KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Business and Law

(Peeking out From behind the Veil)

Female Entrepreneurial Networking process: an Exploratory Study

of Women Entrepreneurs in the Context of Saudi Arabia

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Business and Law, Kingston University for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Submitted by

Nadia ABDELMEGEED

Supervisors:

Dr. Stephen Gourlay   Dr. Maria Daskalaki

"Sometimes you put walls up not to keep people out,

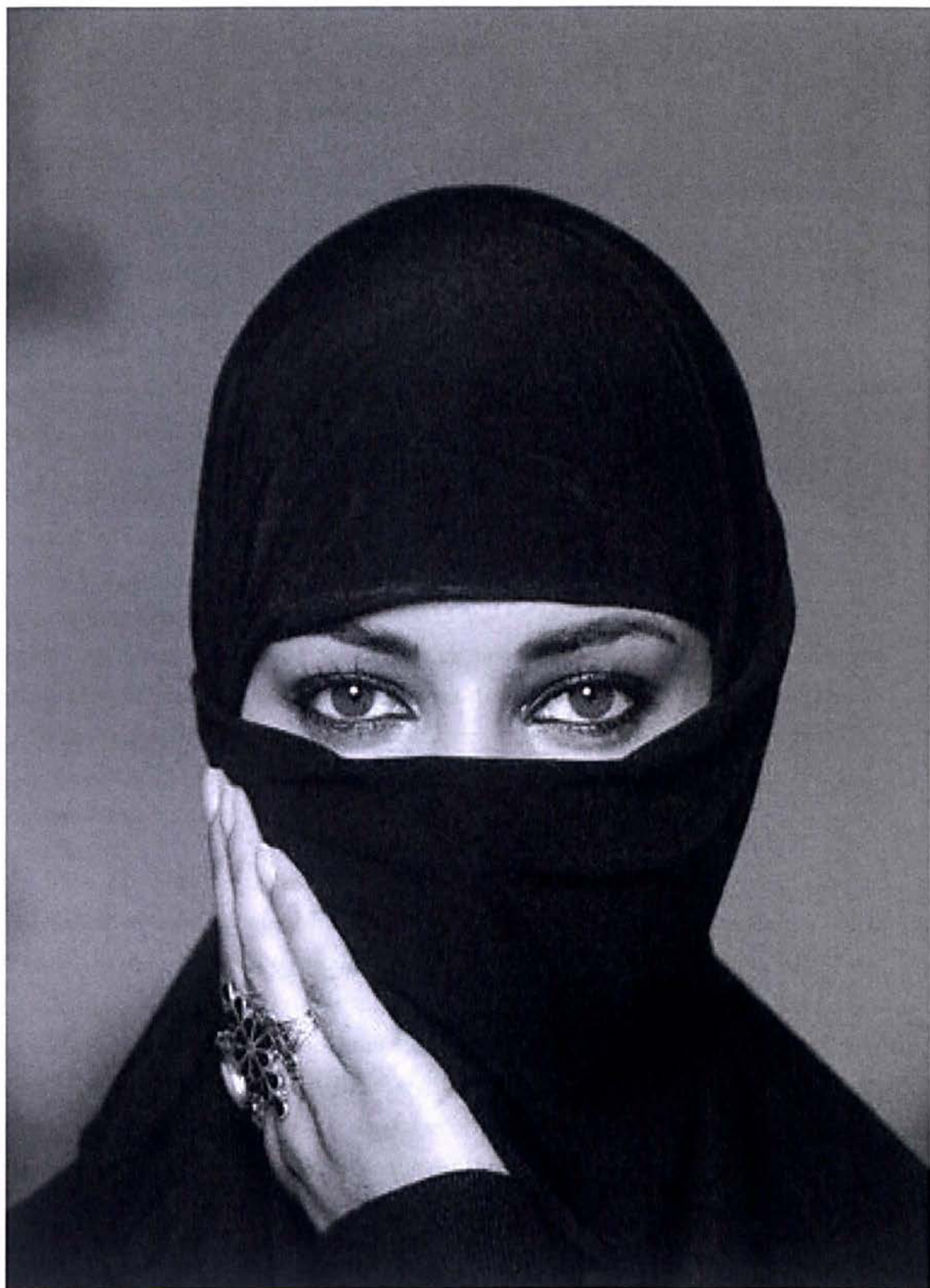but to see who cares enough to break them down."

-Socrates-(469 BC - 399 BC-)

Figure 1 A portrait of a Saudi woman wearing veil

Abstract

Entrepreneurs use their network tools to access resources and information vital to the business's survival. Despite a vast amount of research not all topics have been explored in this area, especially regarding women entrepreneurs and their networking activities, more specifically women entrepreneurs in the Arab context. With respect to this, it is necessary to recognize and to explore how women entrepreneurs get access to monetary and non-monetary resources (e.g. capital, employees, information, and customers) to execute their business practices and activities. Gender inequality exists in the entrepreneurial market; especially in developing countries. It has been noticed that in all industrial sectors, women tend to run and manage less firms than their male counterparts.

The motive behind this study is to bridge the gender gap, inequality, and inequity in entrepreneurship in the Middle East region, in particular in Saudi Arabia. This is to be achieved by giving the floor to the silenced women to tell their stories. Eleven Saudi women entrepreneurs have been narratively interviewed in order to learn from their experiences, their networking interactions and activities. The study investigates the factors that influence their entrepreneurial network, the intersection between their gender identities and other dimensions of the social divisions such as religion, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic class, the problems they faced during the establishment of their businesses and the strategies that they have employed to overcome those problems.

Based upon the collected narratives and using thematic and structural analysis approach, five emergent themes affirm that entrepreneurial networks of women in Saudi Arabia is profoundly based on family members and widely affected by their social-cultural context. The intersection between their gender identity and the other social structural dimensions, e. g. Religion, class and tribal culture, in their daily life brings the complexity to their entrepreneurship, networking and resources acquisition. Gender segregation, social perceptions of women, severe traditions and rules, they all work as network constraints. As a result, many Saudi women have failed to run their business effectively and they have suffered from their networking abilities due to gender inequality in the Saudi culture and society. However, some Saudi women have privileged from new technology and online social networking websites as means to interact with and form new contacts as well as to expand their business ventures to reach new markets. However, other forms of entrepreneurial

networking like funding and loans are not very common as female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia heavily depend on their families for monetary support. Nevertheless in addition to common resources that are required by any entrepreneurs, there is a different type of resources rather than finance that is necessary for them to start up and run their business and this will be provided by their networks.

The findings of the study suggest that growing numbers of women in Saudi Arabia, who are actively challenging the status, governmental reforms and social-cultural changes, urgently require the promotion of women entrepreneurship as being affected by the economy and social aspiration of the country. Thus, the policy makers should take a more strategic approach on a national and international level to empower the Saudi women entrepreneurs and to strengthen their role in Saudi Arabia and provide ample entrepreneurial networking platforms for these women.

Keywords: Networking Process, Saudi Arabia, women entrepreneurs, Narratives, Intersectionality, Gender, Class, religion, Culture, Inequality.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It has never been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university. All sources that I have used, made reference to or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged.

Name: Nadia Abdelmegeed

January 2015

Signed _____

Dedication

To the only man on earth who loved me from the bottom of his heart, who believed in me all his life and never gave up on me. To my deceased father who was my source of support, motivation and inspiration.

God rests his soul

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I gratefully thank Dr. Alex Hill for his valuable feedback and constructive comments on this thesis. I am thankful that in the midst of all his activity, he accepted to be a member of my mock viva. Thanks a lot for my colleague Lilith Arevshatian for advising and providing help whenever asked with no hesitation or conditions.

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Glossary of Terminology and Acronyms

1- Shari'ah:..........Islamic principles of jurisprudence

2- Wakil:...........A male guardian before preceding any business transaction (the lawyer) which is officially should be one male relative of the Saudi female

3- Muaqqib:.........A Saudi male who is the government relations officer

4- MENA:............The region of Middle East and North Africa

5- SA: ....Saudi Arabia.

6- Qu'ran: ....Holy Book of Islam

7- CPVPV:..........The Committee of the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vices

8- Janadriya: ....National festival for Heritage and Culture is organized annually by Saudi National Guard.

9- Souq-Okaz: ....The largest and most well-known of the pre-Islamic (souqs) or gathering places. The souq was a scene for annual social, political and commercial gatherings. It was also the location of competitive recitation of poetry and prose. The buildings remain, including prominent outlines of walls of basaltic stone. (Wikipedia)

10- Saudization: ....Employing more Saudi nationals

11- Aramco:...............The Saudi Arabian Oil Company, most popularly known as Aramco, is a Saudi Arabian national petroleum and natural gas company based in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

12- KSA:....................Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The unexamined life is not worth living for a human being.

(ho de anexetastos bios ou biôtos anthrôpôi)

– Socrate— (469 BC- 399 BC)

Introduction

Women entrepreneurship has engrossed substantial interest of practitioners and academicians. Today's corporate environment and social life are dynamic, demanding and hasty. A significant number of women across the world have successfully started their corporate business, and now managing it with utmost professionalism. Furthermore they are in key positions both managerial and administrative in organizations operating in corporate or economic systems. Philanthropic causes, dual careers and supporting a family are a few of the important reasons which provoke women to participate in entrepreneurial realm.

Despite women's participation in entrepreneurship there are several challenges faced by entrepreneurial women. These challenges inhibit women to develop effective entrepreneurial networking and resource acquisition. Role of social and cultural forces, is important in this regard. Particular religious and cultural value system yields gender inequality and intersectionality in the society which have associated with class and hierarchy in the society. In presence of such obstacles, women entrepreneurs face difficulties to develop an effective network to attain imperative and adequate resources for corporate.

However circumstances and conditions for women's entrepreneurial activities differ from nation to nation and culture to culture. Western nations also face above-mentioned obstacles regarding women's entrepreneurial activities. However, the intensity of such obstacles is comparatively low, as compare to developing or conservative societies, such as the Middle East. Improved conditions of women's rights, public awareness and strong feminist movements enabled western societies to develop encouraging environment which facilitates women's entrepreneurial activities.

The current study aims to explore, the role of social structural forces, e.g. religion, class, and culture, in yielding gender inequality and its effects on entrepreneurial networking, on Saudi women entrepreneurs. Moreover, study evaluates the effect of women entrepreneurial networking on resource acquisition in the local culture of Saudi Arabia. Changes in social relationships of Saudi women have also been discussed.

The current study has been conducted in the cultural and religious context of Saudi Arabia. Current research is effective in expanding existing literature and essentially explores necessary elements which give rise to gender inequality in the society. The study has discussed the role of Saudi Arabian radical religious and conservative cultural values, which promote gender inequality in the society. Local networking pattern and mechanism of Saudi women, which are primarily based on family structure and how they are affected from networking patterns of Saudi women are also discussed.

Difficulties in the acquisition of entrepreneurial resources such as capital or finance have also been scrutinized and explored in the study. Complications or difficulties in the acquisition of finance, capital, technology, training, and human resource are scrutinized, which are affected by the effectiveness of entrepreneurial networking of Saudi women. Family, friends and peers aid the development of entrepreneurial network. These networks are affected or influenced by the social structure of a society and it affects women's social and corporate relationships. This study is a valuable contribution in expanding existing literature and provides valuable insight to academicians and practitioners.

The aim of any business is to survive among other businesses. In order to achieve this aim an entrepreneur should collect the required resources from different channels. These resources include monetary and non-monetary resources such as capital, employees, information, and customers. Entrepreneurs use their network tools to access these resources and information (Fielden & Davidson, 2010). With respect to this area, it is necessary to recognize and to explore how women entrepreneurs get access to such monetary and non-monetary resources (e.g. Capital, employees, information, and customers) to successfully execute their business practices and activities.

Evidences from the literature indicate that despite the growing research on entrepreneurial networks, very limited researches focus on the obstacles facing females in networking. Despite the growing attributes of women entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economies and the extent of their involvement in new business establishment in particular Saudi Arabia, there is little known about their entrepreneurial activities, business practices, endurance, growth strategies and the extent of their endeavours (OECD, 2012; Kariv, 2013; Chamlou; et al., 2008)."Women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia" is an under-researched area and require more attention in order to gain greater academic

understanding of their entrepreneurial activities and business practices (Kariv, 2013; Chamlou; et al., 2008).

It can also be observed that women are becoming entrepreneurs and are taking significant roles in promoting businesses by developing their networks in multiple areas whether at business level or at personal level. By considering this change in a global business environment, the recent study focuses on studying women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia and their network and development process and activities. The prospective of this study is to look at the entrepreneurial network in its context not only as structurally embedded but also as socially and culturally constructed (Daskalaki, 2010). Therefore the aim of this study is to explore and to investigate Saudi female entrepreneurs' networking practices and other related areas which influence them either positively or negatively. In addition to this, coming on the involvement of Saudi females in international trade, it has been estimated that most female businesses are not actively involved in that. Thus by addressing the issues affecting their networking, this can help in promoting women entrepreneurship development and gender equality nationally and internationally.

Rationale of the Study

Research leaves no doubt that entrepreneurship in both developed and underdeveloped countries plays a significant role in any economic development and growth. Entrepreneurship from an individual prospective is considered as an alternative career path for many men and women equally. Entrepreneurs are individuals seeking job satisfaction and anatomy. To run a company there are several activities and capabilities required. An entrepreneur should be able to predict opportunities, take risks, generate and gather resources, and be able to communicate well to establish his/her networks (Arenas, et al., 2004; Kyriakidou & Özbilgin, 2006; O'Donnell, et al, 2001). In addition, entrepreneurs have to interact socially so that they can accumulate as many resources (Mahoney & Pandian, 1992). Women entrepreneurship is not an easy career path (Rosener, 1990). However most researches reveal that there are no significant gender differences in entrepreneurship characteristics; women are equally, to their male counterparts, capable of starting up and run an enterprise successfully. However they face more challenges and obstacles than men. Stereotyping, lack of support and mentoring and exclusion from informal networks are considered as additional obstacles for women entrepreneurs which should be challenged and

overcome in order to survive (Baron, 2013; Arenas; et al., 2004; Gillis, 2008; Bergman, 2003).

In the entrepreneurship field, networks play a vital role in helping entrepreneurs to solve many of their business problems, to provide resources and information and to make decisions required for their business success (Gillis, 2008). Therefore, networking gains great attention from the researcher to explore and to produce knowledge that can lead to maximise their usage and success in networking. Despite that vast amount of research, there is still a lot to be known and explored in this area, especially regarding women entrepreneurs and their networking activities, more specifically, women entrepreneurs in the Arabian context such as Saudi Arabia (Arenas, et al., 2004; Bergman, 2003). This study aims to enrich the field by focussing on female prospects in different contexts. The study will explore the Saudi female entrepreneurs' networks and their relationships to provide tools that can help them to establish successful network and use different types of networks to progress their business.

Thus the completion of this study anticipates generating some understanding of Saudi female entrepreneur networking activities, how they form their network, and how they utilize it. The impact of gender, social structure and culture will be highlighted and more knowledge about business women's networks in Arab context will be generated. Tools and implications to improve Saudi female entrepreneurs' networks will be recommended to help them improving their business success. In addition, the study aims to depict a suitable environment for Saudi women's entrepreneurship development and their networks. It would develop tools and would support services for women entrepreneurs to achieve empowerment and gender equality in the Arab world, particularly in Saudi Arabia.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the vastest Middle Eastern country, occupying over 80% of the Arab peninsula. The establishment of Saudi Arabia state can be traced back to as early as the 18th century in the central region of the Arabian Peninsula (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). This Arabian Peninsula holds importance during early periods of history as an important route of trade for further regions of Greece-Egypt and also holds importance in terms of its roots in Islamic civilization, which is still one of the most prominent factors behind the Saudi Arabian region. The location of Saudi Arabia cannot be overlooked as it is

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located in southwest Asia, at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa and thus connected to the leading geographic positions across the globe (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2013).

The country has harsh and barren terrains, with very less supply of natural water streams that can change the fate of sand laden desert areas. However Saudi Arabia's main resource is the oil capacity it has, which is responsible for the growth the Kingdom achieved over a period of years. Since petroleum remains the integral part of the Saudi economy, all possible measures were taken to improvise the petroleum products and utilize it as a factor for economic growth, which enabled Saudi Arabia to be a prominent oil producer and global exporter (Trading Economics). The social setting of Saudi Arabia is based primarily on the religious norms and values with a heavy influence of local customs and traditions. Since Saudi Arabia is the centre of Islamic civilization, almost all aspects of life are encompassed by Islamic laws defined in "Shari'ah". Since the state laws are prescribed largely by the Holy Book of Muslims "Qur'an" and "Shari'ah" the Islamic laws, all the encompassing aspects are also defined by these guidelines. Therefore the social norms have a great influence of Islamic teachings in day to day activity of Arab people (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2013). The cultural norms of Saudi Arabia vary from tribe to tribe but a sense of similarity can be witnessed in their customs of marriage, with high regard on festivities, the family structure, and role and importance of the male member being the head of family and the decision maker.

Saudi Arabia- Historical Perspective

The historical perspective of Saudi Arabian region accounts for many turbulences and disturbances considering the fact that it had been the epicentre of many important historic eras. The earliest history is that of the pre-Islamic era, which is the period when Saudi Arabia were predominantly tribal areas, mainly populated by Bedouins around oases, and their main source of income remained the trade between Greece and Egypt (Wynbrandt, 2010; Kechichian, 2001).

The history of the current state can be divided into three stages, as the current Saudi Arabia was divided into different reigns which later were unified. The trace of first one starts with the era of conflicts between Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdul Wahab and Prince Mohammed bin Saud in as early as 1745 (Al-Rasheed M. , 2002; Niblock T. , 2004). The second period of history marks the era of second reign dated back to 1824 and terminated

with Imam Abdul Raman bin Faisal upon his leave to Riyadh. This end of second reign led to the third and final foundation reign in 1902 which marks the history when King Abdul Aziz entered Riyadh and Al-Saud rule returned (Al Rasheed, 1997). This also marks the unification of Saudi Arabia under the name of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under a Royal Order that was issued in September 1932. The period of 1902 holds high importance in Saudi history, as it marks the unification of the kingdom with a daring battle by the late King Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al-Saud and his 60 companions and the capturing of Riyadh. With this capture the demarcation of boundaries was done, and the focus was shifted on fostering positive, healthy relations with other countries of the world (Federal Research Division, 2004).

The Al-Saud Family which is considered as the rightful ruler of the Kingdom, has deep roots in Saudi Arabian history dating back to a period of ancient tribes. They can be traced back to the tribes of Hanifa bin Lujaim from Bakr bin Wael bin Asad bin Rabeah which are considered to be one of the most ancient tribes of the Arabian Peninsula (Vasil'ev, 1998). Before the Al-Saud's opting for this particular name they were called Al-Miqren after Miqren bin Markhan, who is the grandfather of Imam Mohammed bin Saud and the ruler of first Saudi state. This denotes the fact that Al-Saud tribe can be dated back to the pre-Islamic era. Another important aspect of Al-Saud history is that they are considered as descendants of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), as it is said that whoever belongs to Bakr bin Wael is a descendant of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) (Schmidt, Hadley, & Stoeser, 1978).

Al-Saud family also took their part in spreading Wahabbism, which is now an integral part of the Saudi states. This dates back to 1744 with Muhammad bin Saud, who was the head of a family then, and then Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab made an oath of working together with Muhammad bin Saud to establish a state based primarily on Islamic laws, as the far flung areas were isolated from Islam and other paganism as per Wahabbi leaders were flourishing in the society. Therefore Al-Sauds also have their part in spreading the Islamic state of laws across the Kingdom (Al-Rasheed M. , A history of Saudi Arabia, 2010; Schmidt, Hadley, & Stoeser, 1978).

Saudi Arabia-Economic Perspective

The Saudi Arabian state occupies a large portion of about 80% of the total Arabian Peninsula. This makes the state well sufficient in its oil resources which act as a main export

good to other countries. One of the prime reasons of Saudi Arabia's oil production and export superiority is the availability of oil at a relatively upper level, which means that the extraction of resources is not costly comparing with the global cost (Lackner, 1978). Saudi Arabia alone possesses over 20% of the world's proven petroleum reserves and ranks as one of the largest exporters of petroleum by-products in the world. The production capacity of Saudi Arabia is estimated at about 10 to 11 million of crude oil per day, which marks the category of largest oil producer globally (US Energy Information Administration, 2013). The reserves for the state are estimated to be more than 264 billion barrels. Not only this but the abundance of reserves of natural gas led Saudi Arabia to become fifth among other countries. The natural gas quantities are 287 trillion cubic feet, thus making Saudi Arabia one of the leaders in gas producing countries (Abir, 1987; Gert van Rensburg, 2010).

With this level of production and extraction, Saudi Arabia is only utilizing 8 out of 80 oil fields, with about 1000 wells each. This denotes the reserve and production ability of the Kingdom and the superiority of natural resource abundance. The biggest of these fields is the most renowned Al-Ghawar, which is one of the largest conventional oil fields in the world with oil reserves of about 70 billion barrels (Niblock & Malik, 2007). Among others are Al-Sufaniya which is the largest offshore oil facility, Qateef, and Abu Saafa. With the advent of latest technologies and resources, the government is expected to raise its production cap to 4 million barrels per day, although this cap was applied in order to maintain stability and guarantee a balance on worldwide supply and demand and restrain monopoly of individual countries or production unit (Moliver & Abbondante, 1980).

Another important aspect of the Kingdom economy is that it is strongly under governmental control. As per data, more than half of the Saudi Arabia's GDP is managed by government. The economy is also backed by the trade of largely produced quantities and varieties of dates which is an abundant crop in the Arabian terrain. The varieties of dates go above 100, which serve to different regions of the world. The pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina also improves the economic conditions as it flourishes in the local economy, improves trade and provides funds to the government through taxes and fees (Kanovsky, 1994).

The economic outlook of Saudi Arabia is as follows. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was USD 576.824 billion in 2012. The GDP growth rate was 2.7% from 2011.The growth of exports of goods and service for 2012 is at 6.17%, while the export contribution to

GDP for 2012 at current prices is at 56.17% (Trading Economics, 2013). The economy of Saudi Arabia is heavily dependent on its oil export and production, therefore the government realized the need to diversify the economy and seek ventures into other profitable and high revenue generating sectors like telecommunication, power generation, natural gas exploration and petrochemicals in order to reduce the heavy reliance on oil and petroleum products (Askari & Dastmaltschi, 1990).

Cultural and Social Perspective of Saudi Arabia

The Arabian culture has deep roots in ancient history and their tribal influence. Islam as their religion has also played an important role in defining the cultural boundary. The culture of Saudi Arabia is very different from Western culture and society. Their culture has male domination which can be witnessed in regular day to day activities. The male member of the family is the head of the family and the bread winner, since women are not generally welcomed in the workspace. Therefore, gender differentiation is observed at every organization running under the Saudi influence (Bjerke & Al-Meer, 1993). The society is conserved and protective towards women and children particularly, emphasizing the code of dress, certain boundaries of socialization and a limit to involve women in decision making and activities like driving or even travelling. The presence of male blood relative's is necessary to travel around as females are not allowed to socialize and travel all alone (Long, 2005). Women are also prohibited from driving. Women experience discrimination when entering non-traditional fields of employment and are isolated from their male counterparts. Women are not allowed to vote in the municipal elections (Library of Congress, 2006).

In addition, the Saudi society-cultural norms and religion are controlled by the Committee of the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vices (CPVPV) which is the enforcement authority of the Saudi religious establishment. The CPVPV view themselves as the protectors of the country's ethics and therefore their major role is to monitor public places and make sure that all practices adhere to Islamic Law. Among their duties is gender segregation; among their roles is to make sure that women do not violate Islamic values by preventing them from seducing men (General Presidency of the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vices).

Furthermore, among other factors, the attitude towards time is very different from that of the Western or other developed societies. The linear passage of time is not considered very

important in daily activities as well as professional business meetings. This social custom somewhat is similar to the Japanese inclination towards small talk before or between meetings in order to enhance the trust factors among the contributing parties (Al-Rasheed M. , 2002; Long, 2005). Any exhibit of being in a hurry can put off local people as they comprehend it against the societal norms. However, with the exposure from the West and other areas, time convention has been improved, yet they consider social affiliations and find it necessary to conform to the social ceremony (Al-Rasheed M. , A history of Saudi Arabia, 2010). The most prominent elements of culture in Saudi Arabia are the incorporated modern reform of heritage, and the commitment towards Islamic teaching. As historians date back to an older era, 'Souq Okaz' served as a platform to exhibit poetry across the Arabian region. The modern reformed version of this Souq Okaz is the presence of modern, fully equipped with latest technologies libraries, literary clubs and other festivals that represent the Saudi culture at its best (Buchele, 2010; Alanazi, 2013).

The Saudi people are very particular about strengthening their roots and incorporating the culture into daily lives, even though they have advanced in terms of the living standards and their basic approach towards life. Therefore, in order to cultivate the cultural spirit the Janadriya National festival for Heritage and Culture is organized annually by the Saudi National Guard to honour their national identity (Musmon, Welsh, Heath, Minton, Laverty, & Maeshiba, 2008). This is held at Janadriya in Riyadh where a heritage village is built according to the old living style, which enhances the experience of the earlier generations. This heritage village is a modern twist in old living style which strikes a balance between both. Similarly, other various festivals are held across Jeddah, Abha and Damman which serve the same purpose (Musmon, Welsh, Heath, Minton, Laverty, & Maeshiba, 2008).

Among other customs are the traditions of dancing to local folk dance called Ardah. These customs have been deeply penetrated into the lives of Arabian generations as they have been present and passed along since the earlier period of tribal era. This folk dance also roots to the tribe of Najd area which is performed with swords and traditional folklore poetry regarding homeland being sung. This dance is now confined to weddings, special national festivals and other occasions (Ulaby, 2006; Ulaby, 2008). The honour of guests is a ritual that Saudi's hold very important regardless of the nationality and relation. Since Saudi Arabia is the centre of Islamic teachings, therefore they truly hold to Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) teachings of treating guests in their best capacity and usually go all lengths to make the guest

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comfortable. Due to this very reason they have been welcoming more and more religious visits from across the globe and are keen on improving their experience (Long, 2005).

These denote some of the societal and cultural norms being held important widely in Saudi Arabia. Some of these might lose their existence in decades to come, however the basic affinity towards their roots emphasize that most of the cultural and societal norms will be preserved for generations to come.

Women Status in Saudi Arabia

In addition to the above, whereas Saudi Arabia became an independent and modern society, the country was successful in attracting foreign workers and providing opportunities for them to work in the country in order to enhance its productivity and growth (Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency , 2012). As per the report of 2009, roughly five and a half million foreign workers (about 80% of the labour force) play an important role in the Saudi economy particularly in oil and service sectors (Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency , 2012). Besides, it is also found that the government of Saudi Arabia is widely encouraging private sector growth to lessen the kingdom's dependence on oil and increase employment opportunities for the swelling Saudi population. Therefore, the government of Saudi Arabia has begun to permit private sector and foreign investor participation in the power generation and telecom sectors (Dincer, Hussain, & Al-Zaharnah., 2004). As part of its effort to attract foreign investment and diversify the economy, Saudi Arabia acceded to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2005 after many years of negotiations. With high oil revenues enabling the government to post large budget surpluses, the Saudi government has been able to substantially boost spending on job training and education, infrastructure development, and government salaries (Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency , 2012). In addition, Saudi Arabia has been ranked as the 13th most economically competitive country in the world, according to the International Finance Corporation (IFC) -World Bank annual "Doing Business" report issued in 2010 (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2010; States News Service, 2009).

In spite of the above facts, it is studied that whereas the government of Saudi Arabia has focused on enhancing opportunities for males in every aspect of life, including education and training, on the other hand the government of Saudi Arabia developed a plan for women's success and provided opportunities for their career development (Federal Research Division, 2004; Marlow & Wynarczyk, 2010; Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). In this

way, the key contribution of the government of Saudi Arabia has been made in the educational sector. It is estimated that in current modern Saudi society, approx, half of the students enrolled in different schools in Saudi Arabia are females. Likewise, in all colleges and universities of Saudi Arabia, there are more than 600,000 students studying in different departments and faculties (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Thus it can be estimated that as compared to males, females comprise 58 percent of the student body. It is because of the efforts of the Government of Saudi Arabia that women are allowed to take part in educational activities. Moreover, it is also studied that due to the increasing number of women in the educational sector, the government of Saudi Arabia has agreed to present various key initiatives in order to support women in both educational and professional development within the country (Al-Rasheed, 2013; Ministry of Higher Education, 2010; WAM Arabia, 2013) (see table 1).

Total Populations :	27,601,038
—Nationales	22,024962
—Non – Nationales	5,576,076
Male	54.5%= 12,003,604.29
Female	45.5%= 10,021,357.71
Median Age	21.4
Total Literacy	78.8%
GDP per Capita (PPP)	$20,700

Table 1- Saudi population (CIA World Fact-book-2013)

Whereas it has been identified that the government of Saudi Arabia contributes to enhance the educational level of females and provides them opportunities for future growth, on the other hand, the government widely supports females in terms of business and professional development (Al-Rasheed, 2013; Marlow & Wynarczyk, 2010). An example can be taken from the establishment of Effat University, the first women's university founded by the children of King Faisal in 1999 with the aim to provide education to females in the business area and develop workplace skills (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Likewise, the establishment of Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) by King Abdullah in 2011 is another key contribution of the government to professional development of women in

which women can acquire higher education in several business areas (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010).

Beside it, both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service have brought job opportunities, particularly for women according to their distinguished status (Al-Rasheed, 2013; Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). These job opportunities have been mainly associated with Accounting, Banking and Computer Science. To meet with the basic job requirements, the government of Saudi Arabia has introduced several training programs for women, which are mainly organized by the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training and implemented by the Ministry of Labour. In addition, the government of Saudi Arabia has provided opportunities for women in technological, medical, and automotive sectors as per their interest and skills (Marlow & Wynarczyk, 2010; Ministry of Higher Education, 2010).

The wealth of Saudi women represents 48% of the total wealth of Women in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the Arabian Peninsula (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2012; Fatany, 2007; Acs & Virgill, 2010). They prefer to do their own business and build their companies to overcome the lack of job opportunities and high unemployment rate among Saudi women. According to the Saudi culture and the governmental rules, a few specific certain types of jobs such as education, health care, and social services, are allowed for women to occupy (Fatany, 2007). Saudi female entrepreneurs face many obstacles that hinder their abilities to grow and to progress in their businesses. The business environment and social life are ruled by the Islamic religion and Saudi culture. The Saudi culture is considered as one of the most conservative cultures in the Arab societies, specifically with respect to gender issues (Saudia-Online, 2002; Durie & Ye'or, 2009; AlMunajjed, 2006; Fatany, 2007; Bowen, 2007; Murphy, 2008).

In the recent decades, the percentage of women who attended different levels of education rapidly increased in Saudi Arabia (Ramady, 2012). Over time Saudi women entered the work force and hit minor managerial positions. As a result of globalisation and modernization the Saudi society rapidly changed, which is reflected on women's positions and their expectations (AlMunajjed, 2006).

Entrepreneurship is seen as a substitute career for some individuals. Like their male counterparts, women regard entrepreneurship as an alternative option to fulfil their aims and

their work satisfaction. However, in addition to the common entrepreneurship's barriers, Women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia encounter more strict challenges and additional barriers such as social norms, culture, traditions, and lack of an entrepreneurial environment. Saudi women entrepreneurs experience several obstacles such as gender bias, segregation, limited financing, lack of mentoring, lack of support, lack of access to networks, and many other barriers.

Despite the growing attention that is given to women from researchers, women in the Middle East have been neglected in the management research and most of the studies concentrate on Europe and North America (Metcalfe, 2006; 2008). Given the unique dimensions of the Middle Eastern culture that have been structured by inherited traditions and Islamic religion, the cultural differences are needed to be studied and to be documented. It has been argued that, despite a surge in cross-cultural studies comparing management practices across different regions, researches that are accomplished in the Middle East remains extremely scarce. In particular, little research has been conducted with respect to women in the workplace (Marmenout, 2009, p. 2).

However, by putting consideration towards the major changes in the labour market in the Arabian region, and the growing participation of women in the work force (specifically in Saudi Arabia), there is a need for more research on Saudi women in management from different aspects (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). Women are now visible in every aspect of life. It is estimated by a number of researchers, e.g. Abukhalil (2011), Al-Rasheed (2013), Dresch & Piscatori (2005) and Wood, et. al., (2012) that in Saudi Arabia, women have their own four percent of total registered businesses along with 5,500 commercial registrations in several areas including retailing, contracting, wholesaling, and transferable industrial business. Likewise, it has been depicted that several Saudi females are supported by their families in entrepreneurial efforts to acquire success in business industry (Abukhalil, 2011; Al-Rasheed M. , 2013; Dresch & Piscatori, 2005).

Based on the review of the existing literature presented so far, there are numbers of factors that influence Saudi female entrepreneurs' progress and development. These factors are divided into two categories: economic factors, and social factors. In terms of economic factors it is identified that the commutation in the market, lack of access in the market, lack of access toward raw material, lack of marketing knowledge, production challenges, business training and most important lack of finance are some of the considerable factors. On the other

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side, at the social level there is a lack of acceptance, lack of networks and Saudi female limited contacts, and limited relation with work force or inter-organizational relationship are some of the social factors that influence female entrepreneurs' relationships in Saudi Arabia (Omar & Gallant, 2013).

Due to scarcity of female entrepreneurs in the past, Saudi Arabia was considered to be somewhat isolated in terms of economic development. Likewise, businesswomen in Saudi Arabia were initially identified as lacking confidence in their abilities as well as being challenged by people in their society. In the same way, it had been found that there were no effective policies or regulations that existed in Saudi Arabia in order to support women's abilities or promote women owned enterprises (Al-Jassem & Al-Mukhtar., 2010 ; Abdullah S. , 2007). Women entrepreneurs in earlier times only had their motivation and encouragement; since there was no supporting factor that could strengthen the base of existing Saudi female owned enterprises, as many of their enterprises were not mentioned in any basic forms (Ardichvili, Cardozo, & Ray, 2003).

Another challenge facing female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia, which became a factor influencing their entrepreneurship, is lacking of promoting business opportunity and entrepreneurship with high growth potential, since skilled women in Saudi Arabia are often successful in self-business activities but find difficulty in forming networks and relationships (Al-Rasheed M. , 2002). However, studying the role of influencing factors on Saudi female entrepreneurs' relationships is very important because this is not only a mean of economic survival, but it also has an impact on the social repercussions of Saudi females and their social environment. Hence, Saudi women at present are taking part in working in all fields like farming and manufacturing industries, while some possess entrepreneurship and build their own firms on the national level as well as providing employment opportunities for others. In addition, developing an effective entrepreneurial network can help women in Saudi Arabia to be run successfully various large, medium, small, and home based businesses as well as supporting other women to make themselves independent individuals.

Based on all of these facts, the research on female entrepreneurs with respect to Saudi Arabian Women remains an under-researched phenomenon. Therefore more research is needed to provide in-depth understanding of the influence of the Arab culture and societal norms on women's career advancement (Chamlou; et al., 2008; Fielden & Davidson, 2010).

Research Objectives

Evidently networking is a very important social activity for the development and success of business sector, and subsequently the economy of the country. Additionally, it has been identified that the research in entrepreneurship and networking is significantly growing. As networking is one of the major aspects of the businesses which can be defined as the relationship between the people that may be in the form of friendship, kinship, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge, and social esteem (Baron, 2013; O'Donnell, et, al., 2001). The development of different relationships can be either strong or weak, but no matter what the nature of these relationships is, it has significant influence on business practices at every level in terms of its success and growth in the business world (O'Donnell, et, al., 2001; Granovetter, 1973). However, it has been found that due to scarcity of female entrepreneurs in the past, they were considered to be inferior to male entrepreneurs. In this area, it is recognized that most of the research has been either carried from male prospects of entrepreneurship or focused on specific geographical areas. With regards to this perspective, it is observed that there is also need to conduct research on female entrepreneurship and their practices of developing and maintaining their network relationships. However, the research that is under consideration indicates that there is a call for further research on entrepreneurs networking to explore female entrepreneurs' networking activities and what influences their networking ability to gain access to information and resources in order to continue in business and its development process.

Consequently the objectives of this research are to explore the female entrepreneurs' network in order to understand events, activities and actors involved in their network. It is also to provide an understanding of what, how and why female entrepreneurs' network is formed in different context other than western context. This study aims to learn the strategies they apply to develop their network from their experience and the barriers that affect and hinder their ability to develop their network and build new relationships. Furthermore it attempts to address the gender gap in the entrepreneurship context by exploring the social-cultural norms and other networking determinants as one of the important entrepreneurship activates. As a result, it should provide new implications for them that are consistent with the Saudi culture to improve their ability to build networks. Therefore the gap in the existing knowledge about women in management in the Arab context can be bridged. Furthermore, from a practical side, the study aims to provide information for decision makers and

international investors who think about new business ventures and investment in Saudi Arabia, and consequently, empowering Saudi women by providing them a ground for greater involvement in the society to push the boundaries and stand out to take control over their lives. Also to help them to claim their rights and equality stated by God in Islamic teaching and law.

Significance of the study

This study gains its importance from three reasons. The first reason is the existing gender gap between men and women engaged in entrepreneurial activities, as it is has been found that even though women entrepreneurs have been recognised for their significant role in the modern economic growth by discovering new opportunities and creating jobs for themselves and others, they are still representing a low percentage of the entrepreneur population compared to their male counterparts. In Saudi Arabia, even though there is no accurate statistics of registered business, however, the Saudi Ministry of commerce and Industry reported 2013 that the total number of registered businesses are 43723, and women entrepreneurs only represent 5778, i.e. only 13.21 percent of the total registered enterprises and less than last year by 1561 business which has been closed (see appendix 4).This suggests that women entrepreneurs face more difficulties to become successful entrepreneurs. Those difficulties are needed to be addressed to promote women entrepreneurship, especially in developing countries in order to maximise the economic potential of this group.

The second reason is the existence of gender inequality and gender segregation in the entrepreneurial market especially in developing countries. It has been noticed that women tend to run and manage firms in different industrial sectors less than their male counterparts. Minority of women entrepreneurs chooses industries such as education, retail, and other services sectors which are usually looked at as less important to the economic growth and development than manufacturing and high technology industries. Consequently women entrepreneurs receive less attention from researchers and policy makers. Thus, the study aims to draw the attention to women entrepreneurs by exploring their entrepreneurial activities and networking process.

The third reason is due to lack of knowledge in women entrepreneurs in the Middle East the literature, thus the study attempts to provide more understanding of their entrepreneurial networking activities and process. Thereby, it increases the knowledge in the

area and bridges the gap in the literature of women entrepreneurs in general by studying as a separate group and women entrepreneurs in Arabian context. The study aims to conquer the 'gender blindness' in the entrepreneurship research. It has been noticed that not only women entrepreneurs occupy a small percentage in the entrepreneurial population, but they are also under-studied in the entrepreneurship research and social sciences.

Thus, this study focuses on studying women entrepreneurs only, due to their significant contribution in modern economies, especially in the developing countries. The study attempts to explore the Saudi female networking experience within the entrepreneurship process. The focus of the study is to explore the practices and activities of the female entrepreneurs networking. The study sheds the light on the obstacles that hinder their networks, as well as the factors that promotes their networking activities. The extent of how they rely on and utilise networks as a tool to access resources and its impact on their business success will also be identified. Additionally it will help to generate tools that help them to improve their career progress and provide new insights and implications that integrate with the Saudi culture to help them develop their social networks and to progress their careers.

Theoretical Prospective

This study is based upon the belief that entrepreneurship, networks and gender are socially constructed. Their activities and practices differ through time, location, societies and cultures (Foss, 2010). It has been found that the majority of previous studies of women entrepreneurs, mainly focused on studying women in terms of comparing them to men entrepreneurs. This has been done to evaluate women's capabilities and qualities in entrepreneurship. Even though the research has shown that there is not much difference between men and women in entrepreneurship, yet, statistically, women are representing lower proportion of the entrepreneurs' population than men. This suggests that women are facing more hurdles and difficulties than men in entrepreneurship. Moreover, in terms of networks research in the area, it has been concluded that women entrepreneurs are disadvantaged in their network capacities and ability to access to opportunities. However as Foss states, there has a tendency in the entrepreneurial networks research "to use the networks of men as the standard against which those of women are measured. This kind of hypothesis is fairly easy to test, but such tests do not convey novel insights, as theoretical arguments are not

developed for why women should or are being less capable of networking than men" (Foss, 2010, p. 87).

Further to this, it is suggested that the majority of the previous research in the area of entrepreneurship, networks and gender unintentionally contributed to the existence of the gender gap, inequity, and inequality (Ahl, 2006; Riessman, 2008; Brush, C.; et al., 2010). What causes this gap is the attempting to understand women entrepreneurship as compared to men not as a distinctive group that possesses distinctive characteristics and needs. Also the focus on studying entrepreneurial network in terms of number of ties and contacts does not reveal much knowledge about their networking activities. In addition, study gender as a variable in the entrepreneurship and network studies is not a way of processing and practicing entrepreneurial network, not to mention that adopting quantitative approaches would diminish and mostly omit women's experience in the field. Thus, previous researches in women entrepreneurs and networks are limited with regard to both theory and methodology (Foss, 2010). Therefore the constructionist feminist prospective theory is suggested to be useful for developing new research on entrepreneurial networks.

Theoretical framework and research questions:

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is driven from the previously reviewed literature in the previous chapters. The study adopts a gender instructional approach in order to gain deep understanding of women networking in the field of entrepreneurship in the Saudi context. Thus, the role of gender structure, religion, class and culture in the women's entrepreneurial network has to be investigated. The intersection between gender as socially constructed in Saudi society, and class and the other social divisions, and it affects their entrepreneurial networking, is needed understood from Saudi women own entrepreneurial experience based on the following(figure2) :

Gender inequality/Intersectionality:

The intersection between gender and the other social structural factors in Saudi Arabia is so complicated and ambiguous and give rise to inequality. Women entrepreneurs face gender inequality and discrimination in entrepreneurial activities. Such barriers give the rise of gender inequality and intersectionality in the name of protecting women and ensuring their security. Religious, cultural and gender structure segregate both genders limit the extent of

their networks and create distance between them due to the necessity of the presence of a male.

In result women are not likely to participate in education, employment and other business or social activities. They have low salary structures and lack of mobility. It is obliged for women to move with "Mehram". Intersectionality and inequality becomes more severe when it comes to racism and the class system. Women from the middle class are affected by Intersectionality and gender inequality.

Gender and Religion, Class, Cultural structure:

Religion plays a significant role in Saudi Arabian society. The deliberate misinterpretation, Quranic injunctions and Islamic traditions, have made life more intense and difficult for Saudi women, especially of those, who have entrepreneurial ambitions. Fundamentalist, orthodox and radical elements of the society restrict women from participating in diverse occupational activities, related to politics, society or corporate. Islam allows women to leave home, for work or for other obligations; however, such radical and orthodox elements compel women to stay at home. Unnecessary emphasis on the veil, scepticism about women's activities outside of their home, considering woman a symbol of honour, are a few of the outcomes of religious value system, which prevails in Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, culture in Saudi Arabia is highly conservative. Male and female segregation is common. The mingling of men and women is not considered appropriate. Segregation exists in public places, organizations and even at home. A woman is considered a symbol of honour and dignity. Society prefers that women should stay at home, and manage domestic affairs, instead of leaving home, for corporate or earning purposes. It is against the honour of the family to send women outside the home. Moreover, when women have to travel or go outside, a family male member always accompanies her. This phenomenon is known as "Mehram". Such conservative cultural values restrict women's movement and participation in employment, education and business.

Gender inequality exists and society has separate roles for male and female. Cultural values stem from tribal cultural roots and male dominancy exists, which intensifies gender issues. Gender Segregation and social norms affect communications and mobility for women in the society. . Bedouin culture and tribal traditions resulted imbalance of power and gender

inequity in the society. Women participation is low in politics, economics, business, sports or other occupations.

Entrepreneurial network

Entrepreneurial network effectiveness led to many outcomes such as social support and protection for women. Moreover, business ideas and advice, industry information exchange, access to financial and material resources, expanding business and growth, and acquiring new contacts and network expansion are also important considerations. So is the network of Saudi women entrepreneurs effective?

Entrepreneurial networking problems:

Gender inequality and intersectionality further affect entrepreneurial process of Saudi women entrepreneurs. The review of the literature shows there is a severe drought of information about Saudi women entrepreneur's networking. Many questioned have been raised that are: how do Saudi female entrepreneurs network in the Saudi context? What is the influence of gender on their entrepreneurial networking? What are the influences of the intersection between gender and class, and the other social divisions and cultural factors on their entrepreneurial networking? What are the constraints on their entrepreneurial networking caused by the religion, Saudi tradition and culture? The absence of these questions' answers has driven this study to be conducted.

Difficulties in Entrepreneurial resources acquisition:

Since it has been evident from the literature that entrepreneurial networking's problems influence access to entrepreneurial resources, it is very important to investigate the ability of Saudi female entrepreneurs to access resources gained from their networks. Literature claims that, contemporarily, Saudi women entrepreneurs have limited access to financial, capital, technology, human resource and entrepreneurial training. Moreover, they have less job flexibility. Financial, human, capital and technological resources are required to manage diverse business activities. Such arrangements require a lot of effort and market relationships. For that purpose, entrepreneurship has to keep diverse business relations, whether with customers, suppliers or other stakeholders. Thus the questions arose here is that: what type of resources does Saudi women gain from their entrepreneurial network? What are the recourses that they find it difficult to get access to?

Research questions

The scope of the study focuses on one central question:

❖ How does female entrepreneur network in the Saudi context?

In order to answer this central question, a set of sub -five questions are taken out of the main research question. These questions are:

Question 1: How gender, religion, class, and cultural structure give rise to gender inequality, which affect women's participation in entrepreneurship and networking activities?

Question 2: How inadequate entrepreneurial networking prevents Saudi women to acquire entrepreneurial resources such as finance, capital, and training and development?

Question 3: What are the major entrepreneurial resources, which are difficult to acquire, by Saudi women entrepreneurs?

Question 4: What are entrepreneurial network and resources women entrepreneur can acquire and mobilize, in Saudi Arabia?

Question5: What are the strategies they use to develop their networks?

To address these research questions, a feminist intersectional approach is adopted. The research situated in the Eastern province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. An inductive qualitative research strategy has been developed.

Methodology Overview

This study attempts to investigate and to provide more understanding of women entrepreneurs' networking interaction, activities, and resources acquisition in the Saudi context. As a result of the scarcity of knowledge on the topic of the study, the intention of this study is not to test an existing theory; instead it aims to discover new patterns. Thus, it is exploratory in nature and attempting to answer the question of how women entrepreneurs' network and access resources in the context of Saudi Arabia. However, since the core of this study is to explore the interaction between people, activities and relationships, it is recommended by many scholars, e.g., Patton (2002), Coviello (2005), Merriam, (2009) and Denzin & Lincoln (2011), to adopt a qualitative approach better than quantitative or even

mixed methods. Qualitative approach provides very rich and descriptive information, particularly in those related to culture, values and social aspects of the participants' context. It helps to understand the meaning that people formed of their identity, lives and the sense which they made of their world.

Therefore, the suggested methodology is the qualitative inductive approach. Since the focus of this study is on women entrepreneurs', narrative inquiry as a data collection approach using in-depth interviews is very adequate. This approach has been found very helpful to spread the voice of the silent to share their entrepreneurial and networking experience. Thematic analysis was employed in order to discover new patterns and meanings in the collected data. This provided deep and rich descriptive information that extends current knowledge and adds understanding of women entrepreneurs networking in their context.

Thesis Layout

The study is divided into nine chapters that are demonstrated below along with other basic components of dissertation such as abstract, acknowledgement, table of content, list of figures and tables, references, and appendices:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction chapter provides details about the study background, research problem, research aims and objectives, significance of the study, rational of the study, dissertation layout and overall summary of the chapter. This chapter also presents an overview of the historical, economical, and cultural context which shape and influence the working environment within Saudi organizations and entrepreneurship. At the end, overall summary of the chapter is provided.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4: Literature Review

The literature chapter of the study describes the background literature of the study along with detailed literature review of various aspects of the study. These include gender differences and women at workplace, and the concept of networking in organizations and its effect. In addition, chapter 4 discusses the role of gender, class, religion interaction and investigate the instability in practice of intersectional situations in entrepreneurship. ·

Chapter 5: Methodology

The methodology chapter of the study explains the conceptual framework of research methodology, research approach, research design, research strategy, data collection, sampling techniques, data analysis methods, reliability and validity of the chosen methodology, research ethics and finally the summary of the whole methodology chapter.

Chapter 6: Narratives of the Participants

The results chapter of the study provides the detailed presentation of the participants and their stories obtained by using effective and appropriate research strategy and approach. At last, overall summary of the chapter is presented by summarizing key points obtained from the results.

Chapter 7& 8: Findings and Discussion

The discussion chapter of the study provides the detailed and in-depth thematic analysis and the results. It also includes discussion on achievement of research objectives of the study. Finally, the chapter presents a brief summary of the chapter.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion and recommendations chapter provides the conclusion of the overall research study as well as recommendations based on the findings for the future study along with the overall summary of the chapter.

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Chapter 2 – Entrepreneurship, Resources and Gender

"True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us".

- Socrates-

Introduction

The entrepreneurship phenomenon, resources and network attract researchers from different disciplines such as economics, business administration, marketing, sociology, psychology, geography and demographic traits. Recently the field also attracted researchers from education which lead to the emergence of new entrepreneurship research filed naming the 'entrepreneurship education' (Lovitts & Wert, 2009). Thus in order to discuss prior knowledge and theories related to this research, two main themes associated with this study are identified to be covered and reviewed from the literature. These are: 1- entrepreneurship and resources based theory 2- entrepreneurial network theory. These two themes will be discussed in relation to gender, feminism, intersectionality, space and geographical place. To cover all the knowledge in these different themes the researcher has to bring theories and research from different fields such as entrepreneurship theory, network theory, and gender studies in entrepreneurship with respect to social and cultural studies.

The first part of this literature review starts from the basic concept of entrepreneurship theory and its relation to resources based theory, and continue for women and entrepreneurship practices. It is important for this study to understand the meaning and nature of entrepreneurship and who is the entrepreneur. Thus the definitions of entrepreneurship have been explored and cited in order to understand how the concept evolved in the economic and management studies from the root to the present standing point as a distinctive field of study. Since this study is designed to explore the entrepreneurial networking of the female entrepreneur, a review of women's entrepreneurs' history and how they engage in entrepreneurship is very important in order to understand the role they play and what the impact of gender on being an entrepreneur is. Successful female entrepreneurs may be different from their male counterparts; this is needed to be discussed to find out the link between their ability to access to resources and how they develop their entrepreneurial network.

The second theme of this study, which is important to be reviewed is networking theory and its relation to entrepreneurship resources. Since this study is standing on the premise that networking is vital for entrepreneurship success, it should be explored in terms of its role in entrepreneurship resources acquisition. The review of the network definitions and different types are important to understand what social networks are and their importance to entrepreneurship success. Studies in social network activities in respect to gender, entrepreneurship space and place within the Saudi context are needed to be critically discussed. The literature review suggests that the majority of research in social network and female entrepreneurs largely based on the quantitative and large-scale databases rather than detailed intensive research design (Ahl, 2006; Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Those types of research design left the questions of what, how, and why the female entrepreneurial networking activities and resources acquisition differ according to its location, societies, and context unanswered (O'Donnell, 2001; Jack S. , 2009). Furthermore, the linkage between cultural context and network process is still unclear and inconclusive (Watts, Dodds, & Newman, 2002).

Additionally, these two main themes would be discussed also with respect to Saudi women entrepreneurs as this is the core of the context of the study. It is quite evident that entrepreneurship is embedded in the social and the cultural context. This affects both the entrepreneurship process (e.g. starting up motivation, resources, opportunity exploitation) and the networking process (e.g. activities, type of relationship, action, and tools). The role of Saudi women in the community and the economy is presented in order to tease out their entrepreneurship motivations, barriers, and achievements. Furthermore, since the entrepreneurs are embedded in their social networks, Saudi social structure and culture are discussed in relation to entrepreneurship.

Generally this review provides a detailed discussion and an in-depth analysis of the previous findings, researches and researcher's opinions, and studies conducted by authors and researchers in the similar area. These researches and studies will be taken from already published materials such as various earlier publications, magazines, websites, journal articles, books, online databases, reports and all other accessible sources that could support the foundation of the certain research study. However due to the massive amount of the literature in the area, it is difficult to review all the published literature in this area. A sample has to be drawn from the current literature to highlight what is already known about entrepreneur

network and what is needed to be discovered. Electronic databases such as ProQuest, Summon, Citation indices, ISI Web of knowledge, Google Scholar and other academic search engines are used to conduct the literature review. Numerous studies and articles in the area have been generated from different disciplines; however, growing evidence from the literature shows there is a growing body of research in entrepreneurship network as a distinctive field in the management studies. The largest part of these studies came from USA, UK, and highly developed countries such as Germany and Netherlands. Very few researches in the area of entrepreneurship, networking are conducted in the developing countries, specifically the Middle East. Thus, the area of network would constitute an interesting and challenging path for further research.

In summary, the literature review of this study is conducted using an open and flexible approach. The main themes are identified to review the existing knowledge in the area: entrepreneurship, female entrepreneur, entrepreneurial network with special focus on the geographical location and context of Saudi Arabia. The rest of this chapter discusses the first theme: entrepreneurship theory and women entrepreneurs. The second chapter of this review discusses the social network and entrepreneurship. This review of literature is conducted to present what is already known in the area and to shed light on the gaps that are still needed to be filled.

Entrepreneurship – Definition and Concept

Entrepreneurship can be traced back to the early 17th century. The origin of entrepreneurship emerged from French states in 17th century where it was derived from 'entreprendre' that were considered as an opportunist who undertake business opportunities (Sergiu Rusu, 2012). By reviewing the literature, it has been found that there is no unified definition of entrepreneurship. This reflects the differences prevailing amongst various theorists on the basics of the concept. Based upon these different definitions approaches, two main views can be identified among entrepreneurship scholars in approaching entrepreneurship definition (Carayannis & Stewart, 2013): 1- economic view, which see entrepreneurship in terms of resources mobilization and exploitation of opportunities which focused on risk involved the entrepreneurship process, and 2- business sociology view , which focuses on the entrepreneurial behavior such as opportunity discovery, innovation, and evaluation which focused on the functions and activities associated with starting a new business/organization.

For instance, Cantillon links entrepreneurship with the risk involved and describes the process as a person buying at a certain price and selling at an uncertain price, therefore bearing the risk (Cantillon, 1931). Jean Baptist distinguishes between a capitalist and entrepreneur on the basis of their ability to organize resources in order to design a business enterprise (Dana, 2011). However, Schumpeter views entrepreneurs as innovators who bring about innovative products/services for consumers (Schumpeter, 1996). In addition to this; Cole defines an entrepreneur as an economic agent who has special personal characteristics that combine all the factors of production: "A purposeful activity of an individual or group of associated individuals, undertaken to initiate, maintain or aggrandize profit by production or distribution of economic goods or services" (Cole, 1959, p. 7). However, Peter Drucker combined views of innovation and opportunities as the key terms in defining entrepreneurship as he views the entrepreneur as the one who has the ability to "shift economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield" (Drucker, 1995, p. 99). Similarly, Carayannis and Stewart regard entrepreneurship as the process of starting a new business which is characterized by innovation and uncertainty. They view the entrepreneur as a changing agent who builds new business with the personal qualities and source of fulfilling the supply-demand gap where entrepreneur analyses supply risk and has the ability to manage uncertainty for personal gain (Carayannis & Stewart, 2013).

Figure 2 – Entrepreneurship

Based upon the above, entrepreneurship can then be defined as the process of identifying, acquisitioning and mobilising resources related to discovering and exploit opportunities for creating new things or discovering new ways to make already existing things more efficient under the conditions of risk and uncertainty (Bygrave & Minniti, 2000; Hisrich, 1990). Hence, Entrepreneurship is the mobilisation of resources (financial, human, labour, and social capital) in a profitable market exchange (Jayawarna, Rouse, & Macpherson, 2014). This process includes activities; e.g. the discovery, assessment and exploitation of opportunities and subsequently gathering and managing resources to exploit these opportunities. As a consequence entrepreneurship makes economies witness boost, creates employment and provides better quality of life. However, entrepreneurship process and activities are viewed as embedded within social context and reliant upon social networks for gaining access to opportunities and the required resources to exploit these opportunities, start up and run a business (Granovetter, 1985; O'Donnell, 2001; Uzzi, 1999).

Resource-based View and entrepreneurship

It is recognised that economies and societies should have continuous entrepreneurial activities for various reasons. Entrepreneurship helps economies to witness boom as they provide a source of income to people employed. It breaks the monopoly and economies witness-free markets, which are natural mechanisms of check and balance, and it improves the overall quality of life prevailing in the society (Lazear, 2004; Hisrich, 1990). With the current worldwide scenario, entrepreneurship helps in exploiting demands in order to create a balanced demand-supply gap (Stuart, 2007). Entrepreneurs are innovators of society; they bring about new products and services that provide a better substitute and contribute to the wellness of societies (Cantillon, 1931; Jones & Wadhwani, 2006).

The interest in this field is directly proportional to the growing interest in the economic and business arena all over the world. Where entrepreneurship is taken to be a process of creating new and valuable things, an entrepreneur is viewed as the one that makes use of these opportunities and mobilise resources. This implies that entrepreneurial process is crucial to the process of economic development and only the entrepreneur is the key factor for this economic growth (Bolton & Thompson, 2007).

From a resources-based view, resources are the building block of any economy. Whereas within economics, entrepreneurship combines resources to create a new company,

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goods, values, profit and ultimately, economic development. Entrepreneurial resources are tangible and intangible assets an entrepreneur uses to exploit opportunities and create competitive advantage. From a strategic management perspective resources are not only vital to start up a new firm but are linked to business growth, superiority and creation of competitive advantage using a unique set of resources (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1986, 1991; Peteraf, 1993).

According to Barney (2001), firms can be looked at as bundles of productive resources and a firm can be different from competitors only if it possesses a different bundle of heterogeneous resources. Alvarez and Bunitz, 2001, argue that an organisation's success and performance are determined by its internal resources and the heterogeneity of these resources creates the firm competitive advantage. Shane, 2003, views entrepreneurship as not just the individual's ability of opportunity discovering but also the exploitation of these opportunities under the condition of risk. In other words, opportunities are objective and their existence depends on the industrial and market structure, and can be seen by many individuals, but not everyone has the ability to exploit them (Shane, 2003). Thus, it can be said that, entrepreneurship is not just about the alertness to opportunities and its discovery, but it is about seeking to exploit these opportunities. Thus, in order to exploit an entrepreneurial opportunity, an entrepreneur is required to collect, mobilise and organise the adequate resources.

Evidence from previous research indicates that access to tangible resources may differ by gender (Brush et al., 2002; Domeisen, 2003; Inman, 2000; Marlow & Patton, 2005), class (Anderson & Miller, 2002; Ordeñana, Arteaga, 2012) and ethnicity (Valdez, 2002). For instance, it has been recorded that starting an entrepreneurial career and access to resources (i.e., tangible and intangible assets) is facilitated by the family social class of the entrepreneurs. Chandler and Hanks, 1998; Hart et al., 1997, demonstrate that entrepreneurs' human and social capital resources have great impact on their ability to access additional financial, human and social capital required for their business advancement and success. Also, Miller and Anderson 2002, suggest that those entrepreneurs from a higher socioeconomic class have access to highly effective business support, because they have a more affluent endowment of both human and social capital. As a result, their businesses tend to have more profit and high potential growth than those from lower socioeconomic class (Miller & Anderson, 2002). Similarly, results from Nelson, et. al., 2014, exploratory study of

Brazilians university student indicated high impact of students' family class and background on their entrepreneurial orientation, rate of enterprise formation, and size of the firm. Hence it is suggested that the tendency for higher socioeconomic class families to entrepreneurship may explained by a variety of financial and non-financial resources that they possess and can offer their family members (Aldrich, et. al, 1998; Nelson et. al., 2002).

Furthermore, Light and Bonacich (1988, p19) suggest that 'class and ethnic resources explain entrepreneurship. Valdez, 2002, noted that some ethnic groups, such as Mexicans with significantly lower levels of business ownership. Yet these minority groups of entrepreneurs can achieve economic success despite their social hostility and disadvantages by solidarity among and relationships among the entrepreneurs from the same ethnic background. Hence, ethnic entrepreneurship is facilitated by resource mobilization based on ethnicity. They use their ethnic network to mobilize resources and subsequent boost their business performance (Waldinger et al. 1990; Valdez, 2002, Waldi). Similarly, Scheers,, 2010, asserted that the success of small business in South Africa associated their ethical and cultural background. Result from research in this area suggest that ethnic entrepreneurs rely on their social capital of kinship and friendship among the ethnicity members to collect any additional resources such as financial, social, and human capital (Valdez, 2002).

Previous research also shows that the existing gender gap limits the economic potentials of women entrepreneurs and holds high impact on their ability of access to resources and holds back their entrepreneurship (Bruch, et al., 2010). Approach to financial resources is frequently mentioned as a principal constraint to the development of female-owned enterprises. Studies show significant differences between men and women in access to financial resources. Women, in general, and in particular in developing countries, have been reported to have less access to banking services. Thus, many female entrepreneurs rely on their personal savings and financial support and loan from family and friends (Fletschner & Kenney, 2011). Also women entrepreneur's ability to access to information, training, and social capital, has been restricted by gender bias, tradition, stereotyping, and social-cultural norms. However, it is suggested that the ability to develop intangible resources may be a means to improve the chances for success for these entrepreneurs who are disadvantaged because of their gender, class or ethnicity, e.g., entrepreneurial orientation, innovation, social capital, knowledge exchange, and effective network (Runyan, Huddleston, & Swinney, 2006).

Gender Gap and Inequality in Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship and its characteristics can best be understood when it is studied in the context of a social activity instead of an individual activity. Organizational sociologists, e.g., Aldrich and Zimmer proposed that, entrepreneurship is embedded in a social context, channelled and facilitated (or inhibited) by a person's position in a social network. Thus Social networks are useful in providing opportunities for entrepreneurs who have potential by offering those chances they would have lost or would not have been able to pursue (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986, p. 6). Since entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial activities are socially embedded, gender cannot be studied in isolation from its environment and social structure (Hyde, 2005). It has been noted that the entrepreneurship theory presented a ground for entrepreneurship definition and description of who is an entrepreneur. The theory, however, did not provide an explanation of either viewing entrepreneurship as a 'male-gendered concept' (Ahl, 2006, p. 598), or from where did the entrepreneurial sexual stereotype and gender differentiation emerge.

Entrepreneurship in the 21st century is very different from how it was perceived years ago. The entrepreneurial perspective today discusses the vision, change and creation of processes. As Blasingame explains, an entrepreneur offers a product or service while accepting the true responsibility of any consequential result (Blasingame, 2012). With the ever evolving theory on this side of management, there is a branching of gender-based entrepreneurship classification known as women entrepreneurship. Whereas, Avolio, 2011, argues that the most problematic issue in studying women entrepreneurs and understanding their experience is the lack of common and precise definition of who is considered as a woman entrepreneur. Thus he proposed a precise and comprehensive definition of women entrepreneurs as women who own 50% or more of a formal enterprise (regardless of how they obtained the ownership), who is actively involved in their operation as managers or administrators, and who generate employment for themselves and for other people" (Avolio, 2011, p. 10). Also, a woman entrepreneur is defined by Lavoie as the female head of business who has taken the initiative of launching a new venture, who is accepting the associated risks and financial, administration and social responsibilities, and who is effectively in-charge of its day to day management (Lavoie, 1984/85).

Ever after female entrepreneurship has been in the limelight due to its complex nature of involving a gender that was excluded from basic privileges of life in the past few decades

around the world (Pile, 2005; Smith, 2000). In the past for women where there was no proper education system, right of freedom of speech, right to vote and other physical and mental barriers, the concept of entrepreneurship was considered to be alien (Sathiabama, 2010; Arogyaswami & Byles, 1987). Although, by reviewing literature, it is recognized that women were occupied in labour force, the degrees of which they can exercise their decisions and carry on the tasks were absolutely minimized than their male counterparts. It is because of the perception that women have a lack of sense of commitment, lack of ownership skills to make effective plans and lack accountability (Scott, 2013; Smith, 2000; Jones & Wadhwani, 2006).

In addition to this, when women start joining the workforce, it is witnessed that they contribute much more than male colleagues, but receive lower pay scale at similar positions, with perceptions about females as being non-reliable employees (Scott, 2013; Smith, 2000). Also, most of the high positions of corporations are given to male employees; it creates a ripple effect of glass ceiling where women are discouraged to go up the organizational ladder. It also affects job satisfaction and overall employee productivity, which shatters the morale of women working at these organizations, thus women face negativity throughout many decades during their employment period under male dominant supervisions (Hahn, Litwin, & Roger, 1995; Hougaard, 2005). These are few of the factors present in organizational culture that promote women entrepreneurship, personality traits and character development. They play a vital role in deciding upon which of the measures any individual will choose, which also holds true for women (Peterson, 2004; Scott, 2013; Pile, 2005; Smith, 2000).

At present, alongside with many changes in the business environment, significant change can also be observed in landscape for women entrepreneurs where women became change agents of society and formed businesses that suit their individual preference upon managerial actions, and their preferred set of rules (Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005; Zhao F. , 2008). As economics and societies start evolving, women start entering into the workforce with a number of these ventures into new enterprises, or start working part-time or full time in any organization with a changed outlook on working condition (Hahn, Litwin, & Roger, 1995; Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005; Smith, 2000).

The review of the literature points several factors that play their part in bringing the less involved gender into the entrepreneurial stream through various means and help in boosting the entrepreneurial activity (Moore, 1990). Among these factors that influenced women to pursue this role are their increased level of influx in workforce which provide a

platform to taste foreign waters, their level of awareness and exposure that lead them to believe in themselves and positively utilize their potential and finally the increased pressure to seek better opportunities. These lay the grounds of women entrepreneurship (Moore, 1990; Kalim, 2013; Jones & Wadhwani, 2006).

Women entrepreneurship starts coming into the mainstream after various factors changed due to World War II. In addition, the recent changes and levels of complexity in large organizations lead to a challenging situation, therefore small and medium enterprises start mushrooming with individuals' yearning to be their own-bosses. This holds true for women as they have to consider a perfect harmony between work-life balances (Donna & Mike, 2011; Baron, 2006; Murugeswari & Cooper, 2013). The prime difference between both of these factors is the main motivation that acts as a stimulant to the outcome. It becomes vital to refer women to less privileged parts of the world and to utilize their potential untapped market and contributing to the overall economy (Ardichvili, Cardozo, & Ray, 2003). On the other hand, Brett et al reported that women entering by choice are witnessed in more developed countries with stable living conditions, thus both parts of the world witnessed a similar phenomenon based on different background (Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005).

With respect to gender differences between men and women in entrepreneurship, the results from previous studies are inconclusive. Brush reveals that there are small but informative differences between male and female entrepreneurs in many aspects; e.g. start-up motivation, business type, business size, risk taking, and performance expectation (Brush, et al., 2006; Brush, 1992). In conformity, Sexton posits that women entrepreneurs do differ from their male counterparts in terms of personal traits and motivation, but these differences are 'over-used'. Further to this, he suggests that the bias of sexual stereotyping exists and a gap still exists between the actual traits of women entrepreneurs and the perception of those traits by others (Sexton, 1990). In a later study conducted on the motivational differences between women and men using a sample of MBA students, the result reveals that if the female and male entrepreneurs, who are similar in terms of business education, educational credentials, and other important variables, the differences between female and male entrepreneurs become larger if the entrepreneurs are married with dependent children (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003). In contrast to this, Kepler and Scott, in their study of the existence of gender differences between women and men entrepreneurs in Programme for the

Study of Discrimination and Exclusion (PSDE), found that there is little evidence of differences between male and female entrepreneurs in either effort and performance, and found no evidence of gender differences in respect to self confidence and undertaking the organising process (Kepler & Scott, 2007).

Evidently, previous studies in gender differences in entrepreneurship concluded that there is no or little evidence of differences between male and female entrepreneurs on characteristics, motivation, or performance. However, Jayawarna et al, (2007) in their study posit that gender differences between men and women in entrepreneurship exists and explaining the importance of gender as a factor that influences entrepreneurial behaviour and success. In furthering their findings, Jayawarna et al, posit that "entrepreneurial resources, and the way in which these resources are deployed to support venture creation and development, is significantly different for males and females" (Jayawarna, Rouse, & Macpherson, 2007, p. 21). Consequently, scholars, e.g. Jayawarna, Rouse, Macpherson and Kitching claim that gender is a powerful control variable in explaining entrepreneurial motivation, behaviour and success (Jayawarna, Rouse, & Macpherson, 2014; Rouse & Kitching, 2006).

Nevertheless, it is quite evident that women are one particular understudied group (Ahl, 2006; DeMartino & Barbato, 2003; Católica, & Lima, 2011). The insufficiency of research focused on female entrepreneurs as an independent group contributed to the lack of understanding the women entrepreneurs phenomenon with respect to their entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurial activities, e.g. networking, acquiring entrepreneurial resources and the other activities; leaving the answer of what holds them back in comparison to their male counterparts unclear (Kepler & Scott, 2007).

This inspection is supported by many scholars, e.g. Ahl, Kepler and Scott, and Avolio. For instance, Ahl explicates that the majority of recent studies on female entrepreneurs focused on studying four main aspects: 1- the individuals, in terms of motivation, characteristics, background, and demographic information, 2- the environment, 3- organisation, and 4- entrepreneurial process. Additionally, on a discourse analysis of 81 studies published between 1982 and 2000 in four leading entrepreneurship research journals, Ahl noted that the research on women's entrepreneurship is characterized by contradiction and inconclusive research results (Ahl, 2006).

Thus, it has been noticed that in the entrepreneurship discourse, entrepreneurship has been gendered while there is not much evidence or explanation why entrepreneurship is considered as a male not a female activity, or why some industry sectors and services are dominated by men while some other few services are left for women where they run their companies. Thus, it can be suggested that lack of valuable knowledge on women entrepreneurship contributed largely to the existence of such gender inequality and discrimination in entrepreneurship.

Thence scholars, e.g., Rouse, et al., (2013) suggest that gender should be employed as a 'theoretical lens' not as a 'variable' in order to explore and understand the entrepreneurship how differences in entrepreneurship experience emerge for men and women. Even further, they advocate that adopting the gender theory can help understanding not only women entrepreneurship, but also men as they claim that: "gender theory can help to advance understanding of all entrepreneurial practice; we could understand male entrepreneurs better through a gender lens as well as using that framework to produce a political critique" (Rouse, Treanor, & Fleck, 2013, p. 453). Thus the study under consideration intends to follow this research pathway and use gender as a 'theoretical lens' by studying women entrepreneurs from their own perspective as an independent research group.

Based on the previous discussion, it became evident that; gender is one of the important factors that influence the entrepreneurial process, especially for women. It's worth mentioning that the main focus of this study is not to investigate gender differences between women and men in entrepreneurship. However, gender differences aspect had to be exposed briefly in order to give an idea about how female entrepreneurs have been investigated in the prior studies and to express the reason of choosing the group of study to be independent, distinct female entrepreneurs. The next section of this chapter presents a review of the women's involvement in entrepreneurship, their entrepreneurial role, motivation of engaging in entrepreneurship, and barriers they face from gender prospective studies in management.

Motivation for Women's Involvement in Entrepreneurship

When considering women entrepreneurship, it is very important to analyse the 'push/pull factors' which are provided by McMullen, Bagby, & Palich; i.e. entrepreneurship by choice or by necessity. Women entering into entrepreneurship by choice are those individuals with high needs of achievement that lead them to pursue a striking career,

possibly through venturing into a new business (Kalim, 2013). They have aspiring ideas that can be materialized and become a source of financial returns which will ultimately have a positive effect on their personality and self-image (Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005; Lyons & Doueck, 2009). Whereas those women who are forced to enter into the entrepreneurial stage are primarily females with financial concerns or economic burdens on their spouses, which lead them to pursue this specific area, or on extreme ends the death of the sole male bread earner eventually lead women of these families to seek financial issues by indulging in entrepreneurial activities (Nino, 2006; Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005; Lyons & Doueck, 2009).

Furthermore, researchers such as Brush et. al., identify that there are many reasons of involvement of women into entrepreneurial activities. The economic situation, the macro situation of the worldwide population, and globalization are the prime factors to name them (Brush, et, al, 2010). Nevertheless, according to Butler, one of the most prominent factors in high female induction is the increased number of worldwide female population (Butler, 2003). Since women are the majority of the population, they realized that they need to contribute to the overall economic situation. Evidence presented by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) recoded that over 200 million women are employed across all industry sectors, with half of them belonging to developing countries (GEM Report, 2007).

In considering the reason of women's involvement in developing countries, socioeconomic factors play a major role. Per Marković states that the working conditions of working at enterprises are not suitable in terms of the benefits they provide to a working female, since employers tend to ignore the necessary working conditions like child care benefits, health care, maternity leaves or compress work week (Marković, 2007). In addition to this, Aaltio-Marjosola et al supported Per Marković and concluded that since the job market is relatively saturated and unemployment is at an alarming stage, any deviation from requiring work conditions result in immediate job termination (Aaltio-Marjosola, Kyrö, & Sundin, 2008). These factors are the foremost amongst many other factors that lead women to create better incentives by creating balance between work and life and seek financial returns by coming up with various entrepreneurial activities that suit their family needs. These women come up with home-based businesses and utilize their basic skills in order to overcome the economic burden (Aaltio-Marjosola, Kyrö, & Sundin, 2008; Frese, 2009).

While considering women from more developed landscapes, the prime motivators are very different from others. The nature of work and management is also variably different (Brush, 2006). According to literature, women in developed countries find it hard to cope with traditional enterprises since these organizations lack in providing them a successful career path as desired by them, the supervision tends to curb their potential and result in lower job satisfaction. These women also find it difficult to prove themselves in the presence of the glass ceiling that is prevailing in almost every organization with no measures to break it (McAdam, 2013; Fielden & Davidson, 2010; Moore & Holly, 1997). These factors boost the entrepreneurial spirit in working women to pursue their own-account and carry on their career goal. For them, the financial return is not the prime objective rather it is the personal satisfaction to enjoy economic independence, build their own self-confidence, and establish their own identity (Brush & G., 2006; Essers & Benschop, 2007). For instance, women in the Pacific region have a high need of achievement and strive for their contribution to the economy. In Japan, 5 out of 6 new businesses are created by women and often employ women for their enterprises (Motik, 2013).

These multi-dimensional factors lead women to pursue their entrepreneurial spirit. The pull/push model helps to strike balance between the influxes of women into industry throughout the world economy. Therefore, women entrepreneurship is now witnessed as a global phenomenon with a positive outlook on economies, societies and individuals (Phillips, 2006). This trend increased the overall quality of life, strikes a work-life balance between both members of the family, and lowers the interdependence of women on their male counterparts. Therefore, women entrepreneurship calls for immediate attention to build a framework to help those who are working on their own, and create more sources in order to continue this trend (Tiwari, 2007; Welter, Smallbone, & Isakova, 2006).

Barriers to Women's Entrepreneurship

Interestingly, it has been reported by 'The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor' (GEM) consortium annual conference that in more than 67 economies worldwide, there are more than 126 million women entrepreneurs who are marking their territories with their entrepreneurial activities (GEM, 2013). With this rising rate, under all things kept constant, women should be equated by half the proportion of the total number of entrepreneurs. However, this is not the case. Even though the gender breakdown by population and workforce is almost half, due to one or more factors, men are outnumbered by women in

launching high-growth companies. Some of these factors can be attributed to gender discrimination, whereas others are due to the nature of entrepreneurship (Kova, 1994; Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005).

However, by reviewing several studies, e.g. Fenwick (2008), Hession (2009), Saskia (2013), and Brush (2013), it has been found that there are certain factors that create barriers to women entrepreneurs when they participate in effective entrepreneurship activities and practices. It is depicted that these barriers to women entrepreneurs ranges differently across the globe due to the differences in economic outlook and cultural and societal norms that prevail largely in every part of the world (Aycan, 2000; Hession, 2009). These barriers can be attributed to the gender specification or at times may be faced regardless of the gender. However, even in the advanced world today, women are subjected to more hurdles during their onward progress towards their preferred entrepreneurial role (Pearson, 1992; Marković, 2007). The two most identified barriers in the literature are: the barriers for women to become an entrepreneur, and the barriers of entering a particular economic sector to be an entrepreneur.

Sahai highlighted in his/her study that one of the most prominent hurdles is the male domination witnessed overall the globe in high return industries. Since capital, knowledge-based manufacturing and service sectors are predominantly occupied by men, while women are left with tapping into more customer-centred service industries, thus saturating it with the same gender and increasing the overall competition (Sahai, 2008; Gould & Parzen, 1990). This limitation of market entry prevents women from entering into new categories that are more profitable and provide room for growth (Brush & G., 2006). This is, however, a self-imposed barrier and women with the right skill set can manoeuvre the limitations and prove their worth. As and when societies advance, women realize their potential and are now entering into former male-dominating industries (Hughes & Jennings, 2012).

In addition, Valla and Nieman depicted that another barrier that women entrepreneurs faced is the prevailing outlook of their businesses (Valla & Nieman, 2001). Women who join by necessity have a limited business scope and performance expectation (Fenwick, 2008). For women working under this influence, their businesses are relatively smaller and have less growth expectation. For them, entrepreneurial activity is a mean of bread earning rather than a career source (Hession, 2009). This is prevalent in less developed economies, with more women entering into workforce to create a secondary source of income. Due to these reasons,

the exit rate is also relatively higher as these women tend to dissolve their business entities after earning short term revenue (McAdam, 2013). McAdam further added that these women-owned businesses have a higher exit rate and are often attributed to personal reasons. Their attitude towards the venture is the sole barrier in providing them a more powerful venture (Smith-Hunter, 2006).

Another barrier that is witnessed globally regardless of economies or societies is the difficulty to access financial resources (Smith-Hunter, 2006). According to Wood, Davidson and Fielden, if all things kept constant, a women entrepreneur is subject to more difficulty in terms of raising capital for their venture (Wood, Davidson, & Fielden, 2012). Women are bound to face more difficulty in securing financial help from equity houses in terms of being subjected to higher interest rates and providing more guarantee to their secured loans (Hession, 2009). These reasons led women to seek help outside the financial entities through their friends, credit cards, spouse and others. Due to the difficulty in raising capitals, women are found to be working under low capital structure than their male counterpart which may be the cause of their lack of success (Mirchandani, 1999; Aaltio-Marjosola, Kyrö, & Sundin, 2008). However, with more women entering into businesses and with joint collaboration of governmental and global policies, women are now given windows to seek out for financial aid (Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005). The terms and conditions might be still a barrier in carrying out an entrepreneurial activity, but with proper documentation of the business plan and future strategic goals women can equip themselves with the necessary credit to operate a successful business (Butler, 2003).

Another barrier that women continuously face during their entrepreneurial career is their role conflicts. A woman is segregated in terms of her role as an entrepreneur which requires full time commitment and so does their role as a family maker (Saskia, 2013). This holds true for women belonging to both, developed and transitional economies, with increased pressure to conform to measures that result in greater output to business results in compromising on their role as a family caregiver (Brush, 2006). Which women are self-employed are usually torn apart in juggling the duties, and their attitude results in dissatisfaction (Tiwari, 2007). Their experience of time-conflict and stress spill over due to family responsibilities. The business domain leads them to initiate coping strategies which results in limiting their business potential rather than growing, which serves as a barrier to

continue their entrepreneurial activity (Marković, 2007; Butler, 2003; Lazear, 2004; Essers, Benschop, & Doorewaard, 2010).

Moreover, the social-cultural barrier was present, which limited the present resources to be fully utilized by women. Hostile societal and cultural norms increased the complexity in order to pursue any leading role in the working industry (Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005). Since women were not actively participating in the workforce, they were not equipped with the skill sets required to perform the tasks, which also resulted in role barrier as these women get into performance pressure or label themselves incompetent from their male counterparts. These all acted as a negative force that prohibited women from tapping into entrepreneurship (Fielden & Davidson, 2010; Essers & Benschop, 2007).

Furthermore, Vossenberg (2013) reports that the lack of government support in terms of policy, laws and services has been identified as a barrier for women entrepreneurs across countries (Jamali, 2009). He suggests that most research reported that the regulation, taxation and legal barriers can create serious obstacles for both men and women entrepreneurs to a certain level. Thus, he calls for more research to be conducted to identify country-specific issues. In addition, he reported that data from the annual report Women Business and the Law (World Bank, 2012) measured that in all Middle Eastern and North African countries, women have fewer inheritance rights than men, and moreover, there are one or more legal differences between women and men that limit women's economic opportunity in over 75% of the world's economies. According to that same report, women only own 1% of the world's property and in 2/3 of countries, legal rights of women decline in marriage, 44 countries restrict the number of hours women can work and 71 countries restrict the types of industries (Vossenberg, 2013, p. 5).

These were the basic factors that are the major potential hurdles for women entrepreneurs. While focusing on the barriers faced by women, it is observed that there are factors that account for social-cultural reasons, however, there are certain factors that are 'Person Factors' which can be eliminated through education, training and mentoring (Mirchandani, 1999; Jepson, 2009; Moore & Holly, 1997). Furthermore, societal and cultural norms and religious beliefs in some countries dictate the willingness to accept women-owned businesses, and primarily define the success rate of these enterprises. Women face different types of barriers while entering the entrepreneurial landscape (Harriss, 1998). The behavioural barrier was an important aspect in holding women to enter into industries, as they

had low self-confidence and self-image with restricted means of awareness. Education was also an issue of general lack of progression in a woman's career to become an entrepreneur (Butler, 2003; Brush, 2006).

In addition to the above, Brush stated that the self-perception, personality traits and are also important factors that at times create barriers for women entrepreneurs (Brush C., 2013). Women perception about their growth and capabilities define their attitude towards the business and the growth prospects (Phillips, 2006). Women belonging to a particular social and cultural background lack the personality trait due to their upbringing which creates a hurdle in running their own business. These factors however are derived from one's own personality regardless of gender and can be diminished (Moore & Holly, 1997).

Also, networking is recognised as the ability of an entrepreneur to socially interact and communicate with other individuals and organisations, and build social relationships in order to be able to mobilize resources and pursue new opportunities. Amongst all the barriers, social capital and networking has been acknowledged as the essential component of the business activities, especially for small firms (Anderson, 2002; p. 202). Research evidence declares that entrepreneurs can gain access to hidden opportunities for linking new products and services in untapped markets only if they can acquire information about their position. This type of information and knowledge, in addition to different types of tangible and intangible resources, can be obtained through their entrepreneurial contacts.

From reviewing the literature, it is noted that women entrepreneurs' studies suffer many numbers of inadequacy and limitations. Ahl reported that these shortcomings include lack of theoretical grounding, the neglect of the structural, historical, cultural factors, one-sided empirical studies, the use of male-gendered measuring instruments, the absence of power perspective, and the lack of explicit feminist analysis (Ahl, 2006, p:595). She further suggests to shift the epistemological position from an objective direction to a more constructivist position and focus more on studying the factors 'outside the entrepreneur' or her business such as socio-cultural norms, family policy, economic policy etc., and their change effects in order to avoid the static picture.

In addition, the review of Carter et al shows that this large amount of research focuses on studying several aspects and issues of the female entrepreneurs such as their characteristics, motivation and their experiences of business ownership and starting up a new

enterprise. The advancement of these research resulted in more specialized research which focused on the idea of gender differences in management of the enterprises, particularly with regard to finance, network, and performance (Carter, Anderson, & Shaw, 2001). However, evidence from the literature suggests that there is still a lot to be known about women entrepreneurship in respect to those areas. There is not much known about their entrepreneurial activities, e.g. networking activities, factors affecting their networking decisions, and their network's resources.

Women Entrepreneurs' Status in Saudi Arabian context

The country of Saudi Arabia acquires a prominent place in the world from the religious as well as the economic point of view. In terms of religion, it is significant because it is considered to be the birth land of Islam and economically it is prestigious because it is the largest petroleum exporting country and accounts for 20% of the world's reserves (Okruhlik, 2004). It is observed that in the present day, Saudi Arabia is making diligent efforts at increasing its economy. Increasingly, efforts have been made to foster growth in the private sectors and at the same time employ more Saudi nationals. This is often referred to as 'Saudization' (Mahdi, 2000).

According to Schwab, the focus on Saudi economy is also on the power generation, telecommunications and natural gas exploration. These efforts have been so great that now Saudi Arabia ranks 11 out of 83 countries in 2011 when it comes to doing business (Schwab, 2010). Furthermore, Dincer, Hussain, and Al-Zaharnah stated that the Saudi Arabia is trying to blend its economic resources with technological advancements to achieve a stronger position. They further argue that this achievement cannot be accomplished until each member of the society, i.e. male and female work towards this development (Dincer, Hussain, & Al-Zaharnah, 2004). In addition, Welsh, Memili and Al-Sadoon explained the role women in the economic mainstream as service providers, farmers, manufacturers and artisans along with trading at domestic as well as international level (Welsh, Memili, & Al-Sadoon, 2012).

However, generally it is noted that when business owners initiate new entrepreneurial ventures they face many challenges and when the business owners are women the challenges are doubled. This concept of Saudi women entrepreneurs is a matter of extensive attention. Since, it is found that the Saudi women have tended to make all possible efforts to become successful women entrepreneurs and also to overcome all the obstacles in this process.

According to a survey conducted in 2010, the female Saudi entrepreneurs were identified to be ambitious, positive, preserving to overcome the challenges they face. They were even considered to be more optimistic in their approach towards the future and the majority is seen to be adamant on expanding their businesses. The women entrepreneurs are orientated toward achievement of higher income and organizational goals, belief in one's own vision, goal-setting, risk takers, and other natural leadership qualities (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

In Saudi Arabia, women entrepreneurs are considered as highly motivated and the factors which contribute in driving the business by them include self-fulfilment, and the need for being financially independent. It is estimated that out of 29 million people women constitute around 45.8 percent of Saudi population (Ahmad, 2011). However, they contribute only little in economic activities. Thus, it can be said that the Saudi female entrepreneurs play energetic role in the development of the country by providing job opportunities to the people and diminishing the rate of unemployment.

As determined from the literature, women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are divided into two categories, i.e. the one that are running registered businesses the other running unregistered business (Welsh, Memili, & Al-Sadoon, 2012). It has been found out from the study conducted by Alturki and Braswell that businesswomen who own registered businesses are usually of ages ranging between 25 and 44, along with being married and half of them even have children; either three or more. They further found that registered businesswomen are educated and are considered to have on average a business experience of 11 years (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

Moreover, it is also found that these business women usually start the business on their own and possess it entirely. These women also have the capability of giving in about 40 hours on the average to manage their business. On the contrary, unregistered businesswomen are a little younger, and probably have been married for quite a while. But these women have more children than registered businesswomen. They also have the same level of education, but they lack the years of experience that the registered women have. The unregistered businesswomen generally have experience of 8.7 years. The unregistered businesswomen also own their business and spend about 42 hours per week (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

The entrepreneurship's essence is deeply implanted and inherited in Saudi people. Especially, trading business and running and commercial exchange is historically rooted and

instilled in them. From the historical periods, it is recognized that Saudi Arabia has been the house of business leaders for a very long time. The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and many of his early supporters were traders and merchants. Remarkably, Khadija, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), was an extremely successful businesswoman long before she met the Prophet (National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, 2010). Moreover, it is studied that a considerable portion of the Kingdom's wealth is assumed to be bestowed with the women who are believed to be sitting on cash totalling $11.9 billion, which, in simple words, can be said that these women are controlling an extensive portion of the country's wealth. Likewise, it is stated that women in Saudi Arabia constitute almost 45 percent of the population and have a literacy rate of 79 percent, in which only 65 percent of them are employed, despite the fact that 78.3 percent of unemployed women are university graduates (Arab News , 2010). Thus, it can be depicted that the women in Saudi Arabia, hence account for a substantial pool of human and financial capital with the power and ability to bring about significant social and economic change. It is hence beneficial to the kingdom to give them the same opportunities their sisters enjoy in other Arab nations, which is currently taking place.

Thus, the main reasons for Saudi women's movement towards entrepreneurship can be identified in the light of certain resource-based view and social capital. According to Penrose and Lavie, the resource based view takes into account the resources which can play a very significant role in business creation and operations. Both the tangible and intangible resources are required at the start of any venture (Penrose, 1959; Lavie, 2006).

Also, it is noted that the Saudi education systems do not give an equal educational opportunity to women in comparison to their male counterparts. In the patriarchal and segregated Saudi society women are prohibited from studying certain majors such as, engineering, journalism, and law, even though the number of Saudi female students is notably increasing year after year (Fallatah, 2010). Thus, the number of employment-seeking graduates which are produced by the Saudi education system in Saudi Arabia each year is more than the economy can absorb (Abdella, 1999). The limitation of job opportunities available for Saudi females because of the social culture and gender-cultural factors derived Saudi women to move toward self-employment and entrepreneurship. Thus, it can be said that, as Fallatah the Saudi female researcher demonstrated in her study,: "Saudi Arabia's unique setting is a good example to demonstrate the barriers of gender" (Fallatah, 2010, p: 31).

Further, the study that is conducted by Sadi and Al-Gazali claims that self-achievement is considered the most driving factor for Saudi women to enterprise. In addition, they explained that self- confidence, profit, and independence are also among the motivations of Saudi women for business start-up (Sadi and Al-Gazali, 2009). Also, in terms of the role of education in motivating entrepreneurs to establish a new business Kelley, Brush, Green, Litovsky, and College, report another important aspect that helps in the creation of new business which is the knowledge of the entrepreneur. This knowledge is needed because it will be influential when it comes to entrepreneurial intentions (Kelley, Brush, Green, Litovsky, & College, 2010).

Thus, concerning to Saudi female entrepreneurs, it is found that the Saudi women in the majority hold a high school degree along with a college degree. Some of these Saudi women even acquire degrees from abroad (Dadfar, Norberg, Helander, Schuster, & Zufferey, 2003). Karl Pajo and Noble found that these women tend to possess knowledge through education and work experience; therefore they can use their intellectual abilities and experience to achieve success in creating a new venture (Karl Pajo & Noble, 2002). In addition to this, the family business background plays an important role in fostering the entrepreneurial knowledge and installs the entrepreneurial orientation in the Saudi women. Since, a great number of Saudi families have engaged in a way or another in the entrepreneurship field, and most of them have started their own large, medium and small enterprises (Vaid, 2011). The entrepreneurial culture is rife in Saudi society, thus, the entrepreneurship knowledge has been passed to their children and encouraged them to establish their own business. However, numbers of questions arise here like: how their family affects their entrepreneurial network? How Saudi women entrepreneurs benefited from their family class and background in networking? Is family background on women's network in the Saudi context is similar to its impact on their entrepreneurial ordination? These questioned remained unanswered.

In addition to the above, another reason central for the inclusion of Saudi women in entrepreneurship is the possession of economic resources and finance as an integral to the creation of any venture (Johnstone & Lionais, 2004). Furthermore, Hewlett & Luce stated that the support offered by the family in the form of providing resources (along with making them able to gain knowledge) serves in providing the women with encouragement during the venture development process. This phenomenon is referred as 'family social-capital'

(Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Concerning Saudi women, Ahmad indicated that they tend to manage their internal resources to get sustainable advantages (Ahmad, 2011). Similar to Danish and Smith stated that the women are also given the support by the family in terms of finances, which in turn help them in obtaining other external funding sources (Danish & Smith, 2012). Dechant and Al-Lamkyin their study about women entrepreneurs in the Arab world claim that the family of a woman entrepreneur in Oman and Bahrain unreservedly offers the labour support needed for the creation of a venture because of the feeling of responsibility towards the family and without expecting anything in return (Dechant & Al Lamky, 2005). An important question can be asked here, which is what about the other resources such as social capital, and information? What are the other type resources Saudi women entrepreneurs acquires and have access to through their social network?. Yet, as a result of research scarcity about women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia, the information regarding their entrepreneurship process and activities is so poor and shallow.

The Untapped Potential of Saudi Women's Entrepreneurship

It has been considered that today the Saudi women are actively attempting to take part in the workforce, along with holding either secondary qualification or university degree. Moreover, in 2006 a total of 57 percent women secured their graduate degrees (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). Thus, it can be said that this rising number of women in education is one of the major factors in the increase of female participation in the labour force. Alturki and Braswell also depicted that women form 30 percent of government employees, and that 95 percent of Saudi women are working in the public sectors. However, it is studied that these women working in the public sectors are active, educated females. In addition to this, about 85 per cent of women are in education, both teaching and administrative positions (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). In the midst of these there are also educated and active women who tend to manage their own business. It is found that these business women engage themselves in different entrepreneurial activities, thus contributing to the development of the economy (Dincer, Hussain, & Al-Zaharnah, 2004).

According to Bradley the business fields in which Saudi women tend to indulge are both registered and unregistered businesses (Bradley, 2010). The businesses that come under the head of registered business are based on art and fashion. These arts and fashion based business involve jewellery, interior designing and photography. Also within this realm comes the ownership of salons. The women are also involved in retail and wholesale businesses.

They tend to offer professional services such as consulting services and also provide event managing facilities. The unregistered businesses are the ones that include home products. These home products take into account specialized food products and handicrafts (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

According to Alturki and Braswell, it has been estimated that 72.6 percent of businesses that the Saudi women operate are unregistered, whereas, 70.8 percent of the registered business are being operated outside the home. Moreover, 99 percent of all the registered businesses by Saudi women are being operated in Riyadh alone (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). However the registered businesses in Jeddah and the Eastern province also operate in other cities in the Kingdom. Alturki and Braswell, further, state that registered businesses employ three times as contrasted with unregistered business, i.e. on the average 19 employees in registered businesses as to 6 employees in unregistered businesses.

Besides, in registered business, there are about 8 percent of unpaid employees whereas this percentage ranges to 30.6 percent of unregistered businesses. Also, there are Saudi women who work as volunteers (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). It has been stated that there is no trend for unpaid female employment in Saudi Arabia. In fact, 85 percent of the businesses do not have unpaid workers (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

In addition to this, coming on the involvement of Saudi females in international trade, it has been estimated most female businesses are not actively involved in international trade. According to statistics, 21.3 percent of the registered businesswomen and only 12.9 percent of unregistered businesswomen indulge in importing of goods and services (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). As opposed to this, Alturki and Braswell found that only 4.5 percent of the registered businesswomen and 1.6 percent of unregistered businesswomen are involved in importing and exporting (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

Saudi women entrepreneurs' access to capital is explained according to the reports of Alturki and Braswell, since they find that most business women venture into business through their own personal savings, and when any further capital is needed the financial help is offered by the family and friends; rolling out external finances (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). Friends and family are sources of great help. In fact, it is the main source for business advice when Saudi women tend to make business decisions. The need for business advice is important because of the Saudi women's unfamiliarity with financial and business tools

(Alturki & Braswell, 2010). It has been estimated that 54 percent of the women do not conduct any feasibility plan before they start any new business. Moreover, 23 percent do not approve of feasibility plans because they consider it to be an unnecessary luxury, and such plans are only required in starting with large ventures. However, 21 percent of the women do not even have the concept of feasibility plan (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

In addition, despite of the intensive use of technology in Saudi society, it is found that with the growing interest in the field of science and technology, the Saudi female entrepreneurs have come to realize that technology and marketing have a huge impact on their business operations. Even though they are mindful of this, Alturki and Braswell found that yet 56 percent of the registered women and 63 percent of the unregistered women are operating their business without having an official website (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

So, in spite of all the efforts carried by the Saudi government so far, and the advancement and progress Saudi women achieved, they still underrepresented in entrepreneurship. The economic potential of Saudi women is still untapped. So, what holds them back? What are the obstacles constraint their participation in entrepreneurship? These missing answers for these questions can be found if the discussion of Saudi women entrepreneurs involves the socio-political and cultural structure of their economics. Thus, more information can be obtained about the constraints associated with their social context and hinder their entrepreneurial activities such as networking and resources acquisition.

Resource acquisition for Saudi women entrepreneurs:

Saudi female entrepreneurs face difficulties in acquiring adequate resources for their entrepreneurial activities. Gender inequality, gender stereotyping, lack of women's rights, social and cultural taboos for women and orthodox and fundamentalist religious value system prevent women from developing entrepreneurial networking to acquire adequate resources for their business.

It has been noted that women entrepreneurs have less starting capital compared to men (Verheul & Thurik, 2001; Brush, 1992) and they have minimal access to external financing. Saudi women are facing similar problems. According to the report of (IFC, 2007), gender bias exists in Middle Eastern societies and women in Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, face difficulties in the acquisition of capital and resources. According to Alturki & Braswell, 82.2% registered business women rely upon personal savings, instead of

external acquisition of capital and financing. In addition, 12.9% seek loans from relative and friends. Saudi women have not yearned technological resources. Their business is based on traditional technological systems. For instance, 55.9%-registered business women do not have their own website. Unregistered businesspersons are even higher at percentage, which is accounted for 62.9% (Alturki & Braswell, 2010).

Interestenglty, it has been found by Alturki and Braswell that, Saudi women entrepreneurs promote their business through word of mouth, brochures, and leaflets for their marketing. Moreover, marketing is not considered appropriate for women in conservative Saudi culture. Financial institutions are hesitant to provide financial capital to women. Gender bias is one of the major issues alongside lack of education and presumed inferior financial management (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). The majority of the women relies upon family support, savings and re-investment of earning from their ventures. So, the questions that would be asked here is: is this enough to reach big market and customers in order to increase business revenue, and subsequently business stability and success? Concerning this issue, the literature indicates that entrepreneurial success requires effective marketing efforts among these activities developing effective entrepreneurial network. So, again this raises the questions of how Saudi women entrepreneurs' network? What are the factors affecting their networking activities in the Saudi context? And How gender shapes their entrepreneurial activities and networking.

Research findings in similar contexts, reveals that 8% women in UAE and 5% in Jordan perceive that gender is a main impediment to the acquisition of finance or capital, from financial institutions. Moreover, the success rate for a proposal request for capital acquisition is minimal. The findings of the same survey further reveal that women have less access to entrepreneurial training and development. At the national level, there is a need to provide opportunities, of training and development, for entrepreneurial women (Doumato & Posusney, 2003).

So, what about women entrepreneurs in the Saudi context, how gender shapes Saudi women entrepreneurial activities? Lavelle and Al Shiekh, assert that Saudi women face a unique set of gender-specific obstacles that hinder their participation in the field of entrepreneurship (Lavelle & Sheikh, 2013, p. 3). In addition, they face many other challenges regarding business licensing, procedures and regulation, bureaucracy and centralized government structure. Moreover, women restricted mobility, lack of support services and

financial resources; affect the ability of Saudi women entrepreneurs to access sufficient entrepreneurial resources. However, improvements are under way to introduce marketing and technology in entrepreneurship. Financing mechanism is also under consideration, despite of capital acquisition problems, for women. Resources, which Saudi women entrepreneurs have an access to are education, family, time to manage corporate. However, these resources are limited to those Saudi women, who are entrepreneurs. Average Saudi women still have challenges (Alturki & Braswell, 2010). So, the questions that one would ask here are: how average Saudi women get access to different resources required to start up her enterprise? What are the issues surrounding them and influences their abilities to access to proper resources? How they overcome these obstacles? These questions are required to be further investigated to gain more understanding of women's entrepreneurship status in Saudi Arabia.

In summation, by reviewing the existing body of literature, it has been noted that, the majority of the existing research is men-oriented and contributed to the lack of knowledge and gender inequity in the area of women entrepreneurship. Accordingly, entrepreneurial activities of women entrepreneurs are to a large extent still under-researched. Thus a new research direction in the women entrepreneurship from a resources based view is highly demanded. This is to conquer inequality and the gender gap in entrepreneurship, and help women entrepreneurs overcome these obstacles. Also, more research is required in order to provide more information about women entrepreneurs in other contexts and explore their institutional orders, cultures, gender roles and other socio-cultural issues that affect entrepreneurship activities, particularly in respect to women entrepreneurs.

Moreover, it has been found that knowledge about entrepreneurship in general and women entrepreneurs in particular, are largely driven from the Anglo-Saxon research prospective and western societies. For instance, it has been noticed that since the mid-1970s in the USA and the mid-1980's in the UK, great number of academic articles have been addressing female entrepreneurs and the issue of women and business ownership. However, the amount of data available for female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia as an example remains scarce (Carter, Anderson, & Shaw, 2001). Notably, Arabian countries and societies have different institutional order, family polices, cultures, and traditions; in particular Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, this resulted in different expectations about men and women's roles in the society. Thus, implementing their entrepreneurship models, knowledge, explanations, and

policy recommendations are not applicable in Arabian societies and more likely in the Saudi context.

In addition, the previous discussion raised numbers of questions, which are: how average Saudi women get access to different resources required to start up her enterprise? What is the impact of social class and other social divisions on their ability to access resources? How the social, political, and cultural structures influence their abilities to access to proper resources? How they overcome these obstacles? What Saudi women entrepreneurs do to reach big market and customers in order to increase business revenue, and subsequently business stability and success? This, consequently, leads to the questions of how Saudi women entrepreneurs' network? And what are the factors affecting their networking activities in the Saudi context? How gender interacted with the other social cultural factors and how they affected their entrepreneurial network? As a result of the current lack of knowledge in the area of women entrepreneurs' activities such as networking and resources acquisition, this study attempts to contribute to the existing literature by focusing on and exploring female entrepreneurial networking process and activities in the Saudi context in order to discover the patterns of their network dynamics Subsequently, the next chapter discusses in detail the intersectional approach in women entrepreneurship research in an attempt to understand the social structural context of the Middle East in general and Saudi Arabia in particular to shed the light the status of Saudi women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

This chapter reviews the information and research in the entrepreneurship, resources based view and women entrepreneurs. It is found that there is no one definition of entrepreneurship. Each definition describes entrepreneurship from a different prospective view, where some define it in terms of the risk bearing entailed starting up an enterprise. Some others define it in respect to the entrepreneurs' characteristics and skills that lead to entrepreneurial activities, however, other scholars define it as the economic activities that are carried out by individuals or groups of individuals to produce goods and activities that yield profits. Based on the resources in this study, entrepreneurship is defined as the mobilisation of resources, labour, financial, human and social capital, in a profitable market exchange (Jayawarna, Rouse, & Macpherson, 2014).

In addition, a review of the women entrepreneurs and their involvement in the entrepreneurship shows that the number of female entrepreneurs is growing dramatically worldwide and more women are motivated to start up their own enterprises. Evidence from the literature shows that there are many reasons for women's involvement in entrepreneurship, which can be summarised in the famous "push and pull factors" provided by McMullen, Bagby, and Palich. In addition, the review presented a number of the obstacles and barriers facing the female entrepreneurs, which include lack of financial resources, lack of support, lack of self-confidence, gender stereotyping, in addition to lack of networks and ability to access business information and resources.

A review of Saudi women entrepreneurs' status in the Saudi context also has been discussed, indicating that, unlike other women, Saudi women's entrepreneurship is not driven out by poverty, and instead it is mainly driven by their wealth and entrepreneurial knowledge and family background. However, Saudi women are not only facing the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs all over the world, but these difficulties and hurdles have doubled by sex segregation and social-cultural structure of their conservative society in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the role of gender, class, religion and feminism in women entrepreneurship in the Middle East will be discussed in details in the next chapter.

Finally, it is noted that despite the enormous amount of research published in the area of entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurs, the vast majority has been conducted in USA, North America and UK regions. There are still a scarcity of research on women entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and more specifically Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study is meant to fill the knowledge gap and provide more understanding of the female entrepreneur's practices and activities in the Saudi context.

Chapter 3— an Intersectional Approach to Entrepreneurship in the Middle East: Gender, Class, Ethnicity, and Religion

I desire only to know the truth, and to live as well as I can...And, to the utmost of my power, I exhort all other men to do the same...I exhort you also to take part in the great combat, which is the combat of life, and greater than every other earthly conflict.

Socrates (469 - 399 BC)

Introduction

The role of social structure is much-discussed topic in gender studies. Recently, within the feminist theory, it is becoming commonplace to claim that women's lives are constructed by several interacted systems of oppression (Carastathis, 2014).

Social structure such as the cultural value system plays an important role in religion, culture, and class intersection with gender. Study of (Forson, 2013) is important in this regard. She talked about barriers faced by women, which stem from the complex social structure of the society. Domestic burden, gender stereotyping, ethnic minority and male domination are those factors, which augment Intersectionality for women entrepreneurship. 'Intersectionality relates to the way in which 'multiple forms of subordination interlink and compound to result in a multiple burden' (Crenshaw, 1989, Kanyoro 2001). Hence the concept of intersectionality is identified by Ritzer as "the view that women experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity. And Collins adds that Cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society, examples of this include race, gender, class, ability, and ethnicity" (Ritzer, 2013, p. 204; Collins, 2000, p. 42). In her study, Forson has also focused on gender, race and class, and she has found that these are interconnected factors, which pose challenges to women, who desire to penetrate economic or corporate realm.

Religion, class, and ethnic culture values are important elements in this regard. In the Islamic countries, particularly, in Saudi Arabia, intertwining between religious and cultural value system poses significant gender issues and adversely affects the appropriateness of women entrepreneurship (Alexandre-Leclair, 2014). Prevailing set of ethnic values, beliefs and expected behaviours affect the conduct of business in the country. There are diverse

ethnic groups in Saudi Arabia, which have different origins, such as Libya, Yemen, Jordan, and Pakistani. In addition to gender and ethnicity, the Saudi society, it subdivided further, according to class, social power, and nationality.

However, ethnic value system is similar with respect to diverse ethnic groups. Women are particularly affected. In Saudi Arabia, ethnic culture is conservative (Moghadam, 2003; Zuhur, 2012) and cultural value system does not encourage participation of women in business. Entrepreneurial activity, for women, is perceived inappropriate. Women are considered a symbol of honour and it is the primary obligation of a male to earn, whereas, the principal obligation of a woman is to stay at home and manage domestic affairs.

In Saudi Arabia religion, class, and culture have a significant and relevant role in shaping gender stereotyping. Women in Saudi Arabia are victims of mis-practicing religion and cultural values, imposed or emerged in the society (Rasheed, 2013). Tribal culture and religious value system, in the country, have deeply affected women, of various occupations, whether it is political, social or economic sector. Religion, class and ethnic cultural values construct the social structure, and influence the role of a woman, in the society.

Gender discrimination, in terms of gender segregation, inequality and low participation in education, employment, and entrepreneurship, has its roots in structural arrangement of the society, which stems from a complicated interaction between religion and cultural values. According to Dy (2014), social structure of the society gives rise to inequality and augments intersectionality. Class, gender and racial differences play an important role in this regard. Distribution and allocation of power are affected by such differences, consequently women get less share of power, in societal-political-economic order. These factors, in their intense form, prevail in Saudi Arabian society. Saudi society is a male dominant society, and power is harnessed by men.

According to Bradley (2007), political and economic aspects of the society also affect gender differences and promote intersectionality. Women participation, in political and economic landscape, in Saudi Arabia, is minimal. Political and economic structure of the country is dominated by male, and family owned governance prevails since the country came into being. She further stated that, despite the existence of feminist movements, gender

inequality exists and structural and power distribution in the society affects gender inter-sectionality.

Majority of businesses is run by male members of the family. Women are provided low fewer opportunities in employment and business activities. They face difficulties in financing their entrepreneurial activities and obtaining training and development. Society and culture have assigned different roles to male and female. According to Risman (2004), women's subordination differs with racial and ethical communities in the society. Ethnic differentiation emerges from class dynamics.

Bradley (2007) also studied how the role of a gender is shaped in a society, and discusses the role of feminism in this regard. Cultural cues and religion play important role in constructing, performing and enacting gender in the society. Women are methodically obliged to live under male authority and domestic violence exists, which restricts women access to the resources. Gender intersectionality affects multiple social intersections, such as sexual identity and cultural aspects of the society.

Feminism Perspective of Women Entrepreneurship:

Women entrepreneurship is a burning topic today. In today's fast, dynamic and challenging business environment, the role of women entrepreneurship is very important. A large number of women are breaking themselves free from traditions and gender specific roles and setting up their own business. They are holding critical positions in the corporate world as well as successfully leading their own ventures. There are several reasons behind women's participation in entrepreneurship. Philanthropic causes, becoming an owner of self-business, implementation of their ideas are one of the few reasons (Clinton, 2012).

Despite the steady increase in women's participation in entrepreneurship, challenges are equally being faced. These challenges include, but not limited to sex discrimination, lack of availability of financial assets and capital, business networking, job flexibility and business growth (Kelan, 2014). Western societies also face such challenges; however, the intensity of such challenges is low as compare to Middle Eastern societies (Aljazeera, 2012). Reason behind is women empowerment, better situation of human rights and strong feminism movements. Besides that, the role of high literacy rate and less influence of religion on social life are also important factors.

In the Middle East, entrepreneurship is regarded as a male dominated field. Middle East is attributed with traditional gender role society. Power distance and social inequalities exist in the society. Women participation in entrepreneurship is not common and difficult to be accepted socially. Culture of Saudi Arabia is also heavily patriarchal and male dominated society and women are provided fewer opportunities to participate in different occupations including entrepreneurship.

Role of Gender, Religion, Class and feminism on Entrepreneurship in Middle Eastern societies:

Entrepreneurial networking plays an important role in success of the venture. Entrepreneur has to manage monetary and non-monetary resources for the business. Financial, human, capital and technological resources are required to manage diverse business activities. Such arrangements require lots of effort and market relationships. For that purpose, entrepreneurship has to keep diverse business relations, whether customers, suppliers or other stakeholders. Gender, religion and feminism are regarded as major factors, which affect entrepreneurial networking (Stewart & McDermott, 2005; Mccall, 2005). The effect of these factors on entrepreneurial networking in the Middle East is severe. Women are not encouraged to make participation in business.

Gender inequality exists and radical religious beliefs exist in the society, which prevents such practices, which empower women. The majority of the industrial sector is looked after and managed by males instead of women. Women participation is extremely low. Feminism is not promoted and lack of equal opportunities exists in terms of women education and employment. It is not considered as taboo for women to take part in social activities of life such as education, business and sports. The majority of the women stays at home prefer to look after household activities.

Even those women, who acquire education, are less likely to enter the professional career, where they can utilize their acquired knowledge, skills and abilities. In such a situation, the importance of gender, religion and feminism is important to evaluate in Middle Eastern society. These factors are discussed below in detail.

Gender's role in entrepreneurship in the Middle East

In order to understand the role of gender in entrepreneurship, one should first understand the concept of 'gender'. Gender is a term used extensively to conceptualise individuals' masculinity and femininity behaviour within the social context. (Kennelly, Merz, & Lorber, 2001). Lober defines gender as "a process of social construction, a system of social stratification, and an institution that structures every aspect of our lives because of its embeddedness in the family, the workplace, and the state, as well as in sexuality, language, and culture" (Lorber, 1994, p. 5). Based on social constructed practices view, Martine, also views gender as " a social structure and related practices with a history that entails opportunities and constraints and a plethora of meanings, expectation, actions/behaviours, resources, identities, and discourses that are fluid and shifting yet robust and persists" (Martine, 2003, p. 244). Accordingly, these feminists view gender as a dominant basis for social differentiation, whilst, these differences are elaborated by the interaction with class, ethnicity, and race.

Thence, according to Yuval-Davies, identities are based on collective and individual narratives and practices (Yuval-Davis, 2006). These narratives have been told and transmitted from a generation to another to tell people who they are, and their positions in the societies. These narratives do not just identify people's belonging to particular groupings or collectivises, but also construct and stereotype individuals' characteristics, body image, vocational aspirations, and sexuality (Yuval-Davis, 2006). That is social construction is the notion that people's understanding of reality is partially, if not fully, socially situated. Thence, gender is not static and varies across time and space (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2005, p. 1). Gender practised, perceived and experienced by women differently from place to another and from society to another. Gender therefore is a social practice demonstrated in performance (Butler J. , 1990).

As discussed previously, Entrepreneurship is seen not just as an economic activity, but also as social-cultural process embedded in social relationships and activities. That is, it is also embedded in gender practices and perceptions. Consequently, as Burni, Gherardi, and Poggio advocate, "a gender analysis of entrepreneurship differs from an analysis of women entrepreneurs because it examines the way in which gender is culturally constructed by those social practices that constitute the social phenomenon of entrepreneurship, without assuming a full correspondence between gender on the one hand, and men and women on the other"

(Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2005, p. 4). In other words, in order to achieve gender equality and women empowerment, Study of entrepreneurship should not just focus on studying gender differences between women and men; instead it should focus on studying gender as practiced within entrepreneurship and the society. Thence, gender differences, inequalities emerge from relational processes that consisted of the interactive and discursive practices of everyday life.

Whereas gender equality does not mean that men and women become identical, it claims equality between men and women in valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. This, Winker & Degele, (2011) suggest that inequality in gender leads to injustice. Moreover, when gender interacts with other form of inequality, it gets more severe (Benschop & Doorewaard, 2012). Gender inequality exists in Middle Eastern societies. Societies are considered as male dominant, particularly Saudi Arabian culture is explicitly based on strict gender differences. Lack of opportunities to participate in employment and social activities leads to sever from of gender discrimination (Acker, 2012; Anthias, 1998). Author further stated that gender inequality exists even with organizational change.

Although Arab societies are being changed with respect to gender differences and inequalities, women's liberty to participate in business, education and employment are still a matter of concern. According to the report published by the World Bank (2012), all Middle Eastern countries are attributed with fewer women's rights as compare to men. Even if women have fewer economic opportunities and legal rights, they tend to decline with marriage. Such condition poses barriers for women to enter in entrepreneurship. If they do succeed to enter their own business, they face difficulties to establish a proper network necessary for the growth of the venture.

Another issue related to gender is lack of job flexibility. Balance between work and professional life is an important element associated with gender. Women have to share time with family to look after children and household. The findings of the survey conducted by "The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research" reveals that half of the women in the survey reported that work life balance is a major issue in Middle Eastern societies. Despite challenges related to gender, however, women business owners in Middle East regarded gender as a net positive instead of an obstacle to entrepreneurship.

graph 9: In General, Gender Seen as a Net Positive Among Women Surveyed

Country	Net negative	No difference/NA	Net positive
Jordan	7	43	50
Lebanon	11	43	46
UAE	7	56	38
Tunisia	7	58	35
Bahrain	2	79	19

Percent
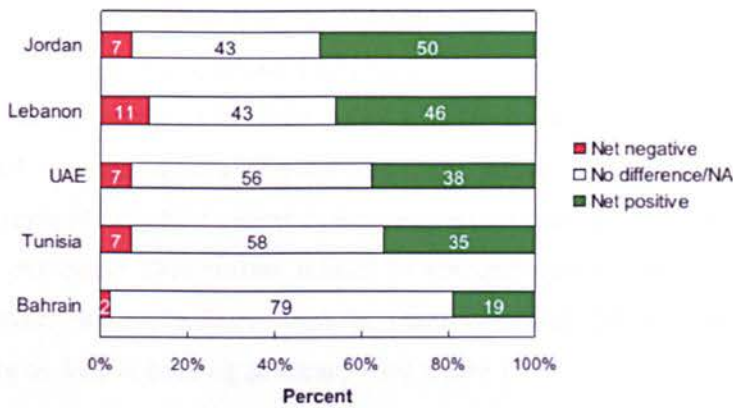
Figure 3: Women perception about gender as an impediment for entrepreneurship

The survey further reveals that although the majority of the women engaged in entrepreneurial activities are educated, however, they entered in entrepreneurship between the age of 35 and 54 (IFC, 2007). This tendency shows that entrepreneurship at early stages is less likely to be favourable for women. Women in mature age have more opportunities and favourable circumstances to overcome gender based challenges and can initiate entrepreneurship. The majority of the women surveyed are married which indicates that they have to look after their families as well and job flexibility is an issue to effectively pursue entrepreneurial activities.

Women themselves do not regard gender as an issue for themselves to pursue entrepreneurship, however, complex social structure inhibit their participation in business and pursuing new avenues whether it is politics, economics, sport or entrepreneurship. Women are perceived to stay at home and look after household instead of going outside for business.

The majority of the women in the Middle Eastern countries are willing to increase their entrepreneurship activities and participation. However, the major hurdle is regarding access to proper training and development. Women are provided with less training and development opportunities as compared to males. It is considered difficult for women to access training opportunities. At the national level, there is no substantial arrangement for training and development for women. Majority of the women are willing to expand their entrepreneurial network, however, lack of training and development activities prevent them to expand business or remain at current level of entrepreneurship.

In 2007, Center of Arab Women for training and research conducted a research study with the collaboration of the international finance corporation, which is a group of World Bank. Results reveal that women who were willing to expand their business were high in percentage as compared to those whose intentions were to main current size of the business. Responses were collected on an average rating scale from one to five from the women to assess their need for training and development. The ratings indicate that majority of the women from diverse Middle East countries were agreed upon the need for training helpful for entrepreneurial expansion Dimensions related to entrepreneurial training include learning about new markets and technology, trips to other countries, business management and financial training as well as training advocacy (See figure 1).
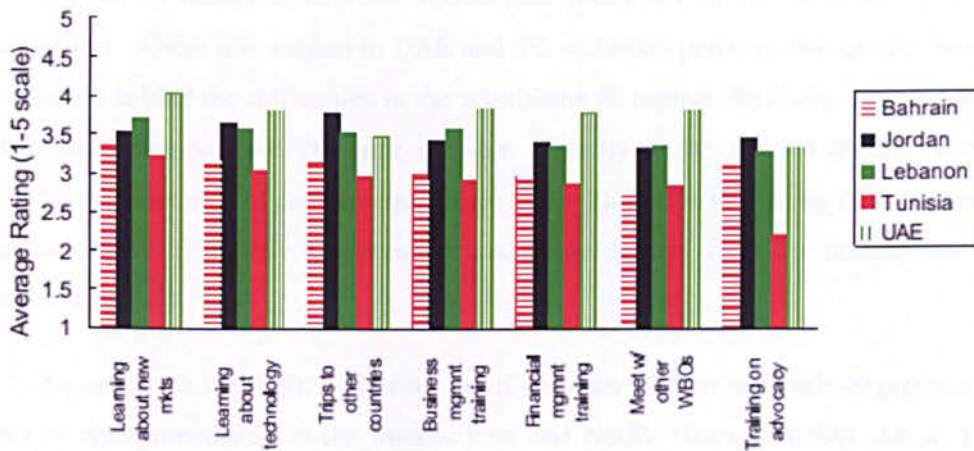
Figure 4: Women desire for entrepreneurial training with respect to different Middle Eastern countries (Source: International finance Corporation, 2007)

Gender bias and lack of access to capital resources

Gender bias exists which affects capital sourcing. Financial institutions are reluctant to fulfil capital requirement of women. Women owned small and medium enterprises face difficulties in acquiring small and medium term loans. Lack of education in women, gender bias and lower level of financial management are the key reason in this regard. Gender problem also poses threats to acquisition of finance and capital for their entrepreneurial business. Women have difficulties to acquire capital and they mostly rely on business earning and personal sources of savings. These sources include savings, reinvestment of business earning, family and friends.
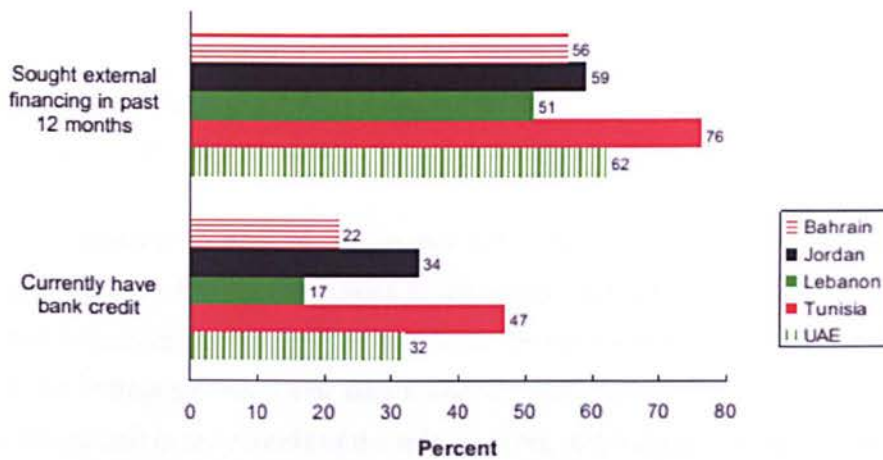
Figure 5: Success rate of acquisition of external financing

The survey further reveals that women face difficulty in the acquisition of capital due to gender bias. About 8% women in UAE and 5% in Jordan perceive that gender bias is the major reason behind the difficulties in the acquisition of capital. Similarly, 2% of women in Bahrain and Lebanon have the same opinion. Majority of the women do not succeed in successful consideration of capital request (see figure 2). In 2013, working draft presented by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reveals interesting information.

According to the draft, wide Gap exists between women and male engagement with respect to entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). About 12% of women are working as entrepreneurship as compared to a ratio of 31% for male. It is difficult to estimate the number of registered small and medium businesses held by women. It is reported that fewer than 7% of small and medium firms are owned by women. Moreover, top female managers, account for only 1% (OECD, 2013).

Activity rate	Early stage (nascent &new ventures) (TEA)	Established business stage (>3.5 years)	Total
Female	8.5	3.65	12.15
Male	18.4	12.93	31.13

Figure 6: Entrepreneurial activity rates with respect to gender in MNEA region (Source: OECD, 2013)

Gender difference also affects entrepreneurial activity. Majority of the established ventures are operated by males and women's participation is low. An OECD survey

investigated that entrepreneurial activity rate for women at initial stages of entrepreneurship is accounted for 8.5% as compared to males, which is 18.4%. Similarly, wide difference exists in an established stage of entrepreneurship. Women participation is 3.65% and male participation is 12.15% (See figure 4).

The promotion policies of the women are remaining unsustainable due to gender biasness and create challenges for women in the entrepreneurship programs. The gender gap in the entrepreneurship recognizes the problems for the women's that how to imitate the process of the entrepreneurship and take initiatives (Ashcraft & Flores, 2003). The social change is recognized in the context of the reframe work of gender gap in the entrepreneurship (Vossenberg, 2013).
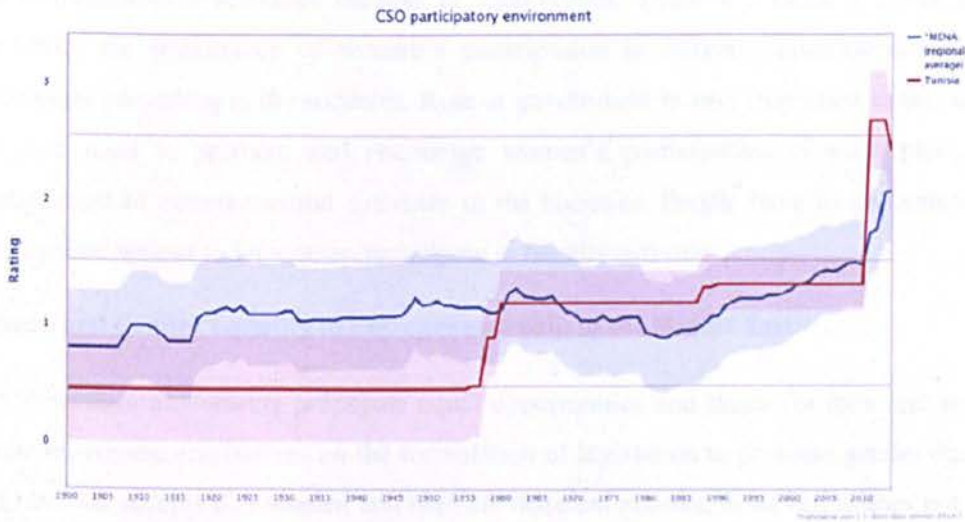
Figure 7: the determination power of the women in the MENA region and Tunisia (Source: https://v-dem.net/DemoComp/en/news-publications/graphs, 2015)

As the graph above shows that, the determination power of the women in the entrepreneurship is that elaborates the stability in the democracy and freedom of the community. This shows that the empowerment is recognized to gain, the more social, economic power sustainability in the country. Since 1990 between 1955, the sustainability has been recognized in the CSO participatory environment in Tunisia. The result of MNEA shows that rise of participatory environment. The results of the Tunisia are one of the major democratic successes and have a high level of regional mean.

Gender and Honour Issues in the Middle East and Entrepreneurship

In Middle Eastern societies, it is not perceived honourable for women to go outside the home for earning. It is perceived that it is the duty of the male household to look after the business or source of earning. When women go outside the home, it is perceived that male members of the house are not fulfilling their obligation towards earning and sending their women outside the home. It is against the honour of the family and males that their women are going outside of the house (Offenhauer, 2005).

Moreover, it is not considered acceptable that women work among males at work place. It is somewhat considered as taboo in Middle Eastern societies. A considerable number of women are working outside; however, the majority of the women have limited avenues to pursue entrepreneurial activities because of such taboos. There is a need to make people aware about the importance of women's participation in different occupation and false honour issues prevailing in the societies. Role of government is very important in this regard. There is a need to promote and encourage women's participation at work places and encouragement of entrepreneurial activities in the societies. People have to understand that it's not against honour to let women participate in healthy activities.

Feminism and Gender Equality in Entrepreneurship in the Middle East

Feminism movements propagate equal opportunities and status for men and women. Feminist movement emphasizes on the formulation of legislation to promote gender equality. Social feminist accepts that women and men are different entities; however, it does not mean that women are inferior to men. Previous studies in entrepreneurship have compared both genders on socialized basis and indicated that although gender differences exist, but it has little impact on business performance of both men and women (Carastathis, 2014). Feminist movements in Middle Eastern societies are in the infancy stage. Currently only gender is the focus of concern. There is need to investigate the issue related to femininity with inclusion in Intersectionality (Davis, 2008).

According to Mccall (2005), although feminist raise voices for all women across the globe, gender difference is the only dimension of analysis. Instead, there is need to include more dimension which is a matter of concern in feminist research. Intersectionality addresses such differences and considered as one of the most important aspect in feminist research.

This is needed to be studied on broad spectrum. Research on feminism in this perspective is limited.

Winker & Degele, (2011) referred a study conducted by Bilge (2010) and stated that, postcolonial critiques and liberal feminism did not essentially explore about why women put veil. There is a need to assess why women put a veil beyond race, class or gender as contributing factors. Majority of the women attributed veil with modesty, morality, divinity and virtue.

Feminism movement in the Middle East is not strong as compare to west. During late 1980s, feminism in the Middle East and North Africa gained popularity in international debate. Islamic feminism is kind of feminism associated with the role of women in Islam. Islamic feminism propagates full equality of women, regardless of gender, age, race public and private life. Although Islamic feminism has been prevailing in the Middle East, its influence is gradually increasing over time.

The problem still exists for female entrepreneurs to start their own venture. Feminism is considered as a powerful source in the Middle East for entrepreneurship. Feminism can contribute to both financial and economic benefits in terms of paving the way for entrepreneurship. Feminism also positively affects the social life of women in the Middle East. Feminism is getting popular, particularly in youth in the Middle East. Feminism is not only necessary for independence but for self-actualization as well (Hancock, 2007; McKenna, 2009). Moreover, feminism incorporates a sense of responsibility, which is beyond the immediate family and self.

Such traits are highly favourable for female entrepreneurship. Independence and self-actualization in women is important for setting up their own business. Young women in Middle Eastern societies make sense of their professional experience as compared to the older generation. Social structure, which prevails in Middle Eastern societies, sets the basis for success for women. Women are less common to participate in business, education, employment and sports because of complex social structure in terms of gender inequality, age differences and societal taboos.

Kelan (2014) described that, gender inequality belongs to the previous generation and its roots are deeply inherited from the past. He further stated that, social structures of the societies are responsible for Intersectionality in feminism. Young people have different

approach regarding their perception about human rights in the society. Carastathis (2014) talked about feminism and explained that Intersectionality is integral part of feminism. Feminism deep roots, its origin in black women struggle for equality. Moreover, Intersectionality comes from societal oppression of women to take part in various social activities, whether it is education, sports or entrepreneurship.

Feminism is essential for women entrepreneurship because it balances the desire for social equity and economic growth. Empowerment not only comes from social equity, but from a strong economic position as well (Winker & Degele, 2011). Entrepreneurial women feel themselves more empowered. Feminism movement is attributed with female empowerment. Lack of femininity and its popularity ultimately affected female empowerment (On international women's day 2015, report was published by Variety of Democracy (V-Dem) on women's rights in MNEA).

Findings indicate that women empowerment is getting better in the region; however, substantial efforts are required to further improve women rights and empowerment (Mechkova, Andersson, Sundström, & Alijla, 2015). The situation was being improved since the 1960s and 1970s. These were the periods when feminism was at infancy stage in the Middle East. Feminism was considered as taboo in Middle Eastern societies.

For the time being, feminism was getting popular which exerted positive influence over women empowerment. During the eras of 1940s and 1950s, women empowerment was considered as extremely low. From the period 1960s until 2000, women empowerment was a bit stagnant; however, increasing trend is being shown after 2010. Feminism movement is suppressed in Saudi Arabia, which has affected women empowerment. The graph indicates that women empowerment is extremely low in Saudi Arabia (See figure 5).

Female empowerment index
Development for selected countries
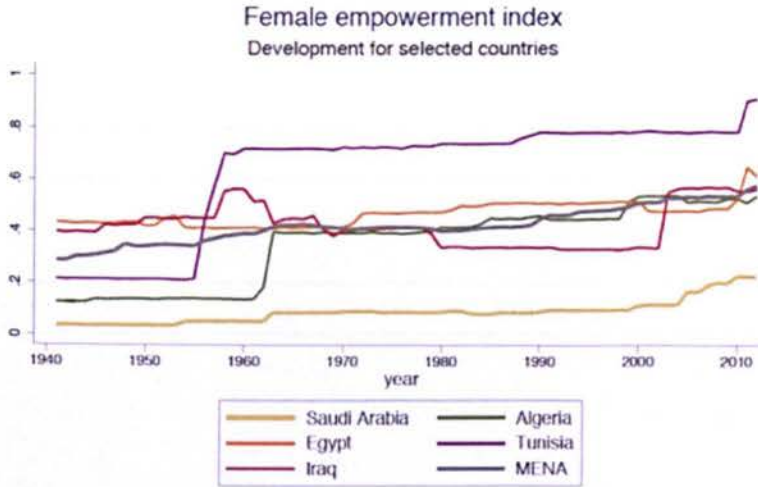
Figure 8: Female empower index for diverse countries in the Middle East (source: V-Dem) on women's rights in MNEA, 2015)

Another reason behind oppression against feminism in Middle Eastern societies is power. Apart from social construction, which inhibits women's participation in political, social and economic matter, power sharing is another phenomenon. Male dominant culture of Middle Eastern societies restricts women's involvement in political, social and economic fields. If women contribute in social, economic and political matters of the country, then power sharing takes places.

Author Hancock (2007) emphasis on the same issue and explains about the black community, particularly black women struggle to gain power. Black community has a history of struggle for power sharing and equal rights. Although, women are involved in political, legal, social, and economic fields in Arab countries, however their participation is limited (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Oppression comes from fundamental and radical elements of the society. They have a fear that women's participation will lead to power sharing. They have to let women participate in important decision in economy and politics. Such power sharing is not acceptable in a male dominant culture.

Women participation could challenge their status quo. Perception prevails that women are inferior intellectually and able to perform in diverse occupations. This is the responsibility of the women to take care of household and family. Male has a legitimate right to handle important matters of the society, whether it is politics, economics, education or politics. Al-Huwiedar, a Saudi feminist described the male patriarchal domination and women oppression in Saudi society saying that: "Men control all aspects of women's lives from the day they're

66

born until the day they die," (Keyes, 2013). In 2010, in continues of her efforts, she tried to push the Unites States to use its political power to enforce gender equality in Saudi Arabia by writing a letter to president Obama describing the status of Saudi women, saying that: "As I'm watching the Gulf of Mexico, birds which are totally covered with black oil stain—I can relate to their suffering as a Saudi woman. These birds can hardly move: they have no control over their lives, and they cannot fly freely to go to a place where they can feel safe. This describes Saudi women's lives. I know that kind of pain. I have been living it most of my life." (Keyes, 2013). Yuval-Davis (2011), talked about power, politics and intersectionality in feminism perspective. Power struggle and politics escalate intersectioanlity in feminism. Power sharing gives rise to politics.

Islamic political groups are achieving political gains in East elections. Meanwhile, women feminist regimes are struggling to achieve equality. Feminist groups are thinking about secular or Islamic feminist agenda to pursue. Their major agenda is to attain a foothold in the economic, political and social landscape. Various feminist groups in Saudi Arabia, Behrain and Yemen are struggling to set their own feminist path. Feminist groups are active to evacuate women from domestic violence, violence from extremist military groups and harassments.

Moreover, they are struggling for equal rights in employments, education and entrepreneurship. Two forms of Femist groups exist in the society. Secular and Islamic feminists. Secular feminists are willing to pursue west form of feminism. However, Islamic feminists are willing to pursue Islamic doctrine in their movements. Agenda for both feminist groups are same as to fight for women's rights. However, the majority of the women are willing to pursue Islamic feminism instead of secular. Secular feminism is attributed with loosing morals, ethics and family values (Aljazeera, 2012).

Feminist groups are intended to pursue power sharing from men to take part in politics and economics. Feminist union of Egypt is power platform for feminists. It has gone through ban for 60 years. It is still facing problems from different political groups. For instance, Muslim Brotherhood's Justice has taken an aggressive stand on the feminist party in Egypt. Such situation is a hurdle in empowering women. Islamic feminism faced set back after 9/11 incident. It was hard to pursue Islamic feminist beliefs after 9/11.

According to V-Dem report 2015, it has been noted that 'the worst situation in terms of women's empowerment in the MENA region is found in Saudi Arabia. Gender inequality is here an official doctrine and the country has been frequently accused of gross violations of women's rights by international organizations' (Mechkova, Andersson, Sundström, & Alijla, 20015). However, the same report shows in the graph below (figure: 9), a slight increase in women empowerment in Saudi Arabia due to the significant increase in women's property rights recently in Saudi Arabia compared to the near past (Mechkova, Andersson, Sundström, & Alijla, 20015) .
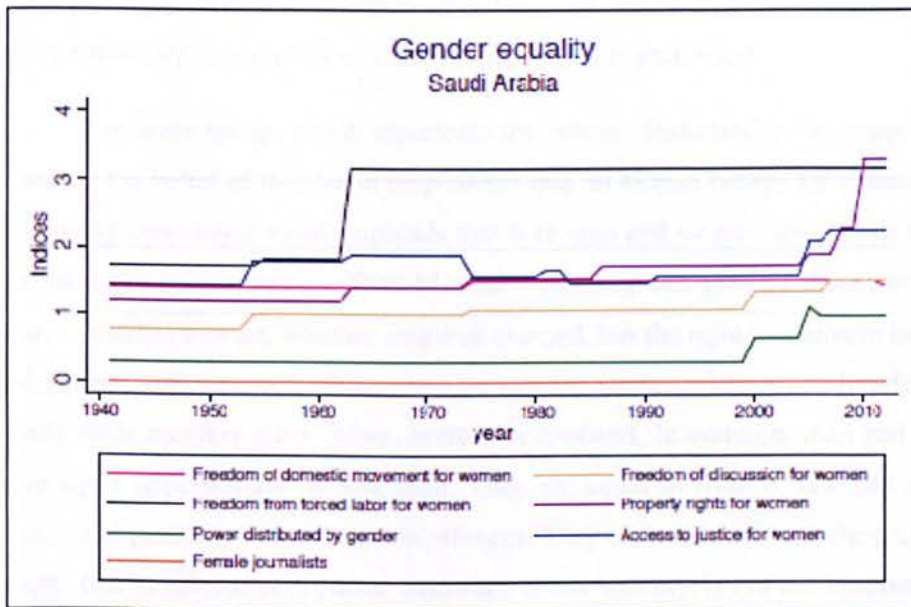
Comment: The figure graphs six different indicators of gender equality in Saudi Arabia between the years 1970-2014.

Figure 9: Gender Equality in Saudi Arabia (source: V-Dem report, 2015)

In Saudi Arabia, the situation has worried some for even Islamic feminist. Feminism is facing strong oppression in Saudi Arabia. Influential Islamic scholar in Saudi Arabia, Mohammad Akram Nadwi recently negated the concept of feminism and discouraged its existence. Such situation is worrisome for feminist, which are struggling for women's rights without any personal motive (Aljazeera, 2012).

Religion and Women Entrepreneurship in the Middle East

Arab society is going through major changes in social, cultural and religious boundaries. Old cultural, religious and social barriers are loosening; however, impact of orthodox and radical religious belief system is considered as a hurdle for women

entrepreneurship. Women in Middle East are still confronting challenges related to religious belief system. Such barriers limit women potential to start their own ventures. Even if they take initiatives, they are discouraged and it is difficult for them to break old frontiers.

Radical and fundamental elements in Islam do not correctly interpret Islamic stand over women's participation in entrepreneurship. Fundamentalist and radical elements discourage women's involvement in trade activities and impose fatalism, conservatism and conformism. On the contrary, there are schools of thoughts in Muslim communities in the Middle East, which encourage participation of Muslim women in doing their own business. They propagate the true essence of Islam and agree that participation of women in entrepreneurship is not a taboo or something, which is prohibited.

The latter group, which represents the Islamic feminists' view, supports their theory based on the belief of that Islam emphasises that all human beings are standing on a footing of equality. And Islam clearly upholds that both men and women are created from one origin and have the same qualities. Thus Muslim women do not give up their name on marriage. Also, a Muslim woman, whether single or married, has the right to maintain her own property and has absolute control over her own wealth and money without any interference from her family male member ether father, brother or husband. In addition, men and women should have equal opportunities in education. They are equal in front of law and are expected to receive the punishment for the same offences. They claim that it is not the text of Qur'an and Hadith (the collection of reported teachings, deeds and sayings of the Prophet) itself, but the interpretation that allowed for patriarchal tradition to exist. Qur'an contains the main principles of gender equality and social justice, and thus laying ground for challenging patriarchal traditions (Kynsilehto, 2008, pp. 9-10; Ahmad A. , 2015).

They perceive that Islam, encourage creativity, trade and women empowerment. Islam promotes technology, science and economics. The majority thinks that women's participation in entrepreneurial activities has potential; however, there is a need to eliminate barriers associated with old, outdated and fundamental religious beliefs. Removing such barriers is considered as the responsibility of women entrepreneurs. They have to challenge such old and false religious doctrine to pave the way for themselves and other women to take part in entrepreneurship. Middle East and broader Islamic world are deficient in entrepreneurship activities.

Country laws and regulation also do not encourage women's participation in entrepreneurial activities. According to McKenna (2009), various factors contribute in women prevention from entrepreneurial activities. Corruption, gender, male dominancy and misuse of religion-belief system are the contributing factors behind women's participation in personal business. The majority of the people in Middle East follows religion Islam. Islam provides flexibility for women to take active participation in life. It does not compel women to completely cover themselves. Women can show off their hands and face as well. The modern Muslim societies, particularly, Saudi society are characterised by contradictions between, what Memissi (1975) refers to as, the 'implicit theory' and the 'explicit theory' of women's sexuality. The explicit theory assumes that men are aggressive in their interaction with women and women are passive. The implicit theory which based on Imam Gazali's work and interpretation of Qur'an assumes that women are destructive, weak and evil. They according to this theory women should be contained, controlled, veiled, and segregated in order to protect men and prevent them from being distracted by women from their social and religious duties. Whilst, explicit theory is prevailing contemporary people's beliefs, the implicit theory dominates the Muslim unconsciousness (Memissi, 1975, pp. 31-33). Thus, in Saudi Society, it is believed that woman's sexuality and beauties are attractive, irresistible, and tempting; consequently, they seduce men to commit sin. Thus, in order to maintain social order in the society, women should be controlled, segregated, and kept secured. This is achieved through the practices of men's power and observation over women and polygamy (Khateeb, 1987, Memissi, 1975).

However, even if they are willing to completely cover their faces, nobody has the right to prevent them from doing business. In Saudi Arabia, culture and religion are regarded as one of the most critical factors behind lack of entrepreneurial activities. Cultural and tribal influence on Islam by the fundamentalist prevent women from becoming business owners. Moreover, the impact of such cultural and tribal influence has exerted their effect on governmental law and regulations. Overall, country environment of Saudi Arabia is not encouraging for women entrepreneurs (Shmailan, 2014).

In a socio-cultural context, family values and culture play an important role. Middle Eastern societies are dominated by fundamental religious belief system. A great number of the businesses in Saudi Arabia are family owned businesses and are operated by male members of the family. Male members of the society are obliged to provide household

necessities and it is regarded as the responsibilities of the male to operate the business. The majority of the societies in Middl East, in particular Saudi Arabia, is hesitant to accept that women are earning for economic and financial gains.

It is assumed that women male family members do not fulfil their Islamic duty to earn for their children and household. That is why women are going out of the home and making earning for their household. There is need to break this norm and need to make people aware about true responsibilities about earnings for both males and females. Hence, there is need to develop an atmosphere which promotes women's participation in business.

There are societies in the world which are dominated by strict religious and social norms which restrict women to stay at home and it is considered inappropriate for them to choose entrepreneurship as a career (Clinton, 2012). Middle Eastern societies are dominated by the perception that, entrepreneurship is not the right career choice for women. In religious point of view, it is better for the women to stay at home instead of going out for business activities. It is not considered as morally and religiously right for women to come out from home. Middle Eastern societies are attributed to male right and female roles where women opportunities for starting up their own business and engaging in paid work are restricted.

It is considered that women have to stay at home and look after household activities instead of going outside. Perception also prevails that it is a sin for women to go outside for earning without a veil. The veil is strictly prevails in the majority of the middle eastern societies. Such conditions severely restrict women to enter in entrepreneurship. Islam does not restrict women to go outside and majority of the women in middle eastern societies cover up themselves. However, the general perception prevails that it is not appropriate for women to go outside their home.

The role of religious fundamental movements is crucial in pushing women away from formal labour markets. These movements in the Middle East and South Asia are gaining influence. Radical and fundamental elements provide support to these movements, which propagate false Islamic doctrine, which unnecessarily prohibit women going out of the house for earning. Currently various fundamental movements are dominating in the Middle East which include but not limited to ISIS, Hezbollah and Al-Qaida.

Women hesitate to take part in entrepreneurial activities with the presence of such regimes and movements. Incidents of torture and harassments are witnessed at work places

by these fundamentalist elements. Those societies, where the dominance of such movements is not strong, the situation is much better. For instance, situation in United Arab Emirats (UAE) is comparatively better as compared to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. In such states, not only fundamentalist prevails, but overall economic and social conditions are better to pursue women's entrepreneurial activities.

Vast majority of the people in middle eastern societies is in favour of implementing sharia as a source of legislation. However, women have some reservations about misuse of sharia in various aspects such as economic opportunities and professional jobs. A survey was conducted by Gallup, which asked participants to describe the role of sharia in legislation. The majority of male participants was in favour of Sharia as an only source of legislation instead of women. Similarly, women showed a greater tendency towards implementation of Sharia, but not as a sole source of legislation (See figure, 6). Women had reservations regarding equal rights, social participation, education and employment. They perceive that Islamic sharia would be exploited by fundamentalist and their rights would be violated.

Arab Women Are as Likely as Arab Men to Want Sharia as a Source of New Legislation

"What role should Sharia have in legislation? Should it be the only source of legislation? A source but not the only source? Or should Sharia not be a source of legislation?"

	Men (Only source)	Women (Only source)	Men (A source, but not the only source)	Women (A source, but not the only source)
Egypt	50%	44%	37%	38%
Syria	18%	15%	31%	34%
Libya	39%	32%	40%	39%
Tunisia	16%	18%	66%	56%
Yemen	68%	58%	29%	32%

GALLUP

Figure 10: Gallup survey about men and women's perception about sharia as an only source of legislation. (Source:http://www.genderconcerns.org/article.php?id_nr=3300&id=Arab+Women+As+Likely+As+Men+To+Support+Isl amic+Law+In+Middle+East+After+Arab+Spring%2C+Says+Survey)

Nevertheless, as Moghadam (2003) stated 'gender inequality and the status of women in the Muslim societies cannot be only attributed to Islam, because commitment to Islamic teaching and the implementations of Islamic laws differ throughout the Muslim world. Consequently, women's legal and social positions are quite varied. And within the same Muslim society, social class largely determines the degrees of sex segregation, female autonomy, and mobility. Today upper-class women have more mobility than lower-class

women, although in the past it was the reverse: veiling and seclusion were upper-class phenomena. Also, he claims that 'By investigating changes over time and variations within societies and by comparing Muslim and non-Muslim gender patterns, one recognizes that, the status of women in Muslim societies is neither uniform nor unchanging nor unique' (Moghadam, 2003, p. 4).

Diversity, Class and women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East

As mention previously, social class plays an important role in gender equality in entrepreneurship and the ability to access resources, particularly for women entrepreneurs. Based on the Marxist capitalist theory, Miliband defines class stratification as "expression in terms of power, income, wealth, responsibility, life chances, style and quality of life, and everything else that makes up the texture of existence" (Miliband, 1989, p. 25). Social class plays important role in determining who is privileged or disadvantaged. Across time and places, it has been proved that, class shapes women's roles in the economic production, their choices and behaviour in the workplace.

It has been reported by many scholars, e.g. Nelson, Lima, and Nassif 2014, Moony (2014), Yuval-Davis (2006) that individuals' ability to access social and cultural capital differs according to their social class, the higher the socioeconomic class the more powerful entrepreneurship activities, interactions, social mobility and relationships. It also has been recognised that, the interaction between the economic, social and cultural class and other factors such as gender and religion usually fosters different inequalities in societies.

Holvino, 2010, reported that many white women, especially middle-class, and wealthy white women are privileged to enjoy the freedom to pursue professional opportunities because of their colour and social class. These two factors, the race and socioeconomic class, worked together to empower the social position of white women oppositely to coloured women. White women have exploited coloured women as domestic workers and organisational assistants, whilst, the special place was always reserved for white women only.

Also, Aldrich, Renzulli, and Langton (1998) suggest that family's social class can promote the entrepreneurial attitude of their children. They argue that children from higher class families have higher entrepreneurial orientation, which can be explained by their ability to provide them with a variety of financial and non-financial, resources as well as wider

social network. Furthermore, it is noted by Laspita, et al, (2012) that families' influences on offspring's entrepreneurial intention varies from one culture to another but it is founded to be stronger in high collectivism cultures. Similarly, Anderson and Miller emphasised the role of family background in developing social and human capital resources to the new enterprises and its effect on their profitability. Their study findings reveal the entrepreneurs who are from high socioeconomic class family have access to highly effective business support, and network (Anderson & Miller, 2003).

In the Middle East, classification and stratification of people in the society largely depend on family's bloodline and background. Moghadam, describes the diversity of the Arab societies with respect to its impact on women, by comparing the status of women in an average society such as Morocco and rich societies such as Saudi Arabia, and expresses how the socioeconomic and cultural structure affects women's situation in the society, as he says: "To study the Middle East and North Africa is to recognize the diversity within the region and within the female population. Contrary to popular opinion, the Middle East is not a uniform and homogeneous region. Women are themselves stratified by class, ethnicity, education, and age. There are no archetypal Middle Eastern Woman, but rather women inserted in quite diverse socioeconomic and cultural arrangements. The fertility behaviour and needs of a poor peasant woman are quite different from those of a professional woman or a wealthy Urbanite. The educated Saudi woman who has no need for employment and is chauffeured by a Sri Lankan migrant worker has little in common with the educated Moroccan woman who needs to work to augment the family income and also acquires status with a professional position. There is some overlap in cultural conceptions of gender in Morocco and Saudi Arabia, but there are also profound dissimilarities (and driving is only one of the more trivial ones). Saudi Arabia is far more conservative than Morocco in terms of what is considered appropriate for women." (Moghadam, 2003, p. 10).

Generally, Arab societies, in particular golf countries, consist of three social classes. The upper class includes royalty, influential families and wealthy people. The middle class is composed of governmental employees, military, and moderately prosperous private business. Farmers and the poor make up the lower class (Moghadam, 2003). In Saudi Arabia, particularly, the social stratification is basically based on families' tribal roots and bloodline (family tree), thus the majority of them holding a 'family book' to keep tracing their family roots. Even though, the Saudi society to a large extent can be considered as culturally

homogenous, it is a heterogeneous and diversified society with different divisions and socioeconomic classes. Unlike many other societies, there is not much class conflict among the social classes as Arab people acknowledge the social class into which they were born, and there is not much can be done to rise from one class to another. Since no matter how much improvement individual achieved in their educational level, occupation statues or acquired wealth, the person's origins will be always known and remembered.

The origin of the Saudi population traces its roots back to the ancient tribe of the Arabian Peninsula, before the unification by the tribal leader Muhammad bin Saud in 1744, and the establishment of the modern kingdom of Saudi Arabia by King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud in 1932. Thus, in the one hand Saudi people are characterised by a high degree of cultural homogeneity, and in the other hand high degree stratification. Saudi Arabian's population stood at by the end of 2014 at 30.8000, the Saudi national constitutes around 20.7000 making up 67 percent of the population, while foreigner workers and non national represent about 10.1000 representing 33 percent of the total population. In terms of age, the Saudi population under the age of 25 consists about 51 percent (Arab.News, 2015).

.The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia consists of 13 distinct regions; the biggest among them are, the Northern, the East, and the Central (Najd which is Riyadh the capital city) provinces. The majority of the Saudi population before the discovery of oil were nomadic Bedouin and semi-nomadic. Historically, before unification and the discovery of the oil, Saudi population was driven from ten major tribes with a membership of one hundred or more sub-tribes. Each tribe had its own values, regulations and rules, which were respected by all members of the tribe. Any violation of these rules exposed the offender to severe punishments from the tribe's leader. Thus, tribes were considered as an independent political organisation.

In the past Saudi people were classified into four main levels: the upper class which was the highest in the status structure of the tribe and the wealthiest p, and they called 'Sheikhs'. The second class composed of members of the tribes who can keep tracing their descent link to the tribe founders which is considered as an honourable status, and this group named as 'Kabeyli'. The third group which is considered to be at lower status in the society named 'Khadeiry' and consisted of the immigrant from other countries and who did not have descended from an original Saudi tribe, but settled under the protection of the tribe. And here is a high degree of discrimination starts in terms of power, marriage and occupations. Where 'Kabeli' people were viewed as more noble and most of the manual and hard works were

assigned to 'Khadeiry' people. In addition, marriage between people from these two classes was totally forbidden. The lowest class in the society were the slaves and domestic servants. Slaves used to be brought to the Arabian Peninsula from African countries such as Somalia, when the slave trade was still running. However, after the unification and the discovery of the oil to the commercial level, which increased the influx of wealth, economic modernization has been brought to the country, and made its effects on people's nomadic life, behaviour, roles, and the hierarchical and political structure of the society (Al Khateeb, 1987).

Due to the rapid economic and urban growth, most of the Saudi population settled. The majority of the population concentrated in three major cities: Riyadh, Dammam and Jeddah. Even though, economic changes resulted in the emergence of new social divisions the social classification of Saudi people remained pretty much the same. Hence, tribal affiliation still constitutes the base of differentiation between different ethnic groups in the society. Unlike some other countries in the Middle East such as Egypt, in Saudi society, the individuals' level of education, occupation, wealth and family affiliation are not correlated. The rise of individuals' educational, wealth acquired or occupational level do not lead to the rise of their social class, yet, the patronymic group still plays an important role in identifying the individual's position in the Saudi society. Not only this, but the family affiliations and the individual's social contacts in government offices usually affect their ability to access to a variety of resources.

In addition to the above, modernisation and wealth in the society resulted in some other major changes that changed the Saudi society. For instance, the slavery and slavery's trade were abandoned by King Faisal in 1963. Yet, they have been replaced in the modern Saudi society by domestic labours, maids and nannies from poor countries, such as Philippine, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Also, the emergence of Shiite group and Sunni, where the Shiites are a minority group and the majority of them centralised in the Eastern province of the country, the Sunnis constitute the majority of the population and spread in all the provinces (Moghadam, 2003). The influx of wealth has transformed the lifestyle of Saudi people from nomadic to modernised society and, industrial and market oriented economy. As a result the level of human development significantly increased (figure 11) due to high income level, health improvement, and wide spread of education.

	Very High Human Development	High Human Development	Medium Human Development	Low Human Development
Oil economies	Bahrain, Qatar, UAE	Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia	Libya	—
Mixed oil economies	—	Iran, Tunisia	Algeria, Iraq, Egypt, Syria	—
Non-oil economies	Israel	Lebanon, Turkey	Jordan, Morocco, Palestinian Territories	Yemen

Figure 11: Level of human development is based on each country's ranking in the UNDP's 2012, Human Development Report. New York: United Nations Development Programme. (Source: (Moghadam, 2013, p. 18)

According to the United Nations Development Program report in (2012), Saudi Arabia succeeded to reach a high position among the Middle Eastern countries in human development, based on its oil economic. This development certainly included the status of women in Saudi society. The role of women in Saudi society has also witnessed major changes and development.

In pre-oil discovery Saudi society, Bedouin and rural women had to stay at home and had only one role as household and the domestic work duties, while men doing the herding work and trading with the other tribes. Contrary to what is commonly believed, women in rural areas in Saudi Arabia, especially south and west such as Abaha, Asser, and Ghammed, enjoyed much more freedom than urban women. Women in these areas used to participate in all life activities publicly alongside their male kin. They enjoyed greater freedom of movement than urban women. Even veiling and gender segregation weren't required or common at that time in these parts of the country. Urban women movement was restricted and required to wear black veil and abaya (black dress code) as a necessity. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that the wealthiest families concentrated in the urban areas and for women was always a symbol of the family honour, they put much emphasis on women veiling and seclusion. On the contrary, families lived in rural areas were mainly peasants and Bedouin which mean their status was very poor and the men were obliged to allow their women to work outside homes to support their families. Thence, the higher the family's class, the more restrictions on women and their mobility. Women also from lower classes, as 'Khadeiry' and slaves' families were allowed to work in the fields or provided domestic help to rich families (Al Khateeb, 1987).

Post-oil discovery, Saudi women's status has been changed alongside with the socioeconomic development of the Saudi society. The discovery of oil has raised the life standards of Saudi families, as a result of wealth influx. Women from high class reduced their participation in the domestic and housework and increased their reliance on foreign worker from poor countries in the Far East in doing the domestic and housework, since the slavery was abandoned. More women attained education at all the levels. Also, Saudi women from poor families no longer accepting demotic work and preferred governmental jobs with low salaries or small enterprises based at home, i.e. homemade goods such as homemade food, handmade and traditional products. Thus, nowadays, it is impossible to find a Saudi woman accept domestic work as a job, as it is considered as disgrace or shameful. However, women from high class and rich families are advantaged and privileged. They attended high level of education and provided by the family's support, resources, social capital and social network (Al Khateeb, 1987; Moghadam, 2013).

According to Jayawarna, Rouse, & Macpherson, argument in their study, class and gender are socially constructed, and the intersection between these two factors shapes entrepreneurial opportunities. They propose that "an individual's act of business creation emerges from their experience of socially structured relations that develop across their life course" (Jayawarna, Rouse, & Macpherson, 2014, p. 283). Their life course pathway model focused on studying the interaction of social class and gender and its impact on business start up in the United Kingdom. Hence, the attitude towards entrepreneurship is installed in children who born in a family with entrepreneurial background, high socioeconomic class in the society. Entrepreneurs who have privileged social class and resources ownership are more capable to start up their own business. This is because the entrepreneurial knowledge, wealth and resources have been transformed to them from their childhood, giving them more capabilities to start their business later in their life. In addition, their study reveals that with the reduction of women's household responsibility and role, e. g., sharing care responsibilities or has no children, even with resources limitation, will also increase the individual entrepreneurship opportunities. This study's findings suggest that socially structured class, family entrepreneurial background and wealth can diminish the impact of gender, and increase the individuals' entrepreneurship stat up capabilities. The question that one might ask here is, is these assumptions applicable to women in Saudi context?

With respect to women's status in contemporary Saudi society, it has been noticed that in spite of the country massive wealth influx and modernisation, restriction on women's participation in public activities and veiling became stricter. This is because women's contribution to family economic has been significantly minimised, and men became more capable to afford their families prosperously. In addition, Saudi women started to face the quandary of the contradiction between their traditionalism and modernisation. They face the conflict between what they want and what they raised on, the contradiction between the traditional gender assumption and the modern new economic society position. The dilemma of the contradictions is the most awkwardness Saudi society recently live.

Saudi women as mothers and Their Stance on Mothering

The common believes about women's role in the Arab culture in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular, is fertility or social reproduction, motherhood, and household duties (Moghadam, 2003). Motherhood was and still is considered as very important role for Saudi women. Women gain power and position in the family by giving birth of children and her high fertility rate. Marriage was restricted by Saudi tradition of 'endogamy' in the family. Where, Saudi woman was preferred to marry from within the same clan or the patronymic group. Given that, it is obligatory by the cultural norms and country's law to marry a Saudi national. Saudi women, however, are allowed to marry a non-Saudi under specific circumstances, such as reaching a certain age at which the girl or the woman will be no longer desirable by a Saudi man. Forasmuch, when a girl reaches the age of thirty in Saudi Arabia, she is considered a spinster. In addition, it became well known that, Saudi men usually prefer to marry young women or girls. And more recently, they became in favour of foreigner women, especially white women, such as American, European, or even white Arabian women from countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Usually, the foreigner woman come as a second wife or more depending on how many wives the man already got. Polygamy (the practice of taking more than one wife simultaneously up to four, according to Islamic sharia law) is common in Saudi Arabia, especially, after the discovery of oil and the increase of their wealth. Polygamy is accepted as men practices in most of the Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, not only because it solves the problem of spinsterhood, but also to curb sexual relations outside the institution of marriage, (Moghadam, 2013; Al-Saif, 1997).

Before the discovery of oil, as a mother and house wife, women's participation in domestic work varied according to wealth and class. Women from high class and wealthy families used to have slaves and domestic workers to do the housework and help in raising the children. Whilst, after the discovery of oil with more wealth influxes, the picture did not change much, except replacing slaves by domestic workers, maids and nannies on the one hand, and on the other hand the number of wealthy families has been significantly increased which means an increase in the number of families who can afford more domestic help.

Like any women in the world, Saudi mothers are loving, and warm and very protective sometimes due to the nature of social norms. Despite the fact that, Saudi women are expected to produce a big number of children as much as they can, with the domestic help and maids and nannies, they were able to manage the conflict of the dual role between work (economic production) and pregnancy and motherhood (social reproduction) as socially constructed. As patriarchal society, Saudi mother gets more credit and power when she gives birth of a baby boy. The boy is considered as the carrier of the family name and the one who will keep the extensions the family in the future. Thus, Saudi mothers treat their sons with great respect and love. Even so, having a baby girl from a Saudi woman is a different issue. The girl should be brought up to get married and should be prepared for this role. The mother and daughter relationship is totally different from mother and son relationship. As a result of women's oppression, a Saudi woman may find consolation in the solidity with her daughter. Thus, their relation becomes a very close relationship, but not very sentimental, since the mother knows that the girl is not of real support for her. Family bonds are highly emphasised by the Saudi society, thus Saudi mothers are required to maintain family relationships through regular kin-based socialisation at home. However, most of the work of child rearing is given to a foreign maid or nanny who may speak little or no Arabic. In addition, mothers are highly appreciated in Saudi society, the older the mother gets, the more respectful and preserved she gets in the family.

In the past, pre-oil discovery, divorce was an unacceptable option for Saudi women. With the existing of low income, low education choices, and few or no job opportunities for women, it was difficult for Saudi women to live independently or to bear the hardships created by the patriarchal culture. But, nowadays, after the oil discovery and modernity of the Saudi society, and as a result of women empowerment, higher education, job opportunities

and independence, the divorce rate is becoming so high in Saudi society as a sign of women's rejection for men's control of their bodies, minds and lives.

The case for intersectional research in Entrepreneurship in the Middle East

By reviewing the literature, it has been found that, even though there is a growing body of research in gender and entrepreneurship, intersectional research in entrepreneurship is in its infancy. And it is needed to understand how women entrepreneurs' practices differ from their male counterparts and how they are affected by different social structures through time and space. Intersectionality approach in entrepreneurship studies can be very helpful to see the full scrutiny of entrepreneurs, instead of thinking of entrepreneurship activities as static and omitting the social dimensions of human life and its influences (Ahl, 2006; Chasserio, Poroli, & Redien-Collot, 2014). The notion of intersectionality helps to understand the embodied vision of entrepreneur, how is applied to women and how social structural factors such as gender, ethnicity, class, and religions, influence their activities, experiences, and construct their identities (Chasserio, Poroli, & Redien-Collot, 2014). The review of the literature shows that practices of entrepreneurship are embedded in social structure and relational interaction. Thence, women entrepreneurial practices have been stereotyped by gender, ethnicity, class and religion (Holvino, 2010; Essers, Benschop, & Doorewaard, 2010; Essers & Benschop, 2009) .

Scholars e.g., Holvino, 2010, Essers and Benschop, 2009, argue that the impact of gender and the rest of the social cultural factors is simultaneously occurring and inseparable, thus it is difficult to exclude the effect of either of class, religion, or ethnicity from the impact of gender. Accordingly, in studying women's entrepreneurs' activities as socially constructed and interactive process in their social context would be very useful in understanding the complexity and the process of multiple-identities of women and its impact on entrepreneurship practices. The question emerges here is, how the intertwining between these socially constructed multiple identities affects women's entrepreneurial activities, networking, social interactions, and resources acquisition.

Thus, the study under consideration attempts to answer this question, especially in a context other than North America and Europe. The Middle Eastern societies, especially Saudi Arabia, posture a very severe and complex social paradoxes for women, which produces many challenges for women entrepreneurs. Not only this, but also the scarcity of

research in the area in such context resulted in the draughts of information and lack of understanding of the women entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia, and consequently, lack of effective strategies to empower women there and improve their participation in various activities.

Conclusion

Current chapter explains the role of gender, religion and feminism in Middle Eastern societies with respect to entrepreneurial evolution. Gender inequality exists in Middle Eastern societies and it poses several challenges for women to pursue entrepreneurial activities. For instance, lack of access to entrepreneurial training, lack of access to capital and honour issues are major concerns for the women. Women have limited opportunities for training and development regarding entrepreneurship. It is difficult for them to go outside and acquire training from some institution.

Women are provided with less training and development opportunities as compared to males. It is considered difficult for women to access training opportunities. Moreover, they have less opportunity available to acquire capital for their business. There are financial institutions, which are reluctant to provide capital for women. Such difficulties hinder entrepreneurial activities of women in Middle Eastern societies. Women have difficulties to acquire capital and they mostly rely on business earning and personal sources of savings. These sources include savings, reinvestment of business earning, family and friends.

Outdated, fundamental and radical Islamic belief system also poses challenges for women to pursue entrepreneurship. This chapter investigated the role of feminism, power sharing and status quo, Islamic feminism and entrepreneurship as well as feminist movements in the Middle East to investigate its impact over entrepreneurial activities. Religion is not against entrepreneurship, however, some radical and extremist elements in the societies inhibits women's participation in business, employment and social activities. They do not permit women to seek entrepreneurial activities.

They wrongly perceive that religion does not allow women to go outside the home and take part in important matters of the society whether it relates to politics, economics or employment. The chapter also explains the role of feminism with respect to women entrepreneurship. Islamic Sharia (i.e. Islamic law and teaching) as a legislation and women reservation about economic opportunities and professional jobs was discussed. Findings

reveal that the majority of the women are not against implementation of Sharia in the societies; however, they show reservation regarding its misuse from the hands of radical elements in the society.

In addition, the role of impact of religious fundamental movements and their struggle for women's rights has been critically reviewed. Islamic groups in various Middle Eastern countries are against feminist movements. For instance, in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, feminist groups are facing strong oppression. Prevailing social belief system also exists in Middle Eastern societies, which hinder encouragement of women to take part in entrepreneurship. It is believed that entrepreneurship is an inappropriate career choice for the women and it is the fundamental religious duty of male to go outside the home and make earning. There is a need to make people aware about the importance of women's participation in different occupation and false honour issues prevailing in the societies.

Islam *per se* is not responsible for women status in the Arab societies in general, and Saudi Arabia. Gender inequality comes from the patriarchal interpretation of Qur'an and Sharia, which is primarily done by men. Not only this, but, the interpretation of Qur'an and Islamic teaching intertwined with traditions and customs. Oppression comes from fundamental and radical elements of the society. They have a fear that women's participation will lead to power sharing. It can be concluded that gender, religion and feminism are the crucial elements in promoting entrepreneurship in Middle Eastern societies. Gender equality, promotion of feminism and prevention of misuse of religion is utmost important to promote entrepreneurship. It is not only the responsibility of women entrepreneurs, but for the government and civil society as well. When efforts will be made from all segments of the society, better results will be produced to pave the way for women entrepreneurs to pursue business avenues. Collaborative efforts are more comprehensive in this regard. Government possesses economic and political power. Hence, its role is more important to make arrangements, which promote entrepreneurial activities.

Chapter 4 – Entrepreneurial network

"Be slow to fall into friendship; but when thou art in, continue firm and constant."

-Socrates-(470/469 – 399 BC)

Introduction

This chapter reviews network theory, and definition, research on entrepreneurial network, and social activities involved in its formation. In addition, it will present the different types of entrepreneurship networks from different topological approaches. The role of different entrepreneurial networking will be addressed. Finally, the women's network also will be discussed.

The Concept of Entrepreneurial Network

To understand the concept of entrepreneurial network, it is first necessary to understand the meaning of the term network. The review of the literature shows that there are numbers of authors who describe the term 'network' in many different ways. In the social network theory, the network in a very basic level has been defined as a set of relationships that connect individuals to each other. These relationships in network theory are described in terms of "nodes" and "ties" in which nodes refer to the people while the 'ties' refer to the relationships or interdependency between them (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). O'Donnell, et al. Defined the network as a set of nodes and connections (O'Donnell, et al., 2001). Thus, the term network refers to the relationship between individuals that may be in the form of friendship, kinship, financial exchange, dislike, sexual, beliefs, knowledge, and social esteem (Arenas, et al., 2004).

From the perspective of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial networks are the relationships between an entrepreneur and individuals such as family, friends, employees, other people or firms (Provan, et al, 2007). In contrast, Todeva reported Donckels and Lambrecht's (2007) definition of entrepreneurial networks' concept, in Barnett's book of 'Encyclopaedia of social networks' as an organized system of relationships between customers, suppliers, other entrepreneurs, relatives, external consultants, and other agents or potential partners' as shown in figure (5) (Todeva E. , 2011, pp. 261-264).
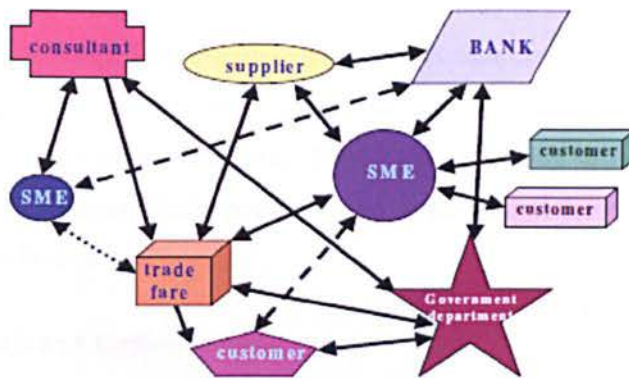
- heterogeneous
- dispersed type of network configuration with fuzzy boundaries
- role-based governance
- resource-based and role-based division of labour
- autonomous agents engaged in contract relationships

Figure 12: Entrepreneurial Small Business Networks (adopted from Todeva 2011, p: 261-264)

The entrepreneurial network provides entrepreneurs with a source of social capital and other significant resources across various levels between individuals and organizations. These networks range from formal to informal relationships that act as support mechanisms to organizations and provide professional services as and when required (O'Donnell, et al. 2001). Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) reported that networking is a part of human social interaction and plays as an essential component of business creation and development. Moreover, the social and cultural structure of the community are affecting the entrepreneurship process and the ability of the entrepreneurs to access various resources and social capital. Furthermore, Watts, et al. stated that the entrepreneurial networks are forms of bonding that unite entrepreneurs with various intermediaries from their supplier end to consumer end (Watts, et al.,2002).

According to Scott, entrepreneurial network represents a heterogeneous group of different bodies or individuals with a resource-based interest or role-division of labour. These heterogeneous agents of a group collectively act together to form formal or informal contact and share information or design strategies. The network process certain tasks allotted and are governed by allocating body and the government. The resource based nature of group led the network to utilize the resources of any particular agent against a term of payment. Similarly, the division of labour helps in unleashing the specialization and capabilities of a specific firm in terms of their labour intensive capabilities that provide profitable solutions to other partners in a network (Scott, 2012).

Contrary to Scott, the entrepreneurial network as defined by Arenas, et al. is a form of relational network which is formed by a collection of actors that create repeated exchange relations with one another, however lack the authority to judge and resolve disputes, if any, among the members of the network (Arenas, et al. 2004). This definition describes briefly the mechanism of operation in entrepreneurial networks and its scope and the extent to which it bears authority over other bodies.

Entrepreneurial Network and Embeddedness

Entrepreneurial studies argue that entrepreneurs are embedded in the community and their social network (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986). Also, Granovetter (1985) asserts that entrepreneurs and their businesses are embedded in their social network. The concept of "Embeddedness" refers to the degree to which economic activity is constrained by non-economic institutions. The concept was first used by Polanyi, who argued that in non-market societies there are no pure economic institutions to which formal economic models can be applied. In these cases economic activities such as "provisioning" are "embedded" in non-economic relationships, religious and political institutions (Polanyi, 1944, 1957). Thereafter, Granovetter (1985) applied the concept of embeddedness to market societies, suggesting that most behaviour is embedded in networks of personal relationships, and even there, "rational" economic exchanges are influenced by pre-existing social ties. Moreover, in his study of ethnic Chinese business networks in Indonesia, Granovetter (1995) found that 'individual's economic agency' is embedded in networks of strong personal relations. However, as a fundamental result, he stressed the importance of weak ties and personal networks in the economic exchange, demonstrating that the development and maintenance of the personal relationships between traders and customers assume an equal or even higher importance than the economic transactions involved. Thus, economic exchanges are carried by individuals involved in long-term continuing relationships.

Hite et al, (2001) cited Uzzi definition of social embeddedness as: "the degree which commercial transactions take place through social relations and network of relations that use exchange protocols with social, non-commercial attachment to grove business dealings." (Uzzi 1999, p: 482).

Social Capital
Trust: Social (3rd party)
Controls: Reputation

HOLLOW
Embeddedness

LATENT
Embeddedness

*Personal
Relationship*
Trust: Personal/Goodwill
Controls: Maintenance of
Personal Relationship

FULL
Embeddedness

FUNCTIONAL
Embeddedness

PERSONAL
Embeddedness

ISOLATED
Embeddedness

COMPETENCY
Embeddedness

Dyadic Economic Interaction
Trust: Personal/Competency
Controls: Value of Relationship History

Figure 13: Types of Embeddedness (source: Hite, 2003, p. 32)

Since then, the concept of social embeddedness has contributed much to the understanding of the relationship between social networks and economic exchange in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship studies argue that an entrepreneur is "embedded in a social network that plays a vital role in the entrepreneurial process" (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003, p.168). Thus, social networks are recognised as essential parts of economic and social interactions and play a critical role in business establishment and growth. It is considered as 'a media' through which the entrepreneurs can gain access to business opportunities, social capital and knowledge.

Due to this embeddedness in the community and social structure, business development process is affected by the social context which in turn influence and form the patterns of their social interactions. The social embeddedness helps entrepreneurs to identify social resources, opportunities and even emotional and professional support during the entrepreneurial process. Nevertheless, some other researchers argue that embeddedness can act as a constraint that faces the entrepreneurship process and development. For example, Uzzi points out that embeddedness can hinder economic action when turned into an obstruction, such as the unforeseen exit of a core network player; the institutional forces rationalising markets; and even over-embeddedness 'suppressing economic action when social aspects of exchange supersede economic imperatives' (Uzzi, 1997, p: 17).

Also, Granovetter (1985) views entrepreneurship as the sum of social and economic actions which are embedded in the social context and social relationships, where the entrepreneurial process consists of many distinct and varying activities such as identifying possible opportunities, acquiring the necessary resources, and the fundamentals of business creation. However, amongst all these are the connections an entrepreneur must have in order to achieve these activities, and accordingly networking (O'Donnell et al, 2001).

Research evidence shows that, starting up and running an enterprise requires doing many activities to raise capital, secure resources, generate customers, and make the required decisions to ensure business success (Anderson & Fisher, 2000; Acs & Virgill, 2010). Entrepreneurship studies describe an entrepreneur as a person who has the ability to network to gather information, and take the actions required to ensure success (Acs & Virgill, 2010; Menifield, 2010). Also, Studies confirmed that networking is a significant success factor for entrepreneurship. Networks give the entrepreneurs the ability to access information and resources. It is vital for enterprises' survival and growth to build social and industrial networks for generating customers and gaining support from different resources (O'Donnell, et al., 2001). Therefore, entrepreneurs' networks gained great interest from researchers to explore its different types, benefits and activities among entrepreneurs.

Although entrepreneurship studies show that entrepreneurs rely on their networks of personal relationships (specially informal and social networks) in order to make their decisions and solve the problems they face, the studies reveal that women entrepreneurs have been excluded from networks and have limited ability to access formal and informal networks. This may affect their ability to access information and resources, and ultimately hinder their business success (Watts, et al., 2002; Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Arenas, et al., 2004; Bendell, 2001; Berdahl & Moore, 2006). Notably, most of the research carried out in this area is from the male prospective and a little research has been carried on female entrepreneur's networking. There is not much information about their networking process, how they gain benefit from it, how they use these networks and relationships as tools for their business success, and the obstacles that prevent them from networking. Therefore, there is still a lot to be known in this area of research to expand our understanding of it (Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Arenas, et al., 2004; Kraus & Yonay, 2000).

In addition, previous studies in social network focused on the structural aspect; with no much attention paid to the formation process, content, social-cultural embeddedness, and

impact of gender and the other social structural divisions on social network. One should notice that the vast amount of current research that has been done on social network focused on studying the structural dimensions in terms of strength and number of ties, economic exchange, and dyadic relation, with little attention paid to the social interaction process and dynamic. Also, little or no intention has been paid to network patterns, and the impact of gender and social-structure on women's network.

Thence this study rests on the premise that the entrepreneurs are embedded in their social context. The interaction and intersection among various social divisions such as gender, socioeconomic class, ethnicity and religion shape their identities, activities, resources access, and social interaction. Thus, the entrepreneurship process cannot be studied in isolation from its environment and social context. Thence, the entrepreneurial network is formed as a result of social interactions among people, which in nature vary from place to another and from society to another. Hence studying entrepreneurs' networks structurally leads to missing a lot of information with respect to the network patterns, resources and social structure and gender.

Entrepreneurial Social Networks

The entrepreneurial framework has attracted many researchers due to the fact that in today's world, entrepreneurial activity is mushrooming. Therefore the mechanism is continuously evolving; branching out to various different theories and functions. One of these theories is entrepreneurial network, which caught attention because of the changing nature of small and large businesses, the intense competition amongst various firms and industries, and macro factors like globalization and increased cost of transaction (Szerb, 2003).These, among many other factors, called for a more complex nature of the entrepreneurial process that comprised of many different partnering actors. These partnering actors voluntarily collaborate with other firms in order to seek financial objectives through networking. Other than the macro and market forces, the firm's own decisions like sub-contracting, outsourcing, and collaborative information sharing and strategic alliance also called for a new phenomenon. Thus a relatively new model of entrepreneurship evolved (Szerb, 2003).

Many studies in social capital and social networks show that relationships between people in society consist of three types of ties: strong ties, weak ties. According to Granovetter (1985), weak social ties are responsible for the majority of the embeddedness

and structure of social networks in society as well as the transmission of information through these networks, and more novel information flows to individuals through weak rather than strong ties.

Within this span of time, entrepreneurial social networks are categorized as either formal networks or informal networks; along with third party institutional relationships such as the chamber of commerce and speeding networks. According to Birley, the initiations of entrepreneurial networks generally began with the already established circle of relationships. This pre-formed web of relationships exists with family and friends. It takes into account religious and social linkages to obtain their purpose. People belonging to these groups tend to provide unexpected help by providing information and resources that can be useful for the development of the business (Birley, 1985). On the other hand, Coviello and Munro argued that the informal network is often taken for granted and in most cases is not even considered to be a network. This is because an informal network is formed between friends and family, therefore it can be exploited properly to derive its benefits (Coviello & Munro, 1995). In addition, O'Donnell, et al further added that the only benefit informal networks can render is being informative to the one who wants to fulfil his business needs. These networks can also provide suggestions to people in them (O'Donnell, et al., 2001).

In addition, Birley depicts that the formal entrepreneurial network operates as associations of businesses. Associations that are formed around the industry are a form of formal networking. Any person who newly joins a business can acquire legitimacy by being a part of these groups, even before his own business gains the competence that makes him liable for a healthy competition (Birley, 1985). On the other hand, Johannisson et al examined that informal relationships, there are limits that define how freely one can interact with those whom the competition must be created by. The associations with these groups can help in obtaining useful information regarding the technological advancements within that field (Johannisson, et al., 1994). In addition to this, Lechner and Dowling examined that the association in formal entrepreneurs' networks helps in finding effective modes of communication that can be profitable to the administration. These formal networks can serve as a means of reaching the public and in turn influencing government policies and strategies (Lechner & Dowling, 2003).

The chamber of commerce has been accepted widely as the 'formal' entrepreneurial network. Chambers are regarded as the oldest form of business associations which also offer

other modern services that the entrepreneurs tend to use (though being the role of other networks). The services that it provides are, for example, health insurance (Birley, 1985). The chamber negotiates prices with providers of services. The chambers are also prone to provide training opportunities through various seminars. They also offer other services that involve contacting them at different venues for further referral services (Birley, 1985; Chell & Baines, 2000).

Speed networking is a kind of service that is provided by the business to offer help to the entrepreneur in order to make connections with the 'larger whole'. Speed networking is a website that actually offers such events that can provide new and exciting ideas for the development of new businesses. It not only provides ideas for business but also offers job leads to the participants who may be considered as a great professional opportunity (Bick, 2007). This website also provides an opportunity to interact and form connections other than waiting for the chance and availability to do so. This implies that through these interactions, any business opportunity can also be availed. Similar to this website, another one that provides business opportunities through offering interactive activities is LinkedIn (Misner, 2007).

Overall, each type of entrepreneurial networks has its own merits and demerits, but due to increasing technology, formal networks such as speed networking may be easier and faster to form than informal networks. According to Laitinen, the focus on entrepreneurial networks depends on the stage of business and the benefit entrepreneurial networks provided to individual firms (Laitinen, 2011). Furthermore, Szerb added that in the early phases of organizations, the business focuses mainly on venture creation and development, with the main objective to create networks with other firms in order to further strengthen in the industry (Szerb, 2003). With regard to this, Todeva adds that the early phase of organisaion creation entails firms and individuals to seek out opportunity and development for their business, and requires platforms for a broader range of resources; as newly formed businesses lack behind in resource acquisition (Todeva E. , 2011). In contrast, Arenas et al examined that in the establishment stage, information and expertise sharing is the most prominent objective behind entrepreneurial networks, since at the establishment stage businesses would have developed their core competencies and look out for further enhancements in knowledge sharing, or strategically focus on their competencies and form networks to conduct other tasks through their networked firms (Arenas, Danon, Diaz-Guilera, Gleiser, & Guimera,

2004). Thus, these denote the fact that scale of operation and size of business have a different approach towards entrepreneurial networks and are catered differently.

In order to understand the entrepreneurial networks, it is important to analyse the factors described by Todeva that lead firms to undergo a major change in their work structure (Todeva E. , 2011). These factors dictated the need for an enhanced model that considers the changing environment and respond to it. According to Todeva, the ever changing scope of technology has pushed firms beyond their capacity to respond with a similar pace. This is especially true for certain industries that rely heavily on technology-specific goods or on technology for their product or service. With this rapid advancement in technology, smaller firms seek out to network with firms that can provide them with services so that they may focus on the core competencies. This particular process gave birth to concepts like outsourcing, which is observed globally. Organizations are most likely to outsource tasks, like administrative tasks and call centres, to firms who are willingly providing services for them. Large corporations outsource most of their tasks; even overseas. For instance, Zara Inc. has set up their manufacturing plant in different continent in order to reduce the manufacturing cost while serving to European and American consumers (Todeva E. , 2011).

Further, Todeva claims that the technological advancement and availability of options for consumers have made firms evolve their working conditions. With the increased competition, globalization and world market competition, firms are now actively seeking for strategic alliances and partnering with other firms in order to produce better results and capture larger chunks of consumers. This phenomenon of complex market structure evolved the process of networking. In today's world, firms are forming alliances vertically with their suppliers in order to reduce the cost of switching to other suppliers. This process increases the value-chain for organizations and hence provides more customer value through better networking (Todeva E. , 2011).

Also, the market structure has completely evolved in the recent era. With a predominant shift of power to consumer end, globalization, and changes in demand pattern, firms are now strategically networking with other firms in order to meet consumer demands and hold their customer base. For this purpose, a lot of organizations are forming networks with their industry partners in order to capitalize their potential (Todeva E. , 2011).

In addition to the above, Korsching and Allen state that the ownership and control of resources are other factors that develop the entrepreneurial social network. In a networked team, any individual firm shares a partial ownership and control of the resources. Every resource is partially owned by each individual, who is held responsible in carrying out a particular task in the whole chain. In this way, the resources occupied by each firm are limited and therefore mitigate risks on higher levels as well as does not involve high cost in terms of input (Korsching & Allen, 2004).

The determinants stated above describe the entrepreneurial networks for any firm undergoing a major change in its working structure. During the early stages of network, two main objectives remain; resource acquisition and capitalizing on opportunities. However, as and when networks advance, the prime objective shifts to providing a meaningful relation to the whole network of information sharing and adding more resources to both ends of the entrepreneurial network.

The above discussion has attempted to identify the characteristics of entrepreneurial networks; which suggests that the basic task of networks is to bring to existing new businesses in already existing organizations. These new ventures are made taking into consideration the maximization of the profit and also focusing on other important goals of the company. An organization possessing entrepreneurial skills helps largely in competing for the resources significant to the interests of the organization.

Networks and the Entrepreneurial Resources

By reviewing several studies, it has been found, that the role of networks in entrepreneurship cannot be emphasized enough since it is the backbone of any successful enterprise, regardless of its size and operations (Bachmann & Inkpen, 2010; Arrighetti, et al.,1997). According to Bachmann, the network each entrepreneur is directly related to endless opportunities and many platforms that their network partners may provide to them (Bachmann, 2001). Buttner acknowledges that in order to be successful, the entrepreneurs must be well-integrated in their communities. Networking can be a means for an entrepreneur to gain access to the resources (information, advice, or capital) required to initiate and operating a new venture. Consequently, Entrepreneurs who are connected to many diverse information sources are more likely to survive and make their businesses grow (Buttner 1993; p.63).

Also, several key roles played by networks in entrepreneurship are identified from the reviewed literature. According to Schreyögg & Sydow and Miner, entrepreneurial networks not only provide a platform for room for growth, but also serve as a process of endless learning. The learning process is witnessed as individuals owning firms form coalitions with other industry partners, as a result of which exchange of information and knowledge occurs (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2011; Miner, 2007). Thus, this exchange of information results in increasing the knowledge an individual has over the industry matter, which proves to be beneficial in terms of better operations and the stake of firm stability. In addition to this, Miner added that the learning process is however not structured and is a more informal part of entrepreneurial networks (Miner, 2007). On the contrary, Aldrich and Cliffargued assert that the learning process occurs when individuals belonging to different firms jointly and willingly share information with their other working partners. For this purpose different measures have been taken by both individuals and agencies in order to speed up and support the learning process (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

In order to introduce a support mechanism to the learning process in entrepreneurial networks, various clubs and networks are formed to promote the sharing culture and often include people from diverse backgrounds who meet up regularly to share their vast experiences and knowledge (Al-Jassem & Al-Mukhtar., 2010; Drucker, 1995). These networks also range from formal to informal networks, while formal networks have a more structured process including basic membership fees, annual or monthly periodicals, and a profiled list of members. Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) sponsored by the Small Business Administration are a few of the clubs that support their members in terms of their output for those interested in business, involved in business or have been in business (www.inc.com, 2013).

Booher and Innes add that one of the most important roles of network is that it enforces the voluntary collaboration of partner firms in order to produce desired results (Booher & Innes, 2002). Alvarez and Busenitz continued that in the absence of partner firms, many of the small level enterprises would be deprived of profitability, as they would be unable to meet market structure and demands. Nascent entrepreneurs usually lack resources to generate enough funds to meet the higher-than-expected demands. Their lack of expertise across various aspects may hinder accepting new tasks from the market; ultimately causing their chance of failure and bankruptcy to be higher than more evolved complex firms

(Alvarez & Busenitz, 2010). Therefore, it can be said that the role of the network comes into action when the cost and profits are shared among the actors and contributed to profitability for everyone involved (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2010; Alvarez & Barney, 2004).

From more strategy based view, concerning environmental changes, Aaltio-Marjosola, Kyrö, and Sundin stated that one of the roles that entrepreneurial network is playing is its ability to provide cushion against environmental changes (Aaltio-Marjosola, Kyrö, & Sundin, 2008). Additionally, Szerb have demonstrated that with the advent of new technologies, dramatic shift in demand pattern, transaction costs, increased monetary and non-monetary risks, and increased levels of competition, the entrepreneurial network comes into play; acting as a mean to save any excess cost by distributing the tasks to partnered firm. It also enhances the effective distribution of resources and minimizes risks (Szerb, 2003; Aaltio-Marjosola, Kyrö, & Sundin, 2008).

Thus, it is observed that these environmental changes have played a major role in defining the working scenario. As per Butler and Galindo in their studies, it has been found that defining working structures are not only beneficial to smaller firms by providing them a continuous streamline of projects that maintain their business profitability, they also promote long term growth and cushion them against areas they generally lack in by substituting the desired work from partner firms. While the role of networks is beneficial in terms of reducing the risk factor associated with new technologies, it also accelerates the flow of information which proves to be critical in various different industries as a competitive edge (Butler, 2003; Galindo, 2008).According to Keast, et al., The prime motive that entrepreneurs seek from networks is the business opportunities and growth potential that can be truly utilized by active participation in society (Keast, et al., 2004).

In summary, networks have been considered important because of their democratic and equitable outcomes. These networks are considered to be activities involving social capital and commercial exchange. For an entrepreneur, these entrepreneurial networks are extremely useful. In fact, these entrepreneurial networks provide an opportunity to foster relationships (Ven, Ganco, & Hinings, 2013). According to Schein, in entrepreneurial networks, relationships with any and all can prove to be helpful, but specifically with peers it can be more beneficial. By being a part of a peer network, any new entrepreneur can get the chance of learning from the others facing the same problems as him/her. This kind of networking can provide an opportunity for the new business owner to benefit from the

knowledge of other service providers, which can be helpful in eliminating the feeling of isolation that often arises when starting a new business. Also, when the business grows, there is always the likelihood that the business will face some kind of challenge (Schein, 1989). In such case, the initiator of that business can find and seek benefits from the networks that had previously helped him with the starting up of the business. The social and peer-to-peer benefits associated with entrepreneurial networks tend to be secondary to strategic network purposes. However the new objectives of this networking can be seen to help in building business alliances, find new partners (new venture opportunities), get relevant knowledge about the service providers, access tangible and intangible resources, or to find and hire anyone with the kind of skills required for the particular area of expertise (Busenitz, 2007; Baron R. A., 2013).

However, this concept of networks in entrepreneurship and its role in entrepreneurial networks cannot be emphasized enough due to benefiting organizations (whether large or small) reaping out of it. The concept revolves around the partnering of firms for a mutual benefit, which results in profitable solutions to partner firms with lowest possible risks associated with it. The role of networks is not only witnessed in operations, but it also impacts the learning process and serves as a mean to cushion against unforeseen changes in macro-environments.

Women entrepreneurial networking

In organisational research, the ability to network successfully is frequently seen as facilitating promotional success and female who are excluded from predominantly male networks are likely to face restricted promotional opportunities. Research in entrepreneurship has also highlighted the benefits of social networks in supporting females in their entrepreneurial advancement. Berkelaar (1991) argues that networks can have three different shapes. They can be formal, informal, or community based. According to Moore and Webb (1998), it is of great importance for entrepreneurs to be involved in all entire three sorts of networks. Networking has been identified as a useful process to assist women who are seeking to advance their business.

From a gender perspective, in organisational research, Scullion and Linehan (2001) refer to the role of the interpersonal networks in supporting the female and suggest that women face additional difficulties when they are excluded from "the Old Boy network",

and this exclusion from the formal and informal networks compounds professional isolation, and restricting the availability of peer support, which in turn benefits the promotional prospects of their male colleagues. Li & Wearing (2002) noted that the very low number of female executives may be partly explained by factors such as family commitments and networking. Additionally, they stated that the low number of female executives is coupled with the fact that female non-executives directors are consistently younger than their male colleagues. The age difference suggests that females are at least equally well qualified in terms of competence, experience and education.

Suseno, et al, (2007) studied different type of relationships and social networks beyond the intra-organizational prospective. They examine the influence of gender in professional services firms. They point out that female managers should look beyond their organizational networks and build their networks of social capital not only through forming and maintaining relationships with other professionals but also with their clients outside their organizations. They argue that there are 'two different types of network structure of social capital that influence the professional's income attainment and positions in firms'. Nevertheless, the nature and the process of the professional social capital for female entrepreneurs with clients within society need more exploration and investigation.

Moore & Webb (1998) state that women and minorities do not have the large, strong network that men have, which will give them a disadvantage in the workplace. Moreover, Farrell (2005) argues that the workplace is unfortunately still filled with discrimination and also points out that the 'Old Boy's' network still exists. Loughlin, (1999) states that, "access to high- profile development opportunities (such as inquiries and working groups) is always gained through informal networks". Research shows that women tend to lack access to informal networks that provide information about such opportunities, they also less likely to have a mentor who will signal their potential and provide them with the support needed to ensure success.

Within the entrepreneurial context, relationships and connectivity play a very important role in any firm or enterprise's success (Suseno, et al, 2007). Granovetter, (1985-1992a) economic embeddedness argument and social capital, reports that any transaction is embedded in social networks, and the trust generated by personal interactions is helpful in discouraging malfeasance. The relational embededdness approach in the entrepreneurial context studies reveals that 'relationally embedded network ties affect the economic decisions

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in emerging firms. Also, Jack's (2005) study points out that the strong ties provide the link to the wider social context in order to provide enterprise with knowledge and resources, yet strong ties also work as a mechanism to invoke the weak ties (Jack, 2005). Even though, she reveals that, the strong ties 'can be a problematic' for a business and hinder its activities and constrain the extent of these activities, moreover, it can lead to 'tension within the networks' (Jack, 2005). In comparison between men and women, Macgregor and Tweed, (2002) report that the 'networked female small business and who are better educated were more expansionist in their business than both female small business owners and men' (Macgregor and Tweed, 2002). Elfring, and Hulsink, (2007), Podolny (2001) and Colby, (2003) assert that networks and social ties play an important role for the emerging entrepreneurs in order to acquire private information as well as obtain the resources.

Furthermore, it has been found that family decision, about participation in the corporate realm, is an important Structural decision, which affects women's entrepreneurial activities (Leahy and Doughney, 2006). Structural cues, such as family values, preferences and societal pressure are important aspects in this regard. Place affect entrepreneurial activities in terms of material, institutional and moral grounds. There are some places, which are associated with rich resources and opportunities, instead of another. Similarly, schooling, health care, and business facilities, transportations and properties are associated with space and place (Javirs, 2005).

Developments or progress, regarding women entrepreneurship, emphasize on women's position in the society and entrepreneurship in general. Weak social position in the society puts an adverse effect on women entrepreneurship and networking activities. Entrepreneurship scholars have different beliefs about entrepreneurial networking activities (Garntner, 1990). Moreover, they have different roles in their desired economic progress (Welter & Smallbone, 2011). According to the studies, conducted by Business development Bank of Canada (1999) and Industry Canada (1999), entrepreneurial women have no common visions on their mind and they formulate their own vision to pursue their entrepreneurial activities. They develop their own business environment to make, create and avail opportunities, which are suitable for networking and entrepreneurial activities. Such conditions support their cultural values and family background. They develop their own networking relations; however, such activities incur on them heavy costs. Fear, insecurities, isolation is the dew of the consequences (Canadian advisory council, 1991).

Ibarra (1992) in his study points out that males are more likely to form more and stronger homophilous ties across multiple networks, while females evidence a differentiated network pattern in which they obtained social support and friendship from other females and instrumental access through network ties to males (Ibarra, 1992). Although the centrality in a wide network does not vary by sex once controls are instituted, males appear to reap greater network returns relative to females from similar individual and positional resources, as well as from homophilous relationships.

Hierarchical categorization is not the only system that provides or restricts entrepreneurial networking and other opportunities to women. Gender based exploitation exists in both, governmental and private sector. Discrimination in labour market also restricts developmental opportunities for female entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 1998). From these studies, it is evident that researchers have diverse opinions regarding entrepreneurial activities of females (Rouse & Kitching, 2006).

Rouse and Kitching (2006) argued that entrepreneurial activities, including networking, are subjected to the nature of the business. There are few businesses, where more networking opportunities are essentially available, as compare to other. Hierarchical categorization is present, which affect entrepreneurial activities for women (Wilson et al., 2004). (Wilson, Whittam, & Deakins, 2004). On the contrary, Rhein (1998) observed that widespread discrimination, with respect to gender, in employment, education and entrepreneurship reduces opportunities for women entrepreneur.

A considerable amount of literature highlighted the importance of entrepreneurial networking. Nevertheless, a few empirical studies have been conducted on women entrepreneurial networks. Entrepreneurship is considered a complex and dynamic phenomenon, and diverse views exist regarding it (Acs and Szerb, 2010). Such differences necessitate further study to clarify, which are the critical factors that affect entrepreneurial activities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Welter and Smallbone (2011) emphasised, on the need to further scrutinize the topic or subject, which may aid to explore and identify external factors, which affect entrepreneurial activities, for instance, entrepreneurial networking, mindset towards entrepreneurship and opportunities available of venture creation. In research, several factors have been discussed, which affect women entrepreneurial networking. However, the role of gender in entrepreneurial networking, needs to be elaborated, in the context of space and place. Space and place play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial

networking, with respect to available resources, needed to initiate successful corporate (Ekinsmyth, 2013).

These previous studies, however, call for further studies to investigate the female entrepreneurs' networks. In addition, the barriers to enter these networks should also be examined properly and what kinds of personal and career benefits these networks provide should equally be studied. There is a need to increase the awareness and understanding of improving and developing female entrepreneurs' role in international management. In addition, in the international human resources context, each region and even each country within the region has its unique culture, economic growth, legislation, and religion which tends to impact on the females' entrepreneurship progress.

Gender, entrepreneurial network and resource acquisition:

There are diverse factors, which give rise to gender issues, which further affect women's participation in entrepreneurial activities and resource acquisition. Religious and cultural value system is important considerations (Alexandre-Leclair, 2014). In Saudi Arabia, ethnic culture is conservative (Moghadam, 2003; Zuhur, 2012) and does not encourage participation of women in business. Moreover, Social structure plays an important role in intersectionality in gender. Forson (2013) stated that barriers faced by women stem from complex social structure of the society. Women in Saudi Arabia are victim of religion and cultural aspects, imposed or emerged by/from the society (Rasheed, 2013)

Entrepreneurial networking is important for a sustainability of corporate. Entrepreneurial networking enables entrepreneurs to acquire adequate resources to run effectively their businesses. Role of gender is extremely important in this regard. Gender affects networking activities, of women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneur has to mange monetary and non-monetary resources, for corporate reasons. For instance, Financial, human, capital and technological resources are required to manage diverse business activities.

Gender issues play significant obstacles for women to pursue networking and arrangements for resource acquisition (Stewart & McDermott, 2005; Mccall, 2005). Such arrangements require a lot of effort and market relationships. Women entrepreneurship has to keep a diverse business relations with various stakeholders. (Winker & Degele (2011) stated that inequality in gender leads to injustice.

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Gender inequality is common in Saudi Arabia. Saudi society is a male dominated society, and culture is based upon strict gender differences. Opportunities for women, to participate in employment and education, are few. Acker, 2012; and Anthias (1998) argue that lack of opportunities to participate in employment and social activities leads to sever from of gender discrimination, which is being witnessed in Saudi women entrepreneurs.

According to the report published by the World Bank (2012), all Middle Eastern countries have fewer women's rights as compare to men, which barricades women from becoming an entrepreneur and halts them to develop their corporate networks. Gender issue further gives rise to an array of obstacles. For instance, early marriages and work life balance do not permit women to allocate appropriate time to pursue their entrepreneurial activities. They start their entrepreneurial between the age of 35 and 54 (IFC, 2007). Gender is also associated with honour issues in the society. It is not perceived honourable for women to leave home, for earning. It is perceived that it is the duty of the male family member to look after the business or source of earning.

Moreover, it is not considered acceptable that women work among males at work place. It is somewhat considered a taboo in Middle Eastern societies. Decision about participation in employment is an important Structural decision, which affects women's entrepreneurial activities (Leahy and Doughney, 2006). Social structure of the society gives rise to inequality and escalate intersectioanlity (Dy, 2014). According to Bradley (2007), political and economic aspects of the society also affect gender differences and promote intersectionality, gender inequality, and discrimination against women.

Such barriers inhibit women entrepreneurial networking, which further reduces the chances of acquiring resources, financial and other. These resources range from financial or capital resources to technical and human resources. Women face hurdles regarding access to proper entrepreneurial training and development. Women have less training and development opportunities as compared to males (IFC, 2007), which compel them to remain at the existing level of their business. Gender bias exists which affects capital sourcing.

Financial institutions are reluctant to provide capital or finance to women. Therefore, women face difficulties in acquiring small or medium term loans (IFC, 2007). According to (Alturki & Braswell, 2010), 82.2% registered business women in Saudi Arabia rely on personal savings and 12.9% seek loans from relative and friends instead of external sourcing.

They also lack in technological resources. 55.9% registered business women don't have their own website and percentage is even higher for unregistered businesspersons which is 62.9%.

Saudi Female Entrepreneurs' Networking

Based on the literature review, it has been noticed that besides the novelty of the network process oriented research in the area of entrepreneurship and networking in general, no traces have been found of any previous research on networking and network process on Saudi female entrepreneurs. However, as it was found in the literature, women in Saudi Arabia have been very active business owners who do not only navigate the usual sets of challenges that face all entrepreneurs, but also contribute to widen growth and development of the business sector, which directly influence the country's economy in a quite optimistic way (Fenwick, 2008; Iqbal, 2010; Hougaard, 2005). In the past, due to the scarcity of female entrepreneurs, Saudi Arabia was a little isolated from the economic and business world, but now the situation is completely opposite, and females in Saudi Arabia are trying to positioning themselves on the Saudi society and contributing to its development. The Saudi women now have their own firms; they are creating employments and are performing in many fields successfully. It is depicted that in Saudi Arabia, many business women are running different businesses and many women are involved in creating jobs and they also motivate other women as well to make them independent in their work.

Conclusion

The literature in the area of entrepreneurship emphasizes the role and the importance of networks in obtaining the required economic and non-economic resources, discovering opportunities, and information exchange, which are critical for the entrepreneurial process. Previous research in the last two decades draws attention to female entrepreneurs' network and its role in acquiring adequate resource to ensuring their emergence and development Hansen, 1991; Hite & Hesterly, 2001; Larson & Starr, 1993; Steier & Greenwood, 2000).

As a result of reviewing the literature in this area, it is recognized that in order to broaden the knowledge and understanding of networks, more qualitative research is required to investigate women entrepreneurs' networking. The literature calls for a social structural perspective of entrepreneurial networks in order to understand the impact of different social divisions on women entrepreneurs' networking .Accordingly, the ability to influence the entrepreneurial processes, success and development. The development of entrepreneurs'

networks may influence their ability in resource acquisition; thus, networks as the firm attempts to leverage, influence, and control resources (Hite & Hesterly, 2001).

A review of the existing research in network within entrepreneurship shows that there are very few studies that adopt a social structural approach, and mostly are employed quantitative techniques. Thus, many criticisms have been forwarded against them due to their limitations and shortcomings. Because of the scarcity of scholarly literature on networking in the entrepreneurial context, particularly with respect to women entrepreneurs, further studies are necessary to contribute to the existing literature, to bridge the gender gap in networking research and to help to create more gender equality in entrepreneurship. Accordingly, this study will help in extending understanding and knowledge of networking processes and activities of women entrepreneurs.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology and Design

"Philosophy begins with wonder."

— Socrates—

Introduction

The purpose of the research is to explore Saudi female entrepreneur's networking and interaction process in order to understand events, activities and actors involved in their network. The study also explores the role of both types of relationships (formal and informal) among the network's actors within their networking interaction process in order to understand the patterns of their relationships and interconnectedness between the different types of relationships. Therefore, an analysis is conducted in the context of what female entrepreneurs think, their experience about developing relationships, and to which level they are involved in developing relationships while maintaining their values and career development.

Research Question:
How do the female entrepreneurs' network in Saudi Arabian context? what are gender issues as well as religion and cultural value system which adversely affect entrepreneurial networking and resource acquisition for Saudi entrepreneurial women? → network interaction activities that can be identified among Saudi female entrepreneurs, process of formation, actors involved in network and their roles, network dynamics, resources that actors can gain access to by forming networks, implications of networking.

⬇

Research Areas Include:
Perception of female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia, Saudi business environment and culture, actors involved in networking and their role, impacts of relationships or networking from different point of views(e.g. business growth and development, and benefit to female entrepreneurs, resources acquisition, etc).

⬇

Research Outcomes:
To understand the perception and practices of female entrepreneurs who owned business corporations and to highlight the impacts and influence of gender, class, and other social divisions on their network or relationships on various aspects including business practices and actors involved with it.

Figure 14: Research Overview - Research questions, areas, and outcomes

Accordingly, following the this chapter is devoted to provide detailed outlines of the overall research methodology used to conduct the research and answers the research

questions. Based upon Creswell, (2003) research design framework (figure 15), the research approach, strategy and methods, illustrating different theories and procedures are discussed alongside with the research methodology used and its justification.

Elements of Inquiry

Alternative Knowledge Claims

Approaches to Research

Design Processes of Research

Strategies of Inquiry

Qualitative
Quantitative
Mixed Methods

Translated into practice

Questions
Theoretical lens
Data collection
Data analysis
Write-up
Validation

Conceptualized by the researcher
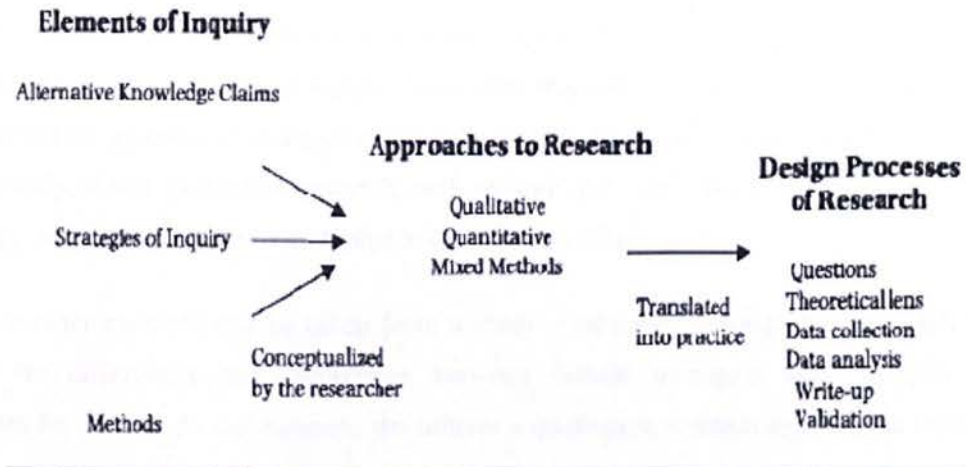
Methods

Figure 15: Knowledge Claims. Strategies of Inquiry, and Methods (source, Creswell, 2003, P: 5)

Research Approach

By reviewing the literature of female entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial networks, it has been found that the qualitative research is highly recommended by many scholars, e.g. Ahl 2006, Bryman & Bell, 2007, Brush, et al, 2006, and Hampton, Cooper, & McGowan, 2009, among many others, in conducting these studies. The qualitative research methodology is usually used in the social science field because it helps in explaining social phenomena such as "persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interaction between nations" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11). It also allows research participants to have more control over their responses to survey questions (Zikmund & Babin, 2006; Creswell J. W., 2008).

Qualitative research approach is used when qualitative data is utilized for the clarification of hypotheses, beliefs and thoughts that are connected with the research topic. It helps in gaining insight of the study area, and helps the researcher during the process of recording, probing, and revealing of deep meanings and importance of the study topic; which can be generalized to large population groups (Misra, 1989). The qualitative research approach is linked with the social constructive paradigm, which picks out the socially

constructed nature of reality. Thus, qualitative research approach engrosses soundtrack investigation, and attempts to explore the in-depth importance of nature-contradicting beliefs and behaviours (Creswell J. W., 2008).

An example can be taken from a study which is conducted by Holly Buttner in 2001, in which the researcher studied the management style of female entrepreneurs by using a relational theory as an analytical frame. The results that are presented by the researcher are purely based on quantitative research methodology; including content analysis approach. But with the help of this qualitative research methodology, the researcher remains successful in obtaining and accessing the research objectives (Buttner, 2001).

Another example can be taken from a study conducted by Cespedes; in which she studies the differences and similarities between female managers and entrepreneurs (Cespedes M. , 2012). In the research, she utilizes a qualitative research approach in order to analyse the likely differences and similarities between female managers and female entrepreneurs in terms of challenges, motivators, and adaptations by conducting interviews. Thus, in this study, the qualitative research approach is effectively identified and it helps in obtaining the desired outcomes. Likewise, Ding and Qi in their studies related to the leadership, empowerment among Chinese female entrepreneurs utilize a qualitative research approach (Ding & Qi, 2008). The research is completely based on the qualitative approach by presenting six qualitative case studies in the context of Chinese female entrepreneurs. Thus, by using this approach, the researcher successfully obtains the desired research outcomes, purpose of research, and successfully meets the research objectives.

Moreover, according to Kratt, the qualitative research approach is more appropriate while studying new grounds relating to women's behaviour or attitude. In the research, Kratt implemented qualitative research approach in order to conduct the research in the context of the way through which female entrepreneurs communicate their credibility. Thus, the outcomes that are illustrated by the researcher are quite good, since the author successfully met the research goals associated with the respective area of study. Hence, qualitative research can be used effectively; as there is plenty of previous research that are found in the literature that utilized qualitative research and acquired effective research outcomes when dealing with females (Kratt, 2003).

In addition to what is illustrated above, the selection of the research approach is also influenced by epistemological and ontological considerations, which should be carefully considered by the researcher in order to identify her research philosophical position. In terms of the epistemological and ontological considerations, qualitative and quantitative research approaches differ from each other in many contexts. From the worldwide view, Creswell (2008) stated that "the more complete way to see the differences between them is in the basic philosophical assumptions". Rossman and Rollis (2003) and many other scholars also call them the research paradigm; the qualitative research always adopts an inductive approach in which theory is generated from research, while quantitative research always takes a deductive approach in which research is used to test a theory.

From epistemological stand point, which refers to the theory of knowledge, which is concerned with what is included invalid knowledge, the basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretive approach, which is interviewing and observation of existing literature. Besides, from the ontological prospective, qualitative approaches are constructionists. A constructionist ontological position of qualitative approach means that a certain phenomenon is built due to interactions of individuals. Denzin and Lincoln have also suggested that qualitative research is more broad and open than other research approaches, and that this approach forms the basis for the construction of theories. Qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position and is interpretive, that is, it concerns with how social phenomena occur and how people are related, and involves the experience and the understanding of people. Denzin and Lincoln's study aims to interpret the experiences and views of the participants who are participating in collection of data by giving interviews. Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln claim that qualitative research is 'multi-method' in focus. It involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter, where the researchers study things in their natural settings; attempting to make sense of or interpret a phenomenon according to meanings that people bring to them. Hence, qualitative research involves the collection of a variety of empirical materials that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). Hence, the focus of this study is to explore individuals' networking interaction, behaviours and activities, as it is inevitable to study the entrepreneurial network process independently of its actors and their social context. Thus, it can be said that the study positions itself in the constructionist ontological stance.

Based on that discussion, for the benefit of this study qualitative research strategy is selected. The selection of the research approach is based on three reasons: Firstly, the current study is exploratory in nature; sinceone of the greatest strengths of the inductive qualitative approach is the richness and depth of explorations and rich descriptions, which lead to understanding the social construction from the viewpoint of respondents(Merriam, 2009).Consequently, adopting a qualitative approach helpsto explore, discover meaning, and develop understanding rather than authenticating truths or predict outcomes.In other words, different theories are formulated instead of testing the existing theories.

Secondly, the selection of research design depends on the research question, aims and objectives of the study. Since the aim of this study is to analyse the interaction process of network process from the participants' entrepreneurship and networking experience, it is better served and fulfilled by collecting rich qualitative data by giving participants the opportunity to tell their personal life stories. Seeing that, Coviello suggests "relational data are best collected using qualitative methods rather than quantitative methods, or even a mix of methods, this is because whilst quantitative data is 'uni-dimensional', qualitative data can be analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively" (Coviello, 2005, p: 43). The qualitative field study has been acknowledged as ineffective approach for studying subtle distinction in attitude and behaviour of social processes, e.g. such as gender and social identities, entrepreneurship, networking and network change over time.

Thirdly and finally, from practical prospective of this study, the qualitative research approach of the inductive stance relies on a research strategy that is flexible and iterative, which means that the researcher can change the research process and methods according to the emergent result of the fieldwork (O¨ hman, 2005; Holloway, 2005).This gives the researcher a chance to adapt to the changes during the study in the social work.

Overall, exploratory qualitative research used in this study is beneficial. That is because it studies the behaviour, perception and opinion of female entrepreneurs in terms of developing and maintaining relationships from different actors in their social, cultural, and economic context. As shown from the literature review previously, the research that has been done in the western context to analyse the barriers and determine the success factors of the female entrepreneurs, this has been criticized on certain grounds. Since, some of these studies have been criticized for being contributed to the extant gender gap, inequality, discrimination in the entrepreneurship, and by being based on structured surveys in which women

entrepreneurs do not get the chance to express their views and share their experiences; such research is regarded as being based on a masculine way of viewing the world and, in so doing, it omits women's experience. This suggests that the interpretation of these studies, subsequently based on androcentric and heterosexual viewpoint. As to avoid the traditional androcentric research methodologies, a qualitative approach has to be employed. In-depth interviews give participants the chance to fully express their feelings and to share their experiences with the researcher.

Qualitative approach gives a chance to get an inner experience of Saudi women entrepreneurs and to analyse the factors creating hurdles in their way of progress. Furthermore, it explores cultural, social and religious factors that are hindering them to enter any prospective field. Qualitative research is particularly effective in obtaining culture-specific information about values, opinions, and behaviours of particular populations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Therefore, qualitative approach best fits this type of social studies, which helps in understanding and evaluating social practice interventions (Schriver, 2001). It has been also found also from the literature that the majority of the research conducted on women and gender issues commonly uses qualitative research method. Thus, it can be said that for this study, qualitative research is the needed research approach for being involving gender elements.

Narrative Inquiry

Research strategy refers to the research design assumption that is used to conduct the overall investigation (Creswell J. W., 2003). In qualitative methodology, there are numbers of research strategies where each strategy "rests on different assumptions" (Denzin, 2010, p. 422). These assumptions help the researcher to choose the appropriate research strategy positioned at the interface between the chosen research paradigm and the employed methods as the researcher move from the theoretical to the practical part (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Among the most used qualitative research strategies are qualitative survey, phenomenology, ethnography, action research, literature review, case study, ground theory, and narrative approaches (Walsh, 2001; Zikmund, 2010; Sofaer, 2002; Creswell J. W., 2006). However, it is suggested that the researcher has to study first each approach, the theoretical assumption underlying each type of qualitative research inquiry and then to look at the research's aim and objectives to decide which approach can best fulfil them and provide answers to their questions. For example, Van Manen asserts that "the method one chooses ought to be in

harmony with the deep interest one brings to the research in the first place" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 2).

Based on the previous discussion, the researcher chooses to adopt the narrative inquiry to conduct this study. The reason behind that choice is to gain rich data and insights into how Saudi females evolve their networks in the Saudi context. The researcher believes that in order to fully understand the human relationships' interactions and networking, which is socially embedded, constructed, and affected by their interaction with milieus, it is very important to collaborate and integrate their lived experiences with the place, their society and events (Polkinghorne, 1991). This can be done by adopting narrative inquiry approach, which helps in understanding the participants' networking experiences by giving order and meaning to what happened in the plots of the participants' stories, sequence of events, and individuals involved (Polkinghorne, 1991).

Additionally, since the targeted participants are women entrepreneurs, it is suggested by many scholars, e.g. Bryman (2008), that women are constrained by many policies and social norms, thus are needed to be given the opportunity to be heard, and express themselves by telling their stories about their lived experiences from their prospective, and the most appropriate way to achieve this is by employing a narrative method. Thereby, one can understand how the reality of their world is socially constructed, how they interact, what are the surrounding issues affecting their networking, and how they assess their experience. It is very important to listen to their narratives and stories of their life experiences and extract meanings of what happened.

Additionally, the narrative research strategy focuses on exploring the individual's life and experience through storytelling and narration of their experience (Creswell J. W., 2008). Unlike all the other research strategies based on fragmenting the collected data and separate individuals and their experiences "in order to finding patterns in the data", narrative inquiry integrates all the collected stories and experiences to provide a cumulative understanding of the women's entrepreneurs networking experiences (Lal, Suto, & Ungar, 2012). The narrative approach embraces narration as both a research method and a phenomenon of study. In contrast to the phenomenological approach, narrative inquiry focuses on studying the constructed individual's experience in relation to others and their social settings (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In addition, Bruner (1991) and Polkinghorne (1991) regard the temporality of events and its sequences as distinctive attributes of narration, hence "narrative is

considered as a description of events taking place over time" (Sutherland, Breen, & Lewis, 2013).

Furthermore, what is worth mentioning is that, historically, the emergence of narrative inquiry can be traced back to the emergence of stories and storytelling as a cultural instrument used in every culture to convey characters, events, and meanings in words and images. Stories and narratives have been acknowledged as common tools shared in every culture to entertain, educate and preserve culture. Stories consisted of characters, events, plots, and place or series of places. Over time, the stories and narratives evolved from being a genre to a method of inquiry in the field of linguistics, nursing, psychology, sociology, and many other fields of social science studies (Bamberg, 2010). Narration is an approach that people adopt to reveal their subconscious. The way people narrate a story carries more than a surface meaning. It could reflect their hidden feelings towards a problem, and this could be induced from their body language.

This is typically true about Arabs, where stories can light fires that start wars and revolutions; 'the word' is like a sword in the Arabic language. Thus, the researcher uses the narrative approach to make the interviewees feel more comfortable and thus reflect truths about their businesses. Arabs can talk for hours and hours, but cannot tolerate writing. The Narrative approach was intertwined and passed in the Arab culture from generation to generation. Arabs shared stories and news via narration, which is how values, ethics and morals were passed and preserved. Therefore, when Islam emerged in the Arab world, The Holy Book "Quran" intended to reach Arabs' minds and hearts via narration. The Quran used narrative approach in reciting stories of past prophets and messengers, from Moses, Joseph, and Noah to Virgin Mary, Jesus, and finally Mohamed (Peace Be Upon Them). After Prophet Mohamed passed away, his companions and followers passed on many stories about different situations and activities of the Prophet's life as a mean to transfer knowledge and experiences in dealing with various life situations or problems. It is an approach that is adopted till today.

Therefore, the narrative approach is the best for collecting rich and detailed data about Arab's daily life activities and experiences. According to Katarzyna and Imas who have employed a narrative approach in their study of 'Fábricas Recuperadas': '....narrating became as an collection of ideas, discourses and narrated actions, a process of co-creation.... a complex co-construction that grows without clear scripts, rules or models, but comes out of the people themselves." (Kosmala & Imas, 2012 , p. 113).

In respect to research methodology, the special contribution in the field of narrative as a method in qualitative research belongs to Lyotard (1984) and Bruner (1986). They both claim that there are two ways to sense-making. The first one is the 'logic-scientific' method, and the second one is the 'narrative' method, where the latter is standing in the opposite direction of the former. The narrative approach evolved and became popular among social science researchers; e.g. Labov (1997), Bruner, (1984), Gee (1991), and Polkinghorne (1991). This approach differs in the way it looks at narratives in terms of the way data should be organised in order to eliminate the irrelevant and redundant information from that which will be analysed in a process called 'narrative smoothing' (Spence, 1983; Spencer, 1986).

In terms of the definition of narrative inquiry, and despite the fact that narrative inquiry has been used since the 20th century in the social science studies, it is difficult to find one specific and precise definition of it (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2008) however, claim that the following definition is agreed upon among scholars in the field. A story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world, and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experiences as a story, is first and foremost, a way of thinking about experiences. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as a phenomenon under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375).

What distinguishes the narrative strategy from all the other research strategies is its conceptual framework, which, according to Connelly and Clandinin (2006) consists of three main dimensions: temporality, place, and sociality. By studying these three dimensions of the narrative the researcher can understand the complexity of the relational composition of people's life experiences inside and outside of an inquiry, as well as imagine future possibilities of their lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).Similarly, According to Polkinghorne (1991, p: 136), narrative is a "cognitive process that gives meaning to temporal events by identifying them as parts of a plot". Narrative does not describe a human experience through listing what happened in order; rather it brings out meaningful connections between events and experiences (Meretoja, 2014). Furthermore, Bruner, (1990-1991) claims that narrative and storytelling are considered as a very effective 'portal' to communicate knowledge, meaning, and experiences, and where one is bound to cognitive memory, constructed memory, and perceived memory (Bruner, 1991; Bruner, 1990).

From an ontological and epistemological prospective, like many other qualitative interpretive scholars, the researcher shares the world view. In other words, the researcher believes that the world is shaped by people's stories. Thus, the researcher's ontological view is that there is no single reality in the world, as reality is constructed and shaped variably according to people's narratives. Following the example of Much (2004) quoted by Knox (2004), selecting the method that is from one's ontological views is 'best for a particular piece of research' (Knox, 2004). Knox describes the relationship between the research philosophy and methodology as "if one thinks that the social world is constructed by narrative and that there is no means of discriminating either between story and reality or between different stories, then one cannot (logically) employ methods that assume an external reality. There would be no point, as one does not believe there is such a reality to be counted or categorized, the only outcome is to write narratives that appear more persuasive"(Knox, 2004, p. 124).

Accordingly, the narrative strategy helps in identifying real life aspects that influence the network developing activities of female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. It helps in assessing the perception and point of view of Saudi female entrepreneurs in terms of developing and maintaining network at both international and domestic levels.

In summary, the methodology adopted in this research aims to explore and develop knowledge about women entrepreneurs' network activities, and interactions as constructed in the Saudi context by using a qualitative approach. The selection of this approach is based upon one of the major advantages of using the 'Qualitative Approach', that is its ability to generate rich information from the participants lived experiences, and how they construct their world from their own views and perspectives. This is by giving them the opportunity to express themselves. Thus, the researcher gains rich information, deep insights, and understanding of the studied phenomenon as socially constructed. This information can be gained not only in the form of verbal speech and expressions, but also through the reflection of thoughts and emotions conveyed in their speech. This is due to the power of hidden meanings contained in those words. The great classical Greek philosopher Socrates said once, "Speak, so I can see you" (Socrates, 470 BC-399 BC) to express that the speech is not just words, however, it is a reflection of others' thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. Narrative method using in-depth interviews was the most appropriate approach to conduct this study in order to obtain rich information and understand the participants' experience in their context.

Unstructured interviews are used to allow the participants to respond freely in order to generate new themes.

Nature of Research's Sample and Sampling technique

In respect to this sampling, the process that is used by the researchers to make selection of an appropriate sample from the population is followed. Particularly, there are two types of sampling techniques: random sampling and non-random sampling techniques (Kothari, 2008; Aggarwal & Khurana, 2001; Bickman & Rog, 2009). Given that, the study adopts an inductive qualitative design in order to explore the female entrepreneurs' networking activities, network and the communication difficulties associated with the nature of the Saudi context.

Furthermore, qualitative research approach and narrative research strategy aim to collect very rich data to provide rich descriptions of the world as seen through the eyes of the people being studied. This can be better achieved if the research respondents voluntarily choose to participate in the study or fully trust the researcher in order to speak out and share their stories. Thus, for the purpose of gaining better understanding of the phenomenon and exploring the Saudi female entrepreneurs' networking activities, practical considerations, and resource constrains, the non-probabilistic snowballing sampling technique is employed. This chosen sampling approach provides the researcher with some flexibility to the research design in order to adjust the sampling process at the time of collecting data (Holton, 2009). Snowball sampling technique is especially useful when the population is inaccessible or hard to find (Trochim, 2000).

Further, in terms of how large the sample should be, the decision regarding the selection of the sample size depends on the purpose, approach and strategy of this research. In qualitative research approach, the sample is required to be appropriate and suitable enough to draw a conclusion, i.e. it should not be over-sized or under-sized (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In addition to this, Glaser & Strauss mention that the appropriate sample size for a study is based on the theoretical saturation, which occurs when no new relevant data seems to emerge with existing information. The obtained information is developed appropriately in terms of its properties and dimensions; and when the relationship between developed categories is established and validated. Therefore, they suggest that the researcher should continue to collect data until the desired information is obtained. An estimation by Glaser & Strauss

suggests that the sample size in a qualitative study can be limited to10, 20, or 30 interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

On the other hand, it has been advised that if a researcher ignores theoretical saturation, this may increase the risk of inadequate findings. It may also cause lack of credibility, which can be reached in qualitative research when the researcher continues collecting data from the field until data saturation occurs (Jones & Noble, 2007). Hence, Glaser & Strauss recommend that if the researcher selects the interview approach to collect data, there is no need to set a particular number for sample size when theoretical saturation occurs (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Similarly, Bryman concludes that "the style of the theoretical underpinning of the study affects the sample size; e.gif the study methodology is based on a life story or interpretive phenomenological analysis, it is likely to involve a much smaller sample size due to the extensive and detailed analysis that is usually taking place" (Bryman, 2012). In line with this principle, the researcher has visited the female section of the Eastern Chamber of Commerce to request a directory or list of women entrepreneurs in the Eastern province. It is noteworthy that, according to Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry statistics report, 2013 (see appendix 5) the number of registered business records in the commercial register offices in the Kingdom reaches, until the second quarter of 2013, 42 886 record, while in the same period, the total number of recorded business registration for women entrepreneurs in the Kingdom is around 5520 records which representing only 12.9 % of the total business registrations, whilst the number of registered women entrepreneurs in Eastern province who runs their business by themselves constitutes only 704 women entrepreneurs who own more than 50% percent of the business for at least and run the business by themselves (Eastern Chamber of Commerce, 2013, Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2013).

The researcher has contacted many of the businesses listed in the directory and has found that most of the premises are owned by women but actually are run by men. However, the small sample has been sufficient for the intended purpose. The data starts at a sample size of nine cases that have been interviewed followed by two more to validate the obtained data and to find out if any new theme emerges. Thus, data theoretical saturation is achieved at sample size of eleven cases. Thus, interviewing a sample of eleven Saudi women entrepreneurs is enough to get enough information and deep understanding of the key issues and concepts related to the purpose of the study.

Study sample covered both registered and un-registered businesspersons, with diverse levels of business expansion. For instance, those women entrepreneurs were also included, who were at initial stage of doing business. Female entrepreneurial women were identified with the help of databases available, at chambers of commerce, of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, which known as Dammam district. All women were Saudi nationals and purpose of the interview was to develop an understanding about entrepreneurial network, challenges and difficulties, faced by women entrepreneurial women in networking.

Study of Hardy (2001) is important in this regard, which provide value bale information about subject development in the research. Author stated that, role of researcher and community is important to produce research subject. Researcher and women entrepreneurs also facilitate sample selection for the current research study. Personal efforts of the researcher and contact information given by female entrepreneurs for other entrepreneurial women greatly assisted sample selection process. The researcher tried to ensure that the research sample includes women from different industry sectors, family background and social divisions. So, some participants have been deliberately chosen to be represented in the sample such as Shiites women.

In sum, due to the nature of the social-cultural nature of Saudi society a non-probability snowball sampling technique has been employed in the research. Snowball sampling has been exploited to make sample selection. Women Entrepreneurial culture is less common in Saudi Arabia, and it is difficult to access women entrepreneurs in Saudi community. Hence, snowball sampling was the best approach, which could be used to facilitate the sample selection process. The snowball sampling technique is utilized for hidden population, when it is difficult for researcher to access the population. Eventually, the research sample size was comprised of eleven Saudi women entrepreneurs from the Eastern province. Sample size was comprised of following a number of entrepreneurial women.

Participants' Personal Profiles and Characteristics

A number of eleven Saudi female entrepreneurs have been interviewed for the purpose of this study. The participants have varied in terms of age, project stage, entrepreneurial category, and the industrial field they operate in. The participants' personal information and location of each interview are summarised in table 6 below:

Pseudonym	Age	Marital status	Educational background	Project lifespan (years)	Project type	Entrepreneurial category	Interview location	Interview Audio taped length/M	Follow up interview
Lila	55	Married & mother	B.Sc. in Sociology	15	Industrial equipment & infrastructure	Large	Café	180	60
Wijdan	45	Divorced mother	B.A in Media	10	Media & advertising company	Medium	Her office	160	30
Razan	34	Married & mother	B.A, & MBA	3	Fashion design &Retail	Small	Her office	135	45
Najla	34	Single	B.A & MBA	8	Perfume production	Small	Her office	130	60
Addanah	45	Married & mother	B.Sc. in Physics	10	Day care centre for special needs kids	Medium	Her office	180	30
Mona	40	Married & Mother	BA, MBA	3	Exhibition organisation	Medium	Her office	150	45
Jouaher	42	Married & mother	B.A. in English Literature	3	Exhibition organisation	Medium	Her office	165	60
Enjoud	26	Single	B.A. & MBA	5	Training centre and network marketing	Large	Café	180	60
Mashael	25	Single	B.Sc. in MIS	3	Handmade products	Small	Café	120	90
Bashayer	35	Married & mother	B.A.&MBA	3	Food& Beverage	Large	Café	150	70
Maha	21	Single	B.A. in Business Management	3	Coffee shop	Medium	Café	195	45

Table 2: Characteristics of Entrepreneurs and Their Businesses

From the collected data, it is worth noting that, Saudi women entrepreneurs are highly educated; holding a college degree or studying towards a college degree. The majority of them hold a higher education degree such as B.A. in Business or MBA and few in other

different majors. In consistency with Mouler and Yhomas' findings in their study, a high level of education encourages entrepreneurial motivation in women, as it functions as personal evidence of being capable and well-equipped to embark on a business enterprise. Moreover, business education plays an important role in providing them with both the technical tools as well as helping them re-orient towards "self-reliance, independence, creativity and flexible thinking" (Mouler and Yhomas, 2001).

Additionally, respondents' ages ranged from twenty one to fifty five. It is noted that the majority, who are seven women, are married with children, whereas only three are younger singles, and one is divorced. Their children's number ranges from three to seven children. This manifests the emphasis placed by the community on the role of marriage in the society and the concept of family and its role in supporting women in society. Saudi social life focused entirely on family bonds and support, thus Saudi females usually get married to one of the descendant of the tribe. Not only marriage, but always preferences are given to relatives in work and all the other aspects of the life. Hence, Saudi women's everyday life is influenced by social divisions.

In terms of social divisions, the research sample consists of all the different socioeconomic levels, ethnicity, religious divisions, and status in Saudi society. The sample composed of one Shiites women and ten Sunnis women. Three of the participants running unregistered business and the other eight are running registered business. In addition, four of the participants are from very rich high class families, four from middle class, and three are from low social class. In terms of tribe affiliation, eight of them are Kabeyli and there women are Khadeiry also, nine of the women participated in this study have family entrepreneurship background and two from family with no entrepreneurship background.The participants are located in the major cities; Alkhobar, Dammam, Qatif, Hufuf, and Jubail in the western province of Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, in terms of business type, it is noted that it is widely varied. The businesses include coffee shop, food and beverages, media, day care center for special needs kids and only one industrial equipment business. Nevertheless, they are mainly focused on services sectors and only very few, precisely one, in the industrial sector. This can be related back to the sociocultural constraints and strict code of gender segregation in public and workplaces for Saudi women's work and everyday activities.

Administration of the interviews:

Interview Procedure

The primary data of this study are collected using in-depth face to face interview with Saudi female entrepreneurs. Due to the conservative and the reticence nature of the Saudi society, in respect to women, snowballing sampling techniques are widely used in this study. That is, the selection of participants is based on information derived from a list of female entrepreneurs obtained from the female branch of the Eastern Chamber of Commerce, and another list of women entrepreneurs is generated by the recommendation of some of the participants. These lists are used to identify and to locate participants to be approached and to be asked to participate. In the snowball strategy, some participants identify other potential participants. As it has been noted from the literature, qualitative research relies on the sample group (Strauss, 1998; Bryman, 2012). Thus, in this study the participant sampling was based on the consideration of data quality and saturation, rather than on statistical representativeness.

Electronic mails have been used to introduce the research topic and research aims to participants, however, phone calls have been a more effective means to get to them. SMS have been also used to follow up with the participants to confirm the interview time and venue. However, for being frequent travellers either because of their business or because of their family commitments, especially on holidays, many interviews have been rescheduled several times. This explains why so much time has been consumed in the data collection process.

Ultimately, a sum of eleven female entrepreneurs has been successfully interviewed. The interview venue has been chosen according to their convenience, where they feel comfortable and free to talk. Some have chosen to conduct the interview in their private offices and some others have preferred a public place such as a café. Before commencing the interview, the researcher has introduced herself. Also, the participants have been given a verbal summary of the research purpose for about 10-15 minutes, and their inquiries have answered before interviewing and recording in order to develop a level of trust. In this way, the respondents are relaxed and they show willing to reply to the exhaustive questions. An in-depth interview typically varied between 2 and 3 hours and is recorded on tape for the sake of analysis and writing the report. In addition, the participants have been given a written consent

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of their participation in the study, for recording and for the use of their data anonymously in the resulting publication.

Interview's Experience and Building trust relationships

The researcher not only physically and in person contacted the selected women, but also established connection through SMS text messages, Phone calls, E-mails and faxes. Interviews were face to face and un-structured. Researcher informed the respondents that interview was for academic purpose, not for a non-academic purpose. It aims to highlight difficulties and challenge in networking faced by female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. Findings of the study will be essential for female entrepreneurs and academicians to improve entrepreneurial networking and resource acquisition. Moreover, university approval letter and letter of consent were used, to gain respondents' confidence.

However, it is worth mentioning that some of women entrepreneurs, who have been contacted in order to participate, retreated once they know that the researcher is non-Saudi. Obviously, the name of the researcher is not one of the commonest Saudi names; especially the family name, which indicates that the researcher does not belong to any of the famous Saudi families that usually descend from traditional tribal origins. In addition to the fact that Saudi women are not familiar with social research in general and with in-depth interview techniques in particular. Thus it is not an easy task to convince Saudi women to participate in the study and talk about their relationships, families' affaires, and private matters with someone they do not know very well, especially foreigners. Even though the researcher has experienced difficulty in gaining their trust at the beginning and to pursue them to participate in the research, some of the interviewees are open-minded and voluntarily offered their participation in the research. This may be because they seek help and they believe that the research may provide them solutions. The researcher had to call them several times, send follow up and confirmation text messages by the date, time and venue of the interview and showed the highest degree of flexibility and ability to reschedule the interviews date and time.

Moreover, noteworthy, the vast majority of the participants are Sunnis, as the majority of the Saudi population is Sunnis; making up to 90%, only one participant is Shiites. Remarkably, during the interview, the researcher had the feeling that Sunnis participants are more confident, and powerful. They appeared as if they are ready to challenge the status quo

and overcome obstacles. Unlike the Shiite women who appeared a little hesitated and fidgety during the interview. However, she seemed to be very optimistic, and proud of what she achieved in her life and entrepreneurship career despite of the challenges she faced. In order to develop a trust relationship with her the researcher made several phone calls, had a chat and informal conversation with her prior to the interview. Also, as the researcher, herself is against all types of racism and discrimination, during the interview she tried not to show any sign of her original religious beliefs or practices in order to avoid any impression of being racist or biased which may affect her openness and trust. Since then, the relationship between the researcher and her has been strengthened.

In addition, before conducting the interviews with female entrepreneurs, the researcher has attended several monthly meetings and forums that have taken place in the Saudi female chamber of commerce division in order to build a close relationship with them. In addition, these visits have been very necessary to closely monitor and study their culture, environment and explore their entrepreneurial activities, interactions and any other related activities in their context. Thus a research diary and research journal has been kept for reflexivity. The researcher simply uses a notebook to collect temporal information, and record sequences of events notes.

As part of the pre-interview process, the interview protocol is sent to the participants in the confirmation email. The interview protocol includes introducing the researcher to the participant, explaining the purpose of the study, receiving permission to audiotape the interview session, reviewing confidentiality assurance, and allowing the participants to ask any pre-interview questions that they may have prior to addressing the constructed interview items.

At the beginning of each interview the participant is informed that the interview process is voluntary, confidential, and participants were made aware that they can withdraw from the study at any time. In the first ten minutes of each interview, participants have received an explanation of the purpose of the study and the procedures for the interview process. Notes before, during and after the interviews also were recorded in the research diary. These notes include a description of the interview venue. In addition, comments on the accuracy of the interview process and the questions being asked to the informants are recorded. This is a helpful practice in order to reflect the research methodology when amending the interview guide, especially, in the first two interviews in order to ensure the

accuracy of the collected data. Typically, brief biographic information about each participant, i.e. name, age, type of business, family background, etc. is also recorded in the research diary after each interview. The participants have been reminded that the interview session would last for 90 to 180 minutes minimum and would be audio taped. The interview dialogue is in Arabic dialect, the participants' mother tongue language.

Afterwards, the recorded interviews have been transcribed and a sample of the initial interviews has been translated into English in order to pilot the data collection and to test the quality of the collected data with the researcher supervisors. In addition, translation of participants' quotations and accounts used in writing the research report and data analysis at the end of the data collection process were indispensable. The researcher translated the interview transcripts from the source Language which is Arabic to English by herself in order to assure accuracy. An attempt was made to translate word–for–word, however, language differences made it difficult, especially, with Saudi Arabic (Saudi dialect) which differs from other regional dialects and standard Arabic. Thus concepts have different meanings and sometimes untranslatable (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). Thus, meaning based translation was also being considered to preserve the meanings as meant by the participants losing any necessary meanings in the translation from Arabic to English. Hence, Guest and MacQueen stated that 'the translation adds a layer of complexity to the transcript preparation because it involves inevitably interpretation' (Guest & MacQueen, 2008, p. 114). In addition, it was important to ask professional help from an expert to check accuracy of translation, revise, and proofread the translation of the interviews.

The initial analysis of the pilot interviews indicated that the collected stories have been shifted from research main questions and objectives. Therefore, interview guide modifications and revisiting the participants were required to generate more detailed and relevant data. In addition, at the end of each interview the researcher has always allowed a small talk to happen. Hence, usually when the recorder is switched off and more relaxed mood dowelled in very interesting, discussions often come up surprisingly. This additional information has been founded usually as crucial and very important, thus it has been manually reported in the research diary immediately in order to be added to the recorded conversation.

All of the participants, who chosen to be interviewed in public places, came to the interview venue wearing the black 'Abya' (Saudi women dress code) that is because

according to the Saudi culture and law, women should not show up in public places without wearing on top the women's tradition black abaya. However, they can take it off in women's private places such as their homes, offices or a place where only women are gathered and men are not allowed to coexist. The majority of them did not cover the face in public and a few were fully covered and veiled, except four of the participants who have been interviewed in their own office, who dressed modern sophisticated work clothes. What can be inferred here is that these women are empowered by their entrepreneurship and gave them the courage to challenge the law and regularity of a woman's body and gendered identities in the society.

Even though, respondents' ages ranged from twenty one to fifty five, one can notice that the age factor did not the participants' ability to start up and running their enterprises. However, this is can be explained by their families entrepreneurial background. All of the younger entrepreneurs of the study participants came from an entrepreneurial background or are very rich. Hence, the intention to entrepreneurship and orientation are instilled in them during childhood. In addition, they may be encouraged by the wealth of their families to take the risk of entering the entrepreneurship field without the fear of failure or loss, since there will be always a backup from their families. Besides, from a resource based view of entrepreneurship, they are provided by the essential resources because of their families' wealth and level in the Saudi social hierarchy.

Also, it has been noted that their socioeconomic status in the society varied between the high class and middle class. At the start of the interview, it was difficult to differentiate between them according to their class without knowing their family's background from their narratives. Since, it is well known that regardless their class; Saudi people maintain good, and high lifestyle even if they cannot afford it (House K. E., 2012). However, as discussed previously tribe affiliation and loyalty is the basis for social classification in Saudi Arabia. Saudi people can tell the tribal origin of individuals from their accent.

In addition, what is worth mentioning is that, married respondents have a minimum number of three children and up to seven children. Thus, one anticipates mom-entrepreneurs to be disturbed by children around or phone calls from them during work or the interview as an inevitable impact of their motherhood. However, as it is very common for Saudi families from almost all the social divisions, maids are taken over most of the mother' functions such as children caring, cleaning, and cooking. Thus, all the participants sat during the interview comfortably and were not worried.

Finally, Second interviews have been arranged after listening carefully to the audio-recorded interviews several times. The aim of these interviews is to follow-up and to clarify some vague ideas and points found and needed further elaborations. The length of the second interviews normally varied between 30-60 minutes, some of them are audio-recorded, and some others are recorded in the research diary to be added and integrated with the first interviews when transcribed.

In summation, the in-depth nature of interviews provides the strength to fulfil the research objectives effectively and builds a theory based on the real perception and opinion of research participants. It is believed that the interview approach provided strength to the study, but on the other hand it created significant ethical issues; including responsibility for the psychological and physiological safety of the participant and the guarantee of confidentiality (Connaway & Powell, 2010; Aggarwal & Khurana, 2001; Allan, 2003; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Misra, 1989; Newman & Benz, 1998). Therefore, while conducting interviews, this factor is considered significant to avoid any sort of ethical issue.

Data Analysis Approach

Data analysis is a procedure of scrutinizing, sorting, converting and representing the gathered data. The objective of the data analysis method is to underline the appropriate information in order to suggest concluding thoughts and to provide a support for the decision making process of selecting a methodology (Ramsay & Silverman, 2002; Cooper & Schindler, 2013). Polkinghorne differentiates between two terms: The first is the 'narrative analysis' and the second is the 'analysis of narrative'. He claims that "narrative analysis research employs 'narrative' as a reasoning approach, and relies on collecting data in the form of descriptions of events or happenings to configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories." (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12).

The second approach, analysis of narrative, employs 'paradigmatic analysis' and results in "description of themes that hold across the stories or in taxonomies of types of stories, characters, or settings." (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12). He further concludes that the two types of narrative inquiry produce 'valued products', but these products differ in their 'cognitive forms'. Hence, 'analysis of narrative' moves from stories to common elements (emplotted narrative), and the 'narrative analysis' moves from the common elements to the stories (plotted narrative)" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12). Creswell points out that Chase (2005)

has presented an approach similar to Polkinghorne's 'analysis of narrative' and has suggested that researchers may use paradigmatic approach for narrative studies. e. g. "how individuals are enabled or constrained by social recourses, situated in interactive performances, and how the narrator develops interpretation" (Creswell J. W., 2006).

However, in order to produce the answers for the research questions it is important to employ a type of 'paradigmatic' analysis into the collected stories and narrative. In narrative research, however, there are several types of data analysis methods, e.g. thematic analysis, structural analysis, interactional analysis, and per formative analysis (Riessman, 2008). By reviewing the literature, it has been found that the implementation of these approaches is bounded to the form of the desired results and the type of the questions that the researcher is trying to answer, since different types of research questions lend themselves to different approaches (Creswell J. W., 2006).

It has been noticed that each approach has different outcomes and focuses on different aspects. Thus, in order to choose the appropriate analysis approach the researcher has to decide the approach which is more useful. Accordingly, the thematic analysis is chosen as the appropriate approach to conduct first phase analysis of the stories collected from the field to explore common themes and main issues in their stories in relation to their network process. Thematic analysis has been recommended by scholars, e. g. Gareth Williams (1984), who suggests that thematic analysis is a useful approach for theorising a cross number of cases (Riessman, 2008). It is recognized as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Hence, thematic analysis focuses on the content of a text and views language as a source of meaning not as a topic of investigation. Hence, it relies on categorizing accounts or aspects of accounts that are being told. "'what" is said more than "how"; "told" rather than the "telling" (Reissman, 2008, p: 2). Connelly and Clandinin suggest that "it is important not to squeeze the language of narrative criteria into a language created for other forms of research, e.g. objectivity, validity, generalizability" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7). Thence, thematic analytical approach facilitates the capture of this type of information more effectively which provides a greater understanding of the study context.

Whereas, the first analysis has focused on the content of the narratives to identify common patterns and ideas, a second phase analysis has conducted using structural analysis to complete the emergent results from thematic analysis. Labov (1982) focuses on 'story

grammar and the way a story is told', even though it involves thematic analysis, however 'language also is taken seriously' (Reissman, 2008, p: 3). Using structural analysis helped in studying the way stories was structured and the identify meaning beyond language not only textual but also culturally. Thus, it allows a more focused and a close investigation of the narratives temporally. Thereby, the formal elements of the stories such as who, when, why, and sequences of events and cultural contextual connections can be identified.

The second phase of the analysis is guided by Labov's (1972) six stages structural analysis. The choice of Labov's approach over the other structural analysis approaches, e. g. Gee's approach based on the specific nature of Arabic dialect which totally different from the other languages such as English. Thus, since Riessman also advised that Gee's approach focused on North American English and may be not suits other languages. Thus, for this reason and also because of the nature of the study and the collected narratives, Labov's approach was more appropriate (Riessman, 2008).

Thence, the research process adopted in this study is guided by the Creswell's framework (as shown in table 2) in conducting a narrative inquiry. Even though, Clandinin and Connelly, declare that "each narrative inquiry "has its own rhythms and sequences, and each narrative researcher needs to work them out for her or his own inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 97), the researcher found this framework to be useful and fixable.

Phases of the research process	Characteristics of qualitative research	Characteristics of narrative inquiry
1. Identify a research problem	• A qualitative problem requires exploration and understanding.	• Narrative researchers seek to understand and re-present experiences through the stories that individual(s) live and tell.
2. Review the literature	• The scholarly literature plays a minor role. • Qualitative researchers use the literature to justify their research problems.	• Narrative researchers foreground the participant's story and background the scholarly literature. • For example, they may find direction or underlying structure of their research reports through the participant's story rather than through a conventional literature review or theoretical framework. • The scholarly literature may offer guidance for how to interpret the participant's stories (i.e., find deeper meaning or new understandings through them).

3. Develop a purpose statement and research questions	• The qualitative purpose statement and research questions are broad and general. • The qualitative purpose statement and research questions, seek participants' experiences.	• Narrative researchers seek to explore the meaning of the individual's experiences as told through a story or stories.
4. Collect qualitative data	• Qualitative researchers collect data following protocols developed during their studies. • Qualitative data collection involves gathering text or image data. • It also involves studying a small number of individuals or sites.	• Narrative researchers collect field texts that document the individual's story in his or her own words (e.g., interview transcripts, letters, and journal entries).
5. Analyse and interpret qualitative data	• Qualitative data analysis consists of text analysis. • Qualitative data analysis consists describing information and of developing themes. • Qualitative interpretations situate findings within larger meanings.	• Narrative researchers analyse the participant's stories by retelling or "restorying" them into a framework that makes sense (e.g., chronology, plot). • This often involves identifying themes or categories of information within the participant's stories (e.g., time, place, plot, scene). • Researchers may then rewrite the participant's stories to place them within a chronological sequence (beginning, middle, end) and/or a plot that incorporates a main character who experiences a conflict or struggle that comes to some sort of resolution.

Table 3: The research process, the characteristics of qualitative research, and the characteristics of narrative inquiry, (Table derived from Creswell, 2008; and 2007, p. 56. Author: Natasha G. Wiebe, 2009).

Narratives construction (storying and re-storying)

According to Bruner, cultures and identities are formed, altered and transformed through language in the process of narrative. Narratives emerge in settings where people make sense of their place, space, culture, experiences, themselves and others (Bruner, 1991). In attempt to gain understanding and in-depth look of the society and the participants experiences, the researcher has to deconstruct the narratives of the participants and reorganise

them to be more comprehensive. The term 'restorying' refers to the process of re-writing the participants' story in the researcher words. This term distinguish between the original stories told by the research participants and the stories retold by researcher in the form of micro-stories based on the selection of key elements from the collected data and the organisation of these elements into a sequence that makes sense and meaning out of accounts in relation to their grand narratives (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Boje, 1991; Boje, 1995).

Based on the suggested narrative analysis process by Creswell, (2008, p. 516) and in response to reflexivity in a qualitative based research, the researcher found it is very useful in narrative analysis to reflect back on the research process, interview and subjects. According to Connelly and Clandinin, it is important in a narrative inquiry to ensure that all the voices of the participants and the researcher who involved in the research are presented and heard (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). This is by sharing the reader the stories of the participants, their experiences, and how their identities are formed by the social multiple systems and reformed by their experiences. Whereas, Perry advocates that "We are the story we tell and then believe as a truth. Such stories create a world that is defended because it upholds our identity." (Parry, 1997, p. 118). Also, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou assert that: "stories are privileged forms/structures/systems for making sense of self, by bringing the co-ordinates of time, space, and personhood into a unitary frame so that the sources "behind" these representations (such as "author", "teller", and "narrator"), can be made empirically visible for further analytical scrutiny in the form of 'identity analysis' (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2009, p. 1).

Connelly and Clandinin suggest three analytical tools to analyse collected narratives which are: broadening, burrowing, and storying and restorying. The first tool, broadening is to look for a broader context of the story by relating a specific action or event chronically to a "person's values, characters, beliefs and way of life, or perhaps the social and intellectual climate of the times" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 11). By introducing more general knowledge about the participants and their context, it stimulates the readers to participate in the interpretation process and sense making of the participants' experiences. In this process the researcher brings into the analysis any additional information s/he knows about the participants such as their physical, social, local and cultural context, as Mishler expresses the researcher adds what else s/he knows about the storytellers and their local and general circumstances' (Mishler, 1986, p. 244). However, the 'burrowing' analysis is used to look

into more specific details of the data, such as feelings, understanding, or specific event and it impact on the participants. After conducting these two analyses, it is suggested by Connelly Clandinin, to use the tool of 'storying and restorying' in order to bring the significance of the participants lived experiences to the attention of the reader (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Hence, Clandinin and Murphy pointed that "Narrative analysis, however, fits within narrative inquiry, which understands lives as unfolding temporally, as particular events within a particular individual's life. The final result is a story" (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007, p. 636).

In this context, it is worth mentioning that, both terms: story and narrative are widely used interchangeably to give the same meaning of telling a sequent of lived events that are told by someone. However, they are not the same. The differences between the two terms are not much, but enough that it matters. Polkinghorne differentiates between these two terms, as he refers to narrative as "a kind of organisational scheme expressed in story form" or "a meaning structure that organises events and human actions into a whole" (Polkinghorne, 1988, pp. 13-18). Subsequently, story is described as a single account that provides meaning of past events of a person's life. Thus, narrative consists of a sequence of number of stories.

Hence, narratives are characterised by temporality, which means transformation and changing over time, events and characters that are involved in the narrative, 'emplotment' which refers to the process through which narratives are produced, and an aim since each narrative must have a point sometimes in the form of a "so what?" factor (Bruner, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988). According to Bruner, narrative may be ostensibly characterised by "diachronicity" since the 'human clock' differs from the 'clock time', as people tend to abstract the time and time is presented in meanings assigned to sequences of events (Bruner, 1991). In other words, while they tell their stories, people tend to narrate events in 'discourse-like flashback and flash-forward' (Bruner, 1991, p. 6).

In addition, since the researcher's main interest is to gain insight and understanding of the Saudi female network activities, events, people involved in it and the impact of social structural factors on the formation of participants' identities, the collection of descriptive events was a necessity. Thence, the participants' narratives and accounts are reorganised and re-story-ed, in a way that make sense to the reader, without involving too much unnecessary information. Thus, the researcher involves the reader in the interpretation process by leaving the space to the readers to make their own judgement, and understanding. A presentation of

the participants' entrepreneurship experience has been produced from their interviews/stories in the form of 'narrative construction, or re-sotrying' which are presented in the next chapter.

Thematic Analysis of Narratives

Data analysis is an iterative and complicated process, where there is Back and forth movement between the steps. The process has been guided by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Smith (2000) in addition to some techniques implemented by following some other narrative analysis examples from the literature e.g. Emden (1998) and Creswell (2006). Particularly, the six step analysis process adopted by Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle, as follows: 1. Prepare and organise the data, 2. Review and explore the data, 3. Code data into categories, 4. Construct thick descriptions of people, places, and actions, 5. Build themes and test hypotheses, and 6. Report and interpret data (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010, p. 180).

Thus, the first step focuses on listening to the recordings carefully and transcribing the dialogues. This helps the researcher to understand the data and to become familiar with the data relevant to the research objectives. The time required for transcribing each interview is between 18-30 hours, and a minimum interview transcript occupies 10-15 pages. The researcher in this step did not attempt to conduct any analysis of the data in order to avoid the researcher's biases, by just transcribing the interview verbatim. Although the researcher's mother tongue is Arabic, there are many differences between the Saudi dialect and the Egyptian dialect. Therefore the researcher is keen to transcribe the entire interview using the original native Saudi dialect in order to preserve the meanings authentically meant by the participants; this serves better analysis and understanding during the data interpretation. Additionally, the information gathered from the second interviews is integrated with the first interviews in order to complete the missing data.

The second step is reading the full interview text several times within an extended time frame (several weeks) to grasp its content. The transcripts are printed out as it is better to do the initial reading of the data in a printed hard copy to keep focusing and engaging with them using highlighters and pen. Initial thoughts, ideas and notes are taken in the margins to get back to them in subsequent steps. The reading step is considered an important step to create an overall view about the main points and patterns in the data.

Since an important role of the narrative approach is to understand people experiences, the following step has been analysing the participants' stories and identifying the main

events, characters, plots, etc. and connecting them in a narrative representing each participant's entrepreneurship experience in a way of recreating their stories and introducing thick description of the participants (Storying and Restorying). As discussed in the previous section, constructing the participants' stories and rewriting their stories in order to present them to the reader is an important analysis phase of the narratives. Thus the researcher has to go through each interview to analyse, to identify and to reorder the events according to their time in their stories. Thence, each participant's story has been rewritten and presented in chapter 6 in order to share the participants' lived experience with the reader and bring its significance to the fore (Kim, 2015). In addition, in order to ensure the quality of the research and credibility, the researcher checked the re-written stories with the participants to ensure that the story accurately presents the participants experiences, and the right meanings have been realised.

In the sequent step, the identification of initial themes and ideas has been done, which helps the researcher to specify the meaning of a segment of data. Since the interview is transcribed in Arabic, it is difficult to use data analysis software such as NVivo or others, as they are not compatible with Arabic language. In addition, Connelly & Clandinin, (2000) claim that computer software for narrative analysis should be used with caution and adaptation since they are paradigmatic analysis which could be not much useful for narrative analysis. Thus the researcher used manual analysis, in addition to the help from Microsoft Word and the function of insert new comments in the review tab (figure 11) which helps in the first stage of analysis.
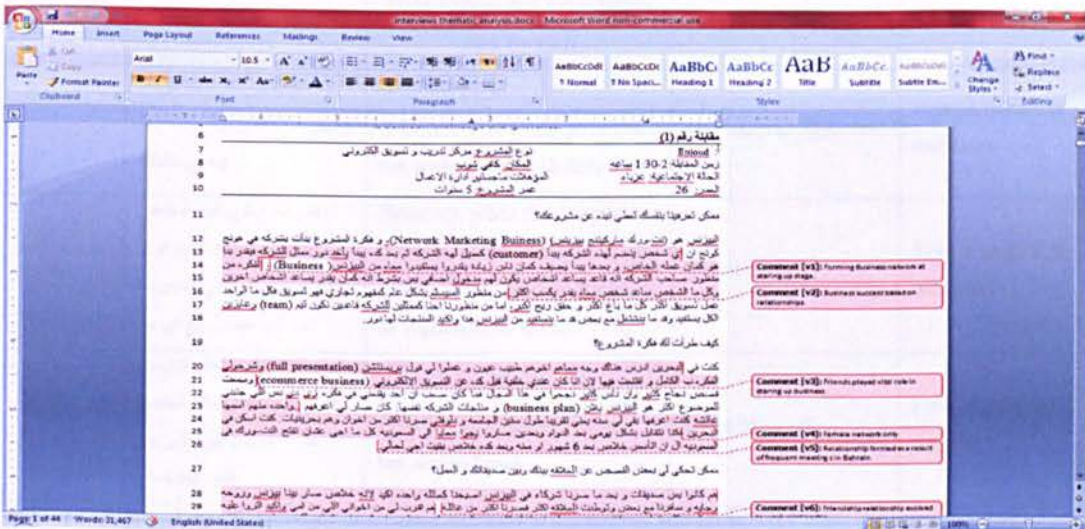
Figure 16: Screen shot of interview labelling and thematic analysis using Microsoft Word

The next step is searching for the main themes. All the emergent themes are pooled together from all the interviews in a new document using the 'Extract Comments to New Doc' macro (table 8).

Participant no.	Data Extraction	Data Extraction Translation into English	Initial Themes
1	البحرين ادرس هناك وجه معهم اخوهم طبيب عيون (full) و عملوا لي فول بريس نتشن presentation) و شرح حولي الفكره ب الكامل و اقتنعت فيها لان انا كان عندي خلفية قبل كده عن التسويق الالكتروني	When I studied in Bahrain. I was introduced to people who gave me a full presentation about e-marketing. Surprisingly, one of those was a friend's brother who works as an optician. They really encouraged me a lot.	Role of family & friends
1	واحده منهم اسمها (اسم فتاة) كنت اعرفها بقى لي .. سنه يعني تقريبا طول سنين الجامعه و دلوقتي صرنا اكثر من اخوان وهم بحرينيات. كنت اسكن في البحرين	I couldn't forget (she mentions a woman's name).She was one of my best friends in Bahrain. We were a wonderful female group.	Gender role
1	فكنا نتقابل بشكل يومي بعد الدوام وبعدين صاروا يجوروا معايا الى السعوديه كل ما اجي عشان نفتح النت ورك في السعوديه ال ان اتأنس خلاص بعد 6 شهور او سنه وبعد كده خلاص بقيت اجي لحالي	We met each other daily after work even I invited them to meet in Saudi Arabia. I felt secure when they were with me till I get used to running my business alone.	Network activities
1	هم كانوا بس صديقات و بعد ما صرنا شركاء في البيزنس اصبحنا كعائله واحده اكيد لأنه خلاص صار بينا بيزنس وروحه وجايه و سافرنا مع بعض وتوطدت العلاقة اكثر فصرنا اكثر من عائله	We started as friends and then we became partners in our business. We travelled together and our relation developed to become stronger and stronger, we became like a family.	Friends & family as network building block

Table 4: Thematic analysis Extract and initial theme

Then, these themes are reviewed and subsequently grouped and clustered. In this stage, all those with conceptual similes have been grouped together (table 9).

Participant No.	Data Extraction	Data Extraction Translation into English	Initial Themes	Main Theme
1	فعادي يعتبر محرم لما نروح ونجيي مع بعض عادي فما كان فيه اي مشكله	With the existence of 'Mahram', we could go in and out without any restraints.	Existence of Mahram	Role of culture & traditions
1	ولكن لما بيكون فيه اشخاص جدد اكيد بيكون فيه حدود قوي بينا . وخاصة هنافي السعوديه ما اقدر اتعامل مع اي حد	However, when there are new outsiders in the context, there will be strong barriers between us especially in KSA.	Social norms	Role of culture & traditions
1	بس كل شخص دخل البيزنس اقدر اتكلم معاه وممكن شخص عازه اعرض عليه البيزنس أقدر اقعد معاه.	Each one involved in business can be normally approached, but within limits.	limits Network	Role of culture & traditions

Table 5: Example of groping and clustering themes and identifying main themes

However, some are discarded eventually from the analysis while others are refined to become the main themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, a 'thematic map' is produced in order to see the connection between the emergent themes (presented in chapter 12, figure 15). In this stage, like ground theorists do, a constant comparison technique is used to compare and contrast the emergent themes in the different accounts in order to check its validity and confirm and enhance those themes.

Once the thematic map is satisfactorily done, it is necessary to conduct a second phase of the analysis to make a deeper sense of the emergent themes and connect it to the meaning behind the words and sentences. Here at this stage, the second phase analysis is recommended by Riessman to help in data reduction and to facilitate the identification of several substantive issues that can otherwise be missed if thematic analysis alone is used (Riessman, 2008). Thence, final defining and refining of themes that will be presented in the final report is done. The themes' defining and refining mean to identify the meaning and 'essence' of each theme, what is it about, which part of the data it presents, and organises the themes into a coherent and consistent account, as well as to identify the meaning that each theme representing in the story. Further to this, within each theme, some sub-themes are identified in order to present complex themes.

In the second phase of the analysis, Labov's (1972) six stage model; Abstract, Orientation, Complication action, Evaluation, result, and coda, is employed. The analysis starts by re-reading each story and identifying the meaning of each story and its socio-cultural connectedness by answering questions such as: What is the story about? Who, when, where, how? Then what happened? How or why is this interesting? And what finally happened? The generated answers help to modify, improve and identify the meaning of the thematic analysis beyond the sentences. As a result the answers of the research questions become clear and its objectives are met.

Once the final analysis has been completed and the result has been concluded, the research has consulted the participants for feedback on the analysis of their narratives to check the interpretation accuracy and meanings corrections of their accounts. Also, the researcher's supervisors' advices have been insightful in order to guide the analysis and the interpretation process.

Finally, the last step is reporting and writing up the discussion of the result. It is very important to elaborate and 'tell the complex story' of the data in a very convincing way (Creswell, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006).In the light of this, as suggested Braun and Clarke the researcher uses enough data 'extracts' to support the analysis and tries to present a logical, coherent, concise, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story that data tells within and across themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus accordingly, all the themes are presented and discussed in details.

Research Ethics

There is a significant importance of ethics in conducting any research. Several academic associations, government agencies and universities are adhered to various rules and policies for conducting research. Research ethics are concerned with issues related to conducting any research in any areas or field of study. Procedures followed and processes involved to carry out research are among these issues. In addition, ethical principles are to be applied for protecting researchers' rights and their participants (Penslar, 1994; Elliott & Stern, 1997; Pimple, 2008; Gregory, 2003; Cooper & Schindler, 2013). Pursuant to this principle for the current study, ethical principles are applied to ensure reliability of research as well as to protect the rights of the research participants, which mainly include female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia.

Respect for Intellectual Property

Every research should give due respect to honour patents, copyrights and other forms of intellectual property rights. Unpublished works, theses, etc. should not be referenced. Acknowledgements should be given to work cited in any research, i.e. the name of the author should be written along with the proper source of that information. The act of plagiarism should be absent. Plagiarism is defined as an act of copying works of other authors or researchers either in the form of theories, images, concepts, words or stories. This could occur both intentionally or un-intentionally, but in both ways it is considered a plagiarized work. The avoidance of the slightest probability of overriding the copyright laws in the process of using the work of other researchers and authors is necessary. Plagiarisms considered as an illegal and wrong punishable act that must be avoided while conducting any new research (Barnbaum & Byron, 2001; Penslar, 1994; Pimple, 2008; Gregory, 2003). In the current study, great caution has been taken to avoid plagiarism and to protect intellectual

property rights. A complete in-text referencing, along with the list of references at the end of the research report is presented in this study.

Several facts, statistics, illustrative materials and common knowledge or concepts are added into this research. Therefore, to avoid plagiarism and to keep the research authentic and reliable, a list of references of genuine and valid sources is included.

Confidentiality

The records of the research data should be kept confidential and should not be given to anyone. The participants' information involved in the data collection process should not be transferred elsewhere. The act of confidentiality assures that all the information and privacy of an individual will be protected. It is related to the management and the handling of information that an individual has shared or disclosed in a relationship of trust, with the hope that the provided information will not be revealed and disclosed to others without authorization (Barnbaum & Byron, 2001; Elliott & Stern, 1997; Cooper & Schindler, 2013; Cohen, et, al 2011; Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In this study, all participants are assured and informed about the purpose and the procedure of the interview such as the use of audio devices. For this research, permission is taken from the participants to audiotape the interview session allowing the participants to ask any pre-interview questions that they might have had prior to addressing the constructed interview items. Moreover, the researcher is also careful and assured that data collected from the research participants will not become available to audiences or general public until proper permission is taken from those female entrepreneurs or from the researcher. Proper data security procedures and precautions under the Data Protection Act 1998 obligation are taken. Data Protection Act 1998 requires that the information acquired from the research participants is processed fairly and lawfully, and it is used for a specified research purpose, and it will not be kept longer than necessary (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 118)

Voluntary Participation

One of the ethics that should be followed in accomplishing any research is that no participant should be forced to take part in the research. People should voluntarily participate in giving interviews if they are asked (Barnbaum & Byron, 2001; Penslar, 1994; Cooper & Schindler, 2013; Orb, et al, 2000). In conducting the present study, no participant is forced to

be interviewed. It is up to their choice if they are willing to participate in this research. All the interviewed Saudi female entrepreneurs are willingly participating in the process of interviews. Proper legal permission is taken from the participants and eleven entrepreneurs are selected and interviewed via telephone calls and emails. To build relationships and to ensure the reliability of the research, meetings and forums are attended to build strong relationships with Saudi females and to explore and observe their activities within a group or through their networks. Thus, the research is conducted after participants' permission to be involved in each activity related to research (Barnbaum & Byron, 2001; Elliott & Stern, 1997; Pimple, 2008; Gregory, 2003; Cooper & Schindler, 2013; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001).

Research Trustworthiness (credibility and reliability)

Qualitative research is based on subjective and interpretive data, which differs from quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Quantitative researchers use five categories of validity. These five categories include: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalizability, and evaluative validity (Thomson, 2011; Maxwell, 1992; Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz, 2010). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba have developed measurement concepts for trustworthiness in qualitative data within the qualitative paradigm context to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative research. There are four criteria for judging it; these include: a. credibility, b. dependability, c. transferability, and d. conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba, 1981).In the vein of a quantitative study, it cannot be valid unless it is reliable; it cannot be credible unless it is dependable and it cannot be transferable unless it is credible.

Credibility in qualitative research, which refers to the internal validity in quantitative research, is the basis upon which all other validities are formed. These criteria deal with the problems arising from the omission of data in the research. They refer to the accuracy of the data that the researcher has collected; i.e. what is said by the researcher and the audio tapes (or videotapes) of the interviews should match with each other to ensure accuracy and validity of the data. Dependability refers that "the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques" (Gasson, 2004, p. 94). This is a problematic task in case of qualitative research. Therefore, in qualitative research, the results and findings could be only implemented to similar groups of studies. Transferability, which runs parallel to generalizability in quantitative research, is concerned with the extent to

which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents, in the researcher's understanding of the concepts used in the study, and relationships of those concepts. Also conformability, similar to interpretive validity, means that the interpretation of data should be based on the perspective of participants of the interview and not the perspective of the researcher, otherwise the study would be considered as biased. The last category is valid, i.e. evaluative validity is not concerned with the data, but with the evaluation of the researcher from his own understanding of the situation (Thomson, 2011).

It has been argued by the number of researchers: e.g. Creswell and Miller (2000) and Stenbacka (2001) that the concept of validity cannot be implemented in qualitative research because validity concept in qualitative study affects the perception and opinion of the researcher regarding study as well as researcher's choices of paradigme assumption. Conversely, other researchers argue that the concept of validity needs to be implemented in qualitative study since qualitative study also requires some sort of qualifying check and measure for their studies (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Gregory, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Stenbacka, 2001; Creswell, 2000).However, Connelly & Clandinin assert that "Like other qualitative methods, narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability, the language and criteria for narrative inquiry are under development" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7).

Thus, scholars e.g. Krefting, (1991), Fournier, (1998) and Merriam (2009) suggest some procedures and strategies which can be implemented to promote the qualitative research 'trustworthiness' including: 1-Triangulation, or multiple sources of data as evidence , 2-Member checks, or arranging for those who provided data to evaluate the conclusions, 3-Saturation, which means continuous data collection to the point where more data add little to regularities that have already surfaced , 4- Peer reviewing, or consultation with experts audit trail, or the detailed record of data collection and rationale for important decisions, 5- Thick description, reflexivity and providing rich detail of the context of the study, and 6- Plausible alternatives, or the rationale for ruling out alternative explanations and accounting for discrepant (negative) cases.

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of this study, several techniques are employed. Triangulation of multiple stories approach and member examination and check of the interview transcripts and interpretation are adopted (Fournier, 1998). It has been stated by number of researchers that triangulation of multiple stories is basically an effective approach

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that helps the researcher in terms of improving the credibility of research as well as improve the evaluation of findings (Glaser, 1978; Fournier, 1998; Krefting, 1991).

Furthermore, this study is controlled in terms of establishing any sort of biasness in the research process as well as in overall research outcomes. Unlike quantitative inquiries, reflexivity is one of the qualitative basic principles based on the premise that the empirical data is understood as a result of interpretation and not biased by the researcher's believes, prospective, and values (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). According to Hardy et al, reflexivity is "the awareness of the situatedness of scientific knowledge and understanding of the researcher and the research community from which the knowledge has appeared" (Hardy, Philips, & Clegg, 2001, p. 554). That is the researcher experience in conducting the research 'becomes is in itself a source of learning through the natural interaction' and open conversation between the researcher and the participants (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009, p. 368). Since in narrative inquiry the researcher's influence is inevitable, the interview process itself is recognised as an interaction meaning making process between the researcher and the research respondents (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997).

Thus, reflexivity is essential in this study and has been widely implemented in order to ensure its transferability. The researcher is aware of her effect on the process of knowledge production and the outcomes. Thus, field notes, thick description, and sufficient details of the research processes, actions, decision making, and interpretation at all stages are taken in a research journal regularly during the research process and interviews. This allows the readers to assess the research quality for themselves. In addition to this, it can be said that the implementation of the triangulation of multiple stories collected from the same person at multiple points at time and members' verification of the interviews' transcripts, and interpretation strategies in the qualitative study, have established valid propositions because conventional scientific approaches are unable to get along with this alternative epistemology (Gregory, 2003; Johnson G. , 2010; Cooper & Schindler, 2013; Locke, 2001).

Dependability in qualitative inquiry is defined as the level to which the research outcomes are constant and precise over time, and correct representation of the total research population (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). According to Johnson (1997); Cooper & Schindler (2013); Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009); and Elliott & Stern (1997) in qualitative research, the higher degree of constancy means a higher degree of dependability which indicates that the outcomes obtained from the study are repeatable. Concerning to their statement, it can be said

that the study conducted in the context of practices and activities of developing networks and relationships by female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia is reliable and full of consistency. This is because the outcomes of the study show higher repetition and similarities between the perception and point of views of the eleven female entrepreneurs participated in the study. In addition to this, it has been stated that the responses and perception obtained from the research participants may change because of the different characteristic of the respondents such as difference in experience or culture, which may lead to errors of measurement (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Concerning this issue of dependability in qualitative research, the researcher has taken a complete responsibility toward the high consistency and accuracy of the interview results and research outcomes. Overall, it can be said that concerning to the given arguments, it is assured that the study under consideration is credited (i.e. reliable) and dependable (i.e. valid).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is exploratory because its aim is to explore the networking interactions and relationships of Saudi female entrepreneurs. Besides, the study attempts to explore the role of interpersonal relationships among network actors involved in the network development practices. Concerning to the aim and purpose of the study, the selected research approach is qualitative approach which helps the researcher in the generalization of results through the use of appropriate qualitative tools. In this way the narrative inquiry is identified to be effective since it is revealed that the interview approach based on narrative inquiry helps the researcher in understanding the real social interactions of female business entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia in terms of developing relationships and networks at both international and domestic levels.

Moreover, it has been observed that the non-random sampling technique is more appropriate in order to avoid biasness and misrepresentation of the results and findings. The selected sampling technique allows the researcher to give equal chance of selection to the study participants. By using a snowballing sampling technique, eleven Saudi female entrepreneurs have been selected for face-to-face interviews. The primary data collected through the interviews with female entrepreneurs are analysed by using thematic analysis approach, which basically consists of three key steps including transcribing, identifying themes, and documentation. Thus, this approach is quite helpful in interpreting and analysing the data as well as to reach authentic and accurate research outcomes.

Above all, a significant amount of consideration is given to the ethical principles in order to avoid any ethical conflicts during the process of the study. In short, this study is an inductive, interpretive, qualitative research based on in-depth narrative interviews and uses thematic and Labov's structural approach as a method of narrative analysis. The analysis results, main themes and their descriptions are presented in the next few chapters.

Chapter 6: Narrative constructions of female entrepreneurs networking experiences in the Saudi context

"Speak, so that I can see you."
-Socrates-

Introduction

Stories attract most hearers; everyone looks forward to hear narrations and everyone becomes all ears to hear what will be told. Storytelling is a universal tool of sharing experiences, culture, history, and teaching morals in a social context. It is the key to the heart and mind of every human being. Human knowledge is immemorial, since it is based on stories and storytelling. 'Narrating' is a natural part of the human brain's cognitive mechanism by which humans can communicate life experiences (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Narration is regarded as "the primary scheme by which human existence is rendered meaningful" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1). It is a very useful means of expression by which humans can describe, express and assess their life experience. It mirrors people's thoughts as they think in a narrative structure and they tend to remember facts in the form of stories. "Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world"(Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Furthermore, Waltz, et al (2010, p. 227) cites Frank's (1995) definition of narrative as an instrument "to giving a voice to the silenced" and to understand a human experience.

Thus, this study focuses on exploring Saudi women entrepreneur's networking by listening to their voices when interacting with their milieu. The participants' narratives reveal that each one of the eleven Saudi women entrepreneurs who participate in this study has gone through a number of challenges and difficulties.

Despite the cultural obstacles preserved by the conservative patriarchy of the Saudi society such as male guardianship and gender segregation, Saudi women entrepreneurs struggle to overcome them. They are following their passion for independence in a society that is full of obstacles and constraints. Above all, they want to prove their success in the field of entrepreneurship. Each narrative expresses a unique case; even though they share the

same solicitude and solitude. The narratives of their entrepreneurship stories are presented in as following:

Participant 1

Lila, a 55 year old woman, is a wife and a mother with B.A in sociology. She has been working in the industry for fifteen years. The company she runs is related to industrial equipment and infrastructure. Lila is an experienced entrepreneur who is from a big wealthy family in the Eastern province. After three months of contacting and re-contacting her, she finally agrees to meet and talk about her entrepreneurship and networking experience. She is a very circumspect person. She did not want to talk about issues such as policies, regulations, and traditions in details. However, at the end of the interview she mentions covertly something that explains it all; that she is from a different Islamic sect: Shia[1]. The attitude towards Shias is not only common in Saudi community but also all over the Islamic world. Such an issue can affect social relationships. Nasr (2006) describes that Shias are marginal in the Islamic world saying:

> "..Shias are about 10-to-15 percent of the entire Muslim world. We don't have accurate statistics because in much of the Middle East it is not convenient to have them, for ruling regimes in particular. But the estimates are that they are about 10-to-15 percent of the Muslim world, which puts them somewhere between 165-to-190 million people....The overwhelming majority of that population lives between Pakistan and Lebanon. Iran always had been a Shia country, the largest one, with about 60 million populations. Pakistan is the second-largest Shia country in the world, with about 30 million populations. And, potentially, there are as many Shias in India as there are in Iraq"(Nasr, 2007, p. 34)

Nevertheless, she did not want to talk about it and she kept the conversation focused on her business experience. The researcher respected her wishes and did not delve deeply into that aspect.

Due to the social and the cultural barriers in Saudi Arabia, Lila struggles to overcome all these challenges. She is very smart, strong, firm and assertive person. Regardless that her study background is sociology, it does not hinder her to fulfil her dream. She teaches herself

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[1] Lila did not express that she is Shia, however Shia people in Saudi Arabia are known by their family name and the area where they are concentrated.

all about mechanical and manufacturing engineering. For her, it is an important prerequisite to deal with different manufacturing practices: processes, machines, tools, equipment, etc. Using the internet is of great help to her. She started her first steps in the entrepreneurship by sharing the management of her husband's family company and by doing some official and paperwork from home. A few years later, she proved her success and took over the responsibility of the company management. She runs the business by herself because her husband became so busy with other businesses.

She starts her story saying, "In a male-dominated sector, I was the only woman running an industrial company. As a woman I encounter a lot of obstacles and I struggle with them". Being the first and the only woman in Saudi Arabia in such a field, she faces too many obstacles and challenges. "One of the major obstacles that faced me at the beginning was to train males to accept taking orders from a female boss; male subordinates never accept to take orders from a female boss" she explained.

The social, cultural and religious codes in the Saudi society impose specific expectations on behalf of women. Thus, accepting the notion of "businesswomen" is not always there, which confines women to specific domains. "Women were only limited to running and manage businesses in fashion, cosmetics and teaching domains". Lack of social acceptance and support constitutes an additional obstacle for Saudi women entrepreneurs. Some males in her company never greet her, claiming that they never contact females. She discussed it with them, explaining how this behaviour is anti-religious. Finally, they accepted to greet her.

Like other Saudi women, Lila needs to have a mediator in her network in order to get access to various governmental bodies and finish her paperwork. She describes, "The mediator is important in the starting up period; however, he wastes my time". Her valuable family members are forming her social network and her entrepreneurial network. They play a vital role in helping her to accomplish her business growth and success, and to overcome any delay and problems occurred of reliance on the mediators (Mouaqib). She asserts "I rely on my family's male members for any governmental routines".

Considering the fact that Lila is obsessed with making differences in the world surrounding her, she fights against many barriers and sails against the tide. During the years of her work in the industrial field in Saudi Arabia, she has tried to avoid any clash with the

religious police, which are known as the 'Commission for Reinforcement Virtue and Preventing Vice' (CRVPV). She mentioned "several times I find a man with a beard that long [pointing at her stomach] asking me: Why do you work? You are a woman. Is your husband died? Are you in a need? Are you divorced? I reply: "No, I am not; I am just helping my husband and my family. They tried to report me to the police many times, but I fought against them, and they could not stop me. One of my Saudi male staff threatened me to inform the religious police when I blamed him for being late. I hurriedly told him that I am neither the sponsor nor the owner, she clarified. It was something very improper to find a woman running a male dominated factory in my country. They believed that men should take the responsibility because women are emotionally and physically weak. Lila was in her early 30's when she started to run the company by herself. It was a very rare case to find a young woman running a company for heavy industries in KSA with such disgraceful look at females.

Despite her great struggle in the field, Lila has got minor credit from national and international media. Unlike many other Saudi female entrepreneurs who run businesses in different fields and are ranked by many international institutes such as Forbes as being influential women in the MENA region, Lila is unrecognized. When she is asked about that she explains, "Such institutes contacted me several times. Forbes, many media channels, magazines and newspapers asked me for interviews, but I rejected the idea". She summed it all up: "I'm a fighter. All male managers in my field used to call me 'the iron woman'. I did not want to be under a microscope, I want to be successful in this business and I will not allow anything to stop me".

Lila is a woman who is obsessed with her success. She believes that she must keep herself in the shadow; otherwise, she would face hell. Most Saudi males are jealous by nature and, would hinder any procedures needed to run her business. They prefer to attribute any success to their own masculine world. On the opposite side, Lila's husband proves to be a good support along with his family members. They trust Lila's ability to run their own business with an assist of more than 10 million SR (almost 2 million English Pounds); a trust that considerably triggered her determination. It is a fact that families play an important role in supporting female entrepreneurs.

For Lila, social networks are very important to ensure any business success. However, she mostly relies on her male family members for any communication with the opposite

gender and any governmental bodies. In her network, she never meets new people in person, especially men. Thus, she relies on her employees to do any communication and to pass the outcomes to her. She explained, "I only let the mediators or other employees meet the suppliers". Unfortunately, this was one of the obstacles to succeed. Sometimes, mediators are not helpful, thus I turn to emails and telephones for contacting the opposite gender, especially when it is more than a million riyal deal". She asserts: "Without expanding my network, one would have never made it. Although it was rare to have face to face contacts, I still can meet very important persons (VIPs) from ARAMCO. ARAMCO contractors believed that "I am a woman, but I am a very hard negotiator."

Participant 2

Razan is 34 years old and holds a B. A. and an MBA degree. She is a wife and a mother, and works in the field of fashion and retail. Razan has been running this business for three years. She is a very cooperative person and happily agreed to participate in the study. Additionally, she offered the researcher a list of other Saudi female entrepreneurs from different industries. She has been very hospitable and smiling person. The trust between the researcher and Razan was built years ago when the researcher participated in the first economic forum for Saudi women entrepreneurs in 2008, though Razan keeps the conversation limited and very diplomatic. The nature of the research topic and the method used for data collection are not familiar to her. They are not used to be interviewed for any study. Most of previous studies have used surveys which are more convenient and suit their attitudes. This is perhaps due to the special nature of the Saudi society and Saudi people's characteristics.

Razan is diplomatic, calm, confident, and discreet person. She thinks twice before answering any question or telling any story. All her family members are involved in manufacturing businesses, but she decides to be different, thus she is interested in trading. In addition to running her own company, she leads one of the Saudi female entrepreneurs centre. The centre provides consultation, advices, training, and all other types of support to female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia and in the region. When you talk to her, you get the feeling that she represents a model for other Saudi women entrepreneurs; she puts on herself the mission of helping and supporting all the other businesswomen in the region.

Razan starts her entrepreneurship journey as a co-founder of fashion and design Retailer Company. She gains sufficient business management experience by working as a manager in her family's company since she has gotten her MBA degree. Her rich family and her supportive, encouraging husband are one of the major pull factors to start her own company. Her husband was her 'angel'. Once he is convinced with her business, he supports her a lot and facilitates things for her. The main obstacle in her business is to face governmental routines. Her family also plays a vital role in her relationships formation; she has been raised in a family which can be considered as a more liberal and open minded family. Her family business necessitates a wide range of relations; she expands her business relations depending on her family networks and their social relationships. According to her, business relations are vital for any entrepreneurs; they will benefit each other sooner or later.

The entrepreneurial network helps her to recruit female designers, and contact customers. She asserts, "In a business context, it was very important to have connections; female entrepreneurs should build relationships with their customers and they should maintain it over time." Razan believes that the more her relationships are greater the more return to businesses one should get. She adds, "I preferred to expand my acquaintance circle; however, I did not prefer to get along with males. Some males might like to take advantage of females. They might tend to form informal relationships with businesswomen; and this was an extra effort on our behalf, we needed to put safe boundaries". She said. Even though, she does not diminish the importance of any relationships, there are still some selection criteria to be adopted for whom she should approach and whom she should allow to join her network. This is conveyed when she says: "all business relations are interrelated whether through friends or through VIPs 'relationships whom I know through my high socioeconomic status family".

Her family and her close friends provide her advice and counselling since these are vital for any Saudi woman who seeks an entrepreneurship career. For Saudi women entrepreneurs, it is very important to have the psychological support, protection and gaining social acceptance through their families. She added "Many Saudi businesswomen did not succeed and quitted because they could not manage to cope with the social cultural norms. Some people strongly believe in work segregation in terms of gender, and that we should respect such social norms". Razan takes advantage of modern communication technology and social network. She said: "Tweeter and Instagram play an important role in facilitating my

business relations. Emails also proved to be very effective, and I have known many people through my social network".

In 2013, Forbes Middle East ranked her in the (31st) position among the top 'Leaders Inspiring the Kingdom in the Business World' list. She has committed herself to help other women, especially young female entrepreneurs. She explains, "I am an outgoing person. I have no problem with meeting new people and make new relations; I usually travel a lot and go out with many female delegations." Her supportive family paves her way to continue with her business.

Participant 3

Wijdan has a B.A in Mass Media and 45 year old divorced mother. She has run her business for ten years so far, and right now, she is working in a media and advertising company. The researcher contacted Wijdan as one of the female entrepreneurs included in the list. She welcomed the idea and showed interest to help, as she studied in Egypt and she is an open minded person. It did not take time to arrange a meeting with her; she agreed to meet the researcher right away the next day evening in her office. Her company is two floors premise. On the first floor, there are the male employees, while in the second her office exists with so much privacy. Warmly enough, she welcomed the researcher. She closed the office door for more privacy. She knows that no one would dare to interrupt or knock her door while it is closed.

Wijdan is a fighter entrepreneur. She has a bachelor degree in Mass Media. Her passion for her major drove her to open a public relation centre to run conferences and advertising. Unlike other women, instead of getting a supportive husband, her husband caused her many problems. She commented: "you know ... Most men fear women's success... just being independent ... having your own name... having your own income, and your governmental identity, all these make any man jealous because they always want to be leaders and women are their followers, especially in our society. "

Finally, she got her divorce. Despite the rising number of divorce cases in Saudi Arabia, divorcing is not something easy for women in the Middle East. A divorced woman, specifically in the Saudi society, is usually viewed as a weak woman who violated some vital values and norms in her society. Thus, it is difficult for divorced women to be equally footed

with married ones. Wijdan described bitterly: "Statistics of the Saudi Ministry of Justices showed that the total number of divorcing cases in the Kingdom in 2011 was34,622 cases, and that about 40 per cent of divorces were mainly due to husbands' refusal to let their wives continue to work .They forced them to quit their jobs. The other 60 percent of divorcing cases were due to issues related to the husbands' control of their wives' salary. Saudi women live in patriarchal society not only by the force of the tradition, but also by law. By law, a Saudi woman cannot work without the consent of her husband; he can stop her from work and her husband is the one to choose where she may or may not work. Also, by law, a woman cannot travel without the permission of a male guardian; he can stop her from attending a conference or visiting her family and friends. Many men exploit these rules for their own selfish egos. Wijdan is a mother of three children: two daughters and a son. She trusted her ability to run the company and to raise her three children. They are now well raised and highly educated and that makes her proud of herself. At the beginning of the interview, she proudly talked about each one of them, and proudly mentioned that one of her daughters worked as an assistant at the centre after her graduation.

Being a divorced woman and a mother of three children was really a push factor to run her own company successfully. Wijdan faced many hurdles in her business. She had to hire men to work in her centre. She confessed: "...Men are skilled in this work more than women, because they are in it for a long time, women can only do some simple work, for instance Photoshop, because they are not enrolled in the field completely. In addition, this work requires women to move a lot and to go out of the house frequently, and we have a conservative society in respect to women's mobility... There are 2000 Saudi businesswomen working behind the scenes and very few women have vivid and tangible activities which were only confined to fashion and cosmetics" she added. As a Saudi woman, Wijdan has to maintain the society's values and norms; she has to keep a distance from men. Thus, she separated male employees in an isolated area away from her own office, and she restricted direct contact with females, unless there is a necessity.

Despite of these conditions, she was able to run the company successfully for more than 10 years till present with passion and energy, and with minimum conflicts with the religious police. "I am Saudi and I know the rules, as long as I do not violate them, no problems will be faced..." she asserted. Networking in her business has a vital role in her success because it helps her to meet her business' interests; she said "it is not a shame to

build a relationship through which you achieve your interests. There is a saying: 'people are for people and all are for God'. She asserts that "information exchange is vital as everything is changing fast, for example, Laser printing and Art & Designs are all important factors in the mass media business." Even though she believes that she should discontinue any relationship if others don't exchange information with her, or if these relationships will be offensive. Wijdan is against any type of racial discrimination or intolerance among people in order to build strong relationships saying that: "Some people follow their norms that they should discriminate between people whether they are Sunni or Shiite, between Bedouin and Urban, Saudi or non-Saudi. This explains why they have limited relations".

To fulfil her work, it was important to her to have a mediator or broker (Mouaqib) to communicate with the government and finish the paperwork, especially in the first stage of starting up her business. When her business grew up, she gained enough audacity to get rid of the broker and to get any forthcoming paperwork done by her social relationships. She said: "When a business grows up, a broker is not needed". In an attempt to preserve the customs and traditions, the government allocated female sections in all ministries to deal with businesswomen needs without communicating directly with men, however, as Wijdan asserts "males are still decision makers". Thus women sometimes think of making short cuts and go straight to male sections.

As a media woman, she managed to form relationships with VIP and high positioned connections, even if they are men. These relationships provide her with facilities, yet she prefers to keep her relationships mostly formal. She added: "formal relationships in comparison with informal ones are more valuable to business success. Friendships and business relationships never mix. Formal relationships are more beneficial." Wijdan would prefer to have more relationships with the opposite gender. She mentioned: "relationships with males largely encourage women to work harder and harder". Unfortunately, they are not introduced to most of businessmen due to gender separation. In Saudi society; it is allowed only to contact men via video conferences or a buffer screen since women are not allowed to be in direct contact with males. She believes that it might be due to physiological reasons that women don't trust other women. Businessmen provide more effective relationships than the ones provided by businesswomen. Further, she explained her view, saying that: "I wish we could have "face to face contact" with other businessmen. I admit that video conferences and microphones are not effective. There are elements of privacy when talking about business

matters, bidding and tenders etc. Further, it is important to attend forums with businessmen since they are more informed and they are frequent travellers... Those businessmen are not teenagers; they are mature. I hope the Chamber of Commerce will help us in that."

Wijdan, asserts "building relationship through forums and social occasions will definitely help to widen your network circles" thus she uses social events such as funerals, weddings; religious occasions as "Ramadan" to build and maintain her relationships with VIP males and females. In addition to this, Wijdan makes use of social network and websites. Facebook, instagram, twitter, etc. are all ways to make her voice reach others and to build international relationships beyond the local borders. Obviously, for Wijdan, freedom means satisfaction and adaptation with her society status quo.

Participant 4

Bashayer, 35 years old, married and a mother has a B. A. in applied sciences followed by an MBA. Her entrepreneurial category is large. She ran a food and beverage premise for three years. It was not easy to arrange a meeting with Bashayer at the beginning. She had to be contacted several times to set a time for a meeting. The researcher had to wait more than a month till she came back from Europe. After all, she agreed that we meet at her coffee shop. The coffee shop is an open area in a big mall where there were so many noises and crowds. She chose to sit at a table which was in the very open area. The researcher asked her if they could sit inside the shop where it was quieter and less noisy, but she refused. Even though she was all covered in black from top to toe; wearing 'Abaya' (the traditional women dress code in public) and a covering face-veil, no one would be able to recognise her even the researcher herself. If it happens that the researcher met her again in another place, she would not be able to identify her. The researcher so far could not understand the reason behind that behaviour except that she was a very circumspect person. However, after introduction and ice breaking, she became very open and talked about her experience in detail.

Bashayer seemed to be a conservative, ambitious person. She started a Waffle business after quitting her job as a teacher. She said "I did not find myself in that job, so I resigned and stayed at home". Bashayer found her passion in running a business. Thus, a few years later, she decided to start a small business. Unfortunately, she failed as she did not have any previous experience in the field or have the required skills to run such a business. Then, she travelled to Europe to study an MBA degree. There, she had been exposed to the western

life, and she had gained basic business management skills. She discovered a business idea. Where she decided to bake fresh Waffles, She studied its feasibility thoroughly when she went back to Saudi Arabia. Due to the lack of expertise in this product in Saudi market, she had to travel back to Europe for training and for learning everything about Waffle and its production. Her husband was a bit taken aback at the idea of the project he thought it would be a daunting task, nevertheless, when he found her so enthusiastic, he supported her to start off the project. When she started her business, she confronted the rough reality. Also, her friends and family who have similar vision all participated in that success in the start-up stage. Many constraints were triggered by social norms, governmental procedures and registration routine. It was difficult for her as a woman to go in person to the male governmental offices.

It was and still is so odd for a woman to go to the governmental offices to finish her required documents. However, this never discouraged her from her determination. She fought for her dream. She persuaded her husband to help her through his friends and connections. Bashayer encountered many difficulties with the Municipality department. She did not know how to deal with them. They were all men and they did not like to talk or to communicate with a woman. To solve this problem she had to ask her husband to mediate the relationship with them each time she had a problem. Her husband's ability to deal with these problems was greater than hers through his connections with friends and acquaintances. Since food and beverage businesses are highly associated with Municipality, they sometimes charge her fines because of violating some of their rules in her business, however, she uses her social relationships and connections to sort out those type of problems: "My business is in food and beverage, I pay fines for Municipality because I unintentionally violated some of the rules in my business, If you have connections, then you save yourself troubles; I am in the market and understand it now. For me to run a business successfully, one should depend on nepotism and favouritism literally. If you have no governmental connections, you lose a lot. We are in a dire need for connections especially with relatives in all governmental offices such as chamber of commerce and Municipality. Whoever denying such an importance, s/he is absolutely mistaken; relationship with municipal office is vital especially in Food &Beverages projects. Sometimes business can be implemented through establishing relationships with government offices through family relationships or in some other times it can be done through Karam, i.e. giving gifts, and bribes" she explained.

Surprisingly, it was not only the Municipal officer who refused to discuss the business issues with her; but she also had to train her male workers to get used to deal with women in the work place. It was not common for a woman to lead a business and to discuss problems with male workers. She narrated, "It is really difficult to build relationships with the opposite gender due to the social norms and traditions. I remember when the coffee machine broke down; I contacted the technician who tyrannically insisted to talk to a male. I kept telling him that I am the owner of the cafe, but he insisted not to talk to me (laughing). He wanted to talk to a man, because they are not used to dealing with women. Thus, I asked my husband to talk to him till they got used to my presence in the workplace. I think when a woman is relatively old, she can manage such issues".

Bashayer also thinks it is vital to have female connections who are very important persons (VIPs) and elite people in the society like princesses and those with very big powerful families. It is also important to be a member in the Chamber of Commerce to build up more networks. The Chamber of Commerce arranges many meetings, forums and workshops where she can meet new women and build new relationships. She can exchange phone numbers if a degree of trust is successfully evolved between them. Those relations are declared to be her sources of connections, information, and experience exchange. Not only does she succeed in that, but also she encounters businesswomen in Bahrain and Jeddah. She is always able to meet new women from various levels when enrolling in different women institutes and societies.

On the other hand, she values relationships with men that, according to her, are very important because men are the decision makers. She always turns to her husband as well as male family members to be medians between her and the other gender to enhance any procedures. According to her, using communication technologies is a way for indirect contact with other men such suppliers and customers.

Noteworthiness, Bashayer succeeds to prove her ability to manage her own business, and now she runs two branches, and she leads at least 20 male workers.

Participant 5

Najla, a 34 year old single female, holds a B. A. and M.Sc in Computer Science followed by an MBA. Najla is from one of the largest and richest high class families in the

country. She is elegant, classy and prestigious yet not a princess. The least significant problem that can face her business is "money". She works in perfume production and she has run this business for eight years till now. She comes under small entrepreneurial categories.

In Saudi Arabia, delaying marriage until the age of 34 is really a big issue for a girl, given that, the average age of first marriage among Saudi females is 25 years. According to Saudi cultural norms, a single woman who has exceeded the age of 25 is considered to have missed the train. In fact, the Saudi culture views that the age between 18 and 25is the optimum age for marriage. Najla attributes the issue of remaining unmarried in Saudi society for many reasons, such as the tribal tradition which accordingly makes the family not to accept giving their daughters to men of a different tribe, even in the most flexible cases the suitors must be a Saudis. In addition, Saudi men are reluctant to propose to overly independent and self-confident women. The lack of intermingling between families and social gatherings is considered among these factors that contribute to the delaying of marriage age. Surrounded by such conditions, females' opportunities of getting married become very rare; she has been put under more conservative and protective role on behalf of her family. Therefore, she encounters additional difficulties in communication and freedom of movement. Hence, in the Saudi culture, a girl only becomes attractive if she is held captive in her family's house, waiting for a groom. Although she mentioned this issue, she showed discontent to talk about it. The researcher respected her wishes and moved to other issues related to her business. She found the condolences in her business's prosperity and success.

Najla had her business management experience from both her academic study as well as her working experience that exceeded 13 years in the private and governmental sectors. In spite of her family's wealth, she decided to build her own life. Thus, her father supported and encouraged her. She entered the field of Perfume production incidentally, since she was very sophisticated and she was looking after her appearance daily. Other women were amazed by her scent; they asked her about its combination and where she got it from. Because she was a very special woman who had a special sense for Perfumes, she became accustomed to making her own fragrances. She found out that she had been clever in blending fragrances. When girls and women around her admired her Perfumes and kept asking her to give them from her Perfumes and blends, she felt that how good she was. Najla said to herself then, "I do not like cooking, and I do not know much about jewellery and clothes; I basically have no

other option". That was how her business started up. In 2005, she had a very little capital, and his father supported her to start her project.

Najla, unlike many other female entrepreneurs, does not have any financial difficulties, but she still faces the most common obstacles in social norms and in communication. Despite her family's wealth, they are very conservative. It is known in Saudi society that the larger the family is, the more severity is shown towards women's exposure to communicate with their surrounding community.

Moreover, Najla was further faced with the difficulty of transportation and restriction on women's mobility. It was not allowed for her to move around freely; especially if she needed to travel. Her business necessitated moving a lot; she had to import bottles and other goods from Syria and sometimes from Italy lack of transportation, especially when items should be imported from Syria or China .However, my family as well as my friends raised my morale. I should not block a source of income for me or for others". Thus she tried to overcome this obstacle by relying on her father connections and relationships in order to facilitate the entrance of the raw material at the airport. Her family's connection played a very important role in bringing in some alcoholic material which is very restricted by the country law. For receiving her shipments from the ports in Bahrain or from the local city harbour, she depends on either her family's driver or her brother. In addition, she relies on them to deliver the products to the customers. Her main customers are very rich high class and very important persons (VIPs), "I was always approaching big names. Princesses were my main target. Most females in my society imitated the royalty in their behaviours and clothing" she says. Thus to reach rich people, she relied on one of the female foreigners without whom she couldn't have done it. The foreigner woman lived in one of the main elite housing complexes, where Najla's driver took her products collection with their details for that to sell them in her compound.

Najla participates in exhibits with women running similar small projects. In exhibitions she seeks help from her sister and close friends and she gives them different roles to assist her in preparing the product packages and displaying them in the exhibition. Her perfumes meet greater demands, and many customers keep asking for the same products. She succeeds to establish her first product line with her own logo on it.

However, exhibitions and social occasions are not her only means to reach new people and customers; she also uses communication technology and internet. Texting VIPs is a vital factor for telling them about the new arrivals of summer or spring collections and strengthening her relationships with them. She mentions "Thanks God, I feel my relationships with the VIPs are strengthened more now. They invite me more to their places and in different social occasions. They are interested mostly in whom your father is and what your family does. If I were from a middle class family, their relationship with me would not exist or it would be very limited". Thus, she focuses on the importance of the role played by the family as a supporter in the entrepreneurial process and networking and as a core of this network: "It all goes back to the family. Without their approval, we can do nothing. But if they are supportive you can break through. I encounter another female whom asked me how I managed to overcome all these obstacles; I answer her question by telling her that she could start with simple items as "a fridge" or "a closet" that could be provided by her family".

The only problem facing her all the time is how to reach the opposite gender. In order to expand her business she should penetrate men's market; "but how?" She wonders. She says "I should depend on a salesman to deal with male customers. To tell you the truth, I have been introduced to two gentlemen in Twitter. They are serious; but having only two serious customers is not enough. I need to market my products well. Should I go by myself or should I have a male marketer? How could I send my products? It is really hard to do that in men sections. Should I open a shop for them?? .. I don't know have a final solution till now. Having such a poor social network with men in our society is an obstacle towards any success. I will be so far behind unless we would overcome such an obstacle. I think in other societies, they will not face such problems and businesswomen could start their business immediately".

Due to gender segregation in the Saudi society, she has limited market share unlike the other countries as she said: "In Bahrain, the society is open and segregation between genders does not exist .Therefore exhibitions are more effective in such countries, even residents can attend there, but here the situation is different".

Currently, Najla has customers from all over the world based on her father relations and acquaintances, business exhibits and internet social websites, yet she still does not know how to contact the opposite gender with no criticism.

Participant 6

Enjoud is a 26 year old female with a B. A and an MBA degree. She is single and working at training centre for network marketing. She has been running this business for five years. Her entrepreneurial category is large and unexpectedly, she is very open and voluntarily participated in the study with no objections and excuses. After a few phone calls and text messages she responded and offered her full cooperation. A coffee shop meeting has been arranged immediately. She warmly welcomes the researcher with a very jovial debonair face. She proudly speaks about her achievements in her study, life and business. She is one of those so-called 'energy donors'.

Enjoud is a very soft talking person, open minded, highly educated, very persistent, and rebellious person who does not know the impossible. Her study of post graduate degree in business in Bahrain allows her to acquire many friends and he freely communicates with them when she is there. She recalls: "I couldn't forget Aisha. She was one of my best friends in Bahrain. We were a wonderful female group".

In addition, she had a family business experience of helping her mother in her shop; she wanted to find her own way away from her mother's work. Her friends, whom she met while studying in Bahrain and whom she trust, shared her some business ideas such as e-marketing. She found the idea very interesting and matching her needs and abilities. Then, their friendship was evolved to be working relationships and they became work partners: "when I studied in Bahrain. I was introduced to people who gave me a full presentation about e-marketing; surprisingly one of those was a friend's brother who worked as an optician. They really encouraged me a lot. We started as friends and then we became partners in our business. We travelled together and our relation developed to become stronger and stronger, we became like a family. They weren't my siblings, however. They treated me as one. I trusted them and they taught me a lot about our business to ensure my success." she said.

Her female friends used to bring their brother along to their meetings as this was vital. She explained: "The issue differs from one person to another. With the existence of 'Mahram' like ... who was a brother of two of my friends, we could go in and out without any restraints. However, when there are new outsiders in the context, there will be strong barriers between us especially in KSA". After all, they split up as she decided to run the business by

herself: "We met each other daily after work even I invited them in Saudi Arabia. I felt secure when they were with me till I felt I could run my business alone".

For Enjoud, e- marketing was not all about just sitting at home and running the work on the internet. She needed to go out to meet new prospective customers and to promote her products. One of the difficulties she met was Arab people, specifically, Saudi ones. They were still far from trusting e-commerce and buying products online. Therefore, she needed to lecture people about e-commerce and its benefits. However, this was another difficulty that had shown up. Enjoud, needed to go out more frequently and she needed to meet new people from both genders. She knew Saudi norms; she was not supposed to meet men without a male guardian 'Mahram'. She had to find some other ways. She employed male members to work with her as agents whom she could trust and whom could give lectures for male customers.

She became so selective to avoid people's misjudgments. She explained, "Each one involved in business could be approached but within limits. I relied only on those whom I can trust or those whom are recommended to me. The issue was sometimes misunderstood by the community and by the religious police. In other words, I could not simply sit with male strangers for marketing my business... The people I lectured were active leaders whom could be considerably trusted and whom could recommend others for me", she said. Thus, she put boundaries and standards to meet the Saudi social and cultural norms: "Building relations with the opposite gender in Saudi Arabia was not easy... I could not simply form a relationship with the other gender in Saudi Arabia. I had to be smart enough to know where it would lead me; in Bahrain it was a bit easier. There should be very clear-cut boundaries; after all, a man is a man... when I met males in Bahrain in a business context, these boundaries were clear and could be easily identified. In Saudi Arabia, the situation was different. It should be the same thing in terms of business context and boundaries. However, the situation was different; may be because the whole thing was still new so it was difficult for them to accept such relationships between men and women. We had just managed to adjust the male attitudes towards accepting the concept of "working women" in the society. Those males had misconceptions about females who were unveiled claiming that they were not respected. Sometimes, I had strong business relationships with some males, which later evolved into something informal, so I decided to put an end to these relations by setting clear boundaries between us." she expressed.

In order to meet new female customers, Enjoud sought public places specially waiting rooms, shopping malls, coffee shops and women forums where she could meet them face to face. Even though, establishing such relationships was not easy. As she added: "It is quite easy for females to meet one another at home. However, it is a bit difficult to meet each other in a coffee shop ...and because the society is reserved, females don't always like to mention their names. They are a bit afraid to be known".

Thus Enjoud took advantage of communication technology and internet social websites such as Facebook, Tweeter, and other networks in building distance networks. Communication technologies as cell phones, Blackberry and WhatsApp, facilitate female entrepreneurs' communication and help to overcome "tradition" challenges." she asserted.

After being faced by these obstacles, Enjoud decided to direct her business activities to female sector only and use her knowledge, education and communication skills in establishing a training centre. Now, she trains young women and girls to improve their skills to find a suitable career path in the future. By this way, she managed to reduce criticism from her surroundings.

Being geographically close to Bahrain was so beneficial to Enjoud. She decided to run the two businesses alongside: the e-commercial one in Bahrain and the young females' training centre in Saudi Arabia. By doing that, she maintained the requirements of the social norms in each country.

Enjoud's principle in life was "there is nothing impossible, if someone has the will, s/he can overcome whatever constrains. All what is needed is the courage to do it and to fight for it". This type of business is very hard in Saudi Arabia especially that one necessitates going out a lot. It was very hard for me at the beginning, but I discovered that nothing is difficult, and one must challenge circumstances and overcome them. If you want to do something you will do it even if you're at home. This distinguishes e-commerce business from others. If it is for another business, maybe I couldn't have succeeded; but with the help of technology, BlackBerry, WhatsApp, and social media, things become easier for Saudi women to work from any place at any time without direct confrontation with the society", she said. Amazingly, the extensive use of the new communication technology has opened doors for Saudi women entrepreneurs to run away from regular challenges and social constraints.

They practice their businesses away from the religious authority and the society which obviously they have no control on it.

Participant 7

Impressively, she is the youngest entrepreneur among the participants. Maha, at the age of 21 has a BA in business management and has run her own business for three years so far. She fits in the medium entrepreneurial category; her business is based on running coffee shops. The essence of entrepreneurship in installed in her from an early age.

It only costs the researcher a text message to ask her to participate in the study. An immediate response by a phone call on behalf of her surprised the researcher. She asks about the topic of the research and she offers a quick meeting next day in the afternoon. However, she apologized for cancelling the meeting due to lack of transportation. Maha has to wait till the driver finishes his round with the other family members and then he would be free to drive her to the meeting's venue. Despite of the disappointment, surprisingly enough, she asked about the possibility of doing the interview via 'Skype' as it is much easier for her to communicate rather than to move around. The researcher shows her preference to conduct the interview face to face in order to ensure relaxation and smoothness during the interview. Thus the researcher negotiates with her the ability to reschedule the meeting for the next day evening.

An initial interpretation of the situation suggests that the difficulty of movement due to lack of transportation and male patriarchal could be considered obstacles for networking and networking. Finally, a vey hasty girl arrives to the coffee shop looking for the researcher. However, after few minutes of welcoming and soft introduction, she starts to relax and to reduce her haste. The researcher has prepared some questions as an interview guide; however, they have not been used, as Maha is so eloquent and expressive.

Maha is an astonishingly talented indigenous young entrepreneur. She has embarked her entrepreneurship, career at the age of 17. Her father is a prominent businessman, who shows great support and pushes her towards success. In Saudi society, Maha could be considered a remarkably unique and an unusual case. Her entrepreneurship is inherited and instilled in her since she was thirteen. She used to go out, blend with people, attend national events, and travel to represent her country internationally in many occasions. "My elder sister

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was in charge of Leadership Training Sessions and I used to go there with her, I managed to know lots of trainers back there. People know me; they used to see me talking with older men without boundaries because I was a child. When I grow up, this picture has not changed; I think they still consider me a child." She narrated.

Maha was raised to appreciate her family business background. This made her appreciate the concept of entrepreneurship and commercial business, and how to pitch an opportunity in the market. Her father taught her the wisdom of life. "I have been raised in a family of seven sisters. My father's qualification is only high school and my mother's too. My father was a successful businessman, who used to make us share with him his business ideas, discuss and sometimes take a part in his new projects. My father also taught me that success in business is not about academic certificates; it is all about life experience in doing business" she said. While she was studying her undergraduate law degree, the young lady found that many students complaining about the quality of the food in the University's cafeteria. By her inherited sense of entrepreneurship, she quickly snapped up the opportunity. She prepared a quick incomplete and inaccurate project study to present it to the Chancellor of the university. Initially, he encouraged her so much for being an ambitious young student, and gave her only one week to finalise her university coffee shop project. She started her university coffee shop with only 5000 SR which was her prize that she obtained from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs when representing Saudi Arabia in Germany. She bought her coffee shop stuff from IKEA, (tables, chairs, etc.). "I was not well prepared and I did not study the project well, I was immature, (laughing) I did not know even where to buy this stuff" she said. Then, she ran to the university along with her maid to prepare the coffee shop location, and then she made orders for sandwiches from the best and well known shops. Surprisingly, at the opening day, she achieved a profit of about 17000 SR. When she went back home that day her family applauded and supported her.

However, after few months of raising motivation and success, problems began to emerge. Some of which was attributed to the bureaucracy and some of them were due to jealousy of her success. "The management at the University sent someone to tell me that it is not allowed to hire non-Saudi employees. I know that the vice president of the university is non Saudi; they just wanted to make it more complicated to me. The salary of a Saudi female worker will not be less than 3000 SR and even though from where I could find one to work such a job. Then immediately, I call my aunt who works in a job centre". She narrated. Maha

solved this problem; she interviewed four Saudi girls who had been sent to her by her aunt; after all she hired one.

However, shortly, the Saudi girl quitted the work because of the Saudi's perception of women work that cannot accept women to work such jobs. She narrated: "The Saudi girl I hired quitted the job the second day. A friend of hers came and told her that she could not accept seeing her working by herself in my coffee shop. That girl told her that she thought that the coffee shop is hers, not a worker in it. The girl came to me and said: "as you can see my cell phone is blackberry and I have an iPhone as well, I do not need this job". Thus Maha organised a campaign as a strategy to appease the hearts of people by making it like a charity project. As a result her friends came to help and exchanged work shifts with her. "Most of my friends supported me; they even brought me home-made foods and wanted me to sell them. They didn't even get money for it", she narrated.

Maha's relationships with VIPs played an important role to reduce the constraints and to find a way out of problems. She says: "Ms.... facilitated matters for me to meet a royal family member and people in the parliament....Such relations with those elite people are never-failing fountains". She got help and support from them in order to solve her business problems and other issues with the University management. Those relationships have been established a long time ago when she was a child and it was free to attend different events, as she described: "Because I attended social events when I was young accompanying my elder sister, other big business people supported me. If I were an adult by then, or a grown up woman they would deal with me as an adult. My relationship with the grownups was unlike my sister, because they dealt with me as a younger sister; thus they assisted me a lot. Of course, I should not behave informally with those people as if I was still a kid. I should be even very formal when I grow up".

While growing up, Maha started to think rationally about her relations in terms of benefits. She could gain from these relationships, she explained: "It is better to discontinue the relationship due to lack of reciprocal interest. There is no use benefitting others who don't benefit you. My relations with others in Food Association are really fraternal but there are limits due to gender difference. We are forced to accept our social norms. Religiously, men and women are brothers and sisters".

In addition, she mentioned, "previous problems with my father's friends are considered obstacles in front of my network expansion". Saudi social norms and traditions play their role in limiting her relationships when she grew up, she expressed, and "Girls who intrude the market side by side with men may miss the marriage train as men normally don't like to marry a girl who is mixed with other men". As a result of these social constraints, very few numbers of women succeeded in their businesses and they were able to act as role models for Saudi women. "In Saudi Arabia we may have very limited numbers of active female speakers...may be 4 or 5 who show up annually. In voluntary businesses, men outnumber women," she described bitterly. Together with social norms, the religious police also constrains women's movement and communication. All of these governmental reforms and efforts are meant to discourage women in the name of preserving religion and social norms. Maha adds, "Although our government allowed to appoint females in the parliament (Shura Council), their fear still comes from the religious police, not from the government who may accuse you of being an infidel or a non-believer if you go against them".

To overcome this obstacle, Maha tries to attend public and social occasions such as forums and conferences; "I attend forums, meetings, social gatherings that occur once or every few months in the Chamber of Commerce and the Treasure Fund of Prince Mohamed bin Fahad. This is the most useful asset for me. It creates lots of connections for me ...Even exchanging howdy and greetings with other people in conferences is an asset for you. When you attend events with highly-educated people and you yourself are not as highly-educated as them, it is an asset". In addition to the privilege of internet and social websites which allowed women to communicate freely: "Contacts between women based on social networks websites is more effective for us especially via Twitter ...I have 3800 followers so far, I always use it to publish my work. However, I have to be very careful when commenting on others in Twitter. Everything is counted on me" Maha said.

Yet, Maha asserts" Family relationships are the most important factors for women entrepreneurs' success". Her father is her advisor and her facilitator. He came to her once and suggested a business partner, his friend's daughter, who needs a sponsor. She accepted to cooperate and they are now selling Burgers. The business grew up and Maha decided to expand her coffee shop outside the university in a bigger shop and in a better location. She decided to share the daughter of her father's friend in an Arabic burger restaurant following her father's recommendation. The 21 year old entrepreneur became more experienced to run

professional businesses. However, as her business grows, the attention of the society is drawn to her, and more constraints and hurdles are placed on her road. "In our society, the more a girl works, goes out and moves, the worse people will think about her, and the less she would get chances of getting married. That is how people will judge you." Maha concluded.

Participant 8

Mashael is 25 years old, single entrepreneur. She has B.Sc. in MIS and she works on projects related to handmade products. She has been in this business for three years. She fits in the small entrepreneurial category. Mashael has been recommended by other participants to the researcher. When the researcher contacts her, she is so polite and shy. Her speech reflects lack of experience when communicating with others. The interview has to be rescheduled several times due to the common problem in this society, namely "transportation". She is a young girl who is following her passion for handmade crafts. She starts her business against her father's will; she gets the needed support from her friends. Her business is small, but she is faced with many problems; most commonly the lack of networking and the ability to extend her network are two main hurdles. She arrives at the interview venue hesitated and unsure about the purpose of being there. However, she delightedly accepts to share her experience and to tell her story. At the beginning of the interview, she focuses on demonstrating her business type, the differences between the materials she uses and their resources. Without interrupting her spree, she continues her story to express the difficulties she faces in her entrepreneurship and networking experience. Here, her story starts:

Mashael is a stubborn, persistent, and a gifted young entrepreneur. She starts her business at the age of 22. The project idea starts as a vocation. Watching her mother making handmade Ceramic Paste products, and seeing her father as an amateur artist loving photography instills in her the passion for handmade products and art. By trial and error, she finds her target in making gifts and toys products out of broadcloth fabric (Gokh). She is one of six sisters and one elder brother. Her mother is so supportive, unlike her father who refuses the idea of starting her business as she is still a young student. He is really concerned about her study. "Actually, I was a senior student at that time, and I was repeating a course as well. My father threatened me that he would throw away all tools and fabrics. He refused the idea at first because it might hinder me from studying. He forgot that I was stubborn and if I had something in my mind I would do it. I suffered in the beginning to convince my dad, but when I did, he became very understandable; thanks God." she depicted.

Beside the family's support, Mashael's friends and colleagues' encourage and help her at the beginning so much. They share her ideas and even buy her products. She narrates, "I turned to my friends in the Accounting Dept. and the Business Management Dept. who were supportive and got different samples. The most important of all was the relationship with customers who were mostly friends and family members. My Friends....my best friends, they were the main source of support for me. They raised my morale a lot and largely participated in business success". Maha also faces the problem of lack of transportation and limited movements, she describes it, saying: "It needed a lot of patience as I only had one brother who was commuting to work; he could not accompany me most of the time... I had a lot of arguments with my father because of going out much often. I suffered because of the lack of transportation".

Even though, she works hard on herself to learn more about the fabric, design and products. Using the internet and social websites, she finds no problems not only in learning more about the craft, but also in promoting her products and forming relationships. "I made a BlogSpot myself; and international customers were accumulating on Facebook and Twitter. Customers in KSA were not convinced of the handmade products which they believed were not compared to the Chinese handmade counterparts. My account in Facebook and Twitter helped me a lot to market my products. Most of my customers were from USA, Europe and Gulf area. Surprisingly, very few Saudi customers were interested," she said. Yet, relying on internet and social websites was not very approved and accepted means by her family and the Saudi community either. She explains, "Some guys tried to approach you online; but I have the experience in identifying the serious ones; I never allowed my personal life to affect my project. Unlike Europe, social network websites are abused in KSA. This was why it took me three years to have customers from Saudi Arabia who didn't appreciate handmade products". Thus, it is always better for her to seek support and relationships through approved institutes such as the Chamber of Commerce, which is favoured by the families as well; she says: "My father always supported me in attending all the meetings and training sessions in the Chamber of Commerce".

Additionally, one of the difficulties she faces is the lack of appreciation for the artefacts from the Saudi people. She has to approach other international customers who really love and appreciate handmade products. But how is this going to happen? She is a girl and is not allowed to move without a male escort, and communicating with the other gender is not

acceptable. She narrated, "From my society's point of view, it is not recommended to talk to male strangers as they can possibly abuse the female; you know how men think of girls. I needed the approval of my father as well as my brother to contact male customers. My father supported me, but my brother was always upset and he usually objected and talked to my father to prevent me from this; I hated this point of view .I usually faced him and told him that I would be capable of dealing with males. My father was always directing me and was teaching me how to deal with males". Mashael was still fighting these severe constraints in order to grow her business and become financially independent from her family, "I don't want to financially depend on my family forever. I need independence" she persistently said.

Participant 9

Mona is 40 years old, married, a mother and has a BA and MBA degrees. She is in exhibition organisation and has been in this business for three years so far. Her entrepreneurial category is medium. Like many other Saudi women, Mona would not accept to meet someone she does not know or be introduced to her by someone she knows and trust. Thus, once the researcher called her requesting her participation, she asked about the researcher nationality then she excused for being busy. However, once the researcher mentioned to her that she has been recommended to by another friend she trusts and from a high class family she accepted to meet in her 'Boutique'. Also, like the other Saudi women who more experienced, she tried to keep the distance and not to be so friendly. After professional welcoming and a quick round in her boutique for ice-breaking, an introduction to the research has been introduced to her. Once she started her story, the researcher discovered that she had a partner who was responsible about all the work papers and the governmental communications. Thus, the researcher found out that a part of the story would be missing unless she interviewed the other partner, a female entrepreneur and fortunately was on her way to the boutique for a meeting with her business partner after conducting the interview. She accepted to participate in the research as well and the story of each one of them was provided separately, since each one of them had a different story and a different role.

Mona was an ambitious person with a vision and aims to help others and make a difference. Her expertise in entrepreneurship training pursued her to think how to provide professional service for the young and new business starters. The idea was ignited three years ago when she went along with her friend and colleague, Jouaher, to follow up some of their trainee entrepreneurs' activities in organising and presenting their products in marketing

exhibitions. They did not like the organisation and the services provided to the female entrepreneurs in those exhibits. Thus, they found out that there was a need for professional foundation to organise exhibitions where this service would be more beneficial, helpful, and comfortable for the female entrepreneurs. Thus, "Female trainees basically need these exhibition skills." she says. Mona started to study the idea of the project with her friend. They decided to provide as much help as they could to integrate services not just exhibition organisation service. With the support of her husband and family, she started the project. The foundation of organising exhibitions aimed to discover talented Saudi female entrepreneurs and train them to contribute effectively in the national economy where there are many Saudi female entrepreneurs who do not know their talent. Thus, the foundation helped them to develop their entrepreneurship abilities and skills, and further they helped them to make a professional feasibility study for their projects. Mona seemed to be a bit shy person, so she left all the required establishment procedures of the governmental paperwork and registration procedures to be done by her colleague who had more connections and ability to do it. "I did not know what the process was or how to deal with the governmental bodies, so my friend and partner Jouaher did everything related to this, so she could tell you in details about it, she was the expert in these issues...[laughing],"she indicated.

However, She was really good regarding the technical aspects of the project' and exhibits organisation. Mona technically did not face substantial constraints, she was financially supported by the family, she deals only with women inside and outside the foundation, and she did not deal with the governmental bodies on any level. She benefited so much from the cooperation with her friend at starting the project. Her network expanded not only due to family members, but also due to her neighbours' relationships: "My neighbours, as well as my family's neighbours, are sources of important networks" she depicted. For her, all her relationships are valuable and never neglect any connection as she expresses: "I do not neglect any relationship, because at the end of the day it is a business; thus I try to keep all my connections active as much as I can. Maybe if it is not by me, it could be through my friends and my daughters. Friends' acquaintances represent an asset". She maintains these relationships like many other Saudi women by sending an invitation to them on various events and social occasions. In addition, she relies on her daughters to expand her network as well. She says: "My daughters play a major role in expanding my network. Each one of them invites their mothers and acquaintances". She also benefited from the social media and websites; she asserted that it helped her to expand her network: "I upload photos of my

exhibition via Instagram. Then, my family and my friends do the same, so it becomes a wide circle... The existence of the internet nowadays makes communication easier in business".

However, Mona's network is also constrained by social norms and traditions since she tries to keep her circle close to female relationships only to avoid misunderstanding and misjudgments by the community: "My social network is closed to females. Males are not allowed. Male contacts in governmental offices are only for finalizing paperwork such as permits..etc." Even though, this communication with the governmental bodies should be done via a broker she hired at the start-up stage of her business: "I started my business via a broker" she says.

Organising exhibitions was not just a business; it was also a means of meeting new women and establishing new connections for Mona: "Our relationships change over time. A few numbers of the participants in our exhibitions became friends. In our female business, some relations may develop into more informal ones. Out of the 200 participants, we met in our exhibitions in the past two years, only 20 evolved to be intimate ones". Even though, Mona is a shy woman and lacks networking skills: "Well, I am trying hard to expand my connections, but I am a bit home-oriented, however I am trying to be more sociable" she depicted. In doing so, she started sending invitations and presents to her network members in social occasions which, definitely, helped her a lot in maintaining her relationships with them. Even though, she asserted that she did not prefer informality and tried to keep her relations limited and professional: "I keep my relations within boundaries and limited. Unstudied expansion of relations may lead to negative effects. We are trying to act as professionally as possible, and we expand our network professionally as well" she explained. As such, she avoided obstacles and problems as long as her network all female: "There are no obstacles as long as all the networks' contacts are women. In our economic conditions, it is vital to have well-studied relationships not improvised. It is an asset in business and valuable source of information. Invitation to social occasions should be implemented on highly technical grounds, and our permanent customers know us through social network websites. Customers in neighbouring countries will have a more special treatment as they are our guests." she asserts.

After achieving remarkable success, she decided to extend the project by opening a permanent exhibition of fashion designs as a 'Boutique'. The Boutique was a result of acquiring loyal customers who admired the various products they used to see in the periodical

exhibitions. Mona is being surrounded by family, friends and family's acquaintances protected her from facing any problems with either the religious police or the society.

Participant 10

Jouaher is 42 years old and has a BA in English literature. She is married and a mother and works for exhibition organisation. She is Mona's partner in business and also has been working on this project for three years, which is the same duration. She arrived to the 'Boutique' half an hour after finishing the interview with Mona, and the researcher had to wait her arrival. On her arrival, she was prepared; however the researcher followed all the interview procedures as normal from the research introduction till the end of the interview. She is a woman with a lot of entrepreneurship experiences, and her story adds new information in relation to governmental network.

Jouaher is a cofounder of the foundation of the exhibition organising. In order to see the full picture, the researcher had to meet her after meeting her partner Mona. She is the general director of the foundation and the one who is responsible for the official procedures and public communication. Apparently, she is a level-headed woman; thus far into the interview, the pace has been sedate and almost jovial. She is a certified trainer from the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) for entrepreneurship with long experience in the field of training. She knows what is required for success in business. Jouaher realises the importance of networking; thus at the beginning of the interview, she asserted that, "The network is important more than a person can imagine. Nobody denies that any business cannot survive without a network. If only we can use these relations positively, it will be really useful" and she explained that as far as she understood it : "International research findings prove that 'words of mouth' is a successful tool for marketing, and it is taken from friends and network contacts, so network is vital for business growth". Thus, she pays a lot of attention to networking and forming new relationships in order to expand her business.

Nevertheless, for her, those relationships should be built upon trust which comes only from family and friends; she says: "Trust comes from friends and relatives and it proves to be worthy". She also knows that there are a lot of benefits and resources that can be gained from her relationships; she proceeds: "I believe relationships are very important, especially in marketing; network resources and business exchange will definitely help". Yet in respect to

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social and financial support she believed the only source to obtain them would be the family and very close friends: "If we are talking about financial and social levels, first class relatives and friends will definitely help nobody else" she asserts. However, according to her, due to conservative social norms, perception and tradition, as other Saudi women, her network will be always limited to family and friends, where other relationships are always liable to discontinue: "For us, no matter what the size of our network is, it will always remain limited. It is important to put some limits or boundaries to our networking relations, There are sometimes difficulties in continuing relationships and maintaining network, but family obligations and preoccupation with work impact on the ability to continue with relationships are always present. Attending events and social occasions and parties prove to be a big challenge for me as it is sometimes socially prohibited, especially for us; to some extent, we are conservatives and hardliners with respect to social matters. Most of the time, there are difficulties in women's movement due to social culture and conservative norms, and also due to our domestic commitment". She explains. Thus, she believes that networking must be within the limits: "It is much better keeping the relationships formal and within professional limits". "We are a very conservative society, you know! And so tough regarding social aspects and relationships, so sometimes we push ourselves to initiate others to motivate them to initiate us". Jouaher, like her partner Mona, likes to be selective and formal in her relationships as she describes: "Since I was working as a trainer, I met women; now they know me but I do not remember them. I earn relationships and contacts. My daughters are involved with us, and so are their friends. We pay a lot of attention for their generation, socially and professionally because our business serves not only business women, but every woman in the community as well, so most of our young connections come to our fashion exhibitions. Definitely, the relationships that are formed in business context are still professional. Less than 1% of our professional relations evolved into more than professional ones. It is not supposed to change and remain professional. We are keeping the relationships professional...with our distributors, suppliers and consumers". This all is done through social media on the internet websites: "We formed connections of distributors, suppliers, consumers and friends through social network websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram" she depicts.

Unlike Mona, Jouaher was responsible for the governmental procedures and all other external communications. Commonly, as a result of sex segregation in the society that is based on culture, tradition and social norms, at the start up stage, she needed to hire a

mediator (Mouaqib) for the governmental official papers; she says: "From my experience, I hired a broker (Mouaqib) to go to the governmental bodies and finalize paperwork. In the governmental offices, they are all men, and as far as I understand, there is nothing easy. The broker may keep matters hanging and unsolved for six months". However, she suffered more difficulties with him. "You know there is nothing easy, however, this Mouaqib made things more complicated." She expressed. Like some other mature female entrepreneurs, she got rid of the 'Mouaqib' and went by herself to finish her paperwork in spite of the expected response of the surrounding people and society for such behaviour : "I managed to get rid of the broker in the advanced stages especially in finalizing Municipality and Civil Defence permits". However, she got up her courage to go to the governmental male dominated offices to finish the papers. Ironically, they finished her paperwork quickly because the presence of a woman in the male governmental offices is not desirable, so yes, it can be said that "every cloud has a silver lining". After achieving impressive success, she, along with her co-partner, decided to expand their business. "The boutique gallery comes as a new birth of the project" Jouaher said.

Participant 11

Adana is 45 year old married woman with kids and has a B. Sc in Physics. She is involved in day-care centre for kids with special needs and has been in this business for ten years so far. Her entrepreneurial category is medium. Adana was not only listed among the group list that has been taken from the female branch of Chamber of Commerce, but also has been recommended to the researcher by the other participants. Reaching for her was not easy. That may be due to her preoccupation with work. After several trials, an introduction to her and request for participation in the study has been successfully done. She agreed to meet in her office before afternoon due to having a meeting with her staff who were all females. After conducting the interview, the researcher went to her office half an hour earlier in order to secure the meeting with her and make sure not to miss her. She welcomed the researcher professionally and after a short introduction, she offered her cooperation as an appreciation from her to science and research. She closed the door and asked the assistant not to interrupt, though some office phone calls did not stop coming during the interview. However, being an experienced entrepreneur, her story was very rich and full of valuable information, especially in terms of networking.

Adana is more like an affectionate mother figure rather than a businesswoman. She is a very kind and caring person. May be that is what drives her to run a day care centre for Down syndrome kids. She is the co-founder of the centre along with her cousin. Adana is like father, like a child, so the entrepreneurship is instilled in her from her family. "I have inherited the tendency to entrepreneurship, from my family. My father has companies and enterprises in Oil, Kitchens and other fields" she said. She and her cousin started this business because she wanted to help children with special needs and Down syndrome. They thought of the project for its charitable side which pleased these children through taking care of them and establishing activities such as exhibitions, carnivals, and bazaars. "We aim to integrate children with Down syndrome with the community and with their normal peers to reflect the educational philosophy of the humanitarian aspect that aims to prepare children for their involvement in the community in their early life stages and avoid isolating them as much as possible to provide them with social, behavioural, reading and writing skills. We aim to raise awareness and educate the community with this group of children as any couple may be at risk of having a baby with Down Syndrome." she said. They achieve this through the development and implementation of educational, training, and rehabilitation programs to overcome the learning difficulties they face and also provide solutions for them with educational, social, and psychological services in the context of a day-care system that is based on the presence of children in the morning and return to their homes with the end of the day.

Despite the noble side of her project and the appreciation of the community for her, obstacles did not stay far. Similar to other Saudi women entrepreneurs, Adana had to communicate with male sections via mediator (the Mouaqib):"Governmental communication and paperwork and permits from different offices were the main obstacle ahead of us. The necessity of a Saudi broker or mediator in the network to deal with the government is regarded as another obstacle as he is always a troublemaker. The broker does not understand what I want most of the time as he is lowly educated. He always referred me to call a male employee. Once I sent the Mouaqib to the police station to finish some paperwork; he did not know what I wanted him to do, then he called me and asked me to talk to the officer, but the officer refused to talk to me saying he would not talk to women. The police officer never accepted to talk to a female" She described the situation. Further, she added that due to the conservative Saudi social norms, a male relative cold always help in the governmental offices, unless he transferred to another area or department, as she says: "A male officer can

only provide help through male acquaintances or connections especially when it comes to a woman; it becomes really difficult for her to deal directly with men. It is difficult for females to leave her office and make a visit to the government offices".

Even though, Adana described her network as: "I have a good network; so many people support me.... I rely on family, friends, relatives and neighbours who all help a lot". Her network changes, but she prefers formal relationships and thinks that it is more rational and stable: "There are some relationships that have changed, but everlasting formal relationships help a lot". However, her network tends more toward shrinking rather than expanding; this is because of many social and occupational factors. She expresses this as she says: "Lack of frequent meeting may negatively affect my network. My network became smaller due to my discipline and preoccupation with work makes it difficult to maintain relationships. You can say my relationships before work were 80%, now it is about 50% due to work preoccupation, going back home tired, and home responsibility. Due to all of this, it became difficult to find enough time for communication with others. Thus, my relationship became limited to only close people like family and friends". Consequently, in order to overcome this problem, she tries "Expanding network thought attending events and conferences may largely widen our network" she says. Not only this, but also she relies on her female staff to make more connections, especially new customers, she expresses: "I can easily win my female staff to my side as I can hire them as sales representatives".

Communication technology such as cell phones, internet and social websites are useful means for her to build connections without the need to move around or go out frequently: "Smart phones and Hi-Tech methods helped me to contact with people whom I have never seen before". In addition, formal entrepreneurial institutes such as Chamber of Commerce are also a good place to meet new women and connect with them: "On the first Tuesday of every month, I meet with these businesswomen... The Chamber of Commerce always holds meetings and courses to take our suggestions" she says. Travelling outside the country and meeting new people are other strategies she employs to expand her relationships; she describes it as: "I always go abroad to hire foreign trainers for teachers. I often issue entry visas for those foreign experienced trainers". Adana values her relationships and all her network's members and most importantly, family in order to succeed; she says: "Any female who wants to be a success, she must start a strong social network including relatives, acquaintances, friends, colleagues. Connections with Heads of governmental offices proved

to be of great value, especially in Municipality office. My dad, my mom and my husband are and will be my leaders to success".

Currently, Adana is dreaming of expanding her business to include children older than thirteen. However, according to Saudi social norms, she cannot serve or allow the children older than thirteen years old to come to the centre. After this age, these kids are supposed to be grown men who should be separated from the other sex, and women should not be exposed to them without being veiled, so the child with Down syndrome or special needs reaching this age, has no place to go, and their learning and training has to stop at this stage. Thus, Adana's future dream is to get a loan and buy a land to build a big centre for those who are thirteen and over to provide the educational and training services to them and their families. She dreams of a high professional centre with international expertise from all over the world who can teach them lifelong vocations and crafts.

Overall, it can be said that a breakdown of these stories shows that the veil covers the face of the Saudi women not their minds. Although their world is male dominated, patriarchally and traditionally very conservative, they are fighting back. They do not give up or retreat. Instead, they get equipped with every means and tactic that can support them, including family members' funding and support, exploiting higher education, leveraging technology, and utilizing social networking. By employing creative problem solving strategies, Saudi women have entered the entrepreneurship world and 'elevated their status beyond traditional roles' (Troemel & Strait, 2013). On the one hand, they are disadvantaged by the need of their male consent, gender segregation, lack of entrepreneurial networking and communication, and lack of business experience in some cases. However, on the other hand, they are advantaged regarding their higher education, frequent exposure to the modernized countries, economic growth, and family entrepreneurial background in most of the cases which created an atmosphere imbued by this entrepreneurship. It can be said that all these factors created unique circumstances for women to run their business, and subsequently, a unique networking process and activities. Therefore, a closer analysis of their networking process and activities using thematic analysis approach is to be provided in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In order to answer the research questions, eleven Saudi female entrepreneurs (SFE) have been interviewed using a semi-structured guide. Although there have been many

constraints and some women have retreated from the participation in the study, some other women voluntarily have welcomed to participate, may be because they have a story to tell and a hope for change.

This chapter has narrated the data collection and the participants' stories; eleven Saudi women entrepreneurs, each one of them have a unique entrepreneurial story. However, they share the same problems and constraints. On one side, they suffer from male brokers, from their lack of direct communication with the governmental agencies, the constraints on women's movement and work that affect their ability to run and grow their business. On the other side, higher education opportunities, national economic growth, and above all the family support and protection are stated as the most entrepreneurial drives for Saudi women.

Deeper analyses were necessary to answer the research question. Therefore, thematic analysis has been conducted and the findings are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Research Findings

"To find yourself, think for yourself"

-Socrates-

Introduction

The stories' provided by the informants shed the light on different aspects of the context in which they ran their business. The analysis of their stories shows that they may be disadvantaged from one hand, but also from the other hand; they might be privileged in respect to some other aspects. However, with regard to this study, which focuses on exploring the networking process, activities and change, it seems that the disadvantages overcome the advantages. The analysis has resulted in five main themes:

1- Family and friends as a network building block
2- Networks formation and strategies
3- Role of culture and traditions
4- Entrepreneurial network resources
5- Leveraging technology and social network websites

These themes and their sub-themes are extended and discussed separately in the rest of this chapter as follows:

1- Family and friends as a network building block

As discussed previously in the literature review, people are by nature socially embedded and tend to be connected to other individuals one way or another. The form and level of the relationships they start with differing from family to national relation. For Saudi women entrepreneurs' building a network genuinely starts from the family level and then slightly extends to include relatives and little number of friends. All the female relationships should be controlled and bonded to the family. This has been clearly reflected in the participants' stories. As for Najla, the family is the focal to all the Saudi female activities including business and buying equipment. She declared that:

> "It all goes back to the family; without their approval you can do nothing.
> But if they are supportive you can break through. I encountered another
> female who asked how I managed to overcome; I answered her telling her

that she could start with simple items as a fridge or a closet. And all these items may be provided by family". (Appendix 2 Line 241)

Similarly for Mashael, she was encouraged by her friends to start her business while she could not because her father refused the idea, and she had to convince him to give her the permission to start her business:

> "I turned to my friends in the university such as Accountancy Dept. and Business Management Dept. who were supportive and got different samples. I was a senior student then, and my Dad refused the idea first because it might hinder me from studying. I suffered in the beginning to convince my dad, but when I did, he was very understanding later" (Appendix 2 Line 264)

Thus, it seems that according to the traditional Saudi family structure, it can be described as tribal and patriarchal in that the father and/or the family's male member has the full authority and power over the female members supported by legal power and social norms. The social bonds and relationships and activities for a Saudi female are all restricted and are also controlled by the family acceptance and approval, more specifically the male guardian. This can be inferred that starting up a new connection is limited due to lack of free will of Saudi female in making such a decision. Mashael asserts that her family should be informed of every step she takes performing those activities. As she said:

> "The approval of the father or the brother to contact the male customer was vital. The father was supportive, but the brother was not." (Appendix 2 Line 367)

Further, she stressed it again when concluded that:

> "When I start a project, or get involved in a relationship my mum should know about it, and most importantly my father and brothers should know. All my family members' males and females should know about it so that they will interfere if a problem arises." (Appendix 2 Line 373)

Maha described how she started the role of her family presented in her sister and how she started her network through her sister as she said:

> "My elder sister was in charge of Leadership Training Sessions, so I went
> with her; I managed to know lots of trainers back there." (Appendix 2
> Line 1565)

Similarly, Bashayer asserted that family and kinships are the start point from which she could form relationships. She said:

> "If the family supports the women in our community, then more than half
> the work is done" (Appendix 2 Line 716)

However, Lila interestingly indicated that the only network she has and she cares about is her family, which consists of her husband and her children:

> "My husband and my children are my entire network. It is a family work
> relationship."(Appendix 2 Line 1030)

The same story happened to Adana; family relationships are the most important for the foundation of her network. This can be conveyed from her saying:

> "I have a good network, so many people support me ...I rely on family,
> friends, relatives and neighbours help a lot." (Appendix 2 Line 1174)

> Apparently from the participants' stories, it can be understood that next to the family come relatives and friends in the Saudi women entrepreneurs' network formation. Most of the participants affirm that relatives and friends have a vital role in their business network and they place them in the second place after the family. For example, Enjoud described her friends' role saying:

> "We started as friends and then we became partners in our business. We
> travelled together, and our relation developed to become stronger and
> stronger; we became like a family."(Appendix 2 Line 28)

Mashael as well indicated the role of her friends in supporting her in starting up her business. She said:

"My friends....my best friends, they played an important role; they were the main source of support for me. They raised my morale a lot and largely participated in business success." (Appendix 2 Line 338)

Further, Adana elaborates that the most important actors in her network in order are family, which comes first, then friends, relatives, and finally neighbours. She says:

"I have a good network, so many people support me ...I rely on Family, friends, relatives and neighbours help a lot. (Appendix 2 Line 1174)

Also, Mona confirmed that neighbours play an important role in the Saudi women's entrepreneurs' network; she says:

"My neighbours as well as my family's neighbours are sources of important networks" (Appendix 2 Line 1295)

Based on the previous discussion, it has been noted that the majority of the participants or it can be said that almost all of them reported that they have pre-existing contacts prior to entering the entrepreneurship field based on family's connections. Thus, it can be inferred that the family is authentically forming the nucleus for the Saudi women entrepreneurs' social activities and networking. Hence, they cannot build any new connection without the family approval and the involvement, specifically the male member or the male guardian. In addition to this, the participants indicated the role of close relatives, friends and neighbours who were forming the core of the Saudi female entrepreneurs' network formation.

In sum, it is evident from the literature that women entrepreneurs are always seeking help and support from their family in terms of finance, encouragement and psychological support. But for Saudi women entrepreneurs, their families play additional role that is establishing relationships. Women entrepreneurs' relations are genuinely based on family relationships. Thus, families in Saudi Arabia establish the foundation of the society not the individuals. Saudi Families are descendants of tribes and clans, thus members of each family are signifying a cohesive unit, looking out for each other. Also, according to Butler and Hansen1991, Hite and Hesterly, 2001, and Larson and Starr, 1993, women entrepreneurs relies on their family relationships, especially in the early stages of their entrepreneurship, then as their business grows they reduces their reliance on their family relationship and shift

to business and strategic relationships. However, in respect to Saudi women, it is revealed that their families establish the core of their relationships through all the stages of their business from the start-up to the mature stage. Furthermore, any new relationships are usually formed with reference of their father or spouse's businesses.

2- Network formation and strategies

Participants' accounts have displayed factors which affect the Saudi female entrepreneurs networking formation, decisions and process. These factors include:

a. Networking motivation
b. Networking activities
c. Networking strategies

Each one of these factors will be expanded and elaborated from the data analysis as follows:

a. Networking Motivation

This theme explains the motivations behind the Saudi women entrepreneurs' networking formation and activities. From the participant's account, it has been noted that the networking formation is mainly motivated by the degree of networking awareness. Based on the narrative collected from the participants, it has been noted that all the female participants acknowledge the importance of networking and its role in their business success which may motivate them to build a network. For example, for Enjoud she believes that she should have built good relationships with everybody and not only to keep her friends close, but also to keep her enemies closer for more success. She asserts:

> "In a business context, I always say –expect the unexpected- you will
> never know one's relationships should be good with everyone... And it is
> recommended to gain your rivals to your own side to be on the safe side
> HOME AND DRY. Relationships last forever here."(Appendix2Line 90)

Likewise, Mashael expressed her awareness of the importance of networking when she stressed the importance of relationships with customers. She says:

"The most important of all is a relationship with customers" (Appendix 2 Line 332)

Also, Razan indicated her high awareness of building connections with suppliers and customers to expand her business and achieve more profits, as she says:

"My network is very important. It helps me to recruit female designers, and customers. In a business context, it is very important to have connections. We should build relationships with the customers and maintain it over time, the more relationships I have, the greater the return to my business." (Appendix 2 Line 430)

For Bashayer, the network is very important to solve her business problems. She claims:

"If you have connections, then you save yourself the troubles". (Appendix 2 Line 549)

Similarly, Wijdan as a media and public relations specialist expressed high awareness of the networking role for her business success:

"Networking, in business, has a vital role in success because it helps you to meet your business' interests. And this is not a shame to build a relationship through which you achieve your interests. The wise saying goes "people are for people and all are from God."(Appendix 2 Line 741)

Additionally, Lila asserts that it is important not only to have a network, but it should be expanded to be more effective:

"Of course, networking is very important for my business. Social Network provides information which is very important ... Without expanding network; one would have never made it". (Appendix 2 Line 967& 1051)

From Adana's point of view, her network is a valuable asset for her business success.

"Any female who wants to be a success, she must start a strong social network with network relatives, acquaintances, friends and colleagues" (Appendix 2 Line 1354)

Likewise, Mona values all types of relationships, particularly her friends and friends' acquaintances. She states:

> "I do not neglect any relationship, because at the end of the day it is a business. Thus, I try to keep all my connections active as much as I can. Maybe if it is not by me, it can be through my friends and my daughters' friends. Acquaintances represent an asset". (Appendix 2 Line 1296)

Jouaher agreed with the previews' opinions and asserts that:

> "The network is important more than a person can imagine. Nobody denies that any business cannot survive without a network. If only we can use these relations positively, it will be really useful" (Appendix 2 Line 1371)

In summary, it seems that Saudi women entrepreneur networking activities are motivated by their awareness of the importance of the network and its impact on their business success and how it can be very effective means to expand their work.

b. Networking activities

One of the puzzling questions that have been looking for an answer in the beginning of the present study is: if the Saudi females' movements are limited and grounded by many social restrictions, then how can they meet their contacts and communicate with them? What activities do they carry out in order to develop their networks? The answers of these questions have been drawn from the participants' narratives, where various techniques and communication means have been reported by them. Interestingly, the participants acknowledged a sizable number of networking activities as the most common among Saudi women entrepreneurs in the Saudi community in order to find new contacts and communicate with them, e. g. social gatherings, public places such as coffee shops, waiting rooms and family sections, travelling outside Saudi Arabia to neighbouring countries, and other western countries, meetings in the Chamber of Commerce (female section), and other institutes such as Prince Sultan Fund (PSF) for Developing Women, attending conferences, participating in female exhibitions, attending and participating in female forums.

For instance, Enjoud reported that she travel to the neighbouring country Bahrain was one of the main activities to meet her friends who became her business partners later on. In addition to this, she frequently visited public places, female gyms and other social occasions. Further, she also mentioned the attendance of female forums and social events:

> "When I studied in Bahrain, I was introduced to people who gave me a full presentation........In public places, I can meet other people especially waiting areas....Nowadays, there are virtual social network websites as Facebook, Twitter, etc......Woman forums are also frequent where I can meet new faces and take their contact numbers.......We are in a society which avails lots of social events but these events have their merits and demerits... (Appendix 2 Lines, 20, 55, 59, 8)

Najla also reported the female exhibitions and social occasions as the most used by her to meet and communicate with other female contacts:

> " Now we have customers from all parts of the kingdom and furthermore from UAE and Bahrain. Thanks to Blackberry and social websites.....Exhibitions and social occasions played a vital role in business (Appendix 2 Line 163)

Additional activities have been reported by Bashayer, such as the workshops and meetings in the female section of the Chamber of Commerce, cell phones, and forums:

> "It is vital to have female connections who are VIPs, and it is also important to be a member in the Chamber of Commerce to build up more networks. We do have workshops with other businesswomen in the Chamber of Commerce ...Using the telephone for communication is also possible....forums once or twice a month Encounters with businesswomen both here and in Bahrain or Jeddah. For instance, meeting new women by enrolling in women institutes and societies enables us to meet new women from different levels". (Appendix 2 Line 608)

However, Lila experienced network communication through travelling to western countries such as the United States of America (USA):

"I travelled to USA to hold seminars and exchange info" (Appendix 2
Line 1052).

For Adana, exhibitions and social events are mostly used activities to meet new contacts, in addition to mobile phones, meetings held in the Chamber of Commerce and travelling abroad:

> "Expanding network through attending events and conferences may
> largely widen our network.... Smart phones and Hi-Tech methods helped
> me to contact people whom I have never seen before... On the first
> Tuesday of every month, I meet with these businesswomen... The
> Chamber of Commerce always holds meetings and courses to take our
> suggestions. I always go abroad to hire foreign trainers for teachers."
> (Appendix 2 Line 1201)

While in terms of the networking techniques Saudi women entrepreneurs use to build and maintain relationships, the participants indicated that they implanted many techniques such as: get introduced to people by friends, frequent communication , sending invitation letters, distributing new products samples, organising events and news updates, and sending greeting cards, emails or text massages. For instance Enjoud got introduced to people by her other acquaintance:

> "..... I was introduced to people who gave me a full presentation about e-
> marketing surprisingly one of those was a friend's brother who works as
> an optician. They really encouraged me a lot " (Appendix 2 Line 20)

Then, she uses frequent communication with her contacts in order to maintain her relationships:

> "The last one I met was at my mum's shop which is in a big mall called
> Al-Rashed Mall where we, later, recognized each other by a mere chance
> and we began to communicate daily" (Appendix 2 Line 76)

Najla chose text messages and sending samples of new products to her contacts as a way of maintaining the relationships:

"Texting those VIPs was a vital factor telling them about new arrivals of summer or spring collections" (Appendix 2 Line 222)

For Adana frequent monthly meeting, it is important to maintain her relationships in addition to sending invitations for events:

"On the first Tuesday of every month, I meet with these businesswomen.... sending invitation to people". (Appendix 2 Line 1222, 1298)

Jouaher sends invitations to her contacts:

"Invitation to social occasions should be implemented on highly technical grounds". (Appendix 2, line 1328).

Overall, it can be evidently suggested that Saudi women entrepreneurs implementing various communication activities to overcome the cultural and social constraints that limit their mobility and their ability to communicate freely with each other. They extensively rely on indoor activities and third party institutional activities, e.g., social events and occasions, forums, meetings, training, and exhibitions more than outdoor activities such as travelling and attending international conferences. Also, the majority of participants tries to maintain their networks through frequent meeting, texting and phone calls. However, it has been acknowledged by most of the participants that the role of entrepreneurship support and development institutes, particularly, Chamber of Commerce Ladies Centre, and Prince Sultan Fund for Women Development play an important part in promoting the women entrepreneurs' networking activities. They provide them with a legitimate, approved and secured place to meet and practice their network activities including forums, discussions, training, and meetings.

In summary, Saudi female entrepreneurs take advantage of their family for strong positioning in the society, but still they require a pull factor to help them to start a new business. Unlike many other women entrepreneurs around the world, Saudi women entrepreneurs should maintain their social relationships by attending and organising many social events. For them, social events, such as weddings, parties and home visits are the common activities to develop their relationships. However, Saudi social gathering is gender

segregated and women are only allowed to attend women's events and parties with the permission of their male guardians. Thus, social events and gathering can lack of professionalism and valuable knowledge of women entrepreneurs; they seek attending some events in third party organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce. Such institutional relationships can play vital role in developing a more professional and verbatim entrepreneurial network. It links women entrepreneurs to training programs, meetings, guest speaker events, and forums. Even though, attending these events is vulnerable due to the preservation of the Saudi culture and male control over women freewill of attending and participating in such events.

c. Networking strategies

In the entrepreneurial context, being motivated and aware of the importance of networking in the entrepreneurial process is not enough to form and develop an effective network. Thus, there are a number of decisions needed to be made by the entrepreneur. These decisions include, for example, who they approach and why, which relationship should be continued and which one should be discontinued or eliminated from the network, which relationship should be devolved and which one should not change.

These types of decisions can be influenced by many factors. From the collected data, it has been noted that in addition to socio-cultural norms, there are two main factors influencing the Saudi women entrepreneurs networking decisions and strategy. These factors are reciprocity and trustworthiness and both are elaborated in the next Sub-themes:

1) *Reciprocity*

The majority of the participants asserts that the main reason to establish, continue or discontinue a connection is the expected rate of reciprocity and exchanged resources such as finance, advice, information, and marketing. This could be perceived from Enjoud's story when she described her first steps in the business since she was a customer for one of the international companies, then she decided to start her business in Saudi Arabia and how she started to contact people who she thought they would add to her business. She says:

"When we have started our business, we were all customers that were bonded by one interest. Every one of us invited those who thought that will add to the group" (Appendix 2 Line 13).

Additionally, this concept can also be inferred when she described the positive side of gaining contacts in business as she adds:

"In respect to business, strangely enough, one never predicts with whom he will be involved in the future. However, they may become the closest relations. Business-wise, it is also positive that one will benefit from those people" (Appendix 2 Line 85)

However, Razan expressed that formal relationship may be formed when there is reciprocity, as she says:

"It is out of your hand; you will have formal business relations with others since you will benefit each other sooner or later" (Appendix 2 Line 445)

Wijdan stressed the importance of networking for female entrepreneurs, as she believes that one should seek relationships if they will help in achieving their interests. However, she affirmed that she discontinues contacting people when they do not keep information exchange with her. This is conveyed from her say:

"If others don't exchange information with me, I eliminate them from my network" (Appendix 2 Line 741)

Jouaher believes that the role of relationship is marketing and resources exchange that are more important for her, which subsequently may be inferred as her relationships primarily motivated by marketing and reciprocity. She concluded:

"I believe relationships are very important, especially in marketing. Network resources and business exchange will definitely help." (Appendix 2 Line 1375)

Nevertheless, she also indicates that not all the reciprocity relationships are about exchanging information and tangible resources; there are some other intangible resources that can be gained from a relationship such as happiness:

> "On the other hand, there are some people that we should keep in contact
> with even through e-mails. Those people you feel that they make things
> easier. It is not necessary to facilitate your business; they can just make
> you feel happy. God created us to know each other and this is what I
> believe in..." (Appendix 2 Line 825)

Even Maha the youngest female entrepreneurs in this study went further, summing it up when she suggested discontinuing any relationship when it became useless and there was no reciprocal interest between them saying:

> "It is better to discontinue the relationship due to lack of reciprocal
> interest. There is no use in benefitting others who don't benefit you"
> (Appendix 2 Line 1592)

Accordingly, it can be understood that based on the participants' points of view, building a relationship for Saudi women entrepreneurs should be based on reciprocal interests and resources exchanges. Thus, they may approach people who are beneficial to them and their business success.

2) Trustworthiness

One of the very important factors that have been noted from the Saudi women entrepreneurs' stories is that their relationships are highly tied to trustworthiness. Trust is very significant for them to build and develop a relationship. It has been inferred that they are very careful in building any new relationships and when they seek a new relation they spend much time than regular people do to form these relationships. Further, they usually tend to keep their relationships limited to a number of very trusted people who can refer them to others, or vice versa they can recommend people to them, thus they can trust them. That is may be due to their very conservative culture and traditions which make it difficult for them to trust others from outside the family unless they have been referred or introduced to them by very close contacts. It can be said that trustworthiness may be considered for Saudi women entrepreneurs as a guarantor for them of not getting involved in a relationship that

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may lead to a breach of their social customs and traditions. This can be deduced for example from Enjoud's story as she indicates that she can normally contact anyone involved in her business. However, she does not build any new relationship unless she trusts them, this can be grasped from her saying:

> "They weren't my siblings; however they treated me as one. I trusted them and they taught me a lot about our business to ensure my success".
> (Appendix 2 Line 29)

Then, she points out that her trust is an essential element of her relationships, which can be based on her own judgment or can be based on the recommendation of other people whom she already trusts, she explains:

> "Each one involved in the business can be normally approached but within limits. Only those whom I can trust or recommended to me by someone I trust...The people I am involved with are the ones who are very active leaders and can be considerably trusted and they can recommend others to me." (Appendix 2 Line 40-49)

Also Wijdan explained from her experience in some situations that a female entrepreneur should discontinue the relationships which may affect her or could be an offence to her and due to that, such a relationship lacks trust. This can be understood from her story:

> ".. There are some acquaintances and relationships that should be eliminated because they may be offensive. I once had a contact with one of the royal family (no need to mention names). He wanted me to make a Saudi National Day exhibition just for him, and he gave false promises of which he achieved nothing. He wasted my time, so I eliminated him from my network. Frankly speaking, do not trust big names... "(Appendix 2 Line 817)

Additionally, Jouaher asserts that trust is only provided by family and close friends' relationships that she experienced and found that it always works for her. So she says,

> "Trust comes from friends and relatives, and it proves to be worthy"
> (Appendix 2 Line 1373)

From Lila's story, she finds that trust even is not necessarily built upon a recommendation from someone you trust, it is something you should examine and experience it by yourself, and then one can judge the degree of trust that should be given for some relationships. That is inferred from her story with some of her employees, as she recounts:

> "My business necessitates being in touch with people in (ARAMCO) company. I have been introduced to someone who started well with me and then he turned to be my enemy. I hired and treated him well, but it didn't work, so he began to spread rumours about my company. I finally managed to eliminate him from my contact list". (Appendix 2 Line 1040)

Also, Maha built her partnership, trust on her father recommendation and suggestions of one of his friend's daughter as her trust of course was derived from her father's. This was interpreted from her entrepreneurship story when she mentioned that:

> "My father suggested me a business partner who needs a financial support...I accepted, and we are now selling Burgers" (Appendix 2 Line 1556)

Thus, it can be concluded that, trustworthiness plays an important role in Saudi women entrepreneurs' networking process and approaching new contacts. To ensure this trustworthiness, they rely on family and close friends to be introduced to new people or recommendation of people whom they already trust.

In summary, it has been noted that Saudi women entrepreneurs' networking decisions may be triggered by two main factors: reciprocity of benefits that may be reaped from a specific relationship, and the degree of trustworthiness between them and the approached contacts. In other words, when a Saudi woman entrepreneur thinks of building new connections, develop or discontinue it, they may think about it from these two perspectives. Otherwise, they may keep their relations limited to the family and close friends just to be in the safe side 'Home and Dry' in respect to tradition and social norms and avoid the misconception and misjudgments by the community.

In conclusion, this theme has presented Saudi women's entrepreneur motivation toward networking formation and development, and strategies they implement while

developing their networks. It has been noted that female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia, while developing networks, emphasize on the shared commitment to entrepreneurship. The findings of this study suggest that most of the network development practices by female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are based on organizational goal orientation. It is found that during the process of network development, the strategy of female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia is mainly focused on acquiring stability, inevitability, and smooth business operation that can contribute in achieving the business goals without influencing their cultural aspects.

3- Network Resources

In terms of the resources that are provided to Saudi women entrepreneurs by their networks, the narratives of the participants in this study convey various types of resources that are gained from their network connections. These resources, both tangible and intangible, include: social support, protection and legitimisation, labour force, business ideas and advice, industry information, finishing governmental paperwork, access to additional financial and material resources, expanding business and growth, and acquiring new contacts and network expansion. However, they indicated that beside the financial, social and human capital resources, there are some other distinctive resources which are in particular very important and valuable to them and closely associated with the Saudi context. These resources are indicated in the following sub themes:

a. Protection, Legitimacy, and Social Acceptance
b. Nepotism and favouritism

These two sub-themes are elaborated as follows:

a.Protection, Legitimacy and Social Acceptance

What conveyed from the participants' talk about their entrepreneurship and networking experience is that the majority of them agree that the main resource acquired from the family relationship is the protection, legitimacy and social support. For example, Enjoud asserts that the existence of a male guardian "Mahram" provides them with the protection against the societal judgments and allows them to move freely as she says:

> "With the existence of 'Mahram', we could go in and out without any restraints. However, when there are new outsiders in the context, there

will be strong barriers between us especially in KSA." (Appendix 2 line 34)

Najla expressed that the main resource she gained from her family connections was the social support:

"My father supported me a lot in my business"

Additionally, she indicates that labour force is also acquired through the family and friends' relationships:

"I can never work alone especially in exhibitions where six or seven sisters and female friends will have different roles. Two heads are always better than one". (Appendix 2 Line 169)

Further, Najla narrates how she gains advice from her father; hence he is more experienced and provides her with guidelines as it can be inferred from this story:

"My father had a lot of expertise in that field. Once, a businessman from Al-Riyadh sent me a woman... and a black woman. She told me that the man who sent her wanted to buy my perfume for 30, 000 SR. I answered her that I did not have a perfume worth that price and I returned his request. I told my father this story. When I told my father about it, he said that was a proof that people started to know me in the market and it was a good idea not giving her anything. That would make them in more demand" (Appendix 2 line 179)

Also, she affirms that the family is the main source of social support, legitimacy and protection as she asserts:

"It all goes back to the family. Without their approval, we can do nothing. But if they are supportive you can break through" (Appendix 2 line 241).

The narratives of Mashael just confirm the role of the family as the main source of approval and legitimacy to their entrepreneurship; since without their approval and support, they cannot succeed as she says:

"I was a senior student then, and my Dad refused the idea first because it might hinder me from studying. I suffered in the beginning to convince my dad, but when I did, he was very understanding later" (Appendix 2 line 270)

Also, for her they are the source of protection:

"When I start a project, all my family members, males and females, should know about it so that they would interfere if a problem arises" (Appendix 2 line 373)

Razan also gains the psychological support and advice from her family:

"It is really practical to have psychological support through family, their advice and counselling is vital". (Appendix 2 line 461)

For married Saudi female entrepreneurs, they may gain social support from their husband in addition to kinships and friends just like Bashayer who confirms:

"My husband was my best support. He always says, 'if you like your job, you will make it. Friendships and kinships who have similar vision all participated in that success in the start-up stage'" (Appendix 2 line 527)

On the other side, she mentions other resources that she acquires from her network contacts such as:

"Exchanging experience, new ideas, information, Consultation, Finance and finishing paper work" (Appendix 2 line616, 686)

For Wijdan, her relationships provide her with "business facilities' and industrial information which is vital to her business success as she says:

"Relationship is providing facilities........ Information exchange is vital as everything is advancing fast. For example, Laser printing and Art and Designs are all important factors in mass media business" (Appendix 2 Line 764)

Lila also gained social support from her husband, which was necessary for her success:

"Once my husband felt that I was responsible, he supported me a lot" (Appendix 2 Line 10080)

On the other side, Mona reported that her neighbours and family's neighbours help her to expand her connections:

"My neighbours as well as my family's neighbours are sources of important networks" (Appendix 2 line 1295)

Jouaher, as well, benefits from her network connections in business growth, information exchange and other business resources:

"I believe relationships are very important, especially in marketing, Network resources/Business exchange will definitely help" (Appendix 2 line 1375)

However, acquiring financial and social support for her comes from the very close relationships, such as close relatives and friends:

"If we are talking about financial and social, first class relatives and friends will definitely help nobody else" (Appendix 2 line 1380)

Maha indicated also that she gained the ultimate support from her family and more specifically from her father:

"My dad is a prominent businessman. He always supported me and made me a success. He always told me that successful managers would depend on experience, so why not become double successful if you academically majored in management?...My father advised me not to approach REDBULL beverage.....My father went to the university president himself to see what the problem was. Then, my father suggested me a business partner who needs a sponsor. I accepted, and we are now selling Burgers" (Appendix 2 lines 1432, 1493, 1556)

Additionally, she acquires labour force, social support and business resources from her friends' contacts:

> "My friends came and exchanged shifts with me...Most of the females
> supported me. They even brought me home-made foods and wanted me to
> sell them. They didn't even get money for it" (Appendix 2 line, 1533,
> 1490)

b. Nepotism and Favouritism

It has been noted that a key factor that lies in the Saudi cultural norms and attitude is when building a relationship; an expectation of special privileges and considerations to be given based on this relationship is also involved. Nepotism and favouritism are common attitudes in Saudi society and very prevalent in the Saudi system. Some of the participants indicate that the role of nepotism and favouritism in their network, and subsequently in their business success and overcoming many problems, is very vital to sort out many problems and helps them overcome many restrictions. For instance, Najla runs a perfume business which sometimes requires some raw material and products to be imported from foreign countries, and sometimes she faces a delay and difficulties with the customs on the borders but she manages to overcome them through her 'connections'. They help her to accelerate and facilitate the take out materials from the port even though she does not have a commercial registration number, as she mentions:

> "As I did not have a Commercial Registration, it was difficult to get raw
> materials from the customs at airports. It was all based on connections".
> (Appendix 2 Line 191)

Furthermore, even though alcohol is banned from entering the country, even the very small quantities, she managed to get it in the country through the favouritism for her relationships and connections. Since she says:

> "Friendship and family members' relationship were important factors in
> bringing some alcoholic materials into the country". (Appendix 2 Line
> 194)

For Bashayer, it is a similar situation. She returns her business success back to the nepotism and favouritism she reaps from her connection, especially the governmental ones as she frankly explains:

> If you have connections, then you saved yourself troubles, but because I am in the market and understood it now; for me literally to run a business successfully, I depend on nepotism and favouritism. If you have no governmental connections, you lose a lot... We are in a dire need for connections, especially relatives in all government offices such as Chamber of Commerce and Municipality, whoever denying it he is absolutely mistaken. A relationship with municipal officials is vital, especially in Food & Beverages projects. Sometimes business can be implemented through building relationship with government offices through family relationships. My husband holds a well-known (Job) and he has good relationships with them, if I unintentionally violated some of the rules in my business, he would go there and immediately sort it out, and some other times it can be done through 'Karam'(i.e. Bribes)". (Appendix 2 Line 549)

Additionally, Maha indicates that favouritism has helped her to achieve awards and reaching people in high positions. As she mentions:

> "Ms..... Facilitated matters for me to meet royal family members (talking about receiving the award of the best entrepreneur), I have known her since we went in the same delegation to the parliament" (Appendix 2 Line 1572).

From the above examples, it can be said that when Saudi women entrepreneurs are seeking a relationship, it is associated with the expectation of special privileges or considerations given to this relationship by their contacts on the other side. Thus, they can benefit from it in many different ways, and such benefits progress their business and overcome different problems.

Thus, based on that previous fact, it is noted that the narratives collected from the research participants suggest that there is a relationship that exists between type of resources

and the type of relationships in the Saudi women's entrepreneurs' network. In other words, different types of resources are obtained from different types of network relationships, for example protection and legitimacy for Saudi women entrepreneurs can only be acquired from the family first class relationships. However, social support, labour force, ideas and advices can be gained from informal relationships which include family members, friends, relatives and neighbours. Also, other resources such as industrial information, material, financial, and business expansion can be acquired from their formal and informal relationships in addition to privileged and special treatments and benefits gained from some types of relationships as a result of nepotism and favouritism associated with these relations.

In sum, Research left no doubt that, networks are crucial for any business. Networks are the channels which provide entrepreneurs with different type of resources, e. g., economic resources and social resources. As the business grows, it requires relationships' expansion and access new resources that support business growth. Evidently, alongside capital, networks have emerged as the most important driver for women's entrepreneurial success (Aldrich, 1989; Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986). Thus, the question of how to use networks to optimize access to resources and information is therefore critical to growing female entrepreneurship. Previous research shows that women need better access to capital, technology, networks and knowledge if they are to compete, nationally and internationally (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2010). In the case of Saudi women entrepreneurs, the resources need and acquired from their networks is beyond capital and financial resources. They are mainly seeking social support, acceptance, and legitimisation to be able to run their business and fight against the traditions and the Saudi social-cultural. Their network should provide them with protection against society misunderstanding and misjudgments. Further to this they are seeking a special treatment and privileges based on nepotism and favouritism to facilitate many business matters and find a way around the hurdles they face. This theme reveals that there is a unique and distinct type of resources that are not necessary for other women entrepreneurs but Saudi women. These resources are vital for them in order to start their business and continue running it, however, if they are seeking growth nationally and globally they should develop their relationships' and acquired resources beyond nepotism and favouritism.

4- Role of Gender, Religion, Class, and Traditions

In order to provide a deeper understanding of the networking determinants of Saudi women entrepreneurs', an exploration of the social-cultural and the surrounding issues in their context has to be done. Thus, this theme represents the main influences of the Saudi women entrepreneur networks based on the analysis of the informants' stories. It has been found that traditions and social-cultural determinants along with the Islamic religion. Where, socio-cultural values and norms are interwoven with Islamic legislation in Saudi society. Hence misinterpretations of the Islamic law resulted in miscounted women's rights and equality. Subsequently, gender inequity in Saudi Society restricted their ability to form and develop their networks and subsequently access resources. This theme is elaborated in detailed using the following sub-themes:

Sub-themes:
    a. Gender role, Segregation and Social norms

    b. Social isolation and Shrinking network

    c. Male Guardianship

    d. Tendency to Formal relationship

    e. Value of relationships with influential people

Each one of these sub-themes is expanded as follows:

a. Gender Segregation and Social Norms

Social norms in any society convey how gender is represented in the society and subsequently affecting all its activities especially communications and networking. Saudi social norms are rooted and grounded in an inherited Bedouin's culture and tribal's traditions. Nevertheless, the majority of these cultural norms are set to protect women and provide them with a secure environment. Thus, a great deal of these norms applies to women more than men causing imbalanced power and gender inequity in the society. Subsequently, these norms have created many obstacles that affected their entrepreneurship and networking process. In terms of Saudi women entrepreneurs' network gender profile, it has been noted that it is mainly female dominated networks. Since according to their social culture and norms, women are not allowed to mix with the opposite gender except their male guardians or 'Mahram' who is, according to the Islamic teachings and also their traditions, the closest male in the family or first class male relative such as; father, brother or husband in addition to

some practices such as women veiling and gender segregation which were mainly grounded in fundamental tribal-familial values, sanctioned and institutionalized by the 'Ulama' (religious Islamic scholars) and the central government' (Al Rasheed, 1997) . From the participants' stories, the majority of them assert that due to the social culture and norms, they can socialise and contact freely with female acquaintances. However, it is not permitted to them to contact men unless through their 'Maharm' or communication devices such as telephones and internet. This can be clearly seen from Enjoud's story describing her friends' relationships saying:

> "I couldn't forget Aisha. She was one of my best friends in Bahrain. We
> were a wonderful female group." (Appendix 2 Line 23)

Then she described her network relationships as girls only network unless in the event of the presence of big group of both genders and even though, it is not preferable to mix with the opposite gender due to gender segregation:

> "As long as girls are involved, single gender network is recommended,
> but when there is a big mixed group, it is acceptable. However, females
> are always segregated from males." (Appendix 2 Line44)

Even though, approaching another female is not an easy job. Due to the inherited tribal and cultural norms, Saudi women still do not feel comfortable to tell their names as Enjoud reveals:

> "Because the society is reserved, females don't always like to mention
> their names. They are a bit afraid and they do not trust other. Still, they
> are not used to this". (Appendix 2 Line 63)

It is worthy to note that the matter of female name is very sensitive in Saudi cultural norms and should not be pronounced in public or to be known to everyone. This is maybe due to the connection between the woman's name and her family, since in the Saudi culture, men find it offensive to mention the name of women in their family, and accordingly women hide their names and identities so as not to offend other members of their families. This is not religious, but rooted in their social traditions. On the contrary, women can benefit of their family name as in the Saudi society, the family name resonates the family's pride. That is

why Najla takes the pride of her family's name and get close to elite and influential people because her family is much known as big, rich and rooted in traditional tribes, she recounts:

> Thanks God, I felt my relationship with the VIPs (i.e. very important persons) strengthened more now not vice versa, in that they invite me more to their homes and in different social occasions. Here they interested mostly in whom your father is and what your family is, in the event if I were from a middle class family, their relationship with me would not exist or would be very limited. (Appendix 2 Line 226)

Additionally, she mentions that due to the nature of the society reservation she cannot network with men in KSA. She says:

> "I cannot simply form a relation with men in Saudi Arabia. I have to be smart enough to know where it will lead me. In Bahrain, it is a bit easier."
> (Appendix 2 Line 98)

This is because in Saudi norms and culture the perceptions of gender role and identity is biased and mostly abused by men. Thus, women's relationships in a business context are not acceptable and approved yet by the society. Enjoud compares the Saudi norms again to those in other cultures such as Bahrain and yet she does not understand why the perception of gender is different in Saudi culture and describes women doing business in Saudi society as new and needs more time to be fully accepted:

> It is more difficult to accept this relationship here in KSA. This is why there must be very clear-cut boundaries. After all, a man is a man, but for example when I meet him in Bahrain in a business context, these boundaries are clear and can be easily identified. While it is supposed to · be the same thing in SA in terms of business context and boundaries, etc., but I do not know...the situation is different... Maybe because the whole thing is still new, so it is difficult for them to accept it...to accept that there could be a relationship between men and women. (Appendix 2 Line 100)

Further, Mashael illuminated the issue of gender identity and perceptions in Saudi society and its effects on their communication even on the internet and social websites. She recounted how the society misunderstood the communication between male and female and in order to do so, she should have the approval from her father and brother:

> Some guys tried to approach you online; but I have the experience in identifying the serious ones... I never allowed my personal life to affect my project. Social network websites are abused in KSA unlike Europe. This was why it took me 3 years to have customers from Saudi Arabia who don't appreciate the handmade products. The way our Saudi society looks at the male-female contact and how it can be misunderstood, largely affects business. The approval of the father or the brother to contact the male customer was vital. The father was supportive, but the brother was not. (Appendix 2 Line 352)

Similarly, Najla indicated that the problem she was currently facing in her business was how to communicate with the male customers while she was not allowed to contact them; she was wondering and thinking out loudly saying:

> "The only problem is how to reach for the opposite gender, so I had to turn to a marketing man to go by himself. To tell you the truth, I have been introduced to two gentlemen in Twitter. They were serious, but having two serious customers was not enough? I didn't know how to market my products? Should I go myself to them, or should I have a male marketer? How to send my products? It is really hard to do marketing in the men's sections. Should I open a shop for them?? .. I don't know what to do till now. Having such a poor social network with men in our society is a potential obstacle towards any success. I will be so far behind unless we would overcome such an obstacle. I think in other societies, they will not face such problems and businesswomen could start their business immediately." (Appendix 2 Line 246)

Having heard Najla's voice, it was not difficult to discover that how difficult it was to have a single gender network for an entrepreneur. However, for Razan this issue was different as she deliberately kept away from contacting men. This was because they might

misunderstand the relationship and tried to 'take advantage of females' thus she kept her contacts on the females' side only, she expressed:

> "I prefer to expand my acquaintance circle; I don't prefer to get along with males. Some males may like to take advantage of females, some males may tend to form informal relationships with businesswomen; and this takes extra effort on our behalf because we need to put safe boundaries." (Appendix 2 Line 491)

Additionally, Bashayer indicated that that all may be grounded to the social norms and tradition as men did not use to communicate directly with women in the Saudi society. Thus, it became difficult to convince them that the relationship between men and women was possible in the real world without despicable purposes, she added:

> "It is really difficult to build relationships with the opposite gender due to the social traditions .I remember when the coffee machine broke down, I contacted the technician who tyrannically insisted to talk to a male. I kept telling him that I am the owner of the cafe, but he insisted not to talk (laughing), he wanted to talk to a man, because they were not used to dealing with women. But then they got used to my presence in the workplace. When a woman is relatively old, she can manage." (Appendix 2 Line 601)

On the other side, Wijdan argues that she can still form a relationship with men, but not a direct one or face to face as she expresses:

> "No need to be in direct contact with men in many fields". (Appendix 2 Line 725)

Even though, as a media specialist, unlike Bashayer and Razan similar to Najla, she would prefer to have contacts with the opposite gender since they are more informative, experienced, active and encouraging others to 'work hard' as she said:

> "As a media woman, I managed to form relationships, especially with the opposite gender" (Appendix 2 Line 763).....relationship with males largely encouraged working harder and harder" (Appendix 2 Line 768)

Further, she confesses that from her point of view a woman does not help and trust another woman, thus the relationship with men can balance and compensate the resources from the network, and she elaborates:

"We do not know most of the businessmen due to gender separation between us. It is allowed only to contact via video conferences or a buffer screen. We are not allowed to be in direct contact. I can't elaborate more than this... It might be due to physiological reasons that women don't trust other women. It is worthy to mention that businessmen provide more effective relationships than businesswomen do ... I wish we could have a face to face contact with other businessmen. I admit that video conference and microphones are not effective. There are elements of privacy in talking about business matters and bidding and tenders etc., Further, these businessmen are not teenagers; they are mature. I hope the Chamber of Commerce will help us in this. It is common here to discover that women don't help each other unlike men. (Appendix 2 Line 859)

Wijdan, also highlighted the issue of social norms related to gender perceptions and interactions. However, she also brought to the discussion the issue of trust between women and other women and she considered the relationships with men more effective in terms of business, as she says:

We are not allowed to be in direct contact. I couldn't elaborate more than this... It might be due to physiological reasons that women don't trust other women. It is worthy to mention that businessmen provide more effective relationships than businesswomen do. (Appendix 2 Line 862)

However, it is noteworthy to take into account that in the case of Wijdan, she is a mature divorced woman, and her father also was dead and she lived with her children who were grown-up and departed to their lives, which might make her case a bit different from the other participants in terms of the degree of free will available to her inside the family but of course not inside the community. This might be due to the lack of male's control over her decisions at work; she might have managed to have some contacts with the opposite gender, but of course within the limitations and restrictions to meet the societal norms and traditions.

Conversely, in Lila's case even though she is an old woman, but with a husband and many children, she indicates that she does not have much contacts outside the family and any other contact takes the form of very short communication just to get the job done, and those communications do not evolve to any form of bonds or form a network.

> "I only have face to face contact with my own staff..... In the beginning I was the only female. Now I managed to hire female staff in the last 2 or 3 years" (Appendix 2 Line 992-997).

Then, she described her network as:

> "My husband and my children are my entire network. It is family-work relationship". (Appendix 2 Line 1030)

In a similar vein, Lila recounts that Saudi men do not accept the idea of having a working female with them side by side and refuse to communicate with her due to their inherited gender perceptions:

> Some males never greeted me claiming that they never contacted females. When I told them it would be anti-religious if they didn't, they finally accepted to greet me. (Appendix 2 Line 1098)

In Mona's case, she directly states that:

> "My social network is closed to females. Males are not allowed" (Appendix 2 Line 1303).

It seems that the Saudi women entrepreneurs are trying to avoid obstacles and problems with the society by keeping their network limited to women as Mona described:

> "There are no obstacles as long as all the networks' contacts are women". (Appendix 2 Line 1319)

Similarly, from Jouaher's account, it can be understood that since her business is tied to women only, her network contacts are mainly women. She says:

> "Since I was working as a trainer, I met women. Now they know me, but I do not remember them. I earn relationships and contacts. My daughters are involved with us as well and their friends. We pay a lot of attention for their generation, socially and professionally, because our business serves not only businesswomen, but every woman in the community, so most of our young connections come from our fashion exhibitions."
> (Appendix 2 Line 1402)

And again, for Maha it could be also considered an uncommon case since she started socialising and formed her network since being a child; she used to go to different national occasions and represent the country internationally, which gave her the opportunity to communicate with both genders and build relationships with them under the guise of her childhood. This could be understood from her account as she confessed that:

> "If I were an adult by then, or grown up as a woman, they would deal with me as a woman. My relationship with the grownups was unlike my sister, because they dealt with me and still dealing with me as a younger sister. Thus, they assisted me a lot. . If I was an adult by then, nobody would have ever given me such an advice; they were not the same with my sister, because she was adult and had a husband. I was young at that time. If I wanted to make a relationship with those people today may be it would be difficult. Of course I could not behave informally with those people as when I was young. I should be more formal when I grew up."
> (Appendix 2 Line 1580)

Transportation and banning women from driving is another social obstacle for women entrepreneurs associated with Saudi cultural norms. Women's moving around is limited and constrained, as described by Enjoud:

> It is difficult for Saudi females go in and out for business, but we can always challenge and overcome these circumstances. (Appendix 2 Line 129)

The same issue has been addressed by Mashael:

It needed a lot of patience as I only had one brother who commuted to work, and he could not accompany me most of the time... I had a lot of argument with my father because of going out much often. I suffered because of the lack of transportation. For them, it was quite unusual. It needed a lot of patience as I only had one brother who commuted to work and he could not accompany me most of the time. I suffered because of the lack of transportation, and dealing with seller men in the market. (Appendix 2 Line 325)

Likewise, Najla thinks this issue affects her business; she narrates:

Sometimes I thought I should stop my business because of the unavailability of transportation especially when items arrived from Syria or China .However, my family and my friends raised my morale, so I did not block a source of income for me or for others. (Appendix 2 Line 173)

Given that, the problem does not come from any religion foundation, since there is no ban on driving for women in Islam. It is rather a deeply rooted problem in the society. Banning women from deriving is one of the issues rooted in the Saudi norms and tradition, and Maha asserts that the severity of these norms is preserved by the religious police not by the government. Thus, people always try to avoid confrontation with them:

Although our government allowed to appoint females in the parliament(Shura Council),the fear still comes from the religious slice into the government who may accuse you of being an infidel or a non-believer if you go against them (Appendix 2 Line 1641)

Thus, it is noted that the Saudi female entrepreneurs network predominantly is a female networks, a few of them may have connections with the opposite gender, however, it can be said that mixed networks are very rare and are not favoured by the Saudi community. In addition, it has been noted that the Saudi culture and norms create a burden of hardships fall on Saudi women in general and women entrepreneurs in particular from gender inequity and patriarchal tradition consequently affecting and shaping their entrepreneurial networks.

b. Social Isolation and shrinking network

In terms of the extent of Saudi women entrepreneurs' network, the participants did not provide enough information about the exact extent of their network. However, from the stories it can be drawn that the extent of their networks depends on the extent of their families and their family relationships at the beginning as they start building their network based on these family bonds then, it extends to include family's friends, relatives, and a few numbers of close friends. Interestingly, the majority of the participants indicated that their network could be considered relatively bigger when they started their business than when their business grew up and became mature. This could be explained by the fact that at the beginning of their entrepreneurship's career they relied on their network to acquire various types of support and resources in addition to promoting their business and acquiring more customers due to the lack of access to the other promotions channels such as newspapers and televisions which were not preferable by the community for a woman to be exposed to the media. Thus, the extent of their network at the start up stage was mainly based on family and its contacts in the surrounding community. This could be seen for example, when Enjoud described her network size as follows:

> "I had many contacts at the beginning may be more than 100 women, and
> I am still in contact with many of them." (Appendix 2 Line 75)

However, Najla did not state accurately how many actors were involved in her network, but she mentioned there would be a number of 6 or 7 people from the family members and friends who helped her with her business, she said:

> "I can never work alone, especially in exhibitions where a minimum
> number of six or seven sisters and female friends will have different roles
> to help me. Two heads are always better than one" (Appendix 2 line 169)

Then, she additionally explained the role played by her contacts at the beginning of her entrepreneurship's career, particularly in promotion and customer recruitment as she said:

> "If not for friends and students in the university, I would have never had
> enough customers, and I would never accomplish my business. I am
> promoting my business through them and my social relationships".
> (Appendix 2 Line 200)

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Also, Mashael did not indicate how many contacts she exactly had, but she mentioned that her contacts were the customers who were not, surprisingly enough, family and friends, she said:

> "I turned to my friends in the university such as Accountancy dept. and Business Management dept. who were supportive and got different samples.... (Appendix 2 Line 264) ..."The most important of all is a relationship with customers who are mostly friends and family members" (Appendix 2 Line 332)

As for Adana, she describes her network as shrinking over time making their network connections just limited to family and close friends due to many reasons which will be discussed later on the coming themes. She confesses that:

> "You can say my relationships before work were 80%. Now it is about 50% due to work preoccupation, going back home tired, and having home responsibility, due to all of these it became difficult to find enough time for communication with others. Thus, my relationship became limited to only close people like family and friends" (Appendix 2 Line 1198)

Likewise, Mona describes her network as only 20out of 200 women participating in the exhibitions they annually hold, and they became in close relationships. She says:

> "Out of the 200 participants, we met in our exhibitions in the past two years, only 20 evolved to be intimate ones." (Appendix 2 Line 1308)

Further, she indicates that she keeps her network small and limited as possible as to minimise its negative effects. Possibly, she means the social negative effects due to social culture and norms:

> "I keep my relations within boundaries and limited. Unstudied expansion of relations may lead to negative effects." (Appendix 2 Line 1317)

Jouaher also describes their network as a limited network in terms of the network size and intensity; she declares that:

"For us, no matter what the size of our network will be. It will always
remain limited. It is important to put some limits or boundaries to our
networking relations". (Appendix 2 Line 1383)

Additionally, she mentions that can be due to their traditions and social norms which limits
their movements and communications:

"Especially for us, to some extent we are conservatives and hardliners
with respect to social matters. Most of the time, there are difficulties in
women's movement due to social culture and conservative norms."
(Appendix 2 Line 1387)

Maha also indicates that she keeps her network limited to specific numbers of connections
who are close friends and does not prefer to put some boundaries and limits rather than
expanding her relationships arbitrarily in order to avoid social embarrassment:

"I asked my friends not to bring any more connections as it might affect
my reputation and my social acceptance" (Appendix 2 line 1672)

Thus, the stories of the participants convey that the extent and intensity of their
network may vary from one female entrepreneur to another, however, it can be said that
according to them and compared to other female entrepreneurs, the Saudi female
entrepreneurs' network will always remain limited and small compared to their male
counterparts due to the severe social norms applied to women in the Saudi society.

c. Male Guardianships

One of the important features of the network is the individual centrality, which refers
to the distance between an individual and his/her network connections (Freeman, 1979).
Accordingly, the individual who has high centrality i.e. in the centre of the network and has
short distance between him/her due to the direct connection with the other actors can, thus,
easily accesses the network resources and is usually known as the network 'leader'. However,
the individual who has long distance between him/her and their contacts due to the existence
of mediators or broker is referred to as 'peripheral'. From this perspective, it has been noted
that the SFEs depend on many mediators in their network in order to access resources and
build relationships with different type of people. As elaborated previously, in Saudi Arabia,

women face several restrictions and constraints based entirely on gender. A woman, in spite of age or marital status is required to have a male guardian (Mahram). Her guardian (or Mahram) may be her father, her husband, her uncle, her brother, or even her own son. A woman cannot travel, attend education, work, or marry without her guardian's (or Mahram) permission. In some cases, although the law doesn't support the practice, a woman cannot receive major medical treatment without the permission of her male guardian. Accordingly, it seems that the Saudi women entrepreneurs are more distanced from the network centre due to the existence of the male guardian as a necessity for their social communication in order to secure social acceptance and legitimacy for them, particularly, in communicating with the opposite gender and governmental bodies. In addition to this, the participants articulated the necessity of hiring a broker 'Mouaqib' as in order to carry out the official communication and finalise the paperwork, especially at the starting up stage. Thus, it can be inferred that Saudi women entrepreneurs are mostly peripheral and marginal within their network rather than leader and they have very few direct short distance connections which are their close female friends and the first degree family members. This can be interpreted from the participants' narrated experience. Enjoud, for example, indicates that the existence of the male guardian is a requirement for contacting people, especially when meeting outside the home, which may suggest fewer connections and more distant from the centre of the network:

> "The issue differs from one person to another. With the existence of 'Mahram' like (person's name)...... who was a brother of two of my friends, we could go in and out without any restraints". (Appendix 2 Line 33)

Similarly, Najla relied on a foreigner female and her driver as intermediaries in her connections with the other actors in her network, which might lead to widening the distance between her and her network connections. She said:

> "I relied on one of the foreigners without whom I couldn't have done it. She lived in one of the main housing complexes. My driver took my collection with their details for her to sell them in her compound. (Appendix 2 Line 214)

Likewise, Mashael has to have the male guardian approval to build a relationship since she indicates that she is not in the leading position within her network, she expresses:

"The approval of the father or the brother to contact the male customer was vital" (Appendix 2 line 367)

Also, Bashayer indicates how the family plays the role of the mediator in her contacts with the governmental bodies. Thus, the distance can be away from the centre of the network with respect to communication with the governmental offices and the opposite gender:

"Sometimes business can be implemented through building relationship with government offices through family relationships....... My husband as well as my family relationship with the opposite gender is mostly effective. I always turn to my husband to be a middle man between me and the other gender". (Appendix 2 Line 593)

The broker 'Mouaqib' is another form of mediators within the Saudi women entrepreneurs' network, who can be hired in order to carry out the official governmental work and fulfil the required paperwork for the enterprise establishment. It has been noted that the majority of the participants had a broker within their network, which conveys the spacing between the Saudi women entrepreneur and the centre of her network. Wijdan affirms:

"A broker (Mouaqib) is important in the beginning". (Appendix 2 Line 752)

Lila as well stats that a broker is very important in the start-up stage:

"The broker (Mouaqib) is important in the start-up period, but he wastes a lot of time". (Appendix 2 Line 936)

Adana also used a broker for her business paperwork:

"The necessity of a Saudi broker or mediator (Mouaqib) in the network to deal with the government is regarded another obstacle". (Appendix 2 Line 1227)

Jouaher described how difficult it was dealing with the government bodies via mediator or a broker which affected the effectiveness of their communication and delayed her work.

"From my experience, I hired a broker (Mouaqib) to go to the governmental bodies and finalize the paperwork. In the governmental offices, they were all men, and as far as I understand there was nothing easy. The broker might keep matters hanging and unsolved for 6 months" (Appendix 2 Line 1394)

Also Maha confirmed the existence of the broker in the Saudi women entrepreneurs' network as she said:

"My sister used the broker (Mouaqib) to finalize papers in the start-up stage". (Appendix 2 Line 1629)

Generally, it can be said that the majority of the Saudi women entrepreneurs is marginal and peripheral within their networks due to the requirement of the male guardian (Mahram) and the broker (Mouaqib) who are mediating the majority of their communication and relationships with governmental bodies and other new connections or opposite gender . This may suggest the fact that wide distance between the Saudi women entrepreneurs and the centre of their network disadvantages them in terms of acquiring resources and information exchange.

d. Tendency to Formal Relationship

Based on the network theory, prospective people can be connected via different types of relationships in a network which is classified according to its social closeness and strength in informal and formal relation (Granovetter 1973). Since for Saudi women entrepreneurs, as it has been noted previously, the majority of their network has consisted of their families and very close friends which can be classified as informal relationships. They also have very limited formal relationships due to their tendency to limit their relationships with very trusted people. Also, it has been noted that they tend to have many absent relationships as a result of the existence of the network mediators such as the male guardian (Mahram) and the broker (Mouaqib). Furthermore, it has been observed that for Saudi women entrepreneurs it is very rare for a formal relation to evolve into an informal relationship due to the severity of barriers and restrictions existing in the social culture and norms. Thus, they tend to make their close relationships very few and limited to the people they already know and trust. The majority of the participants assert that they try to keep their relationships definite and do not mix

friendships with work relationships, and always tend to keep a considerable distance with people who are not first class blood relatives or close friends in forms of formal and professional relationship. This was inferred from the participants' stories like Enjoud's who decided to start her business with her closest friends since she trusted them and has known them for a long time during their study in Bahrain because the trust has already existed in their relationship:

> "We started as friends and then we became partners in our business. We travelled together, and our relation developed to become stronger and stronger; we became like a family. They weren't my siblings, however. They treated me as one. I trusted them, and they taught me a lot about our business to ensure my success."(Appendix 2 Line 28)

Again, in respect to relationships with men for Saudi women entrepreneurs it should always be kept in the form of formal relationship and do not evolve to informal relationship or friendship by setting boundaries and space in between. Enjoud explained this issue, saying:

> "I sometimes had strong business relationships with some males, which later evolved into something informal, so I decided to put an end to these relations by setting clear boundaries between us".(Appendix 2 Line 109)

Mashael indicated that even for those online networks and connection, she keeps it formal and do not allow it to evolve to closer relationship:

> "Some guys tried to approach you online; but I had the experience in identifying the serious ones never allowed my personal life to affect my project".

For some other Saudi female entrepreneurs when a trust ignites between them and other women, the relationships can gradually evolve to the point that they can exchange their contact information such as telephone number and emails, Bashayer says:

> "Some relationships have evolved to the point where we can share our phone numbers". (Appendix 2 Line 614)

For those more mature Saudi female entrepreneurs, it has been noted that they value formal relationships more than friendships and do not allow formal relationship to evolve to informal ones. Even further, they do not prefer to involve friendship in business; this is confirmed by Wijdan saying:

> "Friendships and business relationships never mix. They shouldn't do. Formal relationships are more beneficial." (Appendix 2 Line 765)

Interestingly, Mona asserts that a few numbers of her formal contacts may evolve to the informal level within the business context with other women; however, she does not tend to extend her informal relationship and likes to keep the relationship as formal as possible:

> "Our relationships change over time. A few numbers of the participants in our exhibitions became friends. In our female business, some relations may develop into more informal ones. .... However, I keep my relations within boundaries and limited. Unstudied expansion of relations may lead to negative effects. We are trying to act as professionally as possible, and we expand our network professionally as well."(Appendix 2 Line 1306)

Likewise, Jouaher confirms Mona's view and emphasizes that formal relationships should not evolve to any other form of informal or personal relationships in that they value the formal relationships for their business success:

> "Definitely, the relationships that formed in the business context are still professional; may be less than1% of our professional relations evolved into more than professional ones. It is not supposed to change and should remain professional".

Noteworthy, a relationship between the type of relationship and the degree of Saudi female entrepreneurs' maturity in entrepreneurship can be found, since it is noted that the more experienced women entrepreneurs have more tendency to form more formal relationships and weak ties than friendships and informal ones. This may be because they became more mature and professionally committed to entrepreneurship, so that they became more aware of the benefits and values of formal and instrumental relationships for their business success and growth. However, the situation for younger and less experienced female

entrepreneurs is different as they still in need of more social and psychological support since they are still less independent, which can mainly be obtained from the friends relationships and strong ties. Thus, their relationships have more tendencies to evolve into friendships and informal ones. Hence, it can be suggested that the higher the degree of Saudi female entrepreneurs' maturity in entrepreneurship, the greater the tendency to form more formal relationships and instrumental connections rather than friendships and informal ones.

e. Value of Relationships with Influential People

As it has been indicated previously, it has been conveyed from the participants' narratives that their network is a mainly female network, but one can wonder what type of female contacts they approach. Seeking the answer of this question, it has been observed that the majority of the participants claim that they deliberately target specific types of people to be included in their growing network. So once they start their enterprise, they tend to contact as many female contacts as they can, however, not only that, they also target the elite women such as princesses, big names in the community, and very important people (VIPs) who occupy high governmental positions. In so doing, they can reach their goals faster and achieve more benefits and interests based on nepotism and favouritism due to superiority and priority resulting from those relationships. Thence, their business growth can be facilitated without the need for a big size and highly intensive network. This can be clearly understood from Najla who states that she always focuses on targeting big names and VIPs in the society; she says:

> "I always approach big names; princesses were my main target as our society loves very much to imitate the royalty in their behaviour and clothing... Texting those VIPs was a vital factor telling them about new arrival of summer or spring collections". (Appendix 2 Line 220)

Likewise, Bashayer considers the relationships with VIPs and the governmental bodies, specifically, the municipal office, are the most important for her business. Thus she seeks to build relationship with them as she states:

> "All business relations are interrelated whether through friends or VIPs that I know or my high socioeconomic status family ......relationship with

municipal officials is vital, especially in Food & Beverages projects".
(Appendix 2 Line 467)

Additionally, Wijdan indicated that she had relationships with some elite people, but they were not worthy of her:

".... I once had a contact with one of the royal family (no need to mention names). He wanted me to make a Saudi National Day exhibition just for him, and he gave false promises of which he achieved nothing".
(Appendix 2 Line 817)

According to Lila, she gives high credit and interest to the VIPs relationships and may meet them personally face to face without mediators due to the importance of their role in her network.

"There are very rare face to face contact, but I still can meet VIPs from ARAMCO". (Appendix 2 Line 1063)

Adana also pays a lot of attention to the high positions connection and approaches them:

"Connections with Heads of governmental offices proved to be of great value, especially in Municipality office". (Appendix 2 Line 1255)

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the Saudi women entrepreneurs, deliberately and reasonable approach specific contacts, which infers that they become aware of the type of the people who are valued for their business success; this can be concluded from Mona saying:

"We are trying to act as professionally as possible, and we are expanding our relationships professionally not personally......In our economic conditions, it is vital to have well-studied relations .It is an asset in business". (Appendix 2 Line 1318)

Jouaher agreed with Mona and stated that:

"We are keeping the relationships professional." (Appendix 2 Line 1408)

Also Maha mentions her interest in relationships with specific types of individuals such as Elite and VIPs in the community, she claims:

> "The Treasure fund of prince (........) was the most useful asset for me. It created lots of connections for me.... The Vice Minister of Education visited us, and that was an asset for us.... Such relations with those elite people are never-failing fountains..." (Appendix 2 Line 1666)

Consequently, the evidence from the participants' narratives suggested that Saudi women entrepreneurs, deliberately, chose specific types of individuals to be included in their network due to their growing awareness of the usefulness of those contacts for their business growth and success. Those types of people have been identified by the participants as the elite people, VIPs, and high governmental positions. Additionally, there was evidence suggesting that SFEs avoided building relationships arbitrarily, so they prefer to expand their network professionally by studying well who should be approached and included in their network.

Overall, the findings of the theme have been depicted that Saudi Arabia has a unique social-cultural codes and norms which impose many barriers and obstacles for female entrepreneurs which no other women entrepreneurs face worldwide. These cultural obstacles are perpetuated by the conservative patriarchal culture norms and traditional roles such as guardianship and gender segregation; among many other cultural norms that hinder the Saudi female entrepreneurs networking and business activities with comparison to their male counterparts.

Because of social practices such as objection to gender-mixing in the work place, the stipulation that a male guardian must grant permissions for women entrepreneurship activities, this restricts their relationship formation and limits their ability to develop their network. This is, subsequently, restricting their ability to access information and required resources for their business success. This further suggests that the governmental should support women; many reforms should be taken to activate and increase Saudi women's role and their participation in various social and economic activities in the Saudi community.

5- Leveraging Technology and Social Network Websites:

Saudi women entrepreneurs find a way around the severity of the social-cultural restrictions and norms. Utilising communication technology, such as mobile phones

Blackberry, and social websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, privileged them to be able to overcome any networking restrictions and constraints. Advanced communication technology as the internet, social media and social websites are in the centre of their network. For instance, Enjoud reports using social network websites such as Facebook and Twitter alongside with the attendance of female forums and social events:

> "There are virtual social networks nowadays websites as Facebook, Twitter, etc...... Woman forums are also frequent where I can meet new faces and take their contact numbers....... We are in a society which avails lots of social events, but these events have their merits and demerits... Communication technology, as cell phones, Blackberry and WhatsApp, facilitates women entrepreneurs' communication and helps to overcome the traditional obstacles". (Appendix 2 Lines59, 80, 131)

Najla also reported an extensive and valuable use of social networking websites despite their limitations in business exchange:

> "Now We have customers from all parts of the kingdom and furthermore from UAE and Bahrain thanks to Blackberry and social websites.....Exhibitions and social occasions played a vital role in business; social network websites all helped me to be reachable even from customers in the UK and Russia. Sometimes I could not send raw materials through social network websites; more and more friends added me on their Facebook websites. However, these social networks helped a lot to reach for them and to make marketing for my products" (Appendix 2 Lines 163, 204)

For Mashael, the internet and social websites are her main means to reach customer and find new contacts not only domestically but also internationally. Further, she asserts that social network websites are the most popular among Saudis to communicate:

> "I made a blog-spot myself; and international customers were accumulating on Facebook and Twitter. Customers in KSA were not convinced of the handmade products which they believed were not compared to their Chinese handmade counterparts... In KSA, people

largely depend on social websites; some clicked on LIKE and others clicked on FAVORITE. Instagram account was also helpful" (Appendix 2 Line 298)

Despite the popularity of social networks websites, interestingly, she reports another aspect of their limitations in KSA, which is the misuse of these websites which may lead to their prohibition of using them as she says:

"Social network websites are abused in KSA unlike Europe. This was why it took me 3 years to have customers from Saudi Arabia who don't appreciate the handmade products" (Appendix 2 Line 358).

Also, Razan reported social media and the use of e-mails as the main means for her to communicate with people:

"Twitter and Instagram play an important role in facilitating my business relations..... Emails proved to be very effective...... I have known many people due to the social media." (Appendix 2 Line 415)

Additionally, Bashayer reported the effectiveness of using telephone calls:

"Using telephone for communication is also possible....." (Appendix 2 Line 608)

Wijdan as a media specialist emphasized the role of social network websites as a useful communication means for her, and she also attended forums in the Chamber of Commerce:

"Your voice can reach others using social network websites to build relationships, i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc... But for these social relations based on social network websites reaching overseas, our jobs would have never been accomplished..... It is important to attend forums" (Appendix 2 Line 793)

Mona also reported that using the social networking website is her means to communicate and maintain relationships with customers, particularly international ones:

"Permanent customers knew us through social network websites. Customers from neighbouring countries will have more special treatments as they are our guests." (Appendix 2 Line 1332)

Jouaher indicated the greater use of social networking websites as well in order to build relationships with different type of contacts, customers, suppliers, distributors or friends:

"We formed connections of Distributors, Suppliers, Consumers and Friends through social network websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram" (Appendix 2 line 1417)

Finally, Maha asserts that communication between Saudi women is mainly based on social gatherings and social network websites due to movements' limitation:

"Contacts between women are based on social network websites especially Twitter.... I attend forums and meetings; social gatherings occur once every few months... Twitter website is more effective for us... I have 3800 followers so far; I always use it to publish my work." (Appendix 2 Line 1637)

Najla chose text messages and sending samples of new products to her contacts as a way of maintaining the relationships:

"Texting those VIPs was a vital factor telling them about new arrivals of summer or spring collections" (Appendix 2 Line 222)

Razan mainly relies on sending email as a networking technique:

"Emails proved to be very effective" (Appendix 2 line 654).

However, Mona implemented news and events, updating via Instagram and other social networks:

"I upload photos of my exhibition via Instagram. Then, my family and my friends do the same, so it became a wide circle". (Appendix 2 Line 1301)

Jouaher sends invitations to her contacts:

"Invitation to social occasions should be implemented on highly technical grounds" (Appendix 2 line 1328)

Based on the above, it can be evidently suggested that Saudi women entrepreneurs are implementing various communications technologies to overcome the cultural and social constraints that limit their mobility and their ability to communicate with each other freely. Extensive use of the communication technology and widespread use of social networking websites have been acknowledged by the majority of participants as the most frequently used as the common communication means among them in order to build and maintain relationships. In addition, they implement different techniques to network and maintain their relationships which are also heavily based on the use of communication technology and few face to face frequent meetings.

In summary, this theme reveals that the most convenient modes of communication through which the female entrepreneurs operate their businesses are cell phones and personal computers which are the only technological tools they use to perform their business activities. In the promotion of businesses, internet social websites can play a major role in forming speed network, which can be used by Saudi women entrepreneurs for promoting and selling the product across the globe. The advanced communication devices have also been adopted by Saudi women, especially the unregistered business women who find these tools rendering great help in promoting their businesses. An unregistered business woman, Mashael, has expressed her joy towards these devices by mentioning that: "I can now send the photos of my products that I've crafted via Bluetooth or MMS; in addition to making phone calls, sending emails, and participating in internet forums". Moreover, it is noted that, many of the Saudi women entrepreneurs have acquired access to these devices with the intention that would help them in communicating with their clients more regularly and innovatively. Also, it is noted that they are eager to get advantage from all kinds of networking and support services and facilities. The emergent of technologies creates channels for mass communication and is redefining media. It creates a new breed of citizen entrepreneurship and Saudi women entrepreneurs whom voices could be heard in the global marketplace of ideas. Hence it can be said that Saudi women entrepreneurs are leading Saudi Arabia into a knowledge-based economy.

Chapter 8: Discussion

"I cannot teach anybody anything; I can only make them think."

-Socrates-

Introduction

This study has attempted to explore women's entrepreneurial networking process in Saudi context. Thus, a narrative qualitative methodology has been adopted in order to answer the research question: How does Saudi female entrepreneur network in Saudi Arabian context? This has been simplified into five research questions as follows:

1: How gender, religious, class, and cultural structure gives rise to gender inequality, which affect women's participation in entrepreneurship and networking activities?

2: How inadequate entrepreneurial networking prevents Saudi women to acquire entrepreneurial resources such as finance, capital, and training, etc. and development?

3: What are the major entrepreneurial resources, which are difficult to acquire, by Saudi women entrepreneurs?

4: What are entrepreneurial network and resources women entrepreneur can acquire and mobilize, in Saudi Arabia?

5: What are the strategies they use to develop their networks?

The study has provided a much needed depth, descriptive and interpretative understanding of the entrepreneurial networking process of Saudi women entrepreneurs in a Saudi context, whereas participants have been asked to narrate and share their entrepreneurship and networking experiences. A thematic analysis has been a very appropriate strategy to break down the collected stories and provided adequate tools to develop deep insights and findings. The research questions are fully answered based on following super-ordinate themes have emerged from the collected narrative:

1- Family and friends as a network building block
2- Networks formation and strategies
3- Network resources

4- Role of gender, religion, class, and traditions

5- Leveraging technology and social network websites

The previous five main themes are presented with the findings of thematic analysis implemented in the narratives which have been collected from the in-depth narrative qualitative interviews of eleven Saudi women entrepreneurs (see summary of findings appendix 3). Based on the available evidence, it can be suggested that the networking process of Saudi women entrepreneurs is culturally constructed and embedded in their family relationships and the Saudi context where they run their businesses. Thus, the entrepreneurial networks are centred round their families and friends as they act as the core of their networks in all the stages of their entrepreneurship process from the startup stage up to the growth and maturity stage.

Additionally, it is evident that their networking activities are motivated by a high degree of awareness of the network importance and role in their business success. However, their networking decisions are shaped by reciprocity and trustworthiness between them and their contacts. As a result of such entrepreneurial networking process, they have received a number of tangible and intangible resources, mostly from the family and their close friends. This is shown in forms of psychological support, financial support, legitimization, acceptance, protection and facilitating different matters and issues through nepotism and favouritism as a result of special treatment expected from specific relationships.

Furthermore, it has been found that the Saudi female entrepreneurs are deeply embedded in their social cultural context and are subsequently affected by many restrictions rooted in traditions and social norms shaped by gender bias and inequity in the name of protecting women and ensuring their security. These norms and traditions which segregate both genders limit the extent of their networks and create distance between them due to the necessity of the presence of a male guardian. The male family member plays the role of a guardian (Mahram) to accompany them at all times during all their activities and movement, including meeting other people, or as a broker (Mouaqib) in order to deal with and finalise all the official governmental paperwork. Even though, running a business as a female can be challenging due to these norms and restriction; even a very small thing such as having a ride to work place is restricted under the cultural norms of banning women from driving.

However, they have found a way around these restrictions by communicating through a bundle of indoors activities such as attending social occasions, meetings, forums... etc. in approved and accepted institutions; and the most of all they maximise the utility of communication technology, internet, and online social websites in order to interact effectively.

Saudi Women Entrepreneurial Networks

Entrepreneurship studies emphasise the importance of entrepreneurial networks for women entrepreneurs' success and business development, especially in a male dominated societies (Welsh et al. 2012, Wallace 2001, and Brush et al. 2010). Similarly, the findings of this study also show how important networking is for women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the evidence based on the empirical studies has also shown that during the start-up phase of the enterprise, women require one of the networks for funds in order to get their business going and to increase their start-up capital. Focusing on the study by Minniti (2010), the result confirms that male and female entrepreneurs throughout the world rely on social network for getting maximum information and access to resources.

Sangeeta and Meenu (2011) focus on microfinance and women empowerment. They reach the conclusion that women find ease in receiving finance from their personal contacts and thus confirm the role of networking. Although the Micro financing institutions (MFIs) have become very careful regarding multiple borrowing, it is important to believe that networking with more than one group might lead to multiple loans. Women in Saudi Arabia make use of their own resources and their partnership with family members to overcome any social or legal constraints through entrepreneurship. When consultants focus on how to enhance their business by expanding business into international markets; they embrace the western hypothesis that gives equal value to Saudi women entrepreneurs like western women on both business and family.

This study confirms that, unlike western women entrepreneurs, Saudi women entrepreneurs rely on two distinct business connections: one is based largely on family network, and the other is based on their acquaintances such as other women-business associations. Additionally, Saudi women have succeeded in creating business opportunities among their community, despite all the barriers and business challenges such as lack of support services and limited business networking. However, the study asserts that Saudi

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women entrepreneurs (unlike previous research conducted in developed and developing countries) have a serious problem with the social norms network.

The findings of the current study confirmed that Saudi society possesses unique characteristics. Women play an important role in Saudi society as housewives, mothers and entrepreneurs. Saudi society places great emphasis on family life and bonds. Saudi women are expected to be highly committed to take care of their families and domestic work. The gender identities in Saudi society come from Sharia (Islamic law), tradition, and social norms. Despite the fact that, the number of children is high in typical Saudi families, and the time that female entrepreneurs have to devote to their business is limited. Saudi female entrepreneurs may only be willing to expand their businesses to a manageable size; a size that does not make them sacrifices their matriarchal obligations. However, in modern Saudi society domestic helper is a widespread phenomenon (Alsharekh, 2012). Thus, Saudi women's domestic role has dramatically changed. Undertaking domestic work such as cleaning, cooking, and taking care of children and other domestic affairs is considered as a shame and a disgrace for Saudi women. Saudi families are hiring domestic helpers, maids and nannies from Far East countries to take over their role in household duties. Thence, it can be said that Saudi women entrepreneurs do not face the traditional problem of dual role conflict other women's faces.

Furthermore, based on the result of this study, female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are starting to tap into technological advancements such as emailing, automated customer service, new markets and telecommunication in order to stay in contact with other entrepreneurs and their networks' members. This is all a part of networking which helps them enhance their level of understanding of entrepreneurship's world and increase their social circles. Utilizing internet and World Wide Web as a complete source of distribution channel, Saudi women entrepreneurs have further increased their operational efficiency in recent times. Now there are businesses run by women in Saudi Arabia, which reflect buyer behaviour, improved products, and redefined services and managed supply chains. Nonetheless, the transformation of a company's website from a passive informational presence of an interactive and engaging platform takes time, resource and strategic planning. The percentage of successful female entrepreneurs who have implemented networking skills into their business by incorporating e-marketing capabilities in their business is nuclear.

Thus, it can be said that networking amongst Saudi female entrepreneurs is highly underdeveloped resource. This underdevelopment in entrepreneurial networking is due to the over reliance of these female entrepreneurs in their family for guidance and funding of business. The Saudi Management Association and the Chamber of Commerce have started to work for the strengthening of women's business associations for the effectiveness of networking to be implemented by Saudi women entrepreneurs. Given that the professional associations usually create an underlying infrastructure to assist informal networking relationships, enhancing the membership in these third-party organizations will be useful for the transfer of tacit knowledge that increases the business learning.

Saudi women Entrepreneurial networking and Resources Acquisition

Undoubtedly, networks can provide great benefits throughout all stages of business development, especially at the time of growth phases when network partners can link with other determined business professional with venture capital firms. Without the access to power of networks, women entrepreneurs may not receive any critical advice that is required from seasoned predecessors such as how to translate the concepts of novel into practical plans, how to apply for external financing, to maximize customers, to locate suppliers and to resolve work-life balance issues. A great percentage of Saudi women entrepreneurs agree to the fact that small business model offers inherent flexibility to increase income for their families and fulfil their family roles at the same time. In maintaining this work-life balance, entrepreneurs have taken advantage from the support of family, flexibility in working hours, and the availability of domestic servants.

As per the results obtained from interviews conducted, it can be analysed that women entrepreneurs are now becoming more active in terms of networking. These women are using social media like Facebook, twitter and Instagram to interact one on one with their consumers. Thus, based on that fact, it is noted that the narratives collected from the research participants suggest that a relationship exists between type of resources and types of relationships in the Saudi Arabia entrepreneurs. In other words, different types of resources are obtained from different types of network relationships. For example, protection and legitimacy for Saudi women entrepreneurs can only be acquired from the family first class relationships; however social support, labour force, ideas and advices can be gained from informal strong ties which include family members, friends, relatives and neighbours. Also, other resources such as industrial information, material, finance, and business expansion can

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be acquired from their formal relationships and weak ties. The stories and interviews of these females show that the networking priorities vary from one entrepreneur to another. Nepotism and favouritism are highly rooted in Saudi culture and they have an impact on Saudi women entrepreneurs' networking decisions.

As mentioned earlier, people tend to be naturally embedded and connected to each other in one way or the other (Granovetter, 1985). Building a network by Saudi women entrepreneurs starts from family level and extends to friends and other relatives. Family is considered to be the focal point in the life of the majority of Saudi women. As for one of our participants, Najla, it is all about family acceptance. Najla thinks that without the approval of family, it is not possible to start any work or business. The same story is represented by Mashael, who has been encouraged by her father to attend meetings in the female section of Chamber of Commerce. The Saudi culture and religion make male members of the family are the dominant. Therefore, without the consent or the permission of a father or a male head of the family, women cannot work. Maha, our third participant, however, mentions that her sister is her source of starting a networking. This is similar to Bashayer who has declared that if a woman got support from her family, the majority of her work would be already done. This statement shows that women are heavily relying on their families to support them in order to get their businesses start.

Trust for entrepreneurs can be helpful in reducing uncertainty and risk in a dyadic relationship (J, 2005). However, it has been posited that it can be unnecessary if the network actors embark on actions with full responsibility that completely remove the risk (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Johnsona & Grayson, 2005) Two main types of trust in relationships can be identified: the first one is 'affective' trust which is mainly derived from emotional and social relationships and the other one is 'cognitive' trust which refers to rational or economic trust. The affective trust is built usually when someone investing emotions in a dyadic relationship resulted in concerns about each other's welfare and interests, however, economic or cognitive trust is formed based on evidence of trustworthiness which occurs as a result of familiarity and knowledge when frequent interactions allow each party to know each other and predict the process of the interaction (Smith & Lohrke, 2008, p. 317).

In respect to Saudi women entrepreneurs, it is found that their only source of trust is their family relationships. They do not have the luxury of time, free mobility and frequent interaction which allows them to build an economy or cognitive trust to develop their

network from intensive socially embedded network to more effectively diversified network. Hence it seems that the severity of the conservation and over-protection of women from the family has created a kind of scrupulosity and suspension in others outside the family circle. As a result of lack and hard to form trust it is difficult for them to broaden their network nationally and internationally for more business success and expansion.

Networking plays as an important factor for female entrepreneurs to recruit and expand their teams and to get the right kind of people at the right places. In addition, connections help in protecting them from troubles. Most interviewees are well aware of the importance of connections because they know how these connections could help in running their businesses. Enjoud believes that it was very important to be aware of the surroundings and to have additional contacts without solely relying on your friends, whereas Mashael expresses her awareness of the importance of networking when she stresses the importance of relationships with customers.

Reciprocity and trustworthiness have been found to work as main factors in Saudi women entrepreneurial networking strategy and decision making related to relationship formation and development. At this point, these findings support Larson (1992)'s findings as he asserts that the 'process model of network formation highlights importance of reputation, trust, reciprocity and mutual interdependence'. Also, Granovetter, 1973, Uzzi 1996, and MacEvily & Marcus, 2005, stated that relationships are characterised in terms of trust, reciprocity, and strength of relationship. The findings of this study confirm that these women are well aware of the benefits and formal relationships they should build with their networks' contacts and clients to keep them professional.

Najla and most of the participants stress that the relationships play an important role in marketing their businesses and in building trust among the actors of entrepreneurial network. Trust comes automatically with strong relationship. Many researcher e. g., Coleman, 1988; Burt & Knez, 1996, Ferrin et al. 2006 declare that trust increases when a relationship is embedded in ties to third parties. Also Aldrich (1989) points out that 'networking involves expanding one's circle of trust' (Aldrich, 1989, p. 108). However, due to the conservative culture and tradition in Saudi society, it has been noted that building trust with Saudi women entrepreneurs is not easy and very sensitive issue. Thus, Saudi women entrepreneurs gain trust, only through their families and close friends that they can refer to or they can recommend others to them.

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Based on the resources view of entrepreneurship theory, Saudi women entrepreneurs' networking process can be described as shown in the female entrepreneur network in a precise chart (figure 15). From this chart, it can be observed that the network changes according to the business stage, maturity and resources requirements. Hite (2005), and Schutjens and Erik (2003) suggest that network development causes changing in its characteristics and type of relationships which may affect the opportunities discovery and access to resources and mobility. Hence, at the enterprise start-up stage the network of women entrepreneurs consists of two main groups of actors according to their needs of required resources for their business. The first thing required is family members support, especially husbands, fathers and brothers. Not only do these members of the family provide support, but they are also the providers of social, financial, and human resources to women entrepreneurs. The other important group at this phase is the support of female friends who are potential customers and work as marketers. The connection between these two groups is mostly face to face interaction.
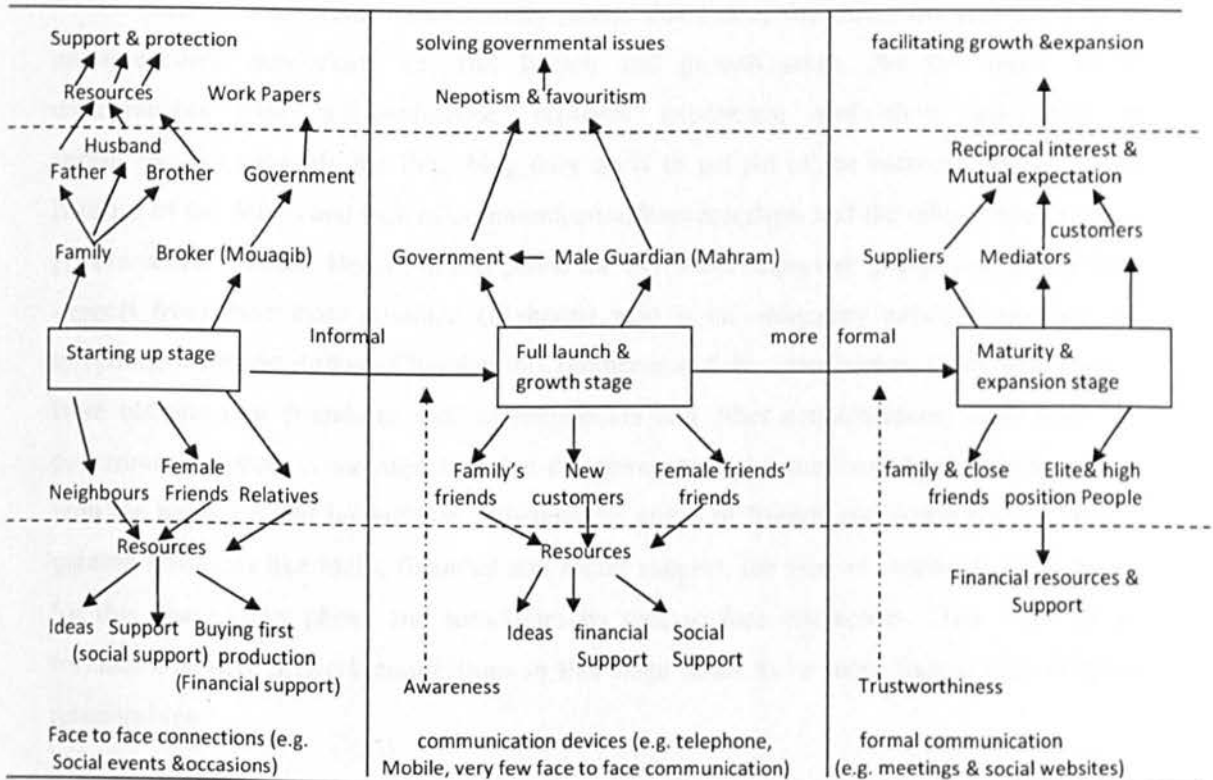
Figure 17: Description of Saudi Female entrepreneurs' network

It has also been noted that, in the startup stage the existence of network broker (Mouaqib) is necessary and so is the presence of a male guardian (Mahram) who should be a

woman's closest male relative such as father, brother, husband or a son. The existence of the Mahram and Mouaqib in the Saudi female entrepreneurs' networks is enforced by the Saudi law, as well as social norms and traditions. Since, women can contact male strangers, and the governmental officers as all the officers and decision makers are men. In addition, it has been noticed that a broker is necessary at the start-up stage due to the lack of experience and information of women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the Mouaqib or broker plays a focal role as social bridge that connects women entrepreneurs with the governmental bodies in the first stage of the business and the network start-up. Thus, it can be said that the role of the network broker in the Saudi women entrepreneurs network is consistent with the role suggested in the literature by scholars, e. g., Antonelli, (2011), Burt 1992, Antonelli, (2003); Consiglio and Antonelli, (2003), who argue that the role of a broker in network start-up stage is to build the network by selecting players; to replace the missing nodes of the network; to define the functioning and communications rules to be used among network players; and to connect the structural holes.

Once an entrepreneur successfully passes this phase, she enters the second phase of entrepreneurial networking i.e. full launch and growth stage. As the Saudi female entrepreneurs gain self-confidence, business experience and more awareness of entrepreneurial network, the first thing they do is to get rid of the network broker; this is because of the delays and lack of communication between them and the other bodies such as governmental offices. Hence, in this phase the two most important groups are that of male support from their male guardian (Mahram) who is an obligatory network member and government support through Chamber of Commerce and the other bodies, along with support from old and new friends as well as neighbours and other acquaintances. Both male and government support is required to solve the governmental issues and legal holdings along with the nepotism and favouritism. Whereas the group of friends and acquaintances help in gaining resources like ideas, financial and social support, the type of communication means for this phase is by phone and sometimes by face to face interaction. Thus, most of the formation of new network connections in this stage tends to be more formal than informal relationships.

The third and the final phase of building an entrepreneurial network for females in Saudi Arabia is maturity and expansion stage. This phase is characterised by a high level of professionalism and reciprocity of networking. The two groups which play important role in

gaining success in this phase are: the first group is that of suppliers, mediators and customers and the second group consist of family and friends, influential and high positions group of high class and influential people. For one thing, the suppliers, mediators and customers help in bringing the reciprocal interest, facilitating growth and expansion, whereas for friends and elite group they are the source of financial resources, reputation and social support. The kind of communication occurring in this phase is a formal one that is achieved through meetings and social networking sites, e.g. facebook, twitter, and instagram, on which they gradually rely to extend their entrepreneurial network and form more connect inside and outside the geographical borders.

Thus, it can be suggested that Saudi women entrepreneurs networking process possesses distinctive features. The Saudi women entrepreneurs' network is based upon the existing family bonds and close friends, and then they develop it according to their business maturity and growth in order to fulfil the required resources for their business development. However, since, as Granovetter (1973) asserts, the entrepreneurs and their networks are embedded in their context, the Saudi females' network interaction process, activities and extent are derived from their social cultural and economic context in which they are embedded. In more mature stage their relationships are rarely changed to informal and the formed relationships are mostly formal. Where, the Saudi women's network development is derived by resources acquisition, and as such it changes to more calculative. Also, as Birley et al. (1991) claim, the entrepreneurs in the startup and early stage rely heavily on their family members, friend and other social networks to gather information and resources, Saudi women entrepreneurs also profoundly rely on their families and friends all the time. Unlike the previous networking model assumption along with the suggestion provided by Birley et al. (1991), and Baines and Wheelock (1999), it is noted that family and friends' relationships are the building block of the network and prominent in all the entrepreneurship and networking stages, as such they cannot reduce or diminish them over time from the network.

Furthermore, the Saudi women entrepreneurs' networks are associated with the existence of network mediators who are their male guardian Maharm and broker who are focal in their network. The male guardian existence is obligatory at all times and in all the development stages; however, once they reach the growth and maturity stage, they get rid of the broker. Hence, the societal culture is very severe, and there are many restrictions for women interaction and activities; thus they only expand their network to the limit they can

manage. Hence, it is very much difficult for the Saudi women entrepreneur to develop an effective network for the business because of some cultural reasons, since in Saudi culture most of women are not allowed to develop a social network on the personal level.

In sum, based on the above, it can be said that Saudi female entrepreneurs rely on two distinct business connections: one is based largely on family network, and the other based on their acquaintances such as female business association or other women-business association. It is noted that Saudi women entrepreneurs try to overcome the barriers facing them and create a less restricted business environment. The Saudi cultural factors such as the enforced gender segregation constrain and limit the female entrepreneur's ability to access resources and markets and narrow their chance of networking, gaining business knowledge, and seizing opportunities. Even though, they are making lots of efforts to become part of different social relations either within the family realm or within their social circle of acquaintances like friends. They try hard to play a significant part in inter organizational sectors in maintaining relations with the government and other business officials.

Further, the findings reveal that the restriction on women's mobility in Saudi Arabia limits their ability to enhance their skills improve their business and build professional network connections. It can be said that Saudi female entrepreneurs are trying to overcome challenges faced by no other female entrepreneurs around the world. These obstacles are imposed by the Saudi government and conservative culture, which adds several layers of complications to overcome such lack of networking. Thus, it can be suggested that family support and external support that are provided by effective entrepreneurial network will positively affect Saudi women entrepreneurs' venture start-ups.

Impact of Gender, Religion, Culture and Social structure

The findings in this study also confirmed that religion plays a significant role in Saudi Arabian society, and subsequently women entrepreneurial activities and networking. The deliberate misinterpretation, Qur'anic injunctions and Islamic traditions, have made life more intense and difficult for Saudi women, especially of those, who have entrepreneurial ambitions. Fundamentalist, orthodox and radical elements of the society restrict women from participating in diverse occupational activities, related to politics, society or corporate. Islam allows women to leave home, for work or for other obligations; however, such radical and orthodox elements compel women to stay at home. Emphasis on the veil, scepticism about

women's activities outside of their home, considering woman a symbol of honour, are a few of the outcomes of religious value system, which prevails in Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, culture in Saudi Arabia is highly conservative. Male and female segregation is common. The mingling of men and women is not considered appropriate. Segregation exists in public place, organizations and even at home. A woman is considered a symbol of honour and dignity. Society prefers that women should stay at home, and manage domestic affairs, instead of leaving home, for corporate or earning purposes. It is against the honour of the family to send women outside the home. Moreover, when women have to travel or go outside, a family member always accompanies her. This phenomenon is known as "Mehram". Such conservative cultural values restrict women's movement and participation in employment, education and business.

Religious, class, cultural and gender interaction gives rise to inequality in entrepreneurship and networking in Saudi Arabia (figure 20). Women entrepreneurs face gender bias, stereotyping and discrimination in entrepreneurial activities. Such barriers give the rise of gender inequality in the name of protecting women and ensuring their security. Religious, cultural, and social structure resulted in segregating both genders, limiting the extent of women's networks and create distance between them and their contacts due to the necessity of the presence of a male guardian. Gender inequality exists and society has separate roles for male and female, limited mobility, and prevalence of male patriarchy as a system of male dominance enforced by misinterpretation of Islam, culture and social structure. Saudi cultural values stem from tribal traditional roots which intensify male dominancy and gender issues. Gender segregation, stereotyping, and social norms affect communications and networking effectiveness of women in the society.

Bedouin culture and tribal traditions resulted imbalance of power in the society. Women participation is low in politics, economics, business, sports or other occupations. Saudi society emphasises the role of family and gender role. The intertwining of religion and tradition in Saudi society has been embedded in the construction of social norms and the governmental structure and law. The misinterpretation of Islamic teaching in Qur'an and Sunna, which is kept exclusively in the hands of men, raised the patriarchy of the society and women's oppression. Thus, in Saudi Arabia as a fundmialsit Islamic state based entirely on Islamic law, it is difficult to separate the impact of religion, culture and politics, on women's

status. The combined and simultaneous impact of the multiple dimensions of intersectionality of religion, culture and tribal traditions shaped gender identities and role in the society.
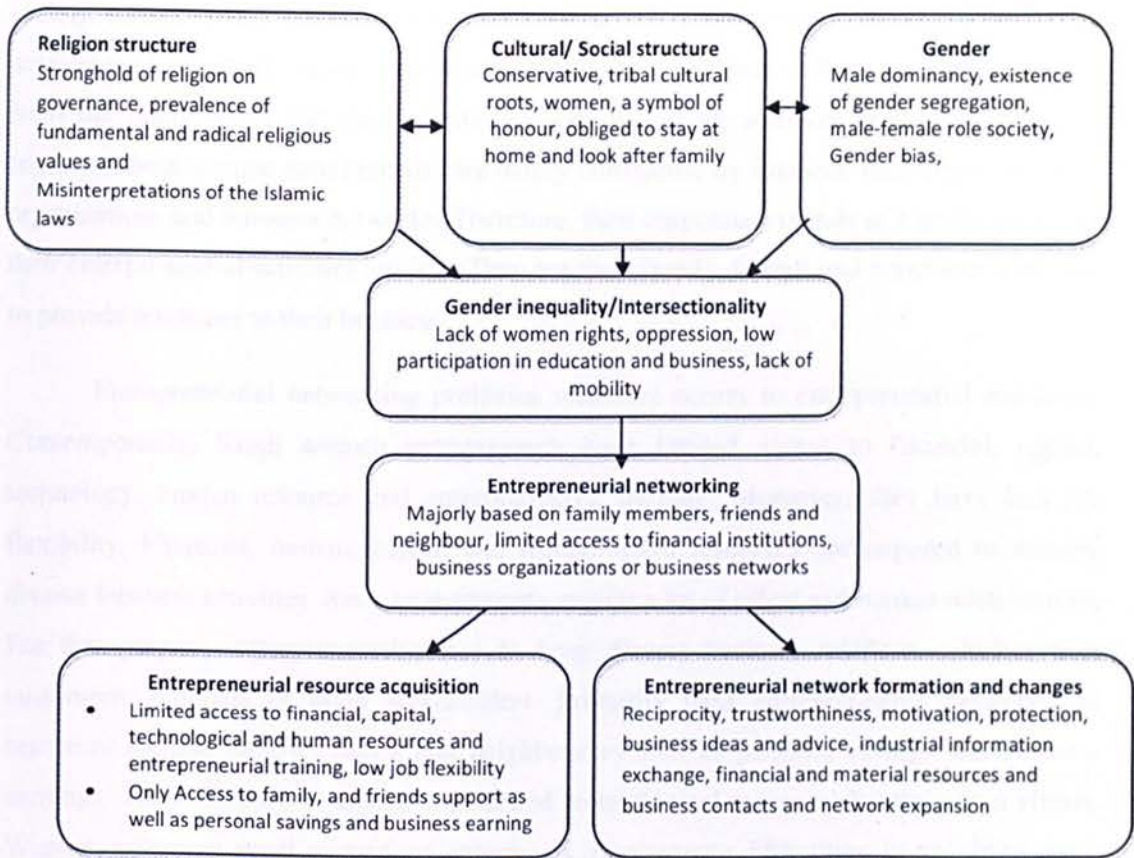
Figure 18: Impact of religious, cultural and Gender structure on entrepreneurial networking and resource acquisition

In result, women are not likely to participate in all different subjects of education, employment and other business or social activities. They have low salary structures and lack of mobility. It is obliged for women to move with "Mahram". Intersectionality, and inequality become more severe when it comes to racism and class system. Women from middle class are oppressed by intersectionality, and gender inequality. While, women from higher class and rich families enjoy more power and access to social capital, which influence their entrepreneurial networking, resources, and ultimately, their outcomes. The multiple dimensions of intersectionality in Saudi society produced layers of difficulties and hardship for women entrepreneurs that affect their abilities to form effective network and access to resources. Thus, women from lower class attempt to build connections with high class and influential women in the society to secure access to various resources and support accrue from favouritism gained from these relationships.

Entrepreneurial Networking Problems and Resources Acquisition:

Gender inequality and intersectionality of class, gender and religion within the Saudi society further affect entrepreneurial networking, of Saudi women entrepreneurs. Their networking is primarily based upon family, friends and neighbours. Network genuinely starts from the family level and then slightly extends to include relatives and little number of friends. These women entrepreneurs are hardly considered by financial institutions, business organizations and business networks. Therefore, their corporate expands at a snail's pace, and their entrepreneurial activities are few. They use their family, friends and neighbour's support to provide resources to their business.

Entrepreneurial networking problems influence access to entrepreneurial resources. Contemporarily, Saudi women entrepreneurs have limited access to financial, capital, technology, human resource and entrepreneurial training. Moreover, they have less job flexibility. Financial, human, capital and technological resources are required to manage diverse business activities. Such arrangements require a lot of effort and market relationships. For that purpose, entrepreneurship has to keep diverse business relations, whether with customers, suppliers or other stakeholders. Primarily their entrepreneurial network and resources include family, friends and neighbour as well as personal savings and business earnings. They organize financial, capital and technological resources by their own efforts. Women, who own small or medium enterprises, face intense difficulties, in acquiring small and medium term loans.

Entrepreneurial network development led to many outcomes, such as social support and protection for women. Moreover, business ideas and advice, industrial information exchange, access to financial and material resources, expanding business and growth, and acquiring new contacts and network expansion are also important considerations.

In additions, women build more relationships. Participants indicated that they used many techniques, such as introduction to people by friends, frequent communication, sending invitation letters, distributing new product samples, organising events and news updates, and sending greeting cards, emails or text messages.

Barriers of Women Entrepreneurial network in the Saudi Context

The barriers that Saudi women entrepreneurs face are so many, they include socio-cultural norms and reservation, social acceptance, patriarchy and male guidance, family commitment, gender inequity and stereotyping, lack of transportation and movement limitation, network mediation of a broker, racism and intolerance of diversity, gender segregation, and lack of networking skills. In terms of such entrepreneurship networks' barriers, it is noted that this consequently affects their choice of the type of business they can be involved in. They try hard to avoid contacting or mixing with the opposite gender. Thus, they choose mostly "women to women" businesses such as beauty centres, women training centres, women exhibitions, coffee shops for ladies, website design, e-marketing or Jewellery making.

It has been found that Saudi women are capable of strengthening the economy of their country; on the other hand, they face many challenges while making attempts to achieve these goals. These challenges, however, are not similar to those challenges faced by nearly all female entrepreneurs around the world. Saudi female entrepreneurs encounter further obstacles that are imposed by the Saudi government and their conservative culture. These challenges can be categorized as gender inequity and patriarchal socio-cultural norms. In Saudi Arabia women are expected to play only primary roles, such as the role of a wife and a mother. It is found that that family resistance along with cultural conditions act as major barriers that the female entrepreneurs have to face. These issues become even more severe when the society is dominated by men and very prominent gender stereotyping. On the other hand, it is found that the cultural context, in which Saudi women exist, often faces contradicting announcements, which results in limiting the participation and advancement of women in several economic sectors. For instance, in 2005, officials from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs have made a promise to ensure that women would be able to be a part of the elections in 2011. However, this promise has faced contradiction when another statement has been passed by the election commissioner saying that Saudi Arabia is not yet ready to accept women's participation in the upcoming municipal elections. Likewise, in Saudi Arabia, gender discrimination and inequity face Saudi women when it comes to the issue of women driving. From 2005 till today, the issue of women driving is still under discussion.

Unfortunately, the government has not taken any action to conceptualize the promise to reality. In fact the Minister of Interior Affairs, Prince Naïf, criticizes to lift this ban on

women driving by calling it an issue that is not a priority in the kingdom (Ghafour, 2005). In the same way, this gender issue comes in direct conflict when Saudi women indulge in any business activities. According to research respondents, the biggest obstacle that faces women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia is the obligatory permission of the 'wakil' or Mahram (a male guardian) before preceding any business transactions. The lawyer (Mouaqib) has to be a relative or a stranger or a legal intermediary who works on behalf of the businesswoman, who has full power over the business assets and who can fully access the business.

It has been found that the actual resistance that Saudi women face is rooted in the Saudi culture which intertwined with Islamic law, the conservative tradition and the social attitude against change. Apart from the traditional barriers that Saudi women face, major challenges are manifested in the form of lack of market studies, and lack of government support. In addition, lack of coordination between various government departments is the most important of all operating barriers, it increases challenges due to the lack of laws that protect women's investments and the absence of community support.

Furthermore, indirect access to government services is another challenge. It has been found out that the female premises have been run by women who have low levels of efficiency and authority. About 38 percent of the Saudi women entrepreneurs are capable of registering their own business, whereas the rest rely on third parties to complete the government registration process. The term used for this third party is 'Mouaqib', who is the government relations officer. Another problem that is identified is the requirement to appoint a male manager. This regulation is an added expense and limits the business owner to manage the business.

The other problem that faces Saudi women is the lack of a supportive business; this means that the policies that support women entrepreneurs are not fully implemented. This forces the entrepreneurs to negotiate with the officials over the benefits that are already granted to them. In addition to this, the restriction on women's mobility is an added problem for female entrepreneurs. With the absence of safe and reliable public transportation, additional costs are added to their burdens as well as their female employees.

Theoretical Contribution of the Study

The current study contributes to the area of entrepreneurial network, gender, and resources acquisition. Previous studies in entrepreneurship have unintentionally contributed to the existing gender gap by studying entrepreneurship as static and in isolation from the social context (Ahl, 2006). The adoption of a quantitative positivist approach to researching entrepreneurship and networking diminished the impact of social structure and dimensions of human life. In addition, studying entrepreneurship and its activities from a male prospective by generalising the findings to both men and women omitting women's voices and neglecting the fact that women are confronting different types of barriers and obstacles stem from gender differences and roles as socially constructed. Thus, this study adopted qualitative interpretive approach bases on intersectional feminist framework to explore women's entrepreneurs' networks. Its findings contribute to developing a theory of female entrepreneurial network in cross cultural context and deepen the understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of women entrepreneurs' identities and roles in Saudi society and how interaction between theses identities and conflicts between the different roles affect their entrepreneurial activities, particularly networking. Thence, the theoretical contributions of this study can be detailed as below:

Cultural and religious Structure of Saudi Arabia: Contributing factors behind gender inequality and Intersectionality in Entrepreneurial Network

The current study has explored the role gender and gender identity in shaping entrepreneurial networking in Saudi women and its ultimate effect on entrepreneurial resource acquisition. This is by adopting an intersectional feminist approach in investigating women's network in order to understand how the complexity of multiple social dimensions interact together and reinforce conditions of gender inequality and women's exclusion in Saudi society. The findings of the study are valuable contributions in expanding existing body of literature in women entrepreneurship. The current study has focused on Saudi women entrepreneurs and investigated how social structures, and interweave between culture and religion develop gender issues in the society, which ultimately affect entrepreneurial networking and entrepreneurial resource acquisition for Saudi women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurship is considered as a male dominated field. Saudi Arabia has a traditional gender role society and power distance and social inequalities exist in the society.

Women often do not participate in entrepreneurship activities due to gender stereotype and gender role expectation of women in the society. Saudi Arabian cultural and religious values play an important role in shaping gender issues in the form of inequality accrued from intersectionality in the society, which links with class and hierarchy in the Saudi culture. There is a stronghold of religion in governance, whether it is political, social, economic, business or any other field. Where there is an authentic implementation of Shariah laws prevails in the country, fundamental and radical elements exist in the society, which misinterpret Islamic Shariah and restrict women's rights, equality, activities and the ability to network. Similarly, cultural values are conservative and have tribal roots.

Gender issues of inequality stem from such cultural and religious structure. Male dominancy and gender segregation exist. Society is gender role and gender bias prevails in diverse forms. A woman is considered as a symbol of honour and she is obliged to stay at home and look after the family. It is against the honour of family and household that women go outside and make an earning.

Gender inequality and networking: Family, friends and relative are the major contributors of Saudi women local entrepreneurial networking

Inequality and Intersectionality (i.e., race, gender, and class interaction and conflict) result in lack of entrepreneurial networking and women's rights. Women are available with low level of opportunities in education, employment, sports, entrepreneurship or any other professional fields. Even if women have professional education or skills in entrepreneurship, they are less likely to exercise such knowledge or skills in the professional environment. According to the World Bank (2012), little economic and legal rights are available to women which even decline after marriage. Such difficulties affect women's entrepreneurial networking activities to contact financial institutions, business organizations or business networks to acquire financial capital, technological and other resources to pursue effectively their entrepreneurial ventures.

The majority of the women relies on family and peer networking support. Entrepreneurial networking is majorly consisting of family members, friends and neighbour. They have limited access to financial institutions, business organizations or business networks to acquire entrepreneurial resources. Moreover, they are required to have Mehram (legal companion) for mobility. Most of the Saudi women have social relationships with close friends, people living in their neighbour and family members. Beyond that circle, it is

considered taboo for Saudi women to make relationships. Such entrepreneurial networking opportunities are limited to pursue entrepreneurship effectively.

Lack of Effective Networking and Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Resources:

Lack of proper networking leads to many problems related to entrepreneurial resource acquisition. They have limited access to acquire financial and capital resources from financial institutions. According to (IFC, 2007), the majority of women in the Middle East have little access to entrepreneurial training and development opportunities. Moreover, lack of opportunities related to job flexibility does not permit them to pursue their venture effectively. The collected narratives further revealed that women entrepreneurs face gender bias to acquire finance and capital requirement. The majority of the applications filed by women entrepreneurs for financial and capital acquisition does not yield results.

Women entrepreneurs rely on personal savings, family earning, and re-investment of business earning. They also lack in technological resources. According to (Alturki & Braswell, 2010), 82.2% registered business women rely upon personal savings instead and additional 12.9% seek loans from relative and friends. Moreover, their business is based on traditional technological aspects. 55.9%-registered business women do not have their own websites. The percentage is even higher for non-registered women, which accounted for 62.9%.

Role of Communication Technology and Social Network Websites

One of the main contributions of this study to knowledge in the field of entrepreneurial networking is illuminating the vital role played by new communication technology such as phones, blackberry and other advanced communication devices, and the role of online social networks and websites, e.g. facebook, twitter, instagram in women entrepreneurs' networking. The online social networks provided Saudi women entrepreneurs with tools to circumvent the gender, religious, cultural, and social structural obstacles to expand their network. Despite the severity of social conservation, gender segregation, lack of mobility, and other social complications, women entrepreneurs found a way around these conditions to contact with the outside world. They became able to extend the offline network beyond the place and space by leveraging the contemporary technology. Since the social dimensions of human life do not apply to the online social networks in the same traditional

manner of offline activities and interaction, it helped them to overcome gender constraints, and mobility restrictions.

In summary, this study makes four important theoretical contributions and extends the existent knowledge about networking with respect to gender. The study fills the gap in social network research and puts emphasis on the importance of studying women network process and interaction activities in order to gain a demanded deep understanding of the whole picture of social network not only structurally but also dynamically. Hence, the motive for this study has been triggered by lack and scarcity of knowledge in the area of women's entrepreneurial activities and networking process. Thus, this study has come as a response to the call for qualitative research in order to provide deep and rich understanding and description of network activities and interaction process by adopting an intersectional feminist framework in the network research.

The study has also contributed to the knowledge in the field of entrepreneurial network and gender by investigating women entrepreneurs' activities as a distinct group. Since the few studies in entrepreneurship are mainly male oriented and little or no attention has been paid to women entrepreneurs as a distinct unit of research, neglecting the fact that they may differ from men in terms of their entrepreneurial process, needs and activities, this study proves to be a necessity. The studies that have been mentioned in the literature review show deep understanding of various entrepreneurial networks. However, despite the growing research on entrepreneurial networks, the link between females and network needs more investigations. The majority of research in network focus on examining women's network compared to men's network as a standard. Thus, the vast amount of the current study sheds light on 'gender blindness' that is resulted from stereotyping, the extant gender gap and inequity in entrepreneurship research and networking research. The study has come as a response to the call raised by many researchers as (Aldrich et. al, 1986, Ahl, 2006, and Foss, 2010) who suggest that there are no differences between the two groups; however, not much is known about their networking activities. Consequently, this study has attempted to conquer gender inequity and imbalanced power which are prevalent in current research in entrepreneurship and networking context by giving the voice for women experience to be heard in the field.

Further contribution of the current study is that its findings have added knowledge to the cross-cultural studies in the field of entrepreneurship and networking. The study has

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attempted to fill the gap in the literature with respect to the impact of the environmental and socio-cultural context in which the entrepreneurs and their networking activities are embedded (Granovetter, 1985) on their networks and interaction process. Hence, the results of this study have confirmed that entrepreneurs could not be isolated from their surrounding environment and milieu. Their entrepreneurial activities and networking process, interaction and development are affected deeply by the societal culture, norms and tradition which are evident from the Saudi women entrepreneurs' behaviours. Thus, in order to promote Saudi women entrepreneurship in their unique context, unique solution should be provided.

Not only this, but the study has contributed to the network studies by adopting an interpretive qualitative approach despite the fact that most of previous research is mainly quantitative which does not give much information about the nature of networks as an entrepreneurial and social activity. Narrative qualitative as been adopted as a research design as being required and recommended by many scholars e. g. Butler, 2003; Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Jack, 2005, Larson & Starr, 1993. This enriches our understanding of the nature of entrepreneurial network change and development. Thus, the study, provides a rich description of the actors involved in the network, and answers the questions of why they involve, which role they play in the network and the resources they have gained from different types of relationships in the network with respect to Saudi women entrepreneurs

This study has contributed to the existent knowledge of women entrepreneurs and networking in the Arab world. Most of the previous researches are mainly Western oriented. The majority of this research has focused on investigating women, entrepreneurship, and networks in North America, United Kingdom and Europe. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to be conducted in women entrepreneurial networking in general and networking process in specific to the Middle East in general and specifically in Saudi context. The entrepreneurship field is very nascent in the Middle Eastern studies, in particular in Saudi Arabia. Hence, just a number of few studies have investigated entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia e. g. Saudi and Al-Ghazali (2009) who study entrepreneurship barriers facing women in Saudi context. Danish and Smith (2009) also investigates the factors affecting women entrepreneurs' opportunities and the challenges they face in Saudi Arabia, and finally, Ahmad (2011) focuses on exploring Saudi businesswomen characteristics, growth patterns, and progression in the national context. Despite these very few studies in the entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East

region in general, which mostly addressed the entrepreneurship's motivation, characteristics and barriers, there is very little known about the field in this context. Thus, the study contributes to the existing knowledge in entrepreneurship, women's entrepreneurial activities and entrepreneurial networking process in the Saudi context. Hence, it provides a basis for future research in the area. Also, in respect to network studies, the researcher has found no traces of any networking studies in terms of women network structure or process.

Additionally, the study stresses the importance of technology and social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and many others in women entrepreneurial networking process and activities. The study has revealed that advanced communication technology helps Saudi women entrepreneurs to overcome some of the networking barriers such as their inability of free movement and lack of transportations due to their social and cultural restrictions. It is now confirmed that with the snowballing rise in the use of internet and communication technology, women entrepreneurs can target their markets and customer using online social websites. Hence, advancement of technology and communication media availability can promote women entrepreneurship success and minimise their possibility to fail (Indrupati & & Henari, 2012). As such, they can contribute more effectively in the development of the economy in a variety of contexts.

Practical Contribution and implications

Since networks have direct implications for entrepreneurship, the study has attempted to help women entrepreneurs to improve their entrepreneurship ability and skills in Saudi Arabia. The concern towards the development of female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia is one of the most significant problems that do not solely rely on business factors. Religion and culture are two of the most critical factors of this phenomenon and especially in cities like Riyadh where the government is closely attached to the religious beliefs. These links can expand its efforts to promote the involvement of females in the business world. As per this statement, there are various projects that can be adopted by the government to expand to a greater level. Conferences and Networking training female programs will work efficiently. Professional associations, mentoring, building an online portal with appropriate links and information regarding government laws and efforts and more research can be of great help too. In 2008, Goldman Sachs has started a new program named 10,000 Women through which women in developing countries are helped to build entrepreneurial skills and business sense. Saudi Arabia has not been a part of this program, although Egypt has enrolled.

Therefore, some of those efforts should be adopted by Saudi Arabia for strengthening its female business world.

Saudi women entrepreneurs, despite of all the obstacles and barriers they face, they try hard to establish and to run their own enterprises to guarantee their positions in the community and to push aside all the boundaries they face..However, it has been observed that such business practices of female entrepreneurs are needed to be supported by different relationships and network. According to Danish and Smith, one of the reasons for female entrepreneurs' success is rooted in their relationships, since these relationships act as a huge support by rendering help in organizing operational programs and also assist them in forming new networking relations (Danish & Smith, 2012). These relations and networks will help and will support Saudi women entrepreneurs who aim to obtain continuation for their businesses as well as to contribute in enhancing the productivity of their organizations that is directly related to the country s economic, social and culture development. Furthermore, it has been found that there are actors (such as family members and government) who are involved in such networks and relationships that can support women entrepreneurs and can help them to obtain significant resources, business information, and knowledge.

In addition to this, it is proved that different relationships between female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia can help them in making effective decisions that could contribute to the success of respective business ventures. Therefore, it can be said that networking of female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia should acquire great attention from researchers, policy makers and third party institutes in order to help female entrepreneurs overcome all these barriers.

Besides, more diverse network for Saudi women entrepreneurs is recommended. Saudi women suffer from not being able to access valuable information and opportunity due to gender segregation and their inability to exchange information and to collaborate with other businessmen. Men entrepreneurs are advantaged in the Saudi society and they acquire more resources. In addition, the issue of trust among women is one of the problems that is associated with women's network, As according to Wijdan:

"فرجال الأعمال الرجال أعمالهم أكثر حجما وينفعوا بعض في المشاريع و اكبر من سيدات الأعمال و علي فكره انا هذا الشئ واجهته ان السيدات الأعمال ما ينفعوا بعض. ما يخدموا بعض في مجال المشاريع لا اعرف قد يكون لعدم ثقة المرأة في المرأة ،قد يكون شئ فسيولوجي

معروف إن المرأة لا تثق في المرأة. ممكن المرأة تثق أكثر في الرجل وتشتغل معاه وممكن
الرجل يثق في المرأة ويشتغل معاها لكن امرأة مع أمراه...(تهز رأسها بمعني لأ..)"

Men entrepreneurs's businesses are of bigger size than women's
businesses and they collaborate and benefit each other more than women,
and for your information I faced this issue personally. Women do not
benefit each other. Some do not serve in the field of entrepreneurship, I do
not know, maybe it's due to women's lack of trust, or maybe it is due to
physiological factors that women do not trust women. Women trust men
and collaborate with them, but it is possible that men trust women and
work with them, but a woman with a woman!!... (Shaking her head means
No)". (Appendix 2, Line 869)

Another problem is associated with the uni-gender network, Saudi women entrepreneurs
consider their female counterparts as their own enemy. Maha reflects her anger, bitterness,
hostility or antagonism from other women, she says:

"Women do not support women, when I started my restaurant, which was
my first enemy and fighting me!!Women, I do not know why they are
doing that! Maha, (Appendix 2, Line 1702)

"فتحت المطعم من قاعد يعاديني البنات ليش ايش قاعدين تسون"

Thus, a more devised network can reduce the tension on Saudi women entrepreneurs
and provide them with better resources, knowledge and opportunities.

Likewise, concerning to the method of developing networks, Baron states that one of
the most important and key methods of network development is the sharing of knowledge
(Baron R. A., 2013). However, with regards to this area, it is found in the Saudi business
culture that female entrepreneurs give more importance to information and knowledge
sharing, they believe that the information is one of the effective ways to achieve success in
business ventures. The information or knowledge-sharing process also involves the practice
of collecting information by using different ways that help making effective business
decisions. In addition to this, it is recognized that in order to develop effective relationships
or networks for the success of the business at domestic level, the organization of business

events is one of the effective ways that is widely used. It is common in the business culture of Saudi Arabia that female entrepreneurs can establish strong networks that are full of information, knowledge and future opportunities. Besides, business events, entrepreneurial activities within different communities, are another way that gives rise to the development of networks and relationships for the sake of the business growth and development.

Noteworthy, women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are deprived of getting involved in community activities where they can be introduced to experienced businessmen and get involved with them in acquiring knowledge and information about their business activities, resources and opportunities. It is noted that in such kind of business activities, businessmen share knowledge and work experience with each other that help Saudi female entrepreneurs in making effective decisions and solving business issues. Moreover, it is also observed that the arrangement of business meetings and gatherings is another effective way of developing the network and social ties through which business professionals meet each other and share their point of views. These business meetings are usually arranged between different business ventures and entrepreneurs to share their perception and point of view about particular business issue. Thus, it can be said that by getting involved in such kind of business meetings and gatherings, female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia can acquire deep understanding about particular issues and about the methods and techniques that could better address certain concerns. It is one of the effective future opportunities for female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia by which they can develop their skills to efficiently deal with any obstacle if it occurs in the future within a respective organization or a business venture.

Moreover, in terms of developing networks at the international level, international business trips are considered as one of the effective approaches that help in building effective networks and effective decisions concerning international business ventures. In addition, business trips, in international markets, help female entrepreneurs in developing international relations that are potential to understand the international market thoroughly.

In addition, it is noticed that no matter what ways are female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia create networking and develop relationships with respect to the actors involved in, the culture impact is widely clear. Female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia put particular considerations toward rules, policies and procedures must be followed in the business industry of Saudi Arabia and that are established by the Government of the Saudi Arabia. Thus, it is suggested that the government in Saudi Arabia, with the support of His Highness

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King Abdullah, should work on improving women rights and empower them by forms several governmental rules and reforms in the governmental organisation and related institutes. It is also found that despite the reform derived by the economic necessity in Saudi Arabia and His Highness the King, still the type of "one step forward, two steps back" behaviour keeps Saudi female entrepreneurs unable to practice their full rights. With the current upheaval in the Arab world, both men and women have taken to the streets demanding for democracy, justice, equality and freedom of expression, it is ridiculous that we are still debating whether women should be permitted to drive, to travel alone or to take decisions. Thus, the Saudi government should make more efforts in order to impose the implementation of these reforms and rules in order to diminish obstacles facing Saudi women discrimination of women should not be tolerated.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

"I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance."

-Socrates- (469 BC - 399 BC)

(From Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers)

Introduction

It is noticed that Saudi women entrepreneurs have recently succeeded to draw the attention to them due to their unique social, business and cultural setting. However, it is noted that in addition to the scarcity of research on female entrepreneurs' networking activities and networking generally, entrepreneurship research lacks knowledge of female entrepreneurs in the Arab world, particularly, Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it is noted that most of the research carried on the area of women entrepreneurs are quantitative and based on structured surveys, because of the difficulty of accessing and communicating with Saudi women. This does not give the chance for women's voices to be heard to express their experiences in order to provide a deeper and better understanding of experiences, problems and obstacles they face. Also, it contributed to existing gender gap and omitted the impact of structural dimensions of women's social life, such as gender, race, ethnicity, religious, and class. This is resulted in lack of knowledge about the interrelationship and intersection between gender and different social divisions on women's entrepreneurial activities particularly networking and resources acquisition. Thus, this study has attempted to bridge the gap in the current knowledge and provide a deeper understanding of the female entrepreneurs' network activities in Saudi Arabia by adopting a qualitative approach.

Thus the aim of this study was to explore women entrepreneurial networking and interaction process in their socio-cultural context and surrounding milieu. Thus, an example has been taken from Saudi women entrepreneurs attempting to provide more understanding and knowledge of their entrepreneurial networking process in terms of activities, actions, sequences, resources, and strategies. Consequently, a qualitative approach has been proved to be the most appropriate for this study based on narrative inquiry as well as by using in-depth interviews of eleven Saudi women entrepreneurs. The adopted methodology proves helpful and suitable for both the research aims and context.

Saudi society possesses very unique characteristics. It is very conservative in respect to women and their communication and relationships, thus adopting in-depth interview is not

easy to be implemented due to difficulty of accessing women entrepreneurs. Yet, the researcher adopts a non-probability sampling technique and snow balling starting by a list of women entrepreneurs where their contact information is taken from the director of female section in the Eastern Chamber of Commerce along with some recommendations from that director due to a mutual trust with the researcher.

The conducted in-depth interviews provide adequate and sufficient information in order to carry on a qualitative thematic analysis. Using interviews techniques give the participants' the opportunity to share their experiences, to reflect their worlds, and to speak out their thoughts. Thematic analysis has provided the required answers for the research questions. Six themes have emerged from the data describing their networking process and the impact of the surrounding milieu and socio-cultural context on this process. These themes are: family and friends as a network building block, Formation of networks, Networking activities, Role of culture and traditions, benefits from entrepreneurial network, and Leveraging technology and social network websites.

The collected data in this study shows that female business women in Saudi Arabia are now establishing and managing a larger number of SMEs than at any time in the past. The good thing is that this trend is growing. However, there are many barriers and obstacles intertwined with their socio-cultural context. Regardless of all the challenges on both societal and institutional levels, women have a great role to play in strengthening the economics of their society. The female population of Saudi Arabia has a high percentage of educated women (58%). Moreover, the majority of women are smart tech users and their access to the internet keep them updated with the growing world. This new generation of women in Saudi Arabia has grown up in social-economic reform era where the female contributions are fairly acknowledged.

In summary, drawing upon the data from the interviews of eleven female entrepreneurs from Saudi Arabia and the literature reviews, the thrust of the present study has been to analyse the entrepreneurial networking process and its impact and usage by female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. It is clear that the networks are present, but they are not being used to full extent by the female entrepreneurs in KSA. Thus, there is a need to create a state of assistance in building a stronger entrepreneurial network to make sure that entrepreneurship amongst women in Saudi Arabia remains sustainable. It has been discovered through the extensive literature review that the entrepreneurial networks are strong tools of

starting up businesses in rural communities. Therefore, developing partnership and strengthening effective networks in rural communities should be considered to fulfil these needs.

Besides the above, growing evidence suggests that the new generation of female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are trying to create a model of entrepreneurship that could bring balance in their private and professional life. It has been revealed that female Saudi entrepreneurs are very ambitious, committed, positive, and they have the ability to overcome challenges they face. These women are optimistic about the future and the majority determines to expand their businesses at the international level. It is indicated that the participation of Saudi women in entrepreneurship is crucial to the future economic strength of Saudi Arabia. Thus, all religious scholars and government officials should look towards the need to propel the desire of changing and utilizing the untapped potential of Saudi women for the benefit of the nation's economic future and to overcome global challenges.

By depending on personal savings, family resources or third party organisations, women of Saudi Arabia can become a part of the labour force and can excel their status beyond traditional roles. With the growing reforms in the Arab world, Saudi women have to compromise in order to lead the Arab world. Although, much opposition stands in front of Saudi women empowerment, many women today are playing a major role in entrepreneurship. They work as women activists for the uplift and the benefit of women in their country, especially for young generations. They truly feel that they do not have the luxury of time, but they can bring benefit to their upcoming generations.

Limitations of the Study

Every research has some limitations. Those limitations may arise due to limited data, adoption of not much sophisticated methodology. Hence, it is essential to identify the limitations that are associated with this research since it helps the researcher in conducting further research. In this study, the foremost limitation is associated with the data since it is most likely that only a sufficient amount of data is available for conducting analysis, and it may include data that is considered iterative and least interesting for being selected for this research. The research strategy of interview consumes sufficient time to collect primary data for analysis. Several barriers and limitations such as time and place sometimes delay the

interview process with female entrepreneurs and make it difficult to represent the available and true picture of the problems.

Furthermore, the second limitation of the study under consideration is associated with the interview time since the researcher has duration of time between 90 to 180 minutes in which she has to conduct a complete interview with each participant. Because of this time limitation, some of the research participants were not able to give a detailed answer for each question. However, it would have been more informative if the researcher has had a longer time to conduct more in-depth and detailed interview from the research participants

Using a narrative approach in this study is associated with the limited number of research participants since the research under consideration is limited to only eleven female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. It is believed that only eleven female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia from one province cannot represent the whole business environment of Saudis in terms of developing relationships and networks on both international and domestic levels. Therefore, to take a broad view of the issue under consideration, a large sample size of female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia would be considered. In addition to this, it is also depicted that the present study also has geographical limitation, since it is limited to some regions of Saudi Arabia. However, in future this study gap can be filled by involving a larger number of participants in various regions of Saudi Arabia in order to better understand the perception and opinion of Saudi female entrepreneurs regarding developing relationships and network. Thus, this study does not claim generalizability, yet other limitations regarding the study are related to the reliability and validity of the data because it is possible that the economic conditions are affected due to recession and global economic crises.

Another limitation of the study is due to the use of cross-sectional data in the analysis. Cross-sectional data restricts the analysis for longer period due to lack of time dimension. It would not be possible for the researcher to analyse the network of Saudi female entrepreneurs over the time due to use of cross-sectional design in the study. However, as the purpose of the study is exploratory, so it is not essential to make analysis of network of Saudi female entrepreneurs over time.

Also, limitation of this study is associated with the language used in conducting the interview, conducting the analysis and writing the result. Since the mother tongue of the research participants is Arabic the interviews have to be conducted in their language, and the

analysis has to be conducted in the same language. However, translating the conversations and data extracts is necessary for writing of the final report, which causes the lost of subtle meanings and sometimes it does not make sense to a western reader. Thus, caution has to be taken while translating and conducting the meaning of the accounts. In addition to the guidance and direction taken from Dr. Maria Daslakaki and Dr. Stephen Gourlay the research supervisors, the researcher consulted a professional translator, not only this, but she checked the accuracy of the meaning several times in order to preserve the meaning as meant by the participants. Consideration of translation and interpretation strategies was a must.

Recommendations for Further Research

Due to the limitations associated with the current study, a number of further studies can be conducted in order to expand the current knowledge in the field. Since the aim of this study is not to generalise its findings, it is based on a limited number of participants from the Eastern province in Saudi Arabia due to availability factor, and limited resources. However, an expanded study with more in-depth interviews can be highly beneficial for future research. In addition, conducting longitudinal studies in women entrepreneurs in the Saudi context may be difficult due to their intention to secrecy and culture reservation, however, further studies that are based on longitudinal approach will be more informative in respect to networking process.

The study also directs for further research to focus on intersectionality, and embeddedness of women entrepreneurs and their activities. The approach of intersectionality provides a very helpful framework to draw on the multiplicity of women entrepreneurs' identities, particularly with respects to the interaction between gender, race and religion. Thus more and deep studies are required to provide deeper insights into the complexity of the women's identity as socially structured and work identity. In view of the fact that, the conflict among women multiple gender identities is more complicated and severe in masculine patriarchal societies as is the case in the Middle East, thus more intersectional studies are required.

In addition, even though this study has investigated the networking activities and process of women entrepreneurs in Saudi context, the differences between them and other women entrepreneurs in different environmental practices remain unrevealed. Thus, further investigations of women entrepreneurs in the other societies in the Arab world continue to be

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a very important area for research. In addition, comparative studies regarding gender differences in networking process and activities in Saudi Arabia would be valuable in the entrepreneurial context. This is to fill the gap in the information about networking and gender inequity in the entrepreneurship context. Additionally, comparative studies in networking process and activities in different contexts and milieus are very important since there is still a lot of information and models that can emerge in the field of entrepreneurial and social networking with respect to women.

The result of this study concludes that technology and online social network websites represent the core of the Saudi women entrepreneurs networking process, and they have found it as a way round to overcome social restrictions and constraints. Yet, further focused studies that investigate the effectiveness of these social websites and communication technology on women entrepreneurs' networks in different contexts would be valuable. This is to examine the devices and the technology that other women entrepreneurs rely on to form and to develop entrepreneurial networks.

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Appendix 1: Consent to Participate in Interview

K I N G S T O N
U N I V E R S I T Y

(Entrepreneurial Network Evolution: An Exploratory Study of Women Entrepreneurs in the Saudi Context)

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Nadia Abdelmegeed a PhD student in Faculty of Business and Law at Kingston University, London, in United Kingdom. The purpose of the study is to explore women entrepreneurs networking process and dynamics in the Saudi context. The results of this study will be included in the PhD thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because *(state reason)*. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

• This interview is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time. We expect that the interview will take about 1:30 – 2 hours.

• Unless you give us permission to use your name, title, and / or quote you in any publications that may result from this research, the information you tell us will be confidential.

• We would like to record this interview on audio cassette so that we can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. We will not record this interview without your permission. If you do grant permission for this conversation to be recorded on cassette, you have the right to revoke recording permission and/or end the interview at any time.

This project will be completed by September 2014. All interview recordings will be stored in a secure work space until (2 years) after that date. The tapes will then be destroyed.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

(Please check all that apply)

[] I give permission for this interview to be recorded on audio cassette.

[] I give permission for the following information to be included in publications resulting from this study:

[] my name   [] my title   [] direct quotes from this interview

Signature of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

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Appendix 2: Sample of Interview Data Extractions (Arabic and English Translations), and Initial Analysis Table

Line. N.	Data extraction	Data Extraction translation into English	Sub - Themes	Main Theme
20	البحرين ادرس هناك وجه معاهم اخوهم طبيب عيون و علمو الي فول بريس نتشن(full presentation)وشرح ولي الفكرة ب الكامل و اقتنعت فيها لان انا كان عندي خلفية قبل كده عن التسويق الالكتروني	When I studied in Bahrain. I was introduced to people who gave me a full presentation about e-marketing. Surprisingly one of those was a friend's brother who works as an optician. They really encouraged me a lot.	Friends & family as network building block	Friends & family as network building block
23	..واحده منهم اسمها ... كنت اعرفها بقي لي سنه يعني تقريبا طول سنين الجامعه و دلوقتي صرنا اكثر من اخوان وهم بحرينيات. كنت اسكن في البحرين	I couldn't forget Aisha. She was one of my best friends in Bahrain. We were a wonderful female group.	Gender role	Role of Culture and tradition
25	فكنا نتقابل انا وصاحباتي بشكل يومي بعد الدوام وبعدين صارو يجوا معايا الي السعوديه كل ما اجي عشان نفتح النت-ورك في السعوديه	I used to meet my friends daily after work, I even invited them to meet in Saudi Arabia	Network activities	Network activities
26	ال ان اتأسس خلاص بعد 6 شهور او سنه وبعد كده خلاص بقيت اجي لحالي.	I felt secure when they were with me until I got used to run my business alone.	Benefits from network	Benefits from network
28	هم كانوا بس صديقات و بعد ما صرنا شركاء في البيزنس اصبحنا كعائله واحده اكيد لأنه خلاص صار بينا بيزنس وروحه وجايه و سافرنا مع بعض وتوطدت العلاقة اكثر فصرنا اكثر من عائله	We started as friends and then we became partners in our business. We travelled together and our relation developed to become stronger and stronger, we became like a family.	Friends & family as network building block	Friends & family as network building block
29	هم اقرب لي من اخواني اللي من امي وأكيد اثروا عليه في الشئ اللي اتعلموه و كان حرصهم عليه ان اتعلم كل شئ بالبيزنس ليس فقط عشان يكبسوا هم كمان ولكن عشان يضمنوا ان انجح و اتعلم كل شئ و اقدر اشتغل لوحدي و اعتمد علي نفسي.	They weren't my siblings; however they treated me as one. I trusted them and they taught me a lot about our business to ensure my success.	Trustworthiness	Rational relation & intellect
33	طبعا الموضوع يختلف من شخص لشخص وطبيعة المسمي الوظيفي بتاعته و كان علاقة البيزنس اللي هاتكون بينا بالضبط بس فيه اشخاص زي،......... اللي دخلني البيزنس هو اخو اتنين من صاحباتي فعادي يعتبر محرم لما نروحونجيي مع بعض عادي فما كان فيه اي مشكله	The issue differs from one person to another. With the existence of 'Mahram' like ......, who was a brother of two of my friends, we could go in and out without any restraints.	Genderrole	Role of Culture and traditions
34	فعادي يعتبر محرم لما نروحونجيي مع بعض عادي فما كان فيه اي مشكله	With the existence of 'Mahram', we could go in and out without any restraints.	The necessity of 'Mahram'	Role Culture and traditions
37	ولكن لما بيكون فيه اشخاص جدد اكيد بيكون فيه حدود قوي بينا . وخاصة هنافي السعوديه ما اقدر اتعامل مع اي حد	However, when there are new outsiders in the context, there will be strong barriers between us especially in KSA.	Network limits	Role of culture and traditions
40	بس كل شخص دخل البيزنس اقدر اتكلم معاه وممكن شخص عازه اعرض عليه البيزنس أقدر اقعد معاه. لو انا اثق فيه وخاصة لو اتعرفت عليه عن طريق اشخاص اثق فيهم	Each one involved in business can be normally approached but within limits. However, I contact only those who I can trust or recommended to me by someone I trust.	Trustworthiness	Rational relation & intellectual
41	لأكثر من سبب في السعوديه..يحكم السمعه اول حاجوثاني شئ انه ماهو شرط انه يفهم الموضوع 100% بالطريقة اللي انا ابقي اوصله المعلوم فيها و ثالث شئ الهينة ..المجتمع حقتا بشكل عام فيه حدود لازم تكون فما ينفع انه كل يوم هاقابل شباب اعرض عليهم بيزنس ولا اجلس معشباب غرب ما اعرفهم	The issue is sometimes misunderstood by the community and by the religious police. In other words, I cannot simply sit with male strangers for marketing my business.	Gender role	Role of culture and traditions

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Appendix3: Summary of Findings:

Content, determinants and process of Saudi women entrepreneurial network

Actors involved in the network (Who)	Actors involved in the network ➢ Family (network backbone) ➢ Female friends ➢ Male guardian ➢ Male broker ➢ Government ➢ Customers Development of Social bonds: ➢ Family bonds & Friends (informal continues to exist as focal network) ➢ Influential people -VIPs based on power of families (formal does not evolve to informal) ➢ Customer, suppliers, mediators (formal and limited relationship does not evolve to informal)
Motivation for Network formation (Why)	➢ Raise awareness ➢ Trust ➢ Prosperity and commitment ➢ Access to resources
Network Process (How)	Activities and events ➢ Social gatherings ➢ Special events –Meetings and forums ➢ Join Exhibitions ➢ Join Institutions (chamber of commerce) ➢ Travelling outside the country ➢ Social networks web (facebook, twitter, etc.) ➢ Mobile devices (iphone, BlackBerry.. etc.)
Network Resources (What)	➢ Social protection against societal misjudgements ➢ Legitimacy of their entrepreneurship ➢ Legal advice ➢ Social acceptance ➢ Social capital ➢ Economic resources ➢ Information/knowledge ➢ Facilitating business matters and special treatment
Socio- cultural specific Variables (Barriers)	➢ Gender segregation ➢ Social norms ➢ Lack of free mobility and transportation ➢ Male guardianship ➢ Social isolation ➢ Religious police (CPVPV) ➢ Nepotism &Favouritism

Appendix 4: Total number of registered women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia

إجمالي عدد السجلات المسجلة لسيدات الأعمال

(Total number of registered records for women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia)

الربع الثاني من العام 1435هـ مقارنة بنفس الفترة من العام 1434هـ

The second quarter of 2013 compared to the same period of the year 2012

(Table 1)

الفرق differences	الربع الثاني 2013 عام 1435هـ	الربع الثاني 2012 عام 1434 هـ	Registration Office مكتب السجل	الرمز Code
-226	1588	1,814	الرياض	1010
-58	98	156	الخرج	1011
-13	22	35	الدلم	1012
-4	12	16	حوطه بني تميم	1013
2	6	4	الحريق	1014
6	27	21	الافلاج	1015
-1	1	2	حريملاء	1018
-5	0	5	ثادق	1019
0	1	1	ضرما	1110
3	9	6	المزاحميه	1111
1	1	0	مرات	1112
-7	13	20	شقراء	1113
0	1	1	القصب	1114
-2	14	16	ساجر	1115
-9	21	30	الدوادمي	1116
-5	13	18	القويعيه	1117
-27	22	49	عفيف	1118
-25	17	42	المجمعه	1122
-6	20	26	الزلفي	1123
6	10	4	الغاط	1124
-9	4	13	الارطاويه	1125
-4	12	16	سدير	1126
-81	63	144	عنيزه	1128
-37	14	51	البدائع	1129
-9	5	14	المذنب	1130
-98	63	161	بريده	1131
17	17	0	الرس	1132
-11	18	29	البكيريه	1134

-11	10	21	الاسياح	1136
-1	0	1	شري	1137
2	2	0	الخبرا	1166
-4	2	6	السر	1170
-2	0	2	ثرمداء	1171
-9	9	18	الجمش	1186
-2	0	2	البجاديه	1187
-95	188	283	الدمام	2050
-20	160	180	الخبر	2051
-7	9	16	الظهران	2052
-4	57	61	القطيف	2053
-19	47	66	الجبيل	2055
-14	12	26	النعيريه	2056
-45	24	69	الخفجي	2057
-4	1	5	السفانيه	2058
-9	25	34	بقيق	2059
-6	1	7	الثقبه	2060
-10	23	33	سيهات	2062
-7	7	14	صفوي	2063
-1	8	9	قريه	2065
-3	5	8	راس تنوره	2066
27	53	26	قري الاحساء	2250
0	84	84	الهفوف	2251
-17	58	75	المبرز	2252
-1	1	2	سلوي	2254
0	1	1	حرض	2256
-2	5	7	العيون	2257
-85	122	207	حفر الباطن	2511
-6	4	10	القيصومه	2512
2	7	5	الذيبيه	2514
-1	2	3	السعيره	2526
-206	73	279	حائل	3350
0	3	3	الحليقه	3351
0	4	4	بقعاء	3352
-3	1	4	موقق	3353
-6	3	9	الحايط	3356
-15	27	42	قري حائل	3357
-4	0	4	جبه	3358
-1	2	3	تربه	3359
-6	3	9	الشملي	3360
-2	0	2	الروضه	3361
-2	0	2	السليمي	3363

-2	0	2	الخطه	3364
10	10	0	الشنان	3365
-26	43	69	سكاكا	3400
-4	13	17	دومه الجندل	3401
21	34	13	طبرجل	3402
-7	3	10	قارا	3403
-3	1	4	صوير	3404
-2	0	2	هديب	3405
-1	3	4	الاضارع	3406
-5	0	5	اللقائط	3407
4	32	28	عرعر	3450
-6	5	11	طريف	3451
-21	20	41	رفحا	3453
-10	12	22	تبوك	3550
-2	0	2	الوجه	3552
0	1	1	حقل	3553
4	5	1	تيماء	3554
3	3	0	ضباء	3555
1	1	0	شواق	3566
-122	745	867	جده	4030
-47	315	362	مكه المكرمه	4031
-50	274	324	الطائف	4032
-8	9	17	الخرمه	4033
-5	15	20	تربه	4034
-2	5	7	بني مالك	4035
4	11	7	رنيه	4036
-2	11	13	المويه	4037
-3	0	3	ظلم	4038
2	3	1	مستوره	4040
-2	0	2	ذهبان	4041
-3	3	6	عسفان	4042
3	3	0	ابوراكه	4043
1	4	3	بالحارث	4044
2	8	6	قياء	4046
3	4	1	ترعه ثقيف	4047
-1	23	24	الليث	4601
4	17	13	رابغ	4602
-30	19	49	القنفذه	4603
3	4	1	خليص	4604
-1	2	3	الكامل	4605
-49	302	351	المدينه المنوره	4650
-5	15	20	العلا	4651

2	6	4	المهد	4652
4	9	5	الحناكيه	4653
0	1	1	الحسو	4654
-1	0	1	الثمد	4655
3	4	1	السويرقيه	4659
0	1	1	الفريش	4660
5	13	8	وادي الفرع	4661
3	12	9	خيبر	4662
2	3	1	الصلصله	4663
1	1	0	الصويدره	4664
1	1	0	ثرب	4666
1	60	59	ينبع	4700
2	3	1	املج	4701
-4	5	9	بدر	4702
2	2	0	المسيجيد	4704
8	32	24	الباحه	5800
2	16	14	بلجرشي	5801
2	11	9	المندق	5802
2	5	3	بني حسن	5803
-1	0	1	دوس	5804
-4	5	9	القري	5805
3	15	12	المخواه	5806
1	2	1	غامد الزناد	5807
1	6	5	قلوي	5808
2	2	0	الشعراء	5809
-8	8	16	عقيق	5810
-6	36	42	ابها	5850
4	21	17	بيشه	5851
-6	20	26	قري الحجاز	5852
-1	7	8	تثليث	5854
-25	82	107	خميس مشيط	5855
1	10	9	سراه عبيده	5856
2	8	6	احد رفيده	5857
-3	7	10	ظهران الجنوب	5858
-6	9	15	النماص	5859
7	15	8	محائل	5860
-8	0	8	رجال المع	5861
-1	5	6	تنومه	5862
1	4	3	بني عمرو	5863
9	26	17	المجارده	5864
-2	0	2	ذهبان	5869
7	53	46	جيزان	5900

-4	33	37	ابو عريش	5901
0	26	26	بيش	5903
2	5	3	ضمد	5904
2	3	1	فيفا	5905
-12	14	26	صبيا	5906
7	24	17	صامطه	5907
1	7	6	فراسان	5908
-1	9	10	الداير بني	5909
4	4	0	هروب	5910
-7	14	21	الاحد	5911
-1,561	**5,778**	**7,339**	**المجموع**	

*The number of female entrepreneurs registered in the cities of Eastern governance is highlighted which represents 704 business.(Source: Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry 's Statistical reports, 2013)

Appendix 5:Total number of registered Business in Saudi Arabia
إجمالي عدد السجلات المسجلة
(Total number of registered records of Business in Saudi Arabia)

الربع الثاني من العام 1435هـ مقارنة بنفس الفترة من العام 1434هـ
The second quarter of 2013 compared to the same period of the year 2012

(Table 2)

الفرق Differen ces	الربع الثاني عام 1435هـ 2013	الربع الثاني عام 1434 هـ 2012	مكتب السجل Registration Offices	الرمز Cod e
-316	9260	9,576	الرياض	1010
-48	518	566	الخرج	1011
-8	86	94	الدلم	1012
3	51	48	حوطه بني تميم	1013
10	17	7	الحريق	1014
52	119	67	الافلاج	1015
22	75	53	السليل	1017
-2	7	9	حريملاء	1018
-19	10	29	ثادق	1019
2	2	0	رغبه	1020
2	22	20	ضرما	1110
-9	56	65	المزاحميه	1111
9	20	11	مرات	1112
1	97	96	شقراء	1113
1	5	4	القصب	1114
-9	85	94	ساجر	1115
-72	163	235	الدوادمي	1116
7	88	81	القويعيه	1117
-52	98	150	عفيف	1118
17	40	23	رماح	1120
-27	101	128	المجمعه	1122
10	145	135	الزلفي	1123
1	11	10	الغاط	1124
-16	28	44	الارطاويه	1125
11	81	70	سدير	1126
-91	483	574	عنيزه	1128
-92	94	186	البدائع	1129
-87	56	143	المذنب	1130
-237	1127	1,364	بريده	1131

-45	240	285	الرس	1132
16	133	117	البكيريه	1134
-18	55	73	رياض الخبرا	1135
-80	69	149	الاسياح	1136
-1	0	1	شري	1137
3	6	3	الفواره	1138
-14	26	40	عقله الصقور	1140
-14	23	37	النبهانيه	1151
-7	16	23	دخنه	1155
-7	30	37	ضريه	1163
-1	26	27	الخبرا	1166
-3	12	15	السر	1170
1	5	4	ثرمداء	1171
0	1	1	ملهم	1173
22	177	155	وادي الدواسر	1185
-14	55	69	الجمش	1186
0	25	25	البجاديه	1187
-62	2116	2,178	الدمام	2050
58	1152	1,094	الخبر	2051
10	79	69	الظهران	2052
34	463	429	القطيف	2053
0	1	1	رحيمه	2054
-144	676	820	الجبيل	2055
-29	95	124	النعيريه	2056
-99	198	297	الخفجي	2057
-8	3	11	السفانيه	2058
-11	132	143	بقيق	2059
-3	40	43	الثقبه	2060
-19	127	146	سيهات	2062
-4	65	69	صفوي	2063
-6	46	52	قريه	2065
-2	79	81	راس تنوره	2066
61	272	211	قري الاحساء	2250
5	594	589	الهفوف	2251
31	441	410	المبرز	2252
3	13	10	سلوي	2254
9	14	5	حرض	2256
-2	39	41	العيون	2257
4	4	0	عين دار	2258
-202	496	698	حفر الباطن	2511
-8	24	32	القيصومه	2512
-4	13	17	الذييبه	2514

-10	3	13	السعيره	2526
-451	592	1,043	حائل	3350
4	12	8	الحليقه	3351
-37	14	51	بقعاء	3352
-4	8	12	موقق	3353
-2	0	2	ضرغط	3354
2	30	28	الحايط	3356
-65	93	158	قري حائل	3357
-4	3	7	جبه	3358
2	17	15	تربه	3359
11	29	18	الشملي	3360
-2	2	4	الروضه	3361
-5	1	6	الكهفه	3362
-2	1	3	السليمي	3363
-6	3	9	الخطه	3364
46	46	0	الشنان	3365
-1	297	298	سكاكا	3400
1	54	53	دومه الجندل	3401
50	77	27	طبرجل	3402
-11	13	24	قارا	3403
2	13	11	صوير	3404
-4	1	5	هديب	3405
8	13	5	الاضارع	3406
-6	6	12	اللقائط	3407
-2	3	5	زلوم	3409
-41	218	259	عرعر	3450
-14	73	87	طريف	3451
22	222	200	القريات	3452
-23	93	116	رفحا	3453
226	997	771	تبوك	3550
-2	2	4	حاله عمار	3551
-3	65	68	الوجه	3552
45	70	25	حقل	3553
34	75	41	تيماء	3554
16	48	32	ضباء	3555
9	19	10	البدع	3556
2	4	2	شرما	3557
1	3	2	المويلح	3558
1	2	1	قيال	3560
1	1	0	الشرف	3561
2	4	2	مقنا	3562
0	1	1	الخريبه	3563

6	22	16	البنر	3564
4	9	5	شواق	3566
1	1	0	القليبه	3567
1	1	0	الديسه	3569
-1	0	1	المعظم	3570
379	5662	5.283	جده	4030
160	2019	1,859	مكه المكرمه	4031
227	1501	1,274	الطائف	4032
17	55	38	الخرمه	4033
-1	65	66	تربه	4034
16	43	27	بني مالك	4035
26	53	27	رنيه	4036
32	54	22	المويه	4037
-7	3	10	ظلم	4038
1	4	3	مستوره	4040
-5	16	21	ذهبان	4041
-12	11	23	عسفان	4042
8	8	0	ابوراكه	4043
-3	9	12	بالحارث	4044
13	26	13	قياء	4046
8	13	5	ترعه ثقيف	4047
1	1	0	غزايل	4048
16	108	92	الليث	4601
1	107	106	رابغ	4602
-1	254	255	القنفذه	4603
2	38	36	خليص	4604
7	19	12	الكامل	4605
1	1	0	مدركه	4621
0	1	1	الجموم	4622
-78	2047	2,125	المدينه المنوره	4650
-30	83	113	العلا	4651
34	46	12	المهد	4652
14	50	36	الحناكيه	4653
2	4	2	الحسو	4654
-3	8	11	الثمد	4655
1	1	0	العمق	4656
-10	1	11	المليليح	4658
12	27	15	السويرقيه	4659
5	14	9	الفريش	4660
14	50	36	وادي الفرع	4661
-7	43	50	خيبر	4662
-2	10	12	الصلصله	4663

3	7	4	الصويدره	4664
1	1	0	الشقره	4665
6	7	1	ثرب	4666
41	485	444	ينبع	4700
5	72	67	املج	4701
18	61	43	بدر	4702
1	2	1	الواسطه	4703
0	5	5	المسيجيد	4704
86	218	132	الباحه	5800
29	129	100	بلجرشي	5801
8	37	29	المندق	5802
8	14	6	بني حسن	5803
0	2	2	دوس	5804
10	55	45	القري	5805
30	94	64	المخواه	5806
-3	6	9	غامد الزناد	5807
45	77	32	قلوي	5808
9	10	1	الشعراء	5809
-9	44	53	عقيق	5810
49	565	516	ابها	5850
105	397	292	بيشه	5851
-7	151	158	قري الحجاز	5852
17	69	52	تثليث	5854
170	1324	1,154	خميس مشيط	5855
18	97	79	سراه عبيده	5856
13	131	118	احد رفيده	5857
23	89	66	ظهران الجنوب	5858
10	76	66	النماص	5859
85	266	181	محائل	5860
-17	79	96	رجال المع	5861
22	45	23	تنومه	5862
1	13	12	بني عمرو	5863
73	169	96	المجارده	5864
14	16	2	قناءوالبحر	5865
-21	0	21	ذهبان	5869
22	382	360	جيزان	5900
26	229	203	ابو عريش	5901
4	6	2	الشقيري	5902
16	195	179	بيش	5903
0	30	30	ضمد	5904
11	19	8	فيفا	5905
6	172	166	صبيا	5906

23	150	127	صامطه	5907
5	23	18	فراسان	5908
-5	52	57	الداير بني	5909
-1	10	11	هروب	5910
3	103	100	الاحد	5911
-53	710	763	نجران	5950
28	87	59	شروره	5951
80	**43,723**	**43,643**	**المجموع**	

*The total number of entrepreneurs registered in the cities of Eastern governance is highlighted.(
Source: Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry statistical reports , 2013)