

Jordanian Women Entrepreneurs and the Role of Social Media: The Road to Empowerment

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Received: 28/9/2021

Revised: 23/1/2022

Accepted: 9/2/2022

Published: 30/5/2023

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Citation: Boshmaf, H. (2023).
Jordanian Women Entrepreneurs and
the Role of Social Media: The Road
to Empowerment. *Dirasat: Human
and Social Sciences*, 50(3), 139–152.
<https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v50i3.5402>

Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to investigate the factors that have influenced women entrepreneurs to use social media to run their businesses. Additionally, it explores how social media has influenced and affected women entrepreneurs' businesses and examines the social changes in their lives instigated by using social media for business purposes.

Methods: The study adopts a qualitative-inductive approach and utilizes semi-structured interviews with 30 women entrepreneurs from various industries in three main cities in Jordan.

Results: The paper highlights that social media platforms have provided women with varying degrees of empowerment. The degree of empowerment differs among women and is associated with their motivations for entrepreneurship. Women who started their businesses with opportunity motivations and used social media as their primary platform are found to be more empowered compared to women who engaged in necessity entrepreneurship. The research findings confirm that female entrepreneurs have experienced positive effects by using social media as their primary business platform. Embracing social media has presented new marketing opportunities, leading to significant economic gains.

Conclusions: This study supports the notion that the status of women's entrepreneurship in Jordan is rapidly increasing, particularly due to the presence of social media platforms. Women adopt different titles and descriptions to gain control over their lives, often referred to as empowerment, which is achieved through access to financial resources, education, and confidence. This empowerment subsequently manifests as entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship, SMEs, social media, empowerment.

المراة الريادية الأردنية ودور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي: الطريق إلى التمكين

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ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في العوامل التي دفعت رائدات الأعمال إلى استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في إدارة أعمالهن واستكشاف كيفية تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، وفي المقابل على سيدات الأعمال الريديات. كما تهدف أيضاً إلى تعرّف التغيرات الاجتماعية في حياتهن الناتجة عن استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في أعمالهن.

المنهجية: تتبنى الدراسة منهجاً نوعياً استقرائياً، وذلك من خلال إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة مع 30 سيدة أعمال من مختلف المجالات الصناعية في ثلاث مدن رئيسية في الأردن.

النتائج: تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أنّ منصات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وفّرت درجات مختلفة من التمكين للمرأة. وارتبط تنوع درجة التمكين بين النساء بدوافعهنّ تجاه ريادة الأعمال الخاصة بهنّ؛ حيث تبين أنّ النساء اللواتي يستخدمنّ "دوافع الفرصة" لبدء أعمالهنّ التجارية من خلال توظيف وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كمَنْصِب رئيسة لإدارة أعمالهنّ هنّ أكثر تمكيناً من النساء اللواتي يتبنين "دوافع الضرورة" في ريادة الأعمال. وتؤكد نتائج الدراسة أنّ رائدات الأعمال قد تأثرنّ على نحو إيجابي من استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بوصفها منصة رئيسية لإدارة أعمالهنّ؛ حيث أدّى تبني وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي التي تقدم فرص تسويقية جديدة إلى تحقيق مكاسب اقتصادية أكبر.

الخلاصة: تدعم هذه الدراسة فكرة أنّ مكانة ريادة الأعمال النسائية في الأردن أخذت بالازدياد بوتيرة متسارعة، لاسيما مع وجود منصات التواصل الاجتماعي؛ حيث تستخدم النساء ألقاباً وأوصافاً مختلفة للوصول إلى القدرة على التحكم في حياتهنّ (التمكين) التي يصلن إليها من خلال امتلاك التمويل والتعليم (الموارد) والثقة (القدرة على الاختيار) التي ستظهر على شاكلة ريادة أعمال.

الكلمات الدالة: ريادة الأعمال، ريادة الأعمال النسائية، الشركات الصغيرة والمتوسطة والمتناهية الصغر، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، التمكين



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Introduction

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) announced in the Women's Report 2018/2019, that 163 million women started businesses across 74 economies worldwide in the last few years, while 111 million were running established businesses (Elam et al., and Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2019). Since the workforce of female participation in emerging economies is limited, this encourages women entrepreneurs to start their own businesses which allow women to raise their voices and enhance their national economies (Boshmaf, 2019). Numerous studies throughout the world have consistently demonstrated the significant role that women entrepreneurs play in stability, welfare among societies, provision and improvement of economic opportunities and growth across their countries particularly for developing economies in the Middle East, Africa and Asia (Banihani, 2020).

There is a growing body of academic literature on the use of social media in a corporate context. By exploring the creation of entrepreneurial opportunity for entrepreneurs (Hossain and Rahman, 2018) and entrepreneurial entry by influencing their ability to network with strangers and known associates (Wang et al., 2020), and also investigating the effect of social media marketing activities on brand awareness (Bilgin, 2018), scholars highlighted the benefit that social media offers, and how it transforms the landscape of how business transactions take place, creating efficiencies and productivity growth for existing businesses and opening unprecedented opportunities for entrepreneurs (Olanrewaju et al., 2020). Furthermore, Social media platforms offer entrepreneurs huge potential with minimum cost to improve their firm performance, which is essential to the growth of the entrepreneur's business, such as, networking; e-marketing campaigns and flexibility in business (Oladipo et al., 2020). However, most of the existing studies focus on larger enterprises that have a higher propensity for adopting new and innovative technologies. There have been modest studies on small and medium entrepreneurs in the context of (SMEs) explicitly (Meske and Stieglitz, 2013). Additionally, micro-sized and informal enterprises where women are concentrated the most have been neglected, especially in developing countries (Crittenden and Bliton, 2019; Banihani, 2020).

A point in case is The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan that provides an interesting example in this regard. An upper middle-income country located in the heart of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. With a population of 10.24 million, there were 6.84 million internet users in Jordan in January 2021 and 6.30 million out of the total population are social media users in Jordan equivalent to 61.5% of the total population in January 2021 (Global Digital Insights, 2021). Jordan's economy depends mainly on services, tourism, foreign loans and international aid, while the paucity of natural resources that are limited to phosphates and agricultural products aggravates the limitations of the Jordanian economy (Boshmaf, 2019). The economy is mostly comprised of small, micro, and medium enterprises (SMMEs), where SMMEs account for more than 99 percent of all registered enterprises employing 60% of the labour force (The Economic Policy Council, 2020). In particular micro enterprises represented 91.5%, small enterprises represented 6.7% and medium enterprises represented 1.4% of the total enterprises by the end of 2011 (Jordan Enterprise Development Cooperation, 2017).

Jordan's economy is still suffering from economic contraction as a consequence of the twin shocks of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/2009, and the Arab Spring sequence of 2010 until the present (World Bank, 2012). A dramatic population increase of three million has been recorded by the Department of Statistics in (2016) representing a massive 46 per cent increase in just one year and 87 per cent over a decade, reaching 9.5 million and in January 2021 Jordan recorded a population of 10.24 million (Department of Statistics, 2021). This consists largely of a massive influx of refugees and the dramatic increase of the population has put enormous pressure on Jordan's economy, including the disruption of trade routes, tourism, and hesitant investment sentiments. Within the economic options that Jordan has, entrepreneurship encouragement has become a vital factor for economic growth, in particular, women's entrepreneurship. Even though the Jordanian government attempts to actively support entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs were mostly unheard of in Jordan's business environment. Female labour force participation rates that are among the lowest regionally and globally, women's economic participation, recorded at 14% in 2020, which is nearly the same since three decades (Department of Statistics, 2020). A research by Hadeel Boshmaf (2019) contends that these low numbers are likely influenced by cultural expectations around women and their role in society which limit workplace involvement in addition to gender norms that dominate male-focused on society.

Problem Statement

There are limited studies on the effects of using social media used by women entrepreneurs, in the micro-sized and informal enterprises, where women are concentrated the most. This research explores women's entrepreneurship in Jordan, with a particular focus on how social media use affected women entrepreneurs in the market and how it shapes women's lives and empowerment. Hence, the importance of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge on the role of social media in empowering women through entrepreneurship. Thus, exploring this will provide new insights and embrace our current understanding of women entrepreneurship in Jordan

Research aim

The overarching aim of this research is to investigate women's entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on women entrepreneurs who take up their businesses to social media in order to develop in-depth understandings of the outcomes of women's economic participation for women's voice. In particular, this research explored the factors that influence the involvement of women entrepreneurs business running by social media and benefits and challenges the social media can offer to women entrepreneurs in the establishment and growth of female entrepreneurial micro enterprises.

Research questions

In order to develop in-depth understandings of the use, benefits and challenges the social media can offer to female entrepreneurs, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What are the characteristics of women entrepreneurs using social media? What are the key drivers for their entrepreneurship? What are the key challenges they face?
- Does the use of social media in entrepreneurship strengthen women's economic voice?
- What are the impacts of social media on women entrepreneurship empowerment?

Theoretical Background

Women's Entrepreneurship

The Global Entrepreneur Monitor (GEM) uses a broad definition of "entrepreneurship" that highlights the role of the individual in the entrepreneurial process. "Any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organisation, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business" (Reynolds et al., 1999:3). In fact, the definition of entrepreneur was dominated by the preconceived notion of masculinity, which was reflected in the bias and assumptions made at the time (Wilson and Tagg, 2010), wholly neglecting the contributions made by women, and denying their subjectivity. Consequently, Scholars persist in comparing female and male entrepreneurs, mainly using male norms to judge women's activities (Henry et al., 2016). For instance, (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2005) found that women have been disregarded as not fitting the stereotypical image of what an entrepreneur is or should be. In fact, while contextualising entrepreneurship, gender is an important construct recognized in starting new business and growth (Welter, 2020). Additionally, motivations faced by entrepreneurs, however, are not gender-neutral as women tend to differ from men in many ways, including barriers, types of support and motivations that affect the start-up and growth of women entrepreneurs businesses (Boshmaf, 2019).

The motivation for becoming an entrepreneur varies between humans, conceptualised by Shapero and Sokol (1982), the push and pull motivations factors are considered the primary theory development around entrepreneurial motivations (McClelland et al., 2005). In general, Pull factors are related to opportunities that draw people to establish businesses seeking independence, personal growth, self-fulfilment, social status, financial motivation and power (Charles and Gherman 2013). Push factors are characterised by personal or external factors driven by necessity-based entrepreneurship and, for example, dissatisfaction with the salaried job (Charles and Gherman 2013). McClelland (1961) argued that people with high achievement orientation (need to succeed) were more likely to become an entrepreneur out of opportunity. Opportunity entrepreneurs are those people who are not influenced by money or external incentives though they may consider profit to be a measure of success and competency, like necessity entrepreneurship. Achievement motivation theory

by McClelland (1961) assumed that a person has three types of needs at any given time. Firstly, the need for achievement; to gain success with one's own efforts. Secondly, the need for power; to dominate, influences others. Thirdly, the need for affiliation; maintaining friendly relations with others. A clear distinction between opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs has been drawn by (Reynolds et al., 2002). Using results from the Global Entrepreneur Monitor (GEM) survey. The GEM defines opportunity-based entrepreneurial activity as the percentage of individuals involved in entrepreneurial activity who claim to be purely or partly driven by opportunity as opposed to finding no other option for work. This includes taking advantage of a business opportunity or having a job, but seeking better opportunities. While necessity-based entrepreneurial activity, is the percentage of individuals involved in entrepreneurial activity who claim to be driven by necessity in other words; having no better choice for work as opposed to opportunity (Braunerhjelm et al., 2016). Traditional necessity entrepreneurship definitions can be seen as survival entrepreneurship or emergency entrepreneurship for example, a woman starts a business to meet basic economic needs for survival (National Women's Business Council, 2017).

Women Entrepreneurs in Jordan

In Jordan, females represent approximately half the population between ages of 15 and above, 87% are educated from primary to bachelor education, and 15% possess university degrees (Department of Statistics, 2020; Dudokh and Aqel, 2017). Even so, female participation in economic activities remains extremely low. In 2020, women's economic participation was recorded 14%, while men showed 54.7 percent participation rates. Additionally, the female unemployment rate reached 24.3% in 2020 compared to 18.1% for men (Department of Statistics, 2020). A number of researchers investigated the demands faced by women entrepreneurs in Jordan, where access to finance is considered one of the key challenges, more so than men (Dudokh and Aqel, 2017). Women in Jordan cannot offer collateral, and so they fund their businesses through personal resources such as investments, friends and family and reinvestment of their earnings (Dudokh and Aqel, 2017). As outlined by (Boshmaf, 2019), businesses in Jordan still face number of obstacles within the regulatory framework and the absence of a clear policy in coordination with stakeholders; most importantly the absence of a unified and standardised SMME's definition that reflects negatively on the assessment and evaluation process of those SMMEs, resulting in having a poor evaluation of policies and programmes relevant to SMMEs. Furthermore, Boshmaf's study indicates that women entrepreneurs are often seen to illustrate some sort of deviation from the gendered roles and norms assigned within Jordanian society (Boshmaf, 2019).

Women Empowerment

The concept of women's empowerment was initiated by third-world feminists and women's organizations in the 1970s (Mosedale, 2005). While the concept is evolving, there is no universally accepted definition, due to the variations in the cultural context that affects how empowerment may occur, given that its definitions still vary. The United Nations (UN) (2001) defined women's empowerment in terms of five components: 'women's sense of self-worthiness; their right to have and determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the house; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally'.

In her oft-cited article on measuring women's empowerment, Kabeer (1999: 436) argues a fundamental element of empowerment which is "the ability to make choices." Identifying empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" (Kabeer, 1999: 437), and used when talking about women, to explore "the norms, beliefs, customs and values through which societies differentiate between women and men" (Kabeer, 2000: 22). The failure to achieve one's goal as a result of deep-seated constraints on the ability. Thus, Kabeer suggests that the main issue with the concept of power is the ability to choose (Kabeer, 1999). Based on the discussion above and to achieve the purpose of this research, the definition of women empowerment used in this research is the process and changes of women's ability to make choices and control resources in an environment where choices were previously denied.

Kabeer defines women's empowerment as consisting of three interrelated elements or diminutions of power: resources, agency and achievement. First is resources; for Kabeer, resources are prerequisites which serve to enhance the ability to make choices. The category of resources, therefore includes not only material resources, but also other human and social resources necessary to exercise choice (Kabeer, 1999). Accessing resources and the way that these are distributed through gender relations in a community. For instance (family, market, society, country) depends on how rules, norms and conventions are interpreted in the institutions and the distribution of authoritative resources (Kabeer, 2005). Second is agency (Kabeer, 1999: 438) points out that agency involves "bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance; where agency is the ability to make choices that affect your life as a group or as an individual". Boshmaf highlighted that agency in relation to empowerment is not only the exercising of choice, but also challenging power relations where empowerment is not only decision making but inclusive of motivation, purpose and aims. Thus, this process which starts from within, and continues by challenging ideological norms, values and practises that control power by propensity to compel women to remain silent about the unequal division of intra household resources rather than challenge those ideologies (Boshmaf, 2019). And finally is the achievement: The well-being outcomes, accomplishments (prosperity results) and the outcomes of the agency regarding empowerment; achievements have been considered in terms of both the agency exercised and its consequences. In fact, judging the validity of an achievement measure is extremely difficult, unless evidence is provided, or we can come up with a reasonable guess (Kabeer, 1999).

Social media and Entrepreneurs

Social media are fundamentally changing the way we communicate, collaborate, consume, and create. Social media (SM) as defined by (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61) is "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Undoubtedly social media had opened up

windows of new opportunities to interact, participate, cooperate, and collaborate with various parties in daily life, including business and enablers of networking (Secundo et al., 2020). The arrival of social media not only encouraging new start-ups, but are also using the platform to enhance the

existing businesses and create networks of customers like never before (Fischer and Reuber, 2011; Duane and O'Reilly, 2017). Many researchers disclose that social media has been recognised as the new essential tool in strategic marketing that allows women entrepreneurs globally to advertise, market and attract clients that open new horizons for them (Hossain and Rahman, 2018; Olsson and Bernhard, 2020). A noteworthy growth of research of women entrepreneurship, has revealed that social media has made new ways of doing business and networking possible for women (Cesaroni et al., 2017; Mukolwe and Korir, 2016) and exploring the relationship between social media and women entrepreneurs and focusing on the low investment and operating costs by taking up social media as platform to run their business, the benefit of flexibility that social media offers for women to balance work and life, where they can effectively manage both their professional and personal lives simultaneously and a means for financial resources and independence (Vivakaran and Maraimalai, 2016; Cesaroni et al., 2017; Hossain and Rahman, 2018; Plazibat and Renko, 2020; Aboutaleb, 2020; Afshan et al., 2021).

Methodology and Sample

The study attempts to explore the influences and effects of the use of social media by women entrepreneurs in their business as their primary business platform, and whether these have an influence on creating entrepreneurial opportunities for them in return, and also to investigate the empowerment between those women according to different entrepreneurship motivations. Hence, to conduct the research, this study takes a qualitative-inductive approach, using semi-structured interviews with 30 women entrepreneurs from various industries in three main cities in Jordan.

The qualitative approach provided rich data by reaching into participants' understandings and experiences and exploring the wide array of the dimensions of their social worlds, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate. Allowing the participants the freedom to speak

about issues important to them is paramount, as this is not reflected in statistical data. Due to their flexibility and delicacy, in-depth interviews were taken into consideration, as the most suitable approach. 30 semi-structured interviews in three largest cities in Jordan by population (Amman, Irbid and Zarqa) were conducted to explore the opinions and perception of women entrepreneurs with regard to the role that social media plays in their lives and business, women were chosen as samples. This approach is consistent with that used by other scholars attempting to capture a better understanding of gender-related issues (Haddad and Le Loarne, 2015). Thirty women participated in these interviews that lasted between 45-90 minutes. The participants were snowball sampled using the following selection criteria: female, lived in one of the three largest cities in Jordan and owned (SM) online business that made use of social media as their only platform for running their business, either individually or with a partner(s), as a full or part time job.

The participants solicited their stories on their use of social media in their businesses and its impact on their life. The interview locations were conducted according to participants' choice, either their home or a public place. The semi-structured interview questions focused on the impetus to start the business, type of business, assets, income and the role that social media had in starting, as well as continuing the business. Additionally, given the empowerment construct, the questions enabled an exploration into the effect that the women thought that social media had on their personal and professional lives. The interview questions were developed by the authors in English, using questions facilitated by the conceptual model for this research. These questions were then translated into Arabic for the purpose of the interview. The interviews were conducted in-person in Arabic by the same author and were audio recorded. The audio recordings of the interviews were then transcribed and translated into English. Interviews were then analysed and grouped according to dominant and recurring themes. These themes were then read alongside feminist, gender and empowerment theories in order to better understand the role social media play in Jordanian women entrepreneur's lives and business. No direct reference to interviewees is made in this research as all real identities have been concealed.

Findings and Discussion

Participants' Profiles

Considering the distribution of the 30 completed interviews of women entrepreneurs by age group, it is noted that the majority of women entrepreneurs are in the age group (20-29), are married and possess a bachelor's degree. Among the interviewed women entrepreneurs, only one participant is less than 20 years, 18 are between the ages of 20-29, and 10 women are between the ages of 30-39 and only one is above 40. Most have a high level of education; two having obtained a master's degree, and the majority 27 participants holding a bachelor's degree, and one with a Secondary level education. Four are single and 23 of the respondents are married, two are divorced and the remaining is only one widowed (see table 1).

Table (1): Background Information of Participants

Item / city	Amman	Irbid	Zarqa
Number of women	10	10	10
Age group			
less than 20	1	0	0
20-29	7	6	5
30-39	2	4	4
40-50			1
Educational status			
No education	0	0	0
Secondary education	1		
Diploma	0		
Bachelors	15	9	3
Higher education	2		

Item / city	Amman	Irbid	Zarqa
Social status			
Single	4		
Married	5	10	8
Widowed		1	
Divorced	1		1

In addition, the information regarding their business type revealed that the majority of their businesses operate in the services sector. Eight different types of businesses were represented by the 30 Jordanian women entrepreneurs who were interviewed. These eight types were: Homemade food, clothing, cosmetics, fashion accessories, event supplies, education, home decorations, and craft. The most popular type of business among the interviewed women was homemade food, followed by clothing. Table (2) identifies the businesses run by the 30 women in the sample group.

Table (2): Business Type

Business type	Number
Homemade food	12
Clothing	6
Cosmetics	4
Fashion accessories	3
Event supplies	2
Education	1
Home decorations	1
Craft	1
Total	30

Furthermore, the information regarding the type of social media used to run their business revealed that two different types of social media businesses were represented by the 30 Jordanian women entrepreneurs who were interviewed. The most popular one was Facebook with 24 responses followed by Instagram with 6 responses. Interestingly, all of the participants had indicated that their businesses are not registered yet, and with no intention to officially register it in the future because of high taxation fees and the long registration process noted as a deterrent.

Reflecting on the theoretical framework of this study and to answer the study questions, four order categories were derived during the data analysis process:

1. The motivation of Women's Entrepreneurs.
2. Personal benefits of using social media in running a business.
3. Benefits of social media use in business.
4. Empowerment

Each of these categories, as described below, are composed of numerous second order themes. Having analysed the responses of the women under study, certain themes appear on the surface. These include the following: Motivation, Challenges, business benefit, personal benefit and empowerment these themes were common Gender, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment among most women regardless of which part of Jordan they came from. I shall discuss each theme in detail.

Motivations; Opportunity versus Necessity

Opportunity Entrepreneurship

The ability to choose

McClelland's Framework identified a person's three types of needs at any given time, i.e. the need for achievement, the need

for power and the need for affiliation. Regarding the first, the majority of the women affirmed that establishment of the business was their choice, explaining that the need for achievement was the main driver to start their business rather than realising an increased income. In fact, the majority of participants who said that they have sufficient available finance had taken full responsibility for financing their business from their own resources; thus starting the business was not a survival strategy.

'I asked my Dad to give me money to help me with starting my business 3 years ago and because I don't like [to] commit to the bank. You never know what will happen in future, if the business will work or not, and that's why I didn't take a loan from the bank'. (Sharq, aged 31, married with no children).

The need for power

Pull factors are related to opportunity entrepreneurship that draw people to establish businesses seeking independence, personal growth, self-fulfilment, social status, financial motivation and the need for power. The recorded findings show that the majority of participants show desire for power as becoming their own boss, working under their own rules and making their own decisions. Power is considered the core concept of Kabeer's empowerment framework (Kabeer, 1999) and an essential one in the Achievement motivation theory by McClelland (1961)

'Since my childhood and even in school; I always try to be something different and to achieve something. I don't like the idea of working a routine job from 8-4. I live to challenge and achieve [for] myself'. (Kholod, aged 25, married with no children).

'I can't work as a follower of the requirements and the desires of others. That's me; I need my power, own power'. (Rasha, aged 37, married with children).

'Having no kids; that gave me a lot of freedom in my time and responsibility to try to improve myself and achieve something. My husband works from 8-6 and I don't have a lot to do. I opened an online homemade food kitchen, and I invested in my cooking skills'. (Inas, aged 32, is married with no children).

Necessity Entrepreneurship

Push factors are characterised by personal or external factors driven by necessity-based entrepreneurship. Findings showed that a number of participants seek entrepreneurship out of necessity where they did not have any other choice than starting their own business. In fact, financial economic motivation was key for them, and a number of women perceive entrepreneurship as a survival strategy.

'I didn't have an option. I was forced to take over the business. After my dad passed away, I am the oldest one of my sisters, I was left with two options, either to close the business or to take over the business, and I chose to take over the business. I felt it was at that point I wasn't sure if I made the right step or not, I took the risk and it turns out not that bad.' (Hind, aged 34, single).

'Means the ability to be independent from others, financially first, because when you have the power of owning your own economy, then you can defend your agency and then you can be able to say what you like in life and what you don't like. As long as you are part of a financial circle that gives the power to someone else, you will always be a follower of the requirements and the desires of others'. (Rasha, aged 39, married with children).

'I have been divorced for 5 years; I was 22 years old [and] a mum of two kids. I had to work, I had to find money to feed my kids, and I couldn't keep taking money from my family. My elder brothers used to give me a monthly allowance, but it was not that much and I was feeling embarrassed to ask for more. So I said that's it, I will work, I am educated, I have a laptop and internet. Since then I did not need anyone financially'. (Noor, aged 27, divorced with children).

Considering motivations, a strong finding was that for many women personal meaning was the source for seeking entrepreneurship. A deeper analysis was taken in order to have insights into the relationships between categorical variables, i.e. entrepreneurship motivation (Necessity and Opportunity entrepreneurship) and characterises of woman respondents. The majority of participants who became entrepreneurs by choice viewed entrepreneurship as a tool for power and achievement, individual autonomy and making changes in their lives and in society. For these women, increasing income was neither a goal nor a basic motivation. Therefore, this indicates that women entrepreneurs in this study are seeking entrepreneurship out of opportunity, which has been previously discussed. Data shows that the vast majority of women entrepreneurs in this study sought opportunity entrepreneurship, and not out of necessity. Additionally, within the two motivations; the majority of participants fall into the (20-29) age bracket. However, the older age (40-49) bracket is disproportionately represented in the necessity motivation, and the younger bracket is disproportionately represented in opportunity entrepreneurship motivation.

Use of social media in business

This study gives a deep understanding on uses those women entrepreneurs try to have through social media platforms. Findings show that women entrepreneurs share marketing information about their products, such as posting photos of the product offerings, and executing sales are the main important points that allowed a way for potential consumers to contact the entrepreneur and to place orders. Economic entrepreneurial opportunities open to women are shaped foremost by culture and tradition, education and access to land and resources (Connell, 2011) and there may be a backlash against changes in women's traditional gender roles.

Share marketing information

The social media site allowed for a business to display products with no cost. For many of the women entrepreneurs, this was the only place their products were featured. As such, the social media platform was both a place to advertise and to distribute. For example, Fayzah aged 33, married with no children, discussed her use of Facebook: *"it is free; I don't pay for marketing my products through the Facebook page. I can post photos and videos that present my products to attract more customers, show them my ideas."* On the other hand, Zain doesn't post pictures of her business, but more accounts *"I post prices and details regarding my business, I also post offers with no pictures because they may copy my work. However, if a customer contacts me by message I can send them a sample of my work"* (Zain, aged 33, married with children).

Execute sales

Another important point In addition to providing marketing information, the social media platform was also a way to execute sales through attracting customers and facilitating the sales agreements.

"Via Facebook messages, the potential customer contacts me and I receive their orders." (Suha, aged 24, married with children). Orders were delivered by the entrepreneur herself or through a mediator who sent the goods to customers. For example, Zain described her online Facebook business: *"It's like a real shop containing products and I receive orders. Everyone has access to the internet with their mobile. It's easy, fast and flexible. In fact social media is useful in supporting the woman entrepreneur and her business"*. (Zain, aged 33, married with children)

Use of social media in their personal lives

Findings recorded that women entrepreneurs were committed to rigid gender norms about male and female gender identities that interact with the gendered division of labour and moral economy. Individual traits/behaviour and even agency is shaped by factors of gender, social relations, and support systems that operate. In the context of household dynamics, norms, values and practises are shaped and gendered by social values, regarding what is appropriate for women and men in terms of their status and roles. In fact, gender norms create more advantage for men over women in controlling power and resources, acting as barriers to gender equality and shaping positions for women as carers and men as providers,

therefore shaping gender identities. For example, gender norms reinforcing mothers' moral obligation and love for their children ensures that their unpaid care responsibilities and their role as entrepreneurs result in a double burden of work. Data shows that women entrepreneurs see themselves as primary caregivers responsible for child caring and domestic duties, which influences the start-up and growth of their business in the traditional economy. Women seek to find a balance between business and their domestic responsibilities as a wife, mother, daughter, and entrepreneur by bearing a double burden. Interestingly social media was a solution for them in different forms which will be discussed below.

Increased flexibility

One of the biggest challenges that all participants reported is the need to Increase flexibility in their work, including the time engaged in the business and the location of where the work occurred. For example, all participants noted that being able to market and run their products through social media allowed them flexibility or suppleness, elasticity and plasticity flexibility to do so from the safety of their homes or basically anywhere there was an internet connection. For example, in response to a question regarding whether social media changes the control over their own lives and how, Maha, Dana and Zain capture the dilemma most women entrepreneurs found themselves in on a daily basis confronting responsibilities as a wife, mother and an entrepreneur.

'The biggest challenges is are the overlapping roles between the home and work, the extra responsibilities that I had with children and the husband [...] being women it can limit a lot especially when her kids are young because of the feeling and wondering I am a good mum wife or even daughter ' (Maha, aged 24, married with children).

'[...] The need for a part-time job. I cannot work a full time job because of my new baby, I got married and I have a baby. I want a flexible job, but at the same time I can't just work under other conditions. I need something flexible-flexible time, flexible work' (Dana, aged 26, married with children).

'I'm a single Mum, flexibility in my schedule is a must, I want to support myself and my kids and to be there whenever they need me. I am the father and the mother for my kids; I am the money maker and the loving emotional provider for them' (Zain, aged 26, divorced with children).

Financial independent

A number of women entrepreneurs explain their understanding of the empowerment word using the term 'the internal power', while others describe empowerment in terms of 'independence', the ability to 'take decision 'or 'choose' or even 'resources' or 'inner strength'. In fact, being financially independent was the main motivation to start their business and at the same time the biggest benefits as reported by all of the participants that reflect on their ability to take control of their lives.

'Becoming financially independent is the most important thing that makes me believe in myself, that I can do it. Giving me the room to make decisions and be responsible for my decisions' (Donya, aged 33, married with children).

'Of course, my life changed; first of all when you are financially independent you can have a more important role in the family, your voice has more effect on your strength and you don't need anyone's help.' (Rahaf, aged 41, divorced with children).

Empowerment and Agency

The interviews provided a deeper understanding of social media to mediate the establishment and growth of female entrepreneurs in micro enterprises. Unpacking the activity outcomes of entrepreneurship on women's voices and life.

Women entrepreneurs repeated the word empowerment during the interviews and the impacts on their businesses and lives. What are women entrepreneurs' understanding of empowerment, and most important how gender power dynamics shape the outcomes?

The main outcome of women entrepreneurs in this study is empowerment. However, empowerment took different forms and shapes according to the motivation that women started their business for. What is interesting is the degree of diversity of empowerment between those women according to their entrepreneurship motivations (opportunity and necessity) and how differently women are being affected by gender norms. In fact, A number of women entrepreneurs explain their understanding of the empowerment word using the term 'the inner power', while others describe empowerment in terms of 'independence', the ability to 'take decision 'or 'choose' or even 'resources' or 'inner strength'.

Sarah had this to say: "... I am nothing and can't do anything rather than cleaning and cooking, that's what my husband used to tell me. But, making this business and then grow it let me believe in myself, I am something I can do more than cleaning and cooking and I can success and do you know what I just buy my car by my money I don't need ask my husband to give me a lift and this is the inside power' that I have now " (Sarah, aged 26, married with children).

Esrai, aged 28, married with children noted *'I started this business to achieve something-to prove that I can do it-yes, I am a woman, a mum and a wife but I can work, achieve something and succeed in life rather than only being a mam. Don't misunderstand me; I love being a mam but also love my work and the feeling of self-confidence that comes with it'. (Esrai, aged 28, married with children)*

Kabeer's (1999) empowerment framework, previously discussed, explained the complexity of empowerment that combined three diminutions of power: resources, agency and achievement and helps us to understand how women entrepreneurs actually felt empowered in this study. In line with McClelland's framework, women entrepreneurs explain the need for power in their lives in three connected and interacting ways to reach empowerment. First: the public; visible face of power as it affects women, their work, public life, legal rights, etc. Second is the private face, and here we can see how power influences and affects relationships and roles in families, among friends, in marriage. Third is the individual power, which reflects with personal confidence, how those women see themselves.

Recorded data shows positive changes in much of the decision making in the business and household level that have been affected and changed by women becoming more financially independent and becoming a decision maker in their families. For Fatemah financial independence reflects on her marriage relationship, seeing herself as a partner rather than dependent on her husband, giving her more confidence in herself and her abilities. While Rahaf emphasises on the importance of being a role model for her children of a strong, independent, educated woman especially as she is divorced.

'[...]me and my husband are both on equal footing and this is very important that's why I'm saying it's a must being economically independent' (Fatemah, married with children).

'Of course, my life changed; first of all when you are financially independent you can have a more important role in the family, your voice has more effect [...]. You can be a good role model for them, they can see your achievements, and they can see how you can make your own decision because you are successful in your work. ' (Rahaf, age 28, divorced with children).

On the other hand, increasing women's income does not necessarily translate into empowerment, especially in cases where income may rise without having changes in status or relationships and that was one of the challenges that participants reported. It is important to recognise that women's behaviours and indeed identities are often determined by gender roles and norms. Identities are developed throughout life and cannot easily be shaken off following relatively minor changes. In fact, most of the women in this study who seek entrepreneurship do not have full authority on the assets of the business or the houses. In line with Kabeer's empowerment framework (1999), Kabeer argues that asset ownership/ resource access helps to constitute an agency (Kabeer, 2005). Women who seek necessity entrepreneurship were more affected by gender norms and their decision-making processes as a reflection of the balance between security and autonomy, which are

determined by relational resources that shape rights, obligations, making necessity women entrepreneurs less empowered. Exploring the different forms of entrepreneurship (opportunity and necessity motivation), lead to different empowerment outcomes, i.e. Women who seek opportunity entrepreneurship recorded more positive outcomes than women who seek necessity entrepreneurship. Women who seek opportunity entrepreneurship are less constrained by gender norms than necessity motivation and having high positive outcomes.

'I had a helper now that I pay her salary, not my husband. He said I have to pay from my money because the helper gives me a lot of time to focus on my work, while I am feeling ok that my responsibilities at home are done by her. (Farah age 27, married with children).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provided a deeper understanding of the role that social media played on women entrepreneurs business and life. The main outcome of this study is empowerment and the vast majority of women entrepreneurs in this study sought opportunity entrepreneurship, and not out of necessity. However, empowerment took different forms and shapes according to the motivation that women started their business for. What is interesting is the degree of diversity of empowerment among those women and how those diversities affect those women by gender norms, what is interesting is how different forms of entrepreneurship (opportunity, survival motivation) have led to different outcomes in terms of empowerment. Findings show that women using different titles and descriptions to reach the same point have the power to control their own lives (empowerment) that they reach by having finance, education (resources) and confidence (agency) that will come out as entrepreneurship.

Women who seek opportunity entrepreneurship are less constrained by gender norms than necessity motivation, whereas the most disempowered women are those who have started the business out of necessity. However, situations can be challenged by women themselves and by the process of 'empowerment to enhance an individual's or group's capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes' (Alsop et al., 2006:10). Some recommendations were perceived to encourage online businesses owned and runs by women entrepreneurs such as, addressing the registration process and procedure in Jordan that have been one of the biggest challenges that women entrepreneurs noted, followed by minimising the cost of registration fees that also the majority of participant focused on during the interviews, I highly recommend to establish one-stop shops to accelerate the steps required to complete the process or even implement an e-registration system. In addition, to develop centres for women entrepreneurs, to provide support and training; these centres could provide effective empirical workshops for women entrepreneurs, that provide detailed information on updated laws, registration processes and technical issues.

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