



Determinants of Women Empowerment and Its Impact on Community Development in Saudi Arabia

Shagufta Tariq Khan¹ , Mohd Abass Bhat² , Badriah Dhefallah Alzahrani³ ,

Thanaa Said Abozeid^{4,5} , Rym Rahouma Hassani^{6*}

¹Department of Logistics, Tourism, and Service Management, German University of Technology in Oman (Gutech), Muscat, Oman

² Department of Business Studies, College of Economics and Business Administration, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Muscat, Oman

³Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Jazan University, Saudi Arabia

⁴ Department of Educational psychology, Faculty of Education, Beni-Sweif University, Egypt

⁵ Previously, Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, Jazan University, Saudi Arabia

⁶Department of Mathematics, University College of Al-Darb, Jazan University, Saudi Arabia

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* Corresponding author:

rhassani@jazanu.edu.sa

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Abstract

Objectives: The present study aimed to explore and evaluate the significant determinants of women empowerment and to examine their impact on community development in the Saudi Arabian context.

Methods: The study employed a descriptive analytical approach using a distributed questionnaire. All the measurement items were taken from previous studies with slight changes in the statements to make them appropriate for the current study. A sample of 310 female faculty members in Jazan University was drawn using the convenience sampling method. For hypotheses testing, Structural Equation Modeling was mainly employed using Smart PLS.

Results: Three determinants of women's empowerment—educational, economic, and social—were considered independent variables, and their impacts on community development were examined as the dependent variable. The findings of the study revealed that the educational aspect is the most influential factor that determines women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia and, thereby, connection with community development, followed by the economic and social domains of women's empowerment.

Conclusions: The results of this study will enable other nations to recognize women's strengths and utilize them for national development and economic progress. This research can help policymakers and government officials develop targeted policies and strategies for educational, economic, and social empowerment that are consistent with Saudi Arabia Vision 2030. This can aid in the efficient allocation of resources and implementation of initiatives designed to promote community development.

Keywords: Education, social empowerment, economic empowerment, community development, gender equality, Saudi Arabia.

محددات تمكين المرأة وأثرها على تنمية المجتمع في المملكة العربية السعودية

شاغوفتا طارق خان¹، محمد عباس بهات²، بدرية ضيف الله الزهراني³، ثناء سعيد أبوزيد^{4,5}، ريم رحومة الحسناني⁶

¹ قسم اللوجستيات، السياحة، وإدارة الخدمات، الجامعة الألمانية للتكنولوجيا في عمان (جوتيك)، مسقط، عمان.

² قسم الدراسات التجارية، كلية الاقتصاد وإدارة الأعمال الجامعة التكنولوجية والعلوم التطبيقية، مسقط، عمان.

³ قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس، كلية التربية، جامعة جازان، المملكة العربية السعودية.

⁴ قسم علم النفس التربوي، كلية التربية، جامعة بني سويف، مصر.

⁵ قسم تربية خاصة، كلية التربية، جامعة جازان، المملكة العربية السعودية سابقا.

⁶ قسم الرياضيات، الكلية الجامعية بالدراب، جامعة جازان، المملكة العربية السعودية.

ملخص

الأهداف: هدفت الدراسة استكشاف وتقييم المحددات الهامة لتمكين المرأة ودراسة تأثيرها على تنمية المجتمع في المملكة العربية السعودية. **المنهجية:** اتخذت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، من خلال تطبيق استبانة أخذت جميع عباراتها من الدراسات السابقة مع تغييرات طفيفة في الصياغة لمناسبة عينة الدراسة. وتكونت العينة من (310) عضو هيئة التدريس في جامعة جازان. لاختبار الفرضيات، جرى استخدام نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية على نحو أساسي باستخدام Smart PLS.

النتائج: تم تقييم ثلاث محدّدات لتمكين المرأة وهي التمكين التربوي، والاقتصادي، والاجتماعي كمُتغيّرات مستقلة ودراسة تأثيرها على تنمية المجتمع باعتباره المتغير التابع. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن الجانب التربوي هو العامل الأكثر تأثيراً في تحديد تمكين المرأة في المملكة العربية السعودية وبالتالي ارتباطه بتنمية المجتمع، يليه مباشرة المجال الاقتصادي والاجتماعي.

الخلاصة: النتائج التي توصلت إليها هذه الدراسة ستمكن الأمم الأخرى من التعرف على نقاط قوة المرأة في المملكة العربية السعودية والإفادة منها في التنمية الوطنية والمجتمعية والتقدم الاقتصادي. كما ستساعد نتائج هذه الدراسة المسؤولين الحكوميين على تطوير سياسات واستراتيجيات مستهدفة للتمكين التعليمي والاقتصادي والاجتماعي تتماشى مع رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية 2030. ويمكن أن يساعد ذلك في تخصيص الفعال للموارد وتنفيذ المبادرات المصممة لتعزيز تنمية المجتمع.

الكلمات الدالة: التعليم، التمكين الاجتماعي، التمكين الاقتصادي، تنمية المجتمع، المساواة بين الجنسين، المملكة العربية السعودية.

1. Introduction

Today's global development strategy has given women's empowerment a higher emphasis because it is closely related to many different development outcomes. The fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-5) that must be achieved by 2030 is gender equality and women's empowerment. In accordance with a United Nations report from 2010, empowered women participate more fully in economic life in all its facets, improving the economic growth and sustainability of a country. Economic, social, cultural, and technical breakthroughs have changed the society we live in today, forcing communities to reevaluate the size, gender, and composition of their "manpower." It is undeniable that for a modern knowledge-age society to flourish, women must be included in the process of community development and given the chance to properly practice their social roles.

Women's empowerment is a daring way to shift power dynamics and promote gender equality (Batliwala, 2007). Thus, women have greater influence over their life, improving their well-being. Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for global development, and cheap financial services can help (Bhatia and Singh, 2019). To advance economic development, men and women must collaborate to maintain project integrity. Saudi Arabian authorities value women. The government has recently emphasized women's role in economic development. The Saudi government accepted the UN charter to empower women and boost their economic participation. It opens female labor offices within the Ministry of Labor and makes workplaces safe for women. High-targeted growth requires efficient and comprehensive utilization of all economic resources, including human capital. Women make up about half of human resources, so they must actively participate in economic operations. This will improve their skills and productivity and reduce the nation's dependence on foreign labor. Saudi Arabia is taking proactive steps to fulfill two of its Vision 2030 goals: lowering the unemployment rate from 11.6% to 7% and increasing women's labor participation to 30% by 2030. Women depend on the wise leadership's belief in their crucial role to actively participate in the Kingdom's political, economic, and social life, make decisions, and evaluate government institutions. The first Saudi woman was appointed assistant Shura Council chief by royal edict to honor, crown, and encourage Saudi women and promote their participation in the Kingdom's advancement. The retirement age for men and women was equalized in accordance with the work system, 13 Saudi women were appointed to the new Human Rights Commission council, legal trainees were granted licenses to practice, and several programs that support women's job stability, success, and empowerment were established to complement the rights that have elevated Saudi women as integral members and partners in society's development (Topal, 2019). Due to these advances in Saudi women's empowerment, laws and rules have been passed to protect them, allow them to drive, pass a harassment law, and make it easier for Saudi women to issue and renew family documents.

Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision clearly promotes women's engagement. It employs women in acceptable work environments. In this way, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development has activated and followed up on increasing women's labor market participation and reducing the gender gap to achieve economic balance. The ministry also reported that the average proportion of women in the labor market for the "third quarter of 2020" was 31.3%, demonstrating the success of empowerment measures and the high degree of awareness of women's labor market involvement. Vision 2030 also empowers Saudi women economically and politically. Thus, more women start and operate SMEs. In 2017, women owned 2/5 of all businesses (Adhadh, 2021).

Empowering women and fulfilling the aim required institutions to create the University Vice Presidency for Female Student Affairs (2018). In addition to implementing the physical education program in girls' schools (2017), offering a Bachelor's degree in "Sports and Physical Activity" for female students (2019), and creating a College of Engineering at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (2018), opening sections for female students in existing colleges of engineering in universities (2019), and creating 21 specialized programs for the bachelor's and master's degrees (2019).

Since the vision's launch, the Family Affairs Council has formed a "Women's Committee" as one of its technical committees (2016) and studied the best guardianship and custody procedures (2017). And the establishment of a specialized center to receive reports of domestic violence (2017), to provide human rights assistance to women and children in cases of abuse (2018), and the entry into force of the anti-harassment crime system (2018), amending it to include publishing

penalties in newspapers at the convict's expense (2021), controlling minor marriage (2019), and making the head of the family the father or mother (2021) (Al-Qahtani, 2020).

While progress has been made in recent years to improve women's rights and participation in various spheres of life in Saudi Arabia, and despite the growing recognition of women empowerment as a crucial driver of community development (Alotaibi, 2017), there is a research gap that needs to be addressed to fully understand the factors influencing women empowerment and its effects on community development in the country. The factors include investigating the specific social determinants, such as attitudes, beliefs, and status, that influence women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia; examining the role of educational opportunities in women's empowerment and community development; and investigating economic factors. The Saudi government has spent heavily in women's education, increasing female enrollment in schools and universities (Ali, 2019). However, it's important to evaluate women's education and the obstacles they may still encounter in higher education. In this background, the present study tries to explore, understand, interpret and analyze the pivotal determinants of women empowerment such as education, employment, technological advancement, economic opportunity, social aspects and so on that significantly influence empowerment of women. Further, it attempts to examine contribution of women empowerment aspects towards the development of the community in Saudi Arabia. The main objectives of the present study are as under:

1. To explore and evaluate the pivotal determinants of women's empowerment such as education, employment, technological advancement, economic opportunity, and social aspects.
2. To examine contribution of women empowerment aspects towards the development of the community in Saudi Arabia.

1.1. Review of literature and hypotheses development

A rising collection of writing attempts to define the idea of empowerment. In this literature, the phrases autonomy, position, agency, power, patriarchy, and gender equality are frequently used interchangeably to refer to the empowerment notion (Tandon, 2016; Banet-Weiser and Rottenberg, 2020; Alhalwachi and Mordi, 2021). In nutshell, there is consensus that the terms alternatives, choice, control, and power are important overlapping concepts that are frequently used to define empowerment. These phrases mostly allude to women's capacity for decision-making and influencing outcomes that are significant to them and their families (Van, 2017). Additionally, it incorporates the notion of human agency, or self-efficacy, which refers to a fundamental change in perspective, or "inner transformation," that is necessary for the formulation of the choices made. Women should be able to recognize their own self-interest and freedom of choice, and they should believe that they have the capacity and the right to do so (Klatch, 2019). Women's empowerment, according to Kabeer (1999), is "the ability to make strategic life decisions in circumstances where this ability was previously denied to them." The last few decades have seen an increase in scholarly interest in women's empowerment as a means of improving women's economic status, mobility, and participation in decision-making (Afrin, 2008; Khan, 2020; Dahlum, 2022; Hadley, 2023). "Empowerment" is a multifaceted notion that depicts a proliferation of outcomes.

1.1.1. Educational Empowerment

Education helps empower women (Sridevi 2005; Ahmad and Sultan 2004). Xaba (2015), Batool and Batool found that education and empowerment improve women's decision-making (2018). Hulley et al. (2022) state that women's education helps them establish their family status and prevent domestic abuse. Formal and informal education empowers women. Skill development boosted women's finances and helped them fight for their rights (Abrar et al., 2019). Jabeen et al. (2020) found that educated women are more likely to work because they have better access to information and skills, another essential component in empowerment. In addition, the study published by Al-Qahtani et al. (2021), highlighted the significance of education for women's empowerment, as it demonstrated that academic women staff in Saudi universities have higher levels of personal empowerment than administrative staff.

1.1.2. Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is the ability to contribute to growth processes in a way that recognizes their contributions and equitably distributes their wealth to expand economic resources (Tariq, 2019). Bank accounts assist women economically

(Tariq and Sangmi, 2018; Coy et al., 2021; Moswete and Lacey, 2015). Economic considerations empower women, according to Cornish et al. (2021). Al-Mamun et al. (2014) examined women's economic empowerment via a qualitative survey. Economic empowerment was measured by household decision-making, financial security, resource control, family decision-making, legal awareness, and mobility (Tariq and Bhat, 2020; Alessa, 2022). Savings bank accounts assist low-income families manage their assets, prioritize consumption and education, and take financial responsibility, according to Parez-Roa et al. (2022). Economic status predicts women's participation. Most respondents said poverty has a greater impact on women's engagement than men. Financial difficulties prevented them from participating in community advancement. Some lamented their inability to fund meeting participation in nearby towns or at the district headquarters (Tariq, 2020; Hernes, 2018).

1.1.3. Social Empowerment

Giving someone power or authority to better their lot in life is referred to as social empowerment. Person-to-person interaction, written communications, and social flexibility all contribute to the empowerment of women (Kapoor, 2019). Social pressure may also alter a woman's ability to make decisions for her family (Jayachandran, 2021). Once a women challenge social norms that act as barriers to their freedom, they gain control over social life and make choices independently. When women are socially empowered, they exert greater force on their day-to-day household decisions. They can move to any place alone, talk to people inside or outside their homes more freely, enjoy social status and gain respect from both family and friends in their communities. Women have a greater say in their marriages as well as education of their children. In this approach, women's empowerment is also favorably and strongly impacted by self-efficacy and family support (Al-Rashdi, 2022). However, social empowerment of women can also be determined sometimes by the external environment. As Weber and Ahmad (2014) studied two main domains of empowerment: social empowerment and financial empowerment in which they measured social empowerment in terms of household decision-making issues like purchases, children's education, and marriage, as well as freedom of movement outside the household. All these indicators were largely impacted by external environment; however, a mobility indicator of women's mobility showed a large improvement after engagement in economic activities (Khan, 2020). The study conducted by Mourad Ali (2021) discovered a statistically significant correlation between financial well-being, financial coping strategies, and women empowerment. Hence, it can be concluded that women's social empowerment is significantly determined by the environment in which women live.

1.1.4. Community Development

The act of taking on tasks that supply communities with essential services to make them more habitable and sustainable is known as community development. By equipping people and organizations with the abilities to transform their communities for the better, community development may empower both individuals and groups (Che, 2018). To coordinate efforts, many groups, organizations, and people must create and sustain effective relationships. It is critical to evaluate the issues and requirements of the community, identify solutions, and create a strategic plan for progress. Furthermore, and as a counterargument, Alotaibi et al. (2021) demonstrated how Saudi Arabia's m-government promotes women's empowerment by giving them opportunity to engage in social and economic activities. A trained work force, adequate water, sewer, and road infrastructure, housing, educational facilities, health care, child and elder care, social services, and recreation are all variables that contribute to the community's capacity for economic growth (Hysa et al., 2020). When Mr. Awatif Al-Muqbil (2012) researched the role of Saudi women in investment and project development, he discovered that Sharia and regulatory standards, in addition to the lack of universal rules for working women in the private sector, were some of the challenges they faced. AlKhateeb and Sultan (2014) identified human rights violations, poverty, disease, violence, armed conflict, a distorted portrayal of women in the media, and a lack of women's input in decision-making as the main issues that women face. The study by Alsabeehg (2018) discovered that the labor market reform, growth in women's literacy, and shift in society's perspective in favor of allowing women's engagement in economic activities helped women overcome their biggest challenges.

1.1.5.

Numerous socioeconomic factors have been shown in the studies to influence how empowered women feel. These factors include the education level of women, their employment position (if relevant), age, media exposure, household income, level of religiosity, inheritance of land or property and dowry, political engagement, rights awareness, and the support of their husbands, among others (Khan, 2022). Women have been denied access to information, equal employment possibilities, control, power, and status, as well as the ability to make decisions and understand their own potential as productive assets for their children's development. Because of Saudi Arabian cultural and social norms, traditions, religious beliefs, widespread illiteracy, low levels of public knowledge, and a high fertility rate, women in undeveloped countries often face a lack of power. When women are in lack of power, their self-confidence and self-esteem tend to be poor. Women in Saudi Arabia's rural areas are largely dispersed, alone, and unable to communicate and share their desires, worries, and issues. In Saudi Arabia, there are many micro and macro factors affecting education of women. Women have been excluded from the social variables that affect development, such as health, necessities, education, and knowledge, as well as access to power and decision-making (Alsubaie and Jones, 2017). Women's empowerment assists women in gaining self-assurance, education, and experience so they may educate their children more effectively and participate in decision-making. Additionally, it will increase females' visibility and exposure and give them equal access to executive positions, enabling women to contribute to the business and the national economy (Alfarran, 2018).

Hypothesis 1: Educational empowerment positively and significantly determines Community Development.

According to Jewkes and Morrell (2010), the lack of economic autonomy reinforces gender inequality in a variety of ways. Accordingly, Wei et al. (2021) discovered that paid work, paid employment, and other income-generating activities reduce women's dependence on the economy and increase their ability to make decisions for their households. According to Habib et al. (2019), women who work for a living feel more empowered and have a better social standing. Paid employment also increases their feeling of self-worth. It is necessary for women to be successful in paid work if they enjoy the ability to use the money earned. The ability of women to use their loans and income is a key and crucial indicator of their empowerment (Riaz and Parvaiz, 2018).

The primary barriers for women, according to Kemp and Zhao (2016), are social conventions, society's attitudes toward working women, and a lack of skills. They praised the media for its constructive role in promoting social awareness and the idea of justice and equity based on gender. When studying the subject of women's empowerment, Griffen et al. (2021) highlighted social attitudes, circumstances, discrimination, and lack of information about the needs of the labor market or career opportunities as some of the primary issues faced by women. Also, teleworking can be one of the key strategies for raising the participation of women in the economy given the degree of infrastructure currently in place in the Kingdom. To assist women regarding the viability of business initiatives and the acceptance of telework as an organized activity, there must be a considerable development in the level of education, technical skills, and training through the expansion of universities, training centers, and consulting services (Tonkikh, 2019). Women's preference for government employment, an irrational approach to choosing a specialized subject during university, and non-material motives for pursuing formal education are some of the causes of the imbalance between demand and supply in the labor market. Furthermore, Saudi women are not employed in many government and private sectors for a variety of technical and professional positions due to a lack of school credentials, training programs, and work experience. It is necessary to place more focus on professional specialization in university courses, on vocational training, and on the transition of broad field graduates into specialized fields like medical science, culinary science, information technology etc. (Noone, 2018).

Hypothesis 2: There is a positively significant relationship between Economic Empowerment and Community Development.

It is clear, women's participation in community development initiatives is important and beneficial in terms of promoting community development that is sustainable (Nutsugbodo and Adjei, 2020). Despite attempts to enhance possibilities for women and the rise of women in Saudi Arabia's socioeconomic and political realms, there is rising fear that women's involvement in development decisions will remain minimal. If all stakeholders, especially women, are not included in

development decisions, inclusive community development may be difficult to achieve. Despite the evident benefits of everyone participating in community development activities, women suffer obstacles and restrictions on the extent of their involvement. These issues have the potential to strengthen existing biases regarding power relationships based on gender. Since this paradigm has varied effects on men and women, gender and gender relations are crucial when it comes to inclusive community development (Yuniati, 2022). People's cultural beliefs and traditions are frequently violated when community development projects are imposed on them (Akbar, 2020). To guarantee that communities support and own community development programs, community organizers must assure genuine local engagement in all project-related activities. In conclusion, community involvement creates a foundation of trust and aids in identifying the requirements that people perceive, defining the roles of stakeholders, and managing the expectations of all stakeholders.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positively significant relationship between Social Empowerment and Community Development.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Measurement model

The model (see Figure 1) was used in this study to examine the elements that significantly influenced community growth and women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia. All the measurement items were taken from earlier research to guarantee their validity, although small changes were made to the statements to make them appropriate for the current study. Community development is the dependent variable in the current study; the independent variables are economic empowerment, social empowerment, and educational empowerment. Four items were adapted from the scale for measuring economic empowerment (Datta & Sahu, 2017 and Kabeer, 1999). Four questions were used by Al-Mamun et al. (2014) and Weber & Ahmad (2014) to measure social empowerment. Seven items were used to measure educational empowerment (Ismail, 2019). Two reviewers received the surveys to ensure their face and content validity. A few grammatical and structural changes were made to some of the statements in response to their recommendations. Experts from Jazan University translated the questionnaire from English to Arabic and then back to English. In this study, a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 was used (strongly agree).

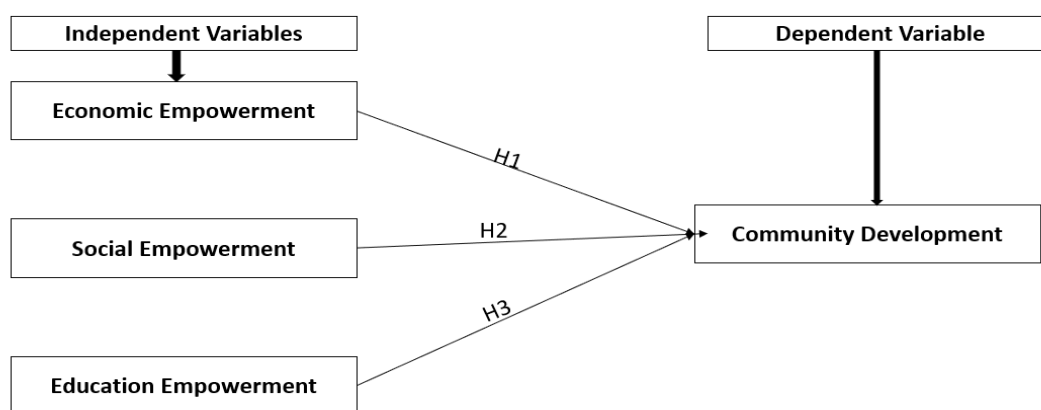


Fig. (1) Conceptual model

Source: Authors' compilation

2.2. Sample design and data collection

The information was gathered through a self-administered survey. The researchers and study assistants handed out the questionnaires in person. The instrument's purpose was described along with how to lessen referrals to participation. This study was conducted during November 2021 to May 2022. The required sample size was determined based on the total

number (1548) of female faculty members in Jazan University using the formula proposed by Yamane (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

where n = sample size, N = total number of female faculty members, and (e) = maximum variability or margin of error = 5% (standard value of 0.05). The required sample size was 308 based on the formulae. However, 310 female faculty members from Jazan University were given questionnaires by following Convenience sampling method. 280 questionnaires in all were returned and used in the data analysis process. The response rate eventually reached above 70%. Out of these 280 respondents, majority of the respondents are masters qualified 70 %, followed by Ph.D (25%) and Bachelor degree (5%); 8% were between 20-25 years of age, 54% were between 21 and 30 years, 22% were between the ages of 31-40 years and 16% were older than 41 years. Majority of the respondent's income ranges from SR10000 to SR15000 (65%) followed by SR5000-SR10000 (30%) and SR15000 to SR20000 (5%); majority of the respondents have nuclear family structure (80%) and only 20% have joint family structure. Moreover, majority of the respondents are married (85%) followed by unmarried (15%).

2.3. Data quality and normality of data

Before concluding the required descriptive and analytical statistics, the data were analyzed to establish the results' reliability and validity. During data screening, missing data, as well as outliers, have been handled. Prior to analysis, data were subjected to tests of normality (Cuschieri, 2021; Bhat, 2023). Using skewness and kurtosis, data normality was evaluated. Kurtosis relates to the distribution's uniformity, whereas skewness measures the distribution's symmetry. Overall, it appears that the data have a normal distribution. According to Wai et al. (2019), a skewness range of ± 2 is permissible. As the skewness values are within the range of ± 2 and the kurtosis values are within the range of ± 3 , results indicate that constructs have a normal distribution.

2.4. Common Method Bias

Because data are collected from a single respondent, it is quite possible that common method bias will occur. Using the partial least squares (PLS) method, Kock (2015) examined the prevalent method bias in the domain of structural equation modeling (SEM). Full collinearity could be used to assess prevalent method bias in SEM, according to the author. Using variance inflation factors (VIF) derived from a full collinearity test, the current study identified prevalent method bias based on Kock's (2015) practical approach. Variance inflation values above 3.3 indicate that the model may be inaccurate due to common method bias, whereas values below 3.3 indicate that the model is devoid of common method bias. All VIF values for all constructs in this study are less than 3.3, indicating the absence of a common method bias. Consequently, prevalent method bias was not an issue in this study.

3. Results

3.1. Analytical Methods

In this work, Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to assess hypotheses. Software called Smart PLS M3 Version 2.0 (Ringle, 2015; Bhat, 2022) was used for the analysis. In the past 10 years, PLS-SEM has gained popularity in management and finance studies because to its capacity to model latent components under non-normality and applicability for small to medium sample sizes.

Table (1) Factor loadings with Mean and Standard Deviation

Items	Statements	Loading	Mean	S. D
COD1	My husband wants me to stay at home to take care of our children.	0.619	3.46	0.891
COD2	My husband supports me in achieving my dreams	0.542	3.31	0.672
COD3	Males in KSA motivate women to work together in developing their community.	0.836	3.25	0.547
COD4	Families encourage girls to participate in the development of society in KSA	0.783	3.42	0.864
COD5	I partake in activities of the community development committee	0.868	3.29	0.456
COD6	I participate in the local government institution	0.858	3.1	0.981
COD7	I take responsibility for changes to this community	0.785	3.61	0.334
EDE1	The government encourages women to participate in the development of the society in KSA	0.788	3.49	0.457
EDE2	Families encourage girls to participate in the development of society in KSA	0.588	3.01	0.784
EDE3	Educated females are well respected in KSA society.	0.722	3.16	0.854
EDE4	I feel barriers in education	0.785	3.28	0.436
EDE5	Content of education influence empowerment	0.709	3.34	0.346
EOP1	I have a say in amount of money to be saved per month	0.878	2.84	0.464
EOP2	I manage resources for repayment of credit	0.896	3.19	0.764
EOP3	I work to generate further income	0.605	3.03	0.774
EOP4	I participate in decision about the usage of savings and credit	0.551	3.55	0.453
SOE1	I can move out of home freely without any restrictions for work.	0.533	3.45	0.563
SOE2	Working freely has improved my social status.	0.756	3.36	0.674
SOE3	I know most of the women living in my locality	0.797	3.6	0.394
SOE4	I am able to talk to outsiders freely	0.811	3.49	0.749

Source: Smart PLS output

Note: *COD1-COD7* are the manifest variables of Community development, *EDE1-EDE5* are the manifest variables of Educational Empowerment, *EOP1-EOP4* are the manifest variables Economic empowerment, and *SOE1-SOE4* are the manifest variables of Social Empowerment.

PLS-SEM is a well-established method for estimating path coefficients in structural models. To ascertain the significance levels of the loadings, weights, and path coefficients, the bootstrapping technique was used. The measurement model's validity and goodness of fit were calculated before the structural relationships described in the structural model were put to the test.

First, we evaluated the convergent validity of the measurement model in terms of three important measures: factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Table 1 shows that all item loadings exceeded the recommended value of 0.5. While AVE, in Table 2 which shows how much of the overall variation in the indicators is explained by the latent construct, exceeded the recommended value of 0.5. In addition, composite reliability values, which demonstrate how well the construct indicators predict the latent construct, exceeded the recommended value of 0.7. All these measures indicate achievement of convergent validity of the constructs under study (Bhat, 2021; Khan and Bhat, 2022).

Table (2) Convergent validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Community Development	0.876	0.891	0.906	0.585
Economic Empowerment	0.719	0.757	0.830	0.560
Education Empowerment	0.769	0.785	0.843	0.521
Social Empowerment	0.713	0.759	0.819	0.537

Source: Smart PLS output

Table 3 displays the discriminant validity to check distinctiveness amongst constructs. The square root of the AVE between each pair of components in Table 2 is displayed diagonally and is higher than the correlation computed between factors, demonstrating the discriminant validity of the AVE. In addition, the discriminant validity of the constructs was evaluated using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) method (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 shows that all values of HTMT are lower than the threshold of 0.90, fulfilling the condition of HTMT.90 (Hair et al., 2017) and reinforcing the satisfactory discriminant validity for all constructs in this study.

Table (3) Discriminant validity

Fornell and Larcker's criterion test				
	Community Development	Economic Empowerment	Education Empowerment	Social Empowerment
Community Development	0.765			
Economic Empowerment	0.724	0.749		
Education Empowerment	0.732	0.768	0.722	
Social Empowerment	0.544	0.637	0.505	0.732
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)				
	Community Development	Economic Empowerment	Education Empowerment	Social Empowerment
Community Development				
Economic Empowerment	0.642			
Education Empowerment	0.573	0.678		
Social Empowerment	0.475	0.764	0.684	

Source: Smart PLS output

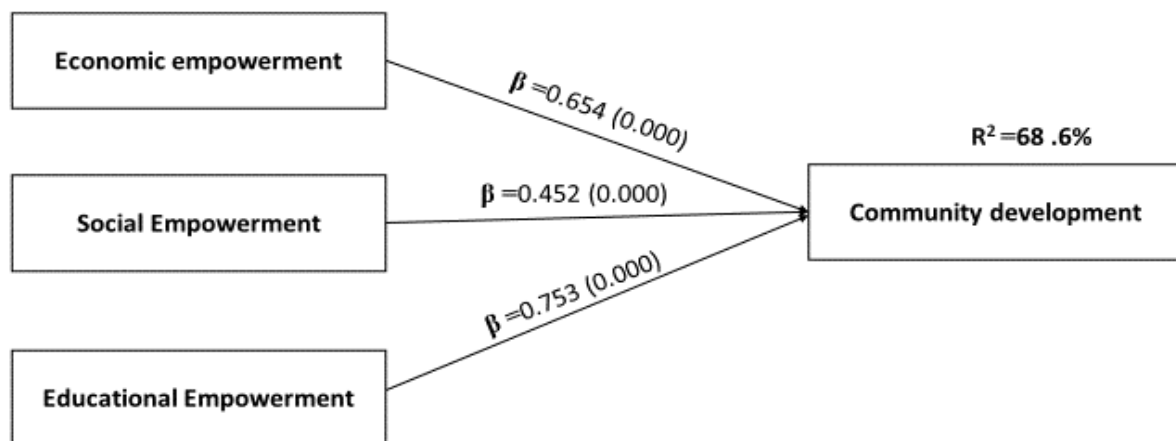


Fig. (2) Impact of Educational, Economic and Social Empowerment on Community Development

Source: Smart PLS output

Key words: EOP1-EOP4 are the manifest variables Economic empowerment, SOE1-SOE4 are the manifest variables of Social Empowerment, EDE1-EDE5 are the manifest variables of Educational Empowerment and COD1-COD7 are the manifest variables of Community development.

Table (4) Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β -value	Std Error	t-statistics	P-value	95%CI LL	95%CI UL	Status
H1	EOP -> COD	0.654	0.143	27.172	0.000	0.533	0.773	Accepted
H2	SOE -> COD	0.452	0.003	28.499	0.000	0.962	0.975	Accepted
H3	EDE -> COD	0.753	0.047	45.067	0.000	0.607	0.793	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS output

Key words: EOP are the manifest variables Economic empowerment, SOE are the manifest variables of Social Empowerment, EDE are the manifest variables of Educational Empowerment and COD are the manifest variables of Community development.

This study used the same measurement methods for further testing of the structural model and hypotheses because all these data and measurements guarantee the validity and reliability of the measurement items. To assess the statistical significance of the weights of the sub-constructs and path coefficients, a bootstrapping approach with 1000 iterations was used. The threshold values for evaluating the outcomes of the GoF study were GoFsmall = 0.1, GoFmedium = 0.25, and GoFlarge = 0.36. The model utilized in this investigation produced a GoF value of 0.424, indicating a very strong model fit. The SRMR value was used to assess the first model. A value of less than 0.08 is a good fit (Rasoolimanesh and Ali, 2018). The proposed model effectively fits the data, as shown by the SRMR values of 0.069 for the saturated and estimated models in this study. The association has been studied between the study's independent which include social, educational, and economic empowerment and dependent variable 'community development'. The most significant factor affecting community development is educational empowerment ($r = .753$, t -value = 45.067, p -value 0.000) indicating that educational empowerment of women in Saudi Arabia has the greatest impact on community development. Economic empowerment ($r = .654$, t -value = 27.172, p -value 0.000) and social empowerment ($r = .452$, t -value = 28.499, p -value 0.000) are the next two important components to the model and can be seen as subsequent influencing variables for community growth. Further the value of R^2 was 0.68.6%, which means the model explains 68.6 percent of the variance in community development.

4. Discussion

This study investigated if there is a link between community development and women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia. It looked at how women's employment directly impacts local development and their contributions to Saudi society. The Saudi government has made significant efforts to enhance the socioeconomic conditions of women in Saudi society as a whole and to boost women's participation in the workforce. This study examines the perspectives of female university faculty members and demonstrates that education is a crucial component of women's empowerment, and that empowerment is a requirement for women to participate in community development. However, those who responded to questions about the connections between community development and social, economic, and educational empowerment felt that these connections were strong. Women have been encouraged to work and engage in creating a modern Saudi society because of the government's determination, family encouragement, and support. This has led to a promotion of their involvement in community development. It is gratifying to see Saudi women becoming more active in the country's social, economic, and educational institutions.

Participation in community development and social standing are positively correlated. Women may contribute significantly to economic growth and a stable political environment, according to the study respondents. Saudi women's contributions and engagement in community development can be considerably increased with a stronger social position and encouragement to pursue further education and careers. These findings are in line with Alfarran et al. (2018) who also found women's social empowerment gives them confidence, education, and experience to better raise their children and make decisions. It will boost women's visibility and access to senior roles, allowing them to contribute towards the development of the community.

This occurrence most likely has a close relationship with the families' financial position and long-standing customs. In terms of finances, women can help and boost family income. Educated women frequently qualify for higher-paying positions than male family members. The respondents thought that males would prefer their wives and sisters to stay at home if there was no financial necessity for them to work. In many Muslim nations, the notion that males prefer women to stay at home or that a woman's role is in the home caring for children while a man's place is at work is prevalent. Wei et al. (2021) and Habib et al. (2019), in line with our findings, found that paid work, employment, and other income-generating activities diminish women's economic dependency and boost their household decision-making power. Working women feel strong and have a higher social status, making them community developers.

The findings show that women who are educated feel more appreciated since they can autonomously plan to raise their educational levels, continue working after getting married, and develop into equally capable leaders as males. According to research, encouraging women to contribute to society's growth actively and positively by the state and families is essential to the development of a contemporary state. Unfortunately, in Arab nations where women continue to have higher rates of illiteracy than men, this scenario may not be feasible. It has been discovered that women's own education is positively and significantly correlated with the measures of empowerment, but that her husband's education has a negligible correlation with these indicators. Numerous additional research has reached a similar conclusion, with Xaba (2015) and Hulley et al. (2022) among those who have done so. In addition to improving job prospects for women, education also boosts women's self-worth and self-confidence, which increases the level of women's empowerment. Although the husband's education has a negligible effect on most of the aspects of women's empowerment, this finding should not be interpreted as meaning that the husband's education plays no part in women's empowerment. Instead, by combining this conclusion with cross tables and correlations, we may conclude that husband education plays a positive effect in the empowerment of women, though it does so to a lesser extent than does education for women. One argument for the lack of significance of a husband's education is that a more educated husband may believe he has superior decision-making skills to his spouse, which tends to reduce women's empowerment.

The social standing of a man in society, especially among his friends and family, is a crucial aspect of the conundrum. Because image is so important, men who are traditionally motivated frequently work hard to uphold the standard of the "perfect man" throughout the Arab world. In regard to this, Badran (2010) noted that women have historically been viewed

as inferior to men in many Arab nations. To modify the pervasive male views about women in Arab society overall, both at home and abroad, more coordinated efforts must be done.

5. Implications of the study

This study has shown the significance of numerous aspects of women's equality, including the freedom granted to women to pursue an unlimited education and the government's empowering of women. Women have taken advantage of this freedom since it was granted to them in 1970, especially in the field of education, where their enrollment rate in higher education institutions is three times higher than that of men's. Saudi society can be represented as growing more open with these educational and social circumstances. In instances where husbands prefer their wives to work when their financial assistance is required but prefer them to stay at home when circumstances permit, however, the exploitation of one gender over another may persist. Such disregards the reality that these same women have a huge ability to positively influence the state's development and advance a variety of economic and social sectors.

The results of this study will enable other nations to recognize women's strengths and utilize them for national development and economic progress. Developing nations should take note of this lesson from industrialized nations, where men and women coexist and compete to create their countries. Because they utilized all available human resources, including both males and females, these industrialized nations have accomplished economic progress. Due to their belief that women play important roles in society and their inclusion of women in social events without marginalizing them, they have progressed socially.

6. Conclusion

This study is topical, particularly in light of the Arab Spring and the present scenario where Arabs are fleeing to other parts of the world, leaving women and children in particularly vulnerable positions. By presenting a model that identifies areas for further development for women in Saudi Arabia this research raises public awareness in the country about raising the standard of women in society. This framework or manual for social equality practices could be used. This study promotes social transformation, and studies of this nature are desperately needed in Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations to promote social fairness and equality. Social transformation takes time; it does not happen overnight. No of their gender, age, ethnicity, or religion, every member of society must participate. When a portion of the population is excluded from civic rights and participation, a society cannot grow, flourish, or maintain equilibrium.

Recommendations

The study reveals how Saudi society views university women's status and advancement in the past, present, and future. The data also show how marginalization and gender inequality affect women. Empowering women, changing employment views, and integrating them in community activities can help modernize and develop nations. The findings emphasize the need for improved access to education for women, enabling them to choose their specialization freely and contribute to social and economic advancement.

- According to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, the prosperity of a society is contingent on the economic and political status of its women. By identifying the effects of women's empowerment on a community's development, we expect to encourage policymakers to increase their commitment to empowering women, thereby influencing the development of all people.
- This research can help policymakers and government officials develop targeted policies and strategies for educational, economic, and social empowerment that are consistent with Saudi Arabia Vision 2030. This can aid in the efficient allocation of resources and implementation of initiatives designed to promote community development.
- Understanding the specific areas in which educational, economic, and social empowerment have the most impact on community development can guide decisions regarding resource allocation. This research can identify the sectors or programs that need additional funding to maximize their positive effects on communities.

- Involving diverse stakeholders in the research process, such as community members, educational institutions, businesses, and non-profit organizations, can foster collaboration and establish a shared understanding of community development needs. This can result in more inclusive and participatory policy formulation and implementation approaches.
- Government efforts should focus on increasing women's participation in the labor market, both in general and in the private sector, by providing education, training, and work opportunities.
- Women in leadership positions should be supported, and stereotypes that confine women to the home and caregiving roles must be changed.
- Highlighting the achievements of Arab women through media programs can be beneficial in challenging stereotypes.

Limitations and future research

The researchers did not interview faculty members from private universities in the Jazan region or elsewhere; the sample for the study exclusively included students at Jazan University. One suggestion for future research on Saudi women's empowerment is to include working women from other regions who work in the public or private sectors. Future research should analyze how tradition and culture affect women's advancement in Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations, as suggested by this study. The position of Saudi women in terms of community development, how this has changed through time, and in terms of economic and social development will need to be shown through longitudinal study in the future.

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