

BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR SAUDI WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER
EDUCATION

By

Naimah Almutairi

A Master's Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

State University of New York at Fredonia

Fredonia, New York

May 2016

State University of New York at Fredonia
Department of Curriculum Instruction

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR SAUDI WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION by NAIMAH ALMUTAIRI, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



Janeil C. Rey, Ph.D.
Master's Capstone Advisor
EDU 691 Course Instructor
Department of Language, Learning, & Leadership

5/12/16
Date



Robert Dahlgren, Ph.D.
Department Chair
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

5/13/2016
Date



Dean Christine Givner, Ph.D.
College of Education
State University of New York at Fredonia

5/18/16
Date

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine both the barriers and facilitators for women leadership in Saudi Arabia. The research question guiding this study was what are the barriers and facilitators for Saudi women in the upper leadership positions in Saudi higher education institutions? To answer this question, a quantitative approach was used with data collected through online surveys. One hundred and eighty-four online surveys were sent to female leaders in four public universities in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of this study. Fifty responses were collected and the return rate was 27.17%. The findings of this study showed that Saudi women leaders in higher education institutions perceive no barriers at social and individual levels; however, some organizational challenges were indicated. The findings of this study also indicated that mentoring, family support and personal efforts are important factors for career success and advancement of Saudi women leaders.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	1
Literature Review	3
Barriers to Women in Top Leadership Positions	3
Cultural barriers 1: The Social Level	4
Cultural barriers 2: The Organizational Level.....	7
Cultural barriers 3: The Individual Level.....	9
Facilitators for Women's Leadership.....	10
Mentoring	10
Family Support	11
Personal Efforts	12
The Context	12
Obstacles for women's work in Saudi Arabia	14
Guardian's Consent to Work	14
The inability of Saudi women to driving	15
The burden of allocation private places for women to work	16
Opportunities	16
Scholarship Opportunities.....	17
Methodology	18
Participants	19
Setting	19

Data Collection Analysis	20
Data Analysis.....	21
Findings	21
Barriers at The Social Level.....	22
Barriers at The Organizational Level.....	23
Barriers at The Individual Level	25
Facilitators.....	27
Mentoring.....	27
Family Support.....	28
Personal Efforts.....	29
Discussion	31
Implications for Practice.....	33
Implications for Policy.....	33
Implications for Further Research.....	34
Limitations	34
Conclusions	35
Reference	36
Appendix	40
Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in this Research.....	41
Appendix B: The Follow Up Email.....	42
Appendix C: Survey Questions.....	43

Introduction

Women have occupied a central place in human resource development plans in Saudi Arabia. This attention can be seen through the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to provide many free opportunities of public and higher education inside the country and overseas for the professional preparation of national cadres of Saudi females. Also, the Saudi government works for the Saudization of females' leadership in all Saudi sectors depending on local development plans. As a consequence, women find many opportunities to reach leadership positions, take more responsibilities, and manage women's organizations. There is an increase of the employment rate of Saudi women in several areas including education, which is evidence of this expansion.

Nevertheless, there is an apparent bias across many cultures for males in the leadership field (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2012), which has been challenging to female leaders, and thus, women in advanced management positions in higher education have not yet received sufficient opportunities to develop and exercise their roles as leaders compared to males. Therefore, the challenges for Saudi women in their career paths in higher education leadership do not much differ from those all women generally face in the field of leadership. Thus, the purpose of this research was to investigate the common barriers and facilitators for Saudi female leaders in higher education institutions.

Research Question

The research question of this study is, "What are the common barriers and facilitators for females in the upper leadership positions in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia?"

Significance to the Field

The role of women's leadership in higher education has become increasingly important because of the differences between genders in leadership style. Eagly and Johnson (1990) identified patterns of leadership based on gender and their meta-analysis showed that females as leaders are more participative, democratic, and interpersonal-oriented than males. Thus, women leaders appear to work collaboratively better than men who tend to be more autocratic and directive. Also, since democracy is desirable in the current era of globalization, the style of women's leadership has become more important. However, with fewer opportunities for women and many difficulties in reaching administrative positions in higher education, diversity in leadership styles continue to be under-represented. Consequently, this study is significant to add to the knowledge of both the barriers that stand in front of the advancement of women as well as the supports for their leadership. It could assist women who are seeking managerial positions in higher education, or those who are already in top leadership positions and want to maintain their careers.

Particularly, this topic is significant to Saudi education where women are needed to fill important administrative positions in higher education. Preparing successful leadership requires identifying obstacles and facilitators for it. Even though there are quite a number of studies that discuss the common barriers for females in leadership, there is an apparent dearth in literature about discussing facilitators and opportunities for their career advancement particularly in Saudi literature. Thus, this topic might help other researchers and decision makers regarding women's leadership.

Personal Significance

Women's leadership is important to me for two reasons. First, I realized a great female's ability to lead before I even learned how to read and write. My mother is the first female leader

who showed me women's capacity to lead successfully, regardless of their level of education. Coping with life's waves and being responsible for raising children under difficult circumstances is much harder than leading an organization. Her important administrative role in the family, personality and passion of caring demonstrated to me that leadership and women are twins. I consider that as the initial seed that made my interest about women's leadership issues. Another reason that made this topic important to me is that there is an urgent need to consider the issue of women's leadership in Saudi higher education. Despite the renaissance that is taking place in Saudi higher education through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, preparing and supporting women for leadership in Saudi higher education have not yet received attention. The purpose of this study is to explore the barriers and facilitators for Saudi females in the upper leadership positions in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The findings can offer useful recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

For the purpose of identifying both the common barriers and facilitators for the advancement of women in top management positions in Saudi higher education, I have reviewed the literature in three areas. I addressed first the barriers to women in the upper leadership positions in higher education, which include social, organizational, individual levels. Secondly, I looked at success factors that support females' leadership in higher education, specifically mentoring, family support and personal efforts of women leaders. Lastly, I examined the specific context of Saudi Arabian culture and its impact on women's leadership opportunities in higher education.

Barriers to Women in Top Leadership Positions

Women's pathway to reach the upper leadership level in higher education is not free of obstacles and struggles. It has been demonstrated by many researchers that there are various barriers that negatively impact the progression of women in leadership (Peus, Braun and Knipfer, 2015; Romanowski and Al Hassan, 2013; Chiloane-Tsoka, 2012; Nguyen, 2012; Peus, Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Amondi, 2011 and Ballenger, 2010). There are cultural barriers to reach top executive positions for women, which can be divided into these categories: social, organizational and individual factors.

Cultural barriers 1: The Social Level

Among different cultures, it has been found that social-cultural barriers are the most critical challenges for women's progression in leadership (Peus, Braun and Knipfer, 2015). Cultural barriers refer to the general concept about the main role of genders in the society, which qualifies men for authority and domination based on their gender characteristics such as being aggressive, individualistic, ambitious and forceful while women who naturally tend to be gentle, sympathetic, helpful and friendly are seen as a caregiver at home. According to Ballenger (2010), social inequality between genders is one of the most important cultural barriers to women that hinder their career advancement. The cultural dimensions make accepting females' authority tough not only for the society but also for women themselves. According to Chiloane-Tsoka (2012) stereotypes against women leaders influence women's understanding of leadership and make it difficult for them to conceive the idea of an executive position.

Female leaders who have a powerful status and authority might become lonely because of prejudicial attitudes towards them in society (Amondi, 2010). Nguyen (2012) conducted a study to investigate challenges that slow down the progression of female academic managers in Vietnamese higher education as well as the facilitators for their career advancement. Through

Running Head: BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR SAUDI FEMALES' LEADERSHIP

interviewing six female Deans, the study revealed serious obstacles to the career advancement of women. The researcher found the top barriers to female academics is having strong family obligations because combining family obligations and administrative commitments would overburden the women in the eye of society. Also, the results of this study pointed out stereotypes against females in upper leadership positions impede the advancement of women. In addition, the study also pointed out that women's leadership is frequently associated with a fear of taking risks, which is perceived to make them less effective leaders in the point of view of society.

The common term in the literature is "glass ceiling", which refers to invisible challenges for women in top managerial positions and can be a relevant explanation for stereotypes against female leaders. Romanowski and Al Hassan (2013) investigated the barriers to leadership of Arab Middle Eastern women. A hundred and twenty-five Arabian women leaders in Qatar were selected to participate in this study based on their leadership experiences. Respondents returned 33% of the research questionnaires. Their study revealed considerable barriers to the advancement of women in leadership. First, Arab traditions and culture play an important role in forming the way women are perceived by the society as less effective in leadership. Also, there are domestic family issues that contribute to hindering women's career advancement in the Middle East such as the jealousy of husbands towards their wives when they get higher positions. In addition, misunderstanding and interpretation of Islam by some people create challenges for Arabian female leaders. The study also showed that treating women unfairly as the weaker gender passively impacts the role of women's leadership in the Middle East.

Moreover, family responsibilities and obligations can be a heavy load that hinders women's professions. Nguyen (2012) in her study found that female leaders perceived strong family obligations as the biggest barrier for their career. Women in her study reported that their

commitment to fulfill their roles as a mother and a wife while working is a common challenge.

Women also are afraid that their participation in many social activities would lead to problems at home. However, Plus, Braun and Knipfer (2015) found that there are many female administrators in the United States who do not perceive family commitments as a challenge for women leadership. They see that getting enough financial support from work offers the balance, so they would be able to pay for good care for their children.

Furthermore, Amondi (2010) investigated factors leading to under representation of female academics leaders in the upper educational management positions in Kenya. The method of this study was a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative approach. Through reviewing completed questionnaires and conducting interviews with managers, the findings showed challenges for the progression of women at work. At the social level, the study pointed to barriers that create difficulties for women's leadership including preferring not to work under female authority, seeing women's best job at home, and believing that administrative work is not suitable for women.

Cultural norms of accepting and supporting female leaders in the Middle East do not differ from those in other countries. According to Romanowski and Al Hassan (2013) Arab traditions and perceptions of women create challenges for female leaders and lead to prejudicial treatment against women similar to the case of women leaders in other cultures. This is also true in Saudi Arabia. Al-Ahmadi (2011) conducted a study to identify challenges that women leaders encounter in their career paths in Saudi Arabia. Through a survey of 160 Saudi female leaders, the study revealed a number of obstacles for women leadership. The researcher found that even though cultural and personal challenges ranked last, women in important positions stated that cultural barriers hinder their effectiveness as leaders. Thus, the passive social perception of

women plays a vital role in impeding the effectiveness of women's leadership among different cultures.

Masika, et al. (2014) conducted a study to look at the opportunities and obstacles for women seeking leadership positions in five universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. A qualitative method of interviews was applied to collect the data of this study. The findings revealed that family pressure and expectations were barriers to entry and advancement in academic careers. Family and marriage is one of the most important social values that shape career opportunities and study for women in the Kurdistan region. Hence, there were some families who intervened in choosing the academic track for their daughters. Moreover, some participants reported that a large number of women working in higher education are single because men do not prefer to marry a woman with higher degrees. This study also pointed that restricted mobility is another barrier for women opportunities. The way women are supposed to talk and move in traditional communities is challenging especially for single women. However, marriage provides greater mobility and freedom for women to work, move, and talk with the other gender. These were the common social obstacles for the advancement of women in leadership positions. In addition to these barriers, there are common barriers at the organizational level.

Cultural barriers 2: The Organizational Level

The organizational perspective refers to the nature of work regardless of the individuals and their differences (Timmers, Willemsen, & Tijdens, 2010). Many obstacles related to the organizational structures can either slow down or hinder women's professional growth. Amond (2011) indicated barriers for the advancement of women at the organizational level, which have been described as the most intense factors that stand in front of the advancement of women in

leadership. These challenges included unfair requirements for leadership work such as working for long hours; discrimination against female managers that block the growth of equal opportunities; and putting a lot of pressure on women to prove their administrative competency, unlike men who are assumed to be professional. Also, Chiloane-Tsoka (2012) investigated cultural barriers that women leaders face at the organizational level in South Africa. He found that there is still a practice of favoring male leadership in organizations. As a result there is male domination that leads to diminish female leaders' contribution and limit their advancement.

Furthermore, Ballenger (2010) found that there is a culture of organizations that prefers masculinity and those leaders tend to take advice regarding administrative affairs from other males, which marginalizes women's leadership. This is typically referred to as "The Good Old Boy Network". In Saudi Arabia Al-Ahmadi (2011) in her study also found that there are many structural barriers to Saudi female's leadership, which included restricting female leaders' power and participation in decision-making and planning, not providing appropriate buildings, and a shortage of supporting women leaders financially and technologically. Al-Ahmadi also indicated that Saudi women leaders do not get enough training for professional development.

Tessens, White, Web (2011) conducted a study to look at the perceived development needs and support by senior women in higher education institutions in Australia. The finding of the study pointed that there are some organizational challenges that slow the advancement of women in leadership. Respondents indicated that the "boy club" was alive, which referred to the lack of listening and acknowledging women's input in higher education institutions. They perceived differences in the opportunities offered to both genders in senior management positions. Women in this study also believe men receive more support and recognition. However, some respondents considered that both genders were offered fair opportunities, yet women did

not take advantage of the offered opportunities as men did. Moreover, women in this study indicated perceived heavy workload as an organizational obstacle for women in management positions.

The lack of mentoring is a serious disadvantage for women managers. Jauharah, Abalkhail and Barbara (2015) examined female leaders' perceptions of mentoring and networking in two different cultures, Saudi Arabia (SA) and the United Kingdom (UK). From interviewing 44 female managers working in public sector institutions in SA and the UK, the researchers concluded that women managers in SA linked mentoring and networking to family members rather than to a professional network. In contrast, women managers in the UK perceive mentoring and networking as a strategy, whether in formal or informal form, that usually takes place in their professional network. The findings of this study also showed that women managers in SA in the public sector are experiencing lack of access to institutional mentoring and professional networks. After reviewing the common organizational barriers for women leadership, it is significant to look at the personal barriers that keep women away from leadership.

Cultural barriers 3: The Individual Level

In the literature, it has been found that there are many individual factors that contribute to gender imbalance in higher education leadership. Nguyen (2012) found individual barriers for women's under representation in higher education leadership in Vietnam including women lacking the willingness for leadership, looking for an easy job with enough paid, wanting to appear feminine.

Moreover, Amondi (2010) referred to individual barriers to women in higher education leadership in Kenya. These factors included having fears of losing family, of failure, and of

sexual annoyances and coping with different social pressures as a price of success. In Saudi Arabia Al-Ahmadi (2011) also revealed personal factors that hinder women's effective leadership. She indicated that holding passive feelings about women's leadership prevents them from leading efficiently. Thus, becoming a leader appears to be less an important demand among many women in different cultures because of some individual factors such as tendency to choose an easier lifestyle rather than authority. After reviewing the literature on the common obstacles for women in leadership, success factors that support the advancement of women in leadership positions should be highlighted.

Facilitators for Women's Leadership

Since the road to top leadership positions in higher education exists for women, there must be important facilitators to support women in leadership. Many studies have shown various facilitators for the advancement of females in administration including mentoring, family support and personal efforts.

Mentor Support

Mentoring is a significant strategy that has been used successfully to improve people's work and learning in different fields. It is especially important for females' career advancement. Apospori, Nikandrou and Panayotopoulou (2006) examined the effectiveness of mentoring as a powerful tool that assists women's career advancement in Greece. They found that mentoring can positively impact career development and thus the relationship between mentoring and the advancement of women's career is strong. Also, Hubbard and Robinson (1998) investigated the effectiveness of mentoring as a way to enhance administrative work. The study showed that women benefit from mentoring more than men because getting this essential guidance provides them more opportunities for leadership positions.

Moreover, the importance of mentoring as a supportive factor for females' professional growth came not only from its role as a major guidance but also as an important emotional support for female leaders. Lee and Nolan (1998) conducted a study to explore the relationship between mentoring and the career progression of women managers. Their study revealed that even though 47% of administrators who participated in the study had experienced the lack of mentoring prior to reaching their current leadership positions, 92.6% of respondents indicated that mentoring is a beneficial support for women's advancement because it provides them emotional support, which is necessary to build confidence, relationships and important skills for their professional advancement.

Family Support

Although it is true that family responsibilities can hinder the advancement of women, family is still a strong factor for female success in leadership. According to Nguyen (2012), getting enough family support is significant for the success of females in academia. Also, Malik (2011) investigated supportive factors for women leaders in Pakistan and found that being raised in a supportive family that respects females and treats them fairly is a significant factor for achieving effective leadership as a female.

Madsen (2007) investigated the relation between family backgrounds and the success of women in leadership and revealed that most female leaders came from stable environments, both emotionally and financially. She also found that parents' positive influence is a significant factor for the healthy development of women leaders. In addition, Jauharah, Abalkhail and Barbara (2015) in their study revealed that women managers in SA indicated that the support that they get from male family members (e.g. father, husband, brother) has a huge influence on their career success.

Personal Efforts

The desire of women to achieve success in leadership is an important factor for their achievements, which pushes them to work harder and prove their professional competency (Malik, 2011). Nguyen (2012) asserted that women who already have become leaders paid great attention to professional self-development, which brought them more opportunities based on her study of the barriers and facilitators for the advancement of female deans in higher education in Vietnam.

Self-efforts of women to reach high positions in leadership are significant. According to Romanowski and Al Hassan (2013) merit is a supportive factor that brings a lot of assistance to female leaders in the Middle East. Also, they indicated that females' efficiency specifically in leadership work reduces incidences of others treating them unfairly.

Through viewing the literature, it appears that there is enormous existing research about the general barriers for women's leadership in top management positions in higher education. At these three levels social, organizational and personal, there are many significant obstacles that impede the advancement of female leaders. In contrast, there are fewer studies that discuss factors that provide women the essential assistance to advance in leadership positions. Mentoring, level of education and individual efforts of female leaders seem to be the most important facilitators for women's leadership in higher education. These barriers and facilitators were presented across different cultures. However, it is important to see if these issues are applicable in the context of Saudi culture.

The Context

Women and work have been a world wide controversial issue in all cultures. Despite the similarity in obstacles that commonly hinder women's progression in the workplace or even

sometimes prevent them from working at all, the status of working women in Saudi Arabia is something different. This difference is due to the nature of Saudi society with inherited customs and traditions, which have formed strict social criteria to accept or reject something. Hence, obstacles female employees face in Saudi Arabia may not be challenges for female employees in another culture.

Gender segregation in Saudi Arabia is something that has distinguished Saudi culture from other cultures. In fact, the separation of genders at puberty is a command of god and exists in Al Quran. Therefore, all Muslim societies agree on the importance of having a boundary that controls communication between genders. This boundary does not only mean a physical boundary but also a moral boundary that should not be passed. Every Muslim community has its own way of drawing the line between sexes. Since Saudi Arabia is the most important country in Islamic world, gender segregation might be wider than in other Islamic societies. The purpose of this is to keep both genders away from unnecessary communication that might lead to moral issues. So, the separation of genders does not mean Saudi males and females cannot communicate with each other at all.

The separation in education begins when children enter formal schooling. Boys and girls in Saudi Arabia go to the same daycare and pre-school programs. However, starting from first grade to high school there are separate girls schools and boys schools. Teachers and administrators must be of the same gender as the students. Also, students in Saudi Arabia can go to the same universities, which have a section for girls and another for boys. Although professors should be from the same gender as much as possible, male professors are allowed to teach female students at the university level. The reason is due to the lack of female professors as well as the fact that communication between men and women for a specific and clear purpose is not

prohibited. In this case, female students come to the classroom where they should meet with their professor, and there must be a female monitor inside the classroom to control students. There are studios in female campuses that are equipped with cameras and microphones to allow the professor to give his lecture and communicate with students from a separate location. Female students can see their professor on big screens in the classroom, and they are allowed to discuss and communicate.

Separation is also enforced in the workplace. Most companies in Saudi Arabia have sections for women to provide services for female customers. Therefore, in general most women's jobs in Saudi Arabia are separate from males. For instance, as mentioned before female teachers and administrators in the education field almost do not have to deal with males. However, there are other fields where women would have to work with men in the same place, like in the field of medicine and nursing.

Obstacles for Women's Work in Saudi Arabia

In conservative societies like Saudi Arabia, there is a daunting distance between women and work. Over the past years, Saudi women have taken great strides to achieve a noticeable progression in entering the Saudi labor market and holding a variety of jobs. Yet unfortunately, this road is still full of challenges and pressures that stand in the way of Saudi women's advances. Although 60 percent of graduates from Saudi universities are women, the total unemployed Saudi women reaches 43%. The common challenges for women's work in Saudi society are their guardian's consent for working, the inability of Saudi women to drive, and the difficulty of having private places allocated for women to work.

Guardian's Consent to Work

Al-Sharairi, K.O (2006) investigated the work of Saudi wives and its impact on her family's status in Saudi Arabia. This study revealed that women have to have consent of their spouse in order to work. The finding of this study also showed that Saudi women employees have a good relationship with their family members where the couple contributes in raising their children. However, wives still endure the great load of childcare.

The inability of Saudi women to drive

As is known, Saudi law does not allow women to drive cars or any other means of transport within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The issue of not allowing Saudi women to drive is still one of the most prominent social issues in the world. Many dialogs have been raised about this issue locally and internationally. However, there has not been done yet a completed research to look in depth at the issue of women and driving in Saudi Arabia to determine its dimensions and impact on Saudi women. Saudi women's inability to drive can be a logical hypothesis that explains lack of female employment in Saudi Arabia. Particularly, if we compare the status of women working in Saudi Arabia with women in other Gulf countries, which are also considered conservative societies that have similar customs and traditions to Saudi, but where women are free to drive cars. Indeed, this restriction has caused Saudi women to reject many job opportunities especially if their husband has stable work in a particular area.

The burden of allocation of private places for women to work

Subaie, H. M (2010) carried out a study to look at social problems Saudi women face in a mixed working environment. The findings of this study pointed out the discrimination between women and men in job promotions as a first issue in a mixed working environment. The findings also showed that 46%, which is a large number of respondents, believed that problems occur for women working at the hospital due to both genders. Followed by 42% who believe that only

females are the cause of problems for women working, while 10%, which was a drop in the respondents, who believe that males are causing problems for women working in a mixed gender environment. Another issue for women working in mixed gender environments include the spread of the phenomenon of snitching among workers, weak social relationships between women employees outside the field of work, and an increase of self-criticism among working women.

Opportunities

The Saudi Arabia government has focused on the development and support of women to enroll in work in the public and private sectors. In recent years, Saudi women have gained great attention that put them in the priority list of human resources development plans. Indeed, the King Abdullah Foreign Scholarship Program is considered one of the most important programs that supports the development and education of Saudi women. This program provides more opportunities for women to engage in the field of professional work with the necessary preparations.

Scholarship Opportunities

Foreign scholarships are not a new thing in Saudi Arabia. Yet, they were almost always restricted to male employees. Therefore, current scholarship programs are considered as a great opportunity for Saudi women to evolve their leadership skills, to see unique academic experiences, and to gain knowledge that contributes to improving the image of Saudi women. The beginning of foreign scholarships was in 2005 when King Abdullah announced his project of providing Foreign Scholarship opportunities for Saudi students male and female alike. The duration of the project was identified as five years with the possibility of extension. This program aimed to be an important resource to support Saudi universities as well as government

and private sectors with distinctive competencies of Saudis. Based on the positive results of this program, it has been extended to another five years in 2010.

The scholarship program of King Abdullah was the first government project that expanded women's opportunities in Saudi Arabia. This project was a great contribution to show the importance of Saudi women's role in the society and many Saudi families have become more open minded about women issues. Many scholarship programs from different Saudi sectors followed this program and provided more opportunities for women.

Theoretical Framework

The social justice theory by John Rawls in 1972 appears to be a powerful theoretical framework for the focus of this study. According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP), John Rawls is one of the most important American moral and political philosophers of the twentieth century. His political activities include writing a series of highly influential articles about political issues. His first book was *A Theory of Justice*. The philosophy of Rawls was basically built on distributing equal economical, social and political opportunities regardless of differences in gender, color, religion or race. Robinson, M. B. (2003) sees the general perspective of this philosophy is about assuring the protection of equal access to all basic rights and liberties including income and wealth, social primary goods and opportunity regardless of gender, race or ethnicity.

Looking from the principle of social equality to current women's status, women still face many difficulties in order to get their equal rights in societies. Regardless the culture, there are still social prejudices that favor men over women and automatically make men seen as more efficient ones. Identified common barriers for women's advancement from the literature strongly illustrated the existence of these prejudicial treatments. Holding such an unfair stereotype about

women has restricted their capabilities and activities. Hence, women's issues in the modern time are still the focus of many studies (Peus, Braun and Knipfer, 2015; Ballenger 2010; Chiloane-Tsoka 2012; Amondi, 2010; Nguyen 2012; Romanowski and Al Hassan 2013 and Al-Ahmadi 2011), in particular, more research has been focusing more attention on those issues that present women's demands to get their full rights and resistance against gender discrimination.

Relation to the current study. There is under-representation of women in leadership positions in higher education institutions (Ballenger 2010 and Tsoka 2012). It has been demonstrated by many researchers that this issue is due to social biases against women that have prevented an equal distribution of leadership opportunities in higher education (Peus, Braun and Knipfer, 2015; Ballenger 2010; Chiloane-Tsoka 2012; Amondi, 2010; Nguyen 2012 and Romanowski and Al Hassan 2013). Therefore, gender equality has become a significant demand and thus Rawls' philosophy of social justice has direct applicability to this research study. This particular study was designed to address this question, what are the common barriers and facilitators for females in the upper leadership positions in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia?

Methodology

I chose a quantitative approach to conduct this study, which allowed me to capture the target data of the study with the available time for my research and allowed me to survey a large number of women in higher education leadership positions in Saudi Arabia. This quantitative online survey study aimed to examine the barriers as well as facilitators that Saudi females in the upper leadership positions in higher education face in their career paths. The research question guiding this study was what are the barriers and facilitators for Saudi women in the upper leadership positions in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia? In this section of the paper,

the criteria for selecting participants, the research design, setting, the survey instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques are discussed.

Participants

The target participants of this research were women leaders in Saudi higher education institutions. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants for this study. This study aimed to collect data from 35 to 45 female participants. There were two criteria for selecting participants, which were: 1) women serving in upper administrative positions such as deans, directors, vice presidents, and 2) women serving in four- year public universities with enrollment of 4,000 students or higher.

Setting

This research took place in four public Saudi universities, which were: King Saud University, Taif University, King Abdulaziz University and Umm al-Qura University. Because of using the online survey, the main research setting was participants' offices. First, King Saud University was founded in 1957 in Riyadh, which is the capital city of Saudi Arabia. According to the Academic Ranking of World Universities 2013 and 2014, King Saud University is one of the best 200 universities around the world. Second, King Abdulaziz University was founded in 1957 in Jeddah. It is considered the fourth large university in the Middle East after King Saud University, Libyan Open University and Ain-Shams University in Egypt. The number of students in King Abdulaziz is approximately 120,000 and includes students of both genders. Third, Umm Al Qura University has a great reputation in teaching Islamic sciences because of its location in Makka city, which is the most important Islamic city in the world. Umm Al Qura University includes 24 colleges and two institutes. The last university is Taif University. The

University was opened as a branch of the University of Umm Al Qura University in Makkah and it remained affiliated until 2004.

Table 1

Saudi Universities

University Name	Number of Students	Number of Female Leaders
King Saud University	63098	31
King Abdulaziz University	120000 in (2010)	8
Umm al-Qura University	30000	16
Taif University	NA	7

King Abdulaziz University, Taif University, King Saud University and Umm al-Qura University

Data Collection

A quantitative online survey research design was used to collect the data of this study. This survey was designed to obtain women's perception of barriers and facilitators for career advancement in higher education leadership. The survey was entered into and hosted on the Survey Monkey site. After receiving approval to conduct the study from the Human Subjects Review Committee at the State university of New York at Fredonia, I contacted potential participants via email. Each participant was invited to participate in this research via an email that introduced the principal investigator, the purpose of the study and the reason for selecting her to participate in this research (see Appendix A). Also, the online survey was attached to the same email, so they could fill and submit it if they chose to participate. Since getting sufficient responses for surveys is a common challenge for researchers, I sent more surveys than the actual number that I wanted to collect for this study. When I did not get enough responses, I sent follow

up emails to encourage the participants to complete the surveys if they had not yet done so. The next section describes the survey instrument.

Survey instrument. To ensure the reliability and validity of this research, I developed the online survey instrument based on using some valid questions from previous studies on the same topic. Because the questions were initially written in English, they were translated to Arabic. The survey instrument consists of questions about the participants' marital status, education, and ages. The other questions were aligned with the barriers and facilitators identified through the lit review

Data Analysis

Survey Monkey provides multiple and easy ways to analyze researchers' data. The data can be easily downloaded into statistical and spreadsheet programs such as SPSS and Excel. Also, the data can be viewed through Survey Monkey in graphic or table form. Therefore, Survey Monkey's graphic and table form were used to analyze the findings of this study.

Findings

One hundred and eighty-four online surveys were sent to female leaders in four public universities in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of this study. The return rate of the anonymous online surveys used to collect data of this study was 27.17%.

On the surveys, questions from 1 to 6 were about the participants' demographic information including age range, current leadership position, and the duration of experiences, marital status, citizenship and the highest level of education. The results of this study showed that the vast majority of participants were in the age range of 35 to 50. Most women who participated in this study indicated that they were administrators without distinguishing a specific administrative position. Over 80% of participants indicated that the duration of their leadership

experiences was five years or less while 20% indicated ten years or more. The rate of married participants was 70% compared to single or divorced participants' rate, which was 30%. All the participants in this study were Saudi citizen. Forty-two percent of the research participants held a doctoral degree while 16% held a master's degree and 42% held a bachelor's degree.

The purpose of this study was to identify both barriers and facilitators for Saudi females in leadership positions in higher education institutions, and for this purpose the barriers were divided into three levels: social, organizational and individual.

The Social Level

There were nine questions on the survey to measure the social challenges that Saudi female leaders encounter in their career path, which were from question 7 to 15. Table 2 shows the level of agreement of Saudi female leaders with common social barriers that have been identified from the literature of women's leadership.

Table 2

Survey Results for Barriers at Social Level

	Not at all	To a small degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Very high degree
Family obligations is a barrier for females' leadership	32.65%	26.53%	26.53%	12.24%	2.04%
Saudi society sees woman's best job is a housewife	47.92%	33.33%	14.58%	2.08%	2.08%
Authority of woman is rejected in Saudi culture	27.08%	22.92%	27.08%	14.58%	8.33%
Single women are more successful in leadership work than married women	42.86%	22.45%	22.45%	8.16%	4.08%

Husbands in Saudi Arabian do not want their wives to get a higher position than theirs.	31.91%	25.53%	21.28%	14.89%	6.38%
Saudi society does not encourage women to be innovative or creative.	50.00%	33.33%	8.33%	6.25%	2.08%
Saudi culture makes women leaders feel less confident about themselves.	43.75%	31.25%	12.50%	8.33%	4.17%
Saudi women have a low perception of their importance in society.	50.00%	18.75%	18.75%	12.50%	0.00%
Saudi society still holds negative perceptions of value of education and training to women	43.75%	27.08%	16.67%	10.42%	2.08%

At the social level, the results of this study indicated that female leaders in Saudi higher education institutions do not perceive many social challenges in leadership. As shown in Table 2, women in this study reported less agreement with the statements that measure the social obstacles. Rejecting authority of women in Saudi culture seems to be the highest social challenge for Saudi women's leadership. This is followed closely by the view that Saudi husbands do not want their wives to hold higher positions than them. Both of these responses were over 20% of respondents viewing the two areas as a barrier of “great” or “very high” degree. Furthermore, It is surprising that over 80% of responses in this study disagree with the description of Saudi society as not encouraging women to be innovative or creative as well as about the same percentage disagree with the description of Saudi people seeing woman's best job is a housewife.

The Organizational Level

Table 3 shows the level of agreement of Saudi female leaders with common organizational barriers that have been identified from the literature of women's leadership.

Table 3

Survey Results for Barriers at the Organizational Level

	Not at all	To a small degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Very high degree
Women leaders in Saudi higher education cannot participate in decision-making	45.24%	21.43%	14.29%	11.90%	7.14%
Women leaders in Saudi higher education get enough opportunities for professional training and development	9.52%	14.29%	23.81%	38.10%	14.29%
The power of female leaders in Saudi higher education is restricted	7.14%	35.71%	26.19%	19.05%	11.90%
The lack of appropriate facilities and buildings is a challenge for women leaders in Saudi higher education institutions	47.62%	23.81%	11.90%	4.76%	11.90%
The organizational climate in Saudi higher education supports the development of women leaders	10.00%	27.50%	37.50%	20.00%	5.00%
Saudi women are often prevented from being promoted to higher positions at work because they are unable to travel or move	35.71%	35.71%	16.67%	9.52%	2.38%
The relationships between women in the workplace are not strong and supportive for leadership	24.39%	24.39%	24.39%	17.07%	9.76%

There is a prejudicial treatment against women leaders in Saudi higher education institutions and men leaders get promotions more than women.	23.81%	16.67%	19.05%	23.81%	16.67%
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

At the organizational level, the results of this study showed that Saudi female leaders perceive some common barriers at this level. As shown in Table 3 there was high agreement with these statements: the power of female leaders in Saudi higher education is restricted, Saudi women are often prevented from being promoted to higher positions at work because they are unable to travel or move, and there is a prejudicial treatment against women leaders in Saudi higher education institutions and men leaders get promotions more than women. However, women in this study also indicated a positive response to the statement, women leaders in Saudi higher education get enough opportunities for professional training and development.

The Individual Level

Table 4 shows the level of agreement of Saudi female leaders with common individual barriers that have been identified from the literature of women's leadership.

Table 4

Survey Results for Barriers at Individual Level

	Not at all	To a small degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Very high degree
Saudi women prefer taking easier careers rather than leadership positions and high responsibilities	36.59%	21.95%	29.27%	12.20%	0.00%

Running Head: BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR SAUDI FEMALES' LEADERSHIP

Leadership positions are not desirable for Saudi females because Arabic traditions negatively influence their perspective about their capability to lead	56.10%	24.39%	14.63%	2.44%	2.44%
Saudi women do not prefer leadership positions because there is a lack of preparing and supporting women's leadership	53.66%	21.95%	14.63%	7.32%	2.44%
Saudi women have poor leadership skills.	67.50%	17.50%	7.50%	7.50%	0.00%
Saudi women do not have a deep understanding of leadership.	39.02%	34.15%	9.76%	14.63%	2.44%
Women's fear of failure negatively influences their professional growth and development	32.50%	37.50%	12.50%	17.50%	0.00%
Saudi women are not motivated to achieve higher leadership positions.	53.66%	17.07%	21.95%	4.88%	2.44%

At the individual level, women in this study indicated that they do not perceive significant personal barriers for their advancement in leadership. As shown in Table 4, most responses in this study showed high level of disagreement with these statements: Saudi females are afraid of performing tasks that require high levels of thinking, Saudi women have poor leadership skills, Saudi women do not prefer leadership positions because there is a lack of preparing and supporting women's leadership, Saudi women are not motivated to achieve higher leadership positions and leadership positions are not desirable for Saudi females because Arabic traditions negatively influence their perspective about their capability to lead. However, there were statements whose responses showed less disagreement. These were: Saudi women prefer taking

easier careers rather than leadership positions and high responsibilities, Saudi women do not have a deep understanding of leadership and women's fear of failure negatively influences their professional growth and development.

The findings of this study revealed that Saudi female leaders in higher education institutions perceive no significant barriers at the social and individual levels. However, Saudi female leaders who are working in higher education institutions perceive some common barriers at the organizational level. These barriers include restricting the power of female leaders; the women's limited mobility, which hinders promotions to higher positions at work; and a prejudicial treatment against women leaders.

Facilitators

The findings of this study indicated that Saudi women leaders in higher educational institutions believe that they get enough support to improve their leadership capacities. Mentoring, family support, and personal efforts were the three supportive factors for women advancement that were identified from the literature.

Mentoring

Table 5 shows the level of agreement with mentoring as a significant strategy that is used in Saudi universities to support women advancement in leadership.

Table 5

Survey Results for Mentoring As a Supportive Factor

	Not at all	To a small degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Very high degree
Mentoring is an important strategy to support women's leadership development in Saudi universities.	2.63%	10.53%	15.79%	44.74%	26.32%

Mentoring provides more opportunities for Saudi females to become leaders in higher education	2.56	7.69%	15.38%	28.21%	46.15%
Mentoring enhances both personal and professional experiences of Saudi female leaders in higher education institutions	2.56%	5.13%	15.38%	33.33%	43.59%

As shown in Table 5, the findings of this study indicated that Saudi female leaders perceive mentoring as a beneficial strategy that supports their professional growth in leadership. Women's responses also strongly agreed with these statements: mentoring is an important strategy to support women's leadership development in Saudi universities, mentoring provides more opportunities for Saudi females to become leaders in higher education, and mentoring enhances both personal and professional experiences of Saudi female leaders in higher education institutions. It also is worth noting that 76% of respondents in this study see mentoring as an important way of enhancing both personal and professional experiences. That was followed by an equal split of 60% who see mentoring as an important strategy to support women's leadership development in Saudi universities and provide them more leadership opportunities.

Family Support

Table 6 shows the level of agreement with family support as a success factor for females in leadership.

Table 6

Survey Results for Family Support as a Success Factor

	Not at all	To a small degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Very high degree
--	------------	-------------------	----------------------	-------------------	------------------

Family support is an important factor for women's career advancement and success in leadership	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	35.90%	53.85%
Having someone to take care of women's responsibilities at home such as children, cooking etc. supports women's leadership	2.56%	2.56%	15.38%	33.33%	46.15%
Educated families encourage their daughters to take more responsibilities such as management	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%	33.33%	56.41%

Women leaders in this study see family support as a success factor that supports female professional development in academia. As shown in table 6, women in this study showed zero disagreement with the statement, family support is an important factor for women's career advancement and success in leadership. In contrast, these women highly agreed with these statements: having someone to take care of women's responsibilities at home such as children, cooking etc. support women's leadership and educated families encourage their daughters to take more responsibilities such as management. Over 80% of responses see the importance of family support for the advancement and success of women in leadership.

Personal Efforts

Table 7, shows the level of agreement with the importance of personal efforts to success in leadership.

Table 7

Survey Results for The Importance of Personal Efforts

	Not at all	To a small degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Very high degree
The level of education of Saudi females gives them more access to top management positions in higher education institutions	2.56%	7.69%	5.13%	35.90%	48.72%
Women's hard work on self-development provides them more leadership opportunities in Saudi higher education institutions	0.00%	0.00%	10.26%	35.90%	53.85%
Saudi female leaders seek out leadership opportunities	2.56%	7.69%	20.51%	41.03%	28.21%

The findings of this study showed that personal effort is a supportive factor that provides women more leadership opportunities in Saudi higher education institutions. As shown in table 7, women in this study reported zero disagreement with the statement, women's hard work on self-development provides them more leadership opportunities in Saudi higher education institutions. In addition, over 80% of women leaders in this study believe that women's level of education can be an important factor in access to top management positions in higher education. A total of 70% of respondents to this study support the view that Saudi female leaders' personal efforts have led to leadership opportunities.

The results of this study revealed that facilitators for women leaders in Saudi higher education institutions are mentoring, family support and self-efforts. Saudi women in this study see these three factors as important and supportive factors for their professional growth in leadership.

Discussion

The findings of this study illustrate those women Saudi administrators in higher education who are currently working in administrative positions in higher education perceive no significant social or individual barriers in their career path. That was illustrated by the consistent rates of negative responses with the survey questions at these two levels. In contrast, Saudi female leaders perceive some organizational barriers, which include restricting the power of female leaders, the limited mobility hindering promotions to higher positions at work and a prejudicial treatment against women leaders.

The results of this study differ from previous studies and that could be due to the organizations' sizes and capacities to support employees, participants' awareness of this issue and gender separation in Saudi education system. First, This study was conducted in four different Saudi universities of differing sizes and capacities to support the development of employees. The highest response rates came from the larger Saudi institutions, which suggests that women working in these organizations get more support. Also, it might be because the participants have no awareness of the barriers that they face. An important point that surfaces in this study is that the gender segregation in Saudi Arabia, especially in education where there are many positions need to be filled by females, might have helped to create a stable working environment for women in leadership positions because there is no threatening by males to females' opportunities to lead.

These findings dispute the literature of the common social challenges that stand in the path of women's advancement in leadership like stereotypes against female leaders, family responsibilities and obligations, preferring not to work under female authority, seeing women's best job at home and believing that administrative work is not suitable for women (Peus, Braun

and Knipfer, 2015; Ballenger 2010; Chiloane-Tsoka 2012; Amondi, 2010; Nguyen 2012; Romanowski and Al Hassan 2013 and Al-Ahmadi 2011). It also disputes the literature of individual obstacles for female leadership such as: women lacking the willingness for leadership; looking for an easy job with enough paid; wanting to appear feminine; fear of losing family, of failure, of sexual annoyances; and holding passive feelings about women's leadership preventing them from leading efficiently (Amondi, 2010; Ahmadi 2011 and Nguyen 2012).

In contrast, there is relative agreement between the findings of this study and the previous studies that have confirmed organizational barriers for women's advancement in leadership such as: restricting the power of female leaders, the limited mobility hindering promotions to higher positions at work, and a prejudicial treatment against women leaders (Timmers, Willemsen, & Tijdens, 2009; Chiloane-Tsoka 2012; Amondi, 2010; Ballenger 2010; Tessens, White, Web 2011 and Ahmadi 2011).

Furthermore, the findings of this study are almost similar to one previous study that was conducted in Saudi Arabia. Al-Ahmadi (2011) conducted a study to identify challenges that women leaders encounter in their career paths in Saudi Arabia. The researcher found that cultural and personal challenges ranked last while there were structural barriers for women leadership. In contrast, these findings demonstrate that women administrators in Saudi higher education institutions are receiving support to improve their leadership capabilities.

The findings of this study confirm the previous studies that showed the benefits of mentoring on women in administration (Apospori, Nikandrou and Panayotopoulou 2006; Hubbard and Robinson 1998 and Lee and Nolan 1998). It also agrees with the literature of the role of family support in assisting women to advance in management positions (Nguyen 2012; Malik 2011 and Madsen 2007). This study also confirms previous research that indicated

personal efforts as an important factor for women success in leadership (Nguyen 2012; Malik 2011 and Romanowski and Al Hassan 2013).

Implications for Practice

The issues that women encounter in mixed gender societies in their career path may not apply for women who live in a gender segregated societies such as Saudi Arabia. The findings of this study show that the gender segregation in Saudi Arabia, especially in education where there are many positions that need to be filled by women, has helped to create a stable working environment for women in leadership positions because female's opportunities to lead are not encroached upon by males.

Implications for Policy

Shakeshaft, as early as 1987, confirmed the significance of women mentoring. Therefore, it is recommended that Saudi higher education institutions should give more attention to mentorship activities in all forms, both formal and informal as a critical strategy to improve women's leadership skills.

Women who participated in this study reported that the ability to move or travel was an obstacle in their career advancement. Therefore, it is recommended that Saudi organizations should provide more opportunities for female leaders to participate in conferences, workshops and other professional trainings locally and internationally.

It was surprising to discover that women in this study were not experiencing any social or individual barriers, which women leaders in higher education typically encounter in mixed gender societies as were found in the literature. These barriers seem not to apply to women in Saudi Arabia who live in a gender segregated society.

Implications for Further Research

The findings of this study were based on a small group of women who were serving in upper administrative positions such as deans, directors, vice presidents in four-year public universities with enrollments of 4,000 students or higher. It is hoped that this study will provide a basis for further evaluation of cultural, structural and individual barriers that can slow women's advancement in management and opportunities for women in the upper leadership positions in higher education.

Furthermore, these findings were based on a quantitative method with data collection through online anonymous surveys. It is suggested that using a qualitative method would provide deeper insight about the results of this study and why women in gender segregated culture perceive no barriers at the three levels: social, organizational and individual, in leadership.

Limitations

There were a few limitations for this study. First, the study took place in four public universities in Saudi Arabia and thus its findings cannot be generalized to all Saudi female leaders who are working in other higher education institutions.

This study is based on a quite small sample of female leaders. If the sample had been larger, the results would have been more reliable. Also, differences in leadership experiences among participants can present another limitation for this study. For example, some participants might have received more facilitators than barriers and vice versa. Therefore, depending on these differences among individual experiences, the findings of this study might be impacted. Also the respondents were self-selected, so the experiences of people choosing to respond may be different from those who do not reply.

Another limitation for this study was the lack of contact information for administrators on Saudi university websites. There were difficulties in finding participants' email addresses from some university websites. In fact, I found names of female leaders with no way to contact them. Therefore, if I had had the chance to get more contact information, the response rate would have been increased.

This study concludes that organizational barriers are the most common challenges for women advancement. Institutional support and opportunities provided for women are still insufficient to support women in leadership. This study also concludes that women leaders see mentoring as an important support to evolve leadership skills. Since a woman is an important part of every family, women leaders derive strength and the desire to continue success from family support. In addition to that, individual efforts of women facilitate opportunities to leadership positions. Women's level of education and professional development efforts can open more doors for leading.

The importance of this study lies in the inclusion of this study in looking at the obstacles and facilities for women leaders. As known, it is very important to look at positives and negatives when attempting to understand any issue in order to address it properly. Indeed, identifying the difficulties women face in their professional growth would not help develop a rational solution unless the supportive and assistive factors are defined as well. Therefore, the inclusion of the insights of this study could provide the balance of the image for other interested researchers into women's affairs. This study also highlighted important issues related to Saudi women in particular that still need further study and research.

References

- Abalkhail, J. M., & Allan, B. (2015). Women's career advancement: Mentoring and networking in Saudi Arabia and the UK. *Human Resource Development International*, 18(2), 153-168. doi:10.1080/13678868.2015.1026548
- Academic Ranking of World Universities <http://www.shanghairanking.com/World-University-Rankings/King-Saud-University.html>
- Al-Ahmadi, H. h. (2011). Challenges facing women leaders in Saudi Arabia. *Human Resource Development International*, 14(2), 149-166. doi:10.1080/13678868.2011.558311
- Al-Sharari, K. O (2006) The work of Saudi wife and its impact on her family position: A field study on the female workers in Al-Qriat Region, KSA.
- Amondi, O. o. (2011). Representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions in Kenya. *Advancing Women In Leadership*, 31(1), 57-68.
- Apospori, E. a., Nikandrou, I. n., & Panayotopoulou, L. l. (2006). Mentoring and women's career advancement in Greece. *Human Resource Development International*, 9(4), 509-527. doi:10.1080/13678860601032627
- Ballenger, J. (2010). Women's access to higher education leadership: Cultural and structural barriers. *Forum On Public Policy Online*, 2010(5),
- Chiloane-Tsoka, E. G. (2012). Cultural observations facing women managers: A South African perspective. *Gender & Behaviour*, 10(2), 4949-4973.
- Cheung, F. M., & Halpern, D. F. (2010). Women at the top: Powerful leaders define success as work + family in a culture of gender. *American Psychologist*, 65(3), 182-193.
- Collings, S., Conner, L., McPherson, K., Midson, B., & Wilson, C. (2011). Learning to be

Running Head: BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR SAUDI FEMALES'
LEADERSHIP

- leaders in higher education: What helps or hinders women's advancement as leaders in universities. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 39(1), 44-62.
doi:10.1177/1741143210383896
- Eagly, A. H., & Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108233-256. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.108.2.233
- Hubbard, S. S., & Robinson, J. P. (1998). Mentoring: A catalyst for advancement in administration. *Journal Of Career Development*, 24(4), 289-99.
- John Rawls (1921-2002) *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>
- King Abdulaziz University, *History*. Retrieved from http://www.kau.edu.sa/home_english.aspx
- King Saud University, *History*. Retrieved from <http://ksu.edu.sa/en/>
- Lee, J. H., & Nolan, R. E. (1998). The relationship between mentoring and the career advancement of women administrators in cooperative extension. *Journal Of Career Development* (Springer Science & Business Media B.V.), 25(1), 3-13.
- Lindsey, U. (2012). Arab women make inroads in higher education, but often find dead ends. *Chronicle Of Higher Education*, 58(22), A12.
- Madsen, S. R. (2006). Learning to lead in higher education: Insights into the family backgrounds of women university presidents. *Online Submission*,
- Malik, S. (2011). A portrayal of women educational leadership in Pakistan
. *Journal On Educational Psychology*, 5(2), 37-44.
- Masika, R., Wisker, G., Dabbagh, L., Akreyi, K. J., Golmohamad, H., Bendixen, L., &

- Crawford, K. (2014). Female academics' research capacities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq: Socio-cultural issues, personal factors and institutional practices. *Gender & Education, 26*(1), 52-69.
- Mercer LLC. (2010). Women's leadership development survey. Retrieved from http://www.thebostonclub.com/index.php/download_file/view/132/99/
- Metcalfe, B. b. (2011). Women, empowerment and development in Arab Gulf States: A critical appraisal of governance, culture and national human resource development (HRD) frameworks. *Human Resource Development International, 14*(2), 131-148.
doi:10.1080/13678868.2011.558310
- Ministry of Work in Saudi Arabia. (2013). *Statistical Annual Book*. Deputy Ministry for Planning and Development and Information
- Neale, J., & Özkanlı, O. (2010). Organizational barriers for women in senior management: A comparison of Turkish and New Zealand universities. *Gender & Education, 22*(5), 547-563.
- Nguyen, T. (2013). Barriers to and facilitators of female deans' career advancement in higher education: An exploratory study in Vietnam. *Higher Education, 66*(1), 123-138.
- Peus, C., Braun, S., & Knipfer, K. (2015). On becoming a leader in Asia and America: Empirical evidence from women managers. *Leadership Quarterly, 26*(1), 55.
doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.08.004
- Romanowski, M. M., & Al-Hassan, F. S. (2013). Arab Middle Eastern women in Qatar and their perspectives on the barriers to leadership: Incorporating transformative learning theory to improve leadership skills. *Near & Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education, 2013*(1), 1-13. doi:10.5339/nmejre.2013.3

- Robinson, M. B. (2003). Justice as freedom, fairness, compassion, and utilitarianism: How my life experiences shaped my views of justice. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 6(4), 329-340. doi:10.1080/1028258032000144776
- Schein, V. E. (2001). A global look at psychological barriers to women's progress in management. *Journal Of Social Issues*, 57(4), 675.
- Shakeshaft, C. (1987). *Women in education administration*, Beverly Hills: CPA, Sage
- Subaie, H.M (2010) *Social problems faced by working women in the work environment mixed* (Unpublished master's thesis) University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- Umm al-Qura University, *Brief*. Retrieved from <https://old.uqu.edu.sa/page/ar/11>
- Taif University, *History*. Retrieved from <http://www.tu.edu.sa/en/Pages/default.aspx>
- Timmers, T. M., Willemsen, T. M., & Tijdens, K. G. (2010). Gender diversity policies in universities: A multi-perspective framework of policy measures. *Higher Education*, 59(6), 719-735. doi:10.1007/s10734-009-9276-z
- Tessens L, White K, Web C. (2011). Senior women in higher education institutions: Perceived development needs and support. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management [serial online]*. December 2011;33(6):653-665. Available from: Education Source, Ipswich, MA. Accessed May 8, 2015.
- Zuhur, S. (2003). Women and empowerment in the Arab World. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 25(4), 17.

Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in this Research

Peace and mercy of God

Dr: Norah Ali

I am Naimah Almutairi a graduate student at the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Currently, I am conducting my research as a requirement to get a master degree in Curriculum and Instruction. The purpose of my study is to identify both barriers and facilitators for women in top leadership positions in Saudi higher education. Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in my research and share your experience through your career path to your current leadership position as a Saudi female leader. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project and Your survey responses will be strictly confidential. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. If you choose to participate to my study please fill the attached online survey and submit it. The survey should not take longer than 10 minutes.

Your time and participation are appreciated.

I wish you more success

Thank you

Appendix B: The Follow Up Email

Peace and mercy of God

Dr: Norah Ali

I am Naimah Almutairi a graduate student at the State University of New York at Fredonia. Currently, I am conducting my research as a requirement to get a master degree in Curriculum and Instruction. The purpose of my study is to identify both barriers and facilitators for women in top leadership positions in Saudi higher education. I invited you to participate in my research and share your experience through your career path to your current leadership position as a Saudi female leader. Because your leadership experience could add a lot to the field of education, especially for Saudi women who are seeking the upper leadership positions, I would like to invite and encourage you to participate in this study. If you choose to participate to my study please fill the attached online survey and submit it. The survey should not take longer than 10 minutes. Your time and participation are appreciated.

I wish you more success

Thank you

Appendix C: Survey Questions

Personal questions

1. What is your age's range?

25 to 35 35 to 45 45 to 55 older

2. What is your current leadership position?

Dean Director vice President other.....

3. How long have been in a leadership position?

Less than five years five years ten years more than ten years

4. What is your marital status?

Single married divorced

5. Are you Saudi citizen?

Yes No

Barriers

A- Society level

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. Family obligations are a barrier for females' leadership.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

2. Saudi society sees woman's best job as a housewife.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

3. Authority of woman is rejected in Saudi culture.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

4. Single women are more successful in leadership work than married women.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

5. Husbands in Saudi Arabian do not want their wives to get a higher position than theirs.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

6. Saudi society does not encourage women to be innovative or creative.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

7. Saudi culture makes women leaders feel less confident about themselves.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

8. Saudi women have a low perception of their importance in society.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

9. Saudi society still holds negative perceptions of value of education and training to women.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

B- Organizational level

1. Women leaders in Saudi higher education cannot participate in decision-making.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

2. Women leaders in Saudi higher education do not get enough opportunities for professional training and development.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

3. The power of female leaders in Saudi higher education is restricted?

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

4. The lack of appropriate facilities and buildings is a challenge for women leaders in Saudi higher education institutions.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

5. How well does the organizational climate in Saudi higher education support the development of women leaders?

Not at all

To a small extent

To a moderate extent

To a great extent

Don't know

6. Saudi women are often prevented from being promoted to higher positions at work because they are unable to travel or move.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

7. The relationships between women in the workplace are not strong and supportive for female leadership.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

8. There is a prejudicial treatment against women leaders in Saudi higher education institutions and men leaders get promotions more than women.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

9. Saudi organizational concern about women's leadership development.

Not concerned

Somewhat concerned

Very concerned

Don't know

C- Individual level

1. Saudi women prefer taking easier careers rather than leadership positions and high responsibilities.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

2. Leadership positions are not desirable for Saudi females because Arabic traditions negatively influence their perspective about their capability to lead.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

3. Saudi women do not prefer leadership positions because there is a lack of preparing and supporting women's leadership.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

4. Saudi women have poor leadership skills.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

5. Saudi women do not have a deep understanding of leadership.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

6. Women's fear of failure negatively influences their professional growth and development.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

7. Saudi women are not motivated to achieve higher leadership positions.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

8. Saudi females are afraid of performing tasks that require high levels of thinking.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

Facilitators

A- Mentoring

1. Mentoring provides a great support for women's leadership in Saudi Arabia.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

2. Mentoring provides more opportunities for Saudi females to become leaders in higher education.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

3. Mentoring enhances both personal and professional experiences of Saudi female leaders in higher education institutions.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

B - Family Support

1. Family support is an important factor for the advancement of women's career and success in leadership.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

2. Having someone to take care of women's responsibilities at home such as children, cooking, etc. supports women's leadership.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

3. Educated families encourage their daughters to take more responsibilities.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

C - Personal efforts

1. Saudi females' level of education gives them more accesses to top management positions in higher education institutions.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

2. Women hard work on self -development provides them more leadership opportunities in higher education institutions.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

3. Saudi female leaders seek out leadership opportunities.

Not at all

To a small degree

To a moderate degree

To a great degree

Very high degree

* Question # 5 and 9 in organizational level is taken from Women's Leadership Development Survey (Mercer LLC, 2010).