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HINDRANCE OF FEMINIZATION IN RETAIL BUSINESS: A CASE OF ALREFAIE COMPANY

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Keywords: sales job, Saudi women, culture, training, mixed environment

ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate reason behind high resistance of female to work in sales field. Ministry of Commerce had decided in women's stores that provide women specific products included perfumes, cosmetics, clothes and children-care product throughout the kingdom. This decision had created challenges and problems to Al Refaie company in hiring women who often had no background in sales and lack of work experiences. The company found some difficulty in hiring women to work on shops as sales staff or cashiers due to many reasons. The study was conducted by using questionnaire to understand the women working influence and Saudi culture impact in retail business. , the result also indicated there was certain factors which lead women reluctantly agreed to have sales job. First factor is masculine society which men had more power than women. The second factor was culture did not fit with women in Saudi culture. Third factor was mixed environment as 40 respondents had agreed and strongly agreed that worked in mixed environment did not fit with Islamic rules.

Keywords: sales job, Saudi women, culture, training, mixed environment

INTRODUCTION

Gender development and role plays in national progress is significant. Everyone handles thing different and clearly cultural context is paramount importance. Saudi Arabia have its own conservative laws and habits which slowly begun to recognize importance of enabling some limited opportunities which help move country forward.

Saudi Arabia is a religiously and socially conservative country [1,2]. Saudi Arabia has population approximated to be about 23 million in 2006. World Economic Forum in 2016 Global Gender Gap Report has ranked Saudi Arabia 141 out of 144 countries for gender equality [3]. In general, gender inequality involved three meaning included men experience better chance, freedom and higher social than women who have same social characteristics [4]. In north of Asia, there are only 42 women working for every 100 working men [5].

In Saudi Arabia, labour market reveals different potentials and challenges. The government is making efforts to improve women position in term of

employment. There are several factors which lead difficulty Saudi women participate in labour market to improve economy development. Women employment is important element for macroeconomic policy in promote economic development.

Saudi women do not have good opportunities in employment due to cultural norms and social traditions [6]. King Abdullah Bin Abdelaziz had announced that Saudi women are allowed to work in women necessities shop in 2011 but also increases pressure on women since society attacking who disagreed women have public and social position. The women in Saudi Arabia facing many difficulty included social norms, gender discrimination, low salary and transportation.

The women who worked in mixed environment have exposure in harassment or abuse and violence which lead to non-emotional stability, psychological combustion, hopelessness and anxiety [7]. These problems would lead to be absent, leave work, look for sick leaves which affected family and community [8]. Besides, working women in mixed environment usually experiences heavy pressure while trying hard in performing all multiple and conflict roles. The study aimed to investigate reason behind high resistance of female to work in sales field.

METHODOLOGY

The study was based on primary data which depended on questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted on 50 women who working or worked in the retail business. Besides, secondary data also used which included literature review. Al Refaie company was selected for this study which consisted 400 employees and more 30 retail outlets across Saudi Arabia. The secondary data of previous studies and references for literature review were also used in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on Fig.1, there were 28 respondents (56%) who strongly agreed and only 1 respondent (8%) were strongly disagreed on worked in mix environment did not fit with Islamic rules. The result also an influence of dominant culture in school and university in their decision in working environment.

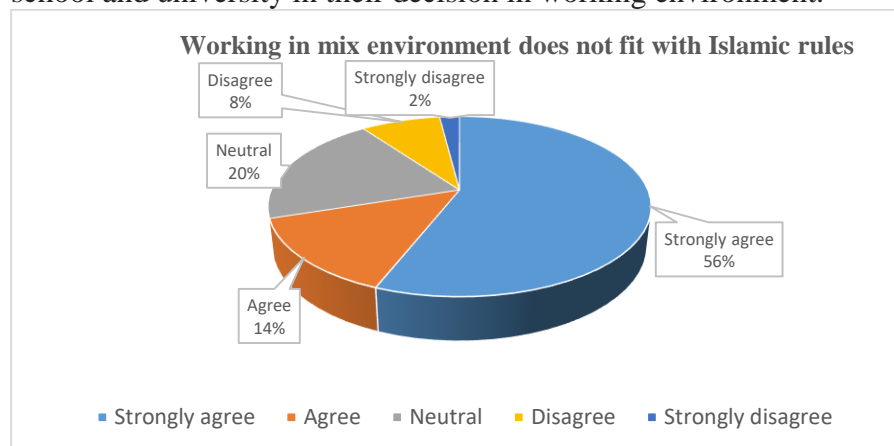


Figure 1: Respondents answer toward working in mix environment does not fit with Islamic rules

Meanwhile, 25% (50%) were strongly agreed and 3 respondents (6%) answered strongly disagreed that sales did not fit with female in our culture as shown in Fig.2. This result showed government decision to hire women in the sales position is likely to have cultural obstacles represented by traditions and dominant culture in the society.

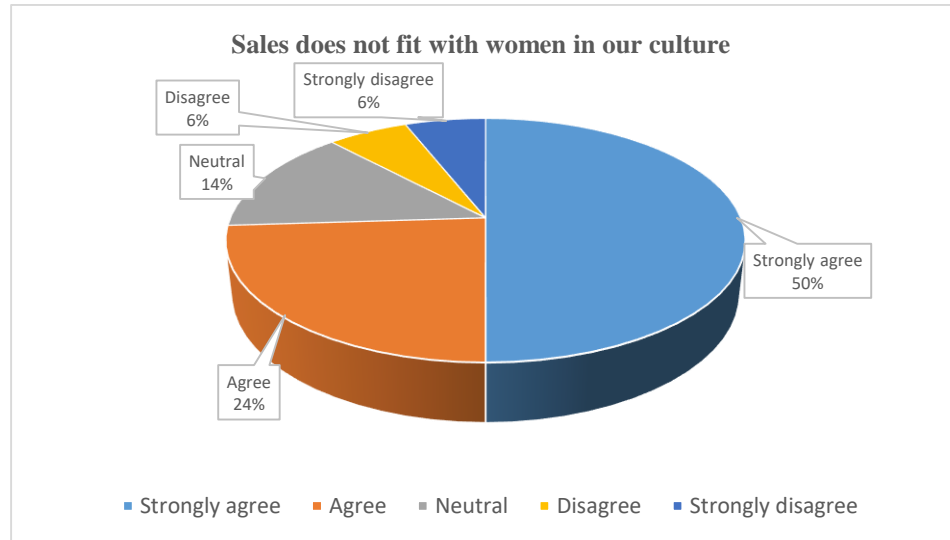


Figure 2: Respondent answer toward sales does not fit with women in our culture.

Based on personal preference and regardless of religious rules or society culture, there were 25 respondents (50%) were agreed that did not prefer to work in a mixed environment against 8 respondents (16%) who worked in such environment and 2 respondents (4%) who were neutral which did not mind worked in mix environment as shown in Fig.3.

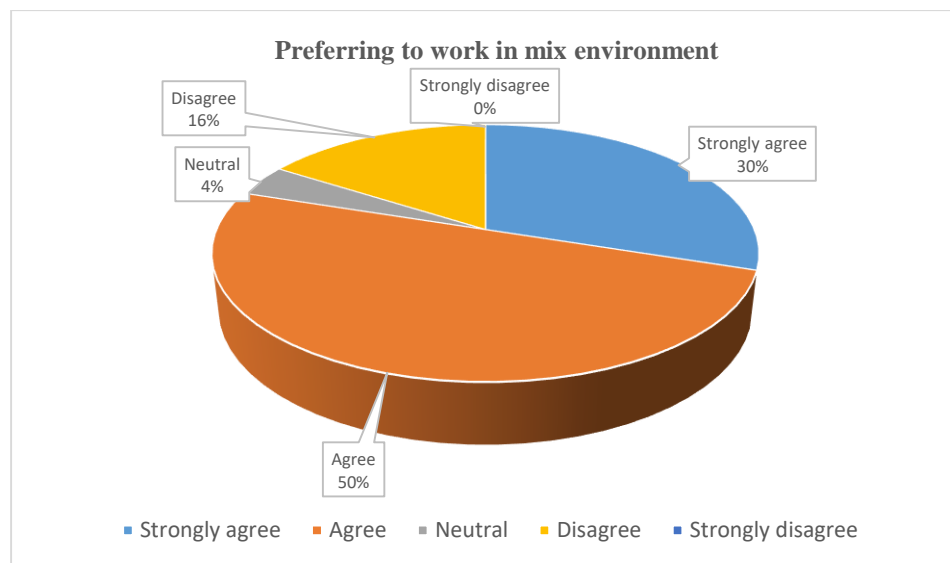


Figure 3: Respondents answer toward preferring to work in mix environment.

In Fig.4, there were 34 respondents (68%) who believed that sales job did not required knowledge and skills. Their opinion was based on fact that throughout

anyone bought things and know what the sales people did sales. There was job training which the women employees in master their working skill.

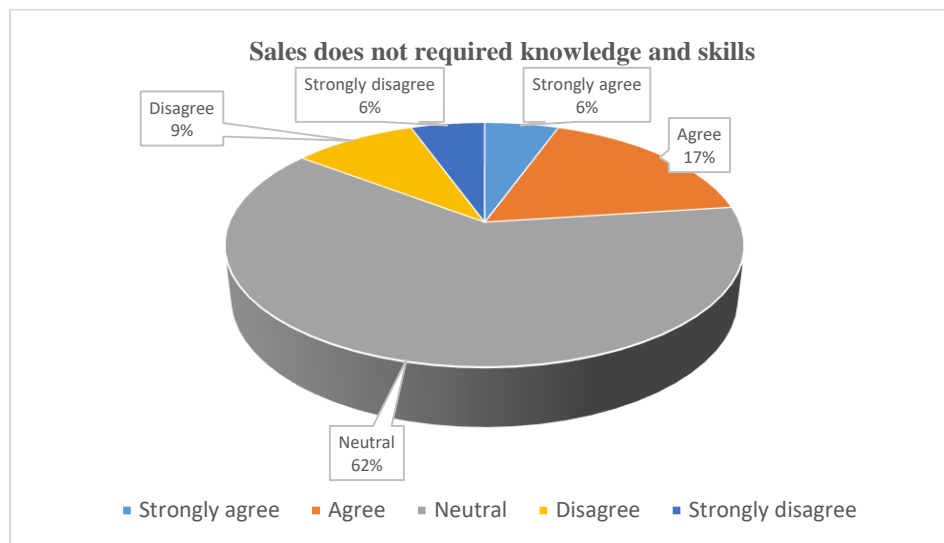


Figure 4: Respondents answer toward sales did not required knowledge and skills.

In additions, 32 respondents (64%) were strongly disagreed and 11 respondents (22%) disagreed that sales had no real value as shown in Fig.5. The respondents claimed that sales was important due to consuming society which marketing and sales represented great deal from society culture. Everyone preferred buy new products and shopping became hobby for many people especially cosmetics and perfumes.

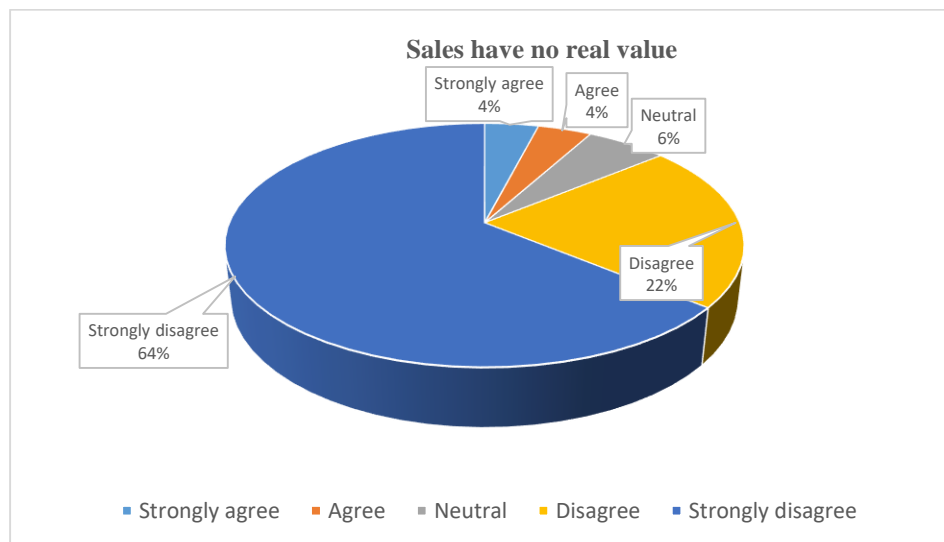


Figure 5: Respondents answer toward sales had no real value

In Fig.6, the masculine society influence which 33 respondents (66%) strongly agreed that their father or husband did not accept their work in a mixed environment. There were 11 respondents (22%) who agreed and 6 respondents (12%) who felt neutral which proved great influence of masculine society.

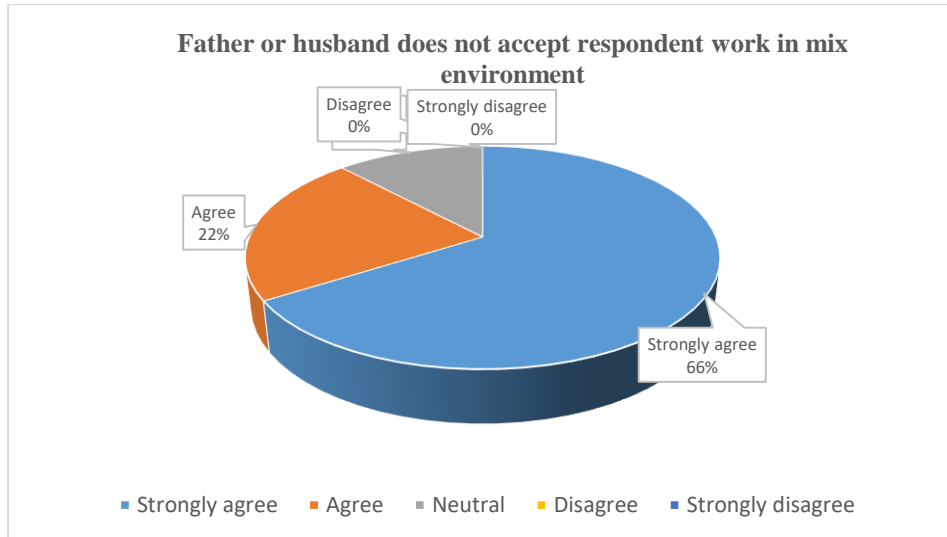


Figure 6: Respondent answer toward their father or husband did not accept their work in mix environment.

In Fig.7, there were 29 respondents (58%) were agreed and 9 respondents (18%) were strongly agreed that society perception toward women as an unacceptable or disrespectful job. The reason due to women staff deals with all kinds of customer.

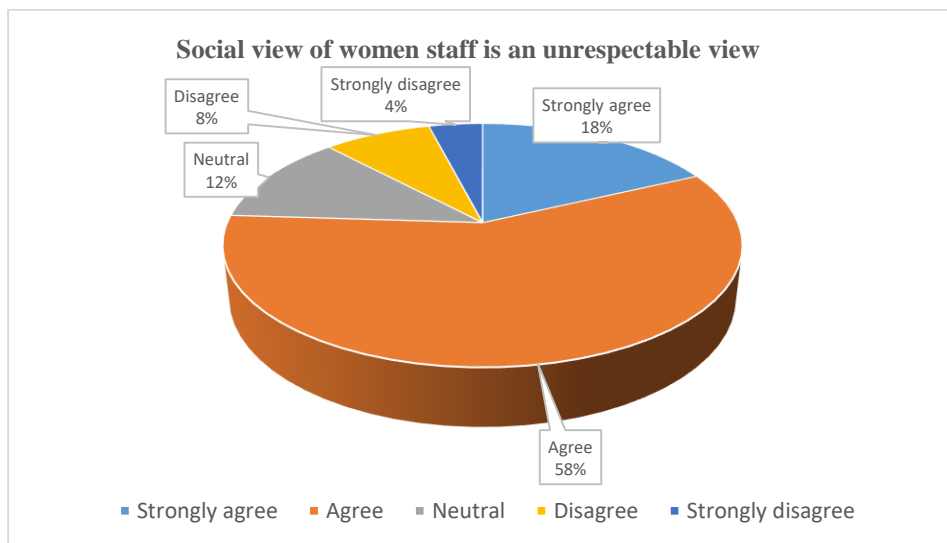


Figure 7: Respondent answer toward social view of women staff was an unrespectable view

The Saudi community became more open on working women idea since there was no restriction in Islam that prohibit women from working a respectful and safe job. There were 35 respondents (70%) strongly agreed that Saudi culture was now accepted working women as shown in Fig.8.

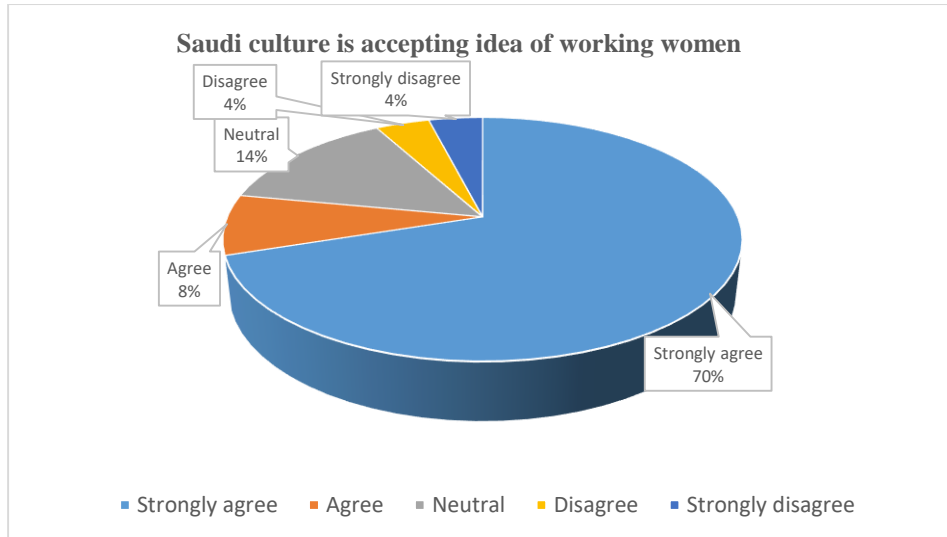


Figure 8: Respondent answer toward Saudi culture was accepted idea of working women

Meanwhile, 20 respondents (40%) had opposite opinion on hiring women in sales job lead unemployment among men as shown in Fig.9. However, 8 respondents (16%) who strongly agreed that women would have chance in sales job. Those respondents who disagreed in this statement believed that sales jobs were created in flourishing economy and demand power. Besides, those who agreed believed that job market is limited and difficulty in finding work.

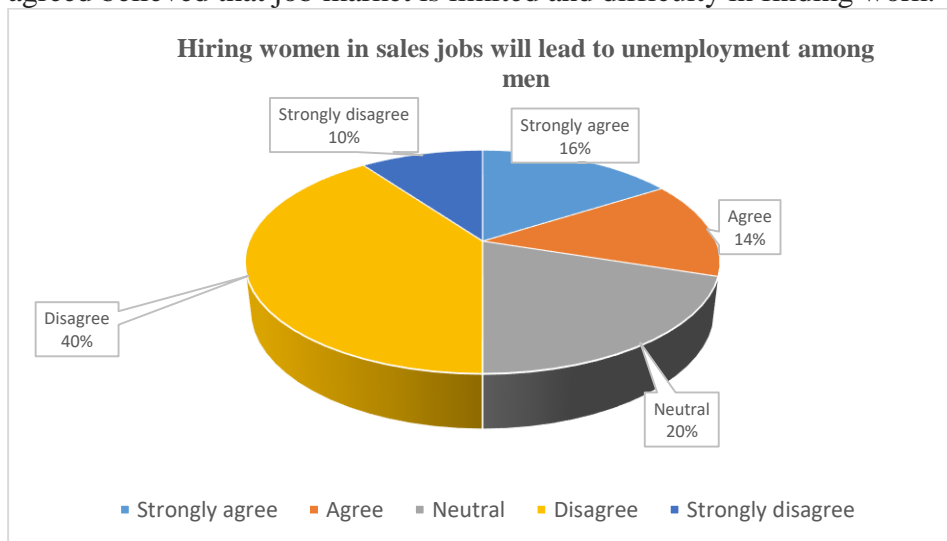


Figure 9: Respondent answer toward hiring women in sales jobs lead unemployment among men

In Fig.10, there were 12 respondents (24%) strong agreed and agreed that hiring women in the sales jobs would negatively impact their social life. Meanwhile, 30 respondents (60%) had disagreed and strongly disagreed in this statement. Their justification was any woman could arrange their day accorded to duties.

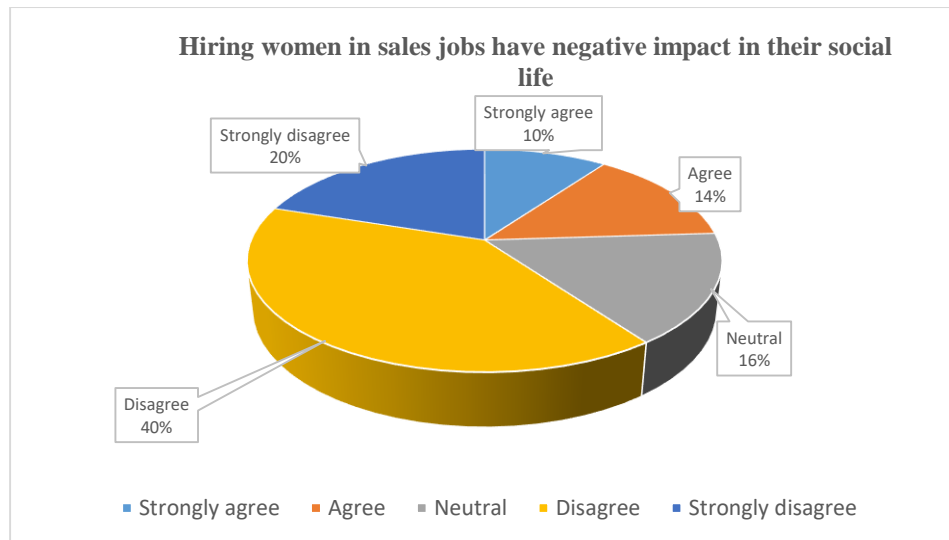


Figure 10: Respondent answer toward hiring women lead negative impact in their social life

In Fig.11, there were 20 respondents (40%) strongly agreed that one of influences on hiring female was raised Saudization percentage since most sale jobs were being occupied by expatriate men. Besides, 9 respondents (18%) were disagreed and strongly disagreed to this statement since the respondents believed expatriates find other jobs to do.

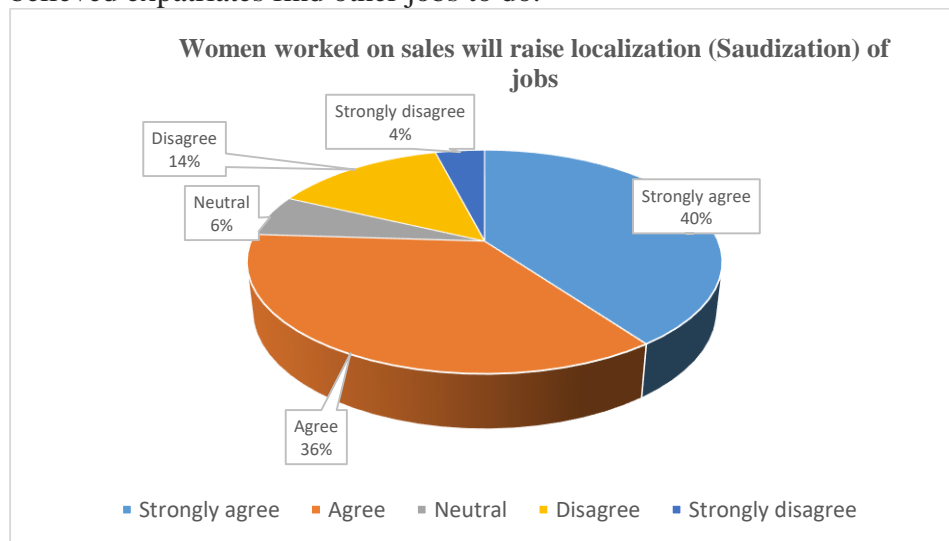


Figure 11: Respondent answer toward women worked on sales raised localization (Saudization) of jobs.

Discussion

The study indicated 20 respondents (40%) had opposite opinion that hiring women in sales jobs would lead unemployment among men. However, 8 respondents (16%) mentioned women was took place men in sales jobs after government decision. Those respondents who had opposite opinion believed sales jobs were created every day depended economy and demand. On other hand, those respondents who agreed the statement believed that job market is limited and difficulty in finding job.

In addition, the result also indicated there was certain factors which lead women reluctantly agreed to have sales job. First factor is masculine society which men

had more power than women. There was 35 respondents confirmed that their father or husband did not accepted their work in mixed environment in sales. The second factor was culture did not fit with women in Saudi culture. Third factor was mixed environment as 40 respondents had agreed and strongly agreed that worked in mixed environment did not fit with Islamic rules. There were 8 respondents believed that sales job did not required knowledge and skills. Their opinion was based on market demand. The training also helped women had be skill in their job which lead negative effect on company productivity. The empowering women who worked in sales had positive influence on some aspects such as reduced employment rate among Saudi women and raised percentage of localization jobs. On other hand, government decision also had negative influence on retail since most women did not working long term due to women dominant culture that being housewives and social perception that did not favour working women in general.

CONCLUSION

In conclusions, the empowering women to work in sales field had positive influence on some aspects such as reduced unemployment rate among Saudi women. There were certain factors which women reluctantly agreed to work in sales field. The recommendation is spread awareness through social campaigns that Islam allowed women work and encourage women to study in the marketing field.

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