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Bridging the gap between the labor market and the education sector (females)

Saudi Arabia

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Glowork
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Introduction:

Part-time jobs are not as popular in Saudi as it is in other countries. In the western world the retail industry is driven by part time students. With the recent statistics in Hafiz that outline that 85% of the unemployed jobseekers in the government database are women, opportunities must be formed and created.

Therefore this study conducted by Glowork, Alwane and DAF was done to bridge the gap between the education sector and employment sector and encourage part time participation in the labor market.

With this study we seek to understand the mentality of the students regarding part-time jobs, and by understanding them we will be able to come up with a solution that will help enlighten students about the benefits and opportunities of part-time jobs.

This research was conducted in partnership with 10 female universities across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and proudly was conducted by part time Saudi females.



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Methodology

Sample size: 500 Sample criteria: Students from universities across the Kingdom

Gender: Female Age: 17-27

Sampling method: Respondents were chosen on SRS (Simple Random Sampling) basis.

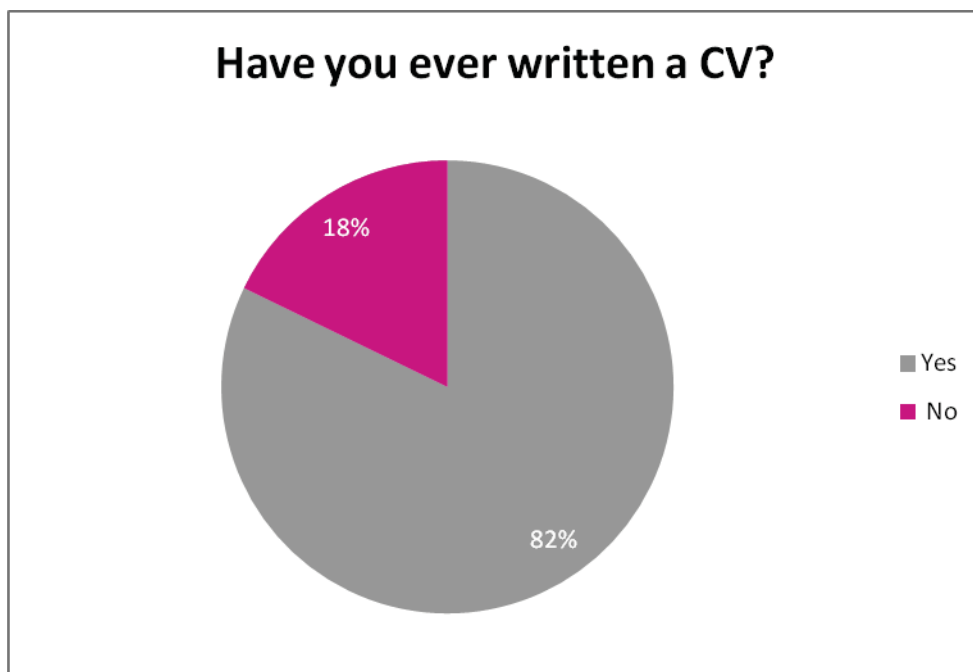


Figure 1 shows that when people were asked whether or not they ever wrote a CV, 82% answered that they wrote a CV while 18% stated that they never wrote a CV. This is a good indication that students understand the value of their CV and that it is an essential part of preparing for the workforce.

Do you prefer writing your CV in English, Arabic or Both?

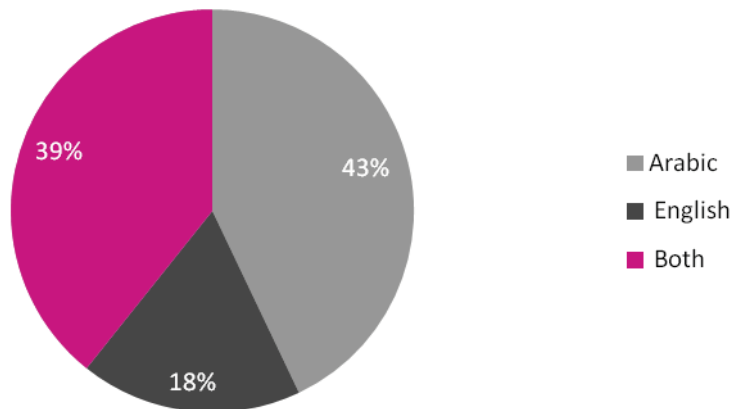


Figure 2 Our respondents were asked whether they preferred writing their CV in English, Arabic or in both languages together.

Figure 2 shows that the majority of our respondents 43% prefer writing their CV in Arabic, and 38% answered that they prefer writing their CV in English. As for the rest 18%, they agreed that they prefer writing in both languages. The figures that suggest that more students prefer writing their CV in Arabic is alarming due to the fact that a vast majority of the private sector prefer English CV's. One possible reason is that the "Arabic" respondents are not proficient enough in English, which has significant implications because the survey shows that the respondents believe that English is important in the job market.

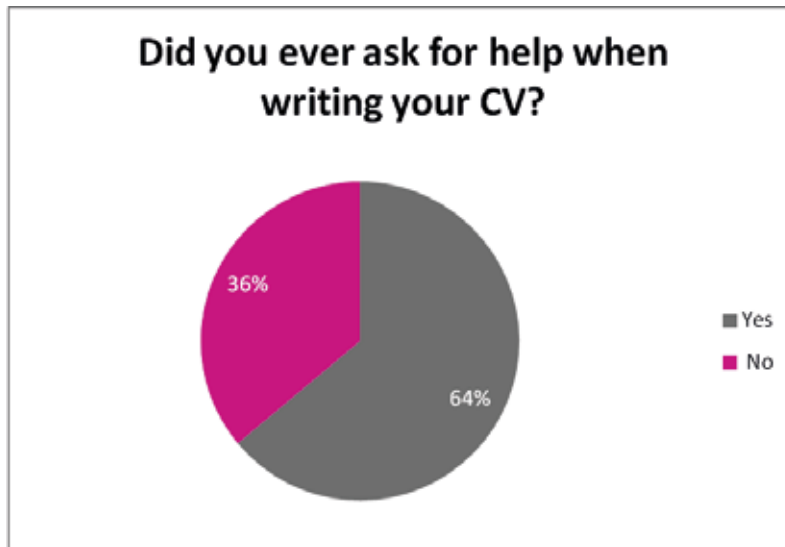


Figure 3 Our respondents were asked if they ever asked for help when writing their own CV, the figure shows that the majority of the women who answered asked for help; 64% admitted asking for help while writing their CV, and 36% answered that they didn't need help writing their CV. Some also commented that they would pay up to 500 Saudi Riyals for an outsider to prepare their CV. The main sources of seeking assistance in writing a CV, were either a local photocopy shop or an online website.

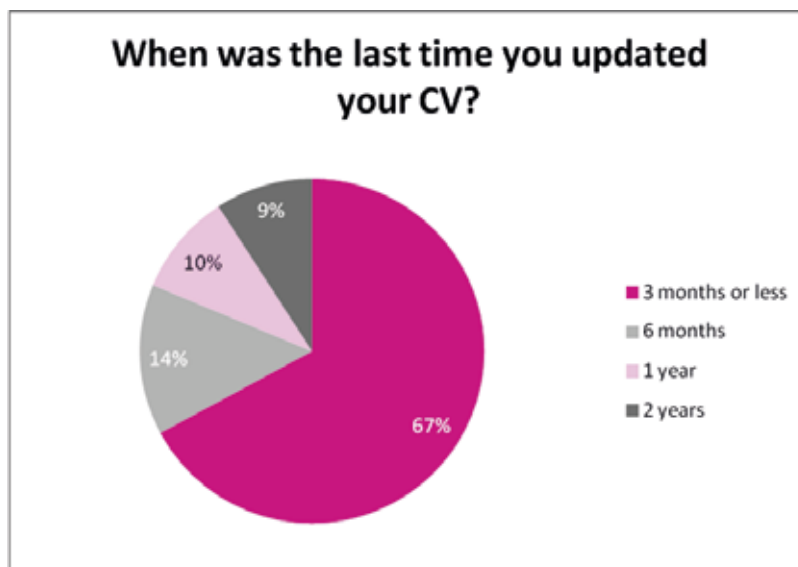


Figure 4 show when was the last time the respondents updated their own CV, 67% of them answered that the last time they updated their CV was in 3 months or less. 14% showed that the last time they updated their CV was before 6 months, whilst 10% agreed that the last time they updated their CV was before one year. The minority of 9% claim that the last time they updated their CV was before 2 years.

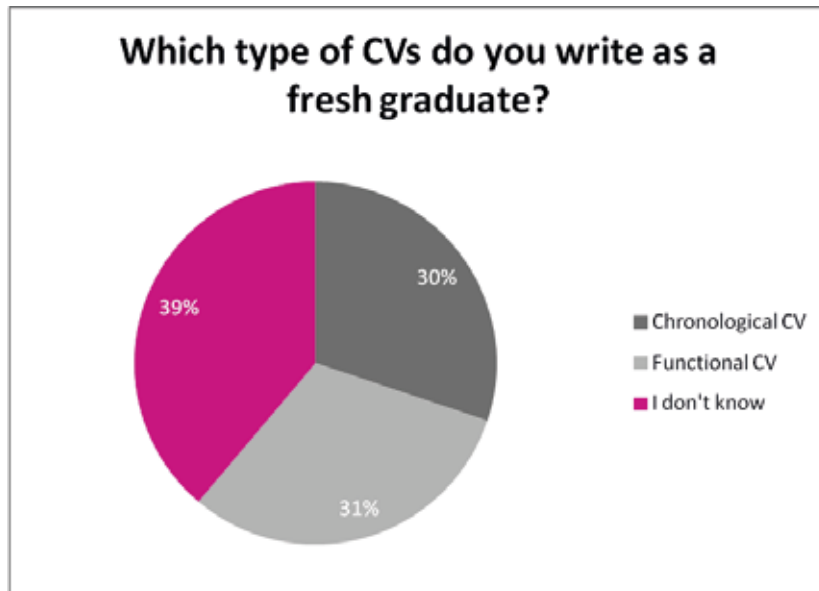


Figure 5 the respondents were asked about the type of CV they wrote as a fresh graduate, there were three choices; Chronological CV, Functional CV, or they don't know. 39% answered that they don't know, which shows that the majority do not understand the different kinds of CVs and which type should be used at which time. 31% of the answers confirm that they wrote a functional CV when they graduated, and 30% of the answers show that the respondents wrote a chronological CV when they graduated.

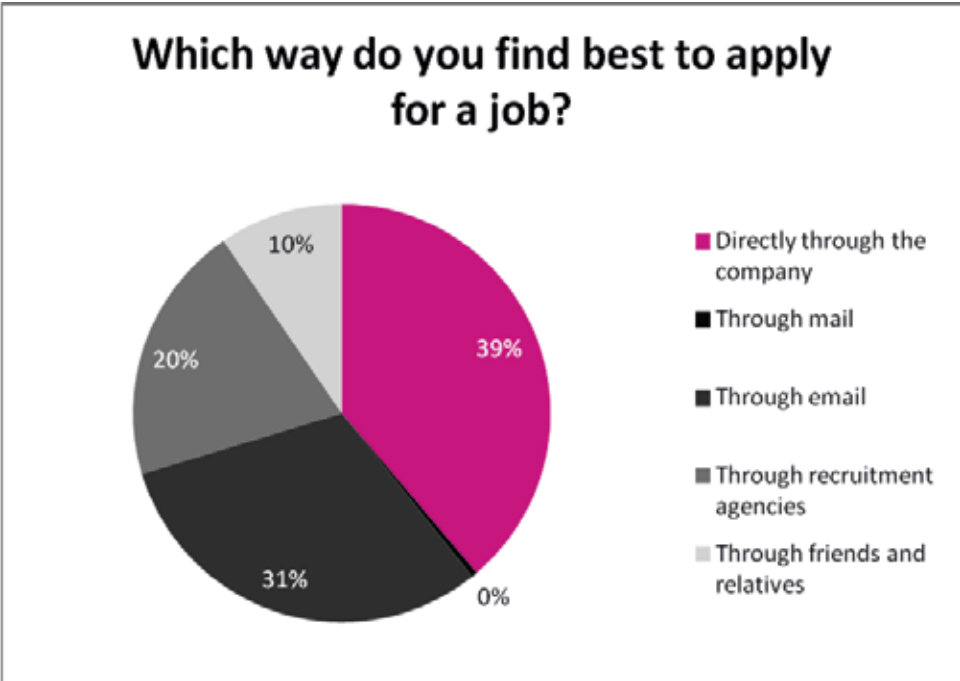


Figure 6 discussed which way they find best to apply for a job. 39% agreed that the best way to apply for a job is to go to the company you are applying for directly and present your CV yourself, 31% voted that it was best to apply for a job through sending an email direct to the employer. 20% of the answers state that it was best to apply for a job through the help of the recruiting agencies. 10% of respondents said that the best way to find a job was through friends or a relative which is a great indication that the perception of finding a job through “Wasta” is changing.

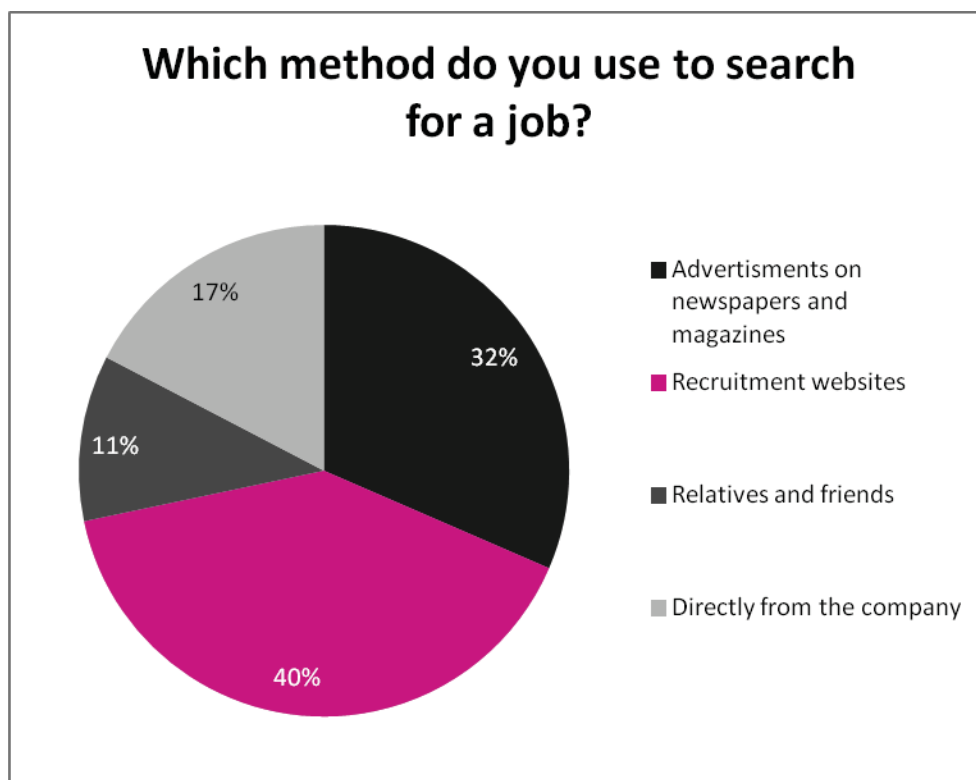


Figure 7 discusses which method the respondents use when searching for a job. The majority have the same opinion that they use recruitment websites to search for a job with the percentage of 40%, and 32% search for available jobs by going through job advertisements published in newspapers and magazines. 17% search for a job by going directly to the company they want to work in and ask for jobs availability, and 11% show that the least used method for searching for a job is through relatives and friends. This shows that the trend to professional recruitment through organization websites and recruitment websites is growing which highlights the professionalism of organizations when it comes to recruitment

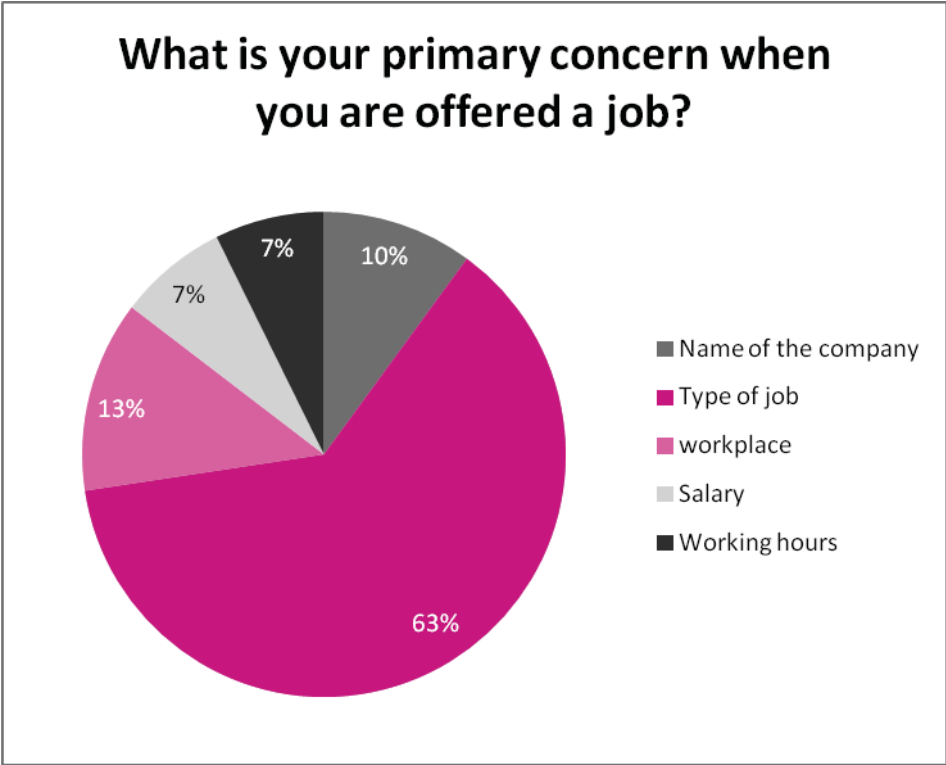


Figure 8 We ask what is the respondent’s primary concern when they are offered a job, the greater part of 63% answered that their primary concern is to ask about the type of job, 13% cared more about the workplace. 10% care mostly about the name of the company they are offered a job in, and 7% care most about the salary of the job. The last 7% find the working hours to be their primary concern.

Which working environment suits you the most?

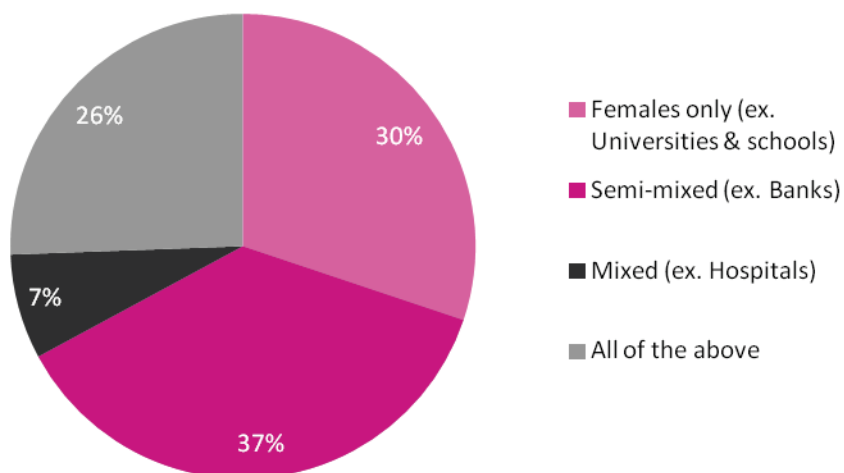


Figure 9 We ask the respondents which work environment suits them the most, 37% preferred to work in a semi mixed environment such as banks and some of the private companies, where men and women interact in a limited manner and separate office spaces are provided for both sexes, 30% want to work in a females only environment such as universities and schools that are for girls only. 26% didn't mind working in any of the different categories females' only, semi mixed and mixed. The last 7% found that a mixed environment suited them the most.

In your opinion, which course will increase your chances of getting a job?

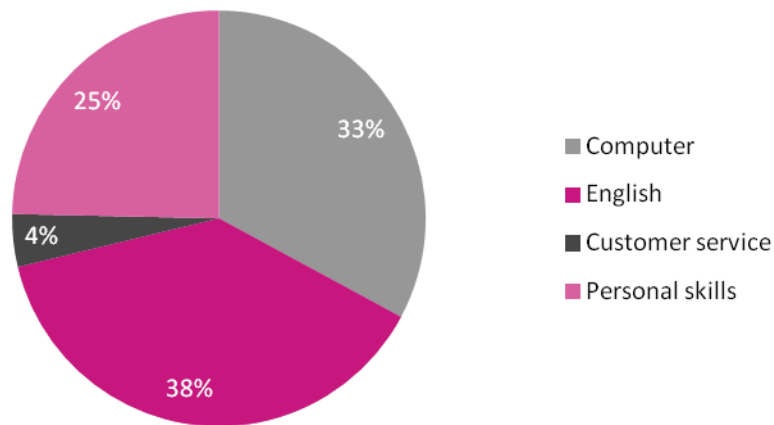


Figure 10 shows that 38% of all the women who answered find English courses will increase the chances of getting a job. The other 33% disagree; they find computer courses the most important course. 25% answered that they find personal skills will increase their chances of getting a job, and 4% think that a customer service course will increase their chance in getting a job.

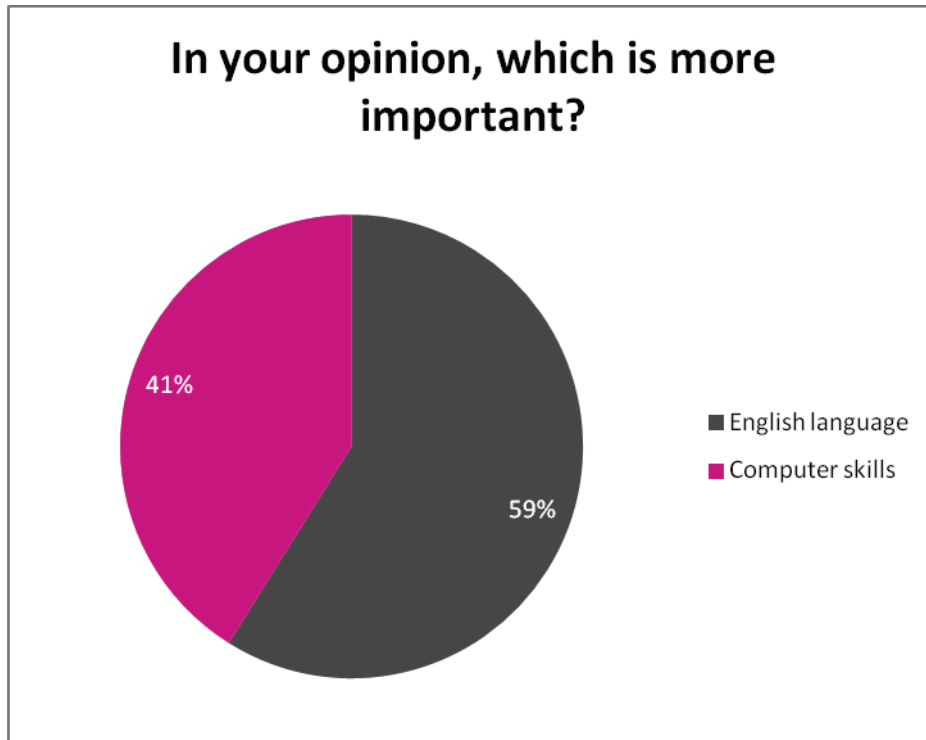


Figure 11 We were interested in finding out whether our sample size found English language or computer skills are more important. As the figure illustrates, 59% found English language more important. 41% think that computer skills were more important. The figure shows that the majority agrees that having a good English vocabulary will boost their chances in finding a job.

**If an opportunity of a part time job
was offered during your studies,
would you apply for it?**

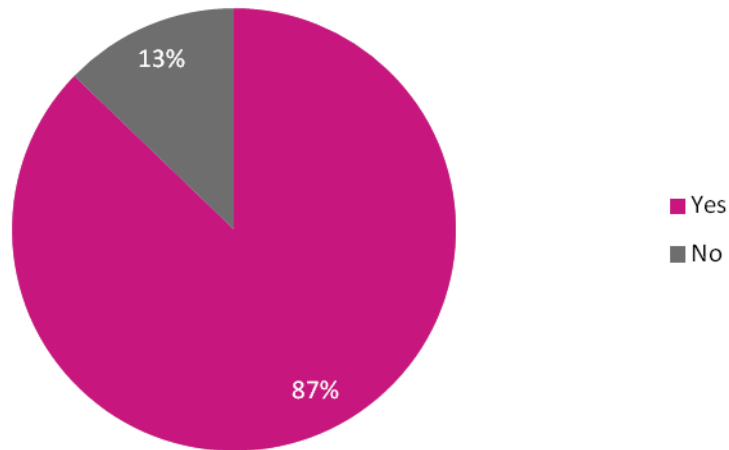


Figure 12 87% of the respondents would say yes if they were offered a part time job while they were still studying, and 13% didn't like the idea of working while studying. This figure shows that the majority wouldn't mind working part time while they studied.

If you were offered a part time job during your studies in the following fields, which would you choose?

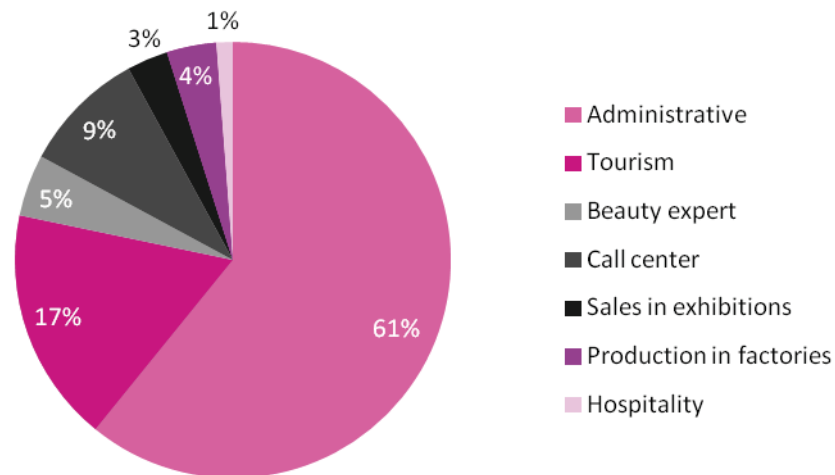


Figure 13 In this figure we went in more detail, we asked the respondents who answered 'yes' in the previous question which fields would they be interested in working at as a part time job. 61% were interested in working in an administrative job, 17% paid more attention to the tourism field, 9% wanted to work at a call center. 5% wanted to work as beauty experts, 4% were more interested in production in factories, and 3% wanted to work in sales in exhibitions. Hospitality was the least wanted field with only 1%, while the administrative field showed to be the most interesting field according to our respondents.

Policy Recommendations by DAF

Universities should capitalize on students' willingness to seek help in writing CVs by establishing and running regular workshops that teach students how to write professional CVs, the different forms of CVs, and other related job-seeking skills, such as handling personal interviews. The data show that such help is needed since 39% of the respondents could not differentiate between the two main types of CVs. The risk in not regularly holding such workshops is that students would seek help from unprofessional sources (e.g., unspecialized photocopy shops), which may negatively impact the quality of their CVs.

Fifty-nine percent of the respondents say that the best way to get a job is through connections. Universities should strive to teach their students how to professionally network and emphasize the difference between professional networking and "Wasta," lest they feel shame in practicing it. Universities' administrators may help their students understand how and when to network by connecting them with recent alumni who work in industries of interest to the students.

Since 39% of respondents indicated that they preferred to apply for jobs directly through companies, universities should organize regular career fairs on campus in order to increase students' exposure to hiring companies. In addition, efforts should be made to ensure that participating companies offer a diverse range of types of jobs because the data reveal that the main concern for students in a job is its type. Furthermore, they should ensure that there are enough companies from industries that students find interesting. For instance, 17% percent of the respondents named tourism as a field of choice for part-time jobs.

Universities should consider online career fairs because they are less costly for universities and more convenient for students. Technological developments in the Internet render online career fairs highly interactive. For example, students may interact directly with a company representative either through a chat room or video conferencing.

One of the main concerns about the integration of females into the Saudi workforce is their inability to work alongside males in a regular corporate setting. The data show that this concern may not be as prominent as it is widely believed.

Only 30% of the respondents preferred all-female work environments. These results should ease some corporations' worries that hiring females would negatively impact the cohesion of their work teams. Moreover, hiring females should be less costly for companies because the former are seemingly willing to share significant working space with males; hence, less separate space is needed. A future interesting study would measure males' attitudes towards their preferred work environment.

Given the importance of English in the job market, the Ministry of Education (MoE) should consider starting to teach English at lower grades in public schools. Recently, the MoE took a step in the right direction by starting to teach English from Grade 4. Previously, public schools did not teach English before Grade 6.

Schools and universities alike are encouraged, at least during English classes, to ensure that the language of instruction is exclusively English. According to Dr. Khalid Al-Seghayer, a Saudi academic, using Arabic to teach English induces less-motivated students to rely on Arabic to convey their messages and erodes the students' confidence in their English proficiency.

Glowork's Conclusion:

From this study we came out with numerous conclusions that need multi stakeholder decisions to be taken. The study revealed that the majority of women currently studying are keen on working part time. If we look at the west for example, the retail industry is built by using a part time workforce. Encouraging students to work while they study would be an important part of developing their skills prior to graduation and Glowork recommends a law to be passed that adds an incentive for employers to hire part time women through a linkage to the Saudization "Nitaqat" system as well as tying the salary to the number of hours worked (possibility of introducing pay per hour system). We can see also throughout the study that there is a clear shift from looking at newspapers/magazines when it comes to job opportunities and the look at online recruitment websites. This is a good indication that organizations and jobseekers are organizing their preferences and it allows both parties a systematic approach when it comes to matching one to the other.

The surprising statistic from the study is that 17% of women were interested in working in the Tourism sector part time. This could see the future of the hotel industry and the travel agencies booming with Saudi women which is a high requirement at the moment. Glowork hopes that this study sheds light on the importance of part time work especially for females as this will become the driving force for the future of our labor market.

From another angle, Glowork sat down with a number of the women that answered the survey in a focus group arranged earlier in the year to ask them if the salary was the motive for working part time and the majority disagreed saying that the experience was the main factor for this choice. Thus this leaves us with a reflection that the survey if conducted for males we would have a different outcome. As long as our sons and daughters are dependent on their families when it comes to financial responsibilities, the reasons for work will remain scarce. Glowork and its partners will take this study and build on it with more in depth analysis studies that are planned to be launched next year.

About Us

Glowork® is formed by young Saudi entrepreneurs that aim to bring empowerment to women and increase diversity in the Saudi workforce. The aim is to start local and increase empowerment to the region.

So what is Glowork?

Glowork is the first website & movement dedicated to female recruitment in the Middle East and the most innovative enabler when it comes to creating equal opportunities for women

Mission:

To help assist female talent in securing clear and concise careers across the region.

Vision:

To be the leading enabler for women into the labor market throughout the region

Objectives:

1. To establish ourselves as a one-stop shop for female career advisory.
2. To associate ourselves with the government, private sector, NGO's, and universities to ensure a stable and prospering career path for women
3. To work closely with NGO's to ensure priority is given to women in need
4. To assist universities in developing graduate females and assisting them in the short and long term career path.
5. To create atleast 500,000 jobs for women in the next five years

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Below are the contacts of all those that have helped make this survey come to life! :

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