

Cultural Narratives and the Empowerment of Women on the Saudi Arabian Labour Market

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Abstract

Recent entrepreneurship literature has delved into the barriers and motivations of European female entrepreneurs. The current study aims to compare what is the effect of cultural narratives on the barriers and motivations for female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia in comparison to these for female entrepreneurs in the UK. The presence of cultural distance or cultural proximity in the barriers and their cultural narrative motivations across Saudi Arabia and the UK is the empirical question. To address this question, we do two types of data collection. Firstly, we replicate a survey conducted among British female entrepreneurs by asking the translated version of the same questionnaire for Saudi Arabian female entrepreneurs. Thus, we obtain a perfectly comparable set of observations for both countries. We collected all in all over 200 responses from Saudi Arabia and we compare them with the secondary data obtained from the UK survey (114 observations). Secondly, we obtain cultural variables to quantify the local cultural narratives. For the UK we use the Understanding Society Survey data on cultural participation. We collected comparable cultural participation indicators for the case of Saudi Arabia. Thus, we ultimately conduct regression analysis using a recursive model, where the female engagement in entrepreneurship is explained with certain barriers and motivations which are on their side explained by local cultural contextualization in the level of cultural heritage and living culture consumed in the locality where the person lives.

Key words: female entrepreneurship, Saudi Arabia, UK, cultural context, barriers, motivations, empowerment