

# Internal and External Factors on Women's Entrepreneurship Performance in The State of Kuwait

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## Abstract

**Aim:** This paper aims to identify factors that influence women's entrepreneurship performance in the state of Kuwait. **Method:** As the current study is considered as an exploratory in its nature, a qualitative approach based on semi-structure interview was the most suitable method for data collection. **Population and Sample:** As there is no accurate number of women entrepreneurs, the study depends on a convenience sample and 9 women entrepreneurs were invited to participate in this study. The results revealed a set of factors that influence women entrepreneurs' performance: internal(personal) factors, such as goals, motives, entrepreneurial orientation, and human capital; external (environmental) factors including cultural (value and religion), social (family and friends), economic, and legal and administrative, and time management. Both sets of factors help women to recognize market opportunity and positively affect women entrepreneurs' performance. **Practical implications:** policy and decision makers in the state of Kuwait can devise the tools, methods, and techniques to reduce the negative impacts of these factors to enhance women entrepreneur's performance. **Theoretical implications:** future research are invited to explore the impact of the current factors and may be other factors on the sectorial level as women entrepreneurs' performance influence by general factors that are related to entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country level and there are factors on the sector level. **Originality:** the originality of this work emerges from two-folds: it modifies the work of Shane (2003) to fit the context of this study and testing the modified version in unique context socially, economically, and politically, culturally, and religiously. In general, it validates some of the well-established assumptions about women entrepreneurship that contend by prior studies.

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**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurs performance, entrepreneurial orientation, personal factors, environmental factors, Women entrepreneurship in Kuwait.

## Introduction

Nowadays, women are the driving force behind developing the economy and welfare in most countries. Women Entrepreneurship is growing in most economies around the globe. In 2017, 35% of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) population were women, thus, most of the GCC governments have started focusing on women's entrepreneurship (National Institutes of Statistics, 2017; Metcalfe, 2008; Murray & Zhang-zhang, 2018)). Therefore, women's labor force has increased significantly in the last decade in the GCC region, as



women have equalized 1.5 million Gulf women, equivalent to 83% of the labor force at the regional level according to World Bank statistics (World Bank, 2010).

Entrepreneurship is an instrumental transformation of social and cultural economic growth (Schumpeter, 1942). Entrepreneurship is one of the significant indicators of global sustainability and competitiveness Index Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Ivie, 2015). Prior research confirmed that entrepreneurship accelerates economic and technological development (Hassan & Almubarak, 2016; AlRaei, Ritzen & Crombrugghe, 2018). Accordingly, developed and developing countries started fostering entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs by devising all needed means and methods for successful entrepreneurship. The continual crises highlight the importance of entrepreneurship to respond, recover from crisis and an effective way to move the wheel of the economy when a recession hit the economy. Therefore, it becomes clear the link between entrepreneurship, economy, crises, and innovation. Under COVID-19 crisis, the entrepreneurship is needed more than ever before. New ways of dealing with the pandemic are taking place, new ways of offering health service are underway, new ways of carrying out tasks are invented, new means of delivering products and service have already taken place, new types of business are growing and thrive. In addition to the serial consequences of the health crisis that require entrepreneurship and innovation, the oil price crisis is prevalent in the GCC region, since then, all the GCC countries doing their best to diversify their economy from oil-based economy (Mathew, 2019; El-Ghannam, 2002).

Based on previous studies and according to the World Bank (2003-2006), it was found that women in the Middle East and North Africa own only 13% of the businesses, about 30% in Lebanon and 20% in Egypt to just 10% in Morocco and Syria (The World Bank, 2006; Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011; Bastain, 2018)). This indicates that the percentage of women-owned companies in the Middle East is much lower than in the USA and Europe. The reason of this low numbers of female the Middle East business owners, it might be because of the male dominant in this field gender-related obstacles (Nair, 2020; McIntosh and Islam (2010) described the effect of Islam on women's business choices and whether women who show a strong commitment to Islam, are more effective in securing funding from Islamic banks and gaining access to business networks, in which this reason Islamic practices are still valid (Al-owaitan & Rao, 2010). Despite the importance of women entrepreneurship for the success of Kuwait vision 2035, the successful women entrepreneurs are limited. In addition, there is scarce of research that focus on women entrepreneur's performance in the GCC and in Kuwait. Furthermore, most of the prior literature covered critical issues related to women entrepreneurship in developed countries but ignore the importance of women entrepreneurship in developing countries as a critical means to improve the world economy (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011; Faisal, et al., 2017). Therefore, this study came to fill this void in the literature and came on the right time where not only GCC countries in crisis but the whole world suffering and entrepreneurship is the best means to get out of this crisis by developing new innovation health, economic, and work solutions.

## Literature Review

There is a plethora of research studies that embraced the entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs in general. However, there is still lack of studies that focus on women entrepreneurship in particular. Women entrepreneurship studies formed less than 10% of all research studies in entrepreneurship. Prior studies highlighted the importance

of two sets of factors that influence women entrepreneurial effort and determine its success: internal factors (personal), external factor (environmental) (Brush, & Cooper, 2012). Before we discuss these groups of factors, it is very important to understand what entrepreneurship and entrepreneur are means according to the prior studies. Jawdat (2018) perceived entrepreneurship as “The process of establishing a new organization or developing an existing one; creating a new business or responding to new investment opportunities by preparing to manage, organize and develop projects in conjunction with risk, in order to reach profits based on creating new business, taking advantage of the available resources including the business and the capital” (Jawdat, 2018). Simultaneously, Barringer (2011) defined the entrepreneurs as an individual seeking to create a new project although he was not sure of the results. Kwong, Jones & Evans and Thompson (2012), describe the entrepreneurs as people who are willing to make an opportunity and provide resources, time, effort, and necessary actions to ensure success. The role of women in entrepreneurship is undeniable as women formed more than 50% of the total society in most communities. In a research conducted by Audretsch, Keilbach & Lehmann (2006) defined women’s entrepreneurship as an innovative process that requires knowledge, reading, and writing with creativity and self-affirmation, where women are heading globally to start their own businesses.

Many social and economic studies that are concerned with the contribution of women to the economy are still focusing on women’s entrepreneurship (Fatima, 2008). The World Bank mentioned that women in developed countries face significant difficulties in securing project financing compared to men, and for many reasons i.e. lack of grantee mortgage land for which a loan can be acquired (World Bank, 2011). A series of previous research summarized the obstacles that face women entrepreneurship. Represented by a decrease in capital, a lower ratio of finance compared to males, as well as the weakness of accessing to capital (De Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2006; Ahmad et al., 2018; Erogul, Rod & Barragan, 2019; Tong, McCrohan & Erogul, 2012). For example, in the UAE Naser, Nuseibeh, and Mohammed (2012) used an experimental evidence to identify the factors that motivate women to self-employment and found the factors that affect women’s decision to start her own business in the UAE. They concluded that the financial support from the government, especially the initial investment capital, is an important factor that motivates women to establish their own business. In addition, self-realization, education, skills, and experience, as well as the relationship of women with their husband or father, or both, are important factors in the development of women entrepreneurs (Alqubaiti, et al., 2018; Naguib & Jamali, 2015). The research used the quantitative approach using a survey that contains many of different factors which were documented based on previous research. And it included 750 entrepreneurs in the UAE, in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and they’ve pointed that the opinion of other entrepreneurs in UAE should be taken (Naser, Nuseibeh, & Mohammed, 2012).

Across the GCC, women’s entrepreneurship events, challenges, and accessible support services differ. For example, 54 percent of Saudi women are said to face the greatest difficulty in obtaining money, while only 12 percent of Bahraini women face similar difficulties (Alturki and Braswell, 2010; Bahrami, 2014). As you might have noted, there is a significant difference between these two nations. As can be seen, there is a significant gap between these two countries in this region. In terms of entrepreneurship, some nations, such as Saudi Arabia (Welsh, et al., 2014; Alhabidi, 2013; Fallatah, 2012; Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018; Troemel & Strait, 2013), Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (Goby & Erogul), tend to be at the forefront, while Kuwait, Qatar (Kebaili, Al-

Subyae & Al-qahtani, 2017), and Oman's women have not been as involved as the first three. Saudi women appear to be the most positive about their short-term business prospects (70 percent), according to the survey.

In Pakistani context, a study found that there is no effective development strategy to help women starting their new business ventures and this is reason behind why they cannot be successful entrepreneurs (AlMunajjed, 2010). It concludes that most of the Pakistani women participate in the family income and develop their education to increase their income and live a better life (AlMunajjed, 2010). De Haan (2014) conducted a research in UAE focusing on two groups of entrepreneurs: the first group; which makes up the majority of women as they practice their traditional businesses like: (perfume mixing, traditional clothes, and different handicrafts), often run by old women working in their home. The second group participates in more modernity businesses, often using advanced communication techniques and contemporary business practices, and it pointed that most of these young women have received a good education that help them to develop their new business endeavors. Regarding factors that influence women entrepreneurship success, two sets of factors include external and internal factors as follows:

### **1. Internal (Personal) factors:**

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicated that women's economic participation promotes exploitation of unused talents pool and skills and enhances social consistency. In addition, women's participation in the economy increases their independence and ability to make decisions related to critical things in their lives, as well as strengthening their economic and social status (Sabeti & Hamdan, 2019; OECD, 2018). There are also several internal factors that affect the performance of businesswomen, of which the most important are: The entrepreneurial orientation, human capital, goals, and motivations of entrepreneurs.

The *entrepreneurial orientation* is the first factor that determine women entrepreneurship success. According to Wiklund & Shepherd (2005) entrepreneurial orientation improves the company's performance and that companies facing performance constraints in terms of a stable environment and limited access to capital can be superior performers if they have a high level of entrepreneurial orientation. Referring to the entrepreneurship Theory of Shane (2003), entrepreneurial orientation is the ability of entrepreneurs to discover entrepreneurial opportunities and learn how to take advantage of them, as they differ among individuals and are based on the individual situation with regard to risk acceptance (Shane, 2003). Accordingly, we conclude that people who have a negative attitude towards risk will not be able to recognize opportunity to create new project. In the same context, some people have creative work or new ideas and have a great tendency to access finance, however, fear of taking the risk will prevent them from making good use of the opportunity for creating projects.

The second important factor is *human capital*; however, it is often measured by education and experience. Anderson & Miller (2003) indicated that entrepreneurs are well educated. Their business and projects are characterized by high profitability and higher potential for growth and expansion. Researchers also showed that influential entrepreneurs with extended social networks have high potential that can be considered as part of his/her human capital. As a result, entrepreneurs of the highest socio-economic class can gain higher social and financial support (Anderson, & Miller, 2003). In South Africa, a

research has been done by Fatoki (2011) on the impact of human, social and financial capital on business performance, it found that the business failure rate was very high in South Africa. While a significant positive relationship between human, social and financial capital on business performance in small and medium-sized enterprises (Fatoki, 2011).

The third important factor is the *goals and motivations of entrepreneurs*. Although several prior studies focus on the crucial role of this factor in the success of women entrepreneurship, the results were varied and undecided which open the path for future studies to explore this issue further to enrich our understanding. For example, in a study conducted by researchers Benzing, Chu, & Kara (2008) aimed to analyze factors influencing entrepreneurship such as: motivation, success and problems in Turkey, the results showed that entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized enterprises are encouraged by incentives and rewards, and among the most important factor of success is entrepreneur's reputation. They added that social skills and a good customer service considered as factors of success. Finally, they pointed out the most serious problem facing entrepreneurs in Turkey is the complex tax mechanism. Other problems such as unreliable employees, inability to keep good records and a weak economy hinder the success of entrepreneurship development.

Buttner and Moore (2007) agree with Benzing's observations, after studying the reasons for the emigration of female entrepreneurs, as the results indicated that the most important motives of migration were for internal and personal reasons and motives, such as the desire to challenge and self-determination, as well as the desire to prove the possibility of balancing between family and work responsibilities. In addition, there is another study done by Belwal, Belwal & Al Saidi (2014) about the characteristics and motivations of entrepreneurs in Oman, the results showed that there is an urgent desire to strike a balance between work responsibilities and family life, the search for stable work, and the intention to take advantage of the position of the market. The researchers also indicated that the main difficulty faced by female entrepreneurs is the inadequacy of financial resources and access to external finance. Not only the internal(personal) factors that determine the success of women entrepreneurship but also the external(environmental) factors may have a critical role.

## **2. External (Environmental) factors:**

Several studies have agreed that external factors have a stronger impact than internal factors on the performance of female entrepreneurs. The most influential factors as shown in Table 1, are the Industry Characteristics (IC) of small and medium-sized enterprises, Economic Factors (EFs), Social and Cultural factors ( SCF) , Legal and Administrative factors ( LAF) according to some studies (Ennis, 2019; Tlaiss, 2015). This indicates that the characteristics of small and medium Enterprise (SMEs), such as location, size, age and quality of product/service, are key requirements for successful women entrepreneurship. Female entrepreneurs should also develop detailed development strategies to enhance their performance and constantly learn the skills required at work (Hertog, 2010; Hasan, & Almubarak, 2016). Brush confirmed that there is equality in the advantages offered to both male and female entrepreneurs. He limited the advantages to business development services, entrepreneur training, and he agreed with the previous study about the importance of the size and age of the Company (Brush & cooper, 2012). Another study showed the ability of women to develop their own business through their abilities to form social relations and to create a balance between their work and other



concerns related to social relations and relatives (Zeidan, & Bahrami, 2011).

Regarding economic factors, a study conducted by Ennis (2019), discussed the economic motivations of female entrepreneurs in Arab Gulf countries. The results showed that the United Arab Emirates, which is the richest in resources and preserving its traditions by following the Islamic religion values and norms, has an economic structure, development plans, and social and economic organization that affects the performance of female entrepreneurs. The results also indicated that the economy in UAE encourages women entrepreneurs and opens a space for them to create their own business, where government and business entities are basically promoting this tendency with a view to creating a positive economic image of a woman-friendly business environment. Encouraging entrepreneurship has been shown to relieve the country from economic and political pressures. He also noted that the Omani and Qatari economy require multiple regulatory adjustments to stimulate the integration of women in the workplace, as well as the need for some sectors of the economy to be reorganized from top to bottom as they discourage women economically (Ennis, 2019).

Regarding social factors, the results of the Tlaiss study showed that the government's efforts to encourage female entrepreneurs have increased the social acceptability of female entrepreneurship as a profession. The study showed how women were attracted to entrepreneurship is the result of behavioral and structural constraints they faced in working place as employees (Tlaiss, 2014; Jabeen & Faisal, 2018). In a study conducted in Oman, the researcher recommended an urgent need to establish a network to encourage Omani women to share their experiences, in order to equip them with the right skills, competencies, support and motivation that are appropriate for the diversification of the national economy and socio-economic empowerment (Jabeen, Faisal & Katsiloulides, 2017; Khan, Ghosh & Myers, 2005). There is also a key role for social relations in influencing business prosperity and stability and contributing to recognizing opportunities and resources. In addition, studies have indicated the importance of getting emotional support from a close social network (husband, father, mother, friends and relatives) rather than support from remote social networks (such as work collaborators, colleagues and former workers). Emotional support from the husband is also very critical to the success of female entrepreneurs (Omwenga et al., 2013). To conclude, there are a set of external factors that influence women entrepreneurship successful development, however, prior studies in the GCC region were fragmented and undecided which are the key factors that determine women entrepreneurship and how to foster and create the conducive business environment that encourage guarantee the success of women entrepreneurship. Reviewing the related literature enable the research team to identify and define the research problem precisely and accurately as follows:

### **Research Problem**

The intention towards women entrepreneurship is growing significantly in the GCC region. Most governments in the region formed formal and informal bodies that support women entrepreneurship. Developing and updating all their regulatory systems to foster women entrepreneurship. the literature is full of studies that try to understand entrepreneurship and explored various issues, however, there is a lack of studies that focus on the influencing factors and challenges that women entrepreneurs normally faced (Hasan, Almubarak, 2016), particularly in Kuwait. In fact, the entrepreneurship, in general, is conceived as a masculine phenomenon. Hence, still, there is a gender gap between

males and females in terms of entrepreneurship developments and its success. Gender disparities in an entrepreneurial world was reported as a key problem that needs further exploration and innovative solutions (Mozammel & Zaman, 2018). This may be due to social issues that are utmost for successful women entrepreneurship, however, their comprehensive role has not been discovered yet (Batool, & Ullah, 2017; Shahnawaz, 2015; Mathew, 2019). To sum up, the research problem lies in lack of successful women entrepreneurship in Kuwait despite the huge effort that governments put in updating regulatory systems, initiating motivating policies, establishing, and building conducive environment for women entrepreneurship. Thus, the research problem can be translated into the following questions:

1. Why women entrepreneurship is rarely successful in Kuwait?
2. What are the internal(personal) factors that influencing women entrepreneurship performance in Kuwait?
3. What are the external(environmental) factors that influencing women entrepreneurship performance in Kuwait?
4. What Kuwait can do more to foster women entrepreneurship?
5. What types of barriers[obstacles] that women entrepreneurship faced up-to-now in Kuwait?

### **Research Significance**

The importance of this research emerges from the importance of women entrepreneurship in fostering required diversification in the GCC countries' economies to meet the vision of 2035 of State of Kuwait. It contributes to the literature by identifying the factors affect women entrepreneurship performance, which can be environmental, and personal factors. Ultimately, it encourages women to startup entrepreneurship to economic security for Kuwaiti women. Moreover, it can be used by policies maker as road map when it comes to the effectiveness of active policies and developing new policies to foster women entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it helps also public decision makers to devise tools, methods, and techniques to mitigate and reduce obstacles that affect women entrepreneurship.

### **Research Objectives**

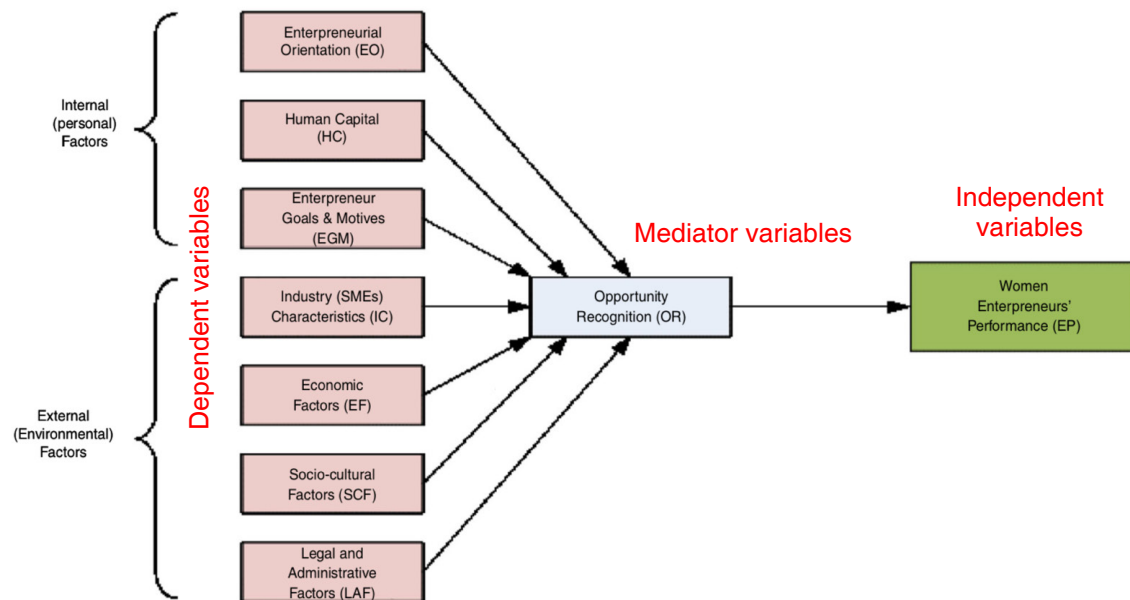
1. To explore why women entrepreneurship is rarely successful in the Kuwait?
2. To identify internal factors (personal) that influencing women's entrepreneurship performance in Kuwait.
3. To identify the external(environmental) factors that influencing women entrepreneurship performance in Kuwait.
4. To identify Kuwait's government can do more to foster women entrepreneurship performance.
5. To identify the key obstacles that women entrepreneurship faced up-to-now in Kuwait.

## Research Methodology

The aim of qualitative descriptive studies is to provide a concise summary of specific events encountered by individuals or groups of individuals in everyday terms. Naturalistic inquiry, which intends to contribute to observing something in its natural state to the degree that is practicable within the framework of the research arena, is sometimes used in qualitative descriptive studies.

Based on the literature review, this research adopts the descriptive qualitative Method, since it can address the research objectives and the research questions. Semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs were used to gather qualitative data. Using definitions extracted from the literature review, a deductive approach was used. This contrasts with the more conventional approach, in which induction is used to code qualitative data before hypotheses or theories are produced (Silver and Lewins, 2007)

The in-depth Semi-Structured interviews were used to assess Kuwaiti entrepreneur's women opinion, response, behavior, Attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions to gain deep information about the effect of the both the internal and the external factors on Women Entrepreneur performance as shown in Figure (1) The conceptual Framework of this research.



**Figure 1.** Source: The conceptual framework for this research is an adaptation of the theory by Shane (2003), with some modifications.



## 1. Research Variables

**Table 1:** Model Variables Definition

Variables	Acronym	Definition	Reference
Entrepreneurial Orientation	EO	Entrepreneurs' desire to take a risk, change, and innovation to gain a competitive advantage.	(Ekype et al., 2010)
Human Capital	HC	Measured by two demographics features academic degree and experience.	(Shane ,& Venkataraman, 2000)
Entrepreneur Goals & Motives	EGM	Goals are the actual results that expect to earn from doing reasoned behavior however motivation is the process by which goaldirected activity is instigated and sustained.	(Teoh,& Chong, 2007)
Industry (SMEs) characteristics	IC	Characteristics of SMEs such as age, size, type, and location.	(Inmyxai ,& Takahashi, 2009)
Economic Factors	EF	The set of significant information linked to internal project funding and external market condition that affects business or an investment's value.	(Wube, 2010)
Socio-cultural Factors	SCF	Include social and cultural factors, such as economic, welfare, and support from family and friends.	(Arasti et al., 2012)
Legal and Administrative Factors	LAF	The issues related to administrative and government regulations can be divided into three factors: banking regulations, tax laws, labour law.	(Wube, 2010)
Opportunity Recognition	OR	Regards to the initiative which can be measured by the goods conditions, services, raw materials and marketing.	(Shane ,& Venkataraman, 2000)

## 2. Research Instruments

In-depth Semi-Structured interview. We design interview in two sections, first, contains a set of demographics about interviewees details, such as education, experience, scope, and SMEs size. Second, contains a set of questions that intend to address the internal and external factors that affect Women Entrepreneurs'. The interview was developed based on the related literature to examine the factors affecting women entrepreneurship performance in GCC countries. Each interview was voice recorded and has a Confidentiality Agreement.

### Analysis Steps

1. Collect the data through Simi-Structured interviews from 9 of Kuwaiti Entrepreneurs
2. Transcribe the interviews from voice record files.
3. Translate the interviews from AR to EN.
4. Upload the files into Nvivo12.
5. Create Nodes (themes) and Sub-nodes (sub-themes) from the framework and

interview questions.

6. Coding: Drag responses to the node from transcript files.

7. Finding.

### 3. Research Population and Sample

This research focusing on the factors affect women' entrepreneurship in Kuwait. Thus, we chose the convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method where parties are selected because they are conveniently available and proximity to the researcher.

In total 9 Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs owning SMEs in different domains were interviewed, their experience years ranged from 6 months to 4 years. The educational levels were 2 Master, 6 Bachelor and one Diploma.

## Research Findings

To identify the effect of internal factors (personal) and external factors (environmental), on Women entrepreneurs' performance and opportunity recognition, we interviewed 9 of Kuwaiti Entrepreneurs' Women. Six nodes (themes) were conducted from the conceptual framework and questions.

The analysis of interview transcripts revealed codes on Kuwaiti Women entrepreneurial orientation and how that affected entrepreneurs' performance and opportunity recognition.

Node & Sub-nodes:

#### 1. Internal Factors (Personal):

- Entrepreneur Goals & Motives
- Entrepreneurial Orientation
- Human Capital

#### 2. External Factors (Environmental)

- Cultural Factor
- Social Factors
- Economic Factors
- Legal and Administrative Factors

#### 3. Women Entrepreneurs' Performance

#### 4. Opportunity Recognition

#### 5. Time Management

#### 6. Barriers

## 1. Analysis

### 1.1.Theme1: Internal (personal) factor:

#### Entrepreneur Goals and Motives

Interviewee's summaries the motives: independence, self-realization, achievement, financial freedom, achievement, develop of the country, grows of expertise and knowledge. Interviewee 1 said: "I get tired of the routine and monotonous tasks in my job, where it keeps repeating itself but with different individuals, I consider this as a motivation". Interviewee 3 added that passion, ambition, satisfying income, and self-

fulfillment. Interviewee 4 believes that the environment and socializing with successful people is one of the important motives. Interviewee 5 highlights on goals by stating that “maybe the conflict we have been living in forever! proof of existence, that prove that women are equal men”. According to interviewee 6 “we wanted to picture another vision of life, to learn things we didn’t know before, and to organize forums, gatherings, and episodes. Interviewee 9 described motivation by “I’m my boss, and this is the most significant motivation for me”.

### **Entrepreneurial Orientation**

Many Interviewee’s felt that several factors affect their entrepreneurial orientation i.e. experience, passion, and competition. According to interviewee 1, she describes her fear before “I was not interested in entrepreneurship because I felt that its masculine field more than feminine and I couldn’t be part of it” and added “I recognized that I am moving faster than my surrounding I informed my CEO that I am working like a rabbit in an institution that works like a turtle”. The words of interviewees 2, 3, and 4 summarize this theme by listing the following factors: personal orientation, loves, a culture of society, and passion. And finally, interviewee 7 sum up “passion is the foundation”.

### **Human Capital**

Interviewee’s agreed on the significance of education, experience, and knowledge for women entrepreneurship. Interviewee3 indicated that “I needed experience thus will decrease my mistakes” while interviewee 4 found that education doesn’t define the working scope. According to interviewee 7 “Women’s education and culture opens up a wide range of learning and knowledge of their entrepreneurship and can lead them to enter the global market, not just local, which is reflected in the quality of their product”.

## **1.2. Theme2: External (Environmental) Factors**

### **Cultural Factor:**

Interviewee1 describe the relationship between religion and values as a rumor that protects women from the dominant male. Interviewee 5 felt that religion and values have an influence depending on the family’s religious orientation. Interviewee 9 summarized this theme by saying “your business should meet your principles and values”.

### **Social Factors:**

Interviewee’s felt that gender is one of the most social issues affect entrepreneurship in Kuwait. In addition, family and husband play a crucial role in women entrepreneurship. As Interviewee 1 describe the social factor as “my surrounding environment doesn’t help or guide me to the world of entrepreneurship in the first place because I am a woman”. Interviewee 2 felt that the biggest obstacle is her family commitment whether as a wife or mother”. Interviewee 4 and Participant 6 summarize that the surrounding social situation including children, husband, and family if they are not supportive, entrepreneurship becomes impossible dream. However, according to interviewee 5 “Facilitations and difficulties for both woman and men alike in entrepreneurship”.

### **Economic Factors:**

Interviewee’s reported that there is a lot of ways to provide financial financing to start up. For example, Interviewee 5 comments “many women want to start out their own

business but there is a lack of finance". Interviewee 8 explains her journey of establishing a new venture by saying "I started with a loan from my mother and father and my budget was limited that bothered me a lot". Interviewee 9 complained, "finance is the most fear for everyone now". This indicates that lack of financial resources could be a hinder for women entrepreneurship, especially in the GCC region where the culture is not in preference for getting loans to establish a new business.

#### **Legal and Administrative Factors:**

Interviewee's complained about the regulations impose by; and the bureaucratic ways of how the Ministry of Commerce on Kuwait handing the applications of establishing new business venture especially the one submitted by women. Interviewee 1 describes this by saying "the process of having licenses for SMEs is not as fast as entrepreneurship standards around the world". In addition, "changing policy and government orientation that opens up as well as closes the possibility for women entrepreneurship". Interviewee 3 added, "The government orientation should foster females on entrepreneurship". This indicates that fostering women entrepreneurship is not on the government orientation agenda. As Interviewee 3 complained that, "I expected to get the license in a couple of months, but it took me a year and a half". The length of the licensing process is one of the key obstacles for women entrepreneurship. This is confirmed by Interviewee 4 observations who commented that employee do not have sufficient knowledge of the required documents to get a license. According to Interviewee 5 "The Ministry of Commerce has tried to develop the procedures to be electronic, because of terms and conditions that cannot be made electronically such as municipal procedures, it can't be implemented electronically because still, some procedures require staff to carry out and needs site visit". Overall, Interviewees agreed that the banking sector does not assist entrepreneurs as they should be, they deal with them as any normal client. Interviewee 6 as all other Interviewee said, "we need to simplify such procedures".

### **1.3. Theme3: Women Entrepreneurs" Performance**

Interviewees agree that Kuwaiti women are strong and independent, they have the abilities to make decisions. Interviewee 9 emphasis "it is common for Kuwaiti women to own home business". Interviewee 5 confirm "today we have a huge name for women who're sweeper the entrepreneurs". Interviewee 1 sum up "a woman should use all the feminine qualities to prove that she can be an entrepreneur because it's not a masculine job it's just a framework that you can put yourself in it". Interviewee 3 explains how she can keep her high performance by "keeping the quality of the products is important".

### **1.4. Theme 4: Opportunity Recognition**

Recognition of the opportunities is how to identify potential ways towards conducting a new business. Interviewee 1 confirmed that "in entrepreneurship world, if you are not aware of new updates, products, practices and competitors what will I achieve in the future, and how can I invest my timing in the business as a woman, because if I didn't organize my time wisely as a wife and mother I might fail". Interviewee 2 said, "The luck is a chance and readiness" added, "luck is not a coincidence its readiness so my start was by chance, but I was ready for opportunity." Interviewee 3 described that "you create an opportunity". Interviewee 4 stated "It was an opportunity and I want to be an entrepreneur; I ask myself why not? what will I lose?". According to Interviewee 6 "opportunities are available to do many things". In addition, "Some may think these

things simple and don't count but they build-ups, small things together form big things". Interviewee 9 emphasis "I decided to start this business from my personal needs and for people who like my taste".

### 1.5. Theme 5: Time management

Time management is the plan and control of achievement in a period of time. Interviewee 2 noticed that the business is positively affected by the time spending on it, and she adds "entrepreneurs must dedicated more time for the sake of their business success". Interviewee 5 mentions "some women didn't continue their businesses, and the reason behind that is lack of time and effort they spent on the business which if they do, it will negatively influence their family lives". We can sum up this theme with what Interviewee 9 said: "we need more time to balance between home and business".

### 1.6. Theme 6: Barriers

Interviewee 1 pointed out "there are so many challenges that increasing by time and the competition out there. My children are growing, life is changing and I am getting more tired so, I have to manage my time wisely to succeed in this field. Any woman had decided to shift from her current job to entrepreneurship world should plan wisely". Interviewee 3 describe that "Starting or growing a business for a woman is stressful, physical strain, thinking, social, there is a difficulty". Interviewee 4 and Interviewee 5 indicate to the lack of available cash. Interviewee 6 complained that "The social aspect. When women decide to start a private business, they are rejected so it faces a loss of time and money". Interviewee 9 emphasis "families refuse them to start their own business or going out frequently" added, "time is an obstacle and a limitation" and "frustration from our environment, especially at the beginning".

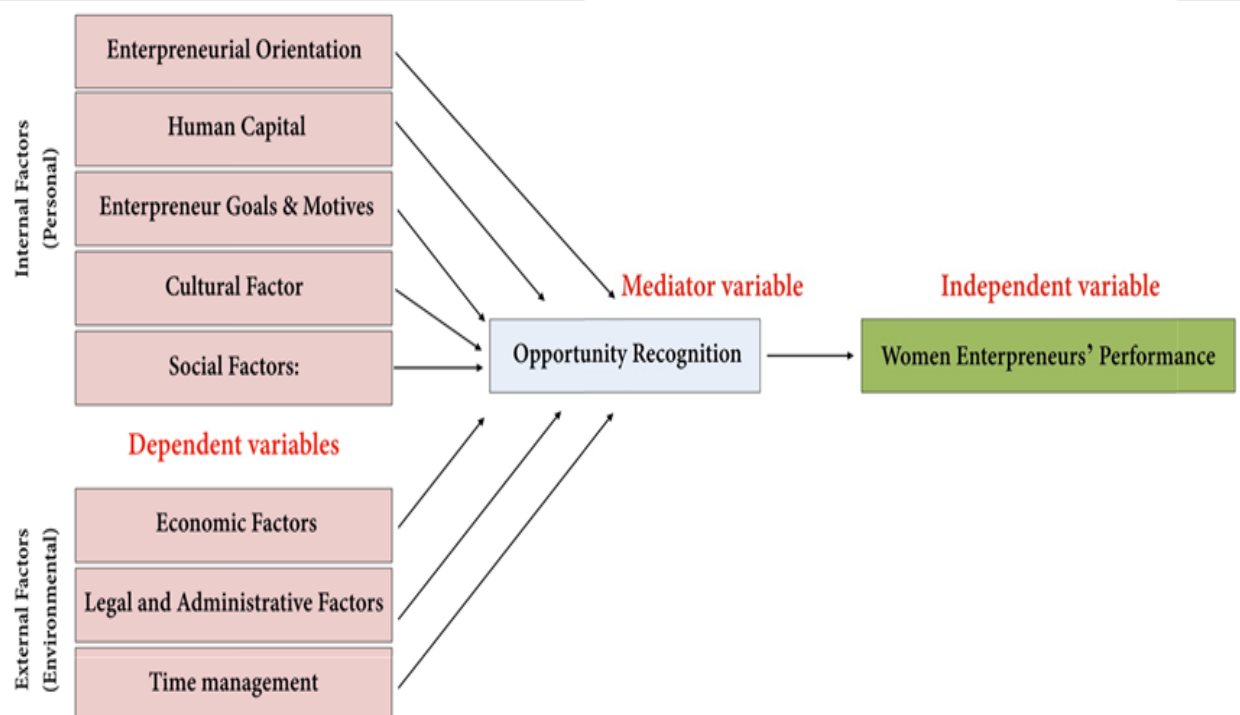


Figure 2. The Suggest Framework Based on the Finding



1. What are the factors that influence women's entrepreneurial orientation in Kuwait?

The Nvivo analysis shows that the factor industry (SMEs) characteristics not mentioned in the interview, hence, this variable has been removed from the framework. For socio-cultural factors, the interviewees divide it based on the analysis in two variables based on recurrences as shown in Figure 2. The first factor is the culture that combines value and religion, second is the social factor that combines family and friends. In fact, we found another new variable through analysis is time management. We can summarize the factors that influence women's entrepreneurial orientation in Kuwait are internal factors (personal) which consist of goals, motives, entrepreneurial orientation, and human capital. Second, external factors (environmental) which consist of cultural (value and religion), social (family and friends), economic, and legal and administrative. All those factors help women to recognize the opportunity and that will positively affect women entrepreneurs' performance Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** The Word Cloud for most Frequent Word in all nodes.

## 2. Is there an impact of entrepreneurial motives in recognizing the opportunities?

The Nvivo analysis reveals the most frequent word on entrepreneurial motives and opportunities recognition theme as shown in Figure 4. It describes the list of advice that suited Kuwaiti Women entrepreneurship expertise.

- Improve your self-development skills and abilities.
- Start with a simple idea then grow.
- Found a new idea, consult, then start.
- Make a clear vision to the future.
- Insight and filling market this gap.
- Observe the capabilities and resource.
- Make different and encourage other women.
- The luck is a chance and readiness.
- Luck is not a coincidence, its readiness.
- Life isn't easy if you want something you need to work hard to achieve it.
- You can create an opportunity
- Current technologies will make your beginning easy.
- You can start to form your personal needs.
- Face your failure experiences and learn from them.
- Take risks and be patient.



**Figure 4.** Word Cloud of entrepreneurial motives in recognizing the opportunities

### 3. What are the obstacles that affect the entrepreneurial orientation of Kuwaiti women?

The Nvivo analysis find out the most recurrence barriers from the interviews, some of them related to the internal factors and others related to external factor, many challenges increasing by time. To illustrate the obstacles, Figure 5 shows the most common obstacles that faced by the Kuwaiti women on entrepreneurship:

- The government policies and regulations that hinder start entrepreneurship.
- Time can be a consideration as an obstacle and limitation.
- The culture of job stability and recognition.
- The difficulties regard the balance between family and business.
- The entrepreneur women who still have a job faced inflexibility in working hours.
- The family and social commitment.
- The frustration and criticism from friends and surrounding people.
- The fear of risk-taking.
- Lack of training courses.
- Start and grow business for a woman is stress, physical strain.
- The traditions about don't support women.
- Fear of financial aspect.



**Figure 5.** Word Cloud of obstacles

## Conclusion and future work

The aim of this research was to identify the external and internal factors that affect women entrepreneurship performance in Kuwait. The results show that the internal (personal) factors are more significant than the external (environmental) factors, to start the entrepreneurship journey. To illustrate, internal factors consists of five elements i.e. entrepreneurial orientation, human capital, goals and motives, culture, and social factors. And the external environmental factor consists of three elements i.e. economic, legal and administrative, and time management.

This research adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to gain a comprehensive and extensive understanding of the affecting factors, using a conceptual framework of adaptation theory conducted by Shane (2003). The instrument was in-depth Semi-Structured interview was developed based on the related literature to examine the affecting factors that influence women entrepreneurship performance in GCC countries. Finally, we suggest a modifications framework for Shane adaptation theory (2003), that fits Kuwaiti women entrepreneurship based on the research results. Also, the studies provide a list of the barriers and obstacles that face the women entrepreneurship in Kuwait and affect their performance.

This study recommends to interviewed women who failed in continuing to be an entrepreneur in Kuwait or GCC. This will provide a holistic idea on the main factors affecting the women entrepreneur and what are the reason for success and fail in this field. Moreover, more analysis needs to be conducted to support the qualitative results.

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# العوامل الداخلية والخارجية على أداء ريادة الأعمال للمرأة في دولة الكويت

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## المستخلص

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تهدف هذه الورقة إلى تحديد العوامل التي تؤثر على أداء ريادة الأعمال للمرأة في دولة الكويت. نظرًا لأن الدراسة الحالية تعتبر دراسة استكشافية بطبيعتها، كان النهج النوعي القائم على المقابلة شبه الهيكلية هو الطريقة الأكثر ملاءمة لجمع البيانات. نظرًا لعدم وجود عدد دقيق لرائدات الأعمال، تعتمد الدراسة على عينة ملائمة وتمت دعوة 9 رائدات أعمال للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة. كشفت النتائج عن مجموعة من العوامل التي تؤثر على أداء رائدات الأعمال: العوامل الداخلية (الشخصية)، مثل الأهداف، والدوافع، والتوجه الريادي، ورأس المال البشري. العوامل الخارجية (البيئية) بما في ذلك العوامل الثقافية (القيمة والدين)، والاجتماعية (الأسرة والأصدقاء)، والاقتصادية، والقانونية والإدارية، وإدارة الوقت. تساعد هاتان المجموعتان من العوامل النساء على التعرف على فرص السوق والتأثير إيجابًا على أداء رائدات الأعمال. الآثار العملية: يمكن لصانعي السياسات والقرارات في دولة الكويت ابتكار الأدوات والأساليب والتقنيات للحد من الآثار السلبية لهذه العوامل لتعزيز أداء رائدات الأعمال. الآثار النظرية: البحوث المستقبلية مدعوة لاستكشاف تأثير العوامل الحالية وقد تكون عوامل أخرى على المستوى القطاعي حيث يتأثر أداء رائدات الأعمال بالعوامل العامة المرتبطة بالنظام الإيكولوجي لريادة الأعمال على المستوى القطري وهناك عوامل على القطاع مستوى. الأصالة: تتبثق أصالة هذا العمل من شقين: فهو يعدل عمل شين (2003) ليتناسب مع سياق هذه الدراسة ويختبر النسخة المعدلة في سياق فريد اجتماعيًا واقتصاديًا وسياسيًا وثقافيًا ودينيًا. بشكل عام، فإنه يثبت صحة بعض الافتراضات الراسخة حول ريادة الأعمال للمرأة والتي تؤكد الدراسات السابقة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** أداء رائدات الأعمال، التوجه الريادي، العوامل الشخصية، العوامل البيئية، ريادة المرأة في الكويت.

