

Women in Business Management: Breaking Barriers in a Post-Conflict Economy – A Case Study of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges and opportunities for women pursuing business management careers in post-conflict regions, focusing on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It explores how women navigate traditional societal expectations while striving for professional advancement in a complex economic environment.

Background: Following decades of conflict, the Kurdistan Region has undergone significant economic transformation, creating new business opportunities. However, systemic barriers, including limited educational access, cultural constraints, and economic instability, continue to impede women's advancement into management roles.

Methodology: This study employs a qualitative case study approach. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with a sample of female managers and entrepreneurs in the region, supplemented by an analysis of the broader socio-economic context.

Key Findings: Despite formidable obstacles, the study reveals that women demonstrate remarkable resilience and agency. The acquisition of formal business qualifications is identified as a critical pathway to economic empowerment and social mobility. Key success factors include strong family support, access to higher education, and gradual shifts in societal attitudes toward female professionals.

Implications: This research contributes to the understanding of how business education can serve as a catalyst for women's economic inclusion in post-conflict societies. The findings suggest that targeted support for women's access to business management education has profound implications for sustainable economic recovery and social development in transitional economies.

Keywords: Women in business, post-conflict economies, business management education, Kurdistan Region, economic empowerment.