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GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG SAUDI FEMALES

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ABSTRACT

This study's prime objective examines the impacts of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social culture, and education on entrepreneurial intentions among Saudi Women. Additionally, this study has also examined the mediating role of gender role stereotyping in the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social culture, and the education and the entrepreneurial intentions among Saudi Women. The study has employed surveys-based, using questionnaires. The females with entrepreneurship startups during the last three years have chosen as a final sample. The SEM-PLS is employed as a research tool. The findings indicate that entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention among Saudi females. The gender role stereotyping, culture and education all appear as a significant determinant of entrepreneurial intention among Saudi females. The study has highlighted the women contributed to the growth of the economy through establishing SMEs and the creation of jobs. A gap has been identified in existing literature irrespective of the significance of attitudes in entrepreneurial actions, intentions, and success. The study is among the pioneer study on the issues related to gender role stereotyping, culture, and entrepreneurial intention among Saudi females.

Disciplinary: Management Sciences, Woman Studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

A key role is played by women in supporting the competitiveness and development of several economies. Almost half of the population is comprised of women in several countries. This 50% of the women population is half of the total potential labor force (Cuberes & Teignier, 2016). However, in some regions, i.e. Southeast Asia, the population of women is more than 50%. At the same time, 25% of women in Europe are doing their businesses. In Russia, 65% of women run their empire. This contribution is significant for any economy in the process of development (Minniti &

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Naudé, 2010, Koohi & Feizbakhsh, 2018).

Entrepreneurship is regarded as an independent activity, based on self-employment. Entrepreneurship is highly crucial for social inclusion, the creation of employment opportunities, and economic growth (Dean et al., 2019). Based on all these reasons, it is important to analyze the advantages of self-employment, improve the level of job satisfaction, and individualism of the economy. The intrinsic motivation is equal in effect with the pull factors. Intrinsic motivation is referred to as the desire for doing a specific activity. It tends to create a significant influence as compared with the push factors (Giddy & Webb, 2018). The existence of entrepreneurs is not exclusively explained by the cultural-institutional and socio-economic conditions.

In the same way, the factors of individualized psycho-attitudinal including intention and self-efficiency are crucial and when combined with other variables of attitudes i.e. risk aversion can be highly important in the process of entrepreneurship (Zhang & Cain, 2017). The attitudes specific to the gender of female entrepreneurs have been examined in this research paper. This has been examined by analyzing the stages of entrepreneurship at MSMEs level in KSA (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (Ahmad, 2012). The key emphasis has been made on the factors related to gender. For two reasons, it is considered important. It has been suggested by research that the number of participating women in the process of entrepreneurship is less as compared with men(Ladge et al., 2019). In the Gulf Cooperation Council region and KSA, the percentage of women participating in business activities is considerably low as compared with global levels.

Another reason is the increase in studies on women entrepreneurs over some recent years. Further, there is a need for more studies in the context of developing economies (Yadav & Unni, 2016). It has been highlighted by current studies on gender that several challenges and opportunities are faced by women entrepreneurs (Hashmi, 2019: Melton et al., 2019). Some studies have identified the factors, which influence motivation, and some have highlighted the issues linked with the empowerment of women.

The context of this research study is Saudi Arabia, highlighting the women contributed to the growth of the economy through establishing SMEs and the creation of jobs (Sabri & Thomas, 2019). A gap has been identified in existing literature irrespective of the significance of attitudes in entrepreneurial actions, intentions, and success. There is a gap of research on the role and impact of attitudes specific to women entrepreneurs within the context of developing economies. It has been confirmed by studies based on the Arab region that cultural norms and social structure influence the intention of women to run a business (Al Subhi & Smith, 2019).

Further, Saudi Arabia women experience at meso and macro levels of the social, institutional, and cultural norms (Syed et al., 2018). Therefore, there is a need to analyze the attitudes of women entrepreneurs regarding the Saudi Vision 2030, per planning for economic reform through improved drivers of growth and diversification. The greater participation of female entrepreneurs in business activity is a key driver, which has been identified (Henning & Akoob, 2017). Moreover, it is considered to analyze the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among females such as subjective norms and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) (Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2016). Literature has suggested that these two perceptions have a considerable influence on the decision-making among women for starting a new business.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KSA

In Saudi Arabia, the entrepreneurship by women has been an area of interest. Traditionally, women in Saudi Arabia have been restricted to contribute to economic growth. A considerable improvement has been seen in this field regarding the status of women. This has been because of the changing vision of the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), which supports gender equality and the empowerment of women (Aleidi & Chandran, 2017). A new phase has been marked by the Ninth Development Plan of Kingdom (2010-2014) in development through the provision of improved opportunities for employment of women and motivating them to do jobs. The recent policy of the KSA government based on Vision 2030 has initiated a new phase in the promotion of SME entrepreneurship for the creation of employment opportunities and improving the participation rate of women in the workforce (Denizci et al., 2019).

Several initiatives have been launched by the government to improve the roles of women in the economic sector and labor force through entrepreneurship leadership including Aramco Entrepreneurship Center, and Al-Sayedah Khadijah Bint Khuwailid Businesswomen Center. It also includes KACST's (King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology) Badir. These programs have been formulated to improve entrepreneurial leadership and support its culture among the young generation of Saudi Arabia (Chandran & Aleidi, 2018). The participation of women in these programs or initiatives is growing and is a trending economic potential.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In literature, the model of behavioral intention has been adopted at a wide-scale(Shiau & Chau, 2016). The intentional theory has been adopted by Moghavvemi et al. (2012) to analyze the IT entrepreneurial behavior and its determinants empirically and found that self-efficacy of computers and some other variables could create an influence on the intention of IT entrepreneurship.

The intentional theory has been applied by several researchers in their research based on the context of women entrepreneurship (Chandran & Aleidi, 2019). Researchers have made a comparison of intention for business startup and growth between men and women. Moreover, the theory of Liñán and Fayolle (2015) as a standard for study based on cross-culture. The researchers analyzed the perceptions of potential entrepreneurs for both men and women. It was concluded by the researchers that there is low entrepreneurial attract and self-efficacy among women as compared with men. Therefore, it results in the low intention for entrepreneurship. It is important to analyze the intention of female entrepreneurs as a determinant in IT entrepreneurial behavior.

2.2.1 ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF- EFFICACY

The concepts of self-efficacy among individuals are linked with the social environment and behavioral intention. The confidence of an individual in self-abilities to become a successful entrepreneur is reflected by the concept of ESE in the field of entrepreneurship (Nowiński et al.,2019). In psychology, this variable has been used as individual differences. It has been suggested by several studies that high ESE in individuals reflect high intention for entrepreneurship. Some researchers have focused on the influence of entrepreneurial beliefs and decisions among individuals by self-efficacy (Crespo et al., 2018). The focus of research based on gender aspects has been on the belief of self-efficacy, skills, and perceptions of abilities from the social aspect and

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female entrepreneurs. In traditional and male-dominant sectors, the literature reveals that the perception of women for entrepreneurial skills is less at times irrespective of their real abilities and skills (Chandran & Aleidi, 2018). The entrepreneurial intention is influenced by this perception, which leads to a low entrepreneurial behavior level.

It was observed by some researchers that women feel that the environment is not feasible for them to do entrepreneurship as compared with men. This may create negative consequences for them. Moreover, it has been found in the literature that there are limited career choices for women than men because of the low perception of required capabilities and skills (Derks et al., 2016). It has been suggested by similar studies that opportunities might not be utilized by some women for becoming entrepreneurs. Therefore, women have low self-efficacy for entrepreneurship. It has been revealed by some recent studies that there is a significant and positive influence of ESE on entrepreneurial intention among women. It was found by (Chang et al., 2019) that a strong gender effect, low ESE rate, and intention for entrepreneurship exists among MBA students and female adolescents as compared with men.

Alternatively, it was found by Wang et al. (2016) that the relation between entrepreneurial intention and gender is low by the incorporation of self-efficacy. It has been confirmed by some authors that a strong influence is created by high self-efficacy of women entrepreneurs on innovative behavior as compared with low self-efficacy women entrepreneurs. Similarly, it was found by Kazumi and Kawai (2017) that a strong influence is created by self-efficacy on the development of entrepreneurial behavior and intention among women particularly in non-traditional sectors such as technological entrepreneurship. It is important to consider that a considerable role is played by women's perceptions of decision making for starting a new business at the IT level. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been formulated.

Hypothesis 1: ESE has a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention among Saudi entrepreneurship.

2.2.2 SOCIAL CULTURE

Social Culture generally, it is assumed that there is high gender inequality in the Arab region. Therefore, difficulties are created by this hindrance in the respect of rights and liberties of women as revealed by some laws. Women in Saudi Arabia are still fighting for their rights. The economy has a clear depiction of gender inequality, as women of all ages require a male guardian (Hales & Hodos, 2010). Saudi Arabia was ranked 130 out of 134 countries based on the index of gender parity in 2009 by the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report (Qureshi, 2014). Several reasons explain that there is a lack of leadership roles for women and gender inequality in Saudi Arabia. The culture of the country does not allow women to reach the positions of leadership. Several obstacles are faced by women, which creates a negative influence on their journey towards such positions. Secondly, even if women get such positions, they experience issues in managing employees particularly men reflecting negative values for them (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). Therefore, issues are created in achieving the objectives of the organization. Ultimately, women might be influenced to do wrong decisions in negative circumstances.

However, the society of Saudi Arabia is witnessing many changes in terms of women empowerment. Women are appearing as a salesperson, waiters, lawyers, tellers, etc. moreover, in the 2012 London Olympics, women also competed from Saudi Arabia for the first time. The religious and traditional institutions are being changed by the social changes supported by

modernization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010). However, the great renaissance was seen for women in the era of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz AlSaud. He supports women in taking high positions such as Education Minister. Moreover, women are allowed to take part in the parliament of Saudi Arabia and vote for municipal councils. Irrespective of the modernized aspects of Saudi Arab, there is still a lot to do. There is a low percentage of women who support modernity. The policies of gender segregation are supported by conservatives(Giddy & Webb, 2018). Social control is significantly fostered by society and religion. There is still gender segregation by society and state.

The variable of social norms refers to the perceived pressure from society such as friends, family, and society in the depiction of entrepreneurial behavior (Zhang & Cain, 2017). The attitude of an individual refers to the level of positive or negative self-evaluation of an individual for becoming an entrepreneur (Hales & Hodos, 2010). It is predicted by the theory that intention for behavior is greater when there is a positive influence of social norms. In this regard, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

Hypothesis 2: Social culture has a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention among Saudi entrepreneurship.

2.2.3 EDUCATION

*A*n experience or act, which has a formative influence on the individual's character, mind, or physical ability, is referred to as Education. It can be regarded as the process of obtaining knowledge during adolescence or childhood (Ormrod & Jones, 2014). When an individual is educated and has access to the optimal mind state, he can think clearly, and behave effectively. Undoubtedly, the knowledge base is created by education and it adds to economic and personal well-being. In Gulf countries, the literacy rate among women (aged 15-24) has reached 100% as per the report of OECD (2014) for Women in Business Report in the Middle East and North Africa Region (Mena). The similar applies to women in Tunisia, Jordan, and Syria. However, it is decreasing to 70-75% in Yemen, Egypt, and Morocco. In some MENA economies, the literacy rate of tertiary education level is not even. However, more than 50% of women in Libya and Lebanon aged 15-24 years have tertiary education (Yadav & Unni, 2016). However, it is just 10% in some economies of MENA. Nowadays, the priority of the Saudi Government is education. The government now considers education as the backbone for economic development.

With this realization, important developments have been seen in the education sector of Saudi Arab. The government has established many colleges, schools, and universities. The education is free to the post-secondary level. Moreover, the government gives financial support for male and female students in specific education areas. Free housing and financial support are given to the students of the university. Moreover, books, means, and transportation are given at subsidized rates. For female students, free transportation is given (Sabri & Thomas, 2019). There has been an improvement in the number of students in different educational phases in KSA as per the recent statistics revealed by the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The figures estimated in March 2015 reveal that there has been a considerable increase in female students in every university of KSA as compared previously.

Similarly, the students' percentage was between 49-50% during 2006-2007-2008-2009. It was found by the last statistics in 2015 that there are 42.0928 female students out of 66.9271. This makes 63% of the total students in universities in Saudi Arabia. It has been admitted by the Gulf

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Cooperation Council (GCC) that several strides have been made by women in education access particularly in Saudi Arabia and UAE (70 and 60% respectively). Women are sponsored by governments of GCC to study abroad to acquire new skills and capabilities for serving their home country(Al Subhi & Smith, 2019).

Hypothesis 3: Education has a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention among Saudi entrepreneurship.

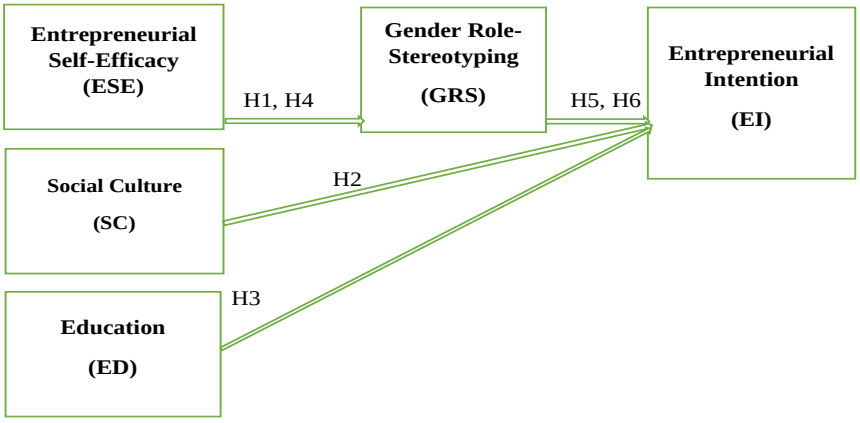

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.2.4 GENDER ROLE- STEREOTYPING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Another important aspect of socio-cultural, which influences the intention of entrepreneurship, is Gender. The previous studies on women entrepreneurship and IS have considered it as biological sex. The current research is based on several theories (Syed et al., 2018). The study has taken into account previous studies on gender differences to forecast entrepreneurship intention. The gender variable has been used as a state of psychology and social construct (Melton et al., 2019).

The gender stereotypes related to the qualities linked with every sex tell about the job types, which are regarded as suitable for them. These are regarded as feminine and masculine jobs. Traditionally, entrepreneurship is considered as a masculine field, which is dominated by males. There are less women owners of businesses as compared with men (Henning & Akoob, 2017). A relation has been established by scholars of entrepreneurship between entrepreneurial intention and gender stereotypes. Specifically, negative influence can be created on entrepreneurial intention among women by gender stereotyping. This can restrict their ability to acquire human, social, and financial capital.

An important role is played by gender stereotypes between the social norms and environmental perception, as well as the intention of entrepreneurship among women. Women can be discouraged by negative perceptions of the creation of new businesses. This is because of the significant impact of societal norms (Aleidi & Chandran, 2017). The role of social norms on the potential of females for entrepreneurship has been examined by some researchers. It was found that this variable could result in low attraction for entrepreneurship and self-efficacy among women than men. Therefore, it influences the intention of entrepreneurship. Moreover, the risk of failure can be created through social norms and negative environmental perception, which may influence the intention of entrepreneurship (Chandran & Aleidi, 2018). It can be observed that an important role is played by social norms in the IT entrepreneurial intention among women.

This statement is in line with the assertion of Cuberes and Teignier (2016) from IS perspective, which states that women are influenced by the IT subjective norms perceptions and intention to use IT. Therefore, this concept is crucial for consideration (Henning & Akoob, 2017). Therefore, the

developed hypotheses are

Hypothesis 4: ESE has a significant impact on the Gender Role- Stereotyping among Saudi entrepreneurship.

Hypothesis 5: Gender Role Stereotyping has a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention among Saudi entrepreneurship.

Hypothesis 6: Gender Role Stereotyping mediates the relationship between the ESE and entrepreneurial intention among Saudi entrepreneurship.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this study.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this surveys-based study, the data is collected with the aid of questionnaires. The females with entrepreneurship startups during the last three years have chosen as a final sample, with a random sampling procedure. The questionnaire is distributed among 430 respondents. The responses were 47.5 percent, considerably higher than the threshold level of 30 percent (Basheer et al., 2018: Hafeez et al., 2018). The SEM-PLS is employed to analyze the collected data.

3.1 MEASUREMENT

EI was measured by six items using a seven-point Likert scale and is adopted from Miralles et al. (2016). The construct of ESE has been measured by using a six-item scale taken from Nowiński et al. (2019). The 12-item gender role-stereotyping is adopted from Eriksson et al., (2017). Scale related to social culture and entrepreneurship is adopted from Shin (2018). The scale of education is adopted from Pahurkar (2009).

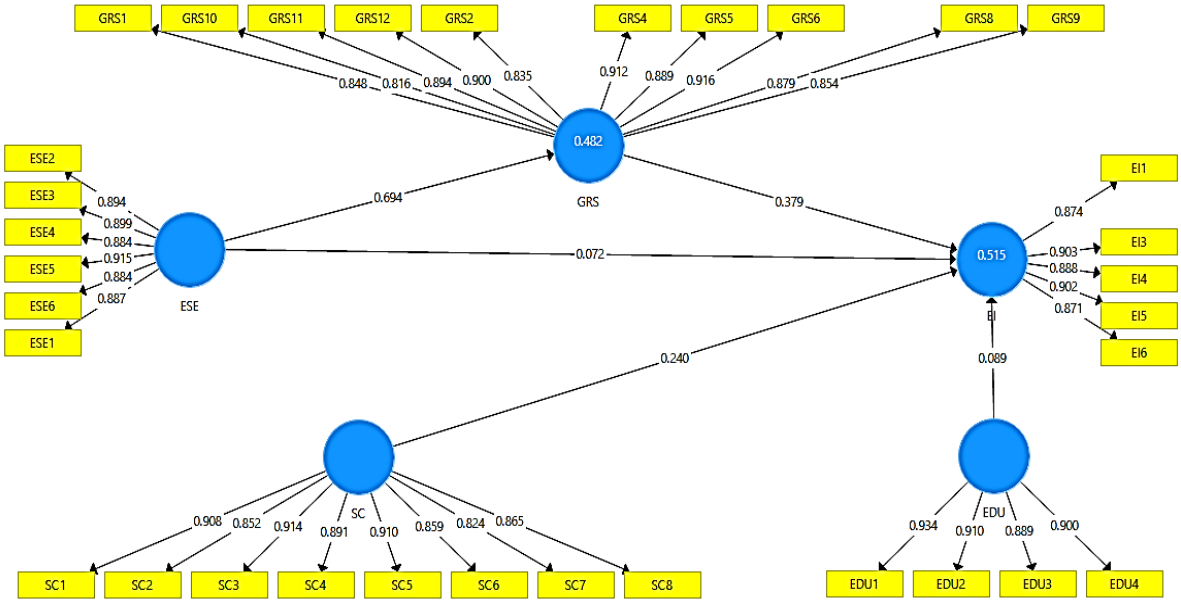

Figure 2: Measurement Model.

4. ANALYSIS

The SEM-PLS comprises two steps namely the measurement model and the structural model (Muneer et al., 2019). The earlier, evaluate the reliability of items, scales, and variables used in the current study. Whereas the latter is used to determine the path coefficient between and among the variables. Figure 2 shows the measurement model of this study.

The individual item reliability is accessed that the items with loadings less than 0.70 are

deleted. The items namely EI-2, GRS-3, and GRS-17 are deleted from the analysis.

Table 1: Outer Loadings.

Variables		EDU	EI	ESE	GRS	SC
Education (EDU)	EDU1	0.934				
	EDU2	0.910				
	EDU3	0.889				
	EDU4	0.900				
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	EI1		0.874			
	EI3		0.903			
	EI4		0.888			
	EI5		0.902			
	EI6		0.871			
Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE)	ESE1			0.887		
	ESE2			0.894		
	ESE3			0.899		
	ESE4			0.884		
	ESE5			0.915		
	ESE6			0.884		
General Role of Stereotyping of Entrepreneurship (GRS)	GRS1				0.848	
	GRS10				0.816	
	GRS11				0.894	
	GRS12				0.900	
	GRS2				0.835	
	GRS4				0.912	
	GRS5				0.889	
	GRS6				0.916	
	GRS8				0.879	
	GRS9				0.854	
Social Culture (SC)	SC1					0.908
	SC2					0.852
	SC3					0.914
	SC4					0.891
	SC5					0.910
	SC6					0.859
	SC7					0.824
	SC8					0.865

The reliability of the model is accessed through the measures namely the Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted. Table 2, the reliability analysis results revealed the fact that all three measures are above the threshold levels and there is no issue of reliability in our study.

Table 2: Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	(AVE)
EDU	0.929	0.932	0.950	0.825
EI	0.933	0.936	0.949	0.788
ESE	0.950	0.951	0.960	0.799
GRS	0.966	0.967	0.970	0.765
SC	0.958	0.959	0.964	0.772

Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion was adopted to assess discriminant validity, that the upper diagonal values of the validity matrix must be higher than lower values.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	EDU	EI	ESE	GRS	SC
EDU	0.908				
EI	0.847	0.888			
ESE	0.786	0.616	0.894		
GRS	0.715	0.685	0.694	0.875	
SC	0.673	0.642	0.616	0.728	0.878

The bootstrapping procedure is employed to examine the path coefficient. The 500 bootstraps are used to examine the structural relationship between and among the variables (Junoha et al., 2019). The findings indicate that, all the paths namely EDU ➔ EI, ESE ➔ EI, ESE ➔ GRS, GRS ➔ EI, and SC ➔ EI are significant at p-value less than 0.05.

Table 4: Direct Relationships

	(O)	Mean	SD	(|O/SD)	p-values
EDU ➔ EI	0.089	0.093	0.131	3.681	<0.001
ESE ➔ EI	0.335	0.325	0.213	3.574	<0.001
ESE ➔ GRS	0.694	0.694	0.064	10.770	<0.001
GRS ➔ EI	0.379	0.380	0.156	3.434	<0.001
SC ➔ EI	0.240	0.248	0.167	3.438	<0.001

The mediating role of GRS in the relationship between ESE and EI is also examined. The mediating path ESE ➔ GRS ➔ EI is also significant at p-value less than 0.05. The R-square value of the current study is above the threshold value (see Table 6).

Table 5: Mediation

Mediation	(O)	Mean	SD	(|O/SD|)	p-values
ESE ➔ GRS ➔ EI	0.263	0.263	0.111	2.372	0.009

Table 6: R-square

	R Square
EI	0.515
GRS	0.482

The hypotheses adopted for this research, the p-values are less than 0.05 indicating statistically significant. Thus all the research hypotheses are accepted.

5. CONCLUSION

In this research, theoretical foundations have been provided by two main streams of literature. The first stream is based on the female entrepreneurship literature, depicting roles of intention for entrepreneurship and its determinants, i.e. social norms and gender stereotypes. The second stream is the information systems literature, highlighting the significance and role of two factors specific to context including expertise and knowledge in technology and IT innovativeness. These two key factors determine intention for entrepreneurship in the field of technological entrepreneurship. The findings indicate that ESE has a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention among Saudi females. The gender role stereotyping, culture and education all appear as a significant determinant of entrepreneurial intention among Saudi females. Researchers can explore several variables

including attitudes to obtain an in-depth understanding of intention through socio-psychological theories. Intentional and planned behavior is represented by entrepreneurship. Therefore, research can be done through formal models of entrepreneurial intention. A broad theory of human behavior proposed by Zhang et al. (2014) refers to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

6. DATA AND MATERIAL AVAILABILITY

This study data can be provided upon contacting the corresponding author.

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