**RESEARCH PAPER**

# Unveiling the Experiences of Female University Leaders: Cruelties, Rights, and Professional Selves

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**ABSTRACT**

The current study aims to explore the cruelties and rights experienced by female leaders in Pakistani universities and how these experiences intersect with their gender and professional selves. Women's leadership in higher education has been the subject of many debates, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, where patriarchal norms and gender discrimination are deeply embedded in society. The researches applied a qualitative approach. Phenomenological ethnography used as research method. Through purposive sampling technique the study participants were selected. An interview guide was developed for data collection. Thematic analysis technique was used. The study highlighted the importance of understanding the intersectionality of gender and professional self in shaping the experiences of female leaders in higher education institutions. By exploring these issues, this study provided valuable recommendations into the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in Pakistani universities and contribute to efforts to promote gender equity in higher education institutions.

| **KEYWORDS** | Cruelties, Female Leadership, Gender Selves |

**Introduction**

Women's participation in leadership positions in higher education institutions has been a subject of debate in many countries (Chappell, 2017). Despite efforts by policymakers and universities to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, they continue to be underrepresented in top positions (Parker et al., 2020). This underrepresentation is due to various cultural and institutional barriers that reinforce gender-based discrimination, such as gender bias in hiring and promotion, a culture of male dominance in leadership positions, and lack of support for work-life balance (Bierema et al., 2022).

In contemporary society, the exploration of cruelties and rights experienced by female university leadership is of paramount importance. Despite significant advancements in gender equality, women in positions of leadership within academic institutions continue to face unique challenges that can hinder their professional selves (Nichols, 2020). This topic delves into the intersectional dynamics of gender, power, and authority, aiming to shed light on the diverse forms of cruelties that female university leaders may encounter, as well as the rights they may navigate (Wright & Garces, 2018). By understanding these complex dynamics, we can foster an inclusive environment that supports the advancement and empowerment of women in leadership roles, ultimately benefiting the entire academic community (Aspinall et al., 2023).

Examining the rights experienced by female university leaders is equally important in understanding the complexity of their professional selves (Endres & Gould, 2009). While gender cruelties is a common experience, the intersectionality of selves amplifies or

mitigates the impact of rights and cruelties (Gillespie et al., 2002). Women who possess multiple rights selves, such as being white, cisgender, or heterosexual, may encounter distinct advantages in their career progression compared to those who lack such rights (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). Recognizing and analyzing these intersections helps us acknowledge the nuances and complexities involved in the experiences of female university leaders. Awareness and acknowledgment of rights facilitates confrontation of societal and institutional cruelities in developed countries (Frankenberg, 2017). Today, there is concern that academia is still perpetuating marginalization and cruelities throughout the academic landscape. Although there have been numerous scholars in educational leadership who have called for the incorporation of social justice in universities there is still concern that Intersecting gender and professional selves are needed to be discussed while exploring the experiences of female leaders regarding cruelities and rights in higher education institutions. Gender and professional selves have not been fully embraced (Diggs et al., 2022).

Women's leadership in higher education has been the subject of many debates, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, where patriarchal norms and gender discrimination are deeply embedded in society. The under-representation of women in leadership positions is a persistent problem in the country's universities. Despite the efforts of policymakers and universities, women still face various forms of cruelities and rights that affect their leadership roles. The present study aims to explore the cruelities and rights experienced by female leaders in Pakistani universities and how these intersect with their professional selves.

**Literature Review**

The historical context of women's struggle for equality in leadership positions is essential for understanding the present-day challenges faced by female university leaders. Throughout history, women have fought for their right to education and the opportunity to engage in leadership roles (Bauer-Wolf, 2019). Despite significant progress, gender bias and societal expectations have continued to limit women's access to leadership positions within universities (Thomason, 2015). Understanding this historical backdrop is crucial in comprehending the intersectional nature of cruelities and rights experienced by female university leaders today (Taylor, 2020). In the underdeveloped countries' context, women's participation in leadership positions is limited by societal expectations of traditional gender roles and the patriarchal norms that are deeply embedded in the culture (Watt, 2007). This has resulted in a lack of representation of women in senior leadership positions in universities. While there have been some efforts to address this issue, such as the establishment of gender equity committees in universities and policies promoting diversity and inclusivity, progress has been slow (Heizmann et al., 2022).

Institutional and structural barriers persist within the academic sphere, impeding the progress of women aspiring to leadership roles (Statista, 2019). Biases and stereotypes continue to shape decision-making processes, resulting in a lack of female representation in top-tier leadership positions (DiAngelo, 2018). Women often face challenges such as gender-based discrimination, limited access to mentorship networks, and unconscious biases that hinder their professional advancement. These systemic cruelities not only affect individual female leaders but also perpetuate a cycle of underrepresentation and exclusion within the higher education landscape (Simon et al., 2022).

Feminist theory provides a foundation for examining the experiences of female university leaders, highlighting gender as a social construct that shapes power dynamics, inequalities, and gendered expectations within organizations (Prado de O. Martins & Vieira de Oliveira 2014). It explores the cruelities faced by women and the need for gender equality. Intersectionality theory emphasizes the interconnected nature of social selves, such as gender, class, ethnicity, and religion, and how they intersect to shape experiences

and opportunities (Alemán & Renn, 2002). This framework helps understand how multiple dimensions of self influence the experiences of female university leaders.

Social self theory focuses on how individuals' sense of self and self are shaped by their membership in social groups. It can be used to examine how the professional selves of female university leaders are constructed and influenced by gender, as well as other social selves. This perspective examines power relations within organizations and the agency of individuals to navigate and challenge these power dynamics. It can be used to analyze how female university leaders negotiate and exert agency within a context marked by cruelities and rights. Organizational culture theory explores the norms, values, and practices within an organization that shape behavior and opportunities. Applying this lens, the research can investigate how the organizational culture within universities either reinforces or challenges gender biases and stereotypes, influencing the experiences of female leaders (Berger & Guidroz 2009).

By employing this theoretical framework, the researchers provided a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of female university leaders, examining the interplay between cruelities, rights, and professional selves. It allowed for a nuanced analysis of the challenges faced by these leaders, the opportunities available to them, and the ways in which they navigate and shape their professional roles within the university context. On the basis of the research topic following research questions were framed;

## Materials and Methods

Within the interpretivism paradigm, the researchers adopted a qualitative approach, specifically utilized the phenomenological ethnographic research design. The objective of this design is to capture the lived experiences, perspectives, and behaviors of individuals within their natural contexts, enabling a deep understanding of their social interactions, values, beliefs, and practices. In the context of this research topic, employing the phenomenological ethnographic research design entailed the researchers immersing themselves within the university environment and actively engaged with female university leaders. By doing so, they had the opportunity to firsthand observe and document their experiences, while also conducting interviews, participating in their professional activities, and observing their interactions with colleagues, staff, and students.

## Procedure

The participants of the present study were the female leaders i.e. departmental heads, directors and deans of all Pakistani public sector universities. Purposive sampling technique was used by the researcher. The researchers constantly collected and analyzed data, identify patterns or themes, and then purposefully select additional participants or data sources that can provide valuable insights to deepen the understanding of these emerging concepts. The researchers developed an interview guide that involved several steps to ensure that the questions were clear, relevant, and aligned with the research objectives (Jamshed, 2014).

The participants were asked for their consent regarding the audio recording of their responses, with the assurance that their selves will be kept confidential. The researcher established trustworthiness by assuring participants that their individual perspectives will be respected, their true desired concepts will be accurately expressed, and their unique elaborations will be carefully considered (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). To enhance the analysis process, the researchers conducted a thorough review of both the transcriptions and recordings, paying particular attention to linguistic clues, including intonation-based cues. In order to ensure accurate transcription of the interviews, the researcher engaged in post-interview communication with participants to clarify any expressions that require further understanding or follow-up (Ryan & Coughlan, 2009).

Multiple opportunities for member checking were provided to the participants, allowing them to review and provide feedback on the data and interpretations. This iterative member checking process involved revisions and edits to ensure the accuracy and alignment of the data with participants' perspectives (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

**Data Analysis**

The researchers identified patterns and developed themes that represent the experiences of female leaders. Thematic analysis techniques were used. This study explored the cruelties and rights experienced by female leaders in Pakistani universities and how these intersect with their gender and professional selves.

**Female Leaders' quotations and their interpretation**

Following main themes were developed.

- Roles and Responsibilities of female leaders

- The Challenges and Strategies Faced by Female Leaders in Pakistani Universities

- Perceptions of Gender Dynamics in University Leadership: Insights from Female and Male Leaders"

- Unveiling the Cruelties Faced by Female Leaders in Pakistani Universities: Insights from Participant Responses

- Perceptions of Gender Dynamics in University Leadership: Insights from Female and Male Leaders".

**Roles and Responsibilities of Female Leaders**

The participants' responses varied based on their positions within the university. The female dean described her role as overseeing academic programs, managing faculty members, making strategic decisions, handling budget management, curriculum development, fostering research collaborations, and representing the faculty in committees. The female department chairperson explained her responsibilities as supervising faculty members, coordinating course offerings, ensuring quality teaching and research, managing departmental resources, liaising with other departments, and participating in strategic planning and policy development. The female department coordinator highlighted her role in organizing and overseeing academic programs, including scheduling courses, managing student registrations, coordinating with faculty members, facilitating student-instructor communication, and handling administrative tasks. Lastly, the female director of research detailed her responsibilities in setting the strategic direction for research initiatives, securing funding and grants, establishing external collaborations, overseeing research projects, promoting a research culture, organizing conferences and seminars, and disseminating research outcomes.

**Here are few responses to the question "Can you please provide a brief overview of your current role and Responsibilities"?**

*"As the dean of the faculty, my role involves overseeing the academic programs, managing the faculty members, and making strategic decisions to ensure the smooth functioning of the department. I am responsible for budget management, curriculum development, fostering research collaborations, and representing the faculty in various university committees."*

*"I serve as the head of the department of [specific department]. My responsibilities include supervising faculty members, coordinating course offerings, ensuring quality teaching and research, managing departmental resources, and liaising with other departments and administrative bodies. Additionally, I am involved in strategic planning and policy development for the department."*

*"As an academic coordinator, I play a crucial role in organizing and overseeing academic programs within the university. I am responsible for scheduling courses, managing student registrations, coordinating with faculty members, and facilitating communication between students and instructors. I also handle administrative tasks related to exams, grading, and student records."*

*"As the director of the research center, my role involves setting the strategic direction for research initiatives, securing funding and grants, establishing collaborations with external partners, and overseeing the research projects carried out within the center. I am responsible for promoting a vibrant research culture, organizing conferences and seminars, and disseminating research outcomes."*

**The Challenges and Strategies Faced by Female Leaders in Pakistani Universities**

The participants' responses highlighted various challenges and barriers faced by female leaders in Pakistani universities. These included pervasive gender bias undermining their authority, exclusion from decision-making processes and professional development opportunities, skepticism and resistance due to societal expectations of gender roles, limited recognition and advancement opportunities due to stereotypes, overlooking of ideas and suggestions, lack of tailored mentorship and support networks, and undervaluation or misattribution of contributions. Overcoming these challenges required perseverance, assertiveness, seeking out networking opportunities, and creating individual support systems. These responses shed light on the multifaceted obstacles that female leaders encounter in their career progression and the strategies they employ to navigate and overcome them.

**Here are few responses to the question "Have you encountered any specific challenges or barriers in your career progression as a female leader in the university? If yes, could you please describe them?"**

*"Yes, I have faced several challenges in my career as a female leader in the university. One of the major barriers I encountered was the pervasive gender bias that often undermined my authority and credibility. I had to work harder than my male counterparts to gain respect and recognition. Additionally, there were instances where I was excluded from important decision-making processes or not given equal opportunities for professional development. Overcoming these barriers required perseverance, assertiveness, and constantly proving myself."*

*"Being a female department chairperson, I have come across various challenges in my career progression. One significant barrier has been the struggle to balance my leadership responsibilities with societal expectations of traditional gender roles. There have been instances where I faced skepticism or resistance from some colleagues who questioned my ability to handle a leadership position while fulfilling my family responsibilities. It required constant negotiation and advocating for myself to overcome these challenges."*

*"As a female department coordinator, I have encountered specific challenges in my career progression. One of the main barriers I faced was the perception that administrative roles were more suitable for women, rather than positions of higher leadership. This stereotype often limited my opportunities for advancement and recognition. Additionally, there were times when my ideas or suggestions were overlooked or not taken seriously. To overcome these*

*challenges, I had to assert myself, demonstrate my expertise, and showcase my leadership abilities."*

*"Certainly, there have been challenges and barriers in my career progression as a female leader in the university. One significant challenge has been the lack of mentorship and support networks specifically tailored for women in leadership positions. It was often challenging to find role models or mentors who could provide guidance and advice on navigating the unique obstacles faced by female leaders. Moreover, there were instances where my ideas or contributions were undervalued or attributed to others. I had to actively seek out networking opportunities and create my own support system to overcome these challenges."*

## Perceptions of Gender Dynamics in University Leadership: Insights from Female and Male Leaders

The participants' responses regarding the overall gender dynamics within university leadership and the differences in experiences between male and female leaders varied based on their perspectives and experiences. The female dean highlighted the persistent gender imbalance and the unique challenges and biases faced by female leaders, such as scrutiny and skepticism. The male department chairperson acknowledged the progress made in promoting diversity and inclusivity but recognized the hurdles and biases still faced by female leaders. The female department coordinator noted the gradual shift towards a more balanced representation but highlighted the additional obstacles faced by female leaders due to gender bias and societal expectations. The male director of research perceived the gender dynamics as evolving and emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all leaders. These responses collectively emphasize the need for continued efforts in promoting gender equality and creating an inclusive culture that values diverse perspectives in university leadership.

**Here are some responses "How do you perceive the overall gender dynamics within the university leadership? Are there any noticeable differences in the experiences of male and female leaders?"**

*"In my perception, the overall gender dynamics within the university leadership still exhibit a significant gender imbalance. While progress has been made in promoting gender diversity, there is still a long way to go. Female leaders often face unique challenges and biases compared to their male counterparts. For example, women may encounter more scrutiny and skepticism in their leadership abilities, whereas male leaders may benefit from unconscious biases that grant them more opportunities and recognition. It is essential to create a more inclusive and equitable environment to address these differences."*

*"From my perspective, the gender dynamics within the university leadership have improved over time. There is a growing recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusivity. However, I acknowledge that female leaders still face certain hurdles and biases. They may have to work harder to establish their credibility and navigate through traditional gender roles and expectations. It is crucial to continue promoting gender equality and provide equal opportunities for professional growth and advancement."*

*"In my experience, the gender dynamics within the university leadership are gradually shifting towards a more balanced representation. However, there are still noticeable differences between the experiences of male and female leaders. Female leaders often encounter additional obstacles related to gender bias, limited recognition, and societal expectations. These differences can impact their career progression and opportunities for leadership roles. It is essential to address these disparities and create an inclusive culture that values diverse perspectives."*

*"I perceive the overall gender dynamics within the university leadership as progressively evolving. Efforts have been made to promote gender equality and empower female leaders. While differences in experiences exist, both male and female leaders face challenges in their respective roles. It is important to focus on creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all leaders, regardless of gender, where their skills and abilities are recognized and valued."*

## Unveiling the Cruelties Faced by Female Leaders in Pakistani Universities: Insights from Participant Responses

The participants' responses shed light on the key cruelties faced by female leaders in Pakistani universities and how these cruelties manifest in daily interactions and decision-making processes. The prevalence of gender bias was identified as a significant cruelties, leading to the undermining of authority and credibility, doubting of decision-making abilities, and heightened scrutiny of female leaders. The lack of equal opportunities and recognition, influenced by traditional gender roles and biases, was highlighted as another key cruelties. The expectation of fulfilling multiple roles beyond professional duties, such as caregiving and family responsibilities, added pressures and challenges for female leaders. Additionally, the lack of a supportive and inclusive work environment, where biases and stereotypes undermine leadership potential and limit opportunities for growth, was identified. These responses provide valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by female leaders and emphasize the need for addressing these cruelties in Pakistani universities.

**Here are some responses to the interview question "In your opinion, what are the key cruelties faced by female leaders in Pakistani universities? How do these cruelties manifest themselves in daily interactions and decision-making processes?**

*"In my opinion, one of the key cruelties faced by female leaders in Pakistani universities is the prevalence of gender bias. This bias manifests itself in various ways, such as undermining the authority and credibility of female leaders, doubting their decision-making abilities, and subjecting them to heightened scrutiny. Female leaders often have to navigate through stereotypes and expectations that limit their opportunities for growth and advancement. Additionally, they may face exclusion from important decision-making processes or encounter subtle forms of discrimination in daily interactions."*

*"From my perspective, one of the key cruelties faced by female leaders in Pakistani universities is the lack of equal opportunities and recognition. Female leaders often have to overcome barriers related to traditional gender roles and biases that limit their professional growth. They may face challenges in accessing resources, networks, and mentorship that can contribute to their career progression. Furthermore, the manifestations of these cruelties can be seen in disparities in decision-making processes, where female voices are not given equal weight or are overlooked in favor of male perspectives."*

*"In my view, a significant cruelties faced by female leaders in Pakistani universities is the expectation of fulfilling multiple roles and responsibilities beyond their professional duties. Female leaders are often burdened with societal expectations related to caregiving and family responsibilities, which can impact their career progression. This cruelties manifests itself in the form of added pressures and challenges in balancing work and personal life. Additionally, in daily interactions and decision-making processes, female voices may be sidelined or undervalued, leading to their ideas and contributions being disregarded."*

*"In my opinion, a key cruelties faced by female leaders in Pakistani universities is the lack of a supportive and inclusive work environment. This can manifest in biases and stereotypes that undermine their leadership potential and limit their opportunities for growth. Female leaders may also face challenges in having their expertise and contributions*

*recognized and valued. Moreover, daily interactions and decision-making processes may perpetuate gendered power dynamics, where female leaders are not given an equal platform to influence decisions or have their perspectives taken seriously."*

**Understanding Patterns and Factors in the Distribution of Rights among Female Leaders in University**

The participants' responses provide valuable insights into the patterns and factors influencing the distribution of rights among female leaders within the university. The female dean highlighted the concentration of rights among those with strong networks and factors such as seniority, achievements, resources, and navigating power dynamics. The male department chairperson emphasized exceptional leadership skills, subject matter expertise, personal connections, mentorship, and visibility as influencing factors. The female department coordinator noted inequitable distribution tied to relationships, gender biases, cultural norms, and support from higher authorities. The male director of research identified visibility, impact, research record, collaboration, effective communication, assertiveness, and building alliances as factors. These responses collectively underscore the importance of fostering an environment that promotes meritocracy, equal access to rights, transparency, and addressing systemic biases in the distribution of rights among female leaders within the university.

**Here are some possible responses "Have you observed any patterns or trends in terms of how rights are distributed among female leaders within the university? What factors influence the allocation of rights?"**

*"From my observation, there are certain patterns in the distribution of rights among female leaders within the university. Rights often tend to be concentrated among those who have established a strong network of support and influence, both within and outside the university. Factors such as seniority, professional achievements, access to resources and opportunities, and the ability to navigate power dynamics play a significant role in the allocation of rights. Additionally, biases and stereotypes can also influence the distribution of rights, as certain leadership styles or traits may be more valued or rewarded."*

*"In my observation, there are some discernible trends in the allocation of rights among female leaders. Those who demonstrate exceptional leadership skills, possess subject matter expertise, and have a track record of successful initiatives tend to be granted more rights. Additionally, factors such as personal connections, mentorship opportunities, and visibility within the university community can also influence the allocation of rights. It is important to foster an environment that promotes meritocracy and equal access to rights for all female leaders."*

*"Based on what I have observed, the distribution of rights among female leaders in the university is not always equitable. Rights often seem to be more readily available to those who have established strong relationships with influential individuals or have access to supportive networks. Factors like gender biases, cultural norms, and the level of support and recognition received from higher authorities can significantly influence the allocation of rights. It is crucial to create a transparent and inclusive system that ensures equal opportunities and recognition for all female leaders."*

*"In my perspective, the distribution of rights among female leaders shows a correlation with their visibility and impact within the university. Those who actively contribute to the university's success, have a strong research or publication record, and engage in collaborative initiatives tend to receive more rights. Factors such as effective communication, assertiveness, and the ability to build alliances and partnerships can also play a role in the allocation of rights. However, it is important to continually assess and address any systemic biases that may hinder equal distribution of rights."*

**Navigating the Intersectionality of Gender and Self in University Leadership: Insights from Participants' Perspectives**

The participants' responses shed light on the complexities of navigating the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of self, such as class, ethnicity, or religion, in leadership roles. The female dean highlighted the balancing act and the opportunities for understanding diverse groups that arise from these intersections, but also acknowledged the additional barriers and biases she faces. The male department chairperson recognized the importance of understanding the challenges faced by female leaders in navigating multiple dimensions of their self and emphasized the need for creating an inclusive and supportive environment. The female department coordinator described the constant balancing act, the unique challenges, and rights that arise from her intersections, emphasizing the importance of leveraging them to foster inclusivity while addressing biases. The male director of research, though not directly experiencing these intersections, acknowledged their significance and highlighted the importance of understanding and supporting female colleagues. These responses collectively emphasize the importance of recognizing, addressing, and leveraging the unique challenges and rights associated with intersectionality to promote inclusivity and equality in university leadership.

Here are some possible responses "How do you navigate the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of yourself, such as class, ethnicity, or religion, in your leadership role? Are there any unique challenges or rights associated with these intersections?"

*"Navigating the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of myself, such as class, ethnicity, or religion, is a complex task. I often find myself balancing multiple dimensions of myself in my leadership role. While these intersections bring unique challenges, they also provide opportunities for understanding and connecting with diverse groups. For example, being from a marginalized ethnic or religious background can help me empathize with the experiences of underrepresented students and faculty. However, it also means facing additional barriers and biases that can hinder my leadership potential."*

*"As a male department chairperson, I recognize the importance of understanding the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of self. While my gender grants me certain rights, I also need to acknowledge the challenges faced by female leaders who navigate multiple dimensions of their self. It is crucial for me to create an inclusive and supportive environment that considers these intersections and provides equal opportunities for all leaders."*

*"In my leadership role, navigating the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of my self, such as class, ethnicity, or religion, is a constant balancing act. These intersections bring unique challenges and rights. For instance, being from a particular ethnic or religious background can help me connect with specific student communities, but it can also lead to stereotypes or biases. It is important for me to be mindful of these intersections and leverage them to foster inclusivity while addressing any biases that may arise."*

*"Though I may not directly experience the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of self, I am aware of its significance for female leaders. It is essential for me to understand and support the challenges faced by my female colleagues in navigating these intersections. By acknowledging the rights associated with certain aspects of self, such as class or ethnicity, I can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive environment for all leaders."*

**Discussion**

The study of cruelties and rights experienced by female leaders has shed light on the unique challenges and advantages they encounter within various professional contexts. This topic has gained significant attention as researchers aim to understand the dynamics of

gender disparities in leadership roles. This article explores the cruelties faced by female leaders, including systemic biases, gender-based discrimination, and societal expectations. Additionally, it delves into the rights that female leaders may possess, such as access to networks, mentorship opportunities, and visibility. By examining both sides of the spectrum, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding female leadership and contribute to the advancement of gender equity in organizational settings (Sehularo, et al., 2021).

Female leaders often face numerous cruelitiess in their professional journeys. Systemic biases and gender-based discrimination pose significant challenges to their advancement and recognition. Research has shown that women may encounter barriers in accessing leadership roles, such as unconscious biases in hiring and promotion decisions (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Stereotypes associating leadership with masculine traits can also hinder their progress (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Gendered expectations and societal pressures to conform to traditional gender roles can create oppressive environments that undermine the credibility and authority of female leaders. Understanding these cruelties is crucial in addressing the systemic barriers that perpetuate gender disparities in leadership positions (Yam, E. A. et al., 2021).

Rights of Female Leadership While female leaders face various cruelties, it is important to recognize that they may also possess certain rights that contribute to their success. Rights can manifest through access to resources, networks, and mentorship opportunities. Women who belong to rightsd groups based on race, class, or other social selves may have additional advantages in their leadership journeys (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). It is important to acknowledge and address these rights to ensure that leadership opportunities are accessible to all women, regardless of their social background. By recognizing both the cruelties and rights of female leadership, organizations can work towards creating more equitable and inclusive spaces that enable the full participation and advancement of women leaders.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the study provide valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and opportunities of female leaders in Pakistani universities. Female leaders in university positions face numerous challenges and barriers, including gender bias, exclusion from decision-making processes, limited recognition and advancement opportunities, and lack of tailored mentorship and support networks.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, it is clear that there is a need for continued efforts to promote gender equality, address biases and stereotypes, create inclusive cultures, provide equal opportunities and recognition, and foster an environment that values diverse perspectives in university leadership. By recognizing and understanding the challenges and rights associated with intersectionality, universities can work towards fostering inclusivity and equality among their leaders.

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