

**CONFLICTS AND CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY THE FEMALE
LEADERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN SAUDI
ARABIA: A CASE STUDY**

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**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITI MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

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AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN SAUDI ARABIA: A CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the conflicts and challenges encountered by female leaders in the higher education sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study further investigated the impacts of the religious features as well as the empowerment on the conflicts and challenges faced by women in Saudi Arabia. In this study the researcher employed a multiple case study, the data collection techniques of this qualitative study involved in-depth interviews and document analysis. The researcher used a purposive sampling approach to select 10 female academic leaders from private and public universities in Saudi Arabia. The data were analysed using a qualitative analytical tool called NVivo. The findings of the study indicated that female education leaders are facing numerous barriers in pursuing their professional responsibilities. Conflicts arise at the end as a consequence of the obstacles that they meet all along. There were some differences identified as the causes of conflicts among the leaders in the public and private universities. In the public universities, female leaders are more autonomous, but they need to follow certain protocols. Men are less supportive and less cooperative probably because of job-stability. On the other hand, in private universities, leaders are more open-minded and cooperative because of the organisational rules, but female leaders need to handle heavier workload. In some cases, due to their lack of skills and experiences they cannot provide enough support to their subordinates. The researcher concluded the study by explaining the implications of the study for the higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Organizational Conflicts, Female Challenges, Female Empowerment, Leadership, Leadership Conflict and Leadership Challenges.

KONFLIK DAN CABARAN YANG DIHADAPI PEMIMPIN WANITA: PELBAGAI KAJIAN KES DI UNIVERITI AWAM DAN SWASTA DI ARAB SAUDI

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini berusaha untuk meninjau konflik-konflik dan cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi oleh pemimpin-pemimpin wanita dalam sektor pendidikan di peringkat pendidikan tinggi di negara Arab Saudi. Kajian ini seterusnya mengkaji secara lebih mendalam kesan ciri-ciri keagamaan dan konsep pemberian dan pembahagian kuasa terhadap konflik-konflik dan cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi oleh wanita Saudi. Dalam kajian ini, pengkaji menggunakan pelbagai kajian kes; teknik pengumpulan data yang menggunakan kajian kualitatif melibatkan temubual-temubual eksklusif dan analisis dokumen. Pengkaji menggunakan pendekatan pensampelan bertujuan untuk memilih 10 pemimpin wanita dalam bidang akademik dari universiti awam dan swasta di Arab Saudi. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan perisian analitikal kualitatif yang dipanggil NVivo. Penemuan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pemimpin wanita dalam bidang pendidikan menghadapi pelbagai cabaran dalam melaksanakan tanggungjawab profesional mereka. Mereka akhirnya akan berhadapan dengan konflik yang semakin meruncing hasil pelbagai halangan yang mereka temui sepanjang perjalanan kerjaya mereka. Terdapat beberapa perbezaan yang dapat dikenalpasti sebagai punca konflik-konflik yang menimpa kalangan pemimpin di antara universiti awam dan swasta. Di universiti awam, pemimpin wanitanya adalah lebih berdikari dan bebas tetapi mereka terpaksa mematuhi beberapa protokol. Lelaki pula bukan sahaja kurang menyokong malah kurang memberi kerjasama. Hal ini mungkin disebabkan kedudukan kerjaya mereka adalah lebih stabil. Sebaliknya di universiti swasta pula, para pemimpinnya lebih bersifat terbuka dan sedia memberi kerjasama. Hal ini mungkin disebabkan peraturan-peraturan yang ditetapkan dalam

organisasi tersebut. Namun, pemimpin wanita terpaksa menanggung beban kerja yang lebih berat. Dalam beberapa kes, disebabkan kurangnya kemahiran dan pengalaman; mereka tidak dapat memberikan sokongan yang terbaik kepada pekerja bawahan mereka. Pengkaji menyimpulkan kajian tersebut dengan menerangkan implikasi kajian tersebut terhadap institusi–institusi pengajian tinggi di Arab Saudi.

Universiti Malaysia

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Conflicts in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) vary from organization to another. Leadership-conflicts, specifically disputes with the male counterparts are severely hindering them to carry out duties. This contravention is negatively influencing on women's development as well as their economic contribution to the society. Women's access to the public domain is now possible due to the favourable government policy as well as changing social structure. Most plausibly, women are getting better opportunity to have higher education in these recent decades. This extended opportunity has capacitated them to participate in the management in higher education (Faisal, 2012; MOHE, 2013). But, the inheritance of long prevailed patriarchal social structure, new economic policy, changing organizational structure, and individual perception are appearing as challenges to the women. These challenges are resisting their practices of leadership in the job vicinity (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Danish & Smith, 2012; Elamin & Omair, 2010; Thompson, 2015) as well as putting them into conflicts.

The university community experiences uncounted conflict scenarios. Unprecedentedly, conflict scenarios could possibly contribute to an extremely adversarial environment in the organization. Disputes over university reorganization, school performance, multimillion-dollar grants, property, social action, freedom of knowledge, to call some, all contribute to a fancy conflict landscape. Augmented, these conflicts common in most organizations, like conflicts over religion, personalities, turf, power, and resources, and there is a very full plate. Anyone in

university could expertise the total varies of conflicts from the social to the international. Some conflicts are distinctive to the university setting, like those involving freedom, research, and therefore the micro-managing of personnel matters by peers. In different instances, things that could which will ostensibly do not have any relationship with the university may, in fact, become a supply of major conflict and obtain vie out on the field, like actions taken by a remote government that is opposed by other staff. Nowadays, women's presence in organizational leadership is gradually increasing (Omair, 2008). However, to a greater extent, women still lag behind men and are marginalized as well as poorly presented in the organizational domain (Kemp, Madsen, & El-Saidi, 2013).

Women's leadership in higher education and other organizational sectors has recently been sanctioned and reinvigorated in Saudi Arabia. Saudi women now have better prospects to acquire higher education and the opportunity to be better qualified academically and professionally. Such a situation enhances Saud women's eligibility to participate in senior management, specifically in higher education. However, there are challenges due to the long-prevailing patriarchal social structure, economic policy, organizational structure and individual perceptions that present multi-dimensional conflicts and challenges towards women.

Females are normally dealing with a couple of boundaries in their professional lives. For instance, gendered cultural, low opportunity for taking part in education, discrimination, majority male instructors in the training system, low confidence and self-esteem, burdensome tasks, lack of empowerment and verbal exchange (Abu-Khader, 2012; Al-Jaradat, 2014). The barriers consist of gender discrimination in the workplace, gender stereotypes; lack of mobility confined chance for the increase and career development, immoderate workload, lack of

family-work balance, gender-based totally challenges related to pregnancy (Al-Asfour, Tlaiss, Khan, & Rajasekar, 2017). In the other perspective, structure challenges seem with the unfavourable structure that hinders women's performance of administrative duties also as leadership roles (Abu-Khader, 2012; Al-Minqash, 2007). In this vein, under-empowerment inhibits girls in taking a call, eliciting modification and performing body roles (Abu-Khader, 2012; Al-Kubaisi, 2004). Sometimes, they face demeaning and unwelcoming behaviour from colleagues and subordinates (Abu-Khader, 2012b).

This study aims to explore the conflicts and challenges that female leaders in education are encountering in the higher education sector in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researcher investigates the influence of the female empowerments as well as the influence of the religious attributes on the conflicts and challenges faced by the women in Saudi Arabia. To begin with, this chapter presents a general overview of the study comprising the background of the study with a brief discussion on female leadership and conflicts in higher education. Other significant topics discussed in this chapter include the Statement of the Problem, relevant theories used in this study, the research objectives and research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms used in this study and then the organisation of the thesis before ending with the summary.

1.2 Background of the Study

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is the birthplace of Islam. KSA is home to two of the holiest shrines in Islam, namely the Masjid-al-Haram and Masjid-an-Nabawi which are located in Mecca and Medina respectively. Their very presence makes this country the destination of Muslim pilgrims from all over the world. Saudi Arabia is an icon in the Muslim world for many other reasons as well. This kingdom is a major

producer of petroleum oil and natural gas. The petroleum reserves of Saudi Arabia are approximately 18% of the total known global oil reserves (in 2018). The production of natural oil accounts for 50% of the gross domestic product and 70% of export earnings for Saudi Arabia (Al-Falih, Al-Aama, & Al-Dossary, 2018). The enormous oil production is responsible for Saudi Arabia being ranked as one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

King Abd Al-Aziz Al-Saud founded the modern Saudi Arabia in 1932 by unifying the Arabian Peninsula. Later on, King Abdallah elevated the development of Saudi Arabia to greater heights during his rule from 2005 to 2015. He took a giant step towards enhancing employment by liberalising the private sector while extending social opportunities to women. During his rule, His Imperial Highness initiated a historic change in this kingdom. In 2015, for the first-time in the Kingdom's history, His Royal Highness allowed Saudi women to vote and also gave them the opportunity to run for election as candidates in the municipal council elections. Consequently, it was with great surprise that a total of 19 women won and were appointed as electoral councillors (Al-Falih et al., 2018).

In 2016, the Saudi government envisioned broader economic reforms in its "Vision 2030" (Fattouh & Sen, 2016). Due to very substantial economic reforms and modernisation, Saudi Arabia is witnessing the extensive participation of women in the job market, at a level never before seen in its national history (Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Women's access to the public domain has become easier due to favourable government policy as well as the changed social structure. In recent decades, women in Saudi Arabia have been given opportunities to obtain higher education. Furthermore, the way is now open to them to advance their academic qualifications

and be eligible to participate in senior management, especially in higher education (MOH, 2013; Rather, 2016).

However, the long prevailing patriarchal social structure, economic policy, organisational set-up and individual perception are posing multi-dimensional challenges for women. These challenges are hindering women's presence and leadership in both private and public sectors of the country's economy while igniting conflict with their male counterparts in the work place (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Danish & Smith, 2012; Elamin & Omair, 2010; Thompson, 2015). Besides, leadership-conflict, which is the dispute and disagreement of female leaders with their male colleagues disrupts their performance and advancement. This confrontation negatively impacts women's career development and progress as well as their economic contribution to society. To build a rational and progressive society, challenges and conflicts that female leaders face in their daily lives need to be eliminated. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the causative factors of the challenges and conflicts in Saudi Arabia.

Natural resources such as oil and gas are not inexhaustible. Besides, the call of globalisation is also undeniable. The socio-economic, geopolitical and socio-cultural aspects of every country have been tremendously influenced by the wave of indomitable globalisation. Consequently, a new phase of market economy has emerged. Considering all these facts, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has launched substantial initiatives to build a knowledge-based economy. In this regard, women's education has gained greater priority since this segment of the population has traditionally been marginalised and as a result has lagged behind now face the need for a massive paradigm shift in their journey towards achieving social, economic and political equality.

Conflict occurs due to the disagreement between involved parties. In this case, the challenges are the causative agents. Saudi women are facing various challenges at different stages of playing their leadership roles (Danish & Smith, 2012). The Saudi government recognises women's rights and offers them leadership positions in organisations (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004).

Nevertheless, Saudi women are finding it difficult to cope with this opportunity because of domestic obligations like having to be family-orientated and also observing religious obligations (Almansour & Kempner, 2016). Their basic duties are to manage the home and child raising (Danish & Smith, 2012). The main challenges to their professional lives emerge once their family members start to dislike seeing them working in the public sphere (Abalkhail & Allan, 2015). From then, they meet constraints in the socio-cultural environment (Jamali, Sidani, & Safieddine, 2005).

The study on the women in higher educational leadership experiences would be crucial to be explored as a result of the prevailing culture of exclusion and disempowerment it becomes difficult for the women to fully engage in management (Thompson, 2015). Besides, men's negative perception of women's representation and their surveillance make women's work-environment even more challenging (Kemp, Angell, & McLoughlin, 2015). The attitude of Saudi males, specifically those who are aged, employed and less educated cling to their traditional views and look unfavourably at working women (Elamin & Omair, 2010). In their professional life, women mostly experience exclusion from the formal and informal network and are deprived of the benefits from the corporate developmental assignments (Omair, 2008).

Saudi women have been seeking economic freedom for a long time. In recent years, due to the economic reformation by the government women can engage in economic activities to enhance their household income. However, their challenges stem from being victims of traditional family culture, which has always considered the man as the head of the household with the responsibility of being the bread winner and responsible for decision making. In this situation, if women tend to play men's roles, conflicts arise due to multidimensional contradictions (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Al-Lamky, 2007)) explained that women face an assortment of challenges that are essentially socio-cultural, organisational, economic and personal. Thus, the reasons for the challenges that push them into various difficulties as they pursue leadership roles are yet to be known. Presumably, when they try to resolve or avoid or counter these challenges to accomplish their tasks, conflicts occur.

However, there are encouraging signs of significant changes beneficial to the women of the KSA. The entire education system in Saudi Arabia seen significant and meaningful structural changes. As a result, the number of highly-educated women are increasing and their participation in the labour market is on a steady incline. Such increased female participation on the work force has been reflected in the enhancement of the national economy as well as household income. A study by Albanawi and Yusuf has reported that more than 60,000 businesses in the KSA now belong to women and 40% of private properties have female owners (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011). Furthermore, the voting right in Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2004 brought new opportunities to Saudi women. A total of 2750 female entrepreneurs participated in the last voting in Riyadh and another 600 businesswomen, who were members of the Chamber of Commerce took cast their votes in the Eastern region (Danish & Smith, 2012). A

modest number of female entrepreneurs are now managing SMEs across the kingdom as well.

Furthermore, in the last decade, women's participation in the hierarchical levels of organisations has increased significantly in both public and private sectors. However, they have been facing challenges in the social and organisational context (Danish & Smith, 2012). For instance, in the education sector, women are facing the harsh realities in the organisational domain, being deprived of sufficient resources and empowerment (Al-Ahmadi, 2011). These adversities have pitched them into conflicts with their counterparts and colleagues. In order to better understand the causative factors of these conflicts and challenges a few issues, such as the women in Saudi Arabia, their empowerment through education, their leadership conflicts and challenges in Saudi Arabia need to be briefly discussed.

The whole Arab region, which comprises 22 countries in the Middle East recognised by the United Nations, due to their geographic proximity and cultural, religious and historical similarities (Omair, 2009) is experiencing tremendous economic and political changes. Globalisation is cartelising these changes from several dimensions and in various ways. Therefore, the socio-cultural landscape is taking new shapes along with the economic domain. New needs and demands are emerging like never before. Women's development has become a crucial issue. They are being recognised as potential economic partners in mobilising socio-economic progress. Hence, women's education and empowerment are given greater priority. Arab Gulf states are concerned about women's education (Metcalf, 2011b). Besides, women's participation in the workforce has been taken into consideration too.

Historically, Arab society had been traditionally patriarchal and women have been suppressed and discriminated against (Yaseen, 2010). Despite whatever

inroads women have made into the traditionally male-dominated organisations, society continues to nurture masculine culture as a norm (Omair, 2008). However the coexistence of conventional organisational structure and the social norm creates an adverse situation for women in the organisation (Jamali et al., 2005). For instance, even if women are in managerial positions they are treated based on their gender rather than according to their administrative status (Omair, 2009). In Arab society, women have always had to depend on the consents of the male family members to even accept any career opportunity (Abalkhail & Allan, 2016), which implies that most of the women in the Arab world are leading lives without self-identity and rightful freedom. They are deprived of advancing themselves with appropriate opportunities and careers. Thus, their contribution to economic development has been insignificant.

The scenario in Saudi Arabia is almost similar to that of many other Arab countries. Saudi women are not only veiled but also almost totally excluded from participating in socio-economic activities. This country has a significant gender gap. According to the gender gap index, Saudi Arabia has ranked close to the bottom for decades. The global ranking of Saudi Arabia is 129 out of 134, even though, recently Saudi women have been offered some degree of freedom to participate in employment. However, they are still significantly underrepresented in the mainstream economic domain (Al-Rasheed, 2013). The Saudi government has launched some initiatives to empower women by prioritising their education. In spite of the increment of women in higher education institutions, the researchers have shown that women in higher education institutions face assorted conflicts and challenges. As a result, women are being qualified to participate in management. However, due to long-triumphed patriarchal social norms, men have conquered organizational culture

and conservative religious belief women are experiencing typical barriers in performing duties and getting into conflicts with their male counterparts (Alsubhi, Hoque, & Razak, 2018). Women's education and empowerment in Saudi Arabia are briefly discussed below.

The government of Saudi Arabia has recently introduced initiatives to ensure higher education for all. In this regard, the allocation for post-secondary education has been very significantly increased. Privatisation of higher education has been inspired (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011). The visionary king Abdul Aziz had realised the necessity of education as a way towards sustainable development. Henceforth, his successors also have taken effective measures to translate that dream into reality. The Ministry of Education formulated a 10-year strategic plan (2004-2014) in order to realise King Abdullah's vision. About Saudi Riyal (SR) 105 billion in 2008 and SR 204 billion in 2012 were allocated for building a strong educational infrastructure (Mohammed, 2013). This allocation was about 5.6 % of the total GDP (in 2012) (UNDP, 2013). In 2013, regarding the Ministry of Education (MOE) or the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), the budget for education was SR 77.2 billion, which was 9% of the total national budget for that year MOE/MOHE (MOH, 2013).

This mounting budget reflected the Kingdom's vision and inclination towards building a knowledge-based economy (Neva, Hala, & Gregory, 2014). By 2013, there were 34 universities and 543 affiliated colleges with 2,393 departments in Saudi Arabia. The education system is controlled by four different entities, such as the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), General Presidency of Girls' Education and the General Organisation for Technical and Vocational training (Neva et al., 2014). The literacy rates of males and female

are almost the same. As of 2012, male youths (15-24 years old) literacy rate was 99% and for female youth (15-25 years old) it was 97% (UNICEF, 2013). Male and female students are separated by a gender segregation policy (Havril, 2015).

Nevertheless, this kingdom is paying serious attention to improving the quality of women's education. Consequently, significant reformation has taken place in the whole education system by focusing on women (Al-Munajjed, 1997). The first girls' college was established in 1970 in Riyadh, while 10 other similar colleges were established across the country by the 80s in order to enhance women's education. Arts, education, general science, mathematics, religion, Arabic language, geography, history, English language, psychology and home economics are included in the curricula. So far, there are 38 educational institutes for women including eight universities that have been operating under the Ministry of Education. Women are make-up 58% of the total number of students in this country (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011). The authorities have extended financial assistance to the female students across the county (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011). The literacy rate of women has risen from two per cent in 1970 to 97% (female youths age between 15 and 25 years) by 2012 (UNICEF, 2013). In this case, University Princes Nora bint Abdul Rahman, which was established in 2009 has played the most important role (Mohammed, 2013). Overall, half of the students, who have graduated in recent years were women. These statistics show that there has been dramatic growth of women's participation in education.

Enhancement of education appears to be the most effective initiative in empowering Saudi women (Rather, 2016). Now, women are more interested to participate in formal jobs and even in management. Favourable environment, as

well as government support, have drawn Saudi women to the education sector. However, due to the long prevailing patriarchal social norm, male-dominated organisational culture and conservative religious beliefs there is resistance to women performing their duties in the organisational paradigm. Such resistance often leads to conflicts (Abalkhail & Allan, 2015; Danish & Smith, 2012; Thompson, 2015). However, the research would explore whether empowering Saudi women sway the conflicts scenario in the higher education institution.

To the best knowledge of this researcher, there is no empirical evidence to support the notion that males are more competent than females at work (Burns & Martin, 2010). This myopic notion has created disharmony in the workplace, and deprived women of the opportunity for career advancement to senior positions. Due to the changing economic, social and political conditions, many developing countries have recently realised the need for women's engagement in administrative positions, but in most Muslim countries, culture and social structure are in the way of women ascending the organisational hierarchy (Oplatka, 2006). Besides, Muslim women have to adhere to certain religious rules and socio-cultural norms. Stereotyped gender-roles, negative views of women's leadership, lack of freedom are the common factors that hamper the progress of women. Women generally encounter various challenges, such as gendered cultural and social values, low participation in education, discrimination, low confidence and self-esteem and burdensome tasks at home, etc. These challenges are the significant barriers that prevent them from advancing to positions of higher responsibility.

Unfavourable organisational structure is an important factor that hinders women performing administrative duties as well as playing leadership roles (Al-Minqash, 2007). Under-empowerment is another factor that prevents women from

making decisions and instituting change and performing administrative roles (Al-Kubaisi, 2004). In the same way, entrenched cultural concepts and practices restrict women from holding high positions in management. Women face demeaning and unwelcoming behaviour from their colleagues and subordinates in the organisational domain. Thus, this research provides a qualitative feedback the leadership conflicts and challenges that women leaders experience in higher education in both public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia. For that, women conflict, women challenges, women empowerment, and Islamic attributes are critical part to explore women conflicts and challenges faced by women leaders in both public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Notwithstanding the substantial growth in the role of women in Saudi society, evidence indicates that women in upper-management positions are facing a different reality from their counterparts due to various structural and cultural factors that impede their effectiveness as leaders. These factors have been found to impede women in management in other Gulf countries. The study conducted by (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011; Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Al-Munajjed, 1997; Al-Lamky, 2007; Danish & Smith, 2012; Thompson, 2015), posited that the main obstacles encounter by women leadership could be simplified as inadequate opportunities to higher education, discriminatory appointment, promotion practices, traditional attitudes of male bosses towards working women. Furthermore, they highlighted that domination of male sectors and male resistance to the women management are considered as a vital issue associated to women leadership in Saudi Arabia. A lack of professional management development programs, a lack of a sufficient number of quality day-care centres,

dual responsibilities of traditional and professional roles, balancing traditional and professional.

Leadership is one of the most vital issues in every sphere of social life. It has positive impacts on organisational growth and development. However, if leaders encounter conflicts and challenges during leadership-practices they will not be able to produce optimum outputs. Several studies have pointed out that Saudi women who are playing leadership roles are experiencing formidable challenges that turn in to conflicts with their counterparts (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011; Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Al-Munajjed, 1997; Al-Lamky, 2007; Danish & Smith, 2012; Thompson, 2015).

Saudi Arabia is a unique Islamic country. It has a long-standing tradition that flows through the veins of its socio-economic culture while Islamic values and principles coexisting with the traditional norms. Although the traditional social construct of this kingdom somehow disregards women in leadership positions but Islamic religious principles grant women the right to work, and preserving their femininity and dignity. In this light, Islamic social scholars in Saudi have recommended a set of jobs as suitable professions for the women, such as nursing, midwifery, teaching, social services, and medicine (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004). Among these selected job sectors, education has become the most attractive and popular to the women. Therefore, the teaching profession nowadays is becoming feminised in Saudi Arabia.

Structural issues contemporaneous a vital challenge to women leaders because of social control and structure practices, ladies managers round the world area unit typically found in lower management positions that provide them very little access to power and few significant challenges (Al-Ahmadi, 2011).

By virtue of this, a large number of women are occupying leadership position in the education sector, more than ever before in the history of this country (Oplatka & Herts-Lazarovits, 2006). However, despite these important inroads, women still experience constant and bothersome conflicts (Al-Lamky, 2007). In the male prioritised society, once a woman replaces a man, a conflict erupts (Omair, 2009). Once women replace or outrank men they encounter adverse realities they face negative consequences, such as exclusion from formal and informal networks, deprivation of employment benefits, exclusion from corporate developmental assignments, etc. (Omair, 2008). However, these conflicts can be viewed from several perspective such as interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup, and intragroup perspectives (Lewicki, 2004).

Besides, Saudi women face high level of discrimination and male dominance (Hamdan, 2005). For instance, evidence from Princess Nourah University suggests that female educators experience problems in performing leadership roles in the public sphere. They encounter bureaucratic research infrastructure in the work place (Almansour & Kempner, 2016). Then, they also meet constraints in the corporate sphere due to the corporate policy and environment (Jamali et al., 2005). A previous study outlined that religion and culture affect women's employment. Conservative culture and strict religious norms hold back women from doing professional jobs (Alselaimi, 2012). Conservative Islamist groups in Saudi Arabia have expressed concerns about women's participation in the public sphere. These conservatives believe that women's employment may contaminate the culture of Saudi society (Alselaimi, 2012).

The above discussion suggests that Saudi women leaders in education are facing an assortment of conflicts and challenges. Challenges can be categorised as: socio-cultural, organisational, economic and personal or individual while conflicts can be categorised as interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup, intragroup conflicts.

In the last three decades, there has been a number of studies carried out on women empowerment and leadership in Saudi Arabia. Back in 1991-1992, (Al-Rawaf & Simmons, 1991, 1992) pioneered a few researches on female leadership in education. They focused on the various aspects of women's education in Saudi Arabia. In 1999, Al-Orabi explored Saudi women's intentions to join the work force and their attitude towards professionalism. Hence, he hinted of the challenges and barriers that Saudi women were facing in society (Al-Orabi, 1999). Almost a decade later, Le Renard (2008) identified the specific barriers that Saudi women were facing because of gender segregation (Le Renard, 2008). However, Sakr (2008) discovered women's participation in media and their realities. He unveiled the socio-cultural resistance and suppression that women experienced in pursuing their jobs (Sakr, 2008). Elmain and Omair (2010) conducted a study on men's attitude towards working women. They explained the real scenario of discrimination that Saudi women encountered in the work place (Elamin & Omair, 2010). Along the same lines, (Al-Munajjed, 2010) conducted a nation-wide survey to investigate women's participation in the workforce and the major challenges they faced. Albanawi and Yusuf (2011) showed the impact of women's education. They highlighted Saudi women's leadership and empowerment due to their higher education (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011), while Syed (2011) pointed out the important issues with regard to female leadership. His focus was on the entrepreneurial women in Saudi Arabia

(Syed, 2011a, 2011b). Al-Ahmadi (2011) did a study on the challenges that women were facing in organisational management (Al-Ahmadi, 2011).

Syed (2011) identified the characteristics of female entrepreneurship and women's involvement in business and the barriers they encountered (Syed, 2011a, 2011b). He shed light on women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia, while Alselaيمي (2012) carried out a study on women's participation in the workforce and the barriers they faced. His study focused on the women who were carrying out managerial duties (Alselaيمي, 2012). Also, Danish and Smith (2012) studied female entrepreneurship and the challenges faced by the entrepreneurs. The issues of empowerment and leadership were also discussed in their works (Danish & Smith, 2012). Moreover, Rather (2016) explored the status of women's education and their empowerment in Saudi Arabia (Rather, 2016). In addition, Danish and Smith (2012) did a study on Saudi women based on their leadership in entrepreneurship (Danish & Smith, 2012). Also, Al-Ghamdi (2013) conducted an empirical study on University. He focused on the obstacles that female leaders faced in the public sector (Al-Ghamdi, 2013). Accordingly, Neva and others outlined the gender differences and the leadership skills of women Saudi students (Neva et al., 2014). Moreover, Rajkhan (2014) did her master thesis on the political involvement of women in Saudi Arabia (Rajkhan, 2014), while Thompson (2015) focused on 30 Saudi female leaders in the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council) and discussed women's leadership, its progress, prospects as well as barriers and challenges (Thompson, 2015). In addition, Alomair (2015) discussed the leadership capacity of Saudi women. She expressed her view based on the existing literary works on this discipline and highlighted women's leadership roles and the barriers they encountered (Alomair, 2015).

Heredero et al. (2016), delineated the factors affecting the successful women leaders in Saudi Arabia. They developed a comprehensive model for the organisational leadership (Kattan, Heredero, Botella, & Margalina, 2016). Saqib et al. (2016) demonstrated the importance of women's participation in economic growth (Saqib, Aggarwal, & Rashid, 2016). Hamdan (2005), (2017), and Hamdan & Alexander (2016) focused on Saudi female students, their education and leadership (Hamdan, 2005, 2017; Hamdan & Alexander, 2016). Other study introduced a few research articles on female leadership in Saudi Arabia as well as in the Gulf states. They explained the career development and leadership of Saudi women (Abalkhail, 2016, 2017; Abalkhail & Allan, 2015, 2016). The study of Al-Asfour et al. (2017) scrutinised Saudi women's challenges in career management (Al-Asfour et al., 2017). Moreover, Saidi (2017) cast light on women's empowerment and economic benefits (Saidi, 2017). Hodges (2017) conducted a comprehensive research on female leadership and empowerment (Hodges, 2017). He interviewed professional women in order to explore their experiences, conflicts, barriers and inspiration. The recent work of (Abalkhail, 2017) concentrated on female leadership in higher education. This study was carried out among the female managers working in two public universities. They explained two research questions on the challenges in leadership positions and the factors supporting women's advancement.

Based on the above overview of previous research it can be concluded that several studies have carried out in the last three decades to determine the nature of these conflicts and challenges in higher education leadership, women empowerment, and leadership issues in Saudi Arabia. However, no comparative study has been done on female leadership, conflicts and challenges in higher education the public and private universities. This gap in the literature has motivated this researcher to

launch to investigate the causes of conflicts and challenges in higher education sector in Saudi Arabia so that the existing gap in knowledge can be bridged.

1.4 Relevant Theories

A theory is an explanatory understanding of a certain aspect of the world. Every theory explains, interprets, predicts, and makes meaning of a certain thing (Brookfield, 2005). In order to comprehend the research topic, the relevant theories are discussed. The existence of conflicts and challenges is not new in human society. In the case of leadership, these phenomena can be explained from a theoretical perspective. The theoretical body of this study is grounded on Critical Social Theory, Behavioural Leadership Theory, and Organizational Conflict Theory. These theories are considered as the most relevant theories to explain leadership conflicts. The underpinning theories are briefly discussed below:

1.4.1 Critical Social Theory

Critical Social Theory denotes a college of educational thought which challenges dominant ways of exploring and explaining organizational phenomenon (Scherer, 2003). While having an extended legacy and being aloof from being one body of thought, critical theory is typically related to the Institute of Social Research at Frankfurt University. The so-called ‘Frankfurt School’ emerged within the 1930s and included such scholars as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Marcuse, and somewhat later, Jürgen Habermas. A key theme of critical theory is to destabilize dominant modes of understanding by surfacing underlying assumptions and rendering power relations explicit.

Fay in 1987 devised ‘Critical Social Theory’ in a simplistic manner as, ‘A critical theory explains a social order in such a way that it becomes itself the catalyst which leads to the transformation of this social order (Fay, 1987). Critical Social

Theory can unearth social phenomena utilising a set of ideas to convince people. This theory is an effective way of reading the situation as well as understanding the changes (Brookfield, 2005).

Critical Social Theory was introduced by Karl Marx, who emphasised power and domination. Hungarian György Lukács and Italian Antonio Gramsci as the successors of Marx ideology focused on the social forces that prevent people from observing and understanding the forms of power and domination (Crossman, 2017). However, this theory typically rejects mainstream political and intellectual views but criticizes capitalism while promoting human liberation (Gale, 2005).

This theory explains the persisting social problems and provides a solution by abiding the norms of criticism established in the field. Critical social theory also shades light on conflict, violence, religious extremism, social income, wealth inequality, illiteracy; educational, gender and racial discrimination, human rights violation etc. It provides multidimensional solution too. Thus, this theory becomes practical and normative in the leadership paradigm (Fuchs, 2017). In education leadership, Brookfield defined a series of learning tasks considering a just and caring society as a learning project. By integrating critical theory in education leadership, he became a pioneer advocate for the idea of applying in Critical Social Theory education. The learning tasks are contesting hegemony, challenging ideology, overcoming alienation, learning democracy and liberation, unmasking power, reclaiming reason, and racializing criticality (Fleming, 2005). Here, criticality is a contested idea with a variety of meanings claimed by different groups of people. Criticality is perverse in the plurality of connotations. Hegemony is shown as a process by which one learns to deal with the commitment and enthusiasm or a set of

beliefs and ideas. Thus, Critical Social Theory suggests the ways by which the women leaders can contribute to the economic as well as social contexts.

1.4.2 Behavioural Leadership Theory

Leadership is one of the most vital elements in the organisational context. It has dynamic effects on the organisation's outcomes. Different types of leadership style have different impacts that appear in different circumstances (Wahab, Rahmat, Yusof, & Mohamed, 2016). In the organisational context, leadership can ensure organisational development, growth, and sustainability by affecting employees' performance, organisational culture and performance (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012).

Behavioural theory of leadership is a huge bounce from Trait idea, in that it assumes that management functionality can be learned, in place of being inherent. This concept is primarily based on the principle that behaviours may be conditioned in a manner that one may have a selected response to precise stimuli. In preference to seeking inborn trends this concept seems at what leaders certainly do by analysing their behaviours in response to extraordinary situations, assessing leadership fulfilment via analysing their movements and then correlating substantial behaviours with fulfilment. The realistic software of the principle is that chief's conduct affects their performance and extraordinary management behaviours will be suitable at different times. The best leaders are the ones have the adaptability to flex their behavioural ways, and choose the proper style suitable for each situation (Wahab et al., 2016).

Behavioural promote promotes the principle of leadership patterns with an emphasis on difficulty for humans and collaboration. It promotes participative choice making and crew development through helping man or woman wishes and aligning individual and group goals. It facilitates managers examine and recognize how their

behavioural style as a leader influences their dealing with the crew and promotes commitment and contribution toward organizational dreams. This idea enables managers find the proper stability between exceptional varieties of leadership, and allows them determine the way to behave as a leader, depending on worries for human beings and for productivity (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012). Thus, the current study explored the behaviours of women leaders in Saudi Arabia towards challenges and conflicts experienced in the higher education institution.

1.4.3 Organizational Conflict Theory

Roloff (1987), described organisational conflict as: "conflict which occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other collectivises, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organisation" (p.496) (Roloff, 1987). That implies, conflict is "an interactive process, which is manifested in incompatibility, dissonance or disagreement between or within social entities such as organisation, group or individual. An individual also can get in intraindividual conflict interacting with self.

Most of the time a conflict arises unpremeditatedly in the social life as well as in the organisational arena (Beitler, Machowski, Johnson, & Zapf, 2016). Conflict may occur due to several reasons such as:

1. If a party is to engage in an activity which is incongruent with his/ her interest
2. If a party has certain behavioural preferences, which are incompatible with another person's implementation
3. If a party expects a mutually desirable resource that is in short supply, then he/she may remain dissatisfied

4. If a party possess different attitudes, skills, values and goals that are perceived to be excluded by others
5. If two parties have partially exclusive behavioural preferences with regard to their joint action.
6. If two parties are inter-dependent in performing certain activities

So, conflict can relate to incompatible goals, preferences and activities. For conflict to occur, it has to exceed the tolerance level of intensity. However, conflict is studied in several disciplines of the social interactions (Speakman & Ryals, 2010). Generally, four levels of conflicts can be highlighted:

- 1) **Intergroup conflict:** This type of conflict occurs between two groups. In a broader aspect, it includes international conflicts between two nations.
- 2) **Intragroup conflict:** This type of conflict arises within the small groups in the organisation.
- 3) **Interpersonal conflict:** This conflict occurs at the individual level. For instance, a conflict between individuals or between an individual or a group.
- 4) **Intrapersonal conflict:** This conflict appears in one's mind (Lewicki, 2004).

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual framework guides a research to determine what is to be measured in order to build an interrelationship between the concepts (Borgatti, 1999). Hence, it combines the relevant scholarly literature and existing theories (USC-Libraries, 2016). This study embodies a conceptual framework interconnecting three theories, such as critical social theory, behavioural leadership theory, and organizational

conflict theory. Critical deals with the persisting social problems as well as provide solutions by following the norms of criticism established in the field.

Critical social theories can play crucial roles in educational reform as well as revolutionise the academic paradigm towards a humanising and democratic system. This theory challenges positivist rationality that assumes political neutrality while recognising standardisation of the system. This theory also values historical consciousness, critical thoughts and critical literacy (Ryoo & McLaren, 2010). Critical social theory makes the education researcher rethink the power dynamics that affect in the education system. All humans are equipped with intellectual and rational faculties and in this case critical theory can help recognise the ways in which education is an ideological tool of the state (Ryoo & McLaren, 2010). From the viewpoint of critical social theory, Saudi women are experiencing domination as well as subordination. In this case, policy makers and the governing bodies seem adhered to deconstruction of the society in order to equate social power. As Max Horkheimer stated, critical social theory deals with two important things: it refers back to the historical context and explains the social problem while providing solution. In Saudi perspective gender-based power disparity came from its historical background. But the waves of modernization and globalization have pursued reformation and social change. Hence, the issue of women empowerment has come into importance. The whole purpose of reformation is to gain sustainable development. However, critical social theory has been used in qualitative research for a long time. By using this theory in qualitative research educational reform is possible. It is difficult to define a universally accepted critical theory that can be unanimously accepted by the philosophers of all schools of thought (Ryoo & McLaren, 2010). Multiple diverse critical theories have been so far developed, such as critical race theory, critical

pedagogy, critical feminist, critical literacy, etc (Ryoo & McLaren, 2010) . It explains conflict, violence, religious extremism, social income, wealth inequality, illiteracy; education, gender, and racial discrimination, human rights violation etc. It provides multidimensional solution in a practical and normative manner.

Since this study focuses on the women leadership so, behavioural leadership theory comes at the important place to depict the nature and roles of the women leaders. Therefore, it delineates women leadership traits, challenges and conflicts. In the same vein, the contemporary literature reflexes the current scenario of the women leaders in higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. From the theoretical view, any kind of conflict emerges from the imbalance of power. Disparity as well as irrationality in the distribution of power ignite conflicts. So, leadership conflict seems intertwined with the conflict and empowerment. Hence, this study adapts organizational conflict theory to explain the nature of conflicts, and the underlying causes while discussing the challenges that obstacle Saudi women to carry on their professional duties.

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of religion Islam, where women's rights and their empowerment are to some extent defined based on the Islamic principles. Therefore, women empowerment in this land is seen from Islamic point of view.

Women in the KSA are encountering various challenges, such as organisational, cultural, personal and economic challenges (Al-Jaradat, 2014; Alsubhi, Hoque, & Razak, 2018). Organisational Challenges: The challenges appear during the administrative duties in the organisational domain and are called organisational challenges. Saudi women experience organisational challenges in the domain of higher education, while performing academic leadership roles. These challenges sometimes obstruct their performance and consequently, they cannot

fully achieve the institutional objectives. Cultural Challenges: Cultural challenges emerge from negative externalities of the long prevailing cultural beliefs and norms in Saudi society. These challenges include the socio-cultural norms, traditions, family rules, long-standing tribal culture, and the influence of Islamic principles. The patriarchal perspective of Saudi men somewhat hinder women's activities by regulating their freedom. The obligatory process of having a *wakil* or male guardian sometimes hampers women in participating in the labour market (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Saudi women are also facing enormous discrimination as well as male domination mostly due to traditional cultural practices, due to traditional Saudi society recognizing men as the head of family and women are their dependents (Hamdan, 2005). Hence, men not only possess narrow estimation of women's abilities but also show antipathy in hiring them. Thus, they deprive women of the opportunity to advance to senior administrative positions (Billing, 2011).

Individual/ Self Challenges: Individual challenges refer to women's personal issues, such as specific feminine characteristics and psychophysiological abilities (Al-Jaradat, 2014; Al-Minqash, 2007). Due to lack of confidence, sometimes they exhibit psychological and intellectual incapacity in performing their duties (Almaki, Silong, Idris, & Wahat, 2016). Their lack of ability to implement positional power, adapt to changes, execute strategic leadership technique, and accepting changing working hours (Al-Jaradat, 2014). These issues sometimes disadvantage them in playing certain roles in the workplace. Personal challenges also prevent their leadership practices (Al-Shihabi, 2008). Besides, Saudi women are also emotionally inclined to family bondage (Al-kayed, 2015).

Economic Challenges: From the economic point of view, Saudi women are facing hardship in adapting to the new economic policy. Several factors, such as wage, age, education, salary structure,

financial freedom and financial liabilities present auxiliary issues such as part-time jobs, etc. sometimes, contrasts with women's desires (Alselaimi, 2012). Furthermore, these issues seem improperly addressed by the authorities, causing women to face difficulties balancing work and life as well as playing their leadership roles. The economic reformation continues to pose multiple challenges for Saudi women.

Women's empowerment is a recent concept, which is exclusively promoted by the West. According to the Western philosophy, it is a cultural issue that assesses women's right from the sociocultural perspective only. On the other hand, the religion Islam views this matter from a different standing. Islam explains women's right from the gender aspect, where the rights and social honour of women are given by considering their feminine characteristics and responsibilities. In addition, the issue of women empowerment in Saudi Arabia is not only wrapped with the Islamic principles but also tightened with the traditional social order. The current sociocultural condition does not allow women to be widely engaged with the income generating activities. But the external influences, such as the wave of globalization, regional changes have somewhat influenced the Saudi society, which is why government of Saudi is slightly liberal towards women's freedom. On the other hand, Saudi envisions to build a knowledge-based economy in order to decrease the dependence on the exhausting mineral oil. Hence, it becomes necessary to allow women to be involved in the economic exercise.

For the purpose of getting women their rights as an international development agenda, activists of 'women's empowerment' started in the 1980s and 1990s. Their efforts have met with resounding success. These phrases have been embraced as specific terms by the international development community (Cornwall & Rivas,

2015). Women's empowerment is described as the focal point of international development. It has gained acceptance as a 'Millennium Development Goal' (Cherayi & Jose, 2016; Stromquist, 2015). The issues involve the imbalance of power between men and women due to gendering difference. However, these terminologies refer to a set of hierarchical and oppositional relationships between man and women, where women are perceived not to be inferior (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Accountability, non-discrimination and inclusion are the main components linked with power and that are intensely social. Idealistically, people should be treated with dignity and respect (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015).

Empowerment refers to gaining control or having a say or being listened to. It enables individuals to influence the social choices and making decisions. In this respect, women empowerment recognises women's views while respecting them as equal citizens alongside the men (Griffen, 2005). Generally, women's empowerment is seen from four aspects, such as: social, political, economic, and psychological (Cherayi & Jose, 2016). Women empowerment is important in political, social and organisational development (Paramanandam & Packirisamy, 2015). Women empowerment authorises women to make any decision in the organisational context. Thus, they become the contributors to the organisation while holding organisational leadership. From the Islamic religious perspective, Islam as a religion recognises women's rights. Islam considers working in the public sphere as women's right and complies with the condition of preserving femininity and dignity (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004).

Islamic religious principle allows women to work with the condition of preserving femininity and dignity (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004). Islam as a religion, recognises the physical, spiritual and intellectual potentials of men and women.

In the Quran Allah (SWT) states:

“O people! Be careful of your duty to your lord, who created you from a single soul and created its mate of the same and spread from these two a multitude of men and women”

(Surah An-Nisa, 4:1).

The Islamic philosophy and faith give importance to *qiwama*, female modesty, and the achievement of balance and equilibrium (*adl*) in the work-place and home. These issues make women's roles more challenging (Metcalf, 2006).

The social perspective today is somewhat dissimilar to the early age of Islam. For example, the prominent women, such as Khadijah (RA) and Aishah (RA) wives of the Prophet Muhammad (SW) and Rabiah al Adawiyyah from Basar (outstanding *Sufi*, widely known as Rabiah Basri) had enjoyed significant freedom at that time. However, often, patriarchal society today still resists women's empowerment by keeping women in physical, mental and emotional bondage that does not comply with the Islamic ontological, sociological, theological and eschatological principles (Johan, 2002).

Women are nowadays enormously participating in higher educational leadership. But they are facing numerous challenges that turn into conflicts. The conflicts can be categorised as interpersonal conflict, intrapersonal conflict, intergroup conflict and intragroup conflict. While the associated challenges are sociocultural challenges, organisational challenges, economic challenges, and personal challenges. In Saudi Arabia, social rules and cultural norms do not equalize women with men in playing the leadership roles. Because these two elements are deeply rooted into Islamic principles and tradition. In this vein, family sees women as home makers, responsible for husband and children. From this aspect women are not responsible for participating economic activities. Therefore, women leaders do

not get enough support from their families. At the end, from the individual aspect, women consider themselves suitable as well as comfortable for homemaking and stay away from public domain. It is due to their personal belief and deep admiration to the tradition, social and family norms. On the other hand, patriarchal social structure enthusiastically empowers men to perform the leadership roles.

In this scenario, once women tend to opt out men, it becomes very challenging and as an end-state, conflict occurs. Furthermore, lack of policy, job environment and management structure disfavour women-leadership and somehow provoke conflict. Thus, this conceptual framework explains how conflicts and challenges affect women leadership in higher educational sector in Saudi Arabia.

The Figure 1.1 below explains the conceptional framework for this research:

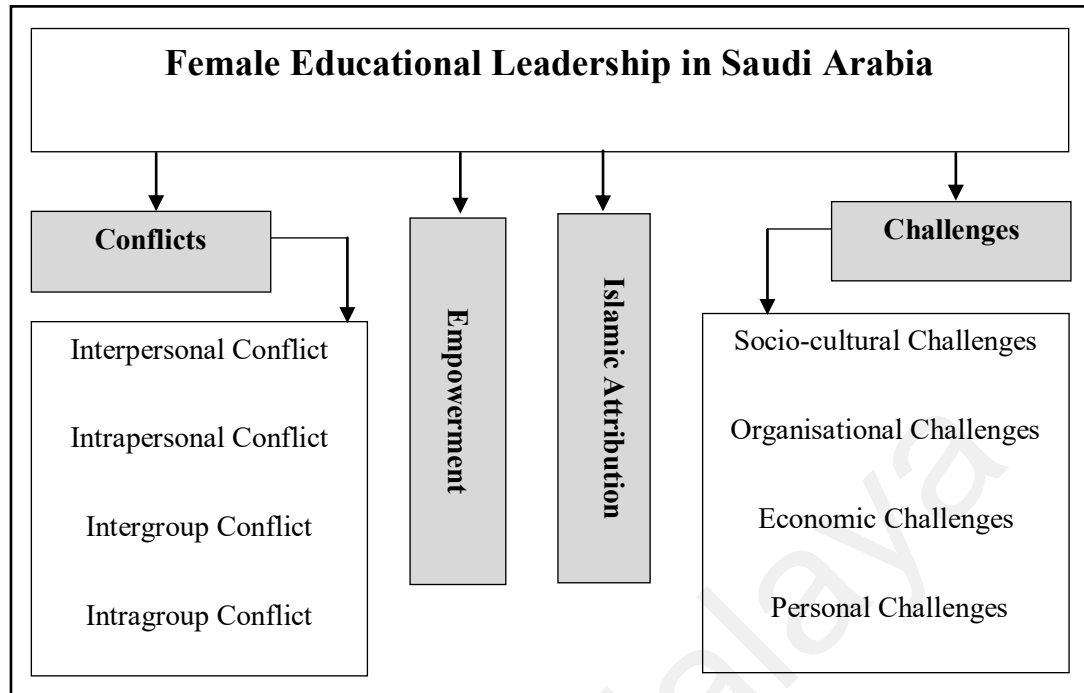


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

1.6 Research Aim

The main aim of this study is to explore leadership conflicts and challenges that women leaders experience in higher education in both public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia. For that, women conflicts, women challenges, women empowerment, and Islamic attributes are critical part to explore women conflicts and challenges faced by women leaders in both public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.

1.7 Research Objectives

1. To explore the current scenario of conflicts experienced by Saudi female leaders in higher education.
2. To explore the current scenario of challenges experienced by Saudi female leaders in higher education.
3. To explore whether empowerment influences the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders.

4. To explore whether the Islamic attributes contribute to the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders.
5. To explore if there is any difference in the nature of conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in public and private universities.

1.8 Research Questions

1. What are the conflicts experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in higher education?
2. What are the challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in higher education?
3. How does empowerment influence the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders?
4. How do the Islamic attributes contribute to the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders?
5. What are the differences in conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in public and private universities?

1.9 Rationale of this Study

Obviously, the rationale of the current study is the result of challenges and conflicts contributing to the lack of empowerment of women leaders. These include lack of administrative efficiency, limited training opportunities, lack of professional exchange opportunities and cooperation with other institutions to gain diverse experiences, the exclusion of women from some policies and regulations and from participating in decision-making and lack of access to information. It also shows that the amount and quality of leadership training available to women is not adequate to meet the demands of their role as leaders; women often undertake training based on

self-initiative, which does not follow a strategic plan for leadership development in the organisation. Thus, unnecessary conflicts and challenges emerge among the women leaders especially in Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions.

Women leaders in higher education face many challenges that limit their effectiveness and prevent them from achieving their leadership potential. These include organisational structure, culture, policies and practices, as well as individual factors such as personal skills, capabilities, confidence, support, ability to achieve balance and a sense of empowerment. This is similar to many western regions, but the Middle East region faces additional concerns relating to greater importance of family ties and the significance of religion in governing all work and social relationships, which both men and women support. Although several studies have been conducted on this subject, the current study comes at a time that is critical in Saudi Arabia, where important social reforms for women are taking place.

Consequently, the present study falls under the qualitative approach design, and according to Merriam (2009), this type of investigation covers numerous types of research that assist in remembering and explaining the meaning of social phenomena with even minute details of a natural setting (Merriam, 2009). This study was conducted on the conflicts and challenges experienced by the Saudi female leaders in Saudi Arabia to help the authorities

1.10 Significance of this Study

Saudi Arabian cultural views of leadership could be enhanced by studying the leadership development of women; and examining women's leadership conflicts and challenges at all administrative levels of universities in Saudi Arabia. By analysing the leadership development process and the enhancement of leadership skills, the ways that women emerge as leaders may be determined. Investigating leadership

skills development for all administrative levels of universities in Saudi Arabia may encourage researchers to explore leadership skills and behaviours for women campus leaders in Saudi Arabia other than the university president.

This study contributed new insights to the dynamics of women's role and development in Saudi Arabia. The primary objective of the study was to capture the experiences of women academic leaders in Saudi Arabia and to highlight the challenges encountered by them to pave the way for future generations of aspiring women. The results of this study suggest that despite their high qualifications, job experience and full readiness to assume leadership roles in their organizations, women leaders in Saudi Arabia face several challenges that limit their effectiveness as leaders and prevent them from achieving their potential. For Saudi Arabia to move on with its current policy of empowering women, the structural and cultural barriers identified in this study need to be addressed.

In this research, the results provide a vivid picture of the conflicts and challenges that Saudi women educational leaders are currently facing in the higher education sector. Besides, it can unearth the influences of the attributes of Islam on the conflicts and challenges. This study will explore the magnitude of the dominance of culture, social system, family and organisational structure on women leaders. It will also provide a clear understanding of the leadership conflicts in public and private universities. Thus, the study will show a holistic view of leadership conflicts and challenges that Saudi women educational leaders are currently experiencing. Besides, a comparative analysis between public and private universities will help determine the similarities and differences in the nature of the conflicts. Based on the findings, proper policies can be formulated to resolve the issues. Furthermore, it is important to explore women's perception of this policy. Thus, through the currents

study, the problems in policy application by the government could be determined in order to reform the existing policy.

This study was carried out in Jeddah, which is a major city and commercial centre in Saudi Arabia with about 2.5 million people (Danish & Smith, 2012). Local women in this city are more eager to take part in professional activities. A conflict-free environment needs to be established for women so that they can perform to their full potential. The findings of this study will show the major barriers and challenges that ignite conflicts. By defining conflicts and challenges this study can also significantly contribute to policy formulation so that leadership conflicts can be eliminated from the academic sphere. Overall, this study can add to the existing body of knowledge by identifying the nature of conflicts and challenges while informed suggestions will provide effective ways of managing the critical issues. In fact, the findings of this study would prove beneficial for further related research.

1.11 Operational Definitions

Certain terms that are used in this study need to be explained in their operational contexts as provided below.

(a) Conflict: In this study the researcher refers to the term conflict as a struggle created due to the contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals. It also refers to the incompatibility of the subject's position. However, conflict may occur between individuals, groups, societal or organisational settings (Thomas & White, 2011; Yeung, Fung, & Chan, 2015).

(b) Challenges: In this study the researcher refers to the term challenges as obstacles and deferent trials encountered by the women in higher education in Saudi Arabia.

(c) **Leader:** A leader is a person who holds a position or office of leadership. He or she is the inspiration and director of the action. He or she possesses a combination of personality and leadership skills that makes others follow his or her direction. Thus, he/she becomes the central body of a group (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; Murphy, Jansson, & Hoyt, 2017).

(d) **Leadership:** According to (Lawal, 1993), leadership is generally defined as ~~the~~ process of influencing people to direct their efforts towards the achievement of a particular goal or goals.” Sikula (1996) explains leadership as an art that involves motivating or influencing others to act towards the attainment of a common goal (Sikula, 1996). However, effective leadership emerges based on the proper ideas, communication and engagement of the followers (Day et al., 2014; Murphy et al., 2017).

(e) **Female Leadership:** When social, political and organisational office or position is occupied by a woman and she has the authority to direct, command and make decisions (AlHajj, AlKowari, Hallak, Khamis, & George, 2014; Krendl, Rodriguez, Galligan, Scheinbach, & Wells, 2015). The administrators or the leaders at the universities are the deans, deputy deans, heads of department, directors, deputy directors.

(f) **Empowerment:** Empowerment refers to ~~gaining~~ control or having a say or being listened to.” According to Swaine and Whitmore (1988) empowerment is an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling themselves to take action to achieve influence over the organisations and institutions which affect their lives and the communities they live in (Metcalf, 2011a; Swaine & Whitmore, 1988; Werhane & Painter-Morland, 2011).

(g) Women Empowerment: Women empowerment as opined by Paramanandam and Packirisamy (2015) is an important political, social and organisational development in which a woman gains control over or has a say or is in a position to give directions and commands and be listened to. This enables women to influence social choices as well as to make decisions (Paramanandam & Packirisamy, 2015). Women empowerment recognises women's perspective while respecting them as equal citizens beside men (Metcalf, 2011a, 2011b). Therefore, it becomes easier for them to make decisions in the social, political and organisational context.

1.12 Organisation of this Thesis

This thesis is in five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background of the study with a brief discussion on female leadership and conflicts in higher education. The Statement of the Problem is identified and the gap in the literature is identified. Also presented are the Aims and Objectives and the Research Questions of this study, as well as the Significance of this study. As an introduction, various relevant theories and the Conceptual Framework are also described.

Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature and discusses previous related studies. Chapter 3 presents the Rationale of the Study, Research Design and Methodology, while Chapter 4 deals with the Data Analysis and explains the findings in a narrative manner. In the final Chapter 5 the Conclusion is presented, followed by recommendations and suggestions for future research.

1.13 Summary

Saudi Arabia, like other Arab countries has been experiencing a wave of modernisation, globalisation as well as the influence of regional changes. Besides, the Saudi people's changing tastes, their outlook and progressive thinking have been

creating a demand for internal These changes have given them an urge for sustainable economic development by shifting the sole dependence from petrochemical based economy to building a knowledge-based economy, which is the better solution. In this regard, human capital development has become the top priority. As a part of the developmental policy, women are given greater privileges to develop their professional careers. In the meantime, diversity is taking place in the work force while its socio-economic culture is becoming heterogeneous. However, Saudi women are experiencing assorted challenges and conflicts in performing their new-found roles in leadership.

Certain socio-economic issues, conservative religious rules, and deeply-entrenched patriarchal cultural norms are negatively affecting women in the performance of their professional duties. Effective policy implementation by the regulatory authorities can reduce the conflicts and challenges. So, it is necessary to imperially scrutinise the actual causes of conflicts and challenges in the search for the desired outcomes. In this regard, this study begins by developing an epistemological basis prior to the empirical investigation. Based on the established theories and the results of the literature review, this study delineates some relevant theories consists of critical social theory, behavioural leadership theory, and organizational conflict theory were discussed with the view to developing the conceptual framework of this study which are Saudi female leader challenges, women empowerment, and Islam and female. Then, the study investigates the current situation of conflicts and challenges that Saudi female educational leaders are experiencing in higher education by conducting an empirical investigation. Besides, this study examines the current situation from the social, personal,

cultural, and economic perspectives. In this way, this study achieves its objectives and contributes to the body of knowledge.

The next chapter will discuss the literature review regarding conflicts, challenges, female Empowerment, and the Islamic attributes from the Saudi Arabian perspectives.

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CHAPTER 2

LITREATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews previous studies in the literature which are related to this study. The review also introduces and discusses relevant theories to facilitate the development of the Conceptual framework which supports the research process. Also introduced and discussed are published works on organizational conflicts, women challenges, leadership and which have been extensively cited and presented argumentatively. Hence, Critical Social Theory is presented as the basis of the theoretical construct. Besides, challenges and barriers that drive Saudi female leaders towards conflict with their counterparts in higher education are highlighted.

2.2 Critical Social Theory

Critical Social Theory is ~~a~~ normative approach that aims to explain social justice while inviting changes.” Critical theorists facilitate and encourage some social action with the view to bringing social changes (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; James, 2008). This theory addresses a broad range of intellectual, social and political issues. Nowadays, it is extensively employed in academia as a metatheory (Ray, 2015). Critical Social Theory has significant functions in examining how theory and society are related. In Critical Social Theory, ~~when~~ a philosophy is accepted without question and does not tend to problematize to the greater extent in society, it becomes an ideology in need of critique” (Ryoo & McLaren, 2010). Critical Social Theory is adopted from the heterodox Marxist theory to situate social philosophy. This theory, as explained by Ray (2015), ~~aims~~ to explore the conditions of domination and critique of obstacles to a good society.”

The school of neo-Marxist philosophy, which is historically evident from the Frankfurt School created Critical Social Theory (Wallace & Wolf, 1999). It was nurtured by the most influential sociologists namely, Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Erich Fromm (1900-1980) [Kincheloe & McLaren, 1997 in (Ladson-Billings & Grant, 1997). James (2008), states that in the contemporary world, the most iconic critical theorist is Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) (James, 2008).

Marx struggled building a relationship between economic and ideological superstructure. In this case, he emphasised power and domination. Hungarian György Lukács and Italian Antonio Gramsci as the successors of Marx' ideology focused on the social forces that prevent people from seeing and comprehending the forms of power and domination in society. Later on, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse substantially contributed to Critical Theory. The contemporary political and economic infrastructure is greatly influenced by their thoughts and ideas.

Critical Social Theory also sheds light on ideology and cultural forces as the facilitator of the domination and barriers to real freedom (Crossman, 2017). In Marx' criticism, the characteristics of Critical Social Theory are 1) modernisation and 2) intertwining social theories and practice (Arnold, 2015). This theory criticises capitalism, promotes human liberation and thus, attempts to expose domination and oppression in several ways. However, it characteristically rejects mainstream political and intellectual views (Gale, 2005). Most of the critiques of this theory assume that there are pathological features especially in capitalism that prevent self-actualisation of the members of society (Arnold, 2015). Ryoo and McLaren, (2010) explain it as follows: –However, this theory also critiques and historicises while

building a relationship of domination, subordination as the contradiction in which humankind is entrenched.” Hence, critics have focused on deconstructing knowledge by valuing, controlling and equating to the power in society. Furthermore the authors add: “It prevents people from becoming slaves to the ideas and activities that societal institutions push upon them.”(Ryoo & McLaren, 2010).

According to Max Horkheimer, Critical Social Theory deals with two important things: 1) the historical context of society while offering robust and holistic criticism incorporating the insights from all science. 2) This theory explains the persisting social problems and also provide the solution, abiding by the norms of criticism established by the field. Thus, it becomes practical and normative. Nevertheless, Horkheimer’s formulation is implanted on Gramsci’s critical role of intellectuals in the process of domination (Horkheimer, 1972).

As Adorno and Horkheimer capture within the Dialectic of Enlightenment —“what men want to find out from nature is how to use it so as wholly to dominate it and other men” (1972: 4). Drawing on diverse intellectual traditions, critical theory seeks to expose the domination, control and suppression that hides behind that which at first appears neutral, progressive and necessary. Exemplifying this tendency, the logic and purpose of positivism is usually a core object of critique for critical theorists. Allied to the present is an emancipatory intent; critical social theory not only reinterprets existing orders but offers alternative modes of understanding and being which liberate those silenced and shackled by conventional theory. In Horkheimer’s terms the speculation is critical in thus far because it seeks “to liberate mortals from the circumstances that enslave them” (1982: 244). In providing enriched understandings of power and competing interest’s critical theory has informed the emergence of Critical Management Studies (Adler, et al., 2007).

Critical Social Theory affords a strong foundation from which to impeach neutral performative motive and discover the dehumanizing consequences of managerial control. The legacy of important theory suggests inclusivity thru the democratization of control and deciding (Marcuse), whilst additionally drawing interest to communicative approaches and the way positive ideas are created and sustained (Habermas). crucial concept for this reason unveils possibilities for evaluation of power, discourse and ancient understandings. In so doing crucial principle mandates reflexivity in research and writing, attuning researchers ~~to~~ the assumptions underlying their own busy empiricism” (Agger, 1991). That stated the appropriation of crucial principle into agency behaviour has not been cleanly. First, in beginning as much as opportunity voices, a key query stays on how the ones drawing upon critical idea can talk or realize the hobbies of others‘ without themselves articulating a privileged account or ideologically knowledgeable alternative. Accordingly, critical management research has been recently challenged at the depend that ~~if~~ it appears itself inside the mirror, it's going to discover a white, heterosexual, probable western, capable bodied man staring returned” (Tatli 2012). second the time period essential‘ dangers turning into colonized by means of the mainstream in which it is carried out all through a superficial manner absolving the hypothesis of its important logic, silencing its emancipatory cause and ignoring its rich theoretical foundations.

Critical Social Theory focuses on sustainable development, which is defined as ~~de~~development that meets the present needs without compromising the needs of future generations. ~~It~~ includes two main concepts: 1) The concept of needs and 2) the notion of constraints demanded by the state or social organisation to meet the present and future needs. Critical Social Theory also explains other problems, such

as conflict, violence, religious extremism, social income, wealth inequality, illiteracy; educational, gender and racial discrimination, human rights violation, forced migration etc., while providing a multidimensional solution (Fuchs, 2017).

2.3 Leadership

A leader is described as “a person with special personality by which he/she can inspire, encourage or motivate his/her followers.” This implies that leadership refers to certain qualities that a leader must possess. The most common leadership qualities include: 1) role model; 2) specific skills; 3) initiative and entrepreneurial drive; 4) attractiveness/charisma; 5) inspiration, and 6) mission or vision (Chin, 2011). However, leadership has significant impact on organisational growth and development. (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012; Underwood, Mohn, & Ross, 2016). Although the main purpose of leadership is to gain organisational success but, the success of leadership mostly depends on the organisational culture. Notably, every organisation is affected by two forms of cultures, such as internal and external cultures. Internal culture refers to “the psychology, attitude, experiences, beliefs and values,” while external culture refers to “the forces that come from outside the organisation.”

These forces may affect the organisational performance (Kattan et al., 2016). An effective leader has to successfully deal with both the internal and external forces. In this regard, Wright (2007) developed the concept of authentic leadership. He maintained that an authentic leader is at first a team builder, who builds a team with the view to delivering exceptional services and outputs as well as enhancing recognisable real values to the organisation. This leader tends to create and sustain people-centred culture as well (Wright, 2007). Brent Davies and Davies (2010) outlined the features of the strategic leader who plays strategic roles in thinking,

learning, influencing, developing, balancing, operating and planning (Davies & Davies, 2010).

According to (West, Bubenzer, & Osborn, 2013) defined three dimensions of leadership, such as context, vision and action. Context involves the series of tasks that a leader has decided to perform. Vision reflects the targeted goal that a leader intends to achieve; and action refers to the process towards change and improvement. Borders and Shoffner (2013) described leaders as “individuals who are social activists or change agents.” They work like catalysts for bringing changes in their own disciplines. There are some propositions of leadership. It is a contextually and culturally bounded process. The application of leadership is intertwined with the larger environment such as organisation, local community and society (Borders & Shoffner, 2013). So, there is a conceptual and practical complexity of leadership. Besides, cultural influences on the leadership is multidimensional which is often difficult to discern and overlook (Dimmock & Walker, 2005).

Every leader act with a certain approach. Leadership approach depends on some factors, such as the level of leadership, size of the organisation, functionality and organisational unit, nature of task and technology, interdependence, critical situation, phases of the organisational life cycle, competence and performance of the subordinates etc. (Yukl, 1998). The particular approach that a leader is to undertake depends on his/ her qualities as well. A leadership approach is like a lens through which leadership practice, interaction and its analytical framework can be seen (Harris, 2009). There are four approaches in leadership, such as 1) trait approach, 2) contingency approach, 3) situational approach and 4) constitutive approach (Grint, 2011). Trait approach explains individual's life and the influences of leadership. This

approach looks into the causes and genetic make-up that act behind an individual to become a leader (Grint, 2011).

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmid (2001) outlined three leadership styles as: 1) task-oriented leadership, 2) interpersonally-oriented style, and 3) democratic leadership styles. Task-oriented leadership is concerned with accomplishing the assigned tasks while the interpersonally oriented style emphasizes on maintaining interpersonal relationship. Democratic leadership allows subordinates to participate in decision making but the autocratic leaders discourage others to get into decision making process (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmid, 2001). Burns' remarkable work, "Leadership" provides a comprehensive view on the leadership styles. He acknowledges two common types of leadership: a) transactional, 2) transformational (Burns, 1978).

2.3.1 Behavioural Leadership Theory

One of the earliest and most common theories of leadership is known as behavioural theory. The theory takes behaviour of the leader to measure his effectiveness. The core assumption of this theory is that the characteristics and traits are not important for a leader but the only measure is his actions and behaviour. The leader can be created by inculcating certain behaviours while they can also be trained to perform in certain situations. The major discrepancy of trait theory i.e. determining the leadership properties paved the way to the development of behavioural theory (Harrison, 2018). In a similar study it was emphasized that the actions of leaders make him a leader rather than the inherent characteristics (Northouse, 2018). The leaders can learn this certain kind of behaviour after repetitive trainings (Goff, 2003). The behaviour that recognizes a person as a leader includes the characteristics such as authority delegation, control type, style of

communication with subordinates and planning ability. The theory also relates success of the team with the success of their leader. The team has significant effect on the leader's behaviour and thus a leader is not independent of his team. The aforementioned behaviours may not be inherent (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Thus the effective and ineffective leadership is due to lack of training of the leader (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

Some other studies reveal that the leader is more focused towards the accomplishment of tasks and goals. There is a provocative need to understand the outcomes of focus on the employees as well (Daft, Kendrick, & Vershinina, 2010; Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). The Iowa University search carried during initial 1900s shows that an effective leader is one who leads using a democratic style of leadership. This behaviour is more successful in the long run. The study also emphasized on three major types of leadership styles i.e. autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and fair leadership. The autocratic leadership is the style that focuses more on the accomplishment of tasks and goals (Engard, 2017). This style of leadership focuses on dictating and guiding the employees about how to accomplish the work. Democratic style leadership main focus is on employees and thus they are involved in the decision making process. The participation of employees in the organization's matters is encouraged. The third kind of leadership is fair leadership where the employees are not intervened or interfered (Harrison, 2018).

The studies carried out by Kurt and Lewin shows that in a mask producing company the minor employees when treated in autocratic leadership style shown increase in the production. This was because the minor or new employees needed proper guidance about how to perform the task (Billig, 2015). This study also

revealed that this increase in the production was only for a short term. When other leadership styles i.e. fair and autocratic were applied on the members, the energy consumption of the employees increased significantly. The study concluded that democratic leadership style was the able to increase the productions (Billig, 2015).

Another behaviour leadership theory accepts that there is no fixed leadership under certain circumstances (Harrison, 2018). This theory is known as the contingency theory. According to this theory, the successful leadership style adopts to different situations in different ways. The hypothesis of this theory was based on the point those leadership theories cannot be explained using certain behaviour and traits. The other factors that led the contingency theory to be more provable were insufficiency of universal leadership theories and lack of emphasis on the environment affecting leadership (Kulkarni, 2017).

According to this theory, a leader may perform effectively in certain situations or environments while in others he may not. Moreover, with the passage of time, a certain leadership style may not be as effective as it was previously. One example of this is autocratic leadership which was once very effective during early 1900, however, it cannot be regarded as an effective style in today's age of information and technology (Chukwusa, 2018; Laub, 2018). The contingency theory is more valid because the cultural norms, economic situations, access to information and expectations may change with the passage of time. The basic elements of effective leadership in contingency theory are the environment in which the leader is performing and the leadership behaviour (Vidal, Campdesuñer, Rodríguez, & Vivar, 2017). There are several variations of contingency theory such as Fielder's contingency theory, Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership models and path-goal theory. The Fielder's contingency theory contributed to leadership by providing a

wide range of leadership behaviours and not confining the model to certain traits (Hunt & Fitzgerald, 2018). The model is based on the leader and follower relation where a strong relationship will result in planned execution of tasks, a moderate relation will result in moderately structured executions of tasks and weak relation will result in an unplanned and unstructured organization.

This theory is, however, criticized due to the inclusion of a large number of variables and data. The Hersey-Blanchard model includes a new dimension to the previous behaviours such as task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviours (Meier, 2016). This dimension is known as the maturity dimension. The theory states that the maturity (readiness) of followers plays a very important role in determining leadership behaviour. The maturity here refers to as the psychological maturity and work maturity. There are various combinations of aforementioned maturity levels thus resulting in four prominent levels i.e. mature (willing & can) moderate (willing & cannot), moderate (unwilling & can) and immature (unwilling & cannot). The next variation of contingency theory is the path-goal theory based on expectation theory (Famakin & Abisuga, 2016).

This theory states that the leader should define, obtain and provide the information and support to the followers so that they can achieve the goals of the organization. The path-goal theory puts four leadership styles i.e. directive, achievement-oriented, participative and supportive. For unknown, difficult and uncertain tasks directive leadership is recommended. If the followers are capable a participative leadership style is more valid because directive leadership will result in reluctance towards goal achievement. Thus the contingency leadership theories have also been criticized because of a large number of variable which has yet not been

searched and tested (Otley, 2016). These theories also lack to explain the demographic behaviour of the leader-follower relationship.

The inclusion of a large number of variables in contingency theory leads to the development of numerous next-generation leadership styles that focused on the leader's behaviours. The new leadership styles have been defined such as entrepreneurial leadership, political leadership, collaborative leadership, paternalistic leadership, servant leadership etc. (Harrison, 2020). The entrepreneurial leadership is a new and modern type of leadership that deals with organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal. The entrepreneurial leader paves the path for the introduction of new technology using his self-confidence, communication skills, adaptability, calculated risk-taking and continual learning. These new leadership theories are more focused on the behaviour of a leader rather than the qualities or traits. Another emerging leadership theory is known as Humanistic leadership theory (Fritz & Sörgel, 2017).

This theory starts with self-awareness. According to this theory, a leader must be self-aware before he can lead someone else. The second step is becoming a systematic thinker i.e. the leader should be able to view the outcome of an intended action. The third step is the development of humanistic leadership. This deals with trusting the human and dealing with them compassionately and ethically. The humanistic leadership style has a well-defined vision, mission, values and expected behaviours (Caro, 2016). The humanistic leadership prioritizes the needs of people over the profit of the organizations. There are three skills of humanistic leadership i.e. leading, management and coaching. Thus humanistic leadership is one of the next generation theory that states that the leaders are aware of behavioural styles that fit them and they use that style to get the best results out of the people. The leaders are

self-motivated and motivate other people to adopt their style. Self-motivated leaders evolve and improve continuously. Leadership is viewed as an observable action of the leader. On the basis of a leader's behaviour, the problems might solve or conflicts may arise (Akanji, Mordi, Ajonbadi, & Mojeed-Sanni, 2018).

The organizational leadership conflicts can be of two types i.e. productive and dysfunctional (Kiitam, McLay, & Pilli, 2016). While a dysfunctional conflict is not needed in an organization, the productive conflict is required for progressive organizations. Productive conflict is focused on resolving the substantial issues being faced by an organisation by discussing different viewpoints. While a dysfunctional conflict is a negative, emotion-driven conflict focused on interpersonal incompatibilities between group members (Khan, Hussainy, & Iqbal, 2017). The objective is to suppress and remove the dysfunctional conflict while generating productive conflict at the same time. Leadership behaviour and style play an important role in eradicating the dysfunctional conflict and generating productive conflict. However, in some cases, during stimulation of productive conflict, it leads to dysfunctional conflicts and thus affects the quality of the decision-making process (Rahim, 2017). The studies show that productive conflict causes frustration among the members due to the dialectical nature of the interaction or sometimes misinterpretation of disagreement leads in believing personal insult or a threat in people. The literature has pointed out three critical relations between productive conflict and dysfunctional conflict (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006). These are reciprocation of understood hostility, behavioural manifestations of negative emotions and emotional responses to productive conflict. Several researchers have pointed out that when productive conflict remarks or disagreements are taken as personal criticism, they lead to the generation of dysfunctional conflict. The

prolonged dysfunctional conflicts can result in deviation from the maximum production to personal revenge (Conti, Arcuri, & Simone, 2018).

The behaviour of a leader is very important in intervening the situations where there are possibilities of conversion of productive conflicts into dysfunctional conflicts (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2016). In addition, an effective leader will reduce the adverse emotional responses by setting the rules of conduct while judging the adverse emotions potentially arising from productive conflicts. A study compared three leadership styles and their impact on controlling the dysfunctional conflicts (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006). The leadership conditions were named as transactional, transformational and external leaderships. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between transformational and transactional conditions in terms of following the instruction while the external leaders followed lesser. Moreover, it was found that the transformational leader's behaviour has the potential to generate more productive conflict.

2.3.2 The Status of Women Leadership in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, there are numerous reasons for the gender inequality and inaccessibility to leadership positions. First, women in this country hardly achieve leadership positions due to the prevailing culture. Second, women face difficulties in leading the employees specially the male employees because they view women negatively. Besides, men are found to be less cooperative under female leadership. Arguably, by this practice men show themselves to be better in leading the organisation (Kattan et al., 2016). Female employment is also a cultural issue in the KSA (Alselaime, 2012). However, a study found that nowadays, the cultural obstacles have comparably low impact on preventing Saudi women from achieving

leadership positions as the government has introduced a new policy that ensures the rights of women.

Saudi women's decision to join the labour force depends on their families (Alselaime, 2012). Family perspectives have shown some degree of change. Women are getting more family support to assume leadership positions. Notably, Saudi families mostly adhere to Islam, and Islamic *shariah* principles and *fiqh* do not deny women's participation in senior positions. Although Islam does not treat women equally but it values them differently (Alselaime, 2012). However, women's personal issues are sometimes found to be important obstacle to their being leaders. They have limited ambition and sometimes are unwilling to carry out the responsibilities of leadership (Al-Ghamdi, 2013).

Market segment is also an issue. Generally, women participate in the job market when the market oriented activities become more rewarding than the opportunity costs of non-marketing familial production (Al-Orabi, 1999). Nevertheless, a few Saudi women have recently outranked men. For instance, Rania Mahmoud Nashar, chief executive officer (CEO) of Samba Financial Group; Latifa Homoud Alsabhan is serving as the chief financial officer (CFO) of Arab National Bank; Sarah Al-Suhaimi is the CEO of the National Commercial Bank, Tadawul, became the first woman to chair of the country's stock exchange. (Al-Sati, 2017). However, regarding women empowerment and leadership, the recent statements of two Saudi Women seem insightful as well as pragmatic. Hence, there statement is narrated below:

A renowned *Shoura* council member Haya Al-Munea delivered her views to the press, as "women are more careful about accuracy in work and integrity. They hold positions and are untainted by any manifestation of corruption". Notably, at

present 10 women out of 30 retained their position as *Shoura* members. Besides, 113 women are working in the Saud Foreign Ministry as diplomats according to Osama Nugali (Rodolfo & Estimo, 2017).

In the same vein, a prominent lawyer and arbitrator Ibrahim Al-Hakmi stated that Saudi women are deprived of the senior position in the management and administration. He further mentioned, “when a woman holds a leadership position, she is more afraid of responsibility than men. It’s because there are only a few women leaders and she’s careful because she wants to keep her position and preserve her reputation”. In the similar voice, Halima Muzaffar, a prominent Saudi poetess stated, “There is no woman in a circle of corruption,”. She also added, “women are more active and more honest.” (Rodolfo & Estimo, 2017).

It would be worth outlining that, the recent policy on allowing women to drive has made a breakthrough too. In this regard, Faruk Soussa, Chief Middle East Economist at Citigroup Inc. said, “the most important near-term impact will be from a reduction in Saudi women’s reliance on drivers. This will not only mean greater access to the economy, including the retail sector, but will also mean a reduction in a large component of highly unproductive foreign labour drivers. This, in turn, will mean a decline in outward remittances and more money staying home to circulate in the economy”. In the same tune, Dima Jardaneh who is the head of Middle East and North Africa research at Standard Chartered in Dubai said, “A key impact of eliminating the ban (on driving) would be a boost to household consumption, including from the potential purchase of a second vehicle for some households and the easier mobility of women.” (Halawi, 2017). She also added that “independent mobility for women would definitely ease their entry and participation into the workforce, particularly as they would not have to secure a mode of transport to come

to work. This would also reduce the cost of employment for women particularly if they do not have a private means of transport.”. She further highlighted that “... given the low participation of Saudi women in the workforce, a meaningful change in this would require a host of other structural measures, such as a change in social norms and readiness of work places to accommodate female employees.” (Halawi, 2017).

Eman Alnafjan, Riyadh-based blogger at Saudiwoman's weblog (Saudi Arabia) said:

“...same obstacles, including the guardianship system and gender segregation, are still in place, the difference now is in the virtual opportunities. Grassroots movements in Saudi Arabia have finally come into their own. Saudi women have mastered social media and its tools and are now using them to organize in a country where people are imprisoned for participating in public civil societies. Saudi women are not only taking advantage of these tools for women's rights issues but also participating in the national discussion about human rights in general and the rights of Saudi citizens.

Through the ongoing grassroots movement of the October 26 Saudi women driving campaign, Saudi women (and men) put to rest the myth that the country is made up of a backward, misogynistic people ruled by a progressive governmental elite. Now they are showing the world that Saudis are capable of peaceful civil movements regardless of whether or not the government is ready or willing to accept that they are no longer subjects but citizens. Through the use of social media, Saudi women and men are now able to gather and discuss their issues without the threat of being arrested for breaking political or gender segregation rules. They are now able to find one another and organize with others who have the same civil and human rights goals. The usual tribal, gender, and regional divisions no longer apply.”

(Heideman, Youssef, & Drumheller, 2014. Pg. 9).

From the above it is obvious that women in Saudi Arabia are now empowered to a certain extent that has given them minimum freedom of talking in the public place, interacting with the males as well as connecting to social media. Although the decoupling rule of gender segregation persists in the socio-political sphere,

government policy of women empowerment appears to have diminished the impact of this rule (Kendra Heideman, Mona Youssef, & William Drumheller, 2014).

Another renowned and influential Saudi woman, *Hala Al Dosari*, advocates women's rights and health researcher had given insightful as well as informative statement as mentioned below:

—....., the year of 2014 is expected to be a potentially promising year for Saudi women. In the October 2013 second universal periodic review of Saudi Arabia's human rights status, I submitted recommendations in the stakeholder's report¹ to the UN Human Rights Council. Out of the 12 recommendations, six of them—including amending the Nationality Act, lifting of the driving ban, and introducing steps to allow easier access for women to legal counsel and redress—are already under review by the relevant Saudi authorities.

During 2013, women lawyers were allowed to obtain permits to practice in Saudi courts, and a new anti-violence law was finally enacted. Earlier this year, the Ministry of Justice made two important decisions: to allow women to use their national photo identification cards as proof of identity in courts without the need for a male relative to verify their identity and to assign special family courts in Riyadh.... This year also marks the first occasion of Saudi women participating in municipal elections.”

(Heideman, 2014, Pg.7)

The above statement manifests that by 2013 significant improvement had taken place in terms of female empowerment in Saudi Arabia. Women regained their right to drive motor vehicles and easier access to legal counsel. The governing authority also allowed women to use photographs in the identification cards as proof of identity (Kendra Heideman et al., 2014). The year 2014 has been marked as a jubilant year for Saudi women who gained the right to participate in the municipal elections. The government of Saudi Arabia has established the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) which has been considered a remarkable initiative. The Women's Branch of IPA provided training on running an administration. This organisation also provides computer literacy and household management skills.

Besides, the Saudi monarchy has established King Abdullah University of Science and Technology with a mixed gender learning environment with the view to teach women science and technology, engineering and architecture. Women's Chamber of Commerce, which was founded in 2002 is now significantly expanding creating partnership with the government agencies. It is worth mentioning, Women's Section of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (in Jeddah and Riyadh) is a semi-autonomous body (Metcalf, 2011a). Thus, the leadership of women is being enhanced and inspired in the contemporary Saudi society.

Notably, an empirical study found that the majority of the women leaders in the academic institutes in the Eastern province and Middle of Saudi Arabia possess transformational leadership. While transactional leadership comes to the next. Laissez-fair leadership quality was found at the lowest level among them (Asan Wirba, 2015). In this transitional period, transformational leadership of women is seen more effective to create a positive change. Because, only transformational leaders focus on the future needs rather than the current ones. They are highly concerned about long term opportunities of the organisation. Furthermore, they see the holistic view rather than viewing intra and extra organisational factors (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Saeed, Almas, Anis-ul-Haq, & Niazi, 2014). For this purpose it combines four dimensions, such as 1) idealised influences, 2) inspirational motivation, 3) intellectual stimulation, and 4) individualised consideration (Doucet, Poitras, & Chênevert, 2009). Based on this theoretical reasoning, the assumption is that the women leaders in Saudi are change-oriented while maintaining individuality through intellectual illumination.

2.3.3 Women Educational Leadership in Saudi Arabia

Nowadays, women are being gradually empowered in Saudi Arabia. Their congruous participation in education and keenness to career development reflect their intention of pertaining the economic activities. Recently, they are joining in the procession of economic and developmental activities. They are also proven having excellent leadership style with effective managerial performance in different sectors (Eagly & Wood, 2011). They possess significant leadership quality as well. An empirical study, that was conducted to explore the leadership style of Saudi women showed that the majority of the women leaders in the academic institutes in the Eastern province and Middle of Saudi Arabia possess transformational leadership and women with transactional leadership stands to the next. Laissez-fair leadership quality among the leaders was found at the lowest level (Asan Wirba, 2015). That implies, the traits of women educational leaders are more likely to make positive changes by transforming the existing social structure.

This study also suggests that women leaders are mostly self-motivated and goal oriented. But Saudi female leaders are underrepresented. Numerous socio-cultural, political and economic issues seem acting behind this situation. For instance, they face difficulties in balancing family responsibilities and cannot come out from gender stereotypes etc. The society has already defined gender-based roles in the socio-cultural arena. Besides, bureaucracy and gender inequality are the main obstacles to the performance of the female leaders.

Similarly, gender segregation is considered as an obstacle in women's career advancement. This constitutional rule limits women's opportunities while sustaining patriarchal social structures as well as traditional attitudes towards women in the workplace. However, it was expected that gender-segregation could in fact bring

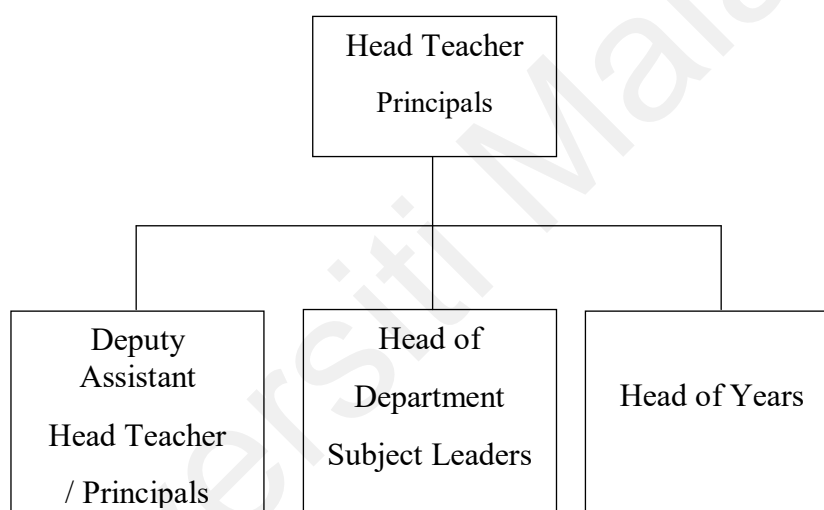
additional opportunities for the leadership of Saudi women (Alomair, 2015). The patriarchal and masculine aspects of Saudi society have built the basis of the authoritative approach of the management while strengthening bureaucratic organisational structure (Elamin & Tlaiss, 2015). The unequal distribution of power and authority has been intertwined with the Islamic beliefs and tribal traditions. That greatly backlashed and suppressed women empowerment (Alomair, 2015). It is worth noting, the impact of rapid modernization enhances the needs for women empowerment as well as create professional opportunities for them, especially in the education sector (Oplatka, 2006). In order to create these opportunities and to sustain women empowerment pragmatic work policy needs to be taken. And only then, equal participation of women in the leadership can be ensured (Bilen-Green, Froelich, & Jacobson, 2008). But it seems greatly absent in Saudi Arabia. The following sections are describing numerous structural challenges that Saudi women leaders have been experiencing.

2.3.4 Educational Leadership

Academic research on educational leadership began in late 1950s and early of 60s (Murphy & Louis, 1999). The educational leader is considered one of the most important as well as influential factor in the development of the quality and characteristics of the educational institute (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Educational leadership basically focuses on facilitating and improving the core functions of the educational institution such as teaching and learning. Leaders also motivate and manage the change process of the organisation (Boyd, 2001). An educational leader acts as a guide as well as inspire and motivate other educators in an administrating setting. Leaders in this executive responsibility look for the ways in order to improve the process of educating students. Typical position for education

leaders are: a) principle, b) superintendent, 3) academic dean, 4) director, 5) head of school, 6) department chair, 7) president, 8) provost (Clint, 2018). The issues of power, democracy, ethics and the empowerment of organisational participants are the central features of educational leadership (Boyd, 2001).

According to Cambridge Assessment (2017) educational leadership refers to the organisational position in the educational institute. Educational leadership aims to attain the improvement of efficiency of the educational institutes (Cambridge-Assessment, 2017). So, discussion on this matter refer to one or more of the followings.



Source: (Assessment, 2017)

Figure 2.1 Formal Leaders

However, education leadership embodies business principles. Over the time the roles and functions of the educational leader are changing due to the diverse change of the communities (Clint, 2018). Educational leaders mostly think about social justice and educational quality. This responsibility moves them from the intellectual engagement to professional exercise to articulate measurable action. They focus less on looking good more on doing good (Noguera, 2003). Most of the

contemporary research demonstrate that style and skills of an educational leader impact on the fellow academic members, their job satisfaction and efficiency to engagement levels and academic emphasis (Bird, Wang, Watson, & Murray, 2010). (Astin & Astin, 2000; Madsen, 2008; Wolverton, Bower, & Hyle, 2009) portrayed women leaders in higher education with certain qualification such as:

1. Articulating own vision aligning with the personal values that can make a difference in achieving organisational goal.
2. Authentic and true to own self while transmitting the values to the institution. Ethics, honesty and openness are to be prioritised.
3. Maintaining cognitive flexibility and adapting leadership behaviour appropriately to the context while leading from multiple perspective.
4. Building supportive network in order to discuss the obstacles and challenges.
5. Delineating the map of own strengths and staying resilient
6. Identifying the changing issues and creating collaborative group

2.3.5 Educational Leadership in Saudi Arabia

Due to new government policy and social reformation, Saudi women are getting the opportunity to play leadership-roles and they are mostly being employed in the education sector. However, in case of participating in leadership positions, they are still grossly underrepresented (Alsubaie & Jones, 2017). A comparative scenario in education leadership is presented below.

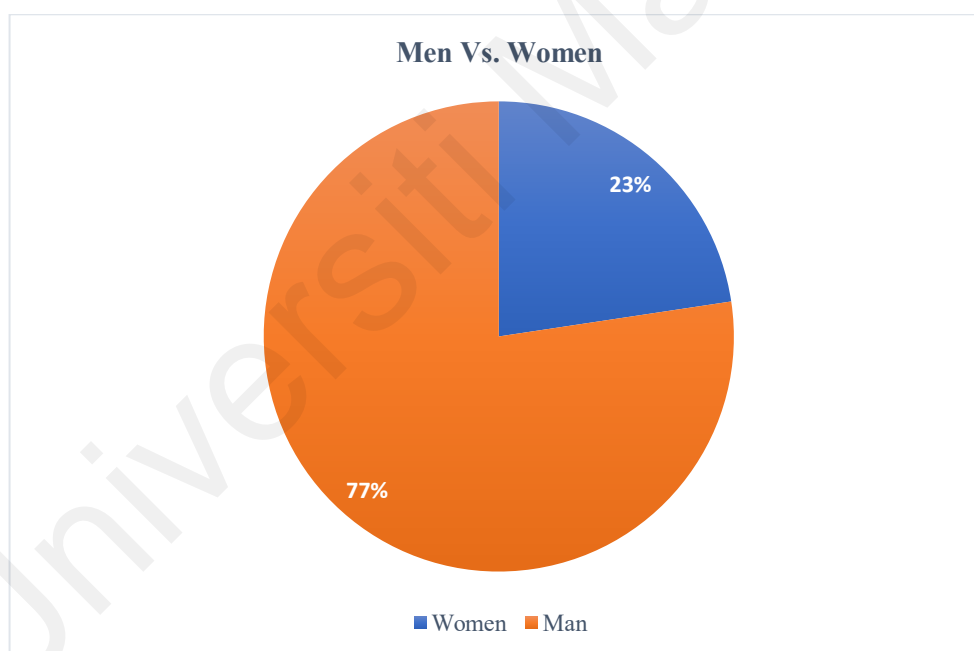
Table 2.1

Current Status of Female Leadership in Higher Education

Leadership Position	Women	Man
Director of the University	1	33
Vice President	12	128
Dean	61	330
Deputy Dean	228	542
Total	302	1033

Source: (Ministry-of-Education, 2018)

Table 2.1 above shows that the number of women in leadership positions in higher education is far lower than men in every position in academic management.



Source: (Ministry-of-Education, 2018)

Figure 2.2 Men Vs. Women in the Higher Education Leadership

Overall, women's participation in the management is only 23% while men's participation is 77%. This scenario clearly indicates that Saudi women are still lagged behind from the opportunity of the leadership in the higher education sector (Ministry-of-Education, 2018).

2.3.6 The Initiatives to Build Academic leadership

The government of Saudi has taken numerous initiatives to enhance women leadership in education. Women have greater access to the education sector. A total of 85% of the working women belong to the education industry. They are involved in teaching and administrative positions (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Government of this country places high importance on competency training and traits enhancement in order for women to excel in leadership (Al-Swailem & Elliott, 2013). In 2006, the MOE launched *Aafaq* project to develop a comprehensive structure for higher education for the next 25 years. This project aims to enhance the quality of management and administration in the institutional levels by focusing on the academic leadership (Al-Swailem & Elliott, 2013). Besides, the Academic Leadership Centre (ALC) was established in 2009 in order to develop necessary skills for the academicians with the view to building world class universities. ALC has five specific goals to enable the academicians, leaders, administrator to become successful and effective. Five goals of ALC: 1) To develop leadership fostering innovation, success and excellence; 2) To develop effective leadership behaviours and practices in higher education management and leadership; 3) To facilitate decision making; 4) To assist in succession planning; and 5) To response to the evolving and changing leadership challenges (Al-Swailem & Elliott, 2013). It is apparent that the government of Saudi as well as the academic policy makers are giving greater attention to building women leadership specifically in the higher

education sector. In this regard, enormous steps have been taken by *Aqfaq* and ALC in order to improve women's management skills, planning capacities and leadership qualities.

Though over the last decades Saudi Arabia observed remarkable changes in its socio-economic policy. Government has taken substantial initiatives for building a knowledge-based economy. Women's access to education and job market was given high priority. As a result, an increasing number of women graduates are participating in the Saudi labour market (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011; MOH, 2013; Rather, 2016). In last 10 years, women's participation in the management in both public and private sectors has raised many folds (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Alotaibi, Cutting, & Morgan, 2017; Danish & Smith, 2012; Oplatka & Herts-Lazarovits, 2006). Saudi women are now entering into the workforces, acting as leaders in the university. These phenomena exemplifies women's transitioning to decision making roles (Al-bakr, Bruce, Davidson, Schlaffer, & Kropiunigg, 2017). Such engagement of women in the economic exercise has exhibited positive impacts on the national economy as well as household wellbeing in Saudi (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011). But, women are experiencing numerous obstacles in both social as well as institutional contexts (Danish & Smith, 2012; Rajeh, Nicolau, Pluye, Qutob, & Esfandiari, 2017). Saudi women are facing intense conflicts.

2.4 Innumerable Perceptions on the Conflict

Conflict is a perspective, which is stemmed from the various social phenomena. It may arise from the irrational interest of individuals or groups (Vogt, 2005) or dissonant bonding among human beings (Kohlrieser, 2007). Once the bondage is split loss; disappointment, frustration, pain and grief occur (Kohlrieser, 2007). In other words, dispute occurs between groups or individuals in their functional

relations due to different status, values and perception (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2007). When any distortion appears between individuals due to tension, disagreement, power-polarization or emotion, it may turn into conflict (Kohlrieser, 2007). Sometimes, conflict happens due to individuals' different moral character, worldview, perception towards life, demography (age, education, gender) etc.

In the organisational context, the conflict appears due to individual's lacking respect to colleagues, a gap of communication, job uncertainty, a methodological difference in the management, a sudden change in the organisational structure and tasks (Salami, 2009). However, the consequence of any conflict is always harmful to the organisation. It demotes work environment while bringing dissatisfaction, uncooperativeness among the group members. However, conflict creates serious destruction when it happens in the culturally diverse workgroup (Ayoko & Härtel, 2006).

The main causes behind any organisational conflicts are personal differences, value differences, differences in objectives, perceptual differences, resource limitation, competition, interdependence, role pressure and denial of status (Subramoniam, 2004). High competition and unprecedented changes in the marketplace, restructured corporate culture, fast-paced business environment, poorly designed reward system, the negative impact of the information system and diverse workforce can create also conflict. Besides, job uncertainty, anxiety, fewer resources, anger, frustration and insecurity increase conflict (Crossman, 2017). Some other causes, such as misunderstand based on age, race or cultural difference, fear of job loss or bypassed for a promotion, sexual harassment, threat to security, power or status, false pride, blaming for mistakes, drug-induced irrational behaviour trigger

workplace conflict (Hu, Chen, Gu, Huang, & Liu, 2017). The intensity and negative effects of conflict depend on the nature of conflict and conflict management.

The concept of organisational conflict refers to the process of dispute or conflict that arises between individuals and they are workers in the organisation as a result of certain pressures or conflicts of interests on the part of an individual or a group of individuals over another individual or a group of individuals for some reason from within the field of work or from outside it and this is to aim for a positive or negative change in the values, criteria, or behaviour of an individual, a group of individuals, or the organisation (Al-Amyan, 2010). And, the subject of organisational conflict is one of the thorny issues that occupied the mind and interest of many scholars and researchers in the field of organisational psychology. Among the definitions that were presented to him are the following:

Muhammad Mustafa Mahmoud (2012) defines organisational conflict as ~~one~~ of the main forms of interaction.” Conflict can also be defined as ~~—~~confusion or disruption to work and decision-making methods in a way that leads to difficulty in choosing and choosing between alternatives.” Sources of strength to raise the job performance of individuals and groups, but reaching a high-level conflict has negative rather than positive effects.”(Al-Amyan, 2010)

Boulding (1957) also defines organisational conflict as ~~—a~~ competitive situation in which the parties to the conflict are aware of the conflict in the possibility of obtaining a position that conflicts with the desire of the other party” (Al-Amyan, 2010).

Fred Luthans (1973) defines organisational conflict as ~~—the~~ process in which units seek A system to achieve its interests at the expense of the interests of other units ”(Al-Amyan, 2010).

It can be concluded from the above that organisational conflict is —a competitive position between two parties as a result of conflict, contradiction or collision in the needs, requirements and interests, and each of them seeks to achieve its goals on calculating the other so it takes various forms of tension, interception, quarrels, and this It may happen between individuals, between the individual and the group, or between groups.

2.4.1 Marxist Theory of Conflict

Conflict is studied as a broad construct in several disciplines in the social interactions (Speakman & Ryals, 2010). The modern theory of conflict was introduced by Karl Marx (1818-1883). He pointed out the causes and consequences of the class-conflict between capitalist (bourgeoisie) and working-poor (proletariat). He showed, uneven and unjustly distribution of resources as the causes of conflicts (Crossman, 2017). However, conflict theory focuses on the changes and orders that sprout forth from the struggle between individual or group in order to maximize their wealth and power (O'Leary, 2007). When power, status and resources are irrationally distributed among the groups in the society, conflicts occur. Sometimes, conflict acts like an engine in the social change. In this case, power plays the role of a controlling device regulating resources and wealth while governing the institutions. Marx's theory of conflict is linked with the cultural hegemony that has a strong causative agent like the power of ideology (Crossman, 2017). Generally, there are two types of conflicts, such as interpersonal and organisational. Interpersonal conflict refers to the disagreement between two or more individuals. On the other hand, organisational conflict takes place between or within the groups in an organisation (Salami, 2009). Categorical conflicts are discussed below:

2.4.2 Conflicts from Various Aspects

Conflict arises in day to day social life as well as in the organisational arena (Beitler et al., 2016). Conflicts can be comprehensively explained from three different aspects, such as socio-cultural aspect, economic-aspect, organisational-aspect (Al-Lamky, 2007; Jamali et al., 2005).

Three main aspects of Conflict Theory are mentioned below:

a. Socio-cultural Aspect

Culture is a complex concept. But it shapes human behaviour and cognition. It plays important roles in individual and social behaviour and so does in conflict. Cultural issues can infect individuals even the states in getting engaged in conflicts (Bercovitchy & Foulkes, 2012). Cultural conflict occurs from misunderstanding, power exertion, leveraging tension and ambiguities of the cultural norms. This type of conflict can break out between and within the communities (Riles, 2008).

b. Economic Aspect

From the economic perspective, conflict may occur due to power politics and economic disparities. When indiscipline takes place in the society and win-win condition is denied or neglected people encounter economic difficulties. Improper distribution of wealth works like a catalyst in conflict. In the recent world, the key ingredient of economic conflict is the use of weapons which is thought as an input in creating cacophonous socio-economic environment (Garfinkel & Skaperdas, 2006).

c. Organisational Aspect

Conflict posits in the organisational arena as well. Sometimes, it appears as class conflict based on racial stratification, which is rooted into social inequality. The larger social forces mostly produce irrational outcomes that used to favour the powerful status-quo. In this regard, conflict theorists pointed out education as the

prime outcome that strongly support the power-structure (Chernoff, 2013). However, three broad types of conflict are generally observed in the organisational landscape, those are: 1) 'personality conflict' that occurs due to personality clashes, power or status, blaming for mistakes, fear of job loss, drug induced irrational behaviour; 2) 'task related conflict' that out breaks from the disagreement of how the work should be accomplished, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, refusal to share information or cooperate; and 3) 'cultural conflict' appears due to different cultural norms. It mainly occurs among the women, minorities, immigrants, diversity workforce (Thomas & White, 2011). Juma (2019) asserted that the organisational conflicts is a natural behavioural development ensuing from a number of the relationships that prevail within the unit deliberately differing views, motives and desires and conflict of roles and responsibilities or the look for power or management or gain material or ethical (Juma, 2019).

2.4.3 Types of Organisational Conflict

Lewicki (2004) highlighted four types of organisational conflicts such as, 1) intergroup conflict that occurs between two groups. In a broader sense, it includes international conflicts happening between two nations. 2) Intragroup conflict arises within small groups that comprises in the organisation. 3) Interpersonal conflict is seen in the individual level. It shows conflict between individuals or between an individual and a group. 4) Intrapersonal conflict appears in one's mind only (Lewicki, 2004). These conflicts are narratively discussed below:

a. Intergroup Conflict: This type of conflict occurs between two groups. In abroad aspect, it includes international conflicts between two nations. In intragroup conflict role conflict, authority conflict and issue conflict are the common phenomena (Lewicki, 2004).

- i. Role conflict: When incompatibility of position occurs due to the same individual requiring mutually exclusive decisions role conflict appears.
- ii. ii) Authority conflict: When superiors or authorities are in conflict in managing the inferiors. This type of conflict occurs once an individual has to report to two or more superiors (bosses) at the same time.
- iii. Issue conflict: When different courses of actions seem suitable for the attainment of the same goal, issue conflict occurs (Subramoniam, 2004).

According to Juma (2019), this type of conflict could be called structure conflict, conflict that happens inside operating teams like conflict between production management and selling management or between the cluster of directors generally (Juma, 2019).

Conflict between the organisation and other organisations: The organisation often deals with government agencies, affiliates, consumers, and funders in addition to its dealings with other organisations that may cooperate or compete with it. Therefore, the conflict may sometimes occur among them due to conflict of interests or to achieve specific demands or to change some things In line with the requirements of each party. As this type of conflict sometimes contributes to achieving competition between the organisation and other organisations, which results in pushing the organisation to develop its products and improve its services (Ghuryshi & Faizah, 2015).

Pictures of this type of agriculture differ from the previous types, to be more comprehensive and broader than other conflicts, more prevalent within the organisation, and this type of conflict occurs between the various levels, as it includes larger groups within the system about some policies and systems divisions around some of the policies and numbers the organisation is running on. The imbalance of powers between departments is a fair way or difference over the distribution of resources or its method of determining responsibilities between the different departments and units, and without a state of conflict between those groups.

In spite of the many Syrian researchers to determine the types of organisational conflict, there are many difficulties that confront them in identifying the sources in which the events of the conflict inhabit, whether at the individual or group level or other levels that the multiple sources of this conflict vary according to the individuals and the nature of the organisation's activity and The philosophy and management policies in which the organisation operates as these variables constitute a discrepancy in the sources of organisational conflict (Al-Nimr, 1994).

b. Intragroup conflict: This type of conflict arises within the groups in the organisation (Lewicki, 2004). Functional conflict, hierarchical conflict, ethnocentrism and line versus staff conflicts occur in intragroup conflict.

Functional conflict: When one functional unit blocks the achievement of other unit's goals in the same organisation functional conflict appears.

Hierarchical conflict: This kind of conflict takes place due to organisational rewards of status, money, prestige, decision making power, etc.

Ethnocentrism: This phenomenon appears once group identity brings pride and respect and dislike to individual in the group due to the collective action of the group.

Line versus staff conflict: This type of conflict occurs once staff specialist uses high informal authority over the subordinates due to their unintentional wrong doings (Subramoniam, 2004).

Juma (2019) also explained the intragroup as this kind of conflict or disagreement between one individual and another between a gaggle of people et al. as a result of completely different desires and roles vie by individuals as a result of variations in views among themselves or different personalities and trends and motivation and social upbringing (Juma, 2019).

Conflict between groups within the organisation: It is represented in the conflict between management and the various departments within the organisation , such as the conflict between finance and marketing or the conflict between the production and marketing department, and so on where simple and secondary conflicts can be, as they may be fundamental and extremely important, and may be Negative as well as positive, as is the conflict between individuals (Harim, 2013).

c. Interpersonal conflict: This conflict occurs in the individual level. For instance, conflict between individuals or between an individual or a group (Lewicki, 2004). Interpersonal conflict involves individuals' views about exposure to negative forms of interaction from minor disputes to serious arguments including insult to the self, inequity, perception of injustice, goal implementations incompetence and being target of another person's verbal or physical aggression, etc. Interpersonal conflict is regarded one of the most common stressors in the workplace (Schieman & Reid, 2008).

Conflict between individuals: It is a conflict that arises between the worker and his co-workers or with his subordinates as a result of differences in personal patterns, cognitive perceptions or misunderstanding, or due to overlapping roles,

poor relationships and clashing interests, and the basis for their emergence may be bad morals or upbringing other than Sound (Ghuryshi & Faizah, 2015).

It occurs between two or more individuals about how each individual approached the situation or the basics of working inside the outlook (Al-Qaryouti, 2019).

The individual's struggle with the group is a part of the interpersonal conflicts. It is related to the way in which the individual deals with the pressure of the group to which he belongs and as long as these values and standards are maintained by the group where the individual is subject to the laws and regulations of the group and at the same time from personal needs and this leads the individual to reactions that are represented in Aggression, withdrawal, and the search for a compromise or resort to defensive tactics (Al-Tajm & Alsouat, 2000).

Regarding to Al-Nimr (1994) This type of conflict differs from its predecessors if I am not confined to one individual, but it includes the other parties, as it is not a rectangle in its appearance and tangible, and it entails a method or a set of apparent behaviours that are the subject of the conflict, as we are not limited to the parties of Iraq that may extend to the parties in the other (Al-Nimr, 1994). Usually this kind of conflict is spread between two or more individuals of three, but everyone has a point of view about the minister in particular, and that individual and his group of positions and attitudes may happen around a certain phenomenon and multiplicity of images. This type of prayer may be the director and his subordinates between the CEO or other images the other, which consists of a group of individuals in the authority, social status, or access to material and moral advantages. Regardless of the parties to the relationship in which this type is involved in the conflict or the reasons that led to the emergence of it is one of the most prevalent types of conflict within

Regulations as it is the history of the call Other parties, and this may be more severe on the outskirts of the relationship, especially if the administration does not succeed in developing appropriate strategies to control it and limit its spread within the region (Badr, 1988).

d. Intrapersonal conflict: This conflict appears in one's mind (Lewicki, 2004). It is a condition that can be characterized by the presence of an individual and mutually contradictory motives, goals and values as well as the state of the internal personality which is characterized by antagonism of its elements. Such conflict basically starts in the human soul which is filled with tension, emotionally distracted (Kashapov, Tomchuk, & Ogorodova, 2015). Hence, intrapersonal conflict is personality related. This conflict may arise when organisational outcomes concern only the decision makers (Drory & Ritov, 1997).

It could be explained as the contradictions of the individual along with his goals or the contradictions of the individual with the roles he plays inside the establishment. The frustration featured by a person in his or her life and work sometimes has negative effects on the incidence of this kind of conflict or self-conflict. (Juma, 2019).

Also, Drory and Ritov (1997) correspondingly explained intrapersonal conflict as a situation that causes opposite effects on individual decision and management of social conflict. Conflicts in structure life are typically anticipated and ready for. Planners of structure modification as an example build acutely aware tries to identify and brace oneself for potential resistance. The results counsel that the presence of intrapersonal conflict could have an effect on the inclination of potential opponents either to join forces or undermine the planned modification (Drory & Ritov, 1997).

Conflict within the individual, and this conflict arises when there is a state of the individual's lack of knowledge of what he or she must do precisely, i.e. what is called (role conflict) and results from the multiplicity of roles that the individual plays and opposes or when the individual is attracted to several goals that necessitate him choosing Only one of them, which cannot be achieved together, is the so-called goal struggle (Al-Amyan, 2010). Here the individual resorts to trying to compare what he will gain and what he will lose in the case of choosing without another, such as choosing the goal of greatest importance to him in the case of the two roles or the two positive goals or the direction towards the least harmful choice if he finds himself in front of two roles or two negative goals (Ghuryshi & Faizah, 2015).

This type of conflict pertains to the individual himself. It is the only stage of conflict, that is, it occurs between the imposition and Daddy. It does not require the presence of other individuals. Although the person is the scene of this conflict, it may be that the positions of others, their attitudes, tendencies, and thoughts may play a key role in causing the internal conflict of the individual. This conflict may cause other types of conflict, as the individual may think that there is a state of conflict between him or between other external parties or between him and the organisation in which he works, which led to the prayer. The results of this conflict on the individual may turn into cases of depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. As for where you are always on the effects of this conflict, it is primarily determined and may be apparent to others as it does not result from it before the imposition and its effects are not limited to the individual through the psychological pressures that he is exposed to because of the phenomenon that is the subject of the conflict (Aldeeb, 1987). In some cases, the effects of this conflict may extend to others inside or outside the organisation. When his paradise condition worsens, his behavior turns

into unconscious behavior, which leads to changing the attitudes of others towards him (Al-Nimr, 1994).

2.4.4 Conflicts and Their Impact on Organisational Sectors

Generally, the concept of conflicts could be described as "critical situations that generates energy for the organisation to handle unsure things. The dynamics of conflict modification from time to time based on the means within which behaviour of one party influences that of the other party and therefore the ways employed in the past for the settlement of the between-groups and inside cluster conflict" (Subramoniam, 2004).

Conflict Theory implies that "tensions and conflicts arise once resources, status, and power are inconsistently distributed between teams in society in which these conflicts become the engine for social modification. during this context, power is often understood as management of material resources and accumulated wealth, management of politics and therefore the establishments that constitute society, and one's social station relative to others (determined not simply by category however by race, gender, sexuality, culture, and faith, among alternative things) (Crossman, 2017). Consistent with Marx, if is the changes created to appease conflict maintained in a capitalist system, then the cycle of conflict would be repeated (Subramoniam, 2004)

The study conducted by Shannon (2014) concluded that the Saudi Arabia has profoundly experienced remarkable enhancements in women's standing socially, politically, and economic life over the past twenty years. However, those enhancements have drawn much criticism from activists and contributed to restrict women's rights. As such, there are several factors that lead to the occurrence of some degree of organisational conflict between Saudi faculty members (Al Sharif,

2008). Alsubaie and Jones (2017) argued that since education is one of the few careers accessible to women, there should be more women in academic leadership. One key clarification is that traditionally, women are prevented from holding positions of leadership in Asian nations because of strict cultural conventions and legislative restrictions (Alsubaie & Jones, 2017).

The study of Abalkhail (2017) investigated the trials and prospects for women in leadership. The researcher interviewed 22 women in higher educational institutions. The results established that even though women had higher qualifications, and greater expertise than their male counterparts, the interviewees believed that there was a preference for men to be given leadership roles. They believed this was due to cultural reasons and power connected to spiritual views.

The outcomes of the study concluded that gender segregation impeded women from participating in strategic conferences and restricted their access to special information and resources and believed by the interviewed to be attributed to discrimination in promotion and lack of coaching. In respect of this situation the interviewees believed that family support could facilitate the path to leadership for women. The researcher further explained that women in higher education are suffering from restricted opportunities for engagement in strategic decisions, particularly to centralise decision-making and also the restricted powers granted to women leaders (Abalkhail, 2017). Research additionally points to the absence of authorisation, and private challenges that are obstacles to leadership for women in educational activities (Alsubaihi, 2016). In addition to that, the study of Al-Minqash (2007) highlighted the low standards of leadership, like inadequate pointers, poor job descriptions still as multiple male and female department administrators, which results in communication issues, poor coordination and conflict (Al-Minqash,

2007). Another study stated that when the women's educational leaders in Asian countries expertise several constant barriers as girls, their state of affairs is deeply complicated as they're distinctive combine between faith and culture (Al Alhareth, Al Alhareth, & Al Dighrir, 2015).

2.4.5 Gender-Based Conflicts: Courses and Strategic Tactics to Overcome it

Wright (2014) summarized in a study that there may be developing proof across the globe that the beliefs and values remain unequal gendered roles and power family members are instrumental in building assist for and perpetuating battle. research performed on masculinities, struggle and peace building for safer global, which checked out tasks and programmes via 19 companies or networks across 5 continents, observed –a developing frame of studies suggesting that gender roles and patriarchal notions of masculinity especially – can gas war and insecurity” (Wright, 2014).

Furthermore, he stated that a number of the previous studies looking at the effect of masculinities on conflicts makes use of the concept of thwarted masculinities. this is used to explain –the stories of guys who are not able to comply to standards of manhood imposed by means of their societies, as an example due to the fact they are not able to find work, get married or guide a circle of relatives” (Wright, 2014). Some of these guys are concept to be much more likely to devote violence, consisting of as combatants in armed conflicts, especially in Organization as –a means of reasserting one’s masculinity within the absence of different, non-violent way” (Wright, 2014). There is also proof analyzing the way that roles and norms around femininity are implicated in violence and war. On the one hand, discourses of ladies as vulnerable and defenseless are used to prop up and perpetuate masculinities that involve men as protectors, the use of violence if essential (Cohn, 2012; Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, & Breen-Smyth, 2011; Wright,

2014). In a few cases, girls may additionally play a position in assisting these discourses, through encouraging male family members to participate in styles of violent communal struggle which include cattle raiding, and deriding guys who refuse to accomplish that (El-Bushra, 2003; Wright, 2014). Alternatively, because the case research under display, ladies have been actively worried as fighters in a few conflicts. but, as Wright's assessment factors out, "while girls do absorb fingers, they're generally taken into consideration to be transgressing conventional gender roles, because a willingness to use violence is taken into consideration a masculine, now not a feminine trait" (Wright, 2014).

Baaz and others (2017), Indicated in their studies on militarised masculinities in the context of the DRC, be aware "while formed in an international panorama, army masculinities are constructed in countrywide and neighborhood contexts and are also frequently articulated in various approaches" at the same time as it is more tough to degree the methods that gender norms and roles correlate with a propensity for conflict, as has been accomplished with the correlations between states' gender equality rankings and war and/or violence, it's miles clean from the to be had proof that gender norms round masculinity and femininity play an influential role. (Baaz et al., 2017; Theidon, 2009).

Despite the fact that there have been tremendous versions within the conceptions and practices of masculine and female habitus round the arena at some point of records, there are dominant functions of the gender habitus: shared expectancies approximately suitable behaviour, language and our bodies. With appreciate to masculinities, those very precise dominant sorts have been known as proof is to be had to demonstrate the role of gender in unique inter and intra country conflicts. This proof particularly points to correlation among gender and battle, rather

than causation. Gender performs a key position in encouraging guys and in a few instances, ladies to take part in conflict, and it acts as a discourse to invoke fuel and perpetuate struggle and violence. however, the proof suggests that gender is by no means alone as a motive or driver of conflict, and that it's miles always intertwined with different social, economic, cultural and political factors (Baaz et al., 2017).

The partial empowerment of a few women can be a precondition for consent, as the discussion approximately intersectionality above has proven. Deniz Kandiyoti aptly named this the “patriarchal good deal” offered to ladies (Kandiyoti, 1988). inside this social contract, girls gain safety and safety within the framework of circle of relatives’ roles as moms, daughters and mothers in-regulation. In flip, they impose the guidelines of a patriarchal order on younger and based girls. Male dominance is enacted “heterosocially” closer to women and “homosocially” towards non-hegemonic masculinities together with bad, homosexual or minority men. nonetheless, all men, even those restricted to subordinate or complicit masculinities, may additionally advantage from “patriarchal dividends”. those are structural advantages, which accrue to men regardless of their person behaviour and perceptions (Connell, 1995).

For instance, a gender-segregated corporation allows employers to offer worse pay to ladies than to most men within the same role. despite the fact that hegemonic masculinity and femininity constitute models, they do no longer completely mirror the complexity of most ladies and men’s lives, they’re embodied in the male and girl habitus and, on the structural facet, in the establishments of the nation and of society. Birgit Sauer describes this as the “masculinity” of the nation. She argues that the methods in which states organise inclusion and exclusion, for example get entry to education, jobs, welfare services, housing or political

participation is both patriarchal and violent at the identical time (Cabrera, Sauer, & Thomas-Hunt, 2009).

2.4.6 Strategic Approaches to Conflicts Management

The researchers such as Blake, Mouton and others argued that the existence of personal methods in managing conflict between individuals, although there is a dispute between them. On the effectiveness of each method, Blake and Mouton and others have identified five methods of managing conflict between them. Individuals explained it in the form of an administrative network that has two dimensions: caring for individuals within the organization, interest in production and making. For each of these two dimensions, the events extend from (zero) to (9). The researchers focused on the points located in the corners of the network, Likewise, the point in the middle, and thus identified the following five approaches of conflict management:

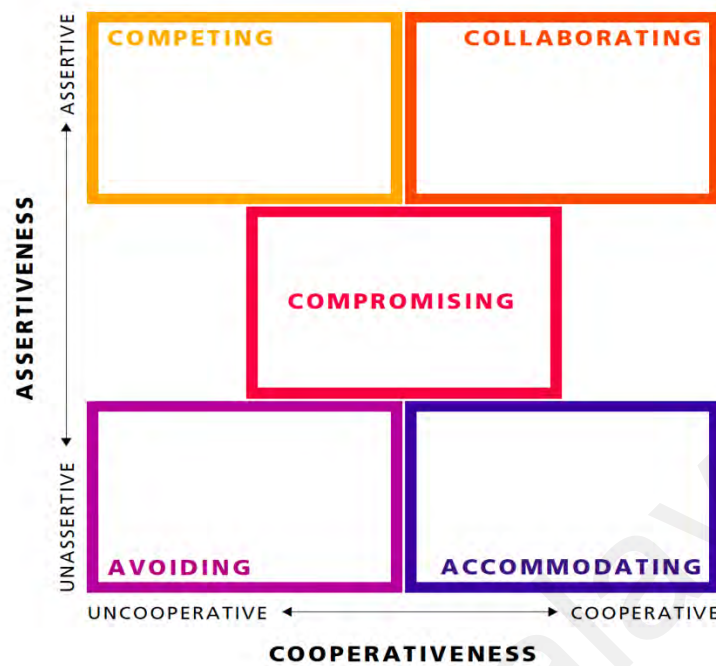
1. Preventive Approach: means withdrawal from conflict management, as the method of avoiding conflict with the other party is through postponement, disregard, or separation of the conflicting parties (Harim, 2013).
2. Confrontational and Disclosure Approach: According to this method, the conflicting parties face each other face to face. To define the problem, clarify it, and cooperate with each other to find alternative solutions, evaluate them, and choose the most appropriate ones (Harim, 2013). This approach is very useful for complex problems that are often dominated by misunderstanding and misjudgment here.
3. Compromise Approach: This is considered as a situation whereby the conflicts are settled through negotiations.

4. **Competitive Approach:** It is also called the method of intimidation, where the manager, in using this method, uses force power, status and the solution reached are in the interest of only one of the parties, when the conflict between colleagues is resorted to the manager has to exercise authority on the other end, relying on this method reduces the motivation to act, and it is used when the desire to make a decision if the case is urgent and swift action is necessary (Al-Thubaiti, 2000).
5. **Collaboration method:** in which the points of agreement are discussed and points of discord are avoided, and this method is distinguished because it applies cooperation and resort to force and human relations, where the director studies the causes of conflict with all parties' stakeholders, present alternatives to the solution and discuss them with the parties.

According to Thomas & Kilmann (1976), conflict mode instrument (TKI) assesses an individual's behaviour in conflict situations along two basic dimensions:

- (1) **Assertiveness** - the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns, and
- (2) **Cooperativeness** - the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns.

These two dimensions of behaviour can be used to define five methods of dealing with conflict. These five conflict-handling modes are shown below:



source:(Thomas, 1992)

Figure 2.3 Two-dimensional Model of Conflict-Handling Behaviour

- **Competing:** it is assertive and uncooperative, an aggressive mode. When competing, an individual win and the other loses. The individual pursues own concerns at the other person's expense, using whatever power seems appropriate to win the position. It might mean standing up for your rights, defending a position you believe is correct.
- **Collaborating:** it is both assertive and cooperative. When collaborating, individual wins but the other does not necessarily win. It involves finding roots of the issue and finding solution that meets both sets of concerns. Collaborating might explore a disagreement from other's perspective allowing to learn from each other and resolving some condition that would otherwise shift them to competing behaviour.

- **Compromising:** compromising is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. This is in the condition of win-win situation. When compromising, the objective is to find a solution accepted by both which partially satisfies both. Compromising might mean agreeing to disagree. Compromising is centred between competing and accommodating, giving up more than competing but less than accommodating. It addresses an issue more directly than avoiding but doesn't explore it in as much depth as collaborating.
- **Avoiding:** avoiding is unassertive and uncooperative. When avoiding, both parties lose. He or she does not address the conflict. Avoiding might be the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, withdrawing from a threatening situation or postponing an issue until a better time but this can worsen the issue.
- **Accommodating:** accommodating is unassertive and cooperative—the opposite of competing. When accommodating, an individual loses in order other to win; there is a self-sacrifice, charity, obeying or selfless generosity in this mode (Thomas & Kilmann, 1976).

To help figuring out the most appropriate use of each modes, the Table 2.2 below describe the effective situation for using:

Table 2.2

Uses of Each Mode of Conflict-Handling Behaviour

Type of Mode	Effective in
Collaborating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When concerns of both parties are too important to be compromised • When your objective is to learn and you wish to test your assumptions and understand others' views. • When you want to merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem • When you want to gain commitment by incorporating others' concerns into a consensual decision • When you need to work through hard feelings that have been interfering with a relationship • Quick, decisive action is vital—for example, in an emergency
Competing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpopular courses of action need implementing— cost cutting, lay offs • Important issues when you know you're right • Protect yourself from people who take advantage of non-competitive behaviour • Lack of knowledge—to allow a better solution to be considered, to learn from others, and to show that you are reasonable
Accommodating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to the other person than it is to you— to satisfy the needs of others and as a goodwill gesture to help maintain a cooperative relationship • Building up social credits • maintaining healthier team environment

Table 2.2, (continue)

Type of Mode	Effective in
Avoiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To unimportant issues or when other, more important issues are pressing • Out of your circle of influence • To less return on investment of time and energy • To let people, cool down and to reduce tensions to a productive level. • To gather more information outweighs the advantages of an immediate decision • When others can resolve the issue more effectively • When the time is not right • When goals are important but not worth the effort
Compromising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When both opponents have same power and commitment to mutually exclusive goals—as in labour–management bargaining • When you want to achieve a temporary settlement of a complex issue • As a backup mode when collaboration or competition fails

In this study, the researcher explored the scenarios of conflicts that occurred among the women leadership in Saudi Arabia especially women in the positions of leadership in higher education institutions from four aspects: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Intragroup and Intergroup conflicts. So, exploring the way of handling these conflicts by the female leaders in higher education enhanced the researcher to understand the current scenario of the conflicts.

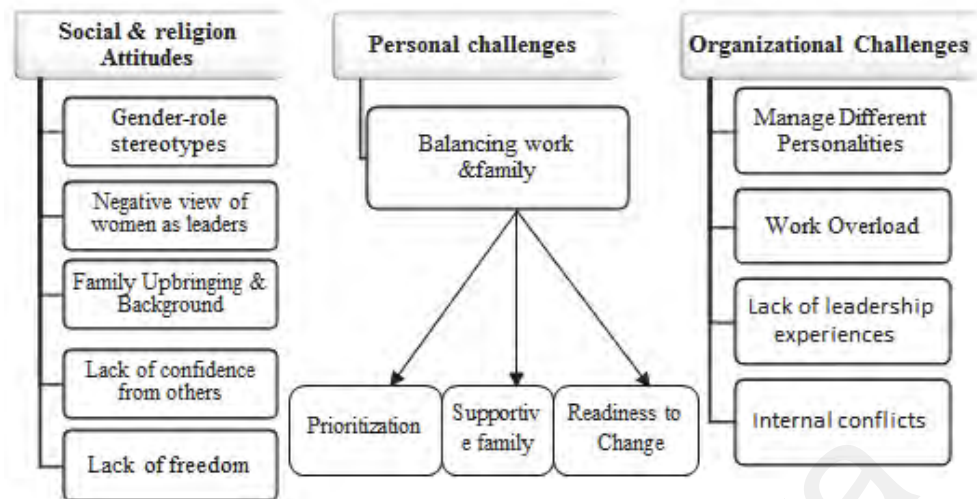
2.5 Saudi Women and the Challenges they Face

Women face distinct challenges in playing the roles of leadership. These challenges vary professions, culture and social justice (Levitt, 2010). Saudi women are experiencing discrimination in corporate culture in terms of recruitment, retention, and promotion. Besides, they are also experiencing the behavioural and cultural issues that are rooted into stereotyping, tokenism, power, preferred leadership style and the psychodynamics of male and female relations (Oakley, 2000). Long prevailed patriarchal social structure, old fashioned organisational decorum and conservative perception of individuals are creating the adverse realities for Saudi women. Therefore, women's leadership is getting severely barred and turning into conflicts with their counterparts (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Danish & Smith, 2012; Elamin & Omair, 2010; Thompson, 2015).

They are experiencing self-challenges as well. Self-challenges which include personal factors and characteristics have negative impacts on their leadership practice (Al-Shihabi, 2008). For instance, lack of communication skills, specifically linguistic styles are sometimes considered as the barriers for joining the hierarchical position in the organisation. Because, linguistic style is an important ability to negotiate with the authority. Another issue is the status quo; where male tends to find themselves at the top always (Oakley, 2000). Two other challenges that negatively affect women's to conduct their leadership roles are taking the right decision, eliciting change (Al-Kubaisi, 2004). So, it can be summarized that Saudi women generally face four types of challenges, such as socio-cultural, organisational, economic and individual/ personal (Alsubhi et al., 2018). The challenges are elaborately discussed below.

According to Bandura, (1997) leadership barriers to women fall into two categories: personal and structural barriers. Personal barriers are linked with self-efficiency or capability. Efficiency is required as a foundation for leadership development (Keohane, 2014; Sandberg, 2013). Personal is also linked with structural barriers. Structural barriers refer to the discrimination that impede the advancement of women's career trajectories. Personal barrier can be overcome but it cannot be in effect if structural barrier is not removed (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Thus, structural barriers overshadow personal barriers.

Saudi women usually face different types of barriers due to institutional policy and culture. For instance, lack of coordination between the governmental departments, proper law for women's right protection, lack of policies and unfavourable socio-culture (Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010). After being graduated from the universities Saudi women usually seek for jobs not only to earn money but also for going out of home to explore the external world (Le Renard, 2008). But they meet barriers in job created by the corporate practices. Unfavourable corporate culture brings about gender imbalance in recruitment, retention and promotion where male gets higher priority than female. Besides, the behavioural and cultural issues. The challenges Saudi women meet when pursuing career in the higher education can be categorised as social, individual and organisational challenges (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016).



Source: (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016)

Figure 2.4 Challenges that Saudi Women Face

According to the Figure above, social attitudes such as stereotypical gender roles, negative view towards women, lack of confidence and lack of freedom discourage women to play their roles as leaders in the higher education. Besides, they also encounter individual challenges in balancing work and family. In this case, it becomes difficult for them to provide equal efforts to their family and job simultaneously. Besides, responding towards the changing situation (changes in responsibility) is a critical issue. In order to adapt with the changing situation an individual needs social and organisational supports and most of the time Saudi women are deprived of that kind of supports. They face organisational challenges while dealing with the different personalities, over workload and internal conflict. Furthermore, lack of acceptance in the organisational domain becomes the most challenging issue for the women leaders. Besides, due to lack of experience they find difficulties to execute their duties while coping with the changing environment (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). Overall, Saudi women are majorly facing four challenges that are elaborately discussed below.

2.5.1 Socio-cultural Challenges

Saudi Arabia has constitutionally discriminated women by means of gender segregation policy. The rule of segregation is perceived as a traditional norm. But this segregation policy has apparently weakened the development of the state as well as the women. Because, due to this policy men and women are deprived of many outlets of their activities, such as cooperation, collaboration, mutual-decision making, team work and synergy (Le Renard, 2008). Some long-standing cultural concept, beliefs and norms discourage women to be in leadership. They are underestimated by their subordinates and colleagues. However, another typical barriers for women in ascending the higher management position is stereotype gender approach of the society (Özkanli & White, 2008). Nevertheless, due to traditional beliefs and cultural norms submerge women's leadership practice. Because of the persisting beliefs they are sometimes unaccepted by their male subordinates, colleagues and other counterparts (Al-Jaradat, 2014). Besides, negative outlook of the community and myopic perception and discriminatory behaviour of men discourage women from continuing their leadership roles (Al-Shihabi, Inaam, Azzam, & Abdul Majid, 2003). In the same vein, men's narrow views towards women and antipathy to hiring them become obstacles to women gaining leadership positions (Billing, 2011).

On the other side, women's increasing wilfulness to be integrated in decision making position seem creating more difficulties for them (Al-kayed, 2015). Because, men are believed more efficient in decision making. Assumingly, patriarchal social structure and men's long-term presence in the leadership position, comparatively more education and experience have made males efficient in decision making. However, women are perceived as emotional and socially bounded, less skilled and

experienced. They are less likely to become efficient as administrators in academia (Al-kayed, 2015). There is a misconception that women can only hold and sustain leadership positions when they possess male characteristics (Tomàs, Lavie, del Mar Duran, & Guillamon, 2010).

The idea of *Qiwama* (Guardianship) is in the vein of Saudi men. They have been cherishing this concept for centuries. Thus, the superiority of men is socially established (Abalkhail, 2017). Lack of freedom is also an important issue in Saudi Arabia. Women cannot enjoy equal freedom to men. They need permission from their guardians prior to making any decision. This obligation indirectly suppresses their progress in leadership position. Since men consider themselves superior than women, they limit women's freedom as well as lag behind them. Lack of freedom and discouragement denounce women's leadership and decision making. Consequently, it has become difficult for women to achieve the superior position in Saudi Arabia (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016; Almenkash, Abdulaziz, Shaman, Haijan, & Dagsh, 2007). Above all, habitually Saudi men perceive women less effective and sometimes unsuitable for the administrative position. This perception has been developed from the social norms. Saudi men's perception towards women is greatly influenced by the long prevailed social culture and customs.

The idea of women incapacity to perform administrative job has grown culturally in the Saudi male. It is probed in their heart that men are more efficient in decision making. Besides, long standing patriarchal social structure and men's sole presence in the leadership made this notion deep and firm. Besides, Saudi people greatly value their family tradition and culture. Where, men are expected to be the income generators while being career oriented. However women's responsibility is to be family-oriented, doing household chores, taking care of children and husband, etc

(Alselaïmi, 2012). So, in this scenario if any women look for economic freedom, most of the time they are discouraged by their family members. In order to protect the family values and tradition Saudi people even go against the developmental approach (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Religion and culture on the other hand, intertwiningly intervene women employment. Conservatism of culture and strictness of religion might hold back the women leaders (Alselaïmi, 2012).

2.5.2 Organisational Challenges

Saudi women experience assorted negative issues in the academic environment that seemingly slow down the institutional progress while undermining their performance (Al-Minqash, 2007). The challenges that Saudi women meet in the organisation are: inadequate financial allocation, lack of training, inequity in the organisational environment, disfavours and uncooperative behaviour of the subordinates, lack of authoritative power, managing different persons, workload, irrationally allocated tasks and long working hours (Al Qahtani, 2006; Al-kayed, 2015; Bilen-Green et al., 2008; Still, 2006; Tomàs et al., 2010).

Women face some issues in the administrative environment that hinder their academic leadership performance as well as hamper the attainment of the institutional goals (Al-Minqash, 2007). Organisational and administrative challenges intercept the way of taking superior position (Still, 2006). The existence of inequity in the organisational environment inhibits them from reaching leadership positions (Tomàs et al., 2010). Some barriers, such as improper financial allocations, lack of training and education for the women also badly affect women leadership (Al Qahtani, 2006). Certain behaviours of the subordinates disfavours and discouraging their leadership roles in all levels of the academia hinder women to play managerial performance (Bilen-Green et al., 2008). Female managers find it a

challenge to deal with the male colleagues and subordinates (Al-kayed, 2015). The uncooperative nature of their subordinates, long working hours and lack of authorization also the causes for lagging behind women in superior position. Most crucial challenges are long working hours, hard to deal with the subordinates, lack of authoritative power, managing different personalities, workload and administrative tasks etc. (Al Qahtani, 2006; Al-kayed, 2015; Still, 2006). Most importantly, in higher education workloads usually go beyond the capability of Saudi women. Their responsibilities seem improperly allocated without considering their family obligation (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). Furthermore, centralising decision making power, and absence of authority lower women's managerial efficiency (Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Getting acceptance by the organisation is also an important issue for women. Saudi women are not widely welcome by the organisations. Their presence in the public domain has already been segmentized. Besides, they also find it difficult to match the changing environment. Presumably, they meet hardship to cope with the organisational change because of lack of experience (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). Saudi women get less privilege to participate in the administrative body but preferred to the academic position (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Al-kayed, 2015). However, several other issues can be pointed out as organisational barriers, such as selection process where only because of being women an applicant may get refusal even carrying equal qualities compare to a male candidate.

Globalization has also brought some limitations to the women leaders. For example, modern organisations expect more outcomes from the employees due to meet the challenges created by globalization. Furthermore, lifestyle conflicts, which creates distance between organisational and family norms become contradictory for women (Hughes, Ginnett, Curphy, & Hahn, 2009). For instance, time constraint, job-

demands and forces for promotion may separate women from the family. Stereotyping in leadership style also push back women from being in the management bodies. Many organisation seeks for masculine characters including assertiveness, aggressiveness and task-oriented leadership abilities (Elmuti, Jia, & Davis, 2009; Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Besides, lack of information about women's leadership and achievement is also a problem with regard to Middle Eastern women. This is because, they cannot identify themselves as well as their positional height. They have low access to the advocacy organisations that dedicatedly work for women. In most cases, women's organisations are strictly controlled by the government (Bahry & Marr, 2005).

In light of the above, the conclusion can be drawn that the organisational environment in KSA is not entirely women friendly due to the long-standing male domination, improper application of the new policy, unchanged perception of men and sometimes wrong expectations about women. Besides, women are suffering from identical problems because of lack of information. This information gap is created due to the gatekeeping roles of male. Furthermore, not only organisational structure, family culture, and social norms somewhat entuse organisational challenges.

2.5.3 Economic Challenges

The government of Saudi has recently paid attention to women empowerment expecting their contribution to the national economy. Women's potentials is perceived not less than the male can positively affect the society if they are encouraged to be functioning in the public sphere with economic activities (Shapira, Arar, & Azaiza, 2010). In this light, the government of Saudi gives importance to

women participation in the public domain. Government has also signed the UN declaration against ‘discrimination against women’ (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004).

Besides, the kingdom is promoting ‘Saudisation policy,’ that supports and encourages women to be active contributors to the country’s economy. This policy may positively impact women’s participation in the labour force (Al-Munajjed, 2010). But, wage, age and education are the important contributing factors that positively influence women to participate in job. Besides, lack of part-time job opportunities has narrowed down women’s employment opportunities (Alselaيمي, 2012). These issues are not yet properly addressed in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, balancing work and family life is still difficult for Saudi women.

On the other side, Saudi males are considered as the main breadwinners and women are their responsibility. Men are expected to be career oriented as well as the incomer for the family. Hence, women are unbound for the financial responsibility (Alselaيمي, 2012). Besides, if women look for financial freedom, most of the time they are discouraged by the male family members. Though, there is an economic reformation but women in this kingdom are still facing challenges.

2.5.4 Individual/ Personal Challenges

Individual or self-challenges refer to women’s personal inabilities that backpaddle them to practice the leadership roles (Al-Shihabi, 2008). It also indicates their physical constraints that limit them to execute their professional roles (Al-Jaradat, 2014; Al-Minqash, 2007). Lack of confidence is another personal issue that overshadows women’s leadership. Sometimes, they pose physiological, psychological and intellectual weakness in playing their managerial duties (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). The lack of ability to employ the positional power, implementing strategic leadership, adapting with the change and working hour push

women backward (Al-Jaradat, 2014). Adverse social condition and family restriction are associated with the personal problems of the women leaders to reach organisational superior position (Mooney & Ryan, 2009). A research has suggested that inequality takes place between men and women in plying leadership roles in higher education due to women's personal and family obligations (Tomàs et al., 2010). Women who are particularly living in the traditional social environment are obliged to carry out family responsibilities, such as raising children, taking care of husband and other family members while doing the household chores. These obligations seem to be barriers in their career development and academic progress (Neale & Özkanli, 2010).

Saudi women also face challenges due to their lack of experience. Since they have been getting engaged with higher management in education only very recently, they seemingly possess relatively less experience in administrative work and decision making (Özkanli & White, 2008). Any leadership position brings a great deal of responsibilities to the leader. In order to accomplish those duties, women need to gain proper skills, experience, abilities to balance over family and job as well as to the change in job environment and unfavourable organisational structure. But failing to do so, women encounter numerous obstacles, conflicts and challenges. Consequently, they might fail to perform their administrative responsibilities (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016).

In addition, family income, marital status and number of children exert significant negative impacts on the probability of joining in the labour force of the Saudi women. Al-Orabi (1999) outlined that unmarried women may get more free time than married women. as such, unmarried women are expected to be more proactive to their organisational responsibilities. Besides, the lower the opportunity

cost of remaining at home the higher the probability of joining the labour force. He also pointed out that economic need may not always pursue women to work. Because, well off family usually prefer women to be managing household responsibilities only. For this reason, married women are less likely to participate in the labour force (Al-Orabi, 1999). Besides, the Saudi society deeply values the family rules and traditional culture. This society seems ready to decline any approach which is contradictory to the traditional familial values and norms (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Thus, the family and individual issues barred women joining the workforce. However, women empowerment seems interconnected with the above issues. So, women empowerment is briefly discussed below.

2.6 Women Empowerment: A Strategic Way-Out

Empowerment refers to gaining control or having a say or being listened to. It enables individuals or groups to influence over the social choices and to make decisions in order to affect the society. The term, empowerment was popularized in social science in the last decade (Hur, 2006). This term can be defined as “an outcome or process or both.” It can also be explained as “a reflexive process which is initiated and sustained by those who seek power to relegate others to play the secondary helping roles. It is a process of personal development from infancy to adulthood.” The process of describing empowerment is linked with psychological as well as socio-political. On the other hand, as an outcome, many theorists shed light on the stage of Conscientisation – “Originally in Latin America: the action or process of making others aware of political and social conditions, especially as a precursor to challenging inequalities of treatment or opportunity; the fact of being aware of these conditions (Oxford Dictionary)” by which individuals get opportunity to understand the political dimensions and can act properly (Carr, 2003).

One of the most prominent Brazilian educators, Paulo Freire (1973-1998) articulated the concept of empowerment based on the development of education. He prioritized on humanity. For instance, oppressed people need empathy and it is necessary to understand their needs (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). But Reichert (2006) brought about the human right principles. He pointed out that the persisting social structure is responsible for inequalities and oppression (Reichert, 2006). Powerlessness is a component that enhances oppression. People are deemed powerless who do not have material and personal resources, such as self-esteem and self-efficiency (Gutiérrez & Lewis, 1999).

Many researches have quantitatively established that there are correlations between levels of women's empowerment and conflict, but the nature of the relationship is not clear. It is not known whether conflict and challenges are the results of greater gender inequality and lack of empowerment, whether gender inequality leads to conflict, whether gender inequality is a proxy for something else that might cause conflict, or whether countries that are prone to one type of violence, are also prone to others. Furthermore, recent studies have reconsidered the evidence on gender inequality and gender-based violence (GBV), noting that GBV occurs across countries including those with high levels of gender equality (Wiklund, et al., 2010, in UN, 2011).

However, quantitative analysis by Ekvall (2013) testing whether norms on gender inequality and violence are linked concludes that ~~while~~ a causal link cannot be proven for any of the five hypotheses in the paper the literature indicates that there might be one. The strong and significant relationships found between our norms and values on gender equality and actual levels of gender equality. conflict and general peacefulness show that there is a need to think about prevention of violence and

conflict in a new way, not reducing gender equality to “women’s issues” that can be dealt with later when the “hard issues have been solved” (Ekvall, 2013).

With regard to the impact of economic empowerment (or lack of) on outbreaks of conflict, evidence suggests that countries with higher female participation in the labour force exhibit lower levels of international violence; better gender equality can indirectly increase a country’s stability through its impact on the country’s wealth/income; plus other findings (Van Geel, 2016).

In respect of the impact of conflict on economic empowerment, evidence suggests during conflict and immediately post-conflict, women are likely to experience greater economic participation; effects of conflict on women’s economic activity differ by age and life status (Walker & Aritz, 2015).

As for the impact of social empowerment (or lack of) on conflict, evidence suggests that countries with high levels of national violence against women and girls have been more likely to experience armed conflict; countries with high fertility rates are more likely to use force in international disputes; plus other findings. According to Carr (2003), empowerment includes some fundamental factors as shown below:

1. Position:

Position is a crucial factor in empowerment. Having demoted/ inferior position may lead to powerlessness, deprivation or oppression. Empowerment as well as feminist theorist are explicating the position considering the socioeconomic and psychological factors.

2. Powerlessness:

Powerlessness is conceived as not only the inability to manage emotion, knowledge and skills but also lacking material resources that are important for effective performance as well as playing social roles and personal gratification.

Empowerment and powerlessness result from the past experience, continued pattern of thinking and ongoing behaviour.

3. Conscientisation:

Critical consciousness is an important factor in realising empowerment. However, critical consciousness goes through a certain process known as conscientisation that uncovers the roots of people's individual expressions of powerlessness and oppression. Through raising consciousness women can identify the cause of oppression as well as personal problems.

Conscientisation can be explained as connected with several subprocess, such as interpreting an individual's relationship with and position in society, creating an identity in a specific environment and effecting social change.

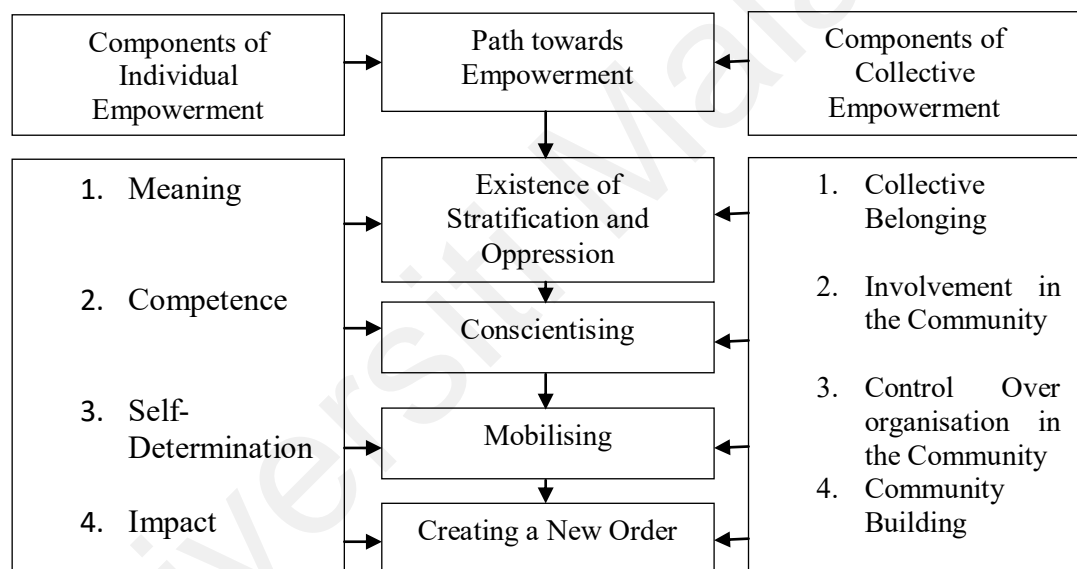
Conscientisation undergoes three process, such as 1) group identification, in which an individual chooses a group with common culture and norms and becomes a member of the group based on the self-concept; 2) developing group consciousness individual starts to understand the dimension of the problem; 3) developing individual and collective efficiency to mobilize social action. Thus, perceiving oneself not only as a subject of the social process but also as bring capable of working towards social change.

Conscientisation is analytical and works to interpret the structure and discourse framing people's experiences. It is constructive as well as creative to develop the power-laden structure and discourses.

4. Political Action and Change:

Political action directly impacts on the empowerment process. By means of political action new strategies are formulated. It can also bring social and personal changes (Carr, 2003).

Hur (2013) explained the process of empowerment that can be synthesised in five progressive stages: such as existing social disturbance, conscientising, mobilising, maximising and creating a new order. However, empowerment has two interrelated forms: 1) individual empowerment and 2) collective empowerment. Individual empowerment aims at achieving a state of liberation that can enable an individual to cope with the personal, community and social life. Collective empowerment includes four general components, such as inclusive meaning, collective belonging, involvement in the community, control over organisation in the community and community building (Hur, 2013) as shown in (Figure 2.5).



Source: (Hur, 2013)

Figure 2.5 The Formation of Empowerment

Nowadays, empowerment is intertwined in case of defining human rights and social justice (Miley & Dubois, 2007). This theory is important to explain human rights, social justice and critical awareness of individual and socio-political contexts. It also can add a distinct dimension guiding holistic assessment especially with the underrepresented population. Besides, the central concepts of this theory are mutuality, collective action, collaboration, critical self-awareness and

conscientisation. It also serve a particular role in redressing unequal access to power (Turner & Maschi, 2015). This alignment views to building a more compassionate world (Miley & Dubois, 2007). Empowerment practitioners and educationalists maintain that a person who has experienced oppression can have a negative self-image and low self-esteem and thus, lose empowerment (Reichert, 2006). In this regard, women have been discriminated against and oppressed throughout history. The nature of oppression and discrimination is in many ways (Turner & Maschi, 2015). The agenda of women empowerment and its active contribution in the leadership become a global issue since 1985. This concept of women empowerment was initially raised and discussed at the International Women Conference at Nairobi in 1985. The term is defined as the process of providing rights, opportunities and responsibilities to women with the aim of developing their potentialities, thinking, and being able to act freely with men in the develop society (Bera, 2016).

Women empowerment is also interpreted as a process of uplifting women's social, economic, and political status in society so that they can live peacefully without exploitation, oppression and discrimination. Women empowerment thus, specifies women's perspective to be recognized and respected as equal citizens (Griffen, 2005). The core believe of feminist theory is that the women carry inferior status because of social inequality. Besides, the personal status of women is the result of political, economic and social power (Turner & Maschi, 2015).

Women can contribute to society through involvement with political and social activities (Paramanandam & Packirisamy, 2015). However, women have limited mobility within the Arab countries, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Women in those countries need permission from their guardian to travel overseas (Metcalf, 2011a).

2.6.1 Women Empowerment in Saudi

Historically, the economy of the KSA started booming from the 1970s (especially the oil crisis in 1973). This economic gain has brought progressive changes all over the country while modernising the social structure. Consequently, the government of Saudi tightened the freedom of women. But this situation started changing by 2000s onwards. Saudi society demanded women-only public spaces and the practice of *ikhtilat* is a term used for intermingling of the sexes. The meeting together, mixing, and intermingling of men and women in one place, their working together, and the revealing and exposure of women to men are prohibited by the Law of Islam (Shari'ah).

These concepts were strongly supported by the conservatives as well as the liberal-reformists. As a result, King Abdallah introduced the first co-ed university keeping the scope of practising *ikhtilat*. Though, King Abdallah University for Science and Technology (KAUST), which was built and financed by Saudi Aramco faced questions that were raised by the religious scholars regarding the implementation of *ikhtilat*. In order to resolve this debate king Abdallah announced a consultative council (*majlis ai-shura*) that worked in compliance with the Islamic principle (Van Geel, 2016). Thus, a new chapter in history was begun.

In Saudi Arabia, the concept of gender management, women empowerment as well as leadership have been tailored based on the social norm, tradition, religion, and socio-economic condition. Women in this country are nowadays participating in different professions in parallel with the transitional phase of the society (Alquaiz, Almuneef, Kazi, & Almeneessier, 2017). Nevertheless, women empowerment in education sector is still one of the most critical issues.

The concept of gender discrimination is created over time as a social pattern and being cherished generation to generation (Walker & Aritz, 2015). Women are regarded to be the dependents of men for educational issues especially, for higher education. They face tremendous barriers in academic life because of the guardianship of men. Nevertheless, the concept of the man guardianship is considered as an unavoidable obligation for the women in Saudi Arabia. This concept adversely affects women in furthering their education as well as discouraging to develop professional career to the higher level (Abalkhail, 2017; Abalkhail & Allan, 2015). According to Van Geel (2016), there are some factors that influence women's depressed position in Saudi society. Those factors are, stricter gender segregation, discovery of oil, urbanization, revivalist Islamic Awakening movement (Van Geel, 2016). In the same vein, Al-Munajjed (2010) underscored some other constraints of women employment, those are legal constraints, educational constraints, and occupational constraints. Lack of enough educational quality, the gap between the job market demand and the quality of the graduates and limited seats for women in the educational institutes are considered as constraints in women empowerment. The current education system is not sufficiently improved for solving the problems of communication skills, creativity and analytical skills. Women are not significantly provided the knowledge of math, science and technology, computer literacy, etc. Consequently, Saudi women lack empowerment even with education. On the other hand, occupational constraints such as lack of opportunity in job market penetration, position in management, and decision making also lagged behind for women. Furthermore, unsupportive organisational infrastructure is also a barrier to women advancing to leadership positions (Al-Munajjed, 2010).

Saudi authorities have taken several effective steps to facilitate female empowerment. Significant initiatives have been taken by the local and regional organisations. For instance, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which is a prominent regional organisation has been working for women's empowerment in the Middle East as well as in Saudi Arabia. This organisation strongly supports women in politics, business, finance, education and various other professional spheres (Metcalf, 2006).

Nonetheless, the traditional masculinist attitude, which is dominating all over the Gulf states pointed at the biological difference between men and women (Metcalf, 2011a). However, the government of the KSA has recently initiated a significant change by evaluating the capabilities of women. King Abdullah allowed 30 women representatives in the Saudi Parliament while extending opportunities for higher education for all. As a result, women were highly encouraged to take on formal job as well as play a role of leadership roles (Hamdan & Alexander, 2016).

Though Saudi women have shown that they can do well in entrepreneurial and innovative activities, but they are particularly encouraged to work in the education sector. About 85% of working women are pursuing teaching and administrative jobs in education (Almobaieek & Manolova, 2013). Relatively better and positive changes have been evident in women's education, employment and legal position because of government policy. Now, women can hold leadership positions in universities, and they are authorised to apply for identity cards without requiring the consent of male guardians. They enjoy a certain level of freedom in the social sphere. They can vote in municipality elections (Sakr, 2008). Numerous other initiatives have been taken to increase women's employability. Women's attendance is nowadays observed in the tourism and training support industries. They

are working in the five-star hotels in the reservation and marketing departments (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Some organisations are paying attention to improve women's human capital, thus enabling them to fit and meet the demands of various industries. For example, *Al Nahda* Philanthropic Society for Women in Riyadh aims to provide training to improve female human resource. Prince Sultan Fund for Supporting Women's Small Projects in the Eastern Region aims to enhance female entrepreneurship and creativity. The League of National Women in the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Riyadh supports women in creating employment at home. Abdul Latif Jameel Community Service programme has been working since 2003 to create employment for them. Through this project government provides small loans and training courses for women (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Thus, the women in Saudi Arabia are getting empowered and stepping into leadership positions as well.

Global Gender Gap Index which was the idea of the World Economic Forum in 2016 outlined that among 144 countries, Saudi's overall rank was 141. Wherein, Economic Participation and Opportunity Sub-index (142), Educational Attainment Sub-index (105), Health and Survival Sub-index (128), Political Empowerment Sub-index (121) (World-Economic-Forum, 2016). This scenario demonstrates that Saudi women are utterly underprivileged as well as underrepresented in education, health and political empowerment. But, in some cases, Saudi women had exemplified tremendous leadership skills even in the extreme unsupportive situation. Presumably, they might exhibit even better performance in decision making in the private and public sector in a favourable environment (Rodolfo & Estimo, 2017).

A study discovered that more than 16 thousand businesses are owned by Saudi women while 40% of the private properties belong to them (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011). Furthermore, Saudi women have achieved the right to vote at Riyadh

Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2004 (though they are facing pressing challenges in Jeddah). It should be noted that 2,750 women entrepreneurs participated in the last election in Riyadh and another 600 business women, who were members of the Chamber of Commerce voted in the Eastern region (Danish & Smith, 2012). The kingdom has articulated “Vision 2030,” which is a long-term economic development goal that envisions 30% women’s participation in the overall workforce. In fact, the private sector in Saudi has already accommodated 30% women in their workforce. Furthermore, work from home project is going to create 140,000 jobs for women by 2020 (Al-Sati, 2017).

Table 2.3

Women’s empowerment in Saudi Arabia from 1999 to 2014

	1999- 2001	2002- 2004	2005- 2007	2008- 2010	2011 2014	-
Female Population (in millions)	44.80	44.85	44.05	43.76	43.53	
Female Employment Rate (%)	45.2	60.23	85.70	84.33	79.66	
Fertility Rate (%)	4.21	3.98	3.46	3.24	3.03	
Literacy Rate (%)	65.25	76.45	82.56	89.33	91.84	
GDP Growth Rate (%)	1.53	5.67	6.27	5.00	4.50	

Source: (Saqib et al., 2016)

According to Table above, there is an upgrowing trend of women empowerment in Saudi Arabia. Women literacy rate is growing higher over the period of time. But the employment rate seems slightly declining from 2005 onward.

Women’s participation in the professional occupations in Saudi is significantly low compared to the global context (Alselaime, 2012). For example, female leadership in higher education is underrepresented. They encounter several challenges in pursuing leadership in the academic environment (Almaki, Silong, et

al., 2016). In that respect, several barriers are identified. Different as well as demeaning attitudes towards women are observed across the region. Besides, female participation in jobs is a sensitive cultural issue while Islam is seen as an enabler to dominate women and women's responsibilities to families (Alselaimi, 2012). Even the educated male are found conservative towards women because of their attachment with the traditional culture (Asadi, 2011). This statement suggests that women in Saudi are barely empowered. It's a matter of hope that the cultural environment and the perceptions of men towards women are changing in Saudi Arabia. Saudi government has ratified the UN Equal Remuneration Convention and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (Al-Munajjed, 2010). The society seems becoming more open than before. Women also proved their abilities through their achievement in the universities. And thus, Saudi women to some extent could gain leadership position in the academic arena (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). Though women are significantly involved in teaching profession but they are under-represented in the senior management (Cubillo & Brown, 2003). A recent study found that the western region of Saudi Arabia is more receptive to different cultures. People from different regions and countries are welcomed to this region. There is less segregation of male and female in this region. On the other hand, in the central region people are more conservative about women's issues (Alselaimi, 2012). Young women are kept under their family surveillance until marriage. They also live in a separate dormitory in the corporate compound under proper supervision (House, 2014).

2.6.2 Women Leadership and Empowerment

In the developed world, women have achieved greater gender equality both at home and in the workplace. Men are participating more in the household chores and

child caring activities which help to ease the domestic burden on women and at the same time accord women a little more freedom. Theoretically, leadership ignores any gender difference. Several empirical studies suggest that male and female leaders behave more alike when occupying the same position (Chin, 2011). It is difficult to identify any specific differences between men and women in carrying out leadership responsibilities but, women continue to be under represented in leadership roles in various sectors, such as corporations, higher educational institutions and in the political sector (Chin, 2011).

Leadership and empowerment are intertwined. Leadership has implications of a relationship of power; the power to guide others (Chin, 2011). Srilatha Batliwala (Batliwala, 1994) clarified the difference between power and empowerment. Power is a control over the material assets, ideology and intellectual resources. Empowerment is viewed as a relational matter. The experience of empowerment and disempowerment depends on the essential sociality of the concept. It is an evolving process that cannot stand alone. It can be temporary and may lead women into the experience of disempowerment from where they may or may not be empowered (Cornwall, 2016).

Empowerment is defined as “the process of challenging the persisting power relations while gaining control over the sources of power.” Since the 90s empowerment has offered us three important insights such as, changing power relations that involves critical consciousness. Raising awareness of inequalities, ensuring social justice, and encouraging social change. It also involves understanding the policy and practice of methodology and process (Cornwall, 2016). Empowerment gained enormous popularity in the last two decades. It has been considered as a way forward to develop social policy reform and practice specifically

for the disenfranchised population (Busch & Valentine, 2000). The concept of female empowerment has a long historical background. It first emerged in the 1970s along with feminist consciousness and its alignment with the international development. It is radical approach was seemed during 1980-90 which was concerned transforming power relations in favour of women's rights (Cornwall, 2016). Besides, female empowerment emphasises the equality between men and women. It was argued that "empowerment is something to achieve. It cannot be bestowed by others. There must be recognition of the inequalities in power as well as asserting the rights and bringing about structural change in favour of greater equality" (Batliwala, 1993, 2007). Thus, women's empowerment is being enhanced and inspired in the Saudi society.

2.6.3 Women's Participation in the Job Market

The initiatives of economic reformation and modernization are provoking Saudi women to participate in the job market greater than any time in the national history (Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Women's access to the public domain has been comparably easier due to favourable government policy and changing social norm. Since, Saudi women are getting better opportunities to obtain higher education in the recent decades, they are being qualified for pertaining job (MOH, 2013; Rather, 2016). Notably, the educated women in Saudi are mostly getting involved in the education sector (Akram, Murugiah, & Arfan, 2017).

To build a knowledge-based economy women education is given greater priority. Entire education system has been nourished by bringing significant structural changes. As a result, the number of higher educated women is increasing and their participation in the labour market is rising parallelly (Al Banawi & Yusuf, 2011). It is noteworthy, Saud Mohammed Al-Sati, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to

India has recently (17 Oct. 2017) published an article in Hindustan Times on women's empowerment in Saudi. He overwhelmingly mentioned the royal decree of King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud on allowing women to obtain the driving license. This decision is considered as a landmark in the year 2017. Besides, in the same year Saudi was elected as a member to serve the UN Commission on the Status of women. Girls are now allowed to receive physical curriculum in public school. On the other hand, justice ministry approved four landmark decisions pertaining women's right, those are protecting minors, divorcees, women in their children custody and the law graduates who are unable to practice their profession due to the arbitration of their male counterparts. The government has introduced 64 centres as well as 17 committees to safeguard women against violence. Most remarkably, in September 2017 women were present at the King Fahd International Stadium in Riyadh to enjoy sports (Al-Sati, 2017).

It is noteworthy, a number of government and non-government organisations in Saudi Arabia are providing services for women's empowerment in economic and social domains. Those organisations are –Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundations, Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation, Saudi Industrial Development Fund, Abdul Latif Jameel Fund, Sulaiman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation, and Cooperative Associations”. Most remarkably, –Princess Seetah Bint AbdulAziz Award for Excellence” in Social Work has the greater impact on women's empowerment (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2014).

But still, women in Saudi Arabia are facing multiple barriers to realising their legal, social and economic potential, which include regulations and associated restrictions on travel, access to finance, unequal property and inheritance rights (Saidi, 2017). The recent statistics suggest that only 20.1 percent women in Saudi

have participated in the workforce. But, 18 percent of the working age population are female. The average youth (15-24 year of age) unemployment is 31.2 percent while female (youth) unemployment rate is about 58 percent despite Saudi women opt out the men in educational attainment. That seems the human capital of women is being wasted in this kingdom (Saidi, 2017).

2.7 Islam and Women

In the pre-Islamic age in Arabia the social status of women was appalling. The infant girls were buried alive and sometimes killed as soon as they were born. A man could marry and divorce women as many times he wished. But Islam brought the provision of women empowerment in that anarchic society. Islam offered five fundamental things to women, such as freedom, equality, security, economic empowerment and dignity. Islam obligates education for all. A girl has liberty to choose the person she wills to marry. Women has right to divorce (*Khula*) and re-marry. She can be the household head in absence of the male member. She also can be engaged herself in income generating activities by doing trading or any professional job but of course preserving her femininity (in *hijab*). In all cases of criminal and civil acts of judiciary, women are equal to men. The Prophet (pbuh) strongly motivated parents to nurture their girls. Islam conferred highest dignity on women saying, *“heaven lies under the mother’s feet”*. Nevertheless, the purpose of suggesting veil is to shield women from mischievous staring eyes (while men were ordered not to stare at women) (Ahmed, 2016).

In Quran Allah (SWT) states:

—And whoever does righteous good deeds — male or female — and is a true believer in the Oneness of Allah, such will enter Paradise and not the least injustice, even to the size of a Naqira (speck on the back of a date-stone), will be done to them.” (Surah An-Nisa, 4:124)

—For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much — a legal share.” (Surah An-Nisa, 4:7)

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss.”

(Surah An-Nur, 24: 31)

2.7.1 Islamic Scholars and their Effect on Women from the Saudi Perspective

Female participation in professional occupations in Saudi is low relative to the global context (Alselaime, 2012). Saudi women leaders in higher education are underrepresented as has been earlier mentioned. They have also encountered several challenges in pursuing leadership positions in the academic environment (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). Different barriers, such as differences in attitudes across the region, and the culturally sensitive nature of female participation in jobs. Islam as an enabler and women's responsibilities to families and social expectations are other issues (Alselaime, 2012). Even the educated Saudi people are found to be conservative towards women because of their attachment to the traditional culture (Asadi, 2011). This statement suggests that women in Saudi are barely empowered. This is because, women in this society are neither seen to be equal nor superior compared to men. However, it can be seen through that, the women are going through the ongoing process of interaction between individual and society. In Saudi

Arabia, young women are kept under their family surveillance until marriage. They also live in a separate dormitory in the corporate compound under strict supervision (House, 2014). So, the current condition can be explained from the Islamic perspective.

It is hoped that the cultural environment and the perspective of men towards women will improve in Saudi Arabia. There are signs that Saudi society is becoming more open than before. Women have also proved their abilities through their achievements in higher education. As such, Saudi women have managed to attain a certain presence in leadership positions (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). Although women are significantly involved in the teaching profession they are still grossly under-represented in senior management (Cubillo & Brown, 2003). A recent study found that the western region of Saudi Arabia is more open to various cultures, as has been reported earlier. People from different regions and countries are welcomed to this region. There is less gender segregation in this region. On the other hand, in the central region people are more conservative about women and gender issues (Alselaime, 2012). Nevertheless, the Saudi government has ratified the UN Equal Remuneration Convention and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (Al-Munajjed, 2010). According to feminist scholars women's lack of knowledge about their rights is largely related to their devalued position (Moghadam, 2005). This process seems in line with the traditional socio-cultural norm. In any case, at least women now can travel abroad. Hence, they are optimistic that the youthful population of this kingdom and the rising influence of the media will bring about positive change to this country (House, 2014). Furthermore, Islamic perspective is prevailing to a greater extent. Islamic social scholars in Saudi have recommended only a set of jobs suitable for women,

such as nursing, midwifery, teaching, social services, medicine, where women need not come in contact with men (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004).

2.8 Difference Between Private and Public Universities in Saudi Arabia

Different studies such as Lubienski and Lubienski (2006), Peterson and Laudet (2006) and Somers (2001) done in various countries show that the types of academic institution, both private and public, as predictors of future academic success have been researched and debated. Non-public education is often associated with higher tuition fees and therefore with a higher socio-economic fame, a perceived 'higher' peer institution, with more flexible curriculum and faculty guidelines. Public or every so often called 'authorities' training is frequently considered the training of the masses, more aligned with cultural identity and norms in many nations such as Saudi Arabia (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2006; Peterson & Llaudet, 2006; Somers, McEwan, & Willms, 2001). Within the country of Saudi Arabia, training begins officially at the age of 6 or grade 1, public or private. Saudi faculties are overseen by the Ministry of Training (global schools for the predicted six to eight million expatriates often comply with extraordinary policies) and are gender-segregated in many respect levels which include higher education. Girls' education began in 1960, and consistently showed outstanding growth and change (Arebi, 1994; Tracy, 2003).

2.9 Summary

The overall discussion suggests that despite significant reformation Saudi women still lag behind in several aspects. Arguably, Saudi women are not fully aware of their rights, a situation resulting from their devalued position (Moghadam, 2005). Besides, Islamic social scholars have recommended only a set of jobs for Saudi women, such as nursing, midwifery, teaching, social services, and medicine where

they do not need to come in to contact with men (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004). This selection somehow brought some liberty as well as opportunities to the women but at the same time significantly compartmentalised them. Thus, Saudi women are marginalised and continue to lag behind.

Job performance is generally influenced by several elements such as the organisational commitment, job satisfaction and other personal and professional issues, such as salary, nature of work, organisational culture, behaviour of the management and leadership (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012). Saudi women are mostly deprived of these privileges in their workplace. Rather, they are facing biased organisational structure, gender discrimination, policy impairment and family restriction. A recent study suggests that these factors negatively impact female leadership (Alselaimi, 2012). Additionally, this society has a preference for the traditional leadership approach where there is no room for women (Neal, Finlay, & Tansey, 2005). In this regard, a study showed Saudi female leaders are somehow bound to adopt the stereotypical social attributes (Taleb, 2010). Hence, the conclusion is that women in Saudi are facing adverse realities in pursuing leadership not only because of culture, religion, and social norms but also unfinished social and organisational reformation. The next chapter will demonstrate the methodology used in researching this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted in this study to achieve the research objectives. It begins with the research epistemology that explains the philosophical aspects of the methods. Then it details all other procedural issues, such as study setting and sampling, data collection and data analyses, and triangulation. However, for the sake of convenience the research questions can be revisited:

1. What are the conflicts experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in higher education?
2. What are the challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in higher education?
3. How does empowerment influence the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders?
4. How do the Islamic attributes contribute to the conflicts and challenges experienced by the Saudi female educational leaders?
5. What are the differences in conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in public and private universities?

3.2 Epistemology and Ontology

The study conducted by Burrell & Morgan (1979) named epistemology, ontology, as attribute and method as philosophical assumptions (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Slevitch (2011) states that ontology (onto in Greek ‘being’ and observe, precept’) is described due to the fact the layout at of reality or matters that contain reality (Slevitch, 2011). The view of Guba and Lincoln, (1994) is that the ontological

attention is what is the shape and nature of fact and so, what can also be recognised about it's miles ~~know-how~~ matters surely are” and ~~knowledge~~ topics virtually paintings” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Regular with Bryman & Bell (2013) an epistemological trouble concerns the query of what's (or should be) idea to be relevant know-how in the course of an area. in addition they country that an specifically critical trouble during this context is that the question of whether or not the social international can and have to be studied in line with the same thoughts, methods and ethos because the natural sciences (Bryman & Bell, 2013). In this line, Allison & Hobbs (2006) means that ontological interest is ready ~~what's~~ that the nature of the knowable, or nature of fact?” and therefore the epistemological interest is ready ~~what~~ is the nature of the connection between the knower (the inquirer) and therefore the appeared (or information) (Allison & Hobbs, 2006). The term epistemology is involved with the information and justification. It explores ~~know-how~~ all of us realize that we all understand something” (Miller & Brewer, 2003)

Therefore, three epistemological perceptions are generally embedded in the methodologies, those are objectivism, constructionism, and subjectivism. Objectivism contends the subjects that are under investigation have an existence irrespective of human input. While constructionists argue that the truth is instead constructed through engagement with an object of investigation. On the other side, subjectivism contends that truth is subjective and the meaning of phenomenon is a sole act of human creation (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). With the view to understanding the deeper meaning of a particular phenomenon in a specific social context, this study adopts interpretive approach based on subjectivism to conduct a qualitative study (Gialdino, 2009). In this vain, interpretivism goes through more personal process to understand the reality by taking account those phenomena under

a study, and the contextual understanding and the interpretation of data (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001). However, qualitative method was used in order to obtain rich knowledge of the specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2002).

3.3 Research Design

Qualitative research method was applied to obtain detailed and in-depth knowledge on the particular phenomenon of leadership conflicts and challenges in higher education. Thus, a deeper understanding on the causative issues was possible (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011). It is worth noting that qualitative research can be defined into five categories, such as 1) narrative research, 2) ethnography, 3) phenomenology, 4) grounded theory and 5) case study (Creswell, 2002).

Methodology is described as “the plan of action, strategies and process behind the choice and use of specific approaches and connecting the choice and use of the approaches to the desired results” (Crotty, 1998). In line with the explanation of Wellington (2015), which states that “methodological assumption aims to assess and vindicate the use of specific methods in a research. For that reason, the methodology of this study is a multiple case study in relation to private and public universities.

A case study is defined by Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1976) as “the study of an instance in action.” Pring (2004) defines it as “the study of the unique case or the specific instant.” Louis, Keith and Lawrence (2000) in their declaration, affirm that case studies “offer a unique examples of actual people in real circumstances, allowing readers to comprehend ideas more visibly than just giving them with abstract theories.” Hence, the multiple case study that is adopted in this study as Yin (1984) puts it, “is evaluative, that is, it clarifies and judges the phenomena in question.” (Yin, 1984).

This study uses ‘multiple case study,’ which is a collective case study dealing with more than one case. It can be conducted at one site or multiple sites by examining a number of departments or units. Each unit is studied as a part of the whole (Mills, 2010). This method is considered as the most appropriate technique for achieving the research objectives (Hamilton, 2013; Mills, 2010). The rationales for choosing case study and multiple case studies are briefly discussed below:

3.3.1 Case Study

The main purpose of using case studies is to create knowledge and understanding, however, in education research this approach not only creates knowledge and understanding but also introduces a standard mean of policy development. Case study has been proved to be an effective as well as beneficial approach in the education field (Mills, 2010). There are several well-known cross-case analysis approaches and techniques available to the case study researcher. Many researchers delineate between variable and case-oriented research as two approaches to cross-case comparisons. In variable-oriented research, variables take centre stage; that is, the outcome observed in the cases varies across observations and causes appear to compete with one another. The cases are selected in advance with an eye toward randomness or the degree to which they represent the general population. The goal is to explain why the cases vary. Variable-oriented approaches to cross-case analysis are a challenge to conduct because fair comparisons are difficult to achieve and the multitude of factors that are associated with social phenomena are often too numerous to disentangle.

There are two types of the case study. First, single case study which is the selection of only one particular case. Second, multiple case study which consist of more than one case study (Yin, 2009). This study involves two types of universities,

public and private universities. Therefore, the multiple case study design was applied. In addition, the current study the method of analysis will involve only 'Inter-case' analysis under the case study research method. This would enable the researcher to described the data and compare the findings obtained from individual informants of the study. In addition, the augments of each participant could be compared from public and private universities. The researcher's position, and the position of others such as Stake, (2013) is that it is conceivable to learn from both the uniqueness and commonality of a case. By providing ample contextualized details of the cases and findings of cross-case analysis, a researcher can conceivably preserve the uniqueness of a case and convey the value of their engagement with a cross case analysis.

Furthermore, in cross-case analysis, the contextualized origins of each case are in danger of being lost as cases are compared, especially if a variable oriented approach is adopted. However, according to Ayres, Kavanaugh and Knafl (2003), losing some contextual detail may be consistent with the goals of cross-case comparison, which is to identify themes across cases. According to TESCH (1990), it is emphasized that cross-case comparison as essentially a "decontextualization and recontextualization" of cases. The process is as follows: case study data are separated into units of meaning (decontextualized because they are separated from the individual cases) and then recontextualized as they are later integrated and clustered into themes. The themes, which are a reduced data set, can help to explore relationships.

3.3.1.1 Multiple Case Studies

In this study, Cross-case analysis was employed due to the nature of the research which includes many cases. This multiple case study is a special form of

case study that is commonly used to examine a bundle of cases. This approach focuses on a small number of people with the view to exploring their activities, problems, policies, strengths or relationships. But each case is expected to have a distinguish characteristic or uniqueness (Stake, 2013). Fieldworkers adopted a common data collection instrument or protocol to collect consistent data across all cases. The researcher used Nvivo to illustrate themes and subthemes of the cases. Cross-case comparison supports the researcher in the creation of clusters or families of phenomena. Sets of cases are categorized into clusters of groups that share certain patterns or configurations. For instance, the informants view on the scenario of conflicts and challenges were compared in the process of the analysis.

Furthermore, this enabled the researcher to applied across or inter-case analysis in order to compare the experience of all participants on the conflicts and challenges facing women leaders in higher education and identify categories of significant statements that were common among them. Once the categories were identified, the researcher reconnected each significant statement to its original context and validated the categories; the researcher wanted to be certain to account for everything that was significant from the original accounts without introducing ideas not represented in those original accounts. Across-case comparisons strategy was used primarily to ensure that the essential structure accounted for everything that was significant from the original accounts and did not impose an interpretation on an individual case that had not occurred within the original account. Although the essential structure alone was not adequate to evoke the intensity of the original experience, the summaries of each theme, including subthemes, successfully captured the intensity of participants' lived experience (Ayres, Kavanaugh, & Knafl, 2003).

The overall discussion suggests that since, the purpose of this study is an in-depth interview of the causal issues of conflicts (not to generalize the findings) qualitative research technique is considered as the most appropriate method. Because, qualitative method can unveil the underlying facts by answering the questions in a great detail. It can demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the underlying reasons, attitude or motivation drives the human behaviour (Rosenthal, 2016). In the same vein this study adopted multiple case study. Thus, a number of subjects (10 respondents) represents the cases. But this approach involves a higher degree of moral risk. Respondents provides personal information as well as an underlying story of a particular social context. Interpretation of data depends on the researcher. Most of the time respondents' personal lives or opinion are being examined or closely scrutinized. So, there is always a chance their personal truth to be distorted (McLeod, 2010). An empirical study was carried out in order to explore the real scenario collecting data from the women academic leaders in Saudi Arabia. At last, both findings were presented in a comprehensive and comparative manner. The Table below presents a glimpse of research technique that was applied to achieve the research objectives.

Table 3.1

Research Design

Research Techniques	Research Objectives	Research Questions
a) Interviewing the respondents and Document Analysis b) Narrative and Thematic analysis	RO 1: To explore the current scenario of conflicts experienced by Saudi female leaders in higher education.	RQ 1: What are the conflicts experienced by the Saudi female educational leaders in higher education?
a) Interviewing the respondents and Document Analysis b) Narrative and Thematic analysis	RO 2: To explore the current scenario of challenges experienced by Saudi female leaders in higher education.	RQ2: What are the challenges experienced by the Saudi female educational leaders in higher education?
a) Interviewing the respondents and Document Analysis b) Narrative and Thematic analysis	RO 3: To explore whether empowerment influences the conflicts and Challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders.	RQ3: How does empowerment influence the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders?
a) Interviewing the respondents and Document Analysis b) Narrative and Thematic analysis	RO 4: To explore whether Islamic attributes contribute to the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders.	RQ 5: How do Islamic attributes contribute to the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders?
a) Based on the findings from in-depth interview the comparative scenario was delineated. b) Narrative and Thematic analysis	RO 5: To explore if there are any differences in the nature of conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in public and private universities.	RQ 7: What are the differences in conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in public and private universities?

3.4 Setting of the Study

The setting of the study were private and public universities in Saudi Arabia which consisted of the total number of 30 public universities and 13 private universities. Generally, Saudi Arabia is considered as country in the central Arabian Peninsula possesses the legacy of a rich history. The Hejaz, which lies along the Red Sea is the cradle of Islam and the site of two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina. The region Najd populated by nomadic tribes is considered as the geographic heartland of Saudi. To the east, along the Persian Gulf is abundant with lot of oil fields that were explored since 1960s. These oil fields have contributed economic richness by earning a great deal of petrodollar. Three elements, such as religion, tribalism and mineral oil have heavily fuelled Saudi's economy while building a new episode of its history (Philby, Ochsenwald, & Teitelbaum, 2018). A single family has been ruling this country since 1902. During this rule, in more than last 100 years this kingdom evolved from being a tribal union to a modern monarchy. Multiple factors have contributed to this evolving process of social reformation, good governance, economic wellbeing. Oil-wealth, interaction with the outer world, internal demand, external pressure, and the unpremeditated wave of globalization have tremendously influenced this process. Along the way Saudi people and society have experienced various changes in their day to day lives, education system, social status of women, role of religion and ulema, and existence of the traditional norms and values. Thus, this Kingdom has reached up to this current phase today which is far different from what it was a century ago (Quamar, 2015).



(Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica)

Figure 3.1 The Map of Saudi Arabia

Basically, the rise of Saud family (Al Saud), a Najdi group for which the country is named in the early of 20th century characterised Saudi Arabia as a modern country. Enormous petrochemical invited huge and rapid investment in this country. Thus, the economy has become rich and nourished. Up to the mid-20th century Saudi people had had traditional lifestyle but later on an accelerated changed has come. Besides, the constant flow of pilgrims to Mecca and Medina attributes outside contact. Interaction with the out world has expanded with technological innovation and improved transportation system. Economic growth has invited unpremeditated domestic changes. Furthermore, modern methods of production invited millions of foreign workers. Besides, a lot of Saudi students are taking higher education in abroad. Infrastructure development and rapid growth of media have cartelised the changing process of Saudi society (Philby et al., 2018). It is noteworthy, the regional events such as the first and second Gulf wars, ‘Islamo-liberal’ movement, September 11, 2001 attack in the US and the recent Arab Spring derive this monarchy to embrace several measures of reformation. A large number of educated people from

the various segment of the society have been included in the administration. The overhaul of the judicial system, state controlled but fairly operated media and the scope of sharing insights by the civil-society has brought about political opining to a greater extent (Quamar, 2015).

However, His Imperial Highness ibn Saud envisioned to build the modern Saudi Arabia by introducing administrative, economic, educational, technological and scientific tools to establish the polity with aspiration. He turned a tribal political union to a modernize state. His Excellency also paid keen attention to sustain Islamic and cultural heritage. In this regard the monarchy has received tremendous support from the ulema who provided legitimacy for the implementation of the modernization programmes. Thus, Saudi government has been parallelly implementing Islamic rules and the tools of modernization (Quamar, 2015).

Saudi Arabia's has delineated vision 2030 that comprises three objectives, such as a vibrant society, an uprising economy and a progressive nation. In order to achieve these objectives government is paying deep attention to education. Education system is being built according to the market needs as well as to create economic opportunities for the entrepreneur, small and medium enterprise and the large corporation. In order to equip the young students with appropriate jobs this king to will continue investing to provide high quality multifaced education and training. Besides, KSA envisions to have four national universities to be among the top 200 universities in the world. At present the university capacity to raise 1.7 million students which as 850,000 in 2009 and 636,000 in 2006. Besides, the graduate programmes are expanded and diversified in order to achieve the goal of graduating 5% pupils. The purpose of the new development is build scientific workforce while enabling graduates with appropriate knowledge and education fitted with the

industrial requirements (Abdulrahman, 2017). Saudi launched *Aafaq* (The Horizons) project in 2009. The purpose of *Aafaq* is to promote knowledge-based economy and moving from oil-based economy. The 25-years plan is to extend higher education to all, boost scientific research and tackle the shortage of scientist in the critical fields. *Aafaq* programme gives priority on several issues and female education is one of them (Abdulrahman, 2017).

3.5 Sample Size and Participant Selection

This study employed purposive sampling technique in order to select participants with the particular characteristics. A purposive sampling method was used in this study; it is a sampling technique where the unit (e.g. People, cases, events, places of data) that are studied are centred on the judgement of the researcher. Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research extensively in order to discover and select cases that are rich in information connected to the phenomena of interest founded on the suitable data to be contributed in terms of both significance and depth (Sharan, 2009).

Data for this study were collected from two private and two public universities. The researcher selected those universities based on the location of the universities where it happened to be in cities and also those universities are having female leaders as their deans and deputy deans in their faculty. A total 10 academicians, practising the leadership roles chairing the top administrative position were interviewed. The researcher selected experienced women leaders and educators who are in the position of University President‘, Dean‘, Deputy Dean‘, Head Department‘ and Deputy General Supervisor‘ of the faculty were chosen as the respondents for this study. An open-ended question was designed in order to interview them. All the Interviews were taken over telephone or online interviewing

considering the convenience of the interviewees. In every case, same questions were asked to the respondent (Patton, 2002).

In developing the questions this researcher followed Patton's (2002) suggestion. He suggested six primary types of open-ended questions, such as 1) behavioural questions, 2) sensory questions, 3) opinion questions, 4) knowledge questions, 5) feeling questions and 6) demographic questions (Patton, 2002). For this study, 'sensory' and 'behavioural' questions were avoided since they seem irrelevant with the objectives. By asking 'feeling' and 'demographic' questions, respondents' feelings about the conflicts and challenges and their demographic identities were noted. On the other hand, by asking 'opinion' and 'knowledge' types questions, core challenges of conflicts were understood. In addition, their suggestion to resolve the underlying issues provided invaluable insights

In quantitative research generalizability of the findings is a prior issues (Singleton & Straits, 1999) but, in qualitative study generalizability is not the main objective, rather, the researcher seeks for exploring the inner meaning of a certain phenomenon (Kaae & Traulsen, 2015). Purposive sampling is suggested for this kind of study and sampling should be balanced enough to properly understand the main fact (Patton, 2002). This balancing can be achieved by using 'saturation' principle. According to this principle data collection for this study stopped collecting data only when no new information was coming out from the new sample (Rosenthal, 2016). However, purposive sampling technique was applied in this research and the respondents were chosen based on their job position, experience and other relevant qualities (Anderson, 2010). In this case, snow-ball sampling seemed the most suitable sampling technique. Under this technique the next respondent was recruited based on the information given by the current interviewee.

Thus, the number of the respondents increases gradually (Patton, 2002). In this light, at the end 10 respondents seemed appropriate size of data.

Table 3.2

Suggested Sample Size

NO	Type of Research	Appropriate Size of Data
1	Case Study	3-5
2	Phenomenological Research	6-10
3	Grounded Theory	15-30
4	Ethnographic	35-50
5	Focus Group	3-12/ 6-12
6	Experimental Research	15-30

(Daniel, 2012)

Since, this study considers case study as the most suitable technique; then, 10 participants were purposively selected from both private and public universities (3-5 respondents from each university) samples were initially thought would be appropriate (Rapley, 2014). Besides, snow-bowling technique also suggested the sample size as 10 respondents. This is in addition to the documentary analysis that was employed by the researcher. In order to conduct in-depth interview, this study took into consideration the issues that mentioned below:

1. Careful attention was paid to data collection so that the answers of the research questions can be obtained.
2. All the open-ended questions were developed thoughtfully by focusing the research objectives. In this regard, insights from the previous studies and experts' opinion were taken into consideration.

3. Best sampling approach were accommodated so that the real facts behind the problem can be identified. In this case, top positioned and long experienced women leaders (University president, dean, deputy dean, head of the department and deputy general supervisor) were chosen as sample.
4. Decision of modality was taken based on their effectiveness. In this regard, phone interviews were used to collect data.

3.6 Selection of Cases

Case selection is that the primordial task of the case study researcher, for in choosing cases, one also sets out an agenda for studying those cases. this implies that case selection and case analysis are inter-twined to a far greater extent just in case study research than in large- N-cross-case analysis. Indeed, the tactic of selecting cases and analysing those cases can scarcely be separated when the main focus of a piece is on one or some instances of some broader phenomenon. Yet choosing good cases for very small samples could be a challenging endeavour (Gerring, 2007). Consider that almost all case studies seek to elucidate the features of a broader population. they're about something larger than the case itself, whether or not the resulting generalization is issued in a very tentative fashion (Gerring, 2004). Accordingly, the researcher selected two foremost cases in studying the phenomenon which are: the case of Saudi women leadership in public universities and the case of Saudi women leaders in private universities. This enabled the researcher to explore in-depth the scenario of conflicts and challenges in the study.

Purposive sampling from Jeddah City because it is a huge and multicultural city in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, very few researches about Female Leaders have been conducted in Jeddah.

3.7 Research Tools

Three basic research tools, such as 1) questions, 2) digital audio recorder, and 3) a software was used in order to collect and interpret data. A self-generated semi-structured question was developed to interview ten academic leaders in higher education from the four selected universities in Jeddah. Digital voice recorder was used for recording the phone interview upon respondents' permission. A software, named NVivo used for writing structured report, developed for the specific purpose of managing and secret writing qualitative information. These programs, however, stay disputed and have influenced, and still influence, information analysis in unforeseen ways that they permit researchers to code giant amounts of information and have arguably semiconductor diode to researchers' conducting studies involving way larger numbers of participants than within the past. The trait of qualitative analysis depends upon the integrity of information gathering and analysis, the lustiness of processes, and therefore the demonstration of conscientiousness. One tool that assists an investigator to manage these tasks well is that the information management and looking out program, that allows an investigator to demonstrate the integrity, robustness, and thus, trait of investigation doesn't analyse information for the investigator. Though is in a position to help the investigator to manage information with efficiency in fast time frames.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The main source for collecting the data were in-depth semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the researcher employed the data reviews in order to gather the rich information about conflicts and challenges among the women leaders in Saudi Arabia. The research started reviewing the related articles which are published on

women leadership in Saudi Arabia and specifically under the leadership in Education.

In the process of the data collection, the researcher asked for the permission by submitting the approval to collect the data from the selected university. See Appendix (5 & 6). After the approval has been given, the researcher presented the consent letter to the participants of the study. The example of the consent letter was added in appendix (3). In addition, the researcher arranged for the computer-mediated communication due to the hectic schedule of the participants and distance between the researcher and the participants. However, all the participants agreed on their preferred time for the telephone interview. Telephone interview technique was applied for data collection in combination with computer-mediated communication (CMC) procedure. It is noteworthy that computer-mediated communication (CMC) precedes an ethical and methodological concern, but CMC allows rich data to be collected from the socially-silent and geographically-dispersed group (McCoyd & Kerson, 2012). Considering this issues, phoning method was utilised for data collection (Gaiser, 2009). The reasoning is that online communication benefitted this study in several ways: The interviews were recorded to facilitate more accurate transcription.

There was no risk of losing data. Besides, it was flexible and convenient for both interviewer and interviewees. Telephone interviewing technique was useful for the busy respondents. This interview session took a shorter time and the respondent might not need to allocate extra time as for face-to-face interview (Bloor, 2006).

A certain guideline was followed for conducting interview:

- Only interested respondents were interviewed
- Proper schedule was maintained considering respondents' convenience

- Researcher's identity was duly submitted
- A set of questions was given prior to the interview
- Explanation of any question was provided if asked
- If the respondent refused to answer any question that was accepted without any signal of irritation
- No answer of the responded was extended with the complements of the researcher (Arksey, 1999).

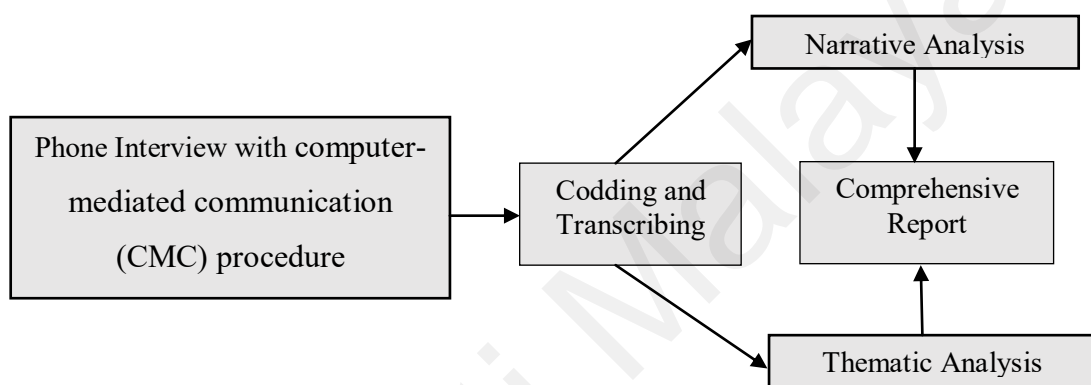


Figure 3.2 Collection and Interpretation

The process of data integration is delineated above in the Figure 3.2. The data were collected by means of telephone interview with the computer-mediated communication (CMC) procedure. A homogenous technique was applied in coding and transcribing in the textual format. Then, the data were analysed by using thematic and narrative approaches.

3.8.1 Interview

Qualitative research relies quite extensively on in-depth interviews (IDI). The interview is being described as a conversation with a purpose between the interviewer and interviewee. It involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between the parties involved. It is an instructional communication process

which involves the asking of questions by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and answering questions from the interviewee. It is instructional in nature because there is an exchange or sharing of roles, feelings, beliefs and information between the interviewer and interviewee (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interview is deceptively complex interpersonal communication processes involving many interacting variables like culture of the interview parties, gender, age, personality traits, listening skills, relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, verbal and non-verbal messages, levels of disclosure, the interview situation, expectations, assumptions feedback, and influences of external forces like corporate policies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative interviews typically are much more like conversations than formal events in predetermined response categories.

3.8.1.1 Semi Structured Interview

The researcher commenced the interview guide using an open-ended question that based on the theories and previous literature to design the semi-structure interview. In this regard, experts' opinion was taken into consideration. Questions was formulated from four aspects, such as 1) opinion questions, 2) knowledge questions, 3) feeling questions and 4) demographic questions (Patton, 2002). Questions on opinion and feeling was asked for the purposes of knowing respondents' opinion and feeling about the issues behind conflicts and challenges and the comparative between them in public and private universities. Thus, the causes of conflict and challenges and the possible way of solution was explored. Questions from the aspect of knowledge helped gather respondents' knowledge about the incidence of conflicts and challenges. Questions related to demography were designed to collect respondents' demographic information.

Table 3.3

Questions Development Technique

Section	Issues	Factors/ Questions
Section One	Demography	Age, Education, Marital Status, Job Status, Household Head, Income
Section Two	Conflicts	Interpersonal Conflict Intrapersonal Conflict Intergroup Conflict Intragroup Conflict
Section Three	Challenges	Socio-cultural Economic Organisational Personal or Individual
Section Four	Empowering Women	Whether empowerment influences on the conflicts and challenges
Section Five	Influence of Islam	Whether Islamic attributes contribute on the conflicts and challenges
Section Six	Solution	How to resolve the conflicts and challenges

3.8.1.2 Designing Open-ended Questions

The open-ended questions embodied six sections. Section One was designed to acquire respondents' demographic information. Section Two comprised the relevant questions on leadership-conflicts from four standpoints, such as intragroup, intergroup, intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. Section Three comprised the questions on challenges from four standpoints, such as socio-cultural, economic, organisational and personal aspects. Section Four comprised the discussed women's empowerment on conflicts and challenges. Section Five looked into Islamic attributes on conflicts and challenges and the last section asked about the solutions

from respondents' perspectives. All the questions were related to the theories and existing literature. However, some relevant questions were added based on the experts' opinion. Notably, the questions were translated into Arabic (vernacular) for the convenience of some respondents.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

In order to confirm validity and reliability of the findings, keen attention was paid to five fundamental issues, such as 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, 4) confirmability and 5) authenticity. In order to achieve credibility of the data three things were maintained, such as 1) prolonged and substantial engagement (possible longer discussion/ follow on), 2) peer debriefing (asking the same questions to other colleagues) and 3) progressive subjectivity (asking counter question on the same issue) (Mertens, 1995).

The credibility and trustworthiness of the data will be attained after the prolong engagement. According to Creswell (2018), by this strategy the researcher gains an in-depth understanding of the actual phenomena of the study and it becomes possible to explain the actual site of the study in detail. The more experience that a researcher has with the informant as a result of the prolong engagement in the actual setting, the more the accurate and valid is the findings of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Multiple cases, this study explores 4 universities to study the conflicts and the challenges of Saudi female leaders, a detailed discussion was made on every case so that every issue becomes more transparent and comprehensive. Merriam (2009) stated that multiple cases selection can confirm the transferability of the study (Merriam, 2009).

Furthermore, dependability of the findings was ensured by referring to the previous findings and crosschecking with the statement against the similar question. Confirmability was gained by maintaining objectivity so that figment of the researcher's imagination cannot overlap the findings. Careful attention was paid for checking authenticity of the statement. Fairness of the answers of the questions was reveal the general authenticity, ontological authenticity and sophistication (Mertens, 1995). For every aspect, trend in the data and the identical statement of the participants were keenly observed (Madrigal & McClain, 2012).

In the process of achieveng the validity, the researcher can use the following methodological procedures:

3.9.1 Member Checking

The application of member checking effectively used in working out the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the ultimate report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determinative whether or not these participants feel that they're correct. This doesn't mean taking back the raw transcripts to ascertain for accuracy; instead, the investigator takes back elements of the polished or semi-polished product, like the key findings, the themes, the case analysis, the grounded theory, the cultural description, so forth. This procedure will involve conducting a follow-up interview with participants within the study and providing a chance for them to inquire into the findings. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher used member checking to determine the accuracy of the finding of the study. The researcher asked the participants in the study to check the accuracy of the findings by taking the findings back to the participants. Before analysing the data, the transcriptions were taken to the participants to check whether

their main ideas correspond with what they meant while answering the interview questions. This ensure that, the participants' thoughts and feelings will be fairly conveyed as they want it.

3.9.2 Triangulation

In qualitative research, triangulation is an important part to ensure quality, validity and reliability of the findings. To avoid error or inappropriate conclusion as well as overcome the problem of reliability, triangulation were regarded as an effective strategy (Arksey, 1999). This technique also helps check the consistency of the collected information from different sources (Mertens, 1995). Triangulation is used to eliminate the error and bias, leaving nothing but the truth.

Furthermore, this assumption is planted within particular ontological and epistemological framework. In order to assure the quality researcher needs to extend activities beyond what is 'normally' done (Flick, 2007). There are four types of triangulations, such as: 1) data triangulation, 2) investigator triangulation, 3) theory triangulation and 4) methodological triangulation (Arksey, 1999; Mathison, 2004).

In this study, the researcher used triangulations method to compare the findings obtained from the interviews in both public and private universities. In addition, the researcher explored both private and public universities in studying the conflicts and the challenges of Saudi female leaders. Merriam (2009) stated that multiple cases selection can confirm the transferability of the study (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation of the data sources as well as multiple cases were conducted in order to compare the findings and to enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings. According to Arksey (1999), data triangulation used for the reasons as mentioned below:

- To increase the confidence in findings
- To achieve completeness of the study
- To enhance interpretability
- To overcome divergences etc. (Arksey, 1999).

The quality of the findings of this study was ensured by comparing with the findings of the previous studies on similar area.

The conflicts and challenges that were encountered by the women leaders in the higher education sector in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia were explained in the current study. The study further explored the impacts of the religious features as well as the empowerment on the conflicts and challenges faced by the women in Saudi Arabia. Based on the findings obtained from both interviews with the participants of private and public universities, the researcher triangulated the findings combining both sources of the data obtained together. The procedure to the data triangulation in this study means the connections between the participants as data resources in the current study. The main reason for using triangulation is that the set of the data collected from the interviews were strengthened through triangulating with comparing data sources. The researcher finally compared and related the findings obtained from the participants' responses to the previous studies in the context of Saudi Arabia. In this case, the method is considered as convergent parallel design, which all research questions were, involved (Creswell, 2019). For instance, Research Question 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were explored using the interviews through comparison of the data obtained from two university sectors. The Figure 4.6 below illustrated the procedure followed in the study.

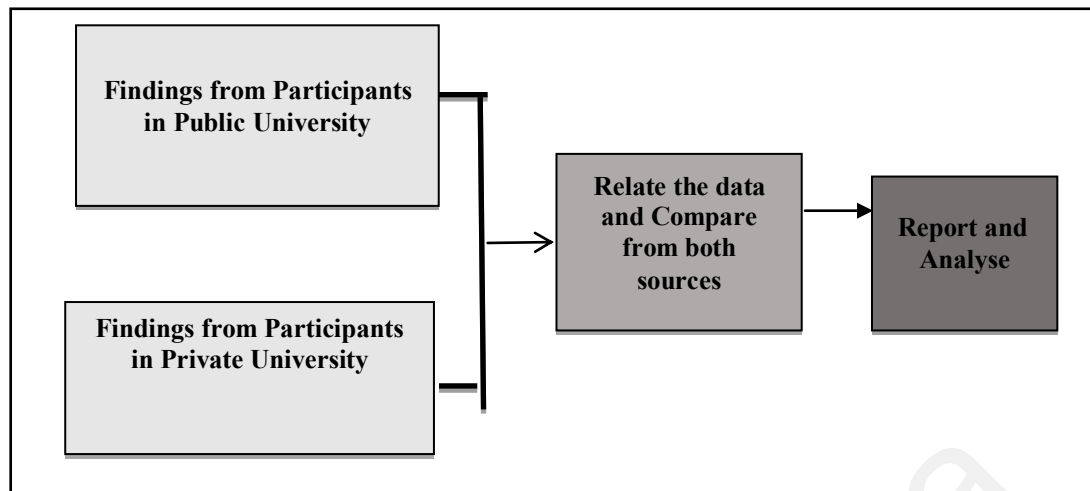


Figure 3.7 Triangulation of the Findings (Creswell 2019)

The figure above depicts the triangulation process used in the current study. The researcher reported the results of the interview combined from 10 participants of the study.

3.9.3 Inter-Rater Reliability

Checking the raters and inter-raters were the crucial approach and vital strategy in guarantying intelligibility, straightforwardness as well as coherence of the themes and subthemes with the research questions posed in this study.

The researcher presented the emerged themes and sub-themes to the inter-raters. Both of the selected inter-raters were lecturing at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The raters were associate professors. The role of the raters was to display their agreement with the coded themes and sub-themes in terms of its relatedness, consistency and cognizance of researcher in developing themes. Their feedbacks were valuable to check the trust worthiness of the themes emerged.

In addition, the study utilized absolute agreement of the inter-rater reliability. Very few of the themes and sub-themes were adapted based on the comments of the two raters. According to Graham, Milanowski and Miller (2012) the recommendation of the initial accepted level of total agreements was to be between

75% and 95%. Meanwhile any number that within the threshold will be considered adequate (Graham, Milanowski, & Miller, 2012). Thus, the percentage of the total estimated percentage acquired in this study was 92% that befalls within the threshold of acceptance as shown in the Appendix (11). In this case, the emerged themes and sub-themes and the inter-raters' reports were accurately and validly represented the responses from participants. The researcher conversed the themes accumulated from the interviewee using discussion units (DU). It is worth remembering this qualitative study aims to explore leadership conflicts and challenges that women leaders experience in the higher education in both public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the researcher came up with the following headings and sub-headings which the themes were tabled.

3.10 Study's Propositions

Propositions are beneficial in all case study research, to enable the researcher to place limits on for the study it could also rise the feasibility of completing the study. Propositions may come from the literature, personal/professional experience, theories, and/or generalizations based on empirical data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The Table below explain the study's propositions of this research:

Table 3.4

Study's Propositions

Potential Propositions	Source
Saudi Women leaders in higher education are experiencing assaulted conflicts while they are pursuing their duties as a leader.	Literature Al-Lamky, A. (2007). "Feminizing leadership in Arab societies: the perspectives of Omani female leaders." <u>Women in Management Review</u> 22 (1): 49-67. Jamali, D., et al. (2005). "Constraints facing working women in Lebanon: an insider view." <u>Women in Management Review</u> 20 (8): 581-594.

Table 3.4, (continue)

Potential Propositions	Source
Saudi Women leaders in higher education are experiencing assaulted challenges in their daily life.	<p>Alminkash, S. A. and A. K. Alanzi (2016). "The Role of the Vice-Chair in Academic Departments in Managing the Organizational Conflicts at the University of Tabuk from the Perspective of Female Faculty Members." <u>ASEP</u> 78.</p> <p>Personal experience and Literature</p> <p>Abalkhail, J. M. (2017). "Women and Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities in Saudi higher education." <u>Career Development International</u> 22(2): 165-183.</p> <p>Almaki, S. H., et al. (2016). "Challenges Faced Muslim Women Leaders in Higher Education." <u>Journal of Educational and Social Research</u> 6(3): 75-86.</p>
Empowerment could influence the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders	<p>literature</p> <p>Abalkhail, J. M. and B. Allan (2015). "Women's Career Advancement: Mentoring and Networking in Saudi Arabia and the UK." <u>Human Resource Development International</u> 18(2): 153-168.</p>
Wrong use of the Islamic attributes contributes to the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders	<p>literature</p> <p>Al-Munajjed, M. (2010). <u>Women's Employment in Saudi Arabia A Major Challenge</u>. Dubai, Booz & Company.</p> <p>Metcalf, B. D. (2006). "Exploring Cultural Dimensions of Gender and Management in the Middle East." <u>Thunderbird International Business Review</u> 48 (1): 93–107</p>
There are differences in conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi female educational leaders in public and private universities.	<p>Personal experience and literature</p> <p>Deraney, P. M. and H. M. Abdelsalam (2012). "Private vs. public school education as a predictor for success for female students at a private university in Saudi Arabia." <u>Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce</u> 3(3): 1-7.</p>

3.11 Ethical Consideration

Since qualitative research explores people's lives the given information of the participants' personal, social, and professional lives deserve privacy and confidentiality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this light, this study took some ethical steps. At first, the researcher got a permission letter from the Saudi embassy in Kuala Lumpur and the University Malaya prior collecting the data see appendix (5-6). Secondly, a 'consent form' was sent to the participants, describing the purpose of the study, importance of the information as well as the needfulness of their participation. Every participant was given the right to withdraw from this study if they feel any inconvenience.

For the purpose of confidentiality their identity kept anonymous while the given information was not used in any other purposes except this research. In order to ensure trustworthiness this study followed Merriam's strategies. She advised, '(peer) member checking' and 'rich thick description' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In terms of peer member checking the participants got opportunity as well as proper explanation to review their transcription if it properly described their statements. On the other hand, in term of 'rich thick description', this researcher tried to provide detail information regarding the respondents.

3.12 Data Analyses

Data were analysed by means of two techniques, such as narrative /and thematic techniques. Narrative technique was applied to explain some issues in a detailed manner. Thus, the core facts were explored and discussed in a comprehensive style. Besides, thematic approach was adopted by coding and classifying data collected by interview. Data was interpreted by thematic structures seeking commonalties,

relationships, theoretical constructs and explanatory principles. The overall findings were interpreted based on the logical reasoning.

3.12.1 Narrative Approach

The main purpose of qualitative research is to enquire the deeper meaning of a certain situation or the understanding of different people. In this case, narrative research is often utilized focusing on the small number of participants in a particular context. It deals with the specific purpose such as exploring the changes of the social condition or so on. Narrative analysis can start within an iterative process of collecting data, analysing, synthesising and reanalysing (Bold, 2012). There are three advantages of adopting narrative approach. Firstly, this technique allows to study the identity of the respondents focusing on their practices in a particular time and place. Secondly, it pays attention to the stories and lives while analysing surroundings. Thus, it focuses on the episodes as well as the events. Thirdly, it foregrounds the context where the particular narratives are produced (Phoenix, 2013).

3.12.2 Thematic Approach

Thematic analysis mainly combines two ideas: research always seeks for identifying themes within the narratives and it involves relationship between the contexts and people (Bold, 2012). Thematic analysis is a systematic approach to the analysis of qualitative data that involves identifying themes or patterns; coding and classifying data, usually textual, according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking commonalities, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles (Mills, 2010). Thematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes. Codes are then typically developed to represent the identified themes and applied or linked to

raw data as summary markers for later analysis. Generally speaking, reliability is of greater concern with thematic analysis than with word-based analyses because more interpretation goes into defining the data items (i.e., codes) as well as applying the codes to chunks of text. This issue is even more pronounced when working in teams with multiple analysts (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

3.12.3 Developing Categories and Coding the Data

After collecting the data, the researcher transcribed all the data, as well as translated the data which were in Arabic language as it is the mother tongue of the researcher and the participants.

After, in order to identify the themes and sub- themes, the researcher read all the data for a few times. The coding system is to organize and group all similar coded data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After categories the data, the researcher transcends the reality of the data and creating the themes.

3.12.4 NVivo for Organizing and Managing the Data

In this study, the researcher used software for the qualitative data analysis. This enabled the researcher to organize and code the responses obtained from all 10 informants in the present study as recommended in the study of Edwards (2014). In the process of the data analysis, the researcher transcribed the information obtained from audio voice to the writing. This part was accomplished through careful listening to the audio recorder severally and researcher notes. After the transcribing, the researcher engaged in coding of themes and sub-themes embarking on the analysis using a reference of NVivo. Next steps were used for NVivo software and the way of how the researcher gathering the themes and sub-themes:

1. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher read it twice in order to identify some key words or phrases to detect in the NVivo software.

2. The researcher used the tools in NVivo (called query) to find the word frequency criteria through all the interviews this is just a starting point. From there it can be easy to explore the main frequent words.
3. The researcher did manual coding to select the codes from the transcripts.
4. Creating a node was the next step. According to the NVivo website –a node is a collection of references about a specific theme, case, or relationship” (About nodes, para, 2). This is an important feature of NVivo because it allows the researcher to collect all similar information under one node so it will be easy to find any emerging ideas.
5. Then coding was the next process to explore the reference which already has been gathered under one node.
6. After all these processes had been completed, the researcher started to organise the nodes into themes and sub-themes.

3.13 Summary

This chapter elaborately discussed the methodology of this study. This study adopted interpretive approach based on the subjectivism to conduct a qualitative study. Though, this method cannot generalize the findings but, it can provide deeper understanding and insights. The multiple case study which is a special form of case study that was also adopted to examine a bundle of cases. This approach was utilised in this study to explore the problems as well as suggesting policies. However, a total 10 female academicians who were practising the leadership roles specifically the head of the department‘, executive director‘, deputy executive director‘ dean‘ and deputy dean‘ of the faculty were chosen as the respondents for this study. An open-ended question was used to interview them. The data were collected by telephone interview including computer-mediated communication (CMC) procedure. The data

were interpreted by thematic and narrative structures intertwining with the commonalties, relationships, theoretical constructs and explanatory principles. The overall findings were interpreted based on the logical reasoning as well as relating with the existing theories. Thus, this study designed the suitable methodology to achieve the objectives. In the next chapter the researcher will enumerate the finding of the research.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the challenges and conflicts that the women leaders are facing in the higher education sector in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researcher also investigated the influence of the religious attributes as well as the empowerment on the conflicts and challenges faced by the women in Saudi Arabia. In this study the researcher used a qualitative approach to answer posed research questions in the study whereby 10 Participants were interviewed. This enabled the researcher to ensure the depth information that are needed to address the study phenomenon. The purpose of this chapter was to analyse and report the results gathered from the participants' responses. The analysis of this study was conducted using only across-case analysis under the case study research method as explained in the chapter 3.

Accordingly, findings of this chapter were based on the five major questions: (1) what the conflicts are experienced by the Saudi women educational leaders in higher education. (2) What are the challenges experienced by the Saudi women educational leaders in higher education? (3) How does empowerment influence the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi women educational leaders? (4) How do the Islamic attributes contribute to the conflicts and challenges experienced by the Saudi women educational leaders? (5) What are the differences in conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi women educational leaders in public and private universities?

4.2 Demographic Information of Participants

In this section, the researcher briefly reports the profiles of the participants preceding to the effective presentation and analysis. As mentioned in chapter 3, the researcher interviewed 10 women leaders of higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The data collected was transcribed and analysed using qualitative software analysis called –NVivo”. By means of software in the data analysis procedure has been thought to provide a rigour to the qualitative research (Richards & Richards, 1991). Using the software enabled the researcher to accurately facilitates interrogation of the interviews. Thus, the demographic data of the participants are presented in the following Table:

Table 4.1

Demographic Profiles of The Participants

Names	Qualification	University Name and Type	Age	Experience as Leader	Designation
Participant1	PhD	D/ Public	51	12	Deputy Dean
Participant2	PhD	B/ Private	42	3	Dean
Participant3	PhD	A/ Public	45	3	Deputy Dean
Participant4	PhD	B/ Private	37	5	Dean of College
Participant5	PhD	C/ Private	61	11	University President
Participant6	PhD	A/ Public	40	3	Deputy General Supervisor
Participant7	PhD	B/ Private	45	2	Deputy Dean
Participant8	PhD	B/ Private	40	4	Dean (Girls‘ Campus)
Participant9	PhD	A/ Public	62	11	Deputy Dean
Participant10	PhD	A/ Public	45	2	Head Department

The Table 4.1 above clearly detailed the participants' profiles such as names which represented as 'Participants', highest academic level (Qualification), universities Name and Type, age, years of experience as leader and their various designations. In spite that participants were women, but all of them have bagged their PhD and heading the position of dean and deputy dean respectively. This indicated that women in Saudi Arabia are given the prospects to pursuit their academic career also shown that the participants of this study are professionals and well educated. Regarding to the participants' ages and years of experience, the Table 4.1 showed that 3 out participants were above 50 years old compared to other 7 participants with ages below the 50 years. Similarly, the participants' years of experience as portrayed by the available demographic profiles. Out of 10 participants, the data revealed Participant 1, 5 and 9 had the highest with 12 and the other two are 11 years of experience, followed by the Participants 4 and 8 who also had 5 and 4 years of experience each respectively. Correspondingly, Participants 2, 3, 6, 7 and 10 years of experience are ranged between 2-3 years.

4.3 Nature of Conflicts Experienced by The Female Leaders in Saudi Arabian Universities

The first research question was focuses on the the conflicts experienced by the Saudi women educational leaders in higher education and the data obtained was analyzed using themes and sub-themes. However, the analyses of women leaders participated in this study generated three main themes and two sub-themes. The Figure 4.2 below

portrayed framework for the conflict nature among Saudi women leaders in HEI.



Figure 4.1 Framework for The Nature of Organizational Conflicts Among Saudi Women Leaders in (HEI)

4.3.1 Causes and Forms of Conflicts in Public Universities

One of the first sub-themes identified from the analysis is the causes of conflicts in public universities. The participants gave variety of responses in relation to causes of conflicts in public universities.

This form of negative attribute is not the only cause of conflicts. The lack of teamwork spirit has also been identified as a cause of conflicts by Participant 2 who shared a long account of her experience. She said:

I had people who joined the team but couldn't really work as a team couldn't work. (P2, DU:5).

The statement above indicates that this participant feels that whenever there is a lack of team spirit, there is tendency of conflicts creeping in. She gave example of how she and her colleagues avoid conflicts through the creation and maintaining teamwork spirit where they work together on a project and ensure that everyone

contribute the part that is related to their work and have interest in. However, the lack of teamwork spirit is not the only cause of conflicts related to working with other colleagues. The management of task within a team is also another cause of conflict highlighted by Participant 2 where she said:

So the same thing also if I'm going to talk about students and the classes for students, there are always conflicts that occur among students, usually it's because of the way of managing especially in their projects when they are working as a team, conflict will occur because she work, she didn't work or she took my part (P2, DU:5).

Another important cause of conflicts pointed out by Participant 4 is the lack of clear tasks and responsibilities. On this, Participant 4 narrated an incidence that occurred between herself and the deputy dean of her faculty where some form of power play took place involving the two of them and a student. She narrated the following:

For example: a situation that happened between me and the deputy concerning one of the students who has a particular case or topic, and the deputy responded by saying "No", although it is none of the dean's business to do with such issues, then she enforced her opinion, saying she is the main decision maker and no one else, the student came back to me personally and referred to the previous conversation and asked for help (P4, DU:5).

When I called her the vice dean about this matter, she justified her position that there was other people with her when she talked to the student, and at the end of the talk she denied the conversation she had with the student, and the Dean confirmed that in her position she is here to serve the students and there are different types of powers, there are people who have the authority of using it or it can be used by the dean or the rector, and we had talked with her and the members in a meeting about all the powers that can be used by women leaders and gives each person the tasks assigned to them. (P4, DU:5).

Overall, causes of conflict can be classified into the organisation based, personal based, and group conflicts. Each classification is presented in the following paragraphs with its evidences from the data.

4.3.1.1 Organisation-Based Causes of Conflicts

Various causes have been cited by the participants which can be identified as organisation related causes of conflicts. For instance, organisation-based conflicts are those forms of conflicts that emanate from the environment of the universities in which the participants work. One of these conflicts is competition this view was endorsed by Participant 4 who claimed that such issues are among the worst forms of conflicts she has ever faced. She stated that:

And these are the most conflicts and problems which I face as a leader are non-cooperation and also competing. (P4, DU:1).

Another organisation-based cause of conflicts is delayed decision making particularly pertaining to tasks assigned to staff. On this point, Participant 4 gave a vivid narration of her experience:

I conducted my research among men and women leaders and it looked a lot different, especially among the younger leaders, also points of view get respect and appreciation especially my points of view as a woman, there are conflicts between the employees who make reports and work under my administration, also between the highly-positioned people such as the rector, the vice rector or other deans who are at the same level of administration as myself, and that is because of common decisions, they are not clear as required nor explicit and these matters cause some sort of conflicts, and every leading person wants to have their name put on the work; without cooperating at the university level. At a personal level, not making a decision quickly on time because of the slow processes of workflow which sometimes can be delayed until eight months, which is supposed only to take a few days, and this kind of things create bureaucracy at work, because they put the objectives of their administration first and before others, and if the objectives are set to be on a university level, it will be fast and well-accomplished and will be away from personal work. (P4, DU:1).

This cause of conflict is also related to another point made by Participant 2 where she pointed out the lack of problem-solving techniques in resolving interpersonal disputes. She recalled such disputes between herself and a junior colleague. She said:

I developed a manual for the students for the internship and finally project and, the last, one of the semesters I was asked to support another new faculty that will be in charge of also the final year project and I shared with her all the materials. And I mentioned that pleased with the respect to the copyright issue, and then I noticed that after a couple of months that she took all my material she took out my name and she just put her name. And she didn't have a lot of experience. She was just had only 2 years' experience. At that I had I think 11 years of experience, almost, anyway so it hurts me. I reflected that and the way that it was resolved was not that nice, so I decided to quit the job. And this is one of the stories that really hurts me. (P2, DU:2).

The lack of women representatives in decision making forums and meetings was also pointed out as a cause of conflict. This point was made by Participant 5 who claimed that such meetings and forums are dominated by male counterpart. She lamented that:

The challenges are often in attendance at meetings held at the Ministry of Education, and sometimes I am the only woman. And I was asking that I be brought in until this barrier is broken because I am the only women to represent university and there are women send their male representatives but I insisted on coming because it is for all university Presidents and I am a University President as well and I don't agree for them to look at me as a woman but as a university President and regardless of a woman or a man because I represent Like other fellows and after these attempts it became a normal look and they accepted my status as a university President. (P5, DU:2)

The participant 4 blamed this mentality on the culture and men's mindset within the Saudi society. This is for the fact that she claimed there was no issue with the foreign deputy, adding that:

But the new deputy for the male students' section is a foreigner who is of an Italian nationality and dealing with him it is pretty much good. And I think that the culture of the society in which he lived contributed greatly to making him accustomed to have a leading woman with no conflicts and the work runs smoothly, who is different from the Saudi leader who did not accept this and resigned from his leadership position within a year due to the strict emphasis on him in applying the instructions and the order on him and the rest of the educational institution just as the female students section apply it. And perhaps this is what led him to resign, but now the experience is with the foreign deputy with

whom we look at the outcomes and the differences which may appear. (P4, DU:2)

A point close to the cultural and mentality issue is the issue of racism tribalism particularly against foreigners. Participant 8 observed that non-Saudis in a leadership position tend to treat foreign staffs with less regards than their counterpart Saudis. She mentioned that:

Sometimes conflicts occur when the head of the department is not Saudi, where he deals in a good way with the Saudis only. Racism is very clear in their dealings with non-Saudis. The main reasons are the difference of nationality. (P8, DU:6)

This according to Participant 7 is not only peculiar to foreign staff in leadership positions against fellow foreigners, but also Saudis themselves discriminate against each other based on tribal affiliations. Participant 7 argued that:

And especially there is some kind of tribalism, in some people, I do not know if they are in Mecca or Jeddah, they have no acceptance, that you are a woman working in an organization, or you are able to succeed more than the man, even if you work in a family organization, the manager may ask you for example: "Why do you appear in the media? You must talk about the Saudi owners and not your person." As if you don't have an entity! (P7, DU:2)

This also goes hand-in-hand with the next point made by Participant 1 who thinks that there is need for one to have a clear understanding of procedures and guidelines. She said:

The more regular professional institutions or work systems perform for the professional reform or procedural evidence or certain procedures, the less conflicts in organizations. (P1, DU:5)
Perhaps not that clear or present, because when we operate all sectors under an organization governed by a transparent vision or message, under institutional procedures which may not be that much. (P1, DU:6)

Such personal looks of issues and work-related situations can all be interpreted as the lack of professionalism and professional ethics. This point was reinforced by Participant 2 view that using one's position to dictatorial is another inevitable cause of conflicts. She stated that:

Another conflict also that there I've noticed where people they tried to take things by power, if I have the power I can take what I whatever I want, which is again, I related to the experience when I don't have the experience, and I have some or I did some mistakes or I have some Issues, I tried to hide these mistakes by just showing that I have the power or I have the connections where I can get whatever I want. This is the two common actually conflicts that I've noticed within my peers actually in both the female environment and also with the mixed environment. (P2, DU:1)

The subtheme of the organisational related challenges that experiencing by the Saudi female discussed below.

Inter-gender Conflicts

Another classification of the Organization-based cause of conflicts is more related to the male counterparts. This refers to those conflicts caused by the work relationship between female and their male counterparts. Inter-gender conflict appears to be one of the core conflict scenarios experienced by women leaders in Saudi Arabia higher Institutions. The behavioural nature of male and female leaders is different in many ways. Nevertheless, women can obtain leadership positing by proving themselves as capable. Men tend to give her authoritative position considering her appropriate skills and abilities. This is due to the nonexistence of precision in the organizational collegiality between women and men units. For instance, participant 3 asserted that:

With the male, it's the authority. You have to take the right for yourself and to feel that your section is dependent, and you can do everything, and you can manage everything. As soon as they know that you are confident enough and dependent enough, they will give you everything, they think that you would be good and do all the jobs you have. But with a female, sometimes they feel that they

want to dominate and it's not like the men, they don't have the authority, but they want to take it from you. They want to stop you and, in a point, and to feel that you're under their authority but it's not like the man's problem. Because the man has the authority but the women no. (P3, DU:4).

The participant 9 also buttressed the points made by (P1 and P3) in the discussion unit that working together with male counterpart often leads to inter-conflict among the staff member. She highlighted that:

As a beginning, because Doctor Rofida selected me without consultation with the male dean, although he was my colleague in my department, he did not contact me for one month (P9, DU:4).

Participant 10 saying that as a woman leader in higher institution, the conflict between males and females will inevitably occur. The women leaders feel more comfortable when they are communicating with females compared to male. She asserted that in (DU:4):

There is a difference when the president is a man the relationship is different, when the president is a woman we can understand and communicate effectively. (P10, DU:4)

Participant 5 cited that men held all the organisational and administrative roles in the private university she worked at. Furthermore, there was a difference in style of working with the men more laidback and slower in their approach while others (women) may want to get things done quickly. Moreover, she mentioned conflicts with colleagues, was mainly due to the gender bias and competition. She also felt that conflict or a healthy ambition could be quite healthy for the department.

The reason for this, due to their being accustomed to a particular business style ' [things can take] five years or more to work, and this kind of challenges [are] facing women leaders, if you want to finish a topic within a month and he wills this subject whether it is treated by specialists towards women leaders and from. Then things [are complicated] due to a lack of understanding of the other's point [of view] and here begins a process of conflict and challenge for women leaders, and it is noticeable that men contain all administrative and organisational power. (P5, DU:3)

Participant 3 is also of the view that most of those who hold a particular leadership position are afraid of losing the position since leadership positions reduce their teaching burdens. This was stated when she said:

Every two years the work period of the leadership is extended, and this is one type of conflict. There are people who are more than me they do not want to go back to be a faculty member because leadership reduces their teaching burdens. (P3, DU:1)

Participant 4 shared her encounter with a colleague saying that:

there is some sort of competition with the employees where they claim that she understands well and she is better and they claim entitlement and try to reach this position. (P4, DU:4)

Such unhealthy competition from male counterpart is viewed by Participant 5 as an issue that goes deeper than it seems:

Whenever there is internal rivalry the better, the conflicts faced by women leaders are in terms of ambition, man and realism, or in terms of differences of views between him and other people or through the competition he offers and there are pros and cons that cause conflict and is your intervention in places that are popular to yourself, your community and the other people you are dealing with in the group that is the address of the community in general. (P5, DU:4)

Male counterparts were also accused for the rejection of women leadership. This is seen more through cultural lenses and as an issue that runs deeper than the work environment, as opined by Participant 4:

the society and culture and due to the man's nature when he is a brother or a father, he is accustomed to be obeyed by the woman. Therefore, administration of the opposite sex is not acceptable, but man's administration over woman is a normal and acceptable thing and widely exist in society, this culture is on its way to change, it is difficult though. A lot of members had studied in the universities with female students with respect, but still a man does not accept a woman as a leader. (P4, DU:3)

This opinion was also backed by what was stated by Participant 8 who cited an example of a personal experience in her department. She stated:

I will say an example for you: A new Doctor came, just a few months ago, she is young--in her twenties--she has no experience, and we did not have a PhD department head, so I gave her this responsibility from the beginning of the semester, this change was surprising, and the former head of the department was She is a professor without a doctorate, but she has experience, and she has been excluded, and this has been a reason for a little conflict and inconsistency. (P8, DU:5)

Apparently, participant 1 underlined that in their most of the time they encounter problems with the male counterparts. That implies, gender differences are an important causative factor of organisational conflict. The study of (Van Geel, 2016), highlighted that stricter gender segregation in Saudi Arabia influence women's depressed position in the Saudi society. Participant 1 encashed in (DU:4) that:

With the females I rarely had once but with the male yes, I had some. We seek to further empower of division female students with male students and this is one of the causes of conflict. It is also necessary to vary the procedures between division between girls' and boys' students, which is a large area of conflict, in order to unify the procedures for male and female students (P1, DU:4).

Participant 4 also elaborated that as a woman leader she encounters the situation where gender difference caused disputes among the staff member. She further pointed out the power problem in the organisation. When superior exert their power to their subordinates it badly affects the psychology of the followers while creating a shadowy environment in the university. Consequently, everyone in the organisation gets disturbed. This was supported with her assertion in (DU:5) when she altered that:

Being a dean, I work between the two campuses of college (male and female), I spend half of my working day in the female students' section and the other half in the male students' section. Working hours is 8 that are completely divided, I don't work with them all the time, when a situation like this one occurs with the employees and the deputy who is their direct headmaster, it creates a negative atmosphere and it affects the workflow, the whole organisation, the members, the teaching staff and the female students. Even the female students knew about this situation and this is not an easy thing (P4, DU:5).

When citing the personal story of participant 7 regarding conflicts she faced, she mentioned that Saudi men were not accepting or open to a successful woman who could be a leader. She felt it could be due to the tribal cultural or perhaps because they were from Mecca or Jeddah, but she faced it numerous times.

When you succeed ... Especially in Saudi society, most of the men not accept that you are a successful lady, how come! (P7, DU:2)

But this scenario is sometimes totally different when a woman deals with another women leader. The superiors mostly try to dominate the subordinates. They even try to stop their successors. Women with high authoritative position sometimes induce excessive power as well as influence over their colleagues. Though it varies from person to person.

It's personal and it depends on the women who have the position and who have the job. (P3, DU:4)

The above discussion shows that Saudi female leaders facing an inter-gender conflicts as an organisation-based conflicts during their leadership roles.

4.3.1.2 Personal-Based Causes of Conflicts

Personal-based causes of conflicts is a conflict that occurs within different individual. This type of conflicts often encompasses some form of goal and cognitive conflict. This seems to be one of shared phenomenon in various organisations especially in higher education institution. Among the forms of conflict faced by the participants in various roles are those that are personal in nature. Women

in Saudi Arabia higher education are facing assorted conflicts in their personal lives as well as organisational realities. Based on the result of this study, all participants appeared to posit that dealing with personal responsibilities and workload burden every so often chase women into conflict. Reportedly, participant 1, highlighted in discussion units 2 that:

Personal conflicts I had in my position at the beginning and I still have some of them are the ones with time management, the different list of priorities, administrative burden, the huge amount of daily routine work. Sometimes it can be delegated. Sometimes cannot be limited, huge responsibilities but limited authorities. These are some of the ones which I still have (P1: DU 2)

This is paralleled to participant 2, who stated that the conflicts scenario among women leaders in Saudi Arabia higher education institution seems to be a personalized conflict. For instance, Participant 2 emphasized in (DU:1) that:

it was more like they converted into personal conflict. So, whatever it is, this is what I've noticed that maturity in the work. This is where you arrive to or you reach a level where you don't personalize the problem with each other, and the issue that I've noticed that most of conflicts that happened is that we take things in person. We don't deal with it as if it's cure business or business is business, and personal issues are personal issues (P2: DU:1).

Personal conflict is linked to people's personal perspective, the way they respond to the issues. When people get freer having ample idle time more problems occurred.

within my group, sometimes there are some personal conflict that occurs between people from personal perspective (P2, DU:5)

Participant 3 observed different types of conflicts in the university. In terms of self-conflict, she reported that this type of conflict occurred only when she used to fight with herself because of failing to conduct her duties. Besides, this conflict discourages women to participate in leadership. According to her observation, the

same thing happens to other female academicians. They prefer to stay academician rather than become an administrator.

This is why I did not leave teaching at all in any semester; and every semester I like to have teaching hours because dropping out of teaching is the worst thing in the academic records (P3, DU:1)

When discussing any hindrances, a leader might face due to the conflicts at hand. Participant 10 stated that at times she felt that while a leader was working to the best of her abilities she might be in a bitter struggle.

From my view as a leader, the leader is busy all day and continuously, and my point of view is that a leader who is capable of building a trail or fingerprint can be in a bitter struggle, and that this post does not add anything or benefit to me. (P10, DU:3)

To prop the aforesaid results from the participants, many studies conducted in Saudi Arabia such as (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016) have acknowledged that the women in the higher education leadership were not proficient enough due to their personal conflicts that associated to inadequate of self-assurance which dominates women's leadership. Occasionally, those personal conflicts prime their physiological, psychological and intellectual dismay in playing their managerial duties. That is plainly explicated from participant 3 assertions that highlighted that *"You feel it is about the depression that you are going to have. Sometimes you feel, no, it's my right and I'll take it. But sometimes you feel, oh my God! Everything I have to struggle in and make a lot of fights to have my duties"*. In addition, adverse social condition and family restriction are associated with the personal problems of the women leaders to reach organisational superior position (Mooney & Ryan, 2009). Therefore, family income, marital status and number of children exert significant negative impacts on the probability of joining in the labour force of the Saudi women (Al-Orabi, 1999). Women who are particularly living in the traditional social environment obliged to carry out family responsibilities, such as raising children,

taking care of husband and other family members while doing the household chores. Participant 10, detailed out the personal conflicts that prompted to their family responsibly in her proclamation that *“Sometimes the leader has no time to spend personal or family matters, and he cannot develop himself, and if there is an error coming to him and under his responsibility, schedules, supervision, training, Leadership does not have any advantages neither in courses nor in promotions, this is unfair, and many people are away from Leadership”* Thus, those obligations seem to be barriers in their career development as well as academic progress (Neale & Özkanli, 2010). To sum up, according to the participants, Saudi women leaders in the higher education are frequently experiencing personal conflicts in various form of it.

Personal-based conflicts could occur through disagreement between two parties or sub-groups of an organizational institutes encompassing substantial antipathy and discontent. Participants of this study emphasized on this conflict that often recruits itself among the individual in organization.

There are other reasons for conflicts. Internal competition, envy, and jealousy are the main components that lead people to conflict. Besides, when subordinates aggressively desire to win the entitlement of the superior position they tend to disobey the leader and create conflict. Some people in the organisation may consider themselves smarter than their boss. They may want to outrank the boss and that negatively impact on their working relationship.

I can do the same as the boss does, this badly affects the work and makes some obstacles and impacts on the workflow. (P4, DU:4)

The participant mentioned that while personal conflicts were due to difference of opinion, conflicts also came in due to difference of cultures, in case of being a woman leader, men hold a certain kind of grudge over women – it gets personal.

There is some kind of grudge against women, and things are taken in a personal way. I do not know if this is the case for all leaders or not. (P7, DU:1)

However, even the job environment becomes unhealthy because of conflicts women try to adapt to the situation. In that condition, they tolerate their leaders just because of generosity or when they have no other choices.

I look at it from my side and I keep going on.... I look at it from another perspective that still they need to learn to solve the conflict with evidences with logic; not by imitating other works, or by power, or whatever... I feel that it takes time for people to learn to reach that level. (P2, DU:3)

To sum up, the above statement was describing the personal-based conflicts that the Saudi women faced. To clearly understand the female personal conflicts the next two section describes two different personal conflicts.

Lack of the Profession

Participant 3 buttressed her assertion saying that self-conflict is the major scenario she experienced. She motioned that aptitude of women leader in higher education to prove their competence heading the position was one of common personal-conflict situation. Participant 3 stressed in (DU:1) that:

I can say that I have a self-conflict. It is in the ability to prove yourself that you really deserve this place and you can continue it and do something new. This is one of the most difficult conflicts I can face or experience between myself and myself (P3: DU:1).

Also, people in the administrative positions tend to have a lot of bureaucracy and this limits people from getting what they need in order to do their work accordingly.

when you finish the job, they try to not give you the thing you deserve, and improve your effort, rather you have not benefited from many things or they are missing...As a part of my thinking is that the organisational institution is delayed in a big way. It is a kind of bureaucracy, routine. (P6, DU:2)

Participant 9 also concluded that coping with the family seems to be concern which can prime to personal conflict. The participant 9 mentioned that during the interviews saying:

I had to work very hard even on the holidays I take my baby with me with her Nanny, and I spend all day from 8:00 to 17:00 at the faculty to read all the letters and all the policies and procedures and I even memorized it. So, I know what to do and what to say and what not to say, what are my rights and what are my responsibilities. (P9, DU:2).

In the same vein, participant 3 reported that personal problem occurs when she marked an interesting point which was: after completing the managerial tenure when a leader comes back to her normal academic life, she does not find the same honour. This discordance gives the raise self-conflict. Ex-leaders may not easily accept the reality with no authoritative power. Personal conflicts appear in various other forms such as leaders suffer from indecisiveness, or sometimes they cannot get the work done in their desired ways. They are afraid of taking big responsibilities due to the possibilities of negative consequences.

You feel it is about the depression that you are going to have. Sometimes you feel, no, it's my right and I'll take it. But sometimes you feel, oh my God! Everything I have to struggle in and make a lot of fights to have my duties. (P3, DU:3)

In addition, participant 10, asserted in the discussion unit 2 that, women leaders are roughcast the personal issues which related to their ability to cope with their career and family matter. She mentioned that:

Sometimes the leader has no time to spend personal or family matters, and he cannot develop himself, and if there is an error coming to him and under his responsibility, schedules, supervision, training, Leadership does not have any advantages neither in courses nor in promotions, this is unfair, and many people are away from Leadership. (P10, DU:2).

In Saudi Arabia, the studies have revealed that women are regarded to be the dependents of men for educational issues especially, for higher education. They face tremendous barriers in academic life because of the guardianship of men. Nevertheless, the concept of the man guardianship is considered as an unavoidable obligation for the women in Saudi Arabia. This concept adversely affects women in furthering their education as well as discouraging to develop professional career to the higher level (Abalkhail, 2017; Abalkhail & Allan, 2015). The above analysis about the inter-personal signaled that in spite that there is a headway in the area of female leadership in Saudi Arabia higher institutions, yet, there is a need to be thru on the concerns of inter-gender conflicts to aid women in achieving gender fairness and balance their leadership professions. However, it is a matter of hope that the cultural environment and the perspective of men towards women are changing in Saudi Arabia. Saudi government has ratified the United Nations Equal Remuneration Convention and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (Al-Munajjed, 2010). The above discussion shows that Saudi female leaders facing inter-gender conflicts as a personal conflict during their leadership roles, which is documented in the University (A) catalogue when looking at the organizational structure it is clear that the top management positions all have been taken by males since the establishment of the university.

4.3.1.3 Group Conflicts

The concept of group conflict is the third Cause of conflict scenario that Saudi female leaders encountered in their job as leaders of Saudi Arabia higher institution. This type of the conflicts commonly occurs in the organisation or institution. Saudi women experience group conflict in the landscape of higher education while performing academic leadership. These conflicts sometimes obstruct

their performance and consequently, they cannot fully achieve the institutional objectives (Al-Minqash, 2007). Sometimes it happened to be very little scale that could be easily managed and vis-a-vis. The participants of this study expounded that the nature of the conflict transpires from the groups or set of people in the institutions. For instance, participant 5 emphasized in (DU:5) that the old staff in the institution might not want to follow the decision made by the leader of other sectors due to blurred vision of idea. She stated that:

There are some differences between superiors and subordinates in order to manage the work in its own way because everyone wants to run the work in his own way, the methods, the methodology and the way he uses sometimes there is a simple hope that you can help them to see their personality and through proverbs or through reality or by clarifying the vision and the other viewpoint whether they are new or old so that they can understand more (P5, DU:5).

Sometimes, conflicts occur in the group if the group members are not fully aware of organisational goals. When all the people in an organisation cannot stand on the same ground of organisational vision when they are not working to achieve the same mission they may get into conflict because of different understandings. They divide into groups according to their opinions. Therefore, they lose unity and harmony.

when the vision and the mission of the institution are not clear or when we fail to deliver the right message to our employees, they may get into conflicts .(P1, DU:5)

Besides, when group members do not maintain proper honesty and integrity; when they imitate or unethically reproduce others work and when they fail to execute their duties properly due to lack of knowledge and skills conflicts appear.

when people steal also your idea but again at the end, even if they steal your idea, they cannot execute it because they don't have the same brain as you have. (P2, DU:6)

On the other hand, group conflict mostly occurs when people intend to work independently and when they show an unwillingness to work in a group.

They want to work by themselves or they want to work alone. (P3, DU:5)

Participant 4 further exemplified: once the conflict occurred so badly resulted one an employee to quit her job. The conflict appeared to be intolerable to her. She ignores all other lucrative facilities and privileges.

Because of this bad condition an employee resigned. Not everyone can endure such atmosphere of conflict. The salary of that employee was more than wonderful, and the job was good, and she had the ability to give while being pleased with that work. (P4, DU:5)

Participant 1 posited in (DU:5) that different in opinion primes to the chaos among the group members. She highlighted that:

I think if it is left to opinions, or individual behaviors, that result is definitely a big chaos. and how it affected them? In fact, it needs more patients with them a plan for training them to do the things more effectively more efficiently, but generally and with my situation in particular very few who asked for rotation and they were transferred to other sectors (P1, DU:5).

The huge conflict appears due to irrational job distribution. When the allocated job is not matched with the given time, people react and get into conflict regarding to participant 2:

Honestly, it happens sometimes that some people maybe have more tasks than others based on a peak time during the semester (P2, DU:5)

When questioned about the nature of conflicts within the team she works with the participant 6 stated that often there were work jealousies, work overlapping which causes trouble, and conflicts and non-cooperation from team members which lead to conflicts arising. Participant 10 cited a number of factors – schedules, materials, academic committees, courses, counselling and workloads.

Schedules, materials, academic committees, courses, counselling, or work tasks. But the deal is good, and in my turn as a leader, I face the conflicting parties (P10, DU:5)

Similarly, participant 3 asserted in (DU: 5) that there are conflicts comes between colleagues at the workplace in both private and public universities. Competition is one of the conflicts faced in both sectors and this is just one person feeling they are best placed to have a role of authority. In some other cases, the staff may possibly have their preference to work on a project with some set of people or group compared to others in the same institution. She said that:

They will we show that their understanding for some point, and later on everything will be clear for all the group and there will be no struggling between them. They will work and they will do the job that they have to do. I think I know with whom should I work, or should I do the project? And I know that is the people who I have to work with I'm talking about the groups I'm working with them for a long time. Not the new people. (P3, DU:5).

Habitually, group conflict takes in the organisation. In other words, it refers to the nature of the conflicts that occurs between two or more groups in the institution.

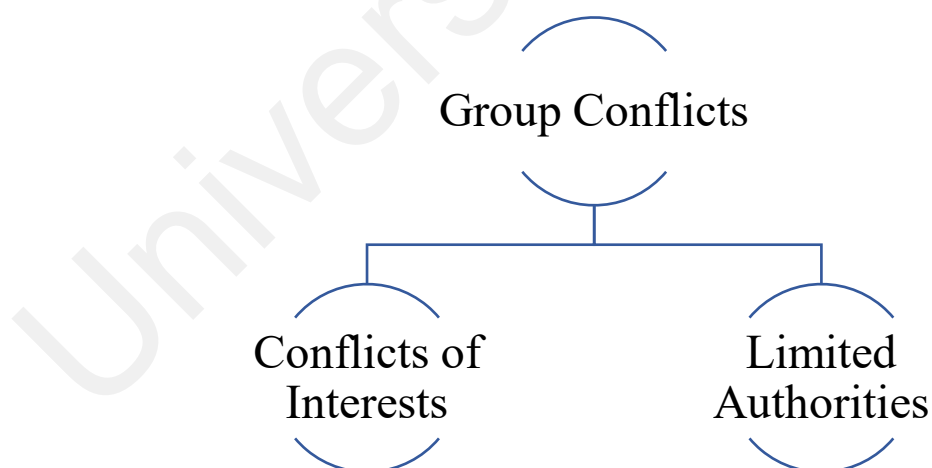


Figure 4.2 Group Conflicts Figure 4.3 Group Conflicts

The Figure above shows the group conflicts which divided to two codes. First code is the conflict of interests and ideas, while the limited authorities was the second code of the group conflicts that faced by the female leaders in Saudi Arabian higher institutions. When asked participant 8 about conflicts with other departments or organisations, the participant mentioned that there are two colleges - one for women and one for men. Often policies were made keeping in mind the male college rather than the female college – although not intentional the slight was felt. However, the Board of Trustees and others concerned could be talked to if it was felt that the policy needed to be reviewed.

As you know we have two campuses one for girls and one for boys and the higher managements are in the male section, so they if there a new decision or something they always go back to the male section, so I think it is not intending to be happening, but it out of ease. This can cause a very disappointment for me, when we get a ready decision from the male section without involving the female section. (P8, DU:6)

Sometimes departments are getting into troubles when there is a misunderstanding or an internal competition between Deans or Directors.

Conflict occurs when there's a misunderstanding when you feel that there is a competition. (P2, DU:6)

Participant 3 also described the same sight of participant 1, in (DU:5) that there was a group conflict especially during the selection of a sector leaders or to lead any specific position of a head of the small group. She said that:

There are conflicts and competition always caused when I want to choose a person in specific position or a head of the small group, I have to give the subordinates a clear idea of why I chose this person that I can announce it to everyone, in case if I have someone said why this person was chosen and I do not? for that we must have a convincing response to why it was selected and on any basis, for example: have more experience than others or have appropriate responses, and clearer idea, so better not to be a random selection. (P3, DU:5).

Participant 2 also portrayed the same sight of participant 8 and 3, in (DU:5) that there was a group conflict particularly when the group of the staff are assigned a project. She said that:

I believe I saw it in other groups honestly when there is overlap of some research topics. This is where conflict might occur in taking others work in trying to forget resource perform, before I got the results, yeah this might cause some problem (P2, DU:5).

However, participant 9 argued in (DU:5) that the female leaders' characteristics and well organisation structure seems to be an antidote to the group conflicts. She explained that:

You can bridge all the conflicts and ease it up if you have a clear organisational structure, no conflict of its interest, and I do not think the professional leaders have conflict of interest, we are working for the same organisation, we are working for the same purpose. So, I do not think that if we believe in this, we will have a conflict-free environment, and we will cooperate to succeed in our work. (P9, DU:5).

The above analysis about the group conflict showed that majority of female leaders in Saudi Arabia higher education institution are experiencing several conflicts among their group members. Lack of confidence, sometimes they exhibit psychological and intellectual incapacity in playing their duties (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). Their lack of ability to implement positional power, adapt with the changes, execute strategic leadership technique, and accepting the changing working hours (Al-Jaradat, 2014). These issues sometimes disfavour them plying certain roles in the workplace. Thus, women in leadership might wish to work together for the betterment of the institution but end up working alone because of lack of cooperation, and one ends up not covering their counterparts and this results in conflict within groups that should be working together for a common goal. So, working alone affects everything overall. Despite that the government of Saudi has taken numerous initiatives to enhance female leadership in education and women have greater access

to the education sector. Eighty-five percent of the working women are belonged to the education industry. They are involved in teaching and administrative position (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Government of this country gives high importance in training on the competency and trait enhancement in order to excel female leadership (Al-Swailem & Elliott, 2013). However, the aforementioned results showed that majorly, the issues of group conflicts seem to be occurred when assigning people for the project and the selection of the leader for any other sub-sectors in the organisation. The researcher further pondered the questions on the causes of the group conflicts among the female leaderships in Saudi Arabia. Almost all of the participants agreed that conflicts of interest and ideas were the main cause of the group conflicts.

Conflicts of Interest and Idea

Conflicts between departments occur when one department try to impose its decision on another department. Or sometimes they become over-reactive. They complain to the superiors or higher administration. Therefore, members of various departments lose confidence in each other. They get divided according to their own believes and working ethics. Sometimes, the Heads of the departments seem not well chosen. They lack the capabilities and skills to handle issues and situations that instigate conflicts.

Sometimes some of them have different work ethics and in most of the cases some of them were not well chosen for these positions.
(P1, DU:6)

Some female leaders are reluctant to move forward most probably, due to their incapacity or reluctance to relinquishing the comfort zone. They might feel it unnecessary to be exposed to new conflicts. Besides, the existing organisational structure is one of the causes of conflict. It is hierarchical and the governing system is centralised. Women are mostly assigned to carry out huge responsibilities with less

authoritative power. They usually suffer from poor organisational culture which sometimes lacks proper planning.

We suffer from the poor culture of strategic planning inside the institutions (P1, DU:12)

Participant 2 served in public and private universities and so, she could share different experiences she had earned in both types of institutes. She encountered assorted conflicts during her tenure as an academic leader in higher education. According to her experience, the nature of the conflict in public and private universities is almost similar. She did not find gender difference as the main causative factor of conflict. But she pointed out that lack of experience and understanding is deriving leaders to conflict. Because having not enough experience leaders cannot perform their duties properly. So, they may get into trouble with their colleagues. Because of lack understanding female administrator might personalize the problems. Thus, a common issue turns into a personal issue. Once they take it personally, they deviate from the professionalism and might behave differently other than a leader.

I've noticed that most of the conflicts happened (because) we take things in person. I noticed it happening due to those people lack experience in work (P2, DU:1)

Promotion is another issue of conflict. When qualified employees do not get the proper position, when they get stagnated in the same position years long, they reportedly, get into conflict. Such conflict delays the organisational workflow as well. Most probably, deprivation demotivates people and they do not concentrate on their works.

No one wishes to remain in office for the rest of their lives or a secretary for twenty years during their full administrative term or as a teacher forever....and this type of conflict affects the completion of work. (P3, DU:6)

Initially when the participant was queried about the kind of conflicts Saudi female academic leaders faced, participant 5 mentioned that conflicts were really about difference of opinion between colleagues (between male and female colleagues). Furthermore, conflicts also arose when a person or people struggled to achieve something but couldn't; however, aspiration was important to achieve goals and work well. It is important to emphasize, that initially the participant didn't really mention a gender struggle in the academic world.

I expect that conflicts [are what] we call the difference of views, but the situation or its diagnosis in the way of conflicts and conflicts on the one hand and try to give them a larger size, all women and men face almost the different counterpart in all personal tires and at work. (P5, DU:1)

When a participant is questioned about conflicts faced this particular, she mentioned that there were less chance of conflicts and more of harassment in certain cases. However, from looking the participants' narrative we feel that it was more a case of certain people not being happy with the participants decision making.

This decision can be influential on the leader as a result of taking a certain situation, and may cause others to hate you or doesn't make them justify actions properly for example, when a leader takes a decision in a particular situation and I'm not criticizing this decision, because the system forced him to do it. (P10, DU:1)

Conflict is something that is present in the workplace and is faced by women who are in leadership in institutions of higher education. According to participant 6 there are elements put in place to help new leaders in the school learn how to avoid and handle difficult circumstances. They are also made aware of what to expect in the leadership role. However, she chose not to follow the directives given and to approach it her own way and tackle issues her way.

As a leader I rejected this direction, and I do not accept any difficulties or conflicts. I took this work for excellence, which exists much and clear, but I do my work and my opinions in order to advance the best. (P6, DU:1)

There's always going to be something that will come up and things will not always go as one expects them to. But dedicating one's time and working hard at a given role will always ensure they come out successful.

In fact, the things always go not in the direction you aspire, but dedicating more times and practices make the work successful and appreciated. (P6, DU:1)

This participant felt that the conflicts hindered her as a female leader. she felt her progress hindered on a regular basis and often wanted to give up but then she looked at her achievement and remained at work.

I always think about stopping work, but back again when I see my achievements and I have an impact on society. I feel that these conflicts I consider as not a hindrance but rather an opportunity to prove my capabilities in a very respectable manner. (P7, DU:3)

In addition, conflict of interests also serves as a cause of conflicts from the male counterpart. Participant 7 opined that:

Conflicts of interest are most common with the group members. When the conflict is not addressed well then delays and failures can come along the way. (P7, DU:5)

Similarly, conflicts can also be caused by differences of ideas, as opined by Participant 7 who stated that:

Conflict of ideas are most of the time the very challenging conflict in our job. (P7, DU:4)

According to this participant's experience, men's myopic views towards women's capability sometimes rise the wrong belief that women are incompetent to be leaders. Therefore, they might disobey the commands of a female leader. Consequently, conflicts appear.

Here as a Saudi community, men believe that the female leader has no place here and will never be the decision makers. (P4, DU:2)

On the other hand, participant 8 feels that in her organisation the conflicts have been far and few mainly because her colleagues both male and female are relatively young, educated, open-minded, belong to progressive families, support and have faith in women.

I think the reason for the lack of conflict is that the working environment is comfortable, and everyone accepts the other--but we have something positive, the social capital and, background. (P8, DU:1)

She felt that sometimes conflicts can hinder her as an academic leader in the university because the director of the university is an older man (in his 70s) and he doesn't take easily to female leadership in academia. The director also doesn't allow women to head departments even if they are sufficiently qualified.

It hindered me a lot. We, as young leaders, have an understanding. But for the director of the university, he is in the seventies. He represents the old school. He is not receptive to young female leaders. He sees that the hierarchy is fundamental. It is not permissible for a woman to become head of a department because she has only a doctorate. (P8, DU:3)

The hierarchical bodies always getting into conflicts. According to her observation, people who excessively complain about their tasks and responsibilities are more likely in conflicts with others. Besides, conflicts appear among the members of higher management mostly during the decision-making sessions. It seems unlikely that the top leaders can reach a common decision. Some leaders who look for their own reputation and name; who extravagantly prioritise on his/ her own view rather than achieving organisational goals are more prone to conflict. In the same vein, leaders' bureaucratic personality sometimes becomes a major cause of instigating conflict. Above all, the absence of cooperation among the colleagues raises conflicts.

Most conflicts and problems which I faced as a leader raised from non-cooperation and also competing. (P4, DU:1)

Participant 7 showed that different idea, suggestion conflicts of interest are mostly the source for every misunderstanding in the institution and the consequences for that would result into delays in the job. She buttressed her view in (DU:5) reporting that:

Different ideas, suggestions, conflicts of interest are most common with the group members. When the conflict is not addressed well then delays and failures can come along the way (P7, DU:5).

Conversely, participants 1, stated that the conflict should be considered as a natural phenomenon that nurtures itself in any organisational institution. In addition, she stated the conflict maybe the result of lack of orientation or inadequate preparation from leaders. She argued with that in (DU: 1) that:

I think the concept of conflict itself for any leader whether male or female it's quite normal quite healthy with their personal or organizational. I think it is quite and something healthy for any institution unless we don't have conflicts troubles. We won't have different solutions different visions for the institution itself (P1, DU:1).

Moreover, conflicts can arise between levels of leadership especially when it comes to the older and the younger generation. The older generations tend to handle situations and issues by commanding and exerting their power to solve them. While the new generation will handle things differently.

The old generation makes its decisions in command and puts itself in power. For example: Old schools have an idea, speech or decision after the flood, and in the performance of work must be clear and unambiguous vision until the completion of this work, not for my decision, which is implemented, and results in the re-division of the academic institution to the difference. (P6, DU:4)

This will affect the direction that a leader should take to guide the institution. Also, there could be conflict if people don't know their roles and the power they have and what authority they should exercise. This can lead to abuse of power and

biasness. The institution not having clear policies and guidelines will cause conflict as there are no rules to follow when problems and disagreements arise.

Subordinates may not have this clear vision or message; hence the conflicts start, perhaps due to the absence of institutional or professional procedures which leads to more conflicts. (P1, DU:5).

If an institution does not perform annual assessments on its employees and even on the events that occurred throughout the year to find out what should be maintained and what should be improved, then conflict will occur.

The absence of an annual assessment is one of the many causes in conflicts system of work. (P1, DU:7).

Hatred and jealousy towards one another can also bring about conflict among colleagues. According to one of the participants, this occurs mostly with women.

Women are always in conflicts with other women especially with the leaders and employees, there are some hatred, implacability and envy and a lot of these other problematic things (P4, DU:29).

If people don't have the team spirit and habit of sharing tasks and sitting down to make decisions and solve problems together, then conflict will be the order of the day. Whenever things are not done as they should be done, for instance if a training has been done to develop employees in certain areas and they end up not using acquired skills, then conflict will occur in the administration.

When the sector provides development courses, performance, training and evaluation, if not implemented will inevitably affect administrative work as well. Hence, there will be some kind of administrative problems (P1, DU:7).

Any conflict will prevent leaders from performing properly. Due to such hazard female leaders do not get promotion timely. Assumingly, it slows down their workflow by consuming excessive time.

In fact, some of them they were time-consuming, and I had to wait for almost two years.... some of the members enjoy a very big comfort zone, and they don't want to be exposed to new practices in such situations. (P1, DU:6)

Conflict of ideas and a lack of a clear job description took a place between this participant and her counterparts.

Conflict is in the nature of work; it is like a job description. Most of this conflict declare job description for each one. Conflict of ideas are most of the time the very challenging conflict in our job. (P7, DU:4)

The participant stressed that while all the conflicts mentioned made working in her current post hard, her dedication and hard work in addition to the support from the colleagues helped her succeed. She went on to discuss that the main source of conflict between her and her colleagues was the fact that she didn't give the green light to everything her colleagues asked her to do and looked into the matter herself.

In the beginning, it was very hard for me to do this work. Especially I did not take the post with my complete will. but, with this support of my team and colleges, my dedication everything was accomplished, and my role was successfully accomplished. (P9, DU:3)

...because I have read all the policies and procedures and I knew all my responsibilities, I told them do not do any action for men unless you consult me, unless you come back to me. (P9, DU:4)

There's also conflict between the older and the newer generation when it comes to qualifications. This is because the newer generation tends to be more qualified compared to the older one and this causes them to be rejected.

So, for the people who started at the beginning with the university, they have no high qualifications, so they could not respect the new generation which has higher degrees such a doctorate. So, there is some resistance in dealing with us. (P8, DU:2).

Racism is another conflict that came up during the interviews, there are some leaders who only tend to treat people from their part of the world well and disregard the rest. This is because these other people are from other nationalities. There are people who tend to abuse the power they have to oppress people under them.

Conflicts also come about when problems are not solved amicably, of one side is favored over another,

The way that was treated that what hurts me more the administration instead of just asking the other person to apologize or just to reflect that this work was taken for any reason but just to say I'm sorry, the issue was treated in a personal way. Oh, no, she loves you. She didn't mean to do that. You know, this is not professional way of treating such type of problems. (P2, DU:2).

In this regard, a study showed Saudi female leaders are somehow bound to adopt with the stereotypical social attributes (Taleb, 2010). From this point of view and based on the analysis above, there are several instances that trigger the group conflicts among the academic staff which are chaired as a result of lack of mutual understanding and the differences in the ideal and interest. Hence, the researcher further explores the surviving strategies used by the female administrators to sojourn the situation of the conflicts in their various institutions.

Limited Authorities

Leadership conflict exists in higher education. As the causative agent, this participant clearly highlighted one point which is men's authoritative power that causes conflict in the management. According to her observation, the male administrators tend to concentrate the administrative power for their own sake so that they can rule over the organisation in their ways. While female leaders have less autonomy to make any decision. They mostly need to depend on men's wills. Hence, they face strong barriers as well as discrimination in the management practice. This barrier pushes them into conflict once they try to execute their decisions.

First of all, men who make the regulation preserve all the authoritative power for themselves and give little of this to ladies (P3, DU:1)

Women are always far behind men in term of reaching the highest position in the organisation. Mostly the faculty Heads or Deans are men accompanied by male Vice- Deans who generally outnumber female Vice-Deans. Naturally, they can demonstrate more power in running departments as well as decision making in the council meeting. Thus, female leaders are discriminated and remain underrepresented. These challenges minimise their potentials. Besides, female leaders feel it burdensome to deal with their organisational duties and family responsibilities simultaneously. It seems due to the excessive workloads in playing the leadership roles and their family lives become imbalanced. Inefficient time management makes it difficult to balance personal and working life. Sometimes it is manageable and sometimes not. Leadership roles demand extended time while leaders have their own limitations. Besides, the lack of authoritative power in the organisation leads behind them. They are mostly given responsibilities with improper administrative power. Therefore, they cannot play their roles independently, fully.

Sometimes it can be delegated sometimes not; huge responsibilities but limited authorities. (P1, DU:2)

Some leaders expose excessive authoritative power. This kind of 'power' problem sometimes, converts a leader into an autocrat, some leaders wants to execute whatever she wills.

Another cause of conflict I've noticed, where people tried to take things by power. If I have power, I can take whatever I want (P2, DU:1)

The power problem is one of the most critical reasons for conflict. When superiors or leaders inflict excessive authoritative power over subordinates; when they unnecessarily interfere with others job; when they try to overshadow other activities; they may ignite conflicts.

The deputy responded by saying ‘No’, although it was none of Dean’s business. Then she enforced her opinion saying that she is the main decision maker and no one else. (P4, DU:5)

Women in leadership also face male dominance when it comes to leadership positions. Hence, it becomes very difficult for women to make any independent decisions without criticism and chastisement. When a woman in leadership makes a decision, the male counterparts will ignore her and go to other males in authority to override her decisions.

Dealing with men, without any castigation, so that they can take the decision correctly, and always have to refer to them because they are close to the administrators and the authority (the Dean, the University Director and others. However, my post refers to the men's division is this organisation, but very close to the authority. (P6, DU:12).

There are instances when female leaders go to conferences organized by Ministry of Education and find they are the only female in the room. This means women are not represented enough. Men tend to reject female leaders; they don’t want women to get leadership roles

with the male member there are a lot of problems and disagreements, and the reason why is that, he is not accepting that there is a female dean that demands tasks from him (P4, DU:2).

Women’s participation in the professional occupations in Saudi is significantly low compared to the global context (Alselaيمي, 2012). For instance, female leadership in higher education is underrepresented. They encounter several challenges in pursuing leadership in the academic landscape (Almaki, Silong, et al., 2016). In that respect, several barriers are identified. Different as well as demeaning attitudes towards women are observed across the region. Besides, female participation in job is a sensitive cultural issue while Islam is seen as an enabler to dominate women and women’s responsibilities to families (Alselaيمي, 2012). Even

the educated male are found conservative towards women because of their attachment with the traditional culture (Asadi, 2011).

4.3.2 Effects of Conflicts

Effects of conflicts refers to the harms the conflicts cause female in leadership role. Two points were made by Participant 1 and Participant 9 which were stress and waste of time. On stress, Participant 9 stated her ordeal on how she was not trusted the first time she assumed her new role and how it was rumoured around that the dean was in support of her saying:

They are saying that I am very young, and I cannot succeed, the dean is supporting Dr. Aisha. All this was very stressful on me. (P9, DU:8).

In addition, being stressful, it is also viewed as time wasting by Participant 1 stating that:

Some of them they were time-consuming, and I had to wait for almost two years. So, they finish their terms of official terms so I can choose others for their possessions for others. (P1, DU:6)

Participant 4 lamented that the male dominance has plenty of effects on her as she and fellow female leaders have to deal with disapproval and the lack of acceptance in a male dominated culture and society. She stated:

It affects me, this is because of the society and culture and due to the man's nature when he is a brother or a father, he is accustomed to be obeyed by the woman. Therefore, administration of the opposite sex is not acceptable, but man's administration over woman is a normal and acceptable thing and widely exist in society, this culture is on its way to change, it is difficult though. A lot of members had studied in the universities with female students with respect, but still man do not except for a woman to be a leader. (P4, DU:3)

This view was echoed by Participant 8 who also admitted that the lack of approval by the old school style leadership of her university hinders her from fulfilling her potential. She complained:

It hindered me a lot. We, as young leaders, have an understanding. But for the director of the university, he is in the seventies. He represents the old school. He is not receptive to young female leaders. He sees that the hierarchy is fundamental. It is not permissible for a woman to become head of a department because she has only a doctorate. (P8, DU:3)

Such conflicts are sometimes not addressed well which then lead to failures as problems breed problems, as stated by Participant 4 when asked about the effects of the conflicts.

4.3.3 Coping Strategies

This is another major theme extracted from the analysis of the interviews. It refers to what the female leaders think can be the best ways of countering those leadership conflicts. A number of suggestions were made by the participants that include knowledge, clear organizational structure, clear guidelines and procedures, work delegation, document violations, leadership workshops, provide work manuals, replacing stubborn colleagues, show good intentions, training, transfers, wisdom and good negotiation skills, and working in areas of specialization. Almost all the participants explained their strategic ways in coping with the several conflicts experienced. Participant 1 emphasized in (DU:6) that she had to send the leaders of each sectors to the workshops to enhance their leadership skills for improvement. She said that:

I had to send them to different leadership workshops, for others I had just needed to document their violations, for others I provided them with work manuals, and just kept watching for improvement, more patients in fact and more wisdom they were and still are needed in such. I also think some of the members they enjoy a very big comfort zone, and they don't want to have or to be exposed to new practices in such situations, I think we need to convince them, to train them (P1, DU:6).

The participants 2, also stressed that sending the staff members for the training on leadership could serve as a coping strategy to the conflicts. The participant 2 stated in (DU: 3) that:

Honestly, it actually encouraged me to work more and try to hide those people who doesn't have experience to gain more experience to be more mature and to see things more professionally, and it's true that sometimes when there is a conflict at the beginning or on spot it hurts (P2, DU:3).

Experience has come out as a vital factor in playing leadership roles. When leaders are seasoned and skilled in their tasks they presumably, become more supportive of their subordinates. And they know how to compliment others' works. In such environment conflicts rarely emerge. If no conflict occurs among the group members, a better result can be earned. Besides, when group members become tasks oriented, they get little time to be involved with the conflict.

I have tasks, they also have, and each of them has a specific task to do. If we all work together and honestly, whoever the spirit (conflict) cannot continue with us. (P2, DU:5)

Further, when group members enjoy the work, they usually do not make conflicts. They become more cooperative and helpful to each other. Overall, a vibrant job environment is possible only when it is conflict-free.

So, we work really as a team. Everyone has a task that she likes that she enjoys, or she enjoys working on it; and whoever cannot fit within the spirit (conflicts) cannot survive with us. They usually quit. (P2, DU:5)

In case of conflicts arising in a team the participant felt that the best way to deal with problems was to bring everyone around the dialogue table and ask them to voice their opinion, hear out their problems and then work to find a solution.

It always produces great achievement; hence I would like to sit at the dialogue table and the eternal debate and to make what is needed clear. As for the opponents, I would allow them to involve, and assign someone else to hear the problem, this person is characterized by the prestige, academic recognition and respect in the educational institution and mostly focuses in the final delivery of public interest, in which that the goal must be achieved regularly. This is the result of preference. The problem is always

the lack of confrontation by our nature as women, rather we must respect others in this situation. (P6, DU:6)

Participant 4 suggested that through her experience, she preferred to use the confrontational approach in handling the conflict zones. She posited in (DU:6) that:

One of my policies which I follow for solving conflicts is confrontation, and it may vary from one person to another, not everyone likes confrontation or can overcome it. It must have anger, admonition and a lot of other things, and a lot of people do not like to reach this phase and just say “it’s ok, it’s ok” (P4, DU:6).

The participant 5 also buttress the point of participant 4 through highlighting that professional relations seems be the solution to handle the conflicts in her institution. She stated that:

On the personal side there is but how does a person deal as a leader with this fight because all that exists in it is a professional relationship that has a loving relation that tries as much as possible to reduce the conflict to be in a way that is productive but sometimes if you put a bit of effort with each individual and understand each other's point of view you can then be more cooperative than personal and help each other in one way or another (P5, DU:5).

When asked how problems could be solved when conflicts were faced in the organisation participant 10 generally let it be known that one had to be in a problem-solving mode.

Sometimes there must be some conflicts with other departments for examples: we as a designers sometimes other departments ask for help in creating a logo for example, but if we are busy and we could not help quickly this cause a conflict between the two departments. Of course, I will get affected, but I try to find other solutions as much as possible. (P10, DU:6)

She also mentioned that as a leader, discussion with conflicting parties was the way forward.

In order to overcome the difficulties and obstacles, and I present a proposal for appropriate solutions that can help the parties to the conflict (P10, DU:5)

Furthermore, when questioned how she dealt with conflicts from another department or organisation, participant 5 diplomatically replied that she deals with them as you do work in a large family by taking on board the opinion of everyone.

We work in the family framework, and the only thing that is competition is to prefer, sometimes not to the degree of conflict but to the degree of competition, and my group is an example in the process of family cooperation. (P5, DU:6)

However, participant 8 did mention that when she faces a conflict in her organization, she tries to solve it through opening up a discussion and finding the solution.

I always stay away from conflicts, when there is issue, I call and discuss it, I respect the other opinion, I have respect for cultures and traditions, when there are different views and different opinions... some people call of women's empowerment but for me I am still believe in culture and traditions, I prefer to discuss. my approach is different than others. (P8, DU:4)

Participant 3 noted one thing: in the top management, the incidence of conflict is rare. She further elaborated that high position gives the opportunity to deal with the chief of the faculty directly. By this way, leaders go through no intermediaries. Therefore, they feel it easy and comfortable with their activities and exchange with the chief and that generates fewer conflicts.

I think that working in the deanship or in the independent organisation is somewhat comfortable to deal with. This job is fixable in terms of punctuality and attendance; and the work you are doing is dealing directly with the dean, so you feel very comfortable. (P3, DU:6)

This participant feels that there has been hindrance in her work as a result of these conflicts – conflicts which are often on the smallest and simplest things. The conflicts are often brought about by colleagues who are highly educated and work at a fairly high level. However, the participant states that she tries to face these issues directly and honestly.

The reality is that the leaders always want to achieve and add on. Indeed, it always makes conflicts and difficulties to work as leader. Despite you have reached this stage, even the renunciation of what is required of you, and if you want this position take it, and this issue is facing us continuously. It is lamentable to see the owners of the certificates whose owner's name, level and grade obtained are written on, when the conflict is done on a very simple and trivial things, which sometimes results to a satisfactory condition. (P6, DU:3)

Also, conflicts can be solved by simply creating an environment where everyone is accepted and understood, this way no one will see the need of acting against another. Confrontation also came up as a way of solving conflicts, this way two people who have conflict with one another can sit down and come to an agreement, though not everybody has the ability to do this. Following up is another way of making sure there are no conflicts, if there are, then follow up and try to find ways to get rid of it, and this could be by making the environment comfortable for everybody.

I always follow up and try to fix things, and I try to sweeten the atmosphere among individuals. (P8, DU:5)

Teamwork is a tool that can be used in curbing conflict as well. If everybody works as a team, they will be looking out for one another, hence no conflicts. Also having team members ask questions to the leadership and getting answers is a great way of ensuring there are no conflicts. Participants 8 concluded in discussion unit 5 that the leader plays a big role in resolving the conflict zones through the use of their psychological ideas and emotional intelligence. Whenever conflict occurs, it is wise to involve the leadership who can then come in and find ways to solve it.

The leader plays a big role, whenever we have a conflict we have to intervene, I have to balance and understand the tension coming from where, and we must use psychology and the emotional intelligence. (P8, DU:5).

Also, if one practices maturity then they are able to handle disagreements better and logically not let things get out of hand

I will be disappointed and I would be hurt I would be upset, but at the end I look at it from another perspective that still they need to learn to get to that level of trying to solve the conflict and trying to solve problems with evidences with logic, not by ruining the other work, or by power, or whatever and I feel that it takes time for people to learn to reach that level. (P2, DU:3).

It seems by exhibiting proper skills a female leader can avoid conflicts. Besides, if a leader can demonstrate proper understanding as well as collaboration conflict can be reduced to a greater degree. Once a woman leader can prove herself as skilled and capable, she can work with the male. In this regard, two participants shared their personal experience as below:

I work directly with the head of graduate studies and with male leaders very comfortably and there are no problems or difficulties. (P3, DU:4)

I also resolve it when I do what we call it a team evaluation between the team members and they ask questions, at that time I try as much as I can to resolve this issue in this way (P2, DU:5)

In terms of how one conducts her works it was also recommended by Participant 1 to learn how to delegate works to others which reduces stress and many a times gets the work done much faster. She stated that:

Some of them by the time I trained myself to overcome them few of them because of the limited authorities. I cannot some of them I trained myself to improve the delegation skills, so they are overcome. (P1, DU:3)

Sometimes, one has to think of taking a drastic measure in dealing with those causing conflicts (stubborn colleagues) by replacing the old guards with new faces. Another form of drastic measures is to issue transfers, as viewed by Participant 6 who stated:

For example, when a member or cadres are diverted from his or her work due to lack of cooperation or conflict, he or she is transferred to a division so that he does not have a role. In fact, this disrupts the interest of the work, and each president brings his supporters and loyalists close to him. (P6, DU:6)

Contrastingly, Participant 9 sees that dealing with those causing conflicts requires one to show them that she is not there to compete with them rather to complement their works and work together for a common good. She said:

Showing good intentions, and that I am not competing with them, and we are complementing each other, there is no hidden agenda between us, respecting, empowerment. with all that, we will proceed to fulfil our tasks and objectives. (P9, DU:6)

This view is close to that given by Participant 1 in another instance in which she argued that countering conflicts sometimes requires wisdom and good negotiation skills. She said that:

But with more wisdom patience and more communication and negotiation skills. I think also with more plan B conflicts and tension are reduced and relieved to the minimum. (P1, DU:18)

This goes in line with the opinion of Participant 6 who opined that one has to ensure that individuals are positioned and given tasks according to their specialisations. She said that:

Each person must work in his area and specialization according to assigned tasks. Therefore, he may overcome the problems and conflicts in the overlapping of roles and tasks. Indeed, the tasks are often distributed according to the abilities and qualifications of each person and must abide by the limits and powers. The strengths and weaknesses should be determined, and also guiding the new user on how to deal with their colleagues in such a way that suits work tasks. (P6, DU:6)

Another leader had a different approach to countering conflicts. She thinks that the best way to avoid conflicts is through a fair distribution of tasks and knowing when a colleague needs help, pushing, reminding and so on. She said in her own words:

Very simple things, and thanks God, I think I have a leadership character... I divide the work for them ... and I distribute the job description of each individual. Sometimes we need to help each other. Sometimes, not all the time, I accept some of these things, some of them need Encouraging/pushing... reminding him what he is doing. (P7, DU:5)

Using tasks to counter conflicts is also employed by Participant 2 who believe that the reason why there are conflicts is because those involved in such conflicts have time to dwell on issues. Thus, giving them more tasks to deal with takes away the time they have to engage themselves in trivial conflicts. She stated:

I usually assign more task to them to try to avoid that personal conflicts. There is a personal conflict, so they don't have time to think about the personal issues and they focus on the work. (P2, DU:5)

Or through the encouragement of teamwork among my team members. She added that:

we are a deanship of research. I have a team working with me. Honestly, to be honest with you the way that we deal in our deanship I've been here for three years and a half, and we work together really as a team, as a family. So, wherever there is a project we all contribute to this project. I have tasks, they also have, each one of them has a specific task to do, we work all together and honestly, whoever cannot fit within the spirit cannot continue with us, to be honest with you. I had people who joined the team but couldn't really work as a team couldn't work as for example, we have a strategy that whatever we have a project we will sit all together with braced on side by side to each other based on what they like, and where they want to contribute, so usually I don't enforced people that is not related to their work, or they are not interested in it. So, we work really as a team with each one has a task that he likes that he enjoyed, or she enjoyed working on it, and whoever cannot fit within the spirit cannot survive with us, they usually quit. (P2, DU:5)

She demonstrated what she meant stating how she balances work and organize the tasks for the members to work as teams. She cited the following example:

for example, a specific person in a specific unit had more responsibilities or had more tasks or duties to be submitted or to be delivered within a very short period of time and others maybe have less let's say load during that period of time. So, what we usually do is that I try always to assign others to support those people, so they work all together, and they usually come and ask me, can I ask this person to help me doing this because I cannot finish it? I say, yes go ahead. I talk to them. Sometimes I take buy myself some of their work as well. (P2, DU:5)

The ability to look at sub-units that are situated within a larger case is essential when the researcher considers that data is been analyzed within the subunits separately. With referring to the case with individual units in the analyses which is presented in both private and public universities, anywhere there are different people with different beliefs working together, conflict will exist. Participants from both public and private universities agreed that they have faced conflict in their workplaces mostly and sometimes in their private lives.

It is commonly highlighted that conflict that arose from interviewing both parties include the university not having a clear vision and mission to guide the institution, *"...when I was appointed when the vision and the mission of the institution. are not clear..." (P1, DU:1)*. This will affect the direction that a leader should take to guide the institution. Also, there could be conflict if people don't know their roles and the power they have and what authority they should exercise. This can lead to abuse of power and biasness. The institution not having clear policies and guidelines will cause conflict as there are no rules to follow when problems and disagreements arise, *"...subordinates may not have this clear vision or message; hence the conflicts start, perhaps due to the absence of institutional or professional procedures which leads to more conflicts." (P1, DU:1)*.

Furthermore, when an institution does not perform annual assessments on its employees and even on the events that occurred throughout the year to find out what should be maintained and what should be improved then conflict will occur, *“The absence of an annual assessment is one of the many causes in conflicts system of work.” (P1, DU:1)*. Hatred and jealousy towards one another can also bring about conflict among colleagues. According to one of the participants, this occurs mostly with women, *“Women are always in conflicts with other women especially with the leaders and employees, there are some hatred, implacability and envy and a lot of these other problematic things” (P2, DU:2)*. If people don’t have the team spirit and habit of sharing tasks and sitting down to make decisions and solve problems together, then conflict will be the order of the day. Whenever things are not done as they should be done, for instance if a training has been done to develop employees in certain areas and they end up not using acquired skills, then conflict will occur in the administration, *“...when the sector provides development courses, performance, training and evaluation, if not implemented will inevitably affect administrative work as well. Hence, there will be some kind of administrative problems” (P1, DU:1)*. Causes of conflict in public and private universities are more or less the same as supported by the contributions given by participants from both sectors.

To conclude, according to the participant on the research question 1, Saudi female leaders in the higher education are frequently experiencing conflicts in their profession as higher education leader. The themes and sub themes in this section highlighted the scenario of the conflict in higher institutions, most especially with their male counterparts rather than female colleagues. There are several reasons of conflicts that were extracted from the responses of the participants. The existing social norm which is seemingly unsupportive to female leaders. Saudi society prefers

men's representation in the top management. This is similar to the finding obtained in the document analysis. According to the study conducted by Al-sharif (2008), there are numerous organisational conflicts faced the female leaders in various faculties which associated to personal academic affairs as well as the cultural norms.

Generally, conflict in the higher institution is common phenomenon and the solution to the conflict could be related to its nature and scenario. Some conflicts required a strategical approach in resolving it and other may need to be handled with confrontation or sending them for the training as recommended by the participants.

4.4 Challenges Experienced by The Female Leaders in Saudi Arabian Universities

The second research question sought explored the encounters experienced in Saudi Arabia Higher institutions as far as female leadership is concerned. Professional women in Saudi Arabia are encountering multifarious challenges in their personal lives as well as organisational realities. There are two main themes under the challenges experienced which are: the forms of the challenges, and the effects of challenges experienced. The following subsections discuss each of the subtheme and the codes that paved the way for its generation. The Figure 4.4 below portrayed the thematic mapping of the challenges experienced among Saudi female leaders in HEI.

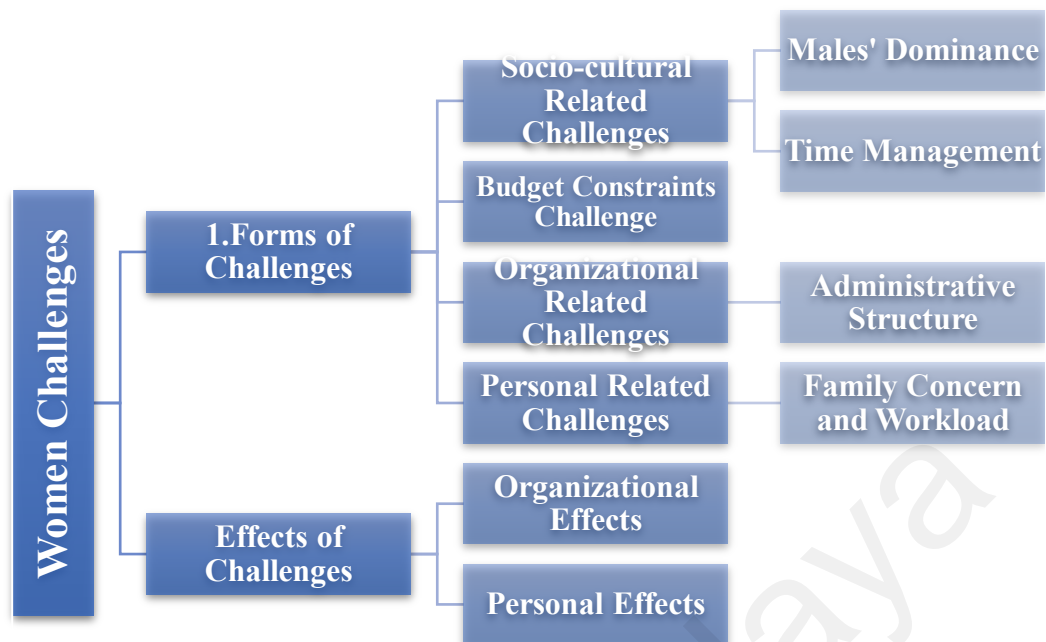


Figure 4.4 Thematic Mapping of the Challenges Experienced by the Saudi Female Educational Leaders in Higher Education

4.4.1 Forms of Challenges Experienced by the female Educational leaders in Saudi Arabia

The forms of the challenges are the first theme emerged while analyzing the data. Female educational leaders in Saudi Universities are experiencing some challenges. Forms of these challenges was the theme and flowed by the sub-themes which are: socio-cultural related challenges, budget constraints challenges, organizational related challenges, and finally personal related challenges.

4.4.1.1 Socio-Cultural Related Challenge

Through the document analysis, it is shown that many researchers in Saudi Arabia have highlighted that educated women are more interested to participate in the professional career and management. However, the social cultural challenges are the impediments for women in Saudi educational leadership. Favourable environment, as well as government support, mostly encourage them to be involved in the education sector (Abalkhail & Allan, 2015; Danish & Smith, 2012; Thompson,

2015). However, social-cultural considered as the dogma's concomitant with the context of study and the working locale in Saudi Arabia. The participants of the current study elaborated that they were experiencing some social cultural challenges that echo unfavorably the leadership career and capacity to vigorously carry out their leadership roles in higher institutions. Almost all research participants established that they were experiencing social cultural challenges such as the challenges from the male counterpart and time management. Women in Saudi Arabia are facing various challenges, such as organisational, cultural, personal and economic challenges (Al-Jaradat, 2014; Alsubhi et al., 2018).

The first form of challenges faced by the female leaders as identified from their responses is social and cultural in nature. This consists of various codes extracted from the analysis of the data. Among these codes are male dominance as well as time management. Longstanding outdated social perception makes female leadership much challenging. Saudi society seems unwilling to accept female leadership. Lacking recognition somehow causes problem to female leaders.

Moreover, we continue to suffer in the society. Our society cannot fully accept the roles of women as leaders, and this is causing some problems. (P1, DU:9)

Along with the social progress in Saudi Arabia, social challenges for the academic leaders are declining day by day, as this participant hinted. She did not believe that the existing issues should prevent one from moving forward. She enthusiastically expressed the hope that the current trend of progress in this country would produce positive results. She deeply believed that the leadership of the young generation must be able to improve the socio-economic condition of Saudi Arabia. In the meantime, she appraised the leadership the Crown Prince while appreciating His forward-looking.

We live in the era of the crown prince and he is younger than me and he is the leader of this change, and the country is based on leaderships and ambitious youth abilities. (P4, DU:8)

Participant 2 seems deprived of social and family lives. She is entangled with many tasks and administrative duties in her organisation. But she needs to perform duties to home for her families. Hence, she cannot make a proper balance between work and family life.

I have seven departments under me because I am the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. So, from international relations to research to economic development, consultancy, scholarship and graduate study, so many responsibilities (I have to perform). (P2, DU:9)

Female leaders face various challenges from all corners of their everyday lives. For instance, social challenges include lacking time for personal life, and one cannot share enough time with family. It is very difficult to balance social and professional lives, but maintaining social relationships is very important. Investing in family and social relationships is one of the most significant things one can do in their lifetime.

best investment in your life is your family because everything will end, people and society always forget what they have made, social relationships are very important, and we must be careful about them. We should make balance in private life and work; this helps better in this role. (P6, DU:8).

The participant was quite clear in stating that as a result of her job role she had to neglect her own children's education, health and social responsibilities.

Delays for family events or meetings, and I have children I cannot provide anything to them from the educational standpoint. because the leadership does not find enough time for his family and for himself and to build relationships with others, deficient in health, and as a leader I cannot close my cell phone. (P10, DU:16)

Participant 3 mentioned about the social barriers that are seemingly unsupportive to women and preventing them from moving forward. Women are unable to perform their duties properly.

There are a lot of barriers in our social life. These barriers impact on the work. (P3, DU:1)

Along the same line's, participant 4 hinted that the influences of sociocultural norms have occupied Saudi men's perspective on women. Saudi men are habituated to be respected by women. Assumingly, they now find it difficult to follow women as their leaders. That could be the reason why they cannot easily accept women in top management. She also hoped that since society is progressing the perspective of men would be changed one day.

This is because of the society and the culture; and due to man's nature. When he is a brother or a father, he is accustomed to being obeyed by the woman. (P4, DU:3)

The Socio-Cultural Challenges impacts the participant socially as she has to interact with a number of government ministries which were predominantly male dominated. This participant felt that dealing with government departments reduces her leadership ability or rather effectiveness to be a leader.

Dealing a lot with the institutions of society. Reduces leadership role, especially reviews of government bodies, and I think there is a very big problem in women's leadership role, especially in terms of accomplishment at work, this makes life very difficult, visiting ministries, such as the Ministry of Justice, or work or education, when you plan on your daily schedule, this makes the role of the cast It is difficult, in production and is one of the challenges facing female leaders. (P5, DU: 9)

Participant 10 mentioned the she didn't face any outright challenges. However, she felt that as a result of her job she was not able to form relationships or friendships as she was preoccupied with her work.

Relative to the social level I cannot form relationships with others comfortably. Sometimes the relationships are limited, and I am busy thinking about the cases that are going through me in the work phase (P10, DU:9)

According to participant 6 women not being given chances to participate or to take part in administrative roles because they don't qualify. Only people who are qualified are considered for the role, yet women also have something to offer even if they are not academically qualified.

Organisational challenge could come when some positions are given only for those who deserve, and the least members who are not qualified do not participate in this field. Women's girders have confidence and give as much as they give. (P6, DU:13)

Participant 9 made it even clearer adding that often statement such as they not be leaders and they cannot lead are labelled against women generally or those who find themselves occupying a specific leadership role. She said in her own words that statement of the following nature is always made:

they should not be in a leadership post, they are not leaders, they are managers only and so inadequate qualifications skills and experience. (P9, DU:1)

Another big challenge the women faced, according to some of the participants is the struggle to balance work and family lives. Participant 9 shared her ordeal with the struggle between her administrative role and academic profession on the one hand and her family life on the other. She revealed:

As I told you, I had a new baby when I got my post, and_ at the same time_ I was knowing nothing about the administration or leadership, you know, I thought my work was purely academic so, I concentrated on my academic life. but, when I got this post, I had to avail all my time, I dedicated all my time and my energy to the work, it was on my personal time and my family time. I did not balance, this was my personal problem, I did not balance because, there was a big challenge for me. (P9, DU:8)

However, according to Participant 6, balancing one's life is a necessity but the priority number one is always the family. She stated:

In fact, you need to balance, and you should know that the best investment in your life is your family because everything will end, people and society always forget what they have made, social relationships are very important, and we must be careful about them. We should make balance in private life and work; this helps better in this role. (P6, DU:8)

Another important social and cultural challenge identified from the responses of the participants' interviews is ensuring fairness by knowing when to say 'yes' and when to say 'no'. According to Participant 9, it was tough for her at the beginning because she found it difficult to say 'no'. She claimed that:

Everyone thinks you have the magic wand to solve their issues, there is a business mediation, you know, everyone is mediating to get some privilege or some benefits from your post. So, you have to be very firm, and you have to say: "yes" when it is right, and "No" when it is not right. And because I was very soft at the beginning, it was very hard for me to say "No". I have to train myself that I have to be fair and just with everybody. So, I have to say "No" when it is no. (P9, DU:9)

Women also have to deal with another social challenge that is more in the form of environmental constraints. It is another barrier, as added by Participant 9 who stated that:

the second thing concerning cultural, you know, there is socio-cultural barriers, all the environmental constraints the women in work. (P9, DU:1)

The environmental constraints coupled with gender stereotype are all some forms of serious social and cultural challenges that the female in leadership positions have to deal with particularly in Saudi public universities. She added that:

The second thing is gender stereotype. Factors are the self-imposed constraints, limited social network, work conflict, personality, there is a weak personality, they should not be in a leadership post, they are not leaders, they are managers only. And so inadequate qualifications skills and experience. (P9, DU:1)

This view was also augmented by Participant 3 who claimed that her social life has been hampered by her works and position. She revealed that:

Actually, sometimes I don't have time for myself to do what I want, if I want for example to travel for a few days, or to go with my friends. Sometimes I feel that I'm not in a mood to do something I really like to do. Working a lot makes me think all the time about work, which makes my mind always busy. So, there's a lot of things in my mind about future and yesterday work, but sometimes in the weekend, I feel I'm free. So, it depends on the tasks you have day by day and a month by month. There's occasionally a very bad times we have in the year, but for most of the year no, it's good. I mean not bad. (P3, DU:8)

She continued that this affected her social life in various aspects as she loves to have time of her own, to visit parents, go out with her family and hang out with friends and so on. She stated:

It's also affected our social life, but personally, I'm not the person who wants to go every day outside and talk to people. I love to stay with myself and stay home for a long time, but I have the time to visit my parents and to go out with my family and to see my friends but for sometimes no, there's no time for any. There is not all the year but some days in the year, I mean, not for long time. But occasionally yes, I don't have the time for myself also. (P3, DU:9)

The view stated above resembled that shared by Participant 9 who also admitted that there is limited time to establish social network or to have a social life of her like. She claimed that:

I had a limited time for personal and family activities. (P9, DU:9)

Likewise, Participant 6 is also of the same view with regard to the social and cultural aspects of the challenges she faces. She argued that:

In fact, the future of women is strongly coming, and requires the provision of much of the same community career, or the family that has no challenge with them rather everyone supports and is promotes them. In fact, there is no appropriate social life and this feeling makes everyone suffers from it, where 85% of my time becomes work. (P6, DU:8)

Inequality in this context refers to the lack of fair hearing given to female leaders particularly when it comes to a decision they have made. According to Participant 7, in some circumstances the stress she gets makes her feel like she is in a war with the male counterpart. She lamented:

In the argument, when there is a discussion ... how you can prove your point of view. That requires great effort to prove and give evidence that you are right, this is the challenge. Because the male problem is, he does not want to hear you, you must give evidence. Sometimes I feel that we are in a war! we are working together! we are working in one organization! We should respect each other to improve our organization. Because the male problem is, he does not want to hear you, you must give evidence. (P7, DU:8)

According to this participant 4, the rejection of female leadership is something that goes deeper into the culture and the social norms. This led to another code extracted from the analysis which is treating women as inferior to men. According to Participant 2, women are considered, by default, inferior to their counterpart male. With regard to this point, the participant made the following statement:

the thing which I always face is the stereotype idea of a female doctor, she must be old, like 60 years old, in order for her to be a doctor and to gain our respect, and any young female leader remains in the society's view small, this is the social challenge which I face. (P4, DU:8)

Conclusively, the participants established that socio-cultural beliefs, family as well as husband contributes to the challenges faced by the women in leadership of higher institution.

Male Dominance as a Challenge to Female Leader

Participant 1 posited that the social culture ideas that prevailing in Saudi Arabia uphold the challenges of gender segregation and unadventurous experiences towards the women in Saudi Arabia. There are several causes behind these unwanted

realities. For instance, the absence of proper feedback from the higher authority, lack of empowerment and underrepresentation causes enormous challenges to women leaders to perform their duties.

Only two ladies in the faculty deanship Council out of 10 or 12 members. (P1, DU:12)

The next form of social and cultural challenge faced by female in leadership positions in Saudi public universities is limited social authority culturally awarded to women as opposed to their male counterparts. This is what extends all the universities and other spheres of social life for the fact that everything is dominated by men. Every job or project a female is working on she needs to get the authority of doing so from men. Participant 3 covered this point in detail:

There's a lot of barriers in our social life. This is impact onto work. First of all, the men who make the regulation they give all the Authorities for themselves and give some or part of this authority to ladies. So, you struggle to do what you want or to take the rights to finish a project or to do something you have to take the authority from the men's section. So, this makes a lot of barriers in your side, and you don't have all what you want. All right, you needed to finish the job or to finish the project you want to do. For each section, you have to talk to the men and take the authority for this part and after you finish, they will see if it's okay or not. So, the authority not in your hand, it's in men's hands. I think this is the first thing we have it here. (P3, DU:1)

Participant 5 explained that the society does not accept the women in the field of leadership and management especially in Higher education institution i.e. Universities and colleges. She further argued men always do not accept the leadership of the female counterpart. She emphasized on that in the (DU:8)

The society is not accepting that the woman has a presence in the field of management dynamically and especially in the boards of the university and the college and the department and did not take the leadership role and does not have full capacity and authority, and the man still feels that he is the best and he is the leader, and cultural challenges so far there is no president of the department or college is a woman. Men's culture is still not accepted by the

woman as a leader, president or Dean of a man. The dean of the female students has become a woman but there are still social and cultural challenges and men do not accept the leadership of women has a weight of different opinions. (P5, DU:8).

In this regard, participant 4 noted her bitter experience with her male counterparts. Notably, she experienced no challenge with her female colleagues, but numerous problems occurred with the males at times. She pointed out that disagreements between the leaders are the major reason behind those problems.

Under my administration, there is a male deputy for the male students' section and a female deputy for the female students' section. There are no problems with the female member at all, but with the male member there are a lot of problems and disagreements. (P4, DU:2)

Though the situation has much improved than before, men still dominate in the organisation. They hold the higher positions whereas women work as their subordinates. Probably, men fear women would outrank them and gain dominating force if they are empowered.

the men give the rights for the woman, but the authority, protect in their hands. They don't want to give the all the rights to women because they feel they have to be the dominant in the organisation or university or any way.... They want to be the top and the woman under them.... In my job, I see that the men are the head and women come under them. (P3, DU:20)

Participant 7 mentioned that one of the main challenges was male colleagues didn't want to hear what female colleagues had to say. She felt that at time working with her male colleagues, in the same organisation and department they were at war.

Sometimes I feel that we are in a war! we are working together! we are working in one organisation! We should respect each other to improve our organisation. ... Because the male problem is, he does not want to hear you, you must give evidence. (P7, DU:8)

She also frazzled on the lack of system which does not differentiate between the men and women in the higher institution. The participant 7 stated in (DU: 9) that:

Often, they make me cry. Yes. As I mentioned: there must be a system that does not differentiate between a man and a woman, this system does not exist, some things are taken personally. But if there is a clear system, women will not face all these problems. No fixed system (P7, DU:9).

Underrepresentation down tunes their voice. Most of the time they fail to make any decision in the council meeting. But female leaders are not always inferiorly represented. Reportedly, they have their own association namely “women affairs committee” which is situated in women’s campus. This committee enjoys ample liberty to make decisions. This committee is generously supported by the president of the university.

We have our own committees. We take our own decisions in the woman campus; and the decisions of that committee are well supported by the president of the university, and they (male members) do care about the decisions taken by this committee. (P1, DU:13)

On the other hand, it can also be guessed some leader has different opinion that higher education might turn men to be more generous and persuasive to accept women’s liberty and authority. Further, working with the devout male academicians seems more easeful and less conflicting. This working relationship makes things easier because of the existence of cooperation and collaboration.

When I was working in scientific research, I worked usually with men; and working with them was better and faster. It was significantly easier because they were focused to work. (P3, DU:9)

This finding is similar to the documents reviewed which highlighted that in Saudi Arabia, the obligatory process of having a *wakil* or male guardian sometimes hurdle women in participating the labour market (Al-Munajjed, 2010). Saudi women are also facing enormous discrimination as well as male domination mostly due to traditional cultural practices. Because traditionally Saudi society recognizes men as the head of family and women are their dependents (Hamdan, 2005). Religion and

culture on the other hand, intertwiningly intervene women's employment. Conservatism of culture and strictness of religion might hold back the female leaders (Alselaime, 2012). Due to the traditional beliefs Saudi men sometimes underestimate women and show reluctance to cooperate them (Al-Jaradat, 2014). Hence, men not only possess narrow estimation regarding women's abilities but also show antipathy in hiring them. Thus, they deprive women to gain superior administrative position (Billing, 2011). The idea of *Qiwama* (Guardianship) is in the vein of Saudi men. They have been cherishing this concept for centuries. Thus, the superiority of men is socially established (Abalkhail, 2017). Since men consider themselves superior than women, they limit women's freedom as well as leg behind them. Lack of freedom and discouragement denounce women's leadership and decision making. Consequently, it is become difficult for women to achieve the superior position in Saudi Arabia (Almaki, Almaki, Silong, Idris, & Wahiza, 2016; Almenkash et al., 2007). Hence, the struggle of the female leadership in higher education with the men counterpart could be well-known as rampant obstacle to the women's career in leadership and management in Saudi Arabia. This in particular may be stemmed from the culture and social understanding prevailing in the context.

Time Management

Managing the time is another challenge faced by the female leadership in Saudi Arabia. The participants of the current study highlighted that working hours play significantly indicate their level of social interaction especially with the family and friend. Participant 4 criticised the prevailing stereotypical social perception to women. This perception considerably enthruses challenges to female leaders. The main challenge she highlighted is 'time'. The working hour of the leader is not confined to a certain period. It is mostly limitless and sometimes even uncertain.

Therefore, she could not pay attention to her other responsibilities. She cannot find her personal life. Therefore, it becomes difficult to maintain her personal relationship. She explained that in discussion unit 9:

It effects my personal relations are certainly limited because of time, because the working hours isn't limited with (8) hours, sometimes it may extend until night even in holidays and in traveling time (P4, DU:9).

Female leaders are facing numerous challenges as this participant reported. One of the main challenges she faced was time management. High position entangles her with multiple tasks and therefore, she does not get ample time to enjoy her personal life with her friends and family. Thus, she feels deprivation of joy and happiness.

Actually, sometimes I don't have time for myself to do what I want.
(P3, DU:8)

Time limitation also makes barriers in term of enjoying their social lives. Excessive organisational duties lessen their opportunity to spend time with the family as well.

I used to enjoy most of the activities with friends with the family members outdoors. now unfortunately I have less family and friends' visits, less Holiday breaks, and less time spent with kids and other family members. (P1, DU:8)

Participant 9 felt that women academic leaders face many challenges while holding and excelling in their jobs. One of the first challenges is sacrificing time with family members, friends, looking after children on the job, and spending a lot of time dealing with the duties and responsibilities of being a vice dean which could be spent teaching or with family. There was also frustration expressed as there was limited time and female academic leaders have multiple roles to play (vice dean, mother, wife, daughter and friend).

when I got this post, I had to avail all my time, I dedicated all my time and my energy to the work, it was on my personal time and my family time. I did not balance, this was my personal problem, I did not balance because, there was a big challenge for me ... they are saying that I am very young, and I cannot succeed, the dean is supporting Dr. Aisha. All this was very stressful on me (P9, DU:8).

Besides, participant 2 mentioned that she needs to manage time to carry out research. Therefore, in the end she does not have time for herself. Leaders have to take their job as a prime responsibility. Because job enrich their economic condition as well as bring financial wellbeing to their family lives. But high responsibilities and excessive stress might fade out their happiness in personal life that they could get from their families and societies. From another perspective, the lifestyle of a leader is different than the ordinary people.

I believe the leader should be a role model in everything role model in his actions in the way that she operates in the way that she leads and also in the way that she looks. As you said in the way what you wear, how you look, at the jewellery, or accessories everything has to reflect that you are leader, because you need to be really a role model. (P2, DU:10)

Moreover, participant 8 argued that through her experience that the time is very scanty and she posited that she was unable to involve actively in society. She mentioned in discussion unit 9 that:

This affects community involvement, interaction with the family, influences my role in the family, and my duties towards my child. There's no enough time. (P8, DU:9).

The same argument was outstretched by the participant 10 in discussion unit 8 that her relationship with the people was very limited due to the time limit. She said:

I cannot form relationships with others comfortably. Sometimes the relationships are limited, and I am busy thinking about the cases that are going through me in the work phase (This is particularly related to the time spent working in the office). (P10, DU:9).

Reportedly, when people get ample free time more problems occurred. In such case, proper job allocation and assignment help segregate them as well as avoid conflicts and challenges.

It means that they have some free time. That's why they're making problems. (P2, DU:5)

From the above discussion, it was vibrant that time management to converse with the social environment and the community was part of the challenges faced by the women in leadership in Saudi Arabia.

4.4.1.2 Budget Constraints Challenge to the female leaders

Budget Constraints challenges prompts Saudi Arabia women to rethink on how to support and sustain their family. The cultural practices in Saudi Arabia made the women to fully depends on their men which dribbled over the practices of the women.

Some of the participants also mentioned budget constraints as a form of challenge faced particularly when public universities are compared with private universities. Participant 3 made this comparison saying:

But sometimes I figured I can't understand how they control the money for the duties, why it's not that fair enough, if you compare it between our university and private universities. This is the issue. (P3, DU:10).

Sometimes we spent from our money, at the same time we are responsible, we have to do it, we have to do it! we have to succeed. If you are paying, and you are satisfied with your work and accomplishment then, it is nothing for you

Participant 1 posited that being a leader in the academic does not amplify the economy burden of the family, but rather it assists in the family economy sustainability. She highlighted in discussion unit 10 that:

If I understand that well such positions do not add any economic burdens since we have an announced for these positions about 2000 riyals a month. (P1, DU:10).

Conversely, participants 2, stated that not every woman considered men as breadwinner rather they are also hardworking in supplementary to her family and succeed in their personal career. For example, she explained that she was raised up with the believe of equal right between her and the men in terms of contributing to the society and society at large. Plus, she studied in the men dominated environment. She narrated her story arguing with that in (DU: 10) that:

I was raised in a house that believes women or girls and boys have the same right to study and work, and my parents always encouraged me actually to pursue my degree in electrical engineering and then I did my PhD especially in a field where it was dominated by man, electrical engineering and even nanotechnology. So being also in the leadership, I believe that woman now a day have the right to prove themselves and they were able to achieve lots recently and she came to work even from economical perspective. I mean not everyone not every lady also at the end they can succeed in their personal. Sometimes they got divorced so she has to take care of herself. So, I believe that the work will not only support the woman from economical perspective, but also from personality perspective, from Independence she can be independent, she doesn't need anyone to support her where she can support herself. (P2, DU: 10).

She also stated that the leader should become a role model for everyone. She needs to shape herself properly so that she can be followed as well as exemplified.

This differentiation might bring about some kind of deprivation too.

I believe the leader should be a role model in everything role model in his actions in the way that she operates in the way that she leads and also in the way that she looks. As you said in the way what you wear, how you look, at the jewellery, or accessories everything has to reflect that you are leader, because you need to be really a role model. (P2, DU:10)

Participant 10 felt that she didn't really have any budget constraints challenges and she isn't in this line of work for money. However, the participant did feel that as she was a female academic leader, she needed to portray a certain lifestyle in society – live in a nice house, drive a nice car and wear good clothes.

It does not affect but of course as a leader I have to own a nice car, and good home, and must be always prepared especially in clothes, must be in a decent level. (P10, DU:11)

The participants 5, also explained that presence of woman in the working place regulates men and help them to become more productive and consequently it contributes to the economy of the country. She posited that in (DU:11) that:

The role of women in the past was specific, and women cannot study in all fields. For example, engineering, legal, politics and the field of law, do not work in embassies. Now the role of women in the economic sphere is greater, and now the ladies of society will have a greater footprint, and hopefully the new generation offers more. The probability that the economic side was stronger in society, because half of Saudi society is women, but it is more lacking than before, and the presence of a woman regulates men, becomes a more productive and better (P5, DU:11).

Alongside the challenges, female leaders enjoy some privileges as well. The superior position brings somewhat economic benefits. Higher administrative position incentivises leaders extra earning (such as RS 2000/month for the Dean). This supplementary income brings additional economic nourishment to the household. But sometimes national economic crisis negatively affects the leaders. Leaders cannot perform research properly due to the slashed budget.

For instance, the austerity crisis that took place two years ago greatly affected the practical research, (outside the work, overtime), but does not affect significantly. (P1, DU:10)

However, economic solvency has a positive influence on the lives of the leaders. Financial freedom offers them some kind of stability in their family.

The situation or things are more settled after being appointed as a Vice Dean. (P1, DU:11)

On the Other hand, it seems from this participant's narrative that she is not economically challenged in any way as even prior to joining the university she did not have any economic difficulties and was involved in quite a few other projects (jobs).

I try to find a special job during vacations by opening channels that help me in this aspect. I have my own project before joining the university. (P6, DU:11)

According to her opinion, Participant 4 stated that leadership position extended economic benefits to her. She is privileged with all the modern life expectancies. Therefore, she never encountered economic challenges during her leadership career. Rather, this position brought her a better living. It can be assumed that the challenges of leadership are also somehow compensated by the privileges given by the organisation. However, she expressed somewhat discontent on the sum of financial increment for the leaders. Though there is a certain allowance it seems low compared to the given responsibilities and duties.

Although sometimes there are allowances, it's not satisfactory comparing to the fatigue that accompanies the job. (P4, DU:11)

Participant 5 mentioned that while she worked and as an academic leader she was in a strong economic position as she had support of her family and husband in terms of taking care of her financial needs. However, she felt having female academic leaders helped improve the economic conditions of the country.

As for the economic challenges, thank God my situation has been good for a long time, and I entered this area and my main goal is to give something to society, and my social and family status helped me because my husband helped me, and my family also understand my leadership role. (P5, DU:10)

In terms of budget constraints challenge this participant mentioned that her husband asked her to stay at home, but she isn't inclined to as that won't provide her a good income or career. She feels that the men must recognize the need for women

to work and have their place in the society, they must help her, not discriminate against her.

It's hard to stay home, this won't give me the right income, it won't provide the required cash support. I won't get the good cash back. He must think about how to help her, he must listen to her to help her solve her problems, he must hear your opinion, he should not differentiate between men and women, because this is wrong .(P7, DU:11)

Interestingly, the participant 9 also mentioned that the budget constraints challenge was an important challenge faced her as she comes from a culture where men are expected to be breadwinners, bring home money and basically take charge. The participant stated that she faced a challenge from her husband in terms of working. While initially her husband did not want her to work, when she got permission to work her husband made it clear that he would be supporting the household and she could keep her money for herself. Interestingly, the economic challenge is not about earning capacity but rather about not turning over the social system which is the status quo.

first condition was when my husband said: -Do not make your money with my money, I will be the one who buys everything, even your driver with my money, I do not want you to buy anything, your money is for yourself".(P9, DU:11)

On the other hand, this participant emphasized that she faced no budget constraints challenges as she belonged to a wealthy family and received sufficient economic support from the university.

The university supports the leadership financially to do the work required. And I'm from a wealthy family. there is also continuous support with career progression, and there is support for achievements. and academic qualifications. so, there is financial support from the university, and as I said I am from a family with good social level. (P8, DU:11)

The above statements posited the participants' sights of the economic challenges heads-up Saudi Arabia women to pursue their career as academic leaders in higher institutions.

4.4.1.3 Organisation-Related Challenges

This refers to the challenges faced by the female leaders in Saudi public universities that are organisation-based. Among these organisational based challenges are those that are related to the administrative structure which could be: biasness, budget constraints, dealing with men without castigation, less financial benefits, limited authority, male dominated decision-making roles, the lack of clear-cut responsibilities, lack of clear organisational structure, poor hierarchical charts, poor strategic planning, poor women empowerment, poorly trained staff, and pressure.

In relation to the organisational structure, the organisational structure is seen as a source of challenge as the structure may be constantly changed with the change of administration or the personality of the person holding a particular role of leadership. For example, having a superior who is religious and upholds religious ethics, he/she is likely to be fairer in his/her running of affairs. Participant 3 had this to say on this issue:

Yes! By changing or moving people from one position to another position, they change the rules, or their side of the rules and that will create more challenges. They want to change, and they want to improve the position they have, and they want to improve the people who work with and they want to show that they have change something. So, you will feel that you have a lot of challenges you have to work with.

The organizational structure of the university needs to be reconsidered. It is intertwined. It does not feel that there are strict laws, even in the hegemony on the authority. This structure depends on morality. At the same pace, and according to the person in front of you if he or she has an ethics it will be good and if the contrary God helps you, there is no binding and clear law, and I feel that we still control the religious situation in all our

affairs, and the moral aspect, If you encounter a weak religious person and his morals are weak, you will face many problems, until the period of his employment is over. but there is nothing clear that you can rely on, contrary to the system or contrary to the profession charter, from that, I think that the organization should be reviewed all that, and many people believe that the place of power is the decision maker, and his opinion is the first and last opinion. (P3, DU:13)

Participant 6 believed that the leadership positions have no material gain. She stated that:

The leadership position is not worth anything, and the material return of the head of the department is not worth anything. It is one of the economic problems that I face with regards to car housing by virtue of the leadership position. (P6, DU:10)

Among the organization related challenges, it was also revealed that there is limited authority, as remarked by Participant 1, who stated that:

Sometimes also the huge responsibilities with the limited Authority.
(P1, DU:12)

In addition, another issue pointed out by another participant, Participant 9, claimed that there was no full direction or clear-cut responsibilities that are expected of her in her department. She also believed that there is lack of clear organizational structure. She said:

The problem is that there is no clear cut between my responsibilities to the department, I do not have a full direction. Every time, whenever the Dean is changed, I have to prove myself again to the new Dean. And this is because we do not have a clear-cut organizational structure, we do not have clear policies. (P9, DU:14)

Furthermore, it is also opined by Participant 1 that there were poor hierarchical charts that defines power relations among offices, departments and so on. The participant stated that she:

I think the most important one is the lack or the poor organizational charts which organized the hierarchy of Authority or power inside the institution and with the bigger organization. (P1, DU:12)

This is also close to another challenge she noticed which is the poor strategic planning in her university. She added that:

We suffer from the poor culture of strategic planning inside the institutions. We Face also the lack of the feedback for any planning. (P1, DU:12)

Another important challenge some of the participants highlighted is poor women empowerment. According to Participant 1, there are only two ladies in the entire faculty deanship council out of 10 or 12 members which ultimately affect the decisions taken by the council members. She stated:

The empowerment of women inside the institution is also very poor. Only two ladies in the faculty deanship Council 2 out of 10 or 12. (P1, DU:12)

And as I mentioned before the for the council meeting of the faculty It consists of about 12 members only two ladies, the vice deans of that two faculties for women's campuses. The rest of the vice Dean ships are run by men, it affects but to some extent it effects the decisions taken inside the council meeting. (P1, DU:13)

This point was also supported by Participant 9 who added that:

organizational structure is, because we have two campuses. and all the male section are dominant. (P9, DU:1)

Organization-related challenge was also hinted out by Participant 6 saying:

through conducting a lot of my studies abroad, but always looking for the best thing and the leading position puts you in pressure and challenges. (P6, DU:10)

Lack of personal opinion, some of the female leaders feel that their opinions do not matter in the process of decision making. As women, they are not supposed to have their own personal opinions on issues. On this point, Participant 7 lamented that:

Yes, this affected me in person, the reason is that man do not accept that you have an opinion as a woman, you must always agree with them, they always think they are right and the women are wrong, and you must implement their instructions, and this was causing many daily conflicts, I kept 14 years with them and then it was exhausted, this situation was not fits me so I left the

organization even though my salary was doubled, this had a high impact. (P7, DU:16)

This lack of women empowerment led to limited authority among the women leaders. Thus, limited authority is another code identified under the subtheme of organisation-related challenges in the private universities. The challenge of limited authority has been noted by a number of the participants. Among them, Participant 4 made the following remark:

Maybe sometimes, currently I'm connected to the University Vice Chancellor for academic affairs according to the organizational structure, and he is connected to the rector, so now in the present time, we directly refer to the rector as the Vice Chancellor's period has ended and there is no new Vice Chancellor, and because we are in a transitional period, this causes a problem of how we get ordered, because all the leaders in the University refer to the rector, all departments, college deans, deanships, supportive deanships and a lot others, all refer to him. (P4, DU:13)

The participant added that this creates challenges as despite having different campuses, the female leaders must choose a male superior and both male and female sides work under the same council. Participant 5 continued:

Yes, it creates challenges, especially within the campus. When men take over the woman, we are not in the same place and we must choose a man as a leader, and the administrative structure at the moment must be seriously considered, as long as there is one council, and the woman in it as a member, and the time must get all the powers granted to the man. For example: We as a private university look at the quality and competence of the nominated person and are for those who deserve the position, whether men or women. (P5, DU:13)

When this participant was probed further on whether she had the freedom to make decisions or had to always refer back to her boss. She responded saying that:

I have tasks to do, then I return to the rector, to give him a brief about the mission and feedback. (P7, DU:13)

She affirmed that the freedom to make decision is non-existent. When she was asked further whether the director was a man or a woman. She responded in the following words:

Yes. Before that there was a woman and we were very happy with her existence. But she left work after 6 months, and she said, "among the reasons she left for work is that they have a problem dealing with women... They do not want the woman to carry out her opinion. In my view, this is also a problem. You must give her powers, then check with her afterwards. But you give her tasks without powers! So, what's the point? ... That will cause conflicts. Women are not yet admitted to work. (P7, DU:13)

Participant 7 on her part stated that she works a lot in her present job at the university, but she does not earn as much as she used to in her previous job. She mentioned:

I worked in my husband organization about 14 years, but I failed to prove myself as a working woman, I tried very much, and finally I left the organization, although my salary was twice my salary now, in the university I work with now. (P7, DU:10)

In addition, the job also comes with a lot of pressure which also is also, yet another source of challenge faced. In relation to this point, a number of the participants gave their opinions. Participant 4 claimed that:

Sometimes, I stay at work from the morning until it is 11 pm, and sometimes there is pressure. (P4, DU:15)

Participant 2, claimed that sometimes if the nature of the power allocated to women in organization are not well labelled, it maybe primes to the chaos and impede the working progress. She averred in (DU:14) that:

Honestly, I am talking in general not only in my organization. Sometimes it affects the work to be done in a very fast way but always when the rules for communication and with reflect for example that this task took from us long period of time while it could be done in a very short period of time, and people usually listen and make adjustments to speed up the process specially if it will not cause any harm or it does not violate the general rules of the organization (P2, DU:14).

When asked about organisation challenges she faced as a female academic leader the participant mentioned the workload she faced and how often people didn't fully appreciate her effort or didn't consider her quite human.

I cannot do everything, because of this position, as you are an model in this work. Many people do not appreciate that you are human or female. (P10, DU:12)

The participants 7 stressed out the concerns of taking permission from a particular body to implement a new idea which makes their roles as a leader in higher institution to be challenging. The participant 7 stated in (DU: 14) that:

Yes, it affects me, makes me under constant stress, constant fatigue, and that makes you think you're ineffective. (P7, DU:14).

The same assertion was made by the participant 8, who claimed that the organizational challenges were caused by the overload of working hours. As a leader, the hours spent in the office may not be enough to accomplish the required task. The participant 8 stated in (DU: 12) that:

I think overload working hours. On the other hand, if you want to be distinguished and to make international relationships you need to work from home. We use social media to communicate about work to make performance faster. I think 8 hours is really not enough to finish all the work at the university. Anyone want to succeed definitely you have to work after work, we are working on student service; we should not restrict to help students even if we are busy. You are always trying to serve college and students. After the day, or on the weekends, I'm working on plans and development. (P8, DU:12).

Participant 3 stated that organisational challenges negatively affect her personal life as well. She cannot spare ample time for her family. Sometimes, she is unable to balance work and family life. This imbalance brings about dissatisfaction and boredom.

I have to do a lot of things. I go back home late. So, it affects my life or my family life. (P3, DU:15)

In this regard, she credited the changing organisational rules. People abide by the rules and do their duties accordingly. Therefore, men and women have to cooperate when they are under certain rules.

So, when the organisation gives the duties to woman, so you (men) have to work with her (P3, DU:25)

Also, this participant mentioned that having to deal with men in the organisation and particularly men in the upper echelons of power was one of the main organisational challenges.

Dealing with men, without any castigation, so that they can take the decision correctly, and always have to refer to them because they are close to the administrators and the authority (the Dean, the University Director and others. (P6, DU:12)

Participant 10 also explained that there was a pressure on every one of the staff. Everyone had to work overtime. She elaborated that the responsibility to be carried out are considerably plentiful. The participant elucidated in (DU:14) that:

pressure on everyone, administrators lag behind organizational work. They get courses and certificates of appreciation and motivation, and training but for me as a leader I cannot develop myself and cannot leave this downstream because the responsibility is great, and there are a lot of courses the leadership must get. For example, time management, film output or photography, free drawing. (P10, DU:14).

Some rules of the organisation may bring challenges to men and women equally. Every organisation has its own nature which is governed by its own rules. If women become leaders, they have to follow the rules too; regardless the gender difference. Leaders have to accomplish the responsibilities that they are given.

I have to follow the rules; it's not because I'm a woman. (P2, DU:12)

If leaders can follow organisational rules then, there is no issue. Challenges only appear when they fail to adopt the rules. Proper adjustment with the process brings no harm to the leaders rather it can enhance the performance speed. Female

leaders' personal lives are not as mirthful as the lives of ordinary women. Leaders get less time to be with family and friends. Hence, they are deprived of the touch of personal happiness.

We don't have a lot of time for the family and sometimes we forget about ourselves. (P2, DU:15)

The participant stated that producing the desired results at work are the main organisational challenges. If the desired results are not meant, then there is a chance that the participant stands to lose her job.

The result I present, this is the challenge, you must work until you reach the desired result, especially in the private sector that does not differentiate between a man and a woman. There is a result you must achieve. (P7, DU:12)

Participant 5 mentioned that male and female segregation made things tougher for board meetings and voting on issues. The civil and government bodies such as government universities struggled with this due to male domination in these bodies. The participant also mentioned that the administration structure of the university created challenges for women as the leader or head always had to be a man despite women gaining representation.

These challenges in the single-section board are either to be the separation of men and women from each other, and when we call the Board of one scientific department here we have the right as women to vote and also we have the right to have the position of a dean or Rector and also a college dean, and this is in some GA The civil and governmental institutions, especially the universities that started with men, cannot be transformed into the empowerment of women. (P5, DU:12)

There were budgetary and control related challenges according to participant 9. Due to there being one dean and four vice deans there was a problem of having no clear-cut responsibilities, decision making powers and budgetary discretionary. If an

initiative was taken it would have to be piloted first and then it really depends on how the pilot or initiative is taken up.

The budget and the organisational structure, especially in the DIT. We have the Dean, and 3 male Vice Deans, and me, and another Vice Dean. ...So, we have actually four Vice Deans, and the department is divided between the four Vice Deans, and nothing is directly under my responsibility. ...So, this is an organisational problem that I was facing. (P9, DU:12)

Organisational challenge is one of the most common challenges in the organisational context. Therefore, it can be clearly that the Administrative structure can help to increase such a challenge, this will be elaborated in the below discussion.

Administrative Structure Creates Challenges to the Female Leaders

Organisational challenges take place due to the organisational structure. But the current structure is somewhat improved. Female leaders should accommodate themselves with the organisational decorum and discipline following the process and procedures which is very important to run the organisation properly.

I believe following processes or rules and procedures is very important to make a work done in an appropriate way. (P2, DU:13)

This participant was affirmative about the existence of organisational challenges. The existing organisational structure is chiefly responsible for the organisational conflict as well. This structure has been designed by centralising men. So, when a man is in the highest position, he exposes authoritative power and muscularity. Sometimes, men use religion in favour of them and that might go against women's interest. Hence, women cannot accommodate themselves in the current organisational setting. Women have to depend on men's decision. Sometimes, men's treatment over women goes unfair. Besides, men's outlook towards women is not proper. To be dependent on men appear as a hindrance to female leaders. It produces a lot of challenge for them.

These challenges are quite obstructive. When you need something, you have to get approval from the dean or the man who has the authority and position. (P3, DU:14).

Correspondingly proclaimed that the nature of the managerial challenges related to situation when the leader attempts to initiate a new idea which will enhance the progress of the organization especially when you need to get approval to implement the new resourcefulness. She quoted in (DU:14) that:

You have to do a new thing you have to manage and improve all the work that you have. just to adapt the new rules. Now they want to simple everything and they want to do new programs, and they want to show their work. So, you will face a new challenge you want to show the work you have to others to share with and to make a new relation with other organization, so it gives you new challenges. These challenges are quite obstructive (P3, DU:14).

Administrative structure sometimes produces huge trouble for women. It limits their access to opportunities. When women are underrepresented in the committee, they cannot establish their opinions. Consequently, their voices remain unsounded or unheard.

I mentioned before the council meeting of the faculty it consists of about 12 members but only two ladies vice deans represent two faculties for women's campuses. (P1, DU:13)

The participant felt that the administrative structure caused challenges for female leaders in the academic field – they had no full decision-making power. However, changes have come in and the participant hopes that this will empower them to have more decision-making powers.

As a college dean, we do not have the final decision, we have absolutely no full powers. It is not personal, but this disrupts processes, powers must be more than that. In order not to disrupt the work. But now there is a better authority than before, there is an improvement in the powers of the Dean. Two months ago, there were huge challenges the many layers. We will see the effect, God willing. (P8, DU:13)

Moreover, participant 4 boldly opined that the existing organisational structure is the main cause of organisational challenges.

I think the weak organisational structure (is the main cause of challenges). (P4, DU:12)

She further pointed at the hierarchical organisational structure where the authoritative power is concentrated. Leaders are getting direction from the topmost authority. Presumably, this kind of decision-making system is hampering female leaders' performance. Hierarchical management structure usually does not consider the opinions of all members. Therefore, it cannot build management synergy. That might bring benefit to the organisation which could be below than the expectation.

All the leaders in the university refer to the rector, all departments, college deans, deanships, supportive deanships and a lot of others, all refer to him. (P4, DU:13)

Notwithstanding, women's challenges in the workplace are being decreased day by day. In her point of view, participant 3 sees that Saudi society is progressively changing nowadays. The current structure is somewhat ready to accept women's leadership. In this regard, the positive attitude of family members is more significant. Saudi family is showing unprecedented support and inspiration to female leaders.

my family or my friends and my husband I feel, they are proud of me because I'm working.... my husband is different, and he gives me a lot of freedom, unlike my brother is somewhat different and does not accept the women work, but later when he was studying Masters...I felt that he was very pleased with my leadership position. (P3, DU:9)

However, participant 6 didn't think the organisation 's administrative structure was a challenge or hindrance. She also thanked the King for this interest in improving the condition of women in Saudi Arabia's academic field.

Women's girders have confidence and give as much as they give.
Hence the majesty of the king gave this session to women. (P6,
DU:13)

All these issues coupled with the weak nature of the administrative structure combined to create the organisation-related challenges faced by the female leaders in the Saudi universities.

4.4.1.4 Personal Related Challenges

The third form of challenges identified from the analysis of the data is personal challenges. There are a number of personal challenges identified by the participants which is mainly family Concerns and workloads related. Personal challenges are referred to as individual trial experienced as a woman leadership of higher education Institution (Al-Jaradat, 2014; Al-Minqash, 2007). Majority of the participants asserted that the main trial that experienced concomitant to the difficulty to juggle between the tasks that are required to accomplish and the family. For instance, participant 1 elucidated that she has many priorities to attain and the work pressures. She posited in (DU:15) that:

In fact, what I need is more good time management, another good list of priorities, new strategies of relieving tension and work pressure, new plans for recreational activities, more scheduled medical check-ups to avoid some major health problems. With my family, I started to delegate some tasks among the sons and daughters. They helped me and in fact they help themselves, and whenever I do and accomplish anything, they themselves feel proud of me and feel that they are part of my success (P1, DU:15).

Besides, long working hours hampers her personal life. She used to go under mental pressure which might bring dissonance in her personal life.

Sometimes, I stay at work from the morning until 11 pm; and sometimes there is a pressure. (P4, DU:15)

Participant 2 prop up the view of the participant 1 by highlighting the stress that she experienced as leader in higher institution. She asserted that they do not have enough time for the family even sometimes she leans towards forgetting her personal prerequisites. She said in (DU: 15) that:

We don't have a lot of time for the family, and sometimes we forget about ourselves. So really, we don't have time to look at ourselves because we are always taking by work. So, I feel my kids were suffered a lot with me. But at the same time, I look at it from another perspective that I trained them how to be independent (P2, DU:15).

Participant 8 explained in discussion unit 16 that she has very little time with the family to the extent that she was unable to accompany her child to the clinic for the vaccination. She elaborated in (DU:16) that:

Sometimes I don't have enough time to accompany my daughter to get vaccinated. This is an example of suffering. Yes, there's an effect (P8, DU:16).

Participant 7 felt that it was a learning experience for her when she worked for her husband's company for 14 years but due to the restrictions placed upon her, she left the company and began her career in a private university. In the private university she worked hard to succeed in her job.

Our daily lives are full of challenges that are meant to make us learn to adjust. For example: I was working in family organisation for my husband for 14 years. I felt that the administration imposed a lot of restrictions such as: not appearing too much in the media, not taking pictures next to men, not putting makeup, and sometimes you are threatened with terminating your contract if You took a lot of pictures with the males. I don't know if this is some kind of control, or some kind of self-confidence, although my husband is a very important man in society and a famous person. (P7, DU:15)

It suggests that they sometimes suffer from indecisiveness. They probably get afraid of the unforeseen challenges and struggles. Hence, they assumingly create some kind of complexity in their own-self.

Sometimes you feel –Oh my God” I don't want to do this, and you leave it as it is. But sometimes, you feel it's very important to do this thing. So, you will take the way and fight. (P3, DU:3)

However, leadership position consequently brings about tiredness and boredom to women. As this participant expressed, she was planning to quit this position in search of a comfortable life.

I want to change this kind of job I am doing. Because after four or five years doing the same job you, I feel tired. (P3, DU:12)

Participant 8 made this point very clear stating that for someone holding her position she could not have a long vacation. This affects her time with her family on both weekdays and weekends. Similar opinion was shared by Participant 5 who believed that her role has taken away all her personal and family time away from to the extent that she does not participate in events except those events that involves her university. She said:

For social interaction, my participation is always through university events. But otherwise, even for the family, my participation has become weak. Because I'm on weekends working on new plans. (P8, DU:8)

On the other hand women's responsibility is to be family oriented doing household chore, taking care of kids and husband etc. (Alselaime, 2012). So, in this scenario if any women look for economic freedom, most of the time they are discouraged by their family members. In order to protect the family values and tradition Saudi people even go against the developmental approach (Al-Munajjed, 2010).

From the discussion above shown that majority of women working as a leader in Saudi Arabia higher institutions were living through their individual trials. Participants highlighted the difficulties experienced in coping with their career as an academic leader as well as their powerlessness to bear out their family essentials.

Family Concerns and workload

This participant opines, a leader has two different worlds, family and her working place. Authoritative position in the organisation gives her economic enrichment as well as social status. On the other hand, due to excessive responsibilities and the shortage of time she has to forgo her family and social life. Thus, hierarchical position makes her life more challenging. Economic condition might influence leaders' performance, but it also depends on the nature of the family where she belongs. If the family is supportive leaders' challenges get deflated to a greater extent.

my parents always encouraged me to pursue my degree in electrical engineering and then I did my PhD especially in a field which was dominated by man. (P2, DU:10)

Participants 3 also argued that being a woman and leader leads to several challenges. Juggling between home and career required more skills of time management and efforts. Reportedly, sometimes these challenges seriously hamper her family and personal life. She can neither take care of her children properly nor herself. That brings her frustration, dissatisfaction and distress. She explained in (DU:15) that she has inevitabilities at home such as teaching and providing needs of the children. She argued in her lengthy quotation that:

I think it is a time management, I am a mother for five kids each one has different work, some of them depend on me in their teaching and others depend on me in their lives in a great way, and others are able to lead his life. It can influences the time I spent with them, also on the quality of the time itself, When I have a lot of problems and I do not want to hear any problems or additional

problems, or I have a specific link, and I move from place to place, and this causes harassment because of the participation in the means of transportation itself, it is necessary to organize this thing with them and be patient on this subject, Sometimes I feel that I cannot speak and is filled with frustration, idleness and isolation. I feel distressed, suffocated, and bored, and I do not want to talk to others. But Sometimes I return home very pleasantly and comfortably and try as much as possible not to convey the problems and difficulties I face while working to my family (P3, DU:15).

In addition, this participant stated that while there were a number of personal and psychological changes, she faced these were not evident in her professional. However, she faces an issue in balancing her personal life with her professional life, she sometimes forgets her children's birthdays and outings. Her mother also feels that she does not see her enough and is not present for the beautiful family moments.

Sometimes I forget my children's birthday parties and also their own occasions, also when my kids ask to go to the pool, and I couldn't do it because of the job. My mother always criticizes me for this work and blames me for not coming to her so much, and not living the beautiful moments with my family. (P10, DU:15)

The participant stated that one of the challenges she faced was dealing with children, dealing with a home life and also dealing with work – it is hard. However, the participant also stressed that was good to struggle to improve your capabilities, skills and work.

It is so difficult. but thank God, I am doing well. ...this makes you struggle and find a way to increase your capabilities and skills, arranging your time. ...if you think negatively you will do nothing. (P9, DU:16)

As this participant highlighted, women have some specific responsibilities in the family. They need to take care of the family members as well as relatives. If they are entangled with the professional duties, they cannot properly manage their family responsibilities. It may cause family dissatisfaction. But in her case, the scenario was

different. Her husband and other family members were supportive and cooperative.

Which is why it was easy for her to balance work and family life.

Thank God, my husband and the family members understand that I undergo certain pressures and time limitation is my biggest problem in balancing working life, family and personal life. (P4, DU:16)

From the above statement it can be clear that the family has a crucial impact on the Saudi women leaders as they found it difficult to handle both working as a leader and holding a family responsibility.

4.4.2 The Effect of the Challenges on the Leaders

Effect of challenges refers to the way the challenges discussed affect the female leaders. Under this subtheme, the effects identified could be either organisation-based or personal-based effects. Each of the two is discussed further below.

4.4.2.1 Organisational Effects

Organisational effects are those effects that have to do with university in which the respondents work. Among the organisational effects are less communication between faculties and work delay. Participant 2 added that *“I think weak organizational structure.”*. On less communication between faculties, Participant 8 made the following remark:

Also, when I go out with the faculty members, they always feel that I am there dean so that makes less communication between us. (P8, DU:9)

What this participant is referring to is how her role as a dean affects the atmosphere whenever she is around her staff. This affects the way they communicate with her and the rapport among them.

According to Participant 4, another form of effect caused by the challenges is work delay. She claimed that the challenges affect the smoothness of workflow between one person to another, department to another department, faculty to another faculty. She stated:

Such challenges can cause work delay and obstruct administrative affairs, because of the agreements that should be signed or wait for some certain directing. This condition differs when there was only a deputy for the academic affairs to whom the academic deanships refer to. There was more focus on the topics related to us for quick solutions and responsibilities, and it is a transitional period from my point of view, until the new deputy arrived. (P4, DU:14)

According to this participant, women are facing the major challenge in balancing their work and family lives. In this case, only rational distribution of work and allocation of enough time can resolve the problem. Besides, superior leaders should extend their helping hands to ease subordinates job burdens. Women should work hard in order to prove themselves as capable. They should achieve experiences to perform their duties properly. They should be professional and not take things personal.

She needs to be a self-learner. She needs to get as much as possible experience. Don't take things personally. Try always to take things professionally. (P2, DU:28)

They should learn from their mistakes while continuing their responsibilities.

We are human we make mistakes, but we take responsibilities at the same time. (P2, DU:28)

Delay in the promotion, leaders' responsibilities are not confined to a limited extent. It is open, unlimited, and sometimes uncertain. Therefore, they have to carry on them out of the office. Furthermore, they get less annual leave than other academicians. Besides, as an academician, they also need to fulfil the requirements

of academic publication and research. But the scarcity of time mostly disallows them to conduct research and writing research article. This obstacle keeps away the chance of getting promotion duly. Their observation suggests that female leaders get their promotion later than others.

to get promotion it takes time. I applied for it a year ago and I didn't get it, although I meet all the requirements. But they asked me to write two articles on my own with no one else. And I think that writing an article isn't easy and takes time. A leader does not have enough time to write something like this because she has a lot of responsibilities. (P4, DU:15)

It can be clear that there are some organisational-based effects of the challenges that women leaders faced in Saudi Arabia.

4.4.2.2 Personal Effects

The effects of the challenges also have a personal dimension. It causes the female leaders to be afraid of expressing themselves since as female they are not supposed to have their own opinion, let alone voice them out. They are being looked down upon and they are considered inferior to male counterpart by default. In addition, as a female leader, one is not supposed to be herself. There are certain activities that you are not supposed to participate since that is seen as not befitting the role and the position you occupy. In relation to this, Participant 8 stated the following:

Also when I go to an event of course, I must abide deportment, poise and dignity at ceremonies, I must respect my role, I am ashamed to dance in front of the employees for example. (P8, DU:9)

Participant 2 remorsefully reported that the overall challenges make her impatient or sometimes weak. It badly affects her body and mind. When it goes beyond her tolerance level, she becomes frail to work and sometimes becomes unable to handle the situation.

it affected me when I feel that I've been strong (patient) for a long time and I've been fighting for a long time. In the future one day you have to be weak, you feel sick (incapable). (P2, DU:16)

Sometimes, it affects her too badly to be functioning properly and even compels her to be bedridden. Similarly, other female leaders may suffer from health hazard due to overstress of the job burden.

Let's say three four continuous working months' day and night until I reach a level when one day I fall on the bed, and I cannot move anymore, and I got my blood pressure very high. Because we forget ourselves and we don't pay attention to our health. (P2, DU:16)

Challenges affect a leader's social life. Sometimes, this leader gets deprived of the touch of friends and family. She cannot manage time to be sociable.

It's also affected our social life. (P3, DU:9)

Deprivation of personal and social lives seem the challenging issues to female leaders. Female leaders cannot enjoy social lives. Because of being leaders, they need to work equally or sometimes more than men in an unsupportive environment. Therefore, it seems very difficult for women to execute their duties.

We have to forget the joy of life, there is no social life at all, because as a woman you need always to prove yourself. In our career and also in our environment lot of responsibilities lot of things to do. (P2, DU:8)

I don't have any social life at all. I just have only one friend and I usually see her once a week sometimes once a month. (P2, DU:9)

Based on the findings from the respondents, it is clearly shown through the unit analyses on the individual responses to the challenges faced by women in the education sector can be organizational, personal, socio-cultural and some may be brought about by the present religious disciplines.

There are some challenges that are faced in one sector and not in the other. For example, on the financial aspect, the financial benefits in the public sector is lower than those in the private, *“...like the private university get like Insurance, health insurance, they get car and they get a lot of things but for public universities “No”, it's extra amount on the monthly paid.” (P2, DU:1).* There's also no clear system to be followed in terms of policies in the private institution and this is way better in the public, *“There is a clear system and structure, and some kind of satisfaction more than private organizations.” (P4, DU:2).* The women are more supported in the private universities compared women who work in the public universities. The men and women work together, *“...we work as a team together male and female we do workshops and so on so that all can dissolve the boundaries...” (P5, DU:2).* and there's the spirit of teamwork. Hence the work environment in the public universities is less supportive than the private.

In the private universities, workload tends to be more compared to public and they tend to have more working hours, *“...the working hours in private universities is more than the working hours in public universities.” (P2, DU:1).*

In both universities, there's the issue of limited authority. Women are not given authority to make any decisions or do some things that is in the scope of their roles. They have to seek help from their male counterparts to enable them move forward with their responsibilities, *“When you need something, you have to get approval from the dean or the man who has the authority and position. He hinders your work completely and, in some cases, you wait to approve your application.” (P2, DU:1).* The decision-making role is dominated by men. Pressure is another challenge faced by females in both sectors, the leadership roles can be overwhelming and as a result put pressure on the women, *“A very difficult challenge, great*

pressure, and I am having difficulties in meeting the challenges, because I need powers...” (P4, DU:2). Finances is another challenge these women face both in private and public universities. They complained that the pay is low and they don’t get the benefits they deserve, *“Women leaders have a lot of assignments despite the fact that the economic return is not much and doesn’t deserve to be strived for and the assignments entrusted to the leader and the deanery allowance doesn’t deserve the fatigue that accompanies it...”* (P2, DU:2). There are very few women in the public and private universities working as faculty and even in leadership roles meaning women are not empowered enough to join this roles and positions.

In the public sector, there are challenges with the budget allocated to the women section of the school. The male section has to donate to them sometimes and this is not guaranteed either, *“if you want anything you have to ask the male, and they have to donate for us ... you have to beg, and if they can give it to you, you will have to ask and ask till the give you the amount you need, sometimes they do not give you”* (P3, DU:1). There are no binding laws that govern the administration of the universities. Hence the leader gets to say what happens and what doesn’t depend on his beliefs. Also, there are no clear-cut responsibilities given to one when they join the institution. In the private sector, some of the challenges they complained about were the issue of too many responsibilities up to a point where one is overwhelmed, also the issue of long working hours came up. Conclusively, there were two types of the effects of the challenges on women leaders in Saudi higher education discussed above. It can be clear that women are hardly affected by the challenges in their daily life as well as the organization.

4.5 Influences of Islamic Attributes on the Conflicts and Challenges

The research question 3 investigated the Islamic attributes of leadership influence on the conflicts and challenges experienced by the Saudi female educational leaders.

medium the researcher aimed to derive whether the Islamic attributes in Saudi Arabia influences the conflicts and challenges prevailing their roles as some academic leaders. The data obtained in this section were categorized to two main themes which are (1) No challenges and conflicts from Islamic from Islamic Attribute (2) Socio-cultural as a source of conflicts and challenges which tabled as below:

Table 4.2

Influences of Islamic Attributes of Leadership on The Conflicts and Challenges Experienced by The Saudi Female Educational Leaders

No	Main Themes	Sub-Themes
1	No challenges and conflicts from Islamic from Islamic Attribute	1. Women's understanding of her Religion 2. Positive Effects of Islam
2	Socio-Cultural as a Source of Conflicts and challenges	1. Misinterpretation of the Islamic Sources 2. Misconception and Fallacies 3. Socio-Cultural Beliefs 4. Maintaining the Hijab Principle 5. Revival of True Islamic Spirit

Religious discipline is commonly seen as a barrier, but it is quite dissimilar to the main tenet of Islam. Islamic rules are sometimes, being improperly interpreted. But contemporary Saudi society has been changing progressively. The above Table 4.4 illustrated the main themes and sub-themes gathered from the responses of informants in this study. There were 2 main themes and 7 subthemes.

4.5.1 No Challenges and Conflicts from Islamic Attributes

In this part of the analysis, the researcher explored the view of the participants on the impact of the Islamic attributes on the women's leadership conflicts. From the informants' assertions, it was elaborated that conflicts spring out not from the Islamic attributes but sometimes from the social cultural beliefs that prevailing in the country.

The following paragraphs will discuss the participants view on the Islamic attributes and social cultural as a source of conflicts.

4.5.1.1 Women's understanding of her Religion

More or less participants of the current study discard the fact that Islamic attributes influence the leadership conflicts among the women in higher education in Saudi Arabia. Participant 3 indicated that religious elements do not influence the women's leadership conflicts in higher institutions. She asserted in (DU: 23) that:

I think the religion support women's rights and support female studies, works everything. it's the main supporter for women. There are no same conflicts between the religion and the women's rights or s work. (P3, DU:23).

She unhesitatingly stated that religious rules in Saudi Arabia do not enthuse leadership conflict. Referring to her personal experience, she argued that it depends on women's understanding and her conduct with religion. Islam permits a woman to deal with a man keeping herself in the veil.

I don't think (religious rules instigate conflict) because I'm working with the religious people..... I don't think that they are against working women. I actually didn't face that in my work or in my life. (P3, DU:24)

I think Islam makes the rules how to work with others and it controls our working life, how to deal with people and how to do the job. This is Islamic rules, but I don't think it's a barrier. (P3, DU:27)

However, she exemplified some conflicting issues relating to religiosity:

I see others having these challenges, for example, talking to men or other and that hampered their work; especially, if they are leaders this causes a problem. (P3, DU:26)

The participant stated that Islam was on the side of women, women were allowed to be in leadership roles, women had been close to the Prophet (PBUH) and there had been female warriors in Islam.

On the contrary, Islam stands on our side. Leadership has not been affected by religious matters. We can only do so much as per what is accepted religion wise but as it is far more important than anything else then whatever it advised is basically for our own good. Islam supports the presence of women in leadership from the days of the Prophet (PBUH). The women were discussing the prophet and talking to him. And there were female warriors. (P7, DU:23)

It can be concluded that Saudi women are aware of their religion and its roles.

4.5.1.2 Positive Effect of Islam

Overwhelmingly, the participant felt that her faith (Islam) had a positive effect on her work as an educational leader. The participant felt that Islam was a mixture of beliefs, living style, discipline, and work ethics and helped with the responsibilities and duties which came with being an academic leader. When the participant was questioned about whether religious beliefs added to the conflict at work, she felt that it did not certainly.

Islam is our victory, our believes, our living style. our Islam attributes reflect on our value, in our discipline, our work ethics, which will add value to our leading academic responsibilities. (P9, DU:23)

If you use your Islamic attributes, it will confirm your role and responsibility. Because it is your work ethics and values, you are just you are right. (P9, DU:24)

With regards Islamic attribute and their impact on female leaders in the academic field the participant felt that if by Islamic attributes it was meant that there should be a veil applied on women then that was already being followed. However, she did emphasize the necessity of having female leaders.

With regard to society's view, if it is the preservation of the veil then there are no challenges, but the country needs such leadership and that the Society of men supports women significantly. (P10, DU:23)

This participant clearly stated that Islam has a role for women and a role for men and these roles should be adhered to.

When everything is clear and specific that can show the place of the woman and the place of the man, and there must be a separation in place and field of work and the field of leadership, I believe that religious controls may be the cause of conflicts. (P5, DU:24)

Correspondingly, Participant 8 concluded that the Islamic attributes does not influence the conflicts of female leadership. She further explained that the combination of men and women has very clear restrictions that no body crisscrossed. She concluded in (DU:24) that:

No, I do not this it can affect, there are no problems, sometimes there is mixing between men and women but within the limits of respect and commitment (P8, DU: 24).

The participants mentioned in above discussion established that Islamic attributes and disciplines does not influence the leadership career of women in higher education. The rapports between the male staff and female staff were professional and intellectual relations.

So Islamic rules are not responsible for the conflict. One of the root causes of conflict is personality and improper understanding of Islam. A leader must know how to communicate with others; how to conduct her duties. Notwithstanding, Saudi women are finding difficulties to cope with this opportunity because of other obligations that they need to mandatorily obey. (Almansour & Kempner, 2016).

4.5.2 Socio-Cultural Contributes to the Women's Leadership Conflicts

The researcher further explored the sight of the participants on the influence of the Islamic characteristics on the women leadership challenges. Results from the informants' affirmations elaborated that challenges were not Islamic characteristics but occasionally from the social cultural principles that predominant in the country. The succeeding subsections converse the influences of both Islamic characteristics and social cultural as a source of challenge.

The participant when asked about any personal challenges due to Islamic disciplines was quick to point out that the challenges were mainly thrown her way through the men. However, she also mentioned that when she attended the meetings she was greeted with respect and appreciation as well.

The challenges can be with the male but I'm going lot of meetings where men are there, but I notice that they appreciate and respect the women leaders, and I also find personal freedom, for example, when I go for the meetings I usually cover my face and there is a great respect, appreciation, support and candidacy from men (P10, DU:27)

Islamic rules do not instigate or catalyse challenge. Rather, if leaders follow Islamic codes of behavioural conducts, they can minimize challenges. Islamic disciplines do not acerbate any challenges to leaders.

No, I do not see it as a challenge honestly. (P2, DU:25)

Participant 10 also elucidated that Islamic disciplines does not impact the conflict of women leadership but the socio-cultural beliefs. She mentioned that in (DU:24) that:

With regard to society view, if it is the preservation of the veil then there are no challenges, but the country needs such leadership and that the Society of men supports women significantly (P10, DU: 23).

The participant 10 felt it was more a question of the way the infrastructure had been set up. Often when women have to attend meetings (particularly in government buildings) there are challenge as the departments employ mainly men and there is little allowance or space for women to be there.

The Rector is difficult to meet or visit because of the presence of men in all government buildings, and because the woman has privacy, the corridors and basic services are not suitable for her presence there so this can be a challenge. (P10, DU:25).

From the results obtained in this study, there are pieces of evidence that women from religious families in Saudi are getting support and inspiration from their family members. However, women need to understand the surroundings and environment in order to maintain themselves according to Islamic rules. The participants emphasized the fact that Islamic attributes does not imposed any challenges on the leadership conflicts of women in higher education, but the socio-cultural beliefs of some parents, guidance and husband. Participant 2 indicated that religious elements do not create any challenges for women leadership in higher institutions but the socio-cultural. Women should adapt themselves to the situation. In the current scenario, most of the women are working in such an environment where they are surrounded by women only. So, there should be no reason to get into conflict or challenges due to Islamic rules. She asserted in (DU: 25) that:

If you mean how it's affecting a woman. Yeah. I think that's related to her closed environment to her parents to her husband to discussed with him. But I have many friends who their family are very religious, and they supported her they know how they raised their daughters and the environment that she's working. And so, I didn't see that it was a Challenge some people in the country they supported I totally understand that there are some others maybe from other perspectives. I don't know how to see it as from the environment that I've been in a very pure woman environment. We didn't have any problem, everyone was working, and everyone

was happy. There were no challenges even from religious perspective. (P2, DU: 25).

Socio-cultural can contribute to the women's leadership conflicts in Saudi Arabia, next paragraphs can explain the four sub-themes related to the socio-cultural challenge from the participants point of views.

4.5.2.1 Misinterpretation of the Islamic Sources

Participants of the current study established the fact that Islamic attributes does not influence the leadership conflicts of women in higher education in Saudi Arabia, but the socio-cultural beliefs of some sects in the society. Participant 1 indicated that religious elements do not influence the women leadership conflicts in higher institutions but the socio-cultural. She asserted in (DU: 25) that:

I think there used to be but not because of Islam but how the society is so and interpreted these disciplines. The education of girls at the beginning went through very difficult stages, and specific boards ran even their education or institutions, till all these institutions were transferred to the Ministry of Education and by 2006 all of them were transferred to the universities. (P1, DU: 25).

However, women not being given same chances as men especially when it comes to education, has caused many women to become illiterate and this affects their contribution to society especially when it comes to academic matters.

I attended an influential meeting that a woman was one of the leaders of the renewal of reading and writing, but she is illiterate and was a senior position in education. (P6, DU: 24)

The participant 10 also explicitly clarified that possibly it should be established that Islamic disciplines does not impact the conflict of women leadership but the socio-cultural beliefs. She mentioned that in (DU:24) that:

There are many difficulties, for example: family, also talking to men, or appearing on television, also appearing in the media, for me there is none of that and thankfully. (P10, DU: 24).

It is clear that there were some understood of the society about the Islamic roles which influenced their attitude toward women in Saudi Arabia.

4.5.2.2 Misconception and Fallacies

Participant 1 supported that Islamic disciplines does not impact the conflict of women leadership but misconception and fallacy of some sects of people may antagonized the women leadership career. She revealed in (DU:24) that:

I don't think that the religious disciplines contribute to the conflicts as much as they are explained or interpreted by some people. and it also depends on the way the higher Administration in any University respond to these disciplines. For example, in this University women or female leaders are empowered, respected, trusted, their opinions are well considered meetings with male counterparts are facilitated to help solve any problems (P1, DU: 24).

Participant 4 also emphasized that it possibly be the different interpretation of Qur'an and Sunnah. However, it should be established that Islamic disciplines does not impact the conflict of women leadership. She exposed her view in (DU:23) that some people are very rigid and conservative in their interpretation while some are not. She asserted that:

I do not see any conflict between Islamic attributes and women educational leadership in Saudi Arabia. Actually, I see them going hand in hand. It might be an issue to those who interpret Islamic attributes in a rigid way. However, under our Government Leadership, King Salman, and his deputy Prince Mohammed Bin Salman things has changed a lot, and we do not have a lot of these rigid interpretations haunting us anymore. Even the religious police power within the country their power and authorities has been redefined by the government to reflect the less rigid interpretations of the Islamic attributes in Saudi Arabia. (P4, DU: 23).

According to this participant, Islamic disciplines don't cause much challenges or conflict. They are okay as they are because Allah has rules that should be observed, and one must always be conscious of what God wants of them be it at work or in their personal lives.

You can be an individual but must be observant and God's conscious in the work and in yourself, because Allah has the limits and rules that you should not go beyond that. (P6, DU:25)

4.5.2.3 Socio-Cultural Beliefs

The participant 4 also explicitly clarified that possibly it should be established that Islamic disciplines does not affect the conflict of women leadership but the socio-cultural beliefs. She mentioned that in (DU:24) that:

I do not see that as an issue at all. I do think it is more related to cultural attributes rather than religious disciplines. As our religion is always urging us to learn, work and grow to our full potential. However, cultural attributes in relation to mixing with men and working in mixed gender environments are the main issues that female leaders face (P4, DU: 24).

In addition, the participant did not think that Islamic disciplines contributed to any conflicts or challenges that women faced.

No, I do not think that religious disciples contribute to the conflicts experience if you know your religion well then you understand that it deemed no harm for you. Maybe it was in the past. (P7, DU:24)

According to this participant, the separation of men and women specifically in meeting is somewhat contravening to the Islamic principles. Men and women can meet each other maintaining the Hijab principle. Thus, they can maintain professional relationship while conducting organisational responsibilities in a collaborative manner.

There is hijab modest men and women even when they are well respected, and they are highly aware of the female leaders, their counterparts, and the professional relationship. (P1, DU:26)

When questioned about the role of faith in setting the argument against women directly working with men. She mentioned the change coming in and how women are now getting freedom and even being able to drive their cars.

Your regulations and policies do not give them this if you as before. Women are, now, have more freedom, even they are driving their cars. (P9, DU:25)

The general findings obtained from the document analysis posited that religious attributes are not contributing to the conflicts or challenges but social norms. The studies of (Abu-Khader, 2012), cited in (Almansour & Kempner, 2016) have elaborated that the critical issues and challenges faced by the women in leadership are not certainly allied with the religion but cultural and empowerment of the women in Saudi Arabia higher education. The further explained that women in the cultural are supposed to be camped at home only for taking care of the husband and children. This constitutional rule limits their opportunities while sustaining patriarchal social structures as well as traditional attitudes towards women in the workplace. Though, it was expected that gender-segregation could bring additional opportunities for the leadership of Saudi women (Alomair, 2015). Generally, the participants established that socio-cultural beliefs of some sects in Saudi Arabia. However, majority of the conservative men still not allowed their women to talk or participate in the society.

4.5.2.4 Maintaining the Hijab Principle

According to this participant, the separation of men and women specifically in meeting is somewhat contravening to the Islamic principles. Men and women can meet each other maintaining the Hijab principle. Thus, they can maintain

professional relationship while conducting organisational responsibilities in a collaborative manner. Harmoniously, Participant 8 also highlighted that it conceivably be the different interpretation of Qur'an and Sunnah. She said she uses Niqab and no one criticize her for that. She said did not face any challenges with her male staff. She asserted that in (DU:27)

I am veiled and from a conservative family, but I have no problem sitting or dealing with males. But other female leaders maybe they face such a challenge (P8, DU: 27).

Participant 5 mentioned that the mixing of men and women was a problem initially. As often when she went to the Ministry of Education, she would find herself the only woman in a room full of men and they would view her as a woman rather than the president of the university. However, with time these men came to see her as the president of the university rather than only as a woman.

Be in the presence of the meetings of the Ministry of Education when they are all men and only me woman, I was seen at the beginning as a woman not as president of the university but now the outlook changed, any they can see me as president. (P5, DU:26)

Mixing and seclusion (Between men and women) There is a conflict between men and women, but Allah Almighty said: Do not hide, and all that there were religious controls there is better clarity and transparency between genders. (P5, DU:27)

However, participant 7 contrasting the other opinion and she asserted that some discipline from the Islam aggravated the challenges due her experience with one of her staff. She explained in (DU:26) that:

yes, I had a problem with an employee, and she made a complaint against me and said things that didn't happen. So, she litigates me and when I had to go to the court, I had to cover my face so I could stand in front of the judge, and I was so scared. Because I never used to cover my face before, so I felt uncomfortable when I defend myself in front of the judge (P7, DU: 26).

The participant felt that the Islamic discipline or principles provided guidelines or limits under which people could live and work

The environment is respectable. There are no compromises, and every person respects his limits. (P8, DU:25)

Participant 9 stated that the Islamic faith helped Saudi women when they had to take part in business mediations and were required to overlook certain practices. She also felt personally her faith allowed her to deal with things transparently and treat people equally. To sum up things the participant felt that the Islamic Faith protected Saudi women and helped them be more responsible in their jobs.

In our work, we sometimes expose to mediations ... you have to mediate, business mediation, you have to close your eyes to something. But, with our Islamic attributes, and your belief in it, by hard-working, and professionalism, you will find a way to avoid this bad influence. (P9, DU:26)

One day, they told me that I have to accept a student, whose rank was 11, and the department, they have 10 before this student, I said "Ok, I will do it but first, Write me a letter ". I thought that, if they wrote to me, they will break my doctoring, the style of work that I was putting. So, I called him directly and told him "you want me to accept this one?". He said "Yes". I said "Ok. accept the other ten ". So, I gave them the same opportunity, and I was very right and honest with everyone. So, nobody feels that this student is better than them. all of them got the same opportunity. (P9, DU:27)

The participant stressed on several occasions that the more clearly, she followed her faith with courage and discipline the better she was able to perform her role within the rules and confines of Islam. However, she also believed that religion maybe used to produce control or challenges for Saudi women leaders in the academic field.

There are no challenges and controls, but I see them legitimately, very important so that I can get freedom, and the more I abide by my religion and Sharia. Whenever he gives me freedom and self-

confidence, and in the face of challenges, no one can speak on my own. (P5, DU:25)

Participant 6 was clear that while Islam set some rules and limitation on our daily conduct they didn't hamper or hinder work.

They are neither challenges nor obstacles (as a result of the Islamic belief or principles). (P6, DU:25)

Finally, she did not feel that Islamic principles were in any way a basic challenge to female empowerment.

No, it is not a basic challenge for as long as you are standing within the norm. (P7, DU:25)

It could be summarized from the above discussion that Islamic attributes and its disciplines does not impose challenges on the leadership career of women in higher education. There was a mutual understanding amongst the men staff and women in their various working position. Islam secures women's right, wills, and enthruses women empowerment.

4.5.2.5 Revival of True Islamic Spirit

The results from the participants of this study concluded that Islamic elements or characteristics does impose challenges on the women in academic leadership, but it encourages the women to look for their rights in contributing the society. Participants argued that Islamic element rather supports the women development and empowerment in the society. For instance, Participant 1, explained that If Vision 2030 comes true it will be regarded as a new dawn, a revival of true Islamic spirit. Because Islamic spirit does not ignore women rights. Rather Islam offers women a certain position, priority, power, and roles based on the rational

judgement. Since the government of Saudi has chalked out a grand vision (Vision 2030) for national development women leaders are hopeful for the positive changes.

The current government vision 2030 supports the women partaking in the leadership career and the women has realised their roles as part of society. She asserted that:

I think everything is now reconsidered thanks to the new vision of 2030 of the government. Islamic heritage If we read it carefully, we find very beautiful examples of women in which they played a vital role as a participant in the Islamic civilization. (P1, DU:27).

Nonetheless, the current scenario of women disempowerment and the extent of social domination mainly depend on the person, position and place. Evidently, women are sometimes rationally valued and properly honoured.

Last year, I attended a training session with 15 men and 3 ladies all of us were wearing hijab except me with Niqab, but all were respected and accepted also as part of our diverse cultures and social norms. (P1, DU:27)

Participant 3 further lay some good stories of the working environment in the university. Though due to the strict separation policy men and women cannot coexist in the workplace but they are fairly collaborating in many cases. This is a progression trend that has been achieved over recent years. She emphasis that she works with the religious people and they did not impose any challenges on her with the leadership roles. Even they were working diligently and efficiently. She said in (DU:25) that:

I don't face it. Lastly, I worked with a group of people men and women in the same group where men and women and some of them are very strict in Islam, but they work in a good way. They don't have challenges like before they don't used to work with woman, and they don't work in a table beside a woman, but now they work and talk easily better than the last three to four years. Yeah. I feel there are some changes it's not like before really, but even before no one can do anything against the organizational rule. (P3, DU: 25).

Participant 4 buttressed the view of the previous participant that that Islamic disciplines does not impact the challenges of women leadership but error and fallacy of some groups of people may be irritated with the women leadership career. She revealed in (DU:25) that:

No, I do not agree to that, and think it is not related at all. It is a force of empowering women rather than hindering them. Yet, rigid interpretations of the religious discipline might be a great challenge, especially with families who prevent their female members to work in mixed gender or attend meetings or work in any way with men. (P4, DU: 25).

Through the unit analysis of the respondents' insights to the influence of the religious attributes, it is elaborated that there are various religious disciplines that affect women leaders. These are beliefs that either hinder women from working independently or make their work harder. There's a participant who got sued as she was in a leadership role by one of her subordinates and she had to cover her face while in court. She admitted to feeling uncomfortable because this is one thing she is not used to doing. The segregating of women from men is also a challenge because they are not allowed to work together with men. This in turn affects work progress especially if they are in a leadership position. Also, how women are viewed as inferior to men is a challenge because when a woman is in a position of power, she does not get the respect she deserves, *"...in the presence of the meetings of the Ministry of Education when they are all men and only me woman, I was seen at the beginning as a woman not as president of the university..."* (P3, DU:2).

The influence of Islam on women empowerment is somewhat vague and it happens due to misconception. Women in Saudi Arabia are suffering probably due to some specific *-Fatwa* and traditional rules. But Saudi society is being changed. The government is reforming the social structure reforming rules while providing empowerment to women.

—.....the government issued the Royal Decree of allowing women to drive cars. In fact, it was not just a decree of driving cars but it was more freedom, more empowerment which definitely affected the whole Saudi society”. The negative influence of Islamic rules on women empowerment is not significantly high as it is generally seen. *“I don't think that the religious disciplines contribute to the conflicts as much as they are explained or interpreted by some people.”*

The extent of negativity depends on the authority who implement or impose rules and the way they interpret. *“For example, in King Abdul-Aziz University women or female leaders are empowered, respected, trusted, their opinions are well-considered. Meetings with male counterparts are facilitated to solve problems.”* Religious discipline is commonly seen as a barrier but it is quite dissimilar to the main tenet of Islam. Islamic rules are sometimes, being improperly interpreted. But contemporary Saudi society has been changing progressively. *“The education of girls at the beginning went through very difficult stages and even their education was run by specific boards or institutions until all these institutions were transferred to the Ministry of Education and by 2006 all of them were transferred to the universities.”* According to this respondent, the separation of men and women specifically in meeting is somewhat contravening to the Islamic principles. Men and women can meet each other maintaining the *Hijab* principle. Thus, they can maintain professional relationship while conducting organizational responsibilities in a collaborative manner.

4.6 Experience of Women Educational Leaders in Saudi Arabia: Empowerment and its Impact on Conflicts and Challenges

The research question 4 explored the impact of the women empowerment on the conflicts and challenges experienced by the Saudi women leadership in education. Women in Saudi cannot work alongside men. The strict gender segregation policy weakens women in taking part in decision making. Hence, sometimes, women face extreme discrimination. Even being enough qualified, they can neither execute their decisions nor achieve the right position in the management hierarchy.

In some universities as we hear, women attend meetings only via video conferencing, and in others the higher administration in a certain sector is run only by a man even though if there is a woman more qualified than them. (P1, DU:26)

The researcher intended to establish whether the women empowerment in Saudi Arabia influenced the nature of conflicts and challenges prevailing their roles as academic leaders. The results gathered from this part were categorized to one main theme, which are tabled as below:

Table 4.3

The Impacts of Women Empowerment on Conflicts and Challenges in Saudi Arabia Higher Institutions

No	Main Themes	Sub-themes
1.	The Impacts of Women Empowerment on Conflicts and Challenges	1.Changes in the Social Structure 2. Freedom Given 3. Mutual Understanding between Genders 4. Social, Cultural, Economic, Legal, Organisational Influence 5. The Influence of Islam on Women Empowerment

The above Table 4.5 illustrated the main headings gathered from the informants of this study. There were 1 main theme extracted from the informants' responses and five sub-themes: The figure below also present sub-themes extracted from the respondents.

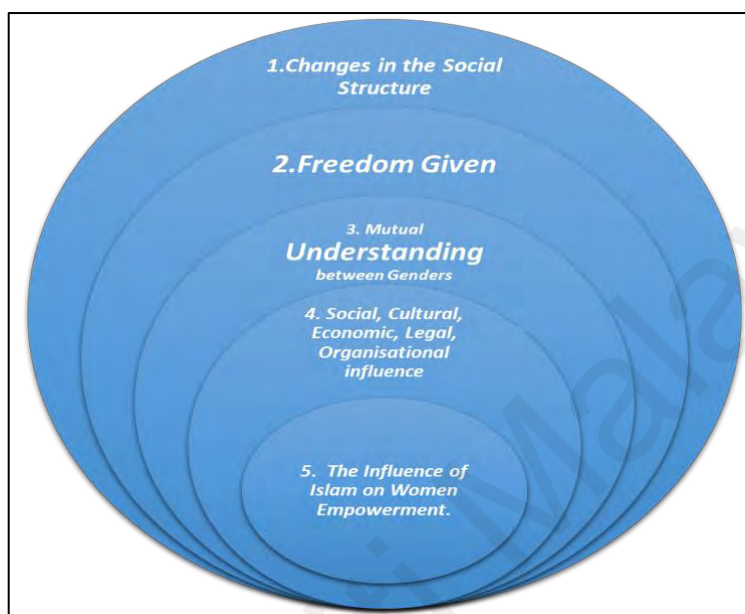


Figure 4.5 The Impact of Women Empowerment on Conflicts and Challenges

4.6.1 The Impacts of Women Empowerment on Conflicts and Challenges Changes in the Social Structure

The process of women empowerment in Saudi Arabia taken place by the prince Mohammad Bin Salman with the aim of reforming and promoting the women visibility in the public affairs. The government of the Saudi Arabia encourages the development of women in their various career to enhance women empowerment. Women have not only been given authority to drive cars but also drive the management especially, in the academic paradigm. They are offered the top positions like Deanship, Vice Deanship. Empowerment of the women in the society will definitely ensure the development society. Participant 1 argued with her opinion that

the current generation is far better than previous decades in terms of women empowerment. She highlighted in (DU:19) that:

I think the situation now is good compared to the situation in the last two decades. The Ministry of Education now created in all the university's deanships for women, and that position comes a second after the position of the president of the university and this is a very important position which takes care of all the Affairs inside the woman's campuses in the universities (P1, DU: 19).

In her observation, Participant 3 said women empowerment is enhanced many folds due to the changes in the social structure. Besides, effective initiatives have taken by the government. Besides, family values are positively influencing women empowerment as well. Above all, she stressed on women's own wills and she hoped on their inner capacities and strengths.

If she wants to do the things, she will do it. She will find a lot of the barriers and she will struggle but if she wants to do the things, she will do it.... (family, society, and the government) will make the way much easier but they will not show you the way. You have to see the way by yourself. (P3, DU:19)

Participant 2 elucidated that women leadership is in the rise in Saudi Arabia. Women are enormously appreciated and proven to be effective in management. They have properly utilized the given opportunities. They have successfully demonstrated their excellence in the education sector and elsewhere. The organisational structure is also somehow positively impacting on women's development. The current government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia strives to empower women to be part of decision making. Such as be a leader in the academic institutions. She proclaimed that in (DU:19) that:

It's really good. Nowadays woman have been given really the, there are appreciated, and Woman proved themselves. They've been given the opportunity and they excelled in it the woman really excelled in leadership in education and I believe also in

other organisations. I have many of my Friends in other organisations as women, they really excel in being leaders in those organisations. So, I feel it's really good (P2, DU: 19).

She also added that when women are empowered and celebrated in the country, they will undeniably become the problem solvers in that society. She highlighted in (DU:20) that:

It should be, because woman back to our nature actually. She's a multitasking, she's a critical thinker, she is a problem solver. This is how God has created her, she has all these characteristics. So, putting her in a leadership position and supporting her and empowering her. She was really extent and will make a big difference. (P2, DU: 20).

Empowering Saudi women leaders in the academic field would help women support other women according to participant 5 and help reduce conflicts and challenges they faced in their workplace environments.

I explained this earlier, especially since women's leaders is different from one side to the other, and at the same time different, and are not favoured to being women against women, and hopefully be bonding, support and cooperation to all other, and I am against the Saying that women against women and this saying made by men in order to be conflict Continuous, women's support for women must being so special at the moment until there's a suitable opportunity for women. (P5, DU:22)

4.6.2.1 Freedom Given

The status of women empowerment according to majority of the participants is that it has gotten better over the years and there's still hope for it to improve. This is majorly because and the decree by the crown prince to allow women to do some of the things which initially, they were not allowed to do. For instance, women were not given the freedom to do simple things like drive a car but that has changed now among other things even concerning education.

Praise be to God empowerment is widespread in the educational and social aspects. There is a very fast development. (P8, DU:22).

Women now are given top leadership positions such as the role of dean or even assistant rector. There's a participant who felt that it wasn't enough and not just women should be empowered but even children. Participant 9 explained that:

everyone, even your kids, needs the empowerment." (P9, DU:20).

Many women however agreed that they should be empowered in the education sector. This is because it is part of the Vision 2030 and the government plans to make sure they meet this goal. Another reason why women should be empowered in this sector is because universities nowadays are dominated by women be it staff or students. So, it is only right to empower them and include them more in the sector. Also, women are highly qualified for these positions, and they should be given a chance to hold these leadership positions. They should not be placed just under men, they should also get the top positions,

our role in the academe should not be regarded as lower level to our male counterparts as both of us male and female have our own functions to be operated." (P7, DU:20).

Some of the things that delay or hinder women's empowerment as an educational leader in Saudi Arabia includes the social, political, cultural, legal and economic factors. First it is when these women don't get a chance to lead, they are not given leadership roles because men are seen as the decision-makers. One participant said,

we do not have powers in the men society or our society, because of their leading positions, such as administrators, deans, rectors and members of the board of trustees have a lot of meetings and occasions, women do not participate in any of these things especially in this circle, building cooperation that leads to facilitate the work, and in it is the decision making, women are far from all of this. (P4, DU:21).

The participant also mentioned that now universities have to fulfil the condition of hiring women even if they don't necessarily believe in it or support it. So, as far as this participant is concerned change is taking place. Moreover, women being empowered in Saudi Arabia would help ensure that they faced less conflicts and challenges. She felt that women were coming almost on par with men in the field of academic and her university had an assistant rector who was a woman.

Yes, the beautiful thing is that organisations empower women, organisations want to be committed to fulfil duty towards the vision, even if the organisation does not believe in the empowerment of women, they apply now to do it. (P8, DU:20)

Participant 4 buttressed the view of the previous participant that women empowerment in educational institution is well-thought-out as drastic in Saudi Arabia. She revealed in (DU:20) that:

I'm actually the first female dean in the private sector (leading both male and female campuses) and this refers to a great change in society. In the past, no one would accept such a thing that there is a woman who leads a college of male students, but there are a lot of changes and this advocate's hope. But in the future, there might be something like this. In the future, this will be a powerful thing for women leadership. The government and the country have a deep trust on women's performance in various fields especially in education (P4, DU: 20).

She also gave her opinion regarding women empowerment which can significantly enhance women leadership in higher education. In this case, she also mentioned the recent progressive trend of women empowerment that enabled women to attain the leadership position. For instance, women are nowadays, not only becoming the Head of the departments or faculties but also Head of the institute. In this regard, she mentioned about University of Princess Nora, a women's university where the Head of the university is a woman.

University of Princess Nora, which is a women's university headed by a woman. (P4, DU:20)

The participant 2, stated that, when women are empowered, they will attain necessary skills and experience in building a virtuous personality. She highlighted in (DU:22) that:

Yes. She would have the right experience. She would be able to face the real-world problem, and this is how she will gain the experience and build her personality (P2, DU:22).

Participant 4 enthusiastically said that women empowerment in Saudi Arabia is moving forward very fast. In order to exemplify the steady development, she proudly mentioned,

The first female Dean in the male student sector at Taif University is Dr. Dalal Namingani. This is a great pride for us. (P4, DU:19)

4.6.2.2 Mutual Understanding between Genders

Participant 1 elaborated the aforementioned argument that Males' negative perception and their domination in the management are suffocating women empowerment. Though women empowerment can expectedly reduce challenges that Saudi women are facing these days. In this regard, men and women should cooperate and collaborate in management practices in order to integrate their different skills and abilities. Moreover, women nowadays in Saudi Arabia are well educated and they merited to be empowered particularly to work in concord with their men counterpart. She said in (DU:22) that:

Yes, it can help. leadership especially education must be shared since the integration is highly needed. Both men and women they have different skills and not to differ, but to be integrated, both should accept the other and work together to make the best for the sector of education, and for their own achievements at the same time. And definitely I think Saudi women are making their own

path and creating their own seen playing a very important part nowadays. (P1, DU:22).

This participant enthusiastically expressed her earnest feelings about women empowerment which she thinks a timely initiative in Saudi Arabia. She further emphasizes the coeducation. She also indicated that Saudi women are enough qualified to take the place of leaders. Most of the universities are nowadays dominated by females in term of participation. Most importantly, women empowerment has been regarded as the priority in the menu of vision 2030. She cherishes hope for the betterment of women leadership based on four conjectures such as 1) the positive influence of co-education on leadership; 2) women are gaining higher qualification day by day; 3) women have made their own places in the academic avenues; and 4) Vision 2030 is ushering new hope and promise to Saudi women.

Number one, co-education is the best area for the best results of leadership.....Number two, many Saudi women are highly qualified and deserve to have the chance to lead.....Number three, most of the Saudi universities now, they are dominated by women either staff or female students.....Number four, it is Vision 2030 of the government that targets this and they plan more empowerment of women in different sectors. (P1, DU:20)

The participant felt that it was society which hindered women's empowerment in the academic field. Once again, the participant felt that while things had begun to improve, they hadn't improved sufficiently.

The society but I think women are beginning to be empowered but not sufficiently. (P10, DU:21)

Participant 10 established that women empowerment possibly will be the solution to the challenges and conflicts of gender dominated sectors. When women are empowered, they will be productive and creative to resolute the conflicts. She said that (DU:22) that:

Yes, every sector is gender-based and therefore it is necessary to empower women in the requisite form, and their existence is strongly needed because it is the link, the focal point and the half of society. For example, the housing sector now provides services to women and men. It is necessary to empower women in this sector because if the service for men only is limited, also when the Ministry establishes women section universities, there are no female engineers, so the schemes do not take into account the needs of the female side in some cases, there must therefore be empowerment of women because they will contribute to integrated and exemplary buildings for female students and will convey the required image, and the presence of women is necessary for integration. (P10, DU:22)

It is a cultural issue and men feel that they have to be dominant. Also, the rules and policies that have been put in place act as hindrance to achieving this. Women should be treated equally with men and not given second to top positions because that is where men feel comfortable for the woman to be. They have the mindset that it's the woman's job to implement what men decide.

Another thing that acts as a hindrance to the women in pursuing leadership roles is lack of time to develop themselves. They cannot go for professional training that will enable them to move up the ranks, this is because of them spending all their time trying to improve the places they work for.

One of the main barriers to women empowerment is lack of their representativeness in the management. They found fewer places in the men's world; specifically, in the world of governing bodies. Men are not only outranked but also outnumbered women in vital positions in university management. The marginal

status gives women the least opportunity to raise their voices; to echo their decisions into actions. They find it very difficult to make the working relationship with men.

some of the difficulties that confront me, and women leaders is work relationships and we do not have powers in the men's society or our society." (P4, DU:21)

But the condition is gradually improving. Women are getting somewhat liberty to participate in the social events with men. In the organisational context, women can participate in the management too. In the academic paradigm, they are collaborating with men to a limited extent. Nevertheless, this is considered the best time of women empowerment that Saudi has ever observed. In her view, women empowerment must contribute to decreasing conflicts with male counterparts. It would help them to execute their tasks as well as achieve their goals. They will find it easy to accomplish their jobs.

Empowering women will help to reduce the conflicts that she faced with the counterparts and peers, but not to disappear it. But power will help them in the performance of the work, easily and smoothly, in order to achieve their projects. (P4, DU:22)

Women need empowerment in the academic world according to participant 5 but as they climbed the leadership ladder, they felt frustrated as they could not attain their full potential because all the decision making was done by the men.

The difficulties faced by women leaders are very many, most of which were when I was working at the Public University, and as I progressed in the management and leadership level quickly and especially that the human wants and aspires greatly, especially when the person in the stages of youth wants to produce more, but you are not allowed to get at the highest level, because the man is the decision-makers and the leadership role of women in the government sector is reduced. (P5, DU:20)

This participant had several things to discuss: the multiple roles women take on as wives, mothers, daughters and women with careers, the lack of voice they are given and because there is no clear organisational structure to remove bias for women.

Our priorities of being women, it can be family, being a wife, a mother among others, and as I said, there is no clear system or clear structure. Women can't give her opinion. There must be respect for her opinion. (P7, DU:21)

However, the participant felt that empowerment of women leaders in the academic field would help reduce the challenges which she faces at work and at home. More gender empowerment will allow women to be more comfortable and less stressed at their workplace.

Yes. This will reduce. The work will become more comfortable. I don't mind if they're her mentors. The women under stress more than the man. She has challenges at work and has responsibilities at home towards her children and husband, and the man does not contribute to household matters, on the contrary, he increases responsibilities. (P7, DU:22)

Participant 9 asserted that budgetary dependence hampered the work and success of women academic leaders. Having a budget or departmental financial independence means you can train and educate the team being headed by a female leader. Furthermore, more the participant mentioned that if you remove obstacles and hindrances to Saudi education leaders then they can progress quicker and be more empowered.

The main constraint for us that ... if you want to accomplish something, and you want to empower the team, and bring somebody to train, you have to pay. If you do not have the budget, then you will not be able to pay for the empowerment. (P9, DU:21)

According to her view, the current scenario of women empowerment in Saudi Arabia is the outcome of Saudi women's will power. The thrust has come from women's heart. They have liberated themselves first. She also associated the influence of the contributions of family members in women empowerment.

I think it comes from inside of the person and the parents and family. (P3, DU:19)

Participant 5 conceded that while there had been some improvement more needed to be done to bring in effective empowerment of female leaders in this field.

The impact still exists, but not significantly at all social, cultural, organisational and economic levels, we are beginning to feel that there is empowerment, but not as required. (P5, DU:19)

But women leaders also should be placed in the right position while given required supports. They deserved to be appreciated for their achievement.

I believe putting her in the right position and giving her the support and the appreciation and the tools, she will be able to give even more. (P2, DU:21)

4.6.2.3 Social, Cultural, Economic, Legal, Organisational

According to Participant 5 women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia are hindered by social, cultural, economic, legal, organisational and religious factors all played their role to hinder women's empowerment.

I think it's a lot, especially in terms of economic, social, cultural, organisational, legal and political aspects, or certain policies, and these are all factors that hinder women's empowerment in universities in terms of education. (P5, DU:21)

In terms of women empowerment for female academic leaders' things had begun to change in a positive sense. The participant felt gradually things were levelling up for women.

From the past years, I can say that women empowerment especially in the educational leadership has improved a lot as now we are levelling to our male counterparts. (P7, DU:19)

In the same line, participant 8 said that there has been rapid development where women's empowerment is concerned in Saudi Arabia. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry calls women up for the position of a Dean. In addition, the participant fully supports the empowerment of women in the academic field.

There is a development, a rapid development, like for example: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry call us, and they want to hire a female dean. (P8, DU:19)

Furthermore, the social capital is the factor that can help or hinder women in terms of their empowerment. She cites her own example as being from a wealthy background, being able to study abroad, having a family which is progressive and supports her and the fact that she is employed by a private university. All this adds to her social capital and helps empower her in society and at work.

The point you should focus on is the social capital. -I studied abroad, my family is conservative, but it is open minded, supports women, believes in women, empowering women, and the role of women. -I get support also at the private University, I don't think I would have found this support in the public sector. Social background contributed to empowering women and obtaining appropriate support. (P8, DU:21)

She also did not have any challenges as women are becoming more and more empowered. She did mention that until a few years ago men were given a clear priority over women. However, now things were changing and there will be more decision making for female participants.

A few years ago, the man was the primary, there was a focus on men more than women, society in general preferred men to women. This is the only thing-the old school-the culture that favours the men's side. (P8, DU:15)

This Participant also added everyone in the academic circle needed to be empowered whether they were men, women or even children (students). In a nutshell, the participant felt that everyone in this sector needed empowerment. It was more about collective empowerment than just focusing on empowerment of women academic leaders.

Not only women. but also, female, all of us need the empowerment. because the outcome will affect the production of the whole society and increase their contribution to the sustainable development of the country. So, everyone, even your kids, needs the empowerment. (P9, DU:20)

The empowerment was at a good stage according to this participant but more needed to be done to improve the overall situation.

Good but still needs more developments and that is something patriotic and obligatory for us. Also, we can see now there is a female leader who became the Deputy of the Minister of development, so this shows that we have some empowerments (P10, DU:19)

The above result is buttressed by the document revised which explicated that the initiatives of economic reformation and modernization are provoking Saudi women to participate in the job market greater than any time in the national history (Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Women's access to the public domain has been comparably easier due to favourable government policy and changing social norm. Since, Saudi women are getting better opportunities to obtain higher education in the recent decades, they are being qualified for pertaining job (MOH, 2013; Rather, 2016). Notably, the educated women in Saudi are mostly getting involved in the education sector (Akram et al., 2017). The researcher further investigated whether the women empowerment in progress by the government reduces the conflicts and challenges of women in higher education leadership. The participants of this study highlighted that

women empowerments in higher education succours the challenges and conflicts, Empowering women can significantly reduce the challenges that they are facing now. Thus, conflicts can be reduced to a greater extent.

Conclusively, the participants agreed that women empowerment will greatly contributes the conflicts and challenges reduction in academic sectors. The circumstances behind are that when women are supported in the society, they will be partaking in the problem solving and contributing to the development of the society.

4.6.2.4 The Influence of Islam on Women Empowerment

The influence of Islam on women empowerment is somewhat vague and it happens due to misconception. Women in Saudi Arabia are suffering probably due to some specific *“Fatwa”* and traditional rules. But Saudi society is being changed. The government is reforming the social structure reforming rules while providing empowerment to women.

the government issued the Royal Decree of allowing women to drive cars. In fact, it was not just a decree of driving cars, but it was more freedom, more empowerment which definitely affected the whole Saudi society. (P1, DU:23)

According to her opinion, Islam supports women empowerment. Islamic rules do not go against women's leadership.

I think the religion supports women rights and supports women studies, works, everything. (P3, DU:23)

In light of the statement given by this participant, Islam gives women empowerment extending responsibilities as the mother and the homemaker. Hence, women are by nature become educators as well as leaders. They perform duties and family responsibilities. Islam offers very important roles to women. This religion empowers them as well.

Woman in general are educators by nature. This is how they raise their kids. They also responsible for her house. And I think it also from religious perspective. (P2, DU:28)

In Saudi Arabia, the concept of gender management, women empowerment as well as leadership have been tailored based on the social norm, tradition, religion, and socio-economic condition. Women in this country are nowadays participating in different professions in parallel with the transitional phase of the society (Alquaiz et al., 2017). Nevertheless, women empowerment in education sector is still one of the most critical issues. In the same vein, (Al-Munajjed, 2010) underscored some other constraints of women employment, those are legal constraints, educational constraints, and occupational constraints. Lack of enough educational quality, the gap between the job market demand and the quality of the graduates and limited seats for women in the educational institutes are considered as constraints in women empowerment. The current education system is not sufficiently improved for solving the problems of communication skills, creativity and analytical skills. Women are not significantly provided the knowledge of math, science and technology, computer literacy etc. As a result, Saudi women lack empowerment with education. On the other side, occupational constraints such as lack of opportunity in job market penetration, position in the management, decision making also lag behind women. Unsupportive organisational infrastructural cannot escalate women for the leadership position (Al-Munajjed, 2010). But the government of Saudi Arabia has recently brought a significant change by evaluating the capabilities of women. King Abdullah allowed 30 women representatives in the Saudi Parliament while extending opportunities for higher education for all. As a result, women were highly encouraged to pertain in the formal job as well as play the roles of leadership (Hamdan & Alexander, 2016).

Looking into the cases of the analysis by unit, the informants argued that the empowerments could contribute to the conflicts and challenges. The informants pointed out many positive initiatives that have been taken by the Saudi government for women empowerment. The trend of women empowerment is going upward nowadays. The government has recently taken numerous initiatives to enhance women empowerment. Women have not only been given authority to drive cars but also drive the management especially, in the academic paradigm. They are offered the top positions like Deanship, Vice Deanship.

“I think the situation now is good compared to the situation in the last two decades. The Ministry of Education has created in all the University's Deanships for women, and that position comes the second after the position of the president of the university.”

In the analysis, individual interviewee provided their experiences as far as the women empowerment is concerned in Saudi Arabia. The informants willingly expressed her earnest feelings about women empowerment which she thinks a timely initiative in Saudi Arabia. She further emphasizes the coeducation. She also indicated that Saudi women are enough qualified to take the place of leaders. Most of the universities are nowadays dominated by females in term of participation. Most importantly, women empowerment has been regarded as the priority in the menu of vision 2030. She cherishes hope for the betterment of women leadership based on four conjectures such as 1) the positive influence of co-education on leadership; 2) women are gaining higher qualification day by day; 3) women have made their own places in the academic avenues; and 4) Vision 2030 is ushering new hope and promise to Saudi women.

“Number one, co-education is the best area for the best results of leadership.....Number two, many Saudi women are highly qualified and deserve to have the chance to lead.....Number three, most of the Saudi universities now, they are dominated by women either staff or female students.....Number four, it is Vision 2030 of the government that targets this and they plan more empowerment of women in different sectors.

If Vision 2030 comes true it will be regarded as a new dawn, a revival of true Islamic spirit. Because Islamic spirit does not ignore women rights. Rather Islam offers women a certain position, priority, power, and roles based on the rational judgement. Since the government of Saudi has chalked out a grand vision (Vision 2030) for national development women leaders are hopeful for the positive changes.

“In the Islamic heritage if we read it carefully, we find very beautiful examples of women in which they played a vital role as a participant in the Islamic civilization.”

Nonetheless, the current scenario of women disempowerment and the extent of social domination mainly depend on the person, position and place. Evidently, women are sometimes rationally values and properly honoured.

“Last year, I attended a training session with 15 men and 3 ladies all of us were wearing hijab except me with Niqab, but all were respected and accepted also as part of our diverse cultures and social norms.

Political initiatives would be more effective in terms of reducing conflicts and challenges while enhancing women empowerment. Women need to be empowered with proper positions and responsibilities. Young generation should be given priority, power and position in the important institutes such as *Shura* council, National Centre for Dialogue and in the Ministries.

I think we (authorities) need to issue more political decrees to empower women. I think the government will break such barriers soon since a woman was appointed as a deputy for the minister of education, and as the case with the Council of Shura where 20 women are participating in that Council in the different committees and in making the decisions very major and the important decisions.

Overall, women's merit and potentials needs to be valued. Their qualification should be recognized. Women should be treated fairly in every sector to reach as prosperous and promising society.

4.7 Differences in Conflicts and Challenges Experienced by Saudi Women Educational Leaders in Public and Private Universities

The last research question sought explored the differences in conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi women educational leaders in public and private universities.

The data obtained in this section were categorized to two main themes as below:

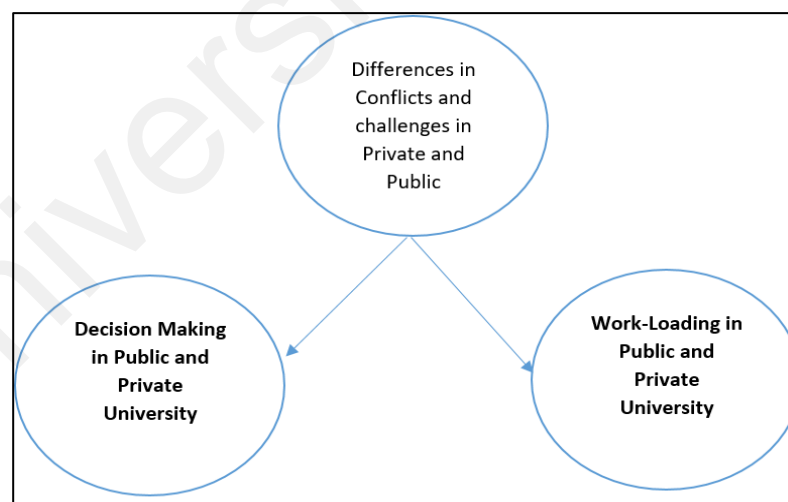


Figure 4.6 Differences in Conflicts and Challenges Experienced by the Saudi Women Educational Leaders in public and private universities

There are differences between public and private universities in terms of their challenges and conflicts. Leaders have to play different roles following organisational disciplines, rules and protocols. In public universities, the absence of assessment reporting causes conflict. In this case, the weak procedural guideline works like a conflict-causing agent.

The absence of an annual assessment is one of the many causes of conflicts at work. The absence of procedural guidelines is also very important. (P1, DU:7)

According to this participant's experience, the nature conflict in public and private universities is almost the same. She also added that conflict is intertwined with people's culture more specifically, the habitual culture of Saudi men. They men cannot go beyond their cultural behaviour whether they are in public or private universities. Therefore, if they are in the top position, they make similar conflict for the same issues.

I think it is same because, of the men who are authorities either in public or private universities; and they are the Saudis. I think the culture affected them. (P3, DU:7)

Participant 5 stated that previously she had worked in the public university and now she was working in a private university. She felt that in the public university when compared to a private university there was less chance of a female academic leader climbing to a higher position. In contrast, the participant felt that in private universities promotion of women to higher academic positions was much easier.

Yes, when I was at a Public university before moving to the Private University, I noticed that the leadership could not reach an attorney or university director or president. In the private universities I think it is much easier and I am now the president. (P5, DU:7)

Women in private universities got promoted quicker according to this participant. She also talked about women helping women in both private and public sectors and termed it as functional cooperation. She feels that ultimately, it's about working for the greater good of the next generation, society and of the Saudi nation

Not as many of my colleagues have reached higher positions in some public universities and I am proud of them and women are the ones that pulls the other woman, and many I notice them trying to do a job succession and this is their tender and I am the same, there is functional cooperation, and everyone has a look for the new generation must take his situation and find cooperation between us, and we have plans towards the generation and empowerment of the new. (P5, DU:17)

This sense derives them to be authoritarians as well as conservatives. Men, according to this participant, believes women as better executioners and therefore, they make plans and policies and women materialise that under men's control. Men's domination is one of the main factors that negatively impact on women empowerment. Besides, the existing system, rules, and regulation may keep women marginalized. Man is the final decision maker and woman is responsible to implement it. This discrimination slows act as a hindrance to women's empowerment.

the decision makers are the men; the ladies are executives only.
(P3, DU:21)

Generally, the conditions which women faced in both sector universities were similar in terms of the gender bias, social and cultural precedents.

They [the issues female academic leaders face] are the same. We are facing the same circumstances, personal and social-cultural environment. (P9, DU:17)

There is dissimilarity between the conflicts and the challenges in the public and private universities. Next section elaborated the decision making and the work-loading as the two different parts between the two sectors.

4.7.1 Decision Making in Public and Private University

The conflicts and challenges of Public universities and private higher institution rooted form the decision making in higher education. The interrogation is who makes decision and what are the basis of decision making. The different in the hierarchy of the decision makers seems to be the spring of challenges and conflicts. The participant 8, asserted that the process of the approval in public considered difficult than the private. She explains in (DU:17) that:

The hierarchy causes challenges, there are many layers, the structure creates a somewhat bureaucratic, approvals must pass on more than one official, but it is easier than the Public sector, but I see that there are a lot of approvals we do not need, approvals have no reason (P8, DU:17).

Participant 1 also agreed with participant 9 on the differences in decision making in both public and private universities. Participant 1 elaborated that in public universities, they need to abide by the system of the public university and follow the supreme decision. Therefore, none of the staff will do the excess job in his or her position compared to the private universities. Besides, in public universities, there are some guidelines that every leader has to follow. The state government articulates those instructions synonymously the protocols. Leaders have to abide by those rules for the sake of sustaining their position otherwise there is a chance that their leadership positions would be relinquished. She revealed in (DU:17) that:

I think that they were natural challenges that do not turn into crises and are managed smoothly and quietly. For instance, in a kind of administrative positions, the guide of the department, it came to our attention that there is a point of big difference, so that we need to abide by the state system in the public universities, so as not to

do any excess, and it must not be considered the termination of this position. However, they must consider the termination of the mandate because they are considered supreme decisions (P1, DU:17).

Jealousy is another type of conflict experienced in both public and private universities. And this can be junior personnel going to head of institution or department to complain about their immediate head over several things that don't really have basis. It could be because they had wanted to get the position themselves.

In the private sector some of the conflicts that were mentioned included conflict of interest, if people have different objectives and goals then conflict is inevitable. They may have different suggestions and ideas about different things and how things should be handled, if not handled well, it can cause conflict. Another conflict that was described is if people are not clear on what their roles are in the organisation or in the institution. If there are people who are not willing to cooperate with others, then they will differ and there will be conflict.

Also, in the public sector there were some conflicts that were mentioned that didn't come up in the interviews with female leaders from the private sector. Misuse of authority can cause conflict, the fact that this mostly happens with the females in power was also brought up,

female, sometimes they feel that they want to dominate and it's not like the men, they don't have the authority, but they want to take it from you. They want to stop you and, in a point, and to feel that you're under their authority. (P3, DU:4)

There are also leaders who use their power to override other leaders under them and not give them a chance to make decisions and handle situations in their dockets.

So, female leaders must follow the “supreme decision”. They are obligated to maintain certain procedures even after achieving the required level of experience. These mandates are absent in the private universities.

Overall, women’s merit and potentials need to be valued. Their qualification should be recognized. Women should be treated fairly in every sector to reach as prosperous and promising society.

The future is promising, and woman are trying to find their way out to be the part of this wonderful new modern Saudi Society. (P1, DU:30)

Political initiatives would be more effective in terms of reducing conflicts and challenges while enhancing women empowerment. Women need to be empowered with proper positions and responsibilities. Young generation should be given priority, power and position in the important institutes such as Shura Council, National Centre for Dialogue and in the Ministries.

I think we (authorities) need more political decrees for empowering women. (P1, DU:28)

I think the government will break such barriers soon since a woman was appointed as a deputy for the minister of education, and as the case with the Council of *Shura* where 20 women are participating in that Council in the different committees and in making the decisions very major and the important decisions. (P1, DU:21)

Furthermore, she made the distinction that female academic leaders in private universities had comparatively less freedom in the decision related to the University budget. On the other hand, there are certain benefits that female academic leaders can avail in the private sectors such as free transport.

In the private sector, they do not have a free hand for budgeting. But I think they have some benefits. For example, they give them things like a car with a driver. (P9, DU:17)

She further highlighted that there are some conflicts that are faced in both private and public sectors when it comes to education. Male dominated decision-making roles is one of the conflicts faced by women leaders in the education sector. Women are not given a chance to make decisions, they have to go to men to decide for them what steps should be taken or what should be done in any scenario,

limited female presentation in the decision and policy-making committee, and meetings, especially decision making, and policymaking (P9, DU:1).

In public universities, there are instances where women are looked down upon even by fellow women in power. They are not seen as capable and able to handle roles of higher ranks.

when I came, she (post-college) is demining me, she said that I am so young, and cannot run the faculty, because I am always concentrating on my students. (P9, DU:2).

For private sector, one of the participants expressed her personal conflict when it comes to not having her family with her. Every decision she made was based on where her family is and this influenced everything she did, from where she went to school and where she works.

This is why I struggle myself that I can break the wall of my family and leave my home and my husband and daughter and go to what I aspire to find other university very close and adapted to that situation and tried to find the right thing and God gave me the best choice Alhamdulillah's. (P5, DU:2)

In both universities, there's the issue of limited authority. Women are not given authority to make any decisions or do some things that is in the scope of their roles. They have to seek help from their male counterparts to enable them to move forward with their responsibilities.

When you need something, you have to get approval from the dean or the man who has the authority and position. He hinders your work completely and, in some cases, you wait to approve your application. (P3, DU:14)

The decision-making role is dominated by men. Pressure is another challenge faced by females in both sectors, the leadership roles can be overwhelming and as a result put pressure on the women. Participant 7, detailed that:

A very difficult challenge, great pressure, and I am having difficulties in meeting the challenges, because I need powers. (P7, DU:13)

In the public sector, there are challenges with the budget allocated to the women section of the school. The male section has to donate to them sometimes and this is not guaranteed either. Participant 9 asserted that:

If you want anything you have to ask the male, and they have to donate for us ... you have to beg, and if they can give it to you, you will have to ask and ask till they give you the amount you need, sometimes they do not give you (P9, DU:1).

To Sum up, conflicts and challenges are different from public to private organisations as the above discussion. Moreover, decision making, and work-loading are the most various part between the two sectors as shown in the next section.

4.7.2 Work-Loading in Public and Private University

There are very few women in the public and private universities working as faculty and even in leadership roles meaning women are not empowered enough to join these roles and positions.

There are no binding laws that govern the administration of the universities. Hence the leader gets to say what happens and what doesn't depend on his beliefs. Also, there are no clear-cut responsibilities given to one when they join the institution.

Generally, Participants were with various opinion about the differences in the conflicts and challenges experienced by Saudi Arabia women in academic leadership in both private and public universities. According to the participants, some

participant belief that there are differences while some rejected the fact of discrepancies existing in both sectors of academic institutions.

Another differences between the private and public universities is considered as the hours of working and work loading. Participant 3 argued that the workload in the tasks to accomplished in the private university are more that the public universities. She said in (DU:17) that:

I didn't work in private sections or private universities, but my friends told me that the duties are much more than the duties on public universities. And the time, the working hours in private universities is more than the working hours in public universities (P3, DU:17)

However, the participant 10, experienced differently from participant 3, she said the work loading in private universities is lesser compared to the public universities. She asserted in (DU:7) that:

Yes, I think it is different, less responsibilities and work in the private universities due to the few numbers of students and workers. (P10, DU: 7)

Moreover participant 8 buttressed the idea stated that they work as a team in the private universities which created the conducive environment to work and it is diverse from the public universities. She stated that in (DU:7) that:

There is a big difference between the public and private universities, the private are better because they have more comfortable environment. Not only in my university but also most of the private organisations you feel that there is a pleasant environment. The capacity of the university can also affect. Also, in private organisations we work as a team together, male and female; we do workshops and so on so that all can dissolve the boundaries, not like public universities (P8, DU:7).

But challenges differ in the public and private universities mostly because of the types of job. According to this participant, time management is a big issue in the public universities.

Honestly, because of the type of work when I was in a public university in the research I used to stay in the lab until midnight. (P2, DU:22)

In spite of the dissimilarities mentioned in the above discussions, participant 5 affirmed that there are no differences between private and public universities. She said that some of her colleagues that are working the public universities were able to excel in the career. She asserted her view in (DU:17) that:

No as many of my colleagues have reached higher positions in some public universities and I am proud of them and women are the ones that pulls the other woman, and many I notice them trying to do a job succession and this is their tender and I am the same, there is functional cooperation, and everyone has a look for the new generation must take his situation and find cooperation between us, and we have plans towards the generation and empowerment of the new (P5, DU:17)

However, participant 9 felt that women in public sector universities could make more of a difference as the number of students there far exceeded those in private universities.

Student number in private universities is small, comparing to us, if you see the impact of your work on the students and society is greater than the private sector impact. (P9, DU:17)

Again, in public institutions there's normally constraints when it comes to budgeting especially in the female sectors unlike the male sectors. The women have to beg the men sector for money, and this is not easily availed to them.

If you want anything you have to ask the male, and they have to donate for us ... you have to beg, and if they can give it to you, you will have to ask and ask till the give you the amount you need, sometimes they do not give you. (P9, DU:1)

Other conflict present in the public sector is bureaucracy and also there's lack of appreciation, one is not awarded whatever it is that they deserve after completing a given task. Some of the conflicts that were mentioned that occur in the private sector

include competition. There's a lot of competition among colleagues and everyone is looking out for themselves and in some instances even ready to sabotage others in order to get ahead,

I was participating in a conference and in Boston and when I've noticed when I came back, I found my research work thrown in the garbage. So, because they didn't want to show that I'm doing better work than them." This is what I've noticed in terms of peers." (P2, DU:1).

Also, some conflicts come about because some people are not mature enough to treat disagreements at work professionally and not turn it into a personal thing. Participants from the public sector had conflicts like the availability of many responsibilities that they have to attend to but have limited authorities, so they have to go through the men, and this doesn't make it easier. There are also those that struggle with self-worth, the fact that they cannot prove that they deserve to have the leadership role that they have. Not only do they have the desire to prove it to others but to themselves as well. For some leaders they struggle with the thought of losing their leadership positions, especially after their terms expire. This is because they have gotten used to being in a position where they are given special attention and wouldn't want to go back to being ordinary.

When you go to a new place you have more advantages...you find yourself in a special place and a special celebration, and if you are convinced that this celebration for you personally will tire after the end of this post, you will return with other people and return to the second row...it will be a very large conflict and will be very difficult, in order to accept your new situation. (P3, DU:2)

Finances is another challenge these women face both in private and public universities. They complained that the pay is low, and they don't get the benefits they deserve.

Women leaders have a lot of assignments despite the fact that the economic return is not much and doesn't deserve to be strived for and the assignments entrusted to the leader and the deanery allowance doesn't deserve the fatigue that accompanies it. (P4, DU:11)

On the other hand, this participant did not find any significant difference in the nature of the conflict in public and private universities. In term of its nature conflict is indifferent in public and private universities.

I was in a public university but now I'm in a private university, what can I see It's the same. (P2, DU:7)

Even in term of personal conflict, women leaders are facing similar issues in both paradigms.

Honestly, I didn't see any difference. (P2, DU:7)

To conclude, work loading differs from public and private universities as shown in the above discussion.

4.8 Dose Challenges Lead to Conflicts?

The constraint of time limits them to perform academic activities specially research and publication. They are facing difficulties to prepare themselves for promotion when it linked with academic excellence. Thus, they are seemingly lagged behind. In this case, excessive administrative tasks deem burdensome to them. Most importantly, when challenges turn into conflicts, they escalate crisis and sometimes, they go out of control.

Sometimes if they are not well run by the leader, conflicts escalate and turn to be serious crisis and go out of control. (P1, DU:18)

According to this participant, conflicts do not sprout forth from challenges. It occurs due to leaders' personality. Some people might be critical and easily get into conflict. In such case, other factors can be held responsible.

No, I think the conflicts how I see it, it is based on the personality of the people”. You cannot change people. You cannot change their personality and also the experience as much as you gain experience, you notice that personal issues are, or conflicts are not only personal issues. So, I feel it's more related not to challenges as much as it's the experience. And they could be because of the personality. How you've been raised. (P2, DU:18)

But sometimes challenges become a matter of enjoyment. When she considers these as her responsibilities when expected results came out, she feels joy. Even the little moment with her family give her limitless pleasure. She feels that she just needs to more cautious about time management. But she is quite affirmative that challenges lead to conflicts. Multiple challenges might put a leader in a complex situation of job performance. It becomes difficult for her to define the duties as well as execute the decision. Sometimes, she has to do something which might be contrasting to her belief.

When you have a lot of challenges you may find yourself in a complex situation with others; with the contrast between what you do and what you believe to do. (P3, DU:18)

Overall, she was very affirmative about the relationship between challenges and conflict. She strongly stated that the existing challenges lead women leaders to conflicts.

I think yes, as long as we face challenges, we will also face conflicts Because they are related to each other. (P4, DU:18)

Participant 5 also buttress the same points through her ambition towards the leaderships career in academic field. She stated that:

No, I do not choose conflict but I choose ambition, and this is my view of the topic in general competition, and I respect and appreciate and compete in anything within this framework and I aspire to reach the leadership roles not for self but for the service of the community and home and family and this was the basic tender in the nature of my work and follow my roles to the leadership frankly. (P5, DU:18)

The challenges faced can then lead to conflict because when a woman leader faces challenges, it in turn affects their attitude and mood and this can lead to having conflict with colleagues.

Yes, when I faced challenges, it is for sure related and effected my personality which can lead to get some conflicts in my work life.
(P6, DU:18)

From the above discussion, it can be seen that in most cases challenges can lead to conflicts. There are differences between public and private universities in terms of their characteristics. Leaders have to play different roles following organizational disciplines, rules and protocols. In public universities the absence of assessment-reporting causes conflict. In this case, the weak procedural guideline works like a conflict causing agent.

“The absence of an annual assessment is one of the many causes of conflicts at work. The absence of procedural guidelines plays very important roles in this case.”

On the other side, the job in public universities is more secured but private universities are well equipped and caring to employees. Besides, in public universities, there are some guidelines that every leader has to follow. Those instructions synonymously the protocols are articulated by the state government. Leaders have to abide by those rules for the sake of sustaining their position otherwise there is a chance that their leadership positions would be relinquished.

“For instance, in a kind of administrative positions, the guide of the department, it came to our attention that there is a point of big difference, so that we need to abide by the state system in the public universities, so as not to do any excess, and it must not be considered the termination of this position.” So, female leaders must follow the –supreme decision”. They are obligated to maintain certain procedures even after

achieving the required level of experience. These mandate is absent in the private universities.

4.9 Summary

The drive of this chapter was to scrutinise and report the results gathered from the participants' responses. Based on the responses from the participants, it could be summarized that Saudi women leaders in the higher education are frequently experiencing assaulted conflicts and challenges mostly with their male counterparts rather than female colleagues. There are several reasons of conflicts that can be extracted from the above interviews. The existing social norm which is seemingly unsupportive to women leaders. Saudi society prefers men's representation in the top management. Organisational structure deems not well suited to women as well. That is why women leaders find difficulties to perform their duties.

Leadership quality is one of the crucial matters in this instance. Women leaders sometimes lack necessary skills and qualities to perform their duties. They might fail to motivate their subordinates. However, the nature of conflicts in public and private universities is almost similar. The different regulation and organisational policies sometimes associate different dimensions in conflicts and challenges only. Organisational structure is not supportive enough for female leaders anywhere whether in public or private universities. They are still underrepresented and depending on men's decision since men are mostly ascended in the highest positions in both types of universities. Women are not equally empowered. In this regard Islamic principles deem not raising the main barriers. But the deliberate application of some religious rules goes against women's rights such as gender segregation. Though leadership positions increase women's responsibilities, but the extended incentives and allowance help them to contribute to the household income. Women

are getting certain values and priorities as well. The perceptions of society and family are being changed gradually. Women are making their own places where they can freely express themselves. Therefore, the coming chapter is the last chapter which will summarize and discusses the findings.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study investigates the conflicts and challenges that were encountered by the women leaders in the higher education sector in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study further explored the impacts of the religious features as well as the empowerment on the conflicts and challenges faced by the women in Saudi Arabia. This chapter summarises this study by delivering summary and discussion of the findings, concluding remarks as well as providing suggestions for further research. The study briefly presents the key points of the findings obtained from the 10 participants. Then, it sheds light on the implications of this research. It narrates the similarities and dissimilarities with other contemporary researches. It also demonstrates the practical and theoretical values of this study. In the end, it offers pieces of suggestions to the future researchers outlining the potential areas that are still undressed and needed to be empirically scrutinized. Thus, this chapter draws the ending line of this study.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This chapter discusses the findings obtained in the current study. Based on the obtained themes in the current study, the findings from this analysis indicated that the women in the higher education leadership were not proficient enough due to their personal conflicts that associated to inadequate of self-assurance, which dominates women's leadership. Occasionally, those personal conflicts prime their physiological, psychological and intellectual dismay in playing their managerial duties. The

participants of this study avowed that women leadership conflict is one of the most critical issues in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia.

Adverse social condition and family restriction are associated with the personal problems of the women leaders to reach organisational superior position. Therefore, family income, marital status and number of children exert significant negative impacts on the probability of joining in the labour force of the Saudi women. Women who are particularly living in the traditional social environment obliged to carry out family responsibilities, such as raising children, taking care of husband and other family members while doing the household chores.

Women educators who are also carrying out responsibilities in the management are enormously facing multiple challenges during performing their duties. These obstacles suppress their progress as well as organisational development. In the end, women leaders get into assorted conflicts. These conflicts negatively impact not only on women's careers but also the government's policy implementation for women empowerment. Overall, such leadership conflicts decelerate the process of building a knowledge-based economy. A crux of the overall findings of this study is presented hereunder. The researcher has summarized the findings of this study with guideline of the research questions of the study

5.2.1 Current Scenario of Conflicts Experienced by Female Leaders in Saudi Arabia Higher Education

Women leaders in higher education experience conflict with their peers and counterparts. Leadership conflict occurs randomly in a natural way. It seems a common phenomenon in the day to day lives of the educators specially who are engaged in the higher management. Sometimes the conflict goes too extreme to tolerate, and that always debuts some unexpected negative externalities. The

participants further elucidated that women leaders encounter major conflicts with their male counterparts. This study surfaced several reasons of conflicts. Instantly, the man-centred management structure, unevenly distributed authoritative power, lack of government's policy implementation, rigid interpretation and purposive usages of Islamic principles, long prevailing gender discrimination, overly exposed masculinity, women's incompetency of playing leadership roles and unsupportive sociocultural environment are responsible for creating as well as catalysing women leadership conflict. Mostly, men hold the topmost positions and women are appointed as their subordinates. Organisational authoritative power is irrationally distributed. Men are outweighed as well as outnumbered women in term of making decision and implementation. Thus, women are legged behind and underrepresented in management. Consequently, they fail to establish their opinion on organisational decision making. Sometimes they have to remain unvoiced and therefore, unheard.

Gender segregation is a strong barrier to the progress of women leadership and empowerment. There is a huge gap in understanding between male and female in Saudi society. Since men and women are not permitted to work together in the public domain they cannot equally contribute to the job. Hence, a unified plan, mutual performance and synergy remain absent in their leadership practice. This absence of mutuality between men and women creates a gap in understanding. Thus, gender segregation passively affects women leadership and their progress.

The government of Saudi Arabia has recently changed policy with the view to materialize Vision 2030. Notably, Vision 2030 is an outline of developing a knowledge-based economy ensuring the rational participation of men and women in economic activities. But the implementation of that policy sometimes fails due to the

unchanged organisational structure. Therefore, women are deprived of their due rights.

From the Islamic perspective: though Islam extends specific and special values to women, men's traditional outlooks and the imposition of inflexibly interpreted Islamic principles stand against women. In the same vein, gender discrimination and overly domination of men held responsible for devaluing women's voice in management. These factors bring dissatisfaction and discordance to women leaders and create conflicts.

On the other sides, women's unskillfulness, lack of experience, and incapacity to play the roles of leadership are sometimes responsible for the conflict. When women leaders fail to manage the team, or imprudently make the decision, or extravagantly demonstrate executive power subordinates might get irritated and go against leaders. Consequently, it might produce conflicts.

The sociocultural structure of Saudi Arabia is not completely ready to accept women as leaders. Ordinary people still believe that men are superior to women in leadership. That is why men are by right the household heads and decision makers. They consider women to be responsible for making home and taking care of family members. Because of this traditional view, men cannot accept women in the leadership position. Though much reformation has been taken place the traditional belief and deep-rooted cultural norm are still alive in the social veins. Therefore, it seems difficult to fully implement the newly formed laws. Therefore, conflicts cannot be washed away from the organisational landscape.

5.2.2 Current Scenario of Challenge Experienced by Female Leaders in Saudi Arabia Higher Education

Most of the respondents reported time management is the most challenging issue in their professional life. They experience a lack of time due to the excessive job burden and illustrated managerial responsibilities. Hence, they cannot make a balance between their social and family lives. Thus, they and their family members are reportedly deprived of joy and happiness. Nevertheless, women have more parental duties than men. They need to take care of their houses and family members. Due to being failed the time management they find themselves unsuccessful either in family lives or in professional duties.

Another challenge is participation in the decision-making process. Women are not always allowed to take part in the executive meeting with men. They are not well accepted in decision-making. Men sometimes do not accept women's opinions even they are right. Mostly, they need to wait for men's consent to execute their decision and they cannot move forward in their own wills. Women leaders have to face all these challenges in the organisational context due to four major reasons: 1) traditional management infrastructure; 2) unsynchronized with the new policies; 3) people's mind-set and 4) women's limitations. All universities have not made proper changes in the management system to accommodate women leaders. Which is why men are still outnumbered and holding the topmost positions. All respondents highlighted that their job allocation is not rational. Organisations do not consider women's family responsibilities. That hints that universities have not made proper change their management structure to be women-friendly. Besides, men are treating women as inferiors. They think women are not capable enough to lead. At the end,

women have their own limitations that appear to be very challenging to play leadership roles. They sometimes lack enough experiences and proper skills.

On the other hand, the recruiting process is unfair and irrational. Men-centred organisational structure gives women fewer opportunities to be in the leadership position even if they possess proper qualification. It is somewhat difficult for them to prove themselves as capable and competent because of the lack of opportunities.

5.2.3 Influence of Islamic Rules on Conflicts and Challenges

None of the respondents gave any indication that Islam contributes negatively to women leadership by instigating conflicts and challenges. But all of them highlighted that some of the rules are tenaciously interpreted and purposely used with the view to be dominating women. Policies such as gender segregation, the prohibition on women in the public place, preventing women from participating meeting with male administrators, the prohibition on travelling alone and so on have been practised to the detriment of women. According to the respondents, these should not be the timely explanation of Islamic principles. Saudi women are facing a lot of challenges due to the aforesaid reasons. But the true Islamic teaching is very supportive to women empowerment. In this regard, they argued that Islam has given women enough liberty and opportunities therefore, women should have rights to be leaders and to play their responsibilities independently. Besides, job preference should be their own decision. A few respondents also exemplified the nature of women's empowerment in the Prophetic time. All of them unanimously opined that Islam has given equitable rights to women and suggested women preserve themselves while working in the public place or collaborate with men.

5.2.4 Differences of Conflicts and Challenges in Public and Private Universities

The nature of the conflict was reportedly similar in public and private universities. According to the respondents, men's views towards women remain the same whether in public and private universities. Their indifferent attitude creates similar challenges in both places. But in private universities, women are facing more challenges in terms of time and job. They have more duties to perform than in public universities. Therefore, it seems more difficult for them to preserve time for their personal and family lives. Further, the Participants in private universities reported that they need to carry out a lot of responsibilities. The higher the workload the more the challenges.

On the other hand, leaders in public universities mentioned about the protocols and government interventions in the management. A leader must follow the protocol regardless the gender identity. Since jobs in public universities are more secured, some leaders tend to be reluctant to perform their duties. Therefore, it becomes difficult for the subordinates to accomplish their goals.

5.2.5 Personal Challenges and Conflicts

The matters of prioritization sometimes cause personal challenges. Professional women face uneven situations to define if they should give importance to family or job. Besides, according to the social norm, Saudi women are somewhat obliged to give priority to their families. They need to take care of their husbands and children while doing household chores. Women who are engaged with the professional career need to carry out their tasks as well as family responsibilities. Their lives become more complex and burdensome when they meet unfavourable job environment and inadequate family support. They encounter a dilemmatic situation.

They find difficulties to balance work and family life. They find themselves in an uncomfortable situation and being indecisive to pursue their responsibilities. Consequently, they might fail to convince themselves which life to give more priority. Physical and psychological issues affect women leadership. Women sometimes cannot cope with the stress. It is linked to their physio-psychological construct. Besides, lack of experience and technical knowledge also prevents them from carrying out leadership duties properly. Besides, leadership quality is one of the most important issues. All female leaders do not possess the appropriate leadership style. Some of them cannot manage the team well. Sometimes they become self-oriented or authoritative or autocratic. Hence, subordinates disobey or unfollow them.

5.2.6 Organisational Challenges and Conflicts

The overall findings suggest that even the organisational structures, as well as management system, have been improved because of numerous initiatives taken by the government but to some points, it is unchanged and incoherent with the government's policy of women empowerment. Therefore, the organisation cannot properly accommodate women leaders. According to the respondents, since the organisational structure is not supportive enough to women leadership there should always be conflicts with their counterparts. Because women need different workplace for maintaining their privacy and different time schedules to balance their work and life. Besides, the task should be allocated based on their skills, abilities, and qualification. Reportedly, the recruitment process does not always comply with the constitutional rules. It is mostly men-centred and sometimes, unjustly practised. Hence, women leaders are not being promoted accordingly. Organisations are still

bearing a lot of weakness that contradicts the adoption of women's leadership in the organisational context.

There is a gap in power distribution between male and female administrators. Male holds superior power. Male are mostly outranked female in the administrative hierarchical level. Most of the superior positions are preoccupied with men. So, women are ultimately deprived of the superior position even they deserve it. Lack of transparency in the organisational culture. Women are not getting proper information. Women's physical construct, family issues psychological issue also affects the organisation. Sometimes women do not fit the position because of the feminine issues. Women cannot cope with the organisational culture and norm due to their own personal problems. For instance, job segmentation, equal access to information, equal opportunities are most notable in this regard. In Saudi Arabia jobs sectors for women are already defined and segmented. Consequently, unskilled and unqualified women sometimes get a leadership position and fail to accomplish their duties. As a result, dissatisfaction raises among colleagues. This discontentment transforms into conflicts.

5.2.7 Socio-cultural Challenges

Undoubtedly, Saudi society is progressing. Family members are somewhat liberal and generous in terms of women empowerment and leadership. Society is also to some extent showing tolerance to accept women in the public sphere. But it seems society and family are not fully ready to accept women as leaders. The male sometimes cannot accept women to work as leaders. Because of the long-prevailing social norm, some men cannot accept another women's leadership. They firmly believe that man is only designated for leadership. Besides, some women are not only the admirers of the patriarchal social system but also the strong opponents of

women leadership. They are culturally inclined and obedient to man's leadership. This group of people somehow create barriers for women leaders. Therefore, women leaders get less support and thus, their working lives become more challenging.

5.2.8 Economic Challenges

The current economic condition of Saudi Arabia negatively affects women leadership. Because of national economic deflation universities sometimes get less budget than necessary. This budget crunch decreases the amount of allowance. Nevertheless, most of the respondents expressed satisfaction with their financial status. Because of being in the administrative position, they make additional income which enriches their household economic condition. They thus bring economic solvency or nourishment to their families. These findings suggest that women leaders in Saudi barely encounter economic challenges while playing leadership roles. Rather they enjoy certain privileges and economic benefits.

5.2.9 Family Issues

Lack of power in the family is the main barriers to women. Women in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to make the decision, especially regarding their career and job. They need to wait for the consent of their male guardians. This norm slows down their activities and liberties. They sometimes are compelled to accept such jobs that they are not good at to perform. However, according to some respondents, family members' outlooks are broadening day by day. Nowadays, family members are beginning to be less restrictive with regard to what their female members are allowed to do. Assumingly, this change has come due to the increase in educated people. In the last decades, Saudi society has observed significant improvement in education. Mass-education has brought enlighten in the society as well as family.

Consequently, family issues are being gradually resolved and women are getting more support from the family member. Thus, they are progressing in leadership.

5.3 The Flow Diagram of Female Leadership Conflicts and Challenges in Saudi Arabia

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher proposed the flow diagram of leadership conflicts and challenges encountered by the women in Saudi Arabia higher education. The Figure 5.1 below illustrated the Flow diagram:

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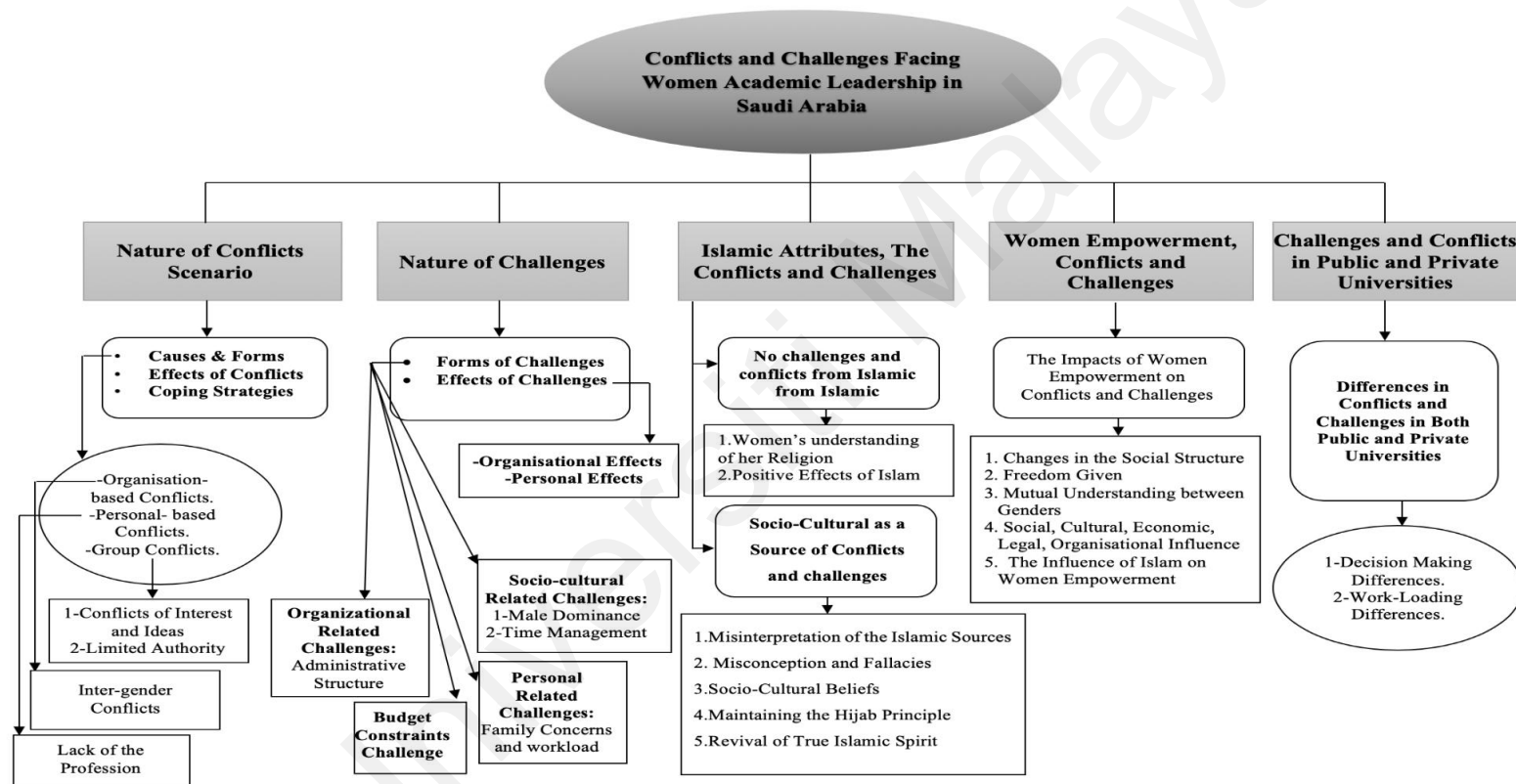


Figure 5.1 Flow Diagram of Leadership Conflicts and Challenges Encountered by The Women in Saudi Arabia Higher Education

In the Figure 5.1 above, it can be summarized that Saudi women generally experience four sorts of conflicts while they are pursuing their leadership role in the public and private universities in Saudi Arabia, and the coping strategy. Their causes of conflicts are organisational, personal, group conflicts. They also faced challenges during pursuing career in the higher education as well as in their daily life and the effect of that challenges. Challenges can categorise as: socio-cultural related challenges, budget constraints challenges, organizational related challenges, and finally personal related challenges. Thus, Saudi women usually face different types of barriers due to institutional policy and culture. For instance, lack of coordination between the governmental departments, proper law for women's right protection, lack of policies and unfavourable socio-culture. The Islamic attributes emphasised that Saudi female leaders are affected by socio-cultural norms. Furthermore, the current empowerment movements are in the constructively inspire the women development in the context of Saudi Arabia. Lastly, differences conflicts and challenges between the public and private universities are clear in: decision making, and work-loading.

5.4 Discussion of The Findings

5.4.1 The Scenario of conflicts and challenges of female leadership in Saudi Arabia

The results of the current study elucidated several scenarios of the conflicts and challenges of the women leadership in Saudi Arabia which were in line with the previous studies that were carried out on women leadership conflicts and challenges in the same context. But to greater extent findings of this study are dissimilar and unique. It is noteworthy; there are a number of studies carried out on women empowerment and leadership in Saudi Arabia in various fields, but more works had

been done focusing on the business sector. Only a few studies were carried out on Higher education. For instance, Al-Rawaf and Simmons (1991) pioneered research on women leadership in education. They highlighted various aspects of women's education, and ultimately questioned the conservative attitudes and the belief that women's natural place is in the home, which was preventing women's 'progress in Saudi Arabia. This belief is also compounded by a number of restrictions. This conservative attitude is not because of Islam *per-se* but because of tradition.

In 1999s Al-Orabi identified Saudi women's intention to join the workforce. He also depicted their attitude toward professionalism. He gave hints of the challenges and barriers that Saudi women were facing in society. Education, marital status, family income, women's human capital, wage rate and children were pointed out as the main factors affecting women to attend the professional life (Al-Orabi, 1999). Le Renard (2008) had shaded light on the specific barriers that Saudi women were facing because of gender segregation. This author also underscored some bright sides to this policy. For instance, gender segregation offers women a different sphere of development where they can enhance their career maintain sociocultural norm. By this way, women have been designated as a distinct category for which a particular discourse has been developed. This policy has also dissolved many social problems. Women now have an autonomous space for themselves which is increasingly widened and diversified for female specialization. Though women segregation is linked to "tradition and custom" (*adat wa taqalid*) the author argued referring several academic works that previously a large number of women were engaged in income-generating activities. For example, Bedouin women were crafting or breeding camels and sheep. Once men's salaries were enough to provide for the family needs women participation in the job were declined or disappeared (Le Renard, 2008). Elamin and

Omair (2010) conducted a study on male's attitude towards working women. They brought into light the real scenario of discrimination that Saudi women used to encounter in their job. They found Saudi males exhibiting traditional attitude towards working women. But educated males reportedly were less traditional (Elamin & Omaid, 2010).

The result of the study conducted by Al-Munajjed (2010) on a nation-wide survey to determine women's participation in the workforce and the major challenges they face in their workplace was in line with current study. She determined educational constraints that imply a lack of high quality and industry-oriented education. Education for Saudi women is mostly for religiosity, being a good wife and mother, midwifery, nursing etc. Women education is not focused on skill development, analytical, problem solving, communication skill enhancement, creativity enhancement. They are deprived of the knowledge of science and technology, math, computer literacy. They also face occupational constraints. Men are privileged with greater opportunities than women. There are a few decision-making positions available for women. And the existing organisational structure is too weak to accommodate women in the management. Women are facing social problems. The cultural and customs of Saudi do not fully support women to be in a higher position (Al-Munajjed, 2010).

Saudi people cherish high value to the family and tradition. They fear to allow women in the public sphere may tarnish/ erode family values. Besides, women have stigma to work in a mixed gender environment. She underscored legal constraints mentioning that the existing laws and regulation do not explicitly discriminate against women. But out of 245 labour regulation articles only 12 related to women's concern those are about childcare, breastfeeding and sick leave. She also

found the *qiwama* issue and businesswomen must employ male representative to manage their business (Al-Munajjed, 2010).

Al-Ahmadi (2011) did a study on the challenges that women leaders were facing problems in organisational management. Her findings suggest that due to high enrolment in education, greater employment opportunities, and illustrated public life derive women to participate in the senior management. But women leaders are facing adverse realities and challenges. She specified the challenges as structural challenges, lack of resources and lack of empowerment, cultural and personal challenges. But his study was on the women leadership. Women leaders from different industrial sectors were selected as respondents (Al-Ahmadi, 2011).

Syed (2011) identified the characteristics of women entrepreneurship their involvement in business and the barriers they men. He found that the main barriers in gender-specific obstacles, inefficient regulation and policy, strict social rules, reliance on the male guardians etc (Syed, 2011b). Alselaimei (2012) carried out a research on women's participation in the workforce and the barriers they met. She conducted the study on the women who were carrying out managerial duties. Her findings indicated that female managers are facing five barriers such as i) different attitudes, ii) female participation in the management is considered as a sensitive issue, iii) impacts of the West, iv) the religion Islam, and v) responsibilities to the family (Alselaimei, 2012). Danish and Smith (2012) studied on female entrepreneurship and their challenges. The issues of empowerment and leadership are also reflected in their work. They uncovered that women leaders in business are facing social and institutional challenges (Danish & Smith, 2012).

Al-Ghamdi (2013) conducted an empirical study on King Abdul- Aziz University. She focused on the obstacles that the women educators were facing in the

public sector. She highlighted cultural and personal obstacles preventing women from assuming leadership positions in the public sector, especially in higher education. She further explained that religion does not discourage women from holding senior management positions. Nowadays, family members in Saudi to some extent are encouraging women to be in the higher management position. But personal problem is the main barrier that discourages women to be leaders. Saudi women lack courage and strong desire to reach a higher position. But this study did not cover other aspects such as the causes of conflict and their natures. Besides it only focused on the public university surveying one university (Al-Ghamdi, 2013). Thompson (2015) focused on thirty Saudi women leaders to the *Majlis al-Shura* (consultative council) and discussed on women leadership, its progress, prospects as well as barriers, and challenges. As barriers he underscored three responsible sources such as family, society and state. As challenges he outlined work-life balancing, responsibility for the family, lack of proper rules and regulations (Thompson, 2015).

Kattan, Heredero, Botella, and Margalina (2016) delineated the factors affecting successful women leaders in Saudi Arabia. They chalked out the factors such as organisational culture, social culture, education, and society are affecting women's leadership (Kattan et al., 2016).

Abalkhail and Allan (2016) published a few research articles on women leadership in Saudi Arabia as well as in the Gulf States. They casted light on the career development and leadership of Saudi women. They indicated that gender segregation, job section specialization (health, education and social work), and education (less presence in science and engineering). They found challenges in recruitment and selection, discriminatory practices, lack of professional development. In most Saudi Universities, the administration is run by men with long

working experiences. Despite having the qualification, higher degree, and long experience women are not always invited to higher management in the University. Women are deprived based on the religious principle, *Al-qiwama* (Al-Qur'an 4:34). Based on this principle men are given the honour of being the leader while women are ignored (Abalkhail & Allan, 2016).

Al-Asfour et al. (2017) scrutinized Saudi women's challenges in career management. The major challenges they face are social, organisational, structural and attitudinal (personal). Besides, lack of mobility, gender stereotypes, gender discrimination in the workplace, limited opportunities for career development, burdensome workload, family and work balance, gender-based challenges also limit them to go forward (Al-Asfour et al., 2017).

Hodges (2017) conducted comprehensive research on women leadership and empowerment. She took interviewed the professional women in order to explore their experiences, conflicts, barriers and inspiration. The conflicts and barriers women are facing due to under-representation in the workplace. They specified social religious cultural and organisational factors are responsible for the slowness of women empowerment. Saudi society still considers women weak and incapable of handling the tasks of representation. Religious norm obligates women to be under the guardianship of men. In this regard, strict *Wahhabi* teaching and turning religious principles as the nationalist ideology; confining women's education to certain areas; restricting travelling freedom; driving rights (though this issue has recently been resolved) are being controlled in the name of religion (Hodges, 2017).

The work of Abalkhail (2017) is concentrated on women leadership in higher education. This study was carried out on the women managers working in two public universities. She shed light on challenges in leadership position and the factors

support to women advancement. Her findings disclosed that women leaders in higher education were facing assorted challenges such as recruitment and selection, gender segregation, lack of professional development and discriminatory practices. They were underrepresented in the administrative position. In this regard, he found sociocultural issues were responsible (Abalkhail, 2017).

5.4.2 Female Leadership and Empowerment in Saudi Arabia

The findings of this research concluded that women empowerment will greatly contribute the conflicts and challenges reduction in academic sectors. The circumstances behind are that when women are supported in the society, they will be partaking in the problem solving and contributing to the development of the society. This is in line with (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) conducted a comparative study among the women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia and Sweden. They looked into the issues of women empowerment and freedom. The findings suggest that the institutional structures are associated with collective freedom. They also pointed out that entrepreneurship worked as a vehicle for institutional change, but entrepreneur's ability and empowerment can reach individual to the desired objectives.

Due to women playing increasingly significant roles in higher education in the areas of leadership and administration, it is essential to understand the history and concepts of administrative empowerment. According to Steward (2009), the ability to understand higher education administrators, in addition to the ways in which they operate, is vital for understanding the causes of failure or success in higher education. This section focuses on administrative empowerment in higher education by emphasising the historical and developmental aspects of administrative empowerment: the concepts, the importance, and the benefits of administrative empowerment for academic female leaders and higher education institutions.

Additionally, administrative empowerment models, theories, dimensions, requirements, and barriers will be provided.

Empowering individuals to do their work in a practical environment that allows them to feel confident and secure and giving them the opportunity to work freely and independently it is one of the important strategies to reach a shared vision. Indeed, this requires the reframing of the system of universities to enable the application of women's empowerment strategy (Al-Munajjed 2010).

Besides, impacts of the Western culture (some social thinkers and religious authorities believe that Saudi women may tarnish the social and traditional norm if they follow the Western culture), Islamic religious principles (religious philosophy such as *Al-qiwama*), *Wahhabism* and specific responsibilities to the family. Saudi women sometimes lack encouragement and aspiration to reach high position. Besides, women have a stigma to working in the public domain. Gender stereotypes, gender discrimination in the workplace, limited opportunities for career development, burdensome workload, family and work balance, gender-based challenges are challenging as well as conflict causing agents. However, this study is somewhat similar and dissimilar to the previous studies. A brief explanation is given below:

The current study found that the conservative belief has perished from Saudi society to a greater extent. Society is more liberal and has wider outlook on women. Therefore, women are getting access to education and being empowered gradually. People of Saudi are coming out from the traditional norm. The results documented by Al-Rawaf & Simmons(1991) are different than these findings (Al-Rawaf & Simmons, 1991). Findings of this study are somewhat similar to the results of Al-Orabi (1999), Saudi women are still facing trouble in balancing life and work. They

need to take care of their families while carrying out their professional activities. But there is a difference in the outputs. Reportedly women are not facing economic barriers as before. Rather, their income is enriching their household income. And thus, women are becoming economic contributors to their families (Al-Orabi, 1999).

However, most of the respondents in this study opposed the segregation policy, which is similar to the findings of Le Renard (2008), respondents of this study believe that men and women should coexist in the workplace. They further explained that women leaders need to join the executive making meeting in order to take part in the decision-making process. Besides, in research and development collaboration between men and women can bring produce better results. Further, if men and women work together there would be more collaboration and less discrimination and as a result less conflict (Le Renard, 2008). In this vein, the study shows the similar results (Elamin & Omair, 2010) . Saudi men are exhibiting discrimination to working women. Assumingly, the magnitude of discrimination is decreasing gradually over the time.

The current study shows somewhat similar findings to Al-Munajjed (2010), but it also shows some dissimilarities such as Saudi women are making rapid progress in their academic and professional lives. The organisational structure is still men dominated and men's views towards women are negative, but the situation is improving fast. The modern organisation s specifically universities are creating positing for women while giving them opportunities to join the management. But women still lack skills and experiences in the management. But they are learning and developing themselves being aided by the government as well as organisation s. Above all, Saudi people have not relinquished family values, but they are becoming

more generous to women progress and development. Thus, women are being greatly accepted in the leadership position (Al-Munajjed, 2010).

However, the findings of Alkhaled & Berglund (2018), help explain the current status of women's empowerment in the context of higher education. The prevailing rules in higher education are not supportive enough to fully empower women leaders. Besides, women administrators have somewhat lacking in their abilities that slow their empowerment too (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018).

This study is somewhat similar to Al-Ahmadi (2011), women leaders in higher education are facing structural challenges. There are some specific rules (those are reported as protocols, especially practised in public universities) that need to be followed by the leaders regardless of their gender identity. Sometimes it is difficult for women leaders to follow those rules (Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Similar problems as discovered by Syed (2011) exist in higher education. Women are being deprived due to gender discrimination and reliance on men. But the social and organisational structures are being improved (Syed, 2011b). Notably, the five barriers [i) different attitudes, ii) female participation in the management is considered as a sensitive issue, iii) impacts of the West, iv) the religion Islam, and v) responsibilities to the family.] identified by Alselaime (2012) are still prevailing in the context of higher education to a certain degree. But most of the respondents in this study denied Islamic rules are negatively affecting their leadership roles. They rather indicated that Islamic rules are supportive of women empowerment. Some rules are strictly applied purposefully, they mentioned (Alselaime, 2012).

5.4.3 Islamic Attributes and Female Leadership in Saudi Arabia

The findings of this study indicated that Islamic elements or characteristics do not impose challenges on the women in academic leadership but it encourages the women to look for their rights in contributing the society. Participants argued that the Islamic element rather supports the women development and empowerment in society. This study is similar to Al-Ghamdi (2013), in term of the influence of Islamic principles. Same as this study he also found that religious rules were not unfavourable to women leaders in higher education. But it differs in term of cultural and personal barriers. This study found that cultural and personal barriers being resolved from Saudi society (Al-Ghamdi, 2013). Findings of this study are very similar to Thompson (2015) women are facing difficulties in balancing work and life (Thompson, 2015). There are some similarities with the findings of (Abalkhail, 2016); (Abalkhail & Allan, 2016); (Abalkhail & Allan, 2015), in terms of gender segregation and job specialization sometimes demotivate women leaders while decreasing their performance. One finding is very similar to (Hodges, 2017). Men still consider that women are not strong enough to perform managerial roles. This study also found that women leaders in higher education were facing challenges due to recruitment and selection, gender segregation, lack of professional development and discriminatory practices. Which is very similar to the study conducted by (Abalkhail, 2017).

This study differs from the findings of (Mustafa & Troudi, 2019). In the avenue of higher education this study did not found the negative influence of Islamic principles.

5.5 Research Implications

This study investigated the Saudi Arabia women leadership conflicts and challenges in higher education. Besides, it uncovered the differences in nature of challenges and conflicts in the public and private universities. This study has significant implications form of implication practically and theoretically. The implications of this study are presented hereunder.

5.5.1 Practical Implications

a) Scenario of Female Leaders Conflicts Documentation in Higher Education

This study has profiled the main issues of conflicts, such as discrimination, men's negative perspective, segregation policy, improper recruitment and promotion, interference in decision making, underrepresentation of women, males' domination, organisational structure, strict religious rules etc. These findings would be helpful for the policymakers to resolve conflicts as well as make a proper environment for women. There are some personal issues of women that instigate conflicts as well. Those are lack of skills and lack of leadership qualities. Women leaders would be able to see their reflection in this study. Therefore, they might take the necessary measures to rectify the flaws. Thus, women leaders can reduce conflicts by virtue of their own personality. Besides, it discovered organisational aspects of conflicts. So, the leaders would be able to restructure the current organisational settings. Hence, this study can contribute to reduce organisational conflicts.

b) Determining the Challenges that Lead to Conflicts

This study has documented the major challenges that women leaders face while plying leadership roles. Time management, job burdens, academic duties, expressing opinions and raising voice, decision making, exclusion, new environment,

necessary skills etc. Women leaders now can take preparation to cope with the situations while the organisation can make necessary changes. Besides, the government may take further initiatives to reduce challenges for women leaders.

c) Scrutinising the Main Roles of Women's Empowerment

This study has identified the critical issues of women empowerment and leadership. For instance, personal inefficiency, family obligation, social restriction, and government rules are identified as the main issues. This study explored that women leaders might lack leadership quality. It is because of less experience, lack of training, and inappropriate positioning. Very recently women have entered into formal jobs. So, they possess low experience as well as get fewer hand on training compared to men. These lacking in experience, skills and training negatively impact on women empowerment. Most commonly, Saudi women have to give high priority to their family. In some cases, family disfavor women to go to public sphere while society does not widely accept them as the leaders. Reportedly, family and society are becoming supportive to women empowerment and leadership. In the same vein, strict Islamic rules somehow discourage women to be career oriented. It can be noted that, the concept of *Quwama* does not allow women to choose their carrier path with free consent. They need to take permission from their male guardians. Besides, Islam gives superiority to men as the leader. Saudi society thereby does not like to see women in the most superior position. On the other hand, states rules are not fully supportive of women empowerment. Because according to new policy government has introduced new rules with the view to creating and increasing women employment in higher education sector. Besides, government-prescribed new rules to accommodate them in the administrative position. But the universities (public and private) seem not fully adopted the new rules. Hence, it becomes impossible to

provide equal opportunities for women. Because, most of the respondents reported that women were not equally participating in the management. They could not attend the meeting with men. They also reported that women did not get on time promotion. They even did not have the autonomy to execute decision. Therefore, it can be assumed that women empowerment in higher education so far has not been properly flourished. The matter of hope: women are gradually becoming higher educated, well trained, skilled, and experienced; family and society are becoming more liberal day by day; Islamic principles do not strongly disfavor women leadership. Simultaneously, organisation al structure and policy formulation are progressing though they are still the barriers to women empowerment in Saudi Arabia.

d) Specifying the Persisting Issues of Women's Leadership

Though a lot of researches were conducted on women leadership issues in the higher education in Saudi Arabia, this study explored the current scenario of the problem comparing the public and private universities in Jeddah. There are some differences appeared in the current scenario such as the leadership approach. Reportedly, women's leadership approach at times not appropriate to the organisation al context. In the public universities, they are more likely autocratic and self-oriented. They sometimes overly use their power. That demotivates the followers and sometimes instigates conflicts. On the other side, in private universities, women leaders are capable of accomplishing their tasks. They can provide due guidelines to their followers and are mostly strategic and task focus. The reasons of conflict in the private universities are mostly lack of resources, and lack of empowerment. Women leaders do not get equal authoritative power to make decision.

e) **Strategic Means of Handling Conflicts**

All respondents were asked for the suggestion in order to resolve the current situation of conflicts and challenges. Hence, this study has gathered some unique and seemingly effective solutions from the respondents. For instance, respondents suggested that it is necessary for the government takes certain initiatives to ensure fair recruitment, proper promotion, authoritative power allocation, right to decision making and implementation. According to respondents' opinion, some positive measures have already been taken such as government has initiated policy and there is a clear vision for women empowerment and engaging them to the mainstream of knowledge-based economy. In some cases, joint leadership is accepted and to some extent collaboration with male leaders is permitted as well. It is proved that Saudi women can pursue leadership maintaining all the religious obligations and cultural norms. For instance, wearing *hijab* and *niqab* women can perform their professional duties. If their working hour and tasks are well organized, they can properly manage their household responsibilities too. So, it can be assumed that proper organisation al infrastructure and the implementation of the appropriate policy would decrease challenges of the women leaders. Besides, it is important to develop a better relationship among the members in the organisation s. On the other hand, women should accomplish their responsibility in a proper manner. They should improve their qualification as well as technical skills. Respondents also suggested that leadership should be given to qualified women. To resolve conflicts there should be a review mechanism. Besides, women should have opportunities to explore themselves to fit with leadership roles.

f) Implications for Policy Formulation

From the overall findings, several issues need to be addressed in order to reduce conflicts and challenges. In this regard, women-friendly organisational structure development should be the main concern. This structure should facilitate well time management, proper job allocation, and apposite skills enhancement. Besides, social perspective, as well as men's perspective, should be changed along with the government's policies. Based on the logical reasoning many suggestions can be offered for the purpose of policy formulation. Most reported challenges are: i) lack of support of the male counterparts, ii) intolerance of the society, iii) improper organisational infrastructure, iv) unsupportive organisational policy, v) gender discrimination, vi) insufficient government initiatives, vii) passion to traditional cultural norms, viii) influence of strict Islamic principles, and ix) lack of implementation of government policies. The holistic policy should be formulated covering all the pitfalls that create challenges for women leaders while instigating challenges. On the other side, men's education might positively influence their perspective to women. Because a literate man always expects a literate wife. Besides, a man educated from the overseas might have the generous view of women empowerment and leadership. In the same vein, when the Western-educated men in management his perception towards women counterpart must be more open and supportive. Social tolerance can be improved by means of education and enlightenment. If Saudi society can realize the importance of women empowerment for the socioeconomic development, it might not restrict women to join the economic activities. Organisational infrastructure can be improved by imposing laws and proper monitoring for the application of the laws. Besides, specific policy should be formulated so that women leaders can get enough facilities and privileges to pursue

their assignment. Gender discrimination can be removed only when men's view towards women would be changed. The government needs to create a new policy so that women can work while maintaining family norm and religious obligations. Traditional culture can be practiced considering their pragmatic values. Some traditions if not appropriate with modern socioeconomic trend should be unpracticed. Islamic principles are not against women empowerment or leadership. For instance, Prophet's (PBUH) first wife was a businessperson, his daughter was involved with politics and his granddaughter was a mathematician. Hazrat Aysha is the most authentic source of Hadith. Women in Prophet's (PBUH) time were permitted to ride on the horse and even join the battle. So, Islam does not restrict women to be leaders. It only suggests them to pursue their task maintaining femininity. In the end, many respondents reported that there are rules for women empowerment by putting them in the leadership position but no proper implementation of those rules. Then, women empowerment and their leadership practice would be possible in a minimum conflicting and challenging environment.

5.5.2 Theoretical Implications

a) Integration of Multiple Theories: This study integrated multiple theories in order to develop its theoretical ground. In that case, it adopted critical social theory, behavioral leadership theories, and organizational conflict theory. Then, considering the women leader challenges, their empowerment, and the country perspective Islamic principles were brought into the discussion. Based on these theories this study tends to explain the causes of conflicts and challenges faced by the female leaders in Saudi Arabian public and private universities.

b) Different Perspectives Towards Female Empowerment and Leadership: This study chose a different standpoint to investigate the main causes of

leadership conflicts. From the theoretical perspective, it assumes that the barriers and challenges could be the reasons for conflicts. In the end, it disclosed that personal, family, social, economic, and organisational barriers are igniting the leadership conflict.

5.6 Research Contribution

This study has a significant contribution to the body of knowledge. It has identified the current scenario of conflicts, challenges and barriers that cause conflict, the importance of women empowerment to reduce challenges and conflicts. Since Saudi Arabia is governed by the Shariah rules the influences of Islamic attributes on women empowerment were scrutinized. This study also outlined the different scenario of conflicts and the different reasons for conflicts.

5.6.1 Documentation of the Current Scenario of Conflicts

This study has documented the current scenario and the causes of conflicts among women leaders in higher education. Women leaders are mostly in conflicts when they cannot make and implement the decision. They need to follow men's decision. Besides, in terms of recruitment and promotion women get less priority. Further, men's unnecessary interference causes conflicts too. The major causes are organisational structure, underrepresentation of women leaders, men's priority, majority and domination. In some cases, women's inability and incompetency are the causes of conflicts too. Besides, the family and social perspective towards women leadership are not fully supportive. Therefore, Saudi society and family sometimes cannot accept women as leaders. Consequently, organisation, family and society become unsupportive and instigate conflicts.

5.6.2 Identifying Challenges

This study has identified the critical challenges that women leaders are facing in the higher education sector. The high weighted issues are personal and organisational. Saudi women are not really ready to play all sorts of leadership roles. They lack proper education, experiences, and skills. Women are less skilled and experienced compared to male. So, they cannot equally perform with the men. On the other side, organisational challenges are also creating challenges against women leaders. Long prevailed men-oriented policies of the organisation are not totally washed out to adopt a new policy for women's employment as well as empowerment. Besides, there are certain rules that disregard gender difference. In those cases, women may fail to pursue their duties properly. As a result, they may get into conflicts with their male counterparts. Thus, this study has explored some potential barriers that prevent women leaders from performing their duties and carrying out their responsibilities.

5.6.3 Women's Empowerment and Islamic Attributes

This study has explored several dimensions of women empowerment in Saudi Arabia. It has shown that the government policy to develop a knowledge-based economy has positive effect on women empowerment. Most of the respondent denied the Islamic principles are against women empowerment. Rather, they consider that Islam has given women ample liberty to play leadership roles. They also believe that the rigid explanations of Islamic rules are somewhat barriers to women empowerment.

5.6.4 Differences between Public and Private Universities

The major and the most unique contribution of this study is to show the difference between public and private universities in term of conflicts and

challenges. This study found no differences in the nature of conflict. But there are some differences in the nature of challenges. In private universities, women leaders are facing more problems in balancing work and family lives. On the other hand, there are some specific protocols to follow in public universities. Specific guidelines are provided by the supreme authorities. It is sometimes becoming challenging for women leaders to follow those strict rules.

5.7 Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to the women leaders in higher education in Saudi Arabia, and the participants have educated women. The majority of the respondents reported that the existing management system does not provide enough room for the women leaders and women leaders are not well empowered in Saudi Arabia that prevents women to pursue their roles. Thus, it is worthwhile to look into the women in the different organizations to confirm the scenario of conflicts and challenges experienced by them.

Furthermore, the research was conducted with the women leaders in higher education, without male leaders in higher education in Saudi Arabia. Further research may be conducted to compare women's perspectives on their leadership with their male counterparts. In addition, the participants of the study are also a limitation to the current study. In this study, only 10 female leadership were selected, thus it would be better if the study is conducted using the larger sample size in the study.

Methodologically, the current research was conducted using a qualitative research design that focuses on the interview using semi-structured interview questions, and a review of the documents, which relies on the articles, journals, and scriptures that are related to this study. Thus, further study may be conducted in mixed mode using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to enhance the in-depth findings of the study.

5.8 Recommendations

This study proposed several recommendations for the policy makers to develop policy and create the way forward. The most pragmatic suggestions were: 1)

enhancing women's empowerment through education; 2) enhancing skills; 3) appreciating women's achievements; 3) changing social views; 4) improving organisational structure; 5) synchronizing the interpretation of Islamic principles.

5.8.1 Recommendations for the Higher Education Authorities

a) Changing Organisational Structure: The overall findings suggest that the existing organisational structure is one of the causes that prevent women from playing their leadership roles due to conflicts that arise. In this regard, changing well as improving organisational structure would be a way forward to resolving leadership conflict. Hence, the higher educational institute should adopt the women-friendly management system and favourable environment that can facilitate women the necessary elements to perform with optimum capacity. Organisation s need to adopt the suitable policy that helps balance work and family life. Women are deprived of being their own selves because of lack of freedom. In that case, the organisation needs to create a certain policy that ensures women's freedom in decision making as well as implementing. Thus, true leadership will erupt while conflict be minimised.

b) Changing the Hierarchical Management System: The hierarchical management system is not always antagonistic to the organisation. But in the paradigm of higher education where it requires knowledge sharing in order to create new knowledge. So, this type of management seems unsuitable in the academic paradigm. Notably, the current system is mostly men-centred. Men occupy the topmost position and women are just followers. The existing management system needs to be changed so that women leaders can better practice their leadership roles while maintaining the synergic environment. The vertical management system can be

applied where men and women would be collaborative. Thus, a better result can be obtained in terms of decision making as well as academic excellence.

c) Changing People's Mindset: People's mindset too should be changed. In this regard, the government may take several initiatives such as awareness building, changing rules, implementing new rules, inspiring or incentivising family, highlighting the benefits of women's empowerment and so on. If people's mindset is changed it would be easy to empower women.

d) Changing Family Views: Some of the respondents in this study highlighted that their families became the obstacles in the career paths. Men are in some cases, discourage women to participate in the management. Besides, because of the obligatory family responsibilities, women cannot continue their career properly. The view of the Saudi family towards women leadership is somewhat negative. Though the condition is changing gradually, this view needs to be altered totally. In this regard, the government can take initiatives such as 1) to incentivising family that gives the opportunity to the women member to participate in the management. 2) Promoting the concept of women empowerment and its positive effect on the family people's perspective can be changed as well. 3) Broadening men's outlook. 4) Promoting Islamic principles that encourage women empowerment and leadership. 5) Flexible time and tasks for women leaders so that they can perform their family responsibilities.

e) Changing Social Perspective: Women empowerment is not possible if the social perspective remains unchanged. Hence, the conservative social perspective needs to be synchronized with the world view. In this case, the education system needs to be synchronized and upgraded. The electronic and printing media, as well as social networks, can be used to build mass-awareness and social concern. The

governmental organisation (GO), non-governmental organisation (NGO) can work together to improve the social perspective. The existing social value system can be improved through enlightenment programmes.

f) Changing Women's Perception of their Rights and Capabilities:

Previous studies suggest that Saudi women are not fully aware of their rights and abilities. Sometimes they cannot underestimate their strengths and power. They generally believe that their world is limited to their home and family. But they should come out of these thoughts. They need to embrace the true teaching of Islam. Islam encourages women empowerment as well as leadership. In terms of the cognitive capability women are not behind men. So proper realization about the capabilities, women can step forward and better contribute to the family as well as society. In this regard, social awareness and institutional efforts can enlighten women to enhance their self-realization.

g) Erasing Conservatism: Saudi Arabia has built a conservative social infrastructure. Islamic religious principles, traditional nomadic culture, and tribal rules flow through its social veins. The primitive social structure disallows women to participate in the public sphere. So, the current social structure should be modified and upgraded. Especially, keen attention should be paid to diminish conservatism. The enlightening programme, adopting new curriculum in the textbook, progressive religious preaching etc. might bring positive results.

h) Rectifying Tribal Rules: People of Saudi Arabia possess deep respect for the tribal rules. They pay tribute to their ancestors' culture and heritage. But there should be a rational judgement on the practice of cultural rules. In this regard, questions may arise: Are those rules still viable to the current social structure? Are those legacies still applicable in modern society? Is it possible to walk side by side

the global trend along with those traditional rules? Are those rules compliant with the Islamic rules and principle? Do they support the vision of modern Saudi Arabia? Hence, considering all these questions policymakers and social reformers should rectify the prevailing tribal rules. Much attention needs to be paid to the rules that obstacle women empowerment and leadership.

i) Establishing the Real Values of Islamic Principles: Islam is the basic ground of the ruling system of Saudi Arabia. But some rules deem contradicting with the government policy and implementation *Qiwama*. Furthermore, some rules are imposed by the Islamic reformist group mainly followers of *Wahhabism*. Those rules might be reviewed in order to synchronize with the current trend and prioritising women's issues. Thus, proper implementation of Islamic rules can bring greater benefits to society as well as to women leaders.

j) Providing Training for Leadership Development: The findings suggest that some women leaders lack leadership qualities. In order to resolve this problem, leadership building training can be initiated in the higher education sector. Women administrators need to undergo such training prior to join the management. And thus, women leaders could be able to lead the team well while being effective decision makers. Some cases, it could be one kind of hand on training so that to-be-leaders would learn from existing leader/s.

k) Creating Platform to Enhance Female Leadership: Women need a certain environment to grow their leadership quality. They need to be placed in a suitable platform where they will be able to learn to lead and manage. Besides, faculties or departments could be selected those are more suitable for women leaders. In some cases, women should be recruited with the priority basis.

l) Supportive Policies: To ensure women's liberty to make a decision; to provide equal opportunities to be promoted to the leadership position; to get industry-related education and job-oriented education; to reform and implement the new rules and regulation there should be supportive policies. Hence, the government may bring necessary changes in the existing policies.

n) Private Sector (private universities) Reformation: Reportedly leaders in the public universities need to follow specific protocols that disregard gender difference. These protocols sometimes become very challenging for women leaders. Hence, the government could bring some possible changes so that women can easily cope with those rules. On the other hand, in private universities women are facing higher responsibilities and time constraint in private universities. To resolve these issues, suitable initiatives need to be taken. Women leaders should be offered flexible time and tolerable workload. Otherwise, they should be rationally incentivised for their efforts. Additional privileges need to be offered so that women can balance family and job.

m) Women's Talent Evaluation: Women's talent needs to be properly evaluated. Most of the respondents mentioned that women leaders were sometimes not selected based on their talent and skills. In this regard, they should be appointed according to their abilities, skills and merit.

o) Rational Values: Women should be valued as capable contributors to the family as well as to the economy. Men's perspective should be changed. Women have already proved themselves as capable as leaders. Therefore, family and society should treat women as economic contributors, not merely dependents. The widened outlook might positively influence women leadership while reducing challenges.

p) Employee Value Proposition (EVP): Employee value proposition (EVP) is an important term as well as common practice in the current world. Women have different needs and demands. Their physio psychology is different than men. Therefore, different EVP should be designed for women. In that light universities need to implement the specific provision of the employee value proposition (EVP) so that women leaders can get a satisfactory living.

5.8.2 Suggestions for Further Research

a) Research on Management System: As most of the respondents reported that the existing management system does not provide enough room for the women leaders so that they can perform their duties in a full swing. Rather, there are many weaknesses of the organisation which prevent women to pursue their roles. Hence, empirical studies by using mixed methods need to be carried out to investigate the real problems in the management structure in the universities. To dig out the causes of the problems in-depth study is needed. Therefore, qualitative research will be most useful. In that case, the management personnel, higher authorities, policymakers, and the ruling authorities would be interviewed. On the other side, by means of quantitative study, the general features of the problem can be determined. For that purpose, a survey can be conducted across the country by using a comprehensive structured question.

b) Research on Males' Perspective: This research disclosed that males' perspective towards women's leadership has significant negative impacts on conflicts. Women are mostly facing obstacles due to men's negative perception. But no empirical study so far has been conducted to specify men's perspective towards women's leadership in higher education. So, there is a big gap in research lies in this realm. Therefore, further research can be conducted to explore the male's perspective

towards women's leadership. Hence, male leaders in higher education can be interviewed by using an open-ended question. Thus, the main facts behind the male's negative perspective towards female leaders will be identified. To generalise the findings a survey can be conducted across the country. In this case, a structured question can be formulated based on the findings of the qualitative study.

c) Research on Females' Perspective: Some issues regarding Saudi women need to be understood. For instance, their adherence to tribal rules and cultural norms; perspective to women leadership; and interest to the superior position and so on. To understand women's psychology and perception qualitative research can be carried out.

d) Research on Social Perspective: The current social perspective needs to be understood. This study should answer the following questions: How does society look at women leaders in education? What kind of changes does society expect? What are the social issues need to be addressed? How can a supportive social environment be created for women? In this regard, a quantitative study can be carried out.

e) Research on Family Perspective: Family views seem very important to address the challenges that women leaders are facing. In this regard, research can be conducted to understand family views towards women empowerment and leadership. Besides, it needs to understand how women empowerment impact on the family. This study can be done from various aspects such as economic, relational (relationship between parents' children and other members in the family), household decision making, happiness and domestic violence etc.

f) Government's Policy Perspective: Government has initiated several policies. It is important to explore women's perception of this policy. Thus, the

problems in policy application can be determined and that will help reform the existing policy. In this regard, a qualitative study could be conducted by taking an in-depth interview of the experts and policymakers.

g) Skills-wise Research: Women have different skills and expertise. Specific research can be conducted to define women's excellence in leadership dimensions. The findings of this research might help understand women's abilities. In that case, mixed methods seem appropriate.

5.9 Summary

Female leaders in Saudi Arabia are experiencing the glass ceiling phenomenon associated with multiple dimensions of significant inequalities that are linked to the family and religion together with the influence of patriarchal assumptions regarding gender roles. Islamic rules are strictly used in this country and shapes its culture. Islam defines male and female relationship in the private and public domains. Islam prescribes the idea of *qiwama* which is popularly translated as –God created men superior to women and men are assigned to take charge of women's affairs.

Thus, this study was conducted with the view to exploring the conflicts and challenges that female leaders are currently facing in higher education in Saudi Arabia. To depict a comparative scenario, this study investigated two public and two private universities in Jeddah. The female academicians who are also tasked with high responsibilities in carrying out administrative work have been considered as education leaders. In this study, dean, deputy dean, and head of department were designated as leaders. However, in terms of conflict and challenges, this researcher has addressed these issues from several perspectives such as personal, organisational, religious, social and family points of views. To achieve the objectives, this researcher interviewed 10 academic female leaders from public and private universities.

The overall findings demonstrated that female education leaders are facing numerous barriers in carrying out their responsibilities. Conflicts arise at the end as the consequence of the obstacles that they meet all along. There were some differences identified as the causes of conflicts among the leaders in the public and private universities. In the public universities, female leaders are more autonomous, but they need to follow certain protocols. Men are less supportive and less cooperative probably because of job-stability. On the other hand, in private universities, leaders are more open-minded and cooperative because of the organisational rules. However, female leaders need to handle heavier workloads. In some cases, due to their lack of skills and experience they cannot provide enough support to their subordinates. The researcher concluded the study explaining the implications of the study for the higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.

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