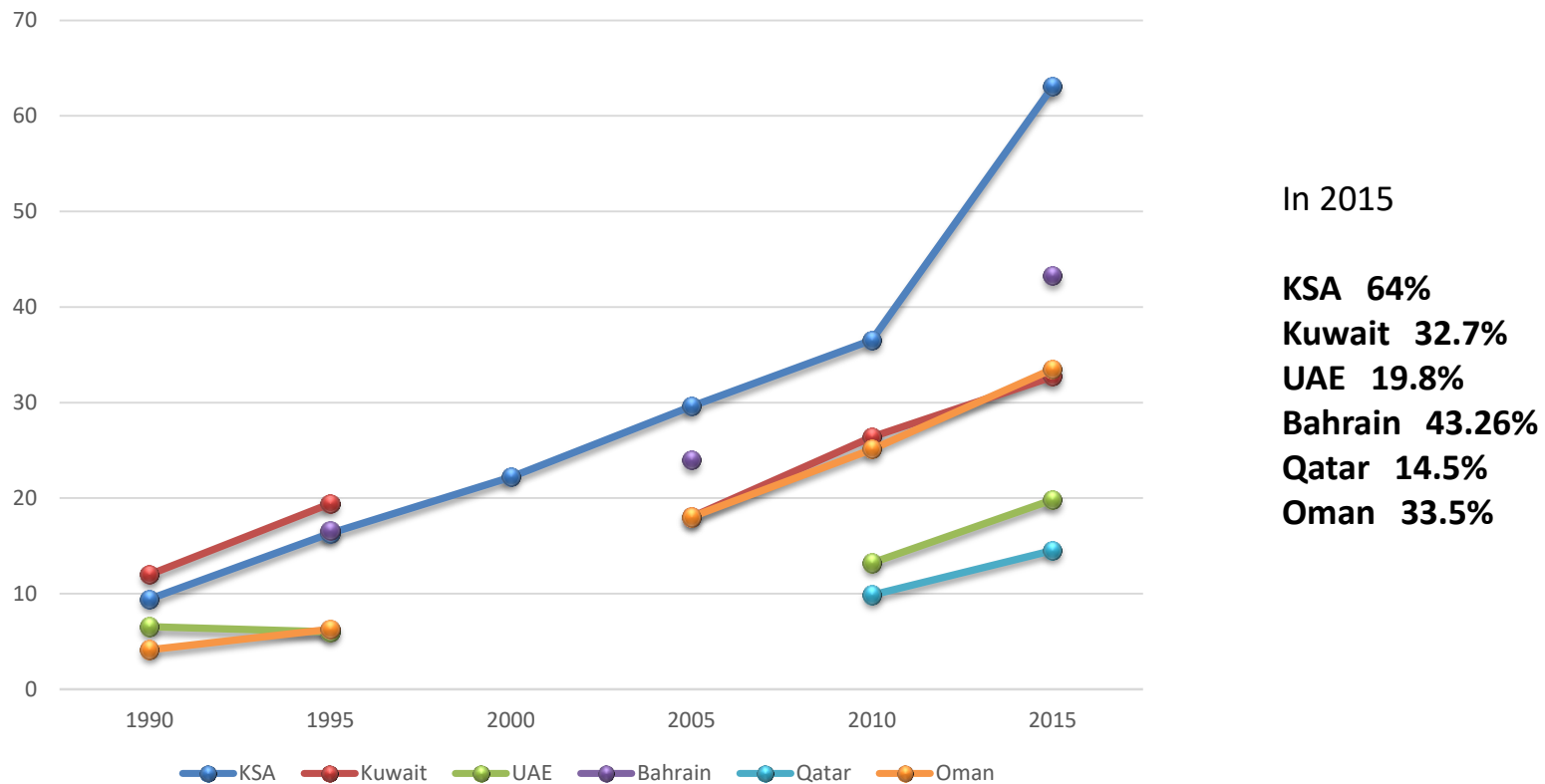




What is Higher Education for?

Expansion of Higher Education

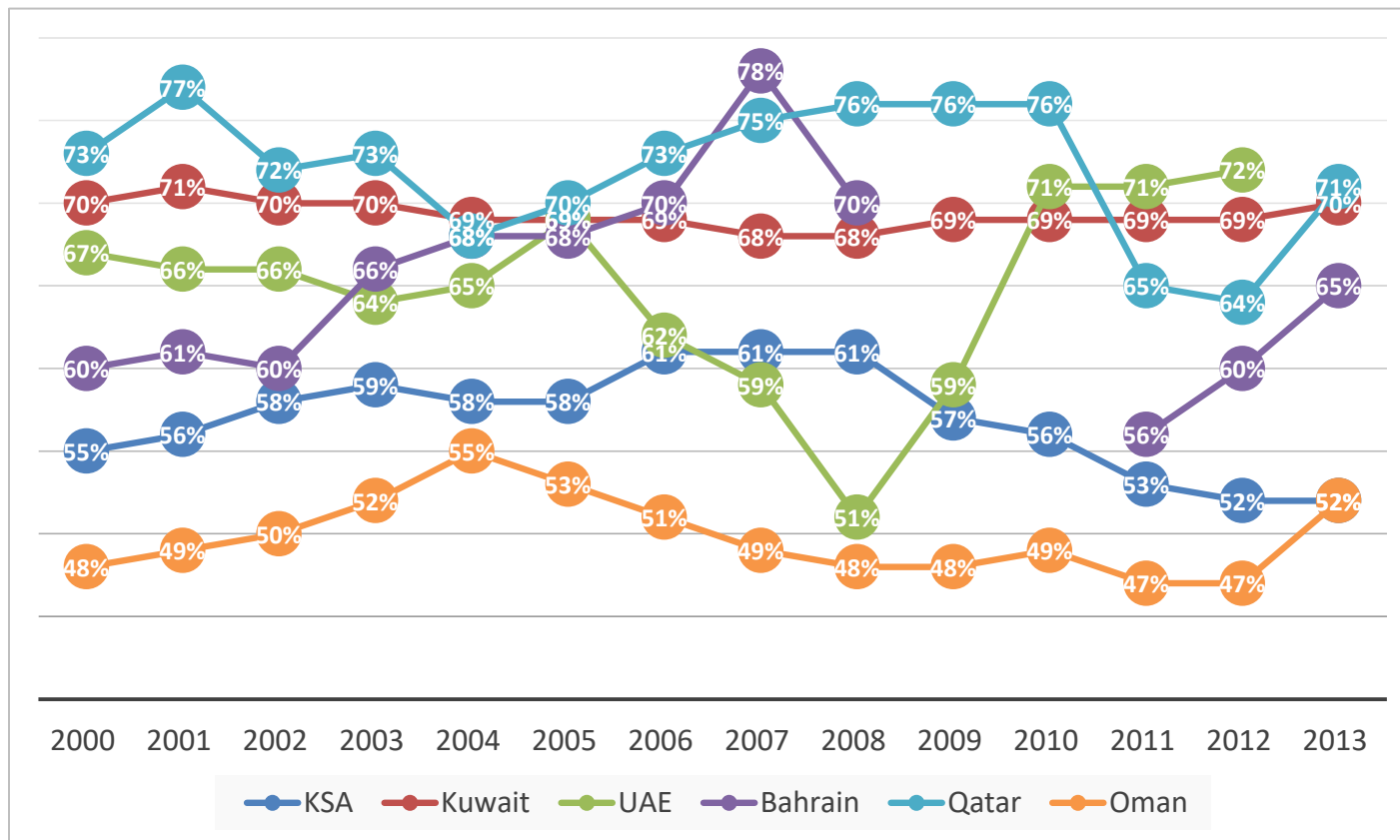
Figure 1 Higher Education Gross Enrollment Ratio (both sexes) in GCC from 1990–2015



KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia UAE: United Arab Emirates

GCC women in higher education

Figure 2 Percentage of Female Student in Government Higher Education in GCC from 2000 to 2013



In 2013

KSA 52%
Kuwait 70%
UAE 72% (2012)
Bahrain 65%
Qatar 71%
Oman 52%

GCC women in labour market

Table 1 Labor Force Status of GCC in 2015 (%)

		Labor Force (Economically Active)		Out of Labor Force (Economically Inactive)
		Employed	Unemployed	
KSA	Male	63.3	3.3	36.7
	<u>Female</u>	<u>17.4</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>82.6</u>
Kuwait	Male	52.6	4.2	47.4
	<u>Female</u>	<u>39.3</u>	<u>5.5</u>	<u>60.7</u>
UAE (Dubai)	Male	62.7	2.4	37.3
	<u>Female</u>	<u>35.2</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>64.8</u>
Bahrain	Male	85.4	0.5	14.6
	<u>Female</u>	<u>39.2</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>60.8</u>
Qatar	Male	68.7	0.3	31.3
	<u>Female</u>	<u>36.3</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>63.7</u>
Oman	Male	85.6	14.5	14.4
	<u>Female</u>	<u>30.0</u>	<u>36.2</u>	<u>70.0</u>

Previous Research

- Most studies dealing with this theme have asked **“why highly educated women cannot get a job”**.
 - Four derived answers from previous research
 - Rentier economy
 - Traditional gender role division
 - Rentier mentality (for both gender)
 - Low quality of higher education (for both gender)
- But, **“then why women want to be highly educated”** was not asked.

(Young:2017;2016;2015, Sim:2016, Ridge:2015, ILO:2015, EY:2015, Pearl Initiative:2015, IMF:2014, McKinsey&Company:2014, Dubai School of Government:2013, AONHewitt: 2013 ; 2012, Al Masah Capital:2012, Jelili:2010, Booz&Co:2010, Oxford Strategic Consulting:2010, Kirdar:2010, Findlow:2007, Kabban&Kothari:2005, Nelson:2004, Roudi-Fahimi&Moghadam:2003)

What is Higher Education for?

Theoretical Framework

Why people strive for academic success?

- **Status Attainment theory**

(Blau and Duncan 1967; Khoo and Ainsley 2005)

Attain social and economic status through academic achievement

- **Status Expression theory**

(Amano 1983)

Express one's social and economic status through academic achievement

Methodology and Research Design

- An on-line questionnaire was conducted from January to October 2016.
- A semi-structured interview was conducted between October 2016 to May 2017 in the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait.

Table 2 Description of respondents

	On-line questionnaire n=1671		Semi-structured interview n=22	
Gender	Female: 1604 Male: 67		Female	
Age	15~47		17~55	
Nationality	KSA	66.8%	KSA	27.2%
	UAE	10.2%	UAE	36.3%
	Kuwait	15.3%	Kuwait	37.8%
	Qatar	2.5%	Qatar	4.5%
	Bahrain	3.7%	Bahrain	4.5%
	Oman	1.6%	Oman	4.5%
Current Status	Student	90.5%	Student	91.5%
	Employed	5.0%	Employed	4.0%
	Unemployed	4.5%	Unemployed	4.5%
Research Items	(1) personal data, (2) educational awareness, (3) educational acts and (4) career awareness based on I-P-O model			

Educational Aspiration

Table 3 Educational aspiration (planned future academic degree) ($p < .05$)

	Educational aspiration (planned future academic degree)				N
	Diploma	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	
KSA	3.4%	18.3%	27.2%	51.1%	881
UAE	1.5%	22.6%	33.6%	42.3%	137
Kuwait	5.5%	21.8%	30.0%	42.7%	220
Other GCC	4.8%	27.9%	34.6%	32.7%	104
Total	3.7%	20.0%	28.9%	47.4%	1342

Why do they study in university

Table 4 Patten matrix of the factor analysis and purpose for attending university.

	Factors			
	Career-minded reasons	Family related reasons	Social environment related reasons	Personal growth reason
To obtain a higher salary job	.910	.086	.081	.006
To achieve a job with a higher social status	.854	.069	.079	.100
To be eligible for getting a job	.787	.112	.039	.021
To answer the expectations of my family	.083	.898	.083	-.021
To match up to family's social status	.147	.875	.115	.033
Forming friendship	.059	.124	.796	-.019
To enjoy university life	.112	.007	.764	.278
Didn't have anything else to do	.022	.176	.578	-.502
To develop personal values	.094	.063	.149	.872
Factor Contribution	2.231	1.647	1.607	1.102
Cumulative Contribution Rate	24.791	43.093	60.951	73.196
Principal Component Analysis, Varimax rotation used Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin=.664, P<.001				
Factor Correlation		.249**	.191**	.186**
	.249**		.235**	.071*
	.191**	.235**		.099**
	.186**	.071*	.099**	

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Personal growth reason	64.5%	33.3%	1.7%	0.6%
Career-minded reasons	30.6%	51.3%	15.0%	3.1%
Family related reasons	6.3%	29.5%	43.2%	21.1%
Social environment related reasons	3.6%	26.3%	55.7%	14.3%

Table 5 Four extracted reasons for attending university and percentage of response

- GCC females are taking occupational attainment into their mind, the personal growth reason was considered as the most important purpose for going to higher education.

Do women enroll in higher education for a Job?

- “[I study] just for myself I can have my own knowledge so I can have experiences and also when I have a degree if I ever think of working I can work so.” (UG1)
- “Humans have to study, they must study and raise themselves and wide their perspective to become a "good person". (Omit) I can have various experiences at university. And if you work, you want to get a "good job" and for that you need knowledge.” (G1)
- “[I entered university] to study English. I like English and I thought I can be a teacher [after I graduate] (*Do you want to be an English teacher?*) Not now but maybe? (Omit) Its [studying English is] interesting and good. Now I can communicate with you.” (UG6)
- “Degree is necessary to get a "good job". (*What is "good job"?*) Interesting work with personal offices, good colleagues and good salary. Also location is important, close from home.” (UG2)
- “After [I] graduate [from university] I [will] get a job, and [will] take a master degree while working and PhD if it's possible. (*Why do you want take a PhD?*) Having a PhD degree is "good thing" for me.” (UG4)
- “I want to have a PhD. (*Why? do you want to be a professor?*) I don't want to become a university professor. Just being a doctor is a "good thing" ” (HS1)

Again, GCC females are taking job opportunity into their mind, the personal reasons were considered as the most important purpose for going to higher education and attaining advanced degree.

Do women enroll in Higher Education for marriage?

Table 6 Attending university and earning a degree is advantageous for marriage (N.S)

	Attending university and earning a degree is advantageous for marriage				N
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
KSA	42.6%	41.8%	11.8%	3.8%	822
UAE	53.4%	35.9%	9.2%	1.5%	131
Kuwait	42.2%	36.4%	15.5%	5.8%	206
Other GCC	44.6%	39.1%	13.0%	3.3%	92
Total	43.8%	40.1%	12.2%	3.8%	1251

- Females perceived that obtaining an advanced degree may not necessarily lead to a favorable marriage.

“Generally, if its higher than master, it [degree] is not very advantageous (for marriage). You know, guys don’t like women with better degree than them. (but you still went to master) I went to the master, because I really wanted to study event management.” (E1)

Summary

- **One, GCC women have strong aspiration of higher education, and in fact, most of the students at higher education institutions are women.**
- **Two, GCC women take occupational attainment into their mind, but consider personal growth to be the most important reason for going to higher education.**
- **Three, GCC women pursue their education even though they know it could be a disadvantage to their marriage prospects.**

Conclusion



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Thank you!

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