مجلة جامعة الشارقة للعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية

اسم المقال: دور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في ريادة الأعمال النسائية في الإمارات: الآثار المترتبة على التنمية والمساواة بين الجنسين
اسم الكاتب: علياء محمد الشنتلي، محمد بن موسى
رابط ثابت: https://political-encyclopedia.org/index.php/library/9205
تاريخ الاسترداد: 2026/11/01 18:32 +03

الموسوعة السياسيّة هي مبادرة أكاديمية غير هادفة للربح، تساعد الباحثين والطلاب على الوصول واستخدام وبناء مجموعات أوسع من المحتوى العلمي العربي في مجال علم السياسة واستخدامها في الأرشيف الرقمي الموثوق به لإغناء المحتوى العربي على الإنترنت.
لمزيد من المعلومات حول الموسوعة السياسيّة – Encyclopedia Political، يرجى التواصل على info@political-encyclopedia.org

استخدامكم لأرشيف مكتبة الموسوعة السياسيّة – Encyclopedia Political يعني موافقتك على شروط وأحكام الاستخدام المتاحة على الموقع https://political-encyclopedia.org/terms-of-use

تم الحصول على هذا المقال من موقع مجلة جامعة الشارقة للعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية ورفده في مكتبة الموسوعة السياسيّة مستوفياً شروط حقوق الملكية الفكريّة ومتطلبات رخصة المشاع الإبداعي التي ينضوي المقال تحتها.

جامعة الشارقة
UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

University of Sharjah Journal

A Refereed Scientific journal

of

Humanities & Social Sciences



Vol. 19, No. 3
Muharram 1444 A.H. / September 2022 A.D.

ISSN : 1996 - 2339

University of Sharjah Journal for Humanities & Social Sciences, Volume 19, Issue 3 September 2022
https//:doi.org/10.36394/jhss/19/3/8

The role of social media in women's entrepreneurship in the UAE: implications for gender development and equality

Aliaa Mohamed Eshantaly(1)

Mohamed Ben Moussa(2)

Received on: 11-10-2020 **Accepted on: 09-02-2021**

Abstract:

The objective of this paper is to assess the implications of social media platforms for women entrepreneurs in the UAE, and the extent to which these tools have empowered businesswomen to compete in the market and overcome cultural, societal and financial barriers. Drawing on in-depth interviews conducted with 14 businesswomen in the country, the paper sheds light on how women entrepreneurs have benefited from the internet and social media to build their startup companies and business ventures, and on the extent to which these tools have helped them overcome various forms of obstacles facing businesswomen in the country. The results have shown that the social media platforms in the UAE context have provided great aid for women to become independent and start their own businesses, while reducing some challenges for them to attain their goals. In addition, the existence of social media has helped in reframing and positioning their roles in the right context to become financially independent.

Keywords: Gender Development, Gender Equality, Social Media, Women's Entrepreneurship.

(1) College of Mass Communication - University of Sharjah (Sharjah - U.A.E.)
aliaaelshantaly@gmail.com

(2) College of Mass Communication - University of Sharjah (Sharjah - U.A.E.)

Introduction:

Women's financial security and employment are important for the sustainability of their own lives, and for the economic growth and development of countries themselves, according to the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has for long embraced this recommendation by adopting and implementing successive strategies aiming at empowering women to become active and equal participants in all sectors of society, including the business field. As a result, women in the country are enjoying huge success as private entrepreneurs and CEOs of startup companies.

What's more, various scholars have noted that ICTs in general and social media, particularly plays a major role in allowing women to peruse their entrepreneurial projects, especially in countries where cultural and societal barriers prevent them from achieving their business dreams. Indeed. These tools allow them to: gain access to resources such as marketing resources and networking resources, enhance the business visibility and value, increase customer and supplier contact, and promote innovation and cultivation of strategic partnerships (Cesaroni, Demartini, Paoloni, 2017).

The paper argues that social media platforms have helped entrepreneurial women in the UAE to strive for gender development and equality. Results have shown how social media platforms provided tools, information, and equal opportunities for different genders to showcase and support their ideas to become a reality and to play a vital role as economic drivers. Social media have altered how women frame their roles in society and how they could be positioned in a way that will make them financially independent and empowered.

The Objective of the study:

The objective of this paper is to assess the implications of social media platforms for women entrepreneurs in the UAE, and the extent to which these tools have empowered businesswomen to compete in the market and overcome cultural, societal and financial barriers. Drawing on in-depth

interviews conducted with 14 businesswomen in the country, the paper sheds light on how women entrepreneurs have benefited from the internet and social media to build their startup companies and business ventures, and on the extent to which these tools have helped them overcome various forms of obstacles facing businesswomen in the country

Research Questions:

This paper seeks the answer of UAE women entrepreneurs on the following questions:

1. RQ1. What are the implications of social media platforms for entrepreneur women's business setup and growth?
2. RQ2. What are the barriers to women's entrepreneurship in the UAE?
3. RQ3. To what extent have social media contributed to gender equality in business opportunities?
4. RQ4. To what extent have social media helped entrepreneurial women to become more independent?

Literature Review:

Social Media Impact on Gender:

According to Blower, "using social media greatly impacts self-identification and self-construction of gender, especially among females" (Blower, 2016, p.3). The social media platforms grant women to create their own image of self and build their own concept of their feminism. (Amestoy et al., 2015). These experiences can define a woman's gender construction and self-expectations of her gender role and sexuality as early as 12 years old (Davis, 2018). A study on objectification, equalization and misinterpretation has discussed that many of these preferences are played out in the virtual environment. Frequent use of picture-based social media platforms like Instagram is linked to greater self-exemplification (Fardouly, Willburger, Vartanian, 2018).

The use of social media to observe and follow attractive peers, along with being exposed to sexualized mass media, stimulates self-exemplification (Vandenbosch, Eggermont, 2016). This self-exemplification and self-examination can lead to misrepresentations and misinterpretations of sexual identities by peers (van Oosten, Peter, Vandenbosch, 2017). For example, social media can propagate assault culture offline by using online celebrations of male sexual victories, whore disgracing, and equalization of women (Sills et al., 2016). Social media platforms are distinct from traditional media in that they empower the user. As Davis contends, "original content created by women on social media can prove to be empowering" (2018, p.7).

Based on historical records, women were exclusively consumers of media, however social media permit women to become makers (Dobson & Dobson, 2015). Women can utilize social media to make and disseminate their self-portrayals of people in general. Pop superstar Miley Cyrus fills in as a profoundly obvious case of the power of social media for the self-construction of the identity (Dubrofsky, Wood, 2014). Postfeminist empowerment is not limited to young women using social media, according to Katrin Tiidenberg (2018). These women use Instagram to advertise themselves in the domains of fashion, fitness, and traveling. These women are fighting against the idea that middle-aged women are never again deserving of public display and appreciation (Davis, 2018). In fact, social media platforms have contributed to the recognition and empowerment of women across cultures and regions.

Drawing on the studies mentioned above, social media platforms have provided access to mass audiences and societies with their different wants and needs. It has encouraged women to find one another and to find global role models, in case local ones weren't existing. Social media platforms have also boosted the expansion of the entrepreneurial activities of women. They gave women a new taste of empowerment and self-identification that is diverse and inclusive of other components of society.

Challenges for Women in the Digital Economy:

Later studies have shown that women's participation in the ICT workforce fluctuates depending on regions. ICT division is globally seen to be male-dominated, and upper administration is predominated by males (Melhem, Morell, & Tandon, 2009). These records, however, persist in more recent studies, because even in advanced economies, women's investment in the ICT work power has declined (Powell & Chang, 2016, p.3). Moreover, women in developing economies still face some barriers to working in ICT-related organizations as they are still underrepresented in the ICT-related jobs and their basic leadership structures (Powell & Chang, 2016, p.3).

This situation does not apply equally to all countries, however. According to the World Economic Forum's 2015 Global Gender Gap Report, the UAE is ranked as a leading country in gender equality in the region (Al Hinai, 2019). In 2015, the UAE has established the Gender Balance Council, a federal entity that enhances and increases women's roles in leadership positions. Other organizations such as Dubai Women Establishment (DWE) are actively promoting gender equality not only in the UAE but also within the GCC countries. Among their many initiatives is the UAE Women Leadership Program, which provides leadership training programs for Emirati women. In 2019, Entrepreneur Middle East reported that Emirati women account for 70% of all university graduates in the UAE, where 46% of university graduates STEM are women. The literacy rate of Emirati women is estimated at 95.8% while 50% of the employees at the UAE's Space Program are women. Emirati women also make up 20% of the diplomatic corps, including female ambassadors to the United Nations. What's more, the UAE is the first country in the region to require every government organization and every company to have female board members (Patterson, Varadajan, Salim, 2020).

Women's Entrepreneurship in the UAE:

The Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) is almost three times higher for males compared to females in the UAE. Young businesswomen are still

seven times less likely to succeed compared to men (Aljuwaiber, 2020). Although there are multiple reasons behind this gap, as mentioned above, the role of sociocultural factors and legislation is said to influence the behavior of Emirati women moving across the phases of entrepreneurship (Aljuwaiber, 2020).

Nevertheless, based on the findings of earlier studies, from 2007 to 2014, the percentage has increased to 82.3% of Emirati women consider starting a business (Tong et al, 2014, p.204-205). Furthermore, according to UAE National General Entrepreneurship Monitor (2017), "there is no significant gender differentiation for the UAE entrepreneurial activity". The female TEA rate ranks the UAE 13th globally (Ismail et al., 2017), placing the country ahead of countries in the Asia and Oceania region (Ismail et al, 2017).

ICT Development and the Gender Divide:

ICT4D aims to bridge the digital divide and help all different economies gain equal access to information and communication technologies. The United Nations, through its UN Development Program, have actively promoted ICT4D as a powerful tool for economic and social development around the world. Gender equality occupies a prominent position (5th) in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In 2019, the UN declared that:

while some indicators of gender equality are progressing, such as a significant decline in the prevalence of female genital mutilation and early marriage, the overall numbers continue to be high. Moreover, insufficient progress on structural issues at the root of gender inequality, such as legal discrimination, unfair social norms and attitudes, decision-making on sexual and reproductive issues and low levels of political participation, are undermining the ability to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5."

ICTs are considered by various actors involved in this field to play a critical role to bridge gender divides (Katsikopoulos, Lan, Katsikopoulos, & Lan, 2011). Scholars have lauded the empowering potential of ICTs, and linked this potential and the economic and professional empowerment of women (Williams, Milward, Layton, 2018).

The Digital Context in the UAE:

Digital technology and innovations have brought significant changes in all fields of life, including in the fields of entrepreneurship, business and marketing (Nuseir, 2018, p.2). Various studies have shown that UAE has made compelling progress in implementing solid grounds for IT infrastructure and ICT-related economy and organizations to develop and expand. The country perceived in the Internet a way to improve its situation as a business, touristic and commercial hub in the region and beyond. Substantial investment in this field empowered the country to assemble a propelled IT and Telecommunication infrastructure (Sokol & Sisler, 2010). Over 93% of UAE residents are online, compared to 52% in the Middle East, and 46% globally (ITU, 2016). Among the 26 countries that were covered in the Google Survey on smartphones, the UAE had the most noteworthy number of residents owning smart phones, with 61% mobile users who had personal cell phones (Parasuraman, Sam, Yee, Chuon, & Ren, 2017).

Likewise, the UAE has built enormous grounds in e-government. Government workers are supported to continually improve their IT aptitudes through the Government-subsidized ICDL program. This approach earned the national rankings in the ICTs Readiness Index given by the World Economic Forum over the ongoing years. The UAE was in this manner positioned eleventh all around for its great IT condition sub-index (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Studies have shown that the UAE has been positioned 32nd universally and second among GCC nations in e-taxpayer supported organizations (Aquaro et al., 2014). As indicated by the 2015 World Economic report, the UAE positions first all-around in quite a while of auxiliary training enrollment for young women. The proficiency level is 94% for men and 97% for women (Parasuraman et al., 2017). The UAE occupies position 86 in instructive fulfillment for women by and large. It occupies position 128 for women's monetary cooperation and opportunity. The nation's sexual orientation files show that there are as yet huge holes to connect (World Economic Forum, 2016).

While the UAE supports the employment of women through its numerous policies, the country is still a heavily gender-segregated society according to a study conducted by Vodanovich and Urquhart (2017, p.4). Using in-depth interviewing, the authors noted that some interviewees expressed that discrimination based on gender stereotyping was still prevalent. Though some workplaces were more proactive in encouraging the advancement of women in, but overall, UAE has shown great progress in improving the digital context to support gender equality (Vodanovich, Urquhart, 2017).

Digital Divide in the Context of UAE:

Another study has investigated the ways Emirati women, especially in higher education, utilize and benefit from ICTs in three main ways: family, identity building, and as a space of freedom (Yusuf, Shakir, 2008). The study highlights the positive attitudes of women towards the role of ICTs in their lives but concluded: ”there is a need for further investigation of these themes to understand how Emirati females interact with technology on personal, social, academic and more importantly, professional-level” (Yusuf, Shakir, 2008, p.9). However, the study does not investigate how these women interact with technology and apply them in the personal, social, academic, and professional spheres.

Studies have also found that men will be more motivated for interaction, while women tend to surf the internet looking for information. Explaining these differences, Sokol and Sisler (2010) argue that men have more freedom to meet and communicate with women online, while Emirati women are usually under strict societal and family control (p.13). The authors argue that the Internet can help overcome social exclusion and gender segregation but paradoxically can contribute to “reinforcing preexisting norms” (p.30). In contrast, Vodanovich, Urquhart, and Shakir (2010) argue that the Internet is allowing women to flaunt societal restrictions by providing them with more freedom and possibilities to communicate with the other gender. Indeed, ”women could find freedom in a virtual world that was not afforded to them in the real world”(Vodanovich, Urquhart, 2017).

Scholars have focused on the role of ICTs in female education and literacy. In the UAE for instance, it has been noted there are independent colleges for students, permitting women to achieve advanced education. (Vodanovich, Urquhart, 2017). However, there is still worry over issues of free access to technologies, for example to the Internet. In the UAE and other Arab nations, access to the Internet is firmly controlled and censored by the legislature with an end goal to control the introduction of specific ideas and thoughts (Al-Saqaf, 2014). ICTs like the Internet and mobile phones give another virtual space, where communication, interaction and organization can happen "outside" the beam of the omnipresent state (Al-Saqaf, 2014).

According to a recent research paper published in 2019, "the findings suggest a decreasing trend in gender discrimination, but the issue requires efforts from policy-makers, society and government to ensure gender parity is achieved. Academic research on women in STEM/SET workplace, specific to the UAE and the region, continue to slowly advance, with very few articles published in the same"(Patterson, Varadarajan, Salim, p. 1, 2020). However, another study has proved that "the use of digital media is lagging in the Middle East as well as UAE. It has not gone to the level it could raise, keeping in view the sales of smartphones and other digital devices in the region. There are also a few disadvantages of digitizing SMEs' business activities like increased competition, more options for the customers to purchase the less costly and good quality products by visiting various websites and chances of decreasing product prices due to open and large competition."(Nuseir, p.11, 2018). This could indicate that the digital gap is a result of a digital lag in the region, not necessarily discrimination and that the UAE should address the subject from a digital improvement point of view to be able to encourage and onboard more women in the field as the UAE policies are recently directed towards women's involvement.

Institutional Assistance for the UAE Female Entrepreneur:

In recent years, several support programs and initiatives have been instigated to focus on female entrepreneurship development in the Gulf nations (Khan, 2013). As part of a worldwide trend, a variety of sociopolitical enablers are creating an impetus toward greater opportunities for female entrepreneurs in the Arab countries (Danish and Smith, 2012). Government initiatives to boost entrepreneurial ventures vary across national settings. UAE is ranked 19th out of 132 countries and has the highest score (61.4) in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region in terms of favorable conditions for female entrepreneurs (Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute, 2016).

A study has shown that "respondents have given good weightage to support from NGOs, easy access to government authorities and less bureaucratic hurdles are helping them to achieve their targets successfully. This result is supported by the previous study that concluded that government support is considered as one of the most influential elements in flourishing entrepreneurship development in any nation especially in the developing ones (Chowdhury, 2011). Availability of business ideas and securing start-up capital are important success factors for the UAE women entrepreneurs." (Gupta, Merchandani, 2017, p.227).

Theoretical Framework:

This paper draws on the theories of Framing by Erving Goffman and Positioning by Davies and Harre, two theoretical frameworks that are suitable to investigate the everyday interactions through which individuals live and construct their social worlds. Discourse analysts have used and developed these theories to uncover and explain how, through linguistic and paralinguistic means, interlocutors create and negotiate meanings, relationships, and identities (Gordon et al., 2015, p.234). Framing refers to how people establish "definitions of a situation" (MacLean, 2007), and discourse analysts typically have drawn thereon to explore how interlocutors construct and add up of social experience, including how they create alignments or "footings" (Goffman 11481). As to positioning, it addresses

"the discursive production of selves", or how people create identities for themselves through interaction. The theory has been used primarily by discourse analysts to research narratives. (Gordon et al., 2015). This study aims at discussing the impact of social media platforms on women's entrepreneurship as these theories have lent insight into the layered nature of social interaction, the discursive construction of multiple selves, and therefore the complexity of language use. In short, the application, interconnection, and continued extension of those theories contribute in significant ways to our understanding of human communication and knowledge.

Methodology:

The data of this research was gathered through in-depth interviews that were conducted face-to-face and on-call format. Purposeful sampling, specifically snowball and network sampling (John W. Creswell, 2013), was used to locate participants in the UAE. Participants were entrepreneur women living in the UAE that are in the process of designing, launching, and/or running their own businesses. Participants were identified through social media platforms and/or through referencing of entrepreneurial women interviewed. There were 14 participants (3 Emiratis and 11 mixed Arab nationalities of women entrepreneurs living in the UAE) who were individually interviewed about their Entrepreneurship experience. The participants' ages ranged from 23 - 40. The participants' business types were diverse, including two makeup artists, one fashion designer, one recruitment influencer, one garage owner, one digital marketing agency owner, two beauty salon owners, one parental coaching platform owner, one media and training services provider, one serial Entrepreneur, one photographer and one talent management service provider. Each participant had enjoyed different levels of success in their entrepreneurial level. Moreover, the duration of the business establishment also varied from 1 week - 6 years, an average of 3 years. Three participants have a verified badge on their social media accounts which means that their accounts are authentic accounts for a global brand.

The interviews were recorded for analysis and discussion. The research design is a qualitative analysis that relies on semi-constructed questions and non-numerical data. Data takes the form of notes and voice recordings, written and translated by the researcher‘s observation of the recordings of the participants, and creating assumptions about the research topic. Mainly 8 questions were provided to the participants; however, each participant elaborated differently on certain topics, which provided a possibility of adding different questions considerably.

Results and Discussion:

The results are organized into three topical sections inspired by each of the questions asked to the participants. Each participant was asked all the items from each of the sections below, however each participant elaborated on certain topics more than the other. Vividness was achieved, and some different themes in each section emerged. What follows are the results of 14 in-depth interviews based on exploring the three topical sections and their emergent themes.

Gender Equality:

Gender Equality comes 5th on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) list by the United Nations. A list published by the United Nations (UN) as the ”world‘s best plan to build a better world for people and our planet by 2030,” as stated by their official website. This reflects the importance of gender equality on the well-being and the development of countries and nations. This declaration indicates the significance of gender equality in the development of humanity overall, and how the governments with the help of the community should all promote gender equality through rules, laws and regulations that facilitate the progress of norms, values and beliefs of the society members against inequality.

Considering the contributions of social media to gender equality in the UAE context, some participants held strong viewpoints on this matter. More than half of the participants have agreed that social media contributed directly to gender equality. Ebtihal, one of the participants, has a strong opinion on how social media diminished the difference between the genders. She stated that:

"The importance of social media was that it contributed directly to gender equality. Social media have marginalized the difference between genders as they are mostly dependent on the quality of content exhibited in them. With social media, you're on the map, you already exist, you just need to prove yourself regardless of your gender. From its name 'social media' you are part of the society, you're being viewed and evaluated socially and it is through your effort you win and attract your demographics. Plus, the exposure to successful existing entrepreneurs, whether men or women are all shared through social media, which motivates both genders to fight and strive for what they believe in. from my point of view, gender discrimination doesn't exist as much on social media platforms, maybe in the mind of some of its users, but still, with the weapons the social media provides for its users, women still can enforce strong statements and exhibit examples of entrepreneurs."

Furthermore, Sally, another participant, agrees with Ebtihal by mentioning how social media exhibited what women are capable of and provided strong examples for other women to motivate them She said:

> *Social media has provided equality between genders, because it started to demonstrate more and more what women are capable of, women were finally given a free and an open window to demonstrate what they want to demonstrate. They are not kept out anymore, they are not kept in the dark anymore, they can exist in social media and show the world what they want to show.*

Most participants mainly discussed gender equality in social media platforms in terms of accessibility, as social media platforms are available to all genders equally. Thus, providing almost equal opportunity in showcasing whatever ideas they have available. As interpreted from their answers, social media do not fight gender inequality per se; however, they only increase reachability and exposure to all genders.

Hence, another counter-argument arises by other participants on the impact of social media on gender equality. For example, Sara Almadani states that gender equality is a radical problem, tools such as social media

and governmental policies can provide assistance, but changes need to happen in the roots, through education and awareness:

Gender equality is radically problematic, even if the system and the government are supportive and there are tools, in this case, social media tools, to motivate women to start their own business; we still face problems of perception of women and her role in the society especially in traditional societies. What do our books say, how are we educated (does it still say Fatima cooks in the kitchen and Hamad works with his father) if those still exist, it will still be perceived that women are weak and their places are behind closed doors. social media in this situation can show examples of capable women, which could play an important role in redefining women's capabilities by setting real-life examples for them. But social media platforms alone won't solve the problem.

Tamara further elaborates on how social media didn't 'fight' against gender inequalities, but it was simply a platform that was accessible to everyone which helped consequently to the inclusion of women:

I don't think that social media fought against gender inequalities but rather provided a platform for everyone to showcase what they want and can do, which has helped the decision- maker include more variety of choices in their decisions. In a way, certain cultural stereotypes were diminished with the rise of social media platforms because if you already exist, so its matter of content quality rather than gender. But the contribution to social media wasn't directed towards gender equality; if social media were used by people that don't believe in equality they'll use it to prove that. In other words, it's just a tool and we decide how to use it.

The counter-argument sheds the controversial aspect of whether social media platforms provide gender equality or women in social media strive for equality. Social media do provide equal tools to all the users, however, the perception of women and their rights lies in the mindset of the users.

From Framing and Positioning perspectives, social media does provide different situations through which entrepreneur women can construct new

social experiences, first by allowing them to be visible on the map, then by allowing them to interact accordingly and finally by giving them examples of which they can identify and relate with, and position themselves accordingly in the society.

In the UAE context, women are supported to strive for financial independence and are supported by government initiatives to implement their ideas and start their own businesses. Thus, the social media platforms in this frame act as a strong weapon to striving for gender equality.

In conclusion, the majority of participants did state, in fact, social media platforms contributed directly to gender equality. It has given them an easily accessible and affordable platform through which they can market and brand their ideas and businesses. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the investments made to strive for gender equality in the UAE have also motivated women to become more active in the society and strive to create their own ideas and implement them. While gender inequality is still a radical issue, social media in the UAE context helped to decrease it.

From Barriers to Challenges:

Social media altered how women of the UAE view barriers to their entrepreneurial activity. Not only it altered their vision, but they have helped them facilitate the process, provide enough information and examples to follow for their business establishment and growth. In order to understand deeply the barriers, faced by the entrepreneur women interviewed, we need to understand their roles in society and their motives to start a business of their own. 6 out of 14 participants are mothers, 4 are wives, and 4 single women. It was clear that all respondents clearly had to perform a delicate balancing act of managing their work and home life on daily basis so they don't lose the track of their tasks. It could be interpreted that, although their entrepreneurial activity didn't ruin their lives, it did lead to modifications in their family and social relations.

From understanding the roles and motives of the participants, the barriers could be anticipated; like lack of know-how, barriers of traditions, family concerns, or even personal barriers. However, The majority of

participants said that they didn‘t face any barriers to entrepreneurship, rather, they called them the ’necessary challenges ‘to the entrepreneurship journey. Nonetheless, four participants mentioned, financial concerns, lack of external support, business cultural barriers, wrong upbringing are still barriers that exist during the entrepreneurial.

Asmaa explains the financial challenges that are related to her business, however she states that social media helped her overcome these challenges saying:

> *Barriers are mainly financial as the meet-up and playdates, events usually requires high rental costs. However, through social media, she had contacted her demographics (Moms) to provide their material in the sessions that weren‘t sponsored*

Another challenge was mentioned by Ghina was the negative support that she had received from her surrounding. But it was not her biological family, rather, they were close relatives and friends:

I faced a lot of negative thoughts regarding that women cannot own her own business. But throughout the paperwork, I have found it safe, yet a little bit overwhelming to finish my papers. But I did it and I did open my saloon. I would give 40% credits to the social media that helped me showcase my launch. I would rather place the rest of my credits to my ideas and creative offers I have provided for my customers, that was also advertised by social media.

Sara also mentions the importance of the external support of the family in terms of identifying the barriers women face in entrepreneurship. She states that although the UAE government is supportive of women and have established so many initiatives and platforms to encourage them to pursue their business, the family upbringing could still be a barrier to her success:

> *The UAE government and leaders are highly supportive of the women‘s role in the society, they have established her won platform from which she can pursue her career and business ideas. There are government initiatives that encourage women in the business*

world, however, the main challenges are her home, familial support, and the effect of her upbringing on her personality. This could be a barrier to women's success not only in UAE but in the whole world.

Almost all participants mentioned that they have not faced systematic nor governmental barriers in the UAE, as the culture, has become supportive of the idea and most of the government initiatives are supporting the inclusion of women in the business world. With the help of social media, they were able to develop and progress, the term 'barriers' and have it changed to the motivational term 'challenges' as a sign of acceptance to women's entrepreneurship. Interestingly, three participants specifically stated the phrase: "I wouldn't call them barriers. but rather challenges", which inspired this section's title. Malaak, Tamara and Tohama explained different challenges they faced in their entrepreneurial journey, ranging from proving themselves, to market research to competitive environments. Malaak, Tamara and Tohama said respectively:

Wouldn't call them barriers, but more like challenges to prove myself, but yes social media helped a lot. For example, without social media I wouldn't have been able to advertise or find models for my business. The social media provide a free and convenient tool to showcase and advertise the business.

She added that

I wouldn't call them barriers, but challenges of studying the market dynamics and identifying what is wanted. But overall, UAE provides a safe nourishing and encouraging environment for entrepreneurs to establish their business which leads to high standard end products which could also be a challenge competing with them. Moreover, social media provides itself as a platform through which women can express and showcase their voices, product, talents, and profiles. And actually, this goes for both genders on social media as there is no dominant gender-wise but rather professionally wise. It is an objective platform that allows equal opportunities for both. I wouldn't say barriers but more like challenges. The competition has

definitely increased. Ladies in the UAE became widely intermixed in the society and business world which adds a challenge to all business owners and the preference goes to the best quality of service provided and the most innovative."

In the same vein, Tohama contends that:

social media provides easy expansion geographically, more reachability, community management, and more transparent competition for planning, but made it a little bit harder for those who can't provide services up to the standards, so in a way it raised the quality bar which improved the market and motivated business owners to work on themselves. because audiences now are aware due to the high exposure caused by social media and they could evaluate the quality better than before. responsibility on the business owner.

To sum up, what has contributed significantly to the shift from barriers to challenges, was the existence of social media. All 14 participants as mentioned above, stated that social media did contribute to the facilitating of the entrepreneurial process. Social media have provided the participants the opportunity to be existent on the map with a minimal budget. Before they were dependent, on newspaper advertisement, word of mouth, and other traditional marketing strategies that were all costly. In social media, whether they have big capital or small, they do already exist anyway, and they have access to many tools that could help you showcase their ideas, products, and services.

Social media platforms framed barriers and challenges differently to women's entrepreneurship. There are no clear walls anymore against women, rather some tasks and requirements of the entrepreneurial process. Women position their effort differently with the existence of social media as they already exist, already been herded, and not hindered physically. Regarding, the intangible obstacles, they are still being diminished by the social media platforms, because the platform already exists, thus providing different examples, mindsets, and education on the importance of women in the entrepreneurial journey.

The Tools of Social Media:

Social media field is advancing continuously. From just a basic socializing tool to a very powerful marketing tool that most entrepreneurs are taking advantage of to move their business to the next level. According to some participants, it is what the social media tools had provided helped them establish and grow their business.

Statistics on Most Popular Social Media Platforms Used

All participants interviewed relied heavily on social media for their businesses, however, social media platforms vary from one participant to another. For example, all 14 participants interviewed use Instagram for their business, 4 of them use only Instagram for their business. The Second platform comes is Facebook used by 7 out of 14 participants. Third, in line is Snapchat each used by 4 out of 14. Fourth comes, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp, each used by 3 out of 14 participants. Then finally comes, Telegram and TikTok, Pinterest each used by 1 out of 14. Ebtihal, mentions in the interview that Instagram is the most effective in attracting talents in the UAE.

In the UAE, Instagram is the most effective platform to find various talents, as it provides just the right amount of representation, plus weak and strong points of the prospects" Moreover, other platforms are also influential and existing on the map, and this is reflected in both statistics.

Sally mentions that Tiktok is the most influential newcomer in the business world next to Instagram. She also states the importance of Twitter in knowing to follow up on business news and celebrities.

> *TikTok is the hottest newcomer, according to her observations" Also, she mentions an interesting insight on Twitter saying: " Twitter is not a place for my business, however, I use it to follow up on business news and celebrity news because it's a platform where everybody expresses what is going on with their business*.

This reflects the indirect usage of social media that affects the quality of the business as well. What's more, Sara provides an interesting insight into her social media usage, as she uses all social media to attract a diverse audience as different categories of audience use the different social media according to their needs:

I use all social media platforms as I believe from my own experience and studies I have read about, that every social media platform has different types of users in terms of age, characteristics and so on, and I want to reach to the greater number of people and as I want my business diverse to suit their diversity.

Moreover, 6 out of 13 participants, their business occurs on social media itself, so without social media, they would not have been able to start their business. These are the participants that have social media accounts through which they showcase their ideas without the need of headquarters (refer to participants' background section). The rest depends heavily on social media as it is the pillar of their expansion, exposure, and success as shown below.

Impact of Social Media Tools on Business Establishment and Success:

It is no doubt that social media contributed to women's entrepreneurship and business activities. Participants have identified that social media had significantly contributed to their business establishment and growth, and they have provided the following benefits of social media:

a. Provide an affordable platform for advertising and marketing

b. Provide exposure and reachability

c. Equal opportunities for both genders

d. Better Communication, self-expression, less control and, less censorship

e. Variety of information, talents, and research methods

Provide an affordable platform for advertising and marketing. Social media provides various tools to advertise and market products, services, ideas, talents and so on, with no or minimal charge, which allows business owners to exist on the map and showcase what they have not depended on their capita, rather, their content quality. Tohama Says.

> *"Yes, contributed a great deal to women's entrepreneurship as it allowed easy delivery of products and services, easy and interactive presentation of them as well, transparent competition for better evaluation, improved planning, pricing, quality, performance and so on. It became an essential element of the business and a lot of traditional media are diminishing from the market. They became the main pillars of marketing and advertising and more cost-efficient."*

Provide exposure and reachability. Social media provides tools to enhance exposure and reach of your content, in terms of number and suitable demographics. This helps to better segment the audience and create more inbound strategies to create and build the loyalty of the brand and on a great scale. Razan says:

> *Social media helped her increase her exposure and reachability for people to know her. It also helped people to bond and identify with her as she is also a lifestyle blogger. so it provided her with inbound marketing as people felt that they know her and they identify with her hence they're connected with her. All of this was done from home where she could manage between her family life and work life. And because of her high exposure, some brands would occasionally collaborate with her with paid campaigns for her to advertise her products.*

Equal opportunities for both genders. Social media helps in eliminating gender segregation as they provide a platform that is for everyone to showcase, and quality wins. This has given decision-makers variety and the possibility of both genders inclusion. Reham says:

I own a car garage. Although my dad was in this business for years, it is because of the exposure, we have on social media, and of course my passion for cars, that motivated him to encourage me to pursue the same career. Reham continues,

Also, through presenting my work through social media, people are becoming more accepting of the fact a woman can successfully run a garage if she has good management skills and a great understanding of cars.

Better Communication, self-expression, less control and less censorship. Having personal accounts allow their owners to better express their ideas and become more creative with less restraint and control over what they showcase, which provides more freedom, less censorship and more variety of content. Asmaa says:

Social media helped me find the moms to build the community for my platform". Also besides, As I mentioned, it provides a continuous communication channel that creates inbound relationships with demographic.

Variety of information, talents, and research methods. Social media provides a huge accessible information database for researchers to better study the market, know the needs and demands, identify the demographics and the current situation of their market. Also, it provides the number of profiles for recruiters and clients to enlarge the business. Tamara says:

Social media is helping establish her business, as she could see the influencers' experiences, she could see the different brands, what the market needs, how the market is developing, and she sees the market gaps that need to be filled. Moreover, through her Instagram account, she could study her women prospects' needs and types and what satisfies them, making the most suitable clothing brand for them. Instagram provides a lot of visuals that could help with her business more than any other marketing tool. She also continues "Instagrams helps in implementing my plan, showcasing my process for starting the business on Instagrams for feedback and audience guidelines. I don't want to establish a product and then sell it, I want to

engage with my audience from the start for them to be more identified with the product and my brand.

The results of the interviews have shown the significant impact of social media on women's entrepreneurship. They demonstrated how these tools have empowered entrepreneur women and facilitated their journey, making it more effective and productive. They also, with the support of government legislations and facilities helped reshape the role of women in a dominantly tribal community and culture.

Impact of Social Media Tools on Independency:

There were a lot of controversial perspectives from which women interviewed define independence. Some Participants perceived independence in the form of free advertising on social media platforms.

Asmaa points out, and a few agreed, in terms of independence, social media tools helped different talents to expose on the social media regardless of their gender:

> *"It helped different talents to show in the market, regardless of being men or women, social media is all depending on the type and quality of your content, which gave more power to women, in general, to make their own business for them.*

On the other hand, Ghina asserts that social media itself cannot provide independence, but rather the quality of services provided to showcase on the platform that will give you independency and uniqueness:

> *Social media platforms could help you become independent by 40%, I would say. It does help you to advertise freely and spread your product which helps increase sales, but if your product itself isn't worth selling social media will not help you.*

Finally, Sara provides an interesting insight into the importance of social media tools on independency. She says:

> *Social media enhances the character and personality of the person, as I mentioned, it is a strong communication channel, and through expects strong characters to be utilizing it and strength gives independency. Plus it helps you meet people that could support you personally and business-wise, I have personally met someone on social media that taught me about the investment. Communication between different cultures, different perspectives and different people that gives more information, information is power, and power makes you more independent.*

The interviewees' insights above reflect both how women entrepreneurs define social media and independency and how they appropriate them in their business adventures. They also show how social media play a key role in framing independency from the perspective of these women.

Conclusion:

To sum up, the article has demonstrated that social media platforms are strong tools at the disposal of entrepreneur women to move forward with their business ventures. The study, actually, provides much needed insights into current entrepreneurial activities of women in the UAE, and the role of news communication tools particularly social media platforms in this process. Almost all participants have mentioned that social media platforms did contribute to the gender equality and development because these tools provide affordable and effective communication platforms for business. Regardless of gender differences and social capital of entrepreneurs, it is the quality of content communicated on social media platforms that plays the key indicator for women's success. This indicates that these platforms constitute a significant and much needed opportunity for so many women to showcase their ideas and creativity and compete with men in a once dominated business sphere. In addition, the article has shed light on the ramifications of social media platforms in the UAE context where entrepreneur women have benefited also from governmental policies aiming at empowering women in a country. Indeed, decision makers and institutions in the country have implemented ambitious strategies over the last decades to provide women with a business environment that enable independent women entrepreneurs to compete in the business world despite continuous social and cultural misconceptions about the role of women in the country and the region generally.

Nonetheless, the article has also demonstrated that full gender equality in the business world is yet to be achieved and requires sustained and long-term efforts to address the barriers that still hinder women's contribution to economic development. The in-depth interviews did reflect positive indicators that women are becoming successful entrepreneurs and key drivers of the economy. Despite these positive developments, there are still huge differentiations between males and females in business participations that need to be addressed. In this context, the study contributes to a small literature in this important field, and helps pave the way for more studies to explore this highly important topic in the context of the UAE and Arab countries in general.

References:

Abukumail, A. Alrashidi, F. M. & Atta, K. (2018). Entrepreneurship in the Arab world: status, challenges, and the role of government. *The Arab World Competitiveness Report, 61*.

Ahmadzadeh, S., Yaghoubi, E., Ahmadi, E., Hadi, A., & Hamid, E. (2012). An analysis of correlation between organizational justice and job satisfaction. *African Journal of Business Management, 6*(3), 995-1002. https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM11.1622

Al-Saqaf, W. (2014). Breaking digital firewalls: Analyzing Internet censorship and circumvention in the Arab world [Doctoral dissertation, Örebro University].

Aljuwaiber, A. (2020). Entrepreneurship research in the Middle East and North Africa: trends, challenges, and sustainability issues. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEEE-08-2019-0123

Amestoy, P., Ashcraft, C., Boiteau, O., Buttari, A., l'Excellent, J. Y., & Weisbecker, C. (2015). Improving multifrontal methods by means of block low-rank representations. *SIAM Journal on Scientific Computing, 37*(3), A1451-A1474. https://doi.org/10.1137/120903476

Blower, L. (2016). It's 'Because I am a Woman' Realizing identity to reconstruct identity for the female autobiographical inquiry. *Convergence, 22*(1), 88-101. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856514560315

Cesaroni, F. M., Demartini, P., & Paoloni, P. (2017). Women in business and social media: Implications for female entrepreneurship in emerging countries. *African Journal of Business Management, 11*(14), 316-326 https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2017.8281

Chew, E., Ilavarasan, P. V., & Levy, M. R. (2010). The economic impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on microenterprises in the context of development. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries, 44*(1), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1681-4835.2010.tb00316.x

Cope, J. (2005). Toward a dynamic learning perspective of entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 29*(4), 373-397. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2005.00090.x

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20*(1), 43-63. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.1990.tb00174.x

Davis, S. E. (2018). Objectification, sexualization, and misrepresentation: Social media and the college experience. *Social Media and Society*, *4(*3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118786727

Dobson, A. S. (2015). Postfeminism, girls and young women, and digital media.

In *Postfeminist Digital Cultures* (pp. 23-51). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137404206_2

Dubrofsky, R. E., & Wood, M. M. (2014). Posting racism and sexism: Authenticity, agency and self-reflexivity in social media. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, 11*(3), 282-287. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2014.926247

Dutot, V., & Van Horne, C. (2015). Digital entrepreneurship intention in a developed vs. emerging country: An exploratory study in France and the UAE. *Transnational Corporations Review, 7*(1), 79-96. https://doi.org/10.5148/tncr.2015.7105

Esmaeeli, H. (2011). The study of effecting factors on digital entrepreneurship (a case study). *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business, 2*(12), 163-172.

Fardouly, J., Willburger, B. K., & Vartanian, L. R. (2018). Instagram use and young women's body image concerns and self-objectification: Testing mediational pathways. *New Media & Society, 20*(4), 1380-1395. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817694499

Goby, V. P., & Erogul, M. S. (2011, July). Female entrepreneurship in the United Arab Emirates: Legislative encouragements and cultural constraints. In *Women's Studies International Forum*, *34*, 4, 329-334, Pergamon. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2011.04.006

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.

Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gordon, K., Murin, M., Baykaner, O., Roughan, L., Livermore-Hardy, V., Skuse, D., & Mandy, W. (2015). A randomised controlled trial of PEGASUS, a psycheducational programme for young people with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry, 56*(4), 468-476. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12304

Gundry, L. K., Miriam, B. Y., & Posig, M. (2002). Contemporary perspectives on women's entrepreneurship: A review and strategic recommendations. *Journal of Enterprising Culture, 10*(01), 67-86. https://doi.org/10.1142/S0218495802000141

Gupta, N., & Mirchandani, A. (2018). Investigating entrepreneurial success factors of women-owned SMEs in *UAE*. *Management Decision*. https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-04-2017-0411

Gurumurthy, A. (2006). Promoting gender equality? Some development-related uses of ICTs by women. *Development in practice, 16*(6), 611-616. https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520600958298

Jabeen, F., & Faisal, M. N. (2018). Imperatives for improving entrepreneurial behavior among females in the UAE. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-03-2016-0042

Katsikopoulos, K. V., & Lan, C. H. D. (2011). Herbert Simon's spell on judgment and decision making. *Judgment and Decision Making*.

Loscocco, K. A., & Robinson, J. (1991). Barriers to women's small-business success in the United States. *Gender & society, 5*(4), 511-532. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124391005004005

Mulej, M., Potocan, V., Zenko, Z., Zizek, S. S., Mulej, N., Potocnik, A., & Hrast, A. (2012). The small and medium-size cities (also) require (requisitely) holistic approach and (ethics of) interdependencek. In *8th Congresso Brasiliero de Sistemas*.

MacLean, G. (2007). *Looking East: English writing and the Ottoman empire before 1800*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230591844

Manochehri, N. N., Al-Esmail, R. A., & Ashrafi, R. (2012). Examining the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) on enterprise practices: A preliminary perspective from Qatar. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries, 51*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1681-4835.2012.tb00360.x

Melhem, S., Morell, C., & Tandon, N. (2009). Information and communication technologies for women's socio-economic empowerment. *The World Bank*. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-8133-5

Lopez-Mulnix, E., Beede, P., & Mulnix, M. W. (2014). Emerging issues among women Emirati entrepreneurs: A research agenda. *European Scientific Journal, 1*.

Nuseir, M. T. (2018). Impact of misleading/false advertisement to consumer behaviour. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research, 16*(4), 453-465. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEBR.2018.095343

Nuseir, M. T. (2018). Digital media impact on SMEs performance in the UAE. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal, 24*(2), 1-13.

Patterson, L., Varadarajan, D. S., & Salim, B. S. (2020). Women in STEM/SET: gender gap research review of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)–a meta-analysis. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*. *https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-11-2019-0201*

Powell, C., & Chang, A. M. (2016). Women in tech as a driver for growth in emerging economies. Council on Foreign Relations.

Sandys, E. (2005). Gender equality and empowerment of women through ICT. Women 2000 and Beyond, 60-76.

Sarkis, J., Naser, K., Mohammed, W. R., & Nuseibeh, R. (2009). Factors that affect women entrepreneurs: evidence from an emerging economy. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. https://doi.org/10.1108/19348830910974932

Schjoedt, L., Brännback, M. E., & Carsrud, A. L. *Understanding Social Media and Entrepreneurship*.

Sills, S., Pickens, C., Beach, K., Jones, L., Calder-Dawe, O., Benton-Greig, P., & Gavey,

N. (2016). Rape culture and social media: Young critics and a feminist counterpublic. *Feminist Media Studies, 16*(6), 935-951. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2015.1137962

Singh, S. (2017). Bridging the gender digital divide in developing countries. *Journal of Children and Media, 11*(2), 245-247. https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2017.1305604

Sokol, D., & Sisler, V. (2010). Socializing on the Internet: Case study of Internet use among university students in the United Arab Emirates. *Global Media Journal, 9*(16).

Soriano, D. R., Garrigos-Simon, F. J., Alcamí, R. L., & Ribera, T. B. (2012). Social networks and Web 3.0: their impact on the management and marketing of organizations. *Management Decision*. https://doi.org/10.1108/00251741211279657

Subramani Parasuraman, A. T. S., Yee, S. W. K., Chuon, B. L. C., & Ren, L. Y. (2017). Smartphone usage and increased risk of mobile phone addiction: A concurrent study. *International journal of pharmaceutical investigation, 7(*3), 125. https://doi.org/10.4103/jphi.JPHI_56_17

Tiidenberg, K. (2018). *Prelims' Selfies: Why We Love (and Hate) Them (Society Now). https://doi.org/10.1108/9781787543577*

Tobito, C., Prada, A. P., Manzanares, L., Piraquive, D., & Valero, L. (2017). *The Central-American Situation on Globalization and Competitiveness*.

Tong, Q., McCrohan, D., & Erogul, M. S. (2012). An analysis of entrepreneurship across five major nationality groups in the United Arab Emirates. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship, 17*(02). https://doi.org/10.1142/S1084946712500070

Van Dijck, J., Poell, T., & De Waal, M. (2018). *The platform society: Public values in a connective world*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190889760.001.0001

Urquhart, C., Liyanage, S., & Kah, M. M. (2008). ICTs and poverty reduction: a social capital and knowledge perspective. *Journal of information Technology, 23*(3), 203-213.https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jit.2000121

Van Horne, C., Dutot, V., & Zhang, Y. (2016). Young entrepreneurs and the digital space: Case studies from the UAE. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies, 5*(02), 293-300.

van Oosten, J. M., Peter, J., & Vandenbosch, L. (2017). Adolescents' sexual media use and willingness to engage in casual sex: Differential relations and underlying processes. *Human Communication Research, 43*(1), 127-147. https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12098

Vandenbosch, L., & Eggermont, S. (2016). The interrelated roles of mass media and social media in adolescents' development of an objectified self-concept: A longitudinal study. *Communication Research, 43*(8), 1116-1140. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215600488

Vincenzo, A., Elia A., Wai, M. K., Patrick, S., Adriana, A., Seema, H.,& A, H. (2014). *United Nations E-Government Survey 2014*. E-Government for the Future We Want.

Vodanovich, S., & Urquhart, C. (2017). ICTs and the computerised Hijab: Women's experiences of ICT in the UAE. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries, 82*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1681-4835.2017.tb00608.x

Williams, I., Millward, O., & Layton, R. (Eds.). (2018). Gender gaps and the social inclusion movement in ICT. *IGI global*. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-7068-4

Yusuf, H., & Shakir, Z. (2008). *Agenda to change our condition*. Zaytuna Institute.

دور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في ريادة الأعمال النسائية في الإمارات: الآثار المترتبة على التنمية والمساواة بين الجنسين

علياء محمد الشنتلي[1]
محمد بن موسى

ملخص البحث:

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى تقييم انعكاسات منصات التواصل الاجتماعي على رائدات الأعمال في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ، ومدى تمكين هذه الأدوات لسيدات الأعمال من التنافس في السوق والتغلب على الحواجز الثقافية والمجتمعية والمالية. وبالاعتماد على مقابلات متعمقة أجريت مع 14 سيدة أعمال في الدولة ، تسلط هذه الورقة الضوء على كيفية استفادة رائدات الأعمال من الإنترنت ووسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لبناء شركاتهن الناشئة ومشاريعهن التجارية ، وإلى أي مدى ساعدتهن هذه الأدوات في التغلب على مختلف أشكال المعوقات التي تواجه سيدات الأعمال في الدولة. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن منصات التواصل الاجتماعي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة قد قدمت مساعدة كبيرة للمرأة لتصبح مستقلة وتبدأ أعمالها الخاصة ، مع تقليل بعض التحديات التي تواجهها لتحقيق أهدافها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، ساهمت وجود وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في إعادة صياغة أدوارها في المجتمع ووضعها في السياق الصحيح لتصبح مستقلة ماليًا.

الكلمات الدالة: التنمية بين الجنسين، المساواة بين الجنسين، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، ريادة الأعمال النسائية.

(1) كلية الاتصال - جامعة الشارقة (الشارقة - الإمارات العربية المتحدة)
aliaaelshantaly@gmail.com