

**The challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi Arabian women
leaders in education during a period of rapid change in the
Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia**

by

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**A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

WESTERN SYDNEY
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KEYWORDS

Women leaders in education, change theory, culture and religion, gender order, globalisation.

DEDICATION

I originate from the birthplace of Islam - Saudi Arabia. In this conservatively religious society women perform three roles - daughter, wife and mother. However, thanks to my parents who instilled in me a love of learning and pursuit of knowledge, I yearn for more than a housebound life. Their good intentions were also supported by their actions: they encouraged me to travel widely and fulfil the dream of honouring them, and myself, by pursuing a PhD. Their unending support and encouragement equipped me with the emotional strength to achieve my goals. In addition to thanking my family, I also want to give special thanks to my adorable daughters “Hob and Smo”, who have been very patient with their mother during a Long journey that includes many difficulties and challenges.

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi Arabian women leaders in education at a time of rapid change in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As one of the largest oil-exporting countries in the world, Saudi Arabia has benefited from an insatiable global demand for oil but has also been impacted by rapid changes, which started in the 1970s as a result of the oil revenues. Change has permeated all aspects of political and economic life in Saudi Arabia with transformative social effects, not least a growing demand for gender equality, in what was hitherto a deeply conservative country. However, with the realisation that it cannot rely on oil revenues indefinitely, Saudi Arabia has begun to invest in the development of human capital, including women's participation in the labour market, which is crucial in this process, leading to a debate about their importance in the development of society. Nonetheless, the changes have given rise to conflicts and contradictions between men and women in Saudi Arabia, not least because of Saudi society's tribal and conservative, patriarchal culture.

Dialectical change theory is used in this study to explain the effects of change and the overlapping debates that permeate Saudi society, including the struggle between progressives and conservatives, and the obstacles created by wider social transformations sparking overdue debates about the imperative for societal change. In addition to dialectical change theory, this study draws conceptually on the theorisations of gender, specifically patriarchy and cathexis, to illuminate the processes through which interpersonal gendered social relations between men and women are structured within Saudi culture and society.

The research employed a qualitative research methodology in order to develop an understanding of the experiences of Saudi Arabian women as leaders in single sex Secondary Education schools. The study elicited data through a series of semi-structured interviews with 16 women

in leadership roles specializing in different academic fields, including English, Religious Education, Activities Education, Family Education and Physical Education, in four Secondary schools.

The study's findings support the claim that a relationship connects Saudi Arabia's legal patriarchal system, the politics of reputation and resistance to change. This relationship is the origin of many obstacles confronting Saudi women education leaders in both their professional and personal lives. Additionally, the study's findings highlight issues arising from the gendered division of labour in women's family lives, frequently leading to a sense of powerlessness among many women leaders, which they regarded as an obstacle to their career development. However, the study also revealed that women education leaders viewed the rapid economic and social change currently transforming Saudi Arabian society as a welcome, but a long-overdue positive development for themselves, their families, the Saudi education sector and Saudi society more broadly.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

Ever since I was a little girl, it was evident to me that I was being treated differently from my brothers. I always wondered why there was a set of expectations for my brothers, and a completely different set for me. As I grew older, I realized I wasn't alone in this struggle; in fact, I shared it with all Saudi girls. Our lives are restricted in many ways; a Saudi girl cannot go out without a direct male relative or driver as she is not allowed to drive, and if she were to travel, she has to have written consent from her guardian. What I personally battled with the most was the idea that I couldn't major in engineering at home, as it was against state-policy for a woman to enter such a major, and so I opted to major in Education. This situation was a struggle. To this day I cannot comprehend the status-quo or accept it at face-value. These feelings motivated me to choose the topic "The challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi women leaders in Education at a time of rapid change".

(Najla AL-Ghamdi)

Introduction

The involvement of Saudi Arabian citizens in the events of 9/11, symbolized by the fact 15 of the 19 alleged hijackers were Saudis, drew unwelcome attention to the kingdom, and the education system which seemingly promoted the alleged pilot's fundamentalism. This provoked a number of foreign and local media organizations to demand the critical evaluation of the religion-based education systems in Saudi Arabia (Bronson and Coleman, 2005). Following the assumption of power by King Abdullah in 2005, the kingdom embarked on modification of the country's education systems, aiming to improve the situation he inherited. Moreover, he strongly supported women's presence at high levels of governance such as appointing a woman as the assistant Minister of Education and facilitating woman representation in the unelected parliament "Majlis Al-Showra" and participation on municipal councils (Abdul Ghafour, 2009). Al-Darweesh (2003) focused on the heads of public schools in Saudi Arabia as key people whose support plays a vital role in bringing about positive change in Saudi education systems. Sywelem and Witte (2013) note that the Saudi Universities Law,

the Labour and Workers Law, and the Civil Service Law treat women and men equally in terms of the roles and responsibilities of leaders, such as recruitment, salary, professional development, training and employment in different sectors, including the education sector, on the condition that men and women abide by the Shari'a law,¹ on which the Saudi constitution is based. Nonetheless, there are several drawbacks in the implementation of such laws because in practice these laws have not been completely enforced. There is a mixture of local traditions and norms, principles and social beliefs that emanate from a patriarchal system and act as a barrier and challenge for women's empowerment in education and employment. These factors have been linked with gender inequality: the traditional roles of men and women in Saudi society favour men over women. (Al-Subaie & Jones, 2017). For instance, although there are only women employees on the Supervisory Bureau for Women's Education in each province and district of Saudi Arabia, women do not contribute to the decision-making processes in relation to policy-making, at the government's highest levels.

Women employees on the Supervisory Bureau for Women's Education supervise the orientation, inspection and direction of the primary, intermediate and secondary girls' education. All the Education departments have to report to the General Manager of Educational Affairs, who leads the office in every region and further reports to the Minister of Education; both of these senior roles are always occupied by a male. The highest level that women are employed is Assistant General Manager of Educational Affairs.

In many advanced economies there has been a rapid increase in the proportion of women occupying executive positions with a significant increase of 5% in a single year; from 24% in 2018, to 29% in 2019. As a result, men and women are now in competition at work. At the

¹ Shari'a law: Shari'a is an Arabic word that literally means 'the way'. In an Islamic context it refers to the way to salvation. Shari'a law are Islamic principles which, when followed, help Muslims to live a moral and ethical life within a just society. Included in its legal precepts are rules concerning economic affairs and the conduct of business. The basis of Shari'a are Quranic verses, sayings of the Prophet (hadith) and the practices of the 'Rightly Guided Caliphs' which are the four rulers who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad (Hamdan, 2005).

same time, Saudi women have had to endure gender bias within Saudi culture, at a personal level, and within their workplace, at a personal and professional level. Accordingly, there are many factors that have had an impact on women's professional competence, and these have held them back from being effective managers and have impacted on their career development (Skaggs et al., 2012). Whereas the Saudi government has requested men and women researchers to investigate the effects of male dominated senior leadership, there are still ground-level problems with persistent inequality between men and women. Research has identified that Saudi women leaders consider that they are disempowered by the oppressive and limiting operation of various manifestations of gender bias in their working lives (Rehman & Alhaisoni, 2013).

Against this backdrop, this research aims to make an important contribution to knowledge, by analysing women leaders' experiences in secondary schools in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, this study will examine how women negotiate family expectations alongside the demands of their professional roles. In the context of rapid change in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia, this study will attempt to provide a critical understanding of the opportunities and challenges that women leaders in education experience.

1.1 Justification and rationale for the research

At the time when this research was conducted (2015), Saudi Arabia's blueprint for the future, Saudi Vision 2030 was having a transformational effect on the kingdom, both economic and social. Included in the ongoing modernization plan are several initiatives which have the potential to empower Saudi women. Within the wide-ranging and all-encompassing programme there are reforms which exceed anything the kingdom has witnessed previously. For example, there are numerous opportunities for women's empowerment. Included in the reform is a commitment to raise the level of participation by women in leadership roles. As this is a current

and ongoing issue within Saudi Arabia and the final destination for women remains unreached, I feel compelled, as a Saudi woman to support Saudi women and Vision 2030's goals. Until now the professional leadership potential of Saudi women has been limited by the conservative nature of society, so we should now take advantage of these new opportunities. I intend to discuss the insights and challenges which women are dealing with in this changing paradigm and I will also discuss the continuing limitations faced by women leaders in defining their professional identities. While difficulties remain, the spotlight shines most brightly on the recent opportunities which are helping women rise to educational leadership positions in both a professional and social context during this time of rapid change.

This study will investigate those challenges by means of research questions, which will be outlined in the next section.

1.2 Research context

"Everyone knows that a leader's most important role is to lead change"

(Bridges, 2003, p. 154)

King Abdullah has announced that Saudi Arabia would reform its educational system (Khalil and Karim, 2016). Moreover, Mohammed bin Salman has stated that Saudi society will increase prosperity and make progress in line with Vision 2030² (Pellegrino, 2018). Saudi women leaders consider that these proposals could help to reform their work and improve their lives. However, leaders cannot succeed if they are surrounded by other difficulties and they cannot negotiate the challenges without having a range of opportunities. This leads to the need to understand the challenges and opportunities in Saudi Arabia for women leaders in a society where women are traditionally constructed in relation to the domestic sphere.

² Saudi Vision 2030 is an official master plan released in 2015 aiming to diversify Saudi Arabia's economy away from oil dependence and to modernise the kingdom. Parts of its strategy include health, education, infrastructure, recreation and tourism (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016).

1.3 Research question

What challenges and opportunities do women leaders in education face at a time of rapid change in KSA?

To answer this question four sub-questions are asked including:

1.3.1 Supporting sub-questions

1. What is the influence of culture on the professional and personal lives of women leaders?
2. Why do women teachers want to become leaders?
3. How do government education policies shape the experiences of women leaders?
4. How do women leaders negotiate the opportunities and challenges in their professional and personal lives?

Supporting Sub-questions

1. What is the influence of culture on the professional and personal lives of women leaders?

The question will examine important facets of culture and religion and their effect on educational leadership. Until the 1950s, Saudi Arabian girls were denied the right to an education under the false claim that this was against the teachings of Islam. In modern times, however, Islamic scholars have increasingly shown that Islam does not forbid the education of girls. On the contrary, education is required for all Muslims, both men and women (Allam, 2018). To begin to understand the position of women in Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to determine to what degree gender roles and expectations are still shaped by Islamic values and traditional customs originating in ancient (and pre-Islamic) Bedouin³ practices. As with all cultures, contemporary Saudi culture is the product of historic inputs which Clifford Geertz

³ Bedouin is the term which describes desert dwelling nomadic tribes that made up 80% of the kingdom's original population. Following the discovery of oil in 1938, Bedouins moved to urban centres in great numbers for employment, education and what they perceived to be a better life (Al Ghathami, 2004). By 2013 Saudi Arabia's desert population had declined to 2% and village population slightly less than 10% (Central Department of Statistic and Information, 2013).

(2011, as cited in Alexander), describes as a “cultural system” blending religious, kinship, legal and political elements; each of which constitutes and is constituted by others. However, as time passed, the cultural system in Saudi Arabia has started facing in a different new direction. This topic will be discussed later, showing how the opposition to girls' education has faded and turned into support for it. Evidence shows that more women (551,000) than men (513,000) are registered as undergraduates (Central Department of Statistics and Information, Saudi Arabia, 2018). Also, it is increasingly apparent that mothers and fathers encourage their daughters to study, even if that involves studying overseas (Taylor & Albasri, 2014). The discussion of this emerging situation aims therefore to illuminate the extent of the influence of culture and religion on women’s educational leadership.

2. Why do women teachers want to become leaders?

Alharthi & Woollard (2014) confirmed that Saudi women are now more educated than ever before. In fact, many of them hold university degrees. They have reached a point where they are confident that they can improve the level of education in women only schools. Accordingly, they aim to meet the new educational needs of Saudi girls in a rapidly changing society (Al-Ahmadi, 2011). According to Ministry of Higher Education (2013) the Saudi women want to have a participatory role in all aspects of society, allowing them to contribute to their nation’s economic goals, social, and cultural development. Evidence that women aim to take professional roles could be associated with their increased confidence in the opportunities afforded by a more equitable society (Al-Ahmadi, 2011).

3. How do government education policies shape the experiences of women leaders?

Ever since the government approved girls' education in the late 1950s, all related decisions and regulations have been implemented in line with the MoE’s policy. As the absolute monarch, the king is in charge of government policy on education, and the state attaches a great deal of

importance to education (increasingly girls' education) while taking care not to contradict social norms and cultural conventions. Therefore, this question attempts to investigate existing policies and consider their impact on women leaders' opportunities and challenges. Moreover, in the last twenty years, there has been progress on gender equality focused education policies. For example, the appointment of Norah Al Faiz as the Deputy Minister of Education for Girls' Affairs played a major role in furthering women educational leadership. Opposition to girls' education from certain segments of the population followed, largely resulting from fear that boys and girls would be mixed in schools. However, schools and universities in KSA only provide single sex education for boys and girls, respectively, and it is important to understand how this segregation shapes what is possible for the women educational leaders in this study.

4. How do women leaders negotiate the opportunities and challenges in their professional and social lives?

As patriarchy is still deeply rooted within the Saudi community, progressive initiatives are often resisted because they are considered as potential threats to the established gender order. Nevertheless, there are now heated debates about the importance of equality between men and women in KSA which, with time, could develop into real opportunities for change. However, Saudi women leaders are limited in their capacity to negotiate change within the community as it is culturally impermissible for them to challenge systems that are controlled by men (Le Renard, 2014). However, as women make more use of social media and become more technologically skilled, women leaders improve their opportunities for change and improvement.

1.4 Significance of the study

Due to the paucity of studies that have investigated the role of women in the Saudi Arabian labour market in general and in leadership roles in education in particular, the originality of this study rests on its focus on gender equity in leadership in education in KSA. According to

Chapter 1: Introductory Overview

Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco (2010) despite the move to improve the education of women by government, several researchers have found that gender inequality in Saudi Arabia has been neglected. It is important to mention that there was found to be a significant lack of empirical evidence and Arab references, especially those which reflect the voices of women leaders. Additionally; this research aims to explain how Saudi social norms and cultural conventions are reflected in the opportunity structures and challenges faced by Saudi women leaders in education. The research will analyse the implications of these opportunities and issues with a view to informing policy and practice in KSA.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

Introduction

For any research project it is crucial to understand its context. Accordingly, this Chapter begins by describing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in terms of its history and geography. The focus then shifts to an examination of the most significant changes that have occurred on modern times, as these will illuminate one of the main concerns of this project, which is to examine how women's lives are subject not only to culture, religion, social codes and traditions, but also to changes brought about by modernization and globalization. More specific discussion focuses on the system of education in Saudi Arabia and the role of personal and professional development for women in particular. One of the key policy documents, "Vision 2030", which set out a transformational strategic plan for the nation's development, will be explored with specific reference to the idea of a new vision for women.

2.1 General background of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Geographically, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the largest country in western Asia, occupying approximately 80% of the Arabian (Al-Jazeera) peninsula. The country's landmass is divided into five historic regions that predate the modern kingdom. For administrative purposes the state is divided into 13 provinces which are further divided into 113 Governorates (Gerges, 2010). According to the Central Department of Statistics and Information in Saudi Arabia (2018) in 2018 Saudi Arabia's estimated population was 33.3 million, 33% of them are foreigners, a 22.9% increase on the 27,136,977 recorded in the kingdom's last census in 2010. The state's population has almost doubled since the First Gulf War, increasing by 97.1% from the 16,948,388 recorded in 1992. In 1955 the kingdom's population was 3,558,155, up from the estimated 2.4 million when the kingdom was first established in 1932. Saudi Arabia's rapid population growth has led to an increase in demand for public education. Saudi Arabia is an

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Islamic state, with the Holy Qur'an as the nation's constitution and Arabic as its official language. English is widely used in business and education and is the nation's unofficial language of commerce. Owing to the country's native population belonging to various related Arab tribes, all sharing a common faith, Saudi Arabia's culture is essentially homogenous (Al-Seghayer, 2005). Despite this, some Saudi Arabian citizens do not have tribal backgrounds and trace their ancestry to migrants from neighbouring Arab countries. Migrants have been primarily attracted to Makkah, Jeddah and the country's industrial powerhouse; the oil rich Eastern Province, where demand for foreign workers is highest. Many of these workers also brought their families, made permanent homes for themselves and, in many cases, received Saudi Arabian citizenship and became immersed in Saudi culture (Al-Garni, 2012). Having considered the general features of Saudi Arabia, the next section considers more recent aspects of change.



Figure 2.1: Map of Saudi Arabia (Al-Dhuwaihi, 2011)

2.2 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and change

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been impacted by rapid changes which started in the 1970s as a result of the oil revenues. Change permeated most aspects of political and economic life in Saudi Arabia, with transformative social effects in what was hitherto a conservative country. It has shifted from being a collection of poor nomadic tribes to a rich urbanised country (North & Tripp, 2009). In addition, technology is helping this trend: people in Saudi Arabia can see the world through satellite dishes and wider, super-fast internet access. All of these enable Saudi society to encounter different countries' and cultural views, not only those of neighbouring Arab nations, but also those of Western states (Al Rasheed, 2015). These influences have not only had an impact on Saudi culture, but also influenced the education system, which has changed a great deal, particularly for women, as they now have various opportunities to continue their studies and to have jobs. Recently, the number of Saudi women who graduated from university is greater than that for men (Al-Saleh, 2009). Furthermore, the government encourages women to study abroad and provides them with facilities and scholarships throughout their studies. For example, the Ministry of education (MoE) provides medical care and financial management education for women and their families when they are studying abroad, in order to give women a greater chance of achieving the ministry's goal of developing the Saudi educational system in general (Ministry of Education, 2015). However, although the recent change in the guardianship law in the decrees of 2 August 2019 is evidence of progress towards equality (Graham-Harrison, 2019), women's roles in the workplace as well as their daily lives are constrained and still governed by decisions taken by men (Celikten, 2005). There are many reasons for women in Saudi Arabia generally not enjoying high professional positions. One reason is that there is a general consensus in Saudi society that the purpose of women's education is to prepare them to be worthy mothers and wives and, to some extent, prepare them for the types of jobs that are deemed to belong to the feminine nature, such as teaching or certain

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medical specializations (Hamdan, 2005). Al-Zarah (2008) asserts that the traditional thinking about women's education is rooted in tribal conceptions of gender roles and expectations, which by and large continue to influence Saudi societal view of women, so many difficulties that face Saudi women are caused by the Saudi traditional culture. The images below show how many aspects of Saudi Arabia have changed over time from 18th century to 21th century (Gerges, 2010).

Saudi Arabia between past and present



Image 1 the Capital of Saudi Arabia during the 18th century which was known by Najd (Gerges



Images 3 and 4 These photos show the Saudi capital "Riyadh" after the discovery of oil (Al-Yousef, 2016).



Image 2 show the trips, nomadic lifestyles in Riyadh



Chapter 2: Background



Image 5 Displays the first commercial oil discovery, made in 1938 (Gerges ,2010).



Image 6 Shows Saudi Aramco in 2019 (Li, 2019).



Images 7 and 8 Jeddah port activity in 1950 (Gerges ,2010).



Image 9 Jeddah port which is the most important port in KSA (Al-Yousef, 2016).



Chapter 2: Background



Image 10 Kaaba in Mecca city, this photo was taken in the late 19th century (Gerges ,2010).



Image 11 These photos show Kabab in 2019 (Al-Yousef, 2016).

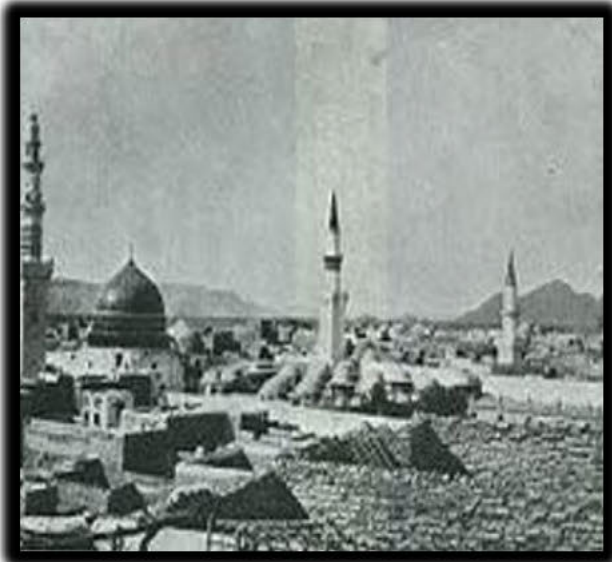


Image 12 an old photo of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina city 1908 (Gerges ,2010).



Image 13 Recently photo of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina city (Al-Yousef, 2016).

Chapter 2: Background

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932. As shown in (*Image 1*) a tribe comprises several kindred clans owing allegiance to a shared sheikh. In reaching his decisions, the sheikh was dependent on wise counsel coming from a tribal council that was derived from clan leaders. Tribes typically laid claim to their geographical areas called dirahs (Gerges, 2010). One year after the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, geologists discovered a geological formation indicating the existence of oil (*Image 5*). Excited by the possibilities of their find, within four months geologists transported their prospecting equipment by camel to the site before trucks and modern machinery arrived (*Image 2*). After several unsuccessful drills Dammam, proved commercial, producing 1500 barrels per day (*Image 3*). By 1945 annual production had reached 500,000 barrels. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) reported that daily production in April 2019 had topped 9.807 million barrels (*Image 6*) (Al -Yousef, 2016). Therefore, since discovering the oil, the Kingdom has undergone many transformations within a short period; it transformed from a desert country into an advanced country. Saudi Arabia's infrastructure has undergone continuous development since the kingdom's foundation. When King Faisal came to the throne in 1964, he launched an aggressive building programme to modernise the kingdom's infrastructure. The king began by formalising the kingdom's financial and budgetary policies, overseen by the Central Planning Organisation. In 1970 this body prepared the first of several five-year plans which emphasised defence, transport, education, and utilities. Included in the infrastructure plans were nationally important construction projects building or upgrading power stations, airports, port roads, and telecommunication networks (Al-Dhuwaihi ,2011). Through infrastructural and manpower innovation, the infrastructure in the kingdom has experienced the world's second-best improvement in its global road safety (*Image 4*). Moreover, the ports (*Image 9*) which established achieves productivity rates comparable to major rivals. As a result, the port is well positioned to fulfil its objectives outlined in Vision 2030 to link Europe, Asia and Africa in the single Jeddah Islamic Port logistics hub.

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Jeddah plays a pre-eminent role in promoting Saudi Arabia's maritime transport and logistics centre (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is also famous for the religion of Islam and the home of the holiest of Islam in Mecca and Medina. The King of Saudi Arabia is called the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. Saudi Arabia's royal family takes its duties protecting them very seriously. For example, in 2015 the Saudi Arabian General Authority for Statistics reported 95,853,017 pilgrims had performed hajj over the last 50 years, with 54,465,253 being in the last 25 years and 23,796,977 in the last ten (*Image 11 and 13*). Vision 2030 outlines a plan to prepare for 10 million annual pilgrims by the year 2050 (General Authority for Statistics Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019).

2.3 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and globalization

The previous section noted the historical development of Saudi Arabia, with a focus on the impact of oil and the transition to a more modern culture. At the same time, the world has also transitioned, with the huge increase in global trade. In order to understand how the KSA meets the challenges of globalization it is essential to appreciate how the Middle East became actively involved in globalisation. Owing to shared cultural, religious and linguistic heritages the 'Arab world' is routinely regarded as a single region (Baha et al., 1976). While there is a degree of truth to this, any understanding of the Arab world is incomplete without appreciating the significant differences that exist within Arab nations and their differing attitudes towards engaging with the non-Arab world. Owing to the importance of religion to Arabs, it is important to recognize that different countries have different beliefs and practices that are expressed both publicly (through policy) and individually at a social level. This influences how governments and people relate to the non-Arab world, and particularly the West (Saidi, 2003). Henry (2003) claimed that countries in the region were at a crossroads, depending on their level of either engagement with or resistance to globalization. Baha and McIrwin (1976) observed, more than a generation ago, that Arab countries sought to achieve improved living standards, health

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services and raising incomes for their citizenry through industrialization and modernization. While globalization may be regarded as conducive to achieving these economic objectives, substantial proportions of many countries' populations and policy makers perceived it as a potential threat to traditional values and beliefs (Henry and Springborg, 2010). The popularity of globalization (in terms of the openness of commodity markets and the availability of consumer goods, new technology and social media) across the region varies owing to different perceptions of it. While some regions have seen obvious material benefits from globalization (such as Dubai), a majority of Arabs were doubtful and openly resisted it (Rabba and McLean, 2002), resenting the imposition of Western processes and values. Some segments of Arab society are displeased with the rapid changes that have taken place within their countries and region and have voiced their opposition to globalization (Elbadawi, 2005). While widespread disenchantment with globalization exists across the Arab World, there are places where it is positively embraced. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain for example, the material benefits of globalization are apparent everywhere and the local populations show strong support for it (Noland and Pack, 2004). Several Arab scholars have recently argued that globalism came to the Arab world after colonialism, and that following postcolonialism it was relatively easy for Arabs to accept a new lifestyle. Saudi Arabia has never been colonised, however British colonialism impacted upon its neighbours in Bahrain, Yamen, Kuwait and Qatar, which resulted in English words being added to the Arabic language. Moreover, globalism has occurred due to Hajj, when millions of Muslims from across the world descend upon Saudi Arabia to perform their prayers (Mir, 2019). However, Saudi Arabia is at the epicentre of globalisation because of the importance of oil to world economies. While Saudi Arabia has undeniably been transformed by the benefits of globalization, the country remains traditional and resistant to social change. Saudi citizens who are suspicious of change are typically conservative and support isolating Saudi Arabia

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from influences from the outside world. Consequently, Saudis can be perceived to be slow to change, particularly in the current digital age (Alnahdi, 2014).

According to Al Rasheed (2015), despite the KSA's traditionalism, the Kingdom has gradually changed. The process has been slow and when it concerns issues regarded as sensitive or affecting religious values, such as women's equality, educational reform and religious institutions – it has proceeded cautiously. To improve the acceptance of change, initiatives are introduced slowly and typically come with a 'sugar-coating', perhaps to make reforms more palatable to traditional men. The incremental pace of change was sped up with the accession of King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz in 2005. During his 10 year reign the speed of administrative and social change has notably accelerated. While ordinary citizens' lives changed, the late king's endeavours concentrated on promoting change from the top-down, through the country's elites: "Many Saudis had urged Abdullah to initiate change on social, educational, youth and economic issues. King Abdullah will be remembered as someone who encouraged the wave of change." According to Alnahdi (2014), many commentators have expressed the opinion that globalization represents a long-term threat to Arab countries from an economic perspective. They point out that possessing abundant natural resources is not enough to develop economically. Globalization has meant that Arab states are economically scrutinised and typically found lacking from an environmental perspective and in terms of manpower skills, gender inequality and human rights. Ordinary Saudi citizens are increasingly becoming aware that oil revenues are insufficient to sustain economic expansion and that dependence on carbon fuels has negatively impacted attempts at developing economic diversification. It would appear that globalization has not aided in developing non-oil industries in Saudi Arabia.

Globalization has also been a mixed blessing economically, socially and politically. In this regard, Power (2000, p. 152) points out that:

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Globalization brings with it a mix of opportunities and threats for every nation's culture and educational system. On the one hand, the removal of barriers and introduction of new technologies create new possibilities for intercultural exchange and dialogue, but on the other, we face the danger of a new global imperial regime in which political, economic and communication of the dominant culture is unilaterally favoured over all others.

An influential evaluation of globalization was developed by Arjun Appadurai in 1990, which is more nuanced in its analysis of various perspectives. His ground-breaking article noted that 'The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization' (1990, p. 295). However, he found that left- and right-wing ideological analyses failed to take account of the complexities of globalization and the contradictions within capitalism. These observations led him to develop five 'perspectival constructs': '(a) technoscapes; (b) mediascapes; (c) technoscapes; (d) finanscapes; and (e) ideoscapes' (1990, p296). A main feature of the ethnoscape is the movement of people and the disruption of traditional social ties as people move from village to city, or from one nation to another, in pursuit of work, education and career progression. The 'technoscape' includes both traditional technology as well as the flow of information. In addition, Appadurai noted the velocity of flow (p. 297); it is evident that this aspect has increased exponentially in the last thirty years. Moreover, the global configuration of capital and the flow of money ('finanscape') have also accelerated at an incredible rate. In addition, it is evident that the 'medias cape' also now overlaps with global investment and technology. To some extent, the model could contribute to the analysis in this research, exploring how tribal and traditional culture is being disrupted and challenged by life and work experiences that are more urban and subject to international influence. In addition, the roles of the technoscape and the mediascape are increasingly evident. In Saudi Arabia, for example, there is widespread use of social media and the influence of international education cannot be underestimated, especially for people pursuing higher level management careers. Nonetheless, the main aspects of the 'ideoscape',

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which Appadurai summarises as a range of key words associated with the Enlightenment (p. 299) have only had limited impact on the political culture of the Saudi nation. Appadurai notes that deterritorialisation is another feature of the modern world's transition to global flows; at the same time, he also introduces his key concept of the 'disjuncture' (p. 301) between various 'scapes' that occur alongside various disruptive fluid forces. In this regard, Saudi Arabia's oil wealth could be understood as an example of how production and exchange are interrelated across various 'scapes', bringing with them opportunities and tensions between traditional and emergent cultural formations.

Globalization has undoubtedly benefited a majority of people in terms of education and learning. For a long time, education has been perceived as a weak link contributing to slow development in the Arab world. Wheeler (1966) stated that until Arab states address deficiencies in their education, they would continue to lag behind developing countries. He argued that advanced economies are not possible without advanced educational systems. Rabba and McLean (2002) claim that supporters of globalization believe that one of its greatest benefits is likely to be education. They argue that low levels of education are a principal cause of stagnant economic growth across the Arab world. If these observations are correct, then it would seem logical that improved education across the Arab world will lead to future economic growth.

Globalization also opens up new forms of learning through technology, as evidenced by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) becoming more prevalent in schools and tertiary institutions across the Arab world. Saudi Arabia's adoption of modern educational systems, which are a product of globalization, promises to improve the quality of educational outcomes by incorporating aspects of the international curriculum and syllabus. Globalization, through its positive influence on pedagogy, has helped match internationalised educational

standards and has the potential of raising the performance of students in Saudi Arabia (El-Hawat, 2007). Smith and Abouammoh (2013) believe that globalization in the sphere of education will drive change and benefit the entire KSA economy by standardising learning irrespective of students' geographical location, age or socio-economic position.

2.4 Educational provision in Saudi Arabia

While Saudi Arabia's education sector has incorporated many aspects of contemporary education, its overriding distinguishing characteristic is the primacy of promoting Islamic values among its pupils at all levels of education (Al-Hamed et al., 2007). All permanent residents of Saudi Arabia are entitled to free public education which is delivered using a standardized curriculum approved by the MoE. Consequently, all state school students use the same textbooks and follow similar lesson plans irrespective of their province of residence (Al-Hamed et al., 2007). As well as state schools, the nation has a substantial number of privately operated schools which are at liberty to develop their own curricula; however, in order to obtain government subsidies, they are required to teach Arabic language and Religious Education as core subjects.

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of education (MoE) oversees and implements the delivery of education through two administrations; one for boys and a parallel one for girls. While there have been discussions about introducing co-education in state primary schools, all government operated schooling is single sex. Teachers and administration staff, as well as students, are similarly single sex⁴ (Al-Sulami, 2019).

Saudi Arabia's pre-tertiary education is delivered in three stages; primary (six years), intermediate (three years), and secondary (three years), beginning at the child's sixth birthday.

⁴ In Saudi Arabia education is gender segregated with boys taught in boys-only schools by male teachers and girls taught in girls-only schools by woman teachers (Fareh, 2010).

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Primary and intermediate education is compulsory, and a majority of students decide to continue to secondary education, with higher or further education becoming more popular (Al-Hamed et al., 2007; Al-Eisa, 2010).

Saudi Arabia's MoE (2015) claims to recognize the need for reviewing the nation's education and it states that it has been reforming both its curricula and management of its human resources. Indeed, the MoE has revised its objectives with a view to transform school curricula. Of particular priority has been the secondary school curricula, as it is recognized that during this stage in a student's personal development their character is perceived to be shaped or set. Education policy summarizes the objectives of secondary education as developing the capabilities of students and recognizing and enhancing their skills, talents and scientific reasoning. The primary goal of secondary education is to equip students with skills that are relevant to an international job market and, where necessary, to encourage them to pursue this through further and higher tertiary education. Simultaneously, a student's education is enhanced in accordance with Islamic precepts while fostering patriotism towards the kingdom of their citizenship. Students are encouraged to recognize and appreciate their membership of the Arabic and Islamic worlds. The MoE's objectives were outlined in the late King Abdullah's Project to Develop General Education manifesto; *The Strategic Plan to Reform General Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, 2004). This document also outlined strategies to recognize and develop the capabilities of teachers and leaders, through a ranking process designed to promote best practice. Significantly, the professional development of the teaching profession was recognized as essential in economically and socially developing the nation (Ministry of Education, 2015). Saudi Arabia's Cultural Mission defines⁵ some of the objectives

⁵ Cultural Mission: The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM), implements Saudi national educational and training policies to provide our country with qualified individuals capable of achieving the country's goals of progress and development (Ministry of Education, 2015).

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of the country's educational policy as ensuring educational efficiency is improved in accordance with religious, economic and social norms that the kingdom has come to expect. Additionally, there is priority for all Saudi adults to be literate. To accomplish these goals, the kingdom's government has several agencies coordinating the planning, administration and implementation of appropriate educational policies (Lindsey, 2010). Moreover, the MoE claims to be promoting a new generation of both young men and women who are living examples of Islamic virtues not only in theory but in practice. To create good Muslim citizens of the kingdom, youth require knowledge and skills acquired in a nurturing society. The MoE believes this will enable Saudi youth to compete intellectually and scientifically on the global stage, and by doing so will ensure the kingdom can continue to grow and develop. The MoE believes these aspirations can become reality through the effective delivery of education, whose foundations lie in discovering students' potential and talents and stimulating them to develop their abilities (Ministry of Education, 2015). Accordingly, the next section discusses how training opportunities might be related to women leaders' personal and professional development.

2.5 The role of personal and professional development

Saudi Arabia's MoE has recognised that training is an essential activity required to transfer knowledge and shape modes of thinking; changing patterns of action leading to modifications in behaviour, skills, habits and abilities are required to improve the performance of educational employees. Ongoing training is regarded as essential in order that employees may reach their employers' desired goals.

Technology driven changes, which are taking place as a consequence of the digital era and economic transformations resulting from globalisation, are leading to a new set of managerial skills that are required for any type of institution, be it educational, social or commercial. Changes drive greater need for managerial proficiency. Equipping employees with necessary

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skills typically requires formal training in order to enable them to cope with technology or procedural change (Raikhan, 2014).

Within the educational sector, managers, administrators and head teachers need managerial and performance skills to enable them to advance their careers or demonstrate the aptitude to acquire them. Consequently, there is a need for continuous skill renewal or refresher training together with more advanced training to meet the needs of new technology, pedagogic approaches or educational techniques. Education reform and modernisation within the educational sector, requires ongoing training for the educators (Sultana, 2011).

Training for educators is not a new phenomenon; however, the application of modern scientific approaches to it began in Saudi Arabia in a systematic way only in the last decades of the twentieth century (Al-Thahabi, 1984). Since this time training for educational workers has become one of the most prominent functions within institutions and organisations. Various institutions have adopted professional development programmes to remain abreast of developments. Owing to the pressure to remain technologically current and abreast of global developments, training specialists are important players in the sector, keeping staff productive and efficient (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). Effective trainers are necessary for employees to reach these desired outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2018). Alyami (2016) identifies other benefits to educational staff training which include improved staff morale, improvements in both quality and quantity of service, reductions in workplace accidents and injuries, improved decision-making ability, reduced anxiety, stress and tension, improved staff cooperation and reduced conflicts, further opportunities for career promotion and advancement, improved work satisfaction and a greater willingness to communicate between levels of management. These benefits from training are both direct and indirect and make a material contribution towards improving outcomes. However, technology and training do not in themselves solve the wider

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and more protracted problem of gender inequality. Access to training might also be more difficult for women if it occurs outside normal working hours, at times when women might be heavily responsible for domestic and family duties that are not expected of their male colleagues. Having considered specific issues relating to personal and professional development the next section proceeds to examine the strategic context for transformational change that is outlined in the Saudi government's "Vision 2030", and how these development plans could have an impact on women.

2.6 Vision 2030: A new vision for women

Saudi Arabia's ambitious blueprint for the future, Vision: 2030, opens the door for Saudi women by granting equal educational opportunities for both women and men. As a consequence, women will have improved access to education and training provided by qualified experts at universities, tertiary institutions and vocational training centers. Part of Vision 2030 is the launch of an educational reform initiative for women that encourages them to seek higher diplomas in teaching and scientific research. This should enable Saudi Arabia to meet the intellectual and expertise requirements for its economy from within its own citizenry. According to Mohammed bin Salman, this component of Vision 2030 is designed to aid the diversification of the Saudi Arabian economy away from over-reliance on oil. By focusing on women, it is expected this will help to achieve the policy objective in order to meet desired social and economic transformations within the country (Pellegrino, 2018). Ultimately, it is a goal of Vision 2030 that Saudi Arabia's reliance on foreign manpower to run sections of the economy will be replaced by requisite skills and knowledge to participate fully in Saudi citizens; especially Saudi women. By increasing women participation rates in the Saudi workforce, it is anticipated this may reduce the requirement for foreign contract workers⁶. In

⁶ The Saudi government decided to allow women to work in shops, cafes and restaurants two years ago (Hameed, 2018).

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the past Saudi Arabia has invested more heavily in men than women, so by investing in all citizens, irrespective of their gender, this may improve the chances of success for the national economy. By developing human resources, in the form of women's employment skills, the entire economy can be developed. Upgrading women's skills begins with quality education. Currently Saudi Arabia's educational system encourages women to graduate from prestigious international universities and to join the workforce. By lifting the quality of the local educational system for women and girls across all disciplines and improving their access to quality education, the entire nation benefits. Educated women are more likely to successfully participate in the job market and participate in the country's political and social life. Educating women ultimately helps Saudi Arabia in preparing to meet the challenges of a less oil-centric future (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016). In line with Vision 2030 Saudi Arabia's MoE has initiated a leadership program designed to improve training and improve training and education standards. Women education leaders are encouraged to participate in career development courses both inside and outside Saudi Arabia in a bid to develop managerial skills. The ambition is to develop leadership capacity within the education sector by enhancing women leaders' qualifications with masters or doctoral degrees. The MoE is promoting this ambition by offering fully-funded scholarships at universities that are recognized for their scientific research (Naseem and Dhruv, 2017). In summary, Various aspects of Vision 2030 envisage improved opportunities for women to contribute to a more modern and more diversified economy and a less inequitable society.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the issues experienced by women in leadership roles at secondary schools in Al-Khobar Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; the aim is to understand the opportunities and the challenges they face. Change theory is the conceptual framework that guides this study. Literature relevant to this study includes a discussion of change theory with social, political, economic, and cultural change in Saudi Arabian society and how it relates to culture, patriarchy and gender. Since the study is concerned with leadership the literature related to women and leadership will be canvassed. The final section of this literature review will discuss the relationship between change theory and a gender analysis of women leaders in order to identify the gaps in research and to help identify the research questions relevant to this study.

3.1 Change theory

Understanding change theory is crucial to understanding the process that education reform in Saudi Arabia and Saudi society, in general, are undergoing. Burke (2017) argues that there are four theoretical frameworks for organizational change, as summarized by Van de Ven and Poole: life-cycle theory, evolutionary theory, teleological theory, and dialectical theory.

Phelps et al. (2007), quotes Burke's definition of life-cycle theory:

There are sequential stages of development over a certain period of time and that firms do not only grow in sizes but they 'mature' in their structures as they adapt to support their growing demands both internally and externally. Moreover, the life cycle has many appealing aspects as it describes a life cycle of 'non-living' organization or institution with organismic metaphors such as birth, maturity and death (p. 1).

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Evolutionary theory is the probabilistic, cumulative, and recurrent sequence of changes, selection, and then retention of traits (Burke, 2017). Although the meaning of evolution has changed over time, this term was increasingly used from the 17th and 18th centuries and was defined as the ‘development of a system over time’ (Bogen and Woodward, 1988). Hull (2010) stated that the meaning of evolution during the 19th century was converted to the ‘directional progression’ which was precisely referring to advancement and development in a positive way. The same meaning has affected the definition of evolution as a term in sociology; however, the frequency of usage has been different. Specifically, evolution occurs when logical progression and development in a positive way has led to elevated levels of maturity and experience. On the other hand, the teleological theory of change is a discontinuous and recurrent sequence of goal setting, implementation, and adaptation. In contrast, dialectic change involves conflict. According to Franke (1992, p.1), dialectic change theory is a discontinuous and recurrent sequence of confrontation, conflict and synthesis (Burke, 2017). According to Weston (2012, p.1)“ Dialectics is the general theory of how things come into existence, change, and die out. Dialectics concentrates on processes, relations, and systems, and maintains that the main causes of the change in processes, relationships or things are their internal conflicts “contradictions”. Moreover, “dialectics is a way of thinking that brings into focus the full range of changes and interactions that occur in the world” (Ollman, 2003, p.11).

Having reviewed theories of change, this study has selected Van de Ven and Poole’s definition of dialectical change theory to explain conflict and confrontation. This approach will involve studying the opportunities and challenges associated with successful leadership by women in Saudi Arabia. Critical consideration of the underlying conflicts and confrontations occurring in Saudi society between strong religious currents and the general population is essential.

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Saudi Arabia has undergone numerous changes and reforms since its formation in 1932. Most changes were gradual, with many taking months or even years to complete or produce an impact. Not all changes were successful or permanent, with several interruptions and reversals occurring in many social and economic spheres. Furthermore, not all changes were universally welcomed with many reforms provoking confrontations and conflicts. For example, Sakr's (2008) analysis of educational reforms within the six nations comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), stated that the educational reforms of Saudi Arabia are highly complicated compared to those of other Gulf nations for several reasons. Firstly, Saudi Arabia is heavily populated compared to other Gulf nations. Saudi Arabia's population in 2017 was approximately 31 million, with about 500,000 teachers. Thus, the replacement of unqualified staff and the shift to professional qualifications and evaluation has the potential to produce significant economic repercussions (General Authority for Statistics Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016). Secondly, Saudi Arabia's attempts to reform the curriculum is often met by resistance because of powerful religious currents. The intention to change and re-structure the curricula by the Saudi government in 2003 is a good example. This was referred to as a 'big jump' to improve the knowledge base of the economy and to elevate school program standards to international levels. You need a segue from this to the next section.

3.2 Education reform in Saudi Arabia

Education reform in Saudi Arabia has been a start-and-stop journey in large part due to a dominant societal tendency to conflate change in education with political revolution. For example, in Saudi Arabia the first group to demand the establishment of all-women schools faced great difficulty.

Al-Hamed (2005) indicated that the first person who helped bring education to women in Saudi Arabia was Princess Affat from the royal family who was the wife of the king's deputy at that

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time. She lived with her father in Turkey part of her life but returned to Saudi Arabia because she passionately believed education was very important for women. She opened her palace in order to teach women in secret and she brought four teachers from Palestine and two from Egypt who were called educators, not teachers, for fear of backlash from the community. However, a large group of men rejected this idea completely. A group of about 800 men decided to go to the king's palace in Riyadh in 1958 which led to delays in the establishment of single sex girls' schools for one year. King Saud refused to respond to these opposition groups again in the second year. As a result, in 1959, a decision was broadcast on the radio about the establishment of free girls' education (Al-Hamed, 2005).

In spite of all the efforts made by the MoE at that time, the modification of curricula was highly criticized by 150 of the nation's leading religious scholars, judges, and academic staff, claiming that Islam would be damaged as a result and Islamic studies might be seriously impacted and downgraded (Abu Taleb, 2005). Ben-Jbreen one of the prominent Islamic figures argued that due to educational curricula shaping the way religion is regarded in society, changes which diminish the centrality of Islam are unconstitutional. He also warned that the adoption of Western inspired pedagogies was inevitable due to the proposed changes (Abu Taleb, 2005). Attempts to change the curriculum have been met with opposition from segments of the public and religious institutions in recent decades, due to perceived threats to the integrity of the Saudi Arabian way of life. However, the Saudi Government has continued to take major steps to enhance the curriculum within this period.

Moreover, although recently the number of Saudi women who graduated from universities is greater than that of men, women's education reform remains an erratic process (Al-Saleh, 2009). Furthermore, lower academic achievement by women compared to men has been linked to perceived gender discrepancies which manifest as divergences from the traditional concepts

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of respective roles and expectations of males and women in Saudi society, typically skewed against women (Sywelem & Witte 2013). For instance, sports⁷ classes in Saudi Arabia are forbidden for girls studying in public education systems. Carroll and Little (2013) argued that although Saudi women have made significant gains in their pursuit of equal access to physical education with their male counterparts, they continue to lag behind men in attaining parity within acceptable institutional norms for personal development, health and physical wellbeing. This confirms that although the Saudi government has experienced remarkable growth in education over the past century, educational reform still faces several hurdles.

Demers (2007) posits that change is a period of discontinuity or disruption when revolution and transformation are considered. School leaders in Saudi Arabia have to sustain such disruptive and discontinuous periods for reforms to be realized. Will the present leaders in education possess the skills and knowledge for sustaining such disruptive periods? How will they sustain the momentum of transformation? And what do they have to understand and do to ensure the success of these reforms? With the challenges they currently face in Saudi Arabia in their roles as leaders, they need to be front and centre within the power structures implementing education reform.

The question now is how Saudi women leaders can turn their educational vision into reality? According to Sakr (2008), the history of education in Saudi Arabia consists of a bureaucratic legacy capable of impeding educational initiatives, and ideological conflicts which negatively impact educational innovation. The reason why attempts to reform education in Saudi Arabia have been unsuccessful is, in part, because the MoE, as the central authority and locus of power, is the sole decision maker of nearly all of the matters which relate to the national education

⁷ After the research had been completed there were further reforms in Saudi Arabia that opened up sport to women (Yee & Hubbard, 2019).

system including, but not limited to, devising course syllabuses, planning programs of study and related textbook contents, recruitment procedures, construction and development of schools, and so forth. The centralization of power can make reform attempts autocratic and time-consuming (Al-Aqeel, 2005). Moreover, the education system in Saudi Arabia does not have a clear long-term plan. It changes frequently with each replacement of education ministers. However, the leaders of educational reform, such as inspectors, should seek to understand their ongoing roles as change agents within the system (Mathis, 2010). The various educational reforms that have been described in this section are the context that woman leaders in education in this study negotiate.

3.3 Origins of organizational change in Saudi Arabia

The reform process can be dialectic, a discontinuous line of confrontation, conflict and synthesis. A case in point, Saudi Arabia started to recruit US citizens for the first time in 1979 when it first set up ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Company) to produce oil in Dhahran. Dhahran is a city located on the East coast of Saudi Arabia where the majority of US companies are based. It has a large American expatriate community made up of predominantly engineers and oil technicians who emigrated with their families from and other western countries to Saudi Arabia. This has led to the development of services and businesses including American-designed residential properties and educational and commercial complexes. As reported by Sultana (2011), 43% of oil sector employees comprised expatriates in 1975. Although Saudi women were not allowed to lift their Hijab (headscarf) while outdoors and were prohibited from driving cars, American women were not obliged to adhere to Islamic dress requirements and were permitted to drive cars and shop unescorted in malls. This led to demands by Saudi Arabian women for equal rights as those afforded to their Saudi Arabian resident American counterparts.

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In November 1979, the government of Saudi Arabia was unexpectedly threatened with the most spectacular challenge to its authority since the founding of the Kingdom in 1932. A group of religious followers of Imam Mahdi had arrived and seized Islam's holiest site in Mecca and comprehensively denounced the Saudi state and its institutions, claiming that they had deviated from Islam's true, original mission. While the revolt was short-lived a degree of political opposition evolved; it was based along pragmatic, political and elite lines, typically drawing inspiration from misunderstandings of religion (Hegghammer & Lacroix, 2007).

However, the social environment of Saudi Arabia was embroiled in a dilemma how to keep a balance between responding to demands for gender equality and preventing the erosion of traditional Saudi social conventions and religious values (Alomair, 2015). Preventing social and religious values from fading became a focus of attention, while simultaneously moving towards the redesign and reform of Saudi women's professional work environments.

The 2002 incident where 15 elementary school girls were burnt to death in Mecca re-emphasised the case in point. As broadcast by media in Saudi Arabia, the death toll would have been significantly lower if the religious police, called the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, had not interfered by preventing the firemen from responding to the emergency in a single sex girls' school, owing to the presumption that the female students and their teachers might not be wearing a Hijab (Ghitis, 2002). This tragic incident gave rise to public outrage and condemnations by authorities and Governors, and led to the formation of two organizations, namely the General Presidency for Girls' Education and the MoE. Prokop (2003) reported that the duties and responsibilities of the Saudi religious police and the General Presidency of Girls' Education were brought into question in both local and foreign media discussions. The merger is considered a prominent turning point in the mind-set of radical Islamic professionals who previously insisted that religious police contributed to women's

education supervision. There is also a great deal of external and internal factors such as globalization, modernization, development of communication and information technology, satellites, internet, liberalization, feminist movements and world organizations amongst others. Moreover, there is pressure from external players and economic factors steering Saudi Arabia towards elevating women's active participation in society which include prioritizing women's education, rising immigration in cities, urbanization and the visibility of foreign workers; these all comprise internal components triggering changes (Prokop, 2003). All of these factors have exerted a potent force which is changing Saudi society. However, at the same time these same influences created considerable conflict and confusion within the community. This topic will be discussed in more depth in the next section.

3.4 Saudi women leaders and their roles in organizations

Women leaders face significant challenges with educational reforms because, although they are nominally represented in the Saudi educational system, the key decisions are not made by them. Saudi women are not allowed to make meaningful contributions to the decision-making processes at government highest levels of educational policy-making. There are women employees in the Supervisory Bureau for Women's Education in each province and district of Saudi Arabia, whose responsibility it is to supervise the orientation, inspection and direction of primary, intermediate and secondary girls' education. However, they report to the General Manager of Educational Affairs – always a male, who has the ultimate say and reports directly to the Minister of Education. The highest rank that occupied by a woman is that of Assistant General Manager of Educational Affairs (Rehman & Alhaisoni, 2013). So how can they influence reforms at a strategic level, if they are not allowed to make decisions at operational levels of governance? To make a difference in women's situation, we must develop an understanding of their roles in organizations and how they are starting to change.

3.5 Changing organizations

What happens in the workplace is significantly determined by the organizational culture. This research is concerned with how women leaders experience work, and how the structure of the organization has an impact on them. At the same time, my research is concerned with the workplace as a site of change for women that presents them with challenges and opportunities.

When the organizational culture is an imperative area of change, either the values have to be modified or certain new values have to be formulated. In this respect, it is essential to understand whether there is congruence between Saudi women leaders' values and those of the institution that employs them. In a more general way, the theories of organizational change could help to shape the research questions and illuminate the discussion of the findings.

Various theories of organizational change have been developed. According to Burke (2017), for instance, there are four phases in the organizational process in which leaders fulfil the functions of their leadership roles. In Phase I, known as the prelaunch phase, vision is required for any organization. Every leader needs to reflect on his/her values, motives, and amounts to self-awareness. Performers see themselves as others actually see them to lead a successful change, the leaders have to be aware of their personal strengths and weaknesses. Self-awareness includes motives, achievement need, leadership, and their use of their power. The third area of self-reflection includes values consisting of proper alignment of the individual leader's needs with the values of the organizational culture. Burke (2017) also indicates that this phase requires examining the external environment and collecting data regarding the participants' needs; establishing the need for change, including the organization's cultural change; and providing clarity of vision and direction in the draft of a clear vision statement.

A clear vision statement for education has been provided for the development of education within the national plan in Saudi Arabia. For example, Islamic rules and thought are included

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in Saudi Arabia's education system's visions and missions (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016). As per the vision stated in Saudi Arabia's MoE, all students both men or women, are expected to be raised and trained to value the thoughts and practices embedded in Islamic education. In addition to the traditional emphasis on religion, the significance attached to international competitiveness has been linked with the education of Saudi youth, which implies a global dimension to the strategy. Moreover, the provision of high-quality education has been highlighted as contributing to the country's overall development through the creative spirit of action and the practical system of education. All of these policy objectives for education and training amount to promoting an idealistic spirit of instruction and edification (Our Vision) (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Saudi Arabia's current visionary aspirations, as outlined in Vision 2030, aim to complete an ambitious program of social reform by 2030 by establishing the entities necessary to realise their desired goals, which include contributing to improvements in the lives of Saudi Arabian young people, as well as securing advancements in medical research and social care systems (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016).

Vision 2030 was established in Saudi Arabia to enable us to study and challenge social standards around what it means to be a man or women in society, and to follow justice and equality for all, which should be essential facets of progress. Moreover, it was established that Saudi Vision 2030 and Globalisation is strongly linked to UN's Sustainable Development Goals and that Vision 2030 should fully take into account the UNDAF core programming principles such as human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment; sustainability, resilience, and accountability. Furthermore, according to Vision 2030, 17 goals from the Sustainable Development Goals were achieved as part of the analytical work, stimulating economic growth, maximizing the impact on gross domestic product, and value, with an aim to chart out a

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promising future for our Scholarship programs at a cost of USD 139.81 million (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016). Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in its attempts to make education accessible to all as it views education as the keystone for the overall advancement of the nation (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016). In this regard, Burke (2017) stated that in Phase II, the launch phase, the need for change is communicated to all members of the institution and activities are provided to convey the reality of change and deal effectively with any resistance that might emerge among individual members who might struggle to adjust to reasonable changes. Specifically, Saudi Arabia has invested extensively to build thousands of schools, colleges, and universities. In addition, Saudi Arabia has also funded post-secondary free education and provided generous scholarships and stipends for students of both genders (Ministry of higher education, 2013).

As a result of all the aforementioned efforts, the number of women's colleges and university students increased, as reported by the MoE in March 2018. For instance, within a period of four years from 2006, accounted for almost half of the student population, while over the same period female student numbers grew to comprise 63% of all university students in Saudi Arabia during 2015 (42,0928 out of 66,9271). Westbrook (2009) states that the relationship between levels of education awards and the possibility of becoming an influential leader is direct and positive.

In Phase III, the post-launch phase, Burke (2017) emphasized that change leaders need to use multiple transformational levers, reducing time pressures, providing consistency in deeds and words, persisting to the point that they risk being known as stubborn, and repeating an accurate message. Burke (2017) advised that the leader has to be well aware of every consequence and outcome that is unanticipated, to maintain the change by creating momentum, to initiate selected successors to infuse the change in all the organizational members consistently, and

finally to launch fresh reform initiatives for renewing the entire system consistently. Organizational change theory has to be understood to instigate change and it must also be related to policy and practice. Burke (2017) stated that change can emerge from any level, function, or unit of the system and essentially requires leadership.

The modernization that has occurred in Saudi Arabia has outwardly changed many things, but societal attitudes remain firmly entrenched in traditional Islamic values. Modernization attempts have previously caused a backlash from religious groups, yet modernism seems the only pathway leading to greater opportunities for Saudi Arabian women. Difficulties as well as opportunities exist for women as the conservative kingdom slowly moves towards catching up with the 21st century.

The work on change theory is suggesting that organizational change needs to be understood as a dialectal change for women leaders who face many challenges and opportunities. This research therefore seeks to examine critically various factors that promote or hinder change, such as culture, religion, patriarchy, power. Each of these key concepts will be examined in the rest of this chapter.

3.6 Culture

According to Williams (1983), culture is considered one of the three most difficult and complicated words used in the English language, due to the complex historical development of various European languages. The term “culture” is used to denote different intellectual concepts in different disciplines. The primary meaning of culture is in husbandry, where it means “natural growth.” Earlier, culture was used as a noun to mean something to tend, especially animals or crops. The general term “cultural” traces all of human development, from being savages to becoming domesticated to becoming free (Williams,1983). Williams confirms that initially, national as well as traditional cultures were used, which consisted of newer cultural concepts

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being characters in newer civilizations. This was utilized for distinguishing material and human developments. Today, the label culture is used with multiple connotations: from describing a tribe's traditional folk music, through to a corporation's managerial policy; and everything in between. So, all-encompassing is the word 'culture', its meaning has become imprecise and even confusing. It is true that this contributes to a major complication because a similar vagueness was laid down by von Humboldt and others until the late 1900s, when the application of the term culture was given as discussed below. Moreover, the term culture is now often used to describe music, sculpture, literature, and painting. Certainly, philosophy and history should also be included in culture (Williams, 1983).

The concept of culture is complex and difficult to define. It is not easy to categorize culture in terms of good, bad, true, or false. The concept of culture simply mirrors varied perspectives (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Hofstede (2010) distinguishes between two styles of culture: The first form is named 'subjective culture' or 'software of the human mind'; it-covers views, morals, and internalized interaction patterns. The second form includes people-made locations and contains everything that individuals have made, plus organizations and art. However, Rohner (1984) considers that culture involves the conformist outlines of thoughts, actions, and items that are bequeathed from one generation to another. Society can be recognized by its styles of activities, such as rice cultivation which is present in some cultures. Moreover, objective culture is theorized as made by people, for instance, art items, fashion, work tools, marriage ceremonies, and laws, such as inheritance arrangements, taboos, religious concepts, and political rules. Furthermore, Schech and Haggis (2000) argue that culture indicates the building of understanding, beliefs, attitudes, experience, hierarchies, values, meanings, religion, concepts of time, roles, spatial relations, and notions of the world, all of these items are offered by a group of individuals through the progression of generations. Bin Nabi (2011) argues that 'Culture' or 'Civilization', is a compound that contains belief, knowledge, ethics, art, custom,

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law, and any other abilities and customs developed by individuals as members of society. However, cultural sides of human behavior are not fixed in nature, they are known gradually through learning and through representations of life. In addition, Schech and Haggis (2000) state that culture tends to separate more obviously between on the one hand the actual attitudes and on the other hand, the abstract ethics and views of the world, which depend on behavior. In other words, culture is not a noticeable attitude, but rather the values and beliefs that individuals use to understand experiences and generate attitudes, which is then mirrored in their behavior.

In Saudi Arabia's context, Sayf (2003) uses this definition of culture as a style of life of a group of individuals, including the attitudes, beliefs, morals, and symbols that they acquire, generally without thinking about them, and that are transferred from one generation to the next. Al-Doaa (2013) notes that culture is a system of views that are shared by people, including ethics, customs, attitudes, and hand-made objects that the members of society use to deal with their domain and with one another in an area, and that are transferred from one generation to the next through knowledge and learning. Moreover, Rajasekar and See Beh (2013) assert that Saudi culture consists of tribes, family networks, individual relationships, and contacts with friends. Furthermore, it is significant to recognize morals, such as shame, pride, avoidance, what is forbidden, and the role of religion; all of these are present in Saudi Arabian culture. In Saudi Arabia's context, cultural values enshrine the patriarchal hierarchy within families and society more generally. As a consequence, Saudi society and culture can be regarded as comprehensively patriarchal in nature. The concept of patriarchy will be explained in the next section in more depth, aiming to provide a deeper understanding of the strong relationship between patriarchy, culture and the gender order.

3.7 Patriarchy

According to Jensen (2017), in societies where women have opportunities to advance based on their merit, and where they do so to the detriment of male career advancement, patriarchy creates obstacles that either increase the inequality or obstruct the career progression of women. There are innumerable patriarchal institutions as well as forms of gendered social relations, which position women as subordinate to men. Moreover, it is within patriarchal limits that men are given priority over women and enjoy more civic rights and comparatively higher standards of living. Patriarchy emerges through the norms of social construction, where gender differences are defined on the basis of biological sex. Patriarchy not only exists in the public sphere but also in the private sphere and permeates social dimensions of daily life, including hierarchies within the workplace and methods of work, and in the division of labour both within the home and in society at large (El- Saadawi, 2015). Given the significance of these gendered social relations between men and women, understanding the concept is critical to analysing how it functions in the Saudi context.

3.7.1 Concept of patriarchy

The term patriarchy means the imposition of the rule of the father or the *patriarch* on women. In the initial phase of its etymological history, it was defined in terms of being circumscribed within the large household of the *patriarch*, which used to be ‘male-dominated’ and included women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic servants and so on (Bhasin, 2006). Patriarchy is not a trivial term but a much wider concept, which not only advocates dominance over women but also aims to institutionalize it in more aspects than one. It relates to differentials in power relations skewed against women and is designed to deprive them of their personal and civic rights thereby rendering them powerless (Sultana, 2011). In sociological enquiry, the patriarchal system is “characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition. It is a

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system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Jensen, 2017, p.39). Moreover, patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between males and women, making certain that males always have the dominant, masculine, roles and women always have the subordinate or feminine ones. This ideology is so powerful that “men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress” (Jensen, p.39). They do this “through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women’s subordination to men” (Sultana, 2011).

Allam (2018) emphasizes that women’s subordination is a key aspect of how the patriarchal system, or a patriarchal society actually functions. It is not only suggestive of the natural superiority of men over women but also caters to a quite shameless upholding of a woman’s dependence on, and, of course, subordination to men in all spheres of life. Therefore, patriarchy as a concept is indicative of subordination by men. Such subordination also exists in private, where the household work done by women is not appreciated and women’s rights are denied, such as the right to freedom and the right to freedom of expression. Accordingly, women’s roles are essentially submissive, in word and deed. In the literal sense of the word, subordination can be defined in terms of a hierarchical order where women occupy a lower rank than men and are therefore referred to as ‘subordinates’. El -Saadawi (2015) has clearly explained the manner in which women are subordinated by cultural claims as well as customs; even successful women in general are considered to be secondary. They are excluded from public leadership in religious institutions as well as society, as specified in the case of politics or administrative decision-making.

According to Sultana (2011) one may refer to not only the inferior positions offered to women, but also to their ostensible inability to frame decisions. In most societies, women have been subordinated by inducing the feeling of lack of social power and low levels of self-esteem

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together with imposing discrimination in a variety of aspects. These feelings may inhibit women's ability to challenge the dominant culture; disempowerment also helps to maintain the conservative status quo.

It is therefore, important to note and observe the kinds of subordination that women are subjected to in their lives in order to discern the distinct forms of discrimination, control, exploitation, disregard, oppression, insult and violence – which exist within the family, places of work, and in society more generally. Different scholars in such cases have different illustrations and explanations of the concept of subordination of women. Allam (2018) highlights the significance of the context of women's relationship with other people and relatives in the family along with other types of discriminative representations, as well as patriarchy in Saudi Arabia.

El-Saadawi (2006) suggests that generally, within a patriarchal system, there are some ways of acting that are associated with women. These norms and practices are considered as the ones which define women's inferiority to men; there are some measures which may not only impose controls on them, but also be present everywhere in the various families present in the Arab society along with other gendered social relations, religions and laws combined. Al-Ossaimi (2014) highlights that the same culture of women's subordinate status can be observed in the case of textbooks, media, factories and offices, throughout Saudi Arabia. Bin-Younus' (2019) study found that Arab women are assumed to be mandated to wear a complete covering of clothing and they are to be kept indoors - doing house chores such as cleaning and cooking - while men are privileged to perform almost all of outdoor activities and jobs. As illustrated in the Saudi Arabian primary and secondary school textbooks portraits of the society, women are shown significantly less than their male counterparts (just below a quarter percent), which provides clear evidence of the secondary-citizenship status of Arab women (Bin-Yonus, 2019).

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Thus, patriarchy is a way of understanding the totality of structures and actions that produce the intense degree of male domination that women are subjected to; men are not only considered as superior to women, but women are often demeaned and disrespected; they are treated as objects.

Women are most generally treated as objects in the realm of Saudi Arabia, where the essential intent lies in subjugating them. There exists a divide between masculine and feminine roles and expectations: the social definition applied to these is based on biological sex differences. Traditional responsibilities and rights in Saudi Arabia are based gender: the roles, rights and responsibilities seem to be gendered constructions; they are constructed upon (imposed over) the biological difference of sex. Socialization therefore plays an important role; for example, the childhood habits of boys and girls become the initial point or the basic fundamental unit of assigning them to femininity or masculinity. It is within the same context that boys and girls learn the behavior which is considered to be appropriate for their sex. For instance, parents teach their sons to be stronger, help them to enjoy activities, and send them outside early on to discover real life. Thus, boys find self-confidence and enjoy learning to overcome the difficulties that they will encounter in their future (Beck & Keddie, 1982). They take on strong protective roles. For example, in Saudi Arabia they could, until recently, be the male guardian for their mother.

While some of the literature drawn on in this thesis is predominantly couched in understandings of gender that have shaped much of gender equity research in the West, more recent work on Southern Theory (Connell, 2018) has re-examined the limitations of engaging Western literature as a sole lens for understanding Middle Eastern contexts. Connell (2018) confirmed that

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Gender needs to be understood in a historical context of the majority world including colonization, colonial violence, role of the postcolonial state, land acquisition, global hunger and post-independence globalization. Feminism in the north as well feminism around the global south stands to gain from the vision of a wider world. Gender scholarship, therefore, needs to move to a world-centered, solidarity-based approach to knowledge (P.9)”.

A growing body of literature by Arab feminist writers (Al-Samman, 2019; Djebbar, 2007; El Sharawy, 1987) have followed in the footsteps of the prolific Nawal Al Saadawi (1983, 1985, 2006 and 2017) by bringing gender equality issues under sharp focus in the Arab world.

3.7.2 The patriarchal social system in Saudi Arabia

Although there are similarities in the difficulties that women face all around the world, the unique culture in the Gulf region, which includes Saudi Arabia, poses a different set of challenges (Fareh, 2010). There are ongoing debates on gender discrimination issues in KSA. These debates focus on how until recently, women were not legally allowed to drive. Women must be addressed by their guardians' names in public and all the public business shop owners are men. Moreover, sports activities have remained one of the major limitations for women as nearly all sports are dominated by their male counterparts. Practices originating in culture are so prevalent across Saudi Arabian society that customs denying women equality with men are typically regarded as being dictated by a cultural tradition that is beyond critical scrutiny. Therefore, the selective dominance of custom reinforces women's inequality. For example, most traditional Saudi families still have arranged marriages, following historic convention. The groom's female relatives play a determining role in arranging marriages through their reports on the prospective bride's appearance. After both parties agree to a meeting the couple meet under the watchful eye of the woman's guardian. At this stage the man has seen no more of his prospective partner's appearance than her face, and the bride does not usually know the groom. Women who engage in such marriages which take place in this way usually do so in order to please her family, because Saudi girls are raised to demonstrate their love and respect

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for their families. If the bride refuses the groom, there might be the potential of impacting the family's relationships that could lead to women feeling guilty. It is common for marriages to be arranged with cousins and other relatives, partly as a means of strengthening the tribe, while arranged marriages across tribal lines were historically carried out to heal disputes between families and clans. Saudi marriages involve three main elements: the prospective bride is asked, without the presence of the proposed groom, if she consents to marrying him; the groom is also asked the same question; if both parties agree, the groom then discusses the dowry with his bride's father and a mutual arrangement is made. Dowries typically include jewellery, gold, clothing and other valuables, dependent on both family's financial means and status. The dowry arrangement cements the engagement, and the marriage contract is made in the presence of legal and religious authorities. The final stage before the couple meet as man and wife is the wedding party. Celebrations are segregated between men and women with each gathering in different parts of the house or venue. Following the marriage celebrations, the couple are farewelled by their friends and family on their honeymoon. Upon return the wife moves into her husband's parent's home to become a member of his extended family. However, in contemporary Saudi Arabia it is becoming increasingly common for newlyweds to establish their own independent households (Al-Osaimi, 2014). Cathexis can be observed through marriage in Saudi society. The gendering of the emotion effect refers to the role gender plays in the social construction of emotion in relationships.

According to Shields (2005),

The gendering of emotion springs from societal power relationships that allow men to harness emotions' power in relationships, but relegate women to chronic states of powerlessness fueled by emotionality that is viewed as out of control or threatening to become so. The concept of control is key in the gendering of emotion effect; as Shields points out, the ability to control emotions reflects a state of power and influence. In this way, the very construct of emotion becomes gendered in ways that favor men in social relationships (P.10).

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Furthermore, in Islamic societies the high regard for religion typically results in Islamic precedence superseding laws and local cultural practices. Al-Osaimi (2014) discussed in his book “The Saudi Woman”, that the Saudi society regards itself as exceptional for being solely comprised of Muslims, but it has disregarded the fact that its population, accounting for Saudi men, women, and children, amounts to only 19 million nationals, whereas there are 1.57 billion Muslims in the world. In other words, the Saudi society is statistically insignificant in the Muslim World. This air of superiority leads some Saudi men to regard themselves as the object of divine favour, self-entitled, and proud as a peacock; and he considers women to be like hens, mere breeding machines and objects of pleasure, but otherwise useless (Al-Osaimi, 2014). He asserts that this scornful and disdainful view of women in Saudi society starts during childhood. The theory is that boys witness and internalize their parents’ view of women as physically, mentally, and sexually weaker and lesser beings. They then reach the erroneous conclusion that since women are lesser beings, they need men to lead them. This unhealthy way in which children are raised in Saudi society predisposes every boy to be arrogant and assertive, while girls are passive, subordinate and a submissive. Many women would agree with Al-Osaimi, and blame their families, and particularly their mothers, for playing a crucial role in the consolidation of this unjust view of women in their minds, though they might have had misguided good intentions (Sultana, 2011). Al-Osaimi noted that a state of forced dependency is imposed on all Saudi women, even for mature adults with multiple degrees. For instance, sometimes the women leaders need to travel to different countries to attend conferences or workshops related to their jobs but the authorities) families) do not allow women to travel without consent from a guardian. Guardians are none other than their father or brother or husband. This could prove very difficult when women want to be independent or do things on their own (Fareh, 2010). Al-Osaimi (2014) confirmed that it is illogical, and ludicrous, to ask a mother, an educator, a professor, or a doctor “where is your legal guardian” so he can sign on

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her behalf and give her his blessing to work or to travel. A lot of women suffer from this law, for it limits them, belittles them, and traps them in a state of forced dependency. On one level, specific law, but they are part of a wider system of inequality based on gender inequality and patriarchy, which rests on cultural customs and religious beliefs for its justification.

It is clear that it is often hard to see beyond individual acts of violence or oppression toward women by men without understanding the structures of power. Connell (1987) stated that:

Power may be a balance of advantage or an inequality of resources in the workplace, household, or a larger institution. By and large, the people who run the corporations, the government departments and the universities are men, who so arrange things that it is extremely difficult for women to get access to top positions. Organizational control is no more naked than force usually is. Both secrete and depend on, ideologies. (p. 107).

Connell (1987) argues that the way violence and ideology are connected indicates social power with particular features including the use of force. In Saudi Arabia all military facilities and equipment and the operational mechanisms of social organizations are controlled by men. This is the point feminists and cultural activists have brought to public attention and have campaigned against, at the risk of being ostracised. They are concerned that women are viewed as the weak gender compared to their male counterparts. Connell (1987) notes that women are seen as assets belonging to men. Again, in making women the mere property of men they are disempowered and devalued.

Another factor that affects Saudi women's lives is their assumed lower physical power, which was discussed in John Stuart Mill's article "The Subjection of Women" (Mill, 2007). For example, when Saudi women are walking on the main streets or in the paths of the marketplaces, they are always accompanied by immediate family members. In addition, families in Saudi Arabia do not like women to go out alone because they believe that they can't defend themselves against men. Thus, as a result of prevalent social norms and familial expectations,

women are seldom seen alone on public streets. In addition, men justify the oppression of women by claiming that they want to protect them because of their inherent vulnerability (El-Saadawi, 2017). However, Connell (2002, p.3) has highlighted that in many areas of brain anatomy and functioning, there are no significant sexual differences. As the neuroscientist Lesley Rogers (2010, p. 34) argued “the brain does not choose neatly to be either a woman or a male type.” Nevertheless, the linking of masculinity and authority means that masculinity has legitimate power. This demonstrates the existence of a discriminatory gender power structure based on patriarchy; however, it can also be contradicted by referring to the fact that some masculine groups lack authoritative power in the community. This complex situation must be taken into account; an interrelationship that exists between violence, authority, and masculine priorities. To understand these conflicts, it is necessary to examine the relationship between change theory and gender, which will be outlined in the next section.

3.8 The gender orders

The construction of highly differentiated gender roles typically determines how parents and society will encourage boys and girls to express themselves; boys are encouraged to display masculine traits, while girls are rewarded when they behave in a feminine manner. Sex typically becomes the determining factor in deciding what is considered appropriate behaviour for boys and girls (Johanna, 2000). Traditionally women have played a greater function in child rearing. Connell (2000) points out that girls display a tendency to be more interested in child rearing responsibilities and exhibit less egoism when they have grown up with their mother. At the same time boys form closer bonds with their fathers in contrast to their mothers.

Stereotypical notions of gender differences lead to the normalisation of differential treatments of boys and girls, with daughters deserving of protection, love, kisses, hugs and softer care from parents. It is not considered inappropriate for girls to be weak, needy, physically inactive or

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docile. On the other hand, parents encourage their sons to exert strength and to participate in outdoor physical activities not considered suitable for girls. Sons are encouraged to explore life while daughters are more often shielded from similar activities and regarded as requiring protection. In summary, the upbringing of boys prepares and empowers them for their roles in adult life. (Wearing, 1996). These widely accepted structural patterns result in defining how gender roles are expressed in routine daily activities (Connell, 2002).

The term social structure is used to describe the phenomena associated with how societies organize themselves through the imposition of limitations on members often based on physical factors, such as sex. According to Connell (1987):

Human practice always presupposes social structure, in the sense that practice necessarily calls into play social rules or resources. Structure is always emergent from practice and is constituted by it. Neither is conceivable without the other. All current frameworks for social theory, the closest to the requirements of a theory of gender. Yet it leaves two outstanding problems. By making the link of structure and logical matter, a requirement of social analysis in general (p. 49).

However, social practices actually function through a complex hybridization of community interactions between members. Social structures frequently manifest themselves through a form of constraint reinforcement or assumed roles upon groups of society members through which gender roles become second nature. Institutions act to reinforce designated roles. Consequently, social institutions reflect social power structures, so by analyzing specific institutions light can be shed on decoding the interests these organizations serve. According to Juliet Mitchell and Gayle Rubin's (as cited in Connell, 2002) interpretations of the effects of gender relations on social structure, institutions of kinship are the most significant source of gender inequality across cultural divides. In order to comprehend the essential nature of gender-related structures, it is necessary to understand the concept 'difference', wherein historical contexts and inner contradictions determine structures in many ways.

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Furthermore, it is important to consider how practices are determined by structures and how social actors are typically a reflection of the structures in which they operate. Additionally, in order to understand social structure constraints, it is necessary to evaluate them within their historic setting. Mitchell (as cited in Connell, 2002) categorized gender relations into four structural components: production, reproduction, socialization and sexuality. She argued that each structure imposed its own characteristic oppression of women. Within an historical context each structure may have expressed itself at either an accelerated or decelerated pace in comparison to another. Additionally, relationship patterns within different structures possess the potential to enter into conflict with each other. As a consequence, gender relationship structures, may be characterized by internal contradictions (Connell, 2002).

Socially motivated gender discrimination resulting in inequality is not confined to conservative education; historically, it has been perpetuated within the capitalist workplace and through the institution of marriage in traditional societies. Globally, marriage has been viewed as an individual relationship between spouses with roles influenced by employment and social restrictions.

With increased industrialization resulting from capitalism, greater career opportunities became available to men who typically had more access to development and higher incomes resulting in women becoming even more financially dependent on their spouses and widening the already existing economic disparity. Consequently, the marriage-based division of labour resulting from industrialization reinforced and expanded the divide between men and women in the workforce (Bailyn, 2003).

Connell (2002) proposes that academic research in recent decades has outlined the course of two fundamentally contrasting relationship structures between men and women. The first relates to the division of labour in society while the second is specific to authority and control.

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The division of labour encompasses the separation of paid and unpaid work, the organization of childcare and housework and the categorization of male dominated occupations and women dominated occupations in gender segregated labour markets. These gender roles are perpetuated through discrimination in promotion and training, wage inequality and unequal opportunities for exchange. Authority structures which exert various representations of coercion through control may be state or business institutional hierarchies which expressly exert their power through various outlets such as interpersonal violence, sexual coercion and surveillance. While various authority structures may differ significantly in their objectives and hierarchical architecture the methods through which they manifest their authority has common features as well as differences. Shared characteristics which permeate many organizations are the principles of gender division or separation and unequal integration (Connell, 2002).

Connell (2002) confirmed that the historical background of the institutionalization of authority has resulted in shaping the destiny of feminine and masculine identities by determining how genders relate to power. However, wealth acquisition through goods and services production (in contrast to power acquisition) has followed a different historic trajectory. Examples of what are termed 'structure models' can be seen in the basic outline of the division of labour, power structures and also the structure of cathexis. In Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, cathexis describes the relationship between structures and their emotional impact and their manifestation through sexuality. Each operate within specific parameters of complexity and express themselves at a gender level according to their historic setting. Interesting questions arise from the impact of industrialization on the gender division of labour and how sexual power structures function within socialized and capitalist economic structures. (Connell, 2002). In many ways, traditional patriarchal power structures which effectively excluded half of Saudi Arabia's population from the economic workforce, survived in the kingdom due to the substantial amounts of unearned revenue received from oil. Despite talk of diversifying the

economy, Saudi Arabia's primary source of revenue continues to be oil and with substantial budgetary deficits compelling the kingdom to change economically, traditional economic models, unfavorable to women, may become an economic 'luxury' that may be forced to change in the future. Consequently, economic pressures are likely to compound social pressures and accelerate the slow pace of change. The patterns by which people form emotional connections with others and sustain relationships with them on a daily basis typically follows divergent yet predictable routes which make sense when evaluated from a perspective of social logic. The following section is based on the premise that these structures are accepted as the underlying hierarchies regulating gender relations. In assuming this, it can be said that evaluating gender relations is discoverable by analyzing sexual politics and gender research, and secondly gender relations accounts for a majority of the structural dynamics presently agreed upon (Connell, 2002).

3.8.1 Gender order and women's labour in Saudi Arabia

The traditional performance of work by one group of people became a social rule determining the allocation of employees for successive groups of people. The commonly observed social norm is a reoccurring theme in practically all studies into paid employment viewed from a gender perspective. Connell (1987, p.99) has explained that

The sexual division of labour at its simplest is of an allocation of particular types of work to particular categories of people. It is a social structure to the extent that this allocation becomes a constraint on further practice. This happens in several interrelated ways.

Connell (1987) proceeded to state that an essential qualifying prerequisite for an improved job, was being male. Further evidence of the role social constraints played in apportioning labour skills and training development was seen in how they appeared to be allotted in terms of gender. Even contemporary training mechanisms in many places give institutional preference to men for selected vacancies (Connell, 1987).

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Shah et al. (2010) described how traditional teaching methods, particularly in relation to teaching girls, poorly equips students and also teachers with adequate communication, interaction and team working skills. The absence of training and teaching programs for teachers results in educators lacking the skills they are supposed to be transferring to their students. This is a result of the low priority placed on training teachers of girls in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the women leaders experience challenges as they are not provided with comparable incentives to upgrade their competencies and higher academic qualifications as provided to the male leaders (Sultana (2011). Additionally, near universal male domination across Saudi Arabia's academic institutions represents a stark example of gender discrimination in the education sector. Rehman and Alhaisoni (2013) note that gender segregation also extends to Saudi Arabia's Supervisory Bureau for Women's Education where in each province all staff were exclusively women. While their functions are to oversee the orientation, inspection and direction of the kingdom's primary, intermediate and secondary girls' schools, this body reports to the provincial Educational Affairs General Manager, who is always a male. Consequently, women's education is effectively headed by men who are answerable to the Minister of Education. The highest position open for women candidates within the Educational Affairs bureau is that of an Assistant General Manager. Another important consideration is the prohibition of gender mixing within Saudi Arabia's education sector, deriving from religiously motivated cultural practices. This disproportionately limits the ability of women to develop careers in comparison to men who have fewer restrictions (Sullivan, 2012).

In the following diagram the hierarchical structure of Saudi Arabia's educational sector is outlined in order to provide an understanding of the career progression limitations that exist for women (Ministry of Education Departments in Saudi Arabia, 2015).

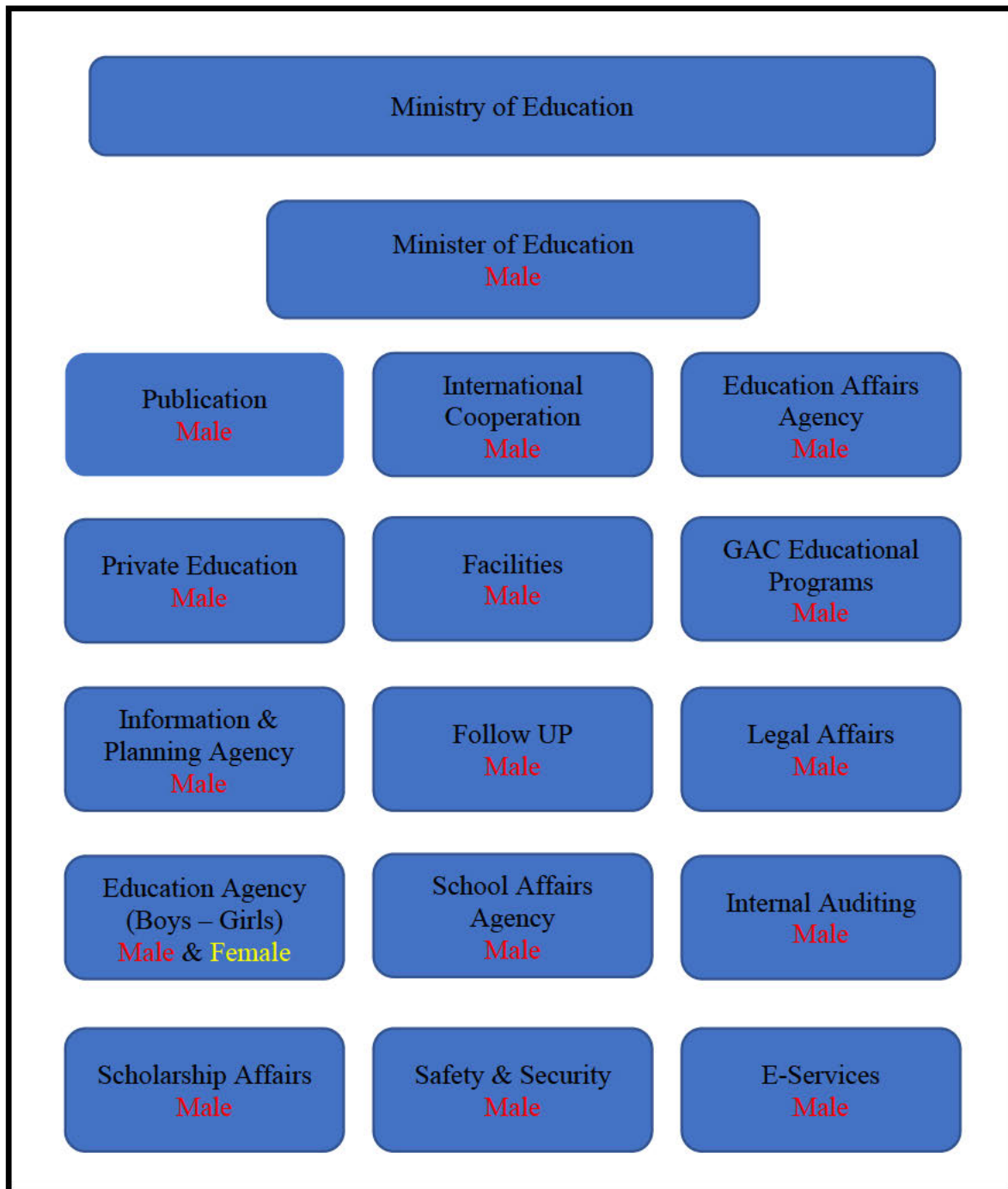


Figure 3.1: Organisational chart of roles and responsibilities by gender in Ministry of Education Departments in Saudi Arabia

3.8.2 Gender order and roles

Achieving a desirable balance between work and family responsibilities represents a significant challenge for most women pursuing leadership ambitions (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Sandberg, 2015).

It is particularly daunting for the millions of single working women raising children outside

traditional family units (Hess & Kelly, 2007). Women are typically the primary or sometimes sole parents responsible for children or extended family members during their own prime years when their own potential is at its peak. Additionally, statistically women require more time off than men to attend to family commitments (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015c). While both men and women may have conflicting emotions about returning to work after beginning a family, it is usually women who cease employment to care full-time for their children (Laughlin, 2011). Likewise, when both partners are in the workforce, when a decision is made for one to reduce work hours, it is usually the woman who does so. One study of men and women in dual career partnership within the petroleum sector highlighted that males are less likely to change careers to follow their partner. Furthermore, males were less likely to nominate forgone home life benefits, than women, as reasons for leaving a job (Sprunt et al., 2013). Both men and women make their employment decisions based on cultural factors, gender expectations in addition to financial necessity.

3.8.3 Gender order and cathexis

According to Goldman (cited in Connell, 1987) points out that couples in heterosexual relationships are both different and simultaneously unequal. Connell (1987) claims that the romantic aspects of couples' relationships coexist within a less perceptible structure based on different emotions and feelings. This analysis, however, does not fully explain contemporary women exclusion from participation in various male-dominated social activities or power structures. A fundamental and substantial aspect of sexual relationship structures is the necessary psychological dimension of eroticism and its role in perpetuating the relationship (Connell, 1987). Consequently, eroticism overflows into displays of gender sexuality such as a male desire for woman association with lace, high heel shoes, leather and perhaps even domination which typically exists more in fantasy than in reality. In many societies advertisers exploit these symbols to push their products and consequently perpetuate a sexually based

cruelty that reinforces gender imbalances. However, societal expectations require the curbing of such desires, such as in places like Saudi Arabia where, as Fareh (2010) points out, women, both local and foreign are obliged to wear the hijab in the form of a loose garment covering their entire body including their head. The hijab can be seen as a symbol of the power of men forcing women to conform to their wishes, not dissimilar to more erotic desires to see women dressed in fantasy garments (Fareh, 2010). In terms of theory, the structure of cathexis in many respects is a reflection of inequalities in power between genders, which is built upon the division of labour which itself is a reflection of cathexis (Connell, 1987). The next section proceeds to discuss in more detail what is meant by the gender order and the notion of resistance.

3.8.4 Gender order and resistance

Women have routinely questioned their perceived subordinate position over the years and have yearned to exercise control over their lives. Previously many men physically harassed women through inappropriate touching, and wolf whistling as an expression of man domination over women. However, many women responded by seeking to achieve freedom through resistance, conflict and striving for positions of influence and power which command respect. The presence of women in senior positions in modern capitalist societies has contributed to a redefining of society's expected masculine and feminine roles. MacKinnon (1987) affirms this stating that women frequently need to emulate male aggressiveness in positions of power as a technique to exercise authority. Foucault (1991) theorised that where power resides in the context of an interaction where one player represents a form of opponent, object, champion, master or manager, counterbalancing that is resistance in the other party. In a situation where a slave is the object or victim, the slave can resist the master's dominating directives to work by failing to perform tasks to satisfaction or even properly. Alternatively, the slave can choose to power share by diligently fulfilling the master's orders. Through fulfilling his assigned tasks, the slave's (victim's) position is acknowledged by the master and also the slave, consequently

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creating a sense of power for both parties while also extending the prospect of freedom of self for the slave.

Nietzsche (as cited in Foucault, 1991) regarded a slave's increasing feeling of power as originating from the slave's perception that their master was unaware of the consequences of their own domination. According to Nietzsche an enslaved individual is only able to recognise this feeling of power if they have previously experienced hardship through powerlessness and through their acts of resistance. Such actions of resistance allow the individual experiencing conflictual situations to understand their choices. The process of defending or showing resistance to their current position leads to further conflict and a struggle for selfhood. By recognising a desire to experience no further conflict for self, individuals are able to avoid mounting resistance and to consciously put themselves outside their previous situation of self-awareness. Nietzsche believed the process of recognition, understanding and accomplishment embellished the slave/victim feeling of power to an elevated degree exceeding any confrontational scenario against the master (Patton, 2002). The consequence of this recognition is the overcoming of desires to engage in resistance to a master's command. As a result, it becomes unnecessary to have an outspoken voice for those with self-awareness as they recognise the strategy of 'the other' and leave these issues to them unchallenged.

Burr (1998) claimed power positions such as slave/master or victim/dominator existing in relations of power originated within an individual's socially learned interpretations of interactions and family situations which denied them experiencing self-awareness. Some feminist academics challenged the earlier male dominated psychological discourses, such as Hollway (1998). Furthermore Foucault (1991) and Gergen (1991) added an additional explanation for an individual's self-generated position of freedom. This modification of discourse was partly achieved by deconstructing earlier models of discourse. As an example,

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when an individual struggled for the removal of discrimination against women, many women discovered a sense of their own innate power.

These historic and newer discourses have aided individuals in reproducing heterosexual relationship models in a variety of reflexive states. As a result, Burr (1998) proposed self-aware positive and powerful positions, which as many feminists outline in their discourse are merely a shadow of democratisation that exists in relationships because they effectively substitute themselves with a dominating male role, as seemed apparent in Margaret Thatcher, Britain's authoritarian prime minister from 1979 to 1990. This discussion has revealed the complex relationship between binary oppositions of power and has illuminated ideas about dialectical struggle, which will inform later discussion of women leaders' opportunities and challenges. Having discussed resistance, the next section examines the gender order and culture.

3.8.5 Gender order and culture

There is a strong relationship between gender order and culture. Daily life has been shaped by gender identities and gender relations. Fluctuations in gender order relations are often highly debated, in part because they have direct effects for everybody; women and men. This immediacy equally explains that gender roles – and mainly women's roles as spouses and mothers can be strong symbols of cultural change or cultural constancy (Johanna, 2000). The anticipation about features and behaviors suitable to women or males and about the relation between them – in other words, gender order – is shaped by culture. Yet Al-Kenizy (2012) points to the political possibilities of such symbols as obvious in the customs that political and religious activities have focused on women's roles. This has helped to link adherence to cultural values or religions – and fight “Western” inspirations. In such contexts, internal efforts for modification become even more complex as those supporting variations can easily be dismissed as irreligious, unpatriotic, or polluted by the West. Al-Kenizy (2012) asserts that the purpose is

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not to upturn the cultural identity of the people, but to emphasize the issues that oppress women. For instance, participant an official in the Cambodian government explains the need to question the cultural standards that support gender inequality: “There is a Cambodian saying that men are a piece of gold, and women are a piece of cloth” (Al-Kenizy, 2012). The slice of gold represents men, when it is fallen in mud; it is still a slice of gold. However, a piece of cloth represents women, once it’s tainted, it’s stained forever. If she is a prostitute, if she was raped, if she is a widow, she is no longer that virginal bit of cloth. But males, whether they are criminal, or have cheated on their spouses, they are still a slice of gold.

Many examples could be used to illustrate that cultural traditions play a major role in the gender order of Saudi society. For instance, although Saudi women tend to be more highly educated than men, and women represent significantly more than half of university students, there are still very few women who have a job outside their home (Doumato, 2000). Al-Sadhan (2012) explains that there are many reasons behind this and all of these reasons relate to culture. If culture is so powerful and bound by strong traditions, how is that a society or a culture can change? Recent research, such as that of Sunstein (2019) has investigated the process of change and how it occurs. Sunstein has illustrated how social norms can suddenly collapse, leading to transformation where it had been thought intractable.

At this point there is a summary of the main features of the current gender order in Saudi Arabia, which will help us to understand the problem of intractability within a traditional society. Firstly, the culture in Saudi Arabia has traditionally forced men to support their women financially, so the men think that women do not need a job to have money. On the other hand, women have to obey men’s instructions. Secondly, in Saudi Arabia there is a dominant view that a woman’s place is her house and many husbands and fathers prefer that their women do not work outside, thinking that perhaps it would impact on their duties at home; this is the basis

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of dependency (Al-Osaimi, 2014). Thirdly, Saudi society places reputation as the first priority, as a consequence of this some men are afraid that the family may lose their good reputation if women were allowed to work or become independent (Al-Mfleh, 2015). Finally, childcare services do not exist in every region as many mothers must to look after their own children (Al-Mfleh, 2015). Every woman who has stopped working in order to raise her children due to a lack of day care facilities will be forced to take an allowance from her husband, and is thus trapped in a state of dependency, for economic independence is essential for women to obtain their rights and achieve personal freedom (Al-Ossaimi, 2014). Moreover, according to Al-Atibi (2010), Saudi society believes that men must be more educated than their wives. Therefore, the typical Saudi woman is forced to stand down from a good position and will defer her own career advancement because she does not want to be a strong competitor with her husband, a situation that could lead to many domestic problems. Fareh (2010) observes that when women have successful employment positions this inevitably benefits the family financially and may be of particular help in raising children.

However, many wives suffer when their husbands have lower qualifications or income than their own as this can threaten their husband's masculinity. Reactions to the husband having an inferior economic position may result in conflict and resentment originating from loss of status. To compensate for his perceived inferior status, the man may assert his masculinity by demonstrating physical superiority over his wife by treating her in a degrading manner. By putting her down or even resorting to physical violence against her, this may reassure him that he is still the head of the household despite her status as 'the bread winner' (Fareh, 2010).

However, these are not the only cases that show how much the gender order and culture impact on Saudi women's lives. Saudi women do not have their own say, they are not entitled to form opinions or work in the public sphere. There exists an overarching divide between the public

and private spheres, where women are confined to the private sphere and men only are allowed to work in the public sphere (Hamdan, 2005).

Overall, significant numbers of Saudi Arabian women disapprove of their society's gender order, cultural attitudes to the sexes and patriarchal characteristics. These social norms combine to deny Saudi Arabian women equal rights with men but go further by also denying them many rights which they theoretically possess under misinterpretation of Islam. Only a radical change in attitudes, as well as laws, will lead to more equal rights between men and women in Saudi Arabia.

3.8.6 Gender order and women's path to leadership

This section aims to focus on discussions about women becoming leaders in a number of countries. In an increasingly globalized society women leader who face challenged look to the experiences of women in other nations. Women are therefore influenced by their perception of the challenges and opportunities women have experienced in other societies.

Carli (2010) presents evidence which shows the enhancement of women's conditions at US workplaces within the past few years, including the increase in the number of women with degree and postgraduate certificates, and the closeness of pay rates among male and female staff. Although women's employment in the United States increased to nearly 48 percent compared to 37 percent over a period of four decades starting from 1970, the leaders in these organizations were almost exclusively men (Barsh & Yee, 2011). This can be explained by the power and privilege that the current male leaders at the top of the hierarchy are awarded, which prevents their less powerful women colleagues to climb to those levels. The privileges include high salaries, benefits, and facilities which the leaders are provided with in several organizations. This has been called the patriarchal dividend (Jensen, 2017). Perhaps with greater transparency and more publicity these differentials will be addressed. Moreover, in the

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global context in which global corporations operate the unfair contradictions of gender and privilege may become more apparent to Saudi women leaders, and more open to challenge.

Historically speaking, women have had a range of major leadership positions like ancient pharaohs and British queens; however, according to Kent and Geiger (2017) the number of women leaders in the current era only accounts for 15 Globally, with 8 of them being the first women leaders in their country. With the exception of royals and prominent women leaders, the statistics for women leaders is still below a tenth among all 193 sovereign countries of the United Nations, even though the total number of leadership positions occupied by women has doubled. With historical jurisdictions and religious thought preventing women from serving the community as leaders, male dominance in leadership positions is undeniable (Christ, 2014).

The effects of having women on the board of directors (BOD) have been examined by some researchers over the past years. Credit Suisse (2012) research pinpointed that return on investment in companies with at least one-woman BOD member would be higher compared to all male boards. In addition, S&P 500 companies were found to enjoy increased return on equity, return on sales, and return on invested capital by having women as leaders in their BOD (Kattan, 2016).

Lowen (2011), stated that there are a number of characteristics that differentiate women leaders from men. The study about women's leadership qualities are summarized into four specific statements:

- Women are more convincing than men.
- When there is a feeling of rejection, women leaders learn from difficulty and move forward with a strong manner.
- Women leaders show a better leadership style, teamwork, resolving problems and decision making.
- Women leaders disregard rules often and take more risks than men.

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Moreover, Leadership Foundation member Kattan (2015) concluded from interviews conducted with Saudi employers that women workers are highly educated and start work on time with higher levels of effort, job devotion and performance. He confirmed that Saudi women employees display a higher work ethic and productivity output than their Saudi male counterparts. With Saudi women employees insisting on utilizing their advanced academic skills while being grateful at work, they are challenging the view of the place of women in Saudi Arabia around the world that they are downtrodden as they are increasingly asserting their status as 'different but equal'.

Offering equal leadership opportunities to women continues to be a challenge that is not yet being tackled even in developed countries such as the United States of America and Europe (Kattan, 2016). Koenig (2003) argues that international conventions must put more effort in promoting the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation at national and international levels. Just as the women's human rights treaty which was passed by 165 participating nations in 1981 stated, it is advised that all nations adopt and implement conventions in jurisdictions which emphasize women's equal rights in civil, political, economic, cultural, leadership and any other social realm (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). One study discovered that women's advancement is strongly linked to gender diverse boards of directors. According to the results of the study by Skaggs et al. (2012), the likelihood of having women in leadership positions would be substantially greater if women members are included on BOD. Thus, the more women on BOD, the more women will take on leadership roles.

Some researchers have investigated why women occupy lower-level positions in a particular profession but are unable to find work at a higher level. According to Caliper (2005), while in African countries, there are more women than men in primary and secondary schools, the number of male counterparts with managerial positions in pre-universities, universities and

polytechnics is higher than women. This difference can be explained by the presence and dominance of unwritten rules and traditions. A woman in top management is only hired when she is already serving as the successor of the man previously in the role. Therefore, this kind of ascent to a leadership position cannot be regarded as evidence of equal opportunity between both genders. The discrimination between women and men, in a majority of African countries, also originates from the fact that only a few women are educated and trained enough to become managers. As a result, the potential for women to contribute to the country's development and evolution has not been exploited fully thus far. Women are the mothers of the nation's children yet to be born, reared, and nurtured and women are the keystone to ensure family well-being. This provides affirmation of the proverb 'the hand that rocks the cradle determines a nation's development (Lowen, 2011).

Overall, there is a necessity for women's presence as top managers and leaders since they form at least half of the population who constitute the work force in many countries. Although there are advocates for increasing the number of women leaders, the primary goal for ambitious women is to see top women managers in sectors where men traditionally dominated. So, the issue of under-representation of women leaders is universal in many ways but takes a particular form in Saudi Arabia, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.9 Women's opportunities for leadership in Saudi Arabia

Although there is a strong emphasis in studies of gender on the problems, obstacles and challenges experienced by women, it is also crucial to identify the specific opportunities that might be available. Some of these opportunities for women are expressed as strategic aims, others as practical reforms. The notion of opportunity will be a significant area of enquiry for the survey of women leaders' perceptions and will inform discussion of the findings of this study.

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The government of Saudi Arabia seeks to encourage more women to take on leadership roles in education. Kotter (1996) describes eight stages of creating the change process: (1) establishment of a sense of urgency; (2) creation of a guiding coalition; (3) development of strategy and vision; (4) communication of a vision of change; (5) empowerment of the broad-based action; (6) generation of short-term success and wins; (7) consolidation of gains and production of a high level of change, and (8) anchoring of fresh cultural approaches.

Al-Ahmadi (2011) noted that Saudi Arabia is experiencing greater leadership development for women. This is because of the increasing women enrolment at different educational levels and in different fields of employment, along with different areas of public life. In the last 10 years, a growing number of Saudi women have participated in senior management areas as well as in the decision-making process in both public and private sectors. The Saudi Arabian government has adopted a clear vision for women's empowerment, which has been reflected within the recent government development plans showing a transparent shift in the country's planning orientation and efforts. Moreover, the plans do not just focus on the rights of women to employment and education; there is a clear emphasis on empowerment of Saudi women and improvement of their participation in public affairs. This has been a way of attaining the development of strategic objectives in the Saudi education system (Alchoui, 2009). Metcalfe and Rees (2010) confirmed that Saudi Arabia is embracing fresh strategic directions for recruiting well-qualified women for leadership positions, especially senior positions in both the private and the public sectors.

Saudi women have slowly been attaining high positions and ranks in positions such as Deputy Minister of Education, board members of Chambers of Commerce, university president, and Shura Council consultant. Also noteworthy is that Saudi women's skills and roles as women leaders are gaining greater attention from public and business practitioners and researchers

internationally (Omair, 2008). This attention and interest is influenced by the larger role played by women in companies and the national economy in general. In spite of the considerable and worthy expansion of women's roles in Saudi society, there is further evidence that women in upper management positions have experienced a reality different to their male counterparts because of cultural and structural factors that prevent their effective leadership (Almenkash et al., 2007). A report by Al-Lamki (1999) found that the key obstacles for women managers have been limited opportunities for higher education, male bosses' traditional attitudes toward working women, discriminatory recruitment and promotional practices, male resistance toward women management and male-dominated fields. Additional obstacles cited were lack of women role models, absence of legislation and policies ensuring women's participation in management positions, a lower level of professional development programs for women, a lack of professional networking, insufficient quality day-care centres, women playing dual professional and traditional roles, and family obligations of being a mother and a wife, including childbearing and child rearing responsibilities. Moreover, the local community has certain cultural barriers that are reflected in societal practices and beliefs that affect women's leadership roles adversely, not least their capability to exercise a positive leadership role.

Shahine (1997) argued that despite the growth of leadership roles for women in Arab societies, women are unable to prevent traditional beliefs and community practices from stifling their careers. In addition, the traditional beliefs have so frequently been presented in terms of the leadership abilities of males only, which often causes women to be considered less effective in their leadership roles. This situation is contributing to the development of negative attitudes towards women leaders due to the common belief that in order to be effective leaders' women need to adopt characteristics that are not naturally considered feminine, such as dictatorial and aggressive behavior.

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Women leaders have been experiencing several challenges that have limited their impact and prevented them from attaining their leadership potential. Such challenges include organizational structures, mentioned in Figure 3.1 above, individual factors, culture, practices, and policies. While this is similar to several Western countries, Saudi Arabia is having additional issues associated with greater family importance and the major role of religion that governs social and work relationships (Metcalf, 2008).

This study comes at a critical time in Saudi Arabia as several major social reforms are taking place. The significance of the “Vision 2030” strategic plan has been noted throughout this thesis (SEE: LIST SECTIONS] in terms of modernization, globalization, and the opportunities that it affords to women. The country has the major goal of women’s advancements in the public sphere and is also implementing ‘The Eighth Consecutive Development Plan.’ In addition, the implementation of the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals (2002-2015) has also placed a strong emphasis on the requirement for women’s empowerment. As noted earlier, the global dimension interacts with the national culture and is starting to inform the policies and strategic objectives of the Saudi government. One of the aims of this study is to evaluate women leaders’ perceptions of change. Have national and international developments directly or indirectly affected the challenges and opportunities experienced at home and at work by women leaders in Saudi Arabia.

Conclusion

Saudi Arabia has undergone many changes since its establishment by King Abdul-Aziz in 1932. After the discovery of oil, there were rapid and significant changes in Saudi society but some of these changes were met with resistance due to KSA’s tribal, conservative, and patriarchal history. Religion and traditional culture are dominant influences and the people in Saudi society sanctify religious scholars’ opinions, even if they are not mentioned in Islam’s holy book.

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Despite the resistance, Saudi society was forced to change. The first step to change was the establishment of boys' schools, and later girls' schools, despite the objection of some members of society. Eventually, various factors supported the change such as technology, satellite dishes, and Internet access. These advancements helped Saudi society to see the world and learn about other countries' views, not only those of neighboring Arab nations, but also those of the West. Furthermore, many Saudi citizens have been educated overseas and have returned to Saudi Arabia with new ideas for the future. Urbanization can now be seen in the Saudi lifestyle, as well as the effects of this change on living standards, families, and community relationships.

The introduction of new ideas and changes have resulted in significant intellectual struggles between liberals and religious parties. Women's gender equity is among the many issues hotly debated by conservative religious groups and liberal supporters alike. Religious groups point out that the process of change is influenced by Western culture, which has a hidden agenda to dominate and achieve its hegemonic goals. Meanwhile, liberals argue that the process of change is an inevitable part of keeping pace with progress occurring in the world. In addition, some believe that adherence to established ideas means maintaining traditional culture. This results in a split and major conflict between the supporters and opponents of change. Yet many people refuse to take sides, preferring to avoid conflict. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that the ethical and societal qualities that are appreciated in a society that have their roots in religious doctrine and tradition are not easy to change. As change happens, it will create conflict and division in society. Based on this, the first question in my research is, "What is the influence of culture on the professional and personal lives of women leaders in education in Saudi Arabia?" I seek to understand the influence of culture and how it impacts on women's career trajectories during a period of rapid change.

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Moreover, although these conflicts have created division in society and among families, the debates have been very useful for increasing society's awareness and deep understanding of the origins of the problems. One of the important results is, Saudi women have started to fight for equality in leadership positions in order to challenge the dominance of male leaders and to claim their rightful positions in society. Saudi women are gaining greater understanding of the operation of the capitalist system and how it is tied to women's oppression. In Saudi society, inequality and oppression of women is linked to their economic dependence on men, the result of women working at home for free, the absence of education, a shortage of well-paid jobs and fewer opportunities for full-time employment in the workforce. As women understand the patriarchal system of male dominance and power systems that currently oppress them they are increasingly demanding change. For example, there is a significant gap between genders in the employment hierarchy where women are employed in positions of lower rank than men. Therefore, the literature I have reviewed prepares the ground for the second and third research questions, which are "Why do women want to become leaders?" and "How do government education policies shape the experiences of women leaders?"

The literature examined in this Chapter pointed to key recurring and interconnected concepts which helped illuminate the processes through which interpersonal and gendered social relations between men and women are changing. These concepts are: gender order, power, patriarchy, culture, religion and cathexis. These concepts cannot achieve the goal of subjugating women without using strategic tools for the exercise of control over women in everyday life i.e., through forced dependency, restriction, limitations of movement, social oppression, and inequality in male dominated hierarchical structures. Change theory, and specifically dialectical theory, is the ideal theoretical framework for this study to identify and analyse patterns of social change, with a sharp focus on discontinuous and recurrent sequences of confrontation, conflict and synthesis experienced by women in leadership roles in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The

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dialectical theory of change employs critical reasoning, which aims to realize things concretely in all their movement, change, and interconnection, with their contradictory and conflicting sides in unity. Moreover, dialectical theory will be a guide to clearly explain the new ideologies and overlapping discussions that permeate Saudi society, the struggle between progressives and traditionalists and obstacles created by societal change. Hence, through the concepts, theory and analysis of causes of conflicts and changes in Saudi society I aim to understand the challenges and opportunities that women leaders face in Saudi Arabia.

In conclusion, the focus of this thesis will use a framework that can take account of broader social change, which gave rise to conflicts and contradictions in both the private and public spheres between men and women in Saudi Arabia. Despite significant gains achieved in gender equality around the world since the 1960s, women's emancipation in KSA is only just beginning. As they challenge patriarchal man-made systems and structures, Saudi women experience the oppressive force of male power at every turn. Against this backdrop, this study focuses on women who are leaders, in a context where gender is policed by law and religion.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This Chapter outlines the methodological approach taken in this study, starting with a discussion of the underpinning epistemological approach of the research. The research design outlines in more detail the approach taken in terms of the selection of sites and participants, explaining why those choices were made. This is followed by a detailed description of the stages of data collection, showing how data is presented in terms of the findings and their analysis.

4.1 Research paradigm

The key objective of this research was to identify and understand both the challenges and opportunities that women leaders face in their daily work experiences and career development trajectories as well as their personal lives. An interpretive approach was chosen for this research in order to generate detailed qualitative data through semi-structured interviews. The interpretive approach has enabled the participants to express their opinions and understanding of their life-world environment; the way people acquire knowledge and adapt to external factors from person to person (Alase, 2017). As a consequence of this feature of the interpretive approach, and because the objective of this research is to investigate the experiences of women leaders in relation to how their own educational careers are influenced by societal factors, an interpretive approach is highly suited to achieve the aims of this research.

Some of the necessary interpretive features are contextual because they involve the participants and researchers' perceptions about their society and culture. For example, this study collected data from participants who lived, worked and interacted in an environment shaped by religion, patriarchy and culture, mirroring the power structures, which both reflected and perpetuated the positioning of women in the labour market and within wider Saudi society. The study sought

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to reveal how the participants negotiated their way through these gendered social relations and to capture their career aspirations against the backdrop of the formidable challenges and obstacles they faced. Given the contested nature of the topic of this research, its focus on Saudi women's emancipation is open to multiple interpretations. As a Saudi woman, I was acutely aware that what one participant might view as a challenge, could be viewed as an opportunity by another. Patton (2002) noted that "The researcher has direct contact with and gets close to the people, situation, and phenomenon under study; the researcher's personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon" (p.40). Therefore, the format of the interview questions and data collection methods required a degree of flexibility to explore potentially unexpected avenues of enquiry which arose during the interview process. Such flexibility is typically a characteristic of qualitative research. Jonker and Pennink (2010) point out that a notable advantage of qualitative methodology is its flexibility. With this methodology I'm able to add or remove any issue or question according to the requirement of the situation at any point during the research process.

During the interview, for example, while speaking with one of the study participants the interviewee spoke about the attitudes of her husband and other culture-related questions. As a result, the interview exceeded the time allocated. However, the openness of the interview generated a rich stream of data that later provided opportunities for theoretical analysis in terms of cathexis. Accordingly, this methodology enabled me to generate comprehensive contextual data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with participants. In the course of data collection, I allowed the respondent complete freedom to answer interview questions as they desired. Interviewees therefore are not restricted in their responses and may provide answers which are unpredictable and do not fit within a pre-determined set of responses. In some cases, it might be possible to follow unexpected turns with supplementary questions. This contrasts with a quantitative survey where the questions and range of answer options are pre-determined.

Turner (2010) also noted that asking open-ended research questions can provide a rich source of information expressing a wide range of views.

4.2 Research design

Given the emphasis of the research on women's perceptions about their situation in life and at work it became apparent that a qualitative methodology would be most appropriate to capture their reflections. The advantage of the qualitative method is that a large amount of information is produced about a small number of participants. Accordingly, we gain an in-depth knowledge of the forces that influence them and their perceptions of their situation.

These aspects of the qualitative methodology are frequently mentioned in research methodology literature. Cooper and Schinder (2006) note that qualitative research design is appropriate for social sciences with a focus on the explanation of the phenomena along with core understanding. This research method concentrates on understanding human and social behaviour through the perspectives of the research participants. For example, Michael Quinn Patton noted that "A qualitative design needs to remain sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry" (Patton, 2002, p. 255). This study uses semi-structured interviews to capture the thoughts and feelings, and report on actions of Saudi Arabian women leaders in education.

The approach provided more meaningful responses, as an information gathering process, than the usual cause and effect which is typically found in quantitative research. Qualitative research has approaches, such as naturalistic research which involves studying phenomena within their natural context (Cohen & Manion, 2002). Johnson and Onwuegbuzies (2004) suggest that researchers who engage in qualitative research usually develop a deep understanding and provide holistic explanations in terms of the subject that is being studied. Reeves et al. (2008)

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also suggest that the qualitative method is useful to collect more information for investigating interactions.

The objective of my research was to understand the women's professional and personal lives through the challenges and opportunities they had faced. My choice of this method facilitated the process of describing and analysing the data using a theoretical framework that helped me cluster perceptions in terms of more general problems and wider debates. Specifically, my study involved reflecting on theories of the gender order and dialectical change theory, as outlined in the previous chapter. These theoretical concepts have helped me examine patriarchy and to modes of resistance that might be available. Accordingly, these theories cut across many of the concerns of the research about women's experiences of challenges and opportunities. Potentially, these theories had a high explanatory value for the situations experienced by the women who were to be the subject of the study, and also challenged me to reconsider my own position in the research. Further exploration of work by Arjun Appadurai likewise created opportunities to develop the richness of the explanations by employing global.

My aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social norms that influence practices and affect the professional lives of women leaders in the workplace. To achieve this, I sought to elicit their beliefs, values, and attitudes in relation to their experiences of leadership in schools and their personal lives.

4.3 Data collection

Before collecting the data, an application for Ethics approval was submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee of Western Sydney University. After receiving the approval from the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee and the General Education Department in Al-Khobar, school principals were contacted via email, and letters were sent to leaders in the four schools to invite them to participate voluntarily in this research.

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I travelled to Saudi Arabia in April 2016 whereupon the Eastern Province's General Directorate of Girls' Education within the MoE forwarded notification to Saudi Arabian women principals outlining the objectives of my proposed research and to invite their participation in the study. Upon receipt of approval from the relevant authorities' parties I met the participants before initiating any interview and gave every participant a copy of the memo from the MoE stating the permission to conduct research. I finished the formalities by asking participants to sign a consent form before commencing the interview. Moreover, I ensured that all the interviewees were aware of the purpose of the research and informed them that they had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. All participants were assured that their data would be protected, and that this data would not to be used for any other purposes. Their names were replaced with pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity. These reassurances made it possible for the participants to present their opinions freely and honestly.

The question topics considered for the interview were selected specifically because they related to the framework of the research together with inputs from the literature review. During the interview, each of the interviewees was asked the prepared questions in sequence and were given adequate time to respond. At regular intervals, they were asked if they had any questions and needed any clarifications regarding the interview. At the end of the interview, each was thanked for their valuable time and co-operation. In total, the interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes on average. Of the total, the first six interviews were held during 2016 in the last in the last semester of the academic year in Saudi Arabia. Three of the interviews were conducted during the secondary school final exams over a period of two weeks. The remaining three interviews were conducted after the final exams were completed. The final four interviews were conducted during the fasting month of Ramadan.

To ensure that the interviewee gave her most honest feedback it was necessary to make her feel comfortable. The interviewee was assured that all her responses would be kept confidential (Briggs & Coleman, 2007). My intention had been to use a recorder during the interviews, but this was not possible. This recording method would have been beneficial as it would have provided me with the original data to reference. My reasoning for using a recorder was to ensure that I collected the data accurately. The recorder would have also ensured that all of the responses were recorded in their entirety and I did not have to rely solely on my notes and memory to understand what was being said. My aim was to ensure that accurate and authentic data were collected. However, I could not achieve this aim, as 16 out of 16 participants refused to have the recorder turned on during the interview. They had various reasons for not wishing to be recorded. For example, “sorry I cannot, my family belong to a strong tribe so, maybe I face a problem if I do that.” Another participant said, “sorry, I’m shy” and another “I don’t like to record my voice for any reason.” I realized that these refusals stem from the conservative nature of Saudi culture (Al-Zarah, 2008) and fear of reprisal. It could reasonably be assumed that their refusal to be recorded was born out of their fear of expressing controversial views that could be recorded as evidence that may be used against them in the future. In view of this, I tried to follow Cohen and Manion, (2000, p. 281) who state, “It might be less threatening not to have any mechanical means of recording the interview.” It would have been unethical to use the recorder when it had been explicitly refused. For this reason, I took hand-written notes during all the interviews. Tracey and Millar (2009) emphasize the importance of accurately recording interview data as essential for analytical accuracy. Furthermore, Muswazi and Nhamo (2013) observe that note taking remains relevant as it can be used to describe the physical appearance or body language of interviewees. This is important because a respondent’s non-verbal reactions may not be identifiable in a recording and note-taking allows these non-verbal cues, reactions or interactions to be documented. Non-verbal interaction, such as body

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language, is relevant because it can provide important additional information about the participant's thoughts and feelings in response to the interview questions. With this in mind, during the interviews I focused on body language, eye contact and the facial expressions of the interviewees and I can confirm that non-verbal language conveys a lot more than the simple spoken word.

Examples of this include participant's body language. During the interviews several interviewees displayed unmistakable non-verbal cues which indicated I should delve further into the topics which caused these signals. An example of this was one participant moved her head - looking right then left - several times to check to see if anyone was nearby to overhear her answers. At this point she was discussing her opinions about leaders requiring more autonomy. Her gestures perhaps expressed her anxiety about the MoE. Another interviewee's facial expressions displayed great unhappiness as she explained with dissatisfaction the role of leaders in schools she had worked with.

Allan and Pease (2004) highlight that a person's body language says a lot about their intentions, their mind-set and their opinions. This is especially true when these non-verbal actions are made in a conversation between two people. During the interviews, I wrote down the respondents' responses and on concluding the interview I also wrote a longer post-interview memo detailing my additional observations such as body language. I did not find this method problematic, in fact my notes on body language and other interactions added valuable insight to the interview data and supported the voice of the participants. As well as I wrote a narrative for each one, a story that summarized the interview and the general sense of the participant's perspective.

Generally, my experiences with the schools and their principals were favorable and worthy of mention here. All the school principals and staff were extremely hospitable and warm. In most places, I experienced Saudi hospitality and was offered Arabic coffee along with the local

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specialties (dates, which are ubiquitous in Saudi Arabia). In some of the schools, I was offered breakfast too, as they acknowledged the long journey that I had taken to reach their school. Saudi Arabia has always been known for its warm and hospitable culture especially for outsiders and travelers.

Within this context the study's research was carried out in Saudi Arabia's Eastern region at the cities of Al-Khobar, Dhahran and Dammam. It involved interviewing 16 women leaders at four schools: Al-Khobar School, National Guard School, Al Dhahran School and Saad School, in different subject areas. The next section and subsections will outline the research design in greater detail.

4.3.1 School selection criteria

The reason for choosing schools based in the same city was to determine whether their geographic location played any part in the educational issues or if there was any relationship between the patriarchal system and the prevailing culture of reputational politics and religion rely on schools. In this regard, it should be noted that the MoE often has localised policies for specific geographic regions which influence the community and its schools. For example, the MoE prohibits sports classes in state schools, while it simultaneously permits them in private schools.

This study is located in Eastern region in the city of AL-Khobar, Dhahran, Dammam.

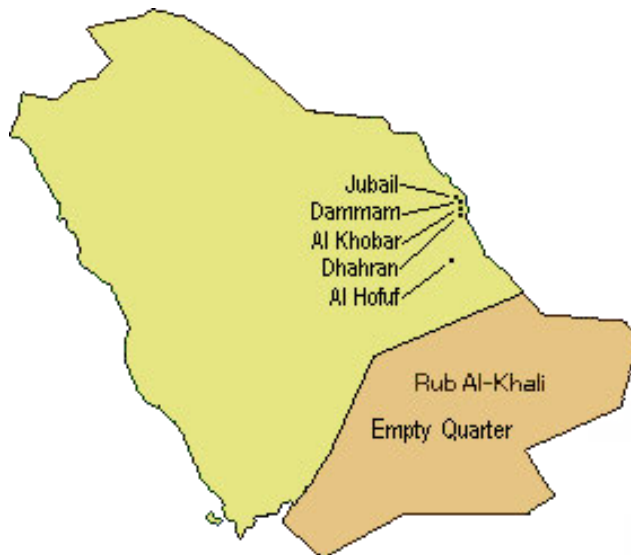


Figure 4.1: Major cities in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia: East Dammam, West Dammam, Khobar, Dhahran (Al-Dhuwaihi, 2011).

The Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia

The Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia has an estimated population of around 600,000. According to the Central Department of Statistics and Information (2013), more than half, of the Al-Khobar residents, approximately 336,000, are not Saudi Arabian and have migrated to the city from other countries.

From a socio-economic perspective, there are three main classifications which can be used to categorise the inhabitants:

- The first group are the most affluent, the owners of major commercial and residential entities. This group can afford the exorbitant fees of private and modern schools, equipped with the latest technologies, for their children.
- The second group of Al-Khobar residents are employees of the Saudi Arabian public sector, such as educational institutes, the army or small to medium state-owned enterprises. The income this group earns is in the middle range compared to others.
- The third group, the poorest class of the city, comprises of people who require support from the government in terms of housing and living expenses allowances to survive. As opposed to other classes, this part of the population owns few assets and have negligible or no savings.

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Because of the varying differences between the needs and expectations of the above-mentioned groups, schools in Al-Khobar city offer specific and tailored services to their students. For example, the wealthy class register their children in Al-Saad school which has many students and offers them a full range of facilities. It is also located in an elite neighborhood of the city.

Al-Dhahran school is another example which was founded in an old, central neighborhood of the city, where the majority of residents are Saudi Oil Company (Aramco) employees. One of the schools in this area, which is located in rented premises in a low-class area, is Al-Khobar school. It provides quite basic educational services and registers many students. The other example of a particularly special school is the Saudi National Guard School, which is highly protected by government guards, even though it is established in a private area with tight National Guard supervision and security monitoring.

In the next section I will describe each school that I visited. The schools were located across the city, with one being in the inner city and three from geographically separated outer suburbs. Additionally, to help provide a variety of responses in terms of professional lives, three schools were public and one private; some with rented non-government-built facilities and others with government built permanent facilities.

4.3.1.1 Al Dhahran school ‘Aramco School’

School profile

Al Dhahran School is an over-subscribed secondary school founded more than two decades ago in an old residential area that is predominantly home to the staff of the Saudi Arabia Oil Company, (Aramco). Accordingly, a majority of the pupils’ fathers work at Aramco and hence Al Dhahran School is also informally called Aramco School. Most students who attend the Aramco school come from the second group. The school building was well maintained through regular renovations and repairs. To provide students with a pleasant learning environment, all

of the walls are painted with beautiful pictures and outstanding calligraphy; this made for a distinctive and very appealing visual display. The staff-student ratio was 60:830, including approximately 30 administrative staff. A number of facilities were provided for staff and students. For example, teachers and administration employees could enjoy their coffee or food in a small kitchen right beside the administration offices. Students can enjoy their physical activities in both outdoor and indoor playgrounds of the school. As a clear guide for visitors, the organizational chart of the school is presented at the entrance of the building providing the name, position, and office location of the school employees.

Reflections about the school

When I entered the school, I was surprised, that although the ‘Aramco School’ was a public school, it resembled a private school. In fact, Al Dhahran school was developed by an American construction company, thus the school had the infrastructure of a model school. It was equipped with the facilities which were unique, not only for this school as a public school, but also among private schools. The availability of high-tech educational equipment like smart boards, computers and digital display devices, together with big classrooms and facilities including a library, theatre, mosque, English and science laboratories, and a crèche for staff, were distinctive features of this school. As mentioned above, the interior design and architecture of this school were impressive.

4.3.1.2 Saad school (private school)

School profile

Founded privately in 1995 by Sana, who is a Saudi woman, Saad schools are surrounded by many condominiums, international schools and football fields. Sana lost her son, Saad, when he was only four years old. She then named the schools after him. Saad schools were built to provide excellent co-education facilities from kindergarten to secondary levels. Specifically, the schools have a number of spacious classrooms, mosque, tennis and basketball courts, and

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even a large movie theatre with capacity for an audience of 800. In terms of additional courses, the schools provide English language lessons, French, maths, and science subjects. Moreover, breakfast and lunch are served to students on campus. In addition, swimming and horse-riding classes are offered for male pupils while martial arts programs are open for registration by both genders, with separate classes. Basically, only students from wealthy families (the first group) can afford to attend Saad schools.

Saad schools have won many awards through their comprehensive and excellent training programs and facilities. To begin with, Saad schools for girls, were referred to as the model for other schools. Saad schools achieved the highest ranking among other Saudi schools led by the MoE in 2000, a rise from third place the year before. Furthermore, the same ministry issued a 'letter of distinction' to Saad schools in 2001 because of their contribution to the improvement of pupils' educational achievements.

Reflections about the school

It has been almost 13 years since I left the Saad school where I worked as a teacher for four years. As expected, I was so excited to visit it again and observe what changes had occurred in the school over the years. From the moment I entered, I was continuously remembering the moments and experiences I had with my students and colleagues. However, what really surprised me was that the school has been progressing towards its distinction status and maintaining the highest standards of education, facilities, and definitely improving its physical environment. Upon visiting one of the managers, I was warmly welcomed and praised for continuing my education to PhD level and the manager was very proud of my postgraduate certificates.

In keeping with the latest educational principles, class sizes had been reduced to only 18 students, although all the classes remained in large physical spaces with the capacity for

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accommodating many more students. Furthermore, the total number of students and teachers had increased compared to the time I was working in Saad schools.

The day I visited the school the end-of-year concert had just finished and consequently all the students and teachers were physically and mentally exhausted. The school's many successes are due to the effective and strong management team, who enable and promote high-quality education in Saad schools. The wealth of the parents and cultural capital of the children is also a contributing factor to students' success.

4.3.1.3 Al Khobar school

School profile

This school is located in downtown Al Khobar city which is inhabited predominantly by middle to low-income residents. Therefore, the students who attend this school come from the third group. The school is surrounded by many houses and small businesses such as mini-markets, chemists and food and beverage shops in a crowded neighborhood. Moreover, it is quite near to Saudi Arabia Education Department. Al Khobar school is a secondary school which was founded in 1971 and provides lower standards of educational facilities. The school has a total of 500 students divided into 15 classes and taught by 28 teachers. A quarter of the school is designated for outdoor activities and includes a small basketball court and backyard. The first floor of the school is used for administration, including management offices and staff rooms, as well as cafeteria, library and science laboratories, while classrooms are located on the second and third floors.

Reflections about the school

Visiting Al Khobar School was disappointing for me since the facilities and equipment provided were quite dilapidated and outdated. The school environment resembles a traditional old house with cramped and narrow aisles on a congested floor plan. As the stairs were quite near the

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administration offices, the loud voices and feet on the stairs could be heard in adjacent classrooms and offices. Moreover, classroom furniture such as students' desks and teachers' tables were rusty with worn out covers. Surprisingly, the school library also lacked the necessary facilities and resources such as personal computers and even tables. Also, the basketball court in the playground was in a state of disrepair and was used for students to queue on rather than physical education classes.

In terms of the busy neighborhood around Al Khobar School, it takes a considerable amount of time to find a car parking space as the school is located in the city center with a mixture of foreign and local populations living and working in the area. Overall, the school matches the needs of children from lower socio-economic status families, which are only able to invest modest amounts of their income in their children's education.

4.3.1.4 Saudi National Guard School

School profile

The Saudi National Guard School was funded and established by the Saudi government three decades ago. This was the only school located outside the city and was designed with full facilities. The school complex was built between two principal suburbs in the Eastern Province and includes around 2000 free residential units for National Guard residents. Moreover, convenient stores, mosques, gyms, and parks are provided for the residents which are cleaned regularly. This school exemplifies the MoE's intention to build public schools suitable for contemporary lifestyles. The Saudi National Guard School offers education at three levels: kindergarten, elementary, and secondary with separate buildings and private areas for every level of study. The capacity of the secondary school is just below 300 students who come from second group. These students are taught and managed by slightly less than 50 teachers and admin staff combined.

Reflections about the school

Since this school is protected by National Guard Security, permission must be sought before access is allowed. Therefore, I had to go through the necessary procedures and explain the intention of my visit to receive a permission letter. After being allowed to enter the school compound, I noticed that as it was lunch-time break, the students were mingling and playing in the playground. One unforgettable memory of the school visit was an incident when some of the students mistakenly recognized me as one of their previous teachers, who was in fact my sister, and enthusiastically ran toward me. I was warmly welcomed by students and administration staff, by which time they realized they had mistaken me for my sister. Staff helpfully took me on a tour of the school, explained all aspects of the school and ensured I had a complete record of the school facilities. I saw the spacious classrooms in the school; however, not all of them were fitted with Information and Communication Technology facilities such as smart boards, personal computers, and other digital display devices. In addition, I inspected the high-quality facilities that included mosques, libraries and a variety of language and science laboratories for English, physics and chemistry classes. Despite the friendly and welcoming demeanour of the staff, the atmosphere of the military base and its security was overwhelming.

4.3.2 The participants

The study sample from four different schools included 16 women educational leaders. These leaders were responsible for different subject areas. Some were English subject leaders. Others led on Home Economics, which covers cooking, sewing and designing clothes. There were subject leaders of Religious Education, which focusses exclusively on Islam and is often called “Islamic Education” in Arab countries – "التربية الإسلامية". Some led the Physical Education department. The final subject area was Activities Education, a class that teaches how to run a small business. The selected participants had no private offices at their respective schools and no specific daily attendance requirements. Each of the education leaders in this study is an

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inspector who is required to periodically attend at least four schools during the academic year to evaluate the performance of other teachers and provide feedback and guidance. The exception being private school leaders whose attendance was required daily.

The sports leaders were found only at private schools, because there are no sport classes in public schools. This is related to a policy from the MoE in Saudi Arabia which prevents students from practicing sporting activities at girls' schools. Only one of the participants was an English language leader as English lessons are only offered at a few public schools in Saudi Arabia. Religious Education leaders were selected to investigate in-depth issues relating to culture, religion and gender. The Home Economics leaders were selected to investigate the challenges they faced, especially since a growing number of families are demanding the removal of this subject from the curriculum as they view it as archaic and old-fashioned. Activities Education includes the new school curricula of vocational projects and small businesses, including the design and production of jewelry and ornaments.

As mentioned above, there were 16 participants. My purpose was to generate richer information; by limiting the number of participants I was able to talk to in more depth and include all of their comments. According to Patton, "The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than the sample size" (p. 245).

The following table lists the teaching experience, supervision experience, school names and qualifications for each of the sixteen leaders who participated in this study.

Table 4.1: Demographic data

SL	Participants	Teaching experience	Supervision experience	Qualification	School name
1	Kholod	18 years	2 years	Bachelor of Religion	Al Khobar school
2	Mashel	19 years	2 years	Master of English	Al Khobar school
3	Refah	16 years	7 years	Bachelor of Home Economics	Al Khobar school
4	Fatima	15 years	1 years	Master of Religion	Al Khobar school
5	Jamila	14 years	9 years	Bachelor of Religion	Al Dhahran school
6	Naima	8 years	11 years	Bachelor of English	Al Dhahran school
7	Reem 1	19 years	2 years	Bachelor of Family Education	Al Dhahran school
8	Rama	20 years	4 months	Bachelor of Art Education	Al Dhahran school
9	Badria	23 years	5 years	Bachelor of Religion	National Guard school
10	Hana	10 years	15 years	Bachelor of English	National Guard school
11	Walaa	10 years	7 years	Bachelor of Home Economics	National Guard school
12	Sarifa	16 years	5 years	Bachelor of Home Economics	National Guard school
13	Haia	20 years	10 years	Bachelor of Religion	Saad school
14	Eiman	11 years	5 years	Bachelor of English	Saad school
15	Rania	19 years	10 years	Bachelor of Art Education	Saad school
16	Marwa	5 years	6 years	Master of Personal Training	Saad school

4.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is an organizational procedure for discussing the interview texts and field notes (Richards, 2009). The stage of data collection included a large amount of data consisting of texts from transcribed interviews. At first glance, the material interpretation and analysis and its extraction for meaningful findings seemed complex. Nonetheless, good researchers find huge amounts of data useful and rich in information for in-depth and creative outcomes (Punch, 2013). Moreover, according to Baxter and Jack (2008) the data analysis stage is crucial within qualitative research; there is an opportunity for creativity in both synthesis and analysis. Creswell (2017) notes that the analysis stage is divided into five parts: data management, coding and developing themes, data description, data interpretation and data representation. This comprehensive process allows for information refinement, leading to useful and usable sets of data. Accordingly, the follow process was undertaken in this study under three stages.

4.4.1 Stage one data management

Immediately following each interview, I transcribed the interview in Arabic to ensure that I preserved contextual meaning. Due to language differences when translating Arabic to English and the subtle nuances of many Arabic concepts, it was important to write the interviews down immediately as a narrative or story of each participant. This proved helpful in the preliminary stages of the analysis when interviews were translated into English. Soon after I translated key items of data, which were eventually quoted in the research, into English. In the interests of translation accuracy, following my own translation I had a woman, who was a university Arabic linguist, check and edit my work to ensure the best translation possible. Where appropriate the linguist modified and corrected my translation in order to preserve the interviewees' contextual meanings. It had been my original intention to use the Nvivo qualitative data analysis software; however, after starting the data analysis I decided to use my hand-written analysis instead of the Nvivo software. The reason for this was that I became intimately familiar with the

respondents' answers and preferred seeing them recorded in my notes rather than through Nvivo. The Nvivo software would perhaps be better suited for studies involving greater numbers of participants.

4.4.2 Stage two coding and developing themes

During this stage I conducted a preliminary codification of data to identify key themes. Once this was done, I sought to identify relationships connecting categories and themes. To achieve this, it was necessary to repeatedly read data in Word documents to allow me to make comparisons, assign categorizations and match responses with questions. In order to distinguish individual responses, the participants' initials were bracketed against their answers. However, in the interests of preserving anonymity all identifying indicators were deleted from the final report. During this process, quotable segments of text from the responses that could be used to support preliminary findings were highlighted and categorized through color coding (Appendix E). I gave specific codes their own colors, for example, all for dependency or restriction related themes were one color. Additionally, color coding of text in the Word document was used to categorize most relevant information. The color coding and categorization of information was useful in identifying relationships between responses during the analysis process, which involved data comparison and assigning extracts to categories or themes. As a consequence, themes and sub-themes emerged that were rich in detail. During this process I was aided by writing notes and reflections to record potentially useful and relevant emerging themes in the data. At the conclusion of this stage the data was visually tabulated to align with the objective of this study, in order to identify the challenges and opportunities that woman leaders faced in education. It was becoming clear why Saudi women head teachers wanted to become leaders.

4.4.3 Stage three data description /data interpretation and data representation

This stage involved the reorganization and reassessment of categories which had been provisionally made during the coding and categorization into themes process. This led to the construction of preliminary conclusions (Cohen & Manion, 2002) and involved continuous reference back to the interviews to ensure the contextual integrity of the data and information. As a result of this process conclusions were formulated by relating them to the research questions within the emergent themes. For example, women leaders explained their problems with transportation given the lack of trains or buses in Saudi Arabia. Also, before 2018, Saudi women were not permitted to drive. Hence, women had to rely on men to travel to different schools. As a result, forced dependency emerged from all these similar codes. Continuous revision of categories allowed for the identification of similarities and differences within interviewee responses thus ensuring that the designated themes were adequate to describe pertinent concepts. Once I was satisfied with the comprehensive categorization of the data, it was visually organized in a table to represent patterns and relationships. This allowed for additional verification prior to arriving at the research conclusions (Bryman, 2016). These stages of analysis were revisited frequently with continuous reference to interviews necessitating frequent revision of the data. The display of data and its interpretation was done in accordance with “dialectical theory” (Burke, 2017). In order to ensure theory was accurately applied to themes relating to conflict and change, which emerged from themes contained in the research data, I first had to establish guiding theoretical principles.

The theoretical principles of dialectic change are evident in this study. They are manifested as significant contradictions and conflicts owing to the emergence of friction caused by the relationship in the gender order. To analyse the gender order concepts such as power, patriarchy, culture, religion, and cathexis were employed to understand how they operated in Saudi society.

Meanwhile I returned to my own research data and supporting statements derived from direct quotations of participant interviews. I was looking for answers from the participants that were similar in order to determine if patterns in their responses were recurring themes. For example, many participants' descriptions of the influence of the MoE on their leadership indicated that they were not given enough authority to act or be decision makers. Also, the role that Saudi cultural norms and social conventions play in the effective leadership of these 16 women was evident in this study. This resulted in two emerging themes that had arisen from the data such as dialectics of culture and politics of power. For example, I could not neglect how there are many contradictions in family relations, such as the husband being the first supporter of his family and his wife. In contrast, the husband's sense of jealousy and his internal refusal to let his wife become better than him, which appeared very clearly during the interviews. This is due to a cultural concept, which is deeply rooted in Saudi society.

4.5 Ethical issues

When starting research, it is vital to consider the ethical aspects of information to be gathered and the impact of the results. Ethics are the rules of conduct conforming to a certain set of principles (Robson, 2002). According to Busher and James (2007), ethical issues arise at any stage of a research project, especially when responding to and when dealing with human participants where research involves assessing a number of possible instances of human behaviour that require the application of ethical principles. In such cases, it is important for the researcher to be aware of the research needs to facilitate ethical judgment when situations are arising and changing.

In my case, an example of an ethical situation requiring the application of principles is the instance when participants refused to record their voices during an interview. In this case, although I decided to record their voices, I changed my mind because I had to follow the

participants' preferences and I was sensitive about the socio-political context of these participants. I was also aware that failure to take care of the recorded voices would jeopardize their privacy because certain aspects of public life in Saudi Arabia are sensitive, based on the culture and policy of reputation as compared to the case of Australia. Consequently, in the case of Saudi Arabia, people are sensitive about the ways of expressing views. Therefore, in my research, I have taken note of cultural sensitivity without invalidating the results. Because as mentioned above, it is unethical to record the voices of participants without their consent.

Additionally, the interview data and the translated documents were collected and safely stored on a password protected computer. I typed the interviews onto my personal computer, backed them up onto a portable USB and made printed copies of the translating; the USB and interview observation documents were secured in a briefcase. All material relating to the study was protected throughout the duration of the research with the intention of erasing the USB and destroying data and other material at the conclusion of the study. Any regulations concerning time sensitivity of data, and notes that may contain personal information about the participants were complied with.

4.6 Validity and reliability

This section briefly compares the function of reliability and validity in different kinds of research and then explains how these terms have been adapted and revised in this study. Traditionally, the concepts of reliability and validity have played a significant role in quantitative research (Bush, 2007). These methods of verification were typically developed for application with positivist research in the sciences (Cohen & Manion, 2002), where the object of study is a relatively fixed phenomenon, where hypotheses can be tested, and where the researcher has an objective or neutral status within the research. In order to repeat the research and to test the findings the researcher's terms and tools need to be standardized, otherwise there

will be disagreements (Hammersley, 1987, p. 37). Thus, the notion of the replication and generalization have a significant place in scientific research.

In terms of qualitative research, however, reliability and validity are *contested* terms. Although reliability and validity were often applied in the early history of qualitative research in the 1950s and 1960s, it is now more common to assert that they have limited value in qualitative research because of their roots in a positive and essentialist model of research. In fact, the new edition of a leading textbook, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource* (2016), only mentions validity 5 times and reliability 7 times, in passing; the authors also note: ‘Today, few qualitative researchers would attempt to validate their interpretations through quasi-statistics. Proof is illusive in qualitative research’ (Taylor et al, p. 189). Closer inspection, however, reveals that terms which are more appropriate to qualitative research have been introduced that correspond to reliability and validity. For instance, Taylor et al. (2016) mention terms such as ‘meaningfulness’ (p. 10), ‘honest rendering’ (p. 126), ‘cross-checks’ (p. 126, pp. 192-193), ‘contradictions and internal inconsistencies’ (p. 127), ‘misunderstandings’ and ‘layers of meaning’ (p. 128), and ‘credibility’ (p. 188). Miller (2008, p. 754) concluded that ‘Whereas many qualitative researchers describe parallel concepts such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and consistency as appropriate qualitative correlates to reliability, others avoid the purposeful quest for reliability’. While the key terms have evidently been adapted and redefined, it is important to note that this does not mean reliability and validity have been erased altogether, leading to a relativistic free-for-all approach. In this regard, (Taylor et al., p. 10) offers a significant observation: ‘A qualitative study is not an impressionistic, off-the-cuff analysis based on a superficial look at a setting or people.’

In contrast to scientific positivism, the social sciences are often dealing with constructions such as race or gender, which are based on shifting perceptions relative to the time of observation and the context. In social science research the qualitative researcher is the measuring tool and

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completely detached objectivity is not possible. Likewise, the participant is not a fixed object but a subjective being. Another problem is that both researcher and participant may evolve; they vary according to time and place. In this regard, Miller (2008, p. 754) points to the need to acknowledge and foreground specificity or uniqueness: ‘the unique identities of both researchers and research participants are transparently identified and purposefully centered. Repeatability, from this perspective, is neither desired nor possible.’ Whereas the positivist quantitative researcher aims to measure objectively, the qualitative method is more interested in evaluation of the data, with a sensitivity to subjective components.

Some of the most influential new approaches to reliability and validity have been derived from the work of the social theorist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929). In summary, Habermas argued that a consensus can be achieved through dialogue, which was developed into a theory of communicative action. His notion of validity therefore involves the dialogic practice whereby claims to truth can be contested, rejected, or endorsed. It could be argued that this practice is embedded in the academic field: there is a community of scholars and there are discursive practices such as research seminars and peer reviews, or domains used to exchange and debate, such as learned conferences. Moreover, in qualitative research there is also a social relation between the researcher and the participants, with opportunities for supplementary questions that are open-ended, and reflective approaches to feedback from participants. Rather than absolute truth, Habermas provides a description of procedures based on *social* validity. This model has also come to rely on the notion of an ‘ideal speech situation.’ According to Cukier et al. (2004, p. 239), ‘This ideal speech situation results in undistorted communication and builds comprehension, trust, knowledge, and consent. In contrast, distorted communication results in misrepresentation, confusion, false assurances, and illegitimacy.’ These terms appear to work well with a qualitative approach to research.

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In order to improve validity and reliability (or similar terms), the qualitative researcher should undertake a process of reflection during the research project: trying to understand her own life journey (education, career, status, class, opportunities and obstacles as a woman); reflecting on her experiences of different cultures (Australia and Saudi Arabia); studying a wide range of theories that might illuminate unforeseen bias or prejudice. In this regard, Miller (2008, p. 754) has observed, ‘most qualitative researchers embrace the notion of reflexivity—the idea that researchers’ backgrounds, interests, skills, and biases necessarily play unique roles in the framing of studies and in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.’ Thus, critical judgements and judicious evaluation had to be applied in sincerely selecting the most appropriate theoretical model for the research. In the early stages of the research, for example, I struggled with various models of gender and patriarchy, and wrestled with multiple theories of change. An example of difficulty was the evaluation of how far these terminologies and theories were universal, or culturally specific, and how they might most appropriately inform the design of questions or my discussion of the findings.

The power of religion is such that it has the ability to influence others. As an example, several of the interviews were conducted during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan. During this month all practicing Muslims are reminded that acts of kindness and being helpful are particularly blessed. As a consequence of desiring to be generous during this month many participants were particularly helpful and interviews were more relaxed and genuine. Additionally, at one school where I conducted interviews, I was a former teacher there years earlier so found the women’s manager particularly accommodating. She expressed her pride that I as one of her former staff members had travelled internationally in pursuit of my PhD. The social power in work relationships with the women manager assisted in speeding up the interview process. She mentioned to the women leaders who I would like to meet, that I was one of the members in this school previously. However, I confirm her support for my study did

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not influence the outcomes of participant interviews where all participants understood that they did not have to participate, and they had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

This study recognized the importance of reliability and validity (and similar terms). Accordingly, several measures were taken to ensure this research was founded on sound data. After I wrote the respondents' answers I repeated my written answers back to them to confirm it was an accurate reflection of their opinions. There were several instances where this necessitated me seeking an opportunity for a follow-up interview where I read my findings to the respondent, giving them an opportunity to confirm their answers. This process allowed them to add to their original answers or to make further comments. Additionally, each study participant was given a pro forma through which they were invited to provide feedback, either anonymously or using their actual name. Feedback actually constitutes an essential part of the research process as it allows participants to expand or modify answers, criticize or validate the research process, or give other valuable information.

The thesis is also transparent in explaining how research questions were constructed, how data was collected, and how coding practices were employed and why. Therefore, the methods used are open to inspection and the documented evidence can be reviewed. Furthermore, it was important to present the main findings in a way that showed how representative they were of the complete data set. Moreover, it was also important to illustrate opposed perspectives and to include minority perspectives. It is also worth noting that quotations from participants are sometimes anecdotal and cannot be verified. Where possible, I attempted to find the most exemplary statements while not suppressing anything that might be idiosyncratic and potentially intriguing — calling for further analysis or reflection. Some scholars have noted, for example, the importance of 'deviant case analysis' which considers what might be regarded as an inconvenient anomaly from one perspective, but from another perspective could usefully

highlight a counter-narrative (or an unexpected layer of meaning) that might require a reconsideration of the initial interpretive schemata (Silverman, 2010, p. 281).

By taking various precautions and gathering reports of action I was able to strengthen the reliability and validity of the research and improve the relevance of the findings (Silverman, 2010). For example, I shared the interview transcripts with the participants to check the accuracy of their statements before data analysis. As my reflexive observations have noted above, knowledge is situated. With regard to this research, I have applied a pragmatic definition that defines reliability as applying to whether research reflects as accurately as possible the subject matter being studied at a specific place and time and whether the findings contradict recent research on the same or similar topics. If they do, this could raise questions regarding aspects of the study's reliability. On the other hand, divergences from previous studies might also point to new perspectives, leading to a new contribution to knowledge. If the findings are deemed to be reliable and valid, they are also more likely to be adopted by policy makers. It is indeed hoped that the recommendations derived from the findings of this study may aid women education leaders to overcome challenges and seize opportunities currently presented to them during the current era of fundamental change that is sweeping Saudi Arabia generally, and its education system specifically.

Conclusion

Justifications for selecting a qualitative approach for this study have been provided. These include its flexibility and greater scope for the research participants to provide descriptions of their experiences as leaders in all woman Saudi schools. As the subject of this thesis relates to challenges and opportunities facing women head teachers, the research was by nature interpretive. Furthermore, the decision to employ individual semi-structured interviews for the purposes of collecting data was made as it provided the opportunity for interviewees to respond

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using their own choice of words and terminology. This permitted me, as the interviewer, to ask follow-up questions to elicit further details which potentially could lead to new emergent issues.

This Chapter additionally described the processes undertaken to ensure trustworthiness and compliance with the University's ethical guidelines. The consequent data was analyzed and thematically interpreted in order to generate findings which form the basis of discussions in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: WOMEN AND THE CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA

Introduction

Women's growing demands for equality pose new challenges to their husbands, their families and to the wider Saudi society. The participants in this study shared their experiences of the challenges and conflicts they faced at home and in the workplace. This Chapter presents the findings drawn from qualitative data that reveal how they negotiated these challenges in the context of a rapidly changing Saudi Arabian society. The data was analysed using a thematic analysis approach grounded in dialectical change and gender theories. In particular, there is an emphasis in the interpretation of the findings on contradictions leading to conflicts, which can be understood in relation to the social and economic dynamics of change coming into conflict with the cultural and religious forces of stability and conservative traditions. Specifically, five key themes are outlined: culture and Islamic influences shaping women's lives; patriarchal society' the institutionalised gender order in KSA; power and control of women, and the life/work imbalance. There is some degree of overlap between these themes as they are intertwined, but their salience was manifested in different ways according to the participants' individual past experiences and their future aspirations. Taken together, however, these themes highlight the key challenges faced by women leaders in education in KSA. These tensions prevent women from achieving their potential, both professionally and personally. The following section will discuss the challenges Saudi women leaders are confronted with in terms of the five identified themes.

5.1 Cultural and Islamic influences shaping women's lives

One of the defining characteristics of Saudi society is the strict adherence to its traditional culture and Islamic religion. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, globalisation is having an

impact on the structure of Saudi life, threatening long-held cultural traditions and challenging gender roles and expectations. The interviews show how Saudi women leaders link their individual challenges, successes or failures to different aspects of the dominant culture, which is mainly affected by a conflation of tribal culture and misunderstandings of religion. Schech and Haggis (2000) suggest that culture is strongly affected by experience, religion, and gender roles. Specifically, the interviews show that the participants are keen to separate traditional customs, that form a major part of Saudi's culture, from religious instructions. For example, one participant called Hana pointed out that:

I do not feel that religion should be a barrier to me doing my job, but my husband's decision is affected by his cultural background, his relatives and friends. I hope that our men will become more aware and more able to see the differences between pure religious instructions and traditional customs.

Hana believes that the separation of traditional culture from religion may help to reduce the challenges women in leadership positions currently face in Saudi Arabia, but these challenges simply cannot be fully resolved in short term. For instance, Saudi women's claim to the right to drive has taken 27 years to achieve. According to El-Saadawi (1983), if people want to discuss the challenges faced by women, they must know that they will face a complicated situation, because women's issues relate to many factors such as culture, religion, policy, psychology, and economics.

The interviews show that these are intricately connected in the participants' personal and professional lives. The women felt positioned as secondary to men and this is justified by an established patriarchal gender order. Fourteen of the sixteen participants in this study described Saudi Arabian society as male dominated and tribally patriarchal and that these two characteristics were unmistakable features of the Kingdom's culture, shaped by both a misinterpretation of Islam and traditional customs. Saudi customs and religious practices

therefore have an impact on the personal lives and professional development of women leaders, as well as the wider Saudi society.

Most of the participants stated that their personal lives as mothers and wives put pressure on their professional roles as leaders. Moreover, their modern role as active decision makers potentially conflicted with traditional expectations of women to be passive and submissive, based on tribal traditions and conceptions of a woman's sense of piety in Saudi Arabia. As mentioned in Chapter 3 this situation is often explained by conservative observers as simply a religious tenet, without acknowledging the key role of traditional tribal cultural traditions (Al-Buleihi, 2016).

Ten of the sixteen participants in this study expressed dissatisfaction with prevalent discriminatory practices against women, which they attributed to the continuing influence of old tribal patriarchal customs and attributed the conflicts they experienced to these. This discrimination, often results in women being assigned marginal roles in decision-making, both at home and in the workplace, thereby reinforcing the notion that men have superior leadership abilities. For example, Lama, an English language supervisor, said:

Unfortunately, religion has become an extension of our social lives and traditions; despite the fact that some traditions actually contradict and clash with religion. One example of this confusion is that a few years ago all the adult women staff and students at Saudi schools were required to cover their faces with Niqabs. But, religion does not ask us to wear the Niqab. While these restrictions are imposed on women, men are free to make their own decisions about their dress and physical appearance in my workplace.

The control of women's bodies by men, under the guise of preserving their modesty, is sustained through the politics of reputation (Al-Osaimi, 2014). There was a consensus in the participants' accounts that Saudi culture strongly exerts its authority over Saudi families. In Saudi Arabia, families care about what other Saudi families might think of them, which in turn makes them more likely to hold on to traditional customs that conflict with liberal values of

freedom, independence and choice. Due to the strength and intransigence of Saudi Arabia's ancient Arabic culture, few citizens can resist its influence or challenge attitudes rooted in received Saudi tradition. This can be challenging for women who accede to leadership positions, compared to those in less influential roles. For example, a woman leader may not be allowed wider communication with others in her field; and she may be restricted from attending mixed events that include male staff, as this is not deemed acceptable behaviour by other family members. While women leaders are restricted in this way by their husbands and their families within Saudi society, a husband may give his wife greater freedom if they are living abroad in a western society.

One participant, Reem, highlighted this when she said

Customs and traditions play a major role in Saudi society. Saudi men tend to show their wives more respect when living abroad than they do when they live in the KSA because when they're abroad they can be themselves. For example, Saudi couples can attend mixed events together when they are overseas, whereas back home they deal with their wives according to the restraints of culture and traditions, in order to please their parents and their communities.

Reem was of the observation that Saudi citizens typically feel a need to conform to foreign expectations when outside the country and be 'on their best behavior', while at home some men tend to exercise dominance over women with less restraint (Al-Osaimi, 2014). The next section outlines how the findings relate to the idea of patriarchal society.

5.2 Patriarchal society

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the prevailing patriarchal society shapes relationships between men and women, exploring how a highly regulated culture influences the formation of ideas about gender roles and expectations (Connell, 2002). El- Saadawi (2017) explained that the Middle East has traditionally emphasized the need for men to assert themselves over women physically, intellectually and in social contexts. The experiences of women in this study show that

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traditional values are still prevalent in Saudi Arabian society today. As a result, when some Arab men see women developing and advancing their careers they feel threatened. For example, current changes in government policy in KSA show that opportunities for women are increasing. However, this does not mean that husbands are happy to give their wives the opportunity to work and communicate equally in the workplace. Al-Osaimi (2014) asserts that Arab men often react (consciously or unconsciously) to Saudi women's demands for more freedoms at home and in the workplace by physically or psychologically undermining and discouraging women as a way of asserting their own diminishing power.

The interviews show that while the number of Saudi women participating in Higher Education has increased in recent decades (Allam, 2018), often with the support and encouragement of their families, women leaders still suffer from Saudi Arabia's patriarchy, both in the family and in the workplace.

One respondent, Naima stated:

Some Arab men don't like a woman with higher status than them; socially and financially most Arab men prefer a woman who can be controlled by her husband, as controlling them makes men feel more masculine. This mentality stems from culture and traditions, and maybe Arab men feel offended if their spouses have educational success and more confidence than their own; their male ego feels threatened.

Naima was of the view that when they feel that their wives' higher qualifications confer on them more social and professional status than them they frequently take out their frustration with life on their wives at home; despite their perception of their diminishing status, they are still able to exercise power in their own home by controlling their wives.

Naima added

The first time I was nominated for a leader's position my husband refused it, I was then nominated again, which was met with mockery from my husband, who said

'out of all the teachers, they chose you ? Why?' He was always belittling me, but finally I rebelled and accepted the position.

Naima sought to rationalise her husband's negativity by explaining that he was a military man, and that in his profession, there was always someone he was subordinate to, and that due to the nature of his work, he displayed a sense of inferiority, which he tried to compensate for by belittling her and finding excuses to refuse her requests.

Patriarchal structure was also a source of conflict between Wala and her husband. Wala came across as assertive and confident and was married to a successful doctor, yet had the following to say about marriage:

There's an obvious issue of jealousy between spouses. Although my husband is a renowned doctor, when I was nominated as a nationwide expert, fights erupted in our household. For no obvious reason he refused me the right to hold such a prestigious position, as if it were a competition between him and me, instead of with me and work colleagues.

Despite the fact that Wala's husband came from an educated, open-minded family, he is still very traditional, and believes that a family's responsibility falls solely on the shoulders of the woman, on whom the success or failure of the family rests and whose constant presence in the home is considered vital. This view is widespread in the Saudi community; a woman should always be available in the home, whereas the man has the luxury and the leeway to be absent from the house, even for a month, whether for work or vacation. Some households believe in gender equality; however, friends and society as a whole have a major influence and exert a lot of pressure on them to fall back on traditional gender roles and expectations, because they are the dominant view in Saudi Arabia (Fareh, 2010).

One participant, Rania, described her situation, which mirrored Wala's: 'Maybe my husband has an inferiority complex, as I have a higher degree than him; my husband is the jealous type.'

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According to Bin-Yonus (2019), in some societies where there is a culture of male domination men frequently resent their wives' perceived successes. In response, either jealousy or fear of loss of control, many may consciously or unconsciously undermine their wives' career ambitions and prevent, or sabotage, them from achieving promotion or career advancement. They might even limit their mobility by refusing to accompany them, as it would be a challenge to travel to attend conferences without a male guardian (Al-Mfleh, 2015).

As shown in the previous example, men are empowered by Saudi culture and it is through this unequal patriarchal gender order that men perpetuate their position of power. Connell (2002) points out that although men are the primary beneficiaries of society's gender inequalities, these benefits are not evenly 'distributed'. Within contemporary Saudi Arabia, men must make a tremendous effort to maintain and defend their position, or risk seeing their role diminished within society. Not only must traditional masculinity be asserted; men must also maintain their families' lifestyle with the full burden of responsibility for income generation (Al-Buleihi, 2016). These pressures on men, which are quite genuine, may actually lead to illnesses in cases where they are not dealt with. Men who aspire to conform to the stereotypical definitions of masculinity pay a price for doing so. Research into male health highlights that men continue to perform most of the economy's dangerous jobs and experience most workplace injuries and deaths. For example, 94% of all workplace deaths in the United States were men, and men also record higher rates of violent deaths, alcohol abuse and sporting injuries than women (Duffin,2020).

The examples outlined above provide a glimpse of the daily struggles of women leaders against prevailing patriarchal structures in Saudi Arabia. Frequently, the analysis indicates that gender order operates across multiple levels, creating numerous conflicts for women and challenges

to men's authority. The next section presents a more detailed discussion of institutionalised gender order in Saudi society.

5.3 Institutionalised gender order in KSA

This section argues that the gender order remains largely unaffected by the current transformation in the KSA. The current government changes are top-down and therefore not able to change the prevalent attitudes and behaviours towards women in Saudi society in the short term. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the literature demonstrates that the scale of gender order across the world is wide ranging and greatly influences the relationships between men and women. For example, while western women appear to have greater freedom, they nonetheless still suffer from inequalities, and there is still a high incidence of domestic violence against women (Mitchell, 2011). Furthermore, according to El-Saadawi (2017) there are many dynamic factors influencing the gender order in the Arab world. Although there are cultural differences within Arab world (often shaped by factors such as the level of economic development and the acceptance or rejection of modernity), the gender order nonetheless remains a dominant feature of relations between men and women. Gender order cultures aim to weaken and marginalize women, subjugating them to subservient roles deemed appropriate to the 'weaker sex'. Some women living in such societies across the Arab and Eastern world have a diminished perception of their own self-worth and may even be ashamed of themselves. Ward (2013) points out that the inferior status of womanhood begins in childhood, a time when male children are favoured over young girls, who are controlled from an early age and their diminished character is shaped.

According to Al-Gaseem (2009), the gender order of Arab society has been perpetuated for centuries, if not millennia, through the transmission of cultural values to children who are taught to accept such characteristics as determined by nature, biology, religion and culture. The

dominance of women by men is therefore regarded as normal and desirable and these values are transferred from one generation to the next, largely unaltered. As a consequence, men and women come to accept that the role of Arab women is solely to serve the needs of men. They exist for the enjoyment of the man; to serve their physical and emotional needs and be there to help them succeed.

Thirteen of the sixteen participants in this study illustrated how the gender order affects them and plays a major role in their lives; how it is the cause of many disappointments they faced.

For instance, Marwa expressed her frustration by saying:

I traveled from one country to another following my husband's career ... which has made it hard for me to finish my Master's degree. I had to do so; I would have been considered an unfit wife according to customs and traditions, especially in the eyes of my parents.

Marwa's experiences are typical of substantial numbers of participants in this study, whose educational and professional ambitions are secondary to those of their husbands and who suffer professionally and personally as a result. A lack of fulfilment, by Marwa being unable to finish her Master's degree, is a source of sadness for her and evidence of unrealized potential sacrificed for her husband's benefit.

Hana, another leader shared her own experience:

When I was nominated for a higher position, it would have required me to move from Khobar to Dammam, which was about 40 mins away from our house. I felt that the subject was not welcomed by my husband. However, when he had to go to Riyadh for a course (four hours), he went despite the fact that it was over the span of several months. He left with no consideration to his family, or his parental duties, because he thought it was his natural right to do so.

Hana then fell silent, deep in thought, and continued:

You know what? A part of me believes that it is a man's natural right to move for work, and that his family should follow him, because he is the bread-winner. I honestly can't be away for my family because of work, not even for a week.

Hana's experience is shared perspective with many other participants in this study who hold a belief that they are subordinated to their husbands in practically all aspects of life. In marriages where men are open-minded and share their time and opinions with their wives, the wife is likely to do the same, but where the husband is not open-minded and does not share his thoughts with his wife, she is more likely to withdraw and not open up to him. According to Al-Buleihi (2016), it is frequently observed a partner mirrors a partner's behaviour, even though it might be counter to their own interests. Accordingly, in Hana's case it is evident she has justified her husband's narrow-minded attitude to herself, despite it not being in her own best interests.

In cases where the husband holds traditional conservative views, which the wife does not share, this is inevitably likely to be a source of ongoing acrimony. Where the wife does not embrace her own subservience to her husband and restrictions of her freedom this will cause two-way problems; the husband will attempt to stamp his authority, while the wife will struggle against it and attempt to assert her rights. In such marriages women often submit to their husband by outwardly complying with his wishes for the sake of her or her family's reputation in the community. She may also submit in order to prevent her children's emotional suffering. In fact, these types of marital dynamic could be seen in the light of Connell (1987, p.112), who pointed out that in marital relationships 'the emotional attachment may be hostile, not only affectionate.' In addition, he also noted that sexuality has a social dimension where power is a factor: 'The members of a heterosexual couple are not just different, they are specifically unequal' (1987, p.113). Connell also noted that there was often a contradiction between the public representation and the private experience of marriage: 'public affection in a married couple often co-exists with private hostility' (1987, p. 113). In the Saudi context, Connell's work has resonance with the views expressed by the participants in this study, as it helps explain how gender differences operate in domestic relationships. Where either party, the man or the woman, do not compromise it is likely the marriage may be unhappy and may fail.

It is an interesting phenomenon that many prominent intellectuals and activists vocally advocate liberal views in public which they do not demonstrate in their own homes; they publicly support women's rights but are unwilling to give these same rights to their own wives (Al-Buleihi, 2016). Saudi society generally does not have a positive attitude towards 'liberal marriages', where women 'enjoy' equal rights with their husband. However, in the face of these societal pressures many intellectual women subordinate themselves and embrace their husband's position and vision as their own, thus contradicting their own beliefs. Professional women, such as those who took part in this study in their roles as leaders, exhibited these characteristics. They often accepted their own marginalization as a price for domestic peace and prioritised their husbands' success over their own personal and professional fulfilments. It should be noted that women are unable to participate to the fullest extent in their own development and advancement because societal cultural restrictions are genuinely accepted and there is widespread disapproval of women seeking to advance themselves. Many of the restrictions on Saudi women in education are supported by the wider society and the independence and self-determination which many women are striving for is regarded with hostility and as a threat to society. Therefore, until sympathetic public awareness is increased across the community, progress will continue to stall or slow down the career advancement prospects of women (Al-Gaseem, 2009). The following section contains more detailed discussion of power and the control exerted over women by Saudi society and the challenges that women leaders face both at home and in the workplace.

5.4 Power and control of women

As mentioned in Section 5.1, Saudi society is regulated by the politics of reputation (Al-Mfleh, 2015), which impacts on the roles and expectations of men and women within a patriarchal society. Furthermore, Connell (2002) stated that women are sometimes regarded as the assets of men and because they are considered as property they are devalued and disempowered.

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Consequently, the power structure of Saudi Arabia is built on established inequitable cultural practices skewed against women, yet these practices are changing.

Saudi Arabia is seeking to modernize with a new vision (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016), which includes consideration of ways to enhance the wellbeing of all citizens through social outlets, improved education and social reform. However, this condition still limits women's ability to travel independently overseas for education and conferences as well as engage with the world beyond the family home. Increasingly, women's leaders participants are understanding this condition to be an incompatible and archaic practice and a hindrance to social development and economic progress. Huba, one of the women leaders in this study said, 'I cannot travel overseas without permission from my husband, even if it is necessary to attend a conference or to receive treatment.'

As discussed in Chapter 3, power and control over women are the most significant issues impacting Saudi women leaders. Their lives are characterized by submission to male control from cradle to the grave. This is in contrast to the influential demands of globalisation and contemporary feminist movements. Traditionally, Saudi women require a male guardian who, prior to marriage, is usually their father and upon marriage is their husband. In cases where neither exists or is unsuitable it may be a brother or even their son. These male guardians exercise considerable authority over women's lives and have the power to make significant decisions which affect them. This convention of male guardianship⁸ affects women of all socio-economic strata in Saudi society. Consequently, no woman can escape its negative repercussions which typically limit their ability to participate in the workforce, pursue life goals or even engage in social activities outside the home. The degree to which women suffer under

⁸ This study was undertaken at a time when the culture of guardianship remained dominant. Future studies could investigate how far the legal reform of guardianship has begun to have an impact on women's experiences and professional opportunities.

this system varies according to individual circumstances, but when guardians choose to, they are within their legal rights to exercise powers by literally controlling the movements of the women under their guardianship. Despite the implementation of limited reforms over the last decade to ease restrictions on women, the principles of male guardianship remain entrenched in custom (Al-Gaseem, 2009). At a national level, the new regulations allow women to travel by themselves. However, a woman leader who is a wife still needs her husband's permission to be able to travel or attend professional events. Evidence from the data shows that the process of gender liberalisation in the KSA context is happening at a very slow pace particularly at the level of interpersonal relations.

For instance, Naima said,

I can't travel without an official document from my husband allowing me to do so, and therefore I can't travel for either leisure or business. He does this to make me feel that I am still under his control, and this bothers me a lot, for I would like to travel with my kids, who are in college by the way, but I don't bother asking him anymore, as I know that he would refuse me permission, if I asked.

These statements provide evidence of how the patriarchal system operates in Saudi Arabia, and how power functions within the family dynamic, which expects women to have a submissive and respectful attitude to their husbands. Specifically, the women's oppression are internalised, her expectations are diminished because she already knows that her career aspirations will be thwarted. In other words, the husband's disempowerment of his wife is supported by the social dynamic of the family, by the society and misinterpretations of Islam. On the other hand, the woman who challenges the *status quo* experiences conflict and disempowerment on multiple levels. The gender order will not reform itself; transformation can only be achieved by involving women in consultation, conflict-resolution and consensus (Connell, 2005).

However, the restriction of women's mobility is the cause of considerable debate in society as it is upheld by many as a requirement of the religion while others hold a different opinion. Many

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register their disapproval by refusing to travel with a guardian claiming it is an old Saudi traditional practice, rather than a religious one. Fareh (2010) points out that the requirement for women to be accompanied by a guardian is not restricted to travelling, as women are also required to be escorted by a guardian whenever they are dealing with males in government services. In such cases women exchange through a mediator or guardian who acts on their behalf. It is undeniable that the status and civic rights position of Saudi men is superior to Saudi women from a cultural and legal perspective. For example, a Saudi woman called Dina Ali sought asylum in Australia. However, she was eventually compelled to return 'with her relatives to the homeland' (Watch, 2017).

The justification given for this was a claim that it was obligatory for men to preserve the reputations of the women in their lives. The reputation of the man is reflected in their wives' or daughters' conduct: a 'bad' wife or daughter will adversely affect the reputation of her husband, making him look weak or unmanly (Al-Mfleh, 2015). Freedom of movement (or the lack of it) is a prime example of gender inequality. One participant, Noura, stated, 'My husband often forbids me from attending courses and conferences abroad, and this difficulty was compounded by the fact I could not travel without a male relative accompanying me.' She added 'Unfortunately, in Saudi society, priority is always allotted to men, for if a man and his wife had conferences that coincided on the same date, it is the wife who ends up not attending her conference.'

Badria, another participant said that

If I were required to attend a meeting in the men's department, it might displease my husband, which would ensue in a fight, as he is the jealous type, and is ardently against gender mixing. Hence, I now miss those meetings, without even checking with my husband, as I'm certain my request to attend would be met with refusal.

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In contrast to the position of women, Saudi men do not require anyone's permission to travel to conferences overseas, even when there is likely to be considerable mixing of sexes.

Owing to the prevailing training pathway in Saudi Arabian education and in other fields, there are greater opportunities available to men than women and therefore vacancies are often tailored for men. Unsurprisingly, the prevailing dominance of males in academic institutions in Saudi Arabia is one of the strongest signs of gender discrimination (Rehman & Alhaisoni, 2013). As observed in Chapter 3 male dominated hierarchical structures are acting to exclude the involvement of women (Connell, 2002).

Furthermore, the interviews revealed that there were other obstacles faced by women leaders which restrict them professionally. For example, women were forced to depend on men when they needed to travel to work; specifically, women were dependent on men dropping them off and picking them up from their places of employment as there are no alternative transport options such as trains or buses. In this regard, Huda, one of the women leaders who took part in this study said:

Transportation is the first challenge I have faced, it is hard for my husband to drop me off more than once per day, and he did not really accept the idea of me riding with a private chauffeur, nor did he like the fact that my job required me to travel to several schools in one day, as he preferred me to stay in one place from the start till the end of my work day.

Saudi Arabia was the only country preventing women from driving at the time when this research was conducted (Guerin, 2018). According to Al-Osaimi, (2014) despite many Saudi women have become doctors and teachers, and others are involved in the Shura Council.⁹

⁹ The Shura Council is one the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's governments' formal advisory bodies established under the Kingdom's Basic Law of Government. The Shura Council comprises 150 members who are appointed by the monarch of which 30 members have been women since 2013. The functions of the Shura Council are to discuss the government's economic plans, government regulations, treaties and international agreements and to make recommendations.

Ironically, some women are trusted to perform human heart surgery and even to fly planes, in their capacity as surgeons and pilots, yet are not trusted to touch the wheel of a car. It must be understood that the control of a woman's movement forces her dependency on men. This is the reason that men resist giving women the power to lead and why they limit their power by restricting their movement. They are forced to rely on men and remain under their authority. This deadlock creates conflict and resistance, so change for women is experienced through a dialectical process.

Before the royal decree announced that women would be allowed to drive, one of the participants suggested a solution to solve the mobility issue. Rifaat said that

There are places where women can drive, such as within the Aramco company. The community in that region is very accepting of the idea, so why not apply this in the rest of the country? Sometimes a leader has to take days off work due to her driver being out of town; this is an issue that has to be dealt with and solved – alternatives need to be found.

Saudi Arabia has many progressive communities with diverse cultures such as Al-Khobar and Jeddah which enable them to accept change easier than other cities. So, the government could allow women to drive in these cities. In addition, some participants, like Rifaat, do not understand the logic behind not letting women drive in KSA. She was a teacher in a school that was seven hours away from the city she lived in, and so she had to go back home weekly with her brother to see her family. Rifaat was eventually transferred to a school in the same city her family lived in. Also, Rifaat actually revealed that

I used to drive in remote areas and on highways, away from the prying eyes of cops, in order to help my brother when he became tired after driving long distances even before

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the royal decree that allowed women to drive I wish they would allow women to drive because it would solve some of the transportation challenges women face.

Rifaat's story provides evidence of how some Saudi women covertly resist the barriers they faced to achieve their goals, even at the risk of breaking the law. In summary, Saudi Arabian society has both the power and ability to control women through power structures. According to al Allam (2018), 102 Saudi citizens (60 of them were women) gave a speech to the National Assembly for human rights to stop preventing Saudi women from driving cars and to provide other public transport services such as buses and trains. Moreover, during their speech the campaigners asked the Saudi public to support their campaign. Participants formed a petition collected from academics, doctors, women in media, businessmen, housewives, teachers, and students in colleges across Saudi Arabian regions. The list of signatories also included the names of husbands, wives, daughters, and sons, who were in support of women's right to drive. However, King Abdullah confirmed that the country's law did not prevent women from driving, it was Saudi society that was imposing this restriction. Dr Fouzia Al-Bakery who works at the King Saud University in Saudi Arabia, points out that

I find that with each change in conservative society, our society will face difficulty at the beginning but will adapt with time and the issue of women driving cars is similar to the cause of education in its beginning when a group of about 800 men refused to open the girls' school (Allam, p.3, 2018).

However, King Faisal said 'Here, the school's doors are open. Whoever wants to teach his daughters and give them an academic education, he is welcome, and whoever does not want to do so, I have no power over him.' In this respect, Al-bakery said: 'I hope they agree to take further steps, even if they are not convinced, because it will be useful and solve many problems, particularly for low-income people' (Allam, p.3, 2018).

However, King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz issued a royal decree on 15 September 2017 that allowed women to drive a year after the government announcement. As a result, from 10

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October 2018 Saudi women were able to drive their own cars. Nevertheless, before the royal decree was broadcast many Saudi women demanded their right to drive cars.

One example of dialectical change (Burke, 2017) was the reform introduced as result of the conflict between women and the opponents over the right of women to drive cars (Al-Mancy, 2018). Although, this royal decree came after extensive debates and protests, the conflict continues between supporters and opponents in Saudi Arabia. The dialectic of change can be understood in terms of many women's increasing consciousness of a contradiction between the reform that allows women to be trained to work in independent professional roles and the traditional laws and patriarchal expectations that women must be dependent and protected, confined to basic domestic work.

With the new changes that have taken place in the country and with intellectual and social progress, women are beginning to understand the reason why their opponents continue to advocate restricting the movement of women. Also, many opponents sought to prevent women from driving by justifying their opposition in religious terms. For example, a guardian may agree to let his wife and children go with a private driver, but they are on guard at all times because the driver's background may not be known to them. At one level, the state has controlled the power of conservatives and implemented new rules that allow women to drive and rationalise their decision in terms of the need for modernisation along Western capitalist lines. These conflicts reveal that women can achieve modest practical gains by actively challenging male-dominated social customs. Thus, there are multiple contradictions between selective reforms and prevalent traditional structures and practices. Accordingly, dialectical change is evident as conflict in the home and in other public domains such as the workplace. I will provide considerable evidence and examples for clarification in Chapter 6.

The next section discusses how the gender order exerts influence over women leaders; it draws on women's experience of restrictions imposed by marriage, which can be understood in terms of the theories of gender order presented by Connell (1987) and others. However, merely being aware of restrictions does not necessarily result in lifting them from women and this awareness must extend to men and women sharing the burden of household responsibilities. The following section will present a more detailed explanation of the life/work balance which arose from the study and represents a significant obstacle for women leaders.

5.5 Life/work imbalance

The balance between personal and professional life is a complicated issue and exists in all societies to different degrees. It could be considered an issue that is influenced by the context of the family in KSA. Globalisation is changing lifestyles in the KSA and the advent of technology offers more facilities and possibilities for women to use in their daily tasks at home and at work. However, Arab cultural values add an extra burden on working women that contributes to them experiencing higher personal stress levels. As Connell (1987, p. 122) pointed out, 'Childrearing is itself work, and bulks large in the sexual division of labour as a whole.' Moreover, she argues that the family often supports a conservative culture of compliance to male needs and priorities, which may be difficult to resist or challenge, given its immense power: 'In no other institution are relationships so extended in time, so intensive in contact, so dense in their interweaving of economics, emotion, power and resistance' (p. 121). As explained in Chapter 3, traditionally, Arab men believed the primary responsibility of women is the home and family.

Reem expressed several of these sentiments when she said, 'I shoulder the responsibility of taking care of my mother and my mother-in-law; after work, my time is divided between them, which causes me immense psychological stress and physical exhaustion.'

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Regardless of the effect of liberalisation on culture and patriarchy, tasks assigned by the family are dependent on family expectations of women and what they perceive to be their main roles. It would not be acceptable in Saudi Arabia for elderly parents to be looked after in a care home, as is common in many modern societies around the world. This shows that the facilities and opportunities offered by the modern world and globalisation cannot be fully exploited by women leaders. This expectation to provide care for elderly relatives is a considerable responsibility impeding women like Reem to balance her work and home tasks.

Irrespective of the socio-religious background of a woman's family, it is a shared Saudi cultural trait that women are expected to devote themselves to raising their children, serving their husbands, preparing family meals and maintaining the house, as well as offering care to both her own and her husband's parents. Until recent times, because women were effectively excluded from the workforce, domestic responsibilities did not represent a conflict with career ambitions; consequently, they did not add to stress. While Saudi women have, to some extent, been successful in negotiating the challenges in the workplace, they have made no progress towards Saudi men contributing more to domestic responsibilities. Generally, married Saudi men grant their wives permission to participate in the workforce on condition that it does not interfere with their household responsibilities. From a man's perspective, the responsibility for running the home is the woman's and hence a woman should balance her work and home life alone (Al-Buleihi, 2016). Many women who accept this work/home compromise now experience considerable pressure (Al-Osaimi, 2014).

El-Saadawi (2017) believes that a broad-based paradigm shift across society is the real solution. Such a shift would require an elevation in the status of women, granting them equal rights and the elimination of gender discrimination. Hana mirrored this opinion:

Society paved the way for men to acquire such authority, and therefore men, and society as a whole, need to be made aware of this issue, and effort needs to be

exerted to reintroduce a balance to gender roles, especially when it comes to the issue of household responsibilities, for it is not fair for the woman to have most of the household responsibilities just because she is a woman.

Significant numbers of Saudi women who have sought a career outside the home and who endeavor to participate in the nation's public life, have called for a rearrangement of domestic marital roles (Al-Osaimi, 2014). Nevertheless, there are few examples of men participating in domestic duties and a majority find excuses for not taking up greater roles in bringing up their children. Irrespective of this, women have shown increasing ambition in seeking career and financial independence, which is a source of produces challenges for them. The resulting inner turmoil negatively affects personal development (Hamdona, 2008).

Ironically, improved educational opportunities highlight to women their own plight and draw attention to the sources of this conflict in gender inequality. Increasing awareness of this conflict, however, has further increased the ambition and drive of women to reach their personal life goals (El-Saadawi, 1985). Despite many leaps in gender equality in the West in terms of the workplace, it is women who still bear the burden of domestic work. For instance, Australian national statistics (2006) revealed that women perform an overwhelming majority of unpaid domestic work, spending an average of 33 hours per week on household duties (Ruppanner, 2017).

In reaction to potential domestic conflicts, some women have contemplated drastic solutions which, according to Sharp (2009), includes preventing themselves from bearing children in an attempt to avoid sacrificing their own personal employment ambitions. All of the factors above contribute to creating feelings of guilt.

5.5.1 Women leaders and feelings of guilt

To begin to understand the cause of feeling guilty it is necessary to determine to what degree a woman's character is shaped by cathexis (Connell, 2000). Cathexis structures have more power

to affect women's lives and so the success of these women in their professional lives often causes them to feel guilty (Johanna, 2000). Kubany and Watson (2003) define guilt as an unpleasant psychological emotion accompanied by a belief in personal failure to act, feel or think in an acceptable manner in a given situation. Guilt usually originates from personal values and a perceived failure to live up to them and can manifest itself in emotional distress and change in behavioral attitudes. However, the personal value and worth felt by women is strongly affected by the men's families and friends. This is not the only factor affecting women leaders; however, it is one of the most important barriers that stop women leaders working hard or devoting their time, their minds and their resources to challenging jobs.

Nine of the sixteen participants in this study pointed out that feelings of personal guilt, which many Saudi women experienced, concerned conforming to expected Saudi cultural norms, as well as psychological stress over their own situations. These may be two sides of the same coin.

Jamila, a study participant stated,

I always feel guilty that I am not giving my all to my family because work takes away so much of my time and energy...I also try not to sleep during the day so that I spend time with my kids without feeling guilty that I am not giving them everything I can.

According to April and Soomar (2013), the assignment of women to the role of primary nurturers and caregivers is a deeply instilled belief, which women also seek to uphold as a personal goal for themselves. As a result, when women choose to place their own emotional and personal needs, such as joy and subjective wellbeing, above societal expectations of women in relation to the responsibilities ascribed to them as mothers, wives and caregivers, this can result in an inner conflict (Guendouzi, 2006). It is evident from Jamila's example, together with other participants, that socially constructed gender roles continue to define what it means to be a man and a woman. Efthim et al. (2001) argued that socially-constructed gender roles play a

significant role in shaping the developmental, psychological, and relational wellbeing of both men and women. Layan echoed this, when she stated:

It is very normal that I feel this way, she added, for this guilt that I am feeling stems from both societal pressure and my own maternal instincts. A man's role in the house is that of a strong presence. Oriental men have inflated egos and are very self-absorbed, but if you go back to the scripture, you find that men have allotted themselves an authority that is not found in Islamic sources.

In this regard, Johanna (2000) discussed the connection between culture and gender roles, particularly the roles of women as spouses and mothers, who are strong cultural symbols and are perceived by many as an emblem of cultural continuity. For example, when a young girl observes her mother performing duties without any assistance from her father, she accepts this as normal family behavior and is made to feel guilty if she does not conform to this societal standard of conduct when she grows up. Similarly, sons growing up in households where their father performs few if any domestic tasks, copy this behaviour when they grow up, free from any sense of guilt at placing domestic burdens exclusively on their wives' shoulders. Arndt and Goldenburg (2004) reported that women exhibit higher levels of shame than men, owing to higher personal self-consciousness and self-reflectiveness. Because they are more concerned about their personal status, changes in perception have the potential of affecting them to a greater degree.

Connell (2000) points out that cathexis structures are the result of power inequalities which occur between genders, which can lead to women feeling guilty. Therefore, all the examples above can be understood as a natural consequence of the cathexis structures in which the women are living and working.

Conclusion

This Chapter outlined the challenges that relate to the influence of the gender order on the professional and personal lives of women leaders in Saudi Arabia. A majority of the participants

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were dissatisfied with the status quo, as they described a variety of personal challenges obstructing their path to professional and personal fulfilment. All interviewees described at least one cultural impact linked to their personal or professional lives which they felt constrained their professional career potential. Some women highlighted the impact of a misguided conflation of religion and cultural tradition on their personal and professional lives. The cultural barriers that women leaders identified as personal obstacles included the prevalent perception in KSA that leadership roles were not suitable for their gender; that women are controlled and restricted from free movement or choice of action and that mothers in particular were placed under stress by being made to feel neglectful of their expected domestic responsibilities and roles.

One dynamic that emerged is the role played by a conservative tribal culture and an inaccurate interpretation of Islam in shaping Saudi society's attitude towards women working as leaders in education. The data gathered from women leaders revealed additional limiting factors. The patriarchal system and the legal authority men have over women in Saudi Arabia were recurring themes that participants described. Furthermore, there was one surprising revelation that none of the participants had ever been consulted personally or collectively within their schools, by any authority in an official or semi-official capacity regarding obstacles or issues important to them. From the study it seems that women leaders' concerns arising from gender inequality are systematically ignored. Issues stemming from gender relationship structures, both inside and outside the school setting, were also never brought into discussion and this caused feelings of personal guilt in women leaders seeking to balance their personal and professional responsibilities.

Women education leaders discussed their repeated attempts to balance their personal and professional lives and how the resulting pressures arising from conflicts between these roles

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made them feel guilty. The following Chapter provides examples of how education policy constrains women education leaders from effectively exercising their authority. In addition, there is further analysis of women education leaders' goals and their attempts to take advantage of opportunities open to them, so they can develop their professional careers.

CHAPTER 6: THE POLICY CONTEXT OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION IN KSA

Introduction

Like other parts of Saudi Arabian society, the education sector is in the midst of a transformation stemming from government-initiated policy changes. These changes in theory open the door for women to take advantage of greater and more equitable career opportunities. The Chapter aims to examine critically how government education policies have shaped the experiences of women in education and the extent to which women have felt encouraged to take up leadership. What emerged from the analysis of the participants' interview data was that while the new policy initiatives led to more women in leadership positions, they faced major obstacles in fully achieving the key objectives of their new roles. In effect, leaders reported being limited in their ability to lead because of power differentials, heavily skewed against women, in the enactment of policy at different levels of a hierarchical system, where men occupied higher leadership positions than women. Interviewees who asserted their rights to lead, to pursue their personal and professional development goals, and to seek promotion were confronted with procedural restrictions, particularly favouring men over women. Additionally, the centralization of administrative power within the MoE was perceived to have a negative impact on women leaders. This Chapter first discusses the challenges faced by women, followed by an outline of education policies that affect women. There is a focus on women's lack of equal rights. Towards the end of the Chapter I shall describe the justifications women leaders made for seizing opportunities available to them in theory, but which in practice, give them limited scope to lead.

6.1 Against the odds

As noted in Chapter 2, the prevailing organizational power structures in favour of men have remained unchanged, despite two decades of increasing workplace participation by women. The interviews show that the most frequently cited limitations on their leadership potential were requirements for approval of basic decisions by others and an over-centralized educational administrative system (Catalyst, 2019). Some remote administrators in the MoE were perceived to be the biggest obstacles to women leaders' work performance, causing a sense of powerlessness for many of the participants in this study. Catalyst (2009) also cited the under-representation of women in positions of leadership in Western countries, pointing out that those who achieved executive status were less likely, in comparison to their male counterparts, to be in positions where they might effectively exercise the theoretical power associated with their status. Eagle and Carli (2007a, 2007b) argue that the reality that women leaders are confronted with is more than the proverbial organizational glass ceiling; that they are also required to negotiate a labyrinth of interpersonal challenges on a daily basis in order to perform their role. The problem of reconciling specific experiences of women and the analysis of an oppressive male hegemony is explained by Connell (1987, p.107), who recognized that 'It is often difficult to see beyond individual acts of force or oppression to a *structure* of power, a set of gendered social relations with some scope and permanence.'

Fourteen of the sixteen participants in this study expressed hopes and ambitions for their roles as leaders. However, they stated they were unable to achieve these goals despite achieving leadership positions. This was due to the numerous conflicts and contradictions they encountered in their areas of responsibility, which left them disappointed at not being able to achieve their professional goals.

Chapter 6: The Policy Context of Women's Leadership in Education in KSA

For instance, one of the leaders, Reem, said, 'I see myself as a painting of a person restrained with shackles, with bad, scary things, negative thoughts, and an oppressive society surrounding me..., but out of my head emerges ideas and hopes to improve the conditions in schools.'

This powerful image reveals the contradictions: even though Reem had ambition, determination and ability, she could not hide the conflicts between her desires and what society will permit her to achieve. There are many reasons behind these conflicts. Reem had previously experienced living in a society where women have ostensibly more equal rights to men, as she had studied abroad in the United States of America and had received her master's degree there. She returned to Saudi Arabia with high ambitions and eager to implement new ideas for the development of the education system. Being a leader was Reem's dream. Nevertheless, after earning the position of leader, she discovered that decision-making was centralized in a system where only men occupied the higher levels of power. Reem thought she was capable of making changes or improvements, but, in fact, she merely received instructions from the MoE and her ability to influence teacher performance and outcomes was limited. In Saudi Arabia, the centralization of power and bureaucratic procedures designed by men also allow traditional attitudes to persist, which limit the potential of women to achieve equality in the workplace.

To gain a deeper understanding of Reem's case, and why she and many Saudi women leaders in her position do not have actual power, it is necessary to understand the context in which she worked. Conservative Saudi culture excludes women from *public* leadership. It is therefore not only in institutions like the family that women feel the impact of patriarchy, the private sphere, but in society more generally such as in politics or administrative decision-making. Misinterpretations of Islam that oppresses women has played a significant part in creating and perpetuating this situation. Moreover, there is a common belief that a weakness for women is compassion, and that they therefore make decisions from the heart, not from the mind and that

this supposedly innate predisposition affects the types of decisions they make. For example, in 2011 a woman Assistant Minister was appointed at the MoE, yet her ability to exercise any actual authority was limited by her overseer, the male MoE . In this regard, Connell (1987, p.106) has argued that 'a hegemonic pattern of masculinity, in organizing the solidarity of men, becomes an economic as well as a cultural force.' This situation is not limited to Saudi Arabia. It is possible to compare other societies where there is a high degree of centralization, and traditional approaches to gender differences that disempower women. In a recent preface to a collection of essays on women leaders in India, for example, Kumar (2015) commented: 'At all levels of organizations, women face higher and different standards while struggling to overcome judgements of their implicit inferiority.' Kumar also noted that women were considered to be 'implicitly weak' and 'emotional', but they were cheaper to employ than their male colleagues. Thus, men's traditional perceptions about women's essential nature as compassionate and emotional rather than assertive and thoughtful influences men's perception of their capacity to act effectively as autonomous leaders. This perception also helps to justify the perpetuation of a highly centralized and hierarchical system.

The MoE system in Saudi Arabia operates chiefly through a centralised hierarchical framework, resulting in pedagogical conflicts between women education leaders and the policies of the MoE . By analyzing the system, we are also helping to explain how women are oppressed:

Organization control is no more naked than force usually is. Both secrete, and depend on, ideologies. The ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality, in short to assert hegemony, is also an essential part of social power.

(Connell, 1987, p107)

Although Connell's analysis was based on work undertaken in 'advanced' Western capitalist nations in the 1980s, one of the primary components of 'power structure of gender' that he

identified was 'the planning and control machinery of the central state' (p.109). Accordingly, this key idea will be examined in the context of the Saudi Arabian system, highlighting its key features and how they impact on women.

6.2 The effect of education policies on women's leadership

To understand why most of the participants did not aspire to become leaders when they were teachers, it is necessary to understand the MoE system in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's MoE sets national educational standards which apply to both public and private sector schools. The result is a system which produces a highly regulated and structured mechanism for overseeing all aspects of the country's K-12 education. The Ministry is administratively top-heavy and highly inflexible. There is little administrative autonomy with decisions originating from and being referred to 'the top' for approval and implementation (Mathis, 2010).

Twelve of the participants expressed opinions that policies created and distributed by the MoE needed to be more flexible in how they are implemented. For example, there could be a delegation of some authority to women leaders specifically. Moreover, participants believed that the scope for them to influence ministerial policy was limited, resulting in a working environment which was inadequate for them to fully achieve their desired goals. In reality, all educational curricula and programmes are prepared and organized by the Ministry on an annual basis. This kind of management style will affect the implementation of the main goals and will cause leaders to focus on programme implementation rather than its development (Al-Aqeel, 2005).

Leader Rania mentioned that

I have a lot of experience that I would like to transfer to others... so they could benefit from me... but the Ministry does not trust anyone, we are all restricted with rules and routine. When we want to do a project, it has to be pre-approved by the

Ministry, down to the smallest details of cardboard size and the colors that are going to be used.

As described in Chapter 3, social practices take place within a complex hybrid structure of community interactions amongst members. Social structures typically develop from a reinforcement of assumed roles placed upon specific community members linked to gender roles which become habitual. Formal institutions can act to reinforce these specific roles. As a consequence, social institutions develop to reflect social power structures. By examining specific institutions, it may become possible to decode the objectives these organisations seek to reinforce (Connell, 2002). Rania provides an example of this when she says that leaders are unable to operate outside a rigid hierarchical structure, even when it concerns an important issue. 'When we want to contact the Ministry, we face great difficulties, and we don't have the contact information of any of the officials in the Ministry.'

The leaders in my study resented the fact that decision-making was centralized because teachers who lead their respective departments hold very little power. Rather, their only job is to follow the national policies as decided by the MoE. The MoE explained that these policies were written in the form of general instructions that could be applied to all possible colleges and schools at the same time and, sadly, did not take into account the schools' geographic locations and what can be done in case of contingencies. Therefore, there were specific cases where leaders ended up facing difficult struggles as they felt unable to handle the situations promptly without seeking the approval of the MoE. Typically, the Ministry took a long time to respond, thereby aggravating the problem. An example of this was the school fire discussed in Chapter 3, where firemen could not enter a girls' school, without permission from the MoE, which led to the preventable tragic deaths of many girls and young women (Ghitis, 2002).

Furthermore, the women leaders could not implement any new ideas they might have without reporting back to higher authorities the (MoE). This process typically takes a long time, and the

school year might actually come to an end before they receive approval. One of the participants tried to arrange a guest speaker visit from a public figure who is active in the community, but she was unable to gain approval from the Ministry. It actually took so much time to finish the paperwork that by the time she received approval, it would have defeated the purpose to host the guest speaker at the schools, since the scheduled event had passed.

For example, Layan explained that

There are several communication problems with the MoE. They are extremely slow when it comes to decision-making, such as approval of applications; permits often arrive late, thus leading to work piling up, or a delay in recruiting new teachers. Consequently, in-service teachers may have to take on extra classes.

Moreover, participant Layan added, 'There are a lot of rules that are not well thought out, which is frustrating to supervisors, as it complicates their work.' Women's experiences at work sometimes come into conflict both with the policy of the MoE and with their experience of behaviour outside Saudi Arabia. For instance, the problem of modesty and photography highlights some of these tensions. In this regard, Rifaat had always aspired to become a supervisor, as she thought that a supervisor's job would be less stressful, and that she could accomplish certain goals, but after she earned the position, she discovered the reality was that the job was not what she had expected it to be. Each supervisor had to complete a certain number of graded tasks and a lot of projects assigned by the Ministry within certain deadlines for her work to be considered fully accomplished. She was also surprised that:

There are a lot of things the Ministry has forbidden supervisors to do, like taking photographs of students and their work as examples of good practice for other schools. I don't have the authority and, unfortunately, the system is centralized by the Ministry who I have to report back to before taking any initiative.

The MoE prohibits photography in schools accordance with the country's constitution, which follows Shari'a law and forbids the circulation of pictures of women dressed without a hijab.

Moreover, Saudi culture prevents the proliferation or circulation of pictures of girls, even if they are young, within schools, and among community members. For example, a woman was arrested in Saudi Arabia due to violating public modesty (Schmidt, 2016). The reason behind her arrest was that she was not wearing a hijab. She had earlier shared a video in which she was seen without a hijab. She was then widely condemned on social media platforms, including Twitter. However, she was also praised by a few individuals who called her brave. The supporters of her case highlighted the contradiction between how Ivanka and Melania Trump wore dresses that exposed their legs and heads during their visit to Saudi Arabia in 2017, yet received a warm and welcoming reaction from Saudi society. This situation demonstrates that there are many contradictions related to culture, which become more apparent as Saudi society develops more economic and cultural collaborations with Western nations. There is a close relationship between the politics of reputation and the values of Saudi society, as mentioned earlier. For example, the actions of foreign women are deemed acceptable, while Saudi Arabia denigrates the same actions by its own citizens. Theorizing this problem of contradiction, Connell (1987, p. 96) has noted that 'the patterns of relationship in the different structures may come into conflict with each other. That is, the structure of gender relations may be internally contradictory.' Accordingly, the conflict between modern/traditional values and Saudi/Western systems is more confusing during a time of transition and reform, which therefore has an impact on the professional development of modern Saudi women, who must precariously navigate multiple roles and competing values.

There are other notable issues originating from the MoE including its practice of issuing then changing decisions unexpectedly and without advance notification. This practice frequently required leaders to implement changes which appeared contradictory or illogical. Ultimately, changes were rescinded or reversed. For example, Walla described this situation in detail:

A supervisor is not an easy task; the job entails many surprises due to ministerial lack of planning and organization, and many random changes, like the high turnover of ministers. There's no continuity in management, or even in programs; there's a lot of ambiguity when it comes to explaining the programs, as they are explained to supervisors in a certain way, and to teachers in another way altogether, which eventually leads to those programs failing.

Kouloud expressed a similar opinion: 'In the last two years, there have been four Ministers of Education, which has resulted in a lot of chaos and turmoil.'

As outlined in Chapter 3, unequal power relations create many disruptions and give rise to further conflicts and problems. Leaders explained how they experienced difficulties coping with changes taking place at short notice. Continuous change places a heavy burden on their shoulders resulting from interpreting and implementing new administrative procedures and practices which often changed on a daily basis, including edicts which affected their own authority and responsibility.

Leaders essentially need to interpret the meaning of the changes and implement as best they can; however, they may also be blamed for any incorrect implementation. Therefore, administrative changes can carry heavy repercussions which can result in stress for responsible leaders. Participants spoke of administrative changes making the job of teaching more complex. Leaders expressed a need to understand the impact of changes upon their schools and needed to devise the best strategies for implementing or reacting to these changes. Irrespective of the perceived benefits or pitfalls of change, change precipitated concern within the school's staff.

Walla commented:

There has been an increase in retirement applications due to the increase of work pressure, penalties, and salary deductions. This is because there are a lot of new programs that have been introduced, and they may be too complex for the older generation of supervisors.

Moreover, numerous other issues originating from the MoE cause frustration and give women leaders a sense of powerlessness. For example, Saudi Arabia's government provides the country with a very significant education budget to help improve the lives of Saudi communities. In 2015, King Abdullah issued an order to share budget, which included an allocation for education of US \$75 billion (Al-Buqami, 2015). This expenditure included the cost of many rented school buildings with inadequate regular maintenance; yet some schools still suffer from a shortage of facilities, a lack of security, and poor health and sanitary conditions. Saudi Arabia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and vast sums are allocated for the development of education without gaining concrete and satisfactory results. This is one of the contradictions expressed by many participants in this study, but other participants have also shown that the main challenge focused more generally on what they termed the 'Ministry's policy.'¹⁰

Amal emphasized this fact: 'There is a high budget set for summer school programmes, but it is unfortunately being wasted and used incorrectly. It is better to seek real development and not just aim to polish the façade of things.' However, Sharifa suggests another problem related to the budget: 'The system suffers from clear administrative corruption, for there is a large budget set forth for education, but in fact there is no clear development in education.'

The education budget is controlled through the MoE, while the leaders are not allowed to deal with financial expenses according to Sharifa: 'Although they are annoyed by administrative corruption, they cannot express their opinions or change this situation due to their fear of repercussions from senior leadership.'

Reem pointed out that corruption was another significant consideration:

¹⁰ Obligatory regulations decreed by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education.

There seems to be a struggle for power between employees in the MoE, and the employment of unqualified personnel in the MoE is common practice. This would have an impact of reducing the ability of leaders to be creative at work. Also, personal social relationships strongly influence the course of work.

As discussed in Chapter 3 Saudi Arabia's social relationships are family-based and follow a traditional tribal system. Consequently, the prevailing culture governing Saudi society exerts a stronger influence alongside government laws and regulations (Al-Buleihi, 2016). Usually members of tribes feel a sense of tribal obligation to aid fellow tribe members from amongst job applicants. As a result, the most qualified candidate for a position may not necessarily get the job, but instead the one with the best tribal connections. In situations like this it will be natural to feel a sense of disappointment and conflict is likely to arise as a result of the competition for employment between candidates with the best education pitched against those with the best social and tribal connections. As mentioned above, Reem expressed a general disappointment with the MoE's staff recruitment and selection procedures. She claimed that despite the MoE's requirement for high caliber candidates, family relationships based on male connections have a greater part to play in the actual employment process than experience or qualifications. As a result, it is not surprising that Reem was frustrated and felt constrained by the 'chains' that prevented her from being creative. This case confirmed that patriarchal society has powerful effects on women's lives. As discussed in Chapter 3 the patriarchal system does not only perpetuate the dominance of men over women but strives to institutionalize this imbalance.

This problem has recently been the centre of policy debates at the highest levels of government. Therefore, there have even been instances in which government ministers have been fired from their positions. One of the most well-known cases is that of the Minister of Civil Service, as explained by Hafez (2017). Due to the official's corruption charges, resulting from hiring his

son in the same MoE, a designated committee was developed to ensure smooth and proper investigation at all possible levels.

Addressing corruption and nepotism is frequently cited by Saudi citizens as an issue that must be rooted out urgently in order to allow their country to have a better future. However, administrative corruption continues to be a reality and is not only limited to employment practices but also extends to the disbursement of the education budget.

Examples of how the MoE's policies affect performance have been outlined above. Another significant area of concern that the women identified was the lack of benefits associated with their work, given their level of responsibility for different subject areas.

6.3 Women leaders and the lack of rights

This section provides evidence about the MoE. Dr. Mohammed Al-Harthy, the Under Secretary in the MoE has in fact reported that the MoE was aware of the dissatisfaction of women leaders and he has stated that the MoE is committed to preserving the rights of women leaders but lacked the capacity in many cases to meet the requests of supervisors. Dr. Mohammed Al-Harthy's comments came in response to criticism from women leaders about increasing administrative workloads which fell outside their core role as leaders, together with the perceived lack of privileges they felt they should be entitled to receive. (Al-Harthy, 2019).

In my study, ten of the participants had complaints about the education sector's benefits in public schools as they did not receive any financial entitlements above a transportation allowance. However, they believed their jobs should entitle them to receive other basic allowances, such as a housing and medical allowance, which other occupations, particularly those in the medical sector receive. Respondents felt that owing to the importance of education,

and in order to receive parity with other professions, appropriate benefits should be ascribed to them too.

Khouloud argued that

I would also like to focus more on the rights of leaders, and review their salaries in comparison to other jobs, especially since leaders not only receive an unfair salary, they also don't have medical insurance as a benefit. Teachers and supervisors in public schools don't have access to treatment like teachers who work for the National Guard schools.

Moreover, salary increments do not necessarily reflect woman leaders' responsibilities. There is no difference between leaders dealing with the burden of changes which may affect them, and thus add to their workload, and other leaders who may be experiencing no significant changes. Women leaders are paid the same irrespective of their widely different burden of responsibilities. Consequently, for many women there is no incentive to seek leadership positions. Manal, an education leader, highlighted this point: 'It was not my aspiration to be a supervisor, for the job doesn't have any incentives or an increase in pay.'

Upon promotion, leaders are not rewarded with a higher salary. This anomaly leads many staff to consider that they are being treated unfairly, as their workload increases, yet there are no tangible financial rewards. The position of leaders also takes a toll on their social lives and may also negatively impact them professionally. Without a financial incentive, the motivating factor for teachers to accept the role of leader is derived from a sense of community service, duty or for prestige. Community service, and a heartfelt desire to improve education and develop the talents of students, is also another, motivating factor that is difficult to measure. Meanwhile, others are happy to accept the role of leader, irrespective of the lack of additional pay, for religious reasons. Many believe their reward will be given to them by Allah in the afterlife. Additionally, five of the participants stated they were motivated by a possibility of implementing improvements in their schools, which they have dreamt of earlier. Four study

respondents expressed frustration with work colleagues who exhibited complacency with the unsatisfactory status quo. Such individuals appeared to have accepted the inability to change the situation and saw no justification in seeking to improve school or individual student performance. Such teachers felt their personal efforts were undermined by less motivated teachers. For example, Hana supported this notion:

While I personally have a determination to change and see our school improve for the better, I am disappointed when the teachers I supervise resist change and display little ambition for a better future. In the face of this lack of enthusiasm it is easy to fall back and accept the status quo.

Eight of the interviewees recalled examples where leaders accepted suggestions for improvements but failed to carry them out, allowing situations to return to how they had been previously. Ambitious and conscientious teachers, working with unenthusiastic colleagues, also acted as a motivation for promotion. Consequently, motivated teachers accepted head teaching roles in order to initiate changes they believed were necessary to improve their schools' performance, which they had little, if any ability to implement in a junior position.

The general picture which can be drawn from this is that there are numerous obstacles preventing leaders from improving their professional skills and justifiable reasons which extinguish many desires for leadership. Ultimately, these barriers put leaders under a lot of stress and create conflicts between their professional and personal lives. However, many teachers still desire head teaching positions for a variety of reasons, including perceived opportunities to implement their philosophy of education.

6.4 Women leaders and opportunities

The reality of inequitable opportunity is that teachers accept greater responsibility; they are more accountable and are subject to a greater workload placed on them by accepting a promotion to education leader. Yet they do not receive higher rewards corresponding to the

terms and conditions of their employment. This situation is complex and its effects on women leaders should be examined. Compared to men, women are not paid for undertaking similar levels of professional work. Participants noted that being underpaid is the price that women leaders must pay to advance their careers and to achieve respect in the community. Understanding the interrelationship between authority and masculine priorities is necessary in order to understand the conflicts presented in the participants' views.

The participants in this study discussed their own personal motivations for accepting the challenging role of leader without financial reward. One respondent explained:

My predisposition, my passion for change, and my refusal to be stuck in the same position without feeling that I am developing and progressing in my career motivated me to seek promotion from the position of a teacher to that of a supervisor.

Another leader stated that she was satisfied with certain social benefits that came with the position, not least an opportunity to establish a favorable status and reputation within the community. Furthermore, leaders have opportunities to professionally meet important dignitaries and decision-makers and to have their opinions heard. Many leaders saw the role as a stepping-stone in their career progression to higher positions in education or other professions. Within Saudi Arabian society, education is a valued occupation and leaders in education are likely to be treated with greater respect than those in other professions. Additionally, within the education sector, teachers and other workers are more inclined to respect leaders' opinions and as individuals. Hana summed up this perception: 'The position is met with a social prestige, and people think that I now have authority and strong connections with powerful people in society.' As described previously the politics of reputation plays a defining role within Saudi society and shapes the behaviour of its people. Badria, a leader, confirmed this idea, stating: 'Unfortunately, many supervisors don't have the right personal qualities for this position, as many of them only regard their job as prestigious social front.'

During the course of this research it became evident that while some teachers experienced greater prestige in the community and were respected inside and outside their schools, others discerned no perceptible change in their social standing. Improved social standings result from different factors. These included being regarded as a community leader, perceptions of success in their extended family, and a belief they are making a valuable and enduring contribution to society by shaping the lives of future generations. They believe they benefit by connecting with powerful and influential society leaders and government officials. Meanwhile for others, they find fulfilment in believing they are part of a transformation of Saudi society and helping to contribute to an important national project. Eight of the participants enthusiastically explained how they saw their involvement in implementing MoE regulations and policies as a positive contribution to society. Younger women leaders participants in this study described their eager participation in committees established to review and improve national educational initiatives. The collective motivation for this group is to enhance the capacity of the education system in helping propel Saudi Arabia forward. For example, Khoulood described her ambition: 'I love being a supervisor, in order to have a direct contact with everyone in the education field and be able to transfer my expertise to others and also benefit from their expertise as well.'

In addition to all this, there is also a near unanimous desire among the participants in this study to participate in a different role after years in the same teaching role. Most participants described enjoying the variety of tasks a leader's job demands, something teaching does not necessarily involve. Becoming a leader allowed them to change personally. This role also invigorated their own lives and helped them prove to themselves their own self-worth and capabilities. Leaders listed several motivating factors which convinced them to accept their roles, which they felt helped shape who they are, at both as individuals and active members of a rapidly changing Saudi society.

Conclusion

This Chapter outlined the findings of this study in relation to the question about how the MoE policies shape the experiences of women leaders. While Saudi Arabia's education facilities are typically gender-segregated and have their own administration departments, all ministerial positions are reserved for men only. So the gender order makes possible certain things and not others such as centralization of educational administration and lack of benefit linked to a professional role. This situation typically causes dissatisfaction within the ranks of women education leaders and can extinguish professional enthusiasm. While many of the causes for their displeasure are ultimately cultural or misguided conflation of religion and cultural tradition as discussed in Chapter 5, other career disappointments stem from policy failings in the MoE. Many women leaders reported unfairness with recruitment procedures which adversely affected them. While the MoE claims to be promoting talent development, many leaders pointed out widespread corruption and nepotism tainting actual practice. Membership of the right tribe or having powerful social contacts continues for many to be valued more than actual qualifications and professional work experience. Furthermore, despite Saudi Arabia allocating considerable funding for education in its annual budgets, much of this money fails to be spent responsibly, efficiently, or even honestly. Instead of funds being spent on strictly educational purposes, much of it is inefficiently spent on renting property or paying for maintenance that falls short of specified standards. Another funding-related problem facing women leaders is a lack of pay for the extra workload and responsibility associated with more senior roles. In other occupations higher salaries are a means of attracting candidates, but this is not so within Saudi Arabia's state education sector. Education leaders typically receive the same pay as their un-promoted colleagues. As a result, the motivation to apply for leadership positions comes from altruistic reasons or perceptions of prestige.

Many of the women leaders in this study who perform leadership positions become disillusioned at the apparent administrative dysfunction of the country's Education Ministry. Constant, poorly justified changes, excessive non-core workloads, unrealistic deadlines and policy reversals are all cited as having a negative effect. On top of this, inconsistent priorities, (exemplified by having four Education Ministers in a single year), all contribute to discouraging women from occupying leadership positions. Leaders reported frustration with their inability to actually lead because the MoE jealously guards its authority and seeks to micromanage all initiatives within their jurisdiction. Women leaders typically lack the authority to undertake many meaningful changes without approval from more senior, usually male, administrators. Irrespective of the perpetuating male domination within senior education, women education leaders enthusiastically seize opportunities presented to them to develop and progress their careers. Many are encouraged to believe they are part of a transformation process permeating Saudi society and they take pride from contributing to what they regard as national development. However, both the theory and the practice, as noted by the participants in this study, point to a process of change that is fraught with perceived injustice, inequities and contradictions and conflict at multiple levels and in various domains of life and work. In summary, there is a persistent *dialectical* opposition in what is presented by government as a gradual liberalization and a progressive process of economic transformation.

CHAPTER 7: WOMEN LEADERS NEGOTIATING CHANGE IN SAUDI ARABIA

Introduction

Women are globally under-represented in all aspects of economic and political leadership (Alsubaie & Jones, 2017), despite their participation in the labour market increasing gradually in Saudi Arabia, from 17.12% in 2009 to 23.45% in 2019 (World Bank, 2019), which is above rates for other parts of the Middle East. This change is apparent because Saudi women are resisting challenges and seizing opportunities. In this Chapter I discuss how women leaders negotiate both the opportunities and challenges facing them in their personal and professional lives through different forms of resistance. Drawing on dialectical change theory and reflection on the interview data, I have found that women who took part in this study have successfully negotiated the complex cultural, social, legal and institutional obstacles they faced, and have risen to positions of educational leadership. In Saudi Arabia the ‘glass ceiling’¹¹ is palpable and visible as it is enshrined in law and constituted in culture and as such, could be more accurately described as an ‘iron ceiling’. The idea of iron ceiling draws on the feminist concept of the glass ceiling but given the explicitness of the barriers women face in Saudi Arabia, its visibility is unequivocal. This iron ceiling has prevented Saudi Arabian women from gaining control of their lives and restricted them from enjoying equal rights to men. However, women leaders who are increasingly articulate and confident use a variety of strategies to attain their goals.

¹¹ Max Weber (as cited in Mitzman, 1971) asserted that modern society tends to live in an iron cage as bureaucracy controls people, private and public property such as schools, streets and even homes.

The Chapter begins by exploring active and passive forms of resistance used by women leaders to negotiate the challenges they faced at home and in the workplace. The second section examines the strategies used by women leaders in their attempts to achieve a balance between their work and home life balance. The third section examines the impact of globalisation on social change in Saudi Arabia and maps the positive effects of the ubiquity of technology and social media on women leaders' access to new training and professional development opportunities in KSA and beyond.

7.1 Resistance

As discussed in Chapter 3, resistance, in its general sense, is a conscious societal reaction to a rejected or illegitimate reality, or against tyranny, slavery, injustice, and discrimination (Patterson et al., 2007). According to Hiralal (2003), *active* resistance is a deliberate refusal to comply with demands or meet expectations. *Passive* resistance includes less overt responses such as listening to persons being resisted while performing disapproved of requirements without enthusiasm, or demotivated behavior such as falling short of a high level of excellence. In this section, I discuss different forms of resistance deployed by women when they faced challenges in their attempts to balance home and work responsibilities and expectations.

7.1.1 Women leaders and active or passive resistance at home

The participants in this study employed a variety of strategies when presented with the challenges they faced in their personal lives and, when problems arose, responded with the best strategy they could improvise. This differed according to the situation, based on the women's socio-economic status and degree of autonomy and power they had within the family. Nevertheless, a majority of leaders stated that using a variety of active resistance methods as a tool was useful in challenging men to change their position or viewpoint. However, women leaders still found it hard to get their husbands to share household chores.

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They also found it difficult to ignore the importance of their existing responsibilities to their families. For example, Hannan (2006) noted that unequal sharing of family responsibilities has negative implications for women striving to advance themselves through education, employment and training, or involving themselves in voluntary or charity endeavours. Excessive family responsibilities also impact on women aiming for public office. Preoccupation with domestic chores at home deprives women of engaging and benefiting from experiences outside the home, particularly where extended travel is involved. Where women are competing with men, they are at a significant disadvantage as men have greater freedom of movement and typically have more spare time. As discussed in Chapter 3 gender inequality is a typical feature of patriarchal societies (Connell, 2002). Additionally, institutional work environments are frequently unaccommodating of women's needs, particularly when they are mothers. Schedules may conflict with family commitments and there is a lack of child-minding facilities. Consequently, many women leaders are forced to make a choice between family or career and those who choose careers are required to make extra efforts to ensure their domestic situations do not intrude into their professional lives. As Noura poignantly stated, 'Many of the conflicts and resistance occurred between my husband and I because of his constant refusal to share household responsibility.'

The conflict between Noura and her husband is common among many of the women in this study. To understand the context of conflict, it is important to comprehend the relationship between traditional patriarchal culture and misinterpretations of Islam by some of the Ulama (religious scholars). Ulama are typically a bastion of conservatism whose role is to uphold traditional values and social mores. They resist social change, particularly with regard to progressive campaigns for women's emancipation and equal rights. For instance, Doumato (2010) reported that a sizeable majority of Saudi Arabia's citizens support the Ulama's social agenda, believing that the inequalities which exist between men and women are not

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discriminatory but are a divine balance between the duties of men as fathers, providers and heads of families and the responsibilities allocated to women. According to these religious scholars, the primary function of women is to serve the family and rear the next generation. This social order is widely accepted in many Islamic countries as natural and its maintenance upholds honour and preserves family values. Saudi Arabia's traditional patriarchal culture is the main obstacle for women leaders who aspire for change. In her book addressing the subject, El-Saadawi (1985) says this conflict causes there to be "two women in one woman" meaning that they have dual roles at home and at work.

However, Saudi Arabian society has not been without change; in fact, it has been influenced by the pace of global modernization which has swept across the world, bringing with it the influence of the feminist movement. Despite the constraints and struggles experienced by Saudi Arabian women, they are not immune to the demands for equality with men expressed in other parts of the world. Women leaders have seized the opportunities which have recently been opened up to them; instead of being afraid to pursue their rights, they have in fact increasingly demanded them, even where the slow pace of reform has been frustrating. Many of the participants confirmed that women who have resisted their guardians have been successful in overcoming obstacles and achieving success in their lives.

According to Kirdar (2004) educated women are challenging the status quo and unashamedly demanding legislated equality in the public and private spheres. They are calling for the empowerment of women in terms of economic autonomy and political and social rights, and freedom from subservience to men. Throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds there is growing evidence of women's struggles for gender equality, even in the most conservative of societies, such as Saudi Arabia. Commenting on the new generation of Saudi women's rejection of the status quo, Fatima observed:

The new generation cannot live with the shackles of the old generation, and women have become more empowered than ever before, and so they refuse to relive the experiences of their mothers and grandmothers in terms of total helplessness, surrender and submission.

According to Al-Buleihi (2014) increasing critical awareness among women has led many of them to the realisation that there is more to their lives than to be worthy mothers and wives and many are therefore pursuing careers rather than families first. This attitude change among some young Saudi women constitutes an active form of resistance to traditional family roles. For example, women are using contraceptives and generally being more in control of their lives and more aware of the burdens of family-hood. There are also correlations between these changing attitudes among women and the increase in the rate of divorce. Al-Amri (2017) confirms that many divorce cases are handled by the courts in Saudi Arabia, with a total of 53,675 in 2017 or 149 cases each day; after extensive data analysis Al-Amri concluded that there are various reasons behind the growing divorce rate during the past decade. Saudi and Gulf societies have changed considerably in recent years, arguably as a result of Western influences and other factors, largely disrupting social, cultural and economic norms. In previous generations only men could bring a marriage to an end, but today things have changed, and substantial numbers of Saudi women are taking advantage of their legal rights to end unsatisfactory marriages through the divorce process. Women, especially those with tertiary education are increasingly exercising their rights (Kirdar, 2004). For example, Fatima reflects these trends in what she said, ‘Where marriage is destructive to the woman, then she should separate and divorce.’ Fatima added some comments on the importance of women’s independence:

Women need to be more resilient and less subservient, even if their surrounding community is conservative; they should always find someone who is open-minded and has a say in their family and turn to them for support. Moreover, they should rely on themselves more and make sure they aim to achieve financial independence.

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Although many women lack an understanding of financial independence, a number of participants had focussed on achieving this goal. This group of participants provided themselves with the support needed to enhance communication in their daily lives; it is considered a positive shift away from the absolute control of men. Based on her experience, Fatima (from Al-Khobar School) concluded ‘This is the right way for a confident woman, an independent mind and clear thought-processing.’ Moreover, Fatima drew on her life experiences; she had suffered abuse in her earlier marriage. She vividly described her personal situation and her thoughts about it:

My ex-husband would demean and verbally abuse me, probably with the intention of breaking me down. In this regard, being financially independent provided me with an escape route from the suffering and prompted me to become aware of what was happening in the outside world. These reflections helped me make the final decision to seek a divorce.

While many women are fighting a battle within the home and within marriage, other forms of resistance occur in women leaders’ personal lives. As discussed in Chapter 3 passive resistance is a potential course of action for groups lacking formal authority or status. Nonetheless, it has been termed a weapon of the weak (Hiralal, 2003). Patterson et al. (2007) suggest that there are at least three types of passive resistance: silence, masking and avoiding, and withdrawing. The term masking relates to withholding opinion or thought. Avoiding refers to avoiding conversations on certain subjects, particularly ones likely to cause offence or provoke an argument. Withdrawing describes the practice of ceasing to participate in a conversation; it could therefore be understood as the use of silence as a political weapon and as a form of resistance.

During the course of this study I encountered a recurring theme of passive resistance which took many forms. One form of passive resistance is the expression of modesty by professional women in regard to their achievements. This form of resistance is called masking, where some

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women either downplayed or trivialized their own personal achievements in an attempt not to incite jealousy or resentment from their husband or extended family.

For example, Khoulood explained: 'A smart woman leader does not talk about her work and achievements in front of her husband. So, her husband does not feel jealous.'

However, it is important to acknowledge that many forms of 'silent' passive resistance are pursued by Saudi wives and daughters in their homes and domestic situations; they are often deployed in an attempt to generate a positive response from husbands or families. This type of resistance happens for two reasons. Firstly, from an Islamic point of view, women's modesty, particularly their relationships with men in their lives, is construed as a valued trait in a 'good' woman. Secondly, cathexis structures family life, especially for Saudi women who believe that the emotions and love mean submission, obedience, forgiveness, servitude, self-sacrifice and truthfulness amongst other characteristics (Apple, 2004).

While in Saudi Arabian (and other Arabic) societies, women are expected to be submissive, men are conversely expected to be assertive. Consequently, there is social pressure for men to lead and provide for their families, both materially and spiritually (Fareh, 2010; Connell, 2000).

It is significant that some of the women leaders who participated in this study had achieved a higher career progression and status than their husbands. This situation was described as a frequent cause of disharmony in the home, as it led to resentment from the husband. Not only did this cause personal embarrassment for him but it was also perceived as a source of shame in a community that expects men to have a higher status than women.

For example, Hana mentioned that

When I have achieved a leadership position, I felt my husband became sad, and his attitude to me changed for the worst. At the time I felt sad, but after a short period I understood why he reacted to me in that way. He felt shame coming from his family

because I had a higher position than him. Therefore, I decided never to talk about my job in front of him.

This account illustrates how the politics of reputation have an effect on Saudi society. Some of the participants stated that their husbands retaliated by undermining their careers. With their husbands being their guardians, this was easily done. So many women chose to downplay their own career, responsibilities and ambitions to prevent jealousy (Al-Atibi, 2010). According to Patterson et al., (2011) this type of passive resistance is called avoidance and the women use it to avoid the occurrence of any problems between them and their partners and for the sake of family harmony and stability.

The reasons why successful women leaders remain silent and are often modest about their career achievements are many and varied. As discussed in Chapter 3, Al-Atibi (2010) argues that a widely held perception exists in Saudi society that men are required to be more educated than their wives. As a consequence, many Saudi women are under pressure to abstain from accepting career promotions, and some women even resign from senior positions in order to prevent their husbands from feeling they are in competition with them.

For example, Reem's comments illustrate the significance of the politics of reputation and how it creates distinctive solutions; she described her own experience and her own approach in terms of how she employed silence as a means of passive resistance: 'I tried to adapt to my new life with silence, and not negative silence, but positive silence that is accompanied with self-reflection, loving myself, developing my skills, and then discussing issues with my husband.'

Despite Saudi Arabia's increasing urbanization, substantial numbers of people - even city dwellers - maintain very traditional, tribal, views. In traditional society it continues to be emphasised that the husband is the head of the family and by default, the bread winner. Many traditional women also believe the home is the sole domain of the wife and that even leaving

the house for shopping cannot be done without a male guardian. People holding such views view women leaders with disapproval; even husbands who do not share these views directly, are influenced by them indirectly, and feel under pressure to exert domination over their wives' careers (Fareh, 2010). Consequently, it is safer for women in such relationships to remain silent about their ambitions and achievements. In the case of women leaders, silence could be used as a form of resistance which allows their careers to advance without marital or family conflict about gender status. Moreover, many participants in this study shared this belief, as Reem's example shows. She refuses to subordinate her ambition to her husband's and follows a strategy of positive silence.

She has applied the Arabic proverb: "Speech is silver, silence is gold." In order to fully understand how this saying relates to Reem's account of her experience, it is necessary to distinguish between positive and negative silence. Reem follows a practice common with the women leaders in this study of avoiding negative silence, in her endeavour to prevent a conflict from arising. However, in addition to this Reem also uses positive silence when it suits her situation. This relates to mirroring the speaker in silent reflection and thoughtfulness. Through this type of positive silence, the speaker typically perceives that the listener is agreeing with him/her, when in fact they may not be. The listener is reflecting inwardly on themselves and may be considering different possibilities to express an opinion, even non-verbally (Patterson et al., 2007). Moreover, as Reem stated her need to "improve and love herself" enabled her to give herself the recognition that she both deserves and believes she has earned.

When prioritising their own careers perhaps the biggest obstacle for women is to set aside society's conditioning from childhood that the primary duty of a girl and woman is to love her family and her own children above all else, including herself. This conditioning starts early, with Connell (2000) pointing out that there exists the tendency for girls to display a greater

interest in child-rearing responsibilities and to develop a reduced ego, when they are growing up in close intimacy with their mothers.

In summary, many participants employed various forms of active and passive resistance. On one level this strategy helped the women to achieve a better balance in their responsibilities and expectations. Various forms of resistance enabled them to assert their career ambitions, deal with family responsibilities and society's expectations of them. Moreover, these behaviours need to be understood in terms of this group of women's socio-economic status and the degree of autonomy they enjoy as leaders.

7.1.2 Women leaders and active resistance at work

Women recognise that resistance in the private sphere is not enough to gain their full human rights and that resistance in the public sphere, particularly in the workplace, is critical in their pursuit of gender equality. Accordingly, women's development cannot be separated from their status and their rights in a specific society. However, women do not have their rights handed to them without a struggle. They have had to fight to regain their basic human rights. That is, as restrictions on women's rights typically emerge out of cultural conventions and community expectations; women often find themselves in situations where they have to resist the constraints imposed on them by conventions and expectations within their marriage, home and communities. Resistance takes many forms and women have to persistently push back against abuses of power. Naima eloquently summed this up when she said: 'Women do not automatically have their rights. They must demand them, fight for them and never give up.'

Women leaders skilfully exercise workplace resistance to keep their job. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2 external considerations and domestic economic factors are exerting pressure for change within Saudi Arabia's educational sphere. In response the Kingdom's educational objectives, the authorities have adopted a positive attitude towards innovative

technologies. Saudi Arabia's rapidly reforming education sector has experienced an enthusiastic adoption of I.T., particularly educational software for both administrative and teaching purposes in universities and schools (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). The interviews show that the rapid transformation of education has had an impact on the performance of women education leaders (particularly more experienced ones), who may have had a long career during where older methodologies were dominant. Many good leaders have experienced difficulties or disruptions to their careers. Maha reflected on this situation:

Some women leaders have suffered because of these changes as they are forced to use these new tools. Because they have never used such things like smart boards and social media and maybe don't want to, they are unhappy about doing so. This has proven to be a cause of conflict between older women leaders who may be more experienced than the younger ones, who do like using these tools.

Although these changes were the major cause of increased stress for some women leaders in this study, there were many other participants (including older leaders) who preferred to use active resistance in order to keep their jobs. They resisted the pressure to retire by learning new methods and accepting that these newer teaching techniques are more suitable to a new generation of Saudi Arabian learners. An example of this approach is provided by May leader who explained:

I have learned and taught myself many new approaches so that I can keep up to date and not risk losing my position as a leader. In fact, I am very proud of this and feel personally satisfied that I overcame my initial sense of powerlessness. I originally thought I couldn't learn new teaching methods, but actually I have.

Moreover, an interesting finding which emerged from the study was that nine of sixteen study participants claimed that they found it easier to deal with students than with their fellow teacher colleagues. These respondents felt a sense of rivalry existed between teachers, which did not exist with students. Women leaders were also fully aware that the workloads of leaders are far greater than teachers, since leaders have the additional burden of academic, administrative and

supervisory duties which add mental and emotional pressures. Many participants confirmed that despite the increased workload and pressures adapting and innovating was necessary in order to keep their positions secure. Women leaders could always give up their leadership positions and return to the less stressful role of teaching, but for many resisting this urge was necessary for keeping their jobs.

Hana leader, for example, stated:

Because of the pressures I was under at work, I started to consider returning to my previous teaching position. But I resisted this easy way out and after having an internal conflict in my head, I decided with determination keep my job as a leader. So, I organized a schedule, arranged my workdays between administrative and academic duties. I also wrote up an alternative plan for days when increased workloads built up and when pressure was excessive. By reorganizing my duties and time it helped me keep my job.

From the above statements it can be seen that many women leaders faced many obstacles, such as unfamiliar technology, modern teaching methods or work pressure potentially forcing them out of their jobs. However, they resisted these obstacles that could lead them to lose their job by learning new skills.

Furthermore, women leaders were not defeated but have shown the power of resistance. A small number of participants have exercised resistance to unjustifiable social expectations. For instance, from a socio-cultural perspective, sport in Saudi Arabia has typically been almost exclusively a male domain, playing an important role in the social construction of masculinity, and the exclusion of femininity. In this regard, Marrow, a PE supervisor, asserted an egalitarian claim: 'Sports are equally beneficial for both boys and girls in both a physical and mental sense.' While men are expected to play and follow sport, Saudi society has typically considered many sports inappropriate for women, so they are therefore denied the health and social benefits of engaging in physical exercise and are excluded from it as a form of entertainment. Due to the

perception that sport is exclusively associated with men and masculinity, the exclusion of women becomes an instrument of oppression and unequal access to healthy living (Hannan, 2006).

Despite the apparent health benefits of exercise and Physical Education, the MoE continues to oppose girls' and young women's participation in PE in girls' public schools for many reasons. First, it is claimed that there are concerns about girls receiving sport-related injuries. Secondly, they justify their decision on the grounds of maintaining the status quo of customs and traditions. However, attitudes towards PE have changed in recent years as it is no longer considered unnecessary or even a distraction from real learning. Marrow, a PE supervisor at a private school commented:

PE has become an important subject in many schools, particularly, non-state schools. Now schools without a PE programme may be bypassed by parents who want to enrol their children in a school with a developed programme. Many parents will refuse to enrol their girls in a school which excludes girls from PE.

And she added, 'As parents' attitudes to PE have changed, so have some school PE programmes. The attitudes of parents and school authorities have outpaced that of the MoE.' In addition, Marwa, a Physical Education supervisor, confirmed that

Private school PE supervisors who are free to operate outside the constraints of MoE restrictions frequently develop strategies to help promote a sporting culture amongst woman students, even in neighboring state schools without PE programmes. They can invite government schools to participate in non-competition sporting challenges or friendly activities of a sporting nature. During such events one needs to also include the parents and the community along with the inclusion of the factors such as the more participation and encouragement of the girls' sports that needs to work and allow the fears to be neutralized.

Saudi society has shown that the influence of social reform such as those naming parents as consumers of schools dictates the terms of educational provision. Al-Buleihi (2014) emphasizes that within society a progressive culture needs to work towards creating equal opportunities and

laws comparable to other nations. As a result of pressure from women, Saudi Arabia entered 2018 with greater freedom to play selected sports in girls' schools as a part of the school curriculum. Since 2018, women have also been allowed to attend sports events where there is segregated seating, such as the King Fahd Stadium, King Abdullah Sports City and Prince Mohamed bin Fahd Stadium. These efforts are among a series of sweeping social and economic reforms orchestrated by the young Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, designed to bring Saudi Arabia into a global leadership role in the 21st century (Grinberg & Hallam, 2017). Moreover, Chulov (2017) reported that Saudi government's responses in a variety of fields regarding gender inequality and empowering women in public spheres are moving forward within the prevailing policy, legal and institutional framework. But while there are some changes, many are yet to be won. Some of the changes are minor; many of them symbolic. In fact, stereotypical practices and attitudes which may have taken a lifetime to form, continue to work to the detriment of women and girls across wide swathes of social life - from families to educational institutions, religious organisations, sporting associations, cultural institutions, political structures, employment sites and through the media.

However, as will be discussed in the next section, this approach came with a degree of personal sacrifice. While many women are fighting a battle within the home and within marriage, other forms of resistance occur in public life. These complex negotiations of home/work life balance are discussed in the next section.

7.2 Women leaders constructing a new order

The women in this study reported a common struggle in terms of organizing their days around family and work and taking steps to separate their work from their family lives. The participants confirmed that their goals were not easy to achieve but that through planning, resistance and persistent pursuit of their rights they sought to eventually find a satisfactory outcome. The

interviews show that women are having to employ a number of strategies to meet the demands of their employers and of their families simultaneously. Mashael highlighted one specific strategy described as passive resistance. She explained how she maintained a balance between her work and her home life:

I tried to draw hard lines to limit the toll of my work on my family life. I did not accept any work-related phone calls after a certain hour, nor did I bring any office work home, so that I could allocate as much quality time as possible to my family.

In this regard, Nippert-Eng (2008) studied how people negotiate their own personal boundaries separating work and home domains with individuals tending to integrate or segregate these spheres of their lives to varying degrees. A person who is characterised as using an integration-style is regarded as someone who makes little if any distinction between their work and home lives, while a segregation-style individual is someone who maintains a clear boundary line between their own work and home spheres. Although Nippert-Eng's study is dated, its findings resonate strongly with the comments from Mashael, whose home and work are two very distinct domains with their own unique set of rules defined by behavioural patterns and guidelines. Mashael is a living example of the type of Saudi professional woman who endeavours to meet her own expectations. Her belief that her family is more important is an emotional defence mechanism in a passive form, which is designed to reduce her feelings of guilt from charges that she prioritises her career over her family. Connell (2000) explains such behaviour is a stereotypical emotional process deriving from what is regarded as normal family behaviour expressed through clearly defined domestic roles for man and women. However, Nippert-Eng (2008) and Clark (2000) argue that the affective, physical and temporal arrangements of a person's home and work spheres impact on how they adjust to them and negotiate their way through the demands of both. An example of this can be seen in Rifaat's description:

My husband is the type of person who is ready to start and escalate a fight if I bring my work home with me, so I am overzealous in thoroughly planning my day, scheduling and organizing my work, making sure I never take any work home or

take any naps during the day. So, I can finish all my household chores before my husband gets home from work. This has caused me emotional and physical distress.

The negotiations that Rifaat has to make are not uncommon and would be familiar to most Arab women. As discussed in Chapter 3, the patriarchal system has emerged as a powerful tool for the benefit of men (Al-Gaseem, 2009). As a consequence, pressures on women in employment are often increased as they are required to meet the expectations of both their work and home lives, while their husbands typically do not increase their domestic duties to compensate for their wives' absence from the home. It is not easy for women to experience a difficult-to-manage increase in responsibilities in their attempt to fulfil their functions as an employee, spouse, mother and member of an extended family (Windebank, 2001). Eby et al. (2005) argue that attempts to simultaneously fulfil the requirements of different social systems, particularly work and home lives, inevitably cause one of the roles to overflow and intrude into that of another, such as employees bringing domestic issues to work or parents bringing work home. The term 'work-home interference' is defined as the practice of a worker's performance or behaviour in one sphere of their life such as the home, being negatively influenced by events in the other domain, such as at work (Geurts et al., 2005; Van Hooff et al., 2005). When women leaders seek to satisfactorily live up to the community's expectations of them as wives and/or mothers, this may come at the expense of their professional lives. In effect, there may be a trade-off as the demands of both family and careers are significant, so one or both may be compromised (Frone, 2003). In this regard, Sharifia describes how a good leader is able to recognise and adapt to the realities of work-home overlap:

A good leader balances her work and home life, even if she has more pressure, so as not to put herself in a situation where she will face the power and the authority of her husband. A husband can use his authority to stop his wife from working, if he feels any shortcomings in regard to his rights or domestic responsibilities.

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An element of successfully performing this balancing act for women leaders such as in Sharifa's case, is recognising their husband's authority, but then engaging in activities that amount to passive resistance. Rajkhan (2014) points out that the perception that most of the countries in the world are hierarchical societies, which award privileges to men at the expense of women is based on fact. Al Ahamdi (2011) supports the claim that social institutions including the family, school and mainstream media all serve to perpetuate negative values and perceptions of women in the workplace and in the wider community. Furthermore, this attitude is not limited to the Arab world but is shared with other societies including those in the West. Consequently, Saudi women are traditionally accustomed to accepting this gender order and its influence on cultural attitudes to the sexes and shaping of patriarchal structures which permeate home and work. However, several women in this study such as Sharifia , Masha'el and Rifaat have commented on how they engage in forms of resistance when faced with a conflict between home and work. Moreover, the impact of cathexis on women's lives, discussed at the beginning of this Chapter, is also manifested in inequalities in power which exist between genders (Connell, 2000). Sharifa's case is therefore an example of what Bruner (1990, p.137) describes as "manifestations of culturally-shaped notions in terms of which people organize their views of themselves, of others, and of the world in which they live." Due to the seniority of their positions, professional women suffer the most significant personal conflict in their attempts to fulfil their duties as homemakers and employees. This is because they intellectually and morally accept that both roles are equally important to them. Work-home conflict, however, is most problematic for professional mothers who are the parents of young children. The problem was greater for professional modern women with progressive views than those holding more traditional beliefs, given that as the latter group of women tended to regard themselves as homemakers, mothers first and employees second. For example, this type of situation is described by Hifa leader:

I am burdened by an intensive internal struggle pitching my duties as a mother with my career ambitions. I believe that a woman needs to decide between being a mother and an employee. If a woman decides on motherhood, then she needs to be a good mother and if she decides on being an employee she has to be the best employee she can be. But after reflecting on this, I didn't accept that it is one or the other but resisted my motherhood and decided I could in fact be both a good mum and good leader at the same time.

These statements show that family roles and professional career progression exert a strong pressure on women who are pulled in different directions. Evidently, some women feel that they must excel at one role or the other, whereas a compromise that falls short of perfection might be more pragmatic. Moreover, some women are realizing that the two roles associated with family and work are not absolutely mutually exclusive and that a degree of accommodation might be possible that allows them to fulfil both roles.

The views of the women in this study have illustrated some of the conflicts between work and home, showing various degrees of awareness and forms of resistance. The next section proceeds to examine the opportunities for women leaders arising from professional development and from globalisation by discussing how women are beginning to negotiate opportunities arising from investment in human resources and from a policy agenda focussed on reform.

7.3 Women leaders and negotiations of opportunities

As explored in Chapter 2 Saudi Arabia's social system in relation to women is currently experiencing a significant shift. This shift originates from the recognition of the importance of women's education and status by the highest authorities within the government of the Kingdom. The shift in official policy has empowered women leaders, giving them a sense of independent agency. This development has begun to result in improved attitudes towards women leaders (Alyami, 2016). The new paradigm has affected women leaders and motivated them to seize newly available opportunities and challenge themselves to develop through participation in

professional development and self-education made available through technology. By engaging in technology-based self-education women education leaders are able to learn from, and share their experiences with, professionals in their fields in Saudi Arabia and in other countries around the world.

For some women leaders, actively seeking to improve their skills and network with other leaders might be a more constructive or pragmatic approach to empowerment rather than risky and disheartening forms of outright resistance to the patriarchal system. Negotiation and opportunity-seeking could be understood as a positive complement to confrontational resistance, rather than being an alternative to it. In the following section I outline how Saudi women education leaders in this study have seized such opportunities and negotiated their way to an improved status.

7.3.1 Saudi women leaders and professional development for educators

Professional development for educators represents one of the most important opportunities in development and modernization .As discussed in Chapter 2, under the Institute of Public Administration, the objective of the MoE programmes is to improve efficiency and the delivery of services by enhancing the ability of employees through developing their skills, improving knowledge and promoting positive behavioural attitudes (Al-Sharari, 2010).

According to the MoE (2018), 245 education centres throughout Saudi Arabia offered 91,000 positions in various professional development programmes during the 2018 summer school holidays. With reference to this point, Walaa observed:

A successful society invests in education, and indeed improving education is one of the goals of the new vision. It aims to provide professional development programmes for leaders and teachers in order to equip them to produce necessary

change and development. This is what we hope to see achieved in 2030¹²: a strong education, strong and eligible schools, and a mature, successful, goal-oriented generation.

Hana confirmed the widespread support for more professional development programmes :

Of course, one cannot deny that these programmes have helped meet the needs of the new generation; this is why a smart supervisor has to work on herself to develop professionally by professional development programmes. Participating in the professional development programmes helps me and my colleagues to bond with students, share their hobbies, and conduct discussions with them.

The establishment of targeted coaching, mentoring and development programmes recognising and catering to the specific and unique needs of women education leaders has the potential to enable them to take advantage of existing opportunities. Exposing women leaders to the leadership opportunities which are already present, such as becoming members of school boards and the MoE Committees, may encourage women teachers and leaders to expand their professional ambitions. The MoE currently offers leadership programmes designed to improve curriculum and pedagogic dimensions of teaching and learning. Encouraging women leaders to aspire to higher leadership roles will help achieve the MoE's vision. Saudi society is changing, even within bastions of conservatism, professional women are seizing leadership training opportunities to benefit themselves as well as pave the way for the younger generations of Saudi women to fulfil their potentials. Recently, Al-Eisa ¹³, who serves as Minister of Education, highlighted the link between women's leadership and their participation in training. While it is considered an excellent opportunity for development, not all women leaders and teachers are

¹² I have mentioned 2030 Vision in more details in Chapter 2 paragraph 6.

¹³ Al-Eisa Ahmed was awarded his PhD in Education from Pennsylvania State University in 1993. He subsequently completed an advanced programme in Management and Leadership from Oxford University in 2009. In 2011 he commenced service as Director General at the Royal Court's Department of Strategic Studies, before being announced as Saudi Arabia's Minister of Education (11 December 2015).

able to participate in training and professional development courses, for a variety of reasons.

One of the most important reasons mentioned by the participant Naima is a restrictive husband:

My husband is like any other Saudi man who is one of the typical conservative characters and follows the traditional culture. He bans me from travelling by myself to attend any conferences, even if doing so is important to my work.

In fact, this problem is not specific to Naima. As discussed in Chapters 3, 5 and 6, in the Saudi Arabian context, a common reason why many women are unable to engage with professional development for educators is because their domestic responsibilities deprive them of the opportunity to travel for courses, seminars or other activities. Women, particularly those with young families, may literally be forbidden to travel by their husbands or socially stigmatised for even wanting to do this. Al-Sulami (2019) has highlighted the challenges which women leaders and potential leaders, from distant regions of the kingdom experienced when attending professional development courses in the capital, Riyadh. These challenges were both social and economic. Typically course participants were separated from their families for at least two weeks which created social pressures while they were also economically disadvantaged by extra costs. Those without family or friends in Riyadh were obliged to stay in hotels and pay for all their expenses, most of which were not reimbursed.

Irrespective of the challenges of attending professional development courses, evidence from this study has shown that Saudi women do not give up, and they always try to resist the barriers and obstacles by looking to other ways to improve their skills. Globalisation and developments in technology and science in recent decades have dramatically re-configured how people acquire knowledge and skills, which has helped Saudi women overcome some of the obstacles to their professional development.

7.3.2 Women leaders and globalisation

As with every era, national governments are presented with challenges to how they plan to achieve desired economic and social development for their country and to protect and enhance the economic well-being of their citizens. As discussed in Chapter 2, today Saudi Arabia, together with most other societies, is working within a fully globalised world. Academic study of this topic has its origin in the work of Arjun Appadurai, who developed five ‘perspectival constructs’: ‘(a) ethnoscapas; (b) medias capes; (c) technoscapas; (d) finanscapas; and (e) ideoscapas’ (1990, p296). Particularly relevant in this section is Appadurai’s ‘technoscape’, which should be understood in terms of traditional technology and hardware, as well as the flow of information, which is now increasingly digital. Appadurai clearly recognized that the different global ‘scapes’ had a disruptive effect on local customs and national cultures. Furthermore, globalisation has increasingly highlighted the value and potential of women in the workplace; professions which were once exclusively for men are now encouraging more women to join their ranks (Bhagwati, 2004). Korany (2008) believes that globalisation has been advantageous for women by providing them with new and greater opportunities. Stiglitz (2002) argues that globalisation and the information and communication revolution, which technology has enabled, have offered women opportunities to develop and improve their skills across many disciplines which may have previously been denied to them.

Several of these ideas are evident in the responses of the women who participated in this study. For example, Rania described one of the most important opportunities that opened up thanks to technology:

Technology and media have played a role in breaking the chains that tie women down, and I am a supporter of breaking these chains; furthermore, a woman has to know about one of the primary factors that helps her improve and has to know about what is going on around her based on technology.

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To understand how technology can break the chains which shackle women, it is necessary to examine what Rania means by chains. The constraints associated with securing transport, described in Chapters 3 and 5, act as chains that restrict women's free movement. Men effectively control where and how women move around their own city or country, by for example preventing them from attending conferences, seminars and professional development courses. However, despite a woman being denied an opportunity to attend a training course because of a husband or guardian's refusal to attend, through technology, training online has helped women overcome this barrier. Raikhan (2014) pointed out that online courses which are cheaply available through technology, have opened up opportunities which were previously denied to women. The widespread availability and access to the internet in Saudi Arabia has had a profound positive effect on women as it has enabled them to access training and to experience other places in the world remotely. Mashabel described how technology had helped her:

I personally try to use technology as much as possible; it has an effective purpose, and it is imperative to learn how to use it. I welcome progress and change, and we need to note that it is not Saudi society that imposed change, but the new generation that imposed itself on society, for through technology and media, members of the youth saw that they have a lot in common with others from around the world. So, a good leader aims to stay up to date with society and always tries to integrate technology with teaching, as new leaders tend to use technology in everything; this is a good communication strategy.

A recurring theme mentioned by numerous women leaders during the course of this research was the use of technology to negotiate their way around obstacles preventing them from fully seizing opportunities which were available. Technology is not a temporary or passing fad but has moved to center stage, becoming a ubiquitous component of both formal education and in the lives of everyone. Its contribution to improved learning outcomes are profound. For instance, Tutkun (2011) documented the influence of computers and the internet on daily lives and economic activity, where technology is now both a tool for teaching and learning. Some of

the benefits of internet usage in people's lives include its ability to facilitate communication, allow access to educational resources and improve the quality of training. There has been a constant emphasis on the development of information sharing through technology, driven by commercial opportunities for training providers. Additionally, because the internet allows users to share and disseminate information with others quickly, it has become an important tool for research and analysis, as well as learning. For example, Mashahel explained how the internet helped her overcome some of society's restrictions:

I try to always work on myself and broaden my horizons. I have also tried to involve my teachers and students in the world of social media and Twitter, for the Internet now has an essential role in our lives, and so homework should be done electronically, and technology should be integrated into teaching.

A final observation from my participant interviews was overwhelming support for the social changes brought about by technology, which the women leaders were both happy with and encouraged by. They were beneficiaries of the shifting horizons brought about the shifting flows across the 'technoscape' flows that helped to disrupt traditional expectations and roles (Appadurai, 1990). In fact, Khoulood's observation captures the dominant views among the participants on technology as a tool for change for Saudi women:

KSA really needs this change, and it is the Saudi society itself that wants this change. If we don't go with the flow of change, we will find ourselves isolated from the world. Change is good: it has resulted in broadening understanding between students, teachers, leaders and society as a whole, and now the whole world is able to communicate much more easily, which makes communication and the transfer of ideas a much easier process between communities and societies.

Conclusion

This Chapter presented how women leaders negotiate both the opportunities and challenges facing them in their home and work lives. The participants described their own efforts to establish a reasonable balance between their home and work lives, and how they employed

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resistance strategies in their domestic lives to prevent their careers from detrimentally affecting their domestic relationships. Additionally, most women leaders spoke with pride about progressive curriculum changes and the increasing modernisation of Saudi Arabia as an improvement and considered it a welcome development that promises a gradual removal of the myriad of obstacles faced by women in pursuit of gender equality. While seizing existing opportunities, participants reported seeking to improve themselves through participation in personal and professional development programmes and collaborating with colleagues, aiming to advance their professional careers. The participants overwhelmingly praised technology which they described as an essential tool that benefited them professionally and opened up new opportunities for networking with other women in their fields. Not only did they perceive technology as making the world a smaller place, but they felt it exposed them to new and different ideas and perspectives. There was general consensus that Saudi society is undergoing profound change with universal support for the new vision (Vision 2030) steering this change, particularly in regard to the improved status of women .

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This Chapter aims to discuss the key findings of this study, which involved 16 women leaders specializing in different subject areas located at four schools in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. It locates the findings within a dialectical theory of change (Burke, 2008) in order to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi Arabian women leaders in education during a period of rapid change in their professional and personal lives. Saudi society is undergoing a struggle between its past, present and future, with multiple barriers obstructing meaningful social change, especially for women. Inevitably, conflicts arise from men's and women's conflicting desires and aspirations, as women want to be more independent and exercise greater freedoms, but men do not want to lose the patriarchal dividend that their historically held power and status in society brings; since such benefits help them maintain their existing privileges (Connell, 1987). These privileges are a result of a patriarchal system which uses religion to maintain power and domination over women. For the women in this study, change is slow and does not easily take place because change of historic cultural norms and corresponding social practices is necessarily mediated through confrontation, conflict and contradictions before it can reach a degree of consensus.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the relationship between the findings that have already been discussed and how they corroborate or diverge from the research literature. In this regard, significant conflicts and contradictions emerged from the relationship between the women's increasing ascendance to leadership roles, the legal patriarchal system and attendant politics of reputation and religion. These relationships have a number of influences on Saudi women leaders in education in both their professional and domestic lives. These relationships are used to regulate and constrain their upward mobility in the workplace, resulting in them having to

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grapple with a range of emotionally draining feelings, ranging from guilt to emotional labour. Furthermore, the Chapter discusses the emergence of issues relating to inequitable division of domestic labour between men and women. This situation contributes to a sense of powerlessness which many women leaders identified as one of the main obstacles to their development. Finally, I will discuss the strategies that women leaders employ to bring about change and how they seize opportunities in both their personal and professional lives, notably through strategic passive or, in some cases, active resistance. Throughout the examination of these key topics, I will be showing how my research relates to other studies, and evaluating the theories used understand the key strand of the research. This Chapter uncovers the strategies commonly used by the women in this study to effectively surmount the obstacles they encountered.

8.1 Women's leadership and conflict in a rapidly changing KSA

Earlier in this thesis (Chapter 3) I discussed the rapid pace of change currently underway in Saudi Arabia. However, outward changes within Saudi Arabia are not necessarily reflected in cultural attitudes that significantly impact women in the Saudi workforce. As mentioned earlier, there is a strong relationship between the patriarchal legal system, the politics of reputation, and the use of religion as subterfuge for maintaining unequal relations between men and women based on antiquated cultural norms and conventions. This relationship repeatedly emerged in this study as one of the most significant challenges directly impacting on women leaders' professional and personal lives. An overriding theme throughout this research was the challenge originating from gender inequality, which permeates all aspects of Saudi society and is an explanation for the stark differential outcomes for men and women, professionally and personally. As discussed, explored in Chapter 3, El-Saadawi (2006) points out that within the patriarchal setup, token concessions are granted to women, yet the status quo remains

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essentially unchanged. The fundamental practices of patriarchy, which essentially subordinates women into an inferior position, are designed to impose male dominance over women. Such measures are not confined to Saudi Arabia but are shared by other Arab societies and are justified on ostensibly religious, legal and cultural grounds.

Data from the interviews demonstrated that fifteen of the sixteen participants cited restrictions on women's movements and prohibition to drive their own vehicles, for example, as significant obstacles hindering working women in their career development and day to day employment routines. Allam (2018) identified the necessity for women to submit to men as being one of the principal pillars of a patriarchal society; without the subordination of women to men the patriarchal system could not function. Patriarchy may be assumed to be established because of a perceived or claimed biological superiority of men over women. However, it is sustained by enforcing dependency of women on men in various aspects of life. Hana, an education leader in English provides an example: 'The transport is the most significant obstacle I face, because if my husband is upset with me, he refuses to take me to my job, he wants to remind me ... I'm under his control and subordinate to him.'

In this regard, the specific aspects of the legal system that are patriarchal and therefore restrict women must be emphasised.

8.1.1 The patriarchal legal system in Saudi Arabia

This study highlights the legal restriction on driving as a major challenge for women as they were completely dependent on their male relatives in order to simply get to their places of employment. However, for a long time Saudi women have resisted restrictions on their rights and have made efforts to assert themselves. As discussed in Chapter 6, since 1990 a small group of progressive women openly demonstrated against the ban on women driving. The women protestors angered conservative segments of society with what were described as their

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'shameful' protest. In fact, a majority of Saudi women dismissed it, in some cases with a sense that they might lose Saudi identity and a fear of westernization (Guerin, 2018). Additionally, Saudi women have been conditioned to accept patriarchal ideology which exaggerates biological sexual differences between men and women. Through conditioning and social reinforcement males are expected to display dominant, masculine characteristics while women display submissive and feminine traits (Al-Gaseem, 2009). According to Sultana (2011) this hegemonic masculinity always succeeds as men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress. This is achieved through institutions such as the academy, the holy religious places, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men.

Nevertheless, preventing women from driving represented an obvious contradiction to Saudi Arabia's avowed devotion to Islam. While the Kingdom is inspired by Islamic teaching, there is no legitimate Quranic text or scholarly justification prohibiting women from driving cars. The restriction on women driving comes from traditional custom, rather than religion. It is an archaic social norm which has been followed by successive generations until recent times (Rajkhan, 2014). Although the political and social establishment largely prevented repeat demonstrations, sporadic endeavours were repeated with activists demanding the right to drive. They have since found a different approach with digital platforms allowing them to express themselves and share their experiences with the world (Waston, 2011). Sunstein (2019) has pointed out that social media has quickly risen to become the most influential tool driving social change. Social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat have allowed the voices of Saudi women to be heard and has amplified the forces for change. As a result, on 4 May 2017, King Salman issued a decree permitting women to hold driving licenses the following year (Hubbard, 2017). However, the King's driving decree did not bring to an end the conflict over women's rights in Saudi society but has instead led to a negative backlash.

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The dialectical theory of change argues that social change is typically accompanied by a dialectic response (Burke, 2008). As an example, despite a government funded public relations campaign designed to win acceptance for woman drivers, many men in traditionalist neighbourhoods burned women's vehicles in opposition to women drivers. The widespread enthusiasm amongst women about their recently won right was overshadowed by apprehension. 'It was not about confidence, it was not about abilities: It was fear of men who for a long time have been dominating society (Bulos, 2018).' In this study, concerning driving, we can see how entrenched gender role stereotyping has been in Saudi society. This extends to normalizing the unequal distribution of power and forced dependency of women on men which is a common feature of Saudi family structures even after women have ostensibly been given greater freedoms. Yet the notion of reputation and the perceived need for guardianship still restrict women's professional development and limit the opportunities for greater levels of equality. These factors are discussed in the next section in more detail.

8.1.2 The politics of reputation in Saudi Arabia

The most significant challenge which has emerged as a source of conflict in Saudi society is the politics of reputation, represented by guardianship. Hafez (2019) highlighted Saudi families' desire to prevent losing face as a significant motivator for their conduct. Families or individuals who lose face typically struggle to maintain their dignity and the respect of others. Once face is lost, it is extremely hard, if not impossible, to regain it. Within Saudi Arabian families, dignity and respect are maintained in order to save face; hence the responsibility of males to control the family.

The interviews indicate that the guardianship law is a significant obstacle to women's leadership. As Marwa the education leader in sport, stated, 'The guardianship laws regulate a

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woman's activities by obligating her to receive consent to undertake or participate in various tasks or activities from either a father, husband, uncle, brother or son.'

There are two forms of guardianship in Saudi Arabia; legal guardianship and social guardianship.

- Legal guardianship is the legally codified requirement for an adult woman to be accompanied by a male guardian in order to initiate specific procedures. The patriarchal contract governing family life is codified by family law enshrined in the Personal Status Code (Royal decree M/7 of 20-4-1407AH of 9 Jan 1987), which defines relationship and civil status before the law (Hoffman, 2020).
- Social guardianship is the non-legally binding social requirement for adult women to have male permission or consent in order to undertake an action or engage in an activity, stipulated by traditional custom.

However, social guardianship is stronger in Saudi society than legal guardianship. An example of this was discussed in Chapter 3. In that instance Dina al-Salloum, a Saudi woman who applied for asylum, was arrested and repatriated back to Saudi Arabia without any other reason than her guardian requesting it (Watch, 2017).

To understand why social guardianship is important in Saudi society we can refer to Chapter 3 which examined the social status hierarchy where the politics of reputation have the highest priority. An example of reputation in action is evident in the response of participant called Jamila who is a religious education leader. She commented, 'My husband prevents me from attending conferences which have the mixing between men and women and his excuse is to avoid embarrassment if someone in attendance may be his friend.' In this response the notion of embarrassment operates as a regulator of gender inequality.

Face-saving initiatives are typically done to avoid embarrassment and discomfort to others, which could otherwise lead to conflict and hostility. Saving face is a more important consideration for some people, and their family, than experiencing personal happiness or

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comfort. As a result of this fear of losing face, many Saudis prefer to conform to societal expectations and cultural norms than follow a course of action that they personally feel would make them happy or successful. So, from a Saudi Arabian perspective, avoiding potential conflict and a loss of face reinforces the conservative nature of family life. Male family heads and guardians prefer to err on the side of conservatism to preserve dignity where they can. This may manifest itself in censoring certain behaviour, preventing travel and maintaining the man's authority over the women within their family. Conservative, traditional families are perceived to be more dignified than more liberal progressive ones (Al-Sadhan, 2012). The English education leader Hana highlights this perspective:

Unfortunately, our society imposes on the man certain actions, including that of restricting the movement of his wife, as it is a sign of his manhood. Therefore, every act from his wife is related to him personally as if he had acted, not his wife.

The politics of reputation in Saudi Arabian society is so significant and has such deep cultural roots, that it cannot be modified in a short time. Additionally, this belief is not exclusive to men as many women also embrace the concept that their movement and conduct is justifiably restricted, typically believing this is acceptable because they actually do believe that their conduct in the community reflects on the reputation of their husbands. Consequently, women with supposedly poor reputations are this way because of a flaw in their husband, while women with high reputations are the product of a good man. For example, in Chapter 3 the religious education leader Haya explained her belief that each act from a wife was a reflection of that woman's personality but was not exclusively her own. This comment highlights the problem of separating a woman's individual free agency from expectations driven by family and culture which exert a strong influence on perceptions.

Another example, which happened recently, clarified how much the politics of reputation is significant in Saudi society. A girl called Rahaf, a 19-year-old from Saudi Arabia, refused to

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recognize the right of men to exercise authority over women. Using this as justification she applied for asylum in Canada. Opponents of Rahaf's case blamed her for her father's death from a heart attack which they attributed to grief caused by the girl's rejection of her culture's traditional belief system and structure, which adversely affected their reputation as a family in Saudi society (Hafez, 2019).

It is worth noting that irrespective of the merits of Rahaf's resistance to norms and traditional culture her opposition to the status quo attracted local media attention with Saudi TV conducting the first interview with a Saudi 'escaped in London and another, a Saudi transgender person, who went to the USA for gender reassignment. Some of these topics would have been considered so taboo that they would not even have been mentioned in mainstream media in Saudi Arabia in recent times. Raising these issues in Saudi TV programs is highly significant. While the media tentatively discusses a once forbidden topic, other activists are petitioning tech giants Apple and Google to suppress the 'Absher' app, which is a digital program facilitating the guardianship system, enabling Saudi women to receive electronic approval from their male guardians (Al-Sharyan, 2019).

It is clear that multiple issues stemming from the complicated relationship between religion and culture bestows immense power on the system of guardianship in Saudi Arabia while placing Saudi women leaders in challenging situations in their private and professional lives, where they face many conflicts. Some aspects of the emotional conflicts experienced by Saudi women will be discussed further in the following section.

8.2 Emotional labour, guilt and the responsibilities of care-giving

Another significant challenge which was highlighted in this study was the feeling of guilt that many women leaders expressed at their inability to continue to fulfil all their domestic chores

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and childcare responsibilities to the extent they would have done before their professional careers. In contrast to prevailing societal perceptions, ten of the sixteen women leaders participating in this research thought it was difficult for them to combine professional and personal responsibilities, without experiencing a sense of guilt. In order to understand why the women leaders in this study felt guilt in pursuit of their careers it is necessary to appreciate that familial roles of women derive from Islam, which places a great responsibility on motherhood. For example, the Quran states that people owe a greater burden of gratitude to their mothers than their fathers, because of the pain and tribulation of pregnancy and childbirth, together with the nurturing required in the infant's first two years (The Quran, 46:14). According to Al-Osaimi (2014) Saudi women coming from traditional families believe that their primary purpose in life is to produce the next generation of children, irrespective of the quality of their marriage. Once a woman becomes a mother, it is expected that she subordinates her needs to those of her offspring. Her own life is, from then on, determined by her children with the expectation that she is devoted to her family's best welfare. In contrast, fatherhood does not burden the man with similar pressures. Consequently, when events or situations occur in women's lives that potentially distract them from their domestic routines and childrearing, they have the potential to make them feel guilty (April & Soomar, 2013).

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a widely held belief that it is necessary for a woman to have children so that she can be supported by them in old age. In recognition of this it is a common expectation that it is important for women to get married because even if the marriage fails, at least she will be cared for by her children in later years. Such perceptions highlight the belief that producing children is one of the essential functions of women in Saudi society (Al-Osaimi, 2014). As discussed earlier in this thesis (Chapter 6) Guendouzi, (2006) confirmed that if the length of time they are able to spend caring for their children is shortened, they inevitably feel guilty.

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Badria a Religious Education leader's opinion confirms this in Chapter 6:

It's quite normal for me to feel guilty. This feeling of guilt stems from the pressure of society, but also my motherly instinct. A man sees his role around the house as being a strong presence. Arab men have inflated egos.

As discussed in Chapter 3 Connell (2000) highlighted that families tend to treat male and woman members according to societal stereotypes which they assume to be 'normal behaviour'. In this respect Hana, Fatten and other women leaders expressed similar views to Kouloud: 'The interrelationship between ideal and reality is projected onto us. We are made to feel we are not living up to the ideal model, so consequently we regularly feel guilty.' Women involved in paid employment present a contradictory image. Balancing work and family roles has become a reason for women leaders feeling guilt in their lives. Women leaders reported finding it hard to get their husbands to share household chores. They also found it difficult to ignore the importance of their existing responsibilities to their families. Connell (1987) explained that cathexis plays a significant role in explaining this phenomenon. Cathexis, which is founded on powerful emotion, has an important part to play in explaining how gender differences manifest themselves in domestic relationships and how they are perpetuated over time. In Chapter 3 the expected differences in gender emotions was discussed. While women are expected to display compassion, warmth and to be nurturing, men are typically not.

However, the changes that happened recently in Saudi Arabia, in part due to globalization, have helped the women leaders in this study. They have increasingly become aware of the impact of societal stereotypes and have begun to mobilize different implicit and explicit resistance strategies. For example, the English education leader Layan explained that she began to resist by refusing to conform to societal stereotypes, 'Gender is equal so, sharing household responsibilities has proven to be an ongoing argument between my husband and I. Eventually my husband finally succumbed and started helping me out with chores.' She is very proud of

this accomplishment, and states that ‘A leader has to be smart and can be strong and successful at work and in her home.’

In closing the discussion relating to the dual roles performed by wives in employment and at home, Marwa, a Sport Education leader expressed her opinions about reducing stress and guilt resulting from being a working mother in the long-term:

I believe that pre-marital courses for couples should exist to help both men and women understand the genuine meaning and purpose of marriage, such as sharing workloads and responsibilities. Husbands could learn to make their wives’ partners, rather than be treated as nannies for their children. I think a law to protect women should exist, as presently women are controlled by society and traditions. I think there should also be MoE funded nurseries within schools. I think working women should be entitled to paid maternity leave, and that it should be a right.

8.3 Women leaders’ ambitions — against the odds

It was evident from the interview data that one of the reasons behind women leaders’ sense of powerlessness, in addition to multiple sources of conflict, was gender inequity. Research undertaken by Al-Halawani (2002) identified a significant number of women across a broad spectrum of government sectors, who worked under the line-management of male supervisors who negatively impacted their ability to perform their duties freely and prevented them from using their own initiatives. The research found that continuous intervention and interference restricted the ability of many women to perform, and stifled initiative while depriving them of freedom to make decisions. A lack of work autonomy not only impacted negatively on the women themselves, but also on the organization’s efficiency. Al-Halawani’s (2002) research concluded that the centralization of senior decision making in men dominated headquarters prevented women leaders from operating effectively. One finding of this research was the anxiety of male managers over the prospect of being ‘out-performed’ by women.

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Reem, a leader of Family Education explained in Chapter 6, 'I see myself as a painting of a person restrained with shackles, with bad, scary things, negative thoughts, and an oppressive society surrounding me..., but out of my head emerges ideas and hopes to better the conditions of schools.' Reem's metaphors highlight the contradictions that Saudi women leaders are confronted with continuously. As previously mentioned, many participants listed the negative impact of the gender-biased division of labour as a restriction on their lives, leading to them experiencing a sense of helplessness since power and control resides with men. Evidence of this was described in Chapter 3 where, during the Mecca elementary school fire in 2002, where some students died due to the inability of women leaders to make any independent decision to help the students (Ghitis, 2002).

This lack of autonomy for women is manifested in the wide power gap that exists between men and women managers within Saudi Arabia's MoE. For example, managers in positions of authority are required to issue specific directions to subordinates. Since most (and in many cases all) managers are men, women managers are therefore under the supervision of men. This hierarchical structure frequently proves problematic from an organizational perspective as slow or ineffective decision making frequently suffocates creative thinking. Within such an organizational culture where obedience rather than initiative is incentivized, employees are discouraged from making decisions of their own. As a consequence, this negatively impacts women leaders who may strive to enhance productivity or have the initiative to make improvements in the workplace. Moreover, according to Saudi Arabia's dominant interpretation of Islam, it is obligatory to physically segregate genders within organizations as well as in society more broadly. This results in the necessity to ensure that men and women who are unrelated are prevented from working in direct proximity with each other. Male employees in Saudi Arabia may work in mixed gender organizations; however, departmentally they are obligated to remain segregated. Yet most woman employees work in exclusively

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women-only settings and have little requirement to interact with men. The main exception to this rule is women working at senior levels who are typically required to interact with males at higher strategic levels of management.

Chapter 3 discussed how the educational policy and the culture of non-communication between men and women highlighted in the data, creates a scenario where women leaders are prevented from effectively communicating with their male colleagues within the MoE (Rehman & Alhaisoni, 2013). The English leader Mashael participant confirms that: 'Most of the communication is conducted either online, via email or verbal communication via land line phones and mobiles, because in Saudi culture direct communication is forbidden.' Poor communication between women and men employees working within the MoE manifests itself in poor quality decision making and hinders the speed and delivery of outcomes which negatively affects efficiency (Sullivan, 2012).

Many of the participants' views echoed the statement of one respondent, a Family Education leader Rania who stated that the formal system creates a communication difficulty because women and men are separated, which makes it difficult for women leaders to take decision or action in emergency situations'.

Fatany (2013) explained that conservatives continue to advocate gender segregation policies, while using religion to justify the subjugation and control over women. There remains in place strict gender segregation sanctioned by the state and society, but to a lesser degree than in previous generations.

Al-Hamadi, Budhwar and Shipton (2007) highlight that the prevailing business culture in the Middle East is intertwined with national culture. As a result, as national culture is shaped by religion and traditional values the political and economic sphere is similarly influenced by the

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same forces. Islamic principles frequently form the basis of organisational guidelines. For example, Rice (1999) investigated the extent to which Islamic ethics influence gender frameworks for human resource policies in relation to equal opportunity. Rice's study concluded that from an Islamic viewpoint a philosophy of 'equal but different' formed the foundations of gender relations. Metcalfe (2006) explored how an equal but different perspective manifested itself through segregated gender specific employment hierarchies with specific occupational roles assigned to men and women within the workplace. Interestingly, Metcalfe (2006; 2007) did not conclude that this segregation was necessarily viewed as a negative limitation on career development of women. On the contrary, for many it provided an opportunity for women to advance or seize opportunities open to them in exclusive professional women's organizations which exist throughout the Middle East. Nevertheless, in the context of Saudi Arabia, local professional women are faced with additional challenges that their culture is resistant to change and that innovations are frequently viewed with suspicion. Saudi Arabia, as the home of Islam's two most sacred sites; the Masjid Al Haram (Madina) and Kaaba (Mecca) takes its responsibilities as guardians of Islam seriously, and consequently makes Saudis particularly traditional. With most of the population socially conservative and their contacts with the outside world limited to some degree, the Kingdom's citizens are hesitant to accept change, particularly if it comes from outside the Islamic world. However, this resistance to change is beginning to wane, especially in an increasingly interconnected globalized world, buttressed by the ubiquity of digital media. Moussalli (2012) has asserted that globalization through modern and advanced technology, including the international network of media and technologies of satellite communication, will promote KSA and give it a universal reach. As discussed in Chapter 2 these observations correlate with the theoretical model of mediascapes and technoscapes developed by Appadurai (1990, p. 296).

This was confirmed by the Religious Education leader Badria, who said, ‘Technology helps me to get many opportunities for learning, ... I completed a lot of training online; it helps me to resist the restrictions imposed on me and experience international cultures from my armchair.’ These opportunities posed to Saudi Arabian women will be discussed in the following section.

8.4 Women breaking down the iron ceilings

As discussed in Chapter 2, globalization has had a positive impact on Saudi society. As a consequence, Saudi Arabia’s citizenry, particularly its younger generation have demands and expectations that earlier ones could never have dreamt of (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). While outwardly conforming to a cultural status quo many people are personally questioning archaic cultural assumptions which is beginning to threaten the established expectations of male and woman roles. As discussed in Chapter 3, despite the changing and rapidly evolving position of women in Saudi society it must be remembered that, during previous generations, the Kingdom’s institutions and society shunned change and maintained an unwavering commitment to preserving heritage and values from the past. Consequently, while the social changes taking place in Saudi Arabia may seem modest from an outsider’s perspective, they are monumental by Saudi standards. Multiple examples of change and change reversal can be found in recent history, such as the example given in Chapter 3 of the strong objection to girls’ education in the 1950s (Al-Sadhan, 2012). In another example, Saudi Society expects men to head their household and to be the main income earner (Sayf, 2003). However, according to Sunstein (2019), recently, Saudi Arabian men have changed their attitudes towards their wives working and are pragmatically welcoming the additional income they can bring to the household from gainful employment.

It is clear that all the changes that have happened in Saudi Arabia have not come at the same time and neither have they been easily won. Most liberalizing changes have materialized

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following conflicts of varying degrees within Saudi society. As discussed in Chapter 3, the events of 9/11, which were officially cited as involving 19 Saudis, triggered a great deal of foreign and local media attention critiquing the religion-based education system then in place in Saudi Arabia (Bronson & Coleman, 2005). However, the educational system has largely prevailed, despite resistance to proposals to update the curriculum from an entrenched opposition within public and religious institutions who resisted such measures on the grounds that Saudi Arabia's identity and integrity would be threatened by the proposed changes. Nevertheless, the Saudi government has pushed through curriculum changes which may be regarded as minor by Western standards, but from the Saudi perspective they are significant. An example of this can be seen in the decision of King Abdullah, following his assumption of power in 2005, to elevate a woman to the role of Assistant Minister of Education, in a move widely seen as encouraging the participation of women in government. This was the first woman representative in Saudi Arabia's unelected parliament, the Majlis Al-Shoura. Women were similarly invited to serve on municipal councils (Abdul Ghafour, 2009).

Several respondents identified the value of having newly won opportunities, with a participating English Education leader Layan stating that 'Women now have more opportunities than before, as teachers and supervisors can receive scholarships to study abroad, all expenses covered for them and their families.'

Moreover, the sport education leader Marwa confirmed that 'More light is being shed on women's issues and women have become more able to claim their rights, enjoy freedom of expression and the ability to attend meetings and conferences; they have become more liberated than before.' She declared that:

Joining the workforce has earned women some economic security, and that technological progress and development has played in their favor. Women now have seats in the Shura council, and they have earned the right to vote; all of which

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are signs that women's previous status quo and society's perception of them is starting to change for the better.

It is worth mentioning that dialectic theory of change is a discontinuous and recurrent sequence of confrontations, conflicts and synthesis (Burke, 2008). In light of this point, it is interesting to note that change stalled soon after King Abdullah died in 2015. However, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS as he is affectionately known) resumed progression down the path of change following his promotion to royal heir in 2017. At age 33, he is the Saudi Arabia's youngest *de facto* leader, which itself is a major departure from the Kingdom's customary practice. MBS's local popularity is reinforced by the ingenuity and flexibility with which he approaches the nation's pressing issues. He evidently recognizes the long-term issues of the nation, both socially and economically and has devised a plan to steer the Kingdom towards a less restrictive and less oil-dependent future. For instance, MBS has promised an economic future characterised by increasing artificial intelligence and a high-level of automation. This has begun with the development of a \$500 billion futuristic metropolis in the desert, Neom, to be filled with robots and resorts, while also pouring money through its sovereign wealth fund into superior global tech-driven corporations, such as Lucid, Softbank and Tesla. Moreover, he has openly backed the relaxation of previously restrictive social and cultural rules and weakened the religious authority of the 'Ulama' (Islamic scholars) (Maris, 2017).

MBS's authority and reputation has enabled him to argue his case before the conservative religious establishment and contradict the ultra-conservative 'al Sahwa'¹³ movement' the Islamic council of scholars, which continues to restrain Saudi society. This intervention by

¹³ The Sahwa movement is a social and intellectual movement that originated with the support of a group including most of the prominent sheiks. The Saudi awakening movement, "Sahwa", adopts ideas that call for preserving the Islamic faith, protecting Saudi society from westernization, and presenting itself as a trend that relies on "moderate anti-radicalism". The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood motivated Sahwa's leaders.

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MBS produces confrontation and has precipitated questions between the Islamic council of scholars and the wider population. What took place within Saudi society was comparable to what Sunstein (2019) described in his book 'How Change Happens'. In it he described the scenario that when the status quo begins to collapse, the people feel unrestrained and develop a strong desire to reveal what their true beliefs on social issues are. This ripples through society with people discussing their experiences, feeling free to act and speak as they believe they should. MBS has opened a door to free discussion on some formerly taboo topics. However, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has endeavored to outline his views during multiple discussions in media interviews. He states his conviction that Islam is a moderate religion and that he believes he is justified in trying to convince Saudi society to consign many of its cultural norms to the past as he believes they are likely to prevent the country from progressing. He argues that many uniquely Saudi practices are not Islamic in origin but are cultural (Pellegrino, 2018). Ayad al-Qarni ¹⁴(Al-Mudiffer, 2019) supports this view stating:

I apologize to Saudi society for the period of ¹⁴Sahwa which I and my colleagues enforced on the Muslim population shaping religious provisions, and I admit that the Islamic religion is moderate and is not related to what we did previously.

This retraction stimulated considerable discussion in Saudi society with both supporters and opponents of the apology. Irrespective of which side of the issue people may be on regarding modernization, Saudi society is presently thirsty for change. As a consequence, there is a broad spectrum of support for Mohammed bin Salman's endeavours to transform the Kingdom.

¹⁴ He is one of the most prestigious religious authorities, an expert in Islamic law, who is respected by other religious scholars, the establishment and the public. He has the authority to make pronouncements on religious guidance, ideological and policy issues and to answer questions brought to him by Muslims globally.

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As a consequence of personal contact with the outside world through social media, travel and globalization, people are increasingly aware that Saudi Arabia can no longer isolate itself, socially or economically, from international trends. This is particularly true for Saudi youth who are enthusiastic about regarding their nation's position in the world and their own material prospects in a global economy that is less carbon dependent. Saudi Arabia's need to diversify economically and socially is recognized and those helping this to occur, such as MBS, are widely supported.

Reed (2017) notes that many social changes are credited to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman who became heir apparent and de facto ruler in June 2017. Since his elevation to the country's second highest position he has initiated a series of economic and social reforms aiming to prepare the Kingdom for a post-oil future and modernize the country. Saudi women have been the beneficiaries of many changes, albeit some argue of an inconsequential nature. Nevertheless, they are moving women towards equality. In an encouraging statement Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Commerce and Investment stated in February 2018 that women should be able to 'start their own business freely' and face no greater obstacles than men when striving to become entrepreneurs. According to Saudi legal consultant Al-Shareef, the country was 'witnessing a new era in the empowerment of Saudi women, in the commercial sphere in particular' (Reed, 2017). Moreover, according to the MoE (2019), Saudi women can achieve senior positions equal to men in many sectors of the education system. For example, recently on 16 June 2019, the MoE issued several decisions that mandate the appointment of five women leaders at the level of deputies and directors of MoE departments including Scholarship, the Educational Programs, Special Needs, Public Education, and Private Education. Furthermore, the king has proposed relaxing the country's oppressive male guardianship laws in the royal decree of 2017. As a result, women are now granted access to government and health services free from their male guardian's consent (Guerin, 2018). Other reforms included in the decrees

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of 2 August 2019 stipulated that women in Saudi Arabia would no longer require the permission of a male guardian for the purposes of travelling. Further initiatives introduced in decrees include granting women the right to register marriages, divorces or their child's birth and also permitting them to apply for passports and official family documents. The decrees also stipulate either a father or mother are entitled to be a legal guardian of their children. This decree goes a long way towards reversing regulations which made women de facto second-class citizens (Graham-Harrison, 2019).

Conclusion

In this Chapter a discussion has been presented exploring the most significant results emerging from the key findings in this study in relation to the opportunities and challenges that Saudi Arabian women education leaders are dealing with, during the contemporary period of change. The rapid social changes taking place in Saudi Arabia have affected the field of education with significant implications for the participants, both professionally and in their personal lives. In addition, the new media and technology is having an impact, as foreseen by Appadurai (1990), in his work on various aspects of modern globalisation. The discussion drew on the reviewed literature and was framed by the dialectical theory of change (Burke, 2008). What was unmistakable from this research was the degree to which women leaders were influenced by the complex relationships interconnecting socio-cultural patriarchal systems, politics of reputation, religion, power and cathexis. All of the participants felt numerous factors had restrained them from advancing in leadership roles to their fullest potential and have adversely shaped their professional and personal lives. The main obstacles which women education leaders faced included the guardianship laws, which legally oblige women to receive approval for many actions from their male 'overseers'. Until recently, women leaders were unable to drive to work by themselves. Moreover, Saudi society expects men to head their households

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and to be the main income earners. Many husbands regard their wives' careers as hobbies and continue to expect them to fulfil all their domestic obligations, such as child rearing and household chores. Consequently, the unequal division of labour in the home is a genuine source of stress and fatigue for women education leaders.

In addition, this Chapter discussed legal barriers, how the lack of power and unequal division of labour constitutes significant obstacles for women's professional success and how it can have a negative influence on their effectiveness as leaders. Also, the segregation in the workplace compounds communication challenges and makes decision making slow and unnecessarily complicated. However, while there are many negative factors which women leaders must overcome on a daily basis, there are also opportunities. Within exclusively women-only professional organizations, determined women have opportunities to excel.

Finally, Saudi Arabia's rulers recognize that women, who comprise over half of the country's population, have an essential economic role to play in a post-oil world. As a result, doors which were once firmly closed are now open, and there is an atmosphere of optimism for the future. A future where Saudi Arabia's young girls of today will have access to more opportunities and freedoms than their mothers or grandmothers ever had. The conclusions and recommendations will be outlined in the next chapter, together with a summary of the key elements of this study.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi Arabian women leaders in education during a period of rapid change in their professional and personal lives. The main research question was explored through sub-questions about the influence of culture on the professional and personal lives of women leaders, the desire of women teachers to become leaders and the government education policies that shaped their experiences. By using dialectical change as a theoretical approach, the study hoped to illuminate how women leaders negotiate all these challenges and opportunities in their professional and personal lives. Interestingly, one of the main conclusions of this research suggests that the status quo begins to change when the social values are modified (Sunstein, 2019). An example of this phenomenon of change has been evident in recent years, with the initiatives to relax restrictive social and cultural rules. These changes gave rise to intense confrontation, conflict and contradictions in Saudi society before arriving at a consensus. The aims of the reform process have not yet been fully realized. Therefore, given this set of circumstances, change theory was a very useful framework to apply to this study as it enabled me to develop nuanced interpretations of the social transformations that took place in Saudi Arabian society during the period of this study.

Saudi Arabia's economy is faced with numerous economic challenges stemming from its over-reliance on the oil sector. Also, the rapid growth in the population means that the country requires a diversified economy to absorb a larger workforce. Simultaneously, economic and social pressures arose from Saudi Arabia's engagement with the outside world as a result of globalization, which has placed KSA at the centre of the world stage and necessitated overdue gender equality and progressive social reform. In the midst of these major economic challenges,

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the government decided to increase investment in human capital in a bid to stimulate employment growth and prepare for a less oil-dependent future (Swead, 2020). For this purpose, the Saudi government has implemented 'Vision 2030,' which was the first step to change and was designed to take advantage of the global job market. Moreover, an important component of Vision 2030 is a recognition of the important role that women can readily play in the economy of the future (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2016). To enable this development, women's empowerment and equality is being promoted, as it is envisioning how women will participate in the industrialization and further globalization of the economy. These changes are not in isolation; they are part of a widespread reform spanning practically every aspect of society, which includes the education sector. However, when I began this research, there were many professional and personal challenges which obstructed women's career development and their full and meaningful participation in Saudi society.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, the general separation of social conventions and cultural norms from religious faith is less distinct in Saudi Arabia, than it is in other societies. Moreover, the patriarchal system codifies male dominance and legal authority over women. For example, this study has found ample evidence of how the politics of reputation continue to contribute to inequity between men and women. It is sustained by enforcing the dependence of women on men in various aspects of life. Until 2017 women were prevented from legally driving cars and continued to require their guardian's permission to travel. Several of the participants described their perceptions that these obstacles resembled a boulder on their pathway to professional career advancement. However, as mentioned above Saudi Arabia envisions that the doors will be opened for women, allowing them to participate in the employment market. Therefore, obstacles to women's career and educational opportunities are changing. Steps have been taken to erode the dominance and authority of the system of guardianship over Saudi women's lives.

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For example, travel restrictions have been relaxed which means attendance at conferences and training events are not as problematic as they were in the recent past.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 6 several of the women education leaders who participated in this study described how the additional responsibilities of leadership roles represented a challenge, which discouraged many women teachers from aspiring to become leaders in the first place. An additional contributing factor for many women rejecting leadership opportunities was the fundamental philosophy that guides the MoE's policy formation. Several study participants described how the MoE's policy so severely restricted the authority of women leaders that it effectively prevented them from implementing programs or proactively instituting innovation. The MoE's perceived reluctance to grant genuine autonomy to women leaders deprived them of authority to perform their role to a meaningful degree. Despite this, Saudi Arabia's education system has recently implemented many positive changes, which have benefited women. This development provides evidence that the rhetoric about providing career opportunities for women is backed up by actual policy changes. For example, more than 17 positions have been created for women in public office, including the Shura Council, Municipal Councils, Chambers of Commerce, universities and the Kingdom's diplomatic missions overseas. An example of a Saudi woman advancing into previously forbidden territory is the appointment of Princess Rima Bandar, as Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States of America and Mashal Al Shimimary, a designer who has joined NASA in the field of privately developing nuclear missile design (Alomani, 2019). There is hope that the momentum created by recent social transformations in KSA will continue. Women will continue to face challenges in pursuit of gender equality, but change will come.

9.1 Limitations of the study

During the course of this study several limitations became apparent which relate to the following: (i) culture and religion; (ii) no electronic recording of interviews; (iii) data on the MoE, and (iv) interviews were conducted before significant changes in society occurred.

In Chapter 5 there was a discussion of the implications of culture and religion for the personal and professional lives of women leaders, and how these influences limited their opportunities. Several limitations should be noted. In Saudi Arabia, for example, religion and culture shape the legal and policy framework. As a consequence of the sensitivity of this topic, it was a difficult subject to discuss and may have resulted in some withholding of opinions by the women.

Additionally, the plan was to record answers at the outset of the study, and this plan was explained in the application presented to the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. However, the women refused to give permission to have the interviews audio recorded. This is a limitation of the study, as recordings would have allowed complete exact transcripts of participant interviews to be confirmed.

Moreover, comments about the MoE were limited. Although the perspectives of women leaders about the MoE would have been insightful, many women still would not openly express their views as they did not want to put themselves at risk of jeopardizing their careers. For example, a participant called Sharifa requested during the Interview: ‘Please change the course of the conversation; I do not want to further elaborate on that point.’

Furthermore, I collected data in 2016, but many changes occurred rapidly in 2017, after the interviews. For example, the demise of the guardianship system and women’s right to drive cars was implemented. If the interviews had taken place later, I would have asked women about

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these changes in the course of the interviews, and it is possible that I would have received different responses from the participants, leading to different findings and perspectives.

Despite the study's limitations, the findings it contains do make an important contribution to the body of knowledge that helps fill a gap in the existing published literature concerning the career development prospects for Saudi women education leaders in the 21st century.

9.2 My journey as a researcher

Before I started this study, I had decided that my research should be about the effect of motivation on Saudi women leaders. This would have been an extension of my Master's project. However, after I met my supervisor for the first time and discussed my research, he told me that 'As a Saudi woman educator, what do you consider to be important for Saudi women leaders at this juncture of rapid change in KSA?'. This led me to think about the wider social structures and cultural systems that shape Saudi women leaders' lives. So, I changed my mind completely about the "motivation", and I started thinking directly about this study because the idea of this research had connected with me since my childhood. Also, I think this topic touches every Saudi woman who is ambitious. So, it was a great privilege to undertake research into a subject I feel is both important and overlooked; *the challenges and opportunities facing Saudi Arabian women education leaders during these times of rapid change*. When commencing this study, I understood that undertaking a PhD involved focusing on the specific subject matter and researching it in detail using the most appropriate methodological approach. However, during the course of the study, I discovered there was more to my research than I had first imagined.

This arose when I was confronted with the cultural contradictions evident in Saudi society; also, my reading and my experience as a resident in a western country as a doctoral student enabled me to compare women education leaders in a conservative country with their counterparts in

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the liberal West. I realized that the country's prevailing ideology and culture directly impacted on the lives of these professionals. Also, Saudi Arabia's institutionalised patriarchal system and the politics of reputation, are the challenges that have limited the opportunities available to women education leaders for generations. Therefore, I had to research how theory could comprehend and articulate the complex challenges and opportunities which are reported in this study.

While thinking about choosing the most appropriate theory, large- scale unexpected changes happened in a short time in Saudi society, involving a conflict between the modernists and fundamentalists. Accordingly, the obstacles created by societal change provoked me to think differently. Hence, instead of limiting my thinking to a narrow research focus, I decided to employ a theory that can help explain the complexities of change in a patriarchal social system. Therefore, I employed dialectical change theory to explain emergent ideologies and the phenomena of overlapping and impassioned debates permeating Saudi society. I believed this one provided the widest ranging explanation for the various conflicts and contradictions which are apparent from the changes reshaping Saudi Arabia. I also used concepts such gender order, power, patriarchy, culture, religion and cathexis which served as lenses to help me to deeply understand precisely what is happening in society. After considering the significance of these points in light of theory, I began to appreciate how these influences play such a significant role in shaping the lives and careers of women education leaders in contemporary Saudi Arabia. Moreover, this research experience taught me that there is much to be learnt from the existing literature concerning research design and completion. The dialectical change theory is a beneficial and significant theory for future scholarship in order to understand the functioning of an modern societies as well as the under-development in the third world societies in a much better way.

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Nonetheless, some equally important lessons could only be learnt through the experience of the actual completion of a research study. For example, I have learnt after completion of this research that there was a determination to succeed which Saudi women education leaders shared to varying degrees. They have determination and will not surrender easily. Throughout the study I repeatedly heard examples of how women leaders encountered obstacles preventing them from exercising rights which were already theirs and how they mounted resistance to discrimination at work and at home. The women leaders displayed skill in negotiating the challenges they encountered and in taking maximum advantage from the opportunities presented to them. They were realistic in deciding what goals were tactically achievable in the short term and in determining how they could contribute towards achieving longer term aspirations. What was admirable was their growing confidence and the increasing aspirations they had and the remarkable progress which has been achieved recently.

On a personal level - as I conclude this section - I should mention how immensely proud I am about what I have discovered and accomplished while undertaking this PhD thesis. I am amongst the first PhD students to record the changes currently underway in Saudi Arabian society. In addition, my thesis aligns with the goals driving “Vision 2030”, initiated by (then) Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salmon on 25 April 2016. The premise of Vision 2030 is to steer Saudi Arabia into a modern era, through economic and social reforms aiming to prepare the country for a post-oil future where dependence on hydrocarbon exports is lessened and where the Kingdom’s population live their lives with greater personal freedoms. It is a great source of personal pride for me to witness most of the challenges described in this study, which have changed to opportunities, leading me to realize how Saudi women can look forward to a time of greater independence and reduced challenges standing in their way to personal and career fulfilment. It pleases me to realize that my daughters will be part of a new generation which can live with fewer restrictions and greater freedom.

9.3 Recommendations

'Research may encourage small changes in practice...or...even underpin a major change in the ethos that affects the whole institution.'

(Briggs & Coleman, 2007, p. 3).

This is one thesis with a small group of women leaders that has produced several ways of understanding women's leadership issues. We know that despite all the progress that is underway in Saudi Arabia there is still much to do. The first recommendation relates to women leaders' need to have more professional development opportunities. There are barriers to these opportunities that relate to struggle to exercise their authority or perform their functions as leaders owing to obstacles and challenges associated with initiatives undertaken by the MoE which were outlined in Chapters 6. The second recommendation is related to social challenges faced by professional women, which are a consequence of the relationship connecting the legal patriarchal system to the politics of reputation, religion and culture which were discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The second recommendation emphasises the need for further research to inform policy development.

9.3.1 Professional opportunities and obstacles

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the most important challenge women leaders faced in their professional lives was a sense of powerlessness. Women leaders do not have any authority to decide even when it concerns an important issue. Therefore, this study recommends that for women school leaders to be effective they need to be delegated greater freedom of action from the MoE. Furthermore, it is recommended that decision-making is decentralised, and women education leaders are granted greater autonomy, particularly by giving them the right to exercise greater influence in designing policies tailored to their school's specific problems and requirements. Moreover, professional leadership training programmes should be provided to develop education leaders' skills and knowledge, so they can positively influence staff they

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have responsibility for. Another valuable initiative the MoE could undertake is to invite education experts from foreign countries to provide mentoring to Saudi education leaders. Learning from other countries' experience in education leadership could be achieved by bringing leadership and management experts to the kingdom and/or sending Saudi women education leaders overseas to learn first-hand in their institutions.

Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 7 women's family and work responsibilities impact on their ability to function and this was a major concern for them. So, I consider that more attention should be paid to ensuring women leaders achieve and maintain a suitable work-life balance, through flexibility over appointments and meeting schedules and providing child-care facilities for working parents. Also, part-time employment may provide a good opportunity for women leaders to reduce the pressure on them, helping them to keep a balance between life and work.

9.3.2 Need for further research on women's leadership issues and social lives.

The Saudi Arabian government strives to fulfil its obligations under the UN Convention for Elimination of forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 2000), which the kingdom is a signatory to. As such Saudi Arabia committed itself to ensuring women possess the right to exercise specific freedoms and rights while being protected from abuse by males. While it is correct to say that in recent years Saudi Arabia has made significant progress towards gender equality in employment, health and education, there remains considerable room for improvement. Therefore, I hope that there will be further academic investigation of the problems raised in this research. I would like to see larger studies of Saudi society to more comprehensively investigate the causes and identify solutions for problems faced by professional women seeking to pursue a dignified life free from unjustified obstacles. For example, further research could examine and compare different sectors of employment, both private and public. In addition, it would be helpful to have a deeper understanding of how non-

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professional women are being impacted by reform and how their challenges differ from those with greater resources and more access to professional connections, networks and political influence. Also, further reforms are therefore required that would potentially benefit women education leaders personally and the Saudi education system as a whole. For example, the adoption of less traditional approaches to gender in the MoE, perhaps following the lead created by other Islamic nations with more liberal policies.

Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 7, globalization and technological advancements represent the best opportunities for supporting the development of skills which connect people with each other. Thus, I believe it would be desirable for the media to report on the contribution women education leaders make towards developing their communities through its schools and that it would be a good idea to celebrate their achievements annually on a specific date.

Also, the media could do more to highlight the plight of working women and discuss the need for gender equality and empowerment, together with economic benefits this would generate for Saudi society. In tandem with the above, gender equality training for men in education would make an important contribution towards changing society for the better. Moreover, this study recommends women leaders recognise their own qualities and appreciate their natural talents and tendencies. By recognising their own strengths and weaknesses they can work on areas in need of improvement and development to ensure they are more successful in the workplace.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Planning and Human Resources (2017) has released statistics which highlight the dramatic increase in single women with improved education, which is the primary justification for this trend. According to these statistics, 33% of Saudi Arabian women are single. A majority of these unmarried women have passed what is considered the normal age of marriage, which in Saudi Arabia is culturally considered to be 30 years of age. If I were permitted to make a recommendation based on this study, it would be for

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government support for initiatives which seek to change the country's attitudes to educated women and their independence (Al-Yousef, 2016).

In conclusion, as former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan constantly reminded audiences, gender equality is not an exclusively a women's issue but is a responsibility shared by men and women alike (Powell, 2018). Making progress is therefore dependent on all parties being aware of their role in addressing the issue, both individuals and institutions. Progress can be achieved when all parties value gender and employment equality and shun discrimination and inequality in their personal and professional lives. Rather than remaining silent in the face of discrimination and inequality, it would be better for voices to be raised against it, even when discriminatory practices are subtle. Courage is needed to confront injustice, particularly when it is institutionally rooted and legally constituted. No one likes to be ridiculed, harassed or victimised. However, both men and women need to accept the conflicts which come with change before real change can be realised.

Concluding comments

This study highlighted Saudi women leaders in education who do not give up. They are breaking down the iron doors and resisting restrictions on their rights. They are breaking the shackles that have held them down. They have made an effort to assert themselves even as they experienced obstacles within their immediate and extended families, often leading to exhaustion and guilt. The women employed strategies such as passive or active resistance to deal with these hurdles and other challenges which they faced in both their personal and professional lives. Finally, I believe I have answered all the questions this thesis raised. The final results of this research have brought new insights and made original suggestions for addressing gaps in current knowledge while recommending areas for further academic study. I believe, and I hope, that the research field of women education leaders stands to benefit from

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this study and I hope it provokes initiatives that challenge the status quo of Saudi women leaders and stimulates deeper research.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix A: Interviews (Arabic Version)



Student researcher: Najla Al-ghamdi

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N.ALGhamdi@westernsydney.edu.au

Interview (Arabic Version)

الموضوع: التحديات والفرص التي تواجهها القائدات السعوديات في مجال التعليم في وقت يتسم بالتغيير السريع

المحور الأول: العادات والتقاليد

كيف اثرت العادات والتقاليد علي وضع معوقات لتقدم المرأة السعودية القادة؟

التحديات التي تواجه المرأة السعودية القادة سواء في حياتها الشخصية او العملية بسبب العادات والتقاليد.

.....إضافة.....

المحور الثاني: قوانين وزارة التربية والتعليم

كيف اثرت قوانين وزارة التربية والتعليم على طموح القائدة

أثر قوانين وزارة التربية والتعليم علي نجاح وابداع وتمكين المرأة في مجال عملها والتي اثرت على رغبة المرأة بان تطمح ان تكون قائده.

.....إضافة.....

المحور الثالث: التفاوض مع التغيير

- كيف تمكنت القائدة السعودية ان تتفاوض مع الوقت الذي يتسم بالتغيير السريع الحاصل في المجتمع؟

الفرص الجديدة للمرأة السعودية القائدة وتفاوضها وتمكينها مع التغيير السريع ورؤية ٢٠٣٠.

.....إضافة.....

مع الشكر

الباحثة: نجلاء الغامدي

Appendix B: Interviews (English Version)



Student researcher: Najla Al-Ghamdi

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N.AIGhamdi@westernsydney.edu. au

The challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi women leaders in Education at a time of rapid change.

Before conducting the interview, the researcher will explain all the details that are related to this study.

The interview will start with participants about asking general questions about the challenges and opportunities for women leaders in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia?

Research question

What are the challenges and opportunities for women leaders in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia?

- **Dialectic of culture**

What is the influence of culture on the professional and personal lives of women leaders?

How and why do women teachers want to become leaders?

- **Politics of power**

How and why do women teachers want to become leaders?

How do government education policies shape the experiences of women leaders?

- **Negotiating change**

How do women leaders negotiate the opportunities and challenges in their professional and social lives?

Thank you

Najla Al-ghamd

Appendix C: Ethics Approval

Locked Bag 1797 Penrith NSW 2751 Australia Office of Research Services

ORS Reference: H11450

15 March 2016

Professor Caroline Reid School of Education

Dear Caroline,

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

RE: Amendment Request to H11450

The Office of Research Services has received a request to amend your approved research protocol H11450 “Female Head teachers at secondary schools in Al-Khobar Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: opportunities and challenges “.

The amendment has been reviewed and I am pleased to advise that it has been approved, as follows: Ethics approval extended to 18/10/2016

Please do not hesitate to contact the Human Ethics Officer at humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au, if you require any further information.

Regards



Professor Elizabeth Deane

Presiding Member, Human Researcher Ethics Committee

Appendix D: Participant Consents and Information (English Version)

Student researcher: Najla Al-Ghamdi
School of Education
Bankstown Campus
+61411120685
N.AlGhamdi@westernsydney.edu.au

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Participant Consent Form

Project Title: The challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi Arabian women leaders in education during a period of rapid change in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia

I hereby consent to participate in the above-named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to:

[Insert tick box option for each specific activity e.g.

- Participating in an interview*
- Having the interview audio recorded*
- Having my photo taken]*

I consent for my data and information provided to be used for this project.

- I understand that my involvement is confidential, and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return address: 23, Al- Olai, Al- Khobar

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H11450

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendices - Appendix D

Information Sheet (English Version)

Centre for Educational Research University of Western Sydney Locked Bag 1797 Penrith NSW 2751

Australia Telephone: +61411120685

Mail: N.AlGhamdi@westernsydney.edu.au



Project Title: The challenges and opportunities faced by Saudi Arabian women leaders in education during a period of rapid change in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia

Project This research will attempt to discover what kind of opportunities and challenges that female.

Summary:

head teachers may negotiable in their schools. It aims to understand how cultural change in Saudi Arabia impact on their leadership and how policy can be revised to support them in their role.

The research will form the basis for the degree of PhD at western Sydney university under the supervision of professor Carol Reid and Dr Mohamed Moustakim.

How is this study being paid for?

The study is being sponsored by the Saudi Arabia Higher Education which has provided funding for a PhD scholarship.

What will I be asked to do?

The participants will be interviewed at a quiet place of their choices and asked about their perspectives and experiences regarding the opportunities and challenges in their careers. The interview will be recorded by a digital recorder.

How much of my time will I need to give?

The interview will have a duration of 45- 60 minutes.

What specific benefits will I receive for participating?

It will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your views and experience of the challenges and opportunities at secondary schools in Saudi Arabia and this will aid in policy development in regard to female leaders and management schools.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me? If so, what will you do to rectify it.

Participants are participating voluntary and they have a full freedom to answer or refuse to answer any question. if, for any reason, they feel discomfort, they can stop the interview at any time they feel.

How do you intend on publishing the results?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researcher will have access to the information on participants. The results will be disseminated through the completion of my PhD thesis, seminars, conference presentations and journal articles. Individual participants will not be identifiable in the results or findings.

A general summary of the findings and results could be sent to the participants if needed.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate, you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?

If you require further information, you can contact Najla Al Ghamdi on the mobile number: +614011120685 or via my e-mail N.AIGhamdi@westernsydney.edu.au. If you have more questions or need further explanation at any stage, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor Professor Carol Reid on telephone number: +61297726524 or e-mail C.Reid@westernsydney.edu.au, or Dr. Mohamed Moustakim on telephone number: +612977206402 or e-mail M.Moustakim@westernsydney.edu.au.

Appendices - Appendix D

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [enter approval number]

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Appendix E: Participant Consents and Information (Arabic Version)

Student researcher: Najla Al-Ghamdi
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WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



مكتب خدمات البحوث البشرية

نموذج موافقة المشارك

نموذج الموافقة ادناه خاص بمشروع معين. حيث أنه يقيد استخدام البيانات التي تم جمعها لمشروع محدد الاسم ومن قبل باحثين معروفين بالاسم.

عنوان المشروع: التحديات والفرص التي تواجه المشرفات في المدارس الثانوية بمنطقة الخبر
أنا،، أوافق على المشاركة في المشروع البحثي استخدام التكنولوجيا والطريقة التواصلية وفق مفهوم معاصر لتدريس القراءة.
وأقر بالتالي:

لقد قرأت ورقة المعلومات العامة للمشاركين في البحوث أو عند الاقتضاء، ' قد تم قراءتها لي ' [ولقد أعطيت الفرصة لمناقشة هذه المعلومات وكذلك مشاركتي في هذا المشروع مع الباحث.

لقد تم شرح الإجراءات اللازمة للمشروع والوقت الذي يتطلب لعمل المقابلة، ولقد تم الإجابة على جميع الأسئلة التي تم طرحها عن المشروع من قبلي إجابة شافية.

أوافق على المعلومات التي تم جمعها عن المشاركين والتي تتضمن العمر والدرجة العلمية والمؤهلات والوظيفة، والخبرة العملية.

أوافق على تسجيل المقطع الصوتي للمقابلة مع الباحث لمدة قد تصل إلى ساعة واحدة وبذلك أنا على استعداد للمشاركة في هذا البحث، مع العلم أنني أستطيع الانسحاب منه في أي وقت أشاء، دون أن يؤثر ذلك على علاقتي مع الباحث أو الباحثين سواء الآن أو في المستقبل. أنا أفهم أن مشاركتي في هذا البحث سرية وأفهم كذلك انه عند عرض او نشر هذا البحث فإنه لن يتم استخدام أي من معلوماتي الشخصية بأي حال من الأحوال ولن يتم كشف هويتي.

التوقيع:

الاسم:

التاريخ:

عنوان استقبال النماذج:

هذه الدراسة قد تم الموافقة عليها من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث البشرية في جامعة وسترن سيدني. رقم الموافقة هو: [] إذا كان لديك أي شكاوى أو تحفظات على أخلاقيات هذا البحث فيمكنك الاتصال بلجنة الأخلاقيات من خلال مكتب خدمات البحوث على هاتف 61247360229 + أو البريد الإلكتروني humanestics@uws.edu.au وسيتم التعامل مع أي قضايا مثارة بكامل الحيلة والاحترام والتحقق فيها بالكامل، وعند الوصول لنتائج التحقيق سيتم إبلاغك بها.

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WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث البشرية مكتب خدمات البحوث

معلومات عامة للمشاركين في البحوث

هذه المعلومات تم صياغتها بإسلوب ولغة تناسب جميع فئات المشاركين من معلمين مدراء و مشرفين.
عنوان المشروع : التحديات والفرص التي تواجه المشرفات في المدارس الثانوية بمنطقة الخبر

من هو القائم على إجراء الدراسة ؟

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة يقوم بإجرائها الباحثه طالبه الدكتوراه نجلاء سالم الغامدي من مركز البحوث التربوية في جامعة غرب سيدني تحت إشراف الدكتورة كارول ريد والدكتورة محمد مستقيم .

ما هي دراسة البحث؟

فالدراسة تهدف إلى تقصي ومعرفة وجهات نظر المشرفات في المدارس الثانوية للبنات حول الفرص والصعوبات التي يواجهونها في مدارسهم أيضا ستقوم الدراسة بتزويد وازره التربوية والتعليم بأخر ما توصل إليه من اقتراحات لتطوير الإدارة المدرسية

على ماذا تنطوي هذه الدراسة ؟

هذا البحث سوف يعتمد على كلا من البحث النوعي لجمع البيانات وتحليلها، من خلال استخدام طريقة دراسة الحالة. فالدراسة سوف تأخذ أربع مدارس ثانوية في مدينة الخبر كأربع حالات، في كل مدرسة سوف يتم التعرف إلى وجهة نظر التربويين (، مشرفون) من خلال مقابلة حول سؤال الدراسة الآتي: ماهي وجهات نظر التربويين (مشرفين ماده الدين والانجليزي والتدبير المنزلي في المدارس العامة والرياضة في المدارس الخاصة) في الصعوبات والفرص التي يواجهونها مع التغير والتطور الذي يحدث في المملكة العربية السعودية

كم من الوقت ستستغرق المقابلات؟

سوف تكون مدة المقابلة الفردية 45 الي 60 دقيقة.

هل ستكون الدراسة (المقابلة) مفيدة لي ؟

سوف تتيح لك المقابلة فرصة لإعطاء وجهات نظرك وملاحظاتك التي اكتسبتموها من خلال خبراتكم و تجاربكم في المدارس حول الفرص والصعوبات التي تواجهونها .

هل سينتج عن الدراسة أي آثار سلبية قد تلحق بي كمشارك في هذه الدراسة؟

طبعاً لا ، جميع أرائكم ستكون محل تقدير واحترام ، وإذا شعرت بعدم الأريحية في اكمال المقابلة فسيتم إيقافها.

كيف يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة مادياً ؟

يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة عن طريق منحة دراسية من قبل جامعها الامام عبدالرحمن في المملكة العربية السعودية .

هل سيكون هناك أي شخص آخر على علم بالنتائج؟ وكيف سيتم نشر هذه النتائج؟
بالنسبة لجميع جوانب الدراسة، بما في ذلك النتائج، سوف تكون سرية وسيكون بمقدار الباحث فقط الحصول على معلومات عن المشاركين. وبالنسبة للنتائج فسيتم نشرها من خلال رسالة الدكتوراه الخاصة بالباحث الرئيسي، أو من خلال المؤتمرات والمجلات. فالمعلومات الشخصية للأفراد ستكون سرية ولن يطلع عليها أحد باستثناء الباحث الرئيسي. بالنسبة للنتائج العامة للبحث فيمكن إرسال ملخص عام للنتائج لإدارة كل مدرسة إذا لزم الأمر.

هل بالإمكان الانسحاب من الدراسة (المقابلة)
المشاركة طوعية، فأنت غير ملزم أن تشارك وعند الموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة ورأيت بعد ذلك ان تنسحب فيمكنك ذلك في أي وقت شئت دون إبداء أي سبب و دون أي عواقب.

هل بالإمكان إخبار الآخرين عن الدراسة؟
نعم ، يمكنك أن تخبر الآخرين عن الدراسة ويمكنك تزويدهم بإرقام الهواتف والبريد الإلكتروني الخاصة بالباحث الرئيسي للاتصال به ومناقشة مشاركتهم في مشروع البحث والحصول على ورقة المعلومات.

كيف بالإمكان الحصول على مزيد من المعلومات؟
إذا كنت تحتاج إلى مزيد من المعلومات، يمكنك الاتصال على الباحث نجلاء الغامدي عن طريق الوسائل التالية:

جوال رقم : 0061411120685

بريد الكتروني: N.AIGHamdi@westernsydney.edu.au

وإذا كان لديك أسئلة إضافية أو جوانب تحتاج إلى إيضاح أكثر حول أي مرحلة تتعلق بالبحث فما عليك إلا الاتصال بفريق الإشراف على البحث وهما:

الدكتورة كارول ريد، هاتف رقم 0061297726524

C.Reid@uws.edu.au

ماذا لو كان لدي شكوى ؟

لقد تمت الموافقة على هذه الدراسة من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث البشرية في جامعة ويسترن سيدني.
فإذا كان لديك أي شكوى أو تحفظات على أخلاقيات سير هذا البحث ، يمكنك الاتصال على لجنة الأخلاقيات من خلال مكتب خدمات البحوث على هاتف 0061247360229 أو فاكس 0061247360013 أو البريد الإلكتروني

humanethics@uws.edu.au

سيتم التعامل مع القضايا المثارة بكامل السرية والمهنية وسيتم التحقيق فيها بالكامل ، و سيتم إبلاغك بنتائج التحقيق.
إذا كنت توافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، قد يطلب منك التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة للمشاركة.

Appendix F: Coding Samples

NAME: R					
Dhahran schools					
RQs	Codes	Categorizes	Themes	Reference from the interview	Theory Dialectical
RQ1 1. What is the influence of culture on the professional and personal lives of women leaders?	Note: “KS doesn’t have public transport inside cities such as buses, trains, In Saudi Arabia women are not allowed to drive” Professionally. 1-1 Transport. 1-2 husband to drop her off more than once per day its hard. 1-3 Private chauffer. 1-4 Travel to serval school. 1-5 Stay in one place. 1-6 an inferiority complexes 1-7 a higher degree than him 1-8 the jealous type. 1-9 forbad her from attending courses	Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender inequality. • Gender power. • Gender relations. • Gender role. 	Patriarchal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restriction. • Threaten. • Forced dependency 	She started the discussion by saying, “our line of work requires commutes between schools, and thus transportation was the first challenge I have faced.” It was hard for Reem’s husband to drop her off more than once per day, and he didn’t really accept the idea of her riding with a private chauffeur, nor did he like the fact that her job entailed for her to travel to several schools in one day, as he preferred for her to stay in one place from the start till the end of her work day. All these factors caused problems between Reem and her husband. She said he might have an inferiority complex, as she has a higher degree than him. Reem’s husband is the jealous type, as he often forbad her from attending courses and	Conflict of opposites, the inclusion of contradiction. It is a conflict between the layers of society represented in the class. Education. Age. Economic Gender. Conflict of opposites Rivalries and contradictions, a special case, or occur in a moment of moments. Conflict opposites Contradiction

	<p>and conferences abroad,</p> <p>1-10 she couldn't travel without a male relative.</p> <p>1-11 priority is always allotted to men.</p> <p>1-12 full responsibility.</p> <p>1-13 Caring.</p> <p>1-14 Kids.</p> <p>1-15 House.</p> <p>1-16 challenges are mostly internal.</p> <p>1-17 shoulder all these responsibilities.</p> <p>1-18 she turned down those invitations.</p> <p>1-19 family is more important.</p> <p>1-20 girls are boys are not raised to be equals.</p> <p>Personally</p> <p>1-21 responsibility of taking care of her mother and her mother-in-law.</p>			<p>conferences abroad, and this difficulty was doubled by the fact she couldn't travel without a male relative accompanying her. Her arms flailed as she said, "unfortunately in a Saudi society, priority is always allotted to men, for if a man and his wife had conferences that coincided on the same date, it is the wife who ends up not attending her conference." After some thought, she said, "the biggest challenge a woman faces is actually herself, for she takes on the full responsibility of caring for the kids and the house, and it is she who places these hurdles in her path, her challenges are mostly internal, not only due to her adherence to customs and traditions, but because she feels that she needs to shoulder all these responsibilities." Reem was actually invited to attend several conferences, but she turned down those invitations before even telling her husband about them, for she was convinced that her family is more important than</p>	<p>renew, accumulations in the new esoteric contradictions and old</p> <p>conflict opposites. Subconscious contradiction, the conflict between career and home responsibilities. The powerful external influence from the husband or family led to a sense of guilt</p>
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	<p>1-22 time is divided. 1-23 psychological stress. 1-24 physical exhaustion. 1-25 unfair. 1-26 feel guilty. 1-27 Push themselves more to balance their lives</p>			<p>her work. She assured that this conviction might have stemmed from the culture itself, as girls are boys are not raised to be equals. Reem also shoulders the responsibility of taking care of her mother and her mother-in-law; and so, after work, her time is divided between them, which has caused her immense psychological stress and physical exhaustion.</p> <p>Reem says it is unfair to compare working and non-working women as that makes working women feel guilty, and so they push themselves more to balance their lives between their work and their family.</p>	
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Appendix G: Letter from Director of Planning and Development to Director of Education Office in Al-Khobar

الرقم ٧١٤١٣ ٨٤٤
التاريخ : ١٤٣٧ / ٧ / ١٠ هـ
المرفقات : -

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وزارة التعليم
Ministry of Education

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
(٢٨٠)
الإدارة العامة للتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

الرسالة: تقديم خدمات تربوية وتعليمية ذات جودة عالية وفق معايير عالمية بمشاركة مجتمعية	القيم: المواطنة- الإلتقان- العدل- العمل بروح الفريق- التنمية الذاتية- المسؤولية الاجتماعية	الرؤية: الريادة لبناء جيل مبدع
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حفظه الله

المكرم : مدير مكتب التعليم بالخبر
من : مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
بشأن: تسهيل مهمة الباحثة / نجلاء الغامدي

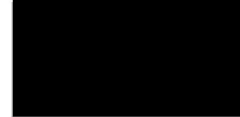
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

بناءً على موافقتنا بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحثة نجلاء سالم الغامدي، طالبة الدراسات العليا لمرحلة الدكتوراه بجامعة ويسترن سيدني ، والتي تجري بحثاً بعنوان (التحديات والفرص التي تواجه المشرفات في المدارس الثانوية بمنطقة الخبر)، حيث يتطلب البحث إجراء مقابلة على عينة من المشرفات ، و تطبيق ملاحظة على عينة من مدارس المرحلتين (المتوسطة - الثانوية)

عليه فلا مانع من تسهيل مهمتها ، علماً أن التطبيق سيكون من قبل الباحثة وفق اللوائح و الأنظمة خلال سنة من تاريخه .

يسعدني شكركم على عنايتكم وتجاوبكم مع ظروف الباحثة
والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

نوال بنت عبد الرحمن التيسان



م/الخبر
١٤٣٧ / ٧ / ١٠ هـ

Office26@edueast.gov.sa

٨٢٦٩٣٦١

فاكس ٨٢٦٤٩٧٧

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
٢٨٠
الإدارة العامة للتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
PD

وزارة التعليم
Ministry of Education

الرقم :
التاريخ : ١٨ / ١ / ١٤٣٨ هـ
المشروعات :

الرسالة: تقديم خدمات تربوية وتعليمية ذات جودة عالية وفق معايير عالية بمشاركة مجتمعية	القيم: المواطنة - الإلتقان - العدل - العمل بروح الفريق - التنمية الذاتية - المسؤولية الاجتماعية	الرؤية: الريادة لبناء جيل مبدع
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إلى من يهمه الأمر

الاسم:	نجلاء بنت سالم بن سعيد الغامدي
السجل المدني:	١٠٥٠٩٧٠٣٤٠
الجهة التي يعمل/ يدرس بها:	طالبة الدراسات العليا لمرحلة الدكتوراه بجامعة ويسترن سدني بأستراليا
الهاتف:	٠٤١١١٢٠٦٨٥
عنوان الدراسة:	(التحديات والفرص التي تواجه المشرفات في المدارس الثانوية بمنطقة الخبر)
أداة الدراسة:	مقابلة وملاحظة
العينة:	مشرفات تربويات - مدارس

تفيد الإدارة العامة للتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية بأن المذكورة/ نجلاء بنت سالم بن سعيد الغامدي ، قد أتمت إجراءات تسهيل مهمة الباحث لدى إدارة التخطيط والتطوير. وبناءً على طلبها أعطيت هذه الإفادة.



مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

نعيمة بنت سالم السعدي

الختم



Appendix H: Letter from Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission

<p>ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA CULTURAL ATTACHÉ OFFICE CANBERRA</p>		<p>سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية مكتب الملحقة الثقافية كانبرا إفادة تسهيل مهمة</p>
<p>١٤٣٧/٦/٨ هـ الموافق ٢٠١٦/٠٣/١٧ م</p>		
<p><u>إلى من يهمه الأمر</u></p>		
<p>يفيد مكتب الملحق الثقافي في سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في أستراليا بأن المبتعثة نجلاء سالم سعيد الغامدي، (رقم الهوية الوطنية 1050970340) مبتعثة من جامعة الدمام لدراسة دكتوراه في تخصص إدارة تربوية بجامعة University of Western Sydney في ، وهي متواجدة حالياً في مقر البعثة، وقد بدأ الصرف على المبتعثة من تاريخ ١٤٣٤/٠٢/٢٦ هـ الموافق ٢٠١٣/١/٨ م، وستنتهي بعثتها في تاريخ ١٤٣٨/٠٢/٢٦ هـ الموافق ٢٠١٦/١١/٢٦ م.</p> <p>ونظراً لحاجة المبتعثة للقيام برحلة علمية لجمع معلومات متعلقة برسالة الدكتوراه من المملكة ولتوصية المشرف الأكاديمي للمبتعثة في الجامعة بذلك؛ نأمل من الجهات ذات العلاقة التكرم بمساعدة المبتعثة المشار إليها أعلاه وتسهيل مهمتها في جمع المعلومات المطلوبة لأغراض البحث العلمي.</p> <p>هذه المعلومات صحيحة حسب بيانات نظام الشؤون الدراسية في التاريخ المحدد أعلاه، وبناءً على طلب المبتعثة تم منحها هذه الإفادة.</p> <p>والله الموفق.</p>		
<p>الملحق الثقافي بسفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في كانبرا</p>		
<p>د. عبدالعزيز بن عبدالله بن طالب</p>		
		
<p>الرقم:..... التاريخ:..... المرفقات:..... Attachments..... Date:..... Ref No:.....</p>		
<p>Tel: +61 2 62693170 Fax: +61 2 62325978 P.O. BOX 1206, DICKSON , ACT, 2602, AUSTRALIA</p>		
<p>www.sacm.org.au</p>		