Full Length Research Paper

Saudi Arabia Female Students' Perception of Effective Female Leaders

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The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia witnessed significant development over the past few years. One of these developments involves the increase of female leaders in the society. The aim of this study was for the female students at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University taking a Leadership and Teamwork course to write an essay on a Saudi female leader and their views about effective leadership. Additionally they completed a survey to analysis female leaders and their qualities. With the realization that perceptions of effective female leaders may be different from those of men, the current research examined how Saudi female students view effective leadership of prominent Saudi women currently operating in leadership roles.

Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia witnessed significant development over the past few years. One of these developments involves the increase of female leaders in society. One will find women in different areas such as economic, education, medicine, business, and the media that hold leadership positions. The aim of this study was for the female students at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University taking a Leadership and Teamwork course to write an essay on a Saudi female leader and their perception of effective leadership among their selected female leaders in different professions and organizations. Additionally they completed a survey that identified the female leaders.

Effective leadership has been noted as a central ingredient in organizational and professional success (Fernandez, 2008). Researchers have effectively demonstrated that "resource capabilities, legitimacy and credibility" are foundational to effective leadership (Karlsson, Parker, Hjerpe & Linner, 2011). Even though some basic requisites for effective leadership have been noted in the literature, research does indicate that the gender of the leader and follower may impact perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Settles, Cortina, Malley & Stewart, 2006). In particular, Isaac, Griffin and Carnes (2010) reported that leadership is often perceived as a stereotypically masculine position. As a result, the entrance of females into leadership positions can challenge perceptions, creating changes in the way that effective leadership is perceived (Isaac, et al., 2010).

According to Alexander (2012), effective leadership results in the group responding in the manner desired by the leader, which includes achieving a goal set by the leader. Alexander (2012) also stated that female leaders tend to define leadership in interpersonal terms. From the female perspective, the cognitive and personal skills are more important for a leader than task or functional skills. While this perspective does not alter the fundamental definitional elements of leadership, it tends to emphasize process over achieving the objective established by the leader (p.7).

Method

With the realization that perceptions of effective female leaders may be different from those of men, a mix method research was conducted. Students wrote essays about their selected Saudi female leaders. These essays were examined to grasp how Saudi female students view effective leadership of prominent Saudi women currently in leadership roles or they view as leaders. In total, 50 students wrote essays on a Saudi female leader, describing the traits and characteristics that they believed contributed to effective leadership for the female selected. The essays were evaluated using content analysis to identify the frequency of common themes in the essays. The language utilized to describe female leaders and their effectiveness was tabulated and compared across all 50 essays. While there were some differences in the descriptions provided, there were some prominent commonalities in the language and

descriptors used. The results obtained from the content review of the essays are provided on the following pages and are based on the most frequent issues noted for female leadership effectiveness.

To strengthen the research, students voluntarily completed a survey that I designed. This survey was reviewed by female educators currently working or worked in Saudi Arabia. Students were asked five questions; (1) who is your favorite female Saudi Leader not related to you?; (2) state the names of 3 (famous public figure) Saudi female leaders that you believe overcame a challenge?; (3) state one female Saudi leader that you learned about who affected people's lives negatively by making bad a bad decision?; (4) state one female Saudi leader that you learned about and how she affected people's future positively with her decision?; (5) and state three qualities you look for in a good leader?

Result

When reviewing the results four main factors emerged in the way the students categorized successful female leaders. The four main factors are perseverance in the face of obstacles, being the "first", excelling in a male dominated field and achieving a dream or goal. Additionally, these female leaders have a leadership style that involves teamwork.

Perseverance in the Face of Obstacles

Content analysis of the essays written by Saudi female students on the subject of female leadership reveals that perseverance was the most frequently noted theme in the essays. Of the 50 essays collected, 42 made some reference to the obstacles faced by female leaders and their ability to overcome these obstacles and achieve their current positions. Although the term "perseverance" was not directly used, the students descriptively detailed the challenges facing their chosen leaders and the ability of the leader to sustain their ambition and determination even in the wake of these obstacles. Students noted that female leaders had to overcome obstacles that included: a lack of support from family members (34 essays), a lack of support from society or culture (33 essays), a lack of support from their profession or other leaders in their chosen field (19 essays) and a lack of support from other professionals or educators working in the same field (13 essays).

A review of success in leadership does indicate that perseverance is a significant issue that has implications for the ability of the leader to achieve desired outcomes. Thomas (2005) asserts that all leaders experience setbacks during their careers. Leaders that are capable of overcoming these setbacks will display perseverance and are often able to eventually achieve their desired goals (Thomas, 2005). While persistence toward a goal is one component of perseverance, Thomas also notes that the way a leader approaches failure and setbacks will also have implications for his or her ability to persevere. Specifically, Thomas argues that "When you encounter a

setback or a significant problem, you can be discouraged and maybe even develop a poor attitude; or you can re-double your determination, stay upbeat, maintain a good attitude and keep moving ahead" (p. 8).

The description of perseverance in leadership noted by Thomas (2005) is one that was reported in many of the essays reviewed. For Saudi female leaders that faced obstacles from their families, many chose to focus on their personal goals and desires to achieve more. This focus provided a foundation for these leaders to maintain their determination even when they faced ongoing criticism of their roles and objectives. Interestingly the need for perseverance was noted by one of the female leaders interviewed for the essay project. Huda Al-Ghoson, General Manager of Training and Development at Saudi Aramco stated that:

> In traditional societies, women's roles are often stereotyped. Family responsibilities are not shared and are assumed to be solely a female duty. Balancing work and family life poses a great challenge. Lack of family support is another reason why we do not see too many women in leadership positions (Deema).

Thus, the ability of leaders to persevere even in the wake of these challenges prompts many Saudi female students to view female leaders as effective.

Being the "First"

While perseverance was noted to be the most prominent theme identified in the essays reviewed in this research, being the first in one's field was also a prominent theme. Being first was noted in 42 of the 50 essays as most students emphasized the role of being the first woman to accomplish a specific goal or task. Repeatedly, the student essays noted the importance of being first in one's field. While being first was an integral component of many of the biographies of women leaders, students writing about the experience of being first often commented on how being first influenced their perception of the leader. For instance, in an essay on Arwa Mutabagani one student noted that the accomplishments of Mutabagani created some of the first steps toward a "dramatic change in Saudi Arabia" in which women were capable of leading (Kinana). What this suggests is that being the first in a specific discipline has larger implications for the development of effective leadership as perceived by female students.

The concept of "being the first" has been best conceptualized in the literature through the use of the term pioneer. White (2006) in her review of the pioneer spirit in leadership argues that pioneering leaders are those that go into uncharted territory to create unique practice. White asserts that pioneers in leadership are "pathfinders who continually face the unknown, exploring new territories and dealing with unforeseen challenges" (p. 1499). While leaders in new fields are often considered to be pioneers, White maintains that many women in leadership are

pioneers because of their ability and willingness to seek out new pathways for women's development. Through this process, pioneers in leadership provide a roadmap for others that are seeking similar positions. As such, effective leaders are those that are willing to take these risks and to provide a foundation for future generations to pursue similar goals and objectives.

Although there is a paucity of research which relates effectiveness in leadership to being a pioneer, it is evident that many of the female students view this component of leadership practice and integral and essential to effective leadership. Because female leaders have the capability of creating a pathway for others, they are viewed as being effective. In addition, because these leaders have been able to successfully overcome obstacles to entering into their leadership roles they are viewed as effective for achieving such a high level of success.

Excelling in a Male Dominated Field

Essays written about female leaders also emphasized the ability of female leaders to succeed in fields or roles that are traditionally held by men. While some students noted the ability of women to make their mark on a profession typically dominated by men, others made mention of the fact that female leaders were able to affect change on the way in which leadership is viewed in the prevailing culture. One student, writing about the leadership of Lubna Olyan, an executive for the Olyan Company reported that "Ms. Olyan struggled a lot to prove to Saudis that Saudi women can make changes in the country's development same as Saudi men" (Laila). This theme was repeated 31 times throughout the essays reviewed. Clearly, the ability of women to possess the same skills and capabilities as men create an important foundation for shaping the perception of female leaders as being effective in their roles.

Researchers when relating the issue of gender in leadership have definitively demonstrated that gender bias has long been an issue of concern (Isaac, et al., 2010). As a result of this perception, women are often not viewed as effective as men in their leadership roles (Lopez, 2010). Lopez asserted that while women are often highly effective in leadership roles their inability to conform to the stereotypical images of the male leader often serve to diminish how their actions and accomplishments are viewed by others. Lopez argued for an expanded view of leadership; one that incorporates female qualities of leadership practice as foundational contributors of leadership success and excellence. Incorporation of these issues into prevailing leadership theory may reduce gender bias and prompt followers to view leadership as effective regardless of the gender of the leader.

Clearly, the essays reviewed for this investigation reflect the gender bias in leadership. Most of the essays which noted the ability of the female leader to excel in a male dominated profession illustrated surprise or awe that the leader was able to accomplish this task. This view suggested that students have a specific view of leadership that is framed in a male context. This view makes it a true accomplishment of the female leader if she is able to succeed in this world. What is perhaps most important about this observation is that students were able to identify the elements of leadership that were unique to the success of female leaders. As such, this may alter the way that females view leadership, creating a foundation upon which perception is shaped by a broader understanding of male and female characteristics that can contribute to leadership success. This is commensurate with what Lopez (2010) noted about changing the views of leadership.

Achieving a Dream or Goal

Another theme continuously noted in the essays was the ability of the female leader to achieve a dream or goal. This theme was identified in 27 of the essays collected. In many of the essays, the authors identified a central dream or goal of the female leader that has served as the foundation for motivating and driving the leader, even in the face of adversity. An essay written on Dr .Howayda Qatham (2011) exemplified this theme as the author noted that "Dr. Howayda studied hard and traveled overseas to accomplish and achieve the childhood dream to become a great heart surgery and raise her country name in the sky" [sis] (Razan, 2012, p.3). Being able to achieve a dream or goal clearly has implications for shaping the way that female students view the leadership of Saudi women in leadership positions.

A review of the literature regarding translating dreams and goals into effective leadership practice implies that individuals capable of making this transition have certain skills and capabilities. Bassaw (2010) in his review of the determinants of successful leadership argued that the ability to transform a dream or goal into applied institutional outcomes suggests that a certain process for development has occurred. In particular this author notes that in order to make this transformation the individual must "be open to different perceptions of reality, embrace contradictions and acknowledge mistakes" (p. 1002). Although these issues were not directly noted in the essays reviewed for this investigation, the consistent identification of achieving dreams or goals by students indicates that there is some awareness of the complexity of his process and scope of the skills and challenges involved.

Saudi female students capable of recognizing the role and importance of achieving goals and dreams as part of effective leadership practice may be better able to identify important characteristics that that will be essential to their success as leaders in the future. While the identification of a goal or dream is important, the ability to achieve the dream is also an important indicator that the leader has mastered important skills that will be needed for leadership success. As students complete their education and begin their careers, exploration of dreams and goals should provide them with the ability to discern the specific skills or capabilities needed to achieve a specific dream or goal.

Role Model/Inspirational

The final common theme noted in the essays regarding female leaders was that the leader was a good role model or was inspirational to others. One essay on Princess Loulwah noted the following with regard to the impact of this leader:

There are challenges also she faces and overcome one is that taking charge on running the Effat colleges making sure to educate well all the Saudi women, and act as a role model to everyone that woman in the present century is not merely the same with the old culture whom Saudi woman are known as a wife and stay at home [sic] (Louwla, 2012, p.2).

In this position as a role model, the author goes on to argue that Princess Loulwah has been able to motivate women to utilize their resources and talents and to seek employment.

Role modeling in the context of leadership has long been noted to be an important and integral component of effective leadership. Yaffe and Kark (2011) asserted that role modeling serves as a foundation to enlist the aid of others and facilitate the achievement of a common goal. By serving as a role model, leaders provide followers with a foundation for shaping and directing their behavior (Yaffe & Kark, 2011). Role modeling essentially means that the individual leads by example. The process is one that also sends a message to followers that the leader is not asking followers to do more than he or she can or will do (Yaffe & Kark, 2011). Students noting the issue of role modeling in leadership practice appreciate the ability of female leaders to set a good example not only for their organizations or professions but also to set a good example for Saudi women in general.

Leadership Style

In addition to reviewing the essays to evaluate common themes for female Saudi leaders, the essays were also evaluated to identify the most common forms of leadership identified by female Saudi students. The specific leadership style identified by the respondent was recorded and tabulated for all of the essays. Democratic leadership was noted by 32 of the students as the principle leadership style used by the female leader. Charismatic leadership was also identified as a prominent leadership style with 19 of the essays having this descriptor of leadership style. Other leadership styles noted, but with a limited degree of frequency included: autocratic (9 essays); bureaucratic (2 essays) and laissez-faire (2 essays). A closer examination of these leadership styles in conjunction with information provided in the essays facilitates greater understanding of why these leadership styles were identified.

Democratic Leadership

Empirical leadership regarding the issue of democratic leadership among leaders indicates that this trait is one that is notable unique for female leaders (Pines, Dahan-Kalev & Ronen, 2001). According to Pines and co-workers evaluations and comparisons of men's and women's leadership styles have shown remarkable overlaps in key areas such as task orientation and the ability to manage interpersonal relationships. The principle difference in comparing men's and women's leadership style has been with regard to democratic leadership: "the new generation of women [leaders] are more open with colleagues and subordinates than men, and are consensus builders who encourage wider participation in decision making" (p. 608). Pine and coworkers go on to note that female leaders also appear to be more interested in the health and personal concerns of their subordinates. This research has been supported by other authors including Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco (2010) who argue that female leaders "promote a somewhat kinder, more socially compassionate version of organizational goals and social policies, and place more emphasis on democratic relationships, participatory decision-making, delegation, and team-based leadership skills" (p. 154).

Placing this information into what students noted regarding democratic leadership styles of their chosen female leaders, it is evident that many of these characteristics were noted. For instance, in an essay on Lubna Olyan one student noted that "As a democratic leader, she created a comfortable work environment for her followers or co-workers by encouraging them to show all their special skills and expertise. Also, she always considers her workers as basic elements in her decision making process" (Laila). In an essay on the leadership of Ala'a Hariri, another student reports that "Ala'a Hariri is a very democratic leader. She always listens to the people that she is working with. She considers other opinions and ideas in everything, even in making the office polices [sic] (Demah). Similar issues as these were noted in many of the essays identifying the leader as having a democratic leadership style.

The data obtained from the essays indicate that students using the term "democratic" to describe the leadership of women have a clear understanding of what this type of leadership entails. As women, the students may value the role and importance of building consensus as an important foundation for leadership practice. Clearly, the ability of the leader to engage in this type of leadership practice will have a strong impact on the perception of female students with regard to effective leadership practice.

Charismatic Leadership Style

Charismatic leadership style was also noted with some frequency when reviewing the essays provided by students. Kuppusamy, Ganesan and Rosada (2010) provided a review of charismatic leadership in which they note that leaders that employ this style are able to influence "major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organization members" (p. 2-3). In addition Kuppusamy and coworkers report that charismatic leaders are able to have "a magnetic effect" on followers: one that enables the leader to build consensus for achieving the organization's objectives. These leaders are often very self-confident, recognize the challenges that lie before them and are

willing to take personal and professional risks to achieve their vision and goals.

Many of these themes were identified in the essays provided by Saudi female students who identified their leader as charismatic. For instance, in an essay on Lubna Olayan, one student noted that this leader was charismatic because of her ability to inspire others to do more and to provide "great work" (Fatimah). Additionally, in an essay on Hayat Sindi the author notes that this leader is charismatic because she is able to serve the needs of her followers. As a result of this characteristic, Sindi is a leader that people like and one that inspires others (Deena). Based on these descriptions it is evident that many students believe that charisma is a desirable trait that provides the leader with a significant degree of effectiveness.

Table (1)
Leadership Survey Q1. Who is your favorite female Saudi leader not related to you?

S. No.	Individual named by respondent	Frq.	%
1	Ameerah Al Taweel	14	20.0%
2	Inconclusive responses	14	19.8%
3	Hayat Sindi	3	4.2%
4	Lubna Olayan	3	4.2%
5	Muna Abu Sulayman	3	4.2%
6	No response	3	4.2%
7	Alaa Al Hariri	2	2.8%
8	Fatima Batook	2	2.8%
9	Ghada Al Mutairi	2	2.8%
10	Manal Al Sharif	2	2.8%
11	Princess Al Johara Al Saud	2	2.8%
12	Zaha Hadid	2	2.8%
13	Adila Al Saud	1	1.4%
14	Ayla Ashadawi	1	1.4%
15	Deena Al Faris	1	1.4%
16	Dr Salwa Al Hezza	1	1.4%
17	Dr Samia Al-Amoudi	1	1.4%
18	Dr. Howaida Al-Qethamy	1	1.4%
19	Hana Al Zuhair	1	1.4%
20	Iman Al Qahtani	1	1.4%
21	Irrelevant responses	1	1.4%
22	Lujain Omran	1	1.4%
23	Majda Abu Ras	1	1.4%
24	Manal Al Dowayan	1	1.4%
25	Noura Al Fayez	1	1.4%
26	Princess Noura Al Saud	1	1.4%
27	Rajaa Al Sanea	1	1.4%
28	Rasha Al Hoshan	1	1.4%
29	Razan Alazzouni	1	1.4%
30	Sarah Attar	1	1.4%
31	Thoraya Obaid	1	1.4%
Total		71	100.0%

Table (2)
Leadership Survey Q2. State the names of three (famous public figures) Saudi female leaders that you believe overcame a challenge?

S. No.	Individual named among 3 public figures stated by respondent	Frq.	%
1	Inconclusive responses	41	22.6%
2	Ameerah Al-Taweel	19	10.6%
3	Hayat Sindi	18	10.0%
4	Fatima Batook	12	6.7%
5	Muna Abu Sulayman	12	6.7%
6	Manal Al Sharif	9	5.0%
7	No responses	9	5.0%
8	Princess Al Johara Al Saud	5	2.8%
9	Irrelevant responses	4	2.2%
10	Lubna Olayan	4	2.2%
11	Sarah Attar	4	2.2%
12	Wojdan Shaherkani	4	2.2%
13	Adila Al Saud	3	1.7%
14	Ghada Al Mutairi	3	1.7%
15	Noura Al Fayez	3	1.7%
16	Razan Alazzouni	3	1.7%
17	Alaa Al Hariri	2	1.1%
18	Dr Samia Al Amoudi	2	1.1%
19	Hanadi Al Hindi	2	1.1%
20	Lolowah Al Faisal	2	1.1%
21	Rajaa Al Sanea	2	1.1%
22	Amena Al Jassim	1	0.5%
23	Amira Al Fadl	1	0.5%
24	Ayla Ashadawi	1	0.5%
25	Deena Al Faris	1	0.5%
26	Dr Salwa Al Hezza	1	0.5%
27	Dr. Howaida Al-Qethamy	1	0.5%
28	Hana Al Zuhair	1	0.5%
29	Heba Jamal	1	0.5%
30	Iman Al Qahtani	1	0.5%
31	Lubna Al Ansari	1	0.5%
32	Lujain Omran	1	0.5%
33	Majda Abu Ras	1	0.5%
34	Nabilah Al-Tunisi	1	0.5%
35	Princess Mashael Al Saud	1	0.5%
36	Samaher Mously	1	0.5%
37	Samar Badawi	1	0.5%
38	Sarah Abu Abdullah	1	0.5%
39	Thoraya Obaid	1	0.5%
40	Zaha Hadid	1	0.5%

S. No.	Individual named among 3 public figures stated by respondent	Frq.	%
Total		182*	100.0%

*Since not all the respondents gave exactly three names, the percentage is calculated from the total names received, including no responses, irrelevant responses, and inconclusive responses.

Table (3)
Leadership Survey Q3. State one female Saudi leader that you believe influenced the society negatively.

S. No.	Individual named by respondent	Frq.	%
1	Manal Al Sharif	29	40.8%
2	No responses	23	32.4%
3	Inconclusive responses	8	11.4%
4	Irrelevant response	3	4.2%
5	Dr Rawda Al Yousef	1	1.4%
6	Aseel Omran	1	1.4%
7	Fawzia Al Nafea	1	1.4%
8	Lubna Olayan	1	1.4%
9	Muna Abu Sulayman	1	1.4%
10	Hanan Younis (a.k.a Wa'ad)	1	1.4%
11	Noura Al Fayez	1	1.4%
12	Princess Al Johara Al Saud	1	1.4%
Total		71	100.0%

Table (4)
Leadership Survey Q4. State one female Saudi leader that you believe influenced the society positively.

S. No.	Individual named by respondent	Frq.	%
1	Ameera Al Taweel	13	18.3%
2	Inconclusive responses	11	15.6%
3	No response	11	15.6%
4	Hayat Sindi	6	8.5%
5	Noura Al Fayez	4	5.6%
6	Muna Abu Sulayman	3	4.2%
7	Princess Al Johara Al Saud	3	4.2%
8	Dr Samia Al-Amoudi	2	2.8%
9	Lolowah Al Faisal	2	2.8%
10	Sara Attar	2	2.8%
11	Irrelevant response	2	2.8%
12	Amina Al-Jassim	1	1.4%
13	Rajaa Al Sanea	1	1.4%

14	Princess Nora Al Saud	1	1.4%
15	Majda Abu Ras	1	1.4%
16	Deena Al Faris	1	1.4%
17	Dr Salwa Al Hezza	1	1.4%
18	Iman Al Qahtani	1	1.4%
19	Nassimah Al Sadah	1	1.4%
20	Hanadi Al Hindi	1	1.4%
21	Lubna Olayan	1	1.4%
22	Fatima Batook	1	1.4%
23	Adila Al Saud	1	1.4%
Total		71	100.0%

Table (5)
Leadership Survey Q5. List 3 qualities that you look for in a leader.

S. No.	Quality named by respondent (1 of 3)	Frq.	%
1	Confidence	11	4.6%
2	Integrity	11	4.6%
3	Communication skills	9	3.8%
4	Good listener	9	3.8%
5	Respect for fellow members	9	3.8%
6	Unbiased	9	3.8%
7	An open mind	8	3.4%
8	Motivation	8	3.4%
9	Decisiveness	7	3.0%
10	Education & Knowledge	7	3.0%
11	Honesty	7	3.0%
12	Optimism	7	3.0%
13	Responsibility	7	3.0%
14	Trustworthiness	6	2.5%
15	Critical thinking skills	5	2.1%
16	Loyalty	5	2.1%
17	Risk-taker	5	2.1%
18	Self-reliance	5	2.1%
19	Strong beliefs	5	2.1%
20	Ambition	4	1.7%
21	Cooperation	4	1.7%
22	Helpful	4	1.7%
23	No response	4	1.7%

S. No.	Quality named by respondent (1 of 3)	Frq.	%
24	Patience	4	1.7%
25	Team worker	4	1.7%
26	A Problem solver	3	1.3%
27	Courage	3	1.3%
28	Dedication	3	1.3%
29	Faith	3	1.3%
30	Flexibility	3	1.3%
31	Humility	3	1.3%
32	Power	3	1.3%
33	Punctuality	3	1.3%
34	Righteousness	3	1.3%
35	Strength	3	1.3%
36	Truthfulness	3	1.3%
37	Vision	3	1.3%
38	Amiable	2	0.9%
39	Concern	2	0.9%
40	Control	2	0.9%
41	Convincing power	2	0.9%
42	Creativity	2	0.9%
43	Dignity	2	0.9%
44	Hard working	2	0.9%
45	Insignificant responses*	2	0.9%
46	Kindness	2	0.9%
47	Participation	2	0.9%
48	Adaptability	1	0.4%
49	Credibility	1	0.4%
50	Determination	1	0.4%
51	Enthusiasm	1	0.4%
52	Experience	1	0.4%
53	Fame	1	0.4%
54	Influence	1	0.4%
55	Inspiration	1	0.4%
56	Poise	1	0.4%
57	Productive	1	0.4%
58	Self-esteem	1	0.4%

S. No.	Quality named by respondent (1 of 3)	Frq.	%
59	Selflessness	1	0.4%
60	Systematic	1	0.4%
61	Understanding	1	0.4%
62	Wisdom	1	0.4%
Total		235	100.0%

*Insignificant responses include those characteristics that were broad and didn't attribute to specific trait (e.g., personality instead of strong personality).

Table (6)

S. No.	Name	Information
1	Adila Al Saud	Princess and influential public figure in terms of Saudi female empowerment
2	Alaa Al Hariri	Interior designer
3	Ameerah Al Taweel	Saudi princess and philanthropist
4	Amena Al Jassim	
5	Amira Al Fadl	
6	Aseel Omran	Singer
7	Ayla Ashadawi	Businesswoman and member of the board of the young businessmen council at Eastern Province Chamber of Commerce
8	Deena Al Faris	Businesswoman and member of board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce
9	Dr Rawda Al Yousef	An activist opposed to political powers for Saudi women
10	Dr Salwa Al Hezza	Renowned ophthalmologist
11	Dr Samia Al-Amoudi	Chairwoman of a breast cancer association
12	Dr. Howaida Al-Qethamy	Well known pediatric heart surgeon
13	Fatima Batook	Successful businesswoman and motivational speaker
14	Fawzia Al Nafea	Fashion designer
15	Ghadah Al Mutairi	Celebrated scientist
16	Hana Al Zuhair	Deputy Secretary General of the Prince Sultan Fund
18	Hanadi Al Hindi	First Saudi woman to become a commercial airline pilot
19	Hanan Younis (a.k.a Wa'ad)	Singer
20	Hayat Sindi	Medical scientist and one of the

No.	Name	Description
		first female members of the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia
21	Heba Jamal	Presenter, and the youngest on the Arabian Business list of 100 most influential Arab women (2011)
22	Iman Al Qahtani	Journalist
23	Lolowah Al Faisal	Economist & one of the most publicly visible female members of the Saudi Royal Family
24	Lubna Al Ansari	News presenter
25	Lubna Olayan	CEO of the Olayan Financing Company
26	Lujain Omran	Singer
27	Majda Abu Ras	Environmentalist and NASA Researcher
28	Manal Al Dowayan	Contemporary artist
29	Manal Al Sharif	Activist and avid supporter of Saudi female driving
30	Muna Abu Sulayman	Muslim Media personality and former founding Secretary General of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation
31	Nabilah Al-Tunisi	Director of the Ras Tanura Integrated Project (RTIP) a.k.a Iron Lady
32	Noura Al Fayez	the first woman to hold a cabinet-level office in Saudi Arabia
33	Princess Al Johara Al Saud	Partner and promoter of Autism Speaks and related organizations
34	Princess Nora Al Saud	Businesswoman and founder of Princess Nora University (PNU)
35	Rajaa Al Sanea	Popular novelist and author of the book 'Girls of Riyadh'
36	Razan Alazzouni	Fashion designer
37	Samaher Mously	One of the first Saudi women to scale Mt. Everest along with 10 others.
38	Samar Badawi	Physical abuse survivor and human rights activist
39	Sarah Attar	First Saudi female to participate in the Olympics (London 2012)
40	Thoraya Obaid	Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund
41	Wojdan Shaherkani	First Saudi female to participate in the Olympics (London 2012)

Table (7)
Comparison of Responses That State "Manal Al Sharif"

Questions	%
No. of people who named Manal Al Sharif in Q1 (favorite Saudi female leader)	2.8%
No. of people who named Manal Al Sharif in Q2 (one of 3 Saudi females who overcame a challenge	5.0%
No. of people who named Manal Al Sharif in Q3 (a negative influence)	40.8%
No. of people who named Manal Al Sharif in Q4 (a positive influence)	0.0%
No. of people who named Manal Al Sharif in Q1 and Q3	1.4%
No. of people who named Manal Al Sharif in Q2 and Q3	7.0%

Table (8)

Questions	No. of responses
No. of people who named Ameerah Al Taweel in Q1 (favorite Saudi female leader)	20%
No. of people who named Ameerah Al Taweel in Q2 (one of 3 Saudi females who overcame a challenge	10.6%
No. of people who named Ameerah Al Taweel in Q3 (a negative influence)	0.0%
No. of people who named Ameerah Al Taweel in Q4 (a positive influence)	18.3%
No. of people who named Ameerah Al Taweel in Q1 and Q4	7.0%
No. of people who named Ameerah Al Taweel in Q2 and Q4	11.3%

Inconclusive responses include those names that couldn't produce sufficient information to suit the concerned question or were too ambiguous.

Irrelevant responses include those names that didn't fit the specified criteria i.e. either deceased or not Saudi.

Interpretations:

The participants in the concerned survey comprise of students enrolled in a leadership class at Prince Mohammed Bin Fahd University (PMU). The results point towards the following:

From the above tables, I deduced that there is a clear affirmative attitude towards Ameerah Al Taweel as well as a distinct negative opinion about Manal Al Sharif. Manal Al Sharif disobeyed the law that stated that women are not allowed to drive. Her action was viewed negatively and might actually harm the impetus for women to drive in Saudi Arabia.

However, one can see that the respondents cannot subjectively distinguish between a public leader and a public figure. This evident in the fact that few respondents have named Manal Al Sharif as their favorite leader and in contrast, a negative influence as well.

The high percentage of inconclusive responses indicates the lack of general knowledge and clear understanding of a leader

as well as the possibility of simply naming random women to get extra credit.

Summary

Synthesis of the results noted from the Saudi student essays on female leadership reveal that there are a number of characteristics possessed by female leaders that students view as important to the development of effective leadership. The ability to persevere, to be a pioneer in a particular field, to excel in a male dominated field, to achieve a dream or lifelong goal and to be a role model or someone who inspires were all consistently noted as components of effective leadership. When juxtaposed against the common leadership styles identified in the essays—e.g., democratic and charismatic—it is clear that the attributes of the leader and the leadership style are interconnected. For instance, the ability of the leader to inspire and serve as a role model is commensurate with the use of charismatic leadership while achieving excellence in a male dominated field could be linked with the ability to meet the needs of followers or a democratic leadership style. Based on an analysis of the student essays, it is possible to better understand what the students believe are good leadership practice and what is effective for achieving success in a leadership role.

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