

*Full Length Research Paper*

## **Saudi Female Students' Perceptions of Leadership: An Overview**

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**Very few researches have highlighted Arab women leadership perceptions. The aim of this research study is to investigate Saudi female university students' perceptions of leadership. In order to address the aim of this study, data were collected from 50 female students at the University of Dammam who were attending various colleges, namely the College of Science, the College of Education, and the College of Arts. The data-gathering process included asking a random sample of students to complete a questionnaire and administering it to them at the end of the semester. The review of the results of this research showed that there are statistically significant differences in attitudes among female students towards leadership.**

**Keywords:** Higher education in Saudi Arabia, Leadership in Saudi Arabia, Female students' education in Saudi Arabia.

### **Introduction**

The aim of this research study is to gain insight into Saudi female university students' perceptions of leadership. Saudi Arabia is the wealthiest country in the Middle East and has directed its full attention a great deal of its attention in recent years to investing in human capital.

Recent researches, in some leadership journals, like *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, have focused on females and leadership and on ways in which societies can be reshaped in order to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and durable future. Despite significant advances in education and professional achievement, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions in politics, education, communities and business around the globe. In many countries, policy-makers have responded by introducing gender quotas in politics and, increasingly, many have expressed an interest in requiring gender quotas for organizations (Shura Council Law, Royal Decree no. A/91). According to Pande and Ford (2011), while female suffrage did not exist in 1890, women had obtained the right to vote in 96 percent of the countries in the world by 1994. The few remaining countries have also moved toward implementing female suffrage in recent years (DuBois, 1998). For instance, women obtained the right to vote in Oman in 2003, in Kuwait in 2005, and in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in 2006 (Kelly, 2009). These advances have been followed by an increase in the female share of registered voters around the world. Given the increasing levels of political leverage that

women have (voting, holding highly political positions, etc), it is important to assess how they perceive leadership.

In order to address the aim of this study, data were collected from 50 female students at the University of Dammam in Saudi Arabia and an analysis was conducted to see how these female students perceive leadership. As recently cited by Alexander (2011), universities and higher education institutions are increasingly focusing on developing students' leadership skills as a means of preparing them for the job market (Shertzer & Schuh, 2004; Yarrish, Zula & Davis, 2010). This trend was motivated by the fact that leadership skills are not innate but instead are acquired through education, training and mentorship (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). Indeed, leadership is one of the important skills that one needs to acquire in order to succeed in one's professional life. According to Gordon (1995), "Career advancement opportunities . . . will be greatest for those who developed, practiced, and refined leadership skills as part of their educational preparation" (p. 3). Researches have confirmed that there is a relationship between education and leadership skills. For instance, Hobbs and Spencer (2002) found that students' participation in an educational program improved their perceived leadership skills. Similarly, Alexander (2011) found that female students' perceived leadership skills improved after enrolling in a leadership class.

A recent analysis about teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia (Alnassar & Dow, 2013) indicated that the substantial

development that has occurred in Saudi higher education will only bear significant fruit if students develop confidence and effective learning skills. Self-confidence is a major component of students' perceptions of leadership.

## **Literature Review**

### **Culture and its Effect on Leadership**

Higher education in Saudi Arabia is currently in a process of reform (Hamdan Alghamdi, 2016). Recently, the main focus was on Women's education. For example, only in 1962 women were permitted to join universities in Saudi Arabia as irregular part-time students at the College of Arts and Administrative Sciences of King Saud University which was established in 1957 (Jamjoom & Kelly, 2013). From 1990 to 2004 female enrollments in Saudi Arabian universities witnessed an astonishing 512 percent growth representing one of the highest rates in the world (Jamjoom & Kelly, 2013, p.121). Currently, women make up more than 60 percent of Saudi university enrollment, and more than 20 percent of the students benefiting from overseas scholarships are women (House, 2012). These advancements in women's education, together with King Abdullah's initiative of selecting 30 women to form the first female cohort in the Saudi parliament in 2013, provided a great opportunity of inspiration to women in general and to young women in particular to aspire to leadership positions.

According to Alexander (2012), culture influences multiple areas related to leadership, such as the importance of achieving consensus and followers' expectation that the leader will reduce uncertainty. Researchers have identified some universal aspects of leadership that are valued in all cultures, including the need for leaders to be authentic and to demonstrate genuine concern for the well-being of their followers (House et al., 2002). It is important to understand the effect of gender and cultural differences on leadership because individuals are increasingly expected to lead groups and teams composed of individuals of both genders and drawn from many different cultures. This is referred to as cross-cultural leadership. Cross-cultural leadership has developed as a way to understand leaders who work in the newly globalized market. Today's international organizations require leaders who can adjust to different environments quickly and work with partners and employees of other cultures (House et al., 2001). For example, leaders in international organizations are often in positions in which they are required to manage individuals from different cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Leading a culturally diverse group of individuals is more complex than leading a group of individuals from the same culture because of differences in the perceptions of the role of the leader and differences in the expectations of followers regarding the specific behaviors of the leader.

### **Gender Influences on Leadership**

Some gender disparities generally exist in the approach to leadership, though all of these disparities are not necessarily present in individual cases. These disparities are largely based on societal expectations of particular behaviors that are

stereotypically associated with gender. For example, men are expected to act independently and assertively and to use a decision-making approach that is based primarily on rationality. They are also expected to adopt a more autocratic leadership style. Conversely, women are expected to act collaboratively and to give greater consideration to building consensus through a participative leadership style (Payne & Cangemi, 2001). Women are also expected to use a decision-making approach that is based more on intuition than on rationality (Alexander, 2012).

In the actual practice of leadership, men tend to adopt a task-oriented style, while women tend to adopt a relationship-oriented style. Most individuals blend elements of the task- and relationship-oriented approaches. Because of their tendency toward task orientation, men tend to be effective leaders when the activities necessary to achieve an objective have a clearly defined beginning and end. Conversely, the relationship orientation of most women increases their effectiveness when the activities necessary to achieve an objective are ongoing and lack a clearly defined end state (Payne & Cangemi, 2001). Northouse (2010) argued that women are more effective leaders in government, education and social-services organizations because the activities of these organizations rely heavily on the use of interpersonal skills. Nevertheless, a female leader may find a task orientation is the most effective approach for addressing leadership issues in particular situations. Because in these cases the female leader is not using a leadership style that is traditional for women, some of her subordinates might attempt to resist the female leader's efforts to exert influence. As a result of this phenomenon, female leaders should assess whether the use of assertiveness and a strong task orientation would have negative consequences in the specific situation (Payne & Cangemi, 2001).

Conger and Benjamin (1999) indicated that leadership development is not just about paying attention to the individual learner and his or her coaching needs, but it is also about paying attention to the learner's changing behaviors. Institutions need to build effective future leaders by providing individual professional development experiences and training opportunities that help emerging leaders learn how to effectively translate mission, vision, strategic planning, and concepts of leadership into practice (Fiedler, 1996).

### **Saudi Female Students' Perception of Leadership**

Alexander (2012) demonstrated a number of characteristics possessed by female leaders that students view as being important for the development of effective leadership including the ability to persevere, to be a pioneer in a particular field, to excel in a male-dominated field, to achieve a dream or life-long goal and to be a role model or someone who inspires were all consistently noted as being 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 her leadership style are interconnected. For instance, the ability of a leader to inspire and serve as a role model is associated with the use of a charismatic

style while achieving excellence in a male-dominated field could be linked with the ability to meet the needs of followers or with the use of a democratic style. Based on an analysis of the student essays, it is possible to better understand what the students believe constitutes sound leadership practice and what is effective for achieving success in a leadership role (Alexander, 2012).

### Method

Students from various colleges of the University of Dammam, namely the College of Science, the College of Education and the College of Arts, participated in this study. They were fifty female students. Researchers aimed to gain those students' insight of leadership. A questionnaire consisted of 15 questions were developed and checked by two faculty members for reliability and appropriateness. The study was conducted in which the researchers invited a random sample of students to complete a questionnaire at the end of the semester. The answers were analyzed in order to identify the students' perceptions. All of the questionnaires were valid as the researchers reviewed the students' answers with the students.

The questions are set out hereunder.

Question 1: What are the reasons for training on effective leadership skills at the university stage?

Question 2: What is the concept of effective leadership from the perspective of female students?

Question 3: What is the importance of acquiring leadership skills?

Question 4: What are the features and characteristics of an effective leader?

Question 5: Could a Saudi woman be successful as a leader? What would be the reason or reasons for her success?

### Results and Findings

#### Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The pretest process was applied to a sample composed of 15 individuals; the instrument initially was applied to the sample then it was reapplied to the sample with a time lag of two weeks. The value of the reliability coefficient was 0.857. After calculating the self-validity, it was found to be 0.926.

Table 1

*Distribution of the study sample according to faculty type*

Faculty	N	Percentage
Theoretical	25	59.5 %
Practical	17	40.5 %
Total	42	100 %

The data set out in the Table 1 indicate that the study sample was distributed according to faculty type with 59.5 percent being completed in the theoretical faculties and 40.5 percent being completed in the practical faculties.

Question 1: What are the reasons for training on effective leadership skills at the university stage?

All the participants of the study sample consider training in effective leadership skills to be an important element of a university education. This is due to the fact that effective leadership is one of the prerequisites for creating a civil society. It is essential to continue exerting effort in training, education, research, practice and application until one achieves success as a leader. This may lead to increased knowledge with effective leadership skills and to greater linkages between the behavioral and administrative sciences on the one hand and valid evidence on the other hand.

Question 2: What is the concept of effective leadership from the perspective of female students?

Table 2

*The perspectives of members of the study sample regarding the concept of effective leadership*

Concept	N	%
A collection of skills and practices aimed at enabling those who possess them to achieve a particular goal	6	14.3
The ability to lead the teamwork, in terms of the allocation of tasks according to the abilities of each team member and the identification and solving of problems facing the team	5	12.0
A communication process between the leader and the team as well as their effect on each other to achieve the goal	5	12.0
Decision-making ability	4	9.5
The ability to manage crises efficiently	4	9.5
The ability to lead the team and achieve a particular goal through insistence, persistence, resolution and the making of sound decisions	4	9.5
Skills and strategies enabling the leader to utilize human, financial and intellectual resources to achieve a particular goal	3	7.1
The feeling of responsibility and the successful navigation of the issues in order to achieve a desired goal	3	7.1
The ability to make a change	3	7.1
Working on achieving the goals and requirements in order to be able to make the changes necessary to keep up with the times	3	7.1
The skills that might be acquired and that affect the team and enable it to achieve its goal	2	4.8
Total	42	100

The results in Table 2 indicate that 14.3 percent of the members of the study sample believe that the concept of effective

leadership is represented in a collection of skills and practices that are aimed at enabling those who possess them to achieve a particular goal, while 12 percent believe that it is the ability to lead the teamwork in terms of allocating tasks according to the abilities of each team member and in terms of identifying and solving the problems facing the team. Twelve percent of the members of the study sample consider it to be a communication process between the leader and the team as well as their effect on each other in order to achieve the goal, while 9.5 percent see it as the ability to make a decision. Furthermore, 9.5 percent of the participants believe that effective leadership is the ability to manage crises efficiently; 9.5 percent believe it is the ability to lead the team and achieve a particular goal through insistence, persistence, resolution and the taking of sound decisions; 7.1 percent believe it is composed of the skills and strategies that enable the leader to utilize human, financial and intellectual resources to achieve a particular goal; 7.1 percent believe that it is composed of the feeling of responsibility and the successful navigation of the issues in order to achieve a desired goal; 7.1 percent believe it to be the ability to make a change; and another 7.1 percent believe it to be the ability to complete the requirements for making the changes necessary for keeping up with the times. Finally, 4.85 percent of the study sample believes that effective leadership is composed of the arts and skills that might be acquired and that affects the team and enable it to achieve its goal.

Question 3: What is the importance of acquiring leadership skills?

Table 3

*The perspectives of members of the study sample regarding the importance of acquiring leadership skills*

Concept	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Scale
Serves as the melting pot in which all the concepts, strategies and policies are combined	4.19	2.59	59.9
Provides for the controlling and solving of work problems, the settlement of conflicts and the establishment of a balance among opinions	4.14	2.031	59.1
Keeps up to date with the surrounding changes and utilizes them for the service of the institution	4.14	1.90	59.1
Makes it easy for the institution to achieve its planned goals	4.14	2.03	59.1
Acts as the liaison between the employees and the institution's plans and future prospects.	4.02	1.89	57.4

Serves as a positive power in the institution and mitigates the negative aspects as much as possible	3.86	1.76	55.1
Develops, trains and cares for individuals, taking into consideration the fact that they are the most important resource within the institution	3.55	1.810	50.7

The data set out in the table above indicate that 59.5 percent of the study sample believe that the importance of acquiring leadership skills is represented by the fact that it is the melting pot in which all of the concepts, strategies and policies are combined. Of all the participants in the study sample, 59.1 percent believe that effective leadership includes controlling and solving work problems, ensuring the settlement of conflicts and striking a balance among divergent opinions as well as keeping up to date with the surrounding changes, utilizing them for the service of the institution and making it easy for the institution to achieve its goals. Furthermore, 57.4 percent believe that leaders serve as the liaison between the employees and the institution's vision and mission; 55.1 percent consider leaders to be a positive power in the institution and to help mitigate the negative aspects as much as possible; and 50.7 percent believe them to contribute to the development, training and caring of individuals, and thus consider them to be the most important resource within the institution.

Table 4

*The perspectives within the study sample regarding the requirements of an effective leader*

Requirements	N	Percentage
The ability to resolve problems and crises	15	35.7 %
Fairness, sincerity, honesty, courage and transparency	12	28.6 %
Insistence and determination	10	23.8 %
Efficiency	10	23.8 %
Assuming responsibility	8	19.1 %
Goal-orientation	8	19.1 %
The ability to analyze and make decisions	7	16.7 %
Commitment	7	16.7 %
Tolerance	7	16.7 %
Cooperation	6	14.3 %
Consultation and listening to others	6	14.3 %

Experience	6	14.3 %
Planning before taking action	6	14.3 %
The ability to persuade others and communicate with them	6	14.3 %
A sense of leadership	5	11.9 %
Self-confidence	4	9.5 %
Identifying the positive and negative points	3	7.1 %
Loyalty to the team	3	7.1 %
Goal planning	3	7.1 %
Balancing different matters	2	4.8 %

In response to a question about the requirements of an effective leader, the participants response illustrated (Table 4) that 35.7 percent of the study sample believe that the requirements of an effective leader include the ability to solve problems and crises, while 28.6 percent believe that effective leaders display fairness, sincerity, honesty, courage and transparency. Furthermore, 23.8 percent of the study sample believe that effective leaders are distinguished by persistence and determination; 19.1 percent believe that they are able to assume responsibility and pursue goals; 16.7 percent believe that they are able to analyze and make decisions, while displaying commitment and tolerance; 14.3 percent believe that they have extensive experience and are skilled in cooperating, consulting, listening to others, planning before taking action, and persuading others and communicating with them; 11.9 percent believe that they embody a sense of leadership; 9.5 percent believe that they embody self-confidence; 7.1 percent believe that they are able to identify positive and negative points, are loyal and are able to make plans to achieve goals; and 4.8 percent believe that they are skilled in striking a balance among competing issues.

Question 4: What are the features and characteristics of an effective leader?

Table 5  
*The perspectives of the study sample regarding the features and characteristics of an effective leader*

Features and Characteristics	N	Percentage
Motivation	18	42.9 %
Honesty, credibility and transparency	16	38.1 %
Assuming responsibility	14	33.3 %
Fairness	13	30.9 %
Efficiency	13	30.9 %
Determination and courage	8	19.1 %

Social intelligence	8	19.1 %
Flexibility	7	16.7 %
Aspiration and future vision	6	14.3 %
Adaptability to change	6	14.3 %
Patience and wisdom	5	11.9 %
High activity and a love of work	5	11.9 %
Problem-solving ability	3	7.10 %

It was indicated from Table 5 that 42.9 percent of the study sample believe that the features and characteristics of an effective leader include motivation, while 38.1 percent believe that they include honesty, credibility and transparency. Furthermore, 33.3 percent of the study sample believe that the features and characteristics of an effective leader include assuming responsibility; 30.9 percent believe that they include fairness and competence; 19.1 percent believe that they include determination, courage and social intelligence; 16.75 percent believe that they include flexibility; 14.3 percent believe that they include aspiration, future vision and adaptability to change; 11.9 percent believe that they include patience, wisdom, high activity and a love of work; and 7.1 believe that they include problem-solving ability.

Table 6  
*The perspectives of the study sample regarding the rights of an effective leader*

Rights	N	Percentage
Being respected and obeyed	8	19.1 %
Receiving commitments and assistance from others	7	16.7 %
Not being interrupted and being respected	6	14.3 %
Being rewarded	5	11.9 %
Being discussed	4	9.5 %
Being provided with facilities	4	9.5 %

The rights of an effective leader question indicates (Table 6) that 19.1 percent of the study sample believe that the rights of an effective leader include being respected and obeyed, while 16.7 percent believe that that these rights include receiving commitments and assistance from others. Furthermore, 14.3 percent of the study sample believes that these rights include not being interrupted and being respected; 11.9 percent believe that they include being rewarded; and 9.5 percent believe that they include being discussed and being provided with facilities.

Table 7

*The perspectives of the study sample regarding the duties of an effective leader*

Duties	N	Percentage
Following up	13	30.9 %
Equity and fairness	17	40.5 %
Urging on work	8	19.1 %
Motivation	7	16.7 %
Pursuing the goal	7	16.7 %
Avoiding spying	7	16.7 %
Guiding the team	6	14.3 %
Consulting and cooperating	6	14.3 %
Distributing tasks	5	11.9 %
Acting with honesty and credibility	5	11.9 %
Rewarding and encouraging	5	11.9 %
Providing clarity	2	4.8 %

When participants were asked about the duties of an effective leader, the data set out in Table 7 shown above indicate that 30.9 percent of the study sample believe that the duties of an effective leader include following up, while 40.5 percent believe that they include equity and fairness. In addition, 19.1 percent of the study sample believe that they include urging on work; 16.7 percent believe that they include motivation, pursuing the goal and avoiding spying; 14.3 percent believe that they include guiding the team, consultation and cooperation; 11.9 percent believes that they include distributing tasks, acting with honesty and credibility, and rewarding and encouraging the team; and 4.8 percent believe that they include providing clarity.

Table 8

*The perspectives within the study sample regarding how to learn the elements of leadership*

How to learn the elements of leadership	N	Percentage
Through situations	14	33.3
Through experience	13	30.9
Through persistence in learning	10	23.8
Through problem solving	9	21.4
Through crisis management and settlement	9	21.4
Through desiring, initiating and trying to solve problems in certain situations	8	19.1

Through self-confidence and polite and tactful speaking 7 16.7

Through control and guidance 5 11.9

The data set out in Table 8 indicated the response to the question “how does one learn the elements of leadership”. The results showed that 33.35 percent of the study sample believe that it is possible to learn the elements of leadership through situations, while 30.9 percent believe that these elements could be learned through experience. Furthermore, 23.8 percent of the study sample believe that they could be learned through persistence in learning; 21.4 percent believe that they could be learned through problem solving and crisis management; 19.1 percent believe that they could be discovered [learned?] through desiring, initiating and trying to solve problems in certain situations; 16.7 percent believe that they could be discovered learned through self-confidence and polite and tactful speaking; and 11.9 percent believe that they could be learned discovered through control and guidance.

Question 5: Could a Saudi woman be successful as a leader? What would be the reason for her success?

Table 9

*The perspectives within the study sample regarding the possibility of a Saudi woman being successful as a leader*

Faculty	N	Percentage
Yes	42	100 %
No	0.0	0.0 %
Total	42	100 %

The data set out in the table shown above indicate that the entire study sample believes that a Saudi woman could be successful as a leader.

Table 10

*The perspectives within the study sample regarding the reason for the success of a Saudi woman as a leader*

Faculty	N	Percentage
Assuming important positions in the country	42	100 %
Competent	30	71.3 %
Well-trained	35	83.3 %

The data shown in Table 10 indicated that the entire study sample thinks that a Saudi woman could be successful as a leader if she were to assume an important position in the country for which she is competent and trained.

A series of significant tests were performed to examine if there were any significant differences between the perspectives of the theoretical and practical faculties’ female students regarding the categories indicated in the previous questions. The results were as follows:

Question: Are there any significant differences between the perspectives of the theoretical and practical faculties' female

students regarding the concept and components of effective leadership?

Table 11

*Differences among the perspectives within the study sample regarding the concept and components of effective leadership according to the type of faculty*

Concept	Practical		Theoretical		Total		KA <sup>2</sup>	P-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
A collection of skills and practices aimed at enabling those who possess them to achieve a particular goal	3	7.1	3	7.1	6	14.3	0.264	0.608
The ability to lead the teamwork, in terms of the allocation of tasks according to the abilities of each team member, and to identify and solve the problems facing the team	3	7.1	2	4.8	5	12.0	0.898	0.343
A communication process between the leader and the team as well as its effect on each other in order to achieve the goal	2	4.8	3	7.1	5	12.0	0.001	0.982
Decision-making ability	2	4.8	2	4.8	4	9.5	0.166	0.683
The ability to manage crises efficiently	0	0	4	9.5	4	9.5	6.502	0.011
The ability to lead the team and achieve a particular goal through insistence, persistence, resolution and sound decision-making	1	2.8	3	7.1	4	9.5	0.440	0.507
Skills and strategies that enable the leader to utilize human, financial and intellectual resources to achieve a particular goal	2	4.8	1	2.8	3	7.1	0.920	0.338
The feeling of responsibility and careful navigation of the issues in order to achieve a particular goal	2	4.8	1	2.8	3	7.1	0.920	0.338
The ability to effectuate change	0	0	3	7.1	3	7.1	4.751	0.029
Working on achieving the goals and requirements so as to be able to make a change in order to keep up with the times	2	4.8	1	2.8	3	7.1	0.920	0.338
The arts and skills that might be acquired and that affect the team and lead it to achieve a particular goal	0	0	2	4.8	2	4.8	3.088	0.079

The data set out in Table 11 demonstrated that there are no statistically significant differences among the perspectives of the members of study sample according to the type of faculty in regard to the concept of effective leadership except in terms of their choice of leadership concept (the ability to manage crises efficiently and the ability to make a change) as there is a

statistically significant difference between them (this was the perspective of the theoretical faculties).

Question: Are there any significant differences between the perspectives of the theoretical and practical faculties' female students regarding the importance of acquiring the leadership skills?

Table 12

*Differences among the perspectives within the study sample regarding the importance of acquiring leadership skills according to the type of faculty*

Importance	Practical		Theoretical		<i>t</i>	<i>P</i> -value
	N = 17		N = 25			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Acting as the pot in which all the concepts, strategies and policies are melted together	3.2353	2.43745	4.8400	2.52784	<b>2.048</b>	<b>0.047</b>
Controlling and solving work problems, achieving the settlement of conflicts and striking a balance among competing opinions	3.8824	1.83311	4.3200	2.17409	0.681	0.500
Keeping up to date with the surrounding changes and utilizing them for the service of the institution	4.7647	1.71499	3.7200	1.94765	0.789	0.081
Making it easy for the institution to achieve its goals	4.4706	2.00367	3.9200	2.05994	0.860	0.395
Acting as the liaison between the employees and the institution's plans and future perceptions	3.7647	1.82104	4.2000	1.95789	0.727	0.471
Acting as a positive force in the institution and combatting negative aspects as much as possible	4.1176	2.02739	3.6800	1.57374	0.787	0.436
Developing, training and caring for the individuals considering them the most important resource	3.38824	2.23278	3.3200	1.46401	0.988	0.329

The data shown in Table 12 indicated that there are no statistically significant differences within the study sample according to the type of faculty in regard to the importance of acquiring leadership skills as the *t*-value has ranged between 0.681 and 0.988. The only exception is in terms of regarding them as the pot in which all the concepts, strategies and policies

are melted together. The practical faculties give them the third rank, while the theoretical faculties give them the fifth rank. The *t*-value reached 2.048.

Question: Are there any significant differences between the perspectives of the theoretical and practical faculties' female students regarding the requirements of an effective leader

Table 13

*The perspectives within the study sample regarding the requirements of an effective leader*

Requirement	Practical		Theoretical		Total		KA <sup>2</sup>	<i>P</i> -value
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	The ability to solve problems and crises	9	21.4	6	14.3	15		

Fairness, sincerity, honesty, courage and transparency	5	11.9	7	16.7	12	28.6	0.010	1.00
Insistence and determination	5	11.9	5	11.9	10	23.8	0.494	0.482
Efficiency	6	14.3	4	9.5	10	23.8	2.077	0.150
The assumption of responsibility	3	7.1	5	11.9	8	19.0	0.036	0.849
Goal-orientation	4	9.5	4	9.5	8	19.0	0.372	0.542
The ability to analyze and make decisions	5	11.9	2	4.8	7	16.7	3.340	0.068
Commitment	4	9.5	3	7.1	7	16.7	0.968	0.325
Tolerance	3	7.1	4	9.5	7	16.7	0.020	0.888
Cooperation	3	7.1	3	7.1	6	14.3	0.264	0.608
Consultation and listening to others	3	7.1	3	7.1	6	14.3	0.264	0.608
Experience	4	9.5	2	4.8	6	14.3	1.993	0.158
Planning before taking action	3	7.1	3	7.1	6	14.3	0.264	0.608
The ability to persuade others and to communicate with them	3	7.1	3	7.1	6	14.3	0.264	0.608
A sense of leadership	3	7.1	2	4.8	5	11.9	0.898	0.343
Self-confidence	2	4.8	2	4.8	4	9.5	0.166	0.683
Identification of positive and negative points	2	4.8	1	2.4	3	7.1	0.920	0.338
Loyalty	2	4.8	1	2.4	3	7.1	0.920	0.338
Goal planning	1	2.4	2	4.8	3	7.1	0.068	0.794
Balancing of issues	1	2.4	1	2.4	2	4.8	0.079	0.779

The data displayed in Table 13 indicated that there are no statistically significant differences within the study sample according to the type of the faculty in regard to requirements of an effective leader as the  $KA^2$  value ranged between 0.020 and 3.69.

Table 14

*Differences between the perspectives within the study sample regarding the features and characteristics of an effective leader according to the type of faculty*

Characteristic	Practical		Theoretical		Total		$KA^2$	P-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%		

Motivation	10	23.9	8	19.0	18	42.9	2.973	0.085
Honesty, credibility and transparency	7	16.7	9	21.4	16	38.0	0.115	0.735
Assumption of responsibility	7	16.7	7	16.7	14	33.3	0.791	0.374
Fairness	6	14.3	7	16.7	13	31.0	0.252	0.616
Competence	7	16.7	6	14.3	13	31.0	1.397	0.237
Determination and courage	5	11.9	3	7.1	8	19.0	1.990	0.158
Social intelligence	4	9.5	4	9.5	8	19.0	0.372	0.542
Flexibility	4	9.5	3	7.1	7	16.7	0.968	0.325
Aspiration and future vision	1	2.4	5	11.9	6	14.3	1.647	0.199
Adaptability to change	2	4.8	4	9.5	6	14.3	0.148	0.700
Patience and wisdom	0	0	5	11.9	5	11.9	<b>3.859</b>	<b>0.049</b>
High activity and a love of work	3	7.1	2	4.8	5	11.9	0.898	0.343
Problem solving	3	7.1	0	0	3	7.1	<b>4.751</b>	<b>0.029</b>

The data set out in the table shown above indicate that there are no statistically significant differences within the study sample according to the type of the faculty in regard to the features and characteristics of an effective leader. The KA<sup>2</sup> value ranged between 0.115 and 2.973, while there was a difference between the characteristics of patience and wisdom and the characteristic Table 15

of problem solving, as the KA<sup>2</sup> values were respectively 3.859 and 4.751.

Question: Are there any significant differences between the perspectives of the theoretical and practical faculties' female students regarding the rights of an effective leader?

*Differences between the perspectives within the study sample regarding the rights of an effective leader according to the type of faculty*

Rights	Practical		Theoretical		Total		KA <sup>2</sup>	P-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Being respected and obeyed	5	11.9	3	7.1	8	19.0	1.990	0.158
Receiving commitments and assistance	3	7.1	4	9.5	7	16.7	0.020	0.888
Not being interrupted and being respected	2	4.8	4	9.5	6	14.3	0.148	0.700
Being rewarded	3	7.1	2	4.8	5	11.9	0.898	0.343
Being discussed	1	2.4	3	7.1	4	9.5	0.440	0.507
Being provided with facilities	3	7.1	1	2.4	4	9.5	2.187	0.139

The data set out in Table 15 indicated that there are no statistically significant differences within the study sample

according to the type of the faculty in regard to the rights of an effective leader. The KA<sup>2</sup> value ranged between 0.020 and 2.187.

Question: Are there any significant differences between the perspectives of the theoretical and practical faculties' female students regarding the duties of an effective leader?  
 Table 16

students regarding the duties of an effective leader?

*Differences between the perspectives within the study sample regarding the duties of an effective leader*

Duties	Practical		Theoretical		Total		KA <sup>2</sup>	P-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Following up	8	19.1	5	11.9	13	31.0	3.467	0.063
Being equitable and fair	10	23.8	7	16.7	17	40.5	<b>3.990</b>	<b>0.046</b>
Urging on work	5	11.9	3	7.1	8	19.0	1.990	0.158
Being motivated	4	9.5	3	7.1	7	16.7	0.968	0.325
Being goal-oriented	6	14.3	1	2.4	7	16.7	<b>7.135</b>	<b>0.008</b>
Avoiding spying	2	4.8	5	11.9	7	16.7	0.494	0.482
Guiding the team	3	7.1	3	7.1	6	14.3	0.264	0.608
Consulting and cooperating	2	4.8	4	9.5	6	14.3	0.147	0.700
Allocating tasks	1	2.4	4	9.5	5	11.9	0.988	0.320
Acting with honesty and credibility	2	4.8	3	7.1	5	11.9	0.001	0.982
Rewarding and encouraging	3	7.1	2	4.8	5	11.9	0.898	0.343
Providing clarity	2	4.8	0	0	2	4.8	3.088	0.079

The data shown in Table 16 demonstrated that there are no statistically significant differences within the study sample according to the type of the faculty in regard to the duties of an effective leader as the KA<sup>2</sup> value ranged between 0.001 and 3.467 except for regarding them as including equity, fairness and

seeking to achieve goals as there is a difference between them, where the KA<sup>2</sup> values were respectively 3.990 and 7.135.

Question: Are there any significant differences between the perspectives of the theoretical and practical faculties' female students regarding learn the elements of leadership?

Table 17

*Differences between the perspectives within the study sample regarding how one can learn the elements of leadership*

How learn the elements of leadership	Practical		Theoretical		Total		KA <sup>2</sup>	P-value
	N	%	N	N	%	N		
Through situations	5	11.9	9	21.4	14	33.33	0.198	0.657
Through experience	4	9.5	9	21.4	13	31.0	0.736	0.391
Through persistence in learning	6	14.3	4	9.5	10	23.8	2.077	0.150
Through problem solving	4	9.5	5	11.9	9	21.4	0.075	0.784

Through crisis management and settlement	5	11.9	4	9.5	9	21.4	1.081	0.298
Through desiring, initiating and trying to solve problems in particular situations	3	7.1	5	11.9	8	19.0	0.036	0.849
Through self-confidence and polite and tactful speaking	4	9.5	3	7.1	7	16.7	0.968	0.325
Through control and guidance	1	2.4	4	9.5	5	11.9	0.988	0.320

The data set out Table 17 illustrated that there are no statistically significant differences within the study sample according to the type of the faculty in regard to how one can learn the elements of leadership as the  $K_A^2$  value ranged between 0.036 and 2.077.

### Discussion

A review of the results provided in this investigation does indicate that there are statistically significant differences in attitudes among university-age Saudi women towards leadership. The literature regarding women in leadership positions indicates that, in many instances, leadership is stereotyped as a masculine domain. The findings of the current investigation have important implications for educating women in leadership practice and for creating the foundational resources necessary to reduce the primarily masculine stereotypes associated with leadership practice. The conclusion is in agreement with some scholars, including Al-Tamimi (2004) who indicated that Saudi female academics are well represented in academic fields, which were traditionally a male preserve. This representation could be applied in leadership positions in which women are presented as deans, vice deans and department heads in all-female settings. Since 2009 Saudi female professors have served as the president of the largest female university campus (Princess Noura University in Riyadh) and of two female private universities in Jeddah (Effat University and Dar AlHekma University).

### Limitations

One limitation of this investigation is the fact that the study was limited to female students at the University of Dammam. Another limitation of the study is the fact that a small sample was used. Indeed, the 50 students who provided data represented only a small percentage of the total student population. The small sample and its lack of random selection reduce the generalizability of the findings.

### Future Research

In order to increase the level of understanding of the role that education plays in advancing the leadership competence of female students, additional research is necessary. Future research would include a control design in which students

would be randomly selected for participation in the leadership course. The control group would participate in a comparative study that would involve students enrolled at other universities in multiple provinces of Saudi Arabia. Future research should also consider the use of larger sample populations in order to incorporate a higher level of diversity into the range of women surveyed. Increased diversity within the sample population of the findings to the larger population of female students currently seeking higher education in Saudi Arabia is a way to make this study generalizable.

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