

Promoting Diversity in Leadership: Exploring Women's Roles in Corporate Governance, with a Focus on Saudi Arabia

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Abstract : This paper critically examines the ethical position of academic scholarship concerning "women in leadership" in Saudi Arabia, focusing on the context of the Saudi Vision 2030 initiative. While this vision places a strong emphasis on empowering women and increasing their presence in the workforce, women still face significant cultural, organisational, and personal barriers to leadership roles. The existing literature highlights the challenges Saudi women encounter, including the male guardianship system, and international perspectives add complexity to the issue. The debate among scholars about considering cultural context versus highlighting ongoing challenges is explored. The paper underscores that despite efforts to enhance women's representation in leadership positions, progress has been slow due to cultural norms, the absence of legal quotas, and limited access to education and professional development. It raises questions about the seriousness of research efforts and the government's commitment to gender equality in leadership roles, emphasising the need for increased academic scrutiny in this area. Ultimately, the paper aims to enhance understanding of the challenges and opportunities for women in leadership roles, their contributions to corporate governance in Saudi Arabia, and potential implications beyond its borders.

Keywords : female directors, gender diversity, women on executive positions, Saudi vision 2030

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