

THE IMPACT OF ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION OF WOMEN ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB WORLD

Introduction

The topic of achievement motivation has attracted many psychologists in the past two decades. It is viewed as a trait or pattern of behavior that is characterized by preferences for activities that promote individual accomplishment. This is achieved "through mastering, manipulating, and organizing the physical and social environment; overcoming obstacles and maintaining high standards of work; and competing through striving to surpass one's previous performance.

This view of achievement motivation is consistent with the concept originally expressed by David McClelland (1961). He emphasized the importance of achievement motivation for the economic development of nations. He believed that the problem of achievement motivation has been and still is a central issue in human history. In his book, "The Achieving Society", he referred to those societies which are developing more rapidly economically as "achieving societies". He traced the history of achieving societies from the modern times back to the Greeks. Through an interlocking series of empirical studies, he suggested that a particular human motive, the need for achievement, promotes entrepreneurship which in turn is a key to economic growth. He stated that the characteristic entrepreneurial effects of achievement

have been demonstrated in a wide variety of cultures and over different time periods. McClelland asserted "they are not western, or modern, or associated with white culture".

Changing people is the shortest way to achieve economic objectives. The traditional ways of a society must readily be replaced by new norms if the developing countries are to achieve economically. A crucial way to break with tradition and introduce new norms is via the emancipation of women.

Psychological considerations as well as the case histories of all rapidly developing countries strongly support this view. The most general explanation lies in the fact that women are the most conservative members of a culture. They are less subject to other influences outside the home than the men and yet they are the ones who rear the next generation and give it the traditional values of the culture. They must be influenced by the mass media or education to adopt new values and new norms, if their children are to be effectively brought up in a different way in the next generation.

Importance of Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation is more than an academic interest. It is important because so many countries consciously want to develop rapidly at the present time. The applied problems of motivation in education and industry are of increasing concern in a postindustrial society that is

finally trying to provide equal opportunity for all - to say nothing of preindustrial societies.

Several environmental theorists pointed out that race and environment are related to achievement. A more analytical version of environmental theories would assert that challenges from without can arouse achievement motivation in peoples. McClelland presented a popular explanation as to why some people show the energy characteristic of high achievement. He pointed out that this may be due to the fact that they have somehow been subordinated or discriminated against. This idea may be used in trying to account for the way economic growth begins. The law of group subordination states that major social changes will come about only if some group in a society regards itself as subordinated. The group must feel itself looked down upon or socially discriminated against by the dominant groups in the society, and must feel that this attitude is improper.

The response to subordination depends on the initial level of achievement motivation. If it is high, then the response will be vigorous; if it is low, the response is likely to be one of apathy and withdrawal. Degree of challenge also makes a difference. In this sense, degree of environmental challenge can be considered an intrinsic factor affecting the degree of achievement motivation which is aroused.

In stressing the role of achievement motivation in promoting economic development in the Muslim world, the roles of men and women in society need to be addressed. It is my belief that no matter how westernized Moslem men may become, there is unlikely to be much over-all value and motivational change in the community as long as their wives stay insulated and therefore unable to transmit new values and motives to their children. Freeing women in the most practical sense means employment outside the home. Most underdeveloped countries which have a labor surplus anyway would "panic" at the thought of setting up such a policy objective, but the arguments for it are persuasive. If women leave home for centers of employment, they are more available to influence from outside sources. They take their new attitudes back into the home and pass them to the next generation.

Countries which have invested heavily in secondary education on the average developed more rapidly economically a number of years later. This was realized when the educated population reached its peak capacity in the working force. Schooling and level of economic development are highly correlated around the world. The best guess is that education is most likely to produce the kind of people motivated to improve when it takes place in an achievement-oriented atmosphere. It is the combination of high achievement motivation and greater emphasis on higher education that really produces a high average rate of economic gain. Neither input alone works nearly as well.

are: a disposition to accept new ideas and try new methods; a readiness to express opinions; a time sense that makes people more interested in the present and future than in the past; a better sense of punctuality; a greater concern for planning, organization and efficiency; a tendency to see the world as calculable; a faith in science and technology; and finally, a belief in distributive justice. We can best facilitate development by a frontal attack upon values or by a frontal attack upon institutions and structures that reduce incentives and opportunities and by supporting those institutions and structures which increase them. These value changes are often associated with political reorganization and changes in the educational system, in religion, in family structure, and in social interaction.

It is important to caution against attempting to change people too quickly. Social psychological research has suggested that it is easiest to change people's minds about new facts, less easy to change opinions, still harder to change attitudes, and hardest of all to change motivation. Therefore, it is suggested that such a sequence preceding from the easiest to the hardest be reversed so that one may start by clarifying facts, then challenging opinions, then attempting to modify attitudes and values. For it may be that if one begins by attempting to change values, the resistance will be so great that one's efforts will be fruitless.

persist into adulthood less modified by the realities of later life which shape conscious beliefs and attitudes. On the empirical side, meaningful individual differences in achievement motivation level have been detected as early as the age of five. Furthermore, such differences may be traced to the attitudes of their mothers at least at a somewhat later age. Mothers of sons with high achievement motivation tended to expect self-reliant mastery at earlier ages than mothers of sons with low achievement motivation. They also placed fewer restrictions on their sons than did the mothers of those with low achievement motivation. Therefore, low maternal concern with excellence leads to low concern with excellence in the son.

Rational Model of Economic Development

The rational model of economic development holds that most adults in the West, in developing countries, and in peasant societies naturally seek to maximize their interests, given the particular situations and constraints in which they find themselves. Hence any attempt to change their economic activity should concentrate on changing the incentives and constraints of their situations.

Many scholars have stressed that economic modernization and growth require a whole new set of values and attitudes, and marked changes in social organization. Several social and economics theorists attempted at identifying the required attitudes and values needed for modernization. Some of these

Origin of Achievement Motive

The origin of achievement motive has been analyzed by many theorists. Motives are acquired early in life at a time when it is difficult for the child to determine just exactly what class of cues is associated with affective change. That is, motives involve generalized associations based on easily identifiable stimuli, regular rewards and punishments, and the like. Therefore, all motives are learned. They develop out of repeated affective experiences connected with certain situations and types of behaviors.

In the case of achievement motivation, the situations should involve standards of excellence, presumably imposed on the child by the culture, or more particularly by the parents as representatives of the culture. The behavior should involve either competition with those standards of excellence or attempts to meet them which, if successful, produce positive affect or, if unsuccessful, negative affect. It follows that those cultures which stress competition with standards of excellence, or which emphasize self-reliance and independent training should produce children with high achievement motivation.

Both for theoretical and empirical reasons research on intrinsic determinants of achievement motivation has concentrated on the family. Psychoanalysis has taught us that the inner concerns of fantasy life have their roots in early parent-child relations. Infantile images of the parents, jealousies, and competitive strivings appear to

Achievement Motivation of Women

Some theorists have suggested that girls are generally motivated by a desire for love, approval, and social approbation, whereas boys are motivated by mastery strivings and a desire for excellence. Some others criticized this approach, arguing that women do not work for social approval; rather, the social arena is where women strive for excellence. In other words, because the social arena has been defined as acceptable for women, it is here that they satisfy their need for achievement without threat of affiliative loss. The proposal that women strive for social approval strikes a patronizing role. The proposition that women achieve vicariously through their husbands and significant others is essentially similar to the notion that it is woman's nature to live for and through others, an idea that has not been well received for some years.

Achievement Motivation of Arab Women

Studies on achievement motivation of Arab women are much less numerous than those on western women. Some are comparative in nature, trying to assess differences between Arab males and females, while others drew comparisons between Arab and American women. Toriki (1985) explored the achievement motivation and fear of success in Arab culture. He investigated differences between Arab men and women and the characteristics of the fear of success among Arab women in college. His findings showed that although the

achievement motivation of Arab women was lower than that of American women, no significant differences were found between the sexes of Arab students on achievement motivation, unlike the results for American students.

Similarly, Botha (1971) compared the performance on achievement motivation tests of students from an Arab culture and an American culture who attended the American University of Beirut. Arab women, in general, were hypothesized to hold different values. The importance of value orientation and situational characteristics was stressed in explaining motivated behavior. The findings indicated that the achievement scores of Arab students were lower than those of the American students due to such factors as parental authoritarianism and permissiveness of dependency on the part of the mother which seemed to apply to both sexes. Thus, Arab male and female students' scores on achievement tests reflect certain shared cultural values rather than those that discriminate between the sexes.

Both findings suggest that Arab women resemble Arab men in their wish to achieve and perform at high standards. Toriki offered an explanation regarding the factors in the Arab culture that might support differences from the American culture which are: (1) Arab women's names do not change after marriage, (2) Arab females obtain the same salary on the job as males, (3) Arab women can perform like men in different educational fields, (4) the Arab culture until now, defined clearly the sex roles for males and females, so the

competition between the sexes is less than in western cultures, and (5) most Arab women, even those who work are highly educated, aim to marry and have children. Thus, the family role in Arab culture does not put women in competition with men.

Barriers to Development of Arab Women

There are several factors that impede females from becoming fully productive in an Arab society. These may be divided into two categories: external barriers that result from the traditional and cultural heritage imposed on females by society, and internal barriers which have been assimilated and internalized by females through the socialization process. Though it is difficult to separate one from the other, an overview of some of the most salient ones will be presented.

The central barrier to development, which shapes and fuels the rest, is the stereotype of women which permeates most Arab and even some Western societies. The image of the female stereotype held by society at large and by the women themselves tend to reinforce the traditional child-rearing practices adopted by the parents. In general, women are perceived as "emotional, passive, nurturant, weak, dependent, decorative, non-assertive, and incompetent except in narrowly defined domestic chores" (Breakwell, 1985, P. 24). The fact that young children see their mothers as cooks, cleaners, and nurses, and fathers as workers, doers, and providers may

explain why vocational decisions for women are generally limited.

Women's stereotypic image of themselves constitutes an internal barrier that hinders change. Typically, self-assessment is the process by which people examine the courses they have studied, activities they have enjoyed, and jobs they have held to discover more about themselves. However, sex-role stereotyping creates a major problem in self-assessment for women who usually tend to downplay their talents and skills because it is considered unfeminine to be competent. So even in the West, when society affirms the woman's right to free choice, for example, the exercise of such choice continues to bring her into conflict with her notions of femininity.

In the Arab world, particularly in conservative societies, while the characteristics attributed to women are not as socially valued as those allotted to men, women who conform to their stereotype have been traditionally rewarded by being given considerable social value. As a result, this view has acted as a self-fulfilling prophecy which maintained women's traditional role in society and slowed the pace of their development compared to other changes in society.

There are also external barriers for the development of Arab women exercised directly or indirectly by society at large. Al-Suwaigh (1989) asserted that in spite of all the changes that have taken place in the social, economic, and educational domains, women are still locked into their

traditional roles by the limitations of job opportunities on the one hand and considerations of traditional norms on the other.

The rapid development in the position of women in the Arab world has been inhibited by several factors:

(1) Social norms in general constitute a resistance to change in women's position.

(2) The limitation in the quantity and quality of education for women acts as a deterrent to their participation in the labor force. In Saudi Arabia, for example, budget appropriations for the education of females constitute only 18 percent of those for the education of males (Al-Mouhandis, 1986).

(3) Despite the tremendous need in the Arab Gulf for labor, women are excluded from full participation in the labor market. Harwood (cited in Al-Suwaigh, 1989) stated that there are 500 thousand girls in the Saudi educational system who are qualified to work.

(4) Employment of women is still generally restricted, particularly in the Arab Gulf, to traditionally female jobs, such as education, social welfare, and health services.

(5) The lack of economic incentive, in oil-producing Arab countries, to work outside the home forms an important factor in limiting economic independence and development of women.

Given the tremendous internal and external barriers to women's development in the Arab world, it is hoped that

Breakwell's (1985) view of the quiet rebel in the West will provide an optimistic outlook on the future of the Arab woman:

Every woman is a rebel. Every woman knows that just because she is a woman, there are constraints upon how she ought to think, feel, and act. Every woman, at some time in her life, resists these constraints. Women differ in the target of their rebellion, its visibility and its longevity. Not every woman is a quiet rebel. Quiet rebels are unlikely to identify themselves as rebels at all...They break with tradition for practical, every day reasons in pursuit of their personal goals, not through some great ideological passion or with grand political motive. (p.1)

Leaving all of you on a positive note, I will say that the present status of Arab women is relatively improved given Arab governments' serious attempts to incorporate them in the productive sector of society. It is my hope that measures aimed at enlisting half of the population in nation building will, in the long run, prove successful. Furthermore, a woman's psychological well-being and self-esteem is facilitated by her occupational competence. Unless a woman is given the opportunity to think beyond the childbearing years and organize her sense of self around meaningful activities outside the home, she cannot make a positive contribution to the social change that goes parallel with the economic development of her country. By fostering in women a sense of productivity and a need to achieve, the Arab nation will not only make future mothers full participatory members of their developing society, but will also promote in their sons and daughters a motivation to achieve.

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