

Review of: "Female Youth Unemployment in the GCC Countries"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Hello Wasseem,

Now, I am not an economist. Your paper may be, and as far as I can tell, it is sound economic analysis. My comments will only be relevant for you if you wish to reach a wider audience, beyond economists.

I can see that your data is from 'respectable' sources such as the World Bank, but I would like to know how unemployment is measured in Middle-East Arab countries. In Europe it is in Labour Force Surveys of the entire adult populations, and unemployment rates are calculated using the ILO definition which your paper mentions. Is the procedure the same in GCC countries? There are problems when applying this measurement to 'youth' in Europe. People slip easily between unemployment and inactivity depending on whether they have done any recent active job searching. The rates that are calculated exclude 'discouraged' workers who have remained in education or ceased job searching because they do not expect to receive acceptable job offers. My own research in Saudi found lots of young people leaving education and entering a period of 'waithood' until a suitable offer came along: a job for males and a husband for young women. The region is changing. More young women are progressing through university and seeking employment careers. Unemployment is becoming an issue, especially among young women, but this is not due to changes in the economic variables used in your paper but to socio-cultural changes. Maybe economists and other social scientists should be working more closely.

On a more technical point; 'country' is one of the variables in your analysis. Here you do not have a sample, but the entire population of GCC countries, and N=just 6. I wonder whether tests of statistical significance are suited to this variable.