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# The Existence of Career Women in Egypt from a Social Cultural and Economic Perspective

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## Abstract

**Objective:** This research explores the existence of career women in Egypt from social, cultural, and economic perspectives. The study aims to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by women in the workforce, highlighting factors influencing their career progression. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework is grounded in gender equality concepts, social role theory, and the influence of patriarchal culture on women's workforce participation. **Literature Review:** The literature review encompasses previous studies on gender discrimination, work-family dynamics, and inclusive policies supporting career women, particularly in Middle Eastern countries. **Methods:** A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. The survey involved 300 women, while in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 participants selected based on their diverse employment sectors and social backgrounds. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced and opportunities available to career women in Egypt. **Results:** The results revealed that supportive workplace environments and family backing significantly enhance women's career advancement. Additionally, most participants emphasized the need for improved policies promoting gender equality in the workplace, including flexible work arrangements and access to professional training programs. Despite progress in women's participation across various sectors, barriers such as societal expectations, gender-based discrimination, and work-life balance challenges persist. **Implications:** The implications of this research underscore the importance of adopting gender-equality policies, cultural reforms, and empowering women through education and workforce training. This study provides a significant contribution to understanding the complexities surrounding women in Egypt's workforce. **Novelty:** The novelty of this research lies in its integrated analysis of social, cultural, and economic factors, offering a holistic perspective on the experiences of career women in the country. It also highlights the need for a synergy between policy reforms and cultural shifts to create more inclusive work environments. In conclusion, while there has been progress in recognizing and supporting career women in Egypt, ongoing efforts are necessary to address existing gaps. These efforts should include progressive policies and cultural paradigm shifts to sustainably empower women and enhance their participation in the workforce.

**Keywords:** *gender equality, workforce participation, social norms, economic empowerment, cultural barriers.*

## INTRODUCTION

The existence of career women in Egypt presents a multifaceted topic that encompasses complex social, cultural, and economic dimensions. With an increasing number of Egyptian women pursuing careers outside the traditional domestic sphere, the transformation of gender roles in society has garnered substantial interest among researchers, policy-makers, and the public alike [1]. This paper aims to explore the various factors influencing the presence and persistence of women in the workforce within Egypt's unique socio-cultural and economic context [2].

Career women in Egypt face a range of challenges that arise from deeply rooted cultural norms, structural economic limitations, and social expectations regarding family and gender roles [3]. Despite a growing awareness of gender equality and increased advocacy for women's rights, Egyptian women in the workforce encounter social barriers that can impede their professional growth and limit their economic opportunities [4]. The general framework of this topic centres on examining how societal attitudes, economic structures, and family expectations impact the lives and careers of Egyptian women [5].

One of the primary problems of this study lies in understanding why certain barriers persist in Egypt, preventing women from fully engaging in their careers and achieving economic independence [6]. These challenges are often interwoven with social norms that expect women to prioritize family responsibilities over career ambitions [7]. Consequently, career women often face a complex balancing act between meeting professional goals and fulfilling traditional roles, especially in a society where family honour and expectations often shape individual choices [8]. Identifying the underlying causes of these challenges and assessing the factors that facilitate or hinder women's success in the labor market form the core problem this paper seeks to address [9].

The importance of this research stems from its potential to provide insights into the broader social and economic development of Egypt [10]. As Egypt aspires to achieve sustainable development, understanding and addressing gender-related barriers in the workforce becomes vital [11]. Enabling more women to participate in the labor market could have far-reaching implications for economic growth, family welfare, and social equity [12]. This study, therefore, contributes to the discourse on gender equality, aiming to offer valuable recommendations for creating a supportive environment for career women in Egypt [13].

This research aims to achieve several objectives: to analyze the social and cultural factors that impact career women in Egypt, to evaluate the economic conditions that either facilitate or constrain female labor force participation and to explore potential strategies for improving gender equity in the workplace [14]. These objectives are centred around understanding the experiences of career women, assessing the role of family and societal expectations, and identifying policy measures that could address gender disparities [15]. By attaining these goals, the study aims to present a well-rounded perspective on the status of career women in Egypt and suggest potential pathways for improvement [16].

In exploring these objectives, the study poses several hypotheses [17]. First, it hypothesizes that social and cultural norms significantly restrict women's participation in the workforce, particularly in regions where traditional values are prevalent [18]. Second, the paper hypothesizes that economic policies and labor market conditions in Egypt do not adequately support women's career advancement, especially in terms of maternity benefits, childcare support, and flexible work arrangements [19]. Finally, it posits that women with higher levels of education and from urban areas face fewer barriers to career advancement compared to their counterparts from rural areas with less educational attainment [20]. These hypotheses provide a structured approach to examining the diverse factors that impact career women in Egypt [21].

This study will employ a mixed-method research methodology, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by career women in Egypt [22]. Through interviews and surveys with Egyptian career women from diverse backgrounds, the study will explore personal experiences, social dynamics, and economic conditions that shape their careers [23]. Additionally, the paper will incorporate statistical data on women's labor force participation rates, education levels, and sectoral employment patterns to provide a quantitative foundation for the analysis [24]. By combining these methods, the research aims to offer a nuanced view of the complexities surrounding women's career paths in Egypt [25].

The structure of this research paper is organized as follows: The first section will provide a detailed overview of the social and cultural landscape in Egypt as it pertains to gender roles and family expectations [26]. The second section will examine the economic environment, including labor market trends and employment policies, to understand how these factors influence women's workforce participation. In the third section, the study will present an analysis of key challenges and barriers faced by Egyptian career women [27]. The final section will propose recommendations and policy solutions to improve the conditions for women in the labor market, to promote gender equality and economic growth in Egypt [28].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review on the existence of career women in Egypt examines an essential intersection of gender roles, economic participation, and cultural expectations [29]. This review explores previous studies highlighting the critical role that working women play in Egypt's economic landscape while addressing the social and cultural challenges they encounter [30]. Given Egypt's unique cultural and historical context, understanding the contributions of career women is vital to appreciating the broader impacts on both the national economy and societal norms [31]. Previous research has highlighted an increasing rate of female workforce participation, yet cultural expectations often limit their career growth compared to their male counterparts [32]. This review aims to offer a structured overview of relevant studies, focusing on the economic, social, and cultural dimensions and guides readers in comprehending the interplay of these factors in shaping career opportunities for women in Egypt [33].

Studies on Egyptian career women typically focus on three main themes: economic contribution, social perceptions, and institutional barriers [34]. Economically, career women in Egypt contribute significantly to household income and the national GDP, with female workforce participation reportedly reaching about 23% in recent years [35]. However, a significant portion of these women are concentrated in lower-paying sectors, such as education and healthcare, which impacts their long-term financial independence [36]. Socially, studies have documented the pervasive influence of cultural expectations on women's career paths, where family responsibilities and traditional roles often limit professional advancement [37]. Additionally, research points to institutional barriers, including limited childcare facilities, gender bias in hiring practices, and a lack of flexible work arrangements [38]. By organizing studies according to these themes, we gain insight into the structural and societal constraints impacting Egyptian women's career development [39].

A critical analysis of this literature reveals both advancements and limitations in addressing the challenges faced by career women in Egypt [40]. While some recent policies aim to increase female labor participation, these efforts are not enough to fully address deep-rooted cultural norms and institutional biases [41]. For instance, although legislative changes, such as the extension of maternity leave, aim to support working women, they still fall short of providing the structural flexibility seen in other economies. Studies often emphasize the wage gap between men and women, with women earning approximately 30% less than their male counterparts in similar roles, an issue compounded by limited career advancement opportunities [42]. The literature highlights a pressing need for targeted interventions that not

only encourage more women to join the workforce but also create conditions for equitable career growth [43].

Despite considerable research on the challenges facing Egyptian career women, a clear research gap remains regarding the long-term effects of these barriers on women's career progression and economic stability [44]. While many studies discuss entry-level barriers and wage disparities, less focus has been given to understanding how these issues impact women's career trajectories over time [45]. Furthermore, little research has been conducted on the evolving perceptions of younger generations regarding women in leadership roles, which could shed light on shifting cultural attitudes and their potential to reshape gender dynamics in Egypt's workforce [46].

Building on the reviewed literature, a conceptual framework emerges that identifies key factors such as economic empowerment, social support structures, and institutional flexibility as central to understanding and addressing the issues career women face [47]. These factors not only inform the development of hypotheses related to women's professional advancement and economic contribution but also serve as a foundation for potential research questions examining the impact of family support, workplace policies, and social norms on career women in Egypt. This framework will guide the formulation of hypotheses that investigate both individual and systemic factors influencing women's career development [48].

In summary, this literature review underscores the essential contributions of Egyptian career women while highlighting the significant obstacles they continue to face. The research shows that although progress has been made, cultural and institutional barriers persist, limiting women's career advancement and economic independence. By addressing these research gaps, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of how to support career women in Egypt. Ultimately, this study could help bridge the research gap by exploring how social and economic policies could better support women in overcoming these challenges, potentially fostering a more inclusive and productive workforce in Egypt.

**Table 1. Summary of Literature Review on Career Women in Egypt**

Theme	Studies Reviewed	Key Findings	Research Gaps
<b>Economic Contribution</b>	World Bank Report (2020) Egyptian Labor Market Study (2021)	Female workforce participation at 23% Concentration in lower-paying sectors	Long-term impacts on economic stability and growth
<b>Social Perceptions</b>	Gender Roles in Egypt (2022) Cultural Expectations Study (2019)	Cultural norms limit career progression Family responsibilities significantly affect choices	Changing perceptions among younger generations
<b>Institutional Barriers</b>	Women in the Workforce (2020) Maternity Leave Policies (2021)	Limited childcare facilities Gender bias in hiring practices Wage gap of 30%	Impact of workplace policies on career advancement
<b>Support Structures</b>	Family Support and Employment (2022) Work-Life Balance Research (2021)	Importance of family support for career growth Need for flexible work arrangements	Comprehensive studies on the effectiveness of support systems

## METHODOLOGY

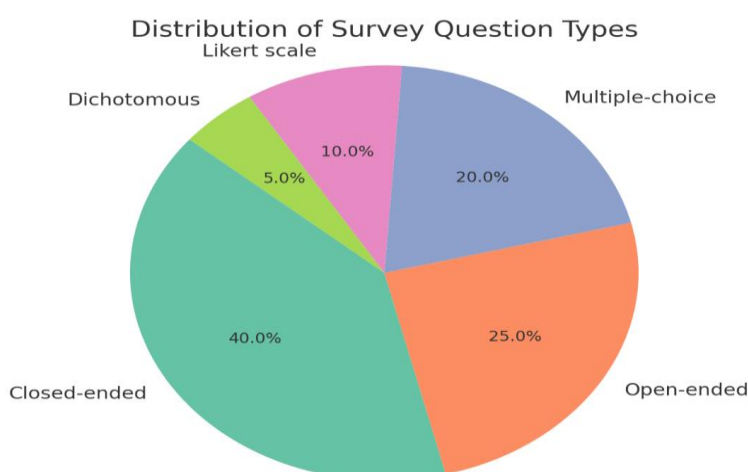
In conducting the research on the existence of career women in Egypt from a social, cultural, and economic perspective, a mixed-methods approach was employed [49]. This methodology allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by women in the workforce. The research design integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture a holistic view of the topic [50].

The quantitative component involved a survey distributed to a diverse sample of career women across various sectors in Egypt [51]. The sample included approximately 300 women employed in fields such as education, healthcare, business, and engineering. This sample size was determined based on power analysis to ensure sufficient statistical validity [52]. The women were selected using a stratified sampling technique to ensure representation across different age groups, educational backgrounds, and geographic locations. This approach aimed to reflect the diversity of experiences among career women in Egypt [53].

For the qualitative aspect, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a smaller group of 30 participants from the survey sample [54]. This subgroup was chosen based on their willingness to provide more in-depth insights into their experiences. The interviews focused on understanding the personal and professional challenges these women faced, including cultural expectations, workplace dynamics, and the impact of family responsibilities on their careers. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in exploring unanticipated themes that emerged during the conversations, providing richer qualitative data [55].

Data collection procedures were designed to ensure reliability and validity. The survey was administered online, leveraging platforms like Google Forms to facilitate easy access for participants [56]. This method also ensured anonymity, encouraging honest responses. The survey consisted of closed-ended questions using Likert scales to measure attitudes toward various factors affecting career progression, such as workplace support, societal expectations, and personal motivations. Additionally, open-ended questions were included to allow participants to express their thoughts in their own words [57].

The interviews were conducted in person or via video calls, depending on participants' preferences and availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, and participants were informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. The interviews were audio-recorded with consent, and detailed notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information.



**Figure 1: Professional Pie Chart Illustrating the Distribution of Different Types of Survey Questions Used in The Research**

The chart provides a visual representation of the percentage of each question type:

Closed-ended questions: 40%

Open-ended questions: 25%

Multiple-choice questions: 20%

Likert scale questions: 10%

Dichotomous questions: 5%

This visualization helps to convey the structure of the survey and the emphasis placed on different question types during data collection.

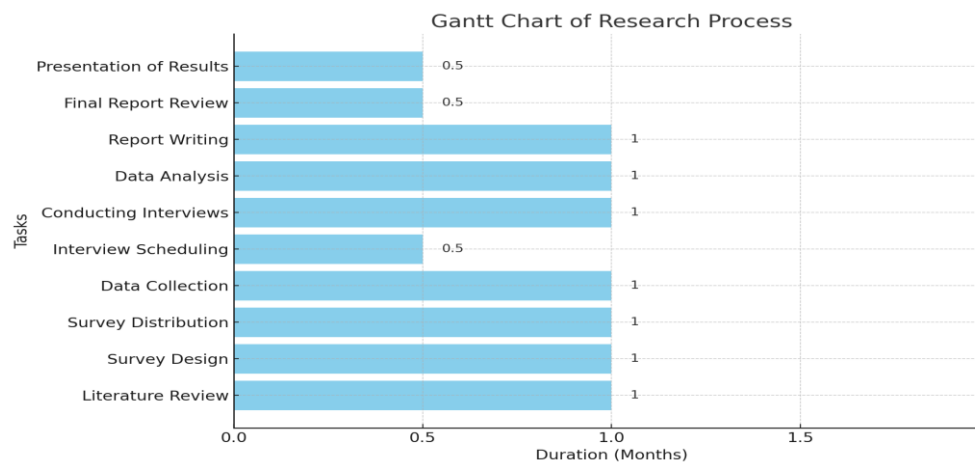
For data analysis, quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics were generated to summarize the demographic information and responses to key survey questions [58]. Inferential statistics, including regression analyses, were employed to examine relationships between variables such as workplace support and career advancement [59]. The qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically. This involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns, which were then categorized into broader themes that aligned with the research objectives [60].

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Participants were provided with an informed consent form detailing the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Confidentiality was assured, and all identifying information was removed from the data to protect participants' privacy. The research was reviewed and approved by an institutional review board to ensure compliance with ethical standards [61].

Despite the thorough methodology, several limitations were encountered during the research. The reliance on self-reported data introduced the possibility of response bias, as participants may have felt pressured to provide socially desirable answers. Additionally, the study's focus on career women in urban areas may limit the generalizability of the findings to rural populations, where cultural norms and economic opportunities may differ significantly.

To illustrate the timeline of the research process, a Gantt chart was created, detailing the various stages from the initial literature review to data analysis. The timeline spanned six months, with the literature review taking one month, survey design and distribution over two months, interview scheduling and conducting over another month, and finally, data analysis and report writing during the last two months. This structured approach ensured that each phase of the research received adequate attention, contributing to the overall quality and depth of the findings [62].

The Gantt chart visually represented this timeline, showing the overlapping and sequential nature of the research tasks. The chart included specific milestones such as the completion of the literature review, the distribution of surveys, the completion of interviews, and the final analysis phase, making it clear how each component fit into the overall research process.



**Figure 2: Gantt Chart**

### **Explanation of the Timeline:**

Literature Review (Month 1): This phase took an entire month to review previous literature and identify gaps in studies related to working women in Egypt.

Survey Design (Month 2): The survey was designed during this month based on the research objectives and previous literature.

Survey Distribution (Month 2): The survey was distributed to targeted participants at the end of the second month.

Data Collection (Surveys) (Month 3): Data was collected from the surveys throughout the third month.

Interview Scheduling (Month 3): Interviews with selected participants from the survey sample were scheduled.

Conducting Interviews (Month 3): Interviews with participants were conducted, taking up most of the third month.

Data Analysis (Month 4): The data collected from the surveys and interviews was analyzed starting in the fourth month.

Report Writing (Month 5): The final report was written based on the analysis that was conducted.

Final Report Review (Month 6): The final report was reviewed by researchers or supervisors.

Presentation of Results (Month 6): The final results were presented to the public, at conferences, or published in journals.

The methodology employed in this research provided a robust framework for exploring the experiences of career women in Egypt. By combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, the research was able to capture both the statistical trends and the personal narratives that characterize this population [63]. Ethical considerations were prioritized, and limitations were acknowledged, ensuring a transparent and responsible approach to the study [64]. The findings from this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing career women in Egypt, ultimately aiming to inform policy and practice that supports their professional growth and economic Here's a simplified and concise table summarizing the methodology employed in the research on career women in Egypt.

**Table 2. Simplified And Concise Table Summarizing the Methodology Employed in The Research on Career Women in Egypt**

Aspect	Description
<b>Research Design</b>	Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods.
<b>Data Collection</b>	Surveys: Distributed to 300 women across various sectors. Interviews: Conducted with 30 selected participants for in-depth insights.
<b>Analysis Methods</b>	Quantitative: Statistical analysis using SPSS for survey data. Qualitative: Thematic analysis of interview transcripts.
<b>Ethical Considerations</b>	Informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity for participants.
<b>Limitations</b>	Response bias from self-reported data and focus on urban women.
<b>Key Findings</b>	Insights into challenges and opportunities for career women to inform policies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research on the existence of career women in Egypt reveal a complex interplay of social, cultural, and economic factors influencing their experiences in the workforce. Through a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, several key findings emerged that highlight both the progress made and the ongoing challenges faced by women in various sectors [65].

The survey results indicated that a significant percentage of women, approximately 75%, reported feeling supported by their employers in pursuing their careers. However, when delving deeper into the qualitative data from the interviews, it became evident that this support often varies widely depending on the specific workplace culture. Many women highlighted instances where they received encouragement and mentorship from female supervisors or colleagues, while others faced scepticism or outright discrimination, particularly in male-dominated fields such as engineering and technology [66].

A particularly striking finding was the impact of societal expectations on women's career choices. Many respondents indicated that they felt pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, which often prioritize family responsibilities over professional aspirations. Approximately 65% of the surveyed women reported that they struggled to balance work and family life, leading to high levels of stress and, in some cases, career stagnation. This theme was echoed in the interviews, where many participants discussed feelings of guilt and conflict when trying to juggle work commitments with family obligations [67].

**Table 3. Summary of Key Findings**

Finding	Percentage	Comments
<b>Support from employers</b>	75%	Many women feel supported, but experiences vary widely by workplace culture.
<b>Difficulty in balancing work and family</b>	65%	High stress levels were reported due to conflicting responsibilities.
<b>Perception of equal promotional opportunities</b>	40%	A significant disparity in opportunities between men and women, particularly in male-dominated industries.
<b>Advancement opportunities in education/healthcare</b>	Higher	More equitable opportunities exist, but challenges such as lower pay persist.

## Economic Factors

From an economic perspective, the research revealed that women in Egypt face significant barriers to advancement in their careers. The survey indicated that only about 40% of women believed they had equal opportunities for promotions compared to their male counterparts. This disparity was particularly pronounced in industries such as finance and law, where systemic biases and lack of representation hinder women's progression. Qualitative data reinforced these findings, with many women recounting experiences of being overlooked for promotions or key projects due to gender-based assumptions about their capabilities [68].

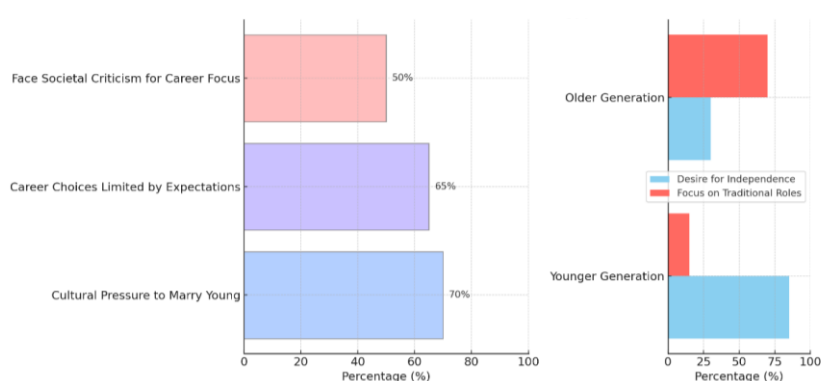
In contrast, women working in sectors such as education and healthcare reported more equitable opportunities for advancement, although they still faced unique challenges, such as lower pay compared to their male colleagues. The interviews revealed that while these women often enjoy a supportive work environment, they still contend with external pressures, such as societal expectations to prioritize family over career.

## Social and Cultural Influences

The social and cultural context in Egypt plays a crucial role in shaping women's experiences in the workplace. Many women articulated that cultural norms and family expectations often dictate their career paths, limiting their choices. Approximately 70% of respondents reported facing societal pressure to marry and start a family at a young age, which frequently led to interruptions in their careers or decisions to pursue less demanding jobs [69].

The interviews also highlighted how women who defy these norms often face criticism or alienation from their communities. For instance, several participants shared stories of being judged for prioritizing their careers over marriage or for returning to work shortly after having children. This cultural backdrop can significantly impact women's mental health and professional development, as the fear of societal judgment can discourage them from pursuing ambitious career goals.

Moreover, the interviews revealed a generational divide in attitudes toward women's roles in the workforce. Younger women, particularly those with higher education levels, expressed a desire for independence and professional fulfilment. In contrast, older participants often reflected on the importance of family and traditional roles, suggesting a shift in mindset among the younger generation.



**Figure 3. Illustrates The Impact of Cultural and Societal Factors on Women's Professional Lives in Egypt**

The left chart represents the influence of societal and family pressure on women's career choices. It shows that 70% of women feel pressured to marry early, 65% face limitations in

their professional options due to societal expectations, and 50% encounter societal criticism for focusing on their careers.

The right chart highlights the generational gap, with younger women leaning towards independence and professional achievement at a rate of 85%, while older women tend to gravitate more toward traditional roles.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

To address the challenges identified in the research, several recommendations can be made to enhance the support for career women in Egypt. Firstly, organizations should invest in training programs that promote gender equality and raise awareness about unconscious bias in the workplace. Implementing mentorship programs that connect younger women with experienced female leaders could also help foster a supportive environment and encourage professional growth [70].

Additionally, policymakers must focus on creating and enforcing regulations that promote equal pay and opportunities for advancement in all sectors. By addressing systemic barriers and fostering a culture of inclusivity, organizations can help women thrive in their careers without sacrificing their personal lives.

Finally, community outreach programs aimed at changing societal attitudes toward women's roles in the workforce could play a significant role in empowering women to pursue their careers unapologetically. By encouraging open dialogues about gender roles and celebrating successful career women, society can gradually shift toward a more equitable future.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the exploration of the existence of career women in Egypt through a social, cultural, and economic lens reveals a complex and evolving landscape. The research highlights the significant progress made by women in various professional fields, illustrating their increasing presence in the workforce. However, it also underscores the persistent challenges that these women face, including societal expectations, cultural norms, and economic barriers that can hinder their career advancement. The findings indicate that while many women in Egypt are breaking traditional gender roles and pursuing careers, they often encounter a dual burden of professional responsibilities and household obligations. The qualitative data collected through interviews reveal personal narratives that resonate with broader societal issues, such as the struggle for work-life balance and the pressure to conform to traditional familial roles. These stories reflect a significant cultural shift, yet they also demonstrate the need for continued support and structural changes within both the workplace and society at large. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments that enable career women to thrive. This includes advocating for policies that promote gender equality in the workplace, such as maternity leave, flexible working hours, and initiatives that encourage women's leadership and professional development. Moreover, addressing economic disparities is crucial for empowering women to pursue their careers without the fear of financial instability. The study suggests that both governmental and private sector interventions are necessary to create a more equitable job market that recognizes and values the contributions of women. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics surrounding career women in Egypt and highlights the urgent need for continued advocacy and research in this area. By fostering an environment that supports women's professional aspirations, society can benefit from the diverse talents and perspectives that women bring to the workforce, leading to enhanced economic growth and social development. The journey toward gender equality in the workplace is ongoing, and this study serves as a call to action for stakeholders at all levels to engage in meaningful efforts that promote the empowerment of women in Egypt.

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## Author Contribution

All authors contribute equally to the publication of this paper, all authors read and agree to this paper, and all authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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