Married Female Emirati Students Pursuing Higher Education: Striking a balance

Round Table Discussion – March 14th 2012
Married Female Emirati Students Pursuing Higher Education: Striking a balance

Presenters: Dr. Lilly Tennant, Dr. Patricia Stringer, Ms. Sumaya Saqr, Ms. Amal Abdulla & Ms. Wadha Al Kurbi
Overview of the Research Study

This Research Study funded by Emirates Foundation

Research Aim:

- To gain an insight on the current challenges and supports of Emirati married students who are in teacher education
- To identify future possibilities of support and include implications for higher education institutions

Mixed Design – Quantitative and Qualitative methods

Phases of the Study

- Phase 1 – Survey Emirati married students at ECAE
- Phase 2 – In-depth interviews – selected married students and their spouses
- Phase 3 – Focus group discussions with ECAE Student services staff
- Phase 4 – Putting it all together – Data Analysis of Results/Discussion
Focus for this session

- Discuss the phase 1 of the research study
- Design of the survey questionnaire
- Participants
- Context of the study
- Presentation of Findings
- Discussion
Rationale: Survey Questionnaire Design
Conceptual Framework of the Study

Future Teacher
Context of School Reform and ADEC's 2030 Vision

Student Teacher
ECAE
Context of Higher Education

Daughter/Wife/Mother/Sister/Aunt
Context of Family, Community
Global Society
Construction of Survey

- Theory
- Survey construction links
- Main categories
- Informal conversations
- Ethics
- Pilot
Piloting of the Survey

- Pilot study was conducted to get feedback and refine the survey questions – 36 respondents from different institutions in teacher education
- Fine tuning and item reduction
- Final survey questions were developed using the software esurveyspro.com
- 101 respondents for main study
- esurveyspro software program was used to design the survey and to manage for initial data analysis
Survey Instrument

- Invitation to Participate
  - Introduction, bilingual
  - Question types & format

- Main parts of the survey:
  1. Demographics
  2. Types of Supports
  3. Motivating Factors
  4. Challenges at different levels
  5. Supports at different levels
  6. Possibilities
  7. Concluding statements
Study Participants

- Age group: 20-24yrs – 60%, 25-30 yrs – 28%, above 30 yrs – 12%
- ECAE female students in Bachelor of Education – over 50% were from Year 4, 20% from years 1 and 2 and over 10% for year 3,
  - Number of years married:

  ![Pie chart showing the distribution of years married]
  - 0-2 years: 36%
  - 3-5 years: 33%
  - 6-8 years: 10%
  - Above 8 years: 21%
Context of the Study

- Total Population in the UAE - 8,248,000
  - Citizens: 948,000, Expats: 7.3 million
  (Gulf News p. 16, March 11, 2012)

- Funded and Sponsored by ADEC, Abu Dhabi Emirate

- ECAE initiated in 2007, students enter from High School

- Over 400 students from the Abu Dhabi Emirate and supported by about 40 faculty

- Abu Dhabi public schools in the midst of educational reform and often referred to as the “New School Model”

- Video clip
## Key Findings of the Survey

### Motivating Factors of becoming a teacher:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Responses</th>
<th>Surprises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 80% strongly agreed</td>
<td>Only about 45% agreed on these</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To be an educated parent</th>
<th>Teaching is desirable occupation for women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add to my knowledge and experience</td>
<td>Improve my financial situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be an active member in society and honor my country</td>
<td>Peer encouragement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- An أَنْ أَصِبْحَ وَالَّدَةَ مَتَلَّمَةً
- كَيْ أَضِفُ إِلَى خَيْرِيَ وْمَعْرُفَتي
- أَنْ أَصِبْحَ عَضْوًاّ نَاشِطًأً فِي الْمَجِيْمَعَ وْأَشْرَفَ بِلَادِي
# Key Findings of the Survey

## Challenges at the Family level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Responses</th>
<th>Surprises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>About 50% strongly agreed</strong></td>
<td><strong>My extended family members (including husband’s) do not offer support – 20%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending less quality time with my husband</td>
<td><strong>Difficulty meeting family and study commitments – 39%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending less quality time with my children</td>
<td><strong>Spending less time with relatives and sharing social life</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending less time with relatives and sharing social life</td>
<td><strong>Afrad Uaeltiy amtida (baw faeem Uaela Zojy) la yqdmun a'un</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- قضاء وقت أقل جودة مع زوجي
- قضاء وقت أقل جودة مع أولادي
- صعوبة التوفيق بين الالتزامات الدراسية والأسرية
- وأقارب و المشاركة في الحياة الاجتماعية

- **My extended family members (including husband’s) do not offer support**

- **Afrad Uaeltiy amtida (baw faeem Uaela Zojy) la yqdmun a'un**

- **Difficulty meeting family and study commitments**<br>صعوبة التوفيق بين الالتزامات الدراسية والأسرية

- **Spending less time with relatives and sharing social life**

- **Afrad Uaeltiy amtida (baw faeem Uaela Zojy) la yqdmun a'un**
### Key Findings of the Survey

#### Challenges at the College level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Responses</th>
<th>Surprises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too many courses and assignments to be done per semester - 70%</td>
<td>Inflexible deadlines for submitting assignments – 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وجوبد إنهاء الكثير من المواد والواجبات في كل فصل</td>
<td>عدم المرونة في مواعيد تقديم الواجبات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities on campus: (e.g. child care nursery, majlis, prayer room, study area) 65%</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning in English is a challenge - 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>نقص التسهيلات في الحرم الجامعي (حجرة عناية بالأطفال، مجلس، مصلى، حيّز للدراسة) 65%</td>
<td>التعلم والتعلم باللغة الإنجليزية هو تحديّ بذاته</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation challenge - 45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Key Findings of the Survey

### Challenges: College & Family Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Responses Strongly agreed</th>
<th>Surprises Strongly agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family identifies me as a married person first and student second - 50%</td>
<td>College faculty not understanding family situation – 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication between student services at the college and family - 24% - neutral category</td>
<td>College faculty inflexibility towards married students – 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member not understanding college expectations - 22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family identifies me as a married person first and student second**

الأسرة تراني شخصاً متزوجاً في المقام الأول وطالباً في المقام الثاني

**Lack of communication between student services at the college and family**

ضعف التواصل مشابين قسم الخدمات الطلابية في الكلية والأسرة

**Family member not understanding college expectations**

عدم تفهم أفراد الأسرة لمتطلبات الكلية
### Key Findings of the Survey

#### Challenges: Society Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly agreed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>As a female, married Emirati student I see myself as a teacher contributing to developing the education system – 75%</strong>&lt;br&gt;كطالبة إماراتية متزوجة، أرى نفسي معلمة تسهم في تطوير النظام التعليمي</td>
<td><strong>My choice of employment in terms of location is limited to working in close proximity to my home – 57%</strong>&lt;br&gt;خياري الوظيفي، فيما يتعلق بالموقع، محدود بالعمل في نطاق قريب من منزلي</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<td><strong>As a female, married Emirati student my employment opportunities are limited to a female only school environment – 47%</strong>&lt;br&gt;كطالبة إماراتية متزوجة، فرص توظيفي مقتصرة على بيئات مدارس الإناث</td>
<td><strong>As a female, married Emirati student my professional development for further education opportunities offered in Abu Dhabi are limited – 44%</strong>&lt;br&gt;كطالبة إماراتية متزوجة، الفرص المتاحة أمامي للتطوير المهني من أجل المزيد من التعليم محدودة في أبوظبي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Responses Strongly agreed</td>
<td>Surprises Strongly agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching profession is respected in my culture – 74%</td>
<td>Working as a teacher will allow me to spend more time with my family – 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مهنة التعليم محترمة في ثقافتي</td>
<td>عملي كمعلمة سيسمح لي بقضاء وقت أكثر مع أسرتي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The working hours of the teaching profession is acceptable in my culture – 17%</td>
<td>عدد ساعات العمل لمهنة التعليم مقبول في ثقافتي</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Key Findings of the Survey

### Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Responses Strongly agreed</th>
<th>Surprises Strongly agreed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My husband helps me with child care duties – 22%</td>
<td>The college supports me with a free education and course resources – 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan and prioritize my family and study commitments – 59%</td>
<td>My college respects my cultural values – 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أخطط لوضع التزاماتي الدراسية والأسرية كأولوية</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Findings of the Survey

#### Possibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly agreed</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance education courses will support me to complete my college degree – 50%</td>
<td>Opportunities to be employed as a future teacher in the public schools 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies for better college support for married women such as extended maternity leave, child care facilities on campus. - 68%</td>
<td>My education degree will offer me better opportunities for promotion – 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mix of online and face to face course work will support me to complete my college degree. – 51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Distance education courses will support me to complete my college degree** – 50% 
  - Manahij al-talim anbadda sa'adani 'alayna Ekmal Shahadij al-jami'a
- **Policies for better college support for married women such as extended maternity leave, child care facilities on campus.** - 68% 
  - Siyasat tata'mimia li'taqidim du'am 'afdal al-matroujat k'tamidid 'Eja'aza al-amuma, w waqo'd 'tasehe'a al-lanahya bal'alafal dalal al-klila
- **A mix of online and face to face course work will support me to complete my college degree.** – 51% 
  - Mazjij min anmahaj al-elctornia w anmahaj al-husoriyya sa'dumni fi Ekmal Shahadij al-jami'a
Discussion Questions

• How much harder is it in terms of teacher education in the Emirati culture to strike a balance versus other cultures?

• Are our assumptions stereotyping the “teaching profession” for Emirati women? What would be the most favorable occupation for an Emirati woman in the sustainable future?

• To what extent do higher education institutions consider or tailor programs specific to the needs of married women who pursue further education?

• lteissant@ecae.ac.ae
"I can picture the future of the woman in my country ... I see her becoming more aware and understanding to all the surrounding circumstances and to the duties required from her. I see her and her sister hand in hand to ascend together the ladder of development and civilization established by the fixed foundations, as this is the beginning of the road for returning the favor to the motherland. "
(H.H Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, 2010).

THANK YOU!