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### Child-rearing practices, cultural believes and shaping identities

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# **CHILD-REARING PRACTICES, CULTURAL BELIEVES AND SHAPING IDENTITIES**

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**International Symposium on Arab Youth:  
Developmental Pathways for Identity  
May 29-30, 2013**

# Rationale

- ❖ Parenting skills play a crucial role in the development of children's personalities, personal strengths, socio-emotional adjustment and mental health (Baker & Hoerger, 2012).
- ❖ Different cultural beliefs of parents mark which goals are important in the socialization of their children. Each community has certain values that carry more weight in importance over other values (Fasulo, Loyd, & Padiglione, 2007).

# Arab and Middle eastern families

- ❖ To a great extent, family status determines an individual's access to education and chances of achieving prominence and wealth.
- ❖ The family seeks to ensure an individual's conformity with accepted standards of behavior so that family honor will be maintained.
- ❖ An individual's ambitions are molded by the family in accordance with the long-term interests of the group as a whole.
- ❖ Just as the family gives protection, support, and opportunity to its members, the individual member offers loyalty and service to the family

# Core belief of Arab society

***Social identity supersedes individual identity***

# OBSERVATIONS VIGNETTES

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# “Byizaal Ammo”

In a restaurant, he is 18 months old, high seated, between mother and grand-mother facing father and grand-father. Conversation revolves around him: Say hello, sing the song, etc...“uncle will be upset, if...” “Bizaal Ammo” (here, uncle being the waiter)

*Very early awareness of the impact of interpersonal social relations*

# Papa don't preach

When you will grow you will become a physician like me, a lawyer like me or a politician like me;

You should do extra curricula activities so I show my friends that I develop your talents;

You should marry a person from your religion and our clan;

When you accomplish all your social duties you may think about what you like and who you like to be with in life.

Medea Azouri, L'Orient le Jour (French speaking newspaper) (11/5/2013)

*Free thinker? Independent citizen?*



Tell me what do you see?



# Young women and motherhood

*Non working upper middle class conservative young mothers:*

- ❖ Delegation of their maternal roles and duties to the nannies (who are foreigners not mastering the local languages) and the private teachers.
- ❖ Minimum empathy towards child feelings, thoughts, and development.

*Impact on the global development of the child: language and emotional development?*

# Fathers working in Arab or African countries

Mothers play a predominant role in children rearing:

- ❖ Father is a guest, sometimes not really welcomed
- ❖ Extended family increased interference
- ❖ Nuclear family living back with the grand-parents or extended family members (uncles, aunts, etc.)

*Impact of this social change on the child's perception about couples, families, paternal role, authority?*

# Data to illustrate parents' perception of their role as educators

- ❖ A questionnaire of 15 multiple choice questions addressing education's priorities and values; parenting styles and communication.
- ❖ sent to all parents (300 families) who have children aged between 3 years and 10 years enrolled in the elementary cycle in a regular school.
- ❖ families are middle class group; from different religious backgrounds.

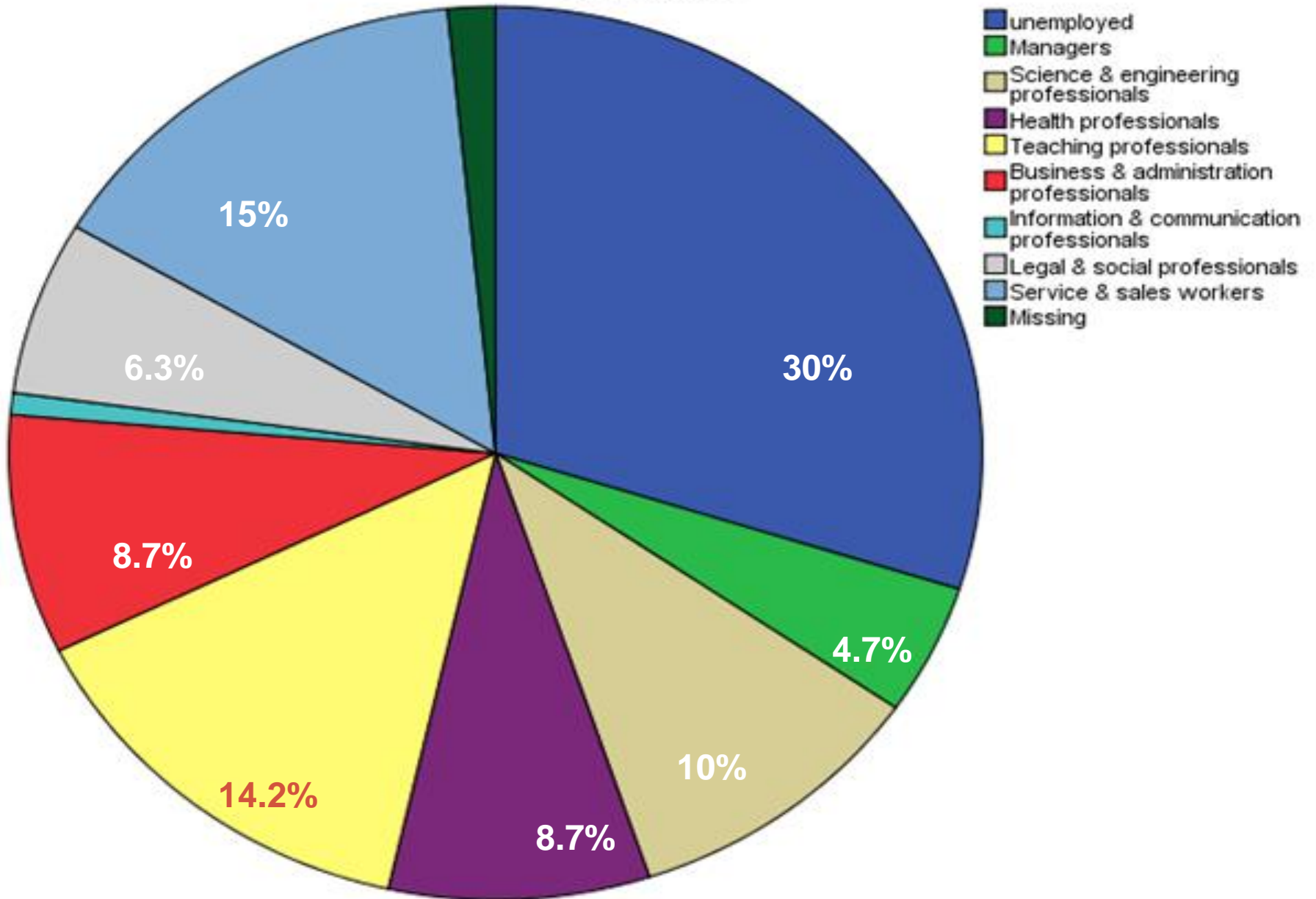
# Demographics

**127 responses collected**

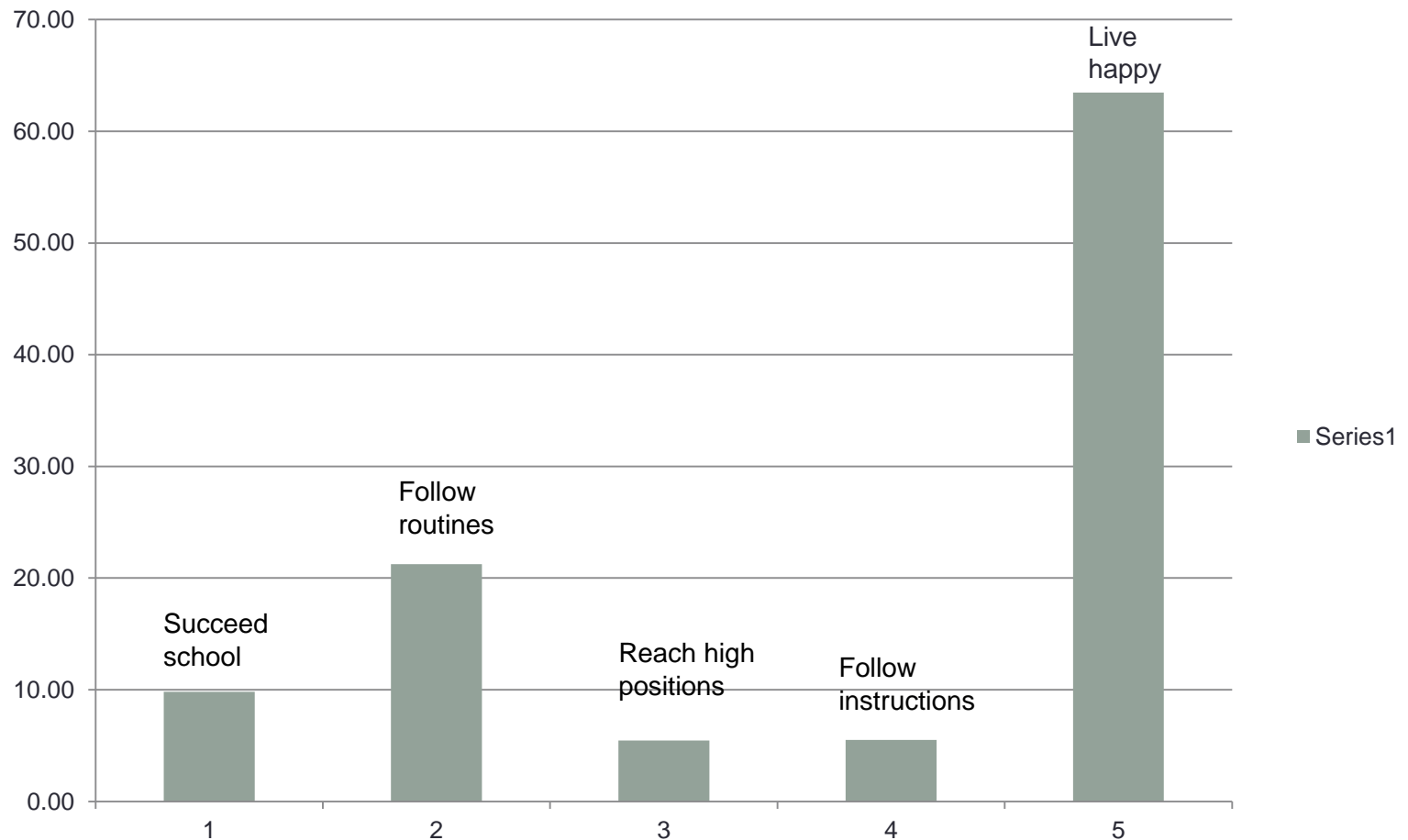
- ❖ 28 males and 98 females, one did not specified
- ❖ Respondents mean age: 38.8yrs (min:23; max:62)
- ❖ Children age range: 3yrs to 10yrs



## Occupation



# Priorities in parental education



# Parents' beliefs

- ❖ 63 % agreement in the couple about children education
- ❖ 85% believe that their children consider them as protective
- ❖ 63% are convinced that their education approach has good impact on the long run
- ❖ 86.4% parental education influence children personality
- ❖ 89.8% describe themselves as moderately strict
- ❖ 80.3% said they don't discriminate between sons and daughters



# Parents' communication skills

- ❖ 92% said they spend time talking to their children about subjects they like while 8% talk about school
- ❖ 22.8% manifest their love to their children with buying stuff and cuddling them
- ❖ 24.4% manifest their love to their children with following up on studies and homework
- ❖ When children obey, 60% praise and give gifts
- ❖ When children disobey, 86.6% talk to them
- ❖ 63.8% threaten them with punishment
- ❖ If they persist in disobeying 52% yell at them
- ❖ 78.7% when upset slap children to make them behave.

# Parents above 40 years old

- ❖ spend time, supervise studies, and talk about school
- ❖ very friendly with children but think partner is too strict
- ❖ children perceive them as authority figure
- ❖ when child follow request ignore them to make them work harder
- ❖ response to child ignoring requests: ignore and stop asking

# THANK YOU

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