

# Female Leadership in Saudi Arabia's Higher Education: Exploring the Challenges and Barriers.

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- **Abstract:** This study aims to explore the barriers and challenges that hinder females to hold leadership positions in Saudi Arabia's higher education. To this end, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a phenomenological approach. This approach is particularly useful to understand the lived experiences of academicians in various universities of Saudi Arabia over the years. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed with NVivo 12. The findings suggested that the current barriers and challenges that females experience are lack of experience, work-family conflict, male perspective, gender segregation in universities, and socio-cultural factors. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by identifying and understanding the challenges that limit women's participation and presence in top positions in the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia.
- **Keywords:** barriers and challenges, phenomenological approach, interviews, Middle East