DISSERTATION

UNDERSTANDING KUWAITI WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR

ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA: A STUDY OF GENDER, DIFFUSION, AND CULTURE

IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING KUWAITI WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR ADOPTION OF

SOCIAL MEDIA: A STUDY OF GENDER, DIFFUSION, AND CULTURE IN THE MIDDLE

EAST

The growing number of small businesses owned by Kuwaiti women in recent years is an

indication of a new progress that Kuwaiti women are achieving. This study through the lens of

Diffusion of Innovations theory examined why and how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt

social media. It investigated the attributes of social media that made social media appealing to be

adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. It also investigated the pros and cons associated with

social media when used as a marketing tool. This study specifically looked at Facebook, Twitter,

and Instagram comparing these three types of social media. This study integrated concepts such

as gender, entrepreneurship, social media, Diffusion of Innovations theory, and culture.

The snowball sample of this qualitative study included in-depth interviews with owners of

20 businesses which revealed detailed data examining women's entrepreneurship and their

adoption and use of social media as a marketing tool. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were asked

in 2014 to answer 18 questions that included inquiries regarding Rogers' (2003) five attributes of

innovation: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability.

The results showed that most Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in this study prefer using

Instagram, the photo and video sharing social networking platform, over Facebook and Twitter

when marketing to their customers. Findings also revealed Rogers' attributes associated with

adopting an innovation, such as relative advantage, complexity, and observability, apply to

adopting Instagram as a marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Kuwaiti women

entrepreneurs adopt and incorporate Instagram in their marketing strategy because of Instagram's

photo-sharing nature (relative advantage), ease of use (complexity), and popularity (observability). This study's findings also unveiled the perceived pros of using Instagram as a marketing tool – Instagram is like a photo album, it enlarges the circle of customers, it is widely used, and it is suitable for smaller businesses. However, the study also showed several cons to Instagram – including that products may not be what they seem and that the business owners have to deal with rude and discouraging comments. The women entrepreneurs also worry about providing unique content. They worry that their accounts will be stolen or lost and their products' photos may be copied. They also wonder how long Instagram will be the preferred social media.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Kuwaiti women live in a strict culture yet they also are at the forefront of change in their society. Wheeler (2001, pp. 191-192) stated that "Kuwait is a country where women face daily challenges because of their gender." Kuwaiti women faced many challenges over the past years. Those challenges include refusing to wear abaya, getting good education, fighting for their political rights, and more recently becoming entrepreneurs in a strictly male dominant field. The growing number of small businesses owned by Kuwaiti women is an indication of a new progress that Kuwaiti women are achieving. The increase can be partly attributed to the technology factor, including the use of social media. The focus of this study revolves around how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs are adopting social media and incorporating them in their marketing strategies. The role social media plays in helping Kuwaiti women reach out to their customers will be looked at through the application of Diffusion of Innovations theory (Rogers, 2003).

Women in Kuwait and Entrepreneurship

Kuwait is an Islamic conservative country and both religion and culture play fundamental roles in shaping the country's laws, and traditions. It is a male-dominant type of society and culture. A socially and culturally constructed belief that is commonly shared by many Kuwaitis is that women play a secondary role in the Kuwaiti society whereas men take the lead. Wheeler (2001) talked about how many Kuwaiti men and especially extreme Islamists endorse the idea of driving women back into the home where many of them believe that women is created to serve her family. Kuwaiti men are the ones responsible for the welfare of their families and by that they have their authority to control and dominate. It is a culturally constructed belief that was inherited from the elder generations of Kuwait and got passed to newer generations. Men were

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the breadwinners while the women's natural place was their home and their jobs were to take care of their husbands and their children with no other serious potentials towards working outside their houses. These gender roles were challenged by newer generations of Kuwaitis. Younger generations of men became more willing to share with their mothers, sisters, and wives some responsibilities at home (Wheeler, 2001). In addition, many Kuwaiti women are encouraged to join and be part of the work force. However, Alessa (2009) argued that women are encouraged to do so because it became as a necessity since having two incomes will ensure living a better life. She argued that if most Kuwaiti men were able to satisfy all the materialistic needs of their family members, then Kuwaiti women will not be encouraged to join the labor force.

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) (2006) reported that Kuwaiti women make up more than 50 percent of the Kuwaiti population in which 24.5 percent of Kuwaiti women are business women in the workforce and make up more than 40 percent of the Kuwaiti workforce. In the recent years, Kuwaiti women are more encouraged not only to join the labor force but also to start and own their businesses. They are getting supported from the government of Kuwait, their family members, national organizations and the society overall. For example, the Kuwait Economic Society (KES), which is a civil society organization, initiated a MEPI-funded local grant project titled "Women's Leadership and Entrepreneurship." This project aimed at empowering Kuwaiti women by helping them take part in advancing the economic situation and the enhancement of their country. This project was designed to improve the trade and business environment for Kuwaiti women. Moreover, this KES project targeted the growth of private sector capacity by promoting and supporting women entrepreneurs through another project and that is the Women's Entrepreneurship Development Project. These projects encouraged Kuwaiti women

entrepreneurs by providing opportunities and guidance involving the expansion of their business, training, networking, and experience sharing (Falzone, 2010).

However, a study done by Alowaihan (2004) looked at gender and business performance of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. The gender differences were discussed through the examination of human capital variables, family situation factors, business characteristics, and financial performance indicators. His results showed that men had more business experience whereas women had higher education levels, and were older than their male counterparts. Also, his findings showed that women-owned businesses' financial performance was significantly lower than businesses owned by men.

For the personal and external factors affecting Kuwaiti women's decisions to become entrepreneurs, Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri (2010) found that Kuwaiti women decide to become entrepreneurs because they want to enhance their social position and help them in taking and making independent decisions. Furthermore, Kuwaiti women were found to be more likely to start and establish their own business and become entrepreneurs than Kuwaiti men (Al-Wugayan & Alshimmiri, 2010).

The main theoretical framework that was applied for this research is Diffusion of Innovations, which introduced the fundamental and main aspects of the adoption process (Rogers, 2003). It discusses how individuals adopt innovations, including behaviors, ideas, and products. The challenges and motivations of Kuwaiti female entrepreneurs, especially those adopting social media, were examined to further understand their adoption of social media and their decision process. In addition, the attributes of social media that appeal more to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were investigated.

Research Questions

This study helps contribute to the existing literature concerning women's entrepreneurship and social media because it integrated different facets and aspects of gender, culture, and entrepreneurship in order to further and better understand women's entrepreneurship in Kuwait. It researched the different challenges and motivations that women entrepreneurs, who adopt and use social media for marketing reasons, faced and experienced. The integration of the multiple facets included the use of social media, gender, entrepreneurship, diffusion of innovations theory, and a distinctive culture. Also, studying Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their adoption of social media through the application of the theory of Diffusion of Innovations provided new insights and findings regarding women's entrepreneurship and their social media use. The overarching research questions for this study are:

RQ1: How do Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt and utilize social media to market their businesses?

RQ2: Are there any certain attributes (relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability) of social media that appeal particularly to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and why?

RQ3: Are there certain characteristics of Kuwaiti culture that make the adoption of social media by women entrepreneurs more relevant to their economic success?

RQ4: How do Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive the pros and cons of social media marketing?

Researcher's Relevant Personal Background

Why am I in particular interested in studying the adoption of social media by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs? The first reason is that I am a woman and I am from Kuwait. I am not an

entrepreneur but I have observed the increase in the number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in the last few years. Wherever and whenever I switch on the TV and check the local channels, interviews done with Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs often will be shown. Reading a local magazine is no exception as well. I got to see and read many interviews done with Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in the last few years. Moreover, almost every time I visit friends and go to family gatherings, one of the most prominent topics that we discuss is the multiplying number of Kuwaiti women owning and running their businesses. Not only do I get to hear, read about, and know some of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in person but I also became a customer for some. Even my sister-in-law has started her own businesses recently and her sister similarly became a woman entrepreneur. It seems like most of the popular businesses owned by Kuwaiti woman are food businesses and I think that they are the most successful ones. My sister-in-law owns a business in which she sells perfumes and special kinds of aromas that she mixes and makes herself while her sister runs a food business featuring traditional home cooked meals. My sister-in-law once told me that her sister's business is more in demand and that she has more customers because hers is a food business. This could be a reason but another possibility might be the way her sister is marketing for her target market.

As a Ph.D. candidate in Public Communication and Technology at Colorado State University, I am interested in the way these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs market to their customers. I noticed that I got to know about many of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their businesses through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Many of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs can be reached by contacting them using such platforms. Customers can easily interact with them through social media and also can get their business contact information to communicate directly with them and make orders over the phone. What I noticed was that some

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use social media to post a synopsis of the type of business they own and also post pictures of the products they sell and services they offer.

I also want to better understand how these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs are currently using social media as a marketing tool. Through the application of the theory of Diffusion of Innovations and examining the use of social media by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs through an academic lens, the collected data and results will be shared with the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to help enhance their use of social media and how they market to their customers.

This study incorporated the mix of two different qualitative methods. The methodology included participant-observation and in-depth interviews. The methodology aimed to collect data looking at Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their adoption and use of social media when targeting their potential customers and marketing for their current ones.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation reviews the existing literature concerning women's entrepreneurship, culture, Diffusion of Innovations theory, and gender. The first part of the literature review includes explications of the main concepts that are related to the topic of this proposal. Concepts such entrepreneur, marketing, social media, and culture were defined to clarify how they were used and referred to in this study. Women entrepreneurship in the Middle East and the role culture plays in influencing it were explored and talked about prior to explaining the Kuwaiti context and more specifically women entrepreneurship in Kuwait. This is followed by social media use in Kuwait.

Diffusion of Innovations, which is the theoretical framework utilized for this study, was reviewed and discussed. Then, the intersection of entrepreneurship and gender come next as it looked over the studies that investigated the gender factor and how it is related to entrepreneurship.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation includes the methodology that was used for this study. The way participant-observation and in-depth interviews were used in the research of this study were explained in details. Then, four cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs using social media were singled out to provide to highlight the way these women adopt social media as a marketing tool. Also, issues of reliability and validity were discussed and issues which the researcher faced during the application of the methods were included.

Chapters 4 to 7 focus on revealing the findings of this study. Chapter 8 covers the discussion of the findings in which it explains how they relate to Rogers' (2003) diffusion theory, entrepreneurship, gender, and culture. Chapter 8 also provides the limitations of this study and suggest potential future studies.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Before reviewing the literature concerning the focus of this dissertation and its overarching research questions, there are several key concepts that should be addressed first. This chapter starts with the explications of concepts such as entrepreneur, marketing, social media, and culture. Then, these concepts were explained as they relate to women entrepreneurs of Kuwait.

What is an Entrepreneur?

Schumpeter (1934, p. 132) defined an entrepreneur as the "one who reforms or revolutionizes the pattern or production by exploiting an invention, or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of materials or new outlet for products, by recognizing an industry and so on."

Girard (1962) explained how entrepreneur is a word derived from the French verb "entreprendre." This French verb refers to attempt, try, and start something. Various business and economist scholars define the concept of entrepreneur differently and the definition of entrepreneur is not consistently used and accepted in the existing literature (Carland, Hoy, & Carland, 1988).

Bygrave and Hofer (1991, p. 14) defined an entrepreneur as "someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it." Bygrave and Hofer (1991) based their description on two other definitions, which are an entrepreneurial event and the entrepreneurial process. An entrepreneurial event refers to the attempt of creating a novel organization to track an opportunity (Bygrave, 1989). The entrepreneurial event is about all the efforts made to pursuing the opportunities and the actions and functions involved in the formation of organizations (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991).

Cole (1959) identified an entrepreneur as an individual who is mainly in charge of collecting the required resources to initiate a business. Moore and Buttner (1997, p. 5) described women entrepreneurs as "those who have initiated businesses and have been actively involved in managing it; own at least 50% of the firm, and have been in operation for one year or longer." For this study, woman entrepreneur is referred to a female individual who initiates, manages, and markets her own business.

Defining Marketing

The concept of marketing was modified several times over the years. According to Keefe (2004) the formal definition of marketing adopted by marketing professionals and used in books and university courses nationally has been formed by the American Marketing Association ever since 1948. The National Association of Marketing Teachers, which is an AMA precursor organization, formulated the first and original definition of marketing in 1935, which was then adopted by the American Marketing Association in 1948 and AMA did not alter or change it after revising it in 1960 (Keefe, 2004).

The first definition of marketing, which lasted for almost 50 years, described marketing as "the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers" (American Marketing Association Committee on Definitions, 1960, p. 15). The newer version of the definition of marketing, which the American Marketing Association developed and released at the AMA's Summer Educators' Conference in 2004, defined marketing as "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organizations and its stakeholders" (Keefe, 2004, p. 18).

Gundlach (2007) illustrated the reactions, commentary, and discourse concerning the definition of marketing that the American Marketing Association unveiled in 2004. He explained that there were academic community members, whose scholarship is in the marketing and society area, voiced their concern regarding the limitations of the 2004 marketing definition. They found that defining marketing as an "organizational function and a set of processes" limits its perspective and domain because it does not include other contributors such individuals, actors, institutions, and processes involved in the marketing process. Moreover, another limitation regarding the 2004 definition of marketing was its narrowness of not addressing the viability and adequacy of the role marketing play in society and therefore it lacked providing guidance to its practitioners. Gundlach (2007) argued that it is the responsibility of the American Marketing Association to form a new definition for marketing that best describes its modern scholarship and practice.

Grönroos (1989) argued that dependency of using the definition provided by the American Marketing Association and basing its description solely on American settings is not fully adequate. Grönroos (1989) argued that in other settings such as the European one, different approaches should be considered when defining marketing. He suggested the need to include the long-term customer relationships associated with marketing.

In this study, marketing involves the business activities and efforts that women entrepreneurs perform in order to publicize about their businesses and attract and promote their customers and buyers to buy theirs goods and services.

Social Media

Safko (2010, p. 3) identified social media as the "media we use to be social. That's it." This is a very generic and a brief definition of what social media is. Chaney (2009) explained how social networking websites such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook allowed their users to socialize with other users. He also pointed out how social media enabled users to start publishing their own information rather than just consuming what is out there.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorized social media into six different types. The six types of social media are collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds. Wikis, which enable and allow the users to add and modify the information posted on their website, is an example of the collaborative projects form. Blogs were described as personal Web pages, which can include personal diaries or other type of information that only one single author is in charge of posting and adding to her/his blog. Content communities refer to a group of individuals who form a community and share media content and information among themselves. The content communities may use and share various types of media such as photos (e.g., Flickr) or videos (e.g., YouTube). Personal accounts and profiles are not required to be created and the users who have done so only share basic information about themselves. Content communities can sometimes be subjected to the threat of using and sharing copyright protected content.

Social networking sites are online presentations that allow their users to create personal accounts and profiles. Social networking sites users can post information on their personal pages in which they can also invite other users and enable them to view their content and get exposed to the posts they post. Users of social networking sites can also send emails and instant messages to other users. The personal profiles of social networking sites include various types of content

such as photos, audio files, videos, personal diaries and so on. Examples of social networking sites include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

The last two types that Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) identified are virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds. Virtual game worlds are online platforms that represent a 3D environment allowing their users to personalize their own avatars and communicate with one another whereas virtual social worlds are platforms that enable their users to behave freely and live in a virtual life which is identical to their real life.

Powell (2009) described social media as a Web platform where individuals can interact with one another. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Facebook can be used to post textual posts, photos, videos, and ads promoting the products and services that the entrepreneurs trying to sell and promote. Morris (2012) stated that Facebook is the biggest convergence of all time and has the largest range of users compared to other social media forms. Twitter is a microblogging social form that allows its users to post their posts (known as tweets) in 140 characters maximum and the popularity of Twitter exceeds all microblogging forms of social media. Twitter is all about brief posts and new updates (Fischer & Reuber, 2011). Instagram is a photo and video sharing application. It enables users to give and design photos with filters and share them with other users of Instagram (Rilling & Vespa, 2014). In Instagram's official website (2015, p. 1), this type of social media is defined as "a fun and quirky way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures." Instagram is created to enable its users to connect through photos. Its filters help modifying the users' pictures and Instagram also makes sharing the photos easy and instant. Instagram also connects its users to other types of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr by allowing them to share photos on a photo-

by-photo basis. Instagram application does not require any fees and it can only be downloaded on iPhones and Android systems (Akkanat, 2012).

For this study, social media refers to the social network sites that allow their users to post to, communicate with, and socialize with other users using the same medium. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Culture

Williams (1985) explained that the concept of culture is very broad and has various connotations. He stated the culture is one of the most difficult concepts to define as it took him years to understand what it actually means. Williams (1985) argued that the meaning of culture can be understood when connecting it to other concepts such as class, art, industry, and democracy. He stated that Eliot (2010) explained that culture covers all the characteristics, behaviors, actions, and interests of a group of individuals. Williams (2006) explained culture in a much later work of his own clarifying three common categories in which culture can be defined. The categories include ideal, documentary, and social. Ideal refers to culture as a "state or process of human perfection, in terms of absolute or universal values" (Williams, 2006, p. 32). Documentary, which is the second category, explains culture as the accumulation of intellectual and creative efforts through behaviors and thoughts of individuals that are recorded frequently. The third category social defines culture as "a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior" (Williams, 2006, p. 32). Another definition of culture was given by Sewell (2005) who described culture as a system including a variety of signals and meanings.

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) comprehended the term culture in a more detailed and useful way by explicating that "culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior

acquired and transmitted by symbol, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action" (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p.181).

For this study, the definition of culture was based on the explication provided by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). In this study, culture refers to forms of various behaviors shared between and associated with a specific group of individuals who imbedded communal ideas and values transforming into explicit actions.

Women Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and the Role of Culture

The Middle East consists of various countries which majority are from the Arab countries. The Middle East region includes countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab of Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Iraq, Yemen, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, and Turkey. Most of the Middle East countries share certain commonalities but also differ in other features. Some of the commonalities shared among these countries include culture, social life, language, and religion. However, the differences among Middle Eastern countries involve income, population, and the degree in which each country is developed (Abdallah, 2001). The MENA region, which refers to the Middle East and North Africa, includes countries from Africa such as Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Djibouti (Chamlou, 2008).

The people of the Middle East place huge importance on religion, culture, and nationality. However, the importance level and degree of each of the three vary from one Middle Eastern country to another. Conflicts and contradictions are bound to occur in that region due to the clashes of culture, religion, and nationality. The discovery of oil in some of the Middle Eastern

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countries especially those located in the Gulf region – Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Iraq – is the reason behind several developments and transitions, such as the increase in revenue and better international relations with Western countries, that this region witnessed over the past years (Abbasi and Hollman, 1993).

The widespread use of social media in the Middle East and North Africa and especially in the Arab world has led to major political changes and shifts in last few years. Ever since 2011, social media use has impacted the region massively and played a major role in what is known as the "Arab Spring." Social media helped keep the protests stay connected and made the protests' communication easier. Tunisia and Egypt were the first two regimes in the Middle Eastern region that faced that social media driven protests (Steponova, 2011). Social media enabled many protests and activists, who played critical roles and led the protest acts, express their opinions, ideas, and views regarding the discriminative and unjust actions done by their dictatorship governments. Social media allowed the protests to distribute huge volume of unrestricted and precise information, which helped raise the awareness among themselves and other civilians of the dictatorship regions enforced on them. Social media acted as the weapon that Arab Spring activists used to revolutionize against their powerful dictatorship (Kassim, 2012).

When it comes to women in the Middle East, Moghadam (1998) looked at women employment and their economic reform. Moghadam's (1998) work illustrated that women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are not provided with the required amount of education and resources when compared to men of that region. She argued that due to the lower equality of education women get in comparison to men, serious consequences arose hindering

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the improvement of women. Moghadam (1998) highlighted the need for improving women's role in participating and enhancing the political economy of the MENA region.

Mathew and Kavitha (2010) specifically looked at women entrepreneurs practicing business in the Middle East and they concluded that there is restriction on women by the society and culture forming some barriers for women entrepreneurship. Mathew and Kavitha (2010) also noted that the existing policy in the Middle East region limits women entrepreneurs from achieving the goals they aim for when owning their businesses, such as having a growing and a successful business.

However, Chamlou (2008) wrote a report regarding women's entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Her report provided surprising findings about women's entrepreneurship in the MENA region negating what the prevailing stereotypes and assumptions might suggest. Her findings include that women entrepreneurs of the MENA region are individual owners of their business more than expected. Also, Chamlou's report (2008) stated female-owned businesses are large and well-established. She talked about how female-owned firms are often as large as male-owned firms. It was also mentioned that women entrepreneurs of the MENA region are frequent users of information technology, active exporters, and their businesses appeal to foreign investors. These findings by Chamlou do not mean that women in that region do not face challenges and obstacles when deciding to become entrepreneurs. The cultural perspective still plays a major role in that region in which it can hinder the rising number of women entrepreneurs in the Middle East.

To better understand how culture comes as an obstacle for women entrepreneurs of that region, it is important to list examples demonstrating the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in that region. Chamlou (2008) highlighted three factors that explain why there are

still fewer women entrepreneurs in that region than men entrepreneurs. The three factors she highlighted starts with attitudes towards women and work. She talked about how women in that region are liked to be perceived and encouraged to first and mainly take good care of family responsibilities, and they are not very likely to be encouraged by their male partners and relatives to become an entrepreneur. She also pointed out the gender-neutral barriers that have gendered differentiated effects. Furthermore, Chamlou (2008) stated that region's business and investments are largely gender blind and in her opinion she thinks that this disadvantages women entrepreneurs of the MENA region more than it actually benefits them.

Goby and Erogul (2011) also covered a number of challenges facing the women entrepreneurs of the United Arab Emirates, a Middle Eastern country that shares commonalities with neighboring countries such Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar. Goby and Erogul (2011) highlighted that the conservative culture and society of UAE plays an integral role in influencing women entrepreneurs more negatively than favorably. They talked about the gender segregated nature of these cultures which affects women entrepreneurs' networking opportunities because it limits their interaction with their male customers. In addition, they discussed the issue of the start-up capital – women start their businesses with lower capital resources compared to those available for men entrepreneurs. Socio-cultural constraints and challenges were also discussed as they illustrated how the society is highly influenced by religion and traditions in which female are discouraged by their fathers and husbands to run their own businesses. Women are highly encouraged to focus on meeting the demands of their families first and society. Another challenge was the collectivist nature of the society of that region which also influences the takeoff and the success of women's entrepreneurship.

Culture can play a role in a consumers' adoption decision in the Middle East in which it may let consumers decide to either adopt or not adopt based on what their group think of them. For example, Middle Eastern cultures, as explained by Goby and Erogul (2011), are collectivist cultures and that may influence the consumer adoption in two ways; one in which some consumers may adopt innovations just because the early adopters of that society adopted the innovation, another that they may not adopt because they have not yet seen anyone in their group adopting the innovation. Culture can play a key role in women's entrepreneurs' decision to adopt social media because it can be as a motivator for them to use social media. Culture creates several challenges affecting women entrepreneurs and, as discussed earlier, social media seem to promise for better communicative tools for women entrepreneurs in the Middle East.

To further understand the role culture plays in influencing women's entrepreneurship of different regions, some comparisons will be drawn and talked about to differentiate between Western culture and Eastern cultures and more specifically the Middle Eastern cultures.

Middle Eastern cultures are very conservative and are highly governed by religion, customs, and traditions (Mathew & Kavitha, 2010). Some of these cultures identify themselves with more of a religious identity than a cultural one (Essers & Benschop, 2009). However, the degree to how conservative these cultures are varies from one Middle Eastern country to another. For example, a Middle Eastern country like Lebanon exercises a higher level of freedom and is more liberal compared to other Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Jamali (2009) examined the interaction of cultural constraints and opportunities influencing women entrepreneurship in the Lebanese context. She studied and looked at the integration of the micro-level and macro-level perspectives. Jamali (2009) found that Lebanese women entrepreneurs face numerous obstacles due to their culture. Her findings show that Lebanese women

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entrepreneurs are pressured by their family and childcare responsibilities, which results into making them feel tensed and guilty because they are not conformist and do not follow the traditional value standards of their culture and society. Being a female entrepreneur in such conservative cultures challenges the prevailing gender norms. Jamali (2009) explained that women in developing countries and in the Middle East region are strongly encouraged to perform in more traditional gender roles and that is taking care of their family responsibilities. When compared to Western cultures, which are far more liberal, women entrepreneurs will not feel guilty or tensed just because they decided to become entrepreneurs.

Some studies also looked at how Western and Eastern women entrepreneurs may struggle with some predominant gender stereotypes. Gupta, Turban, Wasti, and Sikdar (2009) examined the role of socially constructed gender stereotypes and looked at how they are influencing women's decisions to become entrepreneurs. Their study included comparisons between female entrepreneurs in three countries; the United States, India, and Turkey. They talked about how an entrepreneur is stereotypically viewed as a more of a male job which requires masculine qualities and characteristics. Gupta et al. (2009) argued and found that the socially constructed stereotypes associated with the entrepreneur might encumber women's motivation and decision to become entrepreneurs.

The Kuwaiti Context

Kuwait is a small, oil-rich country located in the Middle East and it is marginally smaller than the size of the U.S. state of New Jersey. Kuwait is a constitutional monarchy and Al-Sabah royal family is the ruling family of Kuwait. The current head of the state is the Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Crown Prince is Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Emir of Kuwait approves the cabinet of 15 ministers that is appointed by the Prime Minister. The

parliament of Kuwait has 50 seats and by popular vote, the members of the parliament are

elected (BBC, 2009). The state religion of Kuwait is Islam and 70% are Sunni Muslims whereas

30% are Shi'a Muslims (Al-Mughni, 2010). The population of Kuwait is about 3,996,899 people

in which immigrants outnumber Kuwaiti local citizens as they are accounting for almost 69%.

Kuwaiti women outnumber Kuwaiti men. There are 554,985 Kuwaiti female citizens and 532,567 Kuwaiti males (CIA

Factbook, 2014).

Male Dominated Traditions of Kuwait

Kuwait is a conservative country governed by the restrictions of religion, culture, and

traditions. The evolving roles and chores Kuwaiti men and women perform in their society are

associated with the religious beliefs and more so with the cultural practices and traditions that

Kuwaiti culture values the most. According to Shalesh (1985), it is the tradition of the Kuwaiti

culture more than the religion of Islam that imbedded the belief that Kuwaiti men are the

traditional heads of any Kuwaiti family and that Kuwaiti women play secondary roles compared

to them. Also, Metle (2002) pointed out how culture and traditions influence Kuwaiti women

negatively. Shelash (1985) attributed the male dominated traditions of Kuwait to the strict culture

of Kuwait. He noted two important time periods in Kuwait which affected the traditional roles

expected and played by Kuwaiti men and women. Pre-oil discovery and post-oil discovery were

the two periods that marked the types of roles and dominated traditions performed by Kuwaiti

men.

Shalesh (1985) explained that pre-oil discovery in Kuwait, Kuwaiti men performed major

roles in supporting their families economically. Kuwaiti men were the primary decision makers

of their families and also practiced inclusive authority over the women in their families. Due to

the financial responsibility that Kuwaiti men exercised among their family members and the

power they possessed because they were considered as the traditional heads of their families, this limited the roles performed by the Kuwaiti women. Taking care of their families and doing the housework were perceived to be the main responsibilities of Kuwaiti women. The roles Kuwaiti women played were considered inferior to those performed by Kuwaiti men. Shalesh (1985, p.4) said that "historically, women in Kuwait, as in other Arab countries have been considered second class citizens in relation to men." Kuwaiti women were not allowed to go outside their homes without covering their heads or faces and their marriages were arranged by their families. Also, obeying their male members of their families was their duty. The male dominated traditions of Kuwait practiced in the pre-oil discovery period limited the roles of Kuwaiti women and their abilities to work outside their homes.

However, post-oil discovery in Kuwait, major changes and developments happened in Kuwait which influenced both men and women. Both economical and societal changes occurred which contributed to changing the roles of Kuwaiti women and men. Women in Kuwait started getting education and started to join the labor force and work outside their homes. Women in Kuwait were no longer limited to performing only their family related responsibilities and their housework duties (Shalesh, 1985). Al-Mughni (2004, p. 1) said that "since 1960s, Kuwaiti women have enjoyed access to higher education and relative freedom to advocate for improved economic and cultural rights, particularly as compared to women in the neighboring countries."

Even though after the discovery of oil in Kuwait, the roles of Kuwaiti women were evolving and changing but both Al-Mughni (2004) and Wheeler (2001) pointed out that Kuwaiti women still face challenges and discrimination in various areas of life because of their gender and culture, which regulates their daily lives. Wheeler (2001) talked about how Kuwaiti culture and its practiced traditions still play a key role in disadvantaging women compared to men. However,

Wheeler (2001) studied how a new technology like the Internet can help in advantaging Kuwaiti women in expanding their roles and breaking the gender stereotypes that are cemented due to the persistent traditions of Kuwaiti culture. She argued that the use of new technologies can help foster better scopes for Kuwaiti women and help them in achieving further equity with men.

Changes to Roles of Kuwaiti Women in Recent Decades

Revisiting the Challenges: Kuwaiti Women Going Against the Norm in Kuwait

In a country like Kuwait, with a culture that did not even allow women to go outside their houses when they are not fully covered with a black gown called abaya, it might be considered surprising that women would prefer to break from the norm and ask for their different rights (Alfahad, 2009). Nowadays Kuwaiti women have the right and the freedom to dress and wear whatever and however they like and want to wear be it abaya, jeans, or skirts (Suhrawardy, 2010). This was not the case several years ago. Kuwaiti women were not allowed to go outside their houses without being entirely covered with their abayas. The Abaya is a black gown which covers most of a woman's body and it was a culturally imposed dress code in which it was used to render women as anonymous (Haddad and Esposito, 1998). Alfahad (2009) noted that in the past, Kuwaiti women feared that their family male members would curse them if they refused wearing their abayas. Nonetheless, Kuwaiti women revolutionized and protested against wearing abaya. They asked for the right to dress however they want and expressed that they did not want to be covered by their abayas anymore. They challenged this culturally constructed restraint and decided to take off their abayas publicly. Kuwaiti women were the first women in the Gulf region to refuse wearing abaya. Alfahad (2009) narrated how in the sixties, a group of Kuwaiti women gathered together and went to the main streets of Kuwait City and burned the abaya publicly demonstrating that they will no longer wear it if they do not themselves decide that they

want to. There are other countries in the Middle East where women are still obliged to wear their abayas whenever they go outside their houses because it is part of their remaining culture.

However, wearing Alhijab (veil), which is an Islamic dress code for women, was never imposed in Kuwait. It was and still is a personal matter and choice where women decide for themselves if they want to wear it or not (Alfahad, 2009).

Another challenge that Kuwaiti women faced over the past years was acquiring good education. It was a necessity for most of them because Kuwaiti women knew that by education they could achieve other important goals and rights that can improve their roles and their performance in Kuwaiti society. Being educated is the key behind being able to obtain other positions in the society besides being a mother. Their struggle surpassed the expectations because they tried harder to obtain higher levels of education and not just be satisfied with the basic levels of education that were offered for them (Al-Mughni, 1993).

Joining the labor force was not an easy task as well. Kuwaiti women who joined the work force earlier were not treated fairly compared to their male colleagues. Al-Mughni (1993) talked about how difficult it was for a Kuwaiti woman to get a job and join men at work. Al-Mughni (1993, p.1) said "no matter how hard I worked, I could not expect to be promoted or rewarded as my male colleagues were." She also said that "being a woman meant that you had to be obedient and pleasing, and giving up my personal needs in order to earn the respect of men and of the society at large" (Al-Mughni, 1993, p.1). However, nowadays Kuwaiti women can work in almost every field with some exceptions and get paid equally to men working in similar fields and working in the same jobs (Al-Mughni, 1993). Compared to other countries from the region, the percentage of Kuwaiti women working in ministerial positions is higher than many other countries larger and bigger than Kuwait. The number of Kuwaiti women working in

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governmental ministries exceeds the number of women working in similar positions in other larger countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan and Syria (The Kuwait News agency (KUNA), 2009).

But there are other job opportunities and positions that cannot be obtained by Kuwaiti women in their society such as being a judge. There is not any logical or religious reason that can prevent Kuwaiti women to work as judges but culture always has its own say that still prevents Kuwaiti women from becoming judges (Alessa, 2010).

The desire for political rights of Kuwaiti women is what motivated a group of Kuwaiti women to initiate a movement to have these rights be granted to women. According to Suhrawardy (2010), several educated, liberal, and wealthy women initiated and formed a movement called Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS) on February 3, 1963. This movement lasted for many years and many attribute the success of gaining the political rights of women to that movement. However, many questioned the existence of WCSS ever since Kuwaiti women were given their political rights (Suhrawardy, 2010).

The suffrage rights of Kuwaiti women were successfully obtained. This particular right took years to be gained but finally the Kuwaiti women were able to achieve it. On May 16, 2005, the Kuwaiti Parliament voted to give the Kuwaiti women the right to vote and most of the women were glad that they finally did. However, this great achievement was welcomed with mixed reactions as Etheridge (2005) pointed out that Kuwaiti women marked a novel accomplishment by getting their political rights despite being in a conservative oil-rich country but their victory has been welcomed with mixed reactions. The mixed reactions came from both men opposing the idea of women's right to vote and some other Kuwaiti women who value culture more than their rights. Some Kuwaiti women were against the idea of having the right to vote and run for

office because they believed that women could not contribute to making any change and that gaining their political rights went against their cultural values. Most of the Kuwaiti women who opposed suffrage rights claimed that women were politically illiterate. Many Kuwaiti men, especially extreme Islamists, also opposed women gaining their political rights for the same reason. Politics itself is quite gendered as it is always perceived as a male-dominant field and that women are inferior when they try to become part of it (Etheridge, 2005).

Kuwaiti women first exercised their right to vote in the 2006 parliamentary elections. The date June 29, 2006, was marked as a historic day for Kuwaiti women as they voted for the first time in the history of Kuwait in the parliamentary elections and many women including me exercised this right and participated. Kuwaiti women were the first Arabian Gulf women to vote and have their voices counted in the parliamentary elections of their country (BBC, 2006). Four Kuwaiti female candidates got elected for the first time in the history of Kuwait in 2009 parliamentary elections. That also was marked as huge progress for Kuwaiti women.

Another achievement for Kuwaiti women in recent years is owning and running their own businesses. Women's entrepreneurship can contribute to expanding and developing the economy and the economic situation of a country. Diversification in the job opportunities is highly needed and encouraged in certain countries of the Middle East in order to help decrease the countries' sole dependency on crude oil reserves (Chamlou, 2008). Kuwait is no exception and therefore having women entrepreneurs can help in varying the range of businesses, resulting in a better economic situation for the future. There has been an increase in the number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in the last few years, where more women are now owning and running their own businesses. This study mainly focuses on Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs because even though

there is an increase in the number of women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship still remains a male-dominated domain (Chamlou, 2008).

The use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter helps women to better communicate and market to their targeted customers. Social media widen the range of communication tools between business owners and their target market. They enable new forms of interaction and communication (Clapperton, 2009). Thus, this research investigates the multiple and different characteristics associated with Kuwaiti female entrepreneurs and their adoption of social media. It looked at how Kuwaiti female entrepreneurs use social media to communicate with customers and reach their target market through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations theory (Rogers, 2003).

Kuwaiti women are granted a great amount of equality when it comes to economic rights and work/job opportunities. Kuwaiti women are able to own any business, property, financial contracts and activities, income, and land (Al-Mughni, 2005). Moreover, Kuwaiti female students and university female graduates outnumber the Kuwaiti male students and university graduates. They also graduate at higher rates and with higher GPAs than Kuwaiti men. However, the underemployment of women in the Middle East region in general and more specifically in Kuwait is quite high (Chamlou, 2008). The increase in the number of Kuwaiti female entrepreneurs indicates that more women are exploring different economic opportunities and diversifying their chances to earn a good living.

The roles of Kuwaiti women have been drastically changing in the recent decades. Kuwaiti women who were narrowed to performing household and family related tasks and responsibilities, now exercise more active and effective roles in their society. In the recent decades, Kuwaiti women managed to work and get jobs in various fields including teaching, engineering, business, and also they have become doctors, ambassadors, lawyers, managers,

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administrators, and government ministers (Tetreault, 2001). The current roles Kuwaiti women perform indicate the progress and development in raising the gender equity bar with Kuwaiti men. Kuwaiti women are now found to be in diverse educational, economic, medical, social and political professions (Al Mutairi and Fayez, 2015).

Entrepreneurship barriers for Kuwaiti women: The conflict between the traditional roles of women versus becoming entrepreneurs

Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) studied the factors influencing women in Kuwait to become entrepreneurs. They argued that the number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs is still smaller compared to men entrepreneurs in Kuwait. However, they attributed the importance of studying women and entrepreneurship in Kuwait to the increasing number of women participating in higher education. Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) also highlighted that studying women entrepreneurs in Kuwait is significant because it correlates with expanding the roles of Kuwaiti women. The increase in Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs contributes to the social and economic growth of Kuwait through providing new job opportunities, helping in decreasing the unemployment rate, and earning higher incomes.

Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) identified different factors involving women in Kuwait and their decision to become entrepreneurs. They mainly studied women who own small and medium sized businesses and did not include women owners of large businesses. They found that the motivational factors that encouraged women in Kuwait to become entrepreneurs include "freedom for decision making, the desire for financial independence, the availability of market opportunity, and interest in additional income" (Al Mutairi and Fayez, 2015, p. 60). They explained that women in Kuwait decide to take the decision of becoming entrepreneurs because they want to enhance their social and economic positions as they want to engage and own

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profitable projects and firms similarly to what men in Kuwait do. The survey that Al Mutairi and

Fayez (2015) conducted showed results related to challenges and obstacles facing women

entrepreneurs in Kuwait. They found that high competition among women entrepreneurs and the

roles women play in their families are the two challenges that most respondents chose. The

difficulty in balancing between accomplishing family commitments and running a business is

one obstacle that women entrepreneurs struggle with in Kuwait.

Naser, Nuseibeh, and Al-Hussaini (2012) also studied the personal and external factors

affecting Kuwaiti women to become entrepreneurs. Their results showed that Kuwaiti women

assign and relate to personal factors more than external factors. The findings of their survey

identified several motivational factors for Kuwaiti women to become entrepreneurs including

owning a business helps in developing their social position and allows women to be the decision

makers of running their ventures. In addition, combining both business ideas and the

implementation of interests and hobbies is one motive, which encourages Kuwaiti women to

become entrepreneurs. Moreover, gaining profits and getting revenue is another factor.

Furthermore, Naser, Nuseibeh, and Al-Hussaini (2012) talked about the obstacles and

challenges that face Kuwaiti women when they decide to be part of the entrepreneurial world.

Similarly to what Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) found in their results, Naser, Nuseibeh, and Al-

Hussaini (2012) also found family responsibilities and religious bindings to be the challenges

Kuwaiti women find when deciding to become entrepreneurs.

The evolving and changing roles of Kuwaiti women in the recent decades are determined by

several various factors such as culture and whichever economic phase that the country is going

through. Kuwaiti women became more dynamic and started owning and running their

businesses. They are breaking out from their traditional roles in which their responsibilities are

limited to taking caring of their family members and playing secondary roles to their male members of the families. Deciding to become entrepreneurs indicates that Kuwaiti women not only want to better their personal social and economic status but they also want to contribute to developing the economy of their country. However, obstacles and challenges arise when Kuwaiti women decide to become entrepreneurs because several women find balancing between family responsibilities and running a business is not an easy task to do. The conflict between the expected traditional roles, which Kuwaiti women have been playing for the many past years, and how they breaking out from these roles is what creates barriers and obstacles that hinder Kuwaiti women's entrepreneurship. Culture is the vital factor that plays a key role in determining the barriers and the type of roles Kuwaiti women perform in their society which affects them negatively (Metle, 2002).

Social Media Tools and Women's Empowerment

Similarly to how other external or personal factors might disadvantage Kuwaiti women to become entrepreneurs, other factors such as social media can advantage Kuwaiti female business owners. In an attempt to understand and investigate the uses and developments concerning social media and networking tools among Arabs, the Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation Program produced the Arab Social Media Report series. The report includes all 22 Arab countries and also includes Iran, Israel, and Turkey. Each edition of the report's series is dedicated to analyze usage trends of social media across the Arab region and specifically designed to answer certain questions. The third edition of the Arab Social Media Report, which was published in November 2011, covered and discussed the role social media play in Arab women's empowerment. The research was conducted through collaborative efforts done by the Gender and Public Policy Program (GPPP) at the Dubai School of Government and the

Governance and Innovation Program (GIP). Their research raised a number of questions aiming to explicate the virtual gender gap among Arab female and male users. Also, questions involving the way Arab women perceive the value of social media and how and why female users use social media were covered. Furthermore, the role of social media in how it can be used as a tool for women's empowerment was highlighted through evaluating its contribution to the Arab women's economic and political empowerment (Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation Program, 2011).

The online survey used to conduct the research of the Arab Social Media Report published by Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation Program (2011) unveiled several findings clarifying the gender gap in social media in the Arab region. One of the findings states that the number of Arab male users of social media is larger than female users. For example, only a third of Facebook users in the region are women. The participants' answers identifying the reasons for the low number of female users of social media in the Arab region compared to male users were attributed to societal and cultural constraints imposed on women. However, the findings showed that the reasons Arab women users utilize social media are similar to how and why men users in the Arab region use social media. They are similar in using social media for networking, activism, accessing information, and job hunting (Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation Program, 2011).

The findings about the way female and male respondents perceive how social media can impact Arab women showed that "most felt that social media could, in fact, enhance women's participation in the legal, political, economic, social and civic arenas, although there was some ambivalence as to whether the empowering effects of social media are limited in the absence of actual changes in gender equality legislation and rights on the ground" (Dubai School of

Government's Governance and Innovation Program, 2011, p. 4). The conclusions of the Arab

Social Media Report highlighted how social media can be seen as a tool impacting women

empowerment in the Arab region. It was argued that even though there is a gender gap in the

number of Arab users of social media, the uses of social media are similar among both genders.

Also, it concluded that social media acts like a gender equalizer based on the survey's finding

that women and men were similar in their favorable perceptions of how social media can impact

Arab women's empowerment (Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation

Program, 2011).

Social Media Use in Kuwait

Maarefi (2013) stated that "Kuwait has the highest percentage of social media users, in

proportionate to the population, in the Middle East. With its fastness, viral results,

inexpensiveness and seemingly easy usage, social media has become an extraordinarily attractive

platform for news, experience-sharing, social interaction and promotion of businesses of all

sizes" (p. 1).

The Arab Social Media Report, which was launched in 2015 during the Arab Social Media

Influencers Summit in Dubai, is the first of its kind report and research study that looked at the

social media usage among Arabs. The report aimed at assessing the insights and perceptions of

social media users in the Arab World. Kuwait was among the Arab countries that the Arab Social

Media Report researched. The other Arab countries were the Gulf Cooperation Council countries

and Yemen and they are Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab of Emirates, Qatar, Oman,

Bahrain, and Yemen. Also, the report studied Arab countries in the Levant Region such as

Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. Moreover, the report also included data about Arab

countries located in North Africa such as Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Sudan (Arab Social Media Influencers Summit, 2015).

The Arab Social Media Report research study investigated three key objectives and they were looking at the social and economic impacts of social media among Arab users, illustrating the different ways Arab users use social media, and determining how Arab social media users perceive leading social media channels and platforms. The research study of this report was conducted through a mixed methods approach in which it included both qualitative and quantitative phases of data collection. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were used to provide qualitative data while a telephone survey was done to provide quantitative data about a sample of more than 7000 Arab users of social media. The main results of the report's research study included findings about perceptions about social media, social media usage habits, and social media impacts on Arab society and on business and economy. The Arab Social Media Report's study found that Arab users of social media attach various affirmative aspects to social media. They perceive social media as tools that augment the quality of individuals' lives, help profiting businesses, and make governmental communications easier with the public. However, the report's findings showed that social media is perceived negatively when it comes to how it is impacting local cultures and traditions. Also, Arab users were found to lack trust in using social media. The findings about social media usage habits among Arab users revealed that the main reason for more than half of the Arab users to use social media is to interact and connect with other individuals. Other secondary reasons included gathering information, watching videos, listening to music, and sharing photos (Arab Social Media Influencers Summit, 2015).

Arab Social Media Report provided data and statistics about the types of social media that are most popular and highly used among Arab users in each Arab country that was included in its

research study. The findings showed that WhatsApp and Facebook are the two types of social media that are most used across users of social media in the Arab World. The statistics about the most used social media channels in Kuwait showed that WhatsApp has the highest percentage which is 84% followed by Facebook 75%. Both Instagram and YouTube came third with 43% while Twitter came last with 41% (Arab Social Media Influencers Summit, 2015).

The report's findings related to social media impacts on Arab society and on business and economy unveil that Arab users perceive various pros and cons concerning social media usage. The pros involving social media impacts on Arab society were social media helps making communication easier and more instant, it is an ideal tool to gather information and news, allows learning about novel things, provides entertainment, offers reasonable ways of communication, and helps in finding jobs and expanding career opportunities. On the other hand, the perceived cons of social media affecting Arab society negatively included not advantageous way for personal interaction among individuals, it distances family interactions and fragments its members' communication, social media usage gets addictive, it encourages a lethargic and lazy style of life, it exposes inappropriate material, it deteriorates communication skills of its users, provides deceptive and incorrect information, and social media lacks compatibility with the Arabic culture (Arab Social Media Influencers Summit, 2015).

The findings of the Arab Social Media Report published by the Arab Social Media Influencers Summit (2015) about social media impacts on business and economy perceived by Arab users also revealed a number of pros and cons. The pros included social media speeds the increase and growth of businesses, allows getting direct profits, and enhances the image of businesses and companies. In addition, social media is advantageous to use for advertising and marketing. Social media also helps in finding and searching for talent and boosts consumer-

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centric tactics. On the other hand, the cons of social media impacts on business and economy listed the risk factor that can influence and ruin the companies' reputations negatively. Also, the use of social media can disadvantage other traditional types of media by overcoming their market shares (Arab Social Media Influencers Summit, 2015).

Other findings showing the most used types of social media in Kuwait especially among women entrepreneurs were presented in the study done by Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015). They researched the factors influencing women's decision to become entrepreneurs in Kuwait. They used a questionnaire survey to classify the challenges involving women entrepreneurship in Kuwait. Their study researched the marketing strategies adopted by women entrepreneurs in Kuwait and also their questionnaire included a section asking about the most adopted marketing tools among female entrepreneurs. Al Mutairi and Fayez's (2015) results revealed that women entrepreneurs in Kuwait use the Internet as their main tool to reach their customers. They found that Instagram and WhatsApp were the most adopted types of social media by women entrepreneurs in Kuwait to use for marketing their businesses. Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) explained that due to the accessibility and the affordability of the Internet in Kuwait, many women entrepreneurs use it for marketing and contacting their customers.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the adoption of social media by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and look at how and why different types of social media such as Instagram or Twitter appeal more to women entrepreneurs in a culture like Kuwait, the application of Diffusion of Innovations theory was applied. Moreover, the gender factor was examined with the help of studies about women entrepreneurship and the characteristics of women entrepreneurs and the different factors influencing them such as micro-level factors, macro-level factors, and meso-level factors.

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory is the main theoretical framework that guided and directed the research of this study. Therefore, it is important to go over the main concepts explained by Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory and also review the way this theory relates to entrepreneurship and culture.

Rogers (2003, p.5) defined diffusion as "the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. It is a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas."

Rogers (2003) identified four main elements in the diffusion of innovations and they are the innovation, communication channels, time, and a social system. He also explained five different perceived attributes of innovations. They are relative advantage that "is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes. Compatibility is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters. Complexity is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use. Trialability is the degree to which an innovation may be experimented on a limited basis. Observability is the degree to which the results of an innovation is visible to others" (Rogers, 2003, p. 15-16).

Rogers (2003) also outlined five stages of the innovation-decision process and they are the knowledge stage, the persuasion stage, the decision stage, the implementation stage, and the confirmation process.

The innovativeness and adopter categories that were proposed and offered by Rogers are one of the main highpoints of the diffusion research done by him. Rogers (2003) categorized adopters into five categories. The five adopter categories are innovators, early adopters, early

majority, late majority, and laggards. Innovators were described as the earliest and first ones to adopt and buy an innovation. They are risk takers, young in age, possess highest social class, and have great financial resources. Early adopters are those who comes second fastest group of individuals to buy and adopt an innovation. They include largest number of opinion leaders. They are also young in age, have very good financial liquidity, higher social status, very socially engaged and forward, and have higher social status. Early majority are those individuals who take more time to adopt an innovation than innovators and early adopters. They have average social status, are slower. Late majority are those adopting an innovation after a long period of time. They are skeptical about an innovation, hold below average social status, and have very little financial lucidity. Laggards come at last because they come latest to adopt and buy an innovation. They have the lowest financial resources and social status (Rogers, 2003).

When connecting the theoretical perspectives of diffusion of innovations and entrepreneurship, conflicts among these two perspectives can be found. The theoretical perspectives of diffusion of innovations are associated to those of entrepreneurship because they help provide a solid foundation of the diffusion process that entrepreneurs do when targeting their consumers and marketing and diffusing to their adopters. The diffusion process explained by Rogers tackles the basic structure of the communicative tools and different markets/adopters that entrepreneurs seek to reach out to and diffuse their innovations to. However, Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory was described by Marcati, Guido, and Peluso (2008) as inadequate and lacking perspective because they stated that it mainly focuses on the adopters and somehow it pays very little attention to the role entrepreneurs play in stimulating the acceleration of an innovation. Marcati et al. (2008) based their arguments on Schmpter's propositions and notion of the entrepreneurship perspective, which emphasizes the importance of the role

entrepreneurs play in the diffusion process and identifies entrepreneurs as the driving vehicle of that process. They all criticized how Rogers' diffusion research placed minimal emphasis on entrepreneurs. They stated that Rogers' categorization did not cover and discuss much about entrepreneurs. They considered this as a major flaw in Rogers' diffusion research because they argued that entrepreneurs are the key driver and the strongest link between innovation and the entrepreneurial process and they also described entrepreneurs as innovators (Marcati et al., 2008).

Another gap was found by Miller and Garnsey (2000) when relating the diffusion of innovations perspective to that the entrepreneurship perspective. They pointed out that diffusion research is insufficient in its treatment of entrepreneurship and its capability to integrate the various and multiple range of factors and facets that affect the diffusion process. They argued that the diffusion research proposed by Rogers is inadequate in providing a unified explanation and understanding of how entrepreneurs are capable of influencing the diffusion process of an innovation and more specifically the technology diffusion.

Rogers' diffusion of innovations has its weaknesses when combined with entrepreneurship perspective because it mainly focuses on the adopter aspect of the diffusion process whereas the entrepreneurship perspective highlights the importance of focusing on the entrepreneurs because they are considered the vital player and the main actor of the diffusion process (Miller & Garnsey, 2000).

McFadzean, O'Loughlin, and Shaw (2005) also criticized the diffusion of innovations perspective as they researched corporate entrepreneurship in relation to innovation. McFadzean et al. (2005) clarified that the previous models on entrepreneurship and innovation are inadequate and disjointed because they provide minimum assessment on the relationships and dynamics

between corporate entrepreneurship and innovation. McFadzean et al. (2005) concluded that there are missing links between the entrepreneur and the innovation process and explained that there are three factors, which can help enhance the understanding of the correlations between the entrepreneur and the innovation process. The three factors they talked about include entrepreneurial attitudes, vision, and actions of the entrepreneurs.

When it comes to the adoption of technology, different studies investigated and looked at how certain technologies were being diffused and adopted. For example, Carayannis and Turner (2006) investigated a number of factors influencing the adoption and implementation of Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology which helped them in propositioning a model for adopting such technology. Their study looked at the factors that facilitate security technology adoption and implementation through the application of diffusion theoretical framework. Their research work also involved the experience of some organizations, which utilized PKI technology. Carayannis and Turner (2006) combined theoretical and practical considerations in an attempt to propose a security implementation model that disclose data concerning the factors affecting PKI implementation and illustrates potential for examination of security technology adoption in general. Their model focused on the process of adoption of security technologies by public and private organizations. Carayannis and Turner (2006) argued that the traditional diffusion of innovations research concerning the adoption of information technology concentrated on the individual as the unit of analysis exploring the effect of the adopter attitudes and beliefs, social norms, self-efficacy, and task–technology fit whereas their research used organizations as the main unit of analysis. They examined the adoption of security technology and talked about the attributes of innovations that Rogers (2003) identified, relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.

Carayannis and Turner (2006) findings showed that PKI offers a relative advantage when compared to other security technologies. However, it is unsuited to be used with the security task requirements of the applications engaged by most organizations guiding business over the Internet. In addition, there are several issues concerning the complexity of the PKI technology and how it is used.

Parashos and Messer (2006) looked at the takeoff of new technology in dentistry. Their research work investigated why some innovations lack for support causing the failure of adoption while others are increasingly adopted and succeed to replace older technologies or materials. Even though their research work concentrated on examining diffusion of innovation in dentistry, and more specifically focusing on the adoption of rotary nickel-titanium endodontic instruments, their results revealed interesting information concerning the adoption of a new technology. Parashos and Messer (2006, p. 395) found that the "complex interplay of perceived benefits and advantages, and psychosocial and behavioral factors, in decision making" are factors that influence the adoption process of new technology.

The exiting literature related to diffusion research and entrepreneurship highlighted the lack of diffusion theory in examining and concentrating on entrepreneurs and their involvement in the innovation-adoption process. Therefore, the rationale for using Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations as the theoretical framework for the current study is to focus on entrepreneurs as the adopters of social media and their adoption decisions. This research aims to examine if the diffusion of social media among entrepreneurs has been influenced by the perceived attributes of innovation described by Rogers (2003) with an attempt to evaluate the suitability of these attributes and how women entrepreneurs describe them. Both gender and culture are two important factors and

perspectives that are combined with diffusion theory and entrepreneurship to provide understandings of how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use social media for marketing.

The Intersection of Entrepreneurship and Gender

The existing body of research concerning women entrepreneurs generally covers both the differences and similarities between women and men entrepreneurs. It is important to first note that some parts of the existing research and literature regarding the similarities and differences among women and men entrepreneurs are quite contradictory. The findings are conflicting and some oppose one another (Fischer, Reuber, & Dyke, 1993).

The literature on female entrepreneurship traditionally concentrated on and investigated the different micro-level factors. It included studies that looked on the distinctive and unique characteristics of female and male entrepreneurs in terms of motivation, personality traits, or in terms of the features of their firms and businesses such as in size, goals, access to capital, and management and performance. In more recent years, the focus of the research on women entrepreneurship shifted to the influence of macro-level factors on women entrepreneurs (Jamali, 2009). However, there are fewer studies that looked at the integration of these different levels. Jamali (2009) urged the need to having more research and studies to be done on both the micro-level and the macro-level factors, which are expected and perceived societal and cultural norms. Also, she suggested connecting them to the meso-level factors, which are organizational policies, practices, and processes. She emphasized the importance of studying how those different factors influence one another because she argued that by studying those factors together help provide better and more inclusive understanding of female entrepreneurship.

Micro-level Factors

Motivation is one of the micro-level factors that was studied and tested to see if women have different motivations to start their own businesses than those of what men have. Research regarding the similarities and differences between female and male entrepreneurs revealed that there are more differences than similarities among women and men entrepreneurs when it comes to what motivate them to start and have their own business. It was found that the balance between family and work is what motivates women to become entrepreneurs whereas men are more motivated to become entrepreneurs because they seek advanced economic conditions and wealth creation (Demartino & Barbato, 2003).

However, the research done by Fischer, Reuber, and Dyke (1993) provided opposing results. These feminist researchers proposed studying the differences related to women and men's entrepreneurial motivations through the lens of two perspectives which are liberal feminism and social feminism. They suggested those two perspectives because they argued that both liberal feminism (LF) and social feminism (SF) can help interpret and organize the past research and can also highlights new possibilities and ideas for future research. Fischer et al. (1993, p. 151) explained that liberal feminist theory "suggests that women are disadvantaged relative to men due to overt discrimination and/or to systematic factors that deprive them of vital resources like business education and experience." For example, previous research that looked on whether or not women have less education and experience to compare to those possessed by men falls under the liberal feminist perspective. Also, studies that tested for whether or not lenders and consultants discriminate against women follow the same perspective. Fischer et al. (1993) argued that the systematic shortage of access to resources that women may experience hinders their ability to become successful entrepreneurs.

The second perspective that Fischer et al. (1993, p. 152) discussed was the social feminist theory and they said that it "suggests that, due to differences in early and ongoing socialization, women and men do differ inherently. However, it also suggests that this does not mean women are inferior to men, as women and men may develop different but equally effective traits." For example, earlier entrepreneurship studies that included comparisons between women and men on how they differ in terms of socialized traits and values are consistent with the social feminist theory perspective. Fischer et al. (1993) pointed out that these studies found few gender related differences and even the differences found have minor influence on business performance.

The research done by Fischer et al. (1993) revealed that women have a greater financial motivation and this specific result contradicts previous research, which showed that women decide to become entrepreneurs because they are more motivated by achieving balance between family and work and men are the ones who are more driven and motivated by achieving better economic conditions and wealth. Their findings also stated that social feminism is the reason influencing women's greater motivational need for family-related flexibility.

Contradictions do not end here when it comes to research involving the similarities and differences among women and men's entrepreneurial motivations. Similarly to how Fischer et al. (1993) provided opposing findings to what was done and found by other researchers, DeMartino and Babato (2003) contradicted what was found by Fischer et al. DeMartino and Babato (2003) studied motivational differences among women and men entrepreneurs and explored family flexibility and wealth creation as career motivators. Their study compared between women and men MBA entrepreneurs who share similarities in terms of business education and educational credentials. Their findings show that women become entrepreneurs for family-related lifestyle reasons. Moreover, they found that women are less motivated by wealth creation and

advancement reasons. Their study concluded that the differences in motivations among women and men entrepreneurs appear to be larger if the women entrepreneurs are married and have dependent children.

Studies that looked at the personality traits of women and men entrepreneurs are far more consistent in their findings than those studies that researched other micro-level factors. Research regarding the personality traits factor showed more similarities among women and men entrepreneurs than differences. Most studies concerning women and men entrepreneurs' personality traits reveal that female and male entrepreneurs are independent, self-confident, persistent, goal-oriented, leaders, aggressive, nonconformists, achievers, controllers, and aggressive (Sexton & Bowman-Upton, 1990).

On the other hand, Sexton and Bowman-Upton (1990) proposed and argued that testing for differences and similarities among female and male entrepreneurs' psychological characteristics and their role in gender related discrimination reveals some differences among them. It was found that female entrepreneurs possess lower energy levels and are less risk takers compared to men entrepreneurs. Sexton and Bowman-Upton' study (1990, p. 34) suggested that "female entrepreneurs are less willing to get involved in situations with uncertain outcomes where financial gain is involved. Even though Sexton and Bowman-Upton (1990) highlighted these differences but their study also supported previous findings and the existing body of literature that implies a more unified findings regarding the similarities between women and men entrepreneurs' personality traits. Their study also showed that female and male entrepreneurs own and possess similar personality traits. As mentioned earlier the entrepreneurs' personality traits factor seems to be the most consistent factors compared to the other micro-level factors when studied by different researchers.

Differences among women and men entrepreneurs in terms of their owned firms and businesses were found more frequently than similarities. Various studies and research work found that women entrepreneurs have smaller, less management skills, limited or less access to capital, and poorer performance and that is less profitable businesses when compared to those owned by men entrepreneurs (Mirchandani, 1999).

Macro-level and Meso-level Factors

As noted earlier, similarities and differences among women and men entrepreneurs related to macro-level and meso-level factors are less studied and researched when compared to the micro-level factors. However, some researchers such as Brush, Bruin, and Welter (2009) considered studying the multiple levels that can influence women's entrepreneurship. They formed their study based on an existing gender framework known as the "3Ms" framework. The "3M" framework stands for markets, money, and management in which all three are required to start and establish new businesses and ventures (Brush et al., 2009, p.8).

Through the application of institutional theory, Brush et al. (2009) suggested and argued that the "3M" framework needs to be altered in which it expands to include "motherhood" and "macro/meso environment." They constructed a "5M" framework in order to improve the study of women's entrepreneurship. Brush et al. (2009, p. 18) found that "motherhood" is a metaphor representing the household and family context of female entrepreneurs, which may have larger impact on women than men." They also discovered that the macro/meso surroundings attract further concerns beyond the market especially in the case of women entrepreneurs.

Gender and the Adoption of Social Media

Ilie, Van Slyke, Green, and Lou (2005) investigated gender differences in perceptions and use of communication technologies through the application of the diffusion of innovation

approach. Their research looked for gender differences in the importance of the perceived

innovation characteristics on communication technologies use intentions. Ilie et al. (2005)

research focused on whether gender regulates the influence of perceived relative advantage,

compatibility, ease of use, visibility, result demonstrability and critical mass on intentions to use

a communication technology and that is instant messaging. Their findings showed a solid

moderation influence of gender between perceptions of relative advantage, ease of use, visibility,

result demonstrability, critical mass and use intentions. The results of their study revealed that

there are differences among men and women when it comes to their perceptions of the social

presence, usefulness, and ease of use which affect the behavioral objective of using a

communication technology more often.

Mazman and Usluel (2011) studied individuals' usage motives and drives of social networks

focusing on gender differences. They investigated the use of the social network Facebook. Their

study included 870 Turkish Facebook users who completed an online survey asking them

questions related to their usage purposes of Facebook. Mazman and Usluel's (2011) findings

revealed different four categories involving the users' usage purposes of Facebook. The four

categories included maintaining existing relationships, making new relationships, using for

academic purposes, and following specific agenda. The results of their study suggested that there

are differences between females and males users of Facebook. Male users scored higher in the

category making new contacts. On the other hand, female users' usage purposes of Facebook

were higher in the other three categories.

Curtis et al. (2010) looked at the adoption of social media for public relations by nonprofit

organizations. They surveyed a total of 409 nonprofit public relations practitioners using the

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Gender differences were

found in which female public relations practitioners perceived social media to be beneficial while male practitioners showed greater confidence in actively using social media.

When synthesizing the points discussed above, it becomes clear that the theory of diffusion of innovations lacks when applying and tying it to other perspectives involving entrepreneurship, gender, and culture. In an attempt to understand the interaction of these different perspectives and how they are connected to one another, this study investigates Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their use of social media through the application of the theory of Diffusion of Innovations. The application of the diffusion theory is done to highlight the gaps shown and discussed about the diffusion research aiming to provide new insights and findings regarding women's entrepreneurship and their adoption of social media.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

To answer the research questions of this study, a qualitative mixed-methods approach was used. The methods of this study initially included the use of participant-observation, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. However, participant observation and in-depth interviews were actually used and then four cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopting social media as a marketing tool were examined. Participant-observation was used to observe the online interactions of women entrepreneurs with their customers when using their social media business related accounts. Also, it was used to look at the way Kuwaiti women do their marketing work and exercise their selling strategies. In-depth interviews were used to get more detailed and thick data about why and how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt social media when marketing to their customers. Four different cases of women entrepreneurs using social media were examined.

The use of different qualitative methods together provided a better understanding of the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt and utilize social media as a marketing tool. Jick (1979) noted that the mixed-methods approach helps in offering better understandings of the studied phenomena/problem. Also, Benoit and Holbert (2008) stated that the intersections within method provide greater advantages that will not be obtained when one method is only used. The advantages of mixed-methods within a method include different forms of data such as observations, interpretation, words, and narratives that can complement one another. Furthermore, it allows using the strengths of a different method to overcome the weaknesses in another method because both are being used in the same research. West and Gastil (2004) mixed participant-observation with ethnographic interviews. They studied the participant accounts of the face-to-face public discussion that took place at the 1999 and 2000 World Trade protests in

Seattle and Prague. Their use of a qualitative mixed method helped in presenting a deeper understanding of the phenomenon they were researching.

Kodrich (2002) used a mixed method approach in his field work that investigated the changes and transitions in the Nicaraguan journalism. His methodology included an integration of both quantitative methods such as survey and content analysis and qualitative methods such as participant-observation and individual in-depth interviews. Kodrich (2002) noted that in his participant-observation, he observed the journalists during their work when they were in the newsroom. He observed the interactions happening between editors and reporters. He also conducted longer interviews with the journalists individually after doing some group interviews that allowed him to gather data regarding the journalists.

In this study, participant-observation was used to observe the online interactions and communications between Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their customers. Moreover, the participant-observation also included observations of face-to-face interactions of women entrepreneurs with their customers. The examination of the four cases of women entrepreneurs that this study looked at provided observations regarding women entrepreneurs' face-to-face communications with their customers. In order to complement the data gathered by participant-observation to provide more detailed data regarding the adoption of social media by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, in-depth interviews were done individually.

This study aimed to investigate and examine the different characteristics associated with Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their adoption of social media and how gender plays a role in the adoption decision regarding using social media as a marketing tool. Therefore, the mix of the several methods helped serve the purpose of complementarity that "seeks elaboration,

enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results of one method with results of another method" (Bryman, 2006, p. 623).

Units of Analysis

Babbie (2015, p 97) described units of analysis as "the what or who being studied. In social science research the most typical units of analysis are individual people." He also pointed out that units of analysis refer to the main entity which researchers study and analyze. Babbie (2015) explained that there different types of units of analysis such as individuals, groups, organizations, social interactions, and social artifacts. Also, he emphasized the importance of units of analysis because it is a key element in both the design of study and research and the analysis of the collected data. Bailey (1994) talked about how studying individuals as units of analysis can differ from one study to another. He explained saying that similar units of analysis can be studied differently. For example, studying the learning ability of a person differs from studying her/his personality development.

The units of analysis for this study are Kuwaiti female individuals who run their own businesses in Kuwait. Units of Analysis are individuals. This study investigated female individuals owning their businesses and their adoption of social media when marketing to their target market.

Participant-Observation

The most advantageous thing about doing a participant-observation is that the researcher has to be there to observe what is actually happening (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). Adler and Adler (1994) explained that the observational process develops when conducting the research as it goes through various stages and is done through a number of activities. They explained that qualitative observation is primarily done in naturalistic settings in which the researcher observe

her/his subjects performing and interacting in a natural environment. They highlighted that qualitative observers have the advantage of observing without being governed by specific procedures. Researchers conducting qualitative participant-observation note broader trends, styles, and patterns correlated with the way their subjects behave.

Two different types of participant-observation were done in this study. The first type was done through creating a social media account such as an Instagram account for the researcher of this study to help observe the way women entrepreneurs interact with their customers. The way women entrepreneurs post, comment, and update their account was observed and noted. Moreover, the researcher used the account to participate in the social media platforms that were used by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. For example, the researcher commented on some of the pictures posted of the products and then noted how the woman entrepreneur owning this account communicated back.

The second type of participant-observation was done through having the researcher of this study going to the actual business locations of the women entrepreneurs and observe how they interact face-to-face with their customers. This participant-observation included only the four cases of women entrepreneurs that were focused mainly on.

How Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs Were Observed

The online interactions between women entrepreneurs and their customers were observed by noting and highlighting their communications when using their social media business related accounts. The type of media they post, the comments they write, the updates they share on their social media accounts, and the products and services they market were observed to provide data showing how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use social media as a marketing tool. The researcher of this study created social media accounts specifically used for the research of this study to

enable getting access to the business accounts of women entrepreneurs and also interact with them online. For example, the Instagram account which the researcher used was anonymous and the rationale behind using such account was to capture the interactions of women entrepreneurs in a more natural setting. Identifying the researcher identity would have influenced the online interactions and observations especially that the researcher interviewed all the women entrepreneurs that were observed. The researcher commented on pictures posted and also asked questions regarding the products and services women entrepreneurs market in their social media account.

Participant-observation was also done in the actual business locations of women entrepreneurs. Three different cases of women entrepreneurs were visited in their business locations. Bradshaw and Wallace (1991) noted the importance of acknowledging the bias occurring due to the presence of the researcher regardless of the efforts done to avoiding it entirely. Therefore, women entrepreneurs were observed from a further distance and the observer also got engaged in different activities to help prevent making them feel they are being watched. The observations were noted and written down on sheets of papers describing how the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs are talking and communicating with their customers. The observer focused on the interactions of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and the notable incidents, behaviors, actions, stories, and events that are associated with their face-to-face communication with their customers. In addition, the researcher participated by asking questions about their products and services and also buying some of them.

In-depth Interviews

The qualitative mixed methods that were used for this study included in-depth interviewing. Because Arabic is the mother tongue of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and the researcher speaks Arabic, the questions of in-depth interviews were translated in Arabic and were asked in Arabic to ensure that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs answered comfortably. However, three in-depth interviews were done in English because these three Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were comfortable enough to do the interviews in English and they were fluent enough using English when giving their answers. The value of using in-depth interviews involves achieving breadth and depth of the collected data. The conversational nature of in-depth interviewing allow the researcher/interviewer to extract more detailed and rich data from the interviewees. The interactive role the researcher takes while interviewing helps guide the conversation and also provides more information and data from the interviewees (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). In-depth interviews were used for the research of the current study because it is a qualitative method which allows getting detailed data about how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt and use social media for marketing their ventures. Legard, Keegan, and Ward (2003) explained a number of key features of in-depth interviews. They discussed that the main features of in-depth interviewing include in-depth interviews combine structure with flexibility, they are interactive, they involve the use of probes and other techniques, and they are generative. For this study's research, an in-depth interview guide, which included specific questions, was developed to help direct the interviews with women entrepreneurs and aim to collect data concerning certain topics and themes. However, the structure of the interviews of this study was flexible enough allowing the interviewees to answer and talk about the topics and answer the questions in the most suitable order for them. The interactive nature of in-depth interviews was also ensured through having the researcher of this

study initiating questions prompting the interviewees to converse spontaneously while answering the questions. Based on the answers given by the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, the interviewer continued asking the interview questions and resumed the interactive conversation. Legard, Keegan, and Ward (2003) also pointed out that the third key structure of in-depth interviews is when "the researcher uses probes and other techniques to achieve depth of answer in terms of penetration, exploration and explanation" (p. 141). This technique was also used while conducting this study's in-depth interviews. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were first asked question exploring the surface of the topic followed by follow-up questions probing deeper and richer meanings and answers of the interviewees. The generative feature of in-depth interviewing refers to generating novel knowledge and thoughts by the interviewees in which they introduce new information and data related to the topic explored by the interviewer during the interviewing process (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). Mears (2012) talked about how in-depth interviews are useful and valuable method in terms of providing thick understandings of what the participants feel and know about certain topics. There are several advantages of using in-depth interviews. Investigating and exploring the participants' knowledge in an interactive setting benefits the researcher in gaining more data, deeper meanings, and detailed understandings of how the interviewees feel regarding the researched topics (Mears, 2012).

Site/Period/Interviewee Selection

In-depth interviews were mostly conducted in neutral sites and locations. Most in-depth interviews were done in coffee shops located in different areas of Kuwait such as Starbucks, Caribou, and other local coffee shops. However, some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' in-depth interviews were done in their business locations. The period of time was almost one month where different interviews were conducted and done separately and individually per business. The first

in-depth interview was done on Monday, September 29, 2014, and the last in-depth interview was on Sunday, October 26, 2014.

The first potential interviewees were selected after contacting exhibitors at 52 Degrees and Proud to be Kuwaiti (P2BK) which help entrepreneurs promote their products and act a supportive system to Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. The Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were selected according to the following criteria; being a Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur who owns a business, which is in operation for a year or more. Moreover, the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs should be using any type of social media when marketing for their customers. The most appropriate, and relevant possible interviewee for the type of this research was finalized and then the chosen Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur was contacted.

The first interview subject of the Kuwaiti female entrepreneurs was contacted after taking her contact information from 52 Degrees, which is a Kuwaiti trade show that helps entrepreneurs promote their products and acts as a supportive system to Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. It provides the names, contact numbers, and emails of the Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. 52 Degrees exhibition is the first of its kind in Kuwait and it involves a huge number of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and helps reaching out to them. 52 Degrees is located in Al-Tilal Complex, Pepsi Cola Street, Shuwaikh, Kuwait (52 Degrees Official Blog, 2014). Dalal Dashti, who is the owner of I Love Daraa business with three other women entrepreneurs, was contacted to schedule an interview with after getting her contact information from 52 Degrees. An interview time and date were scheduled but she ended up postponing it every time the interview date was coming closer due to some family issues. This first potential interviewee was not the best one to start with and the interview was never done with her. Therefore, another woman entrepreneur was selected. Majdah Baqer, who is the owner of Om El7elween business, was the first Kuwaiti woman

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entrepreneur who was interviewed. The in-depth interview with Majdah Baqer took place in Starbucks coffee located in Al-Mishref area. Majdah Baqer participated in Proud to be Kuwaiti (P2BK) exhibition, which encourages and supports the national talents, efforts, and activities of Kuwaitis. It provides a platform for Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to project their businesses and help them reach out to a wider number of customers. It is located in International Fair Ground, Mushref, Kuwait (Proud to be Kuwaiti Official Website, 2014).

Sampling Strategy

For this study, the non-probability sampling technique snowball sampling was used for the in-depth interviews. Neuman (2011, p. 269) defined snowball sampling as "a nonrandom sample in which the researcher begins with one case and then, based on information about interrelationships from that case, identifies other cases and repeats the process again and again." Neuman (2011) also explained that snowball sampling is a multistage sampling technique in which the researcher goes through different stages when using this type of sampling and also begins with small numbers of cases but ending up with larger ones if the individuals that get sampled perform in a more connected kind of network because they tend to suggest and refer others that can be included in the sample. This is an appropriate sampling technique to be used for this study because it allows sampling for Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who happen to be interconnected with one another because they tend to promote each other to help familiarize the idea of entrepreneurship in Kuwait and as the sample builds up, enough and adequate data will be gathered to be useful for this research. The sample size for the in-depth interviews included interviews with Kuwaiti female owners of 20 businesses.

Data Sources

The sources of the collected data for this study was gathered from the different Kuwaiti entrepreneurship projects and exhibitions who help Kuwaiti entrepreneurs in general promote their own businesses. The easy access and the availability of such sources helped in gathering the wanted data. However, the specific research data that this research focused on investigating were gathered from the in-depth interviews that were conducted with Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who were included in the sample of this study.

Data Collection Strategy

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were first contacted through the phone and then asked to set up individual meetings and interview appointments. Recording and documenting each and every piece of data through the use of a digital voice recording device was one of the data collection strategies used when conducting the in-depth interviews. Each in-depth interview done for this study was fully transcribed in its original language that was used during the interview. All the Arabic transcriptions of the in-depth interviews were later translated into English transcriptions. However, there were interviews that were only transcribed in English because it was the language used during the actual interview. Another data collection strategy was scheduling a certain and specific number of interviews for each and every week to help organize the data that were collected and gathered from Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs (Babbie, 2013).

In-depth Interview Questions

In the in-depth interviews, 18 questions were asked of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. The questions were originally written in English but were translated into Arabic when asked to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs because Arabic is the mother language of the potential participants. Only three Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs answered the in-depth interviews

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questions in English and their interviews were done in English because they preferred being

asked the questions in English as they are very comfortable and fluent speaking English.

The first question was asked to let Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs introduce themselves.

Questions 2 to 5 were asked to look for information regarding the businesses that the Kuwaiti

women own. Questions 6 to 9 investigated about entrepreneurship and how culture and gender

intersect with being a Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur. This set of questions were formulated to

look at the correlation between gender, culture, and entrepreneurship. 10 and 11 questions ask

about who Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs target as customers/market. Questions 12 and 13

helped identify the overall marketing strategies and the types of media that Kuwaiti women use.

Starting with question 14 till question 18, these questions focused on looking at social media use

by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and how and why they adopted them (See Appendix A). This

set of questions was formed to investigate about the attributes of innovation, which is social

media. Rogers (2003) identified five attributes concerning an adopted innovation. Relative

advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability and therefore questions 14 to

18 were asked to look for answers that reveal why Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt social

media and incorporate them in their marketing strategy.

The structure of this study's in-depth interviews was flexible to allow getting responses from

the participants in their desired order. Semi-structured interviews were done to ensure that the

participants speak freely and express their opinions, thoughts, and feelings spontaneously. For

example, some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs started talking about their social media use and

how they incorporated them in their marketing strategies before they were asked the related

questions about this topic listed in the in-depth questions guide. Follow-up questions and probes

aiming to investigate more about the same topic were asked later to ensure covering the topic

adequately. Also, the questions that were skipped but listed in the current study questions guide were asked later but not in the same order it is listed in. The in-depth interviews were done in a face-to-face setting permitting interactive and naturalistic style of interviewing (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). The advantages of the approach used in conducting the current study's in-depth interviews include providing more detailed data and understandings of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' experiences due to the flexibility the in-depth interviewing process. The interactivity of these in-depth interviews allowed getting rich data about how and why Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs chose social media for marketing their ventures. One main advantage of using in-depth interviews for the current study's research is that it helped Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs feel comfortable sharing their experiences, expressing their opinion, and talking about their marketing strategies. The participants were talking openly because the interviews were done individually which assured a comfortable atmosphere and a relaxed conversation. It is important to note that almost all of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs agreed to do the in-depth interviews and were not comfortable to be part of a focus group interview setting. Thus, using in-depth interviews was a more suitable and advantageous method to use for the research of this study compared to using focus group interviews.

Four Cases of Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs Adopting Social Media

Four different cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were identified to provide more understanding of how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use social media to market their products and services. Case studies should have a case in which it is the object of study. The case should be a "complex functioning unit, investigated in its natural context with a multitude of methods, and be contemporary" (Johansson, 2003, p. 2). Stake (1998) explained that critical to case study research are not the methods used for examination, however that the object of study is a case.

Stake (1998) stated that "as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used" (p. 443).

Gerring (2004) also identified case study "as an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units. Case studies rely on the same sort of covariational evidence utilized in non-case study research. Thus, the case study method is correctly understood as a particular way of defining cases, not a way of analyzing cases or a way of modeling causal relations"(p. 341).

Case 1: Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi

Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi are the owners of Staylek. It is a fashion business in which they design and sell couture dresses for women only. Anfal is the daughter of Shaikhah who joined her mother later and Staylek became a shared business between the two. Staylek is a home business however they have a showroom for their Stylek business in the basement of their house which is located in Mubarak Al-Kabeer area. They have designed their basement as a store for the dresses they sell. Shaikhah and Anfal started Staylek together in 2009. They use three various types of social media when marketing to their customers. They are members of one of the popular Kuwaiti forums called Kuwaiti Women Forum and also use Twitter and Instagram. They created special accounts for Staylek in Twitter and Instagram. The rationale for choosing the Staylek owners as one of the cases include their use of different kinds of social media when marketing to their target market and that their business is well established and has been in progress for more 7 years.

Case 2: Eman Haider

The second case was Eman Haider, who is the owner of Tea Party Sweets business. Her business is a food business in which she only sells different flavored tarts. Tea Party Sweets store

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is located in Al-Salmiyah area. Eman only uses Instagram to interact with her customers and market to them. Her business started as a home business but it was in 2014 when she opened her first store for her Tea Party Sweets. The rationale for choosing Eman Haider as one of the cases for this research is that her Tea Party Sweets is one of the well-known and most successful businesses in Kuwait even though she is only using one type of social media when marketing for her Tea Party Sweets business.

Case 3: Fay and Dalal Al-Asousi

Fay and Dalal Al-Asousi are two sisters who own Casa Spa business, which is a ladies beauty salon located in Al-Surra area. Similarly to Tea Party Sweets business Casa Spa salon started as a home business and then Fay and Dalal opened their beauty salon in 2014. Dalal Al-Asousi is also an owner of another fashion business called Modish Chanel, which sells clothes and dresses for women only. Fay Al-Asousi is in the process of opening a restaurant. These two Kuwaiti sisters own a number of businesses and they use Instagram when marketing to their customers and therefore they were included as one of the cases for this research.

Case 4: Noriya Al-Mlhami

Noriya Al-Mlhami owns a business called Om Khaled. Her business is not only a food business in which she sells different meals and dishes but Noriya also gives cooking lessons. Om Khaled is a home business and even the cooking lessons that Noriya gives take place in her house, which is located in Al-Zahra'a area. Noriya also markets her Om Khaled business using Instagram, which her daughter in law created for her but she is the one who updates it and use when marketing to her customers.

These four cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were chosen because they represent different age groups, different types of businesses, and the adoption of various kinds of social

media. These four cases were visited in their business locations and the researcher spent long periods of time with them to help understand the way they adopt and use social media as marketing tools.

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative researchers such as Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olsen, and Spiers (2002) emphasized the importance of reliability and validity when conducing qualitative research. They explained how reliability and validity remain appropriate concepts for attaining rigor in qualitative research. On a similar note, Lacy and Riffe (1993) talked about how reliability and validity in qualitative research ensure the credibility of the qualitative research investigation, measurement, and result.

Creswell (2013) explained that there are multiple ways in which reliability in qualitative research can be addressed and he referred to reliability in qualitative research as "the stability of responses to multiple coders of data sets" (p. 253). Creswell (2013) explained that reliability can be obtained by qualitative researchers when they collect detailed field notes using a tape recorder of a fine quality and then carefully transcribe what was recorded on the tape. Thus, for this study to improve the reliability of the research in-depth interviews were recorded and also fully transcribed whereas participant-observation included detailed information regarding what was observed.

When it comes to validity in qualitative research, Creswell (2013) identified a number of strategies that help in attaining validity and which are most predominately used by qualitative researchers. The use of two or more of the strategies concerning validity in qualitative research is what Creswell (2013) recommended to assure attaining validity in qualitative research. These strategies concerning validity in qualitative research include prolonged engagement and

persistent observation in the field and that is establishing and building trust and good rapport with participants and informants and learning the culture that is being studied to avoiding obtaining misinformation. This particular strategy was used when conducting the participant-observation research in which the researcher tried to ensure developing a lengthy engagement and observed determinately for longer periods in order to obtain a good rapport with Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, who were observed while they market to their customers in their business locations.

Creswell (2013) also talked about triangulation, which is described as the use of several and various investigators, sources, methods, and theories to provide corroborating and validating evidence. To improve the validity of the research of this proposed study, different types of methods were used. The deployment of participant-observation, in-depth interviews, and the focus on three cases helped in providing better data and evidence when compared to relying only on one single method.

Clarifying researcher bias is another strategy aiming to achieve validity in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers clarify and illustrate their comments on their past prejudices, biases, experiences, and orientations that might have influenced and directed their approach to the study and their interpretations. Moreover, providing thick and rich descriptions is another strategy that was highlighted and this strategy gives the readers the opportunity to make decisions concerning transferability (Creswell, 2013). Both of these strategies were used to enhance the validity of this research. The researcher highlighted and addressed all the biases prior to and when conducting the research. Two major biases were highlighted and they included where the researcher is from and the gender of the researcher. Because the researcher of this study is a female Kuwaiti, it was important to distinguish the possible biases that might influence

the interpretations of the collected data and results. Moreover, the background of the researcher was discussed to avoid generating biased findings. Also, another strategy used to ensure the validity of this research was writing thick and detailed descriptions when utilizing the different methods of this study. Rich data involving the participant-observation, in-depth interviews, and the four cases of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs will be provided in the next chapters.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Since this research involved and studied human subjects, obtaining an approved consent from the Colorado State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was needed. Singleton and Straits (2010) explained that all research involving and dealing with human subjects has to get an IRB approval before conducting the research and CSU also requires it. Therefore, this particular step was done prior to any of the planned steps.

An IRB approval was obtained for the methods which were used for this research on August 31, 2014. Participant-observation, focus group interviews, and in-depth interviews were fully explained and detailed in the descriptions written for IRB. Before conducting the research involving the human subjects who were studied through these methods, IRB approved consent from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained. The approval of the methods and research for this study was obtained by Colorado State University Institutional Review Board with one condition in which each of the participants sign and receive copy of the approved consent form (See Appendix B). All the participants signed and agreed to have their names written and shown in this study as they were told prior signing the approved consent form that the information they would share and provide will be presented and analyzed in the work of this dissertation.

Issues with Focus Group Interviews

One of the initially proposed methods for conducting this research was doing focus group interviews. This proposed method was not utilized because there were some issues related to it. When Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs using social media were contacted to do focus group interviews, almost all of the ones included in the sample of this study refused to participate in a focus group interview setting. Women entrepreneurs were not comfortable to share their information with other women entrepreneurs regardless if they were owning the same type of business or not. They were skeptical about sharing their information especially those related to their business and their marketing strategy with other women entrepreneurs. It took almost one month and a half to try to ask and have a group of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs participate in a focus group interview. Almost all Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who were contacted preferred doing an in-depth interview, which is done individually and separately, than taking part in a focus group interview. Therefore, this method was not used.

The next four chapters will reveal the findings of this study. Chapter 4 will present the results of the challenges and motivations involved with Kuwaiti women's decision to become entrepreneurs. Chapter 5 will cover the marketing strategies used by women entrepreneurs. Chapter 6 will specifically focus on unveiling the findings concerning women entrepreneurs' adoption of social media as a marketing tool. Chapter 7 will showcase the four cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in detail.

Chapter 4 – Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs and Their Businesses: Challenges and Motivations

Because this study focuses on studying female entrepreneurs and their adoption of social media, these women are introduced in this chapter. The challenges and motivations of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs will be unveiled to help understand how they relate to their adoption of social media and using them for marketing reasons. This study attempts to study female entrepreneurs as the main adopters and looks at why they chose to adopt certain types of social media. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were interviewed in this qualitative study to examine their adoption and utilization of social media as a marketing tool. Chapter 4, which marks the start of the findings chapters, will first present the Kuwaiti women owners of 20 businesses who were studied for this research. This chapter will provide their demographics, list the types of businesses these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs run, and also describe how these women operate their businesses.

Additionally, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed for this study talked about the challenges associated with becoming an entrepreneur. They highlighted that women entrepreneurs in Kuwait face many obstacles from the moment they decide to become one. This chapter also will uncover the challenges that these Kuwaiti women faced when they became entrepreneurs and will state those challenges they are still struggling to overcome.

Moreover, in order to know what motivated these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to become part of the entrepreneurial world, they were asked about the motivations that drove them to decide so. This chapter will reveal these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' motivations and how those motivations encourage them to continue what they already started.

The following tables will introduce these women entrepreneurs by providing their demographics and information about the types of businesses they own.

Demographics and Types of Businesses

Table 1 covers the demographic information of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in this study. This table includes 20 women-owned businesses.

Table 1: Demographic Information

No.	Entrepreneur Name	Age	Marital Status	Employment Status
1	Majdah Baqer	47	Married	Retired from a governmental sector job
2	Farah Alraees	24	Single	Graduate student
3	Haleemah Ahmad	29	Single	Looking for a job in either governmental or private sector
4	Badriya Al-Sultan	28	Married	Employee
5	Shaikhah Al-Mutairi	-	Married	Housewife
	Anfal Al-Mutairi	20	Single	College Student
6	Wadha Al-Asfour	29	Single	Employee
7	Wesam Al-Shirazi	39	Married	Employee
8	Aisha Albisher	30	Married	Employee
9	Rawan Al-Duwisan	21	Single	College Student
10	Latifah Aljassem	21	Single	College Student
	Shaikha Al-Amer	21	Single	College Student
11	Ameena Al-Qattan	32	Single	Employee
12	Mona Al-Baghli	32	Married	Housewife

13	Eman Haider	31	Single	Quitted her job in governmental sector
14	Fay Al-Asousi	33	Married	Quitted their jobs in governmental sector
	Dalal Al-Asousi	27	Married	
15	Noriya Al-Mlhami	-	Divorced	Employee (Retiring in 2015)
16	Eman Al-Wazzan	51	Married	Employee
17	Bedoor Alwahiab	30	Married	Employee
18	Fajer Ahmad	23	Married	Housewife
19	Haifaa Alyagout	36	Married	Employee
20	Aysha Alhouli	44	Married	Employee

The 20 businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs include ten women who are in their twenties while eight of them are in their thirties. Few women are in their forties as there are only two and only one woman in her fifties. Two women preferred not to disclose their age as they belong to an older age group and they are most probably in their sixties.

When it comes to the marital status of these Kuwaiti women, married women outnumber single women as there are thirteen married women and the rest are single except for one who is divorced.

The employment status among these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs is fairly similar. Ten women are employees in governmental sector. Five of them are college students and the rest are either retired, housewife, or only own their business.

One notable finding about these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs that the majority of them either have other jobs besides running their businesses or they are still studying. Very few of them only run their own businesses. Various reasons can explain why most of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs do not solely depend on running the businesses they own. Even though an entrepreneur is characterized as a risk taker, the instability and the unpredictability of assured success of the business might play a role in why most of these Kuwaiti women decide to hold on to their jobs. Other explanations to why the majority of these women entrepreneurs have other employment status besides being entrepreneurs could be the need for additional income from doing and proceeding something they are passionate about. Still the independency on running their ventures could not be made as a decision by these women because of the possibility of not achieving an adequate profitable revenue which secures full reliance on running their businesses.

Types of Businesses Owned by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs

Table 2 illustrates the names of businesses and the different types of businesses which Kuwaiti women own and run.

Table 2: Types of Businesses Owned by Kuwaiti Women

No.	Entrepreneur Name	Name of Business	Type of Business
1	Majdah Baqer	Om El7elween	Food business
2	Farah Alraees	FAR Designs	Selling decorative and customized goods and merchandises
3	Haleemah Ahmad	Qumoosh Couture	Fashion business
4	Badriya Al-Sultan	Samboosa Box	Food business
5	Shaikhah Al-Mutairi	Staylek	Fashion business

	Anfal Al-Mutairi		
6	Wadha Al-Asfour	Al-Asfour Designer	Fashion business
7	Wesam Al-Shirazi	Cacaouette	Food business
8	Aisha Albisher	SC Kitchen	Food business
9	Rawan Al-Duwisan	Yummy Choco	Food business
10	Latifah Aljassem Shaikha Al-Amer	Lam Sheen	Fashion business
11	Ameena Al-Qattan	Neon	Fashion business
12	Mona Al-Baghli	Heavenly Chocs	Food business
13	Eman Haider	Tea Party Sweets	Food business
14	Fay Al-Asousi Dalal Al-Asousi	Casa Spa Modish Channel	Beauty Salon Fashion business
15	Noriya Al-Mlhami	Om Khaled	Food business
16	Eman Al-Wazzan	Eman Sweets	Food business
17	Bedoor Alwahiab	Casa Sweet	Food business
18	Fajer Ahmad	Hair Sketch	Beauty salon
19	Haifaa Alyagout	Nutri Juice	Food business
20	Aysha Alhouli	Zari International Est.	Printing Press

The types of businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs vary but there are some commonalties found among them. The majority of these businesses are home businesses in which Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs operate and run them from their homes. Most of these businesses started as home businesses but got so successful and popular that their women owners

were able to own an actual store for these businesses. The businesses that managed to expand out of being just a home business include Samboosa Box, Tea Party Sweets, Casa Spa, Modish Channel, Hair Sketch, and Zari International Est. Nutri Juice business is an exception because it did not start as a home business.

Most of the women owning home-based businesses hope to grow bigger and plan to get their products and services sold in an actual store instead of having them sold from their homes. Most of these businesses regardless of being a home business or otherwise, they all have delivery service. All of these women when interviewed talked about how they make contracts with delivery service companies to help them deliver their products, goods, and services to their customers. Tea Party Sweets is the only exception to having a delivery service. Eman Haider, who is the owner of this flavored tart business, said that she uses the same delivery strategy of McDonald's food chain, which does not deliver its food because it aims to serve the food hot and fresh due to delivery service. Eman Haider said that she does not deliver her tarts because she is worried that the quality and taste of the tarts made in her tart shop might get spoiled before they are delivered to her customers.

One of the noticeable commonalities among these Kuwaiti women businesses is the type of businesses they own. The majority of these businesses are either food businesses or fashion businesses. 11 of these businesses are food businesses and 5 of them are fashion businesses. The rest of the businesses fall under different types of businesses such as beauty salon, printing press, and selling decorative and customized goods and merchandises.

The types of businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs suggest that even though these women are trying to raise the gender bar and achieve further equity by being part of the entrepreneurial world, which is a male-dominated one, they still fall under some gender-based

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stereotypes. The majority of these businesses are either food or fashion ventures in which both are stereotypically classified as fields associated with women more than men. The majority of these women-owned businesses are mainly targeting customers from the same gender, especially the fashion businesses. Those types of businesses are owned and run by women and other female customers are the ones buying from them. However, the food businesses cater to both female and male customers and are not exclusively targeting women. Women in Kuwait live in a conservative society where gender segregated nature prevails. Women are more often segregated from men and this could have influenced the types of businesses these women entrepreneurs chose to own. Running a business which targets customers from the same gender benefits its owner by having her deal with female costumers only. However, other businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs benefits from their use of social media when communicating with their male customers. For example, Majdah Baqer, owner of food business Om El7elween, said that she receives her orders from her customers through her WhatsApp account she created specifically for her business. Majdah said that there were times, she did not know the gender of her customer because the order was placed through WhatsApp messages. She was not able to identify if a man or a woman was placing the order. But she mentioned that only when a phone conversation happened or when customers noted their gender she got to know if the customer was a man or a woman. Majdah expressed that she feels this is an advantageous thing about using social media because it allows limiting the inhibitions of her male customers to contact her and place their orders.

The following sections will unveil the findings related to the challenges that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs encounter and try to overcome. Also, findings explaining the various types of motivations that drive Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs will be presented.

Challenges Faced by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs

Starting their own business is a risky decision that involves many other consequences which Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs either had to deal with earlier when they started their business or still try to overcome and struggle with. Various challenges and obstacles elevated as soon as these Kuwaiti women began exercising the entrepreneurial profession. Most of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who participated in this study implied that in a country like Kuwait where women constantly try to break out from their stereotypical gender role that the society expects them to play and rehearse, becoming an entrepreneur is not an easy choice to make.

Challenges

This study's findings reveal that the challenges faced by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs include:

- Limitations in capital, production, and marketing tools

- Lack of resources

- Issues with delivery service

- Pricing the items

- Work overload and lack of employees

- Orders getting delayed and season overload work

- Finding the right places to work with to get the job done

- Balancing between taking care of home duties and running the business

- Need for guidance

Limitations in capital, production, and marketing tools are the challenges that Ameena

Al-Qattan, owner of Neon fashion business, discussed. She pointed out that the inadequacy of

such important business elements threatens the stability of the business she owns. Ameena

explained the initial challenges that she and her partner dealt with and she also talked about the

remaining challenges that they are still trying to overcome as she says:

> First obstacle was the money because we had to raise some money and we did not have a
> lot. Actually we started with just 500 Kuwaiti Dinars and we could not do much. We
> could not produce a lot because that amount did not enable us to produce a lot. The
> obstacle that we still face is the media or how do I put it the marketing because it is very
> difficult. We manly depend on Instagram and word-of-mouth among friends and family
> so we have few loyal customers. We have to really put an effort using Instagram.
> Sometimes we do and other times we fail because we do not know exactly how to tackle
> that area and use. Until today, I would say this is our main weakness. Other challenge is
> that sometimes we do not find a lot of material like plain materials we can get but the
> pattern ones are hard to find but we try our best to get them. (A. Al-Qattan, personal
> communication, October 19, 2014)

Ameena Al-Qattan stated that marketing for her business is one key challenge that she and

her business partner still need to improve because marketing is an important vehicle that helps in

running a successful business. As Ameena explained, not only the dependency on Instagram is

the issue they are facing but also the amount of time dedicated to using this social media

platform as a marketing tool is another challenge that needs to be worked on.

Lack of resources is another challenge that Wadha Al-Asfour, owner of Al-Asfour

Designer fashion business, experienced. This challenge, which is quite similar to what Ameena

Al-Qattan mentioned about how starting a business with a small amount of money is very

challenging. Along the same lines, Wadha shared her experience by pointing out and

emphasizing the importance of having sufficient resources to start a business. Wadha explains:

> The challenges I faced was lack of resources especially when I first started, I did not have
> much income to invest it in my own business but now that I am an employee and I have
> my salary that I can use, it became way easier. Also, when I first started, there were not

as many exhibitions as they are nowadays. (W. Al-Asfour, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Wadha also mentioned that participating in exhibitions helped her in exposing her business to a larger market and that the limitation in the number of exhibitions that were available when she first started her business was considered as an obstacle. However, Wadha clarified that this challenge no longer exists due to the increasing number of exhibitions that promote Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial ventures.

Issues with delivery service is another challenge that Majdah Baqer, owner of Om El7ween food business, still struggles with. Delivery service for such types of businesses is either done by the business owner herself or by assigning the delivery service to a company, which handles delivering the orders. Majdah does not deliver her orders by herself and she pays a certain delivery service company to get her orders delivered to her customers. Majdah finds this extremely challenging because sometimes the delivery driver does not do a satisfactory job due to late delivery resulting in making her customers angry as she explains:

> The pressure of too many orders at one time and also the delivery service sometimes does not do a good job. With customers sometimes, there were few misunderstandings but I try in my own way to calm the customer especially if she is angry, I try to calm her down. Sometimes the orders do not get delivered to the customer on time and that is one major problem. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Pricing the items they sell is a different challenge that Haleemah Ahmad, owner of Qumoosh Couture fashion business, struggles with. Haleemah discussed and talked about how the absence of concrete standards and parameters regulating the prices of the items she sells is extremely problematic as she elaborates:

> I had some problems for pricing my items because we live in a country where people think the more expensive it is, the more worthy buying it is. So when I started I used to price the clothes I sell very reasonably but I noticed that when the clothing piece is

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pricier, it gets sold out quicker. The ones I price them less, they do not even look at those stuffs even if it is fashionable. (H. Ahmad, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

Work overload and lack of employees are the two challenges which Fajer Ahmad, owner of Hair Sketch beauty salon, pointed out. Fajer stated that running a business involves dedicating a lot of time to it and also having employees help her get the work done. Fajer emphasized the need to having adequate number of employees to insure running a profitable business. Fajer thinks that having a sufficient number of employees help in decreasing the work overload and also ensures that her customers get the services they want satisfyingly. Fajer says:

> The challenges I faced started with me working alone putting makeup so I did not have anyone to help me. It was an overload and plus the customers who wanted makeup also wanted their hair to be done and I was only doing makeup when I worked from home. Most of the customers did not want to go do their makeup in one place and then go to another different place to have their hair done there and that is why I knew that I had to open a beauty salon where customers can have their makeup done by me and have their hair done by hairstylist. Now my friend and I have Hair Sketch beauty salon. (F. Ahmad, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

Another business owner also highlighted the same challenge, Aysha Alhouli, owner of Zari International Est printing press, talked about how work overload is the obstacle she has to tackle. Aysha shared her experience by explaining that carrying the entire responsibility of her business without having any other employee helping her is a tremendously difficult challenge. Aysha still runs her business individually and does not have employees working with her and she says:

> It was not easy from the very beginning. It is a lot of work. Especially that I am the only one responsible for doing all the work. Not having others helping with what I do overloaded me with lots of work. (A. Alhouli, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

Orders getting delayed and season overload work are two challenges that Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer, owners of Lam Sheen fashion business, spoke about as they

correlated the overload work to the season factor. Latifah and Shaikha talked about how delaying

the orders affects their customers' satisfaction and that is why it is very essential to plan ahead

and work on finishing the orders earlier than later. Latifah says:

Since we own a fashion business, our challenge is to get a good tailor. We design the clothes we
sell but we need a tailor who does the tailoring for our designs. The obstacle we face that when
we give the tailor our designs, we do not get the work done on time. Sometimes there will be
delays. Plus our work is very seasonal so during a certain season where there will be a lot of
orders, the tailor we work with might take about a month long to finish tailoring our designs.
That is why we always need to be prepared in advance and way ahead of time. (L. Aljassem,
personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Finding the right places to work with to get the job done is one main obstacle that Farah

Alraees, owner of Far Designs, explained and she also shared her experience of how it is difficult

for her as a girl to go to some places dominated by men such as the printing press alone. Farah

explains:

Yes, there are a lot of obstacles for instance I have a problem with finding a good printing
press and place that can print that designs I make. Plus the amount of money required for
printing my designs is costly and very pricey so finding a good printing place is on major
obstacle. Also, because I am a girl and the majority who work in printing press are men, I
always have one family member or a friend coming with me. Luckily my family and
friends support me a lot so there is always someone helping me. Another obstacle is the
number of designs I print. If I print less designs then I am ok but if I have a bigger order
then it becomes an issue.

Balancing between taking care of home duties and running the business she owns is the

challenge Badriya Al-Sultan, owner of Samboosa Box food business, expressed about. Badriya

pointed out that being a woman and owning a business is challenging due to the balancing factor.

Badriya faced the obstacle of trying to balance between her duties as a mother and her

responsibility towards the business she owns. She shared how difficult it was for her to divide

her time and attention between the two. Badriya stated that woman entrepreneurs face more

challenges than the men entrepreneurs in the context that women have more home and family duties and expectations that they should meet. She explained how hard it was for her as she says:

> One of the major challenges was to balance between my home duties and running the business. When I first started, I just had a newborn daughter and because of the business, I could not give her my full attention and time because I had to take care of the orders that we were getting for the samboosa we make. It was tiring. (B. Al-Sultan, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

Need for guidance on how to start your business is the challenge that Haifaa Alyagout, owner of Nutri Juice food business, faced when she started her business. Haifaa explained that the scarce availability of good guidance on how to start a business is a major obstacle because starting and running a business by itself is a risky decision. Therefore, the lack of proper guidance especially in the initial stages of running a business can result into unwanted consequences. She expressed that taking the decision of becoming an entrepreneur was easier than actually implementing it as she says:

> I needed someone to tell me what I am doing is right and what I am doing will make me gain profit. I was clueless so I needed some guidance to show me how to start my business. (H. Alyagout, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

The challenges that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs shared varied through how they described. Some clearly associated these challenges with their gender while other challenges they talked about through business lens. Gender related challenges include finding the right places to work with to get the job done and balancing between taking care of home duties and running the business. These two challenges were highlighted by Farah Alraees and Badriya Al-Sultan explaining that because they are women, they faced such challenges. Farah clearly stated that she finds it challenging to go to some places dominated by men such as the printing press to get her work done and that is why she always has a family member or a friend accompany her

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when she goes to such places. Badriya Al-Sultan described how gender and being a woman play a major role in challenging her to balance between her home duties and running the business she owns. The remaining challenges are mainly related to the difficulties and finances of running a business.

Other challenges such as limitations in capital, production, and marketing tool, lack of resources, and need for guidance also correlate with the gender of these entrepreneurs. These are some of the common challenges that many women entrepreneurs face across the countries from the same region. For example, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs are disadvantaged with lower capital funds and productions similarly to what Goby and Erogul (2011) pointed about the challenges facing women entrepreneurs of the United Arab Emirates. Goby and Erogul (2011) discussed that Emirati women entrepreneurs struggle with financial issues when they startup their businesses especially compared to men entrepreneurs. Even though the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who shared their experiences in this study did not specifically associate these challenges with their gender, the correlation exists.

In order to understand how these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs overcome such challenges and aim to continue expanding the profitability of their businesses, they were asked about the motivations that drive and help them in continuing their journeys as entrepreneurs. The following section will look at the multiple motivations that encouraged Kuwaiti women to become entrepreneurs.

Motivations for Becoming an Entrepreneur

Motivation directs the energized action of the individual towards achieving a certain target and aim. To be moved towards accomplishing a goal is what defines being motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Motivations

The motivations that derived and guided Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' decision to start and own their business vary from one entrepreneur to another but commonalities were found and the motivations include:

- Doing what they love to do the most

- Practicing and excelling at their favorite hobby

- Family and friends' support

- Inspired by other successful examples of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs

Doing what she loves to do the most is what motivated Majdah Baqer, who is a 47-year-old married Kuwaiti entrepreneur who retired from a governmental sector job and started the food business of Om El7elween in which she makes various kinds of desserts and also cooks some Kuwaiti dishes. She spoke about her love for doing what she does and how it motivated her to become an entrepreneur as she says:

> I personally feel that starting my own business actually affected me more positively as I am using my energy in something I like and love doing. I love cooking a lot. I think and this is how I feel that most of the Kuwaiti women and girls who own their businesses is a matter of doing what you like to do. It is like an enjoyment. I personally do not bother much about the profits or the money that I get back from my business. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Majdah Baqer, who enthusiastically talked about her love for cooking and how it motivated her to start her own business, shared her personal experience of going through depression and talked about how doing what she loves doing the most helped overcome her depression. Majdah said that earlier before she started her business, her therapist told her that it is for Majdahs's benefit to occupy herself and time with doing something that she loves doing. That is when

Majdah told her therapist that she loves cooking so much. Her therapist thought and suggested

that it would be better if she tries doing something out of the house. However, Majdah preferred

doing something at home as she says:

> I told her I like being at home and I love being around my kids and not leave them alone
> for so long so if I go out that will affect me negatively. Therefore, I chose to work from
> home and at the same time I can take care of my kids and see what is happening with
> them. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Another Kuwaiti woman who got motivated to start her own business because she is doing

what she loves doing the most is Ameena Al-Qattan, who is the owner of Neon fashion business.

Ameena tailors and sells only head covers and veils (hijabs) for ladies by designing and adding

the neon color to them. She is a 32-years-old Kuwait woman who still works as a translator in

the Ministry of Defense of Kuwait. Ameena was motivated to start her own business due to

loving what she does as she says:

> I did not see myself in my current position in this governmental job and as much as I try
> to put effort into it, it just does not payoff as much as I want it to. Not being able to join
> the private sector, I thought the best way to just basically do something I love doing and
> then profit from it. Then, hopefully eventually just owning my own working hours God
> willing that is what motivated me to start my business. (A. Al-Qattan, personal
> communication, October 19, 2014)

Practicing and excelling at her favorite hobby is what motivated Haleemah Ahmad, the

owner of Qumoosh Couture, which is a fashion business that sells oversized clothes for women.

Haleemah is a 29-years-old entrepreneur, who started her business back in 2003 when she was an

undergraduate student. She is still not employed yet in either a governmental or private sector.

Haleemah attributed her decision of becoming an entrepreneur to practicing her hobby as she

says:

> It is a hobby for me, I will be still doing but this will not be my only occupation. I am still
> looking forward to getting a job, which is related to my major that is psychology but I am
> hoping to still continue running my own business too. For now, I am only focusing on my
> business. (H. Ahmad, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

Similarly, Fajer Ahmad was motivated to start her business because she wanted to excel at her hobby. Fajer is a 23-years-old Kuwaiti entrepreneur who started her business about four years ago. She is a makeup artist who does the makeup for her customers who come to Hair Sketch beauty salon. Her business initially started as a home-business where her customers used to come to her house to have their makeup done by Fajer. Doing the makeup for other girls and women is the hobby of Fajer. She enjoys doing so and that what motivated her to start her business as she says:

> Applying makeup is my favorite hobby. Earlier my dad used to always bring me different makeup kits as a gift whenever he travelled abroad. It is my hobby and that is why I started my business because I wanted to improve my hobby and become more skillful in it. (F. Ahmad, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

Even though there is an overlap between the two types of motivations discussed above, these two kinds are different. The thin line between doing what they love doing the most and excelling at their hobby blurs the different in how dependent these women entrepreneurs are on their businesses. In other words, loving what they do can mean that they are more willing to maintain only their businesses whereas excelling their favorite hobby can be done just for enjoyment accompanied with searching for another profession. For example, Ameena Al-Qattan, who is motivated by doing what she loves doing, expressed her future ambition by focusing only on running her Neon fashion business because she is not satisfied with her current occupation in the governmental sector. On the other hand, Haleemah Ahmad, who is motivated by practicing her hobby, confessed that she will not depend on her business and that she is looking for an occupation that relates to what she majored in and that is psychology.

Family and friends' support is one major motivation that was found common among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Many Kuwaiti women shared their experiences related to the different family members or friends who encouraged them to start their own businesses. Some

women even talked about how their family's support and belief were greater than their own of themselves. For example, Majdah Baqer, owner of the food business Om El7eween, narrated how her family and especially her husband motivated her so strongly so that she can decide on becoming an entrepreneur as she says:

> Everyone in my family supported me and initially I was the first one who is hesitant to start my own business but because I love cooking and it is a passion for me. I decided to start my own business. My husband supports me the most as he always asks me if I need anything so that he can bring it for me. When I first started he was not in Kuwait, I called him and told him that I want to start doing so and he just asked if I am able to manage between taking care of the house, our children, and that this will not affect me but I told him that I am able to do it. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Likewise, Fajer Ahmad's husband played an important role in motivating his wife to start her business and pursuing her hobby of becoming a makeup artist. Fajer, the owner of Hair Sketch beauty salon says:

> When I first started, I was married and my husband supported me so positively. My husband is the one person who supports me the most because he knows that I love doing makeup so he knew that I can do well in such business. All my family members support me as well and none of them opposed me for starting my own business. (F. Ahmad, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

Other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were hugely motivated by their mothers' support and encouragement even though their fathers were not supportive of such decision at the beginning. For instance, Haleemah Ahmad, the owner of fashion business Qumoosh Couture, talked about the importance of her mother's support and Haleemah also explained why her father opposed her decision of becoming an entrepreneur initially as she says:

> My mom is the one who motivated and supported me the most and that is why I used her name in my business. Qumoosh is the family name of my mother. Family was first, they encouraged me all the way. They always tell me how they love the way I dress. However, at the beginning my father was against it as he looked at it in a bad way as why you are selling clothes to people to get more income but for me it is not about getting more income, it is a hobby and it is for changing. (H. Ahmad, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

Similarly, Wadha Al-Asfour, who owns a fashion business called Al-Asfour Designer, was

supported by her mother but her father was not encouraging her at first. Wadha started her

fashion business which sells casual clothes back in 2007 when she was doing her last year in

college. Wadha says:

> My mother is the one who supported me and when I first started my father was not
> supporting me even though he is a trader and entrepreneur himself. He was worried that I
> was a young girl when I started and also when I started my business, there were not many
> Kuwaiti girls and women who own their businesses. It was not like how it is now where
> many businesses are owned by Kuwaiti women. (W. Al-Asfour, personal communication,
> October 2, 2014)

However, the one who motivated Wadha the most was her mother's friend. She encouraged

and convinced Wadha to start her fashion business Al-Asfour Designer as Wadha says:

> A teacher, who is a friend of my mother, is the one who supported and motivated me to
> start my own business. She told me why do not you start designing and owning your
> business since you are graduating now and that many girls at your age start their own
> business. She said that by having your own business will help you in getting an income
> till you find a job so I started in 2007 and Thank God ever since I was successful. I
> personally love fashion so much. I like to follow the latest trends. I now work in a
> governmental sector but my current job has nothing to do with my business. (W. Al-
> Asfour, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Family members and friends' support played a key role in motivating Kuwaiti women

entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, the above findings show that not all male members of Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs were supportive of them when they initially decided to start their own

businesses. Both Haleemah Ahmad and Wadha Al-Asfour were not supported by their fathers

primarily. On the other hand, Majdah Baqer and Fajer Ahmad were hugely motivated by their

husbands' support.

Inspired by other successful examples of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs is another

motivation that encouraged other Kuwaiti women to become entrepreneurs themselves. Aisha

Albisher, the owner of food business SC that only sells triangle-shaped pastry samboosa and

koobah which is made of ground beef, is the business partner of her husband. Aisha said that her

husband was very fascinated with his sister's business and success that he encouraged Aisha to

start their SC food business. Aisha says:

> My husband is the one who encouraged me. His sister has her own business so he was so
> excited and enthusiastic about owning our own business. He is the one funding the
> business but I am the one who manages and runs the business of SC. To be honest, I
> personally do not like cooking or entering the kitchen but when my husband came and
> talked to me about starting our own business and I saw his sister's experience and how it
> succeeded and how people are now more encouraging and liking such small businesses, I
> got more exited and thank God as soon as we started, our business was profitable. (A.
> Albisher, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Another example of a Kuwaiti woman who was inspired by the success of other Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs is Rawan Al-Duwisan, owner of food business Yummy Choco. Rawan,

who is a student in Kuwait University initially started a business named Sweet Factory but its

Instagram account got stolen. Thus, she decided to start a similar kind of business but with

naming it as Yummy Choco. Rawan said that she likes to make sweets more than cooking other

dishes and that is why her food business only sells tarts and desserts. She was motivated to start

her business because she was noticing all the success of small businesses owned by Kuwaiti girls

and women. Rawan says:

> I was motivated to start my own business when I saw and noticed the widespread of
> home-businesses owned by women and how people are accepting such businesses and
> supporting them by actually buying from them. I personally buy and order from such
> businesses through their Instagram accounts. I am myself a customer for these kinds of
> businesses. So when I saw the multiple successful examples and experiences. I was
> motivated to start my own. (R. Al-Duwisan, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs had similar and varied reasons to start their businesses. The

variation in their motives include their love for what they are doing, practicing their favorite

hobby, support and encouragement from their family members and friends, and getting inspired

by the success of other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. The different motivations these Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs talked about highlight how the roles of Kuwaiti women have evolved over the years and more so recently. Kuwaiti women live in a conservative culture constraining women to play secondary roles in their society compared to men (Shalesh, 1985). However, in the recent years these women decided to become entrepreneurs and pursue doing and exercising they enjoy doing. Major shifts are happening in the Kuwaiti society which suggest that Kuwaiti women are achieving further gender equity. The examples of these Kuwaiti women narrating how their male family members are encouraging them to become entrepreneurs suggest that the notion of having women in Kuwait become entrepreneurs is being accepted and encouraged. The way both Majdah Baqer and Fajer Ahmad described how their husbands encouraged and supported them to become entrepreneurs indicate that gender roles in Kuwait are no longer limited to having women take care of their families and perform their household duties. The support these Kuwaiti women got from their male partners exemplify that newer generations of men in Kuwait are more willing to help and encourage their wives to not only join the workforce but also own and run their businesses. Even if Alessa (2009) argued that newer generations of Kuwaiti men became more encouraging of having Kuwaiti women help with the financial situation of their families by joining the workforce, these men being supportive of their wives' decisions of becoming entrepreneurs take it to a higher level. These Kuwaiti men's encouragement of their spouses signify that they are more acceptable to have women perform a more leading role in their society as they encourage them to become entrepreneurs. Even in the other examples of Haleemah Ahmad and Wadha Al-Asfour whose fathers were not initially supportive of their daughters' decision of becoming entrepreneurs, had their mothers' support which eventually helped in motivating them to join the entrepreneurial world. This also shows

that older generations of Kuwaiti women are helping their daughters and encouraging them to take more leading roles and become more active in their society.

Now that these Kuwaiti women shared what motivated them to become entrepreneurs, understanding how they operate and market for their businesses is what the next chapter of findings will unveil. Chapter 5 will cover the findings related to marketing and promotion of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' businesses.

Chapter 5 – Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs and their Marketing Strategies

Marketing plays a key role in the success of entrepreneurial ventures. It not only raises awareness about the business but it also promotes and advertise it to its target market. Marketing acts like a link or a communicative tool to attract the attention of customers and to persuade them to consume what a certain business is offering. It includes a set of various practices and processes that aim to profit the business owners (Keefe, 2004). There are different marketing strategies that are utilized by entrepreneurs to help promote businesses. This chapter will cover the marketing strategies that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use to reach out to their customers. However, this chapter will only focus on the marketing strategies that do not involve the use of social media because findings concerning the adoption of social media as a marketing tool will be covered and thoroughly elaborated in the following findings chapters 6 and more so in chapter 7, which will focus on social media adoption by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs.

When Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were interviewed and asked about the types of marketing strategies that they use when advertising for their businesses, they listed and talked about two main types of marketing strategies. The two main kinds of marketing other than the use of social media were word-of-mouth marketing and trade shows. First, this chapter will start with the reasons Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs gave regrading why they do not prefer using traditional marketing methods. Then, this chapter will look at how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs market through word-of-mouth marketing. Later, it will talk about the role of trade shows and how they are integrated in the marketing strategies used by women entrepreneurs in Kuwait.

Traditional Methods of Marketing

Marketing strategies involving traditional methods mostly differ from those involving social media and other types. Traditional methods of marketing include advertising through print such as newspapers, magazines, and telephone books. Traditional marketing methods also include advertising through radio and television. These traditional ways of marketing are costly as they require certain fees based on the size of the advertisements and the type of medium which publishes the advertisements (Lavinsky, 2013). According to Nail (2005), marketers are losing interest in implementing traditional methods of marketing because they are not as useful and efficient as other non-traditional types of marketing such as word-of-mouth. In this study, when Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were asked if they use any traditional marketing methods to market their businesses, most of them said that they do not use any.

The two main cited reasons included the high cost of publishing the advertisements and the ineffectiveness of traditional marketing methods. For example, Majdah Baqer, owner of Om El7eween food business, said, "No, I do not use any traditional marketing methods such as advertising in newspapers and others because it is very costly to do so and I own a small home business. These ways of advertising are expensive and mostly unaffordable." Also, both Latifah and Shaikha, owners of fashion business Lam Sheen stated that "we do not advertise and promote our business in newspapers or television because you need so much money to do that. We prefer marketing our business through more convenient and inexpensive ways." Moreover, Aisha Albisher, owner of food business SC Kitchen, stated that the ineffectiveness of traditional marketing methods is the reason why she does not use them as she said "nowadays there are more effective ways of marketing than those used earlier like advertising in newspapers or on radio and television. These ways are no longer effective to promote businesses in Kuwait." Eman

Haider, owner of food business Tea Party Sweets, shared similar opinions as she said that "almost nobody in Kuwait reads or checks newspapers nowadays and with the many channels we have now, very few actually watch our local ones so marketing and advertising on such media platforms is quite useless. I prefer marketing and promoting my business in a more widespread, effective, and accessible ways."

Role of Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is described as a communication occurring between one person to another orally in which there is a communicator communicating messages and views regarding a product or a service in a non-commercially setting (Arndt, 1967). Word-of-month is done free and it is unpaid unlike other forms of marketing and advertising which requires certain amount of fees. Characteristics of word-of-mouth include valence, focus, timing, solicitation, and intervention. Valence refers to being either positive or negative and focus is when the business owner or company focus on the word-of-mouth interaction between customers themselves. Timing relates to when the word-of-mouth is being done either prior the purchase of a product/service or after it. Solicitation means that word-of-mouth might happen either by asking for it or without. Intervention happens when the business owner or the company tries to interfere and mediate the spread of word-of-mouth by intentionally managing it (Buttle, 1998). Word-of-mouth can be done electronically and online as well but the kind discussed in this chapter refers to word-of-mouth happening personally among the customers targeted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs.

Word-of-mouth marketing happens when a consumer endorses the product or service that she/he used to another consumer. It was found in this research that the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' implement word-of-mouth in their marketing strategies is very similar. Mostly

these women entrepreneurs start the marketing process of word-of-mouth with their family

members and friends and then it accelerates to other consumers and so on. So family members

and friends support does not only circulate around motivating Kuwaiti women to become

entrepreneurs but their family and friends help in marketing and promoting their businesses too.

WOM starts with Family and Friends

Most of the businesses that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs own are home-based and even

those businesses which got so successful and expanded beyond the home business started as one.

Since these businesses initiated from home, the first consumers are usually either family

members or friends. Then, when a product or service is tried and consumed, family members and

friends start spreading their word-of-mouth by sharing their views and recommendations that are

mostly positive to other potential customers and individuals they know. After that when word-of-

mouth travels from the entrepreneurs' family and friends to other people who become customers,

these novel groups of customers promote the business to other individuals they know and that is

how word-of-mouth helps in marketing the businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs.

The way word-of-mouth is used by these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' family and friends

reflects what Rogers (2003) described as communication channels, which help in transmitting

the messages from one person to another. Rogers (2003, p. 18) defined communication channels

as "the means by which messages get from one individual to another." Rogers (2003) identified

two types of communication channels – mass media channels and interpersonal channels. The

process of word-of-mouth in this context involving Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' family and

friends works as an interpersonal channel because it shows how one customer persuades another

one by transferring the positive messages about the entrepreneurs' businesses. Because word-of-

mouth is being communicated among individuals who share existing relationships and it is

mainly done through face-to-face interaction, the spread of word-of-mouth is more effective and

persuasive. New potential customers get the messages about products and services from their

trusted peers and that influences their buying decisions. Rogers (2003, p. 19) highlighted that

"this dependence on the experience of near peers suggests that the heart of the diffusion process

consists of modeling and imitation by potential adopters of their network partners who have

adopted previously. So diffusion is a very social process."

Various Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs shared their experiences of how word-of-mouth

played a crucial role in marketing and promoting their businesses as the following examples will

illustrate so.

Haifaa Alyaqout, the owner of Nutri Juice that sells healthy juices made and mixed of fruits

and vegetables, talked about how her family members, especially her mother and sisters, helped

her in marketing her business through their word-of-mouth messages as Haifaa says:

> They (mother and sisters) helped me advertise and promote within the family. They
> themselves buy the juices and share it with their friends and other family members. They
> are helping me with marketing my business in their own way by telling who they know
> about it. (H. Alyagout, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

Another example that shows how word-of-mouth marketing was extremely helpful in

elevating the marketing of her business is Aisha Al-Bisher. She owns the food business SC

Kitchen, which sells fried triangle-shaped pastries and beef stuffed dumplings. Aisha highlighted

the essential role her family played in marketing and promoting the business she runs. Aisha

sounded very overwhelmed when she was elaborating about the word-of-mouth marketing that

her family did for her business as she says:

> A lot. My family helped me so much in promoting and marketing my business. They
> encouraged me a lot. They played a fundamental role and actually they played the main
> role in marketing, endorsing, and promoting my business. If my family did not do what
> they did, my business would not be this successful. They told everyone they know about

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my business and that helped me a lot in terms of marketing. (H. Alyagout, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

In addition, Ameena Al-Qattan, owner of fashion business Neon that sells head veils and covers for women, also shared her experience with word-of-mouth marketing that is done by her family. Ameena says:

> My family and also my friends help in promoting and marketing the business I own. We depend on their word-of-mouth along with Instagram. Word-of-mouth help us get some loyal customers because they get their recommendations and messages from other people they trust and when they use our products they also recommend them to others. (A. Al-Qattan, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Word-of-mouth is one strategy that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs usually initiate their marketing plans with. The other marketing strategy that women entrepreneurs implement to promote their businesses is participating in trade shows. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs consider participating in trade shows as a bigger marketing step than word-of-mouth because women entrepreneurs believe trade shows work faster in enlarging their target market and that they help in attracting more and different types of consumers.

Role of Trade Shows

One of the essential tools of marketing is trade shows. They play an integral role in showcasing the business especially when trade shows are well implemented in the marketing strategies. Trade shows offer business owners the instant interaction with their customers. They help entrepreneurs in knowing about their customers' feedback and opinions about the products and services they are promoting. Trade shows also provide opportunities for the business owners to clarify inquiries and answer questions asked by their customers (Kerin & Cron, 1987). Hansen (1999) highlighted the multidimensional performance of trade shows, which consists of a one outcome-based dimension and four behavior-based dimensions.

Trade shows' one outcome-based dimension refers to the sales-related activities that involve the immediate purchase and direct selling of products and services performed on-site of trade shows or after the trade shows. The four behavior-based dimensions include information-gathering activities, image-building activities, motivation activities, and relationship-building activities. The information-gathering activities refer to actions associated with collecting information about customers, competitors, new products, and business trends presented at trade shows. Image-building activities involve the doings of building the image and reputation of the business during the participation in trade shows. Motivation activities include the efforts of sustaining and augmenting the motivation of the business or company's employees and customers. Relationship-building activities refer to all the intended actions that aim in continuing existing relationships with customary consumers and forming new relationships with novel customers (Hansen, 1999). Over the years, trade shows have proven to be effective marketing tools enabling communication between business owners and buyers and also enhancing the profits of businesses. It is also predicted that in future, trade shows will remain an important marketing tool that will not be entirely replaced by other marketing methods (Kirchgeorg, Jung, & Klante, 2010).

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs value the role trade shows play in marketing their businesses because their experiences of participating in such trade shows resulted in endorsing their businesses on a larger scale. They feel that the existence of trade shows dedicated to Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to promote their entrepreneurial ventures is an indication that the Kuwaiti culture became more accepting and welcoming to entrepreneurship and women becoming entrepreneurs. The one trade show that was commonly and frequently mentioned and talked about by most of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs is Proud to Be Kuwaiti.

Proud To Be Kuwaiti

In Kuwait, there are several popular trade shows that are held specifically to promote and market the businesses of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. One of the most well-known trade shows in Kuwait is Proud to Be Kuwaiti, which provides marketing opportunities for Kuwaiti entrepreneurs when participating in it. Proud to Be Kuwaiti not only supports the businesses run by Kuwaitis but it also helps in introducing them to the market and reaching to new and wider customers. Proud to Be Kuwaiti is a trade show that usually starts end of January and lasts till end of February. Not only the name of this trade show relates specifically to Kuwait but also the timing of it does too. February is the most special month for Kuwaiti people and it is the most celebrative month because both the national day and liberation day of Kuwait are celebrated in 25th and 26th of February. Proud to Be Kuwaiti holds a very nationalistic identity that even its design represents so. The booths in which entrepreneurs present their products and services are made of mud designed similarly to old Kuwaiti houses existed before the year 1934 which marked that the beginning of oil discovery era. National Kuwaiti songs are played while people roam around the exhibition to look at the different businesses participating in the Proud to Be Kuwaiti exhibition. One of the highlights regarding this particular trade show is that the Emir of Kuwait Shaikh Sabah Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visits Proud to Be Kuwaiti to encourage entrepreneurship in Kuwait every time and year this trade show takes place.

The participation in Proud to Be Kuwaiti trade show require certain fees that differ based on the size of the booth and the number of days an entrepreneur rent it for. The fee charges range from 400 Kuwaiti Dinars (1,319 US Dollars) to 1,500 Kuwaiti Dinars (4,947 US Dollars). Some participants think that these charge fees are costly and unreasonable. However, Farah Al-Raees, owner of FAR Designs, participated in Proud to be Kuwaiti trade show in the year 2014 and she

explained why she thinks that paying such amount to participate in this kind of trade show is

worth it as she says:

> Participating in a trade show like Proud to be Kuwaiti was worth the amount I paid for. I personally did not think it was too much to pay 400 Kuwaiti Dinars for renting the booth because Proud to Be Kuwaiti is very well known and famous. Others say that it is quite expensive to participate in this trade show but I think that participating in such well-known trade show is worth it compared to being part of smaller trade shows that are not popular taking place in unfamiliar locations that not all people are interested in going to. (F. Alraees, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

The majority of businesses participating in the Proud to Be Kuwaiti trade show are women-

owned-businesses. Different types of businesses can be seen there including food, fashion,

merchandise, and other types of businesses. Also, most of the businesses are home-based ones,

which are not licensed. However, there are no legality issues concerning these unlicensed home-

based businesses in Kuwait because the Emir of Kuwait Shaikh Subah Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah supports and encourages Kuwaiti entrepreneurs despite him knowing that most of these

businesses are not licensed. The women entrepreneurs who took part in this trade show had

positive and pleasant experiences that helped them in marketing their businesses. The following

examples demonstrate the experiences of some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who participated

in Proud to Be Kuwaiti trade show.

Badriya Al-Sultan, who is the owner of the food business Samboosa Box that sells triangle-

shaped pastries, narrates her experience of participating in Proud to be Kuwaiti trade show as she

says:

> When we participated in Proud to be Kuwaiti three years ago, we won third place for the best business competition. It was a great experience and participating in such trade shows helped us in getting popular and reaching to customers and also expanding the market of our business. We participated three times in Proud to Be Kuwaiti exhibition and thank God the success, support, and encouragement we received for our business was overwhelming. Some other competitive businesses that were participating in the trade show during lunch time, their owners came to our booth and bought from our samboosa. Thank God having such trade show help us in introducing our business and letting people

and customers know about our samboosa. (B. Al-Sultan, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

Also, Farah Al-Raees, who is the owner of FAR Designs business, shared her experience of participating in the Proud to Be Kuwaiti trade show and she explained how her business benefited from being marketed is such popular trade show. Farah says:

> In February this year (2014), it was my first time to participate in Kuwaiti to Be Proud trade show. It is the biggest exhibition I participated in and I am very glad that it was a successful experience. Proud to Be Kuwaiti is the most popular trade show in Kuwait I guess. I rented a booth to market my designs and products for only one week and I regret that I did not rent the booth for the entire month that the exhibition took place in because God willed it, the customers came from everywhere in Kuwait. Even if the customer just came to look and check the products and was not initially interested in buying came in and bought something. (F. Alraees, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Mona Al-Bhagli, the owner of Heavenly Chocs business, is another Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur who participated in Proud to Be Kuwaiti trade show and she also shared her experience of taking part in this trade show by saying:

> We participated in Proud to be Kuwaiti this year (2014). Participated only in this year's exhibition. It is a really good and nice trade show. I participated for one week and it costs us 1000 Kuwaiti Dinars and even a little more than that. Even though we expected more revenue, it is still a good experience because it ensures the existence of our business among the other businesses. We got back what we paid for but we thought will get more but it is a very good exhibition to have your business there seen and known by almost everyone in Kuwait. (M. Al-Baghli, personal communication, October 20, 2014)

Another trade show that was mentioned by Mona Al-Baghli was Al-Mubarakiya Expo. She said that this trade show is parallel to Proud to Be Kuwaiti in its attempt to encourage Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Other similarities between the two trade shows include they both take place in the month of February which marks the national celebrations period of Kuwait and both of them last for almost one month. However, Al-Mubarakiya Expo trade show is free of charge and does not require any fees for participation. It has a certain registration period in which participants should register to rent ahead of time before the trade show takes place. Al-

Mubarakiya Expo is sponsored by Shaikha Amthal Al-Sabah, who is a female member of the royal family of Kuwait and the sister of the Emir of Kuwait Shaikh Sabah Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This trade show takes place in Souk Al-Mubarakiya which is an outdoor and open market that is located in Kuwait City. Mona participated in Al-Mubarakiya Expo as she says:

> I participated in the first year this trade show started in and the next year I missed the registration time so could not participate in it. Many businesses started participating in it and this trade show became popular so many people know about it now therefore its gets really crowded. The first time I participated only for one week and our chocolate jars got sold out so quickly. Participating in this trade show does not require any fee, it is for free because it is sponsored by the Kuwaiti government and Shaikha Amthal Al-Sabah. You just need to register and the organizers will provide you with a table to place your products on and you start selling. That is way the registration for this trade show ends early because many entrepreneurs want to be part of. It is free and it is located in an excellent place. Next time I hope I do not forget and remember registering for it God willing. (M. Al-Baghli, personal communication, October 20, 2014)

Word-of-mouth marketing and participating in trade shows are marketing types that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs incorporate in their marketing strategies. Kuwaiti women did not include traditional methods of marketing. They talked about the ineffectiveness of such traditional methods and also mentioned why such marketing strategies are not suitable for the types of business they own and run. The other reason why Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs decided not use traditional methods of marketing such as newspapers and televised advertisements is the high cost of those types of marketing. Reasons including the capital, size, and type of the businesses these Kuwaiti women own could have influenced they decision Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs took regarding the marketing strategies, which they consider more appropriate and suitable to use to market their businesses.

The other type utilized by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in their marketing strategies is the use of social media to promote their businesses. This particular type will be fully covered in the next chapter. Chapter 6 will present the findings related to the adoption of social media as a

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marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and how they are using it in their marketing strategies. Also, Chapter 6 will reveal the attributes of social media that appealed particularly to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and will look at the reasons behind why these women entrepreneurs use social media when marketing for their businesses. In addition, the pros and cons that Kuwaiti women perceive of social media when adopted as a marketing tool will be covered in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 – The Adoption of Social Media as a Marketing Tool by Kuwaiti Women

Entrepreneurs

This chapter covers the adoption of social media by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. It looks at the types of social media adopted by Kuwaiti women as a marketing tool. Also, it explains how women entrepreneurs utilize social media to market to their customers. In addition, this chapter lists the attributes of social media that appealed particularly to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and examines if these attributes correlated with their decision of adopting such types of social media. Moreover, it covers the pros and cons Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive of social media when used for marketing.

Types of Social Media Used by Kuwaiti Women

The three types of social media adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs that this study examined were Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. There is a huge variation in the preference of adopting these three types among women entrepreneurs in Kuwait. The findings of this research show that the adopters of Instagram outnumber the Facebook and Twitter adopters. 19 of the Kuwaiti women-owned businesses use Instagram whereas only two use Facebook and another two women businesses utilize Twitter for marketing. Another social media platform found used by Kuwaiti women entrepreneur Farah Alraees, owner of FAR Designs, is Snapchat. The findings of this study regarding the types of social media adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs was contrary to the result reported by the Arab Social Media Report published by the Arab Social Media Influencers Summit (2015). The report's findings showed that WhatsApp is the most used type of social media among users in Kuwait scoring 84% and Facebook came second as the most used type of social media among Kuwaiti users with 75%. However, Instagram came third with only 43%. The current study's results show that almost all Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs use Instagram for marketing reasons. This study also shows that users of other kinds of social media also use Instagram or planning to create one in the near future. For example, Badriya Al-Sultan, owner of food business Samboosa Box, currently uses Facebook but is planning to replace it by Instagram soon.

The finding that the Arab Social Media Report published by the Arab Social Media Influencers Summit (2015) revealed about WhatsApp as the most adopted type of social media was found to be similar to the finding of the current study, which found that all Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed use WhatsApp too. However, this study shows that the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use WhatsApp is different than the way they utilize Instagram. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt Instagram to use as a marketing tool while they use WhatsApp more as a private communicative tool to communicate with their customers.

The findings of the current study is similar to what Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) found about women entrepreneurs in Kuwait and the kinds of social media they use for marketing their businesses. In their study, Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) found that Instagram and WhatsApp were the most used types of social media by women entrepreneurs in Kuwait to use for marketing their businesses. Similarly, this study's findings show that Instagram and WhatsApp are the most adopted social media tools among women entrepreneurs but this study also unveils the differences in how they use these types of social media.

The following table demonstrates the businesses owned by Kuwaiti women and the types of social media used by the owners of those businesses when marketing to their customers. It also includes the social media accounts created by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs for marketing their businesses.

Table 3: Types of Social Media Adopted by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs

No.	Entrepreneur Name	Name of Business	Types of Social Media	Social Media Account
1	Majdah Baqer	Om El7elween	Instagram	om_el7elween
2	Farah Alraees	FAR Designs	Instagram Twitter Snapchat	far_designs
3	Haleemah Ahmad	Qumoosh Couture	Instagram	qumoosh_couture
4	Badriya Al-Sultan	Samboosa Box	Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/pages/ Samboosa-Box-Restaurant
5	Shaikhah Al-Mutairi Anfal Al-Mutairi	Staylek	Instagram Twitter Kuwaiti Women Forums	staylek_
6	Wadha Al-Asfour	Al-Asfour Designer	Instagram	alasfour_designer
7	Wesam Al-Shirazi	Cacaouette	Instagram	cacaouette_kw
8	Aisha Albisher	SC Kitchen	Instagram	sc_kitchen
9	Rawan Al-Duwisan	Yummy Choco	Instagram	yummy_choco_q8
10	Latifah Aljassem Shaikha Al-Amer	Lam Sheen	Instagram	lam_sheen

11	Ameena Al-Qattan	Neon	Instagram	neon_q8
12	Mona Al-Baghli	Heavenly Chocs	Instagram	heavenly_chocs
13	Eman Haider	Tea Party Sweets	Instagram	tea_party_sweets
14	Fay Al-Asousi Dalal Al-Asousi	Casa Spa Modish Channel	Instagram	casa_spa
15	Noriya Al-Mlhami	Om Khaled	Instagram	omkhaled123
16	Eman Al-Wazzan	Eman Sweets	Instagram	eman_sweets2013
17	Bedoor Alwahiab	Casa Sweet	Instagram	casa_sweet
18	Fajer Ahmad	Hair Sketch	Instagram	hair_sketch
19	Haifaa Alyagout	Nutri Juice	Instagram	nutria_juice
20	Aysha Alhouli	Zari International Est.	Instagram Facebook	zari_ https://www.facebook.com/pages/zari-international-est/

Instagram Is the Most Adopted Type of Social Media: Instagram vs. Twitter vs. Facebook

The most noticeable finding that Table 3 reveals is that the majority of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in this study use Instagram as their marketing tool. Instagram was found to be the most popular type of social media adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. This research shows that Instagram has barely any competition from the other types of social media. Almost all of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who were interviewed for this study talked about their adoption of Instagram and the way they integrated it in their marketing strategy. Only a few

others use Facebook or Twitter. For example, Farah Alraees, the owner of FAR Designs, uses

Twitter and Snapchat besides using Instagram but she stated that she uses and relies more on

Instagram when it comes to marketing. Farah says:

> I strongly depend and focus on using Instagram because I show pictures and thank God even though my business is almost two years old, I now have about 20,000 followers on Instagram. My customers are able to see my designs and work on Instagram. There are other types of social media that I use but I do so less frequently such as Twitter and Snapchat. I can show some pictures there but as I said earlier I mainly depend on using Instagram. I rarely use or update my Twitter account and when it comes to Snapchat, it is fairly new and it has been only one week since I started using it and till now we did not see how successful Snapchat is when it is used for marketing a business. (F. Alraees, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

The narrative of Farah Alraees indicates that her use of Instagram as a marketing tool have

helped her a lot in marketing her business. She expressed how she is fond of using Instagram

because it enables her to market through posting pictures about the products she sells. Farah still

talked about using multiple types of social media and how she recently adopted Snapchat

regardless of her reliability on Instagram as a marketing tool. Even though Farah sounded very

confident expressing the importance of using Instagram for marketing her business, she still

considered trying a newer type of social media and testing its suitability to use for marketing.

Since technology and social media are constantly changing and developing, the use or the trial of

newer types of social media seem to be an option that some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs opt

for in an attempt to evaluate which type of them is the best option to concentrating on using for

marketing their business.

Facebook, which is one of the most adopted types of social media among Kuwaitis

according to the Arab Social Media Report (2015) was found to be used only by Two Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs interviewed in this study. Badriya Al-Sultan, who is the owner of

Samboosa Box, and Aysha Alhouli, who is the owner of Zari International Est use Facebook for

marketing reasons. Aysha Alhouli also uses Instagram for her business but she confessed that her

Facebook account is not as active. Aysha stated that Facebook users are not as many as

Instagram users in Kuwait and that Facebook is no longer popular in Kuwait. Along similar

lines, Badriyah talked about how they are planning to stop using their Facebook account because

the popularity of Facebook has been decreasing and that very few use it in Kuwait. Badriyah Al-

Sultan also mentioned that she and her husband and "are in the process of creating an Instagram

account for Samboosa Box." Badriyah also says:

> Even though we have a Facebook account but I honestly do not update it or check it
> myself. It is my husband and his niece who took care of the Facebook account that we are
> no longer updating. I personally do not like Facebook and I prefer using Instagram and
> we will soon have an Instagram account for our business. (B. Al-Sultan, personal
> communication, October 1, 2014)

Both the narratives of Badriya Al-Sultan and Aysha Alholi regarding Facebook popularity in

Kuwait negate what was stated by the Arab Social Media Report's published by the Arab Social

Media Influencers Summit (2015) finding about Facebook popularity in Kuwait. These two

Kuwaiti entrepreneurs probably based their opinion on their personal experiences. In Aysha's

example, she compared between the Facebook and Instagram accounts she created for marketing

her Zari international Est business. Aysha made comparisons regarding the number of followers

she has in both accounts as she stated that she has more followers in Instagram and that is why

she updates it more frequently compared to her Facebook account. Badriya also based her

opinion on a personal level as she confessed that she was not the one handling the marketing of

her business but she expressed that she personally likes using Instagram. Badriya sounded very

enthusiastic talking about incorporating Instagram in the marketing strategies of her Samboosa

Box business. Gauging the popularity of the various types of social media can differ from one

woman entrepreneur to another. The low number of Facebook users among these Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs suggest that they are either unaware of its popularity in Kuwait or that Facebook is not widely used for marketing reasons. Another explanation can suggest that other types of social media such as Instagram has replaced Facebook as a more useful social media tool to use for marketing. Both Badriya and Aysha talked about their experiences of using Facebook while other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs did not consider using Facebook from the first place and used other types of social media.

Twitter is another type of social media that got adopted by a limited number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. When Twitter is being adopted, it is not used solely as a marketing tool. For example, Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi use Twitter for their Staylek business but they also use Instagram when they market to their customers. Anfal says "we still have our Twitter account but we now concentrate more on updating our Instagram account. I barely update our Twitter account." Shaikhah and Anfal talked about how Twitter is mainly and preferably used for discussing politics in Kuwait. They think that Twitter is not as appropriate as Instagram especially when used for marketing reasons. Anfal said that the majority of Twitter users in Kuwait use it as a social platform to discuss what is happening politically in Kuwait. She pointed out that because text dominates the content of Twitter, Instagram becomes the better option for marketing because photos dominate its content.

Almost all of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use Instagram or in the process of creating an Instagram account for their business. The findings show that even if these women entrepreneurs use a different type of social media than Instagram, they will still have an Instagram account created for their business. The way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs discussed their preference of choosing Instagram and favoring it over Facebook and Twitter explains that these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs have their own agenda to how they evaluate the different

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types of social media when deciding which to adopt for marketing their businesses. Their innovation-decision process seem to correlate with factors that they perceive more valuable than others. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs decided to adopt Instagram for marketing because it allows them to post pictures of the products and services they sell. Instagram compared to the other two types of social media has the advantage of having pictures dominating its content. This is a very attractive feature for entrepreneurs because it allows them to showcase and present their products and services. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' evaluation of the various types of social media is determined by the dominating content they get exposed to when using such kind of social media. For example, Shaikhah and Anfal discussed how they noticed that different types of social media are preferably used or commonly adopted for certain reasons. In their example, they talked about how Twitter is commonly used among people in Kuwait to discuss politics and therefore it is not as suitable as Instagram to use for marketing. Also, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs decide on adopting or being more interactive using one particular type of social media due to the number of followers they have in their accounts. The popularity of the types of social media is evaluated by the numbers of followers they have. The more followers they have, the more interactive they become using this particular type of social media and this is what can be explained by Aysha's example.

In this study's findings, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were found similar in their preference of using Instagram when marketing their businesses. This result was not parallel to the statistical finding reported by the Arab Social Media Report published by the Arab Social Media Influencers Summit (2015) which showed that WhatsApp and Facebook outnumber Instagram users in Kuwait. Even though the current study found that WhatsApp was commonly adopted among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, Facebook was only adopted by two Kuwaiti women

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entrepreneurs. Also, this study found that the way Kuwaiti women utilize WhatsApp differs from how they are using Instagram as a marketing tool. The findings of the current study about the most used types of social media were similar to those found by Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) who stated that WhatsApp and Instagram are the most adopted social media tools among women entrepreneurs in Kuwait. The findings of the current study suggest that the most adopted types of social media differ if a certain group of individuals are studied. For this study, women entrepreneurs are the ones being studied and their adoption of certain social media tools to use for marketing is the focus of this study. Therefore, the selection and the adoption process are governed by what these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive as more useful to adopt in order to use for marketing their businesses. Both gender and culture are factors associated with this particular group of entrepreneurs in which understanding their adoption seem to correlate with what they use it for and how they are using it. In Rogers' (2003) definition of diffusion, he identified that "the innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (p. 5). The decision of adopting certain types of social media by women entrepreneurs explains that these women are members who belong to a specific category which influenced their adoption of Instagram. The entrepreneurs studied for this research belong to a specific gender and culture. These factors cannot be ignored in the explanation of why they chose these specific types of social media. For example, some of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs evaluated the use of Instagram based on how they noticed its popularity in Kuwait. If another group of women entrepreneurs who belong to a different culture were interviewed, other findings could have been found. Also, Kuwaiti men entrepreneurs might have other preferences concerning the types of social media they adopt. In other words, the adoption of certain innovations can be determined through a group of individuals who share commonalities

and decide to use these innovations for a particular reason. For this study the commonalities among these Kuwaiti women as entrepreneurs correlated with their preference of using Instagram for marketing their businesses. Observations about how these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use Instagram were noted to examine how they are using Instagram as a marketing tool.

How Social Media Are Being Used as a Marketing Tool: Different Uses of Instagram

Marketing is one key element of the entrepreneurial world. To have individuals know about the business they own and to reach to their customers, women entrepreneurs need to use suitable marketing tools. Farah Alraess, owner of FAR Designs, emphasizes the importance of marketing and more specifically she talks about marketing through the use of social media as she says "I strongly believe that marketing is the most important thing that determines the success of the business. If I want to succeed, I need to market greatly. I extremely depend on social media. I started because of social media and I know that my continuous success is based on having such social media." Even though Farah uses different types of social media as a marketing tool. She uses Instagram more often than using Twitter and Snapchat.

For this study observations were made to track the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use social media. Because Instagram is the type which is used the most among these women, an Instagram account was specifically created by the researcher to help observe the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs market to their customers.

Observations of How Instagram Is Used by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs as a Marketing Tool

A major similarity in the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use Instagram is that they all post pictures of the products and services they are marketing for. Most of these accounts are easy to find and follow as any Instagram user only needs to type the business name in the search box of the Instagram and click on the account of the business and then hit the follow button placed on the right top. Most of the accounts are public except for the Staylek Instagram account, which is a private one. Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi, the owners of Staylek, made their account private so they are the ones who decide on accepting the followers request or rejecting it. Anfal says "we have a private account because we want to protect our designs and we also want to make sure that the followers are women and female customers. We only sell clothes for ladies so we do not want to have men following our account." Staylek account is not only private but one unique thing about it that the pictures they post of the designs are not fully shown because of the same reason and that is protecting the designs from having other untrusted Instagram users steal them.

The Instagram accounts for food businesses owned by Kuwaiti women are similar in their content. Most of them posts pictures of the dishes, desserts, and so on. However, the accounts for fashion businesses differ in how they present their dresses and clothes. For example, Lam Sheen Instagram account shows pictures of the clothes like dresses and tops but they do not show who is wearing them. Latifah and Shaikhah, owners of Lam Sheen are the ones who model for the clothes they sell and their way is to only show the clothes but not show themselves in the pictures. Latifah says "we model for our own business. We wear the clothes and take the photos but we do not want to show our faces in the pictures, the clothes we sell are what matter the most. We want our customers to see our clothes and not us."

However, Wadha Al-Asfour, who is the owner of Al-Asfour Designer, likes to model her own designs while clearly showing that she is the one wearing them. She also shares posts and pictures about her daily activities. Wadha states "I am the one modeling for my own designs and I have my friend who takes pictures of me. I also like to post some pictures about what I do almost every day just to keep in touch with my followers." Ameena Al-Qattan, owner of Neon business which sells veils for ladies follows the same strategy of modeling her own products. Ameena says "I wear the hijabs I make and take pictures of them and then post them on my Instagram account. It is very important to show the customer how the products look like. I am absolutely ok about having my pictures there on my Instagram account."

WhatsApp the Private Communicative Tool

The findings of this study also revealed that WhatsApp is commonly used by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. However, the use of WhatsApp differs from how Instagram is used and why it is used. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use WhatsApp as a private communicative tool. They do not use it for marketing their businesses in which they send photos and videos of their products and services to their customers. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use WhatsApp to communicate privately with their customers. The following are examples illustrating the differences between using Instagram as a marketing tool and using WhatsApp as a private communicative tool.

In the Instagram accounts of the businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, the prices of products and services they post photos for are rarely shown. Most of these women do not include or write the prices of their products. They only post photos of them and write the name of the product or item. Therefore, there are comments written by their customers asking them about how much they cost. But answers for such comments are rarely found. It is because

many of these women entrepreneurs use Instagram only for marketing reasons and not for taking the orders from the customers. Prices and orders are done through the use of WhatsApp, which is an application that can be downloaded in smartphones and enables instant messaging between sender and receiver (O'Hara, Massimi, Harper, Rubens, & Morris, 2014). Unlike Instagram that is used as a marketing tool, WhatsApp is not used for marketing reasons by most of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Customers place their orders or ask questions related to products and service through the WhatsApp. Instagram is the type of social media used to advertise the business but WhatsApp is used to socialize with customers and taking their orders privately. Most of the women entrepreneurs prefer using WhatsApp for communicative reasons because it provides more privacy between the business owner and the customer. For example, Mona Al-Baghli says "we use Instagram just to show what we sell but I do not ever take orders or even answer questions related to the prices of the chocolate jars we sell. I use WhatsApp to take my customers' orders and answer any of those questions because WhatsApp messages are more private and I do not want my customers' orders to be shown publicly."

Nevertheless, Haleemah Ahmad, owner of Qumoosh Couture, says "I take orders from Instagram if my customers place them but these orders are not returnable once they are delivered." Haleemah is the only exception among these women because almost all of the others do not take orders posted on their Instagram accounts but they do so by using either WhatsApp or phone. For example, Eman Al-Wazzan says "I only take orders through WhatsApp or placed over the phone but I do not take any orders written on Instagram." Rawan Al-Duwaisan also does the same thing when it comes to taking her customers' orders as she says "I use Instagram just for showing the tarts and desserts I make but when it comes to ordering, my customers contact me through my WhatsApp number." Similarly Wadha Al-Asfour does not place her

prices on her Instagram account as she says "I do not put prices on my Instagram account, if any of my customers want to know the price of a dress or a top, she can contact me using WhatsApp. Communication and ordering is only done through WhatsApp or over the phone."

All the accounts of women entrepreneurs included their business WhatsApp numbers mostly located in the upper part of their Instagram accounts. The reason for not including their prices on their Instagram accounts is because customers tend to compare between the prices they see on other accounts. Rawan Al-Duwaisan explains "some customers will look at other prices and then start comparing yours with them and they even tell you why it is so pricey and you should sell it for a lower price. That is why it is better not to show the prices on Instagram." On the other hand, Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer like to have their prices visible for their Instagram customers because they think it is better to have their customer know about how much their items are for Latifah says "our customers like that about our Instagram account. Many would tell us that they like the way we present our clothes, because it looks like as if you just entered a store. You can clearly see the dress, its size, and its price. We are not worried about showing our prices because our prices are very reasonable compared to others."

The posts and comments written on these accounts are mainly comments encouraging the business owner and complimenting the work she does. However, there are fewer negative comments that can be found and fewer questions too. Most of these entrepreneurs reply and post comments to their customers but they rarely do so for negative comments. However, Bedoor Alwahiab, owner of Casa Sweet, shares her opinion by saying "I actually do not delete the negative comments. There was one time when I got a negative comment from a woman saying that I use artificial colors in the desserts I make and I actually do not so I replied telling her that and then I found that my customers are the ones defending me and I kept the whole conversation

on Instagram without deleting it. Those who delete the bad comments are afraid that it will affect

their business but I do not think it actually does" Wesam Al-Shirazi also agrees to not omitting

the negative comments as she says "I keep the negative comments since I am not bothered with

them anymore. I concentrate more on the positive ones." Majdah Baqer shares similar opinion as

she thinks that "it is true that there are some negative comments that some writes but why bother

if I am getting more positive and encouraging comments and likes." Farah Alraees also thinks

"since favorable comments outnumber the negative ones why should I delete them."

The above observations gives a broader understanding how these Kuwaiti women

entrepreneurs use social media and more specifically Instagram as a marketing tool. When these

women entrepreneurs were interviewed, a clearer idea of how they are marketing through

Instagram was formed. It is true that all these Kuwaiti women are using the same type of social

media and that is Instagram to market to their customers. However, these women entrepreneurs

differ in the way they are using it. For example, Majdah Baqer tries to be more creative in using

Instagram and she also tries to be more interactive using another app within Instagram called

InstaTrack. Majdah says:

> These days I am using a program within Instagram called InstaTrack that can determine
> who among my followers comment the most and has the maximum number of likes. I use
> it to interact with my customers so every day when I get to know the customers who are
> more active in my account, I give them gifts to encourage them to post more and be more
> interactive. I have a top ten customers and I post and update my Instagram account
> almost every day. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Marketing in Instagram is not exclusive to posting the pictures of the products and services

on the business accounts created Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs themselves. Marketing in

Instagram is done through contacting other famous bloggers or celebrities to have advertisements

posted for these women owned businesses. This type of marketing ensures getting a bigger

number of followers and customers. For example, Wesam Al-Shirazi, owner of Cacaouette,

shares her experience of having one of her advertisement being posted by a popular blogger in

Kuwait as she says:

> There was one famous lady that has an Instagram account in which you can post an advertisement of your business in her account for a certain fee and when she posted mine, I got many followers instantly after she did so, my followers reached 5000 in like one or two days after she did so. (W. Al-Shirazi, personal communication, October 3, 2014)

However, even though this way of marketing does have its advantage of increasing the

number of followers, it has the disadvantage that many of these celebrities and well-known

personalities started charging women entrepreneurs a huge amount of money just for one picture

or post. Bedoor Alwahiab, owner of Casa Sweet, talks about the exaggerative charges that these

celebs started to demand to post an advertisement on their Instagram accounts. Bedoor explains:

> Initially when I contact those popular bloggers, there was no charge required for posting my advertisement but now honestly they charge an insane amount of money. The minimum you can pay is like 300 Kuwaiti Dinars and you this much just for having your advertisement or picture posted there for only 24 hours and that is just for one day. If you want it posted for more days, it will cost more money. Can you imagine, there is one celebrity who charges 1,800 Kuwaiti Dinars for only one post. Honestly, this is something I do not encourage it at all. I would prefer using other different ways of marketing than doing such a thing. (B. Alwahiab, personal communication, October 23, 2014)
> Bedoor adds:
> To be honest, there was one very popular personality that I contacted her telling her that I would like to send you a post and I want you to post on your account and then she chose the time of when to post it and she did not charge me anything that time and God willed she was the reason that I got so many followers after she did so. Even the post she posted for me became one of the most popular and I got so happy. After a while, I contacted her again and I greeted her and told that I have new dishes that I would like to send you pictures of to post them of your account. She replied sure it is not a problem but it is for a charge. One picture for 20 and another in 50 KD so after that incident, I started not liking this type of marketing. (B. Alwahiab, personal communication, October 23, 2014)

Having those famous social media personalities taking charges and fees from these Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs to post their advertisements and pictures on their Instagram accounts

resulted into another form of business, which benefits these social media celebrities. For instance, Bedoor talked about a Kuwaiti company called Ghalia which has contracts with most of these popular Kuwaiti personalities to ensure having them get the fees they charge for each advertisements and picture they post promoting the businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Bedoor sounded disapproving of this new Instagram trend of marketing benefiting celebrities while disadvantaging entrepreneurs. She criticized the way celebrities making entrepreneurs pay more money for posting their advertisements in their accounts. Especially that Bedoor experienced the difference in which she had her advertisement posted by a popular celebrity without any charges earlier and then the same celebrity asked her for a certain fee to post her advertisement after a while. When advertising and marketing through Instagram becomes expensive, it kind of loses one of its advantageous reasons to adopt. Instagram is adopted because it does not require any fee. When celebrities start benefiting from the marketing strategies of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and charge them for posting their advertisements, conflict of interest can happen which may disadvantage both. Bedoor is an example illustrating that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs look for reasonable and effective tools of marketing and that is why they use Instagram. This indicates that marketing in Instagram can be done differently and because Instagram is known in Kuwait to be used as marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, other personalities, groups, and companies are trying to also benefit from this trend.

The above observations focused on illustrating the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use Instagram and how they integrate it in their marketing strategy. To understand why Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs prefer using Instagram as their marketing tool, this study will next examine the multiple attributes of Instagram.

Attributes of Social Media That Appealed Particularly to Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs:

Why Instagram Is the Most Adopted Social Media

There are five different perceived attributes of an innovation that Rogers (2003) explained. The five attributes are relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Relative advantage refers to how an innovation can appear better than the original idea it succeeds. Compatibility shows how an innovation is reliable and compatible with the remaining values, earlier experiences, and essentials of possible adopters. Complexity refers to how an innovation can be difficult to understand and use. Trialability relates to the experimental aspect of an innovation that is done limitedly. Observability refers to how an innovation is noticed by others (Rogers, 2003). The findings of this study show that a number of these attributes exist in the context of adopting social media as a marketing tool by women entrepreneurs in Kuwait. However, the definitions and evaluations of these attributes are discussed differently in the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopting social media as a marketing tool.

Each type of social media has diverse attributes and features that makes it different from the rest. There are particular attributes that Instagram has which made it stand out compared to the other types of social media. These attributes made it more appealing to be adopted and used as a marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. The attributes include Instagram's photo-sharing nature (relative advantage), ease of use (complexity), and popularity (observability).

It is all about the pictures: Photo-sharing nature (Relative advantage)

Rogers (2003, p. 212) said that "the nature of the innovation determines what specific type of relative advantage (such as economic, social, and the like) is important to adopters. When Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were asked about why they chose to adopt Instagram for

marketing, several attributed their choice to its photo sharing nature. Even though Instagram as a social media platform is not originally and specifically designed to be used for marketing reasons, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs prefer using it as a marketing tool due to its photo sharing aspect and that can be assessed as Instagram's relative advantage. Instagram, which is a photo and video sharing application, became the most favorite type of social media used by Kuwait women entrepreneurs because it allows them to post as many pictures of the products and services they market for as they want. Marketing involves seeing what is being marketed to you to purchase and buy. Fajer Ahmad, owner of Hair Sketch beauty salon explained that Instagram's best attribute is that it works as a photo album in which you can post so many pictures and also have its users look at these pictures and come to them whenever they want to look at them again. Unlike Twitter in which text dominates its content, Instagram's content is all about posting pictures and commenting on them. Facebook, on the other hand, has both text and pictures but it is not mainly used to share photos and videos.

Most of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs chose using Instagram as a marketing tool because it can help them market to their customers by posting the photos of their products and services. Wesam Al-Shirazi, owner of Cacaouette, talked about how Instagram's best attribute is sharing and posting the photos of the chocolates she makes as she says:

> When Instagram first started getting popular about three years ago, I started using it to post the pictures of the chocolates I sell. Best thing about Instagram is that you can post pictures. I have a contract with a professional photographer and I post the pictures he takes of my chocolates. I am the one who posts the pictures on my account and I personally manage my account. (W. Al-Shirazi, personal communication, October 3, 2014)

Majdah Baqer, owner of Om El7elween, also chose to use Instagram because of its photo-sharing nature, which enables her customers see the sweets and desserts she makes as she says:

Instagram is the most used because it has pictures and comments. People can easily see the pictures I post of my sweets and desserts I make. I like commenting back and try replying to almost every comment I get from my customer. Photography is the hobby of my son and he is the one who takes the pictures of the desserts and dishes I make. He takes pictures and also filters them and make them look more professional so that I can post on my Instagram. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer, owners of Lam Sheen, explain that marketing for their business requires having their customers to look at the designs and clothes they sell and Instagram enables them to do that because they can post pictures of their designs on their accounts. Shaikha explains:

Instagram is excellent for posting your pictures and that is all what we need. We want our customers to look at the designs we make and then place their orders. Pictures dominate the content of Instagram and that makes it easier for our customers to look at what we want to sell. (S. Al-Amer, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

The narratives of these different Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs Wesam, Majdah, and Shaikha all circulated on highlighting one specific feature of Instagram, which is its photo-sharing feature. Posting photos and videos is what attracted these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to use Instagram as a marketing tool. According to these women entrepreneurs, they need a social media platform that can present and showcase what they sell and therefore Instagram is the most appropriate type because it allows them to do so. Instagram is not only allowing them to post pictures and videos of their products and services but also works like a photo album in which the photos they post can be easily accessed whenever a customer wants to. What matters most to these women entrepreneurs is advertising through photos and videos and marketing their business in a platform providing so. This particular feature is also associated with other factors enabling the adoption of Instagram. The accessibility of using smartphones and the affordability of having them in Kuwait make the use of social media and more particularly Instagram easier and widely common among Kuwaitis in general. Instagram the type of social media which has

photos and videos dominate its content can easily be accessed through phone devices and also through the Web. The easy access and the availability of Instagram in such devices allow women entrepreneurs to manage their account themselves. Moreover, taking photos using smartphones also helped in making the process of clicking and posting photos in Instagram more convenient to these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. There are differences in the quality of pictures these women entrepreneurs post of their products and who clicks the photos. For example, Wesam posts photos of the chocolates she sells taken by professional photographer whereas Majdah posts pictures taken by her son whose photography is his hobby. Other women entrepreneurs such as Latifah and Shaikha prefer taking the photos of their designs themselves and post them in their Instagram account. Regardless of these differences, Instagram is use for marketing by these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs because they can easily manage it themselves. The use of Instagram for marketing the businesses is what made it the most preferred type of social media adopted among these women entrepreneurs. Marketing depends highly on showing visuals of what is being marketed. The display of products and services in a visual treat that is easily accessed by their customers is what distinguished the use of Instagram as a marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Rogers' (2003) description of relative advantage circulated around how a certain innovation is "perceived better than the idea it supersedes" (p. 15). In the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, they highlighted a certain feature of Instagram, which is its photo-sharing nature, and perceived it as the most appealing feature of using Instagram as a marketing tool. Posting photos and sharing videos are features found in other types of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. However, the way Instagram works like a photo album enabling customers to see and revisit the pictures of the products and services whenever they want to is what distinguished Instagram and made it more suitable to use for marketing. To

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explain why Instagram is more adopted among this particular group, it is important to understand the perceptions and needs of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Their perceptions about the types of social media used for marketing found to be similar and associated with their need for an accessible marketing platform, which permits marketing their businesses through visuals and posting photos of what they are selling. This is why Shaikha described Instagram as an excellent tool to use for marketing reasons compared to the other social media. However, it is noteworthy to mention that the possibility of having another type of social media replacing Instagram as a marketing tool is a very possible scenario especially if future types of social media would improve the specific feature of their photo-sharing nature.

Ease of Use (Complexity)

Another perceived attribute that was pointed out from several Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs concerning the use of Instagram is that it is easy to use. This particular attribute falls under what Rogers described as the complexity perceived attribute of an innovation. According to Rogers (2003), any innovation can be categorized based on where it falls in the complexity and simplicity spectrum. Many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs said that Instagram is not a complicated type of social media that requires a lot of effort and time to know how to use it. Even if initially some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were not the ones updating and posting the pictures on their Instagram accounts, later they learned how to do so and it was easy for them to use. For example, Majdah Baqer, owner of Om El7eween business, elaborates:

> I do not know how to use social media so I do not have any accounts in Twitter or Facebook, I am kind of a computer illiterate. But I only have an Instagram account and in the initial days, my daughter and my sister were the ones who post pictures for me in my Instagram account. I have limited skills using my phone, iPhone, and WhatsApp, just like that. I only use Instagram, I tried using Twitter but did know how and then I decided not to. Now, I am the one who posts pictures and updates my Instagram because it is easy to use. Instagram is easier to use compared to the other kinds of social media. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

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Likewise, Eman Al-Wazzan, owner of Eman Sweets, had her Instagram created by her daughters but now she is the one who manages her Instagram and she is the one who updates it regularly. Eman also highlighted that Instagram is easy to use and that that is why she favored using it compared to other types of social media. Eman says:

> My daughters were the ones who created the Instagram account for my business and then later I learned how to use it and started taking pictures and posting them myself. I know how to use it and I like using it because it is easy to do so. I take the pictures I post using my phone camera and even though I was told that it is better to take pictures using a professional camera, I kept taking my photos using my phone camera because I felt it is better and I get clearer photos. Earlier I used to call my daughters to take pictures for me and post them but now I do it myself. (E. Al-Wazzan, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Both Majdah and Eman talked about their experiences using Instagram and how other family members such as their daughters helped them learn how to take photos and post them on their Instagram accounts. These women entrepreneurs' need to use Instagram for marketing their businesses can explain why these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs made the effort to learn using this specific type of social media.. In Majdah's narrative, she compared between Instagram and other types of social media explaining that she found Instagram easier to learn than Twitter. These Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs talked about how easy to use Instagram and manage their account themselves. The context of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and how they use Instagram as a marketing tool shows that there are four things these women learn when they decide to adopt Instagram for marketing reasons. The four things are creating an Instagram account, taking photos using their smartphones, posting the pictures they took of their products and services, and managing their Instagram account while interacting with their customers. Both Majdah and Eman said that their daughters were the ones helping them create their Instagram accounts and this suggests that this could be the most difficult step when adopting Instagram.

They both also shared that learning to use Instagram is easy enough to let them manage their

accounts themselves without the help of other. The ease of use can be identified as the way these

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs themselves manage their Instagram accounts referring to how

easy it is to click photos, post pictures, and reply to their customers' comments.

Popularity (Observability)

The popularity of Instagram was one attribute that influenced the decisions of a number of

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs of adopting it and that is what Rogers (2003) termed as

observability. Because Instagram is widely observable and very commonly used by Kuwaitis in

general and more specifically by women entrepreneurs, other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs

decided on using Instagram for marketing reasons. For example, Bedoor Alwahiab, owner of

Casa Sweets, explained that her decision of incorporating Instagram in her marketing strategy

was based on its popularity as she elaborates:

> Honestly I started using Instagram because it the most popular till now. Everything now
> is in Instagram. People in Kuwait only use Instagram. It is very popular and I started my
> Instagram account in 2012. I already had a private Instagram account but I created a
> different one for my business. (B. Alwahiab, personal communication, October 23, 2014)

Similarly to Bedoor, Rawan A-Duwisan is using Instagram just because it is the most

popular type of social media used as a marketing tool as she says:

> Nobody reads newspapers nowadays so there is no point of putting an advertisement in
> the newspapers. Instagram is the only thing that everyone checks and in interested in
> looking at. Now the most popular and widespread is Instagram and that is why I am using
> it for my business. (R. Al-Duwisan, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

In addition, Haifaa Alyagout also uses Instagram due to its popularity among Kuwaitis as

she points out:

> Most Kuwaitis use Instagram and our customers are very interactive with us and
> communicate with us a lot on Instagram. It is the most popular and mostly used type of
> social media in Kuwait. Twitter comes next but Kuwaiti people stopped using Facebook

way back and it is no longer popular. (H. Alyagout, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

Fajer Ahmed, owner of Hair Sketch also said the same thing that Instagram popularity is the reason behind choosing it and using it as a marketing tool as she says:

> There is no doubt that Instagram is top one in Kuwait now and it is very popular among all the Gulf countries. I chose using Instagram because it is the most popular especially when it comes to marketing. (F. Ahmad, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

These Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs narrated their opinions so confidently when they were speaking about Instagram's popularity in Kuwait. Most of them attributed their adoption of Instagram as a marketing tool because they perceived it as the most used type of social media for marketing especially compared to others such as Facebook. This particular attribute the popularity of Instagram that these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed in the current study highlighted found to be contradictory to what the available statistics reported about the most used types of social media in Kuwait. Both WhatsApp and Facebook users were found to outnumber Instagram users in Kuwait (Arab Social Media Report, 2015). This study's findings showed that WhatsApp is commonly adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and almost all of them use it. However, it was found that WhatsApp is used more as a private communicative tool just to interact with their customers. The narratives of most of these women entrepreneurs suggest that Facebook was popular earlier in Kuwait but recently it was replaced by Instagram. It is important to note and explain that these Kuwaiti women belong to the entrepreneurial category which may have influenced their perceptions of what is most popular among the types of social media to use specifically for marketing. Their adoption of certain types of social media such as Instagram associates with their personal observations of what is most used in their field. None of the narratives of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs mentioned statistics reporting the most used types of social media in Kuwait. Instead these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs based their

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opinions and perceptions that Instagram is the most popular in Kuwait on their personal observations. This study's finding about the popularity of Instagram perceived by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs is similar to what Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) found in their study about the most used social media tools by women entrepreneurs in Kuwait. Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) reported that Instagram is widely used for marketing reasons among women entrepreneurs in Kuwait. To further understand this finding it is important to look at how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs observed and based their perceptions about the popularity of Instagram. There are two ways these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs made such observations. A number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs based their observations that Instagram is the most adopted because they are observing other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs using it to market their businesses. For example, Bedoor's narrative shows that she decided to use Instagram as a marketing tool after seeing other women entrepreneurs using it for that particular reason. Bedoor pointed out that she first created her personal account in Instagram but later chose to create another Instagram account used specifically for marketing her business.

On the other hand, other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs based their perceptions about Instagram's popularity on the number of followers they have in their Instagram accounts and how interactive their followers are. In Haifaa's example, she attributed her decision to adopt Instagram for marketing her business to the number and interactivity of her followers on Instagram. Haifaa's narrative included a ranking for the types of social media in which she placed Instagram first. Haifaa's perception also included a comment implying that Facebook is no longer a popular social media tool used in Kuwait. Haifaa's perceptions were based on her own personal observations of what is popular among Kuwaitis and not based on statistical facts.

Rogers' (2003) definition of observability of an innovation was limited to how the results of an innovation can been seen by others. Even if this is still applicable in the context of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who adopted Instagram as a marketing tool because they observed its results with other women entrepreneurs using it, there are other women entrepreneurs who based their perceptions on their own experiences. In the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopting social media, the definition of observability changes to seeing the results of an innovation such as Instagram through the number of followers and the degree to which these users are interactive using such type of social media.

This study's findings shows that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopted Instagram and incorporated it in their marketing strategies because of three attributes. Instagram's photo-sharing nature (relative advantage), ease of use (complexity), and popularity (observability) are the attributes that influenced the adoption decision of Instagram by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. However, these three attributes were defined according to the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their adoption of social media. In the age of social media and its developments, the definitions of such attributes were altered due to the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceived Instagram as the most adopted social media tool used for marketing. Instagram plays a major role in how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs market to their customers but each marketing tool has its pros and cons and Instagram is no exception.

Pros and Cons of Social Media (Instagram) Perceived by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs identified a number of pros and cons concerning social media marketing and particularly using Instagram as a marketing tool. Instagram is the most used type of social media that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs favorably chose to use when it comes to marketing their businesses. Some of the attributes of Instagram is the reason behind making it

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topping the other types of social media. Instagram's specialty in posting and showing pictures is

the most common advantage that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive. This study's findings

show that the pros of using Instagram as a marketing tool include Instagram is like a photo

album, it enlarges the circle of customers, it is widely used, and it is suitable for smaller

businesses. On the other hand, this study also lists several cons that Kuwaiti women

entrepreneurs perceived of using Instagram – products may not be what they seem, the business

owners have to deal with rude and discouraging comments. The women entrepreneurs also worry

about providing unique content. They worry that their accounts will be stolen or lost and their

products' photos may be copied. They also wonder how long Instagram will be the preferred

social media.

Pros of using Instagram as a marketing tool

Instagram is like a photo album

Fajer Ahmad, the owner of Hair Sketch salon, pointed out that the way Instagram functions

as a photo and video sharing social media platform is the most notable pro of using it for

marketing reasons as she says:

> I think that Instagram's most important advantage is that it works like a photo album.
> You can present your work through posting different pictures. When comparing
> Instagram to newspapers and magazines, it is hard to keep them but Instagram has all the
> pictures. Customers can easily see the photos and now you can also posts video too so
> customers can see your work clearly. (F. Ahmad, personal communication, October 26,
> 2014)

Additionally, Haleemah Ahmad, owner of Qumoosh Couture, also highlighted that having

the photos she post on Instagram permanently was the most appealing advantage that she

perceives of Instagram as she says:

> I started using Instagram about two years ago and I use it to post pictures of my new
> collections. It is a good way to post pictures and the pictures remain there for so long so

my customers can look at them whenever they want. (H. Ahmad, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

It enlarges the circle of customers

Another pro that Majdah Baqer perceived about Instagram is its ability in enlarging the number of her customers. Majdah finds Instagram very helpful in expanding her market beyond her family and friends circle as she says:

When I first started using Instagram, my followers were mostly from my family and friends and then I got more followers because my friends and sisters have told their other friends about my business. Then I got more and more customers and my followers have been increasing ever since. Now I take orders from many customers who are not part of my family or friends circle. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Similarly, Haleemah Ahmad, owner of Qumoosh Couture, highlighted that Instagram helps in increasing the number of her customers compared to other types of social media such as Facebook, which keeps her connected only with her family, friends, and individuals that she already knows. Haleemah explains:

When you compare Instagram to Facebook you can see that Instagram is way better when used for marketing because Facebook is more about the people I already know. I never see messages from people I do not already know or I do not add people I do not know whereas Instagram is an account that you have but does not really require your followers to know you personally. Plus you do not need to share your personal information with your customers. You can focus it on just promoting your business. Everything has its good and bad but I think Instagram has more pros because it can get me more followers than any other type of social media. Instagram did enlarge the circle of my customers because other people than the ones I knew look at my items and then I can have them sold easily. Instagram is a really good tool for marketing. (H. Ahmad, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

It is widely used: Everyone uses Instagram

Another advantage that Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer observed about Instagram that it is widely spread and used by almost everyone in Kuwait. Hence, this makes it easier to use as a marketing tool because it helps in reaching out to an inclusive market as Latifah says:

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The best thing about Instagram that everyone uses. Everyone in Kuwait, young, old, women, and men all have Instagram accounts and use Instagram. Instagram is the best when it comes to marketing because it is all about Instagram now. You can reach out to almost everyone. (L. Aljassem, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Moreover, Aisha Albisher, owner of food business SC Kitchen, talked about how Instagram is used by the majority of people in Kuwait and how this is advantageous because it helps in marketing to more customers, Aisha says:

Instagram is the most widespread type of social media in Kuwait. Everyone knows about Instagram in Kuwaiti and they all know how to use it. Instagram is a very important medium to publicize and market for businesses in Kuwait. For promoting all kinds of businesses and all products, the most important thing is Instagram. It is helping us with lots of things. Almost everyone in Kuwait uses Instagram and many women entrepreneurs are using Instagram for marketing. (A. Albisher, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

It is suitable for smaller businesses

Majdah Baqer, owner of Om El7eween, stated that Instagram has the advantage of being the most appropriate marketing tool that she can use for the size of business she owns. She elaborates:

Instagram is most suitable tool of marketing for the size of business I own because I do not want to expand more, I mean I am the only one doing and running my business so I do not have anyone helping me so if my business expands and I get more orders and phone calls, I will not be able to cover all of them. For example, there was one customer who messaged me telling that she wanted to remove my number from her WhatsApp contacts list because she placed an order so many times and I did not respond back to her. I felt so bad because I could not take her order because of having too many orders. That is why I am happy using only Instagram for now. It is the best way of marketing for my business. I only use Instagram. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Bedoor Alwahiab, owner of Casa Sweet, is another entrepreneur who thinks that the pro of using Instagram is its suitability for marketing the size of business she owns. Bedoor shares:

I am still the one handling almost all aspects of my business and Instagram is very suitable as a marketing tool not only because I can personally moderate and use it but also because for the size of business I own, Instagram is very appropriate. (B. Alwahiab, personal communication, October 23, 2014)

The list of pros of using Instagram as a marketing tool that was given by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs overlaps with the attributes these women entrepreneurs associated to why they adopted Instagram for marketing. The narratives of these women entrepreneurs explaining the advantageous feature of using Instagram as a photo album is similar to the attribute of Instagram's photo-sharing nature. The continuous mentioning of this specific feature of Instagram implies that it is the most appealing feature that most of these Kuwaiti women got attracted to. Both Fajer and Haleemah expressed that they like using Instagram because it is the type of social media that provides their customers with the maximum number of photos displaying their products and services. They talked about the advantage of not only posting photos but also the ease of access to such photos. Both of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs like this feature because it allows their customers to look at the pictures women entrepreneurs post of their products multiple times and whenever they want to. This particular feature of Instagram distinguishes from other types of social media and makes it the most favorite among women entrepreneurs. The other advantage of using Instagram was its usefulness to enlarge the circle of customers beyond family members and close friends. Majdah's narrative illustrates how Instagram helped expand her business and her circle of customers by comparing the type of customers she initially interacted with and the more recent ones, who are no longer limited to her family and friends circle. On the other hand, Haleemah's narrative includes a detailed comparison between Instagram and Facebook justifying that Instagram is better to use for marketing. In Haleemah's opinion, Facebook is not suitable to use as a marketing tool because she personally uses it for personal reasons and to communicate with her family, friends, and individuals she already knows. Haleemah thinks that Instagram is a more appropriate social

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media platform to use for marketing because she does feel the need to share personal information and can strictly be used for marketing her business.

Instagram is widely spread among people in Kuwait is another pro that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs highlighted and it is like reframing the attribute of the popularity of Instagram. Most of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs talked about their own observations regarding how popular Instagram is in Kuwait especially used for marketing. Both Latifah and Aisha talked about Instagram's huge popularity in Kuwait as they based their opinions on their personal observations. They talked about how Instagram is widely used for marketing reasons in Kuwait. Aisha's narrative included overgeneralizations about the use of Instagram in Kuwait but she also specifically pointed out that Instagram is highly adopted among Kuwait women entrepreneurs. As noted previously such comments made by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed for this study concerning the popularity of Instagram are based on these women entrepreneurs' own observations. Therefore, the popularity of other types of social media in Kuwait could differ when examined through a different context that is not related to women entrepreneurship and their adoption of social media for marketing.

The other advantage of using Instagram as a marketing tool that a number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs emphasized associates with the type of businesses these women entrepreneurs own. The use of Instagram to market small-sized businesses is suitable because most of these women entrepreneurs handle and moderate all aspects of their businesses themselves. Majdah's narrative explains the suitability of using only Instagram to market her business because she owns a fairly small business which she manages all its orders. Majdah expressed her concern and how bad she felt when she lost a customer just because she was not able to take her orders due to having so many orders. She explained that it would be difficult to

manage a large number of customers and marketing through other types of social media. Also, Bedoor found Instagram to be very suitable to use to market her small-sized business.

The pros Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceived of using Instagram as a marketing tool explain why they chose to adopt this particular type of social media. Comparisons with other types of social media such as Facebook were made by these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to highlight why Instagram is more diffused among these women and why it is more suitable to use for marketing reasons. In the following section, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs list the cons of using Instagram for marketing their businesses.

Cons of using Instagram as a marketing tool

Even though Instagram has pros which influenced Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to adopt and use it as their marketing tool, it has other cons that are sometimes an avoidable. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs discussed the pros involving their use of Instagram for marketing uses and here is the list of Instagram's cons perceived by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs:

Products may not be what they seem

Even though Instagram's strongest feature of allowing women entrepreneurs to post pictures of their products, this can also work as a con when their customers start complaining that what they see on their Instagram account is not close to what they get when they buy from them. Haleemah Ahmad, owner of Qumoosh, explains:

> The disadvantage of Instagram that sometimes you get complaints from customers saying that what we see on your Instagram account is not what we get when we order from you. Some will say that the material they wanted or even the style is not similar to what they actually saw on Instagram. (H. Ahmad, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

Rawan Al-Duwisan, owner of Yummy Choco, discussed the same issue with posting pictures of the desserts and tarts she makes on her Instagram account as she says:

Some customers may get attracted to what they see in the pictures posted on Instagram but when they get the order, they do not like the taste of what I make. So they will start complaining. (R. Al-Duwisan, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Business owners have to deal with rude and discouraging comments

Instagram is a public platform in which anyone can create an account in and then start following its other users. It is hard to have control over who becomes the follower of your account. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive that as disadvantage because this allows discouraging followers and commentators to access their account and thus they would get exposed to reading rude and unwanted comments. Majdah explains:

Some people just like to drag you down by saying and posting negative comments, their intention is not to look at what you sell but they just want to comment negatively and discourage you. (M. Baqer, personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Rawan Al-Duwisan shares the same opinion that some users use Instagram just to write negatively and give rude comments, Rawan says:

When using Instagram you should prepare yourself and expect that you will deal with different types of people. Some of them are not very well behaved and are rude. They write bad comments and just want to find anything to criticize. (R. Al-Duwisan, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Fajer Ahmad also faced the same issue with some Instagram users as she shares her experience by saying:

Even though I do not delete the negative comments but sometimes when I get a really rude comment that is aimed to criticize me personally and not my work, I do not only delete the comment but I also block the commentator. Such rude comments are not constructive criticism which I am definitely okay with, these comments are written to discourage you and put you down. (F. Ahmad, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

Women entrepreneurs worry about providing unique content

Wadha Al-Asfour, owner of Al-Asfour Designer, finds it hard to be distinguished among the

abundance of Instagram businesses. Wadha herself believes that every entrepreneur and her

business is different in the way it is being presented but she talked about how using Instagram

makes them all look kind of the same. Wadha expresses:

> The disadvantage of Instagram that it makes it hard for you to be unique. As soon as you
> post something, you will see comments saying that there is another one who did the same
> thing so there is nothing special about it. However, I feel the customers should have their
> choice and try to see the quality, the price, or the material and then decide because even
> though it is hard to get distinguished, I still believe that each one of us is different. (W.
> Al-Asfour, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer, owners of fashion business Lam Sheen, face the

same issue when posting their designs. They expressed their distress when they post new designs

and later see others copying what they did. Shaikha shares:

> One major disadvantage of using Instagram is the struggle to be different and make
> something exceptional. Many out there who lack creativity will try to copy what we do,
> be it our fashion designs or even the way we present our clothes in pictures. Some even
> tried to copy our business name. This is such a negative thing about Instagram. (S. Al-
> Amer, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Women entrepreneurs worry that their accounts will get lost or stolen

Rawan Al-Duwisan, owner of Yummy Choco, shared her experience of having her first

Instagram account stolen. Rawan initially had a business called Sweet Factory but after losing its

Instagram account, she changed the name of her business to Yummy Choco. Rawan elaborates:

> The worst thing about using Instagram is the huge possibility of having your account get
> stolen. I personally had to deal with such problem because my first Instagram account got
> stolen and I lost so many of my followers and customers. I went through the hustle of
> creating a new account and starting all over again. I even had to change the name of my
> business. (R. Al-Duwisan, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi, owners of fashion business Staylek, talked about creating several Instagram accounts for their business because their previous accounts were either lost or stolen. Shaikhah says:

> I created a number of Instagram accounts for our business. I do not know why for some reason when I tried to log on to it, I was not able to do so. This happened multiple of times which is quite irritating and that is why I think this is one of the cons concerning the use Instagram. (S. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Women entrepreneurs worry that their photos may be copied: No copyrights for pictures

Wesam Al-Shirazi, owner of Cacaouette, identified a major issue of using Instagram and that is having no copyrights for the pictures these women entrepreneurs post for their businesses and products. Wesam explained that there is no law in Kuwaiti which protects the content they post on their Instagram accounts as she explains:

> One of the strongest cons of using Instagram is that the pictures you post are not copyrighted. You do not have full rights to protect your photos. Therefore, this makes it so easy to have other steal the pictures you take and post and claim that they are theirs. In Kuwait, there is no law that protects your content or the pictures you post when using Instagram. (W. Al-Shirazi, personal communication, October 3, 2014)

Likewise, Bedoor Alwahiab, who owns the food business Casa Sweet, feels that one of the disadvantages of using Instagram is the difficulty of protecting the pictures she posts of the tarts and desserts she makes. Bedoor shares:

> Once you post a picture on Instagram, you kind of lose the ownership of it because it becomes publicly available. There is no law or copyright restrictions that are followed in Kuwait. That is bad because the pictures we post on Instagram can be easily copied and stolen without being credited to its original source. (B. Alwahiab, personal communication, October 23, 2014)

Women entrepreneurs wonder how long Instagram will be the preferred social media

The last con is more like a concern that many of these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs have regarding the use of Instagram for marketing their business. These women entrepreneurs talked

about the popularity of Instagram and some of them decided to adopt and use Instagram due to

its huge popularity. However, the concern revolves around what if Instagram does not continue

to be as popular as it is nowadays. Social media is rapidly changing and every now and then, one

new type accelerates and becomes the most popular among them. Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha

Al-Amer expressed their concern about the success of Instagram and how long it will last.

Shaikha says:

> To be honest we are quite worried that Instagram might fade one day. We two always ask
> each other what will happen to our Lam Sheen business if God forbids Instagram does
> not continue with its huge popularity. What if all of a sudden Kuwaiti people not be so
> fascinated with Instagram. What will happen? Will Instagram fade someday and what
> should we do if that ever happens. (S. Al-Amer, personal communication, October 19,
> 2014)

On the other hand, some other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs believe that eventually

Instagram will fade and that other types of social media will prevail sooner or later. For example,

Aysha Alhouli says:

> I am positive that some other type of social media will take the place of Instagram and it
> will become more popular. It happened with the previous social media such as Facebook
> and Twitter so why not with Instagram. (A. Alhouli, personal communication, October
> 26, 2014)

Fajer Ahmad also agreed that there is a huge possibility that Instagram might be replaced

one day with another type of social media as she says:

> Why not? Instagram might fade and some other social media become the most favorable
> and used one. Anything can happen but I think that the next type of social media should
> be better than Instagram and has more features so because if it does not, Kuwaitis will
> still be using Instagram or at least try the new one and then get back to using Instagram.
> (F. Ahmad, personal communication, October 26, 2014)

In the age of social media, issues such as dealing with rude comments, stolen accounts,

privacy, copyrights issues, and others are inventible. The use of Instagram is not an exception

regardless of what it is used for. The list of cons Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs struggle with

when using Instagram as a marketing tool included products may not be what they seem. This particular disadvantage seems to disfavor Instagram's best feature of displaying photos of the products and services these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs market. Complaints about not getting and receiving what the customers expected to get from the photos they see in the Instagram accounts of women entrepreneurs is what Haleemah and Rawan experienced with some of their customers. They both talked about how customers have certain expectations of their products based on what they saw in the pictures. If these expectations are not successfully met, customers get disappointed because they start comparing what they saw on Instagram to what they actually got. This can disadvantage the business because photos can be so attractive to result into placing orders by customers but somehow has a negative effect because the products may not be what they seem like in the photos. Dealing with rude and discouraging comments is one con that is not limited to using Instagram, it can be found when using any type of social media. Social media is a public platform allowing everyone to write what they want without restrictions thus dealing with rude and discouraging comments is one issue Majdah, Rawan, and Fajer discussed how they deal with it. For example, Fajer said that she does not like reading comments criticizing her personally and not professionally. Fajer clarified that she usually tend not to delete bad comments unless they get too rude and personal which then makes her decide to delete the comment and block who wrote it too. Criticism about not providing something unique is another disadvantage that a number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs discussed. Shaikha's narrative shows that unique content gets threatened by individuals who prefer copying than being creative and she sounded agitated expressing how she finds this as a disadvantage using Instagram because it allows other to copy what others have created. Wadha also sounded frustrated when she talked about how some Instagram users criticize her work and describe it as not unique.

However, Wadha believes that each entrepreneur remains different and each business is unique regardless of the similarities and it is the customers' choice to decide which to buy from.

Lost and stolen accounts and no copyrights for the pictures they post are other disadvantages Kuwaiti women face when using Instagram for marketing. Rawan narrated her unfortunate experience of having her Instagram account get stolen. This has hugely disadvantaged her business as she lost her previous followers. Rawan sounded very disturbed talking about how this has affected her business negatively in which she had to change the name of her business and begin all over again. This is a huge threat concerning women entrepreneurs using Instagram for marketing reasons. If their accounts get stolen or lost, it means starting from the beginning which requires so much effort reestablishing the business they own. There are no secure ways to protect their Instagram accounts assuring their ownership. The ownership and copyrights of the photos these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs post of their products and services also face the same problem in which it is difficult for these women entrepreneurs to protect them from getting copied by others. For example, Bedoor sounded very concerned talking about how she loses the copyrights of her photos as soon as she posts them on the Instagram account of her business. She was displeased with the fact that there are no laws or restrictions in Kuwait protecting the copyrights and ownership of what women entrepreneurs post on their Instagram accounts. Wesam also sounded annoyed and unhappy with having no copyright law protecting the ownership of photos posted of her business. The absence of such laws endangers the content of these businesses whose owners depend on Instagram to market for their customers. It becomes difficult to know who the original photos belong to and who post it them first. This advantage is not limited to using Instagram in Kuwait as all the content posted on other types of social media are not copyrighted either. The risky side that these women entrepreneurs worry about is that

they are using Instagram for marketing their businesses. A business requires having a name, logo, layout, and photos of products and services of the business. Without the existence of copyright law when using social media in Kuwait, all these business related aspects are at risk of being copied and stolen.

Will Instagram fade? Will Instagram be replaced by another type of social media? These are some questions concerning these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs using Instagram for marketing their businesses. The possibility of having a newer type of social media replacing Instagram and becoming the most adopted one by women entrepreneurs in Kuwait is huge. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who has been owning their business for so long seem more confident about the probability of replacing Instagram for a newer social media type. For example, both Aysha and Fajer spoke assertively about how a newer type of social media will replace Instagram in future. Aysha based her opinion on previous experiences using other types of social media. Aysha pointed out that what happened with Facebook and Twitter, which are no longer the most preferred social media tools to use for marketing, will also happen to Instagram. Fajer shares the same opinion about Instagram longevity to use as a marketing tool. However, Fajer with the opinion that the newer type of social media that would replace Instagram should be a much better tool which includes advanced and better features enabling it to be adopted as a marketing tool.

Other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs such as Latifah and Shaikha sounded very concerned about how long Instagram will remain popular and the most preferred type of social media. Shaikha expressed in an anxious tone that she and her business partner Latifah worry and ask each other questions about what will happen to their business if Instagram ever fades. Latifah and Shaikha sounded more concerned about not using Instagram because their business Lam Sheen started when Instagram was getting popular in Kuwait. The synchronization of the timing

of initiating their business and Instagram gaining popularity in Kuwait and depending only on using Instagram for marketing their business are the reasons why they both feel so insecure of such possibility. Whether Instagram remains popular for a long time or gets replaced by another type of social media, these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs should adopt more than one type of social media. The dependency on using one type of social media might influence the business negatively if it get replaced and another type of social media takes over.

After unveiling the overall findings involving social media adoption and more specifically Instagram, the next chapter of findings will focus on presenting four cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who adopted social media and use it for marketing reasons. Chapter 7 will cover the experiences of four different Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and detail their journeys while mainly focusing on how these women are adopting and applying social media in their marketing strategies.

Chapter 7 – Four Cases of Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs Adopting Social Media

This chapter looks at four different Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopting social media. These four cases provide better understanding of how and why social media are adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs.

The four cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who own different types of entrepreneurial businesses were chosen to help provide findings about how social media are adopted and used as a marketing tool. The author of this study went to the business locations of these women entrepreneurs whether it was run in a store or from home. One full day was spent with each one of these four cases and in-depth interviews were done with them.

Case 1: Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi

- Business owners of: Staylek
- Type of business: Fashion
- Social media adopted: Instagram and Twitter

The Story of Staylek Business:

How did it all start? Whose idea was to own a business? Who is funding it?

Staylek is a fashion business in which ladies couture and soiree dresses are tailored and sold. The target market that Shaikhah and Anfal market to is Kuwaiti women who are interested in buying dresses for parties and special occasions. They only target women so they do not have male customers. This business is a partnership between Shaikhah Al-Mutairi and Anfal Al-Mutairi. Anfal is the daughter of Shaikhah, who is a 20-year-old college student. Shaikhah started her business in 2005 and Anfal joined her mother in the year 2009. Staylek as a home business actually started earlier than that when the mother of Shaikhah encouraged her to start her own business. Anfal says:

It all started with my mother. She was the one who designs and tailors our own clothes. Later, she started her own business and got popular then I joined her. It was in 2009 when I started working with my mom and joined her business. This business is only owned by my mother and I and no one else is involved because we both are similar in our hobby and share the same interests. When Staylek first started it was my mother's project and she started it as a hobby and my grandmother is the one who encouraged her the most and then my mother started having her business. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Shaikhah is the one who is funding their business and the finances of the business are all coming from personal funds. Anfal is still studying and therefore Shaikhah is the one taking care of the finance matters of Staylek business.

When Shaikhah and Anfal were first contacted to do an in-depth interview, they both were very helpful and welcoming and asked to have the interview at their Staylek showroom in Mubarak Al-Kabeer area. Shaikhah and Anfal used their home basement as their Staylek showroom and therefore their business is a home-based business. Staylek showroom is in Mubarak Al-Kabeer area, which is far from Kuwaiti City, the capital of Kuwait. The Staylek showroom, which is located in the basement of Shaikhah's and Anfal's house, is designed and decorated as a fashion store. Upon entering, customers see the different dresses for sale worn by manikins. They also can see catalogues placed on a hosting table. There is a desk Shaikhah or Anfal uses when customers pay for the dresses they buy from their Staylek store.

Visitors and buyers cannot enter the Staylek showroom unless they get a permission from either Shaikhah or Anfal. The Staylek showroom door remains locked until the customer or buyer contact them to have it opened. Therefore, Staylek showroom is different than an actual store where buyers and customers can enter whenever they want during working hours. Anfal says:

We keep the door locked due to some previous incidents in which some of our dresses got stolen by some pretended buyers. My mom and I do not happen to be home all the time so if a customer comes to see and check our dresses or our new collections, we keep

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the keys with our maid and let her open Staylek showroom for our customers or we schedule certain appointments. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

What were the obstacles?

Shaikhah and Anfal pointed that one major obstacle they faced is having their designs getting stolen. Anfal talked about incidents in which some would come pretend that they will buy something and instead, they just come to copy the design of the dress she or her mother designed. The issue of protecting the designs they make is one major one that Shaikhah and Anfal face not only when some fraud buyers visit the Staylek showroom but also when they post these designs on their social media accounts. Anfal talked about the strategy they used in order to limit this problem to happen. Anfal explains:

> We mostly show parts of the dress or design we post in our Instagram account to prevent some viewers to steal and copy our designs. We even kept our Instagram account private so that only customers we approve of adding will be able to view our dresses and designs. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Marketing Strategies: How are social media being used as a marketing tool?

When Anfal was asked about the different marketing strategies they use to reach and market to their customers. She pointed out that they use different types when marketing their Staylek business. She says:

> We first started by joining Kuwaiti Women Forum, which was very popular at that time. We used to post pictures of our dresses and designs and since this forum was targeting Kuwaiti women, it was a really good way of marketing. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Anfal mentioned that posting in that forum was free initially, it was only when this forum got so popular and its creator and owner noticed that many Kuwaiti women use it as a platform to market for their businesses, she decided to charge them for a 30 Kuwaiti Dinars fee (99 US Dollars) whenever they want to use it for marketing reasons. Anfal explains:

Joining and posting in Kuwaiti Women Forum require a certain fee now that we still pay in order to have the pictures of our fashion designs posted in the forum. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

The marketing strategies used by Shaikhah and Anfal involve the adoption and use of social media. The types of social media they use include Twitter and Instagram. Anfal elaborates:

We started using Twitter in 2009 when I first joined my mother. I was the one who created the account and I am the one who updates it. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

When Anfal was asked why they adopted Instagram and integrated it in their marketing strategy, she replied:

We started adopting Instagram when its mania started like about two years ago. That was back I guess in 2012. I created our Instagram account to cope with what is new as many Kuwaitis started having Instagram accounts. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Instagram's huge popularity in Kuwait was one of the main reasons Shaikhah and Anfal use it as a marketing tool for their Staylek business. They post advertisements and announcements about their new collections in their Instagram account. They post pictures of their designs but they mostly show parts of the dress and design and very few pictures show the entire dress. Four different accounts were created for Staylek because Anfal and Shaikhah lost their previous phones, which had their passwords of their accounts. Anfal is not only the one who created the Staylek Instagram account but she is also the one who takes the pictures of their dresses, which get worn by models they hire when doing their special photo-shoots of their dress collections. Anfal says:

I am the one responsible of creating the Instagram accounts because my mother belongs to an older generation so she is not very familiar with using such technologies. I created four Instagram accounts at different times due to our lost phones that had the passwords in them. Every time we lose our phone, I go in the disturbance of creating another account for Staylek. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

The Instagram account of Staylek that Anfal created is a private one. The Instagram of

Staylek can only be viewed after Anfal accepts the follower's request of joining and following

their business account. Anfal explained that they kept their Instagram account private so that

they protect it from untrusted followers. They also post some of their designs in another

Instagram owned by another Kuwaiti woman who has a fashion-based account. They pay a

certain fee to get their ads and pictures posted along with other fashion designers.

When Anfal was asked about the frequency in which she checks their Staylek Instagram, she

replied "every couple of minutes. I cannot stop checking it." She checks the comments and posts

that their Instagram followers and customers post. However, Anfal does not write any comments

in their account and does not reply back to what is written by their Instagram followers. When

asked why so, she replied that "we are satisfied with the reactions and comments of our

customers that we do not feel the need to reply and comment back to them."

Also, both Shaikhah and Anfal clarified that they only use Instagram as a marketing tool so

they do not accept orders posted on their Instagram account unless the order is from outside

Kuwait. Anfal said that "Instagram is used to show and market the dresses we sell but our

customers' orders we take through WhatsApp."

Anfal and Shaikhah summarized the advantages of adopting social media such as Instagram

as a marketing tool by saying that social media:

> Open opportunities for women to market their businesses and popularize the businesses
> of Kuwaiti women. In the Western countries Instagram is used as social platform to share
> photos and information while we in Kuwait specifically use Instagram for marketing.
> Because of Instagram, many women-owned businesses got so successful and popular and
> Instagram helped their businesses reach their peaks. (S. Al-Mutairi, personal
> communication, October 2, 2014)

However, in Anfal's opinion, Instagram is just a temporary phenomenon that will eventually

fade and get replaced by another type of social media as she says:

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Similarly to how we moved from using Kuwaiti Women Forum to Twitter to now Instagram, some new type of social media will get popular and then we will need to cope and incorporate it in our marketing strategies. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

The disadvantages that Anfal and Shaikhah addressed was the difficulty of determining the gender of the follower. Since their Staylek business is targeting only women, Anfal and Shaikhah say:

We kept our account private to try limit some men who enter our account and look at and steal our pictures which future our models. This is a huge disadvantage as it is hard to know for sure if the follower is a man or a woman. (A. Al-Mutairi, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

Other disadvantages they mentioned were the dangerous goods that some sellers sell in Instagram and the easiness of stealing the pictures posted on Instagram.

Cultural Challenges Faced by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs

When Anfal and Shaikhah were asked about how are Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceived in a culture like Kuwait and if there are any cultural related challenges that they face as women entrepreneurs, Anfal replied by saying that "due to the existence of social media and the widespread of home businesses nowadays, it became way easier for Kuwaiti women to start and own their businesses." Since Staylek started in 2005, they were asked about the differences they noticed regarding the perceptions of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in their culture throughout the years. They both said that the acceptance of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs became much better nowadays because of their use of new technologies. Anfal clarified by saying that "new technologies enabled us to reach to a wider market because now anyone can use their phones and get to know about our business." They both attributed the increasing number of home and women owned businesses to the existence and adoption of social media because such type of media help women entrepreneurs to market and reach their customers.

The case of Shaikhah and Anfal represents an example of a business owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who belong to different generations. Also, the business of Staylek started way back in 2005 so the business has been marketed for through the use of various marketing strategies. Anfal's narrative demonstrates the different marketing strategies she and her mother adopted and used over time to market their business. The daughter Anfal who belongs to a younger generation clarified that it was her idea to incorporate social media to market their Staylek business. Anfal narrated the different types they used as marketing tools and she clearly stated that she is the one responsible of creating the accounts and managing any marketing aspect related to social media. The transition from using Kuwaiti Women Forum to using Twitter to marketing through Instagram suggests that older types of businesses such as Staylek have been marketed through what becomes the reigning tool or way of marketing. Both Shaikhah and Anfal were with the opinion that Instagram will sooner or later be replaced with another type of social media to use for marketing. They based their opinion on their own experience as Anfal stated that this has happened with previous types of social media such as Twitter so why Instagram would be any different.

One notable observation about the Instagram of Staylek that Anfal kept pointing about is how she makes sure to keep their Instagram account of Staylek private and secure. Staylek's Instagram account is a private one and even the pictures posted of the dresses and designs made by Shaikhah and Anfal are not fully shown to protect both their designs from getting stolen and also to protect the images of their models. Anfal's narrative was full of hints and gestures aiming to show how they are making effort to protect their business especially because it is made by women and targeting female customers. Therefore, they are avoiding any interference from men. For example, Anfal said "we kept our account private to try limit some men who enter our

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account and look at and steal our pictures which future our models. This is a huge disadvantage as it is hard to know for sure if the follower is a man or a woman." It seems that the protectiveness Shaikah and Anfal are trying to attain relates to how conservative they are. Also, this suggests that even in the social media age, some Kuwaiti women are trying to maintain segregation from men but in a way that advantages them. The Kuwaiti culture is a conservative one in which gender segregation can be seen and experienced in many ways. Gender segregation can be seen in weddings, schools, university classes, and many other arenas. This is an old cultural belief that keeping the interaction between men and women limited in order to protect either. It was interesting to see that this gender segregation is still maintained by some Kuwaiti women because they are trying to protect their privacy. In Shaikhah and Anfal's case, this could be justifiable as they are designing dresses for women and targeting only female customers.

When questions about cultural constraints and the changes they noticed regarding women's entrepreneurship in Kuwait were asked, both Shaikhah and Anfal spoke positively confirming progressive changes and acceptance. They both placed huge importance on the role social media play in helping Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs reach to their customers. Anfal said "due to the existence of social media and the widespread of home businesses nowadays, it became way easier for Kuwaiti women to start and own their businesses." They even credited and correlated the increasing number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs with the adoption of social media as a marketing tool.

Case 2: Eman Haider

- Business owner of: Tea Party Sweets
- Type of business: Food specialized in making flavored tarts
- Social media adopted: Instagram

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The Story of Tea Party Sweets Business:

How did it all start? Whose idea was to own a business? Who is funding it?

Tea Party Sweets is one of the most well-known businesses owned by a Kuwaiti woman. Eman Haider is the sole owner of Tea Party Sweets in which she sells various flavored tarts. Tea Party Sweets, which started in 2012, is not only popular but also one of the businesses that managed to expand and move away from being just a home business. Tea Party Sweets shop is located in Al-Salmiyah area near Kuwait City and it opened on September 16, 2014. The shop is designed to look like a small cottage and is comparatively small and has a very girly design. Pink is the color dominating the Tea Party Sweets shop. There is a big fridge placed nearly in the center of the shop where the tarts are kept in to have the customers choose the kind of flavored tart they like. She was not present in her shop when the researcher first came in to her shop. She came after she got a call from her older brother Emaad who happened to be in the shop at that time. As soon as she entered her shop, she ordered tea and some biscuits to have while the interview was done. Eman Haider is very friendly and welcoming. Every time any of her customers entered her shop, she personally greeted them, took their orders, and had conversations with them.

Interestingly the Tea Party Sweets shop seems to be popular because of both the tarts Eman sells and the way the store was designed. There were customers who came to the shop and asked permission from Eman to just take pictures of her shop. Moreover, almost every customer who came to the Tea Party Sweets that day has commented on the way the shop looks. For example, one male customer asked Eman about who designed her shop and that is when Eman mentioned that it was designed by a Syrian designer and a friend of hers. Another female customer commented that the shop looks smaller than how it looks in the pictures posted in the Instagram

account of Tea Party Sweets. In addition, another young female customer who came with her

father told Eman that she is so in love with her tarts and that she asked her father to bring her to

Tea Party Sweets shop to choose a tart for her sister's birthday. This young female customer was

so excited about the pinkish colored shop that she said "it looks like the ones we see in animated

movies or series." Eman commented back by saying:

> Tea Party Sweets shop is designed to look like a Barbie house, every girl dreams to have or enter a Barbie look alike house and that's why when you enter my shop, girls feel as if they have fulfilled this dream of theirs. (E. Haider, personal communication, October 21, 2014)

Eman Haider targets customers of both genders and of all age groups. She said "I would love

to have my tarts tasted and eaten by every Kuwaiti and everyone who lives in Kuwait." Eman

makes her own secret recipe of tart "I once was experimenting in our house kitchen and then I

came up with my own recipe of making tart that I do not share with anyone." Eman worked in

the private sector for 6 years, then she worked in a governmental sector because she wanted to

work fewer hours so that she can dedicate more of her time to her business. Eman left her job in

the governmental sector after 7 months and started focusing only on running her own business

and she says:

> Tea Party Sweets started as a home business where I first started making the tarts in our house's kitchen. Later, I built my own kitchen in our house and now my business expanded and I successfully own the Tea Party Sweets shop thank God. (E. Haider, personal communication, October 21, 2014)
> Eman adds:
> When I first started my business at home, I was the one who made the tarts myself because there was no load. I use to make 4 to 5 tarts so not that much. Later, our housemaid started helping me a little bit and then later work got more loaded so my brother Muhammad-not my brother Emad-he started helping me by buying me the stuffs I need and he used to tell me that I can help buy you the things you want. I did not only have my business but I actually built a kitchen so I was not using our house kitchen because I can only do 10 tarts using our house main kitchen and that started not to be enough. So in the kitchen I built I worked and I did not retire from my job till I built my own kitchen. Now that I built a place only for me and I can concentrate on working in it then I decided to retire. Thank God because I had that kitchen now I own my store. My

friends all supported me and believed that I can make it big and especially my friend Esraa. (E. Haider, personal communication, October 21, 2014)

Eman talked about how if her business was not profitable enough, she would not have made the decision to resign from her governmental job. Only after she was financially secure in running her own business, she decided to quit her job. Eman elaborates:

When I left my job in the governmental sector, I had the kitchen and I knew that I could make the amount of money I want to do. Even if I get the same amount of money I used to get from that job, I am more relieved because I feel that I am productive and I am happy. I can sleep peacefully without having anyone bossing me asking to come to work at a certain time and such things. I do not like anyone controlling or bossing me, controlling Eman. So if my business was not profiting me enough and getting me good revenue, I would not resign because you know we live a country in which you need money so that you can live in it. Because in Kuwait especially now everything became so expensive and living in here demand certain expenses because I live in a society where everyone likes to wear fashionably and also go out and spend. But now I changed because I do spend much on fancy clothing unless it is for certain occasions because I only concentrate on managing my business and that is actually good because I became more responsible as I am more responsible toward my business. (E. Haider, personal communication, October 21, 2014)

Eman Haider is the one funding her own business and she pointed out that when she first started Tea Party Sweets as a home business, she did not have a certain capital for it. Whatever she used to get from her salary, she spent it on her business and buying the required materials to make her tarts.

What were the obstacles?

Eman faced couple of obstacles when she started running her Tea Party Sweets business as she mentioned that there were times in which she had a lot of orders and could not accept other orders because of the workload she had to manage. It was getting harder as her business was expanding and getting popular as the number of orders was increasing. Eman stated that one of the main obstacles she needed to overcome was her insecurity of not having a job in either a private or governmental sector. Eman expresses:

There was a little bit of fear. There was fear after I resigned because I had concerns if I would continue what I was doing or not but after I thought of it and I saw the people's reaction that made me continue what I started but regarding making my tarts I was not that worried. However, I was a little concerned that it was just a fading trend that people liked them and that is it but thank God it is not the case for my business. I also had some fear when I first opened my store because it is a responsibility. It is the reputation that I built for two years, hard work, gifts, and pleasing other people. I wanted to make Tea Party Sweets as my own Trademark. Confidently that it is mine. (E. Haider, personal communication, October 21, 2014)

Marketing Strategies: How are social media being used as a marketing tool?

When Eman was asked about her marketing strategies that she uses to market for her Tea Party Sweets business, she said that her customers are themselves marketing for her. She says:

When a customer comes to my shop and clicks a picture of it and then post it on Instagram or Snapchat, other people can see my shop and get curious to come to my shop and try my tarts.

Eman Haider talked about how expensive it is to have advertisements published in newspapers and magazines and that is why the use of Instagram is advantageous because it barely costs anything when used as a marketing tool. Eman talked about the popularity of Instagram in Kuwait and she says:

I noticed that the increased number of businesses owned by Kuwaiti women correlated with the acceleration adoption of Instagram among Kuwaitis. I only use Instagram because I think it is the most appropriate type of social media to use as a marketing tool. (E. Haider, personal communication, October 21, 2014)

Eman explained that using Instagram can attract the number of customers that the type of business she owns can handle. Eman talked about how she frequently uses and checks her Instagram account. She said "I check it almost every minute." The Instagram account of Tea Party Sweets was created by Eman and, unlike Anfal and Shaikhah who prefer not to reply to their customers' comments, Eman likes to comment back and socialize with her customers through her Instagram account. Eman also expressed that she feels very happy when she sees her customers post pictures of the tarts they buy from her shop especially when they thank her and

post positive comments about the tarts she makes and sells. She also expressed that negative comments used to initially irritate her but now she does not worry about such comments because she built her own reputation in which her customers defend her with the positive comments they post and write to her.

Cultural Challenges Faced by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs

When Eman was asked about how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs are perceived in a culture like Kuwait or if there is any cultural challenge hindering the success of women owned businesses in Kuwait, she replied:

> Nowadays our Kuwaiti society became more supportive of Kuwaiti women owning their businesses. Kuwaiti women and girls entrepreneurs are more accepted and supported now and that is a very good thing. I am so happy because of that. (E. Haider, personal communication, October 21, 2014)

The case of Eman Haider represents a successful example of a Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur who succeeded in expanding her business from just a home-based business. Eman is so proud about what she achieved as she was full of excitement and joy expressing how satisfied she feels about owning her Tea Party Sweets shop. Eman dedicates all her time and effort to running her business. She resigned from her governmental job in order to solely manage all the business and marketing aspects of Tea Party Sweets. The narrative of Eman suggests that because her business became successful and profitable, she was able to depend financially on it. She does not need any other income coming from a more secure job such as a governmental position. Eman talked about the type of personality she possesses and illustrated that she likes to be the one in charge and in control. This is why becoming an entrepreneur was very fulfilling for her as she became the one responsible of running her business and there is no one bossing her. However, Eman shared her initial concerns and expressed about her worries after she decided to quit her job and

run her business only. Eman sounded very relieved talking about how the popularity and the continuous success of selling her tarts have helped her overcome such fears.

One interesting thing about Eman's case is the way she uses Instagram in marketing her business. She likes it when her customers themselves advertise for her Tea Party Sweets business by clicking photos of her tarts and shop and post them on Instagram. She thinks this is an indirect way of marketing and publicizing. Eman replies back to her customers' comments and she feels happy when her loyal customers defend her if others comment negatively about her business. Eman uses Instagram as electronic word-of-mouth in which her customers share their comments and feedback to support and market the business she owns. Eman spoke confidently about her loyal customers and the popularity of Tea Party Sweets which she gained through using Instagram for marketing her business. Eman talked positively about using Instagram as a marketing tool and described it as the best and most suitable marketing tool to use for marketing her business. Eman said "I only use Instagram because I think it is the most appropriate type of social media to use as a marketing tool." Eman still chose to market using Instagram only even though her business expanded. Interestingly even though Eman's business Tea Party Sweets expanded from being only a home-based business, she still relies on using only Instagram to market for her business. She also associated the multiplying numbers of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs with the diffusion of Instagram and adopting it as a marketing tool in Kuwait. Eman believes that these two are correlated and she based her opinion on her personal observations and experience. She also expressed her gladness and contentment regarding how women entrepreneurs are being supported and encouraged in Kuwait in the recent times. Eman's successful case indicates that the Kuwaiti culture and people became more accepting and encouraging to having women run their businesses and become entrepreneurs.

Case 3: Fay and Dalal Al-Asousi

- Business owner of: Casa Spa and Modish Channel

- Type of business: Beauty salon and fashion

- Social media adopted: Instagram

The Story of Casa Spa and Modish Channel Businesses:

How did it all start? Whose idea was to own a business? Who is funding it?

Fay and Dalal Al-Asousi are sisters and business partners. They are both the owners of Casa Spa, which is a ladies beauty salon located in Al-Surra area and opened in 2014. Dalal who is the youngest between the two owns another business and that is Modish Channel, which is a ladies fashion store located next to Casa Spa salon. Casa Spa started as a home business since 6 years in which Fay and Dalal used to go to their customers' houses and provide their beauty services.

Fay talked about how her husband was not supportive of her when she first decided on starting her business. Fay says:

> Initially my husband was against the idea of me starting and owning my business especially that it was a home business. He was afraid that there will be a lot of issues and problems since I would deal with customers and have the services done at their homes. It was only after two years of running the Casa Spa business successfully that my husband started to be more accepting of me owning my business because he could see that we are doing really well. (F. Al-Asousi, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

On the other hand, Dalal's husband was more supportive of her starting and owning the Casa Spa business since they started thinking of becoming women entrepreneurs. Fay also talked about how the majority of their family members were not that supportive initially and when she was asked why, she replied "maybe because we are women and they did not believe that we can run a successful business."

Fay and Dalal are the ones funding their businesses and they both stated that the money involved in running their businesses all comes from their personal funds. Dalal mentioned that

her husband also helped her fund the business she and her sister own. Fay pointed out that their

mother encouraged them a lot from the very beginning as she was the one who helped them get

the store license for their store.

What were the obstacles?

Fay summarized a number of obstacles they faced since they started owning their business

and she also highlighted the most difficult ones they are still dealing with. Fay says:

> In Kuwait, it is very hard to bring foreign workers such as from Philippines because there are lots of procedures that the Kuwaiti government wants us to do in order to have foreign workers come and work in Kuwait. It was difficult to do so and also the rents are extremely expensive and pricey for living, office, and everything else. These were the main obstacles we faced and then having a car service and its insurance. Most importantly and the hardest obstacle is how to deal with the employees. (F. Al-Asousi, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Fay also explained that the obstacles they face include their interactions with their

customers. She clarified how sometimes their customers complain about issues that are

uncontrollable and are affected by external reasons. Fay explains:

> When it comes to the obstacles we face with our customers usually the first problem we face is the delay of our service and usually it is not our fault because you know how it is in Kuwait, we have traffic jams. Second thing is if our first customer comes late for her appointment, all the other customers get delayed and the rest of our appointments get late too. Because of our drivers we cannot be always on time because sometimes it is the customer who is late. Some of the customers are very rude and some takes the service and then they complain because they do not want to pay. This is a main one but it happens rarely and always. (F. Al-Asousi, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Marketing Strategies: How are social media being used as a marketing tool?

When marketing to their customers, Fay and Dalal talked about how they shifted from using

Facebook to Twitter to Instagram. Fay said that "we first started marketing our business by using

Facebook, then we used Twitter, and now we are using Instagram which is the best." Dalal

explained how they rely more on Instagram when it comes to marketing her and her sister's

businesses as she says:

We no longer check or have our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We only market through Instagram. I noticed that nowadays some are using snapchat which we are also thinking of using and creating accounts in for both Casa Spa and Modish Channel. (D. Al-Asousi, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Dalal and a friend of hers are the ones who created the social media accounts for her businesses, both the one she owns and the one she is partnering with her sister Fay. Dalal elaborates:

I check our Instagram every day on a regular bases. I check it multiple times to read the posts and comments written by our followers. I do not get mad when we get bad comments but when we get supportive ones in which a customer is complementing us, I get flattered and happy. (D. Al-Asousi, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Both Dalal and Fay talked about how they like getting constructive criticism from their customers because that helps them in enhancing their business. Dalal also said that "we reply back to the comments we get from our customers which they post on our Instagram account."

When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of adopting Instagram both Dalal and Fay agreed that Instagram has more pros than cons. Dalal says:

Instagram is a perfect marketing tool because you can use to advertise about the new services we offer and the new collections we are selling and have pictures posted of them. (D. Al-Asousi, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

On the hand, the disadvantages they highlighted were allowing more businesses of the same kind to sell their products and provide their services for cheaper prices and fares. Dalal and Fay explained that home businesses do not involve the charges and fees they get to deal with because of them owning an actual salon and a store. Dalal elaborates:

Our prices are always compared to those cheaper ones that the home businesses charge. We are trying to lower ours too but we have so much expenses that we need to make sure we cover. (D. Al-Asunication, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Cultural Challenges Faced by Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs

When Fay and Dalal were asked about the cultural challenges they faced, they both talked

about how the increasing number of home businesses owned by women are very accepted by

Kuwaitis nowadays. However, Fay expressed that these home services are not professional and

creative compared to theirs which started way earlier than the trend they are witnessing these

days. Fay says:

> When we first started our business, we started when we were young and our family did
> not expect us that we will make it and succeed and made it because we wanted to do so.
> We are very hard workers. When we started our home service, I was not able to sleep
> until 1 AM at night exactly without exaggeration. I had to arrange everything, correct the
> mistakes, I built the home service from 0 to 10. Now there are a lot of them which are
> home service and a lot of them are not professional and without licenses. Now they come
> to Casa Spa and they even count how many towels we put so that they copy and paste us.
> These businesses are not creative. (F. Al-Asousi, personal communication, October 22,
> 2014)

The case of Fay and Dalal represents two different reactions from their male partners

regarding their decision to become entrepreneurs. Fay's husband was not supportive of her

decision to run the business of Casa Spa while Dalal's husband was encouraging and helpful.

Fay and Dalal started their business when they were young and they experienced a number of

criticisms from their family members who were not supportive initially of their decision. Fay

spoke about how they were doubted to run a successful business because they are women and

some family members underestimated their ability to become entrepreneurs. However, both

sisters talked about the major role their mother played in their journey of running their Casa Spa

salon. Their business which initially started as a home-based business developed into becoming a

well-known salon. Also, Dalal own another business Modish Chanel while Fay is planning to

start a new food business. The marketing strategies for the businesses they own transitioned from

using different types of social media. Dalal said "we first started marketing our business by using

Facebook, then we used Twitter, and now we are using Instagram which is the best." Dalal, the younger sister, is the one managing the marketing part of their businesses. She spoke favorably about using Instagram as a marketing tool compared to the other types of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. She clarified that when they shifted to using Instagram, they stopped using Facebook and Twitter because she noticed that their popularity in Kuwait declined. Dalal gave similar reasons given by other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs regarding Instagram's advantages to use for marketing reasons. In Dalal's opinion, Instagram's photo-based nature and its unique feature of having photos dominating its content are what distinguished Instagram and makes it the best marketing tool.

Case 4: Noriya Al-Mlhami

- Business owner of: Om Khaled

- Type of business: Food

- Social media adopted: Instagram

The story of Om Khaled business:

How did it all start? Whose idea was to own a business? Who is funding it?

Noriya Al-Mlhami, who prefers to be called Om Khaled (which means the mother of Khaled) will soon retire from her governmental job. She is a Kuwaiti woman who owns a food-service business in which she gives cooking lessons and also sells home-cooked dishes that she prepares and makes herself. She lives in a big mansion with her only son and his family. Noriya started her business seven years ago and when she first started it, she did not consider it as a business. Noriya elaborates:

> At the beginning, I did not do this and took it as a business. This is my hobby. Cooking is my hobby and my favorite thing to do. I love entering the kitchen and cook. I love being creative in the meals and dishes I make so that I can feel that I added something new to them. Later my daughters wanted their housemaids to learn cooking. My daughters and

my nieces wanted the same thing. Initially I used to offer them by saying you bring your housemaid and I will teach her how to cook. My daughters were like mom would you please teach my housemaid how to cook. Therefore, I started giving cooking lessons but both my daughters and nieces told me that I should not do this for free because it is very tiring for me. They suggested that I give cooking lessons in my home.

Noriya adds:

Honestly initially I was hesitant because I was not comfortable taking money from my daughters and my nieces. I was not in favor of doing so. I found that very difficult but they refused and they said that we will not bring our housemaids to your place so that you teach them unless you accept taking money for doing so even though they were the ones who needed that and not me. They needed their housemaids to learn cooking but for me they knew that because of my love for cooking, I will eventually say yes. It is my hobby and I really love it. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

If Noriya's daughters and nieces did not convince her to take money for the cooking lessons then she would still be giving her cooking lessons for free. Om Khaled is like many other women-owned businesses in Kuwait, it is a home-based business. Noriya has a big kitchen where she gives her cooking lessons. Her kitchen is located next to the living room where she hosts her guests. Noriya's love for cooking and the support of her family especially her daughters and nieces were the two reasons that helped initiate the business of Om Khaled. Noriya started taking minimal charges for the cooking lessons she gives and she takes less from her family members compared to her other customers. Noriya says:

I take less money from my daughters and nieces and I charge more for other customers. They were the ones (daughters and nieces) who started telling their friends about the cooking lessons I give. Then more people told other people so it started with word of mouth. Later, I started doing some food menus that I send through text messages to my friends and that was prior having and using WhatsApp. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Every business needs funding and Noriya is the one who is financing her business and no one else is funding her. Noriya says "It is all personal funding. Nobody else helped. I funded and financed everything on my own. It is personal funding."

What were the obstacles?

Noriya started facing some obstacles as soon as she started her business. She shared her

experience of instructing a large group of learners and she talked about the difficulty of doing so:

> Initially I used to give cooking lessons to a bigger group consisting of approximately 20
> learners but then I stopped doing so because I realized that there are certain problems
> related to instructing a big group. I now only give lessons to 3 to 4 learners at a time so
> that I make sure they learn properly. It is hard for them to learn if they are in a big group.
> It takes them time to learn. For example, my cook, who already has previous cooking
> experience, took about a year and a half to learn the dishes and meals I cook. With a big
> group, it is like how students behave in school. They do not give much attention or talk
> among themselves and that is why I decided not to give cooking lessons to such big
> groups. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Noriya is the one who handles and manages her business and there is not anyone who is

helping her and even though she really enjoys what she does, she sometimes find it difficult to do

so alone.

> I do not only give cooking lessons, I also cook and make dishes upon order so my
> customers usually call me and ask make me to cook them a certain dish. Even though I
> love cooking and enjoy doing it, sometimes it gets harder because I am the only one
> doing the entire work. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Marketing Strategies: How are social media being used as a marketing tool?

Noriya, who first relied on word of mouth marketing strategy and then sending text

messages to her customers and printing her menus, now uses only Instagram for marketing her

business. Noriya started using WhatsApp earlier than she started using Instagram. Her daughter-

in-law designs menus for the dishes Noriya makes so that she sends them to her customers.

Noriya still uses WhatsApp to communicate with her customers and take their orders but for

marketing she uses her Om Khaled Instagram account. Noriya says:

> First I started using WhatsApp prior using Instagram. I used to send menus of the dishes I
> make to my customers through WhatsApp. My daughter in law is the one who creates
> and designs those menus for me. I write these menus on a piece of paper for her and then
> she designs them for me. Then, I started using Instagram Honestly I do not know how to
> use it. When Instagram started becoming popular, my daughters were the ones who told

me that I should have an Instagram account. I personally love using Facebook but I do not have one for my business. I have a personal account on Facebook. I like using it more. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Even though Noriya was not the one who created her Instagram account, she is the one who takes pictures of her dishes and posts them. Noriya clicks photos of the various dishes she makes and she also photographs the different preparation stages prior having her dishes ready to eat. Noriya says:

> I am the one who takes pictures of my dishes and I post them, too. Everything and every dish I cook, I have to take a picture of it. It is very important to take pictures even if I do not post every picture on Instagram, I like having pictures as references of what I made and then I can look at it later if I want to. I make a lot of dishes. I also take photos of the recipe I see. There was one day I was watching a show in which they were making a fruit tart so I wanted the recipe but I did not want to write it so I just clicked a picture of it. In my Instagram account, I post pictures and when I send an order, I post a picture of it. I am the one who checks my Instagram and posts the pictures. I even now know how to make collages of the different pictures I take. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Noriya thinks that Instagram is best used as marketing tool because it is good for presenting and promoting the business. She pointed out that Instagram is not used as a socializing platform compared to Facebook, which she uses to keep in touch with her friends from all over the world. Noriya explains:

> Instagram is mainly used for presentation and marketing reasons. It is not used as a communicative or socializing tool but Facebook I feel is more used to communicate with others. There was one time when I visited Turkey and became friends with a lady and then I came back to Kuwait and lost touch with her. One day I was clicking on Facebook and I saw her so I started contacting her and getting in touch with her. There are others from Palestine and Syria who like cooking and I became their Facebook friends and we communicate with each other through Facebook. We even share recipes via Facebook. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Noriya talked about how the increasing number of women-owned businesses in Kuwait and

the competition among them eliminates the notion that there are certain cultural-related issues of

having businesses owned by women in Kuwait. Noriya explains:

> Nowadays there is competition among such home-based businesses especially those
> which are food businesses. Many women have Instagram accounts and they post their
> dishes and sell them. This competition is a clear sign that women-owned businesses are
> widely spread. Our Kuwaiti society now became very accepting to having women
> owning their businesses. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Noriya is very glad that Kuwaiti culture and society is now encouraging women owned

businesses. Noriya who works in a governmental sector will soon retire from her job. She likes

having her home business because she cannot imagine herself staying at home without doing

anything. Noriya expresses:

> It is really good and encouraging that we have such women owned businesses. Now that I
> am about to retire so do I just sit at home not doing anything. No, I will get bored. I have
> been working for 38 years so would I just sit home without doing anything, no. I did a
> knee operation a while ago and I had to stay at home and that affected me and my mood
> negatively. I felt so bad but when I started working again, I got my energy back. Soon I
> will retire so what is next if I just sit home doing nothing, it will become very hard for me
> so it is really good that you work. Working is good. (N. Al-Mlhami, personal
> communication, October 22, 2014)

The case of Noriya represents a Kuwaiti woman whose hobby became her business. The

narrative of Noriya shows her initial inhibition of shifting what she enjoys doing and considers

as her favorite hobby into a business that she can profit from financially. Noriya expressed her

love for cooking and how she finds pure pleasure in making various dishes or teaching others

how to cook. Noriya's voice sounded ambitiously excited every time she spoke about her love

for cooking. It was her daughters and the support of her family members that convinced her to

turn her hobby into home-based business. She shared her experience of how she found it difficult

charging for the cooking lessons she gives and the dishes she makes.

Noriya's marketing strategies started with word-of-mouth then sending text messages to her customer. Noriya later started using WhatsApp as a private marketing tool in which she sends her menus and ads to her customers. Noriya's daughters also played a role in helping her create the Instagram account for her Om Khaled business. Noriya who owns a personal Facebook account compared between using Facebook and Instagram. Noriya personally favors using Facebook and she uses it for personal communicative reasons. She uses Facebook to keep in touch and socialize with her friends. Even though Noriya talked about how she does not favor using Instagram, she still acknowledged Instagram's appropriateness to use as a marketing tool. Noriya said "Instagram is mainly used for presentation and marketing reasons. It is not used as a communicative or socializing tool but Facebook I feel is more used to communicate with others." The comparison Noriya made between Facebook and Instagram supports the beliefs and opinions shared by other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs stating that Instagram is mainly popular in Kuwait to use a marketing tool. The narrative of Noriya indicates the women's entrepreneurship in Kuwait is highly accepted and encouraged these days. Noriya attributed the Kuwaiti culture acceptance to having women running their businesses to the increasing number of women entrepreneurs and the cumulative competition among them. She expressed her gladness that Kuwaiti women made such achievement and also pointed out the role social media play in helping women entrepreneurs reach their target market. She shared her own experience explaining that owning her business will make her busy and productive after she retires. Noriya's case shows that Kuwaiti women becoming entrepreneurs has allowed them to exercise a larger role in their society and also gave them opportunities to do the things they love and enjoy doing.

Chapter 8 will discuss the findings revealed in the previous four chapters. It will relate the findings of this study to academic literature and previous scholar research and studies. Answers

to the present study's research questions will be discussed based on the theoretical implications, which cover diffusion of social media and women's entrepreneurship in Kuwait. It will discuss the marketing-related attributes of Instagram that appealed to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. In addition, this discussion chapter will address the characteristics of Kuwaiti culture associated with the adoption of Instagram among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it will discuss the perceived pros and cons of adopting Instagram as a marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Lastly, it will present the overall conclusion, and describe the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 8 – Discussion

This final chapter will present a discussion of the findings of this study relating them to academic research and literature. Answers to the research questions will be discussed based on the theoretical implications. In addition, this chapter will include the overall conclusions related to women's entrepreneurship and their adoption of social media as a marketing tool. This chapter will conclude with the limitations related to this study and provide recommendations for future research.

The research questions of this study investigated the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt and utilize social media to market their businesses and examined the attributes of social media that appealed more to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, this study's research questions looked at the characteristics of Kuwaiti culture that made the adoption of social media by women entrepreneurs more relevant to their economic success and also researched the pros and cons of social media perceived by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. The following sections of this chapter will discuss the key findings for each research question and will address and relate this current study's findings to the relevant literature and previous studies and scholarly work.

RQ1: How do Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt and utilize social media to market their businesses?

The main purpose of this study is to understand the adoption of social media among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and examine the way they incorporate social media in their marketing strategies and use them as a marketing tool to reach to their target market. Several scholars highlighted that Rogers' diffusion theory placed minimal importance on entrepreneurs and the role they play in influencing the diffusion process (Marcati et al., 2008; Miller and Garnsey, 2000). This study focuses on studying female entrepreneurs as the main adopters and investigates

their adoption of certain types of social media to use for marketing. Even though Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations was the theoretical framework applied in the research of this study, this study attempts to understand the gaps this theory lacks to provide when combining different perspectives. The way entrepreneurship, gender, and culture perspectives intersect with diffusion theory were examined through the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and their social media adoption. Rogers (2003) explained numerous aspects associated with the diffusion process of novel ideas or innovations. The findings of this study revealed one major finding related to the choice and type of social media adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to market their business. The findings show that Instagram is the most preferred and adopted type of social media among women entrepreneurs in Kuwait. Instagram is implemented in the marketing strategies of 19 of the examined 20 businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. On the other hand, Facebook is adopted and used for marketing by only two of those businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Similarly, Twitter is used to market another two women-owned businesses. Snapchat was another type of social media that was mentioned by few Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Also, this study reveal that all Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs use WhatsApp to communicate privately with their customers but they do not use it as a marketing tool.

The findings of this study stating Instagram as the most adopted type of social media among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs did not match the statistics which were reported by the Arab Social Media Repot published by the Arab Social Media Influencers Summit (2015). The report which provided statistical numbers about the most used social media types among Kuwaitis in general reported that WhatsApp has the highest percentage followed by Facebook and then Instagram and YouTube. This study also found that WhatsApp is highly adopted among Kuwaiti

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women entrepreneurs as they all said that they are using it. However, this study's findings show that Instagram is the most adopted by women entrepreneurs and they use it for marketing reasons unlike WhatsApp, which is used as a private communicative tool. On the other hand, Facebook was rarely mentioned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Some of the narratives of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs indicate that Facebook is no longer popular and used for marketing businesses in Kuwait. The finding of this study illustrating that Instagram is the most used social media tool among women entrepreneurs is similar to the results found by Al Mutairi and Fayez's (2015), who reported that Instagram and WhatsApp were the most implemented types of social media in the marketing strategies of women entrepreneurs in Kuwait.

The findings of this study also show the similarities and differences of how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs utilize Instagram as a marketing tool. Similarities among women entrepreneurs using Instagram for marketing their businesses include posting photos of their products and services and having public accounts except for Staylek business, which has a private Instagram account. The Instagram accounts of food businesses have similar layouts and content, which display the different food items and dishes that the business owners make and sell. However, the Instagram accounts marketing fashion businesses differ in showing the clothes they sell. Some accounts will feature pictures of the model wearing the clothes while others only show the clothes without having the models appear visible in the photos. For example, Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer, owners of Lam Sheen, post pictures showing only the clothes they sell because they think what they sell is what matters the most and should be visible to their customers. However, Ameena Al-Qattan, owner of Neon, posts pictures of herself modeling for the head veils she sells.

Differences among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs utilizing Instagram as a marketing tool include the visibility of the prices of their products and services. A number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs prefer writing and including the prices in their Instagram accounts while others prefer not to include them. For example, Mona Al-Baghli, owner of food business Heavenly Chocs, does not write the prices of her products on her Instagram account. On the other hand, Haleemah Ahmad, owner of fashion business Qumoosh Couture, prefers having her prices visible for her Instagram customers.

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs do not limit their usage of Instagram as a marketing tool to only posting photos of the products and services they promote. They utilize different ways of marketing using Instagram. For example, Majdah Baqer, owner of Om El7elween food business, uses InstaTrack to track the frequency of likes and comments of her Instagram's followers to create a more interactive communication with her customers. Also, Wesam Al-Shirazi, owner of Cacaouette, talked about how her business was advertised by a popular Kuwaiti blogger, who posted about Wesam's food business in her Instagram account and helped in promoting the Cacaouette business.

The current study's findings show why Instagram is preferably adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs as a marketing tool compared to Facebook and Twitter, which are mostly used for other reasons. Comparisons between Instagram and other types of social media were mentioned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs when they were asked about their reasons of choosing Instagram to market their businesses. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs said that they do not prefer using Facebook because it is not as popular as Instagram in Kuwait. In order to ensure that their businesses are being marketed and advertised to a larger number of customers, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs chose to adopt Instagram and not Facebook because they noticed that the former is

the most popular and widely spread type of social media in Kuwait. For example, Badriyah Al-Sultan, owner of food business Samboosa Box, is planning to adopt Instagram and stop using the current Facebook account of her business due to the decreasing popularity of Facebook among Kuwaitis. Badriyah stated that Facebook is no longer used by many Kuwaitis and this is the reason behind considering the adoption of Instagram instead to market her Samboosa Box business. Also, Aysha Alhouli, owner of Zari International Est, who uses Facebook besides Instagram when marketing for her business, acknowledged that she does not update her Facebook account as much as she updates her Instagram. Aysha explained that her Facebook account's followers and customers are hardly active compared to those following her on Instagram.

Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' choice of adopting Instagram more as a marketing tool than the other social media such as Facebook and Twitter shows that different types of social media are more suitable to utilize for marketing reasons. For example, Facebook as a social media can be adopted for different reasons other than marketing. Mazman and Usluel (2011) examined Facebook users' motives and identified a number of gender differences related to the different categories involving the users' purposes of using Facebook. The four categories that Mazman and Usluel (2011) categorized included maintaining existing relationships, making new relationships, using for academic purposes, and following specific agenda. Their results showed that male users scored higher in the category of making new contacts whereas female users' usage purposes of Facebook were favoring the other three categories.

The current study's findings show that Facebook is not commonly used as a marketing tool. For example, Noriya AlMlhami, owner of food business Om Khaled, thinks that Facebook is preferably used as a communicative and socializing tool compared to Instagram, which is more

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used for marketing reasons. What Noriya pointed out about Facebook relates to what Mazman and Usluel (2011) found about Facebook female users as they purposely use it to maintain existing relationships. Noriya stated that she uses Instagram to market her business whereas she uses Facebook to socialize and keep in touch with her friends from different parts of the world and whom she shares common interests with. Additionally, Noriya said that she does not use Facebook for marketing her business but she enjoys using Facebook for personal reasons such as establishing new relationships or maintaining exiting relationships.

Compared to Instagram, Facebook is found to be uncommonly adopted by women entrepreneurs due to its unpopularity in Kuwait and because it is mostly considered for personal use than for marketing reasons. Twitter is also not widely adopted among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs because text dominates its content and Twitter is more used as a platform to discuss politics in Kuwait rather than used for marketing a business. For instance, Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi, who own a Twitter and Instagram accounts to market their fashion business Staylek, noted that their Twitter account does not get updated as frequently as their Instagram account. They said that Twitter is not suitable for marketing reasons in Kuwait because its users mainly use Twitter to check political news and updates or to get involved in political-related discussions. Also, when Anfal compared the use of Twitter and Instagram, she highlighted that Twitter is lacking when it comes to marketing their business because the content of Twitter presents mostly text. Thus, Instagram has the advantage of presenting photos, which is an integral part of marketing the dresses and clothes they sell.

The comparisons Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs highlighted about the different types of social media explained their decision of adopting Instagram as a marketing tool. Adopting and utilizing Instagram as a marketing tool and using the other types of social media for other

reasons shows that different kinds of social media differ in their suitability to use as a marketing tool. The attributes of Instagram, which determined its adoption as a marketing tool among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, are further discussed and explained next.

RQ2: Are there any certain attributes (relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability) of social media that appeal particularly to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and why?

Rogers (2003) classified five distinctive attributes of innovations associated with their adoption process. The five perceived attributes of innovations are relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, trialability, and observability. The findings of the current study revealed the attributes of Instagram that appealed to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs explaining its adoption and use as a marketing tool. The three main attributes of Instagram that determined Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' decision of adopting it for marketing their businesses are Instagram's photo-sharing nature (relative advantage), ease of use (complexity), and popularity (observability). However, the perceptions of these attributes are discussed uniquely in the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs using social media for marketing reasons.

Relative advantage considers if the innovation is better than the idea or product it supersedes. Relative advantage of innovations can be economic, social, or functional (Rogers, 2003). Several Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs talked about Instagram's photo-sharing nature (relative advantage) which supersedes other types of social media. Instagram enables women entrepreneurs to post as many pictures of their products and services they are marketing and advertising to sell to their customers. Instagram is the most adopted among women entrepreneurs in Kuwait because it has the advantage of showcasing and presenting their commercial goods and services through photos.

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Customers can easily go to the Instagram accounts of these women-owned businesses and be able to get exposed to what they are selling and look through what they want to buy. Many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs shared their thoughts regarding how Instagram is the most appropriate type of social media to be used as a marketing tool because of its photo-sharing nature. For example, Fay and Dalal, owners of Casa Spa beauty salon, stated that Instagram is the ultimate choice when it comes to marketing. Dalal said, "Instagram is a perfect marketing tool because you can use to advertise about the new services we offer and the new collections we are selling and have pictures posted of them." Also, Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer, owners of fashion business Lam Sheen, stated that Instagram's photo-sharing nature helps them in promoting their designs and clothes. They said, "Instagram is excellent for posting your pictures and that is all what we need. We want our customers to look at the designs we make and then place their orders. Pictures dominate the content of Instagram and that makes it easier for our customers to look at what we want to sell." Moreover, Wesam Al-Shirazi, owner of food business Cacaouette, also elaborated on what appealed to her. She said "the best thing about Instagram is that you can post pictures. I have a contract with a professional photographer and I post the pictures he takes of my chocolates. I am the one who posts the pictures on my account and I personally manage my account."

Even though these Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs own different types of businesses; such as beauty salon, fashion, and food, nearly all perceived the relative advantage of Instagram, which is its photo-sharing nature. The women entrepreneurs want their customers and consumers to see what they are trying to sell them and that is why Instagram is described by these women entrepreneurs as the best tool for marketing their businesses. Instagram is a type of social media that allows its users to load their accounts with so many pictures. This specific characteristic of

Instagram advantages women entrepreneurs in allowing them to use Instagram as a photo album or catalogue presenting their products and services. Some women entrepreneurs post photos they take themselves while other women entrepreneurs post pictures taken by others. For example, Majdah Baqer, owner of food business Om El7elween, said, "Photography is the hobby of my son and he is the one who takes the pictures of the desserts and dishes I make. He takes pictures and also filters them and make them look more professional so that I can post on my Instagram."

The photo-sharing nature of Instagram is one key attractive attribute that made Instagram standout as a marketing tool used by many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. In Kuwait, women entrepreneurs prefer using Instagram because photos dominate its content unlike Twitter and Facebook, which display more textual content. In the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, the relative advantage of Instagram is its photo-sharing nature. Kuwaiti women perceives Instagram as the best marketing tool because it allows it users to load their accounts with as many pictures they want. Also, Instagram works like a photo album, which is accessible and available for customers to look at the pictures of the products and services Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs post on their accounts. The relative advantage of Instagram identifies the need of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs for an accessible platform allowing them to market through presentable photos and videos showcasing their businesses. Women entrepreneurs' perceptions and decisions of adopting the most suitable types of social media relate to specific features allowing marketing their businesses through visual content. This feature was a strong attraction for Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to adopt Instagram specifically for marketing reasons. This suggests that this particular relative advantage if found in another type of social media, women entrepreneurs will be willing to adopt and incorporate it in their marketing strategies.

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The findings of the current study showed that the second attribute of Instagram that appealed to Kuwaiti women entrepreneur is Instagram's ease of use (complexity). Rogers (2003) described complexity as the degree to how an innovation is perceived as easy to use. Many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs found Instagram easy to use. They can effortlessly post and upload the photos of their products and services on their Instagram accounts. Even though some of the women entrepreneurs were not the ones who created their Instagram accounts, they still were able to learn how to use Instagram. Women entrepreneurs do not perceive Instagram as complex and that is why many of them adopted it. Several Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who were interviewed for this study shared their experiences describing how easy it is to post the photos of their products and services on Instagram. For example, Eman Al-Wazzan, owner of Eman Sweets, talked about how her daughters helped her initially create the Instagram account for her business. However, she said that it was easy to learn how to use Instagram and Eman now takes the pictures of her products and posts them herself on her Instagram account. Similarly, Majdah Baqer, owner of Om El7elween food business, talked about why Instagram is the only social media she uses. She explained, "Now, I am the one who posts pictures and updates my Instagram because it is easy to use. Instagram is easier to use compared to the other kinds of social media." Ease of use can be classified to four parts: creating Instagram account, clicking photos using phone camera, posting the photos of products and services, and managing the Instagram account and communicating with their customers. The simplicity of performing and learning to do these four things vary from one Kuwaiti woman to another. Several examples of women entrepreneurs explained that others were the ones who created their Instagram accounts for them and later they learned how to manage and use it easily. Ease of use refers to how

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Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs themselves manage their Instagram accounts verifying how easy it is to create account, click photos, post pictures, and reply to their customers' comments.

The third attribute of Instagram that was commonly addressed by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in this study was the popularity (observability) of Instagram. Observability which is "the degree to which an innovation is visible to others" (Rogers, 2003, p. 16), was one attribute that many women entrepreneurs associated with their decision of adopting Instagram to market for their businesses. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs highlighted that the popularity of Instagram and its widespread use among people in Kuwait made it more appealing to adopt for marketing. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs said using Instagram as a marketing tool helps in reaching a wider and larger range of customers because the majority of Kuwaitis have Instagram accounts. For example, Haifaa Alyagout, owner of Nutri Juice business, decided to adopt Instagram and use it for marketing her business because of its huge observability among Kuwaitis. Haifaa said "most Kuwaitis use Instagram and our customers are very interactive with us and communicate with us a lot on Instagram. It is the most popular and mostly used type of social media in Kuwait. Twitter comes next but Kuwaiti people stopped using Facebook way back and it is no longer popular." Along similar lines, Fajer Ahmed, owner of Hair Sketch salon, attributed her decision of adopting Instagram to its noticeable popularity in Kuwait. Fajer considers Instagram to be the most popular type of social media used as a marketing tool in Kuwait. In the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopting social media, the definition of observability changes to seeing the results of an innovation such as Instagram through the number of followers and the degree to which these users are interactive using such type of social media.

Furthermore, Eman Haider, owner of food business Tea Party Sweets, explained how Instagram has the advantage of being a free medium to be used for marketing. Eman thinks that because having an Instagram account does not require any fee, that made it more appealing to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs in particular. Eman stated that the increased number of women-owned businesses in Kuwaiti is associated with the widespread adoption of Instagram among Kuwaitis. She chose to adopt Instagram only as a marketing tool because Eman believes that Instagram is the most suitable type of social media to use for marketing her business. This could be explained as another the economic relative advantage of using Instagram. However, this particular attribute highlighted by Eman is not specifically limited to adopting Instagram because most of the other types of social media such as Facebook and Twitter are free and costless.

The literature on Diffusion and more precisely the research involving these five attributes of innovations that Rogers classified have been applied in different fields and were examined by various scholars. The adoption of different technologies were investigated and researched. Carayannis and Turner (2006) studied multiple factors prompting the adoption and application of Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology. They looked at the adoption of security technology and researched the five attributes of innovations that Rogers (2003) categorized in relation to what affecting PKI implementation and exemplifying potential for examination of security technology adoption in general. The findings of Carayannis and Turner (2006) illustrated that PKI has a relative advantage which benefits its adoption when compared to other security technologies. However, they found that there are some issues regarding the complexity of the PKI technology and how it is used which influences its adoption. Parashos and Messer (2006) looked at the acceleration of a novel technology in dentistry. Their research work focused on examining the reasons behind the failure in adopting certain technologies while others are

successfully adopted and worked as replacements to older technologies. The results of Parashos and Messer's (2006) study revealed that there are factors associated with the adoption process of new technology such as multifaceted interaction of supposed benefits and observed advantages, and psychosocial and behavioral factors.

Scholars such as Ilie, Van Slyke, Green, and Lou (2005) researched the importance of the perceived attributes of innovations and communication technologies use intentions through the investigation of gender differences. Their study examined the role gender plays in influencing the perceived attributes of innovations that Rogers originally described and added some few ones too. They found that gender has a concrete interference in the relative advantage, compatibility, ease of use, visibility, result demonstrability and critical mass on the adopting a communication technology. Their results suggested that men and women are dissimilar in their insights and perceptions of the social presence, usefulness, and ease of use. The current study showed that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs considered the attributes – relative advantage, complexity, and observability – of Instagram when they adopted it for marketing their businesses.

RQ3: Are there certain characteristics of Kuwaiti culture that make the adoption of social media by women entrepreneurs more relevant to their economic success?

The current research studied a distinctive culture and tried to investigate the various characteristics of Kuwaiti culture that make the adoption of social media more relevant to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs' economic success. In this study's findings, Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs shared their experiences and narrated how their family and friends' support motivated them to be part of the entrepreneurial world. Several married Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs talked about how their husbands encouraged and supported them to own and run their businesses. For example, Fajer Ahmad, owner of beauty salon Hair Sketch, said her

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husband is the one who supports her the most and he encourages her to pursue doing what she loves to do. Majdah Baqer, owner or Om El7eweem food business, is another Kuwaiti entrepreneur who talked about how her husband played an important role in her journey of becoming an entrepreneur. Majdah said that her husband's continuing support and help made her feel more confident about how she handles her business.

Additionally, Dalal Al-Asousi, owner of Casa Spa beauty salon, explained that her husband was very supportive of her decision of owning her business. However, Dalal's sister and business partner, Fay Al-Asousi, faced discouragement from her husband as he was initially against Fay's decision of becoming an entrepreneur. Fay said that her husband opposed her decision of becoming an entrepreneur initially because he was worried about the obstacles and problems she would face while dealing with customers and having the business's services done at their homes. Fay further shared that after two years of successfully running the Casa Spa business, her husband became more encouraging of her as an entrepreneur. Wheeler (2001) stated that in a conservative culture like the Kuwaiti one, women face challenges on a daily basis due to gender-based discrimination. She talked about how Kuwaiti women are being more encouraged to join the labor force in recent times. Wheeler (2001) said the younger generations of men became more supportive of their wives' decision of joining the work force. What Wheeler (2001) pointed out was supported by a number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed for this study. Many married Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs were encouraged by their husbands to take the risky decision of becoming an entrepreneur. However, Chamlou (2008) identified three factors related to having fewer women entrepreneurs in the Middle East and Africa (MENA) region and one of these factors focused on attitudes towards women and work. She highlighted that the perceptions toward women in the MENA region circulate around encouraging them to perform

their family-related responsibilities. Chamlou (2008) discussed how women are rarely encouraged by their male partners and relatives to become entrepreneurs. Fay Al-Asousi's example supports what Chamlou (2008) found.

Also, the current study's findings showed other examples of Kuwaiti women who were discouraged by male members of their families. For example, Wadha Al-Asfour's father opposed her decision of owning her fashion business, Al-Asfour Designer, due to his concerns regarding Wadha's young age. Similarly, Haleemah Ahmad's father was against her decision of becoming a Kuwaiti entrepreneur. Haleemah, owner of fashion business Qumoosh Couture, explained that her father was against her decision of running an entrepreneurial venture because he perceived doing so negatively. Haleemah's father initially considered the idea of selling clothes to people to get more income as a bad idea.

On the other hand, the female family members, especially mothers, of nearly all of the Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed for this study were very supportive and encouraged them to become entrepreneurs. Some of the male members such as fathers and husbands who initially were against the idea to start businesses became more encouraging after seeing the success of the women running their businesses.

The findings of the current research showed that many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs correlated the increasing number of women-owned businesses with the accelerated diffusion of social media in Kuwait. For example, Shaikhah and Anfal Al-Mutairi, who have owned their fashion business Staylek since 2005, talked about how the prevalence of social media in Kuwait enabled women entrepreneurs to market their businesses in reasonable ways and also helped in increasing the approval of Kuwaiti culture towards women's entrepreneurship. Anfal said that "due to the existence of social media and the widespread of home businesses nowadays, it

became way easier for Kuwaiti women to start and own their businesses." Anfal also added that social media allowed women entrepreneurs to target a wider market due to their accessibility and ease of use. Furthermore, Noriya AlMlhami, owner of food business Om Khaled talked about how the increasing number of home-based businesses owned by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs correlated with the diffusion of social media, especially Instagram. She talked about how the growing number of businesses adopting Instagram is resulting in more competition between such businesses. Noriya explained that the increasing number of home-based businesses, which is creating competition among these businesses owners, is a noticeable sign that women-owned businesses are widely spread in Kuwait. Noriya said "our Kuwaiti society now became very accepting to having women owning their businesses."

In addition, Eman Haider, owner of food business Tea Party Sweets, associated the increasing number of businesses owned by Kuwaiti women with the noticeable and wide adoption of Instagram among Kuwaitis. Eman explained that Instagram's diffusion among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs relates to how inexpensive it is to use Instagram as a marketing tool taking into account its huge popularity among Kuwaitis in general.

This study explained that the characteristics of Kuwaiti culture that make social media and most specifically Instagram more relevant to the economic success of women entrepreneurs is Kuwaiti culture's acceptance and encouragement of having women-owned businesses. Also, the immense and observable diffusion of Instagram among people in Kuwait helps women-owned businesses to use Instagram as a successful marketing tool by entrepreneurs as it ensures their reach to a larger number of customers. Goby and Erogul (2011) argued that collectivist cultures, which includes Kuwait, may impact the consumer adoption decisions. Some adopters might decide on adopting innovations because they see others adopting them, especially if these

innovations are adopted by early adopters. In the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, this can be explained by relating how women entrepreneurs are adopting Instagram because it is widely diffused among people in Kuwait. Also, the prevalence of other successful examples of women entrepreneurs using Instagram for marketing their businesses might influence the adoption of Instagram by other Kuwaiti women owning their businesses. For instance, Rawan Al-Duwisan, owner of food business Yummy Choco, talked about how home-owned businesses marketing through Instagram became so predominant in Kuwait that many such owners, including herself, became customers of others. She said that she likes shopping and buying things from other businesses which sell their products and services on Instagram. Rawan stated that the increasing number of home-owned businesses operated by women indicates the acceptance of such businesses among Kuwaitis.

Women's Entrepreneurship in Kuwait through the Gender Lens

Women's entrepreneurship in Kuwait is one key aspect that this current study examined. The findings of this study revealed a number of challenges that Kuwaiti women face when they decide to become entrepreneurs. The challenges that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs talked about were either described clearly in relation to their gender or were just mentioned as challenges without relating them to being women entrepreneurs. Chamlou (2008) reported encouraging findings related to businesses owned by women in the Middle East and Africa (MENA) region in terms of owning larger sizes of businesses than male-owned businesses and that women entrepreneurs are more frequent users of information technology, active exporters, and their businesses appeal to foreign investors. Still, Chamlou (2008) acknowledged the predominant notion that states that entrepreneurship is a male-dominated domain, which makes it tougher for women in general and, more specifically, women of the MENA region to become entrepreneurs.

Women face several challenges prior and after making the decision of owning and running their entrepreneurial ventures. Also, Al Mutairi and Fayez (2015) found that the challenges and obstacles facing women entrepreneurs in Kuwait are high competition among women entrepreneurs and the roles women play in their families. The conflict of achieving and maintaining the balance between family responsibilities and owning a business is one challenge hindering women entrepreneurship in Kuwait.

Examples of gender-related challenges included Badriya Al-Sultan, a Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur running a food business, who explained that she still finds it very challenging to be a woman entrepreneur and a married woman who has a daughter. Badriya expressed that balancing between her home duties and running the business she owns is one major challenge she faces as a Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur. Demartino and Barbato (2003) found that balancing between family and work is what motivated women to become entrepreneurs whereas men are more motivated to become entrepreneurs because they seek advanced economic conditions and wealth creation. Also, Brush, Bruin, and Welter (2009, p. 18) argued that the metaphor "motherhood," which signifies the domestic and family circumstance of female entrepreneurs, has a higher influence on women's decisions to becoming entrepreneurs than men. Brush, Bruin, and Welter (2009) explained how being a mother either motived or discouraged women from making the choice of becoming entrepreneurs. However, in Badriya's example, she perceived motherhood and her family duties not as much as a motivation but more as a challenge, which she needs to overcome to be able to balance between performing her family duties and running her business.

On the other hand, both what Demartino and Barbato (2003) found about balancing between family and running a business, and the "motherhood" metaphor, which Brush, Bruin, and Welter

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(2009) designated, seems to associate with Majdah Baqer's decision to become an entrepreneur, especially with owning a home-based business. Majdah, owner of Om El7eween food business, who explained how becoming an entrepreneur helped her overcome her depression, said that her therapist suggested she does something outside her home. But Majdah added, "I told her I like being at home and I love being around my kids and not leave them alone for so long so if I go out that will affect me negatively. Therefore, I chose to work from home and at the same time I can take care of my kids and see what is happening with them." In Majdah's case, it is clear that being a mother governed her decision of becoming an entrepreneur and also owning a home-based business.

Another challenge that illustrated how the gender of the entrepreneur becomes problematic to get business-related tasks done is how women entrepreneurs find it difficult to go to places where mostly men work. Farah Alraees, owner of FAR Designs business, voiced how challenging it is for her as a woman to go to the printing press to get her designs printed because mostly men are there. Farah said that in order to get her work done, she continuously needs to ask a family member or a friend to go with her to the printing press to get any job done.

The other challenges that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs addressed were limitations in capital, production, and marketing tools, lack of resources, issues with delivery service, pricing the items, work overload and lack of employees, orders getting delayed and season overload work, and the need for business guidance. Even though Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs did not personally or specifically relate these challenges to their gender, some of these challenges can be attributed to their gender based on some previous findings of earlier studies. Mirchandani (1999) highlighted that the comparisons between women-owned firms and men-owned businesses revealed findings showing that the businesses owned by women were more often smaller and

that women entrepreneurs have less management skills, limited or less access to capital, and poorer performance. Some similar issues and challenges were pointed out by some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed for the current research. For example, limitations in capital, production, and marketing tools are similar to what Mirchandani (1999) found about women-owned businesses. The present study did not research women entrepreneurs in comparison to men entrepreneurs in Kuwait. But, further research could explore whether women entrepreneurs might be disadvantaged and face such challenges because of their gender when compared to Kuwaiti men entrepreneurs. Also, Alowaihan (2004) stated findings examining gender differences and business performance of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. His results indicated that men had more business experience whereas women had higher education levels, and were older than their male counterparts. Also, his findings revealed that women-owned businesses' financial performance was significantly lower than businesses owned by men. However, this study demonstrated findings showing some different demographic information of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who participated in this study. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs belonged to different age groups and the majority of them are in their twenties. Ten women entrepreneurs are in their twenties while eight of them are in their thirties. Two are in their forties, one woman in her fifties, and two women who did not disclose their age. When it comes to employment status, this study included ten female employees working in governmental sector, five others who are college students, and the remaining women were either retired, housewives, or only own their businesses.

The literature on women's entrepreneurship looked at different factors involving and influencing the decision of women to become entrepreneurs. Much of the literature focused on examining the micro-level factors such as the motivations driving women to start and own their

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businesses (Jamali, 2009). Mutairi and Fayez (2015) listed a number of motivational factors that motivated women in Kuwait to become entrepreneurs. The motivations they found included "freedom for decision making, the desire for financial independence, the availability of market opportunity, and interest in additional income" (p. 60). Mutairi and Fayez (2015) pointed out that improving the social and economic positions and getting involved in profitable projects and running successful firms drive women in Kuwait to become entrepreneurs. The findings of the present study revealed diverse motivations driving Kuwaiti women's decision to become entrepreneurs. This study's findings showed that Kuwaiti women were motivated to become entrepreneurs due to having the liberty of doing what they love to do the most and also practicing their favorite hobby. For example, Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur Ameena Al-Qattan, owner of Neon fashion business, got motivated to become an entrepreneur because she wants to work in something she enjoys and loves doing. Ameena also works in a governmental job but she expressed that she prefers owning her business because it allows her to do what she loves and also profits from it. Ameena also voiced her hopes for focusing only on running her business in the future so that she can own her working hours. Another example is Fajer Ahmad, owner of Hair Sketch beauty salon, who started her business because she wants to improve her hobby. Fajer said that applying makeup is her favorite hobby and excelling at her hobby is what motivated her to become an entrepreneur.

Moreover, family and friends' support motivated a number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to make such decisions while other women were inspired by other successful examples of women entrepreneurs in Kuwait. The findings of the present study showed different motivations of those found by Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri (2010) who found that the ability to enhance their social position and make independent decisions when owning their businesses are the

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motivations that drove Kuwaiti women to becoming entrepreneurs. For example, Haleemah

Ahmad, the owner of fashion business Qumoosh Couture, was strongly motivated by her

mother's support. Haleemah said that her mother motivated her the most to become an

entrepreneur and that is why Haleemah used her mother's surname Qumoosh for naming her

fashion business Qumoosh Couture. Another Kuwaiti woman entrepreneur, who was motivated

by her mother's support, is Wadha Al-Asfour, owner of fashion business Al-Asfour Designer.

Wadha was not only motivated by her mother but also her mother's friend, who encouraged

Wadha to make her clothing designs and start her business as Wadha was close to graduating

from college.

Also, the findings of the current study involving the motivations of women entrepreneurs

were dissimilar to those found by Fischer, Reuber, and Dyke (1993), whose findings showed that

women entrepreneurs have higher financial motivations and that they are not motivated by

achieving balance between family and work while men get motivated by attaining better

economic conditions and wealth. Even though this study's findings revealed different

motivations listed by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, the balancing between family and running a

business was mentioned by a number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs more as a challenge than

as a motivation. For example, Badriya Al-Sultan, owner of Samboosa Box food business,

expressed that balancing between performing her family-related duties and owning her business

is challenging for her. Badriyah finds it difficult to balance between the two because it is

challenging for her to divide her time and attention and make the appropriate balance.

Also, the present study showed a contradictory finding to what Fischer, Reuber, and Dyke

(1993) found about women entrepreneurs and financial motivations. It was found in the current

study that women entrepreneurs in Kuwait are more motivated to start their businesses because it

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gives them the liberty to do something they love doing. Women entrepreneurs tend to choose

what they love to do the most and make a business out of it. Therefore, they are not driven by the

monetary-related motivation. Some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs do not even care much about

the business profit because all it matters for them is the enjoyment and the love for what they are

doing. For example, Majdah Baqer, who is very passionate about cooking and owns a food

business, said, "I think and this is how I feel that most of the Kuwaiti women and girls who own

their businesses is a matter of doing what you like to do. It is like an enjoyment. I personally do

not bother much about the profits or the money that I get back from my business." Another

example of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who are less concerned about the financial gain and

who refused to take money from her customers is Noriya AlMhami, owner of Om Khaled food

business. Noriya said she was initially uncomfortable to charge her customers for the food

services she provides. She said it was difficult for her to take money from her customers

especially those who are family members of Noriya. She also expressed that cooking is what she

loves doing the most and it is her favorite hobby and that is what motivated her to own her food

business Om Khaled.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study were relatable to what Dyke, DeMartino and

Babato (2003) found about the motivations concerning women deciding to become

entrepreneurs. They found that women are less motivated by wealth creation and advancement

reasons and that family-related lifestyle reasons govern women's decision for starting and

owning their businesses. The love for what they are doing and excelling at their favorite hobby

along with other motivations were found commonly among many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs

studied in this research whereas the financial and commercial motivations were absent.

The gender lens does not only involve the challenges and motivations of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, but it can also be argued that the types of businesses these women own have a gendered identity. For example, the majority of these businesses are home-based businesses whereas the minority are businesses operating in actual stores. Most of these businesses started as home businesses but got so successful and popular that their women owners were able to acquire an actual store for these businesses. The home operating factor of these businesses can be looked at from a gender lens, which could argue that women are operating from home because of the family related-lifestyle reasons. They want to balance between their home duties and running their business (Dyke, DeMartino, & Babato, 2003). Another explanation can be drawn from a gender lens is that limitations in capital and production that several Kuwaiti women face are challenges that hinder their ability to have their businesses start or grow beyond home-based businesses (Mirchandani, 1999). A number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs interviewed for the current study expressed their hopes of owning stores for their businesses and grow beyond a home-based businesses. For example, Ameena Al-Qattan, owner of Neon fashion business, said she hopes that in the future she will own an actual shop for her business where she can sell the head veils she designs.

Similarities among these Kuwaiti women businesses can be noticed in the type of businesses they own. The majority of the businesses in this study are either food businesses or fashion businesses. Eleven of these businesses are food businesses whereas five of them are fashion businesses. The rest of the businesses belong to different types such as a beauty salon, printing press, and selling decorative and customized goods and merchandises. Food, fashion, and beauty salons are businesses that mainly relate to women. These Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs do not only own such businesses because they are women but also the majority of their customers are

women, too. Several of these businesses are exclusively targeting women. The majority of these businesses are owned and run by Kuwaiti women to sell products and provide services for other Kuwaiti female customers and consumers.

RQ4: How do Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive the pros and cons of social media marketing?

This study's findings revealed that the perceived pros of using Instagram for marketing by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs are Instagram is like a photo album, it enlarges the circle of customers, it is widely used, and it is suitable for smaller businesses. Nevertheless, this current study also reported a number of cons that Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceived of using Instagram as a marketing tool. The cons of Instagram include products may not be what they seem, the business owners have to deal with rude and discouraging comments, women entrepreneurs worry about providing unique content. Also, women entrepreneurs worry that their accounts will be stolen or lost and their products' photos may be copied. Women entrepreneurs also wonder how long Instagram will be the preferred social media in Kuwait.

The pros that women entrepreneurs in Kuwait listed in using Instagram as a marketing tool are similar to the attributes they associated with why they chose and implemented Instagram in their marketing strategies. Both Instagram's photo-sharing nature (relative advantage) and popularity (observability) were two essential and repeatedly mentioned factors that women entrepreneurs associated with Instagram's suitability to be used as a marketing tool. The pros that Instagram enlarges the circle of customers and that it is widely used relate to the observability attribute of Instagram. The advantage of using Instagram like a photo album is what appealed to many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs to use Instagram as a marketing tool, especially compared to other types of social media. Women entrepreneurs post photos of their

products and services and promote their businesses using Instagram because this particular social media platform is based on the concept of socializing by mainly sharing photos and videos. Also, because most of these businesses are home-based businesses and have limited resources, Instagram becomes suitable to use for marketing these businesses as it is free of charge. Bedoor Alwahiab, owner of Casa Sweet food business said she is the one who operates all matters related to her business and she finds Instagram very suitable to use for marketing. Bedoor adopted Instagram because it enables her to handle the marketing aspect of her business and she also thinks that Instagram is very appropriate to use for promoting the size of business she owns.

However, there are cons of using Instagram as a marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceived the photo-sharing nature of Instagram, which mainly distinguishes Instagram favorably, works against women entrepreneurs using Instagram for marketing their products and services in some cases. For example, some customers were not happy with what they purchased because they feel that they were tricked by what they saw in the photos posted on the Instagram account of the business. Rawan Al-Duwisan, owner of Yummy Choco, elaborated "some customers may get attracted to what they see in the pictures posted on Instagram but when they get the order, they do not like the taste of what I make. So they will start complaining." Similarly, Haleemah Ahmad, owner of fashion business Qumoosh Couture, perceived the same con of using Instagram. Haleemah said that using Instagram disadvantages the business she owns sometimes because she gets comments from her customers complaining that the dresses they see on Qumoosh Couture's Instagram account is not what they get after ordering from her. Haleemah stated that some of her buyers will criticize the material of the dresses or will complain about the style which they do not find similar to what they saw on her Instagram business account. This indicates that the photo-sharing

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favorable feature of Instagram that many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive as an advantage to market their businesses can sometimes work against their businesses. Customers' complains and dissatisfaction of the products might happen because they expect to get exactly what they see in the photos posted on the Instagram business accounts of these women entrepreneurs. When customers do not get exactly what they see or expect to get, they start complaining that it is not like what they saw in the photos posted on Instagram.

Another con of using Instagram is Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs have to deal with rude and discouraging comments. The negative comments are inescapable in the world of social media, which are platforms allowing their users to express how they feel regardless of how positive and negative it is. However, when using Instagram for marketing a business, the rude and negative comments may affect the perceptions of other buyers and customers because they can get influenced by the negative posts. That is what a number of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs referred to as one of the cons of using Instagram. Majdah Baqer, owner of food business Om El7elween, explained, "some people just like to drag you down by saying and posting negative comments, their intention is not to look at what you sell but they just want to comment negatively and discourage you."

Some Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs delete such rude comments when they think that they are attacking them personally more than professionally. Fajer Ahmad, owner of beauty salon Hair Sketch, said that she generally does not delete the negative comments. However, Fajer deletes the rude comments criticizing her personally and not her work. When Fajer reads a rude comment on her Instagram, she does not only delete the comment but Fajer also blocks the commenter because she believes this is not constructive criticism and such rude commenters write negatively only to discourage her. On the other hand, Eman Haider, owner of food business

Tea Party Sweets, does not delete the negative comments written to discourage her. Eman expressed that she now does not pay as much attention to them as she used to because her loyal customers defend her and reply back on her Instagram business account.

The other three cons of Instagram showed how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs worry about providing unique content, that their accounts will be lost or stolen, and that their photos may be copied. These three all fall under the disadvantage of posting original work in a public yet not secured platform. The unsecured and unprotected accessibility of Instagram endangers the content that women entrepreneurs share about their businesses on their Instagram accounts. There are no laws to protect what they post including the photos they share. For example, Bedoor Alwahiab, owner of food business Casa Sweet, said that "once you post a picture on Instagram, you kind of lose the ownership of it because it becomes publicly available. There is no law or copyright restrictions that are followed in Kuwait. That is bad because the pictures we post on Instagram can be easily copied and stolen without being credited to its original source." Also, Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer, owners of fashion business Lam Sheen, expressed their struggle with trying to be unique and not get copied by others. They struggle to present and promote their business in a unique way because other Instagram users can copy and steal what Latifah and Shaikha do and post on their Instagram. They pointed that the main disadvantage of using Instagram for marketing is their inability to protect their fashion designs and the way they present them in photos from getting copied or stolen.

The last con perceived of Instagram is Kuwaiti women wonder how long Instagram will be the preferred social media in Kuwait. The longevity of any type of social media is critical because newer types of social media and technologies can easily replace it and become more adopted. This worries women entrepreneurs such as Latifah Aljassem and Shaikha Al-Amer,

owners of fashion business Lam Sheen. They talked about their concerns about Instagram getting replaced by another type of social media in the future. Latifah expressed that she worries that Instagram will not continue being the most popular social media type used among Kuwaitis. Also, Shaikha said that she wonders if Instagram will fade someday and she was more concerned about what they would do if Instagram loses its popularity. However, other Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs, who were running their businesses for a longer time, seemed more confident that Instagram sooner or later will be replaced by another type of social media. Aysha Alhouli, owner of Zari International Est printing press, predicted that a newer type of social media will replace Instagram in the future and will surpass the popularity of Instagram.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the adoption of social media as a marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. It explores the topic through different concepts involving the use of social media, gender, entrepreneurship, diffusion of innovations theory, and a distinctive culture. Precisely, the main purpose of this study was to understand how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt social media through the application of Rogers' (2003) theory of Diffusion of Innovations in an attempt to provide new insights and findings concerning women's entrepreneurship and their social media use. This research studied the challenges and motivations of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopting social media. This study tried to provide understandings related to the way Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopt and utilize social media to market their businesses. Also, this study focused on exploring the different attributes (relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability) of social media that appealed particularly to Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. However, the perceptions of these attributes were examined distinctively in the context of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs adopting social media as

a marketing tool. It looked at certain characteristics of Kuwaiti culture that made the adoption of social media by women entrepreneurs more relevant to their economic success. Furthermore, it examined the pros and cons Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs perceive of social media when adopted and used as a marketing tool.

This qualitative study combined participant-observation and in-depth interviews to help provide detailed answers involving the adoption of social media by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Additionally, four different cases of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs using social media as marketing tool were extensively observed and interviewed to provide understandings of social media adoption in relation to entrepreneurship, gender, and culture.

One major finding of this study revealed that the type of social media preferred and most commonly adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs is Instagram. This study was originally focusing on three different types of social media – Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. However, it was found that adoption of Instagram is incomparable to the other two as 19 out of 20 women-owned businesses utilize Instagram for marketing while only two use Facebook and another two use Twitter for marketing reasons. Also, this study's findings revealed that WhatsApp is another social media type that is most adopted among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. However, women entrepreneurs were found to use WhatsApp as a private communicative tool to interact with their customers privately. WhatsApp is not commonly used as a marketing tool while Instagram is used mainly for marketing reasons.

This study unveiled the three attributes of Instagram that made it more appealing to be adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and utilized as a marketing tool. The three attributes of Instagram are its photo-sharing nature (relative advantage), ease of use (complexity), and popularity (observability). These attributes were understood through the context of Kuwaiti

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women entrepreneurs using social media for marketing reasons and the way they perceived each attribute. The relative advantage is identified as the need of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs for an accessible social media platform allowing them to market through presentable photos and videos showcasing their businesses. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs decided to adopt Instagram because it enables them to market their businesses through visual content. Ease of use refers to how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs themselves manage their Instagram accounts verifying how easy it is to create account, click photos, post pictures, and reply to their customers' comments. The meaning of observability changes to seeing the results of an innovation such as Instagram through the number of followers and the degree to which these users are interactive using such type of social media.

The way Kuwaiti culture has become more accepting and encouraging towards Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and the widespread diffusion of Instagram among Kuwaitis are the characteristics of Kuwaiti culture that made adoption of Instagram more relevant to the economic success of women entrepreneurs in Kuwait.

This study shows that in the adoption of any certain type of social media among a distinct group, diverse factors and aspects should be examined to see how they all integrate and correlate with one another. Both gender and culture played key roles in the adoption of Instagram among Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. This study reveals the challenges faced by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs include limitations in capital, production, and marketing tools, lack of resources, issues with delivery service, pricing the items, work overload and lack of employees, orders getting delayed and seasonal overload work, finding the right places to work with to get the job done, balancing between taking care of home duties and running the business, and need for guidance. In addition, this study showed the motivations that drove Kuwaiti women to become

entrepreneurs. The motivations are doing what they love to do the most, practicing and excelling at their favorite hobby, family and friends' support, and getting inspired by other successful examples of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs.

This study presented the perceived pros of using Instagram as a marketing tool by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. Those pros are Instagram is like a photo album, it enlarges the circle of customers, it is widely used, and it is suitable for smaller businesses. Nonetheless, this study also showed several cons to Instagram, which include products may not be what they seem and the business owners have to deal with rude and discouraging comments. Moreover, the cons of using Instagram include women entrepreneurs worry about providing unique content, their accounts will be stolen or lost, and their products' photos may be copied. They also wonder how long Instagram will be the preferred social media in Kuwait.

This study concludes that certain social media are more suitable to adopt as a marketing tool than others. Instagram is the most preferred and commonly adopted type of social media by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs because Instagram allows women entrepreneurs to post photos of their products and services, it is easy to use, and it is the most popular compared to Twitter and Facebook. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs and marketers should consider these attributes and characteristics when they utilize and implement social media in their marketing strategies. Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs could benefit by knowing the pros of Instagram that this study listed because they could maximize their usage of this type of social media. Also, the cons of using Instagram as a marketing tool reported in this study can help women entrepreneurs be aware of such disadvantages associated with using Instagram for marketing their businesses. Women entrepreneurs should be more aware of such cons so that they can think of ways to avoid experiencing the same issues.

Study Limitations and Future Research

This study presented findings about media adoption among women entrepreneurs in Kuwait and most specifically of those adopting Instagram as a marketing tool, but there are a number of limitations concerning this study that should be addressed. It is important to acknowledge that the findings of this study cannot be generalized due to its snowball sampling technique, which limits its scope to generalize the findings about women entrepreneurs and their adoption of social media. The answers given by the group of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs who were interviewed for this study provided more data about adopting Instagram compared to other types of social media. Future research could consider other different sampling techniques such as simple random sampling or stratified sampling that can include a wider range of women entrepreneurs and see if they adopt different types of media as a marketing tool.

Another limitation of this study that it mainly focused on the attributes of innovations that Rogers (2003) identified and does not research any other factors related to the adoption process. The findings of this study provided data about attributes of Instagram that made it more appealing to be adopted by Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs but this study did not reveal any findings related to which adopter category these women belong to. Also, Rogers (2003) also identified five stages of the innovation-decision process including the knowledge stage, the persuasion stage, the decision stage, the implementation stage, and the confirmation process. This study did not study the decision process these women entrepreneurs went through because it concentrated on the adoption decision more than the process itself. Future research should consider researching different factors associated with women entrepreneurs' decision to adopt social media for marketing reasons.

This study involved the gender-related perspective and literature but it only presented findings about women entrepreneurs and not men. This study does not provide any comparisons between how Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs are either different or similar to men entrepreneurs in their decisions related to adopting social media for marketing reasons. Gender was only examined in this study through studying women entrepreneurs in Kuwait and their adoption of social media. Future research should include men entrepreneurs and investigate their social media adoption as a marketing tool. Also, future studies can look at the differences and similarities among women entrepreneurs and men entrepreneurs adopting social media and implementing them in their marketing strategies.

This study also is limited because it researched only a particular country and culture – Kuwait. Thus, the findings can be limited to those who share such similarities. Future research should draw some comparisons between how and why women entrepreneurs adopt social media as a marketing tool in other countries. Theses could include two or more countries from the same region, such as comparing Kuwaiti and Lebanese women entrepreneurs and their use of social media to see if similarities or differences exist. Other studies could compare the case of Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs with a Western country and examine how and why the two groups adopt certain types of social media for marketing their businesses.

Despite the limitations, this study reveals that Instagram is the most adopted type of social media among many Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs. It discloses the various ways of using Instagram as a marketing tool. This study also shows the three attributes of Instagram that made it the most appropriate social media type to adopt and utilize for marketing – its photo-sharing nature (relative advantage), ease of use (complexity), and popularity (observability). Moreover, this study lists the pros and cons of using Instagram as a marketing tool perceived by Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs. In addition, this study unveils the challenges and motivations of Kuwaiti

women entrepreneurs and also shows how culture and gender correlate with women

entrepreneurs' decision to adopt Instagram as a marketing tool.

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Appendix A: In-depth Interview Questions

1. Tell me about who you are? Introduce yourself.

2. What is the type of the business you own?

3. When did you start your own business? How long have you been running your business?

4. Whose idea was to own and start your own business?

5. Who is funding your business?

6. What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

7. What are the obstacles you faced when you started your own business?

8. What is it like being a woman entrepreneur in a culture like Kuwait and what are the challenges you faced as a woman?

9. In your opinion, what are the main characteristics that a woman entrepreneur personality should have?

10. Who are you targeting? Define your target market.

11. What is the majority of your target market?

12. What are your marketing strategies?

13. What types of media do you use to market your business?

14. What are the social media you adopted to use as a marketing tool to reach out to your target market?

15. Why do you use social media as a marketing tool?

16. What do you think are the advantages of adopting social media as a marketing tool?

17. What do you think are the disadvantages of adopting social media as a marketing tool?

18. Do you think the use of social media helped you overcome some cultural obstacles related to reaching to your target market?

Appendix B: Colorado State University Institutional Review Board Approval

Colorado State University
Knowledge to Go Places

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE:	August 31, 2014
TO:	Kodrich, Kris, 1785 Journalism Tech Comm
	Luft, Gregory, 1785 Journalism Tech Comm, Alghaith, Shaikhah, 1785 Journalism Tech Comm
FROM:	Swiss, Evelyn, Coordinator, CSU IRB 2
PROTOCOL TITLE:	Understanding Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs and Their Adoption of Social Media A Study of Diffusion, Gender, and Culture in the Middle East
FUNDING SOURCE:	NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER:	14-5228H
APPROVAL PERIOD:	Approval Date: August 31, 2014 Expiration Date: August 30, 2015

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: Understanding Kuwaiti Women Entrepreneurs and Their Adoption of Social Media A Study of Diffusion, Gender, and Culture in the Middle East. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

IRB Office - (970) 491-1553; RICRO_IRB@mail.Colostate.edu
Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381; Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu

Swiss, Evelyn

Evelyn Swiss

Swiss, Evelyn

Approval is to recruit up to 12 focus group participants and 30 Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs with the approved recruitment and consent. The above-referenced project was approved by the Institutional Review Board with the condition that the approved consent form is signed by the subjects and each subject is given a copy of the form. NO changes may be made to this document without first obtaining the approval of the IRB.

Approval Period:	August 31, 2014 through August 30, 2015
Review Type:	EXPEDITED
IRB Number:	00000202