

MODELLING SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN  
SAUDI ARABIA HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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MODELLING SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN  
SAUDI ARABIA HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved father

Dr. Abdulah Sadig Dahlan

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the significant contributions of females to uplift the economy and well-being of society, they face challenges to being equal compared to their male counterparts. Females still lack support to secure leadership positions, especially in higher education institutions. The concept of succession planning is less likely to be considered an important component of strategizing the organizational plan, particularly in the case of the education sector, with the inclusion of females in some contexts. Thus, it is important to understand the current situation of female leadership aligned with the role of succession planning in the advancement of females in leadership positions in higher education institutions. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore the phenomena and processes of how females could inclusively join leadership positions and succession planning in higher education institutions. Conducting interviews with 23 academicians and experts from Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions, qualitative data analysis is performed using NVivo 12. The findings revealed that females are underrepresented in leadership roles due to the several challenges that hinder their career growth, i.e., national, organizational and individual level barriers. Additionally, succession planning which is a useful tool for closing the gender gap, is not being practiced in Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions. Obviously, in the absence of an effective succession plan, the preparation and selection of future leaders remain doubtful and questionable. It is not surprising that a lack of succession planning in a male-dominated society favors males and marginalizes females. In addition to identifying the elements of succession planning, it is also found that there are obstacles to developing and implementing succession planning. High turnover rate, reluctance, resistance, work-life balance, and inactive HR department are among the challenges to practicing succession planning in Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions. This study contributes to the leadership and succession planning knowledge domain as well as the context of higher education institutions and selected cultures. The inclusion of competent females into a succession planning process may overcome various leadership crises and provide leadership opportunities to females. The findings of this study may help higher education institutions develop succession planning strategies with a clear career path and focus on lessening work-life conflict among female employees.

## ABSTRAK

Walaupun terdapat sumbangan besar wanita untuk meningkatkan ekonomi dan kesejahteraan masyarakat, mereka menghadapi cabaran untuk setanding dengan lelaki. Wanita masih kurang sokongan untuk mendapatkan jawatan kepimpinan, terutamanya dalam institusi pendidikan tinggi. Konsep perancangan penggantian kurang diambil kira sebagai komponen penting untuk menyusun strategi pelan organisasi terutamanya dalam sektor pendidikan dengan kemasukan wanita dalam beberapa konteks. Oleh itu, adalah penting untuk memahami keadaan semasa kepimpinan wanita sejajar dengan peranan perancangan penggantian dalam memajukan wanita dalam jawatan kepimpinan di institusi pengajian tinggi. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji fenomena dan proses bagaimana wanita boleh menyertai jawatan kepimpinan dan perancangan penggantian di institusi pengajian tinggi secara inklusif. Temu bual telah dikendalikan dengan 23 orang ahli akademik dan pakar dari institusi pendidikan tinggi Arab Saudi, dan analisis data kualitatif dilakukan menggunakan NVivo 12. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa wanita kurang diwakili dalam peranan kepimpinan kerana beberapa cabaran yang menghalang pertumbuhan kerjaya mereka iaitu halangan di peringkat nasional, organisasi dan individu. Selain itu, perancangan penggantian yang merupakan alat yang berguna untuk menutup jurang jantung tidak diamalkan di institusi pengajian tinggi Arab Saudi. Jelas sekali, jika tiada pelan penggantian yang berkesan, penyediaan dan pemilihan pemimpin masa depan tetap diragui dan dipersoalkan. Ia tidak menghairankan bahawa kekurangan perancangan penggantian dalam masyarakat dominan lelaki memihak kepada lelaki dan meminggirkan wanita. Selain mengenal pasti unsur-unsur perancangan penggantian, ia juga mendapati bahawa terdapat halangan untuk membangun dan melaksanakan perancangan penggantian. Kadar pusing ganti yang tinggi, keengganan, rintangan, keseimbangan kehidupan bekerja dan jabatan HR yang tidak aktif adalah antara cabaran untuk mengamalkan perancangan penggantian di institusi pengajian tinggi Arab Saudi. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada bidang pengetahuan perancangan kepimpinan dan penggantian serta konteks institusi pengajian tinggi dan budaya terpilih. Kemasukan wanita yang kompeten ke dalam proses perancangan penggantian boleh mengatasi pelbagai krisis kepimpinan dan memberi peluang kepimpinan kepada wanita. Penemuan kajian ini dapat membantu institusi pengajian tinggi untuk mengembangkan strategi perancangan penggantian dengan laluan kerjaya yang jelas dan dengan fokus untuk mengurangkan konflik kerja-kehidupan di kalangan pekerja wanita.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

SA	-	Saudi Arabia
KSA	-	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
SP	-	Succession planning
FL	-	Female leadership

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research exploring female engagement in leadership positions in line with succession planning of higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. First, the chapter describes the study background in order to identify the research problem, questions, and objectives. Further, the significance and scope of the study elaborate on the possible contributions and clarify boundary and limitations of the current research. Subsequently, this chapter defines the key concepts used to explore the role of the female as a leader in higher education institutions. Overall, this chapter contributes to understanding the holistic picture of a female's situation in a leadership position in higher education.

### 1.2 Background of the study

The arguments made by neoliberals have placed emphasis on the importance of women's education. It highlights that education is a human right and is essential for creating a moral and progressive society. Women's education is good for society as a whole, but it also provides a great advantage to the economy (Olson-Strom and Rao, 2020). Women in higher education have shown that giving them a seat at the table can be prosperous at both a community and national level.

Despite the significant contribution of females to uplift the economy, they did not achieve equal status compared to men (World Economic Forum, 2018). Studies indicated that females' career positions as professionals and render services as leaders remain underrepresented (Mifsud, 2019; Murray and Mifsud, 2019). Organizations

are failing females in their career trajectories. There is an ongoing and consistent under-representation of females in educational presidency positions (Shaw and Hernandez-gantes, 2021).

Females faced certain challenges in achieving top positions (i.e., gender discrimination and job segregation based on race and status); hence, they are less likely to be involved in professional development than their male counterparts (Alghofaily, 2019). As evident, Gender Inequality Index (GII) published by United Nations Development Programme highlighted that women are discriminated against in health, education, political representation, labor market, and more. Besides, the reports show the loss in potential human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions (UNDP, 2020).

Leadership is one of the most critical factors organizations need to consider to achieve their goals (Cobanoglu, 2020). The qualities of a leader and good leadership have paved the way for change, enhanced employees' commitment and performance, and improved overall organizational performance (Anderson, 2017). The literature suggests that most female leaders are concentrated in areas traditionally associated with "women's issues," and their overall percentage remains low (Barraza Vargas, 2019). The study of leadership in the higher education has been limited in the past. Although gender imbalance in senior positions in higher education is neither acceptable nor sustainable, the improvement rate is slow. the slow pace of change achieved by past attempts at developmental initiatives and goal setting should be augmented by a more positive approach to change (Power, 2020). Most women in the higher education sector remain restricted to middle-ranking posts, rising as high as department heads, deans, controllers of examination, and even registrars but hardly ever becoming vice-chancellors (Gandhi and Sen, 2021). The findings of the study by Shaw and Hernandez-Gantes (2021) suggest that female vice presidents outnumber female presidents.

Historically, providing gender equity both nationally and internationally in terms of accessing and achieving educational opportunities is seen as a necessity for developing sustainable succession plans (Dahlvig and Longman, 2020). However, it

is limited to a sustainable succession plan and building leadership capacity and skills throughout the academic staff. Furthermore, most notably, creating an atmosphere that promotes an environment for the growth of all academic leaders (Power, 2020).

Researchers have highlighted the need for leadership roles to be held by capable individuals and for capable leaders always to be ready to take on a role in the event of resignation, retirement, promotions, death, growth, expansion, and creation of new positions. Having a supply of capable leaders shows an organization's true strength (Desarno *et al.*, 2020). Hence, it is vital for every organization to have an effective and sustainable succession planning process that can withstand any future challenges. The most important elements of a succession plan are growth plans, leadership development, and mentoring programs that allow for positive relationships that cultivate, inspire, and assist faculty in developing the necessary skills to succeed in a leadership role (Phillips, 2021).

In light of the vital role of the women in contributing to the social and economic development and also considering the fact that women face challenges in holding leadership position in general and higher education in particular, this study focus on succession planning as a strategic tool that can help for promoting female leaders in society. The present research is concentrated on Saudi Arabia as it is discussed in the following section.

### **1.2.1 Contextual background**

A vacuum of literature on gender and higher education exists outside America (primarily the United States) and Western Europe. The topic is underdeveloped in the Asian context (Olson-Strom and Rao, 2020). In Arab countries, females are more involved in managing operations related to education, administration, and health care (Alghofaily, 2019). In the context of Saudi Arabia, females have been studied well in gender equality, career advancement, and management (Abalkhail, 2017; Syed *et al.*, 2018), yet, a limited number of studies have covered mixed-gender participation in holding leadership positions. Hence, if

females at work in Saudi Arabia are disadvantaged in their practice, gender discrimination occurs based on socio-cultural and religious-cultural factors (Abalkhail, 2017; Fallatah and Syed, 2017).

In comparison with the western culture, there is a need to explore the barriers to female leadership in Saudi Arabia (Abalkhail, 2017; Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017; Hodges, 2017). It is vital to conduct some pre-impact evaluation research studies to understand the factors that affect the recruitment and selection of senior academic leaders. Along with that, there is a need to point out the challenges females are facing in their advancement to leadership positions, especially in the higher education sector (Alsubaie and Jones, 2017).

Females tend to be excluded from organizational policymaking, planning, and decision-making (Mustafa and Troudi, 2019). The statistics in Table 1.1 prove that female participation in all top positions is far behind men's engagement. The more significant number reported for the dean position at Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University is because the job was open to females only. Females at the vice president and dean positions are also centric to the departments allocated for the female students at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, King Faisal's, and King Saud's Universities.

Table 1.1 Female Leaders in Higher Education, Saudi Arabia

<b>Positions</b>	<b>Number of Females</b>	<b>Number of Men</b>
Director of a university	1	33
Vice president	12	128
Dean	61	330
Deputy dean of faculty	228	542
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>1033</b>

Source: Ministry of Education (2017)

Although the current situation of female leadership is not satisfactory, the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and its programs have given women's empowerment great attention. One of the most prominent outputs of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 was the formulation of legislation that supports the empowerment of women's rights,

including wages and the provision of job opportunities in all sectors, supporting women in leadership positions, and promoting women's rights (Shura Council, 2021). In addition, some factors favor the exploration of female succession planning practices in higher education in Saudi Arabia. First, females are placed with a gender-segregation approach in which they are involved in managing operations related to greater involvement of females, such as education, administration, and health care (Alsubaie and Jones, 2017; Alghofaily, 2019). Secondly, wider gender gap as Saudi Arabia is ranked 141 out of 149 countries (World Economic Forum, 2018).

Actions that advance women's leadership may be as diverse as the contexts themselves for each context and level. Regardless of the social context, what is essential and common is identifying and addressing barriers through developing strategies that advance gender equity for everyone's benefit (Dahlvig and Longman, 2020). Considering Saudi Arabia's national agenda for strengthening higher education institutions, it is essential for universities to track the progress under effective leadership. Achieving the desired results is becoming vital for overcoming the leadership crisis and practicing succession planning. A volatile financial environment, the rise of international partnerships, greater accountability pressures, the need for new business models, new technologies, and changing demographics are just some of these challenges, which call for leadership solutions in higher education (Kezar, 2017). Research implications may open new doors for practitioners, education consultants, and policymakers to practice succession planning in higher education with the inclusion of females.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Female leadership is still in the infancy stage, and more is needed to be done to ensure that they are on equal footing as their male counterparts. The current research agenda has advocated for more female representation and highlighted the positive impacts of female leaders on the community. Despite this recognition, women still do not have equal access to opportunities (Tran, 2020). The

underrepresentation of female leaders in leadership positions is a global phenomenon, not specific to a particular geographical context. To illustrate, findings of the study by Dahlvig and Longman (2020) revealed that women who aspire to senior-level leadership in the United States continue to find their professional journeys hindered by a variety of internal, organizational, and broader cultural barriers. Similarly, Gandhi and Sen (2020) found that female leadership in the top positions in academia in India is not just under-represented but also under-researched. Similarly, in the Vietnam context, Tran (2020) found evidence for the underrepresentation of women, especially in high-level leadership positions.

Despite the recent rapid growth in higher education worldwide, gender inequality in higher education remains a significant issue (Olson-Strom and Rao, 2020). The number of women in leadership positions, especially high-level ones, is still far from being equal with that of men (Tran, 2020). Although a few steps have been taken to reduce the gap in gender imbalance in senior positions in higher education, more needs to be done as the current system is slow and ineffective (Power, 2020). Moreover, a bias towards male leadership in higher education has amplified the gender imbalance (Tran, 2020). That being said, the world is moving towards recognizing the importance of gender balance in all elements of the organization. Educational institutions, in particular, have begun to invest more in leadership programs that encourage both men and women to participate (Kairys, 2018). In addition to financial investments, they are also moving towards more non-financial investments such as building leadership capacity and skills throughout the academic staff, linking resources to a gender-balanced leadership team, seeding leadership posts in areas of specific gender imbalance are all positive moves to achieve a pool of academic leaders (Power, 2020).

One effective way to expand the internal pool of leadership candidates and fill leadership positions is by developing and implementing succession planning programs (Fusarelli *et al.*, 2018). Although succession planning for business has been thoroughly covered in the literature with a sufficient number of initiatives, strategic designs, and programs for corporate organizations (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2018; Black *et al.*, 2019; Ayandibu and Kaseeram, 2020), it is still a new concept in higher

education and hardly addressed in scholarly research (Gilbert, 2017; Keller, 2018). As a result, succession planning is less likely to be considered a critical component in strategizing the organizational plan, specifically in the case of the education sector (King, 2019; Loomes *et al.*, 2019). The limited studies on the matter of succession planning in higher education was mainly focused on western countries, thereby adding to the gaps in both theory and practice in the background (Gilbert, 2017; Keller, 2018; Aylett, 2019).

When females entered the workplace, they faced complex rules, regulations, and a harsh environment. It also creates a barrier for female to perform their routine work and is less likely to have the freedom to participate in the management decisions (Abalkhail, 2017). The ultimate reason behind this is gender segregation, as specified by several researchers (Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017; Hodges, 2017; Alghofaily, 2019). Gender-segregated work environments might limit opportunities for gender equality, sustain patriarchal structures, and maintain traditional attitudes regarding female advancement in the work place (Alomair, 2015).

Theorizing the concept of leadership, female as a subject has been studied in higher education settings that covers multiple styles and context (Abalkhail, 2017; Mohnot, 2017; Dopson *et al.*, 2018). Thus, it becomes fragmented because there is inconsistency in results to recommend an appropriate leadership style that strategically support female leadership in the academic institutions. Female leaders in higher education face challenge to play their effective role at management positions (Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017; Hodges, 2017; Alghofaily, 2019). Unfortunately, the current practices of top-down leadership are impractical to the current landscape in higher education.

Prior literature suggest that current leadership approaches are ineffective to deal with change management and innovative systems (Keller, 2018; Alghofaily, 2019). Eventually, leadership models have pointed out that leaders cannot use one kind of behavior or style to deal with multiple situations. There is a need to adapt different kind of leadership styles to be productive in higher education (Mustafa and Troudi, 2019). In the current era, there is utmost need to guide higher education

institutions with a modern strategic leadership approach that bring effective results in order to achieve the organizational goals, thus old leadership approaches seem ineffective (Washington, 2016; Ritchie, 2020). The drastic change in the higher education environment urges the need to practice shared leadership approach to have collaborative efforts to outcomes (Lu *et al.*, 2017). Today's complex environments require new forms of collaborative or shared leadership to help campuses become nimbler and responsive to needed changes. Higher education leaders now face a very different set of challenges that necessitate new forms of leadership. Some argue that shared leadership not only meets today's challenges, but also is a better fit for higher education (Kezar, 2017).

The new forms of higher education, including massive open online courses, distance learning and artificial intelligence have been changing higher education and create both challenges and opportunities. Beside those global factors, higher education institutions also face their regional and local challenges (Lu *et al.*, 2017). Concerning leadership crisis in higher education, models, framework, and programs related to female succession planning in Saudi Arabia's higher education are limited from a practical approach to a leadership crisis in higher education. Therefore, there is utmost need to fill the literature gap by exploring the succession planning and strategic ways for female engagement to render services at leadership positions in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. In the case of Saudi Arabia, researchers have conducted qualitative and quantitative studies on female leadership, females in education, challenges for Saudi females at work and females in the management of higher education (Abalkhail, 2017; Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017; Hodges, 2017; Alghofaily, 2019; Varshney, 2019).

This current study's systematic review (see Chapter 2) describes the hindrance factors for females from performing their roles in leadership positions, particularly in Saudi Arabia. The following sections provide the study purpose, research questions, and objectives with reference to the research gaps.



## **1.4 Research Questions**

Considering the problems addressed in the previous sections related to females as part of succession planning and engagement in leadership positions in the context of Saudi Arabia, this study explores answers to the following questions:

RQ1: How does leadership is perceived in Saudi Arabian universities?

RQ2: How is the current situation of female leadership in Saudi Arabian universities?

RQ3: To what extend does succession planning is contributing to the advancement of female leaders in Saudi Arabian universities?

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

Based on the research questions, the study sets the following research objectives:

RO1: To discover how leadership is perceived in Saudi Arabian universities

RO2: To understand the current situation of female leadership in Saudi Arabian universities

RO3: To explore whether or not succession planning is contributing to the advancement of female leaders in Saudi Arabian universities

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The focus of this study is to explore the current leadership situation in Saudi Arabia's higher education in line with practicing the succession planning, which provides leadership opportunities for females. Mainly, this study attempts to understand the acceptance of public female leaders and their current participation, supporting factors, barriers, and the role of succession planning to ensure equal opportunity for men and women in career growth in higher education.

The study collected data from selective higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, namely University of Business and Technology, King Abdulaziz University, Sulaiman Al Rajhi university, University of Jeddah, University of Bisha, Umm Al-Qura University, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Prince Sultan University, Dar Al-Hekma University, King Saud University, and Taif University. In addition to universities, the Ministry of Education and Jeddah chamber of commerce are included in the sampling frame. Participants of this study are deans, deputy/vice deans or heads of departments/schools, instructors (faculty staff), and administrators (line management). In addition, the study selected one education consultant from the Ministry of Education and one representative from the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

Given this current era of significant change in higher education and a growing concern that existing approaches to leadership are ineffective, there is growing attention to the importance of understanding the leadership required to guide campuses successfully (Kezar, 2017). Consequently, the purpose of this study is to explore the phenomena and process of inclusiveness and engagement of females in leadership positions in line with succession planning within institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia. More precisely, this study investigates the female leadership crisis using a unique way to explore factors that support and impede females' advancement to leadership positions in Saudi Arabian public and private

universities. Additionally, the role of succession planning in improving female leaders is explored in this study. Researchers have identified that, even when a woman candidate meets the educational requirements, women are still underrepresented at the top of institutional leadership hierarchies. The ecosystem that women function in now has been set up to hold women back and advance men (Diehl and Dzubinski, 2016).

Hopefully, the information and findings of this study could provide a direction for senior leaders to strategize succession planning and deal with leadership crises by giving equal opportunities to female leaders in higher education. This approach supports management personnel in higher education to deploy modern tools and practices for succession planning in higher education. In addition, this study would bridge the gap in the literature, which is still lacking in female succession planning in higher education. Earlier works by researchers focus on leadership styles in academic institutions (Al-bakr *et al.*, 2017; Alghofaily, 2019), workforce management in higher education (Cooper, 2019; Loomes *et al.*, 2019; Wilkins and Neri, 2019), women's career advancement (Hodges, 2017), leadership challenges (Alghofaily, 2019; Mustafa and Troudi, 2019) and gender equality (Syed *et al.*, 2018). However, these studies lack a theoretical framework on higher education succession planning by targeting females in academic settings. Therefore, this study provides a reference point for researchers in various fields concerning leadership crisis, succession planning, and female leadership engagement in higher education.

Furthermore, this study contributes to improving practices in succession planning that focus on diversity and inclusiveness, particularly for females. This study brings the attention of multiple stakeholders to several hidden factors that indicate the female leadership crisis in higher education and help them design preemptive actions to deal with it. More importantly, this study supports management to utilize untapped talent for future leadership positions in higher education. This study's findings also benefit women by raising their awareness of all females' challenges. According to Miltersteiner *et al.* (2020), when women perceive

that others are experiencing the same difficulties and challenges, they may feel more engaged and aware of typical particularities and possibilities.

As stated earlier, certain studies in literature mention the leadership crisis, female leaders, and career advancement in higher education. Nonetheless, the female succession planning framework that describes the process of developing in-house talent to fulfill the need for the future workforce at management and leadership levels in higher education remains eclipsed in the academic literature. Saunders *et al.* (2015) mentioned that research implications might effectively apply when findings come from a contextual setting. Thus, this study elucidates the practices for succession planning and steps to resolve the female leadership crisis in higher education by Saudi Arabian universities.

The present research is also significant from the methodological perspective. The qualitative method is suitable for exploring and understanding emerging concepts such as succession planning. Using a qualitative method provided an opportunity to investigate the current leadership style, female leadership situation, and succession planning statement in Saudi Arabian context. This is particularly important because there is a need for empirically-based studies on academic leadership in Saudi Arabia's higher education (Alomair, 2015) to ensure the sustainability of effective leadership.

From a contextual perspective, the study findings may encourage higher education institutions in Arab and Gulf countries to practice female succession planning frameworks with respect to their socio-cultural settings. In addition, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims for education that contributes to economic growth and "aims to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in international rankings" (Saudi Vision, 2017). Since Saudi Arabia's government is focusing on gender issues, it is important to provide equal opportunities for both genders (Saudi Vision, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2017; Ministry of Education Statistics Center, 2017). There should be a space for female leadership in the succession planning for Saudi Arabia universities to achieve the desired results. Therefore, the present study's findings may provide a guideline for the government

and practitioners in improving their understanding of the current female leadership situation towards implementing inclusive and equitable succession planning in Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions.

## **1.8 Operational definition**

### **1.8.1 Succession planning**

Succession planning is a strategic effort to ensure skillful, productive, and high-performing employees are retained within the organization for leadership or managerial positions over time (Owolabi and Adeosun, 2021).

### **1.8.2 Leadership**

Leadership is a process that involves people with common goals, and leaders are people who can influence a group to commit willingly to a common goal (Turner, 2018).

### **1.8.3 Female Leadership**

Females in the sphere of higher education provide teaching, administrative, and management support to deploy the best practices to lead the organization in equal standing with men. This refers to a practical approach to females' contribution to leadership positions in higher education institutions (Loomes *et al.*, 2019).

## **1.9 Organization of the research**

This research study proposal comprises five chapters:

Chapter 1 provides the background of the study and describes the contextual information related to females' engagement in higher education and their role in leadership positions. It covers the knowledge gap and problem statement where females face obstacles to securing their leadership positions according to academic responsibilities. It refers to the research questions and objectives elaborated in line with the grey areas identified for this study. This chapter also covers the significance and scope of this study.

Chapter 2 presents the systematic review, and theoretical underpinning of the study domain described as females in higher education leadership. It covers the theoretical argument from published studies and supports the study framework. Further, a systematic review depicts the existence of current knowledge and future research areas to work on.

Chapter 3 presents the study methods and procedures adopted for data collection and analysis. The procedure for data management, a pilot test of instruments, and an analytical approach are included in this chapter. It confirms the validity, authenticity, and reliability of data and supports the generalizability of study findings. Overall, it covers the basic steps that are performed to execute the research study.

Chapter 4 focuses on data analysis procedures and techniques used to analyze the obtained data through interviews. Conducted interviews are transcribed, and emerging themes are discussed in this chapter. Finally, the main findings of this study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5 is mainly concerned with discussing research findings and conclusions drawn from the results. The chapter also elaborates on the contributions

of this study to the theory and practice. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion on limitations and recommendations for future studies.

### **1.10 Summary**

The study rationale is elaborated in this chapter which comprises the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, and objectives. This chapter describes the purpose and significance of the study, which is vital to cover the knowledge gap that exists in the Saudi Arabian higher education institutions. Finally, it provides recommendations for scholars to conduct future studies.

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## Appendix A Instrument and interview protocol

### Interview Protocol for Informants in Universities (Insider)

Research questions	Interview Questions	Time
<p>In universities, key informants are: board of trustees, senior management personnel (known as rector, director, deputy-vice chancellor, chancellor), dean, head of departments (known as deputy/vice dean), instructors (known as faculty/lecturers), administrator (line managers or operational staff)</p>		
Introduction	<p>Interviewee's basic information:</p> <p>1) Name: _____</p> <p>2) University: _____</p> <p>3) Position: _____</p> <p>4) Qualification: _____</p> <p>5) Experience: _____</p> <p>6) Nationality: _____</p> <p>7) Gender: _____</p> <p>8) Contact number/email: _____</p>	2 mins
RQ1: How does leadership is perceived in Saudi Arabian universities?	<p><b>Style of leadership being practiced?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: to know and understand the current style of leadership in higher education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What does leadership look like in your university?</b> <i>Probe: How do you define leadership?</i></li> <li>• <b>How do leaders in your university manage operations and people?</b> <i>Probe: look at how the process of leadership is being practiced</i></li> </ul>	15 minutes

<p>RQ2: How is the current situation of female leadership in Saudi Arabian universities?</p>	<p><b>Female leadership in terms of what, how, and why?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: to know and understand the perception of people in higher education; to know the importance of female leaders in higher education and influence to strengthen the educational systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How do you see the female role as a leader in your university?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Aside from Characteristics of female leaders, we want to know how the university sees the female staff are able to accentuate/demonstrate their leadership through their duties/responsibilities/positions/personalities (and other aspects related to roles)-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do you think that your university should have female leaders? And why?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Assumptions and reasons for the need for female leaders in universities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Practices and cultural aspects that support or suppress female leadership?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Specification: to explore current practices in terms of female leadership in higher education within faculties or schools, diversity, and inclusion, opportunity to participate and lead programs/events/conferences,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the current practices that support female leadership in your university?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Do females work at leadership positions in your university? If yes, then what kinds of tasks are they taking care of?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the cultural aspects that support</b></li> </ul>	<p>45 mins</p>

	<p><b>female leadership in your university?</b></p> <p><i>Probe: Do females work at leadership positions in your university? If yes, then what kinds of tasks are they taking care of?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the current practices that suppress female leadership in your university?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Do females face a tough time rendering services at leadership positions in your university? If yes, then what are those practices that suppress females to take aside from leadership roles?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the cultural aspects that suppress female leadership in your university?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Do females face a tough time rendering services at leadership positions in your university? If yes, then what are those practices that suppress females to take aside from leadership roles?</i></p> <p><b>Acceptance of female leaders?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: the environment in higher education, work dynamics, social, cultural, and religious aspects, capabilities to handle the leadership role in higher education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do people accept female leaders at your university?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: How and why?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How do male workers perceive the female role as a leader in your university?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: If perceived positively, then ask why?</i></p> <p><i>If perceived negatively, then ask why?</i></p>	
RQ3: To	<b>Succession planning in terms of what, how, and why?</b>	



<p>what extend does succession planning is contributing to the advancement of female leaders in Saudi Arabian universities?</p>	<p><i>Specification: to know the level of understanding of people about succession planning; in business organizations and higher education; Definition and practical know-how about succession planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• <b>Does your university have a specific process for identifying and developing new leaders who can replace old leaders when they leave, retire or die?</b></p> <p><i>Probe: Does your university have succession planning? How will you define succession planning, and what are important things that should be part of succession planning in your university?</i></p> </li> <li> <p>• <b>How are future leaders or top management positions are chosen to lead in your university?</b></p> <p><i>Probe: Components of succession planning in the university.</i></p> </li> </ul> <p><b>Female Succession Planning in terms of what, how, and why?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: to know the level of understanding of people about female succession planning; in business organizations and higher education; Definition and practical know-how about female succession planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• <b>Does/How female staff is included in the process of choosing the next dean/vice chancellor/president?</b></p> <p><i>Probe: We would like to see how female staff are included either as a panel for the succession planning/ candidates/ mentors/</i></p> </li> </ul>	<p>30 min</p>
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	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>coaches in the process of developing future bosses/top management of the universities.</i></p> <p><b>Development of female succession planning?</b>  <i>Specification: to know acceptance level to execute female succession planning, key steps involved in the development of female succession planning in higher education; to know challenges and overcome in execution of female succession planning in higher education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the challenges to nurturing female leaders in your institutions?</b>  <i>Probe what are the hurdles that they face to adopt succession planning in your university?</i></li> <li>• <b>How can the university develop a process for female staff to be fully considered in the succession planning in your university?</b>  <i>Probe: Organize a workshop to design university-specific design for female succession planning, deal with people perceptions via promoting a culture of female leaders, a consensus of senior management to engage female talents in a leadership role as a part of succession planning</i></li> </ul>	
	<b>Total duration</b>	92 mins

Interview Protocol for Informants Outside Universities (outsider)

Research questions	Interview Questions	Time
<p>Outside universities, key informants are: 1. education management consultants (who provide consultancies to universities and institutions for development and connect with education ministries. 2. Senior personnel from KSA education ministry (who monitor the operations in universities)</p>		
<p>Introduction</p>	<p>Interviewee’s basic information:</p> <p>1. Name: _____</p> <p>2. University: _____</p> <p>3. Position: _____</p> <p>4. Qualification: _____</p> <p>5. Experience: _____</p> <p>6. Nationality: _____</p> <p>7. Gender: _____</p> <p>8. Contact number/email: _____</p>	<p>2 mins</p>
<p>RQ1: How does leadership is perceived in Saudi Arabian universities?</p>	<p><b>Style of leadership being practiced?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: to know and understand the current style of leadership in higher education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What does leadership look like in the universities?</b> <i>Probe: How do you define leadership?</i></li> <li>• <b>How do leaders in the universities manage operations and people?</b> <i>Probe: look at how the process of leadership is being practiced</i></li> </ul>	

<p>RQ2: How is the current situation of female leadership in Saudi Arabian universities?</p>	<p><b>Female leadership in terms of what, how, and why?</b>  <i>Specification: to know and understand the perception of people in higher education; to know the importance of female leaders in higher education and influence to strengthen the educational systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How do you see the female role as a leader in the universities?</b>  <i>Probe: Aside from Characteristics of female leaders, we want to know how the university sees the female staff are able to accentuate/demonstrate their leadership through their duties/responsibilities/positions/personalities (and other aspects related to roles)-</i></li> <li>• <b>Do you think that universities should have female leaders? And why?</b>  <i>Probe: Assumptions and reasons for the need for female leaders in universities</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Practices and cultural aspects that support or suppress female leadership?</b>  <i>Specification: to explore current practices in terms of female leadership in higher education within faculties or schools, diversity, and inclusion, opportunity to participate and lead programs/events/conferences,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the current practices that support female leadership in universities?</b>  <i>Probe: Do females work at leadership positions in universities? If yes, then what kinds of tasks are they taking care of?</i></li> </ul>	<p>20 mins</p> <p>25 mins</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the cultural aspects that support female leadership in the university?</b> <i>Probe: Do females work at leadership positions in the university? If yes, then what kinds of tasks are they taking care of?</i></li>   <li>• <b>What are the current practices that suppress female leadership in universities?</b> <i>Probe: Do females face a tough time rendering services at leadership positions in universities? If yes, then what are those practices that suppress females to take aside from leadership roles?</i></li>   <li>• <b>What are the cultural aspects that suppress female leadership in the university?</b> <i>Probe: Do females face a tough time rendering services at leadership positions in the university? If yes, then what are those practices that suppress females to take aside from leadership roles?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance of female leaders?</b> <i>Specification: the environment in higher education, work dynamics, social, cultural, and religious aspects, capabilities to handle the leadership role in higher education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do people accept female leaders in universities?</b> <i>Probe: How and why?</i></li>   <li>• <b>How do male workers perceive the female role as a</b></li> </ul>	
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	<p><b>leader in the universities?</b></p> <p><i>Probe: If perceived positively, then ask why?</i></p> <p><i>If perceived negatively, then ask why?</i></p>	
<p>RQ3: To what extent does succession planning is contributing to the advancement of female leaders in Saudi Arabian universities?</p>	<p><b>Succession planning in terms of what, how, and why?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: to know the level of understanding of people about succession planning; in business organizations and higher education; Definition and practical know-how about succession planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Does the university have a specific process for identifying and developing new leaders who can replace old leaders when they leave, retire or die?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Do universities have succession planning? How will you define succession planning, and what are important things that should be part of succession planning in the universities?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How are future or top management positions are chosen to lead in the universities?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Components of succession planning in the universities.</i></p> <p><b>Female Succession Planning in terms of what, how, and why?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: to know the level of understanding of people about female succession planning; in business organizations and higher education; Definition and practical know-how about female succession planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Does/How female staff is included in the process</b></li> </ul>	<p>30 mins</p>

	<p><b>of choosing the next dean/vice chancellor/president?</b></p> <p><i>Probe: We would like to see how female staff are included either as a panel for the succession planning/ candidates/ mentors/ coaches in the process of developing future bosses/top management of the universities.</i></p> <p><b>Development of female succession planning?</b></p> <p><i>Specification: to know acceptance level to execute female succession planning, key steps involved in the development of female succession planning in higher education; to know challenges and overcome in execution of female succession planning in higher education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the challenges to nurturing female leaders in the universities?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: What are the hurdles they face to adopting succession planning in the universities?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How can the university develop a process for female staff to be fully considered in the succession planning in the universities?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Probe: Organize a workshop to design university-specific design for female succession planning, deal with people perceptions via promoting a culture of female leaders, a consensus of senior management to engage female talents in a leadership role as a part of succession planning</i></p>	
	<b>Total duration</b>	92 mins

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Dahlan, Dina; Omar, Rosmini; Kamarudin, Suzilawati; Nasar, Asim (2021) A systematic review of succession planning in higher education. *International Journal of Advanced and Applied Sciences*, 8(12)

Dahlan, D.; Omar, R.; Kamaruddin, S.; and Mohammadi, P. (2021) Female Leadership in Saudi Arabia's Higher Education: Exploring the Challenges and Barriers. *Review of International Geographical Education (RIGEO)*, 11(12)