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The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSS)

**Exploring The Challenges for Women Trying To Assume Mid and Senior Leadership
Positions In Higher Education In Yemen**

A Thesis Proposal Submitted to
The Department of Educational Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in International and Comparative Education

Submitted by

Shaima Adel Al-Monefie

Under the supervision of Dr. Ibrahim M. Karkouti, Ed.D.

May, 2023

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Abstract

Women in higher education have the potential to serve as influential agents of change, impacting the economic and societal growth of their respective countries through acquiring leadership positions. However, in Yemen, female administrators face a range of challenges that hinder their progression into senior leadership positions within higher education institutions. This study shed light on these obstacles by conducting qualitative interviews with female administrators from a university in Northern Yemen. Drawing upon Morales's Academic Resilience Theoretical Framework for women's empowerment, the research examined the interplay of institutional, cultural, educational, and professional barriers and other challenges that prevent women from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education. The study's findings highlighted the impact of the low representation of women leaders in higher education and the absence of communal and familial support on Yemeni women's ability to ascend to senior leadership positions. The study concluded that the institutional and cultural barriers are strong barriers in undermining women's empowerment programs in Yemen. It highlighted the significant role that Yemeni women could play in driving change in the academic sector. It emphasized the importance of empowering and supporting female administrators to advance into senior leadership positions.

Keywords: Higher Education, Women Leadership, Yemen

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AUC	The American University in Cairo
IRB	The Institutional Review Board
MOE	Ministry of Education in Yemen
MoHE	The Ministry of Higher Education and Research
UK	United Kingdom
UN Women	United Nations Women

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study explored the challenges that prevent women from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education in Yemen. According to Smith (2020), countries with women leaders function better during times of crisis. Recent academic research shows that women leaders have responded better to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, women-led states had better outcomes in controlling the spread of COVID-19 than men-led states (Purkayastha et al., 2020). In addition, academic research and evidence highlights the importance of increasing women's participation in leadership positions in several fields, such as higher education (Teague, 2014).

Mid-Level and Senior Leadership Positions in Higher Education

On the one hand, a senior leadership position in higher education usually refers to executive-level positions that hold a significant amount of responsibility for the overall administration and management of academic institutions; such positions may include the president, vice presidents, provost, and vice chancellors (as cited in Boulay, 2022). Senior leaders in higher education are responsible for making decisions regarding academic standards, the vision and mission of the institution, policies, budgets, and programs. In addition, they work in collaboration with faculty, staff, and other stakeholders to develop strategic plans and other initiatives that align with the institution's mission and vision; however, they have the most authority and power when decisions are taken in the higher education institution (Kezar et al., 2020).

On the other hand, a mid-level leadership position in higher education is comprised of the university deans, heads of departments, program directors, associate professors, and assistants to the deans in universities (Pritchard et al., 2019). Gagliardi et al. (2017) point out that mid-level leadership positions involve intensive pressure and stress due to the different

continued tasks and roles (e.g., recruiting staff, admitting students, strategic planning) they must fulfill and accomplish throughout the academic year.

Background

Recent research conducted within 193 countries indicates that female executive leaders can increase the overall financial performance of their countries (Perkins & Phillips, 2019). In addition, estimates from the World Bank show that empowering educated and employed females can decrease the level of poverty (World Bank, 2022). The Ministry for Women and Equalities in the United Kingdom (UK) reported that corporations that advocate for gender variety are expected to gain more profits and earnings than those that do not (Meta, 2022). Involving more women in the workplace environment also facilitates communication between employees and diverse customers. Teague (2014) explains that promoting gender diversity involves diverse perspectives, backgrounds, ideas, and experiences. This involvement advocates for more innovation and widens the organization's views.

A United Nations Women (UN Women) report indicates that the gender gap in senior leadership positions is likely to remain for more than 130 years (UN Women, 2021). Another report highlights that women are diminished from decision-making and underrepresented in politics across the world. The report's data showed that among 133 countries, only two countries had reached 50% of female representation in local government. Internationally, only 24% of women leaders participate in senior leadership positions, such as chief executive officers (CEO). The stock market index has also shown that although 45% of women participate in the labor force, only 4% of females work as chief executive officers (Nichols College, n.d.).

Dunn et al. (2014) demonstrate that even in higher education, research is primarily male led. They indicate that leadership positions in higher education are dominated by men, limiting women's participation in academic work or decision-making process. They point out

that diminishing women from higher education is a critical problem, as it limits the diverse views and talents that women might share with the community. The authors highlight that ‘successful leadership’ could not be productive and effective without the different leadership styles and qualities that both women and men hold (Teague, 2014). In addition, women in mid-level and senior leadership positions in higher education bring positive impacts and advantages to academic institutions (Dunn et al., 2014). For instance, the participation of women brings more capital and developmental returns to their countries (Nielson & Huse 2010).

Teague (2014) specifies that although academic research and in-depth studies have shown the importance of increasing the number of women in positions of mid and senior leadership positions in higher education, only few women assume leadership positions in higher education. For example, Teague indicates that in 2014, only 26% of women leaders served as senior leaders in higher education institutions in the United States. In addition, a recent comparative study, published in 2021, concludes that there is a deficiency of scholarly papers regarding women leadership topics in higher education on a global level, such as the barriers that face to assume mid and senior positions in higher education (Maheshwari et al., 2021). The mentioned study reviews most of the studies over the last twenty years regarding women leadership in higher education and points out that although most of the countries lack literature and scientific work on the topic, Asia is the region with the least published data.

In Yemen, Mariam Al-Joufi, the vice president of the Gender Development Research and Studies Center at the University of Sana’a, emphasized that there will never be a real transition in the country’s development and change if women remain excluded from the educational system (Darem, 2014). The question here is how women can be involved in a society that discourages girls’ education until now. A report published by Oxfam in 2008

indicates that many Yemeni families support early marriage which stops/discourages females from pursuing their education (Mukred et al., 2008).

Accordingly, in Yemen, the women's leadership gap in economic affairs, politics, and education continues to be wide. The UN Women Initiative (2014) reported that Yemen achieved low female labor participation, ranking 138 out of 148 countries, indicating that women are underrepresented in the public sphere and economy. Another recent report, released in 2022 from the State of Civil Society (CIVICUS), shows that the ongoing conflicts and Covid19 pandemic in Yemen resulted in increasing the deterioration of female education and employment; for example, most women leaders left the country to escape war, conflicts, and the Covid19 pandemic (Atrakouti, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Analysis of the work of six different authors, who analyzed and reviewed scholarly work that focused on women leadership in war zones and health systems, indicate that, around the world, 40% of almost half a million employees who offer frontline services in emergencies and conflict are females (Patel et al., 2020). For over a decade, Yemen has been experiencing civil war and various conflicts and women have taken considerable responsibility towards the war and peacebuilding efforts; they have been successful in reducing conflict and advocating for peace in several cities, such as Mar'ab, Lahj, and Taiz (Stevens & Heinze, 2018). Through their investigations, Heinze and Stevens (2018) discovered that women activists and leaders in Yemen have productively collaborated with local governments and advocated for peace and ceasefire agreements. For example, women in Mar'ab have participated in the mediation of tribal conflicts. In Lahj, women have participated in allocating aid and capacity-building through increasing inhabitants' awareness of peacebuilding strategies and conflict resolution (Stevens & Heinze, 2018). Despite these

efforts, Yemeni women are still excluded from the decision-making process in academia and political organizations.

Higher education is another area that lacks equality and fairness in Yemen. According to Darem (2014), only 15.5% of professors are women. Having more educated and employed women leaders might end the conflict and reduce the overall poverty in Yemen. Abdullah (2021) illustrates that higher education is a prelude for women's empowerment and representation within economic and political spheres. However, women's access to education is decreasing due to the recent civil war and conflicts. This deterioration of female education prevents them from being employed in several sectors, such as higher education. It is hard for uneducated women to be represented in politics, economic affairs, education, or any decision-making position when they lack high levels of education and skills. In contrast, knowledgeable and successful women leaders in higher education can shape the future of other females in the country and advocate for increasing their access to such education. According to Abdullah (2021), skillful female academic leaders can support female enrollment in educational institutions and participation in decision making. For example, they will inform other females of their rights to education and employment and inspire them to play an active role in the community.

Although research and academic papers have pinpointed the importance of having more female leaders in higher education, Yemeni women still encounter several barriers when assuming such positions, such as a culture of male-dominance in most of the leadership position in higher education (Cahyati et al., 2021; Dunn et al. 2014). According to Schünemann (2020), Culture is a complex concept that includes shared beliefs, values, customs, practices, and social behaviors transmitted from generation to generation. In the context on the challenges women in Yemen face to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education, culture could refer to the norms and practices around gender

roles in Yemeni society and how these impact women's ability to pursue higher education and leadership positions.

In another piece of literature, a female academic professor that was interviewed indicated that she used to work outside of Yemen with a high monthly stipend; however, she decided to come back and use her newfound knowledge to serve her community. After a while, she regretted the decision due to low salaries, lack of resources, and the high prices of consumer goods that both genders face (Muthanna & Karaman, 2014). Although there are challenges that both men and women experience in higher education institutions, female employed in higher education leadership positions face more challenges than males when it comes to their professions, such as achieving higher qualifications than men in a male-dominated society like Yemen (Abdullah, 2021).

This study explores the challenges for women trying to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education in Yemen. Very few studies have discussed and addressed the challenges preventing Yemeni women from holding middle or senior leadership positions in higher education. Few studies addressed Yemeni women's leadership in other fields, such as economy and politics (e.g., Badran, 2002), the history of higher education (Selvaratnam & Regel, 1991), the quality of higher education in Yemen (e.g., Al-Haimi et al., 2017; Muthanna & Karaman, 2014) and some of the challenges that both gender face, such as low salaries (e.g., Abdullah, 2021). This deficiency culminated throughout scholarly research synthesized search, which included journal articles, book chapters, published UN reports, Master theses, and Ph.D. dissertations. Six keywords were utilized during the literature search which are “Higher Education”, “Women Leadership”, “Yemen”, “Female Leadership”, “Middle East”, and “Leaders”. The main research web browsers that were utilized in reviewing the literature in this study were JSTOR, ERIC, Emerald, Scopus Preview, Egyptian Knowledge Bank, Academia.edu, Google Scholar. However, it should be highlighted that

some resources were not accessible to the researcher. Accordingly, some studies address the research topic that might exist.

Significance of the Study

As women's leadership roles in Yemen have become more visible during the ongoing war, understanding the challenges women have encountered to achieve this progress in different fields will allow educational practitioners and policymakers to work on new strategies that increase the representation of women leaders in higher education. The findings of this study add to the available literature related to Yemeni women and their access to higher education leadership positions. This study presents the experiences and opinions of Yemeni women and their struggle to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education institutions. In addition, recommendations from this study could help us understand what facilitates women's access to higher education leadership positions. It is also hoped that the study findings direct decision-makers' attention to formulate context specific strategies that advocate for the presence of more women leaders in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

To investigate the challenges preventing Yemeni women from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education institutions, we need to consider the factors influencing their decisions when avoiding these positions. For example, cultural intervention might ease or complicate women's path to leadership positions (Abalkhail, 2017). To clarify, when communities believe that women's leadership roles are taking away from their duty to the family unit, women feel unsupported by their families and communities, making their leadership journeys morally and emotionally difficult. Morales (2008) presented the theory of academic resilience to deeply understand individuals' emotional stress, interpretations, and experiences. In his framework, he introduced several resilience denominators: resilience and

stress, cultural and constant discontinuity, race and culture inversions, habitus, pride of resolve, and needs of acknowledgment.

Morales's (2008) framework investigates individuals' context in depth, concentrating on their resilience practices when responding to their environmental interactions. In his research, he indicates that academic resilience is a complex issue that needs intensive and in-depth exploration of the individuals' backgrounds and social environments. This section explains Morales's Academic Resilience Model (ARM) which is the theoretical lens through which data will be collected and analyzed (Morales, 2008). ARM was chosen for this study due to its relevance to the topic and overall capacity in allowing us to understand how some women accomplish success and life achievements despite their environmental restrictions and difficulties within male-dominated fields.

Morales Academic Resilience Framework

Morales (2008) identified academic resilience as the procedures and outcomes that result in high academic achievements regardless of the harsh circumstances and environmental challenges a person may encounter. Morales explains that academic resilience could not be related, judged, or evaluated through emotions only; it is connected to the state of the individuals' minds, which involves their mood, cognitive condition, and how they respond to stress. Academic resilience also includes the mental states the brain might react with, such as feeling positive, negative, or neutral towards an action, event, or circumstance. However, he emphasizes that emotional intelligence is one of the most significant factors for individuals to overcome challenges when recording high academic achievements.

Research indicates that controlling stress and pressure, being aware of one's feelings and emotions, coping with various environments, accepting self-decisions, and appreciating and respecting others are reasons behind a quality and thriving academic atmosphere (Harianti & Fadlillah, 2021). Samule (2021) highlighted that university individuals should be able to

acquire and understand resilience skills to have future achievements and successes. She clarified that moving from school to university can be a big challenge that people must overcome. A university environment requires more cognitive skills, qualifications, and abilities. In addition, individuals often need to cope with new and different cultures in a higher education learning environment.

Morales (2008) presents some of these common situations that individuals need to deal with, such as “being bicultural, isolation, familial polarization, self-image, cultural inversion, sustaining motivation, and the burden of achievement” (p. 156). Research has pointed out that individuals with the ability to consistently demonstrate academic resilience can achieve high success even if they come from disadvantaged backgrounds or environments (Morales, 2008; Wills & Hofmeyr, 2019).

Figure 1

An illustration of the challenges Yemeni women encounter to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education.

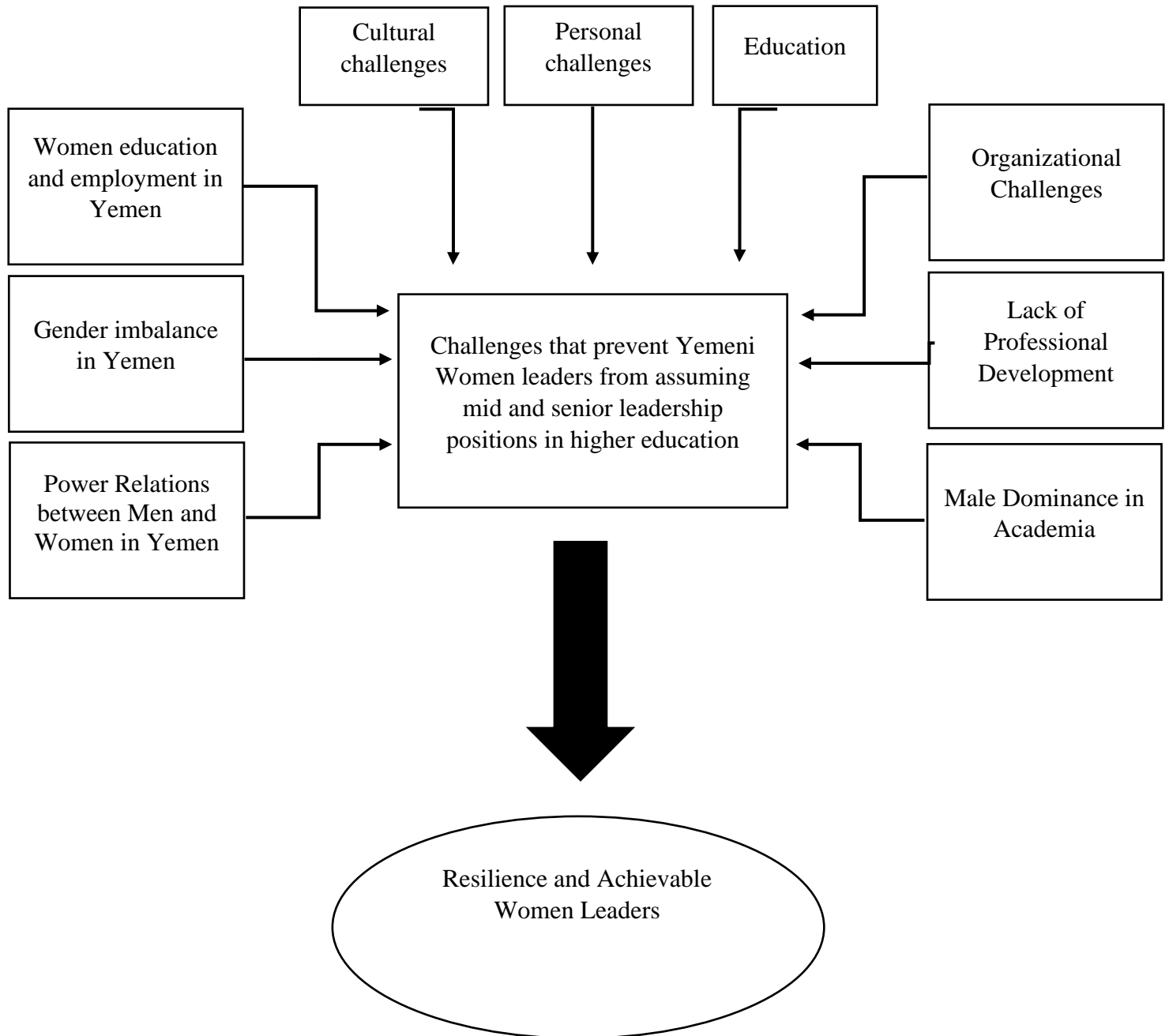


Figure 1 demonstrates how the difficulties Yemeni women encounter are a direct result of women's education gaps, gender inequality, and power dynamics. The actual situation of women in Yemen is also impacted by both personal and cultural problems. Several factors contribute to the educational issues women face. When women assumed mid and senior

leadership positions, they encountered organizational hurdles, such as male dominance and exclusion from making decisions. These difficulties prohibit them from naturally developing into effective educational leaders and deter them from applying for high jobs in academia.

Research Questions

In order to understand the challenges that prevent women from assuming mid and senior leadership positions in higher education in Yemen, study participants will answer the following research questions:

1. What are the greatest challenges at work that obstruct your career advancement and prevent you from obtaining senior leadership positions in higher education? Examples?
2. What are the cultural challenges that prevent you from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education? Examples?
3. Does being a Yemeni woman in higher education entails any difficulties or challenges in terms of career advancement? How? Any personal challenges you would like to share in this regard?
4. How does professional development help you overcome the challenges that obstruct your way towards senior leadership in higher education? Examples? Is training and development available at work?
5. Do you believe that education in Yemen helps women assume leadership positions in higher education? What changes do you recommend to improve the existing educational system for female students who aspire to become senior higher education leaders?
6. Are there any other factors that prevent Yemeni women from obtaining senior leadership position in higher education you would like to add?
7. What needs to be done to help you overcome these challenges and barriers?

Organization of the Study

This research paper is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter provides an overview and introduction to the topic of this research paper, an elaboration of the research significance, its main goals, and the theoretical framework which is used as a lens to analyze the gathered data. Then, the second chapter offers a review of existing literature which is related to the research's main concepts and ideas. Next, the third chapter presents the methodology that will be utilized to conduct this study including the research design, data collection tools, participants, setting, and data analysis procedures. After that, the fourth chapter introduces the findings of the study through five main themes. Finally, the last chapter discusses the results of the research and analyzes them based on the study's theoretical framework. It also includes a set of recommendations for research and professional practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Chapter

Schünemann (2020) indicates that culture is the key factor that challenges women's accessibility to high leadership positions worldwide, especially in poor and undeveloped countries like Yemen. Accordingly, the following chapter begins with an overview of Yemen's developmental and cultural context, then delves into academic leadership in higher education, followed by a background on the status of higher education in Yemen. Women's historical and current status is provided, followed by a discussion of power relations and the existing gender imbalance between men and women in Yemen. Based on the existing literature, an outline of challenges women encounter in their career advancement to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education is offered. The challenges described include those related to the institutional, professional, educational, personal, and cultural levels for women in general, in addition to a brief introduction of those challenges for three countries that share similar religious, cultural, and traditional behaviors with Yemen.

The literature review section aims first to approach the prior scholarly work that has been conducted on the challenges that women face to assume mid and senior leadership positions (e.g., deans, presidents, associate professors) in higher education. This approach will help gain more insights into the topic's significance and clarify the research gap.

Evaluating the literature started by pinpointing books, book chapters, peer-reviewed scholarly publications, and international and national reports. In the beginning, the search started in a global scope using the keywords "women/female leadership," "significance," and "impact," then involved the keywords "higher education," "challenges," "barriers," "obstacles," and "Yemen" to contextualize the study and shed light on the scope of the research. Next, other words were covered, such as "Middle East," "Asia," and "Comparative Analysis," when no sufficient research was found specifying Yemen. In addition, the keywords were utilized as

separate words "women leadership," a combination of phrases "women leadership in higher education," and sentences "Challenges that face female leaders to assume mid and senior leadership positions."

Several academic research and database engines were utilized to search for the highlighted keywords, which are Academia.edu, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB), Emerald Insights, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus Preview. Harzing & Alakangas (2016) demonstrate that Google Scholar and Scopus are the most significant engines that envelop and discuss many scholarly articles in humanities and social sciences. ERIC has been used by researchers since 1966 and includes thousands of Journal articles, dissertations, and books related to educational topics (Corby, 2009). In addition, a study conducted in one of the universities in India concludes that Emerald Insight eases students' access to a wide range of articles they need when conducting research in several disciplines, such as Humanities (Ansari & Raza, 2019). EKB was used in this study because recent research published in 2022 confirms the quality of its information and publications that serve students in their research work. JISTOR is deemed a beneficial research engine for humanities students due to its coverage of hundreds of articles accessible to students. They do not need to pay to access the articles (Ong, 2021). Lastly, the Academia.edu engine was utilized due to its articles' diversity, smooth filtration process, and, most importantly, its suggestions of similar articles and researchers interested in the same searched topic (Hektor, 2009)

Contextual Background

The Location and Population of Yemen

Yemen is an Arab country located in the Middle East's southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It has a strategic position that borders the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia (Morgan, 2004). Its diverse climate, lands, rainfalls,

green mountains, and valleys made the ancient Roman call it 'Fortunate Arabia' (Al-Ghail, 2013). However, it is deemed an emerging country that lacks quality infrastructure, which makes traveling to some provinces and districts difficult for individuals (Saleh, 2020). Yemen has a strong tribal structure where tribal leaders have more control over the local authorities (Sharp, 2010). The last estimated population of the country is 29.8 million people, including an annual growth of 2.3% (Saleh, 2020). Sixty-two percent of the Yemeni inhabitants live in rural areas, and 38% of the population live in urban districts. Most of the population are Muslims, divided into two religious groups, Sunni and Shi'a (Sharp, 2010). It is outlined that Yemen has a dense population compared to its small lands and neighboring countries. The rapid growth of the population adversely impacts the development of the country in both economic and social capacities. In 2008, the local authorities estimated that around 40% of the Yemeni population lives in poor conditions (Al-Ghail, 2013).

The Status of Higher Education in Yemen

Al-Haimi et al. (2017) highlights that knowledge and awareness are critical factors for improving the economy and society in any country. In their research, the authors indicate that higher education is fundamental to gaining quality knowledge and raising inhabitants' awareness of the country they live in. They emphasize that higher education is a stage where citizens learn how to develop and lead their societies. In addition, it teaches them how to contribute to positive and visible changes in the country's political, economic, and social sectors.

In Yemen, the culture of higher education started late compared to other countries (Selvaratnam & Regel, 1991). The first public university, Sana'a University, was established in Yemen's capital Sana'a in 1970, after which many universities were established and developed. In 1990, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MoHE) was established, and all the Yemeni universities that were founded prior began to function under its authority

and supervision (Al-Haimi et al., 2017). During those periods, there was a lack of resources, staff, professional development, and financial support, which led to a low quality of graduates.

Muthanna & Karaman (2014) confirmed the low quality of programs and ineffective planning of higher education in Yemen. Additionally, several governmental branches and authorities collaborate with the MoHE in policy making decisions. When forming new policies or establishing new programs in higher education, having many stakeholders and interventions can lead to confusion and disorganization (Muthanna & Karaman, 2014). The authors surveyed academic educators and administrators and concluded that there is a considerable gap between policymakers, decision-makers, and practitioners in the field. The research participants identified several problems that resulted from this gap, such as low educational quality, curricula deficiencies, weakness of teachers' programs, lack of in-service training, and poor facilities. Muthanna and Karaman (2014) also highlight an urgent need for educational reform and strategic planning in universities to provide citizens with quality education.

The Current Status of Women: Education and Employment in Yemen

Throughout the years and around the world, women still encounter several problems connected to violence and equity, with many connected to education and employment (USAID, 2022). Yemeni females are like other women who face discrimination and equity problems regarding education access and job employment worldwide. Alshebami (2015) notes that Yemen is a conservative community where women are viewed as homemakers and male servants. Therefore, female responsibilities and duties are limited to cooking, cleaning, and looking after children. In a recent report, UNICEF points out that 1.4 million out of 4 million of Yemeni girls get married or in union before age 18 (UNICEF, 2019). Yemeni males do not feel safe sending their female relatives to schools, universities, or jobs.

According to their cultural norms and beliefs, they suppose that any study or work environment that involves males will expose women to danger, such as harassment (World Bank, 2013). This has resulted in a low employment rate for women across the country. For example, Al-Arashi (2015) concludes that, only 20% of Yemeni females are employed in the education sector.

Women represent societies, and the states develop and grow when they are more educated and empowered (Perrin et al., 2010). Education and employment aid in strengthening women and encouraging them to be more productive, in addition to becoming more aware of their rights, societies, and surroundings (Perrin et al., 2010). In their research, Perrin and his colleagues confirm that education remains a significant obstacle that girls in Yemen face and prevents them from feeling empowered and being productive. In addition, the gap between males and females attending schools in Yemen continues to be noticeable. For example, in 2010, two out of three girls are out of elementary school, four out of five girls are out of secondary school, and one out of ten females might have the chance to register for college when graduating from high school, and due to the ongoing conflict, more recent data is not readily available to measure potential progress (Perrin et al., 2010). The authors also highlight that not only do cultural norms discourage women from being educated and employed, but there are several other reasons such as childcare and home responsibilities, distance from educational facilities, health problems, and high study costs. However, male dominance remains the most challenging factor that women in Yemen encounter to be literate. This is due to the strong cultural beliefs that men only should go to schools and be educated (Alshebami, 2015).

Power Relations between Men and Women in Yemen

Before 1990, women's earnings were controlled by the oldest male in the family, as there were no laws that safeguarded inherited properties (Ghanem, 1985). This entailed that

women could not use their properties and income freely and independently without checking with male relatives first. After 1990, the law guaranteed their right to use their ‘properties’ independently without the permission of males (Ghanem, 1990). However, despite the new law, fathers, brothers, and husbands still practice complete power over women and attempt to control their money and properties. In addition, some women, especially in rural areas, are unaware of their properties or what the law indicates regarding their rights (Ghanem, 1990).

In addition, Yemeni women can lawfully participate in the economy, media, business, and commercial activities. However, culture and traditions consider women's participation in the economy a shameful behavior and against the Yemeni society's customs and beliefs (Manea, 2010). Accordingly, no legislation stops women from being active in economic activities; however, the reason behind women's low participation is the pressure and resistance of the communities. As a result, discrimination and inequality against women do not exist in law, but are present in practice (Manea, 2010).

Women in Politics: Gender Imbalance in Yemen

Badran (2002) indicates that the participation of Yemeni women in politics has increased since 1990. This is because equality and rights are regularly supported by new governments that come into power after citizen revolutions. However, in her book *Women, Islam, and the State*, she clarifies that this participation is radical because it only uses women as a means for the new government to gain trust and power over the society. This means that women can only be visualized in political spaces as bargaining chips but without the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process. In Yemen, several committees and parliaments were established to formulate a new constitution for the ‘Unified Yemen’, however, these committees included women only to demonstrate to citizens that the government stands for women’s rights, but all final decisions were made by men (Badran, 2002).

To clarify more, in 1990 year, President Ali Abdullah Saleh agreed to give women from South and North Yemen the opportunity to create their committees, including members from the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and the Women's Union, as long as men were still present in the committee to avoid bias. However, in 1992, while announcing new legislation and laws, the head of a new women's committee discovered that all her committee's suggestions and proposals were not shared, although they had males in the committee who agreed on all the proposals. Later, it was discovered that other religious and political parties decided not to share the committee's work because they were women. Accordingly, male policymakers did not want women to participate in any laws regarding rights or education, meaning that the announcement of women being allowed to participate was for display only and was all a ruse in order to gain public acceptance (Badran, 2002). However, in reality, what is observed is that males, such as in higher education academia, control decisions (Mayya et al., 2021).

Academic Leadership in Higher Education

Wang and Berger (2010) indicate that leadership is a fundamental factor in organizations, companies, schools, universities, and businesses. Quality leadership brings positive changes and advantages to the organization and leads to continued human capital improvement at any place.

In higher education, mid-level and senior leaders compete hard to be presidents or university leaders. University leaders receive high wages, honor, and positions and are highly respected and appreciated in their societies. However, it is not smooth to assume a mid or senior leadership position in higher education. Research and several studies have shown that an academic leader in higher education must have diverse skills and qualifications to participate in the university input (Wang & Berger, 2010). For example, a higher education leader performs more productively when he/she works in a team and deals with leadership as

the responsibility of everyone in the institution (John et al., 2007). This requires him/her to be more flexible and easygoing (Gary & Rubina, 2010). Working in a collective leadership environment in higher education assists in producing practical and productive teaching and learning styles. The impact and work of academic leaders in higher education is shared with several stakeholders, such as students, ministries, administrations, and educational institutions and authorities. Accordingly, the input of a leader can be sustained and maintained for a long time in higher education (Temmerman, 2021).

Airini et al. (2008) highlighted that, traditionally, knowledge is deemed an essential element in leadership. Individuals who are higher academic leaders consider themselves the most powerful humans in the institutions due to the knowledge they have. However, other factors are also associated with quality leadership, such as personal characteristics (e.g., strong self-belief), organizational factors (e.g., strategic planning and accountability), and professional factors (e.g., participating in professional development activities). In addition, Schulze & Boscardin, (2018) conclude that there was no proof that leadership requires specific educational background or experience. The authors point out that leadership skills, strong abilities, and qualifications are gained and developed through practice and experience, disregarding which gender the leader is.

Challenges Preventing Women from Accessing Leadership Positions in Higher Education

The lack of women in leadership positions is a global problem (Mayya et al., 2021). Although research indicates the significant role women leaders play in any workplace or environment, women continue to face several obstacles that impede their access to senior managerial positions. Mayya et al. (2021). highlight that, of these obstacles, the four most prominent are organizational, personal, cultural, and empowerment challenges, each of which to be described below.

Organizational Challenges

Although several laws and regulations ensure women's rights to participate in leadership positions and roles, their presence in senior positions remains low in practice (Abalkhail, 2017). The hierarchical structure placing males in administrative/leadership positions and females in lower positions still shapes organizations by assuming that leadership is a 'masculine practice' and one that should only be controlled and led by men (Adu-Oppong & Kendie, 2009). Gender, as Abalkhail (2017) explains, defines the roles of employees in higher education organizations. For example, male employees are more likely to access professional development training and be promoted to managerial positions. This is because higher education decision-makers throughout the years believe that males lead more professionally, and women are too sensitive and sympathetic (Maseko, 2013). Accordingly, females are discouraged from joining professional development activities, and thus, do not nominate themselves for mid or senior leadership positions in higher education and assume that they are not supported by their senior management. Alsubaihi (2016) points out that, in Saudi Arabia, women are not involved when designing strategic education plans or attending executive meetings in higher education institutions. This limits their communication skills, discourages them from developing their abilities (by learning from others), and stops them from widening their networks.

In her research, Alsubaihi (2016) confirmed that when women communicate and network with other individuals, they become more productive, sharpen their skills, and share experiences. In addition, women leaders in general are more likely to get tasks done efficiently than men. However, demotivating women and excluding them from most of the decisions and policy-making processes forces them to lose interest in taking any higher positions and participating in such fields (Maseko, 2013).

Cultural Challenges

Gender stereotypes are one of the biggest challenges that impede women from wanting to be leaders or assuming leadership positions (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2021). Authors of the same research demonstrate that managerial positions are known to be allocated to males only, and the women's role is to follow. They highlight that leadership positions in most cultures are naturally targeted to males and that managerial positions require 'masculine' characteristics. In their research, they explain that communities deem women irresponsible for assuming senior positions because they will not be able to balance their life-work responsibilities. Abalkhail (2017) also illustrates that women lack support from their family and organizational structures, as both deem women weak and prone to seeking assistance from others. Accordingly, when female employees work hard and pressure themselves to be in higher positions, they often fail to feel empowered and gain support or advocacy from their families and work environments. Alsubaihi (2016) confirmed in her research findings that the bias and privilege of being in a leadership position remain dominated by males.

Male Dominance in Academia

Bagilhole (2010) highlights that although there are several policies that advocate for women employment in higher education, the majority of these positions are still dominated by men. For instance, in Ireland's higher education, 74% of leadership positions are held by men. This overwhelming figure discourages women from applying for or working towards these positions, which perpetuates the trend of male perspectives dominating both the institution and the field of higher education in Ireland (Bagilhole, 2010). In addition, although several studies have emphasized the importance of employing women in leadership positions in higher education which would facilitate economic growth; however, with less women in the field, economies are not growing to their full potential (World Bank, 2022).

Over time, research has confirmed that men are more likely to achieve leadership positions due to the personal attributes these positions require, such as self-confidence and independence. These characteristics have been labeled as masculine traits, despite the various studies showing that either women already hold these traits, or they can be nurtured through professional development (Vasic, 2021). This trend continues today as the Global Gender Gap Report shows where only 36.9 % of women worldwide occupy leadership positions (Global Gender Gap, 2022).

Lack of Professional Development and Mentorship

Professional development is considered essential at any workplace because it aims to improve the skills and knowledge of individuals (Phillips, 2008). Professional development as a critical component of continuing teacher quality. Professional development helps employees in gaining new skills and abilities or building on their existing knowledge. It involves new training topics and educational opportunities. Phillips (2008) emphasizes that career development assists with the growth and improvement of an individual and the organization itself. For instance, it facilitates the broadening of employees' knowledge, raising their confidence, and expanding their networks and communication opportunities.

According to Johnston (2016), women in the academic environment are more aware of the importance of professional development. This is due to the fact that females believe that they lack confidence, periodic evaluations, and mentors in their work. However, due to various reasons males have more opportunities for participation in professional development than women (Johnston, 2016). For example, in Saudi Arabia, the government offers both genders professional development courses outside the country in order to develop their skills. However, only few females participate in the training because their families do not allow them to travel alone without a male family member ("Mahram") (Abalkhail, 2017).

It is more common to find male professors in higher education than females, and as such, Moodly and Toni (2017) insist that women need to be more present in leadership positions in higher education. This can be achieved partially through developing their knowledge and skills to occupy such positions. Even given this, they clarify that men are more likely to participate in professional development and conclude that the organizational entities conducting professional development trainings need to encourage more women to join.

A report that was published by The Training Journal highlights that women employees emphasized that they are not offered quality training that can prepare them for leadership positions (Johnston, 2016). The report also indicates that females encounter more obstacles regarding their professional development due to their limited free time between their life and work commitments. Accordingly, the report emphasizes the importance of designing and implementing more learning opportunities that can enable more women to climb the organizational ladder and occupy leadership positions.

Personal Challenges

Women in academia lack the self-confidence and desire to be leaders due to the negligence they face in higher education institutions (Alsubaihi, 2016). Not only do managers ignore them, but also some male students do not respect female leaders or teaching staff (Maseko, 2013). The disrespect that female faculty encounter makes them feel more disappointed and discouraged from assuming higher positions. In addition, women's responsibilities at home, such as being pregnant, taking care of children, and fulfilling household chores, is one reason behind the fear of occupying senior leadership positions. Their spouses may also inhibit them from accomplishing their work professionally by preventing their daughters or wives from traveling or working late hours (Maseko, 2013).

Select Case Research Related to Women's Leadership in Higher Education

As an Islamic country, Yemen shares cultural and religious similarities with several other countries in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Jordan (Jones, n.d). This section aims to shed light on the impact of several factors, such as culture, religion, and traditions, on women's higher education employment in these countries to understand how these factors shape women's decisions to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education. This comparative analysis offers insights into women's obstacles to assuming such positions and highlights factors that help them assume mid and senior leadership positions.

Several researchers, such as Alotaibi (2020); Dandan & Marques (2017); and Mansoor (2023) indicate that women in higher education remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions in the Middle East, such as Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. In Jordan, Dandan & Marques (2017) highlight those Jordanian women are still far from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education. Researchers of the same highlight that the low number of women in higher education is not expected to be increased soon due to the deficient presence of women in such positions. For example, in the 2017-2018 academic year, no female leader was employed as a dean, vice president, or even president in all the Jordanian public universities, except for five females who assumed the vice president position in five private universities. Similarly, in Iraq, men are the ones who occupy senior leadership positions in higher education, and women assume such positions only in rare cases (Mansoor, 2023). For instance, there is only one female dean at the University of Basra, and the reason behind hiring her as a dean is because all university students are females (Mansoor, 2023). Likewise, in Saudi Arabia, Alotaibi (2020) points out that women are far from assuming leadership positions in higher education because their career choice might not be in their hands. For example, women are not free to select their educational or professional options; in

most scenarios, families decide which major their daughter should be enrolled in or even not to be registered in any major.

Many families in Saudi Arabia determine the path of their daughters, and most Saudi families consider staying at home and raising children must be women's priority and being away from any work environment is safer for their daughters (Alotaibi, 2020). This stunned existence of women in senior leadership positions in higher education in Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia lies behind different reasons, which mainly depend on the conservative cultural background of the country, the higher education institutions' decision-makers' bias for employing more men than women, and other personal factors, such as not being interested or lacking confidence (Mansoor, 2023).

One of the strong factors that obstacle women from assuming such positions are the cultural beliefs that are derived from conservative communities, such as of these beliefs are women's best job is to be a housewife, family responsibilities come first, women should always follow what males decide and cannot be leaders or take any decision, which leads to the lack of family and community support (Alotaibi, 2020). The mentioned beliefs are drawn from high-masculinity communities, where males resist women's presence in senior leadership positions as it might limit their patriarchal power when women lead and make decisions in the higher education field or any other fields, such as economy and politics (Alotaibi, 2020; Mansoor, 2023).

Moreover, Koburtay, Abuhussein, and Sidani (2023) indicate that in tribal conservative communities in the Middle East, such as Jordan, most of the mentioned cultural beliefs are claimed to be driven from their religion, Islam. For example, one of the terms that was mostly analyzed to discuss research topics that are related to women and leadership from Quran (Islam's Holy Book) is "Qwama"(El-Saadawi, 2013) .Some interpret the word as protection, help, and service that men should provide women with in order to help them pass

struggles and obstacles in their daily life; others justify the term as men are the ones who are responsible for working and providing women with all their needs, such as financial needs, so women should only serve as homemakers and leave men take the leadership roles either in a family or work level (Koburtay & Abuhussein & Sidani, 2023). Such cultural and religious obstacles lead to other work-related barriers in higher education when women attempt to assume mid and senior leadership positions (Alotaibi, 2020).

Organizational barriers are also considered another strong factor that prevents women from assuming mid and senior leadership positions, specifically when the regulations and policies of recruitment still need to be implemented (Dandan & Marques, 2017). For instance, in Iraq, in front of the law, women and men are equal participants when both apply for mid and senior positions in higher education; however, if the president or vice president does not believe in gender equality and equal opportunities for both genders, women might not assume a mid or senior leadership position in a higher education organization. Dandan & Marques (2017) clarified that an Iraqi leader in a high position might assign senior leadership positions only to men if he believes that women must be qualified to lead and better serve in their houses as homemakers. In addition, Mansoor, (2023) demonstrates that applied recruitment decisions remain in the hands of the employed decision-makers personal gender beliefs and not what is declared in law.

Alotaibi (2019) clarifies that even when women assume mid and senior positions in higher education affiliations, they do not find support from their male counterparts. For instance, women might not receive any credits or promotions as males do and the promotion nomination selection process is not transparent. Several researchers conclude that women's decision-making power is limited in higher education institutions where their perceptions and notions can be ignored and not considered even if they assume mid and senior leadership positions (Alotaibi, 2019).

This ignorance of women's ideas makes female leaders in higher education organizations feel less confident, scared, and unenthusiasm about such positions. In addition, different research (e.g., Dandan & Marques, 2017) illustrate that women are not provided with sufficient professional development training or quality education that can ease their paths in assuming higher leadership positions in higher education through updating their scientific knowledge through research or acquiring new professional skills, such as collaboration, and critical thinking or effective communication.

Furthermore, due to the conservative culture in such countries, communication boundaries are huge when women deal with men as they are not allowed to communicate with men unless it is significant to work, which rarely happens (Alotaibi, 2019). This lack of communication also makes women far from building work relationships in their work environment, which are considered necessary since many promotions can happen only because of good communication and relationship with the recruitment team leaders in higher education.

Chapter Summary

Although Yemen was called the 'Fortunate Arabia' due to its beautiful sights and varied climate, mountains, and valleys, it is still categorized as an underdeveloped country (Al-Ghail, 2013). The Yemeni population is growing fast, and the country's government is not able to provide citizens with quality and ample resources to survive during the current war circumstances, such as education, healthcare, and sufficient wages to live decently and have more kids. For example, the higher education system in Yemen is undeveloped and lacks improvement. Employees have not been enrolled in any professional development programs since the current war has started. Academic employees, teachers, and leaders need to participate in multiple types of trainings in order to produce quality work, such as in-service training. More importantly, both men and women should participate in those trainings in order to have diverse

opinions, discussion, and effective outcomes. The percentage of Yemeni women present in higher education is still low. Higher education in Yemen has been dominated by men considering women unresponsive and irresponsible for such positions. Yemeni women like other women worldwide encounter several challenges to their career advancement, such as institutional, professional, and personal challenges. These challenges discourage them from applying to senior positions in academia and prevent them from organically growing to become successful educational leaders.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section elaborates on the research design used to answer the research's leading questions, as Appendix A displays. Then, the chapter discusses the sampling technique and how the research participants were recruited and reached out. Next, the procedures and details of analyzing the data are highlighted, in addition to some information about the research's ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

Methodology

The qualitative phenomenological design aims to understand the daily lived experiences of the individual's behaviors, beliefs, and perceptions of a specific phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004; Clark & Creswell, 2014). Wilson (2015) illustrates that phenomenological qualitative research aims at investigating and describing a particular phenomenon in-depth by analyzing the subject views of the selected participants.

In this study, the researcher decided on the qualitative phenomenological design to explore the challenges that women leaders experience in assuming mid and senior leadership positions in higher education in Yemen. In addition, the research aimed to explore the first-person experiences of the women who experienced the challenges of assuming mid and senior leadership positions (Merleau-Ponty & Smith, 1962). The phenomenological design allowed the researcher to comprehensively understand the collected data as it involves iterative processes throughout going back and forth between data collection, analysis, and interpretations. There are several reasons why the phenomenological design was best suited for this research. Firstly, as mentioned above, phenomenology focuses on exploring first-person experiences and gathering in-depth qualitative data. This approach suited the aim of the research, which was to understand the barriers that Yemeni women leaders experience in higher education when attempting to assume senior leadership positions.

Secondly, the phenomenological design explored the complex and varied experiences of Yemeni women leaders in higher education. The iterative nature of the approach, along with the suspension of judgment, allowed the researcher to gather and analyze data from multiple perspectives and build a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2013). Finally, the phenomenological design allowed Yemeni women leaders to voice their experiences and perspectives on the barriers they face in higher education. This approach allowed participants to share their stories and shed light on their unique experiences, supporting the focus on participant perspectives characteristic of the phenomenological process (Manen, 2017).

Therefore, due to its characteristics and suitability for exploring subjective experiences, the phenomenological design was the best approach for researching the barriers that Yemeni women encounter in assuming mid and senior leadership positions in higher education.

Moreover, the researcher used the qualitative phenomenological design to collect descriptive information from ten Yemeni women leaders in order to deeply understand the phenomenon of the low number of female presence in leadership positions in higher education institutions in Yemen. In this type of research design, exploring a certain phenomenon does not depend on including a large number of participants in the research; in contrast, it relies more on the deep interpretations and expressions of the involved participants (Malterud et al., 2016; Mocănașu, 2020). Accordingly, only ten Yemeni women leaders were selected for this study so the interactions could be analyzed on a deeper level.

Participants and Sampling

Based on the motive of this research, the purposive sampling technique was utilized when participants were selected. It is a technique that refers to choosing individuals who have

experienced and acknowledged a certain phenomenon in order to provide rich information about it (Clark & Creswell, 2014). In addition, Patton (2002) clarifies that the purposive sampling technique provides quality data when the resources of the researcher is limited. In this study, the ten selected women leaders were chosen based on a certain criterion they all shared, which is being employed in a mid or senior leadership position in a Yemeni higher education institution where the number of women leaders is low.

Selected participants had to be located and employed in a higher education institution in Yemen. In addition, participants had to be in mid or senior leadership positions in order to investigate the challenges they faced to assume those positions.

Being the first woman to obtain a master's degree in her family and after leading five civic engagement projects that positively impacted her community, the researcher developed a passion for the topic of women's' presence in leadership and believes in the significance of increasing the number of women leaders in higher education. The researcher acknowledges the advantages that women leaders bring when employed in higher education leadership positions due to the overwhelming success of the few female leaders she observed through her bachelor studies in Yemen and the leadership activities of several female professors and colleagues when she was enrolled in a public university in Yemen, such as the women vice-president of Student Union. In addition, through her bachelor's studies, the researcher observed how the significant gender gap between male and women professors, deans, and heads of departments remained high over her four years enrollment. For instance, in her faculty, she was taught by only one female professor, and no woman occupied any leadership position within the faculty.

In the beginning, the researcher aimed to travel to Yemen to collect the data in-person from one university in Southern Yemen through her prior informal relations with its women administrators; however, due to the current war circumstances Yemen face, this was not

feasible. Accordingly, the researcher contacted Yemeni women who are enrolled in higher education degrees in university x in Egypt, Cairo through her personal connections seeking assistance to help her reach out to women leaders who might be in Egypt at the time of conducting the study. This is due to the fact that the researcher is aware that there are several Yemeni women leaders who usually travel to Egypt to attend professional development trainings that are related to higher education.

Fortunately, the researcher firstly managed to reach out to two women leaders who are always in Egypt through her contacts with a one Yemeni woman colleague who has lived in Egypt for ten years, then those two participants helped in providing the researcher with the other Yemeni women leaders either in Egypt or Yemen. Nine of the participants either are or were employed in one public university x in Northern Yemen, and only one participant was found to be employed in another public university in Southern Yemen.

The researcher interviewed five Yemeni women leaders who were present in Egypt at the time of conducting the research; however, all of the five are currently occupying mid-level and senior leadership positions in Yemeni higher education institutions. The other five interviews were conducted and recorded online via Zoom video conferencing. Zoom is defined as an online audio and video service that assists individuals in conducting online meetings and board discussions, in addition, it allows users to record the calls if needed (Archibald et al., 2019). These interviews were with Yemeni women who currently practice their mid and senior leadership positions in public universities and are presently located in Yemen.

Participants were contacted by phone, via email, or personal visit to their offices and houses. The researcher provided information about the study and explained the interview protocol. The participants were informed of the interview procedures, such as the recording process, research questions, the study purpose and significance. The interviews were

conducted virtually and face-to-face, based on the participants' circumstances and place of presence. For example, all the women who were in Yemen were interviewed online. Before starting the interviews, the researcher secured participants' consent. During the interview, the researcher made her best effort to make participants feel comfortable and relaxed.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Current Position	Major	Code
Head of a Department	Sociology	Part. A
Associate Professor	Science	Part. B
Lecturer and Administrative Assistant	Translation	Part. C
Member of the Consultation and Reconciliation Commission of the Yemeni Presidential Counsel	Political Science	Part. D
Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Education	Psychology	Part. E
Professor	Business Management	Part. F
Head of a Department	Psychology	Part. G
Associate Professor	Biology	Part. H
Head of a department	Political Science	Part. I
Head of a department	Media	Part. J

Procedures

The researcher utilized semi-structured one-to-one interviews as the data collection tool in conducting the study. According to Clark & Creswell (2014), open-ended interviews facilitate participants in expressing their opinions about the phenomenon since it enables them to express their lived experiences widely and freely. In this study, the data was gathered through the utilization of a semi-structured interview protocol consisting of seven questions, as displayed in Appendix A. The interviews were conducted both in-person and online, with recordings transcribed into written text to enable efficient coding and thematic analysis. The selection of semi-structured questions enabled participants to describe their personal lived

experiences towards the barriers they encountered to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education and how these barriers contribute to the low number of women in mid and senior leadership positions in higher education.

Before starting the interviews, the researcher asked all the participants for their approval to record the interview, this applied to both the online and the face-to-face interviews. In addition, the researcher informed the participants of the aim behind conducting the study and its significance. In addition, the researcher asked the participants to choose the language they prefer for conducting the interview either Arabic or English. Nine of the interviews were conducted in Arabic and only one participant showed interest in carrying out the interview in English. Although most of the participants were able to speak and communicate in English, the researcher gave the choice to select the language they prefer to be interviewed with. The reason behind allowing them to use their native language (Arabic) was to enable them to feel more relaxed and comfortable without worrying about which terms to use when they explained the challenges, they faced to reach their current positions in higher education since it is their native and professional language.

After confirming the participants' consent about recording the interview and which language to use, the researcher started asking the interviews' questions and opened the space for women to express, explain, and reflect when responding to questions. The researcher had to probe some questions to understand more about the barriers and how women dealt with them to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education. In addition, the researcher took a lot of notes and not only relied on the recordings. Lastly, before the researcher ended the interview, participants were requested to add any further comments that they want to share. Then, the researcher saved the recordings of the interviews, named them, and prepared them for the data analysis procedure.

Data Analysis

Representation of auditable data was the first step in analyzing data. For data to be represented recordings of interviews were first transcribed in the original source Language (Arabic language) using verbatim transcription method (word_ for_ word) then translated into target language (English language) as a computerized written text. Literal translation was used generally with resorting to dynamic translation to bring data alive and to emphasize cultural and interpretive insights. Since the meanings of utterances are profoundly shaped by the way in which was said, nonverbal features were also transcribed and translated. Translated data were revised to check accuracy with transcribed text and original recordings.

After translating the Arabic transcriptions, the researcher printed all the interviews in order to keep physical copies. The reason behind printing them out is that the researcher prefers hard copies over electronic. However, the researcher made sure not to include any names or personal data of participants except for the pseudonyms the researcher had to utilize to name the data.

Then the researcher began by investigating the data through carefully reading the transcriptions, using a marker to highlight the information that was common among all participants in order to generate a general summary and deep understanding of the data. This process was deemed to be the primary exploration analysis before moving to the next step, the coding procedure.

Similar to that of Clark & Creswell (2014), the researcher started the coding process by classifying the collected information into categories that involved similar notions, interpretations, and merits/values. After grouping the data, the researcher classified the grouped ideas into codes and arranged them in a clear table. The researcher utilized open coding, a manual process of grouping related elements into various segments, such as opinions, emotions, or suggestions (Clark & Creswell, 2014).

Due to a preference for handwriting over typing, the researcher used a different color for each theme in handwritten columns. Subsequently, the common/repeated data were further categorized into groups in Excel sheets to enhance transparency and organization, leading to a comprehensive coding process. From this step, the redundant information was excluded from the tables as recommended by Clark & Creswell (2014). The researcher created five specific themes according to the highlighted codes based on the participants' explanations, resulting in a thematic analysis of the study's results.

Then, the researcher provided four of the study's participants with a copy of the transcript to review and make sure that what they said in the interview was accurately reflected in the transcript. When the researcher invites other parties to provide interpretations of the collected data, this ensures that the data collection was accurate. The researcher invited all of the participants to review their own transcripts; however, only four agreed, as the other participants did not have ample time to read and provide the researcher with feedback.

Finally, the researcher compared the findings and data interpretations with the literature and Morales' (2018) theoretical framework to highlight the similarities and differences among them. The reason behind the mentioned comparison was to be able to answer the study's questions in relation to the themes that emerged from the findings.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

In the context of ethical considerations, researchers must prioritize ensuring the study's validity and avoiding any physical or mental harm that may impact the participants (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Therefore, the present researcher has taken steps to maintain participants' confidentiality and uphold ethical standards. For instance, the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the American University in Cairo (AUC), the Ministry of Education in Yemen (MOE), and the university where data were collected. Additionally, the participants' identities, including the universities where they work, were concealed using

pseudonyms. Furthermore, the collected data was safeguarded in a confidential document that requires a complex password for access. In addition, all the papers that were printed for the data analysis process, were cut and burned out after the researcher finished the analysis process. Finally, to ensure accuracy and maintain ethical standards, the researcher re-obtained participants' consent after translating their responses and presenting the research findings.

Research conducted by Lincoln and Guba (1985) illustrates that credibility is an essential criterion for obtaining trustworthiness in qualitative research. In addition, Gunawan (2015) emphasizes that credibility is crucial when the author seeks to gain trustworthiness from their research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) illustrate that credibility belongs to the true value of the data collected and its accuracy. Noble and Smith (2015) highlights that credibility can be achieved by the “applicability” process which indicates that the results of the conducted study can relate to other contexts. In this study, the literature indicated that this study was applied before in several contexts, such as Iraq, Jordan, and KSA (Mansoor, 2023; Alotaibi, 2020; Dandan & Marques, 2017).

Furthermore, transferability was highlighted by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be another standard to ensure trustworthiness. It is an approach that refers to the detailed and in-depth description which the researcher provides in the research paper, such as the time and location, and the research contextual analysis (Glenton et al., 2020). To achieve this, the researcher in this study specified the contextual background of Yemen, current circumstances of the study, such as the current war conflicts in Yemen, explained women leaders' general status in Yemen, identified the participants demographics and their fields of study.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations is the researcher's own enthusiasm about the topic specifying her home country Yemen; however, the researcher shared the findings with the research

advisor and some of the participants as well. In addition, Bumbuc (2016) subjectivity should not always be deemed as a barrier or a bad thing if it contributes in fulfilling research gaps.

Furthermore, this study conducted some interviews in Arabic because some participants asked to have the interviews in their native language. In addition, the researcher is fluent in Arabic, as it is her native language. However, to ensure the research adhered to ethical guidelines, the researcher translated the interview content independently from Arabic into English. The fact that a non-translator translated the interviews may have impacted the meaning of the questions. Consequently, this led to various interpretations than the original instrument intended to deliver. Additionally, it could have resulted in quotes in the findings section that sounded similar in language and tone. Nonetheless, the researcher mitigated this limitation by sharing the translated data with some participants who agreed to review their transcriptions.

Another limitation is that this research targeted only 10 Yemeni women in mid and senior leadership positions in higher education, so the data cannot reflect all Yemeni women leaders in high education in Yemen. This study does not give voice to all of Yemeni women in academic leadership positions who might have other experiences that this study did not capture, given the low number of participants.

Lastly, this study concluded the perspectives and experiences of women only; if men had been included in the interviews, the study could be much more informative and inclusive.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The results and discussion of this study are two of the most significant chapters, as this data is used to uncover potential directions for future research. The present chapter's final thoughts demonstrate that every effort has been made by the researcher to draw sound conclusions utilizing original data. The results of this research are divided into five themes which each focus on the difficulties that Yemeni women leaders have in assuming senior leadership roles in higher education. Ten female administrators participated in this study, and all participants are currently employed in Yemeni higher education settings with a different range of marital situations, ages, and degrees of expertise. The participants were chosen from two public Yemeni universities. Participants were interviewed at a time that worked for them and each of the responses to the questions have been recorded in a secure MS Word document. Through examination of their responses, five themes have been presented, and some of their quotes have been used as supporting evidence and to improve the project's authenticity.

Theme One: Institutional Barriers

The data collected in this study showed that the most challenging barriers encountered by the ten women leaders to assume mid and senior leadership positions occur in the institutional bureaucracy of higher education. All the participants mentioned three main challenges, which are (1) male resistance against women, (2) the unapplied rules and regulations, and (3) excluding women from decision-making roles.

Male Resistance Against Women Leaders in Higher Education Institutions

All the participants mentioned that male employers in higher education institutions would always prefer hiring men in mid and senior leadership positions rather than women. They clarified that men in administrative positions keep confirming that women do not have the abilities nor the skills to assume leadership positions in higher education organizations.

Participant (A) mentioned, "Men, even students or administrative staff, still believe that women are incapable of assuming leadership positions" (A).

The same participant explained that when the government nominated her to become the University's Dean, her nomination file was left behind for months by the senior male leader responsible for hiring her. When she went to speak to him, he aggressively replied, mentioning that he does not like working with women and that his prior experiences employing women in higher positions were unsuccessful. He clarified that women are not committed to work, especially when married (A). The interviewed women confirmed that "Men do not have trust in women" (H) and do not accept their presence in higher positions even if women perform well in their work. The participants explained that even when women prove their strong capabilities to lead in higher education institutions, "institutions prefer to invest in men" (C). An example participant (B) mentioned is that women in the department she leads did great work to maintain university quality during the war while men did not put in the same level of effort. She stated that:

We did great work during the war to maintain the University's quality standards by making hundreds of course descriptions accredited by international quality standards; also, the female cadre were the ones who insisted on opening master and Ph.D. programs in the University (B).

Another participant, who has been a leader in higher education institutions since the 1980's, confirmed that she was more committed and responsible for her work during the war than men. She mentioned, "I am one of these women as I accepted being a dean during the war, while other males refused" (A).

While conducting the interviews, participants observed how male senior leaders in higher education kept ignoring the positive impact that women continue to bring to higher education institutions. Participant (A) highlighted that when she was the Associate Dean, she

was the first leader who adopted the auto correction system at the University; however, the man who took the position after her was the one who was given the credit for it only because he was a male. She highlighted that males would rather support other males even when women are qualified for those leadership positions.

Participants showed that they had made several attempts to have more women leaders in higher education institutions in order to have more female role models who can support and inspire other women leaders in higher education; however, they always failed. For example, Participant (E) emphasized that whenever she tries to hire a woman for a leadership position, the senior male leaders surprise her by appointing only men. Accordingly, the female presence in her department remains low.

The participants also added that when women succeed in their leadership roles in higher education, they continue to resist women's presence, instead opting for a male-dominated institution where, "they might replace her (woman leader) by a male" (A). The participants indicated that this aggressive treatment toward women in the higher education work environment might discourage other females from assuming higher leadership positions.

One of the participants indicated that she was nominated to be the head of the department; however, she refused to accept the position. She elaborated that men do not welcome working under the authority of a woman leader; accordingly, the situation would not make her feel comfortable with the responsibility. She mentioned, I feel like women are still incapable of managing to have men under their leadership as they always find discouragement from other men they are working with (G).

The information that was provided explains how male-dominance in higher education keeps resisting the presence of women in leadership positions through their "passive aggression," as if leadership positions are only "male-oriented" (C). In addition, it shows how

this resistance even discouraged the interviewed women from acquiring senior leadership positions at times, leading to their exclusion from any decision-making role.

Women's Exclusion from Making Decisions

Throughout the interviews, participants demonstrated that they were excluded from participating in any decision-making process. They highlighted that male leaders tend to exclude females when decisions are made. Participant (E) illustrated that no female leader is involved in the current government because all male parties refuse women's presence due to war conditions. However, further research, literature, on-ground projects, and initiatives demonstrate how women positively impacted their higher education institutions during the war.

Participant (A) stated:

I participated in the National Dialogue conference as a vice president with the economic team representing the private sector. In public meetings, we could notice the appearance of tribal conflicts. So, whenever there was an issue, people presenting at the conference created groups to solve these issues, and the woman's presence at the conference was about 30%, but they were excluded. So, I wrote a memo to one of the members asking why women are not nominated to solve some of these issues with other groups. This person passed the paper to other members who said this was not the time for women (A).

Moreover, participants pointed out that most higher education decisions are made outside their institutions in informal and unofficial procedures. Participant (G) explained that men tend to make the most significant decisions, such as promotions and hiring new individuals in evening gatherings where women cannot be present, so their opinions and suggestions are not taken into consideration. It is part of the Yemeni culture that people gather in the evenings to chew khat (leaves chewed like tobacco) and talk. However, according to the traditional Yemeni cultural restrictions, women are forbidden from interacting with men in the evenings

or anywhere outside the work environment, which is deemed an obstacle to their participation in these meetings. Participant (A) mentioned:

As a member of the Department of Business Management, whenever there were issues that we needed to discuss to make decisions to solve those issues, many co-workers preferred to gather at someone's place chewing qat, and discuss these issues, which is difficult for me as a woman to join this kind of meeting (A).

Participants confirmed that they have been calling for women's presence in senior positions in higher education. "However, this will not be possible either in higher education or on the governmental level" (D). They elaborated that males in senior higher leadership positions pretended to care about democracy and emphasized that women were welcome to be in such positions, but their true intentions were revealed through their actions. Participant (E) stated, "Sometimes they [males in higher positions] used to give us some promises to provide women with senior positions, but we were surprised every time by the appointment of males" (E).

The provided information during the interviews emphasized that the written regulations in the higher education employment process do not exclude women from participating in such positions; however, these rules are not applied in reality.

Senior Positions Recruitment in Higher Education: Unapplied Regulations

Participants indicated that almost no Yemeni recruitment policies discouraged them from acquiring a senior leadership position in higher education; however, the problem resides in the implementation process of these recruiting regulations. The interviewed women highlighted that the academic and professional path of assuming higher positions is clear. An example clarified by participant (B) demonstrates that there are specific standards and qualifications that senior leaders in higher education should acquire such as academic degrees, scientific knowledge, and research skills. They explained that acquiring the mentioned

requirements should ease the process for women seeking senior higher education positions, but what was implemented in reality made their journeys harder (H).

Higher education institutions in Yemen do not apply or follow the appointed rules when recruiting for senior leadership positions, according to participant (A). Participants expressed that the employment process depended on other factors such as political interests, personal connections, or other preferred recommendations without questioning any qualifications. They confirmed that in some situations, a female applicant could have the same or more qualifications than a man; however, the recruitment team always decided to hire a male (C). Additionally, some males with shared political preferences got hired in leadership positions due to an official declaration from the country's president without questioning their qualifications, according to participant (B). The participants also illustrated that women sometimes assumed these positions without questioning their qualifications. Participant (E) stated:

Our department appointed a female head of department only once, and that was not for her experience, qualifications, education, or her right to assume that position, but due to some issues when they did not find any male who could take it (E).

Participants expressed their dissatisfaction towards employment practices in higher education. They demonstrated that the rare involvement of women in higher education positions could lead to a deterioration of the quality educational system in higher education institutions, given that the current status of the higher education system is worsening due to war and protracted conflicts. Participant (I) mentioned that:

It is a political system that reflects on the management or administration of the University. For example, the University's senior leadership is a group of several parties sharing its management. All these members are men. Looking at the distribution of financial shares, this leadership does not consider improving the University's conditions, such as its offices, administration, and performance... even when you assume a position

in higher education, you will find many strains and pressure from the working environment and its lack of facilities such as no electricity and no secretary to assist you in your work. So, it is very stressful. Higher education in Yemen will deteriorate a few years later (I).

The highlighted information through the interviews indicates that most challenges women face in higher education institutions emerged from the Yemeni conservative culture. Participant (H) elaborated that men generally practice their Yemeni cultural beliefs, values, and conservative norms of always excluding women from any work environment in Yemeni institutions.

Theme Two: Cultural Barriers

During the interviews, participants tended to relate most challenges to the Yemeni cultural beliefs and values. They explained that Yemeni families believe women should never be enrolled in a work environment where males are present (C). Participants illustrated that when their families allowed them to work with males, society deemed them as an open-minded family, which may bring communal and familial shame on them, restricting them from feeling proud of themselves in leadership positions (A). One of the participants who used to work with the government explained how her relatives harmed and discouraged her, especially her uncle acquiring a leadership position. She explained this as she mentioned:

My uncles completely refused the point that I would be with men. This was not very pleasant to them. Whenever any man said their niece worked with him, they felt uncomfortable. One of my uncles left the place where I was working because he was ashamed of that (H).

Moreover, participants elucidated that being a leader in higher education sometimes required them to communicate with men by phone, have lunch together to discuss work-related issues, travel for professional training with other employees, or spend more working

hours in their higher education institution (A). However, this type of communication and outings outside the work environment was considered to be inappropriate behavior, which they were then criticized and shamed for. Consequently, some of the participants' families felt overwhelmed and ashamed by society. Then, they did not allow their daughters to travel for professional development training or spend more working hours in their work, which could help them assume positions in higher education.

The interviewed women leaders pointed out that Yemeni women are mainly observed in the Yemeni society as "ashamed bodies" (H). Accordingly, men in their workplaces did not appreciate the hard work, scientific knowledge, or positive impact of these women; in contrast, most men only paid attention to their bodies. In addition, sometimes, they were exposed to sexual harassment from their male colleagues, especially if the woman dressed neatly and professionally. Males would fight to work with her. Participants also highlighted that even when Yemeni males were raised or worked outside Yemen, their conservative cultural beliefs towards Yemeni women remained the same. This was more explained by participant (E) as she stated:

We are speaking about reaching positions in higher education and men who are assumed to be well educated and have obtained high educational degrees who have completed their higher studies abroad. These people are assumed to be open to different cultures, and they have noticed that education and qualifications are what matter. However, we can observe how their parental culture or traditions dominate whenever they reach Yemen since these traditions are deeply rooted in Yemeni males (E).

The data accumulated in this research emphasized that these restrictions and limitations when women deal with men in Yemeni society hindered them from assuming senior positions in higher education. An example illustrated by participant (A) was when her family allowed her to travel alone, attend informal meetings outside her workplace, and spend more working hours during the war; she got promoted and became the Dean of the university

when her other women colleagues' families refused. This refusal made higher positions more accessible for males because, as men in the Yemeni culture, you are free to travel anytime you want, spend as many hours as you want outside, and communicate and spend time with whomever you want (B).

The selected women for this research confirmed that all family members, even mothers, would prefer not to support their daughters as they did with males. Participant (E) elaborated that when the family lacked financial resources, they prioritized males attending schools, accessing education, and developing their skills. This is because they believe that males do not shame families. This prioritizing was an obstacle for the participants because it stopped them from improving their academic knowledge and professional development, which could help them assume mid and senior higher positions in higher education institutions. Participant (C) stated:

As I told you, I am a lecturer and administrative assistant at my university. One of the biggest challenges that I face are educational requirements. So, if I want to get any higher position, I need to assume a higher education degree. So, I think it is fair enough (C).

Theme Three: Lack of Educational Degrees and Professional Development Training

Participants gave the educational barriers a significant focus in their answers when interviewed. They highlighted that to acquire a senior leadership position in higher education, a woman leader should have obtained a higher degree, such as Ph.D. (B). However, participants explained that girls' education in Yemen needs to begin from early childhood, and families would prefer to have educated males rather than educated females. Participant (F) mentioned, " You find great challenges throughout your journey to assume a higher position starting from childhood, where girls are deprived of their right to education" (F).

Participant (E) illustrated that when women acquire higher degrees and complete their higher education, their accessibility to senior higher leadership positions becomes smooth. An example was elaborated by participant (A), who was a dean and a current professor at university X, when she stated:

In my case, when I graduated from the University with excellent ratings and a degree of honor, that gave me an advantage when my department asked me to work as a lecturer, and I accepted, believing that I should be a part of developing my society. So here, I had an experience with the faculty Dean, who took my appointment file and kept it with him for a long time. So, I went and asked him for his reasons for delaying my appointment. He said that he had previous experiences with females. After reaching this position, they left to be married or have family priorities... So here, the Dean had a prejudgment that I would not be able to manage the job or travel and complete my higher education. His questions created a push inside me and only after one year I told my father that I wanted to complete my master's in the USA. He agreed, and I completed my studies (A).

The gathered information showed that the low presence of females in schools and higher education institutions would continually lead to having few females in senior higher leadership positions. Participant (C) explained that educational and professional opportunities were equal for both genders in her institution; however, only a few women could access these opportunities, such as traveling for a master's degree or any professional development training. Participant (E) stated:

Training and developments, especially if it needs traveling, are always accessible for men only. Furthermore, that is due to several challenges women face when their families do not allow them to travel alone. Also, due to political restrictions nowadays... any woman must have a guardian in case she wants to travel. So, not

having many developed and trained women allows men to achieve higher positions easily (B).

The data confirmed the significant role that education and professional development play in enhancing the presence of more women leaders in higher education, which makes them feel more confident and increases their potential to be leaders (H). However, Participant (G) highlighted that due to other personal challenges, such as family responsibilities, sometimes a woman herself loses the courage to become a leader.

Theme Four: Personal Barriers

Throughout the interviews, participants shed light on how their personal life could impact their leadership role, which was also deemed an obstacle for them. One of the participants, a current associate professor, indicated that a senior leadership position in higher education needed her to devote much time at the University to guide employees in the department and solve problems. However, these responsibilities contradicted her family responsibilities, such as going home early, spending time with family, cooking or cleaning, then she decided to leave the position (B). In addition, participants elaborated that these positions did not fall under the scope of what they were interested in, so they rejected them. An example was provided by participant (G) when she stated:

In my case, I did not want to assume a leadership position because I was interested more in researching rather than administrative work besides building my academic abilities and achieving higher academic degrees like completing my master's and Ph.D., and until now, I am doing research to develop myself. I was nominated to assume high leadership positions like a head of the department or vice dean. Still, I was not interested (G).

Moreover, participants explained that at a time in their life, they could manage to be a senior leader; however, when a personal issue changed, such as getting married, they could

not maintain the position anymore (G). An example was given by Participant (B) when she stated:

I may add women's social life [to a list of personal challenges]; for example, if she is married or has family responsibilities, this factor can affect women's ambition to reach leadership positions. Sometimes women's husbands stop them from working, fearing that they would be exposed to harassment... having children or husbands, this might make them think twice about having high leadership positions, though I think women are more sincere to work than men (B).

Moreover, the information the researcher collected showed that women lacking confidence, even when qualified, became an obstacle. Fear and lack of confidence could discourage women from assuming these positions, especially when they feel that their society and families do not appreciate their work (D). This was elaborated by Participant (G) when she stated:

I can notice within these five years how women's personalities have changed. I can see the positive change from my female students who now have self-confidence and lack of fear and are able to express themselves compared to when female students used to hesitate if I asked them, for example, to make presentations, so this sort of strong personality is qualified to assume leadership positions (G).

Participants indicated that the potential to assume mid and senior higher leadership positions in higher education resulted from other barriers beyond the institutional, cultural, educational, and personal, such as political crises, religious restrictions, and low salaries.

Theme Five: Other Barriers

When participants were asked about discussing any additional barriers not mentioned in the interview questions, the most repeated common factor was the current political crisis. Participants explained that due to the current war in Yemen and various accompanying

conflicts, political parties tend to connect their political interests to the educational system in higher education institutions. They elaborated that political parties started to have more power in hiring people in higher education positions and even in enrolling students (E). Participants explained that political parties decide to hire people who will follow orders and toe the party line even if that involves corruption.

Participants indicated that, unlike men, women are more honest and sincere when doing their job, so they might never allow corruption in higher education institutions. Moreover, if the employed woman leader did not follow their orders, they would easily remove her from the position (H). Participant (D), who is a current head of department in a faculty at university X, elaborated on her personal experience, stating that:

I was nominated to be the head of the department after the person who was in that position for ten years at that time, but since I was not one of the members of the senior leadership of the University and I did not support them, I was neglected, and my academic promotion decision was delayed because having this academic promotion means you are qualified to take a leadership position. Also, another issue is partisanship, where you find difficulties obtaining your rights in case you are independent and do not belong to any political party (D).

The same participant reflected on her recent experience during conflicts explaining that political parties currently allow students to enroll in higher education studies even if they do not have the qualifications as long as they pay for their education. Participants emphasized that higher education in Yemen will keep deteriorating as long as women are excluded from higher positions and politics is involved in the decisions of educational systems.

Suggested Recommendations to Overcome the Mentioned Barriers

At the end of the interview, participants provided suggestions and recommendations, from their perspectives as leaders, to decrease these challenges and attract and employ more

women for senior leadership positions in higher education. These suggestions are labeled and highlighted in Table 1.

Table 2

Participants' response to the question, "What needs to be done to help overcome these challenges and barriers?"

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
Participant (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop women's skills in higher education through continuously attending professional development courses. • To establish new academic policy regulations that guarantee women's presence in higher education senior leadership positions.
Participant (E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer more online professional development programs that women can attend from their houses. • To make educational reforms in schools' curriculums that reinforce the stereotypical view of women's leadership positions. • To design compulsory courses on gender studies to raise students' awareness in schools and universities.
Participant (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To formulate females' personalities and skills from early ages in schools and enhance them to become leaders. • To create a governmental system that empowers women to participate in senior leadership positions in higher education. • To follow and apply the appointed rules regarding the recruitment process in higher education. • To promote institutional transparency.
Participant (G)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold meetings and professional work in the work environment in formal and professional procedures. • To enhance training courses and seminars for women students in higher education.
Participant (H)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having more women leaders as role models inspires other women to become leaders. • To raise families' awareness about the significance of their support in women leaders' journeys.
Participant (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To abide by specific professional working hours in higher education institutions. • To encourage women through financial awarding.

Unique Results

The results of this research involved insightful lived personal experiences on the obstacles Yemeni women leaders encounter in higher education institutions. However, one of the study's participants reported remarkable results when she indicated that she did not pass through any challenge to assume her current mid leadership position. Surprisingly, she was the only participant who reported that she had a smooth career path toward leadership in higher education. This one-of-a-kind experience pinpointed the diverse characteristics and circumstances individuals have played an essential part in navigating women's leadership career paths in higher education in Yemen.

Chapter Summary

The chapter detailing the study's findings presents five overarching themes, each derived from the salient patterns from the participants' responses during the interview process. The participants, in their responses, identified that the most significant obstacles they encountered were situated within the context of higher education institutions. They elaborated on how male senior leadership positions within these institutions were predominantly occupied by males, creating a male-dominated work environment. Additionally, the participants pointed out that female leadership figures were routinely excluded from decision-making processes, as the existing rules and regulations of the higher education apparatus were deemed irreconcilable with their participation.

Moreover, participants indicated that cultural beliefs and societal norms prevalent in Yemeni society contributed to their inhibited advancement to higher positions within the institutional hierarchy. Such cultural beliefs manifested as restrictions against female professionals traveling alone, clocking in additional working hours within the workplace, and other culturally proscribed gender norms. Consequently, participants noted that these institutional, cultural, and personal challenges could erode their self-confidence and detract from their passion for pursuing leadership roles within higher education.

They demonstrated that obtaining advanced degrees and augmenting their area-specific knowledge and skills via ongoing learning was necessary to be qualified for senior leadership positions in higher education. However, the mentioned challenges could hinder their ability to pursue higher education degrees and enhance their skills and expertise through professional development training.

All in all, the study's findings show that women leaders in higher education encounter a variety of hurdles in Yemen, including institutional, personal, professional, educational, and political impediments in order to assume mid and senior leadership positions. However, these barriers are rooted in a bigger and more basic issue that is Yemen's culture and male-dominated community. Yemen's patriarchal culture has a considerable impact on people's ideas, attitudes, and behaviors about women's responsibilities in society, including their involvement in higher education leadership positions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter starts with a general overview of the findings chapter. The challenges that participants reported are analyzed and discussed in the light of Morales's Academic Resilience Framework, which describes individuals who can overcome complicated circumstances and complex challenges to assume mid and senior leadership positions as academically resilient leaders in his theoretical framework. In addition, the chapter reflects on other research illustrated in the literature review chapter.

This study explored the challenges for women trying to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education in Yemen. The findings demonstrated that women leaders had strong qualifications in the first theme, Institutional Barriers, but faced difficulties (patriarchy-defying), mainly if they worked in settings that discouraged gender equality. The second theme is significantly influenced by the cultural norms and beliefs surrounding women leaders in higher education. The third theme indicated how Yemeni women leaders lack the skills necessary for assuming senior leadership positions in higher education. Lastly, themes highlighted that women's personal life experiences could negatively discourage Yemeni women from assuming higher positions, in addition to the current political crises and conflicts in Yemen. The findings also indicated that some highly educated women, without interest in politics or societal change, face more challenges not being involved in politics, despite their awareness of its significance (Khan & Khan, 2022). They occasionally have an interest in developing the quality of higher education through research and other updated systems, such as the autocorrection system. In addition, women leaders might frequently prefer to carry on with their daily activities without getting engaged in anything that is not directly related to their jobs, such as politics.

Question One: What are the greatest challenges at work that obstruct your career advancement and prevent you from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education?

According to Morales's Academic Resilience Model (ARM), Yemeni women leaders of this study showed that they were qualified and resilient leaders in higher education who served under pressure from their work environment. The findings highlighted in Theme 1 showed how Yemeni women could lead their departments in higher education despite harsh circumstances, such as war, gender inequality roles, and exclusion from decisions.

Furthermore, the results of this research are directly related to some Yemeni women's ability to challenge patriarchy and establish themselves as deserving leaders in conventional settings where women are viewed as the weaker gender, in contrast to other women who prefer to leave such positions due to personal reasons listed in the above results. The participants' abilities to assume mid and senior leadership positions in Yemeni higher education institutions confirmed that, despite the many institutional barriers, some women leaders were able to use their knowledge to address and combat issues of gender dominance (Evans & Pfister, 2021).

However, the interviewees, women who hold senior decision-making positions in higher education, stated that not all positions of authority were equivalent to positions of power. The respondents noted that in addition to the capacity that is required to succeed as a leader, it is also important to be able to influence the working environment and delivery of results through authority (Al-Sakkaf, 2020). In other words, even though a woman holds a leadership position, her authority may not be acknowledged by male coworkers or subordinates because of patriarchal beliefs that prescribe how people think and behave, even in the workplace. To fit into the roles and demonstrate their capabilities as leaders, it is

required for women leaders to act, work, and lead like males even when women have positive impact (Patel et al., 2020).

Furthermore, feedback from the respondents revealed that women leaders, the major supporters of the gender equality agenda, were frequently targets of mistreatment due to their support. In this scenario, their authority would be endangered, or their projects would be shelved to stop further progress toward gender equality (Baron, 2019). Women leaders who support gender equality explained that they are in a losing battle with conservative society and its opportunistic politicians, who prefer to receive support from the traditional forces during unstable times rather than from the women leaders, even though the latter is a part of the political system and the government.

According to the respondents, women empowerment will continue to encounter resistance because men in higher education institutions do not have faith in women's talents, especially given that they hold a disproportionately small number of positions that involve decision-making. Even if they are highly qualified and hold high positions, women, as a vulnerable social group, would rather stand aside and avoid conflict with groups that could use any means necessary to get their way in the absence of the rule of law or responsibility when the state itself is weak, and systems fail to protect citizens. It also becomes more difficult for women to oppose decisions and demand their rights because the Yemeni state frequently targets women from vulnerable groups, especially in the absence of governmental support from above and grassroots support from below (Nasser et al., 2019).

Women are typically expected to hold lower-level roles since leadership is associated with masculinity due to cultural conditioning. For instance, Yemen has a lower average percentage of female parliamentarians (20%) than the global average (26%), which is already low, and further highlights the persistent underrepresentation of women in politics at all levels. Women hold senior positions in fewer than 7% of Yemeni higher education

institutions, including in 'women-friendly' areas, according to a survey on women's leadership in academia (Alotaibi, 2020). Men's emphasis on the cultural distinctions between men and women, male-dominated societies, a lack of mentoring, reliance on formal career management methods, perceived stereotypes, and restriction on movement are some of the theme's most salient features.

It is critical to develop an egalitarian and inclusive workplace where everyone may realize their potential, regardless of gender or other personal traits (Evans & Pfister, 2021). To address these challenges, workplaces should focus on mentoring, flexible work schedules, prejudice and diversity education, and leadership development programs that support diversity and inclusion. Organizations can unlock the full potential of all workers, including women, and promote innovation and success by establishing an inclusive and empowering culture built on these basic principles. In addition to diversity and inclusion training, mentorship and sponsorship programs, equal pay regulations, and leadership development efforts that support diversity and gender equality should be promoted and encouraged.

Moreover, according to the women leaders themselves who were interviewed, it would be extremely beneficial if they were assisted in establishing unions or other organizations that would support and protect them to be recognized for their significant contributions in senior leadership positions in higher education.

Question Two: What are the cultural challenges that prevent you from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education?

One of the conducted research projects suggests that the biggest and most persistent barrier to female leadership is Yemen's patriarchal sociocultural context (Alim-Alsoswa, & Brehony, 2022). Most authority positions in higher education are held by men in Yemen, which has a highly patriarchal culture with little room for women to participate in public life

(Richter, 2022). The existence of male dominance in Yemeni culture is complicated and has deeply ingrained cultural ideals that place a premium on masculine control and authority.

Throughout the participants' responses, most of the barriers that affect women's access to higher education leadership positions in Yemen are connected to male dominance. Male domination is deemed a core challenge that Yemeni women face to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education. In Yemen, the cultural norms are derived from patriarchal ideas where men are favored over women, leading to unequal resource distribution between males and females. For example, the collected data showed how higher education institutions prefer hiring men in leadership positions more than women, especially when they tended to give more opportunities to males.

Furthermore, male domination in Yemen is not a particular challenge; however, it intersects with other concepts, such as religion, socioeconomic status, and education. When these identity traits intersect, Yemeni women can face professional, personal, and political challenges in trying to assume mid and senior leadership positions. As a result, an intersectional strategy is required to successfully address these difficulties and empower women leaders in Yemen's higher education sector.

In this context, intersectionality refers to the interlinked issues/factors that lead to women's marginalization and oppression from leadership positions in higher education (Showunmi, 2021). In the case of Yemen, the women leaders explained how their marginalization and higher education experiences were shaped by factors other than male dominance, such as the interpretations of religion or insufficient qualifications. The results also indicated how when comparing two similar participants, the issue of family support from patriarchal beliefs was the only challenge that affected one participant's ability to obtain a leadership position; however, for another participant, there were compounding challenges, such as patriarchal beliefs and coming from a low-income family where she could not pay to

obtain a higher degree. Job advancement for women is negatively impacted by these patriarchal beliefs and the gender roles that accompany them, which restrict employment options to those that uphold the conventional division of labor and do not interfere with family responsibilities (Alotaibi, 2020).

Women leaders who strive to act and exert authority outside the norms associated with their gender and leadership style encounter resistance and unfavorable criticism from others. They are also seen as unfeminine because they may be overly stiff, harsh, or indifferent. In the Yemeni culture, men are perceived by both men and women as being better leaders than women, even when both have the same credentials and experience. This gradually gives rise to the belief that women leaders would always be seen as less capable than men since effective leadership typically mirrors male attributes, and women's leadership styles are perceived as ineffective.

Accordingly, women can encounter opposition or rejection from relatives or family members who are unconvinced of their skills or right to follow their dreams and participate in leadership positions in society. This could result from cultural norms and values that stress traditional gender roles and impose restrictions on women's movement, education, and autonomy. Families and communities can play a significant role in helping and promoting women to acquire these traits.

Interviewed women in this research elaborated on how their familial and communal lack of support was one of the results behind their struggles to assume mid and senior leadership position in higher education. However, their strong resilience, positive potential, research, and impact confirmed their abilities to lead and develop from the quality of education even when discouraged by their communities. Morales (2008) confirms that when individuals achieve high achievements regardless of their culturally depressed interventions, they prove their resilience and professional qualifications to lead.

Cultural barriers may not prohibit women from achieving top positions, but those positions will not go beyond being head of the department or vice dean. The cultural restrictions on women's freedom of movement can have a crippling effect on providing for the necessities of the family when men are gone due to migration or conflict. Yet, literature provided in this study, as well as the findings, suggest that work-life balance challenges, gender stereotypes, discrimination, a lack of representation, and other cultural barriers and prejudices frequently affect women in their path to acquiring a senior leadership position in higher education.

It is crucial to remember that women's rights and equality are fundamental human rights and societal issues that call for systemic and structural change rather than personal integrity or accountability. To ensure that everyone, regardless of gender, realizes their full potential and serves the common good, people must challenge and reform the cultural norms and prejudices that restrict women's possibilities and perpetuate gender inequities (Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2019). In addition, changes in cultural norms and values about leadership and gender must be made over time to address these cultural issues. This could involve a number of tactics, such as promoting gender equality in the workplace and in school, increasing the visibility of women in leadership roles, and battling harmful stereotypes and attitudes about women in the household and within the community (Richter, 2022).

Question Three: How does professional development help you overcome the challenges that obstruct your way towards senior leadership in higher education?

The fact that women encounter major barriers to engagement in public life or higher senior positions is also a result of many other vicious cycles of insufficient academic knowledge, training, and professional experience. According to person-centered theory (Harvard Business Review, 2018), women's lower levels of human capital, skill sets, as well

as other pertinent attributes, compared to males are the reason behind the gender discrepancies that women encounter in job advancement.

Participants indicated that, in Yemen, women's access to basic education and professional development courses is limited and families prefer to send only male children to schools and universities. This limitation results in having less educated women to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education. As mentioned in the literature, the number of males who go to school and universities is more than females because Yemeni parents, relatives or husbands still believe that their women will be exposed to sexual harassment and will not be safe in schools, universities, or any environment where they must interact with males.

Moreover, based on the literature and what the interviews confirmed, the current status of higher education institutions is deteriorating due to conflicts. This could also be a result of having a low number of women present in senior higher education positions in Yemen. The data collected in this study illustrates how the presence of women leaders in higher education can improve the quality of education. In leadership roles, women bring distinctive perspectives and experiences that support the advancement of inclusive and successful educational practices. A serious issue that could harm the advancement of the educational process is the low presence of women in leadership roles in educational institutions and organizations that are associated with them.

Question Four: Does being a Yemeni woman in higher education entails any difficulties or challenges in terms of career advancement? How? Any personal challenges you would like to share in this regard?

It is evident, from the literature and findings of the study, that leadership roles necessitate a lot of responsibility and certain personality traits in order to be successful in a top leadership position. These traits include forward-thinking, strategic thinking, written and

spoken communication, and resilience, all of which are necessary to exhibit proper leadership abilities. Participants underlined that success in any career requires more than just a degree and that having a strong work ethic and creating high-quality work are essential. Participants acknowledged that although women confront obstacles in the workforce due to family obligations and social stigmas, they had a real and noticeable influence on their leadership positions in higher education. They clarified that if a woman leader acquires strong leadership skills as mentioned above, they succeeded in their roles.

However, other women value other facets of their jobs or personal lives, such as family or studies, more than their desire for a higher position. It is crucial to remember that these aspects do not just apply to women but to all people.

Lastly, the overprotective and exclusionary social environment for women in Yemen may impact their leadership identities and self-perceptions as leaders, eroding their confidence and preventing them from pursuing high-level jobs. The few who choose to deviate from the norm may face prejudice, criticism, or threats to their lives. According to the interviews, women's approach to their positions frequently drew inspiration from the bounds of the family or the community. Instead of relying on their personalities or skills to contribute to peacebuilding, leadership, and conflict resolution, they took a family-centered approach.

Question Five: Are there any other factors that prevent Yemeni women from assuming senior leadership position in higher education you would like to add?

The most notable factor for the failure of initiatives promoting women's empowerment in higher education is political and social instability. In this sense, instability refers to periods and occurrences of political dysfunction and economic crisis that directly and indirectly impact the success of governmental endeavors generally rather than as a result of military conflict and weak states (Faidah & Al-Ghalib, 2020). According to Richer (2022), unstable

nations are more likely to plunge into poverty and experience a lack of growth, which fuels further instability and a vicious cycle.

Political instability also contributed to the failure of women's empowerment initiatives in higher education, such as enrolling more female leaders, promoting their influence in the formation of political agendas, or participating in international educational conferences. This is due to the fact that new leaders tend to push their own personal agendas based on their histories and interests. As a result, the advancement of women in higher education cannot be sustained or continued.

According to Lopez-Fernandez (2019), instability hurts the efficacy of policies promoting women's empowerment, primarily due to a lack of funding. This was partially due to the Yemeni government's lack of financial support for such initiatives because it did not prioritize women's empowerment during the unrest. This was also brought on by the fact that donors who funded most of the work on women's empowerment often withdrew their support during times of crisis (Ketelhut, 2020).

However, instability can occasionally create opportunities for women's empowerment due to changes in their conventional roles and new tasks that they must adopt in the absence of men, according to Nasser (2019). The findings, alongside the literature, showed how women during the current conflict had made several positive impacts on the state of education in Yemen, such as through conducting research, civic engagement projects advocating for peace, voluntary work, and local initiatives to solve intracommunal conflict.

Instability also affects women leaders' capacity in higher education to carry out their duties, particularly their ability to implement laws and conduct research, intended to advance the status of women. Most interviewees acknowledged that instability has positively impacted their life in some way, particularly about the influence it has had on the women leaders themselves, such as being promoted. Their feedback showed they faced tougher obstacles

when working on their projects during unstable times; however, they were able to manage their departments in higher education institutions.

In conclusion, personal interactions, family relationships, education that encourages gender awareness rather than reproducing standards already in place, and understanding of historical periods in which women played active roles and valued their voices are factors in having more women in higher education leadership positions (Alhaffar et al., 2022).

Recommendations

This section provides implications suggested by the research participants based on their experiences. The last question of this study aimed to draw on implications that can attract policymakers' attention in considering the supplied recommendations in their future decisions to increase the number of women leaders in higher education.

- The findings have significant ramifications for Yemeni gender politics and policy and can be useful for other nations with similar legal systems. This is an opportunity to consider alternatives to the methods currently being used in Yemen to empower women and instead channel additional efforts towards the challenges mentioned in this study. The findings can set the stage for donor interventions in women's empowerment initiatives and provide the blueprint for revisions to women's empowerment plans based on addressing the institutional and professional challenges brought to light through this study. This research can also provide guidance for future studies of a similar nature in other developing nation contexts, and particularly those with patriarchal systems such as that of Yemen.

- Given that Yemen is presently experiencing armed unrest, this research may help to understand and encourage better policies for women's empowerment in post-conflict Yemen. Barakat and Milton (2015) demonstrate that empowering diverse and local leaders in higher education results in re-building the social infrastructure and human capital in the post-conflict period. Empowering women in higher education can contribute to developing resilient societies after the war.

Future Scope of the Research

Future scholarly work building on this thesis could take several different paths, including developing its theoretical contributions, replicating this study using new techniques, and conducting comparative research focusing on different social, geographic, or temporal contexts. As this thesis demonstrates, Yemeni women leaders face numerous obstacles in their drive to advance and realize gender equality, and these difficulties have had a detrimental effect on the country's efforts to empower women. There is a need for studies that cover each of those topics in depth and include several examples of both successes and failures. The theoretical distinction between authority and power in the experiences of Yemeni women leaders in higher education, which was often underlined in this research's findings, could be further expanded in future studies. In light of this, it would be intriguing to investigate the agency of powerful women leaders who operate in patriarchal settings. Also, a subsequent study might look at how empowerment policies can address societal redistribution of power in conjunction with or before development activities. Such a study can advocate for including the nuanced conceptualization of women's empowerment provided in this research in the design, implementation, and assessment of gender policies. From a different perspective, the results of this study might lead to programs and policies aimed at empowering women in times of peace as well as during and after periods of instability or even armed conflict. Lastly, future research

can also explore the factors that enable particular females to break through the glass ceiling and draw insights that can pave the way for other women leaders in higher education.

Chapter Summary

According to the study's findings, empowering women in Yemen is a complicated issue that calls for more than top-down policies to address development indicators, including enrollment in schools and universities, access to financial resources, implementation of rules and regulations in the higher education work environment, and the promotion of gender awareness. Although these development goals are crucial, they primarily focus on the supply side of women's empowerment and ignore the need to increase public demand for these services.

The first theme of this study explained how women struggled to assume mid and senior leadership positions in higher education due to institutional barriers such as male-dominated administration, exclusion from decision-making, and unapplied recruitment rules and regulations. This theme provided a thorough analysis of the disparity between the affected individuals, the significance of familial support, and the situation of gender inequality. The second theme focused on the cultural barriers prohibiting women from attaining senior leadership positions and highlighted the cultural disparities present in Yemeni society that women must face. It emphasized the significance of removing barriers and hindrances to women's advancement. The third theme focused on the importance of education and professional development and how these two pillars strengthen women's positions in assuming higher positions in higher education. In addition, high academic degrees, quality education, and training increase self-confidence and attributes that are desirable for leaders. The next theme centered on the personal challenges women encounter on their journeys to higher positions in higher education, such as marriage, children, and lack of interest. The last theme explained how the current political situation of Yemen during conflict impacts women

leaders in their positions in both positive and negative ways. This study emphasized the significance of distinguishing between authority and power and how the institutional spillover from the cultural to Yemen's formal institutions dominates the cause of women's empowerment without supporting it. In conclusion, this study illuminates crucial facets of Yemeni policies promoting women's empowerment and offers helpful data to theorists, policy makers and implementers, and development experts.

Conclusion of the Study

Since it impacts cultural beliefs and norms, gender roles in society, and gender-based power dynamics in the community, gender equality is contentious in many conservative nations, including Yemen. This phenomenological qualitative research aimed to understand the barriers that Yemeni women encounter in assuming mid and senior leadership positions, which lead to the low presence of females in higher education institutions. Unfortunately, the position of Yemeni women in senior positions in higher education remains dire despite numerous efforts. The generated themes illustrated that the institutional, cultural, educational, professional, and political barriers are intense challenges that Yemeni women leaders experience in higher education when attempting to assume such positions. In addition, these challenges intersect with other factors, such as religion, which make the challenges even harder to overcome.

It is crucial to challenge the assumption that a more inclusive leadership model that questions conventional gender norms and acknowledges the significance of male and female traits is the sole solution to addressing gender inequality in Yemen. Such a strategy may overlook that gender is not binary and that individuals may possess traits that cannot be categorized as exclusively male or female. Therefore, it is necessary to approach gender inclusivity with a nuanced and intersectional lens that considers all individuals' diverse experiences and perspectives.

In conclusion, while empowering women to take up leadership positions in higher education is an essential step toward promoting gender equality in Yemen, there is a need for more considerable systemic and structural changes. This entails challenging cultural and institutional norms, changing laws and policies, and promoting a more diverse and intersectional understanding of gender.

Overall, the Yemeni government must make parallel attempts to advance women's emancipation by including women in decision-making circles when appointing them to mid and senior positions in higher education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval

 THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Case# 2022-2023-099

To: Shaima Adel
brahim M. Karkouti
Dena Riad

From: Heba Kotb Chair of the IRB

Date 12/1/2023

Re: IRB approval

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled

"Exploring The Challenges for Women Trying to Assume Senior Leadership Positions in Higher Education in Yemen"

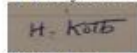
It required consultation with the IRB under the "expedited" category. As you are aware, there were minor revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. Your proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

This approval letter was issued under the assumption that you have not started data collection for your research project. Any data collected before receiving this letter could not be used since this is a violation of the IRB policy.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.



Heba Kotb
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo
2078 HUSS Building
T: 02-26151857
Email: hebakotb@aucegypt.edu

Institutional Review Board
The American University in
Cairo
AUC Avenue, P.O. Box 74
New Cairo 11835, Egypt.
tel 20.2.2615.1000
fax 20.2.27957565
Email: irb@aucegypt.edu

Appendix B: English Consent Form



Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: Exploring the Challenges for Women Trying to Assume Senior Leadership Positions in Higher Education in Yemen

Principal Investigator: Shaima Adel Al-Monefie - (Mobile: +20 1067795367- Email: shaima2050s@aucegypt.edu)

*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to study the challenges for Women in higher education in Yemen and the findings may be published, presented, or both. The expected duration of your participation is 60 minutes.

*The procedures of the research will be as follows the interviewer will ask you a few questions about your perception of blended learning and educational equity.

*There are no risks or discomforts associated with this research.

*There *will not be* benefits to you from this research, still the researcher hopes and tries to understand the challenges that prevent female academic leaders in Yemen from obtaining senior leadership positions in higher education.

*The information you provide for purposes of this research is *confidential*.

*For students, we will give a copy of this paper to your family. If you want to ask about anything, please call the researcher Reem Yaseen on her phone (+20 1067795367) or contact her at this email (shaima2050s@aucegypt.edu).

*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

Appendix C: Arabic Consent Form

الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة



استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث : استكشاف التحديات التي تواجه المرأة التي تحاول تولي منصب قيادي رفيع في التعليم العالي في اليمن.

الباحث الرئيسي: (شيماء عادل المنيفي)
البريد الإلكتروني: shaima2050s@aucegypt.edu
الهاتف: +02 01067795367

ندعو حضرتك للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية.

*هدف الدراسة هو الغرض من البحث: تستكشف هذه الدراسة التحديات التي تواجه المرأة التي تحاول تولي منصب قيادي رفيع في التعليم العالي في اليمن ويمكن نشر النتائج أو تقديمها أو كليهما. المدة المتوقعة لمشاركتك 60 دقيقة.

*ستكون إجراءات البحث على النحو التالي ، سيطرح عليك القائم بإجراء المقابلة بعض الأسئلة حول تصورك عن التحديات التي تواجه المرأة اليمنية في تولي منصب قيادي رفيع.

*المخاطر المتوقعة لا توجد مخاطر من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

*إن تكون هناك فوائد لك من هذا البحث. ومع ذلك ، يأمل الباحث أن يساعد استكشاف وجهات نظر القائدات في فهم التحديات التي تواجه المرأة اليمنية التي تحاول الوصول الي مناصب قيادية رفيعة في التعليم العالي في اليمن.

*المعلومات التي ستدلى بها في هذا البحث سوف تكون سرية.

*للمتطلب ، سوف نعطي نسخة من هذه الورقة لعائلتك وفي حالة وجود أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة أو حقوق المشاركين فيها يجب تقوم بالاتصال بالباحث/ شيماء عادل المنيفي على التليفون (+02 01067795367) ، أو على الإيميل (shaima2050s@aucegypt.edu).

*إن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ما هي الا عمل تطوعي. حيث أن الامتناع عن المشاركة لا يتضمن أي عقوبات أو فقدان أي مزايا تحقق لك. ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.

اسم المشارك:

التاريخ:

الامضاء:

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Exploring The Challenges for Women Trying To Assume Senior Leadership Positions In Higher Education In Yemen

Interview questions

First: Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your marital status?
3. What is your academic degree?
4. What is your job title?
5. How many years of experience do you have?

أولاً: أسئلة ديموغرافية.

- كم عمرك؟

- ما هي حالتك الاجتماعية؟

- ما هو مؤهلك العلمي؟

- ما هي صفاتك الوظيفية؟

- كم سنوات الخبرة لديك؟

Second: Interview Protocol

1. What are the greatest challenges at work that obstruct your career advancement and prevent you from obtaining senior leadership positions in higher education? Examples?
2. What are the cultural challenges that prevent you from assuming senior leadership positions in higher education? Examples?
3. Does being a Yemeni woman in higher education entails any difficulties or challenges in terms of career advancement? How? Any personal challenges you would like to share in this regard?
4. How does professional development help you overcome the challenges that obstruct your way towards senior leadership in higher education? Examples? Is training and development available at work?

5. Do you believe that education in Yemen helps women assume leadership positions in higher education? What changes do you recommend to improve the existing educational system for female students who aspire to become senior higher education leaders?
6. Are there any other factors that prevent Yemeni women from obtaining senior leadership position in higher education you would like to add?
7. What needs to be done to help you overcome these challenges and barriers?

ثانياً: بروتوكول المقابلة.

- ما هي أكبر التحديات المؤسسية التي منعتك من الحصول على مناصب قيادية رفيعة في مجال التعليم العالي؟ أمثلة؟
- ما هي التحديات الثقافية التي منعتك من الحصول على مناصب قيادية رفيعة في مجال التعليم العالي؟
- هل يترتب على كونك امرأة بمنزلة قيادية في التعليم العالي أية صعوبات أو تحديات من حيث التقدم الوظيفي؟ كيف؟ أي تحديات شخصية تودين مشاركتها في هذا الصدد؟
- كيف يساعدك التطوير المهني في التغلب على التحديات التي تعيق طريقك نحو القيادة الرفيعة في التعليم العالي؟ أمثلة؟ هل التدريب والتطوير متوفر في العمل؟
- هل تؤمن بأن التعليم في اليمن يساعد المرأة على تولي مناصب قيادية في التعليم العالي؟ ما هي التغييرات التي توصين بها لتحسين النظام التعليمي الحالي للطالبات اللاتي يتطلعن إلى أن يصبحن من كبار قادة التعليم العالي؟
- هل ترغبين بإضافة أي عوامل أخرى تعيق المرأة اليمنية عن الحصول على مناصب قيادية رفيعة في مجال التعليم العالي؟
- ما الذي يتوجب عمله لمساعدتك في تخطي هذه العوائق؟