

Women Administrators in Segregated Higher Educational Institutions in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Since the 1970's, national universities in Saudi Arabia have created closed centers for women off their main campuses. Though segregated, women study and work in accordance with the same structure and regulation of "mother" universities. This study investigates women administrators work conditions, their role in decision-making, the hierarchical power structures established between males and females; tensions underpinning the current administrative 'traditions'. In all state universities, male administrators are in control of higher administrative positions, colleges, deanships, and all academic as well as service departments. Women serve as deputies and have a limited role in decision-making. The present study reports results of interviews with 36 female administrators at 12 higher education institutions representing a variety of administrative structures, and locations.

1. Historical Background

1.1 History of Women's Pre-college Education in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, formal schooling for girls is only 50 years old. Until 1960, females were ignored and remained illiterate. It was not easy for them to go to school due to some social traditions and some fanatic clergy who were against the formal education of girls for fear of coeducation and the abandonment of hijab, in addition to the absence of governmental attention/role. Many Saudi families were also hesitant to send their daughters to school especially in villages, deserts and remote areas, where schools were limited in number and scattered and means of transportation were rare and inconvenient (Albahr, 1997). In 1960, the gap between male and female education was large because girls' education started 20 years after that of boys, and because education was mainly provided for male students who represented the main labor force. In 1960, a royal decree on behalf of the late King Saud mandated the establishment of the Directorate General for Girls' Education (DGGE), a ministry staffed by ulama (Muslim clergymen), which provided education for girls in gender-based schools.

The goal of women education as stated in the Kingdom's official policy was ideologically tied to religion: *"the purpose of educating a girl is to bring her up in a proper Islamic way so as to perform her duty in life, be an ideal and successful housewife and a good mother, ready to do things which suit her nature such as teaching, nursing and medical treatment."* The policy also recognized *"women's right to obtain suitable education on equal footing with men in the light of Islamic laws."* In practice, educational options for girls at the precollege level were a bit different in that only boys had vocational schools and took physical education, whereas girls took home economics.

Between 1962 and 2003, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and DGGE were independently in charge of male and female students' education. MOE supervised the education of boys such as special education programs for the handicapped, adult education, and junior colleges for men, and DGGE oversaw the general education of girls such as kindergartens and nurseries, women's literacy programs, elementary, junior and senior high schools, as well as colleges of education and women's junior

colleges. This state of affairs stemmed from the religious and social imperative of gender segregation.

Although DGGE was in charge of girls' education, the rector, vice-presidents and higher-level administrators and decision makers were all men. The highest administrative position women could hold under DGGE was Head of the Supervision Department in the different school districts around the Kingdom.

In 2003, the DGGE was abolished upon the death of 13 female students in the blaze of a fire at a junior high school in Makkah. As a result, MOE took over and has been in charge of the Girls' schools. Only the director general and higher administrators were released, but the rest of the departments were merged with those of MOE. Male and female students and staff continued to study and work in gender-based environments. The highest position held by women continued to be head of Supervision Office, until the first female deputy to the Minister of Education was appointed in early 2009. It is noteworthy to say that she also works in a segregated environment.

1.2 History of Women's Post-secondary Education in Saudi Arabia

Women's higher education institutions were established 10 years after that of formal public schools for girls. DGGE established the first women's college in Riyadh in 1970-1971. Many women's colleges were later established in the different regions and in 1976, several graduate programs opened in Riyadh and Dammam respectively. Twenty years later, there were 46 women's colleges in 32 cities, in addition to 14 women's colleges in 8 major cities offering M.A. and Ph.D. programs in education, arts, science and home economics (Al-Marshad, 2002).

When DGGE was abolished and merged with the MOE in 2003, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) started to run women's colleges. In each major city, women's colleges became part of the state university in it. For example, the Women's College of Education in Makkah joined Umm Al-Qura University. In 2007, women's colleges of Art, Science and Home Economics in Riyadh were put together and constituted the first women university, which was called "Riyadh Women's University" and the first female university rector in the history of higher education in Saudi Arabia was appointed. In 2009, the name was changed to "Princess Noura University".

For male students, modern university education in Saudi Arabia began in 1957 with a single state university (King Saud University in Riyadh), which was established by MOHE. Twenty years later, there were 7 state universities: King Abdul-Aziz, Umm Al-Qura, King Fahad, Imam, King Faisal, King Khalid and The Islamic Universities. Large universities such as King Saud, King Abdul-Aziz, Imam and Umm Al-Qura Universities had branches with few colleges and departments on each campus in several smaller towns.

Few years after the establishment of most university programs for male students, a limited number of programs were open for female students. For the first time, female students were able to pursue their college education at King Saud University in Riyadh in 1960, as irregular students (off-campus). They pursued their studies at home on their own and only sat for final exams at the end of the academic year. In 1976 women were allowed to be regular students and attend classes on a campus for female students. Gradually, new programs, departments and even colleges for women were created and expanded as the demand for female higher education increased. Soon a Center for University Women students which contained all colleges

and departments was established in major universities with the exception of King Fahad and the Islamic Universities in Madina as those are for male students.

Following a Royal decree in 2004, numerous new universities were established, some of those were based on branch college campuses. Those new universities are Qassim, Taibah, Taif, Jazan, Hail, Joaf, Tabuk, Baha, Najran, Northern Territories, Majma'aa, Kharj, Shaqra, and Dammam Universities and King Saud University for Health Sciences. New state universities have Centers for Women Students similar to those in older state universities.

Since the year 2000, numerous private institutions started to appear as well. With the expansion of state higher education institutions, the number of private institutions has dramatically increased to 26. Some of those are open for men only, some for women only and most for both. Private institutions have a total of 920 male and 883 female faculty as opposed to 18857 male and 11579 female faculty at all state universities (MOHE, 2009).

With the exception of King Abdulla University for Science and Technology which was opened in 2009, men and women in all higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia work and study in segregated environments, regardless of the type of the university and where the university is located. Only medical, pharmacy and applied medical science male and female students and faculty have some opportunities for working and studying face-to-face, i.e., a male instructor may teach female students or supervise them at the hospital. However, classes are not coeducational. In other understaffed departments, male instructors may teach female students through a closed-circuit T.V.

With the expansion of state and private higher education institutions, older as well as new universities have been undergoing tremendous change such as the expansion of scholarship programs, setting of strategic plans, evaluating and restructuring of current programs, and the creation of new deanships, programs and colleges. Most universities are now seeking accreditation. As the number of qualified and highly educated women in different disciplines is continually increasing and the number of colleges, departments, programs and deanships is also increasing, more and women are granted a variety of administrative positions in higher education institution.

In 2010, there are 50 higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. As far as women higher education is concerned, those institutions can be classified into the following categories:

(i) Centers for Women Students at State Institutions

There are currently 21 state universities with a total of 17113 male and 10243 (37%) female faculty (MOHE, 2009). This category includes older universities such as King Saud, King Abdul-Aziz, Umm Al-Qura, King Khaled, King Faisal and Imam Universities. Here, a mother university was initially established for male students, then Centers for female college students were established. Those have colleges, departments, administrations, and centers parallel to those open for male students.

Universities established after 2004 have female academic and service departments parallel to those on the men's campus. Nursing, dentistry, and applied medical science colleges were recently added. All of specialties were conglomerated in a Center for Women Students supervised by the university Vice-president for Academic Affairs. The Center has a Dean, Vice-deans for Students' Affairs, Academic and Administrative Affairs, and each college has a female supervisor.

(ii) Centers for Women Students at Private Institutions

This category includes private institutions such as Prince Sultan University, Arab Open University, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Dar Al-Ulum University, Yamama University, Private College of Business, Suliman Faqeeh College of Nursing and Science, Riyadh College of Dentistry, Ibn Sina Private College, Qassim Private Colleges, Prince Fahad bin Sultan College, Batarji College of Medical Sciences and Technology, Ma'arefah College of Science and Technology, Buraidah college of Applied Medical Sciences, Mohammed Al-Mana' College, International Private Colleges, Farabi College of Dentistry, Al-Ghad International Colleges of Health Sciences. These private institutions are open for both male and female students. Like state institutions, private institutions were originally male institutions in which women's departments were established at a later stage. Like state universities, there are academic and service departments for women parallel to those for men.

(iii) Women-only Institutions

This category includes Princess Noura University, which contains all of the former women's colleges established by the former DGGE in the Riyadh Province. Those included the former teachers' colleges, Colleges of Arts, Science, Home Economics and Social Work. Since 2003, those colleges were run by MOHE financially and administratively and were embraced into a new women's university. The former colleges were gradually re-structured and new colleges have emerged such as the College of Languages and Translation, Business, Information Technology, Nursing, Physiotherapy, and several others in areas of specialties needed by the labor market. The university rector, most vice-presidents, some college deans and department heads and directors are all females and one male Vice-president for Academic and Administrative Affairs.

This category also includes women-only private institutions such as Effat University and Dar Al-Hikmah College, Saad College, Al-Riyadah College of Health Sciences. Like Princess Noura University, private institutions have a female rector, female deans, department heads and staff.

(iv) Men-only Institutions

This category includes two men-only state universities: King Fahad and the Islamic Universities and several men-only private institutions: Al-Faisal University, Suliman Al-Rajhi Colleges, Prince Sultan College of Tourism in Abha, Baha private College, and Prince Sultan College of Tourism in Jeddah.

(v) Desegregated Institutions

This category includes King Abdulla University for Science and Technology. Here, all administrators, academic staff and students work and study in a desegregated environment.

With the appointment of a female deputy Minister of Education, and a female rector of a state university, and the expansion of female higher education in Saudi Arabia and the increasing number of educated women assuming new administrative positions, one wonders what it would be like to work in a segregated campus, what role female administrators play in those Centers for Women Students in state and private institutions and in women-only state and private institutions. The present study aims to investigate the status of female administrators working at the different higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia as perceived by those female administrators

themselves. In more specific terms, the study aims to find out the following: (i) administrative positions held by women administrators, (ii) Selection criteria of women administrators, (iii) how male and female administrators communicate; (iv) kinds of authorities conferred upon women, (v) women's role in decision-making, planning, carrying out, following up and assessing performance; (vi) factors affecting those roles; (vii) problems female administrators face in dealing with male administrators, i.e., types of conflicts with male administrators; (viii) female administrators' work environment; (ix) how male administrators view female administrators and treat them; and (x) how they view themselves.

A review of the literature has shown that numerous studies have focused on job satisfaction issues among male and female schoolteachers, principals and supervisors such as (Khattab (1988), Nadhreen (1991), Al-Eissa (1995), Al-Toak (1995), Kazem (2000), Al-enezi (2002), Al-Ruwaili (2002), Al-Salloum (2002), Al-Meshal (2006), Qadhi (2007), Felimban (2008). Some studies investigated on leadership styles in school principals (Al-Toak, Sanaa (1995), Kazem (2000), Al-Meshal, 2006) & Qadhi, 2007). Organizational climate Al-Eissa (1995), relationship between source of organizational work stress (Al-Salloum, 2002), work commitment (Felimban, 2008), and organizational belonging (Khattab, 1988 & Albakr, 1990). Few studies investigated job satisfaction among female workers at the university level such as Nadhreen (1991). However, recent studies that focus on the new roles of female administrators in the different types of higher education institutions are lacking.

This study fills a gap, focuses on a wider sample of institutions, uses several data collection methods, quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. Results will enable higher-level male administrators and decision-makers gain insights into the needs of female administrators, their current work conditions, sources of conflicts among male and female administrators and factors affecting performance, productivity and goal attainment.

3. Sampling

A total of 33 women administrators from 8 or 16 % of state and private higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia were randomly selected and individually interviewed. The sample of institutions has different organizational structures, administrative patterns and locations and represents the categories mentioned above. Administrators selected have different qualifications, years of experience and administrative positions. Some held several administrative positions. The sample distribution is as follows: (i) 19 administrators from the Women Centers at older and new institutions, viz, King Saud, Qassim and Taibah Universities: 1 Center dean, 1 Center vice-dean, 1 college dean, 3 college vice-deans, 7 department deputy chairs, 1 director of supervision and follow-up, 1 administrative coordinator, 9 committee members, 3 personnel staff. All are Saudi and hold a Ph.D., 1 holds an M.A. and 3 hold a B.A. (ii) 8 administrators Women-only universities viz Princess Noura University and Effat University: 2 vice presidents, 1 department head, 1 program coordinator and 8 committee members. All are Saudi and hold a Ph.D. (iii) 6 administrators at private universities, viz Sultan, Yamama and Dar Al-Ulum in Riyadh: 1 vice-president, 1 dean, 2 vice-dean, 1 department deputy chair, 2 program coordinators and 1 committee member. 4 are Saudi and 2 are not. 4 hold a Ph.D. and 2 hold an M.A. degree.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using the following methods: (1) Content analysis of the Rules and Regulations of the Higher Education Institutions in Saudi Arabia; (2) examination of the sample university websites especially lists of vice-presidents, deans, department heads and major university committees; and (3) an interview-questionnaire. The interview-questionnaire contained 8 open ended questions: (i) Which administrative positions are women currently holding? (ii) Which major committees are open for women? (iii) What kinds of authorities are conferred upon women? (iv) Which problems do you face in dealing with male administrators? (v) What is your role in decision-making, planning, carrying out, following up and assessing performance of coworkers and subordinates? (vi) How do male administrators treat you? How do they view you? (vii) Give examples of administrative conflicts with your male bosses and colleagues.

5. Results and Discussion

Results of the interviews with 36 women administrators at 12 higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia are reported below according to the university categories mentioned above.

5.1 Women Administrators at Centers for Women Students at State Institutions

The majority of Saudi Universities (87.5%) fall into this category. A female dean typically runs the cluster of humanities and/or science colleges and departments serving female students. The Center has several vice-deans for Academic and Administrative Affairs, and Quality. Each college, deanship, department, or center has a female deputy and female staff parallel to those on the men's campus. The deanships of Registration and Admission, eTransactions, eLearning, Skills Development, Quality, Students' Affairs, Personnel, Legal Affairs, Library, Research Center, Maintenance and Public Relations all have a female-deputy and female staff. The same rules, regulations and academic decisions apply to both male and female students. Women's academic departments follow the same course plan (program). The dean is, in the proper sense of the word, but a senior administrator who coordinates the services and functions provided for and by the women's departments.

Although these institutions are governed by MOHE and follow the same Higher Education Rules and Regulation, there are many discrepancies in administrative practices within the departments and colleges across Saudi universities exist, as the job duties, responsibilities and authorities granted to female departments and relationship with their corresponding male departments are not clearly defined.

Selection Criteria of Women Administrators

The dean of the Center, her vice-deans, and all female deputies must be Saudi. The dean is usually nominated by the Rector and the nomination has to be approved by the Council of Higher Education, which consists of male members representing all state universities. Lower-level women deputies for non-academic departments and deanships are selected by the Dean of the Center. Academic college deputy-deans, and deputy chairs are selected by the male dean, nominations are approved by the college and department councils and finalized by the Rector. Where possible, women deputies for academic colleges and departments should have a Ph.D. degree. However, some academic department deputy chairs, as in Educational technology, have an M.A. degree. Most non-academic deanships, departments, centers such as the Deanship of Admission and Registration, Library, Personnel, Students' Affairs,

eTransactions, legal affairs, women deputies have an M.A. or even a B.A. degree although women with higher degrees exist at the Center. Seniority and academic rank (being an associate or full professor) are not taken into consideration in appointing the dean of the Center or women deputies. The selection is not usually based on academic or administrative merits and is sometimes based on non-academic factors such as connections. A new graduate with few years of academic experience, who is traditional and conservative, has moderate social and political views and who is rather submissive to male authority might be selected, and senior professors with many years of experience may be ignored.

Female Representation in University Administration

There is no female vice-president or college dean, Dean of Admission & Registration, Library Dean, Dean of eLearning, Dean of eTransactions, Dean of Students' Affairs. Women cannot be a university vice-president even for female students' affairs and cannot be a college dean (for both male and female students), although there is nothing in the higher education statutes that bans women of that. Women representation in committees and councils is very low (fewer than 10%). Women are not represented in the Recruiting Committees, Academic Councils, Council of Deans, Higher Education Council, or university-level permanent committees either. In addition, men have control over financial matters at all Saudi universities in this category. Men feel that they are more capable of making decisions and have more experience managing the financial affairs of the university and can take responsibility for spending those millions of riyals. By contrast many female administrators hesitate to handle and be in charge of money even if it is a few thousands.

Compared to other state universities, King Saud University is the oldest and largest university and women, relatively, enjoy more freedom and more opportunities than their colleagues other state universities. Few years ago, a female vice-dean was appointed to coordinate the administrative and academic services of each college such as female students' admission, registration, classes, exams and sending course results to the Admissions and Registration Department.

Male and Female Administrators' Communication Channels

Female administrators communicate with their male counterparts and bosses by phone, fax and to a lesser degree by e-mail. Face-to-face meetings are rare. Only recently the dean of the Women's Center can meet with the rector and vice-presidents. Only recently, female deputy-chairs and female faculty can attend departmental meeting and have a say in decision-making. Those meetings are still segregated and take place through an audio-cast that connects male and female meeting rooms. Since the year 2008, some men's departments at King Saud University started to include their female counterparts in departmental meetings and counting their votes when making decisions. There are also distance joint committee meetings held using an audio-cast. The dean of the Center at King Saud University attends the University Council and meetings with the vice-presidents through videoconferencing (one-way video and 2-way audio) ((Al-Jarf, 2005).

Authorities conferred upon women administrators

Participants indicated that no written clear-cut authorities, responsibilities, and job descriptions are available for female administrators. Successive male bosses can grant their female subordinates some authorities and may withdraw them depending

on who comes and goes. It also depends on the boss's attitudes towards female administrators. If he supports female participation in the decision-making process, he would grant her more freedom and power in administration. On the contrary, if he is traditional or more conservative or anti-feminist, he would restrict her and grant her fewer responsibilities and authorities.

Female administrators' role decision-making

Participants reported that women are rarely involved in decision making, no matter how competent they are. They are expected to obey and carry out orders no matter how incompetent some male decision-makers may be and even if their point of view is unjustified. This applies to many men administrators in the university administrative hierarchy. Some feel they are just tools for executing men's decisions, even though they disapprove of those decisions. Others suffer silently. Those who are outspoken, and object are excluded from their positions, while submissive ones are appointed and kept in position longer.

Some men take academic and administrative decisions that comply with the university rules and regulations and are not in conflict with their personal interests. If a male boss requires certain things, he would use his authority as a man and would impose his own decision on the female administrator, even if such decisions were against the rules and regulations. Personal and social connections play a significant role in recruiting new employees. A qualified applicant recommended by the deputy may not get a job and a less-qualified applicant would be given the job by the male boss, as a compliment to a friend or acquaintance or if an applicant belongs to the same tribe. They take such decisions on behalf of their female subordinates, even though they have no idea about the situation, needs, and applicants. An admission test would be re-scheduled for a female student who missed it upon orders from the male boss to his deputy female to re-schedule the test. A female student who was denied registration by the female deputy for one reason or another, would be allowed to register by the male boss despite her objections. Some female students are granted admission by a male boss, even if they do not meet the admission criteria and female deputies deny them admission.

A female administrator at a College of Dentistry stated that men marginalize female administrators for no reason. Even in desegregated colleges such as the Colleges of Dentistry and Medicine, females are denied the right to participate in anything that is not controlled and supervised by men, even if those men are less experienced or less qualified. Here is what she says:

We will not fulfill/achieve the university goals, unless men are willing to recognize women's right, competence and ability to make bottom-up and top-down decisions especially in issues related to female students and faculty. Until then, the university will be wasting time walking on one foot without the other and it would be difficult to achieve all goals.

Factors Affecting Marginalization of Women

Since male and female staff, faculty and students are segregated, this segregation deprives women of real-life experiences in administration, finance, negotiations, recruiting, maintenance and others. As a result many women do not know how to manage educational institutions. Lack of equal opportunities adds to their inexperience. Men travel, go to conferences, meet with business executives, meet with all levels higher up in the administrative hierarchy, the majority of women do not. A Center's dean once said:

We are called to committee meetings and asked to discuss issues with which we are neither familiar nor have experience.

Since most women administrators lack administrative experience they would resort to their bosses or male colleagues, consult them and seek their help and advice in the tiniest administrative issues for fear of being responsible for a wrong decision. This has become a normative behavior for females who assumed administrative positions, and who, in turn, seek their male counterparts' guidance in the simplest decisions.

Some female administrators mentally and psychologically accept the man's dominance and superiority in the decision-making process. They address their superior male administrators as "Sir" and "Long Live your Excellency". They believe this superiority is natural and he should have the upper hand. As a result they are apprehensive of making decisions.

Having gone to a segregated school environment, surrounded by male's authority who decides when to go to school, when to leave, and what to learn, working in similar isolated institutions after graduation, women grow up to take for granted men's existence as a driving force in the work environment and their superiority and dominance.

Another factor is lack of equal qualifications: Many women administrators have inferior qualifications to their male counterparts or male bosses. Some female deputy-chairs hold an M.A. degree and work with male bosses who have a Ph.D. degree; some Ph.D. holders are assistant professors or new graduates, whereas their bosses are associate professors and have more academic and administrative experience, more publications. Consequently, a female administrator feels inferior to her male counterpart or boss.

How Men View Women at the Workplace

Many men believe that women are emotional and weak, and expect them to submit, answer to their requests and take the decisions as they wish, not as they should be. They feel they are superior (simply because they are men) even when the woman they are dealing with has higher qualifications. They apply the Quranic verse that says "*Men are the protectors and maintainers of women*" to the workplace. Unfortunately, no matter how educated some Saudi men are, they transfer their family role to the workplace and how they treat females in their family to female colleagues in the workplace. They treat female colleagues as if they were their guardians. They do not take the university regulations into consideration when dealing with female subordinates as he would with male subordinates.

Gender theories explain some of these discrepancies of men and women in the workplace. In her gender equity theory, Chafetz (1990) distinguishes among three types of gender definitions: (i) *gender ideology* or beliefs about the basic and, typically, presumably biological differences in the natures of men and women; (ii) *gender norms* or expectations of the appropriate and proper ways for men and women to behave; and (iii) *gender stereotypes* or accentuation of the differences between men and women in how they will generally respond in situations. When the level of consensus among members of a population on those gender definitions is greater, when the gendered differences are presumed by individuals to be the way the sexes are, these definitions would influence both macro- and micro-level social processes sustaining gender inequality. In another theory of gender stratification, Blumberg (1988) views gender in relation to the level of economic power women can mobilize. The less economic power women can mobilize, the more likely they are to be

oppressed physically, politically, and ideologically. Also, the more economic power women have at macro levels of social organization, the more likely they will be able to gain access to other forms of power-political and ideological.

The Female Work environment

Some female administrators lack professional behaviors. They come to meetings late, answer mobile calls and lack objectivity in dealing with staff, colleagues and students. Their office is more like a reception area with coffee, dates and chocolates. Visitors stay for a long time and some come to chat not to do business. Some co-workers hang around the dean or deputy to be her pet and be excused, gain some privileges or to have their incompetencies overlooked.

5.2 Women Administrators at Centers for Women students at New State Institutions

New state universities such as Qassim University have Centers for Women Students. However, participants indicated that females are more marginalized than their counterparts at older state universities such as King Saud University. Although the Center has a dean, a Vice-dean for Students' Affairs, another for Academic and Administrative Affairs, and each college has a supervisor, the whole Center is supervised by the university Vice-president for Academic Affairs.

Participants reported that women are not represented at the university level, do not serve on any committees, do not attend any departmental meetings whether face-to-face or using an audio-cast. Only the dean can attend the university council meetings.

All of the decisions regarding recruiting, pay-roll, follow-up, maintenance, admission, academic programs, schedule of classes and finals are taken care of by men. Women have no say in those decisions and only carry out those decisions (just performers). Women do not handle these matters as it is the case at older state universities.

Since these universities are new, they are still understaffed and newly appointed female administrative staff are inexperienced. Administrative affairs for the university personnel are still taken care of by the personnel department staff at the mother university such as King Saud University. For example, the female staff the King Saud University personnel department female indicated that they are still taking care of the administrative affairs of Majma'aa, Shagra and Kharj Universities, which were only branches of King Saud University less than a year ago.

5.3 Women Administrators at Centers for Women Students at Private Institutions

Like state institutions, private institutions were originally male institutions and women's departments were established later. Thus, there are women's departments parallel to those for men. A female supervisor runs the women's departments. Participants believe that the administrative structure at private institutions is not clear-cut and well-defined. When asked about the administrative units, they indicated that they are being under construction.

Private higher education institutions lack qualified and experienced women who are capable of assuming administrative positions. Since the salary and fringe benefits offered by private institutions are usually lower than those offered by state universities, they do not attract women to work there. Consequently, those universities

hire men, females with lower qualifications or lesser experience than their male counterpart or non-Saudis.

At private institutions, women are represented in the major university councils and committees, but when we take into consideration the male-female ratio, this representation is minimal and is not proportionate with the number of female faculty. As a result, women's role in decision-making taken by those councils and committees is also limited due to the limited number of female votes.

The work environment at private institutions seems to be very supportive for women administrators as the administrative units and departments and thus facilitates decision-making. Since private institutions are new and small in size, it is easy to follow up expenditures and recruitment. Employees cannot misuse nor exploit their powers, compared to large higher education institutions. Decision-making is fast as they are not subject to the civil service recruiting procedures, which forces the institution to recruit an unqualified person.

Although women seem to be strongly and eminently present in administration and committees, participants pointed out that, in practice, this depends on the man in charge and whether he is willing to grant women some freedom or not. It also depends on how the woman views her administrative role. Some women do not see the ultimate goal of striving for their authorities. They handle the job as a daily duty and feel that there is no need to be in conflict with the men for fear of triggering problems or confusion. They accept their realities and do not feel the urge to fight for their authorities which they will abandon once their term is over, as those authorities are not written down and changeable depending on the situation and the male leader's inclination and attitudes towards women.

At Centers for Women Students at private institutions, women are always dominated by men. This reflects distrust and lack of confidence in women's ability to perform the job away from the guidance and supervision of men. Administrative post granted to women are honorary posts rather than real executive jobs since they are not associated with the necessary powers required for doing the job and attaining the institution's goals. Communication between male and female administrators is very slow. This causes delay in processing mail and transactions. Being non-Saudi weakens women administrators' position in making decisions. Whatever decision they make, it has to conform to the men's will.

5.4 Women Administrators at Women-only Institutions

At Princess Noura University, the university rector, who is a princess, is a lady. She has the same authorities as her male counterparts at other state universities. Princess Noura University has 5 vice-presidents: Vice-president for Administrative Affairs, Academic Affairs, Graduate Studies, Development and Community Service and Environmental Affairs. Some Administrations have male staff as remnants of the old administrative system that used to run the former Women's colleges. However, they are supervised by a female vice-president. Those men find it difficult to accept a female boss who is in charge of granting them leaves, training, as they used to be the decision-makers and in control of everything for decades.

Female administrators at Princess Noura University have extensive academic and administrative powers (authorities) conferred upon them. Those are identical to those conferred upon their male counterparts at other state universities. All department heads are female. All departmental meetings are run by women and all academic decisions are exclusively taken by women. Women administrators at

women's universities are not linked to male counterparts and are not obliged to consult with men and wait for their consent. They have more administrative power.

It was surprising to learn that Princess Noura University has a male to female students and staff Vice-president for Financial and Administrative Affairs. When asked why, interviewees indicated that women deans do not have the same capabilities and experiences in financial affairs, budgets, transactions, quotations and warehouses. They believe that very few women understand company accounts, can manage projects, and be in charge of maintenance. They consider those as male responsibilities that require wide financial experience, experience with the market and direct contact with male decision-makers outside the university, which women do not possess due to isolation and lack of exposure. They consider segregation in the work environment normal and justified due to Saudi social conventions and imperatives of religion.

A senior male administrator is also needed to appear in print media and on T.V. It was the male Vice-president at Princess Noura University who appeared in the media to deny the damage caused by the latest torrential rain in Riyadh. Female administrators keep a low profile, and their university achievements are less salient in the media than those of state universities because male administrators are interviewed more frequently and hence have more influence on public opinion than their female counterparts, who do not appear on T.V. and their photos are not published in newspapers like men.

Since Princess Noura University is undergoing tremendous change, the old areas of study were terminated, new ones, needed by the labor market have been established, graduate programs have been suspended, are being re-structured and will be resumed once qualified faculty are readily available. More than 50 TA's and lecturers are on scholarships studying abroad. Most administrative and academic programs are being reviewed and re-structured. An administrator at Princess Noura University summarized it all as follows:

Everything is going so fast at our young university. We lack the know-how. All changes are new and taking place so fast. We are still having the same academic and administrative staff we had before, who still have the same mentality and same skills as before and are not undergoing changes of the same type and at the same pace. That's why we are not familiar with and do not know how to cope with and handle the new visions and plans. The standard of the former colleges was not up to our expectations. We are trying to catch up with the other state universities and we are also seeking accreditation.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Educational policies in Saudi Arabia grant women the right to all levels of education in segregated learning and work environments. This gender segregation is required at all levels of public education and is also demanded in public areas and businesses by religiously conservative groups as well as by social convention.

Due to this segregation in the workplace, women's higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia can be divided into two types: Centers for Women Students at state and private institutions, where a mother university was first established, followed by the establishment of a women's campus that contains colleges and departments serving female students. This model is prevalent in most higher education institutions and serves more than 75% of women students. In this category, the Center has a female dean, several vice deans and each college, academic

and service department on the men's campus has an equivalent on the women's campus. The dean, head or director for both branches is usually a man who has a female deputy on the women's campus. Although the university rules and regulations apply to both, men seem to have the upper hand, are the decision-makers and any decision taken by the deputy has to be approved by her male boss. State universities do not have a female vice-president and women are rarely represented in university-level committees. They have a very limited role in decision-making as authorities are usually conferred upon male administrators, and women's duties, responsibilities and powers are not clearly stated.

The second type is manifested in few women-only state and private institutions where the institution has a female rector, most vice-presidents, deans, department heads and directors are females as in Prince Noura University. All women administrators enjoy the same rights, duties, responsibilities and powers that their male counterparts at other state universities enjoy. The administrative model at Princess Noura University grants women a lot of administrative freedom in decision-making. However, the exclusion of women from the real labor market and job experience by segregation resulted in a shortage of qualified, specialized and experienced women in certain areas. This mandated that financial affairs, management of graduate programs and several others be handled by male staff.

Social values and ideology play a major role in how male colleagues view their female colleagues at work and underscore the work traditions followed. Women are banned from higher administrative positions because of male administrators' traditional views of women as "emotional", "weaker" or "less capable" of making decisions and needing protection.

Due to recent changes in higher education institutions and the appointment of the first female deputy-minister and first female university rector at Princess Noura University, women are expected to assume more extensive administrative positions, to be granted more authorities and to take part in decision making. Recent expansions in women's higher education institutions in terms of colleges, deanships, academic and service departments, and the dramatic increase in the number of students require that at least one female university vice-president for female students' affairs be appointed at each university, being closer to female students and staff and more familiar with their academic and administrative needs.

Recent developments in women's higher education also require new job descriptions that specify the duties and responsibilities of female administrators in the administration hierarchy. Higher education rules, regulations, statutes, and job descriptions that currently govern higher education institutions are 50 years old and are by no means adequate for the 21st century and new roles assumed and to be assumed by women. New rules, regulations, statutes, and job descriptions that define male and female administrators' duties and responsibilities and give both clear-cut roles in decision-making are called for.

In order for women to take part in decision-making, direct male-female communication is needed. Face-to-face meetings are not needed in this day and age. Use of technologies such as audio-casts and videoconferencing can play a significant role in improving the communication channels between male and female administrators and in conducting meetings with all levels of men administrators (Al-Jarf, 2005).

Since many women administrators lack administrative experience, some studies show that pre-job and on-the-job training significantly improves on-the-job performance and enables women to make better and more informed decisions.

Deanships of Skills Developments may organize online and face-to-face workshops and training in time, meeting and project management, conflict resolution, strategic planning, decision-making, negotiation skills, skills analysis, employee evaluation, SWOT analysis and others. Needs assessment questionnaires can be used to determine women administrators' training needs.

More robust, objective, specific and clear-cut criteria for selecting female administrators based on academic and administrative merits are urgently needed.

Finally, studies that look into the roles of women administrators in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia as perceived by men administrators is still open for further investigation.

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