustrated in the following quotes:

> ‘*The colleagues in the department are extremely cooperative whether in teaching matters or anything that relates to work*.’ (P.14 / semi-gov. / early career)

This work culture was even more appreciated by participants when work intensified during the Covid-19 pandemic and the abrupt electronic transformation that accompanied it:

> *‘during Covid especially when we first shifted to online teaching. Those days were crazy…a nightmare with the amount of workload but we were cooperative and we were always together even when we breakdown psychologically and neurotically*

[laughs], we breakdown together. So as a team we are always together and this what made us pass last semester successfully' (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

Moreover, participants experienced a sense of community and belonging at work which they perceived to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of their work:

'*I like that I have many colleagues my age. I like that I have friends who are also colleagues'* (P.20 / semi-gov. / early career)

On the other hand, participants found it a little difficult to reach top management in this segment if they wanted to:

'in talking to the higher management. It is very inflexible. It is very uneasy to reach higher management, very hard.' (P.20 / semi-gov. / early career)

In the same vein, having a voice in meetings and in sharing work-related suggestions or opinions was a common working condition in this segment as illustrated in the following:

'*I, for example, would say my point of view on something so I have my space… I feel that there is space for everyone's opinion.*' (P.18 / semi-gov. / early career)

Third, opportunity for development was also a common resource in participants' jobs in this segment. In addition to internal promotions and funding for studies (reported in section 8.2.3 of chapter 8), participants had other development opportunities such as funding to attend scientific conferences and on-site workshops to develop job-related skills:

'They always do workshops and have incentives to attend conferences and develop yourself and work on papers, join research teams.' (P.24 / semi-gov. / early career)

However, offered workshops appeared to lack specialization in participants' scientific fields as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'if I am looking for specialized workshops in computer science I would for sure not find it'* (P.16 / semi-gov. / mid career)

9.2.2.3 Private segment

Participants in the private segment perceived their job to be highly meaningful. They loved what they do whether it was teaching or research as expressed below:

> *'I'm someone who like to give and I love [emphasis] my students, I love teaching, I love listening to them…that's honestly my real incentive.'* (P.8 / private / early career)
>
> '*what makes me like my job, is that I'm generating knowledge and I feel very few people do that and I love my area of research and love my field*.' (P.37 / private / mid career)

They highlighted the prosocial effect in their jobs as a factor enhancing meaningfulness and sense of reward in their work through their sense of giving back and contributing to building their country:

> '*You're helping your community.*' (P.8 / private / early career)

This feeling appeared to be amplified for participants who availed of the government external scholarship program as they returned with a sense of debt and responsibility to payback their country as illustrated in the following quote:

> '*what made me originally return and work in academia is that I felt I want to payback. I was sponsored for a very long time and probably have to pay back'* (P.37 / private / late career)

Participants in this segment also enjoyed the interaction with the outside world, namely the industry:

> '*we are usually engaging with the industry through doing campaigns with external bodies… something I really really love about my job.*' (P.29 / private / late career)

Another job characteristic appreciated by participants in this segment was room for creativity and innovation as illustrated in the following quotes:

> '*I really love that in my job I'm able to curate things, invent new ways of doing things, dreaming and making dreams come to reality, having all the support to make new things'* (P.29 / private / late career)

Third, support and cooperation characterized relationships with bosses and colleagues in this segment as well as the work culture in scientific departments as illustrated in the following quotes:

> '*the associate chair who is the one above me… very understanding and very supportive.*' (P.38 / private / early career)
> '*The department is very very cooperative. They call themselves family and this is true just like family members.*' (P.38 / private / early career)

Furthermore, participants reported having voice in meetings and in proposing ideas as illustrated in the following quotes:

> *'my bosses are so good. They hear your ideas. They implement them.'* (P.8 / private / early career)
> '*if there was something that I was very interested in, I would negotiate it, I would talk, or present something in the college council or bring it up.*' (P.39 / private / late career)

Similar to their peers' experiences in the other two segments, participants in the private segment experienced a sense of community and belonging at work which they perceived to be one of the most enjoyed aspects of their work:

> '*enjoy going to the university and meeting my colleagues and chatting with them. This might be the most thing I like.*' (P.38 / private / early career)

In the same vein, open door policy was a working condition that emerged almost exclusively by participants in this segment. Participants appeared to have an easy access to top management as illustrated in the following quotes:

> '*The boss which is the vice dean and the dean. Both of them are very cooperative and listen to you. You don't have to call the secretary and make an appointment. You can just knock on the door and enter.*' (P.8 / private / early career)
> '*It is usually very easy in our university to contact my boss directly and also my boss's boss whom is the president of the university, we have an open door policy where you can approach them and talk to them, discuss things*' (P.29 / private / late career)

Fourth and last, opportunity for development was a common resource in participants' jobs in this segment. It included trainings and on-site workshops to develop job-related skills such as teaching and technological skills:

> '*many development trainings were on online teaching and online tools and students interaction in online especially because of Covid-19'* (P.39 / private / late career)

However, participants highlighted the issue that most offered workshops lacked specialization in participants' scientific fields as expressed below:

> '*They bring international experts to provide workshops and training. The only thing is that it is only specialized in teaching skills*.' (P.26 / private / mid career)

9.2.3 Summary

The findings above showed that some psychosocial demands in academic jobs were shared across segments of the HE sector (government, semi-government, and private) while others were segment-specific. Lack of clarity in assigned work was a common issues across all three segments and was more pronounced for early careers. Second, poor work planning was an issue particular to the government segment and showed a negative impact on participants' psychological health and work-life balance, irrespective of career level. Third, restriction in teaching autonomy was a common issue across all three segments of the sector. It was particularly related to autonomy in students' assessment and curriculum. Academic accreditation requirements, as part of education policy, was a common factor affecting this working condition across all three segments. Furthermore, autonomy appeared the most restricted in the government and semi-government segment which both included colleges where curricula are developed in partnerships with foreign universities. Fourth, bureaucracy appeared to be the strongest in the government segment affecting the creativity and innovation of participants working there. Fifth, time pressure was a common working condition in the government and private segment but not the semi-government segment. Multiple job roles and lack of TAs were the two factors cited for creating time pressure in the experiences of participants in these two segments which were affecting their performance mostly in scientific research. Sixth, favouritism and lack of transparency in selection mechanisms for opportunity were issues particular to the government segment. Lastly, labour market change showed an exclusive impact on working condition in the government segment, namely reward and job security. This included removal of some allowances from participants' total compensation and creating perceptions of uncertainty, lesser job security, and higher competition among participants from all career levels in this segment.

On the other hand, almost all psychosocial resources in academic jobs were shared across all three segments of the sector (government, semi-government, and private). Participants in all segments perceived their jobs to be highly meaningful.

They loved what they do and valued the prosocial effect and social interaction characteristics of their jobs. Work meaningfulness was enhanced for participants who availed of the government external scholarship program, across all three segments, as they perceived their jobs as means to pay back their country. Good relationships with bosses and colleagues and supportive scientific departments characterized the social work environment in participants' experiences across all three segments of the sector. There was slight variation in access to top management at the segment level. Access appeared to be more difficult in the semi-government segment while open door policy characterized the work culture in the private segment. Similarly, opportunity for development, namely trainings and workshops for developing job skills and financial support to attend and participate in scientific conferences, were available resources to participants in all three segments of the sector. Lastly, participants appeared to enjoy more room for creativity and innovation in the private segment compared to their peers in the government segment. The following section will discuss the research findings in light of literature review and research context.

9.3 Discussion

The findings highlighted similarities and differences in psychosocial demands and resources across the three key HE segments—government, semi-government, and private which will be discussed below.

9.3.1 Academic psychosocial demands

Some psychosocial demands are shared across all three segments while some are particular to the government segment. Demands shared across the segments will be discussed first, highlighting any segment-level variation, followed by demands particular to the government segment.

9.3.1.1 All segments

In the government, semi-government, and private segments of the sector, lack of clarity in assigned work appears to be a common psychosocial demand and is more pronounced for early careers. Lack of proper induction and job orientation and incomplete communication or lack of specification in job responsibilities seem to be processes creating this demand in the work experience of female academics in the government and semi-government segment. In the private segment, conflicting job descriptions seem to be a process affecting academics' job clarity but no issues with poor inductions in this segment. The segment-level variation in the processes creating this demand in female academics' work experience might be explained through variation in the institutional characteristics of the segments. In the private segment, conflicting job descriptions might indicate organizational underdevelopment. This feature would imply secondariness in the segment along that dimension (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). On the other hand, lack of issues concerning poor inductions and job orientation in the private segment indicates, simultaneously, otherwise. Hence, the private segment seems to include a mixture of organizationally developed and underdeveloped HEIs; an organizationally heterogeneous segment. In the government and semi-government segments, issues of lack of induction and job orientation might be an outcome of a public sector culture. The segments' operation in protection from market processes might affect organizational performance values such as efficiency which includes lack of attention to these HR practices.

From an employee wellbeing perspective, lack of clarity in assigned work would create ambiguity and hinder academics' ability to successfully perform their job responsibilities. This psychosocial demand is predicted to negatively impact academics' wellbeing by affecting their work engagement, positive emotion, and sense of accomplishment (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Seligman, 2011). Ambiguity creates uncertainty and confusion which academics would have to navigate before they can perform the work or it can lead to error or suboptimal job performance. It would create a barrier in academics' work

engagement by consuming their energies (i.e. time, emotion) in overcoming this obstacle which can be otherwise directed to engaging in their work. Efficient communication of work tasks and clear instructions on how to perform them is one mechanism to enhance job clarity. The latter is a significant antecedent for academics' work engagement (e.g. Barkhuizen, Rothmann, & van de Vijver, 2014) and lack of job clarity can affect all three dimensions of work engagement—vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). It can also affect academics' belief in having the necessary resources to successfully perform their job— a psychological antecedent for work engagement (Kahn, 1990).

In the government, semi-government, and private segments of the sector, restriction in job autonomy was a common psychosocial demand, largely in the teaching aspect. Education policy at the institutional level (i.e. academic accreditation requirements and quality assurance measures to obtain and retain institutional accreditation) appears to drive this restriction, particularly in relation to students' assessment and curricula. In the government and semi-government segments, partnerships with foreign universities are another factor driving this demand. More measures might be necessary to standardize education quality across collaborating universities. However, despite the restriction academics experience in their choice of course references or tools for students' assessment, they seem to have enough job autonomy to drive their intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000) and support expressing their preferred self at work (Kahn, 1990). From an employee wellbeing perspective, the latter two are instrumental conditions for eliciting a motivational process within individuals that is predicted to lead to positive wellbeing outcomes such as job satisfaction (Shin and Jung, 2014) and work engagement (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). From a labour market segmentation perspective, jobs in the primary labour market are assumed to have job autonomy and greater personal participation by workers (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Osterman, 1975). Autonomy seems to be largely an inherent characteristic in academic jobs. Even in a context of labour market change, if adequate autonomy is preserved in academic jobs, it would place them in the primary or core segment of the labour market (e.g. Vohlídalová, 2021).

In the same vein, bureaucracy seems to be a HE sector characteristic overarching all three segments of the sector. However, it appears to be the most pronounced in the government segment. Although bureaucracy might not directly narrow job autonomy but the long administrative procedures involved in requests and obtaining organizational approvals seem to negatively affect the work engagement of academics in this segment. In particular, they seem to make academics give up and disengage from following on their creative and innovative ideas and attempts. Creativity and innovation are valuable outcomes of work engagement (e.g. Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013; Inam et al., 2021). While factors at the job level seem to motivate academics' creativity, bureaucracy at the organizational level seems to impede its application and demotivate academics. Bureaucracy consumes academics' energies to either go through or around these administrative barriers. It also intensifies the strain experienced from other job demands such as time pressure. To reduce strain, academics in this segment seem to choose to disengage from this discretionary job behaviour. This working condition can be contrasted with that of academics in the private segment where ease in applying ideas seems to be a common experience. The segment-level variation in this psychosocial demand might be explained through structural and organizational characteristics. Government HEIs are commonly larger in size and steeper in hierarchy compared to the smaller and more egalitarian private HEIs (*Private Higher Educations Institutions*, 2020).

Lastly, in the government, semi-government, and private segments of the sector, time pressure was a common psychosocial demand. The multiple roles in academic jobs (i.e. teaching, administrative, scientific research, etc.) and lack of TAs seem to be key factors driving this demand in the government and private segments and affecting female academics' productivity in scientific research. This finding is consistent with academics' experiences with time pressure, work overload, and publication pressure in cross-cultural HEIs (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004; Naidoo-Chetty and du Plessis, 2021). Furthermore, the intensification of time pressure and workload during the Covid-19 pandemic in the government and semi-

government segments are consistent with findings from cross-cultural HE labour markets (Watermeyer *et al.*, 2021). From an employee wellbeing perspective, this psychosocial demand can negatively affect the wellbeing of female academics by impacting their sense of accomplishment (Seligman, 2011) and psychological availability to engage in their work (Kahn, 1990). In addition, lack of TAs and delegation in academic jobs can create strain and intensify strain already experienced from other job demands (e.g. work overload, role ambiguity, etc.). This can intensify the negative effect on wellbeing. Without adequate relief in job design, these psychosocial demands can result in job burnout in the long run (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001).

In the semi-government segment, time pressure on the whole seems more tolerable. Segment-level variation in this demand might be explained by specialization. While the government and private segments include colleges from different branches of science (i.e. business, humanities, technology, etc.), the semi-government segment includes colleges specialized in the applied health sciences. The latter tend to follow a block model in education which seems to affect working conditions such as work organization and work scheduling. Hence, specialization at the college level, as opposed to the segment level, seems to differentiate work organization and hence the experience of time pressure in academics' experiences.

9.3.1.2 Government-segment-specific

The government segment appears to have the highest segment-specific demands in the sector. Some of these demands are institutionally driven while others seem normatively driven. Change in female academics' reward (or total compensation) through the removal of some allowances in the government segment seems to be an outcome of institutional change in the labour market. More specifically, part of lowering public spending at the state level to finance and support socio-economic transformation at the national level (Credendo, 2018; Moshashai, Leber and Savage, 2020). Hence, cuts might not be permanent. The civil service employment system seems to be the instrument (or process) through which cuts are

administered as only female academics employed on this system experienced cuts. The state seems to have a more direct control over the compensation of academics employed on that system—the system national academics' are commonly employed on in the government segment. This might also explain the lack of change in female academics' compensation in the semi-government segment despite that both segments are part of the public sector (segment-level variation). National academics in this segment are commonly employed on the social insurance system. Also, the governance system in the semi-government segment seems to grant it more independence and autonomy in managing its employment and financial affairs (e.g. *Universities' New System*, 2019).

From an employee wellbeing perspective, cuts in total compensation would constitute a job demand in the way it is predicted to affect female academics' psychological condition of reward (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). However, change in reward seems to have no negative effect on female academics' wellbeing or positive job behaviours in the government segment (i.e. extent of self-investment or exerted effort at work). This might be explained by the understanding academics seem to have for the reasons causing the cuts in their compensation—i.e. serving a greater good and/or a better future for their country and children. Furthermore, academics in this segment seem to understand that the labour market is in a transformational phase and they seem to be in an anticipative as opposed to a reactive mode. In other words, as some changes are expected to be transient, academics seem to be waiting for the transformation to be finalized before they judge the resulting change in their working conditions. In addition, the lack of compensation cuts' effect on academics' wellbeing might be explained by the ample resources in academic jobs and their role in buffering negative consequences that can result from negative work factors (e.g. Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). However, if compensation does not recover or increase to acceptable levels after labour market transformation is finalized, it might negatively impact academics' wellbeing by creating job stress.

Second, lessening job security for female academics in the government segment seems to be, similarly, an outcome of institutional change in the labour market. Furthermore, the lack of labour market change impact on female academics' job security in the semi-government and private segments (segment-level variation) might be explained by the purpose and scope of labour market change. Regulatory liberalization of the HE sector aims to lower public spending and enhance labour market flexibility through fixed-term employment for public sector employees as recommended by scholars and experts alike (e.g. Moshashai, Leber, & Savage, 2020; Tamirisa & Duenwald, 2018). The public wage bill constitutes 49.41% of total public spending (*Statement of the State General Budget*, 2021). The liberalization involves a change in the employment system for national academics in the government segment—from the civil service to the social insurance system. Since fixed-term employment on the social insurance system is followed in the employment of national academics in the private segment and predominantly in the semi-government segment, this seems to remove the two segments from the scope of employment system change and its impact on academics' job security. This might explain the almost exclusive experience of lessening job security by female academics in the government segment. In anticipation of that change, they seem to perceive a high threat of job security loss. They are the only group in the sector whose their permanent employment status is threatened with loss anytime during the course of labour market change (*Universties' New System*, 2019; Alkhattaf, 2020). This is consistent with intensifying job insecurity in transforming economies (Kalleberg, 2009) which might understandably intensify in a labour market where job opportunity for female workers is limited. This perception also finds support in the fact that females show greater attachment to internal labour markets than male workers (Steinberg, 1975)—a structural characteristic of the government segment. More closely, it aligns with findings showing a greater negative impact of perceived job insecurity on the wellbeing of workers who have permanent employment (Mauno et al., 2005).

From an employee wellbeing perspective, lessening job security would constitute a job demand (e.g. Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007; Mudrak et

al., 2018) and have the potential to negatively affect the wellbeing of female academics in this segment (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). Similar transformations in cross-cultural higher education labour markets showed a negative impact on the working conditions, and hence wellbeing, of female academics in that context (e.g. Cardozo, 2017; Zheng, 2018; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019; Vohlídalová, 2021). Lessening job security would consume academics' mental energy in coping with resulting concern and stress. The negative wellbeing outcome is expected to occur through a conservation of resources mechanism (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 2002). As a valued working condition (job security) is threatened with loss, academics are expected to experience stress. Furthermore, lessening job security can impact two critical components of wellbeing: positive emotion and engagement (Seligman, 2011). For the latter, it can affect academics' psychological availability to engage in their work—i.e. believing they have the necessary psychological resources to engage (Kahn, 1990). Evidence shows a negative impact of job insecurity on employee wellbeing outcomes including work engagement (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, Witte, & Alarco, 2008; Mauno et al., 2005; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007); exhaustion (Mauno et al., 2005); and job stress (Mudrak et al., 2018).

Apart from reward and job security in the government segment, the unobservable impact of labour market change on the psychosocial working conditions of academic jobs in the private and semi-government segments might be a matter of time. Labour market change seems to not have yet reached the job and organizational level in the other two segments. As change is taking place top-down starting at the institutional level (new regulations and governance system) (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2019), it seems to remain at that stage. Although many psychosocial demands and resources in academic jobs are inherent in the nature of work, change in the governance system can impact mechanisms for accessing some resources or opportunities. Access can become more conditional or merit-based. This would be consistent with the recent orientation of the public sector toward making employee benefits more conditional and merit-based (e.g. "Minister of Civil Service: We Will Not Link Promotions to Seniority and Distinguished Employees Will

Jump Two Levels Exceptionally," 2019). Moreover, evidence shows that some regulatory labour market change can dismantle even high-skill high-wage internal labour markets (e.g. Kuruvilla & Noronha, 2015).

Third, poor work planning appears to be a normative psychosocial demand particular to the government segment. Short notice work assignments, lack of a clear timeline for work submission, and too early responsibilities for newly hired academics seem to be common work practices in this segment. This working condition can have serious consequences for academics wellbeing, mostly through intensifying other psychosocial demands such as time pressure and interrupting work-life balance. From an employee wellbeing perspective, these working conditions can impede academics' ability to detach from work and recover their energies which are crucial conditions for psychological health—i.e. emotional exhaustion, physiological health, and work engagement (Sonnentag, Binnewies and Mojza, 2010). In the same vein, this segment-specific demand might have institutional explanations. In particular, the segment's institutional shelter from market processes (through state control and funding) and academics' permanent employment seem to affect organizational performance values such as efficiency and accountability. Hence, poor work planning in the government segment might be an outcome of lax application or lack of prioritization of these values in the organizational work culture.

Fourth and last, favouritism in development opportunity and lack of transparency in selection mechanisms for those opportunities appear to be a normative psychosocial demand in the government segment. Similar to poor work planning, this working condition might have institutional roots. The segment's shelter from market processes by the state and academics' permanent employment might have created an operation condition where the organizational value of accountability for resource allocation might not be emphasized or effectively applied in this segment. This condition would, in turn, give room for such practices. However, the new governance system accompanying the regulatory transformation of the HE sector is expected to emphasize high-performance organizational values

in government HEIs (i.e. accountability, transparency, efficiency, merit, etc.) (*Vision 2030*, 2016). This change is consequently expected to reduce these types of organizational practices in the government segment. From an employee wellbeing perspective, favouritism and lack of transparency in work matters can have negative consequences for female academics' wellbeing. Favouritism in either access or awareness of development opportunities can impact academics' equity perceptions. If academics perceive the opportunities available to them to be unfair compared to the ones available to their peers (i.e. distributional injustice), it can create a hindering demand in their work experience which has shown to negatively affect workers' work engagement (Crawford, LePine and Rich, 2010).

9.3.2 Academic psychosocial resources

Most psychosocial resources in academic jobs are shared across all three segments of the sector (government, semi-government, and private). The following section will discuss shared resources highlighting any segment-level variation.

9.3.2.1 All segments

In the government, semi-government, and private segments of the HE sector, academic jobs appear to be perceived as highly meaningful. Female academics, across all segments, seem to draw positive meaning from the characteristics of their jobs. They enjoy the content of their work; the prosocial effect inherent in it; and the social interaction aspect. In the private segment, female academics seem to, additionally, enjoy room for creativity. This segment-level variation seems to result from the organizational characteristics of HEIs in the private segment. They tend to be smaller in size, more egalitarian in structure, and less bureaucratic (*Private Higher Educations Institutions*, 2020) which can make implementing creative ideas easier and more common in this segment. The significance and nobility commonly associated with the role of education and scientific research in

guiding, enlightening, and developing individuals and societies seem to be the strongest factors driving meaningfulness in academic jobs.

These job characteristics would support academics' wellbeing through the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability (Kahn, 1990). They are predicted to have a positive effect on all dimensions of academics' work engagement—vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). This prediction is rooted in the posited higher likelihood of experiencing work engagement the higher individuals perceive the value of their work (Maslach and Leiter, 1997). From a eudaimonic perspective, positive meaning in work (i.e. meaningfulness) is perceived as a facet of wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2001) and a component of human flourishing (Seligman, 2011). From a labour market segmentation perspective, positive meaning in academic jobs renders them part of the primary labour market. LMS theory argues that job and employment characteristics in the primary segment infuse jobs with positive meaning and support workers' wellbeing while jobs in the secondary labour market are assumed to lack meaning (Blauner, 1964).

In the same vein, availing of the government external scholarship program seems to enhance work meaningfulness and work engagement across all three segments of the sector. Through what seems to be a mechanism of social exchange (Blau, 1964), female academics who availed of the program perceive their jobs as a means to pay back their country. They seem to direct their cognitive, affective, and physical energies to their jobs, even though their postgraduate studies abroad were not funded by their employers. The government scholarship program here can be considered a psychosocial institutional resource. The program seems to intensify the prosocial effect in this group's academic jobs (paying back their country) and the positive meaning associated with it which are both predicted to support academics' wellbeing (Kahn, 1990; Seligman, 2011).

In the government, semi-government, and private segments of the HE sector, support and cooperation characterize social relationships and the overall

work culture. Social support seems to ease strain experienced from other job demands such as time pressure and work overload, especially during the global Covid-19 pandemic and electronic transformation in work. This experience is consistent with the posited buffering effect of job resources on the negative effect resulting from job demands on employee wellbeing in the JD-R model (e.g. Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Furthermore, having a voice at work seems to provide female academics with not only a sense of support but also respect, across all three segments of the sector. This psychosocial resource is expected to enhance academics engagement not only at the job level but also at the department, college, and university level (e.g. Rees, Alfes, & Gatenby, 2013). When academics feel heard and their opinions and suggestions are welcomed, it is expected to drive their work engagement by increasing their desire to invest themselves at work in reciprocation for receiving this valued psychosocial resource (Blau, 1964).

The prevalence of social support in female academics' experiences, across all segments, is predicted to engender instrumental psychological conditions for employee wellbeing and work engagement such as psychological safety (Kahn, 1990); sense of belonging and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001); and positive meaning in work (Rosso, Dekas and Wrzesniewski, 2010). In addition, social support in female academics' experiences is consistent with findings from cross-cultural HE labour markets (e.g. Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021) and the positive effect supportive work relationships show on academics' wellbeing through enhancing their work engagement and job satisfaction (Cao & Zhang, 2021; Mudrak et al., 2018).

In the same vein, the high social support in academic jobs, across segments, might be explained by the nature of academic work. Many aspects of academic work are collaborative (or team-based) whether in teaching courses, administrative work (e.g. committees), or scientific research. Additionally, many job responsibilities and administrative positions tend to rotate among academics as a group. That is, the organization of academic work, whether at the department or

college level, might entail social support as a necessary working condition as opposed to a voluntary one—i.e. merely driven by workers' kindness and care for each other. On a related note, segment-level variation in access to top management, where it appears easier in the private segment (through open door policy) than in the other two segments, might be explained by organizational characteristics. HEIs comprising the private segment tend to be smaller in size and more egalitarian in structure compared to public HEIs comprising the government and semi-government segments (*Private Higher Educations Institutions*, 2020). This structural difference seems to have implications for academics' ease of access to top management.

In the government, semi-government, and private segments of the HE sector, opportunity for development (i.e. workshops, trainings, conferences) appears to be a common psychosocial resource in academic jobs. This psychosocial resource supports academics' successful job performance and advancement which is predicted to, in turn, support their wellbeing (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The availability of this resource, across all HE segments, enhances academics' competence (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and sense of accomplishment every time they learn something new (Seligman, 2011). Hence, positive emotion and positive meaning are more likely to be experienced by academics at work (Seligman, 2011). From an employee wellbeing perspective, these psychological conditions are expected to be reciprocated (Blau, 1964) with positive attitudes and behaviours such as work engagement and intrinsic motivation which are considered facets of wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). From a labour market segmentation perspective, emphasis on employee training and skill development are characteristics of jobs in internal labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971).

9.3.3 Comparative section by segment

In the government and semi-government segments, shelter from market processes through state control and funding seems to affect organizational performance

values such as efficiency. A condition that is argued to play a role in poor inductions and job orientations (HR practices) for newly hired academics and ultimately affect job clarity. Also, created and funded by the state, HEIs in the government and semi-government segments tend to be large and steeper in the hierarchy (*Public Higher Education Institutions*, 2020). This might explain the impact of bureaucracy on creative behaviour in the government segment and the difficulty experienced by female academics in accessing top management in the government and semi-government segments.

In the government segment, institutional shelter from market processes and academics' permanent employment are argued to play a similar role in driving the psychosocial working conditions of poor work planning, favouritism, and lack of transparency in selection mechanisms for opportunity in this segment. This is argued to occur through lax or ineffective application of organizational performance values such as efficiency and accountability. Furthermore, lowering public spending at the state level appears to impact the psychosocial working condition of reward at the job level (through the employment system) in the government segment. Similarly, change in the employment system (as part of regulatory liberalization of the sector) seems to impact the psychosocial working condition of job security at the job and individual level in this segment.

In the private segment, operating in a competitive external labour market seems to create an organizationally heterogeneous segment. Female academics' mixed experiences with psychosocial demands in this segment indicate that some HEIs are organizationally well-developed while others seem underdeveloped—e.g. role conflict vs. role clarity in experiences from the same segment. From a LMS theory perspective, organizational underdevelopment in the private segment would imply secondariness along that line. In the same vein, the seemingly bigger room for creativity in this segment seems to result from the characteristics of the organizational structure of HEIs in this segment which tend to be smaller in size and more egalitarian in structure (*Private Higher Educations Institutions*, 2020).

Lastly, the high prevalence of the psychosocial resources: meaningful work, social support, and opportunity for development, across all three segments, implies that these resources might be inherent in the nature of academic work as opposed to being organization- or segment-specific. The following table 9.1 summarizes the key findings on psychosocial demands and resources in female academics' jobs in the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private).

Table 9.1 Key Findings on the Psychosocial Demands and Resources in Female Academics' Jobs in the Three Key Higher Education Segments

Balanced Psychosocial Working Conditions in Academic Jobs with Varying Susceptibility to Labour Market Change		
Government segment	**Semi-government**	**Private segment**
Lack of proper induction and incomplete communication of job responsibilities drive a lack of job clarity in academic jobs		
Academic accreditation requirements restrict the teaching aspect in female academics' jobs		
The multiple roles in academics jobs and lack of teaching assistants create time pressure for female academics	The block model in teaching alleviates time pressure for female academics	The multiple roles in academics jobs and lack of teaching assistants create time pressure for female academics
Bureaucracy negatively affects female academics' creative job behaviour	Bureaucracy shows a weak influence on female academics' creative job behaviour	Bureaucracy shows a weak influence on female academics' creative job behaviour
Lowering public spending at the state level results in the removal of allowances from female academics' total compensation	No impact of lowering public spending at the state level on female academics' compensation	No impact of lowering public spending at the state level on female academics' compensation
Announcements of changing employment system lessen the subjective job security of female academics	No impact of labour market change on female academics' job security	No impact of labour market change on female academics' job security
Institutional shelter from market processes and academics' permanent employment contribute to poor work planning by affecting the values of efficiency and accountability in work organization	No issues of poor work planning in the work experiences of female academics	No issues of poor work planning in the work experiences of female academics
Institutional shelter from market processes and academics' permanent employment influence transparency in selection mechanisms for opportunity and favouritism practices in work	No issues of transparency or favouritism in the work experiences of female academics	No issues of transparency or favouritism in the work experiences of female academics
The work content, prosocial effect, and social interaction involved in academic jobs drive female academics' work meaningfulness		

The government external scholarship program enhances work meaningfulness for female academics who availed of the program. Female academics perceive their job as a means to pay back their country
Work relationships and the work culture are characterized with high support and cooperation
Non-educational development opportunities are highly available to female academics

9.4 Conclusion

The psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs are explored in this research for a deeper understanding of the working conditions in academic jobs and their implications for female academics' wellbeing in a context of labour market change. This answers the third research question. We find that lack of clarity in assigned work, restriction in job autonomy, and time pressure are common psychosocial demands in academic jobs across segments of the HE sector. On the other hand, meaningful work, good supportive work relationships, and non-educational opportunity for development are, similarly, common psychosocial resources in academic jobs across segments of the higher education sector.

While most psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs exist at the job and organizational level, institutional and structural factors play a role in differentiating some of those working conditions at the segment level. State control and funding seem to be the strongest institutional factor differentiating female academics' experiences with job clarity, work planning, and selection for development opportunity at the segment level. This factor seems to have a largely indirect impact. It seems to differentiate the aforementioned working conditions by impacting performance values (i.e. efficiency, accountability) at the organizational level. Similarly, it seems to differentiate room for creativity, bureaucracy, and access to top management in female academics' experiences through impacting the organizational structure of HEIs in the different segments of the sector along size and extent of development lines. In the same vein, institutional change in the labour market shows impact only on the psychosocial working conditions of academic jobs in the government segment, namely reward (or compensation) and job security, through the employment system. This is the largest and most state-

dependent segment in the sector both financially and regulatory. Change in these psychosocial working conditions indicates transition in the HE sector along segment lines.

Psychosocial resources shared in academic jobs across segments of the HE sector (i.e. job autonomy, meaningful work, social support, and development for opportunity) render academic jobs, on the whole, resourceful and part of the primary labour market. Moreover, HE employers care for employee training and skill development, across segments, imply internal labour markets in the HE sector. For employee wellbeing implications, the psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs render academic jobs largely supportive of female academics' wellbeing in both direct and indirect ways. Furthermore, support in academic jobs for female academics' wellbeing appears to be a combination of factors at the job, organizational, and labour market level (refer to section 8.3 of chapter 8 for employment conditions in academic jobs). In the same vein, as labour market change currently stands, the wellbeing of female academics in the government segment seems to be the most vulnerable in the sector.

Finally, this chapter provided an in-depth discussion of the psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs, their impact by institutional factors, and implications for female academics' wellbeing in light of the literature review and research context. The following chapter will provide a comprehensive conclusion of this research, highlight the research significance, and provide recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion and Recommendations

10.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive conclusion of the research grounded in the research findings and analysis. It then revisits the research significance by outlining the research contribution. Then, it highlights the research limitations. Lastly, the chapter provides recommendations for future research, labour policy, and practice.

10.2 Research Conclusion

This PhD thesis sought to explore the impact of institutional change in the labour market on female workers in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. To contextualize this research, it was important to reflect on the wider labour market structure for female workers in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, this thesis explored aspects of labour market entry and mobility of female workers and characteristics of their early career jobs. These issues were investigated by looking at the employment history of female workers across the three key HE segments, namely the government, semi-government, and private. The research indicates the presence of overarching structural obstacles of limited job opportunity for female workers in the wider labour market. These barriers appear to assign highly educated female job-seekers, in all three segments, to a type of secondary labour market employment, at least in the beginning of their work life. Navigating these structural barriers by accepting bad starting jobs appears to result in minimal skill acquisition opportunities and create short-tenure bridging jobs as part of their employment history. This pattern appears to create challenges to upward mobility.

The concentration of female academics' early career jobs in conventional female occupations (i.e. higher education, healthcare, and TVT), across all three segments, implies low entry barriers to jobs in those sectors. This leads to a situation where jobs for female workers in Saudi Arabia centre on these sectors.

The HE sector, in particular, seems to offer attractive and female-accommodating working conditions to female workers. These characteristics seem to significantly influence the career decisions of female workers, across all three segments, to join academia.

In the government and semi-government segments, upward mobility in the employment history of female academics seems to be driven by slightly different factors. Changes in the employment system (from the social insurance system to the more secure and protective civil service system) and employment type (from fixed-term to permanent employment) seem to significantly drive this pattern in the government segment. Furthermore, better working conditions in current academic job (i.e. sheltered employment stability, well-developed career ladders, considerable employee training, and jobs aligned with qualifications) seem to similarly drive this upward job movement. In the semi-government segment, better working conditions in current academic job (i.e. sheltered employment stability, well-developed career ladders, considerable employee training, jobs aligned with qualifications, and high compensation) seem to largely drive this upward pattern.

In the private segment, the mobility pattern in female academics' employment history appears more lateral. No change in employment type or system between previous and current jobs. Furthermore, there seems to be no significant difference in working conditions apart from well-developed career ladders and jobs aligned with qualifications in current academic job. These characteristics can indicate entrapment in a type of secondary labour market employment for this group. On the whole, a disadvantaged entry to the wider labour market is part of female academics' early career experiences across all three segments of the sector.

Second, to explore the impact of institutional change in the labour market on female workers in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia, it was equally important to understand the higher education labour market structure for female workers, specifically in relation to ports of entry to academic jobs. To achieve that,

female academics' access patterns to academic jobs were explored in the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). In the government segment, access to academic jobs seems to be largely controlled and rationed through the civil service employment system. Academic jobs appear to be created incrementally by the state on that employment system. This access characteristic implies internal labour markets in this segment. Consequently, this situation appears to create job queuing by female applicants based on job availability as opposed to training costs. Furthermore, the different job quality of similar jobs in this segment indicates an existence of a two-tier system. This might also reflect a pattern of starting in a lower-tier job before moving to an upper-tier job in the same segment. Work experience acquired in these jobs might have supported female workers' upward mobility in this segment—i.e. bridging their transition from secondary to primary labour market employments.

In the semi-government segment, access to academic jobs seems to be largely controlled through a strong preference for employment at the entry-level (i.e. TA jobs). Although this segment has two employment systems for the employment of national academics, namely the civil service system and the social insurance system, it appears to largely use the latter. These access characteristics imply internal labour markets in this segment. Apart from the normative employment practice, access to academic jobs in this segment appears to be a function of labour demand at the organizational level. This combination of normative and institutional factors in access to academic jobs might explain variation in female academics' employment experiences in this segment (i.e. ease/difficulty, taking a long time/quick). Furthermore, the segment exhibits no signs of a two-tier system in academic jobs. This might be because this segment is comparatively smaller and relatively new in the sector.

In the private segment, the comparatively easier and quicker access to academic jobs implies weak institutional control or barriers. Access to academic jobs appears to be largely a function of labour demand at the organizational level. These access characteristics imply a competitive external labour market in this

segment. Furthermore, this segment's large employment of the government external scholarship program's graduates implies the application of job queueing based on training costs. As a high-skill low-training-cost group of workers, graduates of this program appear to be largely prioritized in selection for academic jobs in this segment. Furthermore, the different job quality of similar jobs in this segment indicates an existence of a two-tier system. Starting in a lower-tier job before moving to an upper-tier job in the same segment might indicate casualization of academic workers. In the same vein, work experience acquired in these jobs might have supported female workers' upward mobility in this segment—i.e. bridging their transition from secondary to primary labour market employments. On the whole, variation in access experiences to academic jobs in the different segments of the HE sector implies heterogeneous ports of entry to those jobs in the sector. A combination of institutional, normative, and market factors appears to differentiate access to academic jobs in the HE sector.

Third, for a deeper understanding of the higher education labour market for female workers, female academics' perceptions of compensation, employment stability, and career ladders in their jobs were explored in the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). In the government segment, compensation seems to not be very competitive, employment stability seems to be high, internal scientific and administrative promotion ladders appear to exist for female academics, and funding for postgraduate studies appears to be similarly available. Permanent employment on the civil service system seems to significantly influence compensation setting in this segment. Particularly, the segment's ability to offer non-pecuniary employment benefits (i.e. high job security) seems to lower compensation competitiveness. Employment stability appears to be largely sheltered in this segment by state funding and the civil service employment system. These conditions appear to enhance job security and investment in academics training (i.e. funding postgraduate studies) in this segment. They also seem to, simultaneously, enhance academics retention and employers' likelihood of recouping the investment in academics training.

In the semi-government segment, compensation seems to be very competitive, employment stability seems to be high, internal scientific and administrative promotion ladders appear to exist for female academics, and funding for postgraduate studies appears to be similarly available. Fixed-term employment on the social insurance system combined with high investment in academics training (i.e. funding for postgraduate studies) seems to significantly influence compensation setting in this segment. These employment characteristics seem to drive up compensation competitiveness to enhance academics retention and the segment's likelihood of recouping the investment in training. Employment stability appears to be largely sheltered in this segment by state funding. These conditions appear to enhance job security and investment in academics training in this segment. In the same vein, the significant difference in compensation competitiveness between the government and semi-government segments, despite both belonging to the public sector and receiving state funding, seems to stem from the employment system. Specifically, the employment statuses granted by the different employment systems followed in the segment. This difference in employment status (fixed-term vs. permanent) seems to require different compensation strategies for academics under each segment's efficiency maximization strategy.

In the private segment, compensation seems to be competitive, employment stability does not seem to be high, internal scientific and administrative promotion ladders appear to exist for female academics, and funding for postgraduate studies seems to be unavailable. Operating in an external competitive labour market involves a higher risk of job loss for academics. This characteristic seems to be compensated with competitive compensation in order to retain academics in this segment. Furthermore, employment stability appears to be largely susceptible to market processes as this segment receives no significant or consistent funding from the state. These conditions, combined with fixed-term employment on the social insurance employment system, seem to lower job security and investment in academics training (i.e. no funding for postgraduate studies) in this segment. As the segment is comparatively less able to retain

academics, it seems to be less willing to fund their postgraduate studies which supports their scientific advancement. These characteristics imply secondariness in the segment along the lines of employment stability and employee training. On the whole, different combinations of market and institutional factors seem to set employment conditions in academic jobs in the different segments of the sector. State funding and employment system seem to be key institutional factors differentiating employment conditions in female academics' jobs at the segment level.

Fourth, for a deeper understanding of the working conditions in academic jobs and their implications for wellbeing in a context of labour market change, the psychosocial working conditions in female academics' jobs were explored in the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private). While most psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs exist at the job and organizational level, institutional and structural factors seem to play a role in differentiating some of those working conditions at the segment level. Lack of clarity in assigned work, restriction in job autonomy, and time pressure are common psychosocial demands in female academics' jobs across the three segments. State control and funding seem to be strong factors differentiating female academics' experiences with job clarity, work planning, and selection for development opportunity in the sector. This factor seems to have a largely indirect impact by affecting organizational performance values (i.e. efficiency, accountability) in the government segment. Similarly, the segments' financial and regulatory relationship with the state seems to differentiate room for creativity and access to top management in female academics' work experiences. This seems to occur indirectly by affecting the organizational structure of HEIs in the different segments of the sector along the lines of size and extent of organizational development.

Meaningful work, social support, and non-educational opportunity for development are common psychosocial resources in female academics' jobs across the three segments. The similarity in these psychosocial resources across the sector

implies that many of these resources are inherent in the nature of academic work as opposed to being organization- or segment-specific. These characteristics render academic jobs, on the whole, resourceful and supportive of female academics' wellbeing in both direct and indirect ways (through a buffering effect). Furthermore, these job characteristics and HE employers care for employee training and skill development, across the three segments, render academic jobs part of the primary labour market and lend them internal labour markets characteristics. In the same vein, the government external scholarship program represents an institutional resource that seems to support the wellbeing of female academics in the three segments through enhanced work meaningfulness and work engagement. On the whole, support in female academics' jobs for wellbeing seems to result from a combination of factors at the job, organizational, and institutional levels. As labour market change currently stands, the wellbeing of female academics in the government segment seems to be the most vulnerable in the sector.

Institutional change in the labour market shows an almost exclusive impact on the psychosocial working conditions of academic jobs in the government segment, namely compensation and job security. This is the largest and most state-dependent segment in the sector, both financially and regulatory. The civil service employment system appears to be the process through which compensation cuts are implemented. Furthermore, the government announcement of changing national academics' employment system appears to significantly lower female academics' job security in this segment. Change in these psychosocial working conditions indicates transition in the HE sector along segment lines. Furthermore, lowering job security and compensation cuts might imply precarity in academics' working conditions in the government segment in the course of labour market change.

In conclusion, the labour market experiences of female academics in the Saudi labour market meet many of the classical conditions of segmented and internal labour markets. These highly educated females experience non-economic barriers in their entry to the wider labour market as well as to academic jobs in the

higher education sector. Institutional factors influence and differentiate the working conditions in female academics' jobs and their entry to those jobs along segment lines. However, despite the variation in working conditions at the segment level, the higher education sector represents, in the aggregate, a primary labour market for female workers in Saudi Arabia. The human capital hypothesis applies to female academics in all three segments of the sector. Furthermore, formal rules (i.e. employment systems) organize female academics' employment relationships in all three segments. In addition, career ladders exist for female academics in all three segments. Only the private segment of the sector exhibits secondariness elements in employment stability and employee training.

The higher education sector exhibits elements of transition. Institutional change in the labour market is reflected in the small but growing semi-government segment. The government segment seems to be transitioning to semi-government through regulatory liberalization. This transition involves employment regulations that impact academics' working conditions and consequently their wellbeing. Furthermore, this institutional change in the largest segment of the sector can indicate fracture in long-standing internal labour markets for female workers in Saudi Arabia. Without careful attention to employee wellbeing in labour policy, this labour market change can create precarity in the working conditions of academics or give birth to the casualization of academic workers. By the same token, this institutional change in the labour market (through education, labour, and financial policy) is predicted to expand females' job opportunity in the wider labour market. Finally, institutional change in the labour market in Saudi Arabia is shifting the boundaries of the higher education labour market segments. The segments appear to be in a state of flux in this context of labour market change. These conditions have implications for the working and employment conditions in academic jobs and consequently the wellbeing of academics. The following table 10.1 summarizes the research key findings across the three key HE segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private).

Table 10.1 Research Key Findings across the Three Key Higher Education Segments

Theme	Key Findings

	Government segment	Semi-government segment	Private segment
Disadvantaged entry to the wider labour market	Limited job opportunity is the biggest structural obstacle females face in entering the labour market. Jobs for female workers concentrate in conventional female occupations (i.e. higher education, healthcare, and TVT)		
	Limited job opportunity assigns highly educated female job-seekers to a type of secondary labour market employment in their early career life		
	There is an upward movement in the current academic job from previously worked jobs that is driven by changes in employment system, employment type, and better working conditions in the current job	There is an upward movement in the current academic job from previously worked jobs that is driven by changes in employment system, employment type, and better working conditions in the current job	There is an upward movement in the current academic job from previously worked jobs that is driven by changes in employment system, employment type, and better working conditions in the current job
Structural variation in entry to the higher education labour market	The employment system is the strongest control process in access to academic jobs	The normative practice of employment at the entry-level is the strongest control process in access to academic jobs	No significant institutional control in access to academic jobs
	Queueing for academic jobs is based on job availability. Academic jobs are rationed by the civil service employment system	Apart from normative employment at the entry-level, access to academic jobs is a function of labour demand at the organizational level	Queueing for academic jobs is based on training costs and labour demand at the organizational level. Graduates of the external government scholarship program are prioritized in access to employment in academic jobs
	A two-tier system exists in academic jobs—i.e. different job quality of similar jobs	No signs of a two-tier system in academic jobs	A two-tier system exists in academic jobs—i.e. different job quality of similar jobs
	Work experience in this segment bridges female workers' transition from secondary to primary labour market employments in the same segment	No transitions from secondary to primary labour market employments in this segment	Work experience in this segment bridges female workers' transition from secondary to primary labour market employments in the same segment
Structural Variation in the employment conditions of academic jobs in the	Compensation is the least competitive in this segment. The segment's ability to offer female academics high job	Compensation is the most competitive in this segment. Female academics' fixed-term employment and	Compensation is competitive in this segment. Employers' desire to retain academics and

higher education labour market	security influences compensation competitiveness	funding for postgraduate studies influence compensation competitiveness	academics' higher risk of job loss influence compensation competitiveness
	Employment stability is sheltered in this segment through state funding and the civil service employment system	Employment stability is sheltered in this segment through state funding	Employment stability is a function of market processes in this segment
	Internal scientific and administrative promotion ladders exist for female academics in these segments		
	Funded scholarships for postgraduate studies are available to female academics. State funding received by these segments plays a key role in the availability of this opportunity		Funded scholarships for postgraduate studies are unavailable to female academics. The high susceptibility of the segment's economic stability to market processes plays a key role in the unavailability of this opportunity
Balanced psychosocial working conditions in academic jobs with varying susceptibility to labour market change	Lack of proper induction and incomplete communication of job responsibilities drive a lack of job clarity in academic jobs		
	Academic accreditation requirements restrict the teaching aspect in female academics' jobs		
	The multiple roles in academics jobs and lack of teaching assistants create time pressure for female academics	The multiple roles in academics jobs and lack of teaching assistants create time pressure for female academics	The multiple roles in academics jobs and lack of teaching assistants create time pressure for female academics
	Bureaucracy negatively affects female academics' creative job behaviour	Bureaucracy negatively affects female academics' creative job behaviour	Bureaucracy negatively affects female academics' creative job behaviour
	Lowering public spending at the state level results in the removal of allowances from female academics' total compensation	Lowering public spending at the state level results in the removal of allowances from female academics' total compensation	Lowering public spending at the state level results in the removal of allowances from female academics' total compensation
	Announcements of changing employment system lessen the subjective job security of female academics	Announcements of changing employment system lessen the subjective job security of female academics	Announcements of changing employment system lessen the subjective job security of female academics
	Institutional shelter from market processes	Institutional shelter from market processes	Institutional shelter from market

	and academics' permanent employment contribute to poor work planning by affecting the values of efficiency and accountability in work organization	and academics' permanent employment contribute to poor work planning by affecting the values of efficiency and accountability in work organization	processes and academics' permanent employment contribute to poor work planning by affecting the values of efficiency and accountability in work organization
	Institutional shelter from market processes and academics' permanent employment influence transparency in selection mechanisms for opportunity and favouritism practices in work	Institutional shelter from market processes and academics' permanent employment influence transparency in selection mechanisms for opportunity and favouritism practices in work	Institutional shelter from market processes and academics' permanent employment influence transparency in selection mechanisms for opportunity and favouritism practices in work
	The work content, prosocial effect, and social interaction involved in academic jobs drive female academics' work meaningfulness		
	The government external scholarship program enhances work meaningfulness for female academics who availed of the program. Female academics perceive their job as a means to pay back their country		
	Work relationships and the work culture are characterized with high support and cooperation		
	Non-educational development opportunities are highly available to female academics		

10.3 Research Significance

This research holds significance for both science and practice. This section revisits the research significance outlined in Chapter 1 and identifies the aspects through which this research contributes to knowledge on changing labour markets in the Middle East. These aspects include the theoretical, empirical, methodological, and practical contribution of this research.

10.3.1 Theoretical contribution

The classical theoretical literature on labour market segmentation (LMS) theory assumed that the key characteristics and boundaries of labour market segments

were largely fixed (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). This research adapts internal labour markets (ILM) theory to the context of a rapidly changing, but heavily segmented, labour market where segments can be in flux and the boundaries between labour market segments and sub-segments shift. In general, relatively little is known about changing labour markets in the Middle East. The theoretical contribution of this research, therefore, involves an attempt to adapt LMS theory to a specific dynamic institutional context. This work applies LMS theory to a highly dynamic and rapidly evolving labour market where public policy is creating processes of rapid institutional change in a developing country with an emerging market economy. These conditions are qualitatively different from the ones which gave birth to ILM, namely urban American labour markets in the 1960s and 1970s. In this sense, LMS theory in this research serves as a vehicle for understanding the impact of labour market transformation. This admittedly differs from the issues the theory sought to explore and address at its inception, namely persistent economic and social inequalities despite general economic prosperity. Novel applications of ILM can produce plausible frameworks for exploring the ways labour markets in some developing countries are changing and the ways these changes are impacting on marginal groups such as female workers. This has the potential of advancing further theory development.

Another theoretical contribution of this research is the bridging of labour market segmentation theory and theoretical conceptualisations of job demands and resources (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The adaptation the JD-R model to a context of an evolving labour market extends the application of the JD-R model in two ways. First, the JD-R model is primarily concerned with factors at the job and organizational level that impact workers' wellbeing (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The findings of this research showed that institutional factors can play a significant role whether independently or through shaping and differentiating working conditions in academic jobs across segments of the higher education labour market. Specifically, the research findings extends the theoretical conceptualizations of job demands and resources by adding a new set of factors, namely institutional factors, to the other sets of factors already

identified in the model (i.e. physical, social, organizational). This addition reflects the interaction that happens in work reality between factors from different levels (i.e. physical, social, organizational, and institutional). It is noteworthy that personal factors were added to the JD-R model later through empirical research by scholars applying the model (e.g. Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007; Cao and Zhang, 2021). Some institutional factors in this research findings existed across the higher education labour market segments (i.e. government, semi-government, and private) while others were segment-specific. The government external scholarship program (an institutional resource) had a positive impact on female academics' work engagement and job motivation across the higher education sector, irrespective of segment. Similarly, education policy (i.e. academic accreditation requirements) had a negative impact on female academics' job autonomy across the higher education segments. For segment-specific factors, bureaucracy (a higher education sector work culture) had the most impact on creative and innovative behaviours of female academics in the government segment. Similarly, state control and employment system were specific to the government segment and had the largest impact on compensation and job security. The diagram below (Figure 10.1) shows the extended JD-R model through the addition of institutional factors to the conceptualizations of job demands and resources.

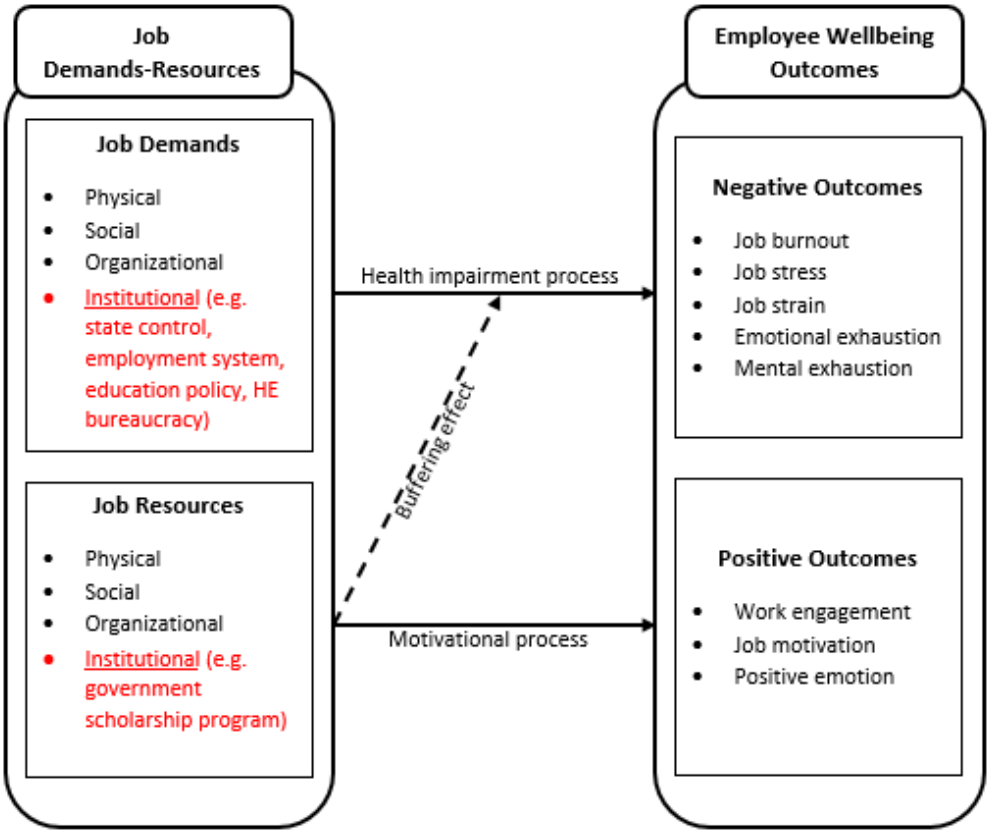

Figure 10.1 Extended Conceptualizations of Demands and Resources in the JD-R Model

10.3.2 Empirical contribution

The empirical literature on Middle Eastern labour markets indicate sector- (e.g. Abdalla, Al-Waqfi, Harb, Hijazi, & Zubaidi, 2010; Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012); citizenship- (e.g. Adham, 2021; Elbanna, 2021); and gender-based segmentation (e.g. Al-Waqfi & Al-Faki, 2015; Syed, Ali, & Hennekam, 2018). For the latter, the focus has been on barriers to female labour market participation as opposed to job or labour market structure (e.g. Alfarran, Pyke, & Stanton, 2018; Alselaimi & Lord, 2012). The empirical contribution of this research lies in the understanding of a changing segmented labour market from the perspective of a highly educated group of workers (i.e. national female faculty) in a transforming labour market (i.e. higher education sector). The analysis highlights the significant role the state plays in the labour market and the resulting variation in the employment and working conditions of female faculty in the higher education labour market. Structural and institutional factors in the labour market mediate labour market outcomes for

female workers in the Saudi labour market. In particular, the research found that females' job opportunity is limited in the labour market; public higher education institutions constitute internal labour markets where entry is controlled and career ladders are well-developed for female workers; employment is sheltered in public higher education institutions by the employment system and state funding which creates high employment stability. Furthermore, the employment conditions of faculty hired on the civil service system appear the most vulnerable to labour market change which, in turn, make the wellbeing of faculty hired on that system the most vulnerable in the sector to labour market change. These empirical findings support a better understanding of evolving labour markets in oil-economies in the Middle East (i.e. the Saudi labour market). They highlight the processes through which change is happening; outcomes are resulting; and interactions and tensions in the labour market are arising.

Another empirical contribution of this research is the deep understanding of the working conditions in academic jobs. This allowed for the detection of conditions impacted by labour market change and segment-level variation in that impact. It also highlighted the processes through which the working conditions were impacted. This understanding supports an effective policy intervention and direction. While policy is used to drive national socio-economic transformation, the research findings highlight the areas where policy can be directed to address and mitigate repercussions of that transformation for employee wellbeing in the different segments of the labour market.

10.3.3 Methodological contribution

The methodological contribution of this research lies in the qualitative application of the JD-R model to the working conditions in academic jobs in the changing segmented higher education labour market in Saudi Arabia. The model is commonly applied quantitatively in the empirical literature where relationships between variables are statistically tested (e.g. Mudrak et al., 2018). The application of the JD-R model in this research involved a qualitative exploration of academic JD-Rs.

Conclusions about academics wellbeing were then drawn based on the model's predictions (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Hence, this research contributes to the methodological development of the JD-R model through the qualitative exploration of demands and resources in academic jobs.

10.3.4 Practical contribution

Upskilling female workers and removing institutional barriers alone are not enough to increase female labour market participation and improve their job quality and mobility. An understanding of females' job and labour market experience in relation to labour market structure and working conditions is imperative in order to design effective interventions that would ultimately create positive social impact. Labour policymakers in Saudi Arabia can benefit from the knowledge generated by this research in areas related to structural and institutional dimensions of the labour and their impact on female workers' participation, mobility, career decision-making, and wellbeing (i.e. career choice, transitions, work adjustments, psychological health). Generated findings can also inform revisions and refinements of active and passive labour policy and programs as well as labour law.

The research findings here can also be utilized by managers and leaders at all levels in the higher education labour market to create a healthy work environment for female faculty. The generated knowledge can assist leaders in making informed decisions with regard to working conditions (e.g. flexible work arrangements, job security, rewards, development opportunities, etc.) that female faculty seem to highly value. A correct application of this knowledge is expected to increases resources in academic jobs which can support faculty's self-actualization and optimal functioning in work without compromising their psychological health. This, in turn, is expected to have positive organizational outcomes (i.e. organizational commitment, lower turnover intention, and work engagement) (e.g. Halbesleben, 2010; O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999).

Lastly, the scientific outcomes of this research is expected to support the country in its socio-economic development plan *'Vision 2030'* which was introduced in 2016. In particular, supporting the two objectives identified under its *'Thriving Economies and Rewarding Opportunities'* dimension—increasing female labour market participation and creating high-performing work cultures (*Vision 2030*, 2016).

10.4 Research Limitations

This research has a few limitations. The limitations tend to be methodological in nature and can be addressed in future research. First, the cross-sectional research design. That is, the collection of data at one point in time as opposed to repeated collection from the same subjects over time. Although cross-sectional designs are commonly associated with quantitative studies, they can be qualitative (Cummings, 2017; Yin, 2018) as in this research. In general, cross-sectional designs are incapable of determining causality, tracking change over time, controlling for variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016), or memory bias (Yin, 2018). Although a cross-sectional design was appropriate for this research aim, purpose, question, and most importantly stage of knowledge development in the research area (i.e. labour market change in developing counties), with lesser time constraints (i.e. PhD timeframe) a longitudinal design would have been ideal. It would enhance the research rigour.

Second, sample size and generalizability. The sample size might be regarded small in this research compared to the sample size in quantitative studies which tend to be more concerned with statistical or population generalizations. However, the sample size in this research (i.e. thirty participants) is considered appropriate for the research aim, purpose, and design (i.e. qualitative case study). The emphasis in case studies is not on sample size but selected cases and the richness of information they can bring to the researcher understanding about the phenomenon of interest (Bloomberg, 2007). Similarly for generalization arguments, the research

aim emphasizes deep understanding and the research design emphasize exploration over uncovering relationships or accuracy of predictions. Moreover, some scholars argue that findings from case studies should be generalized to populations from which the sample was drawn and share defining characteristics (e.g. Firestone, 1993).

Third, a single-sex research sample. An all-female research sample might be argued to not provide a complete picture of the impact of labour market change on workers. It is noteworthy that the decision to focus on female workers in this research has a contextual and theoretical basis. Their labour market indicators (i.e. participation, unemployment, and employment rates) imply that they experience disadvantage in the labour market while the focus of institutional change in labour market on increasing female labour market participation creates potential for higher job mobility for them. Furthermore, an all-female research sample aligns with the research aim, purpose, and question.

Fourth, data-collection method. That is, the use of online and phone interviews as opposed to in-person interviews. It is noteworthy that the latter alternative was unavailable at the time of data collection in this research due to prolonged global travel ban during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in spite of absence of direct personal interaction, participants were highly engaged during the interview and the researcher was able to collect rich data. This was evident by length of interviews and participants' voluntary comments and additions at the end of the interview.

Fifth and last, a single data collection method (i.e. interviews). This is usually discussed in the context of qualitative research credibility and trustworthiness. However, this research has successfully fulfilled other criteria identified by scholars to enhance trustworthiness of qualitative research (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, the use of multiple data collection methods constitutes only one form of triangulation. Other forms include triangulation by sources, researchers, and theories (Patton, 1999) and were all applied in this research. The researcher did not

only interview participants but also reviewed documents pertinent to the phenomenon investigated (i.e. labour market change). These included labour policy, laws, royal and ministerial decrees, and labour market survey among others. Triangulation by researcher was applied in this research by having a team of researchers—three research supervisors in addition to the principal researcher, as opposed to a single researcher. That is, steps in the research process were discussed with other researchers in which better ways were suggested and blind spots were highlighted. This team arrangement supported making better decisions about the research process enhancing its trustworthiness. Lastly, triangulation by theories was applied in this research through the different backgrounds of the research team. While the principle researcher comes from a human resource management background, research supervisors came from organizational psychology, economics, and public administration backgrounds. This diversity of perspectives supported the research development and enriched subsequent analysis.

10.5 Research Recommendations

Based on the research findings, analysis, and limitations, the following sections provide recommendations for future research, policy, and practice, respectively.

10.5.1 Future research

Future research can address some of the research limitations outlined above in the following ways. First, future research can use a longitudinal design at the individual level (e.g. Howell & Reese, 1986; Tolbert, 1982). Qualitative longitudinal designs at the individual level would explore the impact of interacting factors from different levels on individuals over time which would enhance the research credibility. Repeated data collection from the same group of workers over time would provide deeper insight into the ways change in the labour market is happening and

impacting the group of interest. Furthermore, a better understanding of interactions in a context of rapid labour market change would be supported by prolonged engagement through a longitudinal research design. This would, consequently, support the development of more effective labour market interventions.

Second, future research can address generalizability limitations by adding quantitative methods to the research design. That is, using a mixed-methods research approach and following particularly an exploratory sequence[40]. An exploratory sequence would align with the exploratory and deep understanding aim of this research (e.g. Creswell, 2014). This modification in research design would expand the generalizability of the research findings to a larger population and hence its social impact. It would also provide an additional form of triangulation which would enhance the research credibility.

Third, future research can include male workers and even migrant workers of both sexes in the research sample. With appropriate stratification in the research design, more variation in the sample would create more subgroups to compare and contrast workers' experiences. This would, in turn, enrich and expand our understanding of the impact of labour market change on different groups of workers.

Fourth, future research can address limitations in used data collection method (i.e. virtual interviews) by conducting in-person interviews. If time and financial resources permit, methods enhancing rapport and intimacy in social interaction can prove beneficial in qualitative research seeking deep understanding of social phenomena. Data collected through in-person interviews would

[40] An exploratory sequential mixed-methods research design would typically start with qualitative data collection and analysis (phase I) followed by quantitative data collection and analysis (phase II) and finally interpretation. The interpretation section would also start with the discussion of qualitative findings followed by quantitative findings. The purpose of this order is to illustrate how themes emerging from qualitative findings were generalized to a larger population through quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014).

corroborate this research findings and supplement our understanding in areas where virtual interviewing might have been unable to capture.

Fifth and last, future research can exploit the flexibility of the JD-R model and apply it to various dynamic cultural contexts (not restrict its use to the organizational level). The model allows researchers to incorporate factors from different levels that are attuned to the context of their research. This research has demonstrated the ways multiple levels of influence impact employee wellbeing which future research can refer to as an example of the model application. Similar applications of the model would support designing complementary organizational and policy interventions that can create wider and more effective positive impact on workers' wellbeing.

10.5.2 Policy

The following recommendations are institutional in nature and directed to parties involved in the devising of all labour-related policy—i.e. the state, the law, and the private sector. The recommendations are derived from the research findings and analysis and address issues related to job structure, workers' rights and protection, job nationalization, and sociocultural change.

First, the biggest structural obstacle female workers face on entry to the labour market is limited job opportunity. This points to a problem with the job structure in the labour market at large and seemingly more for female workers. The public/private sector segmentation in the labour market seem to play a big role in this problem where good jobs for female workers tend to concentrate in the public sector. The main recommendation for this problem is to create higher economic diversification with well-developed labour markets. The former lies at the heart of the current economic transformation. It constitutes a top priority for the Saudi state and is being pursued aggressively through public and economic policy. However, if most of economic diversification to take place in the private sector,

with the objective of growing the private sector to become the primary employer for nationals, it needs to include well-developed job structures. That is, jobs that correspond to nationals high levels of education, pay good wages, have career ladders, and consider nationals' expectations or at least an understanding of where they come from. Historically, very few sectors have well-developed structures for female workers in the Saudi labour market (e.g. healthcare, higher education, banking). It is recommended that labour policymakers pay attention to this structural characteristic as it would enhance not only meaningfulness and fulfilment drawn from work (e.g. Kahn, 1990) but also females' labour market attachment (e.g. Steinberg, 1975). The latter is crucial for achieving desired economic outcomes. However, developing internal labour markets outside the public sector might need state support. At the moment, private employers resist giving up high profit margins resulting from the common labour-intensive business model and here is where the state can intervene to make change.

The private sector needs serious investment in technology to transform the labour-intensive model to a capital-intensive model. The state can direct resources to support this transformation through offering the private sector financial incentives such as tax cuts, land leasing, and soft loans among others. Although in the short-run these incentives would increase public spending, which runs against the main economic objective of lowering public spending, in the long-run, it is expected to have many economic and labour market benefits. A diversified economy with a technologically advanced private sector would increase the supply of good jobs that require specialized skills in the labour market. This is expected to, in turn, push and incentivise industries and employers to develop good employment structures in order to retain workers. In other words, the transformation would create mutual benefits for national workers and private employers, if private employers were able to share the economic sustainability value with the state. Furthermore, making that transformation in the business model is expected to elevate the current equilibrium in the labour market by lifting the input (i.e. skilled workers), process (i.e. higher technology); and as a result the output (i.e. higher productivity).

Second, institutional efforts to grow the private sector without careful attention to workers' rights and protection can expand the secondary labour market for female workers. Labour legislations (i.e. laws, policy, and programmes) should seek to improve and standardize workers' rights and protection across the labour market segments. Labour law constitutes the strongest tool to achieve that.

Third, the easy recruitment of cheap foreign labour makes it difficult for private employers to voluntarily replace them with the more expensive national labour or even comply with job nationalization policy. The state can intervene here through immigration policy. The state can closely identify the skills the labour market lacks and tie the issuance of work permits to them. This intervention gains greater significance in light of the education and upskilling policies implemented in the last twenty years which produced highly educated national labour. Therefore, it is recommended for the revision of immigration policy to target the elimination of foreign workers in standard white-collar jobs whom can be replaced with national workers of similar skills. This would support lowering nationals' unemployment rate of both sexes. At the same time, the labour market would still be open for foreign talent whom can meaningfully contribute to the country's economic development as well as blue-collar workers (e.g. sanitary and domestic workers) whom are equally needed. In the same vein, private employers' resistance to job nationalization policy might be eased by following a participative approach in policymaking. That is, to consult businesses in devising labour policy and take their input into policymaking. This practice is expected to engender more genuine cooperation between the business sector and the government as it would align interests and create a shared vision for the future of the labour market. Furthermore, it is expected to create change that is deeper than a sanction-avoidance level and more sustainable.

Fourth and last, it is recommended that revisions and refinements of labour legislations (i.e. laws, policy, and programmes) be attuned to the broader socio-cultural change and the implications it might have for long-held beliefs and values

about matters of gender roles and mixed-sex work environments. For example, recent revisions of labour law removed the special treatment of females in the workplace (i.e. article (149) and (150) in Chapter 9) to comply with international labour standards related to gender equality. However, without careful and periodic evaluation of outcomes, these changes can have repercussions for females' labour market attitudes and behaviours. It is recommended that special attention be paid to this point, particularly in relation to the social aspects of the labour market. Cultures differ and the weight they place on some values similarly differ. A complete disregard of that context might not yield long-lasting desired outcomes or even create repercussions.

10.5.3 Practice

The following recommendations for practice pertain to two working conditions: flexible work arrangements and job security. These recommendations can be applied by practitioners at the organizational level.

First, flexible working hours. This factor represent a highly valued working condition influencing the career choice of many female workers to join academia and a component of what they perceived to be an accommodating work environment. Furthermore, the lack of flexibility in work arrangements have been cited by females in Saudi Arabia as a reason for either quitting jobs (Alfarran, Pyke and Stanton, 2018) or not seeking employment all together (Alselaimi and Lord, 2012). Accordingly, the recommendation for practice (i.e. line managers, leaders, and HRM professionals) is to introduce more flexible work arrangements at the team, department, and organizational level (e.g. hybrid work arrangements, remote work, job sharing, part-time jobs, and higher utilization of technology in work communication). This includes a shift of focus from working hours and on-site attendance to productivity. The recommendation can be operationalized through a clear identification of work goals and deadlines for their submission along with periodic follow-ups while employees would have higher flexibility in the time, place, and way of execution. Of course this flexibility would not be applicable to all types

of jobs but should be available wherever applicable. Furthermore, from an organizational psychology perspective, higher flexibility in work would mean higher job autonomy which is argued to foster intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000). In the same vein, practitioners can leverage their experience with the sudden and drastic change of the rigid on-site work models during the recent pandemic (i.e. Covid-19). Work productivity through the different work arrangements during the pandemic challenged the posited link between fixed working hours and on-site attendance on one hand and workers' productivity on the other. Furthermore, scientific evidence (Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi, 2020; Alfarran, 2021) and feedback from industry (Schwabel, 2021) convey workers' positive perceptions of remote and hybrid work arrangements. For practitioners in the Saudi labour market, pioneering this trend (i.e. hybrid work arrangements) has great potential to capitalize on the long argued underutilization of females' potential (Rutledge *et al.*, 2011). It would accommodate females' highly cited participation barrier of family responsibilities (e.g. Al-Asfour et al., 2017; Alfarran et al., 2018). However, it must be emphasized that proposed flexibility to be available for all groups of workers and not only females.

Second, job security. Female workers seem to experience high distress when their job security is threatened with loss. Employers need to understand the significance of this psychological condition for female workers and the extent to which it can impact their wellbeing. The recommendation is to address this issue in employment arrangements in a way that would buffer this distress for them. For instance, rather than annual employment contracts to increase labour market flexibility, a three-year contract might be a better alternative taking the interests of both parties into account—flexibility for employers and more employment stability for workers. Employee wellbeing is a large subject and its consequences exceeds work and the workplace. Workers' wellbeing seems to lie at the centre of a paradox between the economy and psychological health. What is argued to be good for the economy (i.e. higher labour market flexibility, competitiveness, efficiency) is also argued to be bad for workers' psychological health (i.e. job stress, burnout, etc.) (Zheng, 2018; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019; Vohlídalová, 2021). Although

achieving a healthy balance between the two is almost unattainable, a prioritization of values such as sustainability can give practitioners and policymakers a sense of direction; a trajectory for achieving economic objectives with lower taxing of workers' happiness, health, and prosperity.

10.6 Conclusion

This chapter concludes this PhD thesis. The thesis sought to address a knowledge gap in the literature on modernizing labour markets in the Middle East. The in-depth investigation of the job and labour market experiences of female workers in the higher education labour market was carried out to understand the rapid labour market change in a developing country and an emerging market and its impact on female workers. Institutional change in the labour market is expanding females' labour market opportunity and improving their labour market indicators but can also have a negative impact on their wellbeing, through working conditions, if occupational psychological health is not earnestly and carefully addressed in public policy driving labour market change. Contributing to the advancement of knowledge in that area was perceived significant for both cross-cultural scholarship in that stream of research and national efforts to achieve successful and positive economic transformation and social change. With this scientific endeavour coming to an end, the researcher hopes to have fulfilled the research aim and purpose and satisfactorily answered the research question.

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Appendices

Appendix (A): ILO Labour Standards Conventions Ratified by Saudi Arabia

	Fundamental Conventions	Year
1	**C029** - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	1978
2	**C100** - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)	1978
3	**C105** - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)	1978
4	**C111** - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)	1978
5	**C182** - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	2001
6	**C138** - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)	2014
7	**P029** - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930	2021
	Governance Conventions	**Year**
8	**C081** - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)	1978
	Technical Conventions	**Year**
9	**C001** - Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 1)	1978
10	**C014** - Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14)	1978
11	**C030** - Hours of Work (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1930 (No. 30)	1978
12	**C045** - Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45)	1978
13	**C089** - Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89)	1978
14	**C090** - Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 90)	1978
15	**C095** - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95)	2020
16	**C106** - Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106)	1978
17	**C120** - Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120)	2020
18	**C123** - Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No. 123)	1978
19	**C174** - Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)	2001

Source: Adapted from International Labour Organization (ILO) (no date). Available from https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103208

Appendix (B): Prominent Labour Legislation and Regulation in Saudi Arabia from 2000 to 2022

Year	Action	Issuing Authority	Area of Improvement
2000	Establishment of Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF)	King & Council of Ministers	Training & Development
2005	Labour Law	King & Council of Ministers	Protection of Workers' Rights Standardization of Work Conditions
2011	*Nitaqat* Program (Quota Nationalization)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2011	*Hafiz* Program (Unemployment Allowance)	HRDF	Social Protection
2012	*Taqat* Platform (Recruitment e-Platform)	HRDF	Employment - Nationalization
2012	Wage Additional Support Program	HRDF	Wages & Benefits
2013	Wage Protection System (WPS)	MHRSD	Wages & Benefits Protection of Workers' Rights
2014	Ministerial Decree (Work under the Sun)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health
2014	Guide for Accommodating Workers with Disability	MHRSD	Equal Opportunity
2014	Unemployment Insurance Program *'Saned'*	GOSI	Social Protection
2015	Amendment to Service Termination in Labour Law	King & Council of Ministers	Workers' Rights Service Termination
2016	Ministerial Resolution (Disabled Workers)	MHRSD	Equal Opportunity
2016	Ministerial Decree (Standard Work Rules)	MHRSD	Standardization of Work Conditions
2016	Ministerial Decree (Suspension of Financial Benefits)	MCS	Compensation & Benefits
2017	Ministerial Resolution (Parallel Nationalization)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2017	Transportation Subsidy Program '*Wusool*'	HRDF & MHRSD	Employment - Females
2017	Childcare Subsidy Program *'Qurrah'*	HRDF & MHRSD	Employment - Females
2017	Policy (imposition of fees on dependents of non-Saudi workers residing in the country)	Ministry of Finance	Nationalization - Reduction of Foreign Labour
2017	Royal Decree (Reinstatement of Financial Benefits)	King	Compensation & Benefits
2018	Policy (increasing amount of fees imposed on dependents of non-Saudi workers residing in the country)	Ministry of Finance	Nationalization - Reduction of Foreign Labour
2018	Ministerial Resolution (Nationalization by Economic Activity)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization

2018	Ministerial Decree (Health & Safety Regulations)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health
2018	Anti-Harassment Law	King & Council of Ministers	Occupational Safety & Health
2018	Removal of male guardianship requirements in females' entrepreneurship activities	Ministry of Commerce and Investment	Entrepreneurship - Females
2018	Linking Promotions in Public Sector to Merit	MCS	Promotions
2019	Initiative (Nationalization by Profession)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2019	"Standardized Regulations for Women's Work Environment" Initiative	MHRSD	Employment - Females
2019	Ministerial Resolution (Disabled Workers)	MHRSD	Equal Opportunity
2019	Employment Subsidy Program for Upskilling	HRDF	Training & Development
2019	Program to Nationalize Jobs in the Communications and IT Sector	MHRSD & Ministry of Communications and IT	Employment - Nationalization
2019	Amendment to the Social Insurance System (increase women retirement age)	GOSI	Equal Opportunity
2019	Ministerial Decree (Night Shift)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety and Health & Protection of Workers' Rights
2019	Ministerial Decree (Protection from Behavioural Infringements Regulations)	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health
2019	Ministerial Resolution (Nationalization by Sector)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2020	Ministerial Resolution (Nationalization of Accounting Jobs)	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2020	Ministerial Decree (Suspension of Financial Benefits)	Ministry of Finance	Compensations & Benefits
2020	Ministerial Resolution (Reform in Job Mobility of Expatriate Workers)	MHRSD	Workers' Rights
2020	Standardizing Regulations for the Work Environment	MHRSD	Standardization of Working Conditions
2020	Flexible Work Regulations	MHRSD	Employment - Nationalization
2020	National Policy for Occupational Health Safety	MHRSD	Occupational Safety & Health
2021	Employment Discipline Law for Public Employees	King & Council of Ministers	Employee Discipline

Appendix (C): Table of the Research Sample Demographic Information

No.	P. ID	Age	Married	Family Responsibilities	Highest Level of Education	Country of Highest Level of Education
1	P10	29	No	No	Master's	USA
2	P11	30	No	No	Master's	USA
3	P27	34	No	No	PhD	USA
4	P2	33	No	No	Master's	UK
5	P13	34	No	No	PhD	Saudi Arabia
6	P21	33	Yes	No	Master's	USA
7	P25	37	No	Yes	PhD	UK
8	P12	39	Yes	Yes	PhD	UK
9	P32	42	No	Yes	PhD	Saudi Arabia
10	P35	40	Yes	Yes	PhD	UK
11	P14	26	Yes	Yes	Bachelor's	Saudi Arabia
12	P18	33	Yes	Yes	PhD	USA
13	P20	28	Yes	Yes	Master's	UK
14	P24	33	No	Yes	Master's	USA
15	P31	31	Yes	Yes	Master's	New Zealand
16	P16	38	Yes	No	PhD	UK
17	P19	36	Yes	No	Master's	UK
18	P36	34	Yes	Yes	Master's	USA
19	P15	46	Yes	Yes	Master's	USA
20	P23	54	Yes	Yes	PhD	USA
21	P30	45	No	Yes	Master's	UK
22	P33	37	Yes	Yes	Master's	Australia
23	P8	29	No	No	Master's	USA
24	P22	31	No	No	Bachelor's	USA
25	P38	32	Yes	Yes	Master's	Australia
26	P26	33	No	No	Master's	Australia
27	P37	39	No	No	PhD	USA
28	P29	39	Yes	Yes	PhD	UK
29	P34	43	Yes	Yes	PhD	UK
30	P39	47	Yes	Yes	PhD	UK

Appendix (D): Table of the Research Sample Employment Information

No.	P. ID	Segment	Employment Status	Employment System	Employment Contract	City
1	P10	Government	Full-time	Civil Service System	Permanent	Jeddah
2	P11					Jeddah
3	P27					Jeddah
4	P2			Civil Service System	Permanent	Jeddah
5	P13					Jeddah
6	P21					Jeddah
7	P25					Jeddah
8	P12			Civil Service System	Permanent	Riyadh
9	P32					Riyadh
10	P35					Jeddah
11	P14	Semi-government	Full-time	Labour Law	Fixed-term	Jeddah
12	P18					Jeddah
13	P20					Jeddah
14	P24					Jeddah
15	P31					Jeddah
16	P16*			Civil Service System	Permanent	Jeddah
17	P19			Labour Law	Fixed-term	Jeddah
18	P36					Alahsa
19	P15			Labour Law	Fixed-term	Jeddah
20	P23					Jeddah
21	P30					Jeddah
22	P33					Jeddah
23	P8	Private	Full-time	Labour Law	Fixed-term	Riyadh
24	P22					Riyadh
25	P38					Riyadh
26	P26			Labour Law	Fixed-term	Jeddah
27	P37					Riyadh
28	P29			Labour Law	Fixed-term	Jeddah
29	P34					Jeddah
30	P39					Jeddah

*The only participant in the segment to be employed on the civil service system and have permanent employment.

Appendix (E): Table of the Research Sample Job Information

No.	P.ID	Years of Work Experience	Career Level	Position	Leadership Role	College/Department
1	P10	1	Early	Lecturer	-	Health Sciences
2	P11	1		Lecturer	-	Health Sciences
3	P27	1.5		Assistant Professor	-	Computer Science and IT
4	P2	5	Mid	Lecturer	-	Business
5	P13	4.25		Assistant Professor	-	Humanities
6	P21	5		Lecturer	-	Business
7	P25	4		Assistant Professor	-	Design and Architecture
8	P12	8	Late	Assistant Professor	Vice dean of graduate studies and scientific research	Health Sciences
9	P32	12		Assistant Professor	Vice dean for a university institute	Humanities
10	P35	7		Associate Professor	-	Computer Science and IT
11	P14	1	Early	Teaching Assistant	-	Humanities
12	P18	1		Assistant Professor	-	Natural Sciences
13	P20	2.7		Teaching Assistant	-	Humanities
14	P24	1		Lecturer	-	Humanities
15	P31	2.5		Lecturer	-	Humanities
16	P16	4	Mid	Assistant Professor	-	Computer Science and IT
17	P19	7		Lecturer	-	Humanities
18	P36	3.25		Lecturer	-	Health Sciences
19	P15	13	Late	Lecturer	-	Natural Sciences
20	P23	26		Associate Professor	College dean	Nursing
21	P30	9		Lecturer	Head of an administrative unit	Nursing
22	P33	10		Lecturer	-	Nursing
23	P8	3	Early	Lecturer	-	Law
24	P22	2.2		Teaching Assistant	-	Design and Architecture
25	P38	3		Lecturer	-	Business
26	P26	5	Mid	Assistant Professor	Dean of scientific research	Business
27	P37	4		Assistant Professor	-	Business
28	P29	8	Late	Associate Professor	College dean	Advertising
29	P34	10		Assistant Professor	University vice president	Business
30	P39	15		Assistant Professor	Assistant vice president	Business

Appendix (F): Table of the Characteristics of Higher Education Institutions from which the Research Sample was Interviewed

No.	University	Segment	Foundation Year	Size[41]	No. of Students[42]	Headquarters
1	University (A)	Government	2011	Large	26696	Riyadh
2	University (B)		1968	Large	77095	Jeddah
3	University (C)		2014	Large	21050	Jeddah
4	University (D)		1953	Large	155290	Riyadh
5	University (E)	Semi-government	2005	Medium	12238	Riyadh
6	University (F)	Private	1998	Medium	6048	Riyadh
7	University (G)		2001	Small	2532	Riyadh
8	University (H)		2002	Small	3100	Riyadh
9	University (I)		2000	Small	4329	Jeddah

[41] Institution size was determined based on a criterion identified by CollegeData—an online source of information falling under the National Association for College Admission Counselling (NACAC) in the United States (*College Sizes: Small, Medium, or Large*, no date). The source classifies colleges/universities with less than 5000 students as small; with students ranging from 5000-15000 as medium; and with over 15000 students as large.

[42] Number of students were compiled from the latest statistics published by each institution in the following years: U(A) latest stat 2019/2020; U(B) latest stat 2018/2019; U(C) latest stat 2017/2018; U(D) latest stat 2018/2019; U(E) latest stat 2018/2019; U(F) latest stat 2020/2021; U(G) latest stat 2020/2021; U(H) latest stat 2020/2021; and U(I) latest stat 2017/2018.

Appendix (G): Table of the Allocation of the Research Sample across Higher Education Institutions by Career Level

No.	University	Segment	No. of Participants	Career Level	
1	University (A)	Government	3	2	Early
				1	Late
2	University (B)		5	1	Early
				3	Mid
				1	Late
3	University (C)		1	1	Mid
4	University (D)		1	1	Late
5	University (E)	Semi-government	12	5	Early
				3	Mid
				4	Late
6	University (F)	Private	2	2	Early
7	University (G)		1	1	Early
8	University (H)		4	1	Mid
				3	Late
9	University (I)		1	1	Mid

Appendix (H): Table of the Recruitment Methods of Research Sample

Segment	Participant ID	Method of Recruitment
Government	P2	University official website
	P11	
	P21	
	P27	
	P25	
	P10	Referrals
	P12	
	P13	
	P32	
	P35	
Semi-government	P14	Scientific research unit in university
	P15	
	P16	
	P18	
	P19	
	P20	
	P23	
	P24	
	P30	
	P31	
	P33	
	P36	
Private	P26	University official website
	P37	
	P38	
	P39	
	P8	Referrals
	P22	
	P29	
	P34	

Appendix (I): Research Ethical Approval by the Social Research Ethics Committee

4/27/2020 University College Cork Mail - Log 2020-074 Approved

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Bayan Alqurashi <118221412@umail.ucc.ie>

Log 2020-074 Approved
3 messages

Ethics Committee, Social Research <srec@ucc.ie> Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 10:12 AM
To: Bayan Alqurashi <118221412@umail.ucc.ie>
Cc: "Leka, Stavroula" <stavroula.leka@ucc.ie>, "Beck, Matthias" <matthias.beck@ucc.ie>

Dear Bayan

The Social Research and Ethics Committee has now approved your application Log 2020-074 entitled "Labour Market Segmentation and Change: A Case Study of Saudi Female Workers in

Higher Education."

The committee wishes you every success with your research.

All the best

Liz

Liz Hales | Coordinator, Social Research Ethics Committee, University College Cork | srec@ucc.ie | Phone +353 (0)21 4903234

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From: Bayan Alqurashi <118221412@umail.ucc.ie>
Sent: Thursday 23 April 2020 14:57
To: Ethics Committee, Social Research <srec@ucc.ie>
Cc: Leka, Stavroula <stavroula.leka@ucc.ie>; Beck, Matthias <matthias.beck@ucc.ie>
Subject: Log 2020-074 Clarification required - clars

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=6cf00918ea&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-f%3A1665116399124986180&simpl=msg-f%3A16651163... 1/3

Appendix (J): Interview Guide for Female Workers in Higher Education

Section I: Immediate work environment—working conditions of academic jobs held by female workers in the higher education sector.

1. Tell me about your current job. What do you do? And where do you work? [job, employer]

2. What does your job entail? [job responsibilities, roles]

   - In case of multiple roles, do they conflict? If yes, in what why? And how do you resolve the conflict? [role conflict]
   - Are your job responsibilities clear for you? Do you know what is expected of you? And how to perform it? [role clarity/ambiguity]. In case not, what do you do?

3. How long have you been in your current job? And with your current employer? [job tenure]

4. To what extent do you have space and control over your work? [job autonomy]

5. How do you describe your relationship with your boss/bosses? [social support]

6. How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? [social support]

7. If you faced a challenge or difficulty at work and needed support or understanding, would you find it? If yes, from whom? [social support]

8. How do you see the workload (load size, working hours, time pressure)? [workload]

9. How do describe the work-life balance in your life? If poor, is there anything your employer can do to improve it? [work-life balance]

10. How do you see your salary (fair, good, suitable, satisfactory)? If not satisfactory, why? [compensation]

11. How do you see the job security in your job? [employment stability]

12. How do you describe the training and development opportunity provided by your employer? If not satisfactory, what is lacking or you wish was provided? [development opportunity]

13. Do you do anything on your own to develop your skills? If yes, what do you do? And what is your motivation for doing it? [labour market attitude]

14. Is there anything at work that makes you say if it was not for that thing I would have given more than that or better than that? [factors at job level affecting work experience]

15. What do you like or enjoy in your work? [factors at job level affecting work experience]

16. What do like about your workplace? And what do you wish would change or improve? [factors at organizational level affecting work experience]

Section II: Labour market experience.

17. Have you worked in other places before your current employer? If yes, what and where were the jobs? [job mobility/transitions]

18. What made you leave your previous job/s? [job mobility/transitions]

19. How did you know about your current job? [labour market access]

20. How would you describe the employment process from applying to eventually being hired? [labour market access]

21. Were there any challenges in moving from one job to another? [job mobility/transitions]

22. What was your first job? How did you know about it? [labour market access]

23. How was the process from seeking employment to getting employed in the job? [labour market access]

24. Were there any challenges in finding your first job? [labour market access]

Section III: Career choice.

25. Have you thought of other careers or jobs? If yes, what made you not pursue them? [career choice/decision]

26. What made you choose to work in academia? [career choice/decision]

27. What are your career aspirations? [career attitudes]

28. Do you feel your career aspirations are achievable? And why? [career attitudes]

- Is there anything you would like to add to what we talked about or think is relevant in the context of this interview?

- Would you mind if I contact you if further information or clarification was needed?

Thank you very much for your time and participation!

Appendix (K): Codebook

Code	Description	Example
Limited job opportunity	Unavailability of jobs or careers in the labour market which a participant desires or is educationally equipped for.	*'when I graduated the job opportunities weren't many, they were limited so unfortunately I didn't continue in accounting…I would ask myself where would I work?'*
Low quality entry job	Jobs held in early career which had low quality working conditions compared to current job or were below a participant qualifications.	*'I started with a position that was lower than my qualifications just because of gender and then after maybe one year I found an opportunity in the IT and was able to move there.'*
Controlled access to employment in government HEIs	Employment restricted to certain job levels—mostly entry level with internal promotion ladders or jobs requiring a PhD degree and above.	*'when I went to apply at [a government university] they didn't accept me because I had a Master's. They told me that we only take either Bachelor's and then we send you to do a Master's and PhD or you'd have a PhD.'*
Easy access to employment in private HEIs	An employment process that is characterized with ease and smoothness from applying to eventually being hired.	*'the process was very easy and very smooth and I got the job right away.'*
Competitive compensation in private HEIs	Compensation that is perceived fair and satisfactory by participants.	*'I'm in a private university so I get paid higher than public universities. I feel that my salary is excellent'*
Uncompetitive compensation in government HEIs	Compensation that is perceived unfair and unsatisfactory by participants.	*'I don't think this is fair at all and the salary itself is not compatible neither with the academic rank nor the hard work we did in the years of our life in order to get these degrees nor with the nature of work'*
Superior compensation in semi-government HEIs	Compensation that is perceived as excellent or above market wage by participants.	*'the salary is maybe among the highest salaries in the university education sector.'*
Employment instability in private HEIs	Continuance of employment with current employer is not assured but dependent on market and organizational factors (e.g. demand, profit, organizational restructuring).	*'regardless of the reasons which can be economic or downsizing or anything, you might not be renewed.'*
Employment stability in government HEIs	Continuance of employment with current employer is almost assured as long as no major misconduct is committed.	*'The job security is high…The disciplinary and termination policies are almost non-existent unless the employee does something very big.'*
Employment stability in semi-government HEIs	Continuance of employment with current employer is almost assured through automatic renewal of contract as long as there is no organizational restructuring or major misconduct committed.	*'my contract is annual with [the semi-government university], not a civil service job, but…I feel job security. I don't feel that I'm threatened by anything.'*

Funded postgraduate studies in government HEIs	The institution funds the faculty member to continue her postgraduate studies while remaining employed.	*'I'm an assistant professor at [a government university]…I went to do my Master's and PhD and returned'*
Funded postgraduate studies in semi-government HEIs	The institution funds the faculty member to continue her postgraduate studies while remaining employed.	*'You are talking about a university that would send you to study abroad'*
No funded postgraduate studies in private HEIs	The institution provides no funding for faculty members to continue their postgraduate studies.	*'I used to work as a TA for two years and then I joined the abroad scholarship program…and did my Master's…I got back I reapplied at the university and became a lecturer.'*
Meaningful work	Significance and positive meaning work holds for participants—sense of value, usefulness, worthwhileness, and return on effort.	'*You feel that you are actually giving, you are building, you are paying back your country*'
Social support	Available and accessible support from supervisors and colleagues at work when needed.	*'I would find support starting from my colleagues, to the department head, to the dean's office and the dean.'*
Development opportunity	Opportunities at work that support growth and development such as trainings, workshops, scholarships, and support for attending conferences.	*'our university is extremely great in providing developmental workshops, trainings, and even trainings outside the Kingdom'*
Open door policy	Easy access to top management.	'*The boss which is the vice dean and the dean. Both of them are very cooperative and listen to you. You don't have to call the secretary and make an appointment. You can just knock on the door and enter.'*
Role ambiguity (or lack of job clarity)	Not clearly understanding the assigned work task or how to do it.	*'when they assign us with a task we're not always given instructions that you will be doing 1, 2, 3. You have to ask and sometimes you get an answer and sometimes you don't.'*
Restricted teaching autonomy	Not having desired freedom or space in areas of curriculum design, course reference, and/or students' assessment.	'*in assessment, assignments would have 20 points, finals 30, you can't change much in saying that I want to put 15 points for the finals and points for the project.'*
Time pressure	Having little time available (real or perceived) than is necessary to complete a task or meet a deadline.	'*You are required to fulfil 14 hours of teaching… At the same time you are required to do scientific research and also to get promoted but how to do with time?'*
Bureaucracy and rigidity	Long administrative procedures to get work-related matters done or lack of flexibility in introducing change in work	'*bringing a guest speaker from outside the university is a two-month process to happen…with these complications in place…makes one don't follow on those ideas.'* / *'whenever you want to do a new thing they tell you based on the regulations you can't'*

Poor work organization	This includes short notice work assignments; lack of timeline for work submissions; and too early job responsibilities for new faculty.	*'Planning in the work domain is very terrible…the distribution of tasks over the semester in that on this week you have a deadline for this thing and on that week you have a deadline for that thing and that week you have to submit that thing. Nothing is clear.'*
Threatened job security	Participants feeling scared or uncertain about their job security or experiencing change or lessening of it.	*'It [privatization] scares me, it threatens my job security which is one of the advantages that made me join academia. Now it might go away, disappear.'*
Compensation cuts	Experiencing cuts in total compensation through removal of some allowances	*'the salary is not stable because of the allowances. There was the high cost of living allowance which got removed and there are still allowances that may or may not get removed.'*

Appendix (L): Research Dissemination

- 2019, Irish Academy of Management Conference 2019, *'Context Matters: Examining Work Conditions, Gender, and Employee Engagement in the Workplace'*
- 2022, European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology Conference 2022, *'The Psychosocial Work Environment in Saudi Higher Education Institutions and the Wellbeing of Female Faculty'*