

Saudi Arabian Entrepreneurs at Festivals for Women: Roles of Empowerment and Social
Support

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Abstract

Despite the growing trend in the literature on comparing male and female entrepreneurs with respect to barriers, motivations, management styles, and perceptions of the qualities required for leadership in the literature review on women entrepreneurs, little effort has been made to address the association between entrepreneurship experience and empowerment in the literature on women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, no study has addressed the relation between entrepreneurship and empowerment contextualized within the experience of Saudi women entrepreneurs. The dissertation contributed to filling these voids in the literature. Drawing upon from psychological empowerment theory, the study endeavored to find which factors assist Saudi women entrepreneurs to run their businesses successfully, which leads them to be empowered. Further, the social support concept was used to investigate the influence of perceived social support on women entrepreneurs' lives. The objectives of the study are to explore Saudi women's experiences as entrepreneurs at festivals for women and the opportunities female entrepreneurs receive from participating at festivals. Also, to examine how entrepreneurship experience affects Saudi women's empowerment and determine how perceived social supports have an impact on entrepreneurs' lives as well. The study included both a qualitative method approach (individual in-depth interviews, $n = 8$) and quantitative approaches (survey research, $n = 196$). The findings of the study confirmed that entrepreneurship experience affects women's empowerment; two factors that influence Saudi women entrepreneurs' psychological empowerment are self-confidence and prior knowledge. The study's findings provide insightful contributions to the women entrepreneur's literature and practical implications for Saudi government programs and nonprofit organizations in advocating the role of Saudi women in society.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For the past several decades, numerous policies have hindered Saudi women from having a normal life, including not traveling alone, limited job opportunities, and being prohibited from driving. Some of these policies began to change, such as driving was permitted by 2016, and traveling alone was permitted by 2019 (Fahim, 2019). This transformation of Saudi Arabia in terms of political, social, and cultural aspects could revolutionize the lives of Saudi women (Aubbard & Alsutan, 2017). One of the revolutions is an increase in the number of women managers, business owners, and leaders in Saudi Arabia. Fortunately, several initiatives have helped women to play an essential role in the private sector, including a new policy to ensure equal distribution in employment rates, starting their businesses without a male guardian's permission, and softening restrictions on women (Forster, 2017). Based on this change, the number of Saudi women entrepreneurs increased from 4% to 39% by 2017 (Fareed, 2017). This increasing the number of Saudi women entrepreneurs may lead them to transform their lives in terms of social and economic empowerment. Empowerment refers to the capacity of individuals to take control of their situations and achieve their goals that positively influence the quality of their lives (Rappaport, 1987). In turn, Saudi Arabian women have the possibility to become empowered in a male dominated, patriarchal society.

Role of Saudi Women in the Private Sector

In 2005, the Saudi government expanded educational opportunities for young women, such as offering more majors for women in Saudi universities to increase their participation in private sectors, such as law, engineering, and geology. Saudi women are an essential asset, composing over 50% of Saudi university graduates (Forster, 2017). However, the private sector has a workforce of only 5% females (Ettwood, 2010). Recently, at the US-Saudi Women's

Forum on Social Entrepreneurship—an assembly with the mission to benefit all stakeholders through a development plan that is sustainable economically, socially, and environmentally—it was revealed that Saudi Arabia would be providing more opportunities for Saudi women to enhance their business and leadership skills (Hampole, 2010). There are, however, still some challenges that decrease women's participation in the labor market such as limited government assistance; the government offers only a few programs targeting women's development while the majority of the support for women comes from business and academic communities (Hampole, 2010). Another challenge is that the Saudi social norm negatively views women who work in private sectors, which leads Saudi women to prefer public sectors (Forster, 2017; Yanagizawa-Drott, 2019). The combination of limited government support and negative attitudes has subsequently decreased women's participation in the private sector.

The Creation and Anti-Unemployment Commission believes that a lack of effort to enhance Saudi women's participation in market labor will significantly impede Saudi Arabia's development plans on improving the lifestyles of Saudi society and enhancing its economy. Thus, one of the commission's objectives is to further improve the talents of females by investing in their production and empowering them to strengthen their future through their contributions to society and economy (Elmulthum & Elsayed, 2017). Several initiatives are facilitated to help Saudi women become female entrepreneurs. For example, initiatives including the Institute of Entrepreneurship, the Prince Sultan Fund for Supporting Women's Small Projects, and the Al-Sayedah Bint Khuwailid Business Women Center have operated as centers and training programs to facilitate female entrepreneurship. Also, in 2016, the National Women's Business Council was established. This council may help to decrease the challenges that faced Saudi women business owners and redefined a useful entrepreneurial ecosystem framework in order to

help women business owners succeed. The entrepreneurial ecosystem can ignite desired change by focusing efforts in the industry, markets, and labor that support women's business ownership in order to accelerate the policy and meet the needs of Saudi women entrepreneurs in the future economy.

Despite all those initiatives, Saudi women are underrepresented in the private sector as employers and employees but are overrepresented in the public sector—e.g., education and health occupations. In 2015, 17.6% of Saudi individuals in the workplace were women, 85% of whom worked in the public sector. Furthermore, for every female entrepreneur, there are ten male entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia (GEM, 2009; Lavelle & Al Sheikh, 2013). The level of female participation in the private sector is lower than in the public sector, which is a serious concern for the country. Forster (2017) indicates that Saudi women face more barriers in private sector organizations than in public sector organizations. Approximately 90% of women and 80% of men believe that it is easier for Saudi men than women to become leaders in private sector organizations; however, approximately 35% of women and 23% of men believe that there will be more Saudi women in leadership positions in the private sector in the future (Forster, 2017).

Saudi women face two main challenges in the private sector. First, low levels of gender equality exist in the workplace. Only 9.3% of women and 12.6% of men believe equal opportunities in the workplace exist for women; in other words, both Saudi women and men believe that a limited quality of opportunities exists for women in the workplace (Forster, 2017). Consequently, Saudi women display low participation in the private sector and are less likely to be in leadership positions in that sector.

The second challenge is that traditional norms and patriarchal values have shaped the role of women in Saudi Arabia. Saudis' negative attitudes toward women who choose to work in the

private sector hinder those working women. Forster (2017) interviewed some Saudi women regarding the attitudes of Saudis towards women who work in the private sector. The respondents stated that there have been changes in Saudi society and the labor market over the last ten years. However, they added that there were still significant barriers for women to overcome and that the segregation existing between women and men is instilled in their lives. Their families imposed the restrictions and often with force. This restriction or segregation mindset gradually permeates young children's minds, so that it strongly influences the way Saudi people think or behave. For example, Saudis believe that women working in mixed-gender environments do not make suitable wives. The majority of women who are in the most senior positions are unmarried, and the majority of private sectors—e.g., business and oil companies—are mixed environments. Because of traditional norms and patriarchal values, Saudi women are avoiding work in mixed environments, thereby impacting their participation in the private sector.

Lastly, Forster (2017) asked Saudi women about their attitudes toward the religious or cultural restrictions behind the prescribed roles and lack of legal rights in Saudi society. Almost all blamed their culture, not their religion. For example, one woman shared that "the Quran does not say we cannot work, or be engineers, or drive cars." Another woman gave an example of prophet Muhammad's first wife who was a businesswoman: "prophet never tries to prevent his wife from practicing her business." This shows that religion is not preventing women from being a business owner or working in any sectors. To clarify, traditional norms and patriarchal values have shaped the female roles in Saudi Arabia. As a result of this challenge, Saudi women exhibit low participation in the private sector and are less likely to be in leadership positions in that sector.

Changing Roles of Saudi Women in the Private Sector

Recently, after acknowledging that Saudi women face obstacles in the private sector, the Saudi Arabian government changed the system to ensure the same employment opportunities in the private sector for women as those for men. For example, the government has established a new policy to ensure equal distribution across the national labor, including new regulation stating that Saudi women should not comprise less than 30% of employees in an organization ("A changing future," 2018). Also, since 2018, the government has implemented a law that allows women to start their businesses without a male guardian's permission. Additionally, the government has several initiatives to encourage more Saudi women to participate in the private sector, such as paying for the cost of daycare and transportation for women who work in private sectors whose salaries are less than 7000 Riyal (\$1870).

Furthermore, the government developed "Vision 2030" to improve and enrich the lifestyles and social cohesion among communities and remove some of the conservative restrictions in society ("Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", 2016). One of the pillars of the Kingdom's "Vision 2030" is to build a flourishing economy by implementing a strategy that connects the education system to the needs of the market and creates opportunities for entrepreneurs. Also, one primary goal of this thriving economy pillar is to increase women's participation in the economy to 30% by 2030. This pillar focuses on developing female roles in society through education and employment instead of focusing on women's rights. Thus, the vision focuses on increasing women's participation in the private sector and the small-medium enterprise sector (SMEs). An example of an initiative is the Centennial Fund, which provides training courses and funding for projects, 21% of which are headed by Saudi women.

Fortunately, since 2017, Saudi culture has softened restrictions on women. Saudi social norms toward women have been shifted by allowing women to drive without a male presence, attend stadiums, and work in mixed-sex environments. Women feel that the attitudes toward them have changed, and they get much support from the government and society ("A changing future," 2018). Sly (2018) interviewed more than 12 Saudi women to learn about the new Saudi reforms and the changes that happened in their lives. The researcher concluded that Saudi women from all segments of society think that the Saudi reform is real and their lives have been changed—e.g., being able to enter careers, start businesses, and seek and secure divorces and child-support payments.

Saudi economy observes that the level of women participants has increased in the workforce. According to the 2016/17 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the proportion of Saudi women entrepreneurs increased significantly from 2007 to 2017, from 4% to 39% (Fareed, 2017). The director of Babson Global Center for Entrepreneurship Leadership (BGCEL) stated, "Women entrepreneurs are catching up quickly in Saudi Arabia—almost 33 percent of the owners of established businesses are women" (Fareed, 2017. P. 1).

In summary, barriers against Saudi women have become less severe, and their participation in the private sector has increased. Thus, this shift may lead them to feel more empowered and independent, which may affect the economic and social role of women in Saudi Arabia.

Problem Statement

Previous studies on female entrepreneurship have mainly been conducted in the psychology field. Researchers in these studies have compared male and female entrepreneurs (Birley, 1987; Carland & Carland, 1991; Sexton & Bowman-Upton, 1990), barriers (Brindley,

2005; Eversole, 2004; Jayammal, 2012; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005), female management styles (Buttner, 2001), and perceptions of female and male managers toward the qualities required for leadership (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995). Furthermore, several studies have examined females' and males' motivations for creating their enterprises (Bianchi, Parisi, & Salvatore, 2016; Cromie, 1987; Gill & Ganesh, 2007; McGowan, Redeker, Cooper, & Greenan, 2012) and the impact of women entrepreneurs' skills on their motivations, barriers, and performance (Huang, Mas-Tur, & Yu, 2012).

In the area of Saudi female entrepreneurs, much scholarly attention has been given to exploring the challenges facing female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia (Danish & Smith, 2012; Minkus-McKenna, 2009; Nieva, 2015; Peters, Bleijenbergh, & Poutsma, 2010; Sivakumar & Sarkar, 2012) and examining business motivational factors for Saudi female entrepreneurs (Ahmad, 2011; Alzahrani, 2012; Fallatah, 2012; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010). Some studies have addressed the effect of microfinance institutions, which serve poor women in developing countries, on enhancing female empowerment (Haile, Bock, & Folmer, 2012; Kevane, & Wydick, 2001; Noreen, 2011; Torri, & Martinez, 2014). However, this case does not apply to Saudi women entrepreneurs because financial capital is not the primary challenge they face, is noted by Danish and Smith (2012).

No study has examined the relationship that exists between entrepreneurship experience and empowerment for Saudi women entrepreneurs. Thus, understanding the relationship between entrepreneurship and empowerment contextualized within the experience of Saudi women entrepreneurs is essential, especially with the current remodeling of Saudi Arabian culture. Significant changes have occurred in Saudi Arabia within the past few decades due to globalization, and as a result more responsibilities and occupation of higher positions are

delegated to women (Alchoui, 2009). Concerning the approaches to women's issues, there has been a shift from welfare to development over the past three decades. Furthermore, one pillar of the 2030 vision is "increased attention to women's affairs and development capabilities and removal of barriers to participation in the development activities." The plan identified one of its overall objectives as "the empowerment of women and increasing their participation in different areas, whether within the family or in the workplace and to provide better opportunities in decision-making and empowerment." This objective highlights the idea that women in Saudi Arabia may have more opportunities than before to be empowered in terms of social empowerment and economic empowerment. Therefore, the experience of Saudi female entrepreneurs and its impact on empowerment needs to be explored in academic research.

Additionally, there is a lack of research about whether and how family support and external support affects female entrepreneurs regarding their business and their lives in Saudi Arabia (Welsh, Memili, Kaciak, & Al Sadoon, 2014). Perceived social support is vital for women entrepreneurs because they will face many difficult situations in entrepreneurship life, potentially causing depression. Thus, perceived social support indicates lower levels of depression; perceived social support is the core factor in this study (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988). In sum, the impact of perceived social support of female entrepreneurs needs to be addressed.

The Significance of the Study

There is limited literature about Saudi women entrepreneurs and empowerment; thus, this study will yield more knowledge about Saudi female entrepreneurship in the literature. Also, Saudi Arabia, in terms of politics and culture, has been changed remarkably toward women; this study will thus explore the role of empowerment and social support on female entrepreneurship

as a vendor. If this study proves that there is an existing relationship between female entrepreneurship as a vendor and women empowerment, the festivals for women could be a new strategy for the government programs or nonprofit organizations whose mission is to support women to become empowered in the Saudi society. Specifically, these government programs and nonprofit organizations will facilitate participation for women at the festivals for women to change the social and economic empowerment for Saudi women. Also, this study will generate empowerment from Saudi women's perception, which can be different from western women's perception.

Objectives of the Study

Based on the literature, the study objectives are established as follows: 1) explore Saudi women's experiences as entrepreneurs at festivals for women, 2) explore the advantages or opportunities female entrepreneurs receive after participating in festivals in terms of developing their skills, getting new consumers, and marketing their products, 3) examine how entrepreneurship experience affects Saudi women's empowerment and how the empowerment influences their lives, and 4) determine how perceived social support from family and attendees have an impact on entrepreneurs' lives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is composed of four parts. The first section provides some background on the Saudi Arabian cultural changes toward women in terms of the past, present, and the Saudi government's vision for women. The next section provides information regarding female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia in terms of women's entrepreneurship characteristics, challenges, and motivation to become an entrepreneur. The third section describes a festival for women in Saudi Arabia. The fourth section introduces theoretical foundation for the proposed study based on a comprehensive review of previous research.

Cultural Changes

Barriers Facing Women in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is known as "the land of the two holy mosques,"; the two holiest places in Islam are Mecca and Medina. The country employed the kingdom government system, headed by the Al-Saud royal family with a council of ministers (Zamberi, 2011). The country has strong roots in religious and tribal histories. In 1938, oil was discovered, leading to a significant economic boom in the 1970s. The discovery of oil helped tremendously in developing the country socially and economically; education abroad and a change in lifestyle affected the societal structure (Forster, 2017; Zamberi, 2011). However, women remained a mostly untapped resource in the region, comprising only 32% of the labor force (Beck, Demircuc-Kunt, & Martinez, 2008). Approximately 84.1% of the women who are working in the public sector are educators (Zamberi, 2011).

Understanding the lives of women in Saudi Arabia and their low level of engagement in the country's workforce requires some understanding of Saudi culture. Saudi Arabia is an extremely conservative, religious, and profoundly tribal society (Forster, 2017). Saudi culture

does not experience the modernity that many other countries in the MENA region have. Saudi society enforces several social restrictions such as gender segregation; Saudi males only socialize with other men, and Saudi females only socialize with other women in public spaces (Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005). Another restriction is that women still need the prior approval of a man to get married, travel abroad, and start a business (Coker, 2018). Until 2005, women needed to provide permission from their guardian to start a business or take out a bank loan (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Metcalfe, 2011). These social restrictions affect the lives of Saudi women, limiting their freedom and opportunities in society.

The Changing Status and Roles of Saudi Arabian Women

The world has a misconception about Saudi women's status, depicting them as second-class citizens (Forster, 2017). It is true that traditional norms and patriarchal values have shaped the roles of Saudi women, which leads them to stay at home and to raise a family, limiting their contributions to and participation in the growth of Saudi Arabia. However, this is not a deterrent Saudi woman to take part in the development of society. More than 50% of university graduates are female, and some of them are eagerly seeking new opportunities in the labor market and more leadership roles at the community level (Forster, 2017). Additionally, Saudi women's lives have been improving and changing significantly over the last two decades. There are more opportunities, freedoms, and personal incomes compared to twenty years ago.

Until four decades ago, Saudi women had fewer educational opportunities; most only completed primary school education and very few had access to higher education. After the discovery of oil in the early 1970s, part of the revenue generated was used to open education facilities for boys and girls. In addition, the increase of revenue from oil opened up opportunities for education abroad, and as a result, opportunities to be exposed to other lifestyles that affected

the structure of society in Saudi Arabia (Yamani, 1996). These changes impacted Saudi Arabia significantly in a short time. Since 1975, more girls have graduated from high school. During 1975-1980, 5,310 students out of approximately 26,377 students enrolled at universities were women. From 1980 to 1990, out of 250,000 university students graduating yearly, more than half were women.

The norms for education have changed for women since 1980. Before 1980, people thought education for women was against their religion and traditional values. However, King Faisal persuaded his people that education for women was not against their religion by acknowledging that Quran encourages people to seek knowledge instead of forbidding the education of women (Al Rawaf & Simmons, 1991). In 2003, several Saudi women were working as entrepreneurs or employees; the majority of these women were from powerful families or families with high social standing; at that time, an entrepreneur was still not an appropriate job for women based on the Saudis' values. Examples of high profile businesswomen are Hayat Sindi, investor, scientist, entrepreneur, and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Sciences as well as Huda al-Ghpson, executive director of human resources at Saudi Aramco.

Despite all the social norms against women's participating in the private sector, there are approximately 20,000 businesses owned by Saudi businesswomen. In addition, women's investments account for 21% of all investments in the private sector (Forster, 2017). Also, the number of women employees in the private sector has increased from 12% in 2011 to 30% in 2017 ("A changing future: The economic role of women in Saudi Arabia," 2017).

Sharma (2018) articulated the story of Nouf Alsaleem, the youngest Saudi women entrepreneur at just 20 years of age, who stated that "There were not many women who had their businesses in Saudi Arabia, but things have changed a lot in the past ten years" (p. 1). She owns

Mathaqi, a domestic food delivery service, which was ranked 24 on a Forbes list of 60 women-led start-ups (Sharma, 2018). The company works with more than 100 mostly female Saudi nationals who are home chefs to make a variety of local and international dishes; the company boasted more than 5,000 customers on their database in 2017. Nouf became an entrepreneur after a year of starting her online food service business and app. She created more than 100 Saudi female entrepreneurs who work as a chef and earn an income of around 7000-8000 SAR a month (approximately \$2,000). It is clear that Saudi women entrepreneurs have played a major role in developing the social and economic fabric of the country through their success in small and medium enterprises.

Fortunately, since 2017, Saudi culture has softened restrictions on women. Women feel that the attitudes toward women have changed, and they get much support from the media and individuals in general. For example, Maria Mahdaly, a Saudi female entrepreneur, reported the cultural change towards Saudi women. In 2007, Maria Mahdaly started Rumman (Pomegranate, in English), a media and publishing house in Jeddah, with her partners. The company established two services: a magazine called Destination Jeddah that is published monthly with 70,000 copies printed, and a social network called Fainak (Where Are You, in English). She documents experiences where women need a male guardian's permission to start up their business, rental property, or travel. In the short life of her business, Mahdaly has witnessed several legislative changes. For example, in 2015, women were given the rights to run their business without a male guardian's permission, and participate in politics through voting and running for positions to the Shura Council, a highly influential political body in the country.

As such, the societal roles of Saudi women have been affected by Saudi culture. However, since 2016, the culture has changed because the government wants to open up the

society to benefit the economy and lifestyles, including advancements for women. The legal, economic, and social situation for women has significantly improved in recent years (Dege, 2018). Saudi women are starting their businesses and becoming independent, inspiring other Saudi women.

Saudi Government's Vision for Women

The Saudi Arabian government has acknowledged the importance of female participation in their national labor market for economic growth. According to Forster (2017), women now constitute about 40% of the global workforce; thus, Saudi Arabia cannot generate economic growth unless it increases the number of female participants in economic sectors. Additionally, countries where the national labor markets have enacted opportunities for women have advanced in all professional occupations and equal opportunity legislation, economic power, and social status (Forster, 2017). Thus, the Saudi government focuses on increasing women participation in the labor market.

In 2008, the government instilled several policies to ensure participation of Saudi Women in high level management positions where they get to make valuable decisions in public and private sectors, which in turn develops women's roles in Saudi society. For example, the government established a policy that decreased some cultural barriers such as driving; this change in policy creates platforms and legislation to empower women to play an active role in society (Al-Ahmadi, 2011).

Policymakers believe that an inclusive and sustainable development can only be achieved with all social actors of development in the global society; this belief is derived from indicators of globalization and economic and social developments in Saudi Arabia (Metcalf & Rees, 2010). It is quite clear that Saudi Arabia is embracing a new strategy in recruiting qualified

women into positions of leadership in the public and private sectors. Some of these leadership are in politics, universities, ministries, and businesses in public and private sectors (Al-Lail, 2017).

In 2016, the Saudi Arabia government issued their "Vision 2030", which aimed to 1) develop a sustainable economy that isn't fully dependent on its oil exports, and 2) contribute to improving and enriching the lifestyles and social cohesion amongst the community as well as removing some of the conservative restrictions in society ("Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," 2016). One of the pillars of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 helped to empower women and provide equal opportunities for both men and women in the economy. Achieving the Vision 2030 will likely help to increase the contribution of women in the labor market and empower them. Lastly, Saudi women entrepreneurs may be perceived as non-contributors to the economy as women's entrepreneurship is overshadowed by male participation in the Saudi economy. However, opportunities for their economic participation are on the rise (Lavelle & Sheikh, 2013). This effect can have incredible shifts in cultural norms that can potentially help women gain independence.

Female Entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia

Characteristics of Women's Entrepreneurship

Women entrepreneurs tend to operate small and medium-sized businesses for several reasons. First, women tend not to consider entrepreneurship as a career and therefore do not intend to turn their firms into big enterprises (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2005). Haan's study (2004) revealed that the primary motivation to start a business for the United Arab Emirates is additional income (24%) and the secondary motivation is a hobby (24%). This means that female entrepreneurs do not consider their businesses a career. Second, the majority of female

entrepreneurs are the sole proprietors to their business (Richardson, Howarth, & Finnegan Richardson, 2004; Robb, 2002); they are more likely to work individually or only hire only a few employees. Lastly, female owners face challenges in obtaining financing to expand their business operations. Still and Walker (2006) contend that business women in Australia face challenges in obtaining funds to start their business, attain council, and acquire necessary business information.

Most family and friends support women-owned businesses by being part of the work team. By relying on family and friends, these women are minimizing the risks of their business. Overall, experts agree that businesses led by women are typically smaller compared to male-owned businesses (Hill, Leitch, & Harrison, 2006). Many female business owners have fewer venture creation experiences, executive experience, and have interrupted careers. As a result, women face many challenges in creating and maintaining a business, and researchers argue that these barriers still remain (McKay, 2001).

Challenges

Previous literature on female entrepreneurs has identified similar challenges that women face all around the world. Stead and Elliot's (2009) study, which is a cross-cultural study on western women as entrepreneurs, indicated that women entrepreneurs worldwide share some similar barriers including stereotyping, lack of role models, and lack of access to training. Also, women entrepreneurs face significant barriers in establishing and growing businesses all around the world. These barriers include gender biases, family responsibilities, political instability, lack of access to market information, lack of technology and financing, lack of support services, and an overall business environment that is unfavorable (Ashwin, 2000; Haynes & Helms, 2000; McManus, 2001; Welter, 2004). In addition, there is a perception of a “masculine” trait for

entrepreneurs by the public, which is another factor that decreases the credibility of businesses owned by women (Baron, Markman, & Hirsa, 2001; Carter, Anderson, & Shaw, 2000). Some research illustrated that the most significant barriers for female business owners have limited access to external sources of capital and limited access to informal networks (Aidis, Welter, Smallbone, & Isakova, 2007; Smallbone, & Welter, 2001). Welter's (2004) study also identified some barriers for female business owners including limited human (experience and training), social (limited network), and financial capitals.

The female entrepreneur's studies in the Gulf region have identified similar challenges that women entrepreneurs face all around the world. For example, Danish and Smith (2012) conducted a study on Saudi women entrepreneurs and found that six factors stood out as barriers including technological resources, rules and regulations to expand business, building a network, high productivity and efficiency, handling competition, professional staff, and access to loans and grants. Forster (2017) identified several barriers for Saudi women entrepreneurs, including lack of an adequate "entrepreneurial environment" and "entrepreneurial ecosystem," low "entrepreneurial aspiration" among women, significant gender inequalities, difficulty in obtaining startup funding, lack of access to technology, lack of female entrepreneurial role models, and inadequate support networks.

However, several challenges are unique to the Gulf culture. First, traditional restrictions toward women are the essential challenges that face women entrepreneurs in the Gulf region. According to the 2006 Gender Entrepreneurship Markets (GEM) Report, within the UAE, women face many different social norms, which can make it difficult to participate in entrepreneurial activities. Society in the UAE is heavily influenced by religion and tradition, especially when it comes to women's roles in society. Even in the present day, some

conservatives are displeased when women run their own businesses. The norms make it difficult for women in Emirates to grow their entrepreneurial talents and meet the demands of expectations placed by society and their families (Goby & Erogul, 2011; Preiss & McCrohan, 2006). Furthermore, Itani, Sidani, and Baalbaki's (2011) study identified the traditional UAE society as one of the four major categories of barriers that face UAE women entrepreneurs. Foster (2017) concluded that Saudi women also faced challenges including social norms toward the role of women in society, negative attitudes of Saudis towards women who work at the private sector, conservative attitudes, and complex registration and licensing law procedures. In Sadi and Al-Ghazali's (2010) study, Saudi businesswomen indicated that traditional restrictions are the most substantial barriers.

Second, the lack of systemic legal protection for women, the lack of government support, discriminatory practices of male guardianship, sex segregation, and official Saudi employment laws and regulation are minimal for women, creating more barriers (Forster, 2017). Sadi and Al-Ghazali (2010) concluded that the main operating barriers faced by Saudi women are the lack of communication between government departments, lack of regulations to protect their investments, and socio-culture restrictions.

It is clear that Saudi women entrepreneurs face challenges different from those faced by women all around the world. These challenges include social and cultural norms (traditional restrictions toward women), lack of systemic legal protection, sex segregation, and lack of support of the government. Since 2016, these challenges have been reformed positively toward Saudi women. Currently, Saudi women feel empowered and inspired to be independent ("We feel empowered": Saudi women relish their new freedoms," 2019).

Motivations to Become an Entrepreneur

Previous female entrepreneur literature related to entrepreneurship's motivations revealed that their motivation was derived from positive and negative drivers to open their own ventures. McGowan, Redeker, Cooper, and Greenan's (2012) study identified important positive motivations toward entrepreneurship: respect and personal fulfillment, the desire to take control over decision-making as they exhibited drive and ambition to be self-employed, the desire for flexibility in their professional and personal lives, the ability to spend more time with their family, and the ability to manage a balance between their time and workload more effectively. The negative motivation toward entrepreneurship was a lack of satisfaction with prior jobs due to low service quality, promotion ceiling, failure to be awarded for their efforts, and unnecessary bureaucracy. Further, none of the women expressed that the motivation to open a business was to accumulate wealth or any other financial motivation. Instead, they expressed the benefits of working for themselves and the benefits of hard workflow for themselves as opposed to someone else. Some researchers reported that accomplishing things individually and being independent were ranked as the first motivations for entrepreneurs, then having flexible work hours was ranked second (Hisrich, 1990; Orhan & Scott, 2001). According to Sarri and Trihopoulou's study (2005), the main motivators for female entrepreneurs in Greece are economic reasons (desire for profit-wealth) and self-fulfillment.

Several types of research have discussed female entrepreneurs' motivations in the Gulf region, particularly in Saudi Arabia (Alzahrani, 2012; Erogul & McCrohan, 2008; Haan, 2004; McCrohan, Erogul, Vellinga, & Tong, 2009; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010; Zamberi, 2011). Haan (2004) addressed UAE women entrepreneurs' motivation regarding establishing a business. The primary motivations were additional income (24%) and a hobby (24%). An opposing view to

these findings, Erogul and McCrohan's (2008) responded by stating that the main motivator for UAE women entrepreneurs was independence (24%) followed by contributing to society (19%). Only three studies have discussed the primary motivations for Saudi women entrepreneurs to start their business (Alzahrani, 2012; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010; Zamberi, 2011). Zamberi (2011) indicated that having new ideas or opportunities from past experiences and flexibility was the primary motivator to start a business for Saudi women. Sadi and Al-Ghazali (2010) revealed that self-achievement and independence were the primary motivations to start a business for Saudi women entrepreneurs; the third and fourth motivations were self-confidence and profit motives. Alzahrani (2012) used pull and push motivations for Saudi women entrepreneurs to start their businesses. The main pull motivations were flexibility, challenge, and independence, while the main push motivations were a desire to be self-employed based on adverse inferences, including losing a job, limited work opportunities at private sectors, lack of a positive work environment, and independence. Therefore, the primary motivations that drive Saudi women to establish a business in the literature are increased opportunities from previous experience, flexible hours, entrepreneurial challenges, and desires for self-employment, self-achievement, and independence.

A link exists between the barriers and motivations of Saudi women entrepreneurs. First, Saudi women see entrepreneurship as an opportunity to achieve some goals that they have, especially with limited job opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia. Second, there is a need for achievement because of the limited high position career opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia. Third, an opportunity of independence related to financial independence and the capability to control the business environment are the main reasons why Saudi women open their own business (Deng, Hassan, & Jivan, 1995; Lee- Gosselin & Grisé, 1990). Lastly, a proper job

that is flexible for a balance between work and family and the ability to work from home is an important goal. When Saudi women achieve these goals as entrepreneurs, this may influence their role inside and outside their homes and empower Saudi society.

Festivals for Women in Saudi Arabia

Festivals have been established to help Saudi women vendors transform their lives in terms of social and economic benefits beyond providing attendees with a pleasant experience. They are the places where women can meet with other women and learn about and buy the latest products, local and international designs, and unique products. The festivals are also places where ladies can go to cafes and eat food. The most common activity during these festivals for women is shopping; the attendees have great experiences during their shopping because of the festival atmosphere and the quality of products.

Types of Festivals

Bassat Al-Rih Festival is an example of a festival for women in Saudi Arabia. The festival lasts for six days and is held at the Jeddah International Exhibition and Convention Center with the participation of over 160 booths from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Region. The majority of participants at the festival are productive families (home based business) from inside Saudi Arabia in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce in Jeddah. The festival is designed to create good investments for national companies and Gulf companies and encourage families to participate and provide services. Ultimately, it helps to achieve economic development of the region and provide integrated services catering to the needs of residents in order to ensure that the economic gains remain in the community. The mission of the festival is economic development in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises through the presence of

companies marketing their products, thus helping to stimulate commercial growth, and most importantly, helping the women of the region engage in businesses (Hamdy, 2018).

The organizers pointed out that the festival offers networking opportunities to meet companies, conclude contracts, conduct business transactions, identify the productive and export capacities, and stimulate the movement of internal trades in light of the increasing public demands to visit the festival Bassat Al-Rih. Furthermore, the festivals for women create economic mobility in the region and promote investments, as it contains branches of antiques, clothing, and accessories ("Riyadh is preparing to receive the exhibition Winter Shops 2018," 2018).

Another example of a festival for women is the Winter Shops festival, which is intended to empower the work of Saudi women and enhance their role in the national economy, according to the vision of Saudi Arabia 2030. The Winter Shops festival is held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Riyadh. A critical factor of this festival is its support of Saudi women entrepreneurs in various fields. The participation of the festival exceeded 130 participants, (12%), Gulf (9%) Arab, and (2%) international, which gave it great importance both locally and internationally ("Riyadh is preparing to receive the exhibition Winter Shops 2018," 2018). One of the organizers claimed that the festival has succeeded in supporting Saudi women designers by presenting their designs, stating that "Because of our professionalism, quality, team effort and good choice of participants, this has given us great confidence among traders and shoppers, so we have become an important destination for them in Riyadh" ("Riyadh is preparing to receive the exhibition Winter Shops," 2018). The Winter Shops 2018 confirmed that for the first time, a new area would be added in its seventh year, namely the participation of three prestigious brands in the automotive sector to support women's leadership.

Theoretical Framework

Empowerment Theory

In the 1980s and 1990s, empowerment emerged as an essential focus of research and practice with community psychologists. Rappaport (1987) defined the term of empowerment as the process of enhancing "the possibilities for people to control their own lives" (p. 15). Several authors developed their research regarding empowerment based on Rappaport's definition of empowerment. For example, Swift (1984) described empowerment as the contrast of the paternalistic model, which is someone that has the empowerment to decide for others without their consent. An example of this is a doctor treating his or her patients in a situation where they cannot decide for themselves. Swift (1984) argued the empowerment as "insists on the primacy of the target population's participation in any intervention affecting its welfare" (p. 15). Others have described empowerment as a result of citizen participation. Kieffer (1984), explained empowerment as "the transition from a sense of self as a helpless victim to acceptance of self as the assertive and efficacious citizen" (p. 37).

Further, Rappaport (1987) described empowerment as a process in which individual, organizations, and communities earn knowledge and skill in a situation. At the individual level, empowerment contains participating behavior, incentives to use control, and feelings of efficiency and control. Organizational empowerment provides the opportunity to improve skills, accept leadership roles, grow professionally, and actively influence the community. Empowered communities have empowered organization, and that provides the opportunity for citizens to express their opinion during community decision-making. It is a multilevel concept where each level of analysis is reliant on the others. Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) showed that each level of analysis is enhancing the capability of member participation in order to achieve the goal.

Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) proposed, "participation with others to achieve goals, efforts to gain access to resources, and some critical understandings of the sociopolitical environment are basic components of the construct" (p. 571). These definitions of empowerment reveal that a person is an active participant in decision-making, which definitely affects his or her daily life and will increase the individual's sense of personal power and effectiveness.

Many studies point out that it is essential to analyze empowerment across all levels of analysis including participating behavior, motivations, environment, and culture to obtain a better understanding of the contextual empowerment (Kieffer, 1984; Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Zimmerman, 1990). In other words, one cannot understand the individual level of analysis without considering other factors such as environmental influences, organizational factors, or social, cultural, and political factors.

This study focuses on psychological empowerment (PE); this develops empowerment theory by explaining essential elements in order to understand other levels of analysis. PE may differentiate from organizational or community empowerment, but PE also influences and influenced other levels of analysis (Zimmerman, 1990). An emphasis of empowerment at the individual level doesn't mean one should overlook the sociopolitical or contextual factors. PE isn't exclusive to one's awareness of competence, but it includes engaging in the community and comprehension of the sociopolitical condition.

Psychological Empowerment Theory

Zimmerman (1990) claims that empowerment symbolizes an interaction between people and environments that are defined by culture and context. Empowerment at the individual level of analysis is discussed the psychological empowerment (PE) (Zimmerman, 1990). The construct integrates perceptions of self-control, being proactive, and a comprehension of the sociopolitical

atmosphere. The difference between individually oriented conceptions of empowerment and psychological empowerment needs to be distinguished. The individual concept of empowerment is limited to a single paradigm, which is empowerment as a personality variable. However, psychological empowerment is not limited to the individual level of analysis but includes ecological and cultural influences (Zimmerman, 1990). This means that psychological empowerment focuses on a contextually oriented conception of empowerment that encompasses how a person can fit his or her environment. It includes joint action, skill growth, cultural mindfulness, and integrates variables such as incentive to control locus of control, and self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992).

The aim of psychological empowerment (PE) is to understand the thoughts and processing for individuals when interacting with his or her environment to improve mastery and control the factors that may influence his or her life. PE can be done in a variety of ways, and depending on the person and context, may require maintaining a life outside of an institution. For example, an empowered person may have an understanding of effective choices in different situations, the factors that influence decision-making processes, the factors that influence his or her decision making within the life domains he or she decides is essential, and the choices that may have a greater impact on the actions (Sue & Zane, 1980). Ultimately, psychological empowerment is a contextual construct that needs an ecological analysis of individual information, the process of decision-making, and lifestyle. Therefore, (PE) is the method by which individuals gain the skills needed to be independent and understand the environment they are in (Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1987; Schulz & Israel, 1990; Swift & Levin, 1987; Zimmerman, 1990a). The context and population studied impacts the form of PE to utilize

(Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman, 1990). Intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral components conceptualize PE (Zimmerman, 1995).

The intrapersonal component explains how individuals think about their ability to influence systems that are vital to them such as social and political systems. It is a self-awareness concept that includes domain-specific control (Zimmerman, 1995), self-efficacy, inspiration to use control, and ability. It could also include a perception about the challenges related with trying to use control to address and solve community problems. This perceived difficulty might refer to a subjective view about one's own ability to impact social and political systems or about people in general (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

To master social or political systems successfully requires the interactional component that refers to the connection between people and environments. In addition, knowledge about the resources needed to achieve goals are included (i.e., resource mobilization) (Zimmerman, 1995), comprehending causal agents (Sue & Zane, 1980), an understanding of the surroundings (Kieffer, 1984), and the necessary skills to actively engage in the environment. The interactional component is essential to the development of PE, even though it hasn't been studied directly, because it connects self-awareness and self-control (intrapersonal component) with what one does to apply influence (behavioral component).

The behavioral component of PE refers to the actions taken to influence the social and political environment by participating in the community. Some examples include participating in the community through local politics, religious groups, service groups, and neighborhood associations (Zimmerman, 1995). Examples of the behavioral component are participation in community-related activities such as helping others cope with communicating with public officials, or getting together with the neighborhood to discuss and solve an issue (Zimmerman,

1995; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Voluntary participation in community organizations is associated with psychological empowerment (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). The operationalization of psychological empowerment for a study is dependent on the population and context being studied.

In sum, the combination of the three components of PE illustrate the beliefs a person holds about his or her capability to influence a given context (intrapersonal component), the knowledge of how the structure of the system works in the context (interactional component), and the correct actions to control the situation in the context (behavioral component). To obtain a complete picture of PE necessitates knowledge of all PE components to fully capture PE (Zimmerman, 1995).

This study focuses on providing an initial attempt at describing psychological empowerment for Saudi women entrepreneurs. It aims to understand beliefs about their capabilities when interacting with their environment to improve, inhibit, and control factors that impact their lives. The intrapersonal component refers to how entrepreneurs as vendors think about their capacities, the influences on their business, and their role in society. In other words, the intrapersonal component is their perception about themselves in terms of control, self-efficacy, incentive to use control, and ability. The interactional component refers to the communications between merchants and atmospheres that enable them to be successful. It includes knowledge about the resources needed to achieve goals such as workshops before starting the business, causal agents (Sue & Zane, 1980) such as the role or policy to start a business, a critical awareness of one's environment (Kieffer, 1984) such as design accessories and clothes where the majority of women vendors work, and the change of decision-making and problem-solving talents necessary to dynamically participate in one's environment. The

behavioral component of PE refers to their actions of starting their business and how being independent women may influence the social and political environment through their participation in the private sector.

Multidimensional Measures of Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment components are intrinsic factors that affect how the individual can play an essential role in the workplace, and these components are influenced by an external factor such as a business environment, culture, or community. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) claimed that PE is complex, and it cannot just be explained by one concept. They explained PE in a broad format as an increased intrinsic task motivation established in four thoughts reflecting on their individual work role: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. All four cognitions are active orientations necessary in a work role. Active orientation means that what an individual does and how the individual acts will shape his or her work role and the context is implied. A combination of the four cognition dimensions creates an overall psychological empowerment construct. In other words, the lack of any single dimension will weaken the overall degree of empowerment. Thus, the four dimensions specify a "nearly complete or sufficient set of cognitions" for understanding psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Meaning is the value and purpose of doing work, defined by an individual's ideas and standards (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). It fits between the responsibilities of work and the individual's beliefs, values, and behaviors (Brief & Nord, 1990). Competence is the ability to perform an activity with skill (Gist, 1987). It is similar to agency beliefs, mastery, or effort-performance expectancy (Bandura, 1989). To sum up, when women entrepreneurs as a vendor value their work and believe they are capable of achieving their goals, this means that their work

experiences are unique to them (meaning) and they are willing to compete and pursue their goals (competence).

Self-determination is an individual's sense of being independent (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). It reflects independence in the beginning and maintaining work behaviors and processes; for example, the knowledge and skills that enable them to make decisions about work methods, pace, and effort constitute the work behaviors and processes (Bell & Staw, 1989; Spector, 1986). To sum up, self-determination is related to a person's knowledge and skills that allow her to decide on her own how to go about doing her work.

The impact is how much influence the individual has to impact a variety of outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989). It is the opposite of dependence (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Additionally, it is dissimilar from the locus of control because the locus of control refers to the beliefs that the person determines what happens in their lives (Spreitzer, 1995) rather than external forces. Whereas, the work context influences impact, the internal locus of control is a global personality characteristic that endures across situations (Wolfe & Robertshaw, 1982). To sum up, impact refers to the influence of their decision-making on their lives, businesses, or families, and the outcome of their behaviors or actions. In sum, multidimensional measures of psychological empowerment are developed to measure how a person's behavior, motivation, skills, and actions affect his or her role in the workplace and society (psychological empowerment). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) developed the four cognition dimensions measurement to capture how the individual can affect their role at work and become empowered in their life.

This study used multidimensional measures of PE to measure how female Saudi entrepreneurs achieve mastery and control over their businesses and cultivate a critical

understanding of their environment. The meaning dimension refers to how female entrepreneurs as vendors perceived their work goal as valuable (that is their perception about their work as an important and meaningful to them). Competence dimension is generally understood to mean their perception about their capabilities to do their job. Self-determination refers to one's ability to master their job and the ability to fit in to their environment, including knowledge about the entrepreneurial resources needed to achieve goals, a critical awareness of one's environment, and successful decision-making processes. Impact dimension refers to the impact of one's actions in their business and how becoming an entrepreneur can affect one's status as an independent woman (see Figure 1).

Psychological Empowerment Theory

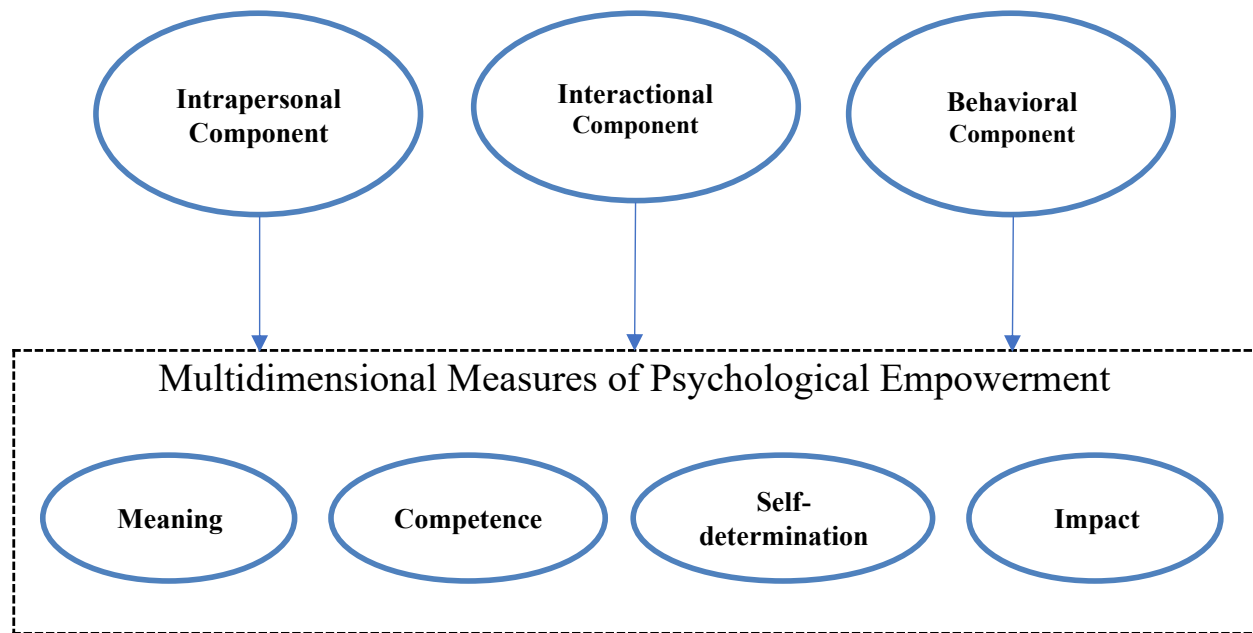


Figure 1: Psychological Empowerment Theory

Social Support

Social support explains how social relationships influence our cognitions, emotions, and behavior. Social support is defined as "an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient" (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984, p. 13). Researchers demonstrated that perceived social support could enhance a person's well-being (Cohen & Syme, 1985; Thoits, 1982). To understand perceived social support, it is necessary to obtain a better understanding of what support does for the recipient. The function of support is to improve the recipient's well-being, which is enhancing the overall physical and mental health of the individual.

There are several needs that can be achieved through perceived social support, including gratification needs, self-identity maintenance and enhancement, and self-esteem enhancement. Support can meet the recipients' needs of gratification, and through support, people can obtain the feelings that satisfy their gratification needs, including expressions of caring, love, understanding, concern, and an enhanced sense of belonging. Furthermore, support has been associated with maintaining and enhancing recipients' self-identity, including perceived feedback regarding aspects of the self from the provider (Mitchell, Billings, & Moos, 1982). According to Festinger, (1954), people appraise their belief systems by comparing their own opinions, attitudes, and beliefs to those of others. Moreover, support has been linked to enhancing self-esteem (Gottlieb, 1983). Factors that impact self-esteem include approval, praise, and expressions of respect for the recipient.

Gratification, self-identity, and self-esteem can be fulfilled by perceived social support from family and external support, which may have an impact on their lives. For example, the level of perceived social support from family members is essential to job satisfaction for employed women (King, Mattimore, King, & Adams, 1995). Further, a high level of perceived social support is associated with a low level of depression and anxiety (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988). Also, the effect of perceived social support on the recipient, such as expressions of caring, love, respect, understanding, and concern could have short and long-term effects on their life. The immediate effects of perceived social support include feeling cared for and valued, enhancing a positive state of mind, self-confidence, and reducing stress. The long-term effects of perceived social support include an enhanced the sense of personal security, increased bonding, emotional well-being, and positive self-esteem (Dahlem, Zimet, & Walker, 1991; Shumaker & Brownell, 1984). Therefore, when entrepreneurs perceive social support from family and

attendees, this feeling may positively affect their lives. Also, this feeling may influence female entrepreneurs' experiences of empowerment inside and outside a home, which in turn can enhance their life.

Supporting Women Vendors

Limited information currently exists in the literature on women's support for female entrepreneurs. The majority of researchers addressed family and friends support for women entrepreneurs (Molino, Dolce, Cortese, & Ghislieri, 2018; Powell & Eddleston, 2013; Rajani & Sarada, 2008). Rajani and Sarada (2008) analyzed the role of family support on women entrepreneurship. They pointed out that family support has the most substantial influence on women entrepreneurs when deciding to start their business. Also, they underlined that women entrepreneurs, who receive support from family and external support, can do their work successfully. Rajani and Sarada's (2008) study investigated two cases of women entrepreneurs. Both women faced a high level of resistance from their family when discussing the idea of starting a business. When the first woman convinced her family to support her, she not only received the financial support but also invested in training and skill development. These supports helped her to put her idea into practice and achieve more than 150% profit. However, the second woman failed to receive support from her husband, which constrained her from expanding her business that she established on a small scale. Also, she admitted that only a 10% profit was achieved in her business, and she was unable to further explore her entrepreneurial potential due to the lack of family and community support. Rajani and Sarada's (2008) study concluded that women need more support from their family members and society to establish and sustain a business. Anna (1990) argued that family encouragement is the most critical factor for successful women entrepreneurs.

Powell and Eddleston (2013) investigated the influence of how women entrepreneurs' experiences in their family influenced their experiences in their businesses. They examined the relationship among affective family-to-business enrichment, instrumental family-to-business enrichment, and family-to-business support, and hypothesized that each relationship is more positive for female entrepreneurs than for male entrepreneurs. Affective family-to-work enrichment is identified when female entrepreneurs transfer a positive effect from the family to work such as a positive mood and happiness. This positive effect generates positive emotions that improve female entrepreneurs' overall well-being (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) such as job satisfaction and life satisfaction (McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010), and increases the chance of becoming successful across life domains (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Instrumental family-to-work enrichment is identified when female entrepreneurs transfer skills and behaviors attained in the family to work. The skills and behaviors enhanced in the family are spilled over to work, which in turn improves work performance and also leads to positive outcomes at work (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Family-to-business support is identified when the individual's social life within a family provides emotional support, instrumental assistance, and advice (Uchino, 2004). These family relationships maintain and enhance female entrepreneurs' mental and physical health and prevent stress, which in turn serves to enhance entrepreneurial success. The study results showed that the linkage of these two components of family-to-work enrichment and family-to-business support benefits female entrepreneurs, while it does not benefit male entrepreneurs (Powell & Eddleston, 2013).

Based on a recent review of the literature on female entrepreneurs' social support, Molino, Dolce, Cortese, and Ghislieri, (2018) found that receiving external support from essential people is crucial in the development of entrepreneurial intention for female entrepreneurs over their male counterpart. Also, their study showed that perceived support is a more important factor for female entrepreneurship than having positive personal characteristics, such as self-efficacy in entrepreneurial intention.

Psychologically speaking, entrepreneurship is explained by a creative and innovative response to a motivation driver from within the environment (Vinze, 1987). This means that the environment around female entrepreneurs affects their entrepreneurship experience. Perceived social support from essential people is one of the environmental factors that may influence women's motivation to become an entrepreneur. Therefore, examining perceived social support is a crucial concept to gain a better understanding of the female entrepreneurship experience. Also, perceived social support is a significant factor in helping women entrepreneurs achieve their goal of starting a business. This study explored the impact of social support from family and attendees on Saudi women entrepreneurs' life.

There is no research discussing perceived social support from attendees at the festival. Due to the lack of research discussing the perceived support from attendees to women vendors at the festival, this study conducted informal interviews with 15 attendees who attended Bisat Alreeh and Dakakeen festivals on July 2018. This informal interview was intended to obtain a better understanding of attendees' experiences at a festival for women and their feelings or behaviors to support women vendors. One question from the informal interview was "Do you have the feeling or behavior to support women vendor? Please explain." The majority of attendees said they love to support women vendors. As an example of their statements,

"If the product is good quality and unique, sure I love to support women vendor, and I will tell her that you are doing a great job and I will tell all my friends about her products, and I am willing to buy their product even if the products are expensive because their products are unique."

"I like to support women vendor because I know that these days the festival takes much money for rent a booth, so I like to buy from them; also, the government does not support them."

Some attendees said that they want to support women vendors, but they cannot buy from them because the products are expensive and not unique. As an example of their statements,

"I would like to support women vendors, but the price of the products is so high, even though the products are not an international brand or knowing brand in Saudi."

"If the product is unique and the price is reasonable, I am willing to support women vendor."

"I am willing to support women vendor one time, but if the product is unique and the price is reasonable, I like to buy from her many times."

However, a few attendees state that they like international products because of the variety of products and reasonable prices. As an example of the statement,

"I do not prefer festival for women, because I would like to see the international products from different countries and their price is reasonable because there is a big competition between all booths in the festival."

Some attendees pointed out that some festivals for women have high credibility among consumers because organizers put in their consideration the festival environment and creative booths, both critical factors in creating a successful festival. As an example of their statements,

"The festival outlet and decor is important, and the product price is not so high, I will come to the festival every year, but some festivals for women do not have a nice outlet, and the price of the product is not reasonable, this kind of festival I will not attend it every year."

"Some festival for women has high credibility of its name because of the design of the festival and the quality of each booth."

From the data revealed, attendees intend to support women vendors when their products are unique, are good quality, and the festival has a positive reputation. This means that attendees understand the vendors' needs, which can be achieved by perceived social support, including gratification needs, enhancing self-identity, and self-esteem enhancement. Thus, the relationship between becoming a vendor and empowerment can be affected by perceived social support from attendees.

The majority of studies on Saudi female entrepreneurs have discussed the challenges facing female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia (Minkus-McKenna, 2009; Nieva, 2015; Peters, Bleijenbergh, & Poutsma, 2010; Sivakumar & Sarkar, 2012; Yousuf Danish & Lawton Smith, 2012) and motivational factors for Saudis female entrepreneurs (Ahmad, 2011; Alzahrani, 2012; Fallatah, 2012; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010). Thus, this study focuses on exploring what factors affect the psychological empowerment of Saudi women entrepreneurship and whether perceived social support impacts their life, which have not been addressed in the literature.

The study presents the results of interviews of eight female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the study explores the factors that empower female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabian society and seeks to understand how perceived social support influences their life. Additionally, the study developed a questionnaire based on a qualitative study analysis. A total of 200 surveys were collected from female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. The study's results will help to suggest tips to support empowerment of women. The discoveries and recommendations should be useful to increase alertness to policymakers in identifying factors that may facilitate women's roles in society.

Chapter 3: Qualitative Research Approach

To achieve the research objectives, the present research employed a concurrent mixed-method design investigating how psychological empowerment and social support apply to the Saudi women entrepreneur as a vendor. Both a qualitative approach (i.e., individual in-depth interviews) and a quantitative approach (i.e., descriptive statistics, survey research) were employed in this mixed-method design. The researcher first qualitatively explored the experience of Saudi women entrepreneurship in order to identify what factors affect the psychological empowerment of Saudi women entrepreneurship and whether perceived social support affects their life. The qualitative approach was used for four reasons: 1) to explore what factors empower female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia society, 2) to understand how perceived social support influences their life; and 3) to develop a model based on the interview transcript results and 4) to modify the measurement items identified in the literature review. In the quantitative approach, the researcher can test and confirm the model that is developed from the qualitative approach (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), using qualitative methods is appropriate when the study focuses on individual experiences. Furthermore, because the individual experience involves thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions, the researcher cannot capture the deep meaning and the broad perspective of their experiences unless the researcher uses face-to-face interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Also, there is limited research on the relationship between women's experience in entrepreneurship and empowerment. Previous work has focused only on Saudi women's barriers and motivations as entrepreneurs but has failed to address the relationship that might exist between women's experience in entrepreneurship and empowerment for Saudi women entrepreneurs. Thus, an individual experience of Saudi women

entrepreneurs and how this experience affects their life needs to be explored by using a qualitative approach. Detailed descriptions regarding the participants, procedure, analysis, and results of the individual in-depth interviews are presented in the following sections.

Individual In-depth Interviews

Patton (2002) classified interviews into three types: 1) informal interview, 2) semi-structured interview, and 3) the standardized, open-ended interview. This study used semi-structured interviews with a set of questions reflecting the topics or concepts for the study. This type of interview is a flexible technique in which open-ended questions can be asked, and the interview can take many directions before covering all the areas the researcher wants to address (Fylan, 2005). This type of interview is often used in individual case studies or small sample sizes, and this is also the most typically used type of interview in qualitative studies (Drever, 1995).

Procedures

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with Saudi women entrepreneurs who participated at a festival for women as a vendor. The researcher conducted interviews for approximately two weeks, and each interview lasted 40 minutes to 90 minutes. The semi-structured interview in this study allowed the researcher to understand what has empowered women to become entrepreneurs in festivals for women, what they have experienced as women entrepreneurs, whether they have received social support in this role, and how all these factors influence their lives. The interview questions were generated from a literature review on female entrepreneurs (Cooper & Artz, 1995; Hopp & Stephan, 2012; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Zimmerman et al., 1992; Zimmerman, 1995). The interview questions addressed several topics, including entrepreneurship's experience, building knowledge and skills through participation at

festivals, the impact of social support and culture on their business, and the influence of entrepreneurship experience on empowerment. The interview questions are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Individual Interview Questions

Topic	Question
General	How long have you been vending at events? Tell me about your experiences as a vendor at events.
Personal growth	In what ways has becoming a vendor potentially impacted your personal growth?
Saudi culture	In what way does Saudi culture affect women in terms of personal and working life?
Perceived social support	In what ways has becoming an event vendor changed your family status, friend status, and social status?
Empowerment	How do you feel about the relationship formed between vendors and women's empowerment? Tell me a little bit about your path of empowerment.

This study used purposive qualitative sampling by selecting participants based on specific characteristics. Purposive sampling is an appropriate and practical approach when the number of samples is small due to the nature of the research design, aims, and objectives (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The researcher chose this purposive sampling method because the participants have specific characteristics, that is, Saudi female entrepreneurs participate at a festival for women as a vendor and the number of Saudi women vendors are limited in Saudi Arabia. Also, purposive sampling is known as judgment, selective, or biased sampling, relying on the

researcher's judgment when choosing the sample population in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Because this study analyzed the role of psychological empowerment and social support in Saudi female entrepreneurship, the researcher used her judgment to choose Saudi women entrepreneurs as appropriate participants in the individual interviews.

The researcher obtained the sample by attending two festivals for women, which are Bisat Alreeh and Dakakeen festivals. The researcher invited 19 Saudi women vendors from both festivals and got their contact information to arrange a time for an interview after explaining the purpose of the research. Then, the researcher called them to ensure that they were willing to participate and asked them for a convenient place and time for the interview. Data collection continued until data saturation. Saturation was achieved after interviewing eight female participants; the study seems to have adequate information to replicate, so no additional new information was needed, and that coding was feasible. Study saturation would suggest that the researchers do not need additional data because they will get the same results if they keep asking new participants the questions (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). The details of each interview are presented in Table 2.

Participants

These eight participants were Saudi women entrepreneurs who participated at a festival for women as a vendor: five of the participants were fashion designers, two were jewelry designers, and one was a caterer. The ages ranged from 23 to 45 years old, five of them were married, two were single, and one was divorced. The levels of education ranged from high school to a Ph.D. degree: three of entrepreneurs had a master's degree, two had a bachelor's degree, one had a Ph.D. degree, and one was a high school graduate. The age, marital status, and education level are listed in Table 3.

Table 2.

Details of the Individual In-Depth Interviews

Participation	Date	Location	Duration	Job Title
1	July 10, 2018	Interviewee's house	86 minutes	Fashion Designer
2	July 17, 2018	Interviewee's house	45 minutes	Fashion Designer
3	July 19, 2018	Interviewee's house	90 minutes	Fashion Designer
4	July 20, 2018	Interviewee's house	45 minutes	Fashion Designer
5	July 27, 2018	Interviewee's house	40 minutes	Jewelry Designer
6	July 28, 2018	Café	40 minutes	Jewelry Designer
7	July 29, 2018	Interviewee's house	45 minutes	Fashion Designer
8	July 30, 2018	Café	45 minutes	Café Manager

Table 3.

Age, Marital Status, and Education Level Table

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Education Level
1 (FA)	45	Married	Master's
2 (AL)	40	Divorce	Master's
3 (RA)	45	Married	PhD
4 (TK)	55	Married	High school
5 (BA)	25	Single	Bachelor's
6 (FE)	23	Single	Bachelor's
7 (GA)	40	Married	Master's
8 (ZE)	35	Married	Master's

Data Analysis Procedures

An individual in-depth interview is a specific type of interview that is used to ask participant experiences. Researchers can understand those experience by describing the meaning of a phenomenon that the participants share. The in-depth interview asks questions about the past and present experiences to understand the individual's essential experience with the phenomenon. This study chose individual in-depth interviewing to capture the individual experience and assess the relationship between the individual experience and cultural, social, and environmental context (Clandinin & Connelly 2000). The researcher's responsibility is to "dig nuggets of knowledge out of a subject's pure experience" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p 144).

The study used the individual in-depth interview to explore the role of empowerment and social support in Saudi women's entrepreneurship. This individual in-depth interview provides insight into 1) the impact of becoming entrepreneurs on their personal growth in terms of knowledge and skills; 2) the influence of Saudi culture on their entrepreneurship experience; 3) whether perceived social support is affected Saudi women entrepreneurship; 4) women entrepreneurs' perceptions about themselves, their reaction to the entrepreneurship tasks, and how they engage with the environment (psychological empowerment) (Zimmerman, 1990); and 5) identifying factors that may be affected or related to the psychological empowerment of Saudi women' entrepreneurship.

After transcribing each interview from my audio recording, the researchers reread it and listened to the recording at the same time. Then, multiple readings were done carefully line-by-line to capture holistic informants about participants' experiences. Then, the researcher sent the interview transcriptions to each participant through an email for them to make necessary edits or corrections. Only two participants responded to my email; they did not have any corrections and

they agreed with the information in their interview transcriptions. Through this process of member checking, the researcher enhanced the credibility of the data by assuring that the researcher correctly understood and transcribed their voices (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). After enhancing the credibility of the data, the researcher translated the interview from Arabic to English. Transcripts in English averaged ten to fifteen pages of text per participant. Open and axial coding was used throughout the analysis process (Saldana, 2016). Open coding was used to identify the initial codes and then decide which codes are the most critical, while axial coding was used to create categories by bringing several codes together that reflect commonalities among codes.

Qualitative Results

In this research study, the researcher used the interpretive lens to analyze the data. The interpretive lens helps to understand the participant experience and action, which are subjective and constructed (Lather, 2006). Deductive codes are used because the theory is known before coding. The reason to choose the deductive code is to achieve the research objectives and to pull out the themes and codes that help to clarify the research idea and answer the research question. Several steps are followed to obtain the qualitative results: 1) I read the transcript as a whole and made notes about it, 2) I reread the transcript carefully line by line to let the text tell what was happening, 3) I made coding when the word is repeated in several places, when an interviewee explicitly stated that it was essential, or when it was related to the research objectives, 4) I grouped these codes by asking myself how the codes worked together; at this step I created categories by bringing several codes together that reflected commonalities among codes, 5) I labeled categories, 6) generating themes from the data rather than discovering them, and 7) I

described the connection between these themes, which was new knowledge about Saudi women entrepreneurs from their perspective (Saldaña, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2012).

A theme “captures something important about the data represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82.). The researcher generated four themes and sub-themes under each theme from the transcription: (1) entrepreneurs’ capabilities in running a business; (2) entrepreneurs’ environments affect their performance, (3) being women entrepreneurs affect their empowerment, and (4) festivals are influenced women entrepreneurs’ businesses

Entrepreneurs’ Capabilities in Running a Business

Participants expressed that entrepreneurs need to have capabilities that may affect how to run their business. This theme comprises three subthemes, including personality characteristics, passion to work, and entrepreneur locus of control. Each subtheme is elucidated below.

The participants shared data that led to the *personality characteristics* theme (see Appendix A). The interviewee indicated several entrepreneurs' characteristics that may affect their business life, such as determination, insistence, strength, self-reliance, work hard, confidence, leadership, and ambition, assisting them in pursuing and achieving their goals. For example, two female participants talked about how their personality helped them to be able to face business challenges. Participant TK highlighted that the determination is very important in achieving her goal, she shared the following idea that supported the theme of *personality characteristics*.

My business affects my personality, but you should have determination with achieving your goal, if my family saw that I was in a problem, they said that it is not necessary to work and do not bother yourself, but it was the insistence that motivated me because every business has problems.

Participant GA emphasized that self-confidence and self-reliance are very essential personality characteristics for entrepreneurs to build a successful business, she shared the following idea that supported the theme of *personality characteristics*.

I believe that the success of my business is based on the strength and self-reliance on myself. Also, to be successful, you need to work hard and be confident to start your business and do not think about what other people think about your project. In the beginning, I expected that I would fail but with persistence and continued to open many doors that I did not know about it, and I need to implement several steps that are necessary to do to succeed.

Participant FE described a situation in which her personality affects her to have a high optimistic in their business path.

The power of human, whether a woman or a man increases his or her success in any field, basically my personality is leadership and ambitious woman that ambition make me do not stop it, and I want to go height to the highest.

The participants shared answers that led to the *Passion to work* theme (see Appendix A). The data analysis shows every entrepreneur has talent and passion for working to pursue her dream. The participants have a high passion for working in their business because their business is their dream and what they love to do in their life. For example, three female participants talked about how their talent and passion to work influenced their business and helped them to have a successful business. Participant FA said, "Everyone must have his or her talent and motivation in life and wants to achieve and develop as a concept at the beginning, and my personality and motivation lead me to be successful in my business life." Participant RA stated, "I had a touch of art, and I loved the arts, and I loved folklore when I was a kid." Another participant shared her perspective that supported this theme.

I have a goal, and I am self-fulfilling, I studied and I did not find my place in the public sector, Rania does not want to put her Ph.D. degree as decoration in my library at my home, as my grandfather told me you would have a high position as your aunt, Why I sit at home? This was my idea; I have something I love it. I want to do a project, and start my project also was one of my goals is training girls.

The *entrepreneur locus of control* theme is defined as the skills and experience that help entrepreneurs to run their business (see Appendix A). The participations described that their skills, ability, and experience helped them to run their business successfully, such as developing quality and unique products and establishing consumer awareness about their business.

Participant TK stated that "Each dress has a good idea and is different from the market; I made some changes for the material to be different from the market and the dress for what ends dazzles people." Also, they mentioned that their confidence helped them to make the right decision and manage their business effectively, such as participant BA stated, "Effective management strategy is needed because the business is difficult, and I asked employees to work productively and fast in exchange for giving them their rights in full." To clarify, participations highlighted that an entrepreneur needs to have advanced skills to survive in her business, such as leadership skills, satisfied workers, and self- confidence.

I participated in a women's festival in a small corner and the place on the side and small then after experiencing this year entered the world of the festival strongly took the forefront of the celebration, and a larger place was 12 model Dress brides with makeup for three days.

Entrepreneurs' Environments Affect their Performance

Participants highlighted some factors may affect their business's performance. This theme includes four subthemes, which are prior knowledge, perceived social support, happiness, and culture. Each subtheme is elucidated below.

Prior knowledge was highlighted as important to develop in order to start their business (see Appendix A). Participants stated that before starting to implement their ideas, they built knowledge by exploring how the fashion design was working, taking a course to make sure they were in the right track, and interacting with other designers to discuss any problems that may be

face in the future. For example, how to make employees more productive is a topic that is important for these entrepreneurs. One participant stated, "I liked to build knowledge and information by going to the shops and see how the design is difficult or easy and then entered the course based on my goals, and sound conditions are all met." Another participant shared, "The course was excellent, and I felt that the information and things that in my mind match with the actual implementation." Participant FA underlined that building Knowledge help her to be able to run her business effectively, she shared the following idea that supported the theme of *Prior knowledge*.

I had information and experience by meeting with the designers and sit and talk about the problems they were asking advice from me, my style and my way with the workers was good, and my ability to run the workers very well and I know what Is a good way to deal with the workers.

Also, one participant highlighted that knowledge is more important than money in their business path, and she said that knowledge makes you a successful entrepreneur, but not the money. She stated, "knowledge is crucial and your knowledge is manufactured your ability, but the money does not make you."

Another female participant talked about how her prior knowledge about design help her to start up her business in small scale to make sure that she had the ability to run her business successfully. "I wanted to use my knowledge in the design matters and began to design my clothes and people who are around me."

Social support is another theme uncovered from the data and it noted as essential in the entrepreneurs' life (see Appendix A). For example, some participants stated that their family assisted them in balancing their responsibilities between family and work. Also, their family helps them to be creative and innovative in their business. Also, they mentioned that some of

their family members assisted them in their work. To clarify, participations highlight that family support plays a crucial role in time management, business innovation, and tangible assistance. One participant shared, "Husband, children, and parents help them to manage the time because I usually leave them around 5 or 6 hours a day, so each member of the family is referred to settle his responsibility and also helps others." Another participant shared, "Family has an important role, if they did not help me, it would be hard on me to do my work, but do not stop my job, but my creativity is reduced." Another participant shared, "My husband was the supporter; for example, I needed to travel to a place to buy certain fabrics. I cannot travel because I am busy. I ask him if he can travel instead of me; he always agrees and leaves his job for three days. He travels and brings me fabrics." Finally, one participant shared another response that supports this theme. "My daughter also helps me in social media; even she is the last year of engineering. I tell her you must take one hour from your time to work on social media."

The data presented social support from attendees also play an essential role in the entrepreneurs' happiness in life. The participants stated that perceived social support from attendees helps them to feel good about themselves. One participant shared her feelings that support the theme of happiness.

Princesses took my business card, and one of them asked how did this design, I said this my work, and then she asked how did this design I said me, she said are you sure I said yes this my work and the princess said the words of a beautiful and encouragement, this is enough all people give encouraging words and go, for example, one attendee who did not need a dress, she is mom but said I want to praise you and your job, I wish all the best for you.

Based on the data, the participants mentioned that *happiness*, which is the feeling of having a comfortable life, is a crucial aspect to being successful as an entrepreneur. One participant stated that feeling pleased and happy allows her to be more creative and innovative in work. "Stable and satisfying life is important because if I were tense and worried about

problems, this would not allow me to be creative and innovative at my work." Another participant talked about how feeling happy influence the amount of effort put into her business. "There is a significant thing is needed, it is stable and satisfying life, and you feel or need to be comfortable, if you were not pleased and happy, you would not give your project."

Based on the data, the interviewee mentioned that Saudi *culture* has been remodeled in these days because of social media. The participants stated that policies have been modified, such as having a fashion show in a mixed front audience. "The community was closed, but now after social media has helped us a lot before I could not display my designer on the models, the fashion show was forbidden, but now is not permitted by 2016".

Culture and my family do not affect my decision I do the right thing, I have a fashion show now at festival for women but not in front of men, this is my conviction, It is also possible to change my conviction because when I agree with the Swedish director to design costumes for the actors I felt that it was the same of the fashion show in front of a mixed audience.

Another participant described how Saudi culture has become less conservative toward involving women in the business industry. "Now it is not difficult, a lot of Saudi women start their projects, at my time (2009) it was a defect I stopped in the shop I sell, now we are all standing in the shops and selling with pride, it is changed a lot."

Furthermore, three participants spoke about culture and emphasized that it is not an obstacle for women to become entrepreneurs. The participants described that it is just an excuse for being unwilling to make an effort to find the opportunity. "Who said culture is an obstacle, the business life is hard for women, and there are limit opportunities for women, this is just excused, there are many opportunities just find the opportunity."

I believe that Saudi culture did not have any effect on Saudi women because if a person is a woman or a man who followed the laws and respected the system would not be an obstacle in their business or their life, I think the weak personality and no family support may affect her negatively, it is not the culture.

Saudi culture gives women the opportunity, but restrictions are necessary because we are a conservative society, because we are an Eastern society, if we did not have these restrictions we were like the West, we need to keep our values and be unique from the rest of other countries.

Being Women Entrepreneurs Affect their Empowerment

Participants emphasized that beginning as businesswomen or working women helps them to be empowered. This theme has a subtheme which is empowerment. This subtheme is elucidated below.

From the data analysis, the participants defined *empowerment* as independence; empowerment indicates the right to decide on the business. Here is a statement about the meaning of women empowerment from the participant's perception.

From my viewpoint, empowerment women who are working woman, a working woman is strong, whether professional means doctor, a doctor at university or engineer workers, workers feel stronger because it means independent and she does not depend on anyone, she independent on herself. Although I have a husband, the husband helps but does not depend on him, and all her intention is not on her kids or husband but needs to put her intention on her. I have to have a life even though I have a good husband, and we are happy together, but I need to be strong and have a job working in it.

The following is a statement about the influence of being women entrepreneurs on empowerment and independence from the participant's perception. "The business gives you strength and relies on yourself a lot, and the strength and self-reliance develop from one year to another year." Another participant shared, "Woman who is working her character and thinking does not look like the woman sitting at home." Finally, one participant shared her response that supported the theme. "Personality became very strong, the people who are around me in work called "Abu Shabab" which means that my strength looks like 100 men. They feel when I am with them, I am a man in our midst, and they do not say me like a lady."

Festivals are Influenced Women Entrepreneurs' Businesses

The data analysis identified several benefits that are obtained from participating at festivals. Participants emphasized specific attributes that help them to establish successful businesses. This theme contains two subthemes, including benefits of participating in festivals for women and festival attributes. Each subtheme is elucidated below.

The participants shared the *benefits of participating in festivals for women* (see Appendix A). The participants described that there are several advantages of participating in the festival for women, such as obtaining knowledge regarding consumers and products, reaching new consumers, and promoting and marketing their products. For example, some participants said that participating in the festival for women helps them to gain knowledge and experience in communicating with consumers and developing an excellent product that meets the consumers' expectations.

The advantages are that the festival for women gives the experience and knowledge in dealing with people and the way of communicating with customers, and the entrepreneur will know her product if the product will be successful and continue in this product or the turnout. Also, she will know the weaknesses of products and develop these products to meet customers' expectations.

Also, two participants described that participating in a festival for women helps them to have consumers' data and to build a relationship with them. For example, one participant shared her response that supports this theme.

This experience and participation at festival for women actually help me to interact with attendees, and it was dazzle on the dresses this year, this participated in the festival help me to gain new customers and I target a variety of customers segments, which help me to change the quality of business and be creative at my business.

Further, some participants highlighted that participating in a festival for women assists women entrepreneurs to introduce their businesses to consumers and promote their products.

One participant shared, "I want my business name will know in the fashion design industry, and many attendees will know my business name by participation at the festival for women."

Another participant shared, "The festival helped us to succeed because it introduced people to my project, showed my name, gave me experience, connected me to clients and developed me, and test and redesign the goods also."

Also, the participants mentioned that the *festival attributes* play an essential role in successful businesses. The festival needs to have a good reputation and can use several strategies to attract more attendees, such as inviting celebrities and advertising. One participant shared, "I feel the festival is a necessary and essential base, and it is an important step." Some participants said that the festival attracts specific visitors that their main motivation to attend the festival is buying products and they are willing to pay more for seeking quality products. One participant shared "the type of visitors who attend these festivals are willing to pay more and they came to buy products and I was out of profit and be profitable 3 times the capital and rent." Another participant shared the following response that supported this theme.

Festivals need to have a good reputation, and you need to ask about who is responsible for the festival and the company organizing the festival; also, some festivals invite celebrities, the people are attracted to the festival, thus, only participated in the good reputation festival.

Connections between the Subthemes

As the themes were developed, the researcher could analyze the interview results in terms of interrelationships among the themes. All the themes that are presented in this study are related to Saudi women entrepreneurs. I learned from participants' experience that four factors, including personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneur locus of control affect the psychological empowerment of Saudi women's entrepreneurship and help them to start their business. In addition, the researcher learned that without perceived social support and

happiness, Saudi women entrepreneurs will be struggling in entrepreneurship life and cannot be successful in their business. Thus, perceived social support and happiness are fundamental factors that lead to psychological empowerment for Saudi women entrepreneurs.

Based on the data, personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control help them to succeed in entrepreneurship life and lead them to feel empowered and independent. The interpretation concludes that these four factors, including personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control have an effect on the psychological empowerment of Saudi women entrepreneurship based on qualitative study results. One participant shared, "Basically, my personality is leadership and ambitious woman that ambition make me do not stop it, and I want to go height to the highest." Another participant shared, "I love my work, if I am convinced, I believe in it, this is why I put this picture in front of me and some of my designs to show how I am proud of myself." Another participant shared, "Knowledge is crucial, and your knowledge is manufactured your ability, but the money does not make you." Finally, one participant shared, "Before I'm afraid of the job, but now I am not afraid I am taking any decision in the job now, my experiences in work let me be strong women."

Further, from the interview, I found that perceived social support from family and attendees and happiness are crucial factors that affect psychological empowerment for Saudi women entrepreneurs. For example, most participants implicitly suggested the importance of perceived social support and happiness by stating that social support and happy lives help women entrepreneurs to be empowered by feeling comfortable and less stressed, which enhances their creativity and productivity, and in turn, influences their psychological empowerment. Also, when I asked them about the meaning of empowerment from their perspective, they said that

empowerment is a feeling of independence; however, without family support, it can be hard to achieve this in one's entrepreneurial life. As another example, one of the participants faced a challenge in her business and felt like giving up. However, with her husband's support, she returned to her work and gained confidence and a feeling of security, which enhanced her empowerment. Another participant describes her life as an unhappy life because of facing a health issue and a difficult life at her home, which affects her business process negatively. Thus, the interview results confirm that without social support and happiness, the relationship between the four factors (personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control) and psychological empowerment would not exist. Based on this understanding, the researcher decided to develop a research model to examine perceived social support from family and attendees and happiness as moderators for the influences of four factors (personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control) on psychological empowerment. The data that supports this research model is shared below.

Women workers feel stronger because it means independent and she does not depend on anyone, she independent on her, but at the same time if my family did not help me it will be hard on me to do my work, but do not give up my job, but my creativity will be reduced.

Two years ago, there was a decline in production, and it was not only me; there were many projects that did not succeed, but I continued in my project because I was not loss means it was a successful project at that time when other projects closed. It was at this stage I feel weakness, but my husband refused and told me to forget that you will close the business and your ambition this 15 years, I stand at the moment I told him I do not have a salary he said I would pay for them, then I was back to return strongly and my husband has credit after God and I started my project of my husband's money, he was supporting me financially and morally.

It was frustrating that my project would not be successful, but with my father supports, I feel I am strange, and I can achieve my dream, which is starting my business. My father gives me strength when I received his support.

Satisfying life is an important thing, if you were not pleased and happy, you will not give your project, I had a period of my work, I was not happy for example in my home I had health problems; I had tensions, which became a gap in my job.

Moreover, two of the participants stated that they are struggling when deciding to start their business because their family did not support them. Also, they underlined that women entrepreneurs who receive support from family could do their work successfully. When not receiving family support, the participants were not able to expand their business that they established on a small scale. Also, they admitted that they do not gain any profit in their business and were unable to further explore their entrepreneurial potential due to the lack of family support. For example, two of the participants shared the following statements. "Some women do not have someone to encourage them and help them informal procedures and also do not give his or her views; this can be hampered."

In the beginning, my family disagreed with me to start my business because they were worried about me, and they think business life is difficult for women. They do not anyone laughs at me or take any advantage of me, but after that, when they saw me, I can achieve my dream and see me that I can do it, my father began proudly of me.

To sum up, the interview results conclude that the research model will examine the influence of four factors that include personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control on the psychological empowerment of Saudi women' entrepreneurship and perceived social support and sustaining a happy life as moderators between these four factors and psychological empowerment. Also, measurement items in the survey will be modified based on the interview results.

Conceptual Framework Model

This study tests a conceptual model depicting the influence of four factors that include personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control on the psychological empowerment of Saudi women' entrepreneurship. Also, the model

highlights the role of perceived social support and having a happy life as moderators on the existing relationship between these four factors and psychological empowerment as well. As shown in Figure 2, the suggested model illustrates the direct relationship among the four factors that are identified from the qualitative study (i.e., personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control) on the psychological empowerment of Saudi women' entrepreneurship and the moderating effect of perceived social support and happiness on the relationship between these four factors and psychological empowerment.

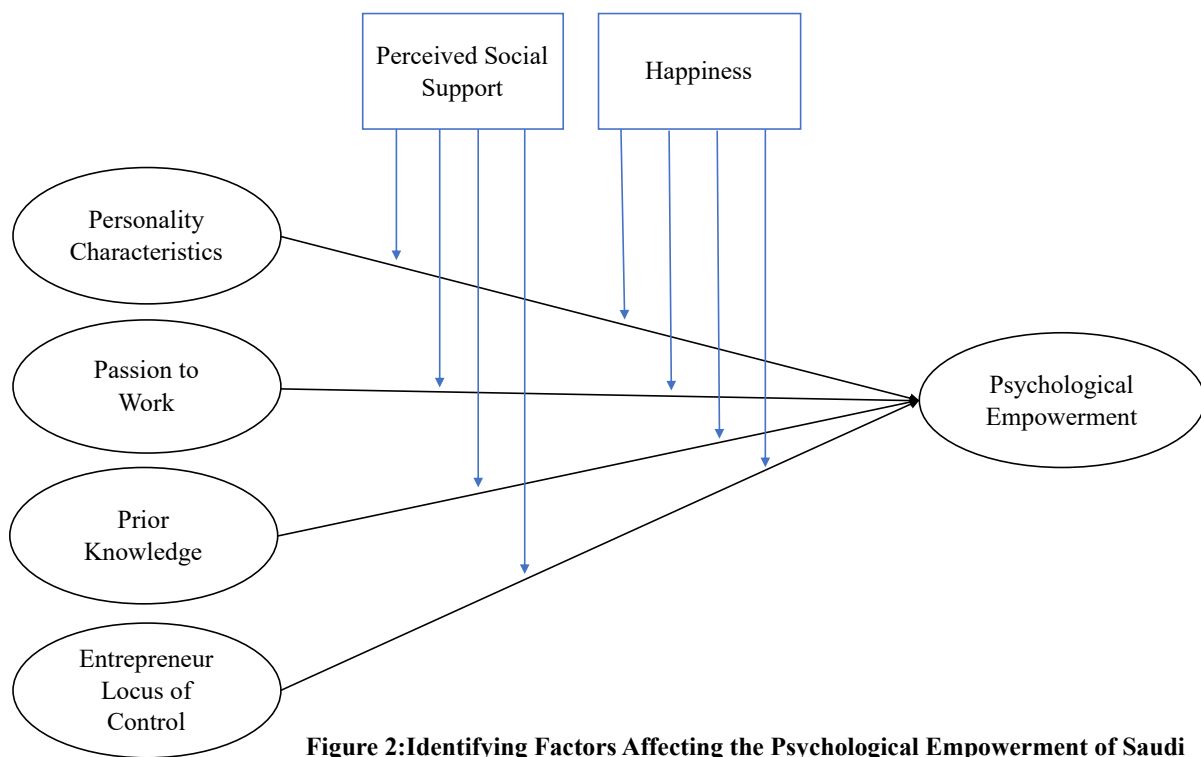


Figure 2: Identifying Factors Affecting the Psychological Empowerment of Saudi Women' Entrepreneurship from Qualitative Study

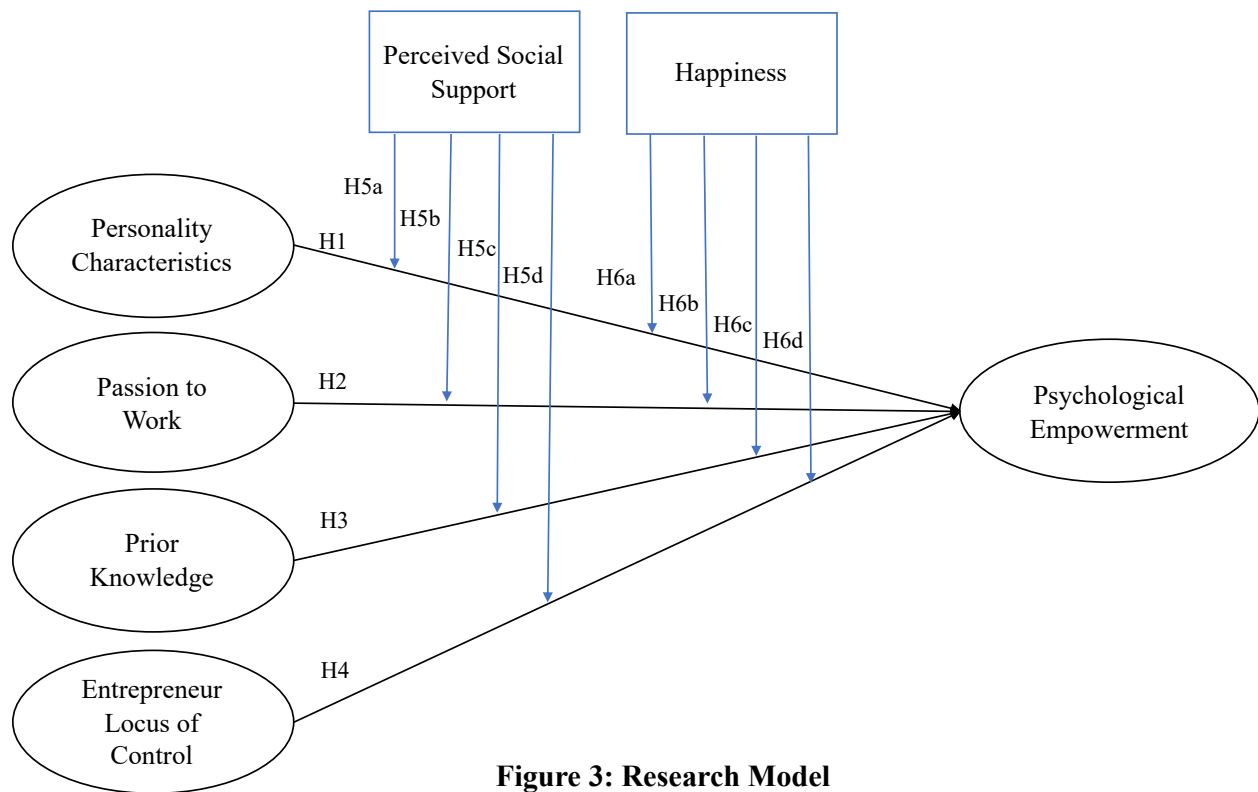
Chapter 4: Quantitative Research Approach

Research Model

Previous chapter highlights the themes inductively derived from the qualitative data. The qualitative study generated seven themes from the interview transcriptions: personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, entrepreneur locus of control, perceived social support, happiness, and empowerment. The connection between these themes offered new knowledge about Saudi women entrepreneurs from their perspective. These themes highlighted the factors that impact the psychological empowerment of Saudi women's entrepreneurship. Based on these themes, a model was developed, and the items identified from the literature were modified to reflect the transcribed items from the interviews. This chapter focuses on the quantitative approach that will be used to test and confirm the model that is developed from the qualitative approach. Also, this chapter provides hypotheses, sampling design, measurements, content analysis, and data analysis techniques.

This study tests a conceptual model depicting the relationships among personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, entrepreneurs' locus of control, psychological empowerment, perceived social support, and happiness. As shown in Figure 3, the exogenous variables include personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control that may impact the psychological empowerment of Saudi women's entrepreneurship. The endogenous variable in the proposed research model is the psychological empowerment in female entrepreneurship. The psychological empowerment is complex and cannot be explained by a single concept. Thus, the psychological empowerment is measured by four cognition dimensions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Perceived social support and

happiness variables were employed as the moderator between the relationship of the personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control with psychological empowerment. The conceptual model is depicted in Figure 3.



Hypothesized Relationships

Specific hypotheses regarding the relationship among personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, entrepreneurs' locus of control, psychological empowerment, perceived social support, and happiness in Saudi female entrepreneurs are stated below.

Aminosharieh, Baharvand, Alipoor, Bahmani, and Mowlaie (2018) indicated that the personality characteristics of entrepreneurs have a relationship with psychological empowerment. The study's results affirmed that the four personality characteristics, including extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and responsibility have a positive relationship with four dimensions of psychological empowerment. Di Zhang and Bruning (2011) found that an entrepreneur's personal characteristics, including need for achievement, internal locus of control, and need for cognition have a positive relationship with entrepreneurs' performance. In other words, entrepreneurs with a higher need for achievement, internal locus of control, and need for cognition are more likely to be successful. Both studies revealed that the entrepreneur needs to have a strong personal characteristic to become empowered entrepreneurs. Therefore,

H1: Saudi female entrepreneurs who have stronger personality characteristics will have more empowerment in their life.

Researchers have found that passion for work is a core element of the entrepreneurial process and a driving force behind entrepreneurial success. For example, passion for work has contributed to venture growth (Baum & Locke, 2004), opportunity recognition and pursuit (Baron, 2008), invention of new products and services or developing a business venture to bring products and services to the market (Cardon, Sudek, & Mitteness, 2009), and the visions and dreams of entrepreneurs (Ma & Tan, 2006). Further, passion for work is an important predictor of mental health, flow, vitality, and affective commitment (Simpson, Irvine, Balta, & Dickson, 2015). Adomako, Quartey, and Narteh (2016) indicated that passion for work strengthens the

relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and a business's performance in dynamic market environments. It appears that passion for work has beneficial effects on entrepreneurs' cognition and behavior. Therefore,

H2: Saudi female entrepreneurs who have a stronger passion for working will have more empowerment in their life.

Several authors claimed that entrepreneur knowledge plays an important role in business performance. Omerzel and Antončič (2008) stated that entrepreneur knowledge is an important factor for business performance, business growth and profitability. Lichtenstein and Brush (2001) also found that business performance depends on the entrepreneur knowledge. In fact, knowledge is considered the core factor to implement the desired strategy to achieve the performance (Lichtenstein & Brush, 2001; García-Palma & Molina, 2016). Entrepreneur knowledge plays a critical role in a successful business because an entrepreneur who has knowledge will enhance his or her empowerment (Sullivan, 2000). This empowerment will affect entrepreneurs' ability to innovate new products and services or improve existing ones more efficiently (Chia, 2003). All studies exposed that the entrepreneurs' knowledge empowers entrepreneurs. Therefore,

H3: Saudi female entrepreneurs who have stronger prior knowledge will have more empowerment in their life.

Babalola (2009) found that female entrepreneurs' internal locus of control influences entrepreneurial innovative behavior. In other words, a female entrepreneur with high internal locus of control has a higher innovative behavior than a female entrepreneur with low internal locus of control, confirming a positive relationship between the locus of control and innovation among female entrepreneurs (Kirkwood, 2009; Nachimuthu & Gunatharan 2012; Varma, 2016). Similarly, Rauch and Frese (2000) found that female entrepreneurs with a slightly higher internal

locus of control are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, which may empower their drive for innovation. Further, Jha and Nair (2008) tested the influence of the locus of control on psychological empowerment; the results showed that the locus of control has a positive influence on psychological empowerment. Therefore,

H4: Saudi female entrepreneurs who have stronger entrepreneurs' locus of control will have more empowerment in their life.

Researchers found that perceived social support is an essential factor for female entrepreneurship. For example, Rajani and Sarada (2008) highlighted that perceived social support has the most substantial influence on female entrepreneurs' starting a business and successfully completing their work. Anna (1990) also pointed out that encouragement is the most important factor for successful women entrepreneurs (Anna, 1990). Further, Powell and Eddleston (2013) confirmed that perceived social support benefits female entrepreneurs, while it does not benefit male entrepreneurs. Similarly, Molino, Dolce, Cortese and Ghislieri (2018) found that perceived social support plays an important role in the development of entrepreneurial intention among female entrepreneurs, but this is not evident for male entrepreneurs. It seems that perceived social support has a positive moderating role in the impact of antecedent variables on female entrepreneurs. Therefore,

H5: Perceived social support will moderate the relationships between psychological empowerment and four antecedent variables consisting of personality characteristics (H5a), passion for working (H5b), locus of control (H5c), and prior knowledge (H5d)

Developing a sense of feeling in control and feeling satisfied with many aspects in an entrepreneurship's life affects entrepreneurs in different ways. For example, Nordenmark, Vinberg, and Strandh (2012) found that a positive relationship between high levels of control and life-balance for entrepreneurs affects their feeling and mood positively. Similarly, Sundin (2009) found that a stabile work life impacts the well-being of entrepreneurs. It can be concluded that

when female entrepreneurs have a stable life and feelings of happiness, this can influence their roles at work and help them to make decisions effectively, which in turn affects their feelings of empowerment.

H6: Happiness will moderate the relationship between psychological empowerment and antecedent variables consisting of personality characteristics (H6a), passion for working (H6b), locus of control (H6c), and prior knowledge. (H6d)

Sampling and Data Collection

The population of this study consists of Saudi women entrepreneurs who participate in a festival for women. Snowball sampling was used in this study; this method is a system that involves referrals from individuals participating in the study or participants referred from individuals affiliated with the topic of the study (Creswell, 2010). The researcher chose this method because female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are rare and difficult to find (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Browne, 2005). The researcher started with multiple individuals possessing the essential characteristics (i.e., female entrepreneurs who participated in festivals for women) required by the research design and requested that an individual suggest others with similar characteristics. The target respondents of this study were adult vendors (18 or older) who had participated in festivals for women; a total of 200 entrepreneurs were targeted for this study.

The researcher sent a brief description of this study, the sample information, and the survey instrument to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Tennessee for approval since this study involves human participants. The data were collected within three weeks in October 2019 from 200 Saudi female entrepreneurs who had participated in a festival for women in Saudi Arabia. This study used a web survey to collect the data. The survey was constructed by the researcher using Qualtrics and was placed on a website hosted by The University of Tennessee. After that, the researcher sent the survey to Saudi female entrepreneurs

via email and the WhatsApp platform, which is a social media app that allow users to send text messages and voice recordings to other people. In order to reach more participants, the researcher contacted the Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia to distribute the survey to targeted participants. The female entrepreneurs who agreed to participate were directed to the website hosted by the University of Tennessee to answer the questions. The survey gave a brief introduction of the purpose of the study and the main characteristics of participants who were Saudi females owned businesses and had participated at a festival for women in Saudi Arabia. Among the invited members, 200 accessed the survey. Excluding four individuals who did not finish the survey, a total of 196 completed responses were obtained. The respondents provided their demographic information toward the end of the survey. The survey took about 10 minutes to complete.

Sample Demographics

The demographic information of the respondents, such as age, marital status, education, working status, and incomes, was the last section of the survey. The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 4. The analysis of respondents' demographic information revealed that about 68% of the respondents were between 35 and 54, 16.4% were 25-34, 38% were 35-44, 30.3% were 45-54, and 10.3 % were 55-64. Also, more than half of the total respondents were married (66.1%). Additionally, 57.0% of the respondents had a four-year college degree. The majority of respondents have their own business (66.1%). Overall, the respondents' income was widely distributed across the spectrum: 24.2% earned less than \$16,000, 12.1% earned \$16,000-25,999, 6.7% earned \$26,000-38,999, 22.4% earned 39,000-51,999, 26.7% earned \$52,000-64,999, and 7.9% earned \$65,000 or more.

Table 4.
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographics		Frequency (n=165)	Percentage
Age	18 to 25	7	4.2%
	25 to 34	27	16.4%
	35 to 44	64	38.8%
	45 to 54	50	30.3%
	55 to 64	17	10.3%
Marital Status	Married	109	66.1%
	Single, never married	25	15.2%
	Separated, divorced, or widowed	31	18.8%
Education	High school or less	17	10.3%
	Associate degree (community college, technical school, two-year college)	30	18.2%
	Bachelor's degree	94	57.0%
	Graduate degree (Master's, MBA, or doctoral)	24	14.5%
Working Status	Work full-time	11	6.7%
	Work part-time	45	27.3%
	Work on my own	109	66.1%
Income	Less than \$16,000	40	24.2%
	\$16,000-25,999	20	12.1%
	\$26,000-38,999	11	6.7%
	\$39,000-51,999	37	22.4%
	\$52,000-64,999	44	26.7%
	\$65,000 or more	13	7.9%

Instrument Development

The measurement scales employed in this study are adapted from the literature and modified based on the qualitative study (interviews). The questionnaire is composed of seven sections: (1) personality characteristics, (2) passion to work, (3) prior knowledge, (4) entrepreneurs' locus of control, (5) perceived social support from family and attendees as a moderator, (6) happiness as a moderator, and (7) psychological empowerment (i.e., meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact). All the items were measured on a 5-point-Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

The scale for each of the factors on the questions was adapted from the following sources: *personality characteristics* was adapted from Turan and Kara (2007), a *passion to work* from De Clercq, Honig, and Martin (2013), *prior knowledge* from Shane (2000), *entrepreneurs' locus of control* from Kroeck, Bullough, and Reynolds (2010), *perceived social support from family and attendees* from Canty-Mitchell and Zimet (2000) and Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, and Rhoades (2001), *happiness* from Hills and Argyle (2001), and *multidimensional measures of psychological empowerment* from Spreitzer (1995). Spreitzer (1995) developed the four cognition dimensions to understand worker empowerment in the workplace. The scale is reliable and provides adequate construct validity (Kraimer, Seibert, & Liden, 1999; Spreitzer, 1995). This study used four cognition dimensions, including meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Table 5 summarizes the items used for each construct along with the source.

Table 5.
Adapted scale items

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Reliability</i>	<i>Source</i>
Personality characteristics		• Need to achieve • Do not give up easily • Being self-confident • Like to take risk • Like to work on own	.76	Turan & Kara, (2007)
Passion to work		• I love my work. • I look forward to returning to work when I am away from it. • I accomplish a lot because I love to work hard.	.89	De Clercq, Honig, & Martin, (2013)
Prior knowledge		• Knowledge about the ways to serve the market • Knowledge about the product/technology • Knowledge about the ways to produce/develop the product/technology	.90	Shane, (2000)
Entrepreneur locus of control		• Overall, my skill and ability will help me start a business. • There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business. • My personal philosophy is “do whatever it takes” to establish my own business. • My past experience will be very valuable in starting a business.	.80	Kroeck, Bullough, & Reynolds, (2010)
Happiness		• I feel I am in control most of the time. • I am satisfied with many things in my life. • I am very happy. • I find it easy to make most decisions.	.90	Hills & Argyle, (2001)
Perceived Social Support	Family	• My family really tries to help me. • I get the emotional help and support I need from my family. • I can talk about my problems with my family. • My family is willing to help me make decisions.	.93	Canty-Mitchell, & Zimet, (2000)

Table 5. (Continued)

	Attendees	• The ___ takes pride in my accomplishments. • The ___ values my contribution to its <i>well-being</i>. • The ___ shows little concern for me. (R)	.84	Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001
Psychological empowerment	Meaning	• The work I do is very important. • My job activities are personally meaning to me. • The work I do is meaningful to me.	.81	Spreitzer, 1995
	Competence	• I am confident about my ability to do my job. • I am self-assured about my capability to perform my work activities. • I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.	.76	
	Self-determination	• I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job. • I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work. I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.	.85	
	Impact	• My impact on what happens in my department is large. • I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department. • I have significant influence over what happens in my department.	.83	

Modified Measurement Items Based on Interview Transcripts

The scale items for *personality characteristics* were refined. For example, “need to achieve” was modified to “I have a strong determination to achieve my goal.” Participants believed that a person who is ambitious and determined could achieve his or her goal. Also, “Do not give up easily” was modified to “I have leadership skills, so I do not give up easily”; most of the participants expressed that they do not give up quickly because they are ambitious and have leadership skills.

Three scale items for *prior knowledge* were refined. First, “Knowledge about the ways to the server the market” was modified to “I have good knowledge on how to start small businesses” because the participants said that they usually explore the industry and begin self-teaching about how the business works. Second, “Knowledge about the product/technology” was modified to “I have good knowledge about products in the marketplace” because the participants articulated that starting a business requires developing knowledge about products. The money is not as essential as knowledge. Third, “Knowledge about the ways to produce/develop the product/technology” was modified to “I have good knowledge about the ways to produce and develop products.” The participants shared that they used their knowledge to create a product for themselves and the people around them; they were thinking of starting their business and began to think bigger.

The scale items for *entrepreneurs' locus of control* were refined. For example, “My past experience will be very valuable in starting a business” was modified to “My past experience will be very valuable in making the right decision and expending in my business.” Some participants expressed that they improved decision-making skills after their experienced at a festival for women. Furthermore, they improved their knowledge about how to expand their business. This experience assisted them in actively entering the business industry. Due to the information from the participants, one more scale item was added: “I am confident that I can manage my business effectively.” Several participants elaborated that when they are confident, this helps them to manage the business effectively, which is very important in the business world.

The scale items for *happiness* were refined. For example, “I feel I am in control most of the time” was modified to “I feel I am emotionally stable most of the time.” The participants

emphasized that when they are emotionally stable, they feel happy and pleased about their life; this attitude fosters creativity and innovation at work and directs effort to their business.

The scale items for *perceived social support from family and attendees* were refined. For example, “My family really tries to help me” was modified to “My family helps me to succeed in my work.” Six of the participants stated that without family support, the business would be hard and stressful for them. However, with family support, they could be productive and creative at the business and secure as well. Further, one new scale item was added: “My family plays an important role in my business.” The participants highlighted that their family plays an essential role in helping their business to succeed. Specifically, time management and tangible and intangible support nurtured the ability to survive and succeed in their businesses. Also, the scale items for *perceive social support from attendees* were refined. For example, “The ___ take pride in my accomplishments” was modified to “The attendees were happy about my accomplishments” and “The ___ values my contribution to its well-being” was modified to “The attendees valued my business ideas.” Additionally, “The ___ shows little concern for me (R)” was modified to “I received encouraging words from them.” The participants said that attendees were happy, and they received beautiful and encouraging words from attendees. This encouragement made them feel like strong women. Table 6 summarizes the initial items and modified items used for each construct based on interview transcripts.

Table 6.

Modified scale items

Construct	Factor	Initial Item	Modified item
Personality characteristics		• Need to achieve • Do not give up easily • Being self-confident • Like to take risk • Like to work on own	• I have a strong determination to achieve my goal. • I have leadership skills, so I do not give up easily. • I am confident about myself. • I like to take risks to accomplish my goals. • I like to work on my own.
Passion to work		• I love my work. • I look forward to returning to work when I am away from it. • I accomplish a lot because I love to work hard.	• I love my work. • I look forward to returning to work when I am away from it. • I accomplish a lot because I love my work.
Prior knowledge		• Knowledge about the ways to serve the market • Knowledge about the product/technology • Knowledge about the ways to produce/develop the product/technology	• I have good knowledge on how to start small businesses. • I have good knowledge about products in the marketplace. • I have good knowledge about the ways to produce and develop products.
Entrepreneur locus of control		• Overall, my skill and ability will help me start a business. • There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business. • My personal philosophy is “do whatever it takes” to establish my own business. • My past experience will be very valuable in starting a business.	• Overall, my skill and ability will help me start my business. • There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business. • My personal philosophy is “do whatever it takes” to establish my own business. • My past experience will be very valuable in making the right decisions and expanding my business. • I am confident that I can manage my business effectively.
Happiness		• I feel I am in control most of the time. • I am satisfied with many things in my life. • I am very happy. • I find it easy to make most decision.	• I feel I am emotionally stable most of the time. • I am satisfied with many things in my life. • I am very happy with my life. • I find it easy to make most decisions.

Table 6. (Continued)

Perceived Social Support	Family	• My family really tries to help me. • I get the emotional help and support I need from my family. • I can talk about my problem with my family. • My family is willing to help me make decisions.	• My family helps me to succeed in my work. • I get the emotional support that I need from my family. • I can talk about my problems with my family. • My family is willing to help me make decisions. • My family plays an important role in my business.
	Attendees	• The ___ takes pride in my accomplishments. • The ___ values my contribution to its well-being. • The ___ shows little concern for me (R)	<u>During my participation at the festival for women.</u> • The attendees were happy about my accomplishments. • The attendees valued my business ideas. • I received encouraging words from them.
Multidimensional measures of Psychological empowerment	Meaning	• The work I do is very important. • My job activities are personally meaning to me. • The work I do is meaningful to me.	<u>As a Saudi woman entrepreneur.</u> • The work I do is very important. • My job activities are personally meaningful to me. • The work I do is meaningful to me.
	Competence	• I am confident about my ability to do my job. • I am self-assured about my capability to perform my work activities. • I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.	• I am confident about my ability to do my job. • I am self-assured about my capability to perform my work activities. • I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.
	Self-determination	• I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job. • I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work. • I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.	• I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job. • I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work. • I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.
	Impact	• My impact on what happens in my department is large. • I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department. • I have significant influence over what happens in my department	• By becoming an entrepreneur, I will make a large impact on women's images in my country. • I will have a great deal of control over what happens in my business. • I will have significant influence over what happens in my business.

Content Analysis

To ensure the survey instrument that was used in the study was appropriate, content validity was examined. First, the study used a back-translation technique to establish the equivalence of meaning in each language and to ensure that each respondent clearly understood the questionnaire. A translator interprets the questionnaires translated into Arabic; then, the second translator translates the previous version of the questionnaire from Arabic to English. Lastly, the translators compared the new translation with the original text to check if there are any meaningful differences between the two.

Second, the content validity of the English version of the questionnaires was examined by the researcher and a group of the same ethnicity (i.e., 7 Saudi women; see Table 6). For instance, some words in the questionnaires were modified, including "love" to "like," "happy" to "satisfied or proud," and "business idea" to "product."

Third, to assess the face validity of the Arabic version of questionnaires, the researcher and the group of the same ethnicity reviewed the questionnaires in the Arabic language regarding linguistic validation and cultural validation. Linguistic validation is used to investigate the equivalence of concepts in the questionnaire. The cultural validation is used to map the concepts for the target culture, such as appropriateness of wording and potential misinterpretation due to different ways of thinking. As a result, the researcher and the group of the same ethnicity decided to remove two scale items. One scale item from *personality characteristics*, "I like to take risks to accomplish my goals," and another scale item from *entrepreneur locus of control*, "My personal philosophy is "do whatever it takes" to establish my own business" were removed. These scale items may cause misinterpretation in the Saudi culture. Also, the researcher and the

group of the same ethnicity investigated the equivalence of concepts in the questionnaire. They found two scale items were not translated clearly from the Arabic language to the English language. Thus, they revised these items so that they would be understandable for respondents. The two items were "I like to work on my own" and "There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business. " Table 7 shows the modified scale items and content analysis of the scale items from the same ethnicity for the constructs used in this study.

Table 7

Content Analysis from the Same Ethnicity

Construct	Factor	Modified item	Content Analysis
Personality characteristics		• I have a strong determination to achieve my goal. • I have leadership skills, so I do not give up easily. • I am confident about myself. • I like to take risks to accomplish my goals. • I like to work on my own.	• I have a strong determination to achieve my goals. • I have leadership skills, so I do not give up easily. • I am confident about myself. • I like to work on my own.
Passion to work		• I love my work. • I look forward to returning to work when I am away from it. • I accomplish a lot because I love my work.	• I love my work. • I look forward to returning to work when I am away from it. • I accomplish a lot because I <u>like</u> my work.
Prior knowledge		• I have good knowledge on how to start small businesses. • I have good knowledge about products in the marketplace. • I have good knowledge about the ways to produce and develop products.	• I have knowledge on how to start small businesses. • <u>I have knowledge</u> about products in the marketplace. • I have knowledge about the ways to produce and develop products.

Table 7. (Continued)

Entrepreneur locus of control		• Overall, my skill and ability will help me start my business. • There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business. • My personal philosophy is “do whatever it takes” to establish my own business. • My past experience will be very valuable in making the right decisions and expanding in my business. • I am confident that I can manage my business effectively.	• Overall, my skill and ability will help me start my business. • There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business. • My past experience will be very valuable in making the right decisions and running my business. • I am confident that I can manage my business effectively.
Happiness		• I feel I am emotionally stable most of the time. • I am satisfied with many things in my life. • I am very happy with my life. • I find it easy to make most decisions.	• I feel I am stable most of the time. • I am satisfied with many things in my life • I am very <u>satisfied</u> with my life. • I find it easy to make most decisions.
Perceived Social Support	Family	• My family helps me to succeed in my work. • I get the emotional support that I need from my family. • I can talk about my problems with my family. • My family is willing to help me make decisions. • My family plays an important role in my business.	• My family helps me to succeed in my work. • I get the emotional support that I need from my family. • I can talk about my problems with my family. • My family is willing to help me make decisions. • My family plays an important role in my business.
	Attendees	During my participation at the festival for women, • The attendees were happy about my accomplishments. • The attendees valued my business ideas. • I received encouraging words from them.	During my participation at the festival for women, • The attendees were <u>proud</u> about my accomplishments. • The attendees valued my <u>products</u>. • I received encouraging words from them.
Multidimensional measures of Psychological empowerment	Meaning	<u>As a Saudi woman entrepreneur,</u> • The work I do is very important. • My job activities are personally meaningful to me. • The work I do is meaningful to me.	<u>As a Saudi woman entrepreneur,</u> • The work I do is very important. • My job activities are personally meaningful to me. • The work I do is meaningful to me.

Table 7. (Continued)

Competence	• I am confident about my ability to do my job. • I am self-assured about my capability to perform my work activities. • I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.	• I am confident about my ability to do my job. • I am self-assured about my capability to perform my work activities. • I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.
Self-determination	• I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job. • I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work. • I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.	• I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job. • I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work. • I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.
Impact	• By becoming an entrepreneur, I will make a large impact on women's images in my country. • I will have a great deal of control over what happens in my business. • I will have significant influence over what happens in my business.	• By becoming an entrepreneur, I will make a positive impact on women's images in my country. • I will have a great deal of control over what happens in my business. • I will have significant influence over what happens in my business.

Data Analysis and Results

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used in this study to evaluate the measurement model by examining its uni-dimensionality, reliability, construct validity, and fit statistics. Also, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used via AMOS 26 to test hypotheses and revise model evaluations based on the testing results.

CFA For The Measurement Model

CFA was conducted for the measurement model comprised of five constructs, including personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, entrepreneurs' locus of control, and psychological empowerment, which was measured by 38 observed variables. The correlation

matrix showed high values of correlation between three factors, including personality characteristics, passion to work, and entrepreneurs' locus of control, which indicated the possible issues of multicollinearity. The measurement model, it showed that high values of correlation were found between personality characteristics and entrepreneurs' locus of control ($\gamma = 0.915$), and personality characteristics and passion to work ($\gamma = 0.900$) indicating the possible issues of multicollinearity. To solve the issue of multicollinearity between those three factors, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted for the measurement model comprised of four constructs, including personality characteristics, passion to work, prior knowledge, and entrepreneurs' locus of control. According to Cureton and D'Agostino (1983), EFA might limit the relationships among the variables. To limit the intercorrelations among variables, the researcher needs to consider fewer numbers than the number of the variables (Stapleton, 1997). With EFA, three factors were identified from four factors, which are self-confidence, prior knowledge, and passion to work (Table 8). Based on this finding, another CFA was conducted for the measurement model that consisted of four constructs (self-confidence, prior knowledge, passion to work, and psychological empowerment) measured by 24 observed variables (after deleting two items from self-confidence, which are SC3 and SC13), which resolved the problem of high correlation.

Table 8.

Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Items	Code	Loadings
Self-confidence		
I have a strong determination to achieve my goals.	SC1	.693
I like to work on my own.	SC4	.735
There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business.	SC12	.672
I am confident that I can manage my business effectively.	SC14	.702
Prior knowledge		
I have knowledge on how to start small businesses.	PK8	.620
I have knowledge about products in the marketplace	PK9	.796
I have knowledge about the ways to produce and develop products.	PK10	.702
Passion to work		
I love my work.	PW5	.587
I have leadership skills, so I do not give up easily.	SC2	.567
I accomplish a lot because I like my work.	PW7	.830
Overall, my skill and ability will help me start my business.	PW11	.551
I look forward to returning to work when I am away from it.	PW6	.565

All measurement items were examined in terms of standardized residual covariances, their lambda weights (standardized regression weights), and modification indices (MIs) to improve the measurement model. A total of 18 pairs of error variance showed high MIs: SC 2 and SC3 (MI = 17.161), SC 2 and SC 5 (MI = 26.739), PW 10 and PW11 (MI = 17.786), PE 25 and PE 26 (MI = 37.984), PE 24 and PE 25 (MI = 23.355), PE 23 and PE 26 (MI = 14.576), PE 22 and PE 23 (MI = 46.984), PE 21 and PE 24 (MI = 16.011), PE 21 and PE 22 (MI = 20.650), PE 20 and PE 24 (MI = 11.984), PE 20 and PE 23 (MI = 17.216), PE 19 and PE 20 (MI = 32.504), PE 18 and PE 25 (MI = 16.634), PE 18 and PE 20 (MI = 54.536), PE 18 and PE 19 (MI = 22.975), PE 15 and PE 23 (MI = 17.587), PE 15 and PE 20 (MI = 15.723), and PE 15 and PE 16 (MI = 58.611). Based on this result, the respective error variances with high MIs were correlated to improve the fit of the measurement model (Table 9).

Table 9.

Modifications to improve the fit of the Measurement Model

Construct	Modification
Self-Confidence	Correlated error variance • SC 2 and SC3 (MI = 17.161) • SC 2 and SC 5 (MI = 26.739)
Passion to work	Correlated error variance • PW 10 and PW11 (MI = 17.786)
Psychological Empowerment	Correlated error variance • PE 25 and PE 26 (MI = 37.984) • PE 24 and PE 25 (MI = 23.355) • PE 23 and PE 26 (MI = 14.576) • PE 22 and PE 23 (MI = 46.984) • PE 21 and PE 24 (MI = 16.011) • PE 21 and PE 22 (MI = 20.650) • PE 20 and PE 24 (MI = 11.984) • PE 20 and PE 23 (MI = 17.216) • PE 19 and PE 20 (MI = 32.504) • PE 18 and PE 25 (MI = 16.634) • PE 18 and PE 20 (MI = 54.536) • PE 18 and PE 19 (MI = 22.975) • PE 15 and PE 23 (MI = 17.587) • PE 15 and PE 20 (MI = 15.723) • PE 15 and PE 16 (MI = 58.611)

After correlating the error variances with high MIs to improve the fit of the measurement model, it showed that moderate correlations were found between self-confidence and prior knowledge ($\gamma = 0.560$), passion to work and prior knowledge ($\gamma = 0.765$), but high value of correlation was found between self-confidence and passion to work ($\gamma = 0.900$), indicating the possible issues of multicollinearity. Therefore, passion to work was eliminated from further analysis due to its high correlation with self-confidence. Another CFA was conducted for the measurement model that comprised of three constructs (after deleting passion to work) measured by 19 observed variables. The measurement model, it showed that moderate correlation was found between self-confidence and prior knowledge ($\gamma = 0.557$) (see Figure 4).

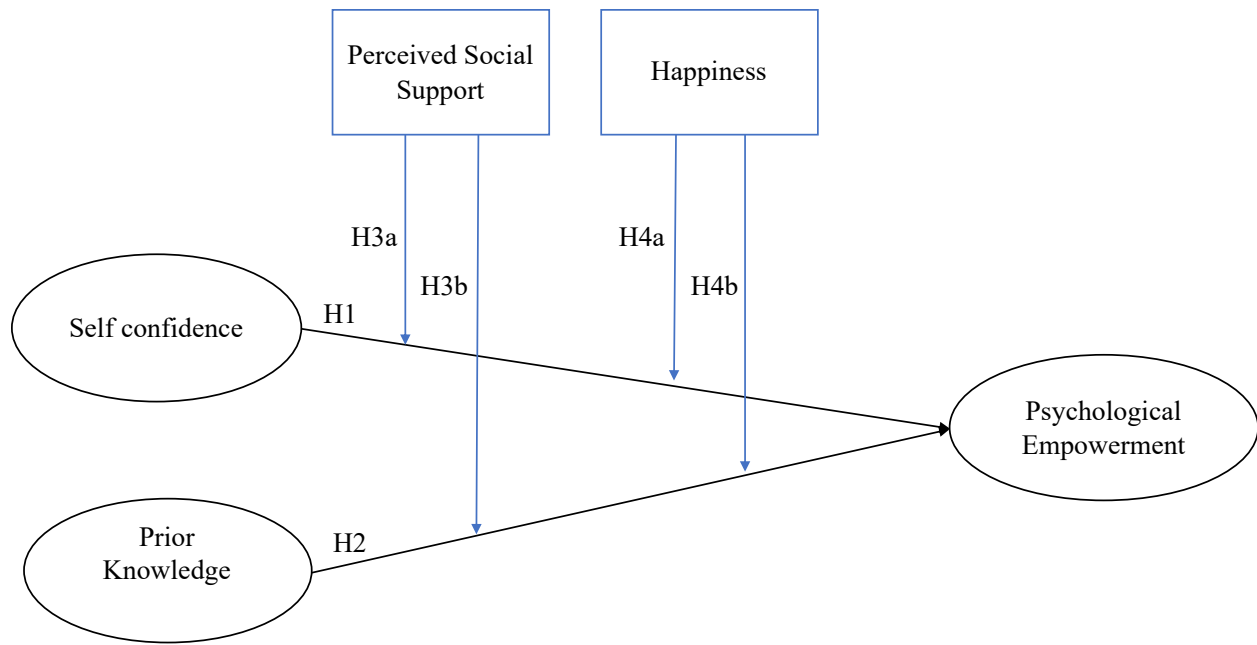


Figure 4: Research Model

The model fit of the measurement model was assessed by the χ^2 (chi-square) tests, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). As an indicator of a good model fit to the data, Kline's (1998) criteria were used (i.e., $\text{CFI} \geq .90$, $\text{TLI} \geq .90$, $\text{RMSEA} \leq .08$). The fit statistics of the initial measurement model were: $\chi^2/\text{df} = 3.113$; $\text{CFI} = .877$; $\text{TLI} = .842$; and $\text{RMSEA} = .104$ (see table 10). Using the cutoff points for RMSEA to determine adequate model fit has no empirical support, noticed by Chen, Curran, Bollen, Kirby, and Paxton, (2008). Because the sampling distributions of the RMSEA are linked to the sample size, the model type, and the misspecification degree (see also Curran et al. 2003), Chen et al. (2008) suggested that to decide the criteria for model fit can vary as a direct function of sample size and model type. Maydeu-Olivares, Shi, and Rosseel (2018) indicated that in a model with a

large number of variables (probably over 15), the RMSEA will be slightly larger than it should be, especially if the sample is less than 500. As a result, the RMSEA results incorrectly make the fit of our model appear poorer than it is. This study model has 19 number of variables, which is considered as a large number of variables, and the sample size is 196 participants, which is much smaller than 500. Therefore, the model fit of the measurement model of this study should not be assessed by the RMSEA, as noticed by Maydeu-Olivares, Shi, and Rosseel (2018).

Table 10.

Final Measurement Model: Factor Loadings and Composite Reliability

Construct	Scale items	Factor loading	Cronbach's α (Composite Reliability)
Self-confidence	I have a strong determination to achieve my goal.	.712	0.764
	I like to work on my own.	.529	
	There is no limit as to how long I would give maximum effort to establish my business.	.752	
Prior knowledge	I am confident that I can manage my business effectively.	.673	0.719
	I have knowledge on how to start small businesses.	.697	
	I have knowledge about products in the marketplace.	.644	
	I have knowledge about the ways to produce and develop products.	.693	
Psychological Empowerment	The work I do is very important.	.581	0.919
	My job activities are personally meaningful to me.	.705	
	The work I do is meaningful to me.	.773	
	I am confident about my ability to do my job.	.719	
	I am self-assured about my capability to perform my work activities.	.685	
	I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.	.733	
	I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.	.679	
	I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work.	.623	
	I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.	.652	
	By becoming an entrepreneur, I will make a positive impact on women's images in my country.	.595	
	I will have a great deal of control over what happens in my business.	.847	
	I will have significant influence over what happens in my business.	.745	
	Fit Statistics		
χ^2 /df		3.113	
CFI		.877	
TLI		.842	
RMSEA		.104	

$\chi^2/\text{df} < 5$ indicates acceptable fit level; < 2 is a good fit

CFI ≥ 0.80 is an acceptable fit; ≥ 0.90 is a good fit

TLI ≥ 0.80 is an acceptable fit; ≥ 0.90 is a good fit

RMSEA < 0.05 very good, < 0.08 acceptable, < 0.10 mediocre, ≥ 0.10 poor errors of approximation

Construct Validity

The measurement model fit appears to be acceptable, except for RMSEA that is slightly large because of the number of variables in the measurement model is large, especially with the sample size small (Maydeu-Olivares, Shi, & Rosseel, 2018). Therefore, the model fits seem to be valid to pursue the study. The construct validities of the latent constructs were evaluated by both convergent and discriminant validity (Table 11). Convergent validity was tested by the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct higher than the recommended threshold value of .50 (Hair et al., 1988). The discriminant validity was tested by examining the values of average variances extracted; AVE should exceed the squared correlation coefficients between all possible pairs of constructs, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). From Table 9, it can be concluded that the three constructs have low convergent validity because AVE for each construct is less than .50, and discriminant validity is low for self-confidence and psychological empowerment, but prior knowledge construct has discriminant validity because AVE exceeded the squared correlation coefficients (i.e., shared variance).

Table 11.

Construct Validity of the Final Measurement Model

Construct	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	1	2	3
Prior knowledge	0.460	0.438	0.720	0.678		
Self-confidence	0.451	0.653	0.780	0.565	0.672	
Psychological Empowerment	0.487	0.653	0.927	0.662	0.808	0.698

Diagonal entries show the square-root of average variance extracted by the construct.

Off-diagonal entries represent the variance shared (squared correlation) between constructs.

Structural Model Evaluation

Four hypotheses have been developed for the proposed model (see Table 12). The structural model was developed to test the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. The fit indexes of the structural model were: $\chi^2/df = 3.113$; CFI = 0.877; TLI = 0.842; and RMSEA = .104. To determine whether the hypotheses were supported or not, standardized regression estimates of variables and their respective significant path weights were used. (Table 12 & 13).

Table 12

Summary of hypothesized relationships

Construct	Code	Proposed Hypotheses
Self-confidence	H1	Saudi female entrepreneurs who have self-confidence will be more empowered in their life.
Prior knowledge	H2	Saudi female entrepreneurs who have prior knowledge will be more empowered in their life.
Perceived social support	H3a	Moderating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between self confidence and psychological empowerment
	H3b	Moderating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment
Happiness	H4a	Moderating effect of happiness on the relationship between the self-confidence and psychological empowerment
	H4b	Moderating effect of happiness on the relationship between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment

Hypotheses Tests

H1: Saudi female entrepreneurs who have self-confidence will be more empowered in their life.

The impact of self-confidence on psychological empowerment was positively significant ($\beta = .638$, $p = .000$) as expected; thus, H1 was supported.

H2: Saudi female entrepreneurs who have prior knowledge will be more empowered in their life.

The impact of prior knowledge on psychological empowerment was positively significant ($\beta = .302, p = .000$) as expected; thus, H2 was supported.

Multi-group Analysis

To compare the group-invariance between the high and low groups for social support and happiness measurement models, both the unconstrained model and fully constrained model, chi-square value (χ^2) is used to measure the differences. Chi-square value (χ^2) indicates there were significant differences between the high and low groups. Therefore, the measurement models are found to be group-variant across the two groups. Difference between unconstrained and fully constrained models for social support was ($\Delta\chi^2 = 105, \Delta df = 19, p = .000$). Difference between unconstrained and fully constrained models for happiness was ($\Delta\chi^2 = 108.5, \Delta df = 19, p = .000$). The reason behind this unexpected result could be related to the small sample size or unbalanced group size of this study (Yoon & Lai, 2018). Also, the chi-squared statistic is generally sensitive to sample size.

The multi-group analysis was used to test the moderating effect: splitting the sample into sub-groups according to whether female entrepreneurs (or respondents) scored high or low on the scale items of perceived social support. De Wulf, Odekerken, and Iacobucci (2001) suggested the technique of splitting the data into sub-groups is used to investigate of the moderating relationships. The median score for respondents was 4.125 on a 5-point Likert type scale. To classify respondents into two groups, a split method was chosen (i.e., "high" whose score was greater than or equal to 4.125 and "low" whose score was lower than 4.125). Therefore, respondents who valued more than or equal to the median score ($n = 91$) were classified into the "high" group, and the respondents who valued less than the median score ($n = 105$) were classified into the "low" group. The study used a comparative analysis of each path between the

two groups (i.e., high group and low group) by using the critical value test (Table 14). The critical value assessed if there were significant differences between the two groups.

H3: Perceived social support will moderate the relationships between psychological empowerment and two antecedent variables consisting of self-confidence (H3a) and prior knowledge (H3b).

The moderating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between self-confidence and psychological empowerment was significant for both high and low groups (high group, $\beta = 1.247$, $p = .004$ and low group $\beta = .496$, $p = .000$). However, the critical value revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding the connection between self-confidence and psychological empowerment (Z-score = -1.93); thus, H3a was not supported.

The moderating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment was significant for only the low group. It is not significant for the high group (high group, $\beta = -.214$, $p = .313$ and low group $\beta = .389$, $p = .004$). However, the critical value revealed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups regarding the connection between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment (Z-score = 1.857); thus, H3b was not supported.

H4: Happiness will moderate the relationship between psychological empowerment and antecedent variables consisting of self-confidence (H4a) and prior knowledge (H4b).

The moderating effect of happiness on the relationship between self-confidence and psychological empowerment was significant for both high and low groups (high group, $\beta = .783$, $p = .000$ and low group $\beta = .638$, $p = .000$). However, the critical value revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding the connection between self-confidence and psychological empowerment (Z-score = 0.184); thus, H4a was not supported.

The moderating effect of happiness on the relationship between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment was significant for the only low group, and not significant for the high group (high group, $\beta = .055$, $p = .627$ and low group $\beta = .343$, $p = .002$). However, the critical value revealed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups regarding the connection between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment (Z-score = 1.102); thus, H4b was not supported.

Table 13.

Structural Model: Hypotheses Testing and Fit Statistics

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Standardized Regression Weight	Standard Error	Result
H1	Self-confidence → Psychological Empowerment	.638	.101	Supported
H2	Prior knowledge → Psychological Empowerment	.302	.079	Supported

Table 14.

Moderating Effects

Moderating Effects	Hypothesis	Structural Path	Standardized Regression Weight		Critical value	Result
			High Group	Low Group		
Perceived social support	H3a	Self-confidence → Psychological Empowerment	1.247	.496	-1.93	Not Supported
	H3b	Prior knowledge → Psychological Empowerment	-.214	.389	1.857	Not Supported
Happiness	H4a	Self-confidence → Psychological Empowerment	.783	.638	.184	Not Supported
	H4b	Prior knowledge → Psychological Empowerment	.055	.343	1.102	Not Supported

***significant at $p < .000$, **significant at $p < .05$

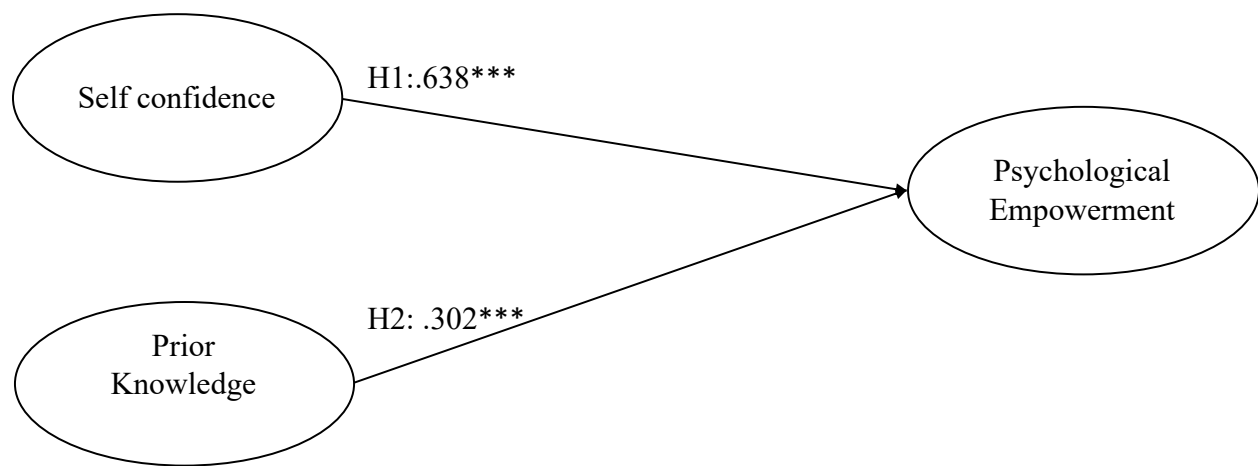


Figure 5: Final Research Model with Path Coefficients

Chapter 5: Discussions and Implication

Overview

This study explored Saudi women entrepreneurs' lives in a festival setting to identify factors that affect their empowerment from their perspectives and to determine whether perceived social support affects their lives and business. Specifically, drawing from psychological empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 1990, 1995), the study attempted to find which factors that assist Saudi women entrepreneurs to fit their environment and control their own lives, which lead them to be empowered. Further, the study used the social support concept (King, Mattimore, King, & Adams, 1995) to investigate the effect of perceived social support on the relation of the self-confidence and prior knowledge with psychological empowerment.

In so doing, the study employed two research methods: first, a qualitative investigation (i.e., individual in-depth interviews) was undertaken to explore what factors affect Saudi women entrepreneurs' psychological empowerment and understand the influence of perceived social support on their lives from their perspectives, and second, quantitative approaches (i.e., descriptive statistics, survey research) were designed to test and confirm the conceptual model that was developed from the qualitative approach (as shown in Figure 2). Based upon these two research methods' findings, this chapter discusses the study's theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Theoretical Contributions

The literature review on women entrepreneurs in the world showed a growing trend in comparisons of male and female entrepreneurs with respect to barriers, management styles, perceptions of the qualities required for leadership, and motivations (Carland & Carland, 1991; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Buttner, 2001; Bianchi et al., 2016). The literature on women

entrepreneurs in the Gulf region has focused on exploring the challenges female entrepreneurs face and their business motivations (Danish & Smith, 2012; Nieva, 2015; Sivakumar & Sarkar, 2012; Ahmad, 2011; Alzahrani, 2012). Some studies have addressed the effect of microfinance institutions, which serve poor women in developing countries, on enhancing female empowerment (Haile, Bock, & Folmer, 2012; Kevane, & Wydick, 2001; Noreen, 2011; Torri, & Martinez, 2014). However, according to Danish and Smith (2012), this case does not apply to Saudi women entrepreneurs because financial capital is not the primary challenge they face. Further, the literature on women entrepreneurs has failed to address the association between entrepreneurship experience and empowerment, and none has provided an explanation of the relation between entrepreneurship and empowerment contextualized within the experience of Saudi women entrepreneurs, particularly in the context of the current changes in Saudi Arabian culture. Accordingly, this dissertation helped fill these voids in the literature.

The study advanced the women entrepreneur's literature in several ways. It contributed to the literature by confirming that indeed, entrepreneurship experience affects women's empowerment, and identified two factors that influence Saudi women entrepreneurs' psychological empowerment—self-confidence and prior knowledge. Self-confidence is reflected in entrepreneurs who prefer to establish their own businesses and believe that they are able to achieve the goals they set. These entrepreneurs have a perceived sense of self-esteem and competence that play essential roles in their business activities. This indicates that female entrepreneurs who prefer to work in their own businesses have a strong determination to achieve their goals, and are highly confident that they can operate their businesses effectively. Such self-confidence is a necessary entrepreneurial characteristic that is related to these women's psychological empowerment. Nachimuthu and Gunatharan's (2012) argument that self-

confidence is one of the crucial variables that defines the empowerment of women entrepreneurs supports this finding. This finding is also consistent with Kirkwood's (2009) finding that building self-confidence is more needed for women entrepreneurs rather than providing them with tangible business skills. Building self-confidence enhances their ability to run their businesses effectively, and thus, increases their psychological empowerment. Prior knowledge refers to having knowledge that allows entrepreneurs to run small businesses, market their products effectively, and identify opportunities to innovate new products. This indicates that when female entrepreneurs have adequate business knowledge, they are able to think productively, discover, and pursue new opportunities that lead to the creation of a new business or products. Thus, this knowledge empowers them and allows them to launch a successful business. This finding is supported by Chia's (2003) argument that entrepreneurial knowledge plays a critical role in entrepreneurs' ability to innovate new products and services and helps them make the right decisions to build a successful business, which in turn, leads to their empowerment. Omerzel and Antončič (2008) also indicated that knowledge plays a vital role in business performance, growth, and profitability, which makes women entrepreneurs proud of themselves and empowered. In summary, entrepreneurs who have a strong degree of confidence and prior knowledge are expected to be successful and empowered. To this end, the study contributed to the female entrepreneur literature by identifying the critical factors that affect their empowerment, self-confidence and prior knowledge.

These findings shed new light on women entrepreneurs and their psychological empowerment. With respect to psychological empowerment, the study's findings suggested that self-confidence and prior knowledge are characteristics essential for women entrepreneurs' empowerment. Self-confidence allows women entrepreneurs to believe in their goals (meaning)

and perceive that they have the ability to run their businesses effectively (competence). Prior knowledge allows them to master their businesses, including the way to operate them, find opportunities to innovate new products, and market them effectively (self-determination). Self-confidence and prior knowledge incline women entrepreneurs to believe that their efforts or roles in their businesses influence its success or failure (outcome).

The moderating effect of perceived social support on the relation between self-confidence and psychological empowerment did not differ significantly between the high and low groups. The high group refers to the group that receives a high level of social support, and the low group refers to the group that receives a low level of social support. Contrary to the expectations, the relation was not strengthened in both groups. Thus, it can be said that women entrepreneurs who are self-confident may have strong psychological empowerment, whether they perceive social support or not, and women entrepreneurs who are not self-confident may have weak psychological empowerment whether they perceive social support or not. In addition, perceived social support did not influence the relation between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment, which was conflicting with the expectations as well. In other words, women entrepreneurs who have prior knowledge may have strong psychological empowerment, and who do not have prior knowledge may have weak psychological empowerment when they have either happy or unhappy lives.

The second moderator is the effect of happiness on the relation between self-confidence and psychological empowerment also did not differ significantly between the two groups. It was an unexpected result, which is women entrepreneurs who are self-confident may have strong psychological empowerment, and who are not self-confident may have weak psychological empowerment when they have either happy or unhappy lives. Further, there is no moderating

effect of happiness on the relation between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment between the two groups. The relation between prior knowledge and psychological empowerment was not strengthened in the two groups. Thus, it might say that women entrepreneurs who have prior knowledge may have strong psychological empowerment, and who do not have prior knowledge may have weak psychological empowerment when they have happy lives or not.

The reason for the insignificant moderating roles of perceived social support and happiness is attributable to the sample size, which was 91 participants for the high group, which is under the minimum sample size for a multi-group analysis, while the sample size for the low group was 105 participants. According to Deng, Doll, Hendrickson, and Scazzero (2005), a large sample is more appropriate for multi-group analysis (e.g., greater than 100 respondents per group) studies with latent variables. In this study using latent variables, the sample size was small, which may have caused problems. Hence, the small sample may have caused inconsistencies in the results expected in this study.

The findings of the qualitative research (i.e., individual interviews) revealed unexpected information about the impact of Saudi culture on empowerment. Previous research about female entrepreneurs in the Gulf region has identified several challenges that are unique to its culture, such as its social and cultural norms (traditional restrictions on women) as Itani, Sidani, and Baalbaki (2011) and Foster (2017) noted. However, this study's qualitative research provided initial insight to the female entrepreneur literature in the Gulf region by proposing that the traditional restrictions on women have changed and no longer are a challenge that women entrepreneurs face, and hence, have little influence on entrepreneurs' lives.

Further, the qualitative data analysis indicated that Saudi women entrepreneurs who participate in festivals as vendors benefit from learning about consumers and products, contacting new consumers, and marketing their products. These advantages of participating in festivals help them target different consumer segments with respect to psychographic segmentation (lifestyle or social class, personality characteristics, and interests) and geographic segmentation (potentially grouping consumers by region, city, and neighborhood), which helps their businesses succeed. This showed that, from their perspective, Saudi women entrepreneurs see the festivals as a tool that helps them build their businesses or brand awareness among visitors.

Moreover, this study provided valuable insights into which critical attributes of a festival women find worthy of note. The results of the study's qualitative research indicated that these women believe a festival's essential attributes are its good reputation and the opportunity to advertise their businesses. This shows that a festival that has a good reputation and facilitates advertising to consumers will yield benefits for women entrepreneurs. Examples of potential benefits include: willingness to pay premium prices (i.e., large margins and inelastic responses to price increases); attracting visitors (i.e., demand), and, possibly, a decrease in the cost of advertising and promotions for the business (brand awareness). These outcomes will offer several benefits for women entrepreneurs as vendors, such as increasing their cash flow incrementally because of premium pricing and decreasing promotional expenses. Most importantly, the qualitative research findings provided initial insight into these festivals and women entrepreneurs by proposing that Saudi women entrepreneurs appear to see the festivals as a tool that helps them learn about businesses and consumers, reach more consumers, market their

products, and build consumers' awareness of their businesses, which, in turn, help the business grow and be profitable.

Managerial Implications

This research offers suggestions for Saudi government programs and nonprofit organizations that have the goal to strengthen and enrich Saudi women's role in society and enhance their social and economic empowerment. First, according to this study's findings, women entrepreneurs' empowerment in their lives and businesses derives from their self-confidence. These findings can guide government programs and nonprofit organizations to focus on building women entrepreneurs' self-confidence. An example of the suggestions to improve women's entrepreneurial self-confidence is to offer courses and advice tailored to these women. According to Varma (2016), confidence can be learned, and women entrepreneurs need to treat confidence as a necessary skill. Another suggestion is that women's networking groups would be effective media to build confidence (Bate, 2018). Such networks can enhance their members' confidence by providing inspiration, support and advice, and access to funding. The young entrepreneurial generation in particular needs such connections to build their confidence by learning from women entrepreneurs who have launched their businesses previously.

Second, this study identified prior knowledge as an essential factor that affects women entrepreneurs' empowerment. An example of suggestions to improve women's entrepreneurial knowledge is to provide entrepreneurs with information about business operations in terms of legal structure of a small and medium business, financial operations, and how to operate business management. Example of information that women entrepreneurs need to know are the designs and processes for goods and services, the industry or market data that their business are in,

customer data or information on suppliers and stakeholders, and plans for future activities, such as ideas for new products or services ("Knowledge management and business growth," 2019)

Another example of suggestions to improve women's entrepreneurial knowledge is to offer booths with affordable rent, which can encourage many women entrepreneurs to participate in festivals designed for women. Participation at such festivals can serve as an opportunity for Saudi women entrepreneurs to increase their knowledge and learn the business process through their experiences at these festivals. This learning process can help women entrepreneurs do better than they did before they opened their businesses, for example, by testing or improving products. García-Palma and Molina (2016) stated that knowledge acquisition is an active process in which entrepreneurs seem to develop by learning from their experience. Further, the qualitative study findings confirmed that one of the advantages of participating at festivals for women is building their knowledge about consumers and products. Thus, offering booths with affordable rent would offer women entrepreneurs the opportunity to increase their knowledge through participation at festivals for women.

Another way to improve women entrepreneurs' knowledge is to establish mentoring programs that provide opportunities for active learning, in which women entrepreneurs are encouraged to engage in reflective learning and the mentoring is available at any given time (Sullivan, 2000). These programs provide knowledge and access to appropriate expertise that has immediate relevance to participants' needs. They will also add value for women entrepreneurs because mentoring must be responsive and flexible to meet individual needs at any given time. A previous study suggested that mentoring programs are the key to women entrepreneurs' success, and in turn, help empower them (Sullivan, 2000). Finally, it is necessary to build awareness of the value of volunteer work and the way it adds depth to an individual's life.

Volunteering can give women entrepreneurs the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experience in the real business world. Further, volunteering offers an opportunity to enhance an existing talent that is more likely to be linked to passions and interests. Entrepreneurs can acquire several skills by volunteering, such as the ability to work in a team, solve problems, be adaptable, and communicate with clients ("6 Ways Volunteering Can Boost Your," 2019). Thus, government programs that have the goal to develop entrepreneurship knowledge need to send adequate information about volunteer opportunities and ask entrepreneurs to contribute their time to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to launch a successful business and enhance their roles in society.

Limitation and Recommendations for Future Research

This section discusses the dissertation's methodological and contextual limitations, and provides some suggestions for future research. First, the researcher suggests using expert judges to evaluate the construct validity of the three factors, self-confidence, prior knowledge, and psychological empowerment, because these three variables' convergent validities were low, and the discriminant validities of two variables, self-confidence and psychological empowerment, were also low. Thus, the study findings should be interpreted with caution. Second, the researcher suggests that future studies replicate this study with a large sample to improve the model fit, particularly by decreasing the RMSEA. Further, the researcher recommends future research with large samples to enhance the applicability of multi-group analysis because the sample size for the high group was less than the minimum required for the multi-group analysis. Thus, using a large sample can improve the model fit and lead to valid results from the multi-group analysis. To this end, the researcher hopes to initiate future research to explore how entrepreneurial self-confidence and prior knowledge affect women entrepreneurs' psychological

empowerment, and address the current cultural changes in Saudi Arabia and the way they affect female entrepreneurs. Further, since the setting of this study is festivals, which target entrepreneurs as vendors, the researcher hopes to initiate future research to conduct this study on all Saudi women entrepreneurs to investigate the influence of self-confidence and prior knowledge on Saudi female entrepreneurs' lives. Moreover, future research could discuss and address how Saudi government programs and nonprofit organizations can equip Saudi women entrepreneurs with self-confidence and prior knowledge to empowering potential female entrepreneurs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	A sample of participants' statements
The factors Affecting the Psychological Empowerment of Saudi women's Entrepreneurship	Personality Characteristics	Takes risk, insistence, strength, confident, persistence, determination, ambitious, hard work, self-reliance, power, leader.	"It will be at your own risk, I said to her I will take the risk" "My business affects my personality, but you should have determination with achieving your goal, If my family saw that I was in a problem, they said that it is not necessary to work and do not bother yourself, but it was the insistence that motivated me because every business has problems" "I believe that success of my business is based on the strength and self-reliance on myself" "it depends on their confidence, strength and persistence" "To be successful you need to work hard and be confident to start your business, also do not think about what other people think about your project" "at the beginning I expected that I will fail but with persistence and continued to open many doors that I did not know about it, and I need to implement several steps that are necessary to do to succeed" "The power of human whether a woman or a man increases his or her success in any field " "basically my personality is a leadership and ambitious women that ambition make me do not stop it, and I want to go height to the highest."
	Passion to Work	Motivation, love art, love folklore, love my work, more inclined to folklore, persuade my dream, I have a goal, I love heritage, love history, self-fulfilling, I have a dream, passion, love my project.	"Everyone must have his talent and motivation in life and wants to achieve and develop as a concept at the beginning" "My personality and motivation lead me to be successful in my business life" "I had a touch of art and I loved the arts and I loved folklore when I was a kid" "I have a goal, and I am self-fulfilling, I studied and I did not find my place in the public sector, Rania does not want to put her PhD degree as decoration in my library at my home, as my grandfather told me you will have a high position as your aunt, Why I sit at home? This was my idea, I have something I love it I want to do a project and start my project also was one of my goals is training girls" " I love my work, if I am convinced, I believe in it, this is why I put this picture in front of me and some of my designs to show how I am proud of myself" "It was hard to balance family responsibility, studying and my business duties but I was trying to do my best to achieve my dream"
	Prior Knowledge	Knowledge, information, test knowledge, courses knowledge is crucial, management skills.	"I liked to build knowledge and information by going to the shops and see how the design is difficult or easy and then entered the course on the basis of my goals, and sound conditions are all met" "The course was an excellent and I felt that the information and things that in my mind really match with the actual implementation" "I had information and experience by meeting with the designers and sit and talk about the problems they were asking advice from me, my

style and my way with the workers was good, and my ability to run the workers very well and I know what is a good way to deal with the workers." "I went to use my knowledge in the design matters by virtue of a specialization in the master and began to design my clothes and people who are around me" "my grandfather made us to love knowledge, we are in a house that loves reading when we were young, he would not let us to be absent from the school he was saying: if you do not go to school you will end up to be housekeeper, I do not have girls that absent from school, people are flying to the moon and you tell me I do not want to go to the school" "knowledge is crucial and your knowledge is manufactured your ability but the money does not make you"

Entrepreneur
Locus of Control

Start small, quality of products, unique products, business expanded, leadership skills, satisfied workers, and feel confident, Motif "experience enhances expertise and strength of her personality and trained to make the right decisions", I used to work at a gift shop, Motif "I am a productive family"

"I participated in a women's festival in a small corner and the place on the side and small then after experience this year entered the world of the festival strongly took the forefront of the celebration and a larger place was 12 model Dress brides with makeup for three days" "the business is expended because the dresses were excellent and have a high quality" "Each dress has a good idea and be different from the market, I made some changes for the material to be different from the market and actually the dress for what ends dazzles people" "effective management strategy is needed because the business is difficult" "I asked them to work productively and fast in exchange for giving them their rights in full" "Of course any experience of the human project enhances expertise and strength of her personality and trained to make the right decisions" "I used to work for the gift shop, and I was working from the house. I used to work in the dried roses and my husband had the stores" "I used to help my husband, his family when I was at the first year at the university, this means I am a productive family" "before I'm afraid of the job, but now I am not afraid I am taking any decision in the job now, my experiences in the work let me to be, strong women"

Culture

Conservative
Culture

Conservative culture, fashion shows forbidden, less conservative, fashion show permitted, beliefs influence, Motif "conviction", and conviction may change.

"The community was closed, but now after social media has helped us a lot" "I could not display my designer on the models, fashion show was forbidden, but now is not permitted by 2016" "Culture and my family do not affect my decision I do the right thing, I have a fashion show now at festival for women but not in front of men, this is my conviction" "It is also possible to change my conviction because when I agree with the Swedish director to design costumes for the actors I felt that it was the same of the fashion show in front of a mixed audience"

Less Conservative Culture		Motif " culture is not an obstacle" "it is excused," Motif " the business life is hard for women" "it is easy," Motif " there is limit opportunities for women " there are many opportunities just find the opportunity," Motif "every woman has her circumstance" Motif "Culture would not be an obstacle in their business or their life" Restrictions are necessary" many Saudi businesswomen, reform culture.	"We have an easy life and easy to work and provide a livelihood and get acquainted but needs to strive in many opportunities in Saudi Arabia" "This is not right, people say that an excuse, so they do not want to work to find an opportunity" "I believe that Saudi culture did not have any effect on Saudi women because if a person is a woman or a man who followed the laws and respected the system would not be an obstacle in their business or their life" "I think the weak personality and no family support may affect her negatively, it is not the culture" "Saudi culture gives women the opportunity, but restrictions are necessary because we are a conservative society, because we are an Eastern society, if we did not have these restrictions we were like the West" "we need to keep our values and be unique from the rest of other countries" "Now it is not difficult, a lot of Saudi women start their projects" "now how do we all Saudi women sell in shops, at my time (2009) it was a defect I stopped in the shop I sell, now we are all standing in the shops and selling with pride, it is changed a lot"
Perceived Social Support	Attendees' Support	Encouraging words, supportive words, roses, and gifts, Motif "joy in their eyes," amazed my work, Motif "role models" Praise, positive energy, and nice feedback.	"Princesses took my business card, and one of them asked how did this design, I said this my work, and then she asked how did this design I said me, she said are you sure I said yes this my work and the princess said the words of a beautiful and encouragement, this is enough all people give encouraging words and go, for example, one attendee who did not need a dress, she is mom but said I want to praise you and your job, I wish all the best for you" "All of them are happy for me, and I received some of the most beautiful words, are encouraging" "Some of the attendees gave me the roses and gifts, and I can see the joy in their eyes" "give me strength when I hear the praise from people who visit the festival" "when I hear the praise from people, I had something positive and gave me positive energy" "a nice feedback leaves impressed on me"
	Family support	Manage the time, Motif" family has an important role" Without my family support, it will be hard, reducing creativity, but not give up, the husband is the primary support at my work, show support, father support, family support, Motif "The family is the greatest moral supporter of me."	"Husband, children and parents help them to manage the time because I usually leave them around 5 or 6 hours a day, so each member of the family is referred to settle his responsibility and also helps others" "family has an important role" "If they did not help me it will be hard on me to do my work, but do not stop my job, but my creativity is reduced" "My husband was the supporter. For example, I needed to travel to a place to buy certain fabrics. I cannot travel because I am busy. I ask him if he can travel. Instead, he always agrees and leaves his job for three days. He travels and brings me fabrics. My daughter also helps me in social media; even she is the last year of engineering I tell her you must take one hour from your time to work on social media"

			"they are supportive , and they show their support, but it was frustrating that my project would not be successful, but with my father supports I feel I am strange, and I can achieve my dream which is starting my business" "The family is the greatest moral supporter of me, and the society's view is respectful and respectful because the creative human being is productive in any society that promotes its society" "my family help me to be creative because I feel I was happy with my life"
	No Family Support	Afraid of my family, afraid of the man in the family, conservative family, influence on me, reject that their daughter would be salesperson, refusing, they prefer to do not be in the TV, cover my hair, and do not put a lot of make-up, my family see me as a diamond ring, caring of me.	"In the beginning my family was disagree with me to start my business because they were worried about me and they think business life is difficult for women" For example, they are not jealous, they do not anyone laughs at me or take any advantage of me" "but after that when they saw me I can achieve my dream and see me that I am able to do it, my father began proud of me, but they still tell me that they prefer or desire does not be in television, cover your hair, and do not put a lot of make-up" "if the ring is not diamond and fail down in the sink when you wash your hand you will not care about it , but if the diamond ring failed down in the sink you will try many ways to find it and you may ask plumber to find it as well" "they do not want anything happen to me that may hurt me"
	Happiness	stable and satisfied life, not tense and worried, and happy.	"stable and satisfied life is important because if I was tense and worried about problems, this will not allow me to be creative and innovative at my work" "there is very important thing is needed before, it is stable and satisfied life and you feel or need to be comfortable, if you were not pleased and happy, you will not give your project. This is an important thing once I had a period of my work, I was not happy for example in my home I had health problems; I had tensions, which became a gap in my job"
Empowerment	Independence	Strong women, independence, working women are knowledgeable, refinement myself, and my personality became very strong,	"It gives you strength and rely on yourself a lot, and the strength and self-reliance develops from one year to another year" "I see the Saudi woman is very advanced "woman who is working her character and thinking does not look like the woman sitting at home" "The project refinement of my personality" "personality became very strong, the people who are around me in the work called "Abu Shabab" which means that my strength look like 100 men, they feel when I am with them I am a man in our midst, they do not say me as a lady"

Benefits of Participating in Festivals	Learning Process	Experience and knowledge, experience on how to communicate with consumers, test products, redesign products, change the quality of products, interact with designers, developing me and my products, knowing consumers' taste, and motif" opening my eyes." Learning, gain knowledge of the market and consumer taste.	"The advantages are that the festival for women gives the experience and knowledge in dealing with people and the way of communicating with customers and the entrepreneur will know her product if the product will be successful and continue in this product or the turnout. Also, she will know the weaknesses of products and develop these products to meet customers' expectation" "Learn what requirements and how the best to participate in the festival" " it gives the experience and knowledge in dealing with people and the way of communicating with customers" "gain the knowledge of the taste of customers"" festival gave us an advantage of learning such as test, develop, improve my products, and knowing my consumers' wants or needs" "knowing what consumer think about my products"
	Getting New Consumers	Help me to interact with attendees, reach more consumers' target, meeting international consumers, and connection to clients, gain a large and variety tastes of customers, build consumer data, building relationship, wide vision.	"This experience and participation at festival for women actually help me to interact with attendees, and it was dazzle on the dresses this year, this participated in the festival help me to gain new customers and I target a variety of customers segments, which help me to change the quality of business and be creative at my business". "It was a global director of the Swede wanted to see the designers of Saudi women, and I was selected to design clothes of drama performance in Sweden about the Syrian war" "I got a large and variety tastes of customers" "I have a good data base of consumers, which help me to connect and build relationship with the consumers and me. Now I have wide vision and not focused on one style"
	Marketing	Settle the name, spread it more, media, branding my business, introduce people to my business, showed my name, spread my vision and image.	"The motivation was to settle the name to spread it more and also, I want my business name will be knowing in the fashion design industry and many attendees will know my business name by participation at the festival for women" "The festival helped us to introduce the people to our project, and connected me to clients" "I want my business name knows in the fashion design industry, and many attendees will know me by participation at the festival for women" "spread my vision and image in the world of design"
Festival Attributes		Invite celebrities, good reputation, marketing a festival, fit with my direction and target group, good organizers, credibility have advertisement, the time is appropriate, the location is good, right place for my booth.	"Festivals need to have good reputation ask about who is responsible for the festival and the company organizing the festival" "some festivals invite celebrities; the people are attracted to the festival " "only participated in the good reputation festival." I "do research about the festival is suited my direction and the target group, credibility, and what they have for advertising." "The type of visitors who attend these festivals are willing to pay more and they came to buy products"

and I was out of profit and be profitable 3 times the
capital and rent"

Appendix B



April 14, 2020

Faten Salem Alshammari
UTK - Coll of Education, Hlth, & Human - Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Mgmt

Re: UTK IRB-16-02845-XP
Study Title: Empowering Saudis Women: Exploring the lived experiences of Saudi women at Arts and Crafts Events

Dear: Faten Salem Alshammari

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application to **continue** your previously approved project, referenced above. It has determined that your application is eligible for **expedited** review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1). The IRB reviewed your renewal application and determined that it does comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes approval of your renewal application, and reinstatement of approval of your project. Approval of this study, which is closed to enrollment, will be valid from 04/14/2020 to 10/28/2020.

Any revisions in the approved application must also be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subject or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, **re-approval** of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,

Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
Chair

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement
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Vita

Faten Alshammari was born in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She holds a bachelor's degree in Geography, from King Abdulaziz University at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and a Master of Business (Event Management) degree from Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia. Prior to joining the Ph.D. program at University of Tennessee at Knoxville, she worked as a lecturer at Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. During her Ph.D. years, she published articles in *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* and *International Hospitality Review*. She is interested in festivals management, tourism management, and women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia.