



Received: 6 December 2021  
Accepted: 29 April 2022  
Published: 1 July 2022

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How to cite this article:  
Azizi, Firouzeh; Moradi, Fahimeh, (2022). An Analysis of Barriers to Woman's Economic Participation in Iran, *The International Journal of Humanities* (2022) Vol. 29 (3): (79-107).

<https://eijh.modares.ac.ir/article-27-63900-en.html>

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# An Analysis of Barriers to Woman's Economic Participation in Iran

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**Abstract:** It is important to investigate the status of women's presence in different economic sectors and formal and informal economies. Also, considering the special situation of Iran in terms of increasing number of women with higher education and economic sanctions, identifying the effective factors for recognizing barriers to women's presence in economic, social, and cultural dimensions and providing solutions for removing those barriers is the need of the present time to obtain practical results for the field of employment policy. Accordingly, this study, after identifying the effect of these barriers on women's economic participation, intends to provide solutions to eliminate and reduce the effect of barriers and suggest appropriate solutions for creating opportunities and increasing women's economic participation. Based on the results, using a correlation test and multivariate regression, it was shown that three of them, economic, social, and occupational barriers had a negative and significant effect on women's economic participation in Iran's labor market, while the effect of institutional barriers was not statistically confirmed.

**Keywords:** Women's Economic Participation; Barriers; Labor Market; Employment.

## Introduction

In today's world, human capital, as the most valuable reserve of any nation, plays a significant role in the fruitful growth of the social, cultural, and economic spheres of societies. From this point of view, in the orientation and macro-policy of the economic

system, considering different groups, especially women, requires special attention. Global experience has shown that addressing the slogan of women's presence in economic and social activities only by relying on the fact that half of the population is from

communities, is a superficial look at the discussion of women's presence in the field of social and economic activities (Zaafranchi, 2009).

Every human society consists of women and men who play a special role and function under mutual social relations, while the mutual dependence of each of the two sexes on each other, and women, as half of the population, have a direct impact on social development. Undoubtedly, the most important factor that accelerates the rate of economic-social development is the "human resources" of that society. Also, one of the important indicators for measuring the development of any country is the status of women and the type of their participation in men's environments, because development is not measured only concerning the gross national product and the level of per capita income, but also different factors such as political, social and participation. All people, especially women, are also effective on this process. Therefore, the strategies of a developed society must be based on the active participation of women in economic, political, and social affairs. Therefore, the way society deals with women is one of the important indicators of economic, political, and social development in a country. It can be said that women's employment is a basic guarantee for their personal and economic independence, as

well as a symbol of social transformation (Pasban, 2006).

Since the level of participation and employment of women is considered one of the indicators of the modernization of the national economy, and also the level and manner of participation of women in economic activities is one of the factors and indicators of the development of the society, understanding the obstacles and finding solutions to increase the employment of women to It has become one of the topics of concern for policymakers and governments. What is proposed as the main point by the theories of the field of women is that the position of women in the labor market and the home and family is related to each other and a part of a general social system in which women are men's followers. A key issue in these theories is assigning domestic work, especially child care, to women. These theories emphasize that the trend toward "female's jobs" is because it is a reflection of women's domestic roles (such as teaching, nursing, cleaning, and catering) and just as in most societies, women's domestic work has become less valuable. These jobs and skills are also undervalued. This perspective pays attention to the equal participation of men and women in the full degrees of social and private life and believes that activities and opportunities should be freely between instrumental and

expressive roles for both of them (Al-Hasani, 2015).

A brief description of several studies conducted in the field of identifying effective barriers in women's employment is presented below, which shows that the majority of studies have focused on a specific aspect of the barriers and a less comprehensive view has been done in the studies.

Sa'adi, et al. (2017) in a study entitled "Analysis of obstacles and limitations of rural women's employment" investigated the statistical population of working rural women in Toisarkan and concluded that the first effective obstacle in women's employment is cultural-social obstacles and after that, there are economic-environmental barriers, personality barriers, and educational-support barriers.

Safaipour and Zadouli (2016) in a study entitled "Analysis of the barriers to women's economic participation in Iran" investigated various barriers to women's economic participation in the statistical population of Tabriz and came to the conclusion that the most important barriers to women's economic participation are cultural aspects of the society, also economic, social and political indicators are in the next ranks.

Karimi Moghari, et al. (2013) in research entitled economic factors affecting women's

employment identified several effective factors using the neural network method and concluded that the contribution of the added value of the industry sector and women's education in women's employment has been effective.

Sharbatian (2009) in a study entitled "Reviewing the dimensions and social barriers of women's employment" has concluded that there are still biological and personality barriers, with emphasis on physical disability and physical capability, besides cultural, social, and economic barriers have been effective for women's employment.

Among the international studies, Bantenbal (2017) conducted a study titled "Opportunities and obstacles for women's participation in the private sector of Oman". In this study, he sought answers to the following questions: What is the structure and division of labor in Oman? What is the formal employment pattern of Omani women? What are the main macro factors of women's employment in Oman and how do they affect women's participation in the workforce? What is women's understanding of employment and previous perceptions of women regarding participation in the labor market, and what are the limitations and opportunities that differentiate them from men in the public and private sectors? At the end of this research, based on research findings and

international labor guidelines, policy recommendations have been presented that can help strengthen women's participation in the private sector of Oman.

Al-Hasani (2015) in a study "Women's Employment in Oman" has identified cultural and institutional factors in women's employment and examined the effect of these factors on women's participation in the Omani labor market. At the end of this research, based on research findings family and system laws have been recognized as effective factors in women's employment.

Alam (2013) in his study "Limitations faced by employed and unemployed women " analyzes the difference between the challenges of employed and unemployed women in their families. The results of this research show that working mothers have limited social communication due to their heavy work schedules. Also, one of the known obstacles and limitations for the majority of working mothers was their encounter with issues related to their children. In the end, the researcher has concluded that due to the high importance of increasing the presence of women in the labor market for the economic development of Malaysia, family-friendly or supportive policies for working women should be implemented in Malaysia.

Losindilo et al. (2010) in a study entitled "Investigation of the factors preventing the economic, social and political participation of women in rural areas of Tanzania" investigated the factors with a negative impact on the economic participation of women in this country and concluded that women Villagers have a very low participation rate in various activities. According to the findings of the research, education level, geographical location, religion, and cultural beliefs, gender and age were the most important factors preventing women's participation in production activities.

The review of recent studies in the field of economic participation shows that most of the studies have tended to focus on a specific field, that is, either the society under study has a special characteristic or the issue of participation and its obstacles in the field of women's employment has been studied from a specific point of view. While in this research, the factors and barriers to women's economic participation in a whole country that is governed under a single political, social, and economic law have been investigated, and these barriers are not evaluated as a result of a change, but in general and based on statistics and perceptions of people with different employment statuses in the urban and rural society of Iran is examined, because based on

many economic theories such as new institutionalism (Oakley, 2020), what will affect the economic participation of women is the society's belief on women and their situation in society.

Many studies and reports by the International Labor Organization (2012, 2016, 2017 reports) have shown that the growth of women's employment is a key factor in reducing the gender gap in the labor market and strengthening women's empowerment. Economically, empowering women and their employment in the labor market has a large positive effect on the well-being of the family and society. It can be said that the factors that are known to improve gender justice also promote economic growth. Also, based on many studies by this organization (2016 and 2017), increasing women's employment through its direct effect on increasing family income can be effective in reducing poverty in society and increasing family investment in education and health. (International Labor Organization, 2018)

As it was said, since the employment of women is subject to various economic, social, demographic, and even political factors, therefore, to investigate the factors affecting their non-participation and proposing strategies to increase their participation in the labor market of society, is not possible to focus

only on one aspect of the issue. It should be noted that limiting the studies of this area to one dimension does not show the correct picture. Therefore, in addition to the economic point of view, the social and cultural point of view, other known factors, and obstacles regarding the employment of women should also be investigated to show the real picture of this issue in the country. The noteworthy point is that there are many factors affecting the participation and employment of women in every society. The participation rate of women is a function of socio-economic and cultural factors. Education "Minser, 1980" Income of other family members "Benham, 1980" Marital status, age, household size, place of residence, religion and family income level " Losindilo et al (2010), Ashraf (2007) are factors that are used in different studies and They are emphasized.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate how the known effective barriers will affect women's economic participation in Iran's labor market, which can continue from entering a job, maintaining a job, and being employed in the workplace. In this study, an attempt was made to investigate and review the obstacles known in various studies and categorize these obstacles, investigate the effect of these obstacles on the perspective of women's economic participation in the form of

a quantitative survey, and at the end of this quantitative test, the results of the study were compared with the related studies.

### **Barriers to Women's Employment**

The difference between the sexes of men and women has caused the social duties of these two sexes to be different from each other in terms of employment. This difference is caused by a number of obstacles.

#### ***Cultural Barriers***

Gender roles reflect a cultural belief system, and represent what most people accept about the categories "boy" and "girl," "man" and "woman," and "masculine" and "feminine." (Correll, 2004) There is an argument that gender beliefs lead men and women to use different criteria to judge their competence and these differences in self-evaluations lead to the effect of gender differences Imposed by culture on the emerging career landscape. Although some researchers may also attribute these differences to biological differences, other scientists have found that these differences are imposed by culture (Syed& Pio, 2010).

Also, studies have proven that gender differences caused by culture emerged from three potential problems related to job prospects. First, women choose to stay at home and prioritize domestic roles, perhaps because

they believe they cannot progress in their jobs and do not necessarily feel compelled to try out roles outside the home. Second, women try to prioritize jobs with less challenge and higher flexibility, because they do not believe as much as men in putting energy for career development in front of their family obligations. Third, it is difficult for women who have left their jobs to re-enter the workforce and seriously consider career advancement (Litzky and Greenhaus, 2007).

Cultural factors in our society can affect the status of economic participation as well as women's job prospects in Iran differently. In addition to women's and society's belief in the main role of women as responsible for domestic affairs and the maintenance and care of children, as well as belief in the role of men's bread-making, it can be said that there are traditional beliefs about women's having jobs and the characteristics of the job of choice, as well as fulfilling personal and family commitments after employment, which can have a significant impact on women's employment. In addition to the factors that play the role of religious beliefs, it should not be ignored, although Islam promotes equality between men and women and invites women to work and work together with men, it restricts women from entering certain occupations based on religious beliefs. In addition, it should

not be ignored that failure to adopt religious beliefs to intra-organizational expectations can be one of the reasons for women's lack of participation in the labor market or women's abandonment of work. Therefore, all of these factors can affect women's employment under a general factor entitled cultural factors and their job prospects according to the principles governing the labor market (Al-Hassani, 2015).

### ***Social Barriers***

Family background and social expectations affect the implementation of standards of economic participation for both sexes. Studies have shown that parents' educational inclinations play an important role in the formation of people's career prospects (Ashby and Schon, 2010). Also, in another study (Al-Hasani, 2015) it has been argued that women are more likely than men to try to consider attitudes, values, and opinions similar to those around them as effective in their career choices, so they choose lower options according to expectations. they let People around them evaluate and identify them and they leave many opportunities in front of more ideal options and thus lose job opportunities. It has also been concluded that the impact of gender beliefs in the family and society on the perspective of women's economic participation

has been strong (Li and Kerpelman, 2007). It can be said that social factors in society have a significant impact on women's economic participation. A number of these factors can affect women's economic participation with a deterrent role and a negative impact on women's career prospects. One of these factors is the communication skills needed to be present in society and the work environment, which can play a positive or negative role in women's economic participation (Safaeipour and Khajeh, 2015).

Also, another factor that will affect women's economic participation is gender discrimination in society, which can play an important role in all social, occupational, and family environments, and in some cases, its negative effect can affect the prospects of women's economic participation. In addition to these social impact variables, the strong role of social expectations should not be ignored, expectations that can have a negative and inhibiting effect on the prospects of women's economic participation (Alicia et al., 2010).

### ***Institutional Barriers***

The institution of the family and the legal system will have a significant effect on the economic participation in society. The family as an institution can have one of the main effects on the perspective of women's



economic participation, as studies have emphasized that women much more than men support the values and intellectual flow of the family and help them to make decisions regarding their presence in the market and career choice follow (Al-Hosni, 2015).

On the other hand, the legislative system is a framework that shapes people's choices. People's career prospects and their maximal tendency are influenced by the restrictions, freedom, and protections provided by the country's regulations. Most of the labor market policies in developing countries have suffered from a lack of transparency, lack of accountability, and persistent inefficiency, especially mismanagement of resources. Moreover, such labor market policies have not been able to help the poorest and most vulnerable levels of developing countries and have generally not performed well in reducing inequalities in the labor market (Standing, 2011, Brugnach and Ingram, 2012 and Endres. et al, 2009).

Also, people's knowledge and understanding of labor market rules may affect their career choices and job progress. However, the multiplicity and complexity of the regulations or the lack of implementation of the regulations can discourage people from trying to find out about these regulations. As a result, ambiguity may hurt one's career

prospects. Therefore, it can be said that the lack of family support and acceptance for women's employment and the conflict between women's family and job responsibilities, along with the inefficiency of the legislative system and lack of determining support policies or inefficiency in the implementation of support policies for women's employment can be inhibiting factors and hurt the prospects of women's economic participation in Iranian society should be investigated (Alvesson, 2001).

### ***Career Barriers***

The factors in the work environment will play a significant role in the presence of women in the labor market and job retention or career progress. Job obstacles such as existing inequalities in the path of promotion in the desired job, lack of suitable welfare conditions for employed women and mothers, lack of work flexibility, and also the existence of behaviors and relationships that are not compatible with the spirit and dignity of women in the Islamic society in the work environment can cause them not to enter the workplace or leave their jobs or the continuous movement of women from jobs and their slowness or not being placed on the path of career advancement and in general, it can diminish the prospects of women's economic participation (Alam, 2013).

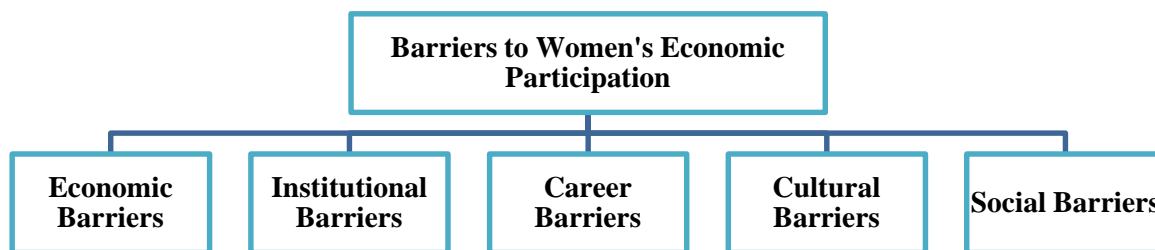


### **Economic Barriers**

The economic factor is one of the most important motivational causes for people to enter the labor market, especially if we are in the context of today's economic pressure in Iran, part of which is the result of sanctions. While this important factor of encouraging entry into the labor market and maintaining a job can appear with other variables such as preventing people, especially women, from entering the job market and causing women to quit their jobs. Variables such as lack of women's capital, lack of consistency in family spending, and lack of financial facilities for women are economic factors that can prevent women from entering the labor market or keeping their jobs (Sharbatian, 2008).

Therefore, it can be said that women face all kinds of obstacles on the way to economic participation, and these obstacles cause women to be dissatisfied with participation in activities and the labor market. Some of the issues and problems of women's employment can be related to institutional obstacles, in which various institutions such as the family and the legislative and political institutions of the country can be effective. On the other hand, some problems as job obstacles can be directly caused by the job or organization in which women are employed or want to work. In this regard and according to the authors' library studies, the barriers to women's participation in economic activities in Iran's labor market are shown in Figure 1.

**Fig. 1. The barriers to women's participation in economic activities**



Source: Research findings

Therefore, to evaluate the impact of the identified barriers on women's economic participation, this research seeks to test the following hypotheses:

1. There is a relationship between women's career prospects and cultural barriers in Iranian society.

2. There is a relationship between women's career prospects and social barriers in Iranian society.
3. There is a relationship between women's career prospects and existing institutional barriers in Iranian society.
4. There is a relationship between women's career prospects and career barriers in Iranian society.
5. There is a relationship between women's career prospects and economic barriers in Iranian society.

### Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this study, a sample of the statistical population of the active population of women in Iran was needed to quantitatively assess the impact of barriers to women's employment on their economic participation prospects by completing the information of a questionnaire designed based on the identified barriers.

Also, from the perspective of analysis, it should include women working in different economic sectors of the country with different educational, familial, and geographical conditions. Based on similar studies, the larger the number selected, the more valuable it was for the study. It is noteworthy that at this stage, due to the widespread number of questionnaires and the possibility of

unaccountable, a large number of completed questionnaires were sent until the number of completed questionnaires reached a number that confirmed the validity of the test. It should be noted that the number of women in the active population of Iran according to the 2018 labor force survey plan of the Statistical Center of Iran has been registered as about 33 million people, which according to Cochran's formula for sample size, the sample number of 384 was determined. The main formula for calculating Cochran sample size is as follows:

$$n = \frac{\frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left( \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2} - 1 \right)}$$

In this formula, n is the size of the statistical sample, N is the size of the statistical population, which in this research is 33 million people, d is the margin of error (usually considered equal to 0.05), Z is the value of the normal variable with a confidence level of 1- $\alpha$ , which in the test the range of the z value for the 95% confidence level is equal to 1.96. P is the ratio of having the desired attribute (for example, the female population) and q is the ratio of not having the desired attribute (for example, the male population). Usually, p and q are considered equal to 0.5 (Delavar and Pajehan, 2008)

A questionnaire that was prepared based on the elements in the identified obstacles was sent to 384 people in different provinces of Iran according to their willingness to participate in the research. Of these, 52 people either did not complete the questionnaire correctly or did not deliver the questionnaire within the deadline, so their data were excluded from the analysis.

Then, the questionnaire information was used to measure the impact on the prospects of women's economic participation through correlation and regression statistical tests, to answer the test of research hypotheses regarding the impact of barriers to women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

### Quantitative Analysis of Impact of Identified Factors on Women's Economic Participation

In this part of the study, which requires hypothesis testing and data analysis, to explain the upcoming analysis, there must be a definition of the criteria of the variables. The

dependent variable of this research is the perspective of economic participation, which was designed using the career perspective scale of Gray and O'Brien (2007). To quantify this variable, 5 sentences have been used in the questionnaire. Participants were asked to indicate how well each statement could represent the person's views on a 5-point scale. (1=I completely disagree, 2=I disagree, 3=I have no positive or negative opinion, 4=I agree, 5=I completely agree) in this test, Cronbach's alpha = 0.695 calculated for questions. A 5-point Likert scale is also used for the independent variables that were discussed in the previous sections and the analysis of their effects on the dependent variable is considered.

### Data Description: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The information of the participants in this study is as follows:

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Age					
		51-60	41-50	31-40	21-30
		10%	15%	45%	30%
Marital status and children					
	breadwinner	Married with more than one child	Married with one child	Married without children	single
	%3	21.1%	32.5%	16.3%	27.1%

Employment status					
Retired	freelancer	Unemployed(job seeker)	Unemployed(without willingness)	Part-time	Full-time
1.8%	6%	7.8%	8.4%	13.3%	62.7%
Education status					
	Ph.D	Master degree	Bachelor degree	Associate degree	High school
	5/4%	45/2%	45/8%	2/4%	1/2%
Economic sector					
		Independent businesses	Public and private	Private sector	Public sector
		6%	13%	29/1%	51/8%

Source: Research findings

### Prospects of Economic Participation of Participants

In this part, it has been tried to use propositions for the overall assessment of the prospects of participation of women participating in the Iranian labor market, which are suitable for both working and non-working women. Based on this, five propositions have been prepared according to the knowledge obtained from the Iranian labor market.

The first proposition is regarding being in a job where there is no possibility of equal advancement. By examining the responses of the interviewees, it was found that nearly 44 percent of the participants in the interview are completely against being in such a job. The second statement regarding the willingness to attend a job if there are conditions for termination of service is appropriate. Among

the participants, more than 45% completely disagreed with the continuation of employment if there are suitable retirement conditions. The third statement was about the perspective of the participant's career development. In this way, do they think that as a woman, by putting more energy into their job, they can get career advancement? More than 35% of the participants in this research were completely against and had a completely negative opinion about their career advancement.

The fourth statement was about women's view of the existence of job opportunities for them. This proposition could be used for employed and unemployed people because it could also be suitable for those who were dissatisfied with their jobs and needed to change their jobs and look for better opportunities. Among the participants in this

study, about 39 percent were completely against this statement and believed that there are no suitable and sufficient job opportunities for them according to their expertise and gender.

The fifth statement was about the quality of life of employed and unemployed women. This statement was made in the way that unemployed women have a happier life compared to working women, due to the absence of physical and mental pressure caused by the pressure of responsibilities and dual roles, and other factors affecting the work environment. Among women participating in this study, more than 28% of women strongly agreed that non-working women lead happier lives.

### **Reliability Analysis**

By completing the questionnaire, the questions designed on a Likert scale were answered. It is important to know whether if the same questions were asked again in a questionnaire, they would bring the same answers from the respondents. The variables obtained from the study will be consistent only if they lead to fair and reliable responses after re-administration. In this regard, Dennick and Takakol (2011) stated that it is important to identify the internal validity of the data to determine the validity and measure the error rate. Therefore,

reliability determination including Cronbach's alpha retest should be considered.

The most common measurement of the reliability of questionnaire questions is Cronbach's alpha index (Cortina, 1993). This index can be from 0 to 1. Where the Cronbach's alpha index is zero, the questionnaire does not show any reliability. Perfect reliability is rare in practice, and values close to 1 indicate internal consistency across studies. It is important to remember that reliability, regardless of the strategy used to obtain it, is not an inherent property of the test itself, but an estimate of the reliability of a set of questions when presented to a specific group of participants at a specific time under specific conditions. It is specific for a specific purpose. (Brown, 2002) Cronbach's alpha is an important concept in evaluating assessment tests and questionnaires. It is imperative that researchers estimate this value to determine the validity and accuracy of their data interpretation. Dennick and Takakol's (2011) This study shows a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.830, which indicates that there is internal consistency in the collected data.

### **Testing Hypotheses**

All the hypotheses considered for the research suggest a linear relationship between variables and consider the identification of the barriers

in each factor and measuring the relationship with it. It is expected that by using multivariate regression, which is determined the coefficient of the variables and estimates the relationship and the intensity of its effect.

In addition, using Spearman's correlation coefficient, the strength of the relationship was examined. The hypotheses proposed in this research are related to the effect of cultural, social, economic, institutional, and occupational barriers on women's economic participation. Therefore, by identifying the components in each factor, their effects were identified.

To investigate the first hypothesis of the research regarding the effect of cultural barriers on the activity and preferences of women in the labor market, the effect of cultural barriers on the prospects of women's economic participation as a representative of the activity and preferences of women in the labor market was considered. In the test of this relationship, the variables of education, marital status and having children, job status, and family income level were considered as control variables. By performing multivariate regression, the expected relationship was investigated and the reliability of the model was discussed through the information obtained from the analysis of variance.

The first hypothesis: cultural barriers have an effect on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

The results of the regression showed that only 0.015 of the changes in the perspective of women's economic participation were influenced by the relevant cultural barriers variable, and the rest of the changes in the perspective of economic participation were dependent on other factors. The value of the significance test of the model, which is the F statistic, is equal to 4.93, and considering that the value of the significance level of the test is equal to 0.027 and is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected with 95% confidence. That is, the existing model is significant with 95% confidence, and based on the available data, this model is able to express some of the changes in the variable of women's economic participation. Also, Spearman's correlation coefficient is equal to 0.177, which indicates the existence of a positive correlation, although this correlation is not strong, due to its significance, it can indicate a small but positive relationship between the two variables. Also, the results of the regression coefficients in Table 2 show that the variable coefficient of cultural barriers is 0.105, which is confirmed with a significance level of less than 0.05.

**Table 2. Regression coefficients of cultural barriers from the perspective of economic participation**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-test	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.694	.133		12.758	.000
	Cultural Barriers	.105	.047	.122	2.220	.027

Source: Research findings

It is also possible to examine the effect of cultural barriers on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market despite its adjustment with the variables of education, marital status, job status, and family income level. This hypothesis is examined in order to show that education, marital status, organizational position, and income level had no effect on the responses of the participants and changes in their opinions.

By adding the income variable to the regression, it is clear that the coefficient of determination has increased and the regression

has statistical validity. Based on the statistical calculations shown in Table 3, about 0.18 of the changes in economic participation prospects can be positively explained by the cultural barriers variable, which has increased with the presence of the income control variable. That is, for women who have a higher family income, their prospects for economic participation are also higher. So it can be said that the income variable as a control variable has a positive and significant effect on the regression.

**Table 3. Summary of the model for estimating the effect of cultural barriers on women's economic participation**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. the error in the Estimate
1- Constant Cultural Barriers	.122	.015	.012		.59046
Constant Cultural Barriers and Income as Control Variable	.134	.018	.015		.59302

Source: Research findings



By adding the job position variable, the results show that there is a very small change in the coefficient of determination around 0.04, but despite the significance of the overall regression with a significance level of less than 0.05, it can be seen that the coefficient of this variable does not have statistical validity. Therefore, the variable effect of women's job status on the perspective of women's economic participation cannot be considered reliable enough.

Also, to measure the effectiveness of the control variable of marriage and the number of children, we add this variable to the regression to evaluate its effect on the coefficient of determination and the validity of the regression. The results show that about 0.011 of the changes in women's economic participation outlook can be interpreted by the change in women's marital status, that is, women are more optimistic about their job prospects after getting married and having children. But the significance level of the coefficient of this variable in the regression is exactly 0.054, which cannot be confident with 95% reliability and is acceptable at a significance level of 90%. Therefore, regarding the impact of women's marital status on their prospects for economic participation in Iran's labor market, it is not possible to comment with certainty on the validity level

determined for the statistical analysis of this research.

The results of adding the control variable of women's education to the regression show that this variable can only explain 0.001 of the changes in the perspective of economic participation. Also, the changes resulting from adding this variable made the statistical validity of the model not confirmed, and the coefficient of this variable in the regression has a significant value of more than 0.05, which shows that it does not have statistical validity. Therefore, it can be said that the variable of education could not have a statistically significant effect on the variable of the perspective of women's economic participation in the labor market.

By examining the effect of control variables on the prospects of women's economic participation, we find that only the level of family income can statistically have a significant effect on the prospects of women's economic participation. This conclusion seems logical because with the increase in family income, women can make a freer choice to choose a job and how to enter the labor market, and under the influence of economic pressure, they wouldn't have had choices that lead to leaving the job or changing the job early or without career progress.

Therefore, here we examine the relationship between the variable of cultural barriers and the perspective of women's economic participation with the control variable of income in the form of correlation with the results of Table 4. The results show that the correlation between cultural barriers and the perspective of economic participation is positive and equal to 0.177 and it is significant, which indicates a positive and significant

relationship between cultural barriers and the perspective of economic participation. Also, the correlation coefficient between the perspective of women's economic participation and the family income of women is positive and equal to 0.129, which indicates a positive and significant relationship between income and the perspective of women's economic participation.

**Table 4. Correlation between economic participation, cultural barriers, and income**

Income	Cultural Barriers	Economic Participation	
0/134	0/177	-	Economic Participation
0/014	-	0/177	Cultural Barriers
-	0/014	0/134	Income

Source: Research findings

The second hypothesis: Social barriers have an effect on the prospects of women's economic participation despite the control variable of income.

By performing multivariate regression and adding the income variable to isolate its effect, we can evaluate the effect of social barriers on the prospects of women's economic participation. The regression results in Table No. 5 show that 0.03 of the changes in the

economic participation perspective variable can be interpreted by the social barriers variable. The value of F statistic is equal to 5.172 and is statistically acceptable at a significance level of 0.05. As a result, at the confidence level of 5%, it can be said that social barriers are effective on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

**Table 5. Summary of the regression model of social barriers from the perspective of women's economic participation**

Model	R Square	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F
1	.175 <sup>a</sup>	.030	.025	.59010	5/172

Source: Research findings

Based on the results shown in Table No. 6, social barriers have been placed as an obstacle in the way of the growth of economic participation. The coefficient of this variable in its regression with the prospect of economic participation is equal to 0.109 and has a

negative sign and is statistically significant. Therefore, increasing the effect of social barriers will have a negative effect on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

**Table 6. Regression coefficients of social barriers on the perspective of economic participation with the presence of income control variable**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-test	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	beta		
1	Constant	2.149	.232		9.276	.000
	Income	.103	.042	.134	2.466	.014
	Social Barriers	-.109	.053	-.112	-2.067	.039

Source: Research findings.

The correlation coefficient of the variable of social barriers with the variable of the perspective of women's economic participation in Table 7 is 0.112 with a negative sign, which indicates its negative relationship with the perspective of women's economic participation. Therefore, it can be seen that

components such as social expectations, lack of social communication skills, and gender discrimination, which are considered as components of social barriers in this research, have a negative and significant impact on the prospects of economic participation.

**Table 7. Correlation between economic participation, social barriers, and income**

Income	Social Barriers	Economic Participation	
0/134	-0/112	-	Economic Participation
0/001	-	-0/112	Social Barriers
-	0/001	0/134	Income

Source: Research findings

The third hypothesis: There is a relationship between women's career prospects and existing institutional barriers in Iranian society.

Given that institutional barriers can have an effect on and alongside social barriers, we can measure the effect of institutional barriers as a control variable on the prospects of women's economic participation. Considering that variables such as the influence and support of the family on women's employment are included in the set of institutional variables, therefore it can be related to the effect of social barriers on women's economic participation. For this purpose, with multivariable regression, we consider the impact of social barriers on the prospects of women's economic participation by controlling income and institutional variables.

The regression results in Table 8 with the control variable of institutional barriers and income show that 0.032 of the changes in the economic participation perspective variable can be interpreted by the social barriers variable. Based on this, the value of F statistic is equal to 3.659 and is statistically acceptable at a significance level of 0.05. As a result, at the confidence level of 5%, it can be said that social barriers are effective on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market, despite the control variable of institutional barriers and income. It can be seen that the institutional barriers have been placed as an obstacle in the way of the growth of economic participation.

**Table 8. Summary of the regression model of institutional barriers on the perspective of women's economic participation**

Model	R Square	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F
1	.180	.032	.024	.59042	3.659

Source: Research findings

According to the information in Table 9, the variable coefficient of institutional barriers in the regression with the perspective of economic participation is equal to 0.048 and has a negative sign, but it is not statistically significant. Therefore, increasing the effectiveness of social barriers will have a

negative effect on the prospects of women's economic participation in the Iranian labor market, while the controlling variable of income with a positive effect and institutional barriers with a negative effect is also effective on the economic participation of women in the labor market.

**Table 9. Regression coefficients of institutional barriers on the prospects of economic participation with the presence of the income control variable**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-test	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	2.263	.272		8.313	.000
	Income	.104	.042	.134	2.472	.014
	Institutional barriers	-.048	.060	-.047	-.802	.423

Source: Research findings

Also, based on the results of Table 10, the correlation coefficient of the variable of institutional barriers with the variable of the perspective of women's economic participation is equal to 0.112 and has a negative sign, which indicates its negative relationship with the perspective of women's economic

participation. Therefore, it can be seen that components such as social expectations, lack of social communication skills, and gender discrimination, which are considered as components of social barriers in this research, have a negative and significant impact on the prospects of economic participation.

**Table 10. Correlation between economic participation, social barriers, and income**

Institutional Barriers	Social Barriers	Economic Participation	
-0.082	-0.112	-	Economic Participation
0.001	-	-0.112	Social Barriers
-	0.001	-0.082	Institutional Barriers

Source: Research findings

Considering the non-significance of the results of the relationship between institutional barriers and the prospects of women's economic participation, this section, in order to separate the effects of the set of institutional barriers, the effects caused by the family institution, and the legislative system have been separated.

The results of the regression of social barriers with the control variable of family barriers (lack of family support) and income on the economic participation perspective variable show that only 0.004 of the changes in the economic participation perspective variable can be interpreted by the family barriers variable. Based on the results of statistical tests, the value of F statistic is equal to 3.105 and it is statistically acceptable at a significance level of 0.05. As a result, at the confidence level of 5%, it can be said that social barriers are effective on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market, despite the control variables of family barriers and income. According to the regression results, the variable coefficient of family obstacles in the regression with the perspective of economic participation is equal to 0.023 and has a negative sign, but it is not statistically significant. Therefore, increasing the effect of social barriers will have a negative effect on the prospects of women's economic

participation in the Iranian labor market, while the control variable of income with a positive effect and family barriers with a negative effect is also effective on the economic participation of women in the labor market, but family barriers It has no significant effect.

Based on the results of the correlation test, the correlation coefficient of the variable of family barriers with the variable of the perspective of women's economic participation is equal to 0.029 and has a negative sign, which indicates its negative relationship with the perspective of women's economic participation. But this correlation coefficient is also not significant. Therefore, despite the confirmation of past studies on the effect of lack of family support as an obstacle to women's economic participation, the result of the statistical analysis showed its negative effect, but did not confirm its statistical validity.

The fourth hypothesis: career barriers have an effect on the prospects of women's economic participation despite the control variable of income.

By performing multivariate regression and adding the income variable to isolate its effect, we can evaluate the effect of job barriers on the prospects of women's economic participation.

The regression results in Table 11 show that 0.047 of the changes in the economic

participation perspective variable can be interpreted by the career and income barriers variable. The value of F statistic is equal to 8.08 and is statistically acceptable at a significance level of 0.05. As a result, at the

confidence level of 5%, it can be said that job barriers are effective on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

**Table 11. Summary of the regression model of career barriers from the perspective of women's economic participation**

Model	R Square	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F
1	.216 <sup>a</sup>	.047	.041	.58509	8.087

Source: Research findings

The information in Table 12 shows that job barriers are also placed as a barrier in the way of the growth of economic participation prospects. The coefficient of this variable in its regression with the prospect of economic participation is equal to 0.168 and has a

negative sign and is statistically significant. Therefore, increasing the effect of job barriers will have a negative effect on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

**Table 12. Regression coefficients of career barriers on the prospect of economic participation with the control variable of income**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-Test	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	2.398	.238		10.068	.000
	Income	.099	.042	.129	2.393	.017
	Career Barriers	-.168	.053	-.170	-3.162	.002

Source: Research findings



Also, the results presented in Table 13 show that the correlation coefficient of the career barriers variable with the women's economic participation perspective variable is equal to

0.174 and has a negative sign, which indicates its negative relationship with the women's economic participation perspective.

**Table 13. Correlation between economic participation, career barriers, and income**

Income	Career Barriers	Economic Participation	
0.134	-0.174	-	Economic Participation
-0.029	-	-0.174	Career Barriers
-	-0.029	0.134	Income

Source: Research findings

Therefore, it can be seen that factors such as the lack of equal conditions for the advancement of women and men, the lack of suitable welfare conditions for working mothers, the lack of job flexibility, and the existence of inappropriate behaviors for women's morale and dignity, which in this research are considered as career barriers have been considered to have a negative impact on the prospects of women's economic participation. As a result of this part of the research, the correlation coefficient of job barriers with income was also shown with a negative sign in Table 13, which is justified from the economic point of view.

The fifth hypothesis: economic barriers have an effect on the prospects of women's

economic participation despite the control variable of income.

By performing multivariable regression and adding the income variable, we can evaluate the effect of economic barriers on the prospects of women's economic participation.

The regression results in Table 14 show that 0.037 of the changes in the economic participation perspective variable can be interpreted by the economic barriers and income variables. According to the results of the statistical test, the value of F statistic is equal to 6.40 and it is statistically acceptable at a significance level of 0.05. As a result, at the confidence level of 5%, it can be said that economic barriers are effective on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

**Table 14. Summary of the regression model of economic barriers on the perspective of women's economic participation**

Model	R Square	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F
1	.194	.037	.032	.58796	6.405

Source: Research findings

The results presented in Table 15 show that economic barriers are also an obstacle in the way to the growth of economic participation. the coefficient of variable in its regression with the prospect of economic participation is equal

to 0.123 and has a negative sign and is statistically significant. Therefore, increasing the effect of economic barriers will have a negative effect on the prospects of women's economic participation in Iran's labor market.

**Table 15. Regression coefficients of economic barriers on the perspective of economic participation with the presence of the income control variable**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-Test	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	2.253	.231		9.768	.000
	Income	.096	.042	.125	2.307	.022
	Career Barriers	-.123	.048	-.140	-2.588	.010

Source: Research findings

Table 16 shows that the correlation coefficient of the variable of economic barriers with the variable of the perspective of women's economic participation is equal to 0.148 with a negative sign, which indicates its negative relationship with the perspective of women's economic participation. Therefore, it can be seen that factors such as women not owning

capital, women's lack of access to their own facilities, and the lack of reconciliation of family income and expenses, are considered economic obstacles for women's employment in this research, have a negative and significant effect on are the prospects of economic partnership.

**Table 16. Correlation between economic participation, economic barriers, and income**

Income	Economic Barriers	Economic Participation	
0/134	-0.148	-	Economic Participation
-0.062	-	-0.148	Economic Barriers
-	-0.062	0/134	Income

Source: Research findings

What can be concluded from the analysis of the variables related to the identified barriers and their impact on women's economic participation is that out of the five categories of barriers identified, three cases, i.e. economic, social and occupational barriers, have been negative effect on women's economic participation in the Iranian labor market. On the other hand, despite the negative effect of the correlation coefficient and the regression coefficient with the prospect of economic participation, the institutional barriers were not statistically significant, and it cannot be said with certainty that the influence of the family and the legislative institution has a negative effect on the prospect of economic participation.

### Conclusion

One of the most important criteria for measuring the degree of development of a country is the importance and prestige that women have in that country. Now the world's

eyes are more focused on women because today, in order to realize social development, accelerate the process of economic development and achieve social justice, if women are viewed as an active and productive force, it will definitely have a great impact on the process of development and increase the quantitative and qualitative of human resources in such societies. The role of women in development is directly related to the goal of social and economic development, and therefore it is considered a fundamental factor in the transformation of all human societies.

The result of the statistical analysis conducted on the barriers known in past theories and studies and their impact on women's economic participation showed that social barriers, economic barriers, occupational barriers, and also barriers related to the legislative system have a negative and significant effect on the outlook of Women's economic participation in Iran's labor market. In addition, the variable effect of barriers

related to the effect of lack of family support on women's economic participation also had a negative and inhibiting effect, but its statistical validity was not confirmed for this sample. The results of this research based on the influencing factors confirm the results of studies such as Safaipour and Khajeh (2015) and al-Hasani (2015). Suggestions for known obstacles are generally summarized in the following cases:

One of the issues that the majority of respondents referred to is inequality in entering the labor market for occupations where there should be no obligation to determine gender in entering them, which is one of the components of job barriers that have a negative effect on women's economic participation prospects was confirmed in statistical analysis. In this regard, it is desirable that the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs enter, while examining discriminatory employment situations through executive and private sector agencies, to obtain justification for these inequalities and to provide solutions to eliminate them. It seems that it is better to have a unit in this deputy to follow up on the complaints of women about the existence of gender unequal employment conditions that have a direct relationship with the administrative and employment organization and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to track gender inequality in entering the labor

market. It is also mandatory for recruiters to be included in employment notices in case of unequal employment conditions.

Considering the confirmation of the negative effect of social barriers, it seems that the necessity of women's economic participation and the benefits of their economic participation should be made known to the public. This issue can definitely be informed in the best way with the help of the national media and other media and mass communication tools.

Also, regarding the effect of institutional barriers and the need to support families, which was confirmed as one of the main factors in this research, it is desirable to educate families through the media as well as students through the educational system in order to create a culture for sharing responsibilities. It should have provided fair and collective decision-making for men and women in the family.

Also, considering the confirmation of the effect of economic barriers in this research and considering its main component as women not owning capital, it can be recommended to create self-employment facilities for women with special conditions for women with more children and women heads of households which would be the mission of economic institutions should be placed.

As the results of the studies showed, some of the obstacles and challenges of women's employment are related to cultural and social factors. Therefore, the first step can be a change and transformation in the mental attitudes of people in the society and removing the traditional forms of women's roles. In this way, it is fundamental importance to create a suitable cultural and social policy to change the attitude of the family and society toward the entry of women into the public field of work and to adjust the negative attitudes towards their presence in the society

Considering that achieving the goals of gender and development is not an easy task at all and requires the support of all people at different levels of government and private institutions and executives. This requires a

conscious effort so that the interests and passions of women and men can be moved in the direction of social and economic development and use for the development goals of the country. The realization of this importance also requires a complete assessment of the roles, relationships, and efforts of women and men in the field of political, economic, social and cultural life. In addition, it is necessary to prepare a framework for valuing various economic and non-economic activities. After all, achieving development goals requires serious thinking and action that has a humane direction and is inspiring to solve gender issues, understand the future of society and the needs of men and women at any age, and fulfill these needs with all their efforts.

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## بررسی موانع مشارکت اقتصادی زنان ایران



فیروزه عزیزی<sup>۱</sup>، فهیمه مرادی<sup>۲</sup>

**چکیده:** بررسی وضعیت حضور زنان در بخش‌های مختلف اقتصادی و اقتصاد رسمی و غیررسمی در اقتصاد امروز اهمیت دارد. همچنین با توجه به وضعیت خاص ایران از لحاظ افزایش تعداد زنان با تحصیلات عالی و شرایط تحریم اقتصادی، شناخت عوامل مؤثر جهت شناسایی موانع حضور زنان در ابعاد اقتصادی، اجتماعی و فرهنگی و سایر ابعاد شناخته شده و ارائه راهکار برای رفع این موانع نیاز پژوهشی زمان حاضر در راستای به دست آوردن نتایج کاربردی برای حوزه سیاست‌گذاری اشتغال است. بر این اساس در این پژوهش پس از شناسایی موانع حضور زنان در بازار کار، به شناسایی اثرگذاری این موانع بر مشارکت اقتصادی آنان به منظور ارائه راهکار برای رفع و کم کردن اثر موانع پرداخته شد، تا با شناخت این موانع راهکارهای کاربردی و درخور برای ایجاد فرصت و افزایش مشارکت اقتصادی زنان ارائه شود. براساس نتایج این پژوهش با استفاده از آزمون همبستگی و رگرسیون چندمتغیره نشان داده شد که از موانع شناخته شده، سه مورد آنها یعنی موانع اقتصادی، اجتماعی و شغلی دارای اثر منفی و معنی دار بر مشارکت اقتصادی زنان در بازار کار ایران بوده است، درحالی‌که اثر موانع نهادی از لحاظ آماری مورد تأیید قرار نگرفت.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** مشارکت اقتصادی زنان، موانع، بازار کار، اشتغال.



تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۰/۹/۱۵

تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۴۰۱/۲/۹

تاریخ انتشار: ۱۴۰۱/۴/۱۰

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