

Discussant Bios

Noura Abothneen

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Dr. Noura Abothneen is a dynamic leader who is excited by the changes happening in her society. As a strong and vocal advocate of progressive feminism and women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia, she knows first-hand the need for strong female leadership in STEM in Saudi Arabia. Trained as a language expert, Dr. Abothneen currently collaborates with professors in the College of Science at Alfaisal University to raise awareness about the college's programs and to empower students. Her teaching background includes experience in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), applied linguistics, cultural studies & global citizenship, and educational leadership, which provides her clients and organizations with the linguistic and leadership tools to move forward in their careers. Dr. Abothneen has devoted her research to deconstructing learning barriers for international women of color, including women in STEM, and helping them navigate their shifting identities, as they inhabit cross-cultural spaces. She is focused on helping women, especially Saudi women, adapt to the rapidly shifting landscape of their society and feel empowered to achieve their highest potential.

Munirah AlAjlan

ESL Instructor
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Dr. Munirah AlAjlan is an ESL instructor in the College of Engineering and Petroleum in Kuwait University (2008-present). She has an MA in applied linguistics (University of Newcastle upon Tyne), and a PhD in applied sociolinguistics (King's College, London). Munirah has researched Kuwaiti women who are studying engineering in Kuwait. Drawing on sociocultural linguistic and interactional perspectives, she focuses on the small story approach in order to investigate how the women constructed a female identity in engineering. Dr. AlAjlan's research interest falls in sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and translation. She has been a member of the Pluricentric and NDV-Working Group (non-dominant varieties) representing Kuwaiti Arabic (University of Graz, Austria). Dr. AlAjlan published three conference proceedings (2011, 2012, & 2013) and presented many papers in the area of language, linguistics, and education. Currently she is involved in the Subtitling and Translation Project and Political Narratives Project.

Esra Aleisa

Associate Professor

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Dr. Esra Aleisa is an Associate Professor of Industrial and Management Systems Engineering (IMSE) at Kuwait University (KU). She is also affiliated with the graduate program of environmental sciences at KU. She served as a vice dean for planning and career development at the college of engineering and petroleum at KU. Currently, she is also working as a part-time consultant for the Ministry of Oil in Kuwait. She has accomplished projects in collaboration with the United Nations Commission Committee (UNCC) in regard to post war environmental remediation, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for national resource efficiency and cleaner production practices. She has been also an author at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Co- chaired a conference organized by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), and has also been recognized as an international expert by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the field of simulation optimization. She received her Master's and PhD in Industrial Engineering at the State University of New York in 2001 and 2005, respectively. Her research interests include quantitative sustainability modeling using Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), mathematical optimization and statistical analysis of sustainable development, cleaner production and environmental practices. She has received several national awards in the field of quantitative sustainability and has published over 50 publications including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters, a book and a patent. She is a project management professional (PMP) and an active member in several professional societies.

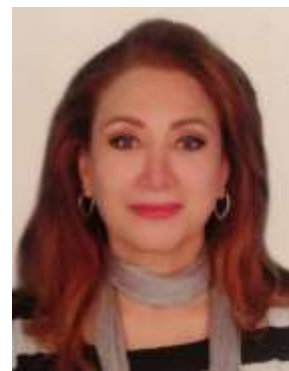
Sabah AlMomin

Research Scientist

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Dr. AlMomin is research scientist in biotechnology and genetic engineering at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. She obtained her PhD from the University of Surrey, UK. She is an elected fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) and a member of the Organization of Women in Science for the Developing Countries (OWSD). She has lead several pioneer research projects in molecular diagnostics, embryo transfer in animals, DNA fingerprinting, diagnostics, germplasm management of marine species, algae bioproducts, and phytoremediation. Currently she is leading an ambitious project to establish a national center of genetic engineering and biotechnology. She is an active member of several committees in areas of biodiversity, women in STEM, biosafety, and biosecurity. She is also the Kuwait Liaison Officer for the International Centre of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB).

Sharifa M. Alragam

Assistant Professor

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Dr. Alragam is an assistant professor at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, College of Basic Education. She received a PhD in clinical neuroscience and speech language at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London. Currently, her research focuses on the reading behavior of Arabic speakers with Hemianopic Alexia (HA). Previously, she worked as a speech-language pathologist for MOH at Sheikh Salim Al-Ali Hearing and Speech Center for 14 years. She has provided therapy services in speech and language, including voice for pediatric patients, and adult patients with acquired language disorders (post stroke). She received her Masters of Science in clinical speech pathology from Northern Arizona University. For her research, Dr. Alragam has received funding from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) for the development of the Arabic-Read Right APP. Arabic-Read Right APP provides a free downloadable therapy which can help improve reading speeds in patients with Hemianopic Alexia.

Nour Alsabeeh

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Nour Alsabeeh, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Physiology in the Kuwait University Faculty of Medicine. Her research investigates the role of mitochondrial dysfunction of pancreatic beta cells in obesity and Type 2 Diabetes. In 2019, Dr. Alsabeeh received the L’Oreal UNESCO for Women in Science Middle East Regional Award. She has recently published on a novel mechanism that drives fasting hyperinsulinemia of the prediabetic state, which may constitute a novel target to prevent or delay diabetes progression. In 2016-2018, she was a visiting researcher in the Department of Endocrinology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She received a PhD in physiology in 2018 from Boston University, co-supervised by Prof. Barbara Corkey and Dr. Orian Shirihai. She also holds a Master’s degree in medical sciences from Boston University and Bachelor’s degree in biology from Brandeis University.

Habiba AlSafar

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Associate Dean for Student Affair
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Dr. Habiba AlSafar is an Emirati research scholar who has a wealth of professional and educational experience that includes a Doctorate in Philosophy in forensics and medical sciences from Western Australia, a master’s degree in medical engineering from the United Kingdom and a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry from United States. Her research interest is constructing the genomic structures of individuals of Arab descent to identify genomic segments that carry gene(s) that predispose them to disease. Specifically, addressing diseases that are increasing in prevalence amongst the local communities of the UAE. Habiba was one of the outstanding Arab women scientists to win the International L’Oréal-UNESCO Fellowship for Women in Science. AlSafar was also awarded the UAE First Honor medal from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum for being one of the pioneers in her field. AlSafar has been a member of the UAE Science Council since 2016 and in 2019, she was selected as a member at Dubai Future Council on Health & Wellbeing.

Zaha Alsuwailan

Assistant Professor
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Dr. Zaha Alsuwailan is an assistant professor at Kuwait University in the Department of Foundation of Education. She earned her PhD from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville in 2006 with a focus on the philosophy of education. The title of her dissertation was “The Impact of Societal Values on Kuwaiti Women and the Role of Education.” She has worked as a manager of the Education Development Centre and is currently the coordinator of the Khalifa Award in Abu Dhabi. Her research interests are in the area of philosophy and women’s education. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi and American Educational Studies Association. She received the Poster Award in Social Sciences in 2014 on her article “The reasons behind Students’ choices of certain majors and its impact on society needs.”

Dalal M. Al-Taweel

Acting Vice Dean of Academic and Student Affairs
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Dalal Al-Taweel, PhD, is currently the Acting Vice Dean of Academic and Student affairs at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Kuwait University. She is also the director of the Kuwait Medicines Information Centre at the faculty, which she co-founded in 2014 and the chair of the Integrated Active Learning and Assessment Committee at the faculty. On a university level, Dr Al-Taweel is a member of the Teaching Excellence Program at KU which organizes regular workshops and seminars for staff to improve their teaching skills. Dr. Al-Taweel joined the Department of Pharmacy Practice, in the Faculty of Pharmacy in 2013 after obtaining her MPharm degree from the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland in 2002 and her MSc in clinical pharmacy, as well as a PhD (pharmaceutical care) from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, in 2008 and 2013, respectively. Her research interests are in the development of tools to assess prescribing practice, drug information and pharmacy education.

Abrar AlAwadhi

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Abrar AlAwadhi is an Assistant Professor of Special Education in the Department of Educational Psychology in the College of Education at Kuwait University. She earned a master's and a PhD from Teachers College, Columbia University in special education with a focus on intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder. She has a bachelor's degree in childhood/special education from New York University. Her areas of academic interest and research concentration is on the areas of early childhood development, general and special education development, inclusion, and the transition of individuals with disabilities from adolescence to adulthood. She has and currently is consulting for nonprofit organizations in Kuwait and the Ministry of Education in Kuwait.

Mariam AlAwadhi

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry
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Dr. Mariam AlAwadhi is a psychiatrist with expertise in Women's mental health. She is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Faculty of Medicine- Kuwait University and she currently heads the Medical Department at the Kuwait Addiction Centre. She is one of the very few female Kuwaiti consultant psychiatrists and the only female Canadian trained psychiatrist in Kuwait. Dr. AlAwadhi completed her training in psychiatry at the University of Ottawa, in Canada and she is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada. She is the only psychiatrist with a rare specialty in women's mental health and interest in issues related to mental distress in women across the life span. She is trained to treat adults individually and in a group therapy format.

Dr. AlAwadhi led the integration of mental health into general hospitals in Kuwait and into the primary health centers in Kuwait. She has been an active advocate to fight stigma against mental health and participated in several campaigns in Kuwait to educate and increase awareness towards mental illness and methods to address it. She was the Head of Consultation liaison at the Kuwait Center for Mental Health, Kuwait's national mental health hospital and the medical lead for both the Women's Mental Health Unit at the Maternity Hospital in Kuwait and Psychosocial Oncology unit at the Kuwait Cancer

Control Center. She serves as an educator to both medical students and postgraduate residents in psychiatry and an examiner in the board at the Kuwait institute for Medical specialization.

Dr. Mariam AlAwadhi has done multiple international and local talks on mental health conditions and is working on several research papers to study different mental health risks factors in the Kuwaiti culture.

Malak Abed AlThagafi

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Dr. Malak Abed AlThagafi is an American board-certified physician-scientist in clinical pathology, anatomical pathology, neuropathology, and molecular genetics pathology. She studied and worked in world-renowned universities like Georgetown, University of California San Francisco, Stanford, Johns Hopkins and Harvard. She is a national and international awards winner in her field and published over 100 original and conferences papers. She was selected in 2018 and 2019 as one of the most powerful people around the globe in pathology and lab medicine by the British Pathologist magazine. Currently, She is the director and primary investigator of the Saudi Human Genome Lab at King Fahad Medical City (KFMC) in Riyadh, associate research professor at King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology, medical director at KFSHI, and founder of CID (Genomic Startup Company). Her hope is to improve the application of personalized medicine and targeted therapy, which can be utilized in the clinical management of patients.

Hessa Amin

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Hessa Amin is the deputy chief executive officer of FAWSEC Educational Company, a K-12 education company in Kuwait serving around 3,000 students. In this role, she oversees Al-Bayan Bilingual School and Al-Bayan International School as well as the FAWSEC support departments: human resources, professional development, IT, education technology management and admissions. Over the past few years, Hessa has worked on several STEM related projects including co-creating new science standards with the teachers, updating the methods of technology instruction, and planning and managing a school wide initiative to implement design thinking and creative problem solving. Hessa was a presenter at the October workshop in Washington where she shared the results of a study exploring what motivated Kuwaiti students to enter STEM field majors at the university level in Kuwait. Hessa holds a Masters of Education in international education policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a BA in business administration from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Amani S. Bu-Qammaz

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Amani S. Bu Qammaz is an Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering at Kuwait University. She received her PhD in civil engineering from The Ohio State University (USA) in 2015. Her MSc in civil engineering from the Middle East Technical University (Turkey) in 2007 and BSc in civil engineering from Kuwait University in 1999. Prior to pursuing her graduate studies, Bu-Qammaz joined a specialized training program for fresh graduate engineers and then spent 12 years working for The Ministry of Public Works, Kuwait, and she was a specialist engineer when she left the MPW to join Kuwait University. Her research interests are in construction management, risk management, contract claims and extension of time, international construction and decision-making analysis. In addition to her academic activities, Bu-Qammaz works as a consultant in the Public Authority of Manpower and is sometimes a member on governmental committees. Additionally, she has been working as the risk consultant for Kuwait International Airport New Terminal Project since 2016. Bu-Qammaz is the advisor and academic director of “Kuwait’s Engineer Girls – KEG” project, a women empowerment program established in 2017. KEG targets young female engineers in Kuwait to help them succeed in their future careers.

Tiffany Chow

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Tiffany Chow is a graduate student in sociology at the University of California - Santa Barbara. Her current research analyzes the ways gender and race impact labor market experiences for high tech workers. Previously, Chow's work has examined how educational segregation impacts job placement and opportunities for Hispanic computer science degree holders from Texas. She continues to work in the high tech labor market as a user experience design lead and is based out of Austin, Texas.

Nagwa El-Badri

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Dr. Nagwa El-Badri is the founding chair of the Biomedical Sciences Programs, and the director of the Center of Excellence for Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine at Zewail City of Science and Technology in Egypt. She has more than 100 publications and patents in the field of stem cells and regenerative medicine. She has established several undergraduate and graduate programs in Egypt and the US in the fields of regenerative medicine, women's health and gender medicine. She received more grants and awards from the American Heart Association, NIH, and Science and Technology Development Fund of Egypt, and recently the Women in STEM Exemplary Leader in Management Position Award by Meer Kaul Foundation.

Melissa Ghim

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Dr. Melissa Ghim is a senior health scientist administrator and neuroscientist in the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), developing and leading projects that enhance the participation of women in biomedical research careers. In addition to advising on programs and policies related to gender diversity and career development of the biomedical research workforce, Dr. Ghim has led the launch of programs such as the Administrative Supplement for Continuity of Biomedical and Behavioral Research Among First-Time Recipients of NIH Research Project Grant Awards ([NOT-OD-20-055](#)). Prior to joining the ORWH, Dr. Ghim spent a decade overseeing the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) research training and career development programs. In her capacity as the NIDA Training Director, Dr. Ghim chaired numerous training-related committees and workgroups, from the NIDA Pathways to Independence Award Transition Committee to the NIDA Research Training Committee. She also served on numerous trans-NIH committees, including co-chairing the BRAIN-Blueprint Training Team. Dr. Ghim has been integral in the reissuances of various funding opportunities announcements (FOAs) to address areas of programmatic and scientific workforce need, such as NIDA's institutional career development (K12) program, the clinical research education (R25) program, and the Blueprint Computational (T90/R90) training program. Dr. Ghim spent a number of years as an executive board member at the William Orr Dingwall Fellowship Foundation, where she continues to serve in an advisory and steering capacity.

Yasmine Kanaan

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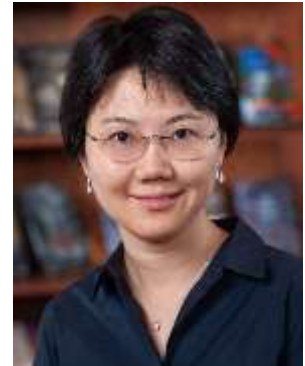


Dr. Yasmine Kanaan is an associate professor at the Howard University College of Medicine and Howard University Cancer Center in Washington, DC. She has over 105 publications and abstracts in breast and prostate cancer research. Dr. Kanaan has an extensive collaborative research effort in directions that delineate molecular differences in breast cancers amongst the two ethnic groups (African Americans and Caucasians). The aims of which will help identify ethnicity specific markers for breast cancer

progression and in developing a more tailored treatment approach leading to better management of breast cancer in African American women. Dr. Kanaan's lab is focusing on: 1) conducting research to refine the diagnostic criteria for the basal-like phenotype, particularly as related to cancers in African American women, while simultaneously identifying molecular features that can be used as markers and clues for further studies into the pathogenesis of these cancers; and 2) the development of novel approaches for prevention and treatment of breast and prostate cancer. Together, these exploratory analyses will provide clues regarding specific chromosomal regions, and genes within those regions, which are important for this phenotype of breast cancer. In addition, to 3) determine associations between metabolic syndrome and molecular profiles (particularly related to fat metabolism) in breast cancers of African American women; and 4) using breast cancer cell lines with gene expression patterns parallel to those of major categories of basal-like breast cancer, to evaluate critical endogenous lipid metabolic pathways and endogenous growth requirements. Dr. Kanaan is an educator and has trained 12 doctoral students and served on various other doctoral candidate committees. Due to her academic accomplishments, Dr. Kanaan has been an invited speaker in several national and international venues.

Yingyi Ma

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Dr. Yingyi Ma is an Associate Professor of Sociology and a senior research associate in the Center for Policy Research. She is a sociologist of education and migration. Her work on STEM education focused on who studied in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields and why, including the formation of aspirations, college major choice, and degree attainment in STEM fields. She has another strand of research on international education and has a forthcoming book on Chinese international students titled “Ambitious and Anxious”, to be published by Columbia University Press. Yingyi received her PhD in sociology from Johns Hopkins University in 2006.

Lama Moussawi

Associate Professor of Management Science
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Lama Moussawi, PhD, is a tenured Associate Professor of Management Science in the Suliman Olayan School of Business at the American University of Beirut where she is currently serving as the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development. Dr. Moussawi earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from the American University of Beirut (AUB), and an MBA, an MSc degree in supply chain management, and a PhD in management science from the University of Texas at Dallas.

Her current research centers on applying models of operations research and management science to various business areas. Dr. Moussawi's research also focuses on deploying data analytics to promote gender diversity and equity in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). Her research has attained national and international recognition. She serves on the editorial board of several journals in the field of Management Science. Her research appeared in leading journals and professional publications.

Dr. Moussawi is heavily invested in promoting gender diversity and equity to empower women at AUB and across the Middle East. On a global level, she is the founding Chair of the Women in Data Science (WiDS) conference at AUB, a yearly initiative held in collaboration with Stanford University. At AUB, she is the founding chair of the AUB Committee on the Lives and Careers of Women at AUB, the first committee at AUB that looks into the careers and lives of AUB faculty, staff, and students.

Dr. Moussawi is passionate about serving and promoting women's rights at AUB and beyond. She is a co-founder of the Center for Inclusive Business and Leadership for Women at AUB, the first gender center in the MENA region that focuses on advancing inclusive workplaces and dignified work for women. Dr. Moussawi also serves as co-PI on several US funded, leading research projects focusing on women's economic empowerment.

Christine Min Wotipka

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Christine Min Wotipka, PhD is Associate Professor (Teaching) of Education and (by courtesy) Sociology and Director of the Master's Program in International Comparative Education (ICE) and International Education Policy Analysis (IEPA) at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. Dr. Wotipka is co-Resident Fellow at the Education and Society Theme (EAST) House, which she co-founded in 2010. From 2012-2016, she served as Director of the Program in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Stanford University. In 2019, she was elected to the Stanford Faculty Senate and after serving on the Committee on Committees, is now a member of the Steering Committee.

Dr. Wotipka's research centers around two main themes examined from cross-national and longitudinal approaches. The first relates to leadership in higher education with a focus on gender, race and ethnicity, and sexuality. The second theme, that of citizenship and education, explores how social science curricula, namely school textbooks, have shifted focus away from the development of national identities to ones that emphasize global citizenship. Her articles have appeared in *Social Forces*, *Sociology of Education*, *Gender & Society*, *American Journal of Education*, *Comparative Education Review*, and *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*.