

Women's Perceived Challenges in Academic Leadership Positions

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover the challenges preventing women from advancing in academic leadership positions. It also investigated the scope of support and acceptance of women as leaders in their workplace including administration. The study tried to shed light on the challenges women face in leadership positions. The study was conducted in a private university in the United Arab Emirates from 115 academic women including (68) working in administrative positions and (47) in non-administrative positions. Data were collected using a quantitative web-based survey questionnaire. The results showed significant correlations between women being on top leadership positions and the challenges of un-motivating environment (.311**), husband's disapproval (.262**), work/life balance (.311**), lack of confidence in women (.221*) and lack of self-confidence (.186*).

Keywords: academic women, administration, challenges, factors, women's leadership

1. Introduction

While the world is evolving; women are still lagging behind when it comes to leadership roles. With women still pushing to reach the top, they face various challenges and obstacles that many of their male counterparts do not have an understanding of. These challenges and obstacles are hindering women from becoming leaders and fading their aspirations of advancing professionally and climbing the career ladder.

There are many women who serve as models of leadership and have become inspiring leaders for other women to follow their example. They have indeed shown other women the potentials and the power they hold in their own hands. These women have definitely passed through many experiences and hidden challenges to move forward. Fraser (2014) indicated that women occupied only 20% of the top positions in some of the life major fields such as law, academia, and politics, which she believed should be a critical reason for young women to find distinct and successful women who can be role models for them.

In academia, leading women are no exception, indeed the examples are abundant of women who achieved the highest academic ranks and accomplishments same as their male colleagues. Yet for all their academic achievements, these women represent a small percent

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of leaders overall. It is no wonder that they have even been ignored from holding administrative positions to the account of their male colleagues. Thus, it is important to understand the environment and the barriers that hold women back in leadership positions and the challenges they face.

Why we must empower women around the world in leadership positions is a question almost all researchers have tackled and debated (Appelbaum et al. 2013; CIMA 2010; Heathfield 2017; Karmer 2015; Kerpen 2017). There is not much support for women leadership in the Arab world as much as there is for men in leadership positions especially. Women in the Arab world often face additional barriers to success in the form of societal expectations of women and customs.

The concept leader efficacy is similar to self-efficacy; it is how much we believe in our abilities to succeed as leaders. It determines if we pursue leadership positions, if we persist to leadership challenges, and if we see ourselves as leaders in the first place. Women reported (Kanda-Olmstead 2018; Sandberg 2010) using leadership skills but did not believe in themselves as being capable of succeeding as leaders.

There are few female leaders who are supported by their communities to be in top administrative positions even though they serve as models of how to lead and become leaders. The reasons may vary from society to women themselves not believing in other women's abilities to succeed as leaders, or being raised in hesitancy to lead in Arab society.

Having more women in leadership positions in the Arab world will bring various perspectives in the workforce and create new ideas that might serve all institutions in the society. Thus, it is important to have a diverse society and communities fill with women and men to have that harmony in life. We need this diversity to be effectively implemented and activated in leadership issues too.

Having more women in senior roles is linked to stronger performance at various levels whether economic, financial, educational, societal, etc. "Women leaders work in different ways from men and can bring real competitive advantage to business" (CIMA 2010: 1). It takes a lot of dedication to beat the odds and challenges, and support women to succeed in men's world.

2. The Lens of the Study

The study was designed to shed light on the following issues related to women's leadership:

- I. Challenges preventing women from thinking of administrative positions
- II. Challenges facing women in administrative positions
- III. Scope of support and acceptance of women in leadership positions

3. Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to discover the factors that prevent women from advancing in academic leadership positions. It also focused on investigating the scope of support and acceptance of women as leaders in their academic workplaces- including administration. The study tried to shed light on the challenges women face in leadership positions and the challenges that prevent women to take steps toward leadership positions.

4. Literature Review

A simple definition of leadership is "the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal" (Ward 2018, par. 1). This definition according to Ward refers to

the importance of being gifted and ready to inspire others. Yukl (1994) define leadership as the process of giving purpose to collective effort, and expending willing effort to achieve purpose. So effective leadership is based upon personal traits that can be interpreted practically and shared in a way that promotes others to take part and contribute, as the leader wishes them to act. From the above definitions, it is deduced that leadership is closely interrelated to performance and thus any leadership definition has to consider it.

A leader is someone with interpersonal and leadership skills, which inspires people to follow him/her. In other words, “the leader is the inspiration and director of the action” (Ward 2018, par. 3). Not necessarily related to profit, but indeed effective leaders work on leveraging and maximizing the company’s bottom lines and accomplishments. They certainly have to manage the resources at their disposal. Nevertheless, they must also possess primary leadership skills such as communicating, inspiring, sharing knowledge and supervising - just to name a few (ibid).

4.1 Women’s Leadership. Female leadership is necessary in teams, organizations and in society. That is why we need leaders from both genders to complement each other. Organizations nowadays have strong internal policies in support of gender diversity; indeed, some prefer women for certain positions as they have experienced the benefits of female leadership.

Undertaking leadership positions leads to women experiencing behavioral changes, such as strengthening some unique traits, reinforcing some hidden ones, refining their discerning capacity, and making precise decisions (ConnectAmericas 2015). According to Misquitta (2016), feminine leadership style is known to be socially inclined in which crucial and personal attention is given to subordinates and to maintaining a good working environment, meanwhile the masculine leadership style is known to be instrumental and instruction giving. Appelbaum et al. (2013) argue that the most effective leadership style is transformational leadership, which is associated with characteristics considered more typical of women. This style suggests that leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level, and that leaders act as role models motivating others to go beyond the confines of their jobs, and support developing the subordinates’ skills in addition to fostering good relationships.

As stated on ConnectAmericas (2015) website, the following are some of the features that determine female leadership:

- People-oriented: They are sociable, expressive, and establish close ties, strengthening the possibility of achieving commitments, whether company objectives or a particular project.
- Tendency to cooperate: Making teamwork more natural through actively including and containing people. They also ensure that procedures are carried out in an orderly and sound fashion.
- Capacity to operate in different directions: They possess the innate capacity to think and operate in different directions at the same time. This offers an advantage when making decisions and facing crises.
- Horizontal leadership: Female leadership is inclusive, encourages participation and shares information and power with those she leads. She tends to create and strengthen group identities.
- Emotional prevalence: They are generally capable of considering the “human” side of individuals and generate high levels of empathy.
- More prone to change: Their style is innovative and has a strong sense of quality that is people-oriented, flexible, communicative and persuasive.

4.2 The Challenges Women Face in Leadership. Organizations today place multiple demands on those holding leading positions, requiring them to impart vision, initiate change, and make difficult decisions (Mwangi 2012). In the quest to undertake their mandate, the leaders face a number of challenges both internally and externally (Johnson & Scholes, 2003). The internal challenges arise from the job and the organizational environment whereas the external challenges are from outside the organization such as personal and family.

A report by Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger, and Baumgarten (2007) states that in order to increase the proportion of female leaders, the modern model of male-oriented leadership style need to be changed, which requires unflinching availability and total geographical mobility. The report also states that companies must be innovative and willing to create flexible work environments.

In terms of academia, women also have much in common with their counterparts in other workforces, and the reasons for the lack of female leadership do not fall exactly in system or self, but into both categories. In this article, the researcher intends to examine a number of challenges women face in leadership roles based on the reviewed literature. These challenges include society not accepting women as leaders, lack of colleagues' support, organizational environment unmotivated, women being emotional, lack of self-confidence, career priorities, work-life balance, and workload.

4.3 Society not Accepting Women as Leaders. The societal assumptions about an ideal leader in an organization can have different impact on men and women. According to Williams (2000), the predominant view of this leader is someone who enters a career immediately upon attaining the appropriate degree, and then works his/her way up the corporate ladder with no career interruptions, making substantial time commitments to the organization and making primarily a financial contribution to family life. In reality, many women take breaks in their careers, work reduced hours, or otherwise contribute large amounts of time to caring for children and responding to family needs. Such breaks can prevent women from being seen as ideal leaders and candidates for top positions; thus, usually men are the ones who take over leading positions (April, Dreyer, and Blass 2007).

In his study, Adkins (2006) found that executive women in the US and the UK felt that the greatest deep-rooted barrier to leadership comes from the society itself, because of the perception that women are not patterned for top leading managerial positions. April et al. (2007) also argues that while women in South Africa have more opportunities, and therefore potentially more economic power available to them than their male counterparts, there is also a societal perception that women have been appointed to executive positions as part of affirmative action initiatives rather than because they have the requisite skills, experience, and qualifications.

4.4 Lack of Colleagues' Support. Mentoring schemes can be particularly important for women. The Catalyst study of MBA graduates found that 61% of women found a lack of a mentor as a barrier to career development, compared with 31% of men (Carter and Silva 2010). A formal mentoring scheme could provide invaluable support, particularly with proper training for the mentor and careful matching of mentor and mentee.

Same as supporting individuals, mentoring schemes can benefit the organization as a whole. Based on a German study, it is quite helpful mentoring women by men, where the benefit is for not only women but also men, as they learn about specific problems and barriers

that women experience through personal direct interaction. Furthermore, the organization makes better use of its female employees and thus increases productivity (Manz and Rosmann 2002).

4.5 Organizational Environment Not Motivating. Organizational environments are themselves gender-biased, affecting leadership development efforts. Organizations that are male-oriented or male-dominated are not gender-neutral (Hopkins et al. 2008). Indeed, they reflect environments where presence, performance, productivity, and success are scrutinized, measured, and evaluated for women differently than for men (O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria 2008).

According to Ruderman and Ohlott (2005), even the most progressive modern organizations are created by and for men, and thus tend to have systems, policies, norms, and structures that favor the male life experience. Consequently, efforts to systematically develop women's leadership must be acquainted with this important contextual element and appropriately tailor a learning agenda that considers this factor. Annis (2008) found many women lose their drive to excel in leadership positions due to lack of motivation and the barriers women face along the path of becoming a manager. These barriers are discrimination, stereotyping, prejudice, family demands, and lack of opportunities (Elmuti, Jia, and Davis 2009).

4.6 Women are Emotional. Women's style and approach in leadership are usually different from that used by men, and they do not feel they need to copy men so as to lead. According to CIMA report (2010), most women labelled their leadership approach by using "empathy, compassion, and ability to connect with people". One of the women stated that women are usually 'More compassionate, have better listening ability and are more intuitive around how others are feeling, for example, through reading body language'.

According to Hopkins et al. (2008), women are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, and are more adept interpersonally, whereas men are more self-confident, optimistic, adaptable, and able to manage stress. Agreeing Amalia Vanoli, Director of the human resources consulting firm Tiempo Real, argue that female leaders' emotional intelligence is higher than their male counterparts, and they do very well in building work teams and motivating others with keeping the results into consideration (ConnectAmericas 2015).

4.7 Lack of Self-Confidence. Building confidence and changing attitudes that also women can be leaders without sacrificing their femininity or having a family should start from an early age (Lahti 2013). Nurturing leaders starts with confidence building from a young age through family, school, media, and peer relationships (Javadi et al. 2016). It affects girls' abilities to learn themselves and to identify not only their strengths and weaknesses (ibid) but also their way of thinking about career opportunities (Lahti 2013).

When girls familiarize themselves with different male-dominated business sectors, it would help them later to excel at such businesses and be confident in their capabilities. This level of self-realization is something they will regard as important in leadership development (Javadi et al. 2016).

Lynch (2003) distinguished between men and women in leadership indicating that men enjoy certain traits that help them in leading. Among the challenges women in leading positions face is their lack of self-confidence (Al-Jaradat 2014; Lynch 2003). Kamfer's study (1998) showed that the challenges preventing women's leadership are limiting the existing communication

means and low confidence in decision-making. Similarly, Al-Hussein (2011) found that leading women in Jordan face some challenges to reach the leadership positions including the negative stereotype of the woman in the mind of both men and women, women's limited ambitions, lack of confidence in women's abilities, and discontinuity in work

4.8 Career Priorities. Men and women are more similar than different, yet the differences exist in biological, neurological, and psychological dimensions (Hopkins et al, 2008). Such as their techniques of information processing, prioritizing tasks, responding to stress, as well as their methods of motivation (Ruderman and Ohlott 2005). Men and women also have divergent conceptions of career success. One study found that women tend to define career success as an interest in intrinsically rewarding roles, personal achievements, self-development, and work-life balance, whereas men tend to view success as high salaries, moving up the corporate ladder, and achieving status (Sturges 1999). Women also face a distinct set of career decision factors. In this regard, Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) propose that women take into account multiple life roles, which creates varying importance of emphasis on challenge, balance, and authenticity for women during their early, middle, and later stages of careers.

4.9 Work-Life Balance. Women experience competing priorities for their time and attention across life and career stages that are different for men (ibid). Whereas men are framed as the bread-earners, women are framed as the homemakers and mothers. At the time men try to swap family responsibilities against work responsibilities, women try to balance their work and family roles, tending to assign greater priorities and more time to their family responsibilities, independent of their work demands (Aryee, Srinivas, and Tan 2005). A study by European commission (2000) found that women's employment starts to decrease when they have young children, whereas men between 20-44 years old are more likely to be in employment when there is a child in the household.

Mwangi (2012) argue that unlike male managers, the female managers face the challenges of resolving the inevitable conflicts between the traditional female and family roles and the role of managerial/administrative leadership. Ledin et al. (2007), posit that an aspect of these role conflicts is the problem of balancing time between the traditional familial role and the managerial/administrative role. Both male and female leaders are subject to this conflict, but since women are the ones who bear the heaviest load of family work in most cultures, men face fewer and different role conflicts than women

Usually women resolve these conflicts in several settings such as (i) preserving the degrees of career and geographic mobility, (ii) sorting priorities at different points in time that the path to top leadership may require, (iii) dealing with the consequences of career interruptions that are more common among females early in their careers than among males, and (iv) managing childbirth and child-rearing, which are traditional female roles (Rothbard 2001).

4.10 Workload. According to a CIA report (2013), women in the American workplace face many challenges, including lack of sponsors, bias and harassment, insufficient workplace flexibility, an increasing number of workloads, and personal responsibilities, which may lead to voluntarily taking time off from a career at a higher rate than their male counterparts.

In a different context, Paavo (2006) interviewed number of women in Canadian union leadership to examine the effect of workload on women working in leadership positions. Their experiences confirm what others have previously identified as the nature and effects of workload on women everywhere. The lack of official recognition of the problem, to say

nothing of the lack of concrete strategies to address overwork, continued the exclusion of women and other workers from union-movement leadership.

Lundberg and Frankenhaeuser (1999) investigated the effects of stress and workload of both men and women in high-ranking positions. They found that women were more stressed by their greater unpaid workload and by a greater responsibility for duties related to home and family. Women had higher norepinephrine levels than men did, both during and after work, which reflected their greater workload they suffer from.

5. Methodology

This study used a quantitative design known as opinion polling research which addresses the relationships between women's perceptions and the factors that prevent them from advancing in academic leadership positions. This type of research usually consists of simple questions that yield numerical results that enable the researcher to make valid interpretations through comparing those numbers (Skaik 2016).

A cross-sectional web-based survey was used as a method to collect data from the participants. The instrument employed for this purpose was a questionnaire. The survey can collect large numbers of data and apply correct numerical formulas to test the proposed relationships between the variables under study (Skaik 2016). The web-based survey has many benefits including overcoming time and space boundaries and ease of data entry (Batinic, Reips, and Bosnjak 2002). Moreover, it is cost-effective in developing and distributing through an internet link (Weathington, Cunningham, and Pittenger 2010).

5.1 Sample and Sampling Technique

The setting of this research composed of one university; a university in UAE. The sample consisted of academic women working in that university. A total of 115 women participated voluntarily in the study. The sampling technique used for this study was the simple random sampling, which includes samples of whoever would be available at the time of conducting the research (Gay and Airasian 2003).

5.2 Instrument

The instrument used to collect data from participants was a questionnaire, which consisted of items inspecting women's perspectives regarding the hidden challenges they face in leadership. This questionnaire was adopted from a previous research by Al-Jaradat (2014) and it was modified to match the current study. All the items in the original questionnaire were designed based on Likert's five-point scale. For the validity of the instrument, Al-Jaradat (2014) reported that his questionnaire was validated by 30 arbitrators who are experts in education and educational leadership. As for the reliability of the questionnaire, Al-Jaradat applied it on a sample of 20 women, in which he employed chronobach Alpha coefficient. The total reliability coefficient was (0.95) reflecting an appropriate instrument for his study objectives. The correlation coefficients between items and their domains were at (≤ 0.05) significance level.

The researcher of the current study sent Al-Jaradat an email asking for his approval to use his questionnaire in her study with some modifications of the adopted items to fit the sample and the setting of her study. After receiving the approval, the researcher did the necessary modifications on the questionnaire and used it in her study. In addition to this instrument and based on her thorough reading, the researcher developed the rest of the items in her instrument for the current study for the aim of defining the challenges preventing

women from thinking of administrative positions and their work/life priorities. All the added items were designed based on the same Likert's five-point scale for each section.

For the validity and reliability of these items, the researcher shared them with professional specialized educators in education and educational leadership (n=7). The researcher asked the educators to examine the relatedness of the items to the domains that they measure and she considered their comments. Before sharing it with the targeted participants, the researcher also applied the instrument to a sample that consisted of (10) members of the study population and she took their remarks and comments into consideration. The items in the current questionnaire were distributed into four domains: reasons not being on top positions, challenges facing women in leadership positions, women's life priorities, and women's career priorities.

5.3 Data Collection and Analysis

One of the fastest techniques to collect data is the internet using an online survey (Skaik 2016) and so the researcher decided to collect data using web-based questionnaires. Data were collected through an online survey that was shared with a large number of women throughout University Moodle, Emails and Whatsapp. The researcher designed the online survey using Google Drive Docs sharing the link with several women throughout these different networking sites.

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), allowing the researcher to do the relevant statistical analysis. In addition, data management (case selection, file reshaping, creating derived data) and data documentation (a metadata dictionary is stored in the data file) are features of the base software. The researcher used this software to analyze the data and came up with the following results.

6. Results

6.1. Demographics

The 115 academic women participants in this study consisted of (68) women in administrative positions and (47) women in non-administrative positions. Their ages ranged between 28 and 56 as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Women Demographics (N=115)

Administrative Position	No.	Marital Status		Level of Education		
		Single	Married	B	M	D
Yes	68	39	29	27	23	18
No	47	2	45	44	1	2

There were 68 women in administrative positions; 27 hold Bachelor degrees, 23 hold Master degrees and 18 hold Doctoral degrees. On the other hand, 47 women indicated not having administrative positions; 44 of them hold Bachelor degrees, 1 holds Master degree and 2 hold Doctoral degrees.

6.2 The Challenges

The results were analysed to determine the relationships of the following challenges preventing women from thinking to pursue any administrative position. The means and

standard deviations of these challenges as well as the number of participants and percents are presented in the table below.

Table 2: Means and St. Deviations of challenges for women in non-administrative positions (N=47)

Challenge	Mean	SD	(N)	%
Men not accepting women as their leaders	3.44	1.3	(29)	62%
Life priorities	3.37	1.2	(23)	23%
Career priorities	2.96	1.2	(10)	21%
Lack of Self Confidence	2.31	1.4	(13)	28%
Environment not motivated	2.86	1.2	(13)	28%
Women are emotional	2.87	1.2	(12)	26%
Work/life flexibility	2.83	1.2	(11)	23%
Lack of support	2.63	1.3	(14)	30%

As seen in table 2, the means and standard deviations for the first three challenges ‘men not accepting women as their leaders’, ‘life priorities’ and ‘career priorities’ show that women are influenced more likely by these challenges than the other challenges regarding not trying to seek administrative positions.

The highest percent of (62%) of women believe that men do not accept women as their leaders, which reflects that women believe they are being discriminated based on gender. The second highest percent of (30%) goes to ‘Lack of support’ reflecting that women see that not having enough support in their work and life prevent them from thinking of administrative positions. Other challenges including life priorities, self-confidence, environment is not motivated, women are emotional, work/life flexibility and career priorities followed by percents ranging from 21% to 28% of women seeing them as challenges.

A correlational analysis was used to shed light on the issue related to the challenges preventing women from thinking of administrative positions and to meet that end, Person r correlations were used in this study because they enabled the researcher to describe the relationships between the variables used in the survey.

Table 3: Correlations of challenges for women in non-administrative positions (N=47)

	Challenge	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Women in administrative positions	Environment not motivating	.311**	.001
Women in administrative positions	Husband disapproval	.262**	.005
Women in administrative positions	Work/life balance	.311**	.001
Women in administrative positions	Lack of confidence in women	.221*	.018
Women in administrative positions	Lack of self confidence	.186*	.047

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 presents the correlational analysis of challenges prevent women from thinking of administrative position. As the data in table 4, there is a significant correlation between women not being on administrative positions and the environment is not motivated (p

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=.311**). There are also significant correlations too with husband disapproval of supporting their women to have an administrative position ($p = .262^{**}$), work/life balance ($p = .311^{**}$), lack of self- confidence to be in an administrative position ($p = .186^*$). Surprisingly, women themselves reported that they do not trust women in administrative positions ($p = .221^*$).

Table 4: Means and St. Deviations of challenges for women in administrative positions (N=68)

	Challenge	M	SD
Women in administrative positions	Balance work and home	3.59	1.2
Women in administrative positions	Men do not accept women as their leaders	3.29	1.3
Women in administrative positions	What to do next in career	2.88	1.3
Women in administrative positions	Society not accepting women as leaders	2.87	1.3
Women in administrative positions	Completing workload	3.08	1.2
Women in administrative positions	Lack of colleagues' support	2.66	1.2

The mean and standard deviation for balance work and home variable in table 4 shows that it is the highest influencing variable women face in administrative positions. The means and standard deviations for statements 'men do not accept women as their leaders' and 'completing workload' are the next influencing variables showing that women are influenced by society discrimination between men and women and other responsibilities.

Looking at the second issue, challenges women face in their administrative positions, the researcher found that women faced the following challenges:

Table 5: Challenges for women in administrative positions (N=68)

Challenge	No.	%
Balance work and home	(34)	50%
Men do not accept women as their leaders	(24)	35%
What to do next in career	(17)	25%
Society not accepting women as leaders	(14)	21%
Completing workload	(13)	19%
Lack of colleagues' support	(12)	12%

The data in table 5 shows that women in administrative positions find it difficult to balance work and home responsibilities at (50%) being the highest percent of the challenges. Men do not accept women as their leaders took the second rank of the variables reported by participating women, followed by what to do next in career variable, society not accepting women as leaders, completing workload and lack of colleagues' support.

In order to shed light on the issue of the challenges women face in their administrative positions, a correlational analysis was used, and to meet that end, Person r correlations were used in this study as they enabled the researcher to describe the relationships between the variables used in the survey.

Table 6: Correlations of challenges for women in administrative positions (N=68)

	Challenge	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Women in administrative positions	Balance work and home	.285**	.002
Women in administrative positions	Completing workload	.341**	.000
Women in administrative positions	Lack of colleagues' support	.515**	.000
Women in administrative positions	Lack of confidence in women's abilities	.389**	.000
Women in administrative positions	Men do not accept women as their leaders	.467**	.000
Women in administrative positions	Society not accepting women as leaders	.389**	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 presents the correlational analysis of challenges faced by women in their administrative position. As seen, there is a significant correlation between women in administrative positions and 'lack of colleagues' support' ($p = .515^{**}$), followed by 'men do not accept women as their leaders' ($p = .467^{**}$). Following were items 'society not accepting women as leaders' and 'lack of confidence in women's abilities' with the p value for both at ($p = .389^{**}$). As for items 'completing workload' ($p = .341^{**}$) and 'balance between work and home' ($p = .285^{**}$), they came last.

It is worth taking into consideration women's perspectives about deciding to be or not in top positions without relating their decisions to challenges preventing them or facing them in their positions. Rather than that, the researcher wanted others to look at women's priorities and decisions they are taking in their careers and lives. Looking at women's priorities issue, the researcher found the followings:

Table 7: Women's Priorities (N=115)

Priorities	(N)	%
Family	(64)	56%
Health	(57)	50%
Satisfaction with manager	(57)	50%
Job security	(53)	46%
Personal development & growth	(52)	43%
Satisfaction with my team	(52)	43%

The data in table 7 shows that women's top priority is family (56%), followed by both health and satisfaction with the manager (50%) each. Job security (46%), personal development and growth and satisfaction with the team were also part of women's priorities (43%) each while thinking of pursuing leadership positions and resist challenges or not.

7. Discussion

The study focused on discovering the challenges preventing women from thinking of administrative positions. It also tried to shed light on the challenges women face in academic leadership positions. The first issue was about the challenges preventing women from thinking of administrative positions. Based on the responses of the participants to the questionnaire,

the results showed that the most challenges women face are 'men not accepting women as their leaders' at 62% and 'lack of support' at 30%. Following were lack of self-confidence and environment not motivated at 28% each, other challenges included life priorities, career priorities, women are emotional, and work/life flexibility.

The results indicate first that gender biasness still plays a role when it comes to women in leading positions, the societal assumptions about the ideal leaders in any organization should be a man according to the stereotype of men leadership in the society. Second, the lack of colleagues' support reflects a problem in the organizational environment where women do not receive the required support to provoke them to hold leading positions. Third, life priorities force women to choose either being homemakers and mothers, or try to balance their work and family roles, which tends to assign greater responsibilities on working women.

On the other hand, based on the results regarding the second issue of challenges facing women in administrative positions, the researcher found that lack of colleagues' support followed by men not accepting women as their leaders are the most challenges women in administrative positions face. The next challenges women face were society not accepting women as leaders and lack of confidence in women's abilities. This is in agreement with the male-oriented model of leadership style that is really a big challenge that facing any trial to change this perspective to a new modern model that does not lean into the gender issue. The results indicate that more attention needs to be paid to the abilities, skills, and potentials of women in order to bring real competitive advantage to institutions to have more successful women in men's world.

8. Conclusion

It is no longer an option to see the advancement of women to executive positions in the Arab World; it is rather a requirement. Organizations today are more interconnected since changes occur faster than before. Therefore, they look for characteristics such as collaboration, empathy, sensibility and consensus that relate more to the feminine side. In general, women tend to participate more in finding the best solutions within a work team. When women are given the opportunity to lead, they take it as a true challenge and fully focus on their work to achieve the target objectives. Companies can go even further to harness the talents of senior women for the benefit of the whole organization. Employers need to look at employing part-time directors who have a super specialty in a certain area, which is something women excel in.

In conclusion, there are three main points that need to be taken into consideration when discussing women in leadership positions. First, there is a need for institutional strategies to develop women leaders in different sections. Second, there is a need for implementing new visions of change and acceptance to what is good for achieving organizational objectives. Finally, it is important for both women and organizations as a whole to consider these challenges that prevent women from being on top, and to work together to eliminate them and create a gender-balanced working environment that supports both men and women to be on top positions.

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