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The Notion of Feminine Leadership in Kuwait's higher Education: Female Leaders' Perspectives

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Abstract

Regardless of the relatively higher number of females working in higher education, females continue to be outnumbered by men at the highest levels of leadership. Lack of access to traditional social networks reduces the chances of female leaders to become leaders as males still dominate highest leadership roles in higher education in Kuwait, keeping females in middle leadership positions. Thus, it is crucial to understand female leaders' perceptions of feminine leadership, by investigating the concept of feminine leadership among females in mid-level leadership roles at private universities in Kuwait. Conducting comprehensive semi-structured interviews with female leaders presently in middle leadership roles and those who have previously held similar roles provides insights on how they perceive the concept of feminine leadership and whether, and in what way, it influences their development of leadership styles. Results provide an interesting viewpoint on the appropriation of femininity to women by calling for a dismantled engagement with the idea of feminine leadership. The paper is expected to greatly advance current knowledge in these areas, given the dearth of information on the experiences and leadership styles of female leaders in the Arab countries and globally, adding to the global policy discussion on female leadership, empowerment, and gender equality in higher education.

Keywords: feminine leadership, higher education, organizational practices, cultural readiness, higher education