Received 18 July 2016
Revised 4 June 2017
Accepted 5 June 2017

A study of female Middle Eastern entrepreneurs: a resource-based view

Tariq M. Khizindar and William K. Darley
Department of Marketing, Faculty of Economics and Administration, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Purpose – Using the resource-focused view of the firm as a theoretical backdrop, this study aims to examine the relationships between entrepreneurial perceptions and two dependent measures (i.e. customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance). Specifically, the study tests the boundary conditions of the resource-based view (RBV) performance relationship in a Middle Eastern context.

Design/methodology/approach – The data from 171 female Saudi entrepreneurs are analyzed using structural equation modeling.

Findings – The research results revealed that marketing capability and financial capability (i.e. financial capital access) have a positive significant effect on both dependent measures. Labor shortage also has a negative significant effect on both dependent variables, whereas operations capability does not show a significant effect on the two dependent measures. To a large extent, the results show that the RBV holds true in the Saudi context.

Originality/value – The study contributes to the knowledge about the effects of specific human and financial capital, as well as illuminates how marketing capability, financial capital access and labor shortage impact these dependent variables in the unique context of Saudi Arabia among female entrepreneurs, thereby extending the knowledge of the RBV in different contexts. Furthermore, it extends knowledge of the entrepreneurship literature, especially in the area of gender-based entrepreneurship research in developing countries.

Keywords Middle East, Developing countries, Perceptions, Firm performance, Female entrepreneurship, Customer satisfaction outcomes

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Despite the influence of emerging economies on the global economy and the vital role of entrepreneurship in our world, our knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa is quite limited (Kiss *et al.*, 2012). The focus of entrepreneurship research up until this point has almost exclusively been on research sites emanating from North America and Europe (Bruton *et al.*, 2008). Consequently, other areas of the world such as the Middle East and Africa have not received much attention from academic researchers despite the need to understand entrepreneurship in these emerging economies (Bruton *et al.*, 2008; Kiss *et al.*, 2012).

Furthermore, despite the acknowledgment in the literature of the growing importance of female entrepreneurs in creating job opportunities and governments' efforts to enhance

Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship
Vol. 19 No. 1, 2017
pp. 42-58

1471-5201
DOI 10.1108/JRME-07-2016-0023

This project was funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research (DSR), King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, under grant number 1/002/429. The authors, therefore, acknowledge, with thanks, DSR's support for scientific research.

entrepreneurial development notwithstanding (Ismail *et al.*, 2012), little is known about the influence of entrepreneurial perceptions on customer satisfaction outcomes from the Saudi female perspective. Thus, our study investigates the influence of entrepreneurial perceptions on customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance in the context of the resource-based view (RBV). Specifically, we test the boundary conditions of the RBV performance relationship in a non-Western context.

Sheth (2011) notes that it may be ill-considered to generalize such research findings from the developed world to organizations in the emerging markets. Thus, our study contributes to scholarship by showing how specific types of human capital and financial capital influence customer satisfaction outcomes, as well as financial performance, and adds to the limited entrepreneurship research from the Middle East by providing new insights of the RBV as it applies in this context.

We postulate from the RBV (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) "as it extends to human capital" (Becker and Huselid, 2006; Soriano and Castrogiovanni, 2012, p. 334) and focus on two resources (i.e. knowledge and financial capital access) that are critical to the success of a business (El-Hamidi, 2011; Hitt *et al.*, 2001). Thus, we propose and test a model showing the effect of marketing capability, operations capability, labor shortage and financial capability (i.e. financial capital access) on customer satisfaction outcomes, as well as on firm performance within the unique context of Saudi Arabia. Because "entrepreneurship is an activity that is situationally and culturally bound" (Das, 2000-2001, p. 68), our study will help establish elastic boundaries and limitations of resource availability theory in entrepreneurship research (Kolvereid *et al.*, 1993) in a non-Western context. Thus, our study also speaks to the current debate on contexts and non-enabling environment with respect to women's entrepreneurship.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. First, we offer a context for our study. This section outlines the uniqueness of the Saudi context and how this context is likely to influence the hypothesized relationships identified in this study. Second, we provide a literature review and background information. Third, we present the theoretical framework and hypotheses. Fourth, the research methodology and analysis are discussed. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling are used for the analyses. Finally, we conclude with the results, implications and future research directions.

The context

While Saudi Arabia is redefining its relationship with the rest of the world, internal perceptions and expectations differ for men and women. Gender segregation at work and at school is upheld (Robertson *et al.*, 2001) either on religious or traditional grounds. Additionally, women are still "not allowed to drive and must have a male representative to deal directly with government agencies" (Minkus-Mckenna, 2009, p. 7). Whereas many highly educated unemployed Saudi women are turning to entrepreneurship instead of waiting for a job opportunity, they face a number of obstacles in the entrepreneurship sector. Among the hurdles women face in engaging in entrepreneurship are social, educational and financial. First, for social hurdles, certain tribes do not allow their women to run businesses because of the belief that such behavior will reduce a woman's chances of getting married. Also, women cannot run a business by themselves because this is socially frowned upon. In addition, some fields are off-limits entirely (e.g. real estate) (Saudi Gazette Report, March 5, 2016). Thus, the normative condition in terms of a social cultural belief system does not favor entrepreneurial undertaking for Saudi females (Lim *et al.*, 2016). In terms of educational obstacles, there is evidence suggesting that the educational system is unable to help female students develop the skills needed to thrive in a business environment. (Saudi

Gazette Report, March 5, 2016). Thus, female university graduates may still not be fully capable of engaging in entrepreneurial undertakings because of an inability to satisfy the cognitive condition of knowledge about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship-related knowledge (Lim *et al.*, 2016). A third obstacle is financial. There appears to be a shortage of special financial institutions that help women to obtain loans to start a small business or they have to deal with a cumbersome system of "red-tape". Thus, a Saudi woman who wants to start a business needs support of her family and financial help of her family (Saudi Gazette Report, March 5, 2016). Taken together, the foregoing discussion provides a synoptic view of the unique non-Western context to explore the viability of the RBV.

Literature review

In the subsequent section, we present research findings from the academic literature on Saudi Arabian female entrepreneurs. Sadi and Al-Ghazali (2012) indicate that from the point of view of a Saudi business woman, the main motivations by rank are self-achievement (first), working independently (second), self-confidence (third) and profit (fourth). In a survey of 350 female entrepreneurs in the Dammam area was obtained through on-line as well as using a drop-off and pick-up method, Sadi and Al-Ghazali (2010) find that self-achievement is the greatest motivational factor for starting a business. Ahmad (2011a) also investigates the challenges, perceptions and motivations of entrepreneurs and their impact on entrepreneurial behaviors in the Riyadh area based on in-depth interviews with 19 Saudi female entrepreneurs. Ahmad (2011a) finds that the challenges and perceptions are similar to those found in other countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) for entrepreneurs, but the women differed in their educational background and in how they obtained their entrepreneurial skills (Minkus-Mckenna, 2009). Saudi females typically receive educational instruction in segregated institutions as well as depend on family and relatives for the development of their entrepreneurial skills.

Additionally, Danish and Smith (2012) report on the challenges and constraints facing female entrepreneurs and the type of support available in a sample of 33 female entrepreneurs from Jeddah. They find the challenges to be societal and institutional. Whereas informal financing is readily available in Saudi Arabia, local government and religious traditions act as major barriers to entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Ahmad (2011b, p. 610) identifies challenges such as:

> [. . .] gender-specific obstacles in the regulatory environment, limited access to the use of formal capital, and financing mechanisms as well as the need for increased integration of sophisticated marketing and technology.

Using a purposive sample of 80 female entrepreneurs from the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia, Sirakumar and Sarkar (2012) also report the obstacles as systems of government department (first), lack of experience and training (second), family obligations (third), the difficulty of time management (fourth) and socio-cultural factors (fifth). In addition to gender discrimination, the Saudi female entrepreneurs face barriers and business challenges such as "bureaucratic red tape, limited access to the use of capital, gender discrimination, lack of support services and limited business networking" (Ahmad, 2011a, p. 137; Ahmad, 2011b; Hattab, 2012; Danish and Smith, 2012; Minkus-Mckenna, 2009; Sadi and Al-Ghazali, 2010), as well as being expected to be "submissive, docile and supportive of males instead of taking active lead roles" (Ahmad, 2011a, p. 136). The challenges and motivations found in Saudi Arabia also parallel those reported in Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (Chamlou, 2008; Dechant and Lamky, 2005; Naser *et al.*, 2009; Sadi and Al-Ghazali, 2012).

Thus, the aforementioned studies point out challenges and obstacles faced by female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia in starting and growing their businesses, as well as their motivations for getting into business. Apparently missing is the direct link from perceptions to customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance. To this end, our study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between entrepreneurial perceptions and customer satisfaction outcomes, as well as firm performance within a Middle Eastern context.

Conceptualization and hypotheses

The theoretical underpinning of this research is derived from the RBV which argues that "resources are the determinants of firm performance" (Barney, 1991; Priem and Butler, 2001: 24) and are "valuable when they enable a firm to conceive of or implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness" (Barney, 1991, p. 106), as well as viewed as "anything which could be thought of as a strength or weakness of a given firm" (Wernerfelt, 1984, p. 172). Thus, marketing capability (i.e. knowledge of the market), operations capability and financial capability are viewed as capabilities or resources. Their presence can be regarded as a "strength", whereas their absence can be thought of as a "weakness" or a "challenge".

Marketing capability, customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance

The RBV (Barney, 1991), as it extends to knowledge resources (Soriano and Castrogiovanni, 2012), suggests market knowledge will affect performance. Recent research suggests a link of marketing capability and firm performance (Krasnikov and Jayachandran, 2008). According to Krasnikov and Jayachandran (2008, p. 3), marketing capability is "based on market knowledge about customer needs and past experience in forecasting and responding to these needs" (Day, 1994) and reflects the ability to decipher customer needs through acquisition of the right information to understand the marketplace better than competitors and to meet the needs of customers better than competitors. In addition, a firm that has accurate information about the marketplace is more likely to be sensitive to needs of the consumer and perform better than its competitors (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

In the case of the Saudi female entrepreneur, she will tend to be well-educated with a graduate or postgraduate degree (Minkus-Mckenna, 2009) and is highly motivated by self-achievement (Sadi and Al-Ghazali, 2010, 2012). Any lack of business acumen is compensated for by a business partner. Thus, the firm will know the market and customers well enough to enjoy a competitive advantage. Consequently, the more knowledgeable the Saudi female entrepreneur is of her customers and marketplace, the more likely is she able to identify the needs of her customers, satisfy those needs and keep her customers. Thus, it is argued that if the Saudi female entrepreneur has the required market knowledge, this knowledge will positively impact her customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance. Extrapolating from the foregoing, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a. There is a positive relationship between marketing capability and customer satisfaction outcomes.

H1b. There is a positive relationship between marketing capability and firm performance.

Operations capability, customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance

Drawing from the RBV (Barney, 1991), "as it extends to human capital" (Soriano and Castrogiovanni, 2012, p. 334), we explore the relationship between operations capability and customer satisfaction outcomes, as well as between operations capability and firm

performance. Operations capability focuses on the performance activities "efficiently and flexibly with minimum wastage of resources" and such capabilities tend to be "related to efficient manufacturing and logistics" (Krasnikov and Jayachandran, 2008, p. 2). In addition, this capability is interested in the efficient delivery of quality products and services as well as in cost reduction and flexibility.

However, the exact mechanism through which operations capability influences satisfaction outcomes and firm performance is still being debated (Peng *et al.*, 2008). That said, we argue that for the Saudi female entrepreneur's firm, the ability to function or operate with an advantage in delivery, efficiency and quality is going to be an asset that will strengthen relationships with customer satisfaction outcomes, as well as with firm performance. Hence, the following hypotheses are presented for a positive link between operations capability and the two dependent measures:

H2a. There is a positive relationship between operations capability and customer satisfaction outcomes.

H2b. There is a positive relationship between operations capability and firm performance.

Labor shortage, customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance

The presence of skilled labor can increase business success (Dubini, 1989). In general, skilled labor can positively influence customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance. Although the exact mechanism for which labor shortage may influence customer satisfaction outcomes and influence firm performance is open for discussion, it appears that the relationship between labor shortage and customer satisfaction outcomes as well as between labor shortage and firm performance can be hypothesized to be negative. The absence of needed labor means the firm will be unable to meet production targets and, thus, will not be able to meet the needs of its customers or grow the business. This shortage of labor should negatively impact customer satisfaction and firm performance.

In the Saudi society, women are not allowed to drive. Whereas this could create a societal constraint, the women tend to have "hired" drivers or can easily contract on a short-term or long-term basis the services of a taxi. This societal constraint may render the Saudi female entrepreneur for all intent and purposes immobile and dependent on others for her driving needs. Also, there are other societal or cultural constraints placed on women, such as not being allowed to mix and/or talk to strangers, which could affect their mobility and independence. Additionally, such factors can have a negative influence on the Saudi female entrepreneur's ability to recruit labor and exacerbate the already difficult situation she faces in attracting qualified labor (Jamal, April 25, 2016; Minkus-Mckenna, 2009; Saudi Gazette Report, March 5, 2016). Also, the role of the female in a male-dominated society may make it difficult to deal with male Saudi employees or tough to retain male employees (Ahmad, 2011a). Consequently, the female entrepreneur may end up with an expatriate labor force or a predominantly female labor force. Taken together, a negative relationship is predicted such that higher levels of labor shortage will lead to lower levels of customer satisfaction outcomes. Similarly, a negative relationship is hypothesized for labor shortage and firm performance. Extrapolating from the foregoing ideas, *H3* is presented:

H3a. There is a negative relationship between labor shortage and customer satisfaction outcomes.

H3b. There is a negative relationship between labor shortage and firm performance.

Financial capability, customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance

Financial capital is resource-based (Barney, 1991) and is viewed as "the ability and willingness to secure external debt" (El-Hamidi, 2011, p. 4). The presence of financial capital can increase firm performance (Dubini, 1989). Conversely, the inability to access finance capital can be a deterrent to a firm either in starting a business or in successfully running the business (Ahmad, 2011b; Danish and Smith, 2012). With capital, key inputs can be harnessed to meet customer needs, thereby ensuring higher satisfaction and better retention of customers.

Whereas women, in general, have trouble gaining access to financial capital (Colleretta and Aubry, 1990; El-Hamidi, 2011; Hisrich and O'Brien, 1981), for most Saudi women entrepreneurs, the traditional sources of funding are fathers, husbands or other family members who provide sufficient capital for their small-scale business ventures (Ahmad, 2011a). Saudi female entrepreneurs also have "access to informal funding" (Minkus-McKenna, 2009, p. 8) and "informal financing is readily available" (Minkus-McKenna, 2009, p. 12) because "women control much wealth" in Saudi Arabia (Minkus-Mckenna, 2009, p. 8). The Saudi female has money from inheritance and does not have to spend because she is a dependent of the father, uncle or brother who cover her expenses. Thus, with her financial reserve plus family financial support, we predict a direct relationship between financial capability and customer satisfaction outcomes, as well as between financial capability and firm performance. Hence, *H4* is presented:

H4a. There is a positive relationship between financial capability and customer satisfaction outcomes.

H4b. There is a positive relationship between financial capability and firm performance.

We hypothesized that marketing capability, operations capability and financial capability as resources will be positively associated with customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance, whereas labor shortage, as a challenge, will be negatively related to both customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance (Figure 1). Thus, we test the boundary conditions of the RBV performance relationship in a non-Western context.

Methodology

Data collection

An available data set of female owners of small and medium-sized firms was obtained from the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce in the Western region of Saudi Arabia, and respondents were randomly selected from this list of contacts. Firms that were willing to participate in the study were identified by making phone calls to the randomly selected companies. Targeted respondents held the position of president, owner or manager of the respective firm. The reason behind this selection was that these individuals were responsible for strategic decision-making at the organizational or marketing function level. If the initial phone contact with the firm resulted in a commitment to participate, survey materials were mailed to the firm and a date for an on-site visit was scheduled. Surveys completed by participants were collected during the site visit. Others were mailed in by the respondents.

The sample

The sample consisted of 171 female entrepreneurs from the Western region of Saudi Arabia. The firms participating in this study had an average of 18 employees, of which approximately 10 per cent were in manufacturing, 27 per cent in retailing and 43 per cent in the service industry. Nearly 63 per cent of the respondents described their job title as owner,

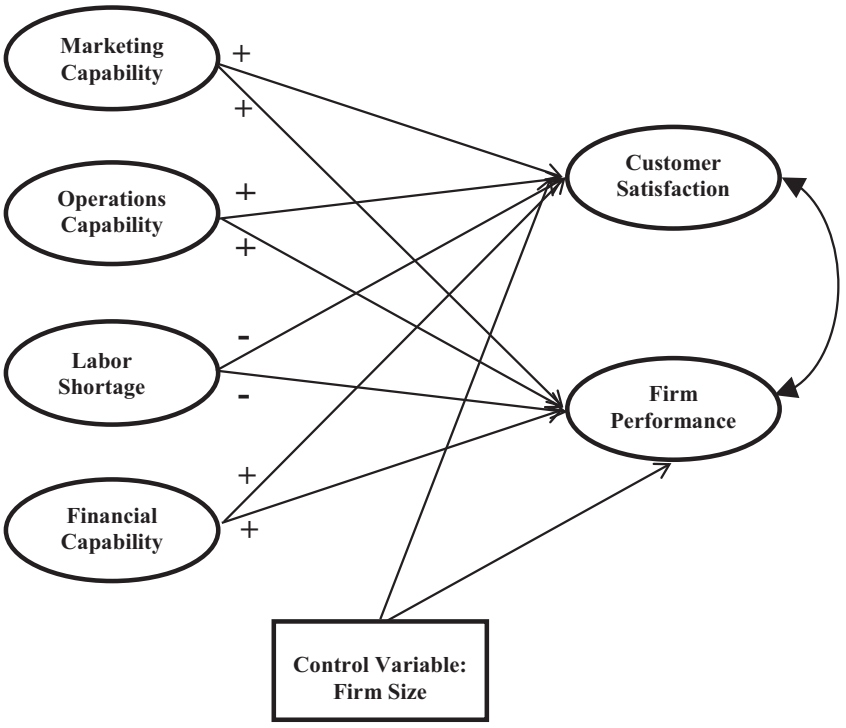

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework

while about 25 per cent used owner/manager as their job title. The remaining 12 per cent used the title of manager. The average female entrepreneur was 37.4 years old and had been in business for an average of eight years.

These sample characteristics parallel the sample characteristics of female entrepreneurs in the MENA region reported by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). GEM asserts that most female entrepreneurs are between the ages of 25 and 44 years old, and their enterprises are more likely to be consumer-oriented businesses and in small ventures hiring between 6 and 19 employees (Hattab, 2012; Kelly *et al.*, 2011).

Description of measures

The measures used in this study are presented in Table I. They cover various aspects of perceptual factors and are consistent with the conceptualization of perceptions of challenges and obstacles encountered by entrepreneurs (Ahmad, 2011a; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006; Danish and Smith, 2012; Sadi and Al-Ghazali, 2010). The independent measures are marketing capability, operations capability, labor shortage and financial capability and these are operationalized using four, three, three and four items, respectively. Their reliabilities were 0.74, 0.76, 0.80 and 0.77, respectively. The specific items can be found in Table I.

The dependent measures are customer satisfaction outcomes (Narver and Slater, 1990) and firm performance adapted from previous studies (Hult *et al.*, 2004). Customer satisfaction outcomes were measured using three indicators (alpha = 0.89) that parallel those used in Menguc and Auh (2006), as well as Narver and Slater (1990). Firm performance was measured using four items (Table I), and assessed using sales growth, market share,

Independent and dependent variables	Standardized[a] loading	Reliability (SCR[b], AVE[c])
Marketing capability[d]		SCR = 0.73, AVE = 0.48, $\propto$ = 0.74
X_1: We continuously collect information about the market	0.640	
X_2: We are capable of analyzing the effects of market information on our business	0.764	
X_3: We are well informed about market opportunities	0.657	
Operations capability[d,f]		SCR = 0.77, AVE = 0.53, $\propto$ = 0.76
X_4: We have some defects in our operations	0.589	
X_5: We face difficulties fulfilling our daily operations	0.684	
X_6: We still work with traditional technologies	0.886	
Labor shortage[d]		SCR = 0.80, AVE = 0.57, $\propto$ = 0.80
X_7: We always have a shortage of knowledgeable manpower	0.751	
X_8: We have a shortage of skilled labor to manage our business	0.790	
X_9: We wish we had employees with multiple skills	0.729	
Financial capability[d]		SCR = 0.76, AVE = 0.45, $\propto$ = 0.77
X_{10}: We are able to acquire the capital we need	0.667	
X_{11}: We are able to acquire a government loan easily	0.679	
X_{12}: We are able to acquire a bank loan easily	0.769	
X_{13}: We do not have a problem acquiring capital or financing	0.550	
Customer satisfaction outcomes[e]		SCR = 0.89, AVE = 0.73, $\propto$ = 0.89
Y_1: We have been able to create value for our customers	0.846	
Y_2: We have been able to retain our customers	0.823	
Y_3: We have been able to keep our customers satisfied	0.889	
Firm performance[e]		SCR = 0.81, AVE = 0.53, $\propto$ = 0.81
Y_4: We have been able to achieve the desired profitability	0.683	
Y_5: We have been able to achieve the desired returns on investment	0.752	
Y_6: We have been able to achieve the desired sales growth	0.856	
Y_7: We have been able to achieve the desired market share	0.583	

Notes: [d]Items are measured on seven-point scales anchored by 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree; [e]Items are measured on seven-point scales anchored by 1 = performed not extremely well and 7 = performed extremely well; [f]Items are reverse-coded; [a]All standardized loadings are significant, $p < 0.001$; [b]SCR = scale composite reliability; [c]AVE = average variance extracted

Table I. Construct measurement summary: confirmatory factor analysis and scales reliability

desired profitability and desired return on investment (alpha = 0.81). The relative firm performance measures in this study are similar to those used in previous studies (Chen and Paulraj, 2004; Dess and Robinson, 1984; Han *et al.*, 1998; Hult *et al.*, 2004; Matsuno *et al.*, 2002; Menguc and Auh, 2006; Narver and Slater, 1990; Pearce *et al.*, 1987) and consistent with Bhuian and Habib (2004).

Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire which was in Arabic. Two bilinguals fluent in both English and Arabic translated the Arabic version into English, with

the second person validating the work of the first translator. Any discrepancy was resolved by consulting a third bilingual person.

Control variable

Given the importance of firm size to firm performance and that it is the most widely used control variable (Murphy *et al.*, 1996), a measure of firm size was included (Alzharani *et al.*, 2012; Moorman and Rust, 1999; Soriano and Castrogiovanni, 2012) to control for the impact of a firm's resource on customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance (Im and Workman, 2004; Narver and Slater, 1990). Firm size was defined as the number of employees employed by the entrepreneur.

Analysis and results

To explore the presence of multicollinearity, we used SPSS "collinearity diagnostics". The SPSS program provides variance inflation factor (VIF) score, tolerance value and condition index score to help assess multicollinearity. Pallant (2013, p. 164) suggests the following "cut off points for determining the presence of multicollinearity: tolerance value of less than 0.10 or variance inflation factor value of above 10". Multi-collinearity is also present if the condition index is equal to or greater than 30 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

We regressed the 14 indicators of the four independent or predictor factors on the mean of the "customer satisfaction outcomes" items (i.e. three items) and then on the mean of the firm performance items (i.e. four items). None of the VIF values exceeded 2.15 and none of the tolerance values was lower than 0.47. Also, all condition index scores were less than 27.84. Thus, the VIF, tolerance value and condition index scores fall within acceptable ranges (Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001) and do not indicate that multi-collinearity is a threat to the validity of the analysis.

Measure refinement and validation

We followed Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach whereby we established the quality of our measurement model first before testing the full (general structural equation) model. We examined the psychometric properties of the six multi-item constructs using AMOS 21.0 for reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. In reporting the fit indices, we follow the conventional recommendations and report comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), normed chi-square or simply the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). CFI and RMSEA are "among the measures least affected by sample size" (Garson, 2012, p. 52) and IFI is "relatively independent of sample size" (Garson, 2012, p. 53). By convention, RMSEA of less than 0.08, IFI equal to or greater than 0.90, CFI equal to or greater than 0.90 and normed chi-square of less than 2:1 suggest a reasonable good fit.

The confirmatory factor analysis for measurement model for the 21 items resulted in CFI = 0.914, IFI and RMSEA = 0.055 (χ^2 = 294.85, df = 174; χ^2/df = 1.70). However, examination of the residual values and modification indices suggested one item from the "marketing capability" indicators might be cross-loading on the other latent factors. Dropping this item eliminated the problem of cross-loading (Larwin and Harvey, 2012; Segars, 1997) and still maintained the significance of the composite reliability (Bowen and Guo, 2012). The respecified measurement model, after dropping the problem item, showed an improved fit (CFI = 0.937, IFI = 0.939, RMSEA = 0.055, and χ^2/df = 1.52). Thus, from the results in Table I, it is reasonable to conclude that the 20 items produced a reasonably good fit to the data.

Following the acceptance of the overall model, we evaluated the composite reliability of each construct. The composite reliabilities for "marketing capability", "operations capability", "labor shortage" and "financial capability" were 0.74, 0.76, 0.80 and 0.77, respectively. The composite reliabilities for customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance were 0.89 and 0.81, respectively. All the composite reliabilities exceed the recommended minimum of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 1998, p. 623). Thus, internal consistency reliability, using composite reliability, is demonstrated. Therefore, the subsequent analyses are based on 20 items.

Aware of the possible threat of common method variance associated with a single respondent of survey studies, we undertook the following remedies and checks. First, at the measurement level, we examined the potential of common method variance using confirmatory factor analysis approach to Harman's one-factor test. According to the test, "if common method variance is a threat, a single latent factor will account for all the manifest variables" (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; Wang *et al.*, 2009, p. 109). The one-factor model yields a chi-square of 890.85 and degrees of freedom of 170 (χ^2/df = 5.24, CFI = 0.431, IFI = 0.440 and RMSEA = 0.158) compared to the six-factor measurement model that produced a chi-square of 235.04 and degrees of freedom of 155 (χ^2/df = 1.52, CFI = 0.937, IFI = 0.939 and RMSEA = 0.055). Thus, at the measurement level, the results suggest that common method variance is not a threat, as the single-factor model poorly fits the data and accounts for less than 25 per cent of the variance.

Second, we used the "unmeasured latent factor method" to assess common method variance as suggested in Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), which includes all 20 indicators from the six latent factors used in this study. Additionally, 20 indicators are "constrained to be equal to each other". We ran the measurement model with and without the common latent factor or unmeasured latent factor as suggested in Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) and paired-compared the standardized regression coefficients for the paths. In no case did any pair reach 0.2. In addition, introducing the common latent factor in the structural model did not change the significant results. Also, none of the path coefficients between "the common latent factor and the construct indicators were significant" (Jimenez *et al.*, 2014). Thus, taking these assessments together, it is reasonable to conclude that common method variance is not a threat to our findings (Mackenzie and Podsakoff, 2012). Subsequently, the results reported in Table III reflect the actual standardized regression coefficients without any adjustments (Jimenez *et al.*, 2014).

We used two procedures to check for the convergent validity of the scales. First, we examined the standardized factor loadings and their magnitudes. The factor loadings ranged from 0.55 to 0.89, and are all significant at $p < 0.001$. Thus, all items are significantly linked to their specified constructs. Second, we checked for convergent validity by evaluating the average variance extracted (AVE), which reflects "the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct" (Hair *et al.*, 1998, p. 612). All average variances are above 0.50 with the exception of "marketing capability" and "financial capability" that have AVE of 0.48 and 0.45, respectively, fell somewhat short of the recommended 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 1998, p. 623). Taken together, however, adequate convergent validity is established (Table I).

Table II shows the bivariate correlation coefficients, the square roots of the average variances, means and standard deviations for the six constructs. We used two approaches to determine discriminant validity of our constructs. First, we examined the square roots of the AVE for each construct against the correlations among the constructs. The square roots of the AVE were greater than the off-diagonal elements for the bivariate correlations of the constructs (Hulland, 1999). Thus, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) requirement for discriminant

validity is satisfied. Second, we evaluated discriminant validity by comparing the AVE for each factor with the squared inter-construct correlation (SIC) for that factor, with AVE > SIC being evidence of discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Heeler and Ray, 1972). In all cases, the AVEs were greater than the SICs. Thus, we conclude that the six constructs with 20 indicators are reliable and valid.

Structural equation model for hypothesis testing

To examine the study's hypotheses, a full structural equation model was used. In our investigation, the independent variables were marketing capability, operations capability, labor shortage and financial capability. The criterion variables were customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance, and the control variable was firm size (i.e. number of employees). We correlated:

- the disturbance terms of the dependent constructs (covariance = 0.553, $p < 0.001$) because we expect customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance to be conceptually connected (Morgan *et al.*, 2000, p. 348; Spiteri and Dion, 2004); and
- the two indicators of financial performance, y_4 and y_5 (covariance = 0.506, $p < 0.01$), because of content overlap. These correlations are theoretically and statistically defensible (Bowen and Guo, 2012).

We used the conventional CFI, IFI, RMSEA and the normed chi-square to judge the fitness of our full model. The results in Table III produced CFI of 0.908 (i.e. >0.90), IFI of 0.911 (i.e. >0.90), RMSEA of 0.063 (i.e. lower than 0.08) and normed chi-square of 1.68 (i.e. <2:1). These results show a reasonably good fit for the data. The results of the structural equation modeling are presented in Table III.

Market knowledge was significantly related to both customer satisfaction outcomes (0.178, $p < 0.05$) and firm performance (0.281, $p < 0.01$). Labor shortage was significantly related to customer satisfaction outcomes (−0.445, $p < 0.001$) and firm performance (−0.324, $p < 0.001$). Financial capability was significantly related to customer satisfaction outcomes (0.349, $p < 0.001$) and firm performance (0.318, $p < 0.001$). Operations capability was not significantly related to customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance.

Discussion

Summary

Based on data obtained from Saudi female entrepreneurs, we found specific significant effects of marketing capability, labor shortage (albeit negative) and financial capital access,

Constructs	Mean	SD	MK	OD	SLS	FCA	CSO	FP
Marketing capability (MC)	5.247	1.307	*0.693*					
Operations capability (OC)	4.004	1.580	−0.081	*0.728*				
Labor shortage (LS)	2.763	1.656	0.067	−0.362***	*0.755*			
Financial capability (FC)	3.807	1.533	0.212**	−0.175*	0.140	*0.671*		
Customer satisfaction outcomes (CSO)	5.681	1.372	0.172*	0.028	−0.323***	0.265***	*0.854*	
Firm performance (FP)	4.631	1.224	0.244***	0.033	−0.200**	0.260***	0.544***	*0.728*

Notes: $N = 171$; Pearson correlation coefficients are reported. Diagonal elements in italics are square roots of average variance extracted for the multi-item constructs; * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Table II.
Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the study's constructs

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient and significance
H1a	Marketing capability → Customer satisfaction outcomes	0.178*
H1b	Marketing capability → Firm performance	0.281**
H2a	Operations capability → Customer satisfaction outcomes	0.054
H2b	Operations capability → Firm performance	0.020
H3a	Labor shortage → Customer satisfaction outcomes	−0.445***
H3b	Labor shortage → Firm performance	−0.324***
H4a	Financial capability → Customer satisfaction outcomes	0.349***
H4b	Financial capability → Financial performance	0.318***
	Control variable	
	Firm size → Customer satisfaction outcomes	−0.043
	Firm size → Firm performance	−0.012

Notes: χ^2/df = 298.209/178 = 1.68; CFI = 0.908; IFI = 0.911; RMSEA = 0.063; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table III.
Results of structural equation model

but not of operations capabilities. To a large extent, we find that the RBV holds true in the Saudi context.

Marketing capability has a positive effect on customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance. The significant effect of marketing capability on customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance is consistent with the marketing literature (Kotler and Keller, 2012) in that knowledge and understanding of the market are prerequisites for meeting the needs of customers. Knowing one's market, the entrepreneur is more likely to provide the right product or service, at the right price with the right promotion and the appropriate service quality (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Hence, the entrepreneur is likely to have more satisfied customers, as well as keep them and generate more sales and more profit.

Financial capability has a positive impact on both customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance. There is an increasing number of intentional intervention programs offered by the Saudi Government to ensure that bank loans and state loans are readily available to women as a way of encouraging entrepreneurship among women and alleviating the high unemployment among well-educated females. With more financial resources, the female entrepreneur can afford and support service quality programs that will engender enhanced customer satisfaction and retention, as well as can institute marketing programs that can impact performance.

Labor shortage has a negative significant effect on performance. Noteworthy is that female entrepreneurs, in general, have trouble attracting qualified labor (Kolvereid *et al.*, 1993) and are constrained by lack of mobility. Thus, at higher levels of labor shortage, it is reasonable to expect the firm to be unable to satisfy customers and to keep them, as well as to show poor firm performance.

That said, the Saudi Government is setting aside specific sectors of the economy for only Saudis with special inducements and infrastructural entrepreneurial support for females (Jamal, April 25, 2016; Saudi Gazette Report, March 5, 2016). With the special incentives and on-the-job-training, labor retention is likely to be enhanced and the negative impact of any labor shortage is likely to be minimized.

Surprisingly, operations capability, which was predicted to have a positive significant influence on customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance, had no such significant influence. We had argued along the RBV (Barney, 1991) that this antecedent would have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance.

However, our results did not support our prediction. One plausible explanation for the insignificance of the effect of operations capability on customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance may be that the pool of firms in our sample was mainly retailing/wholesaling, service and import/export types. Traditionally, in the Saudi Arabian context, operations of such firms require low technology, as well as involve limited processes with equipment, often few in number to begin with, which could be easily maintained or replaced. Perhaps because of these factors, our sample of female entrepreneurs did not perceive any significant relationship between operations capability and customer satisfaction outcomes or firm performance. That said, these results offer an opportunity for further research to explore this occurrence.

Limitations and directions for future research

Clearly, this study like other studies has some limitations. It is cross-sectional and undertaken at one point in time. Also, it focuses only on women and did not allow for gender comparisons of customer-focused outcomes and firm performance. It is reasonable to expect a relationship between entrepreneurial gender and entrepreneurial performance (i.e. referred to as "gender-based entrepreneurialism") owing to the "substantial gender-specific barriers to entrepreneurship which constrain the performance of female entrepreneurs", and the "fundamental differences in the motivations and approaches that male and female entrepreneurs have towards their businesses" (Bardasi *et al.*, 2011, pp. 417-418; Dafna, 2008), particularly in Saudi Arabia. Also, the inclusion of male entrepreneurs could have provided base-line information to compare against the female customer satisfaction outcomes and firm performance and provided additional evidence for "gender-based entrepreneurialism" (i.e. the part of entrepreneurial activity that is explained by gender) (El-Hamidi, 2011).

Future research could explore industry effects to see if certain industries have special explanatory power and could introduce other potential control variables in light of the fact that firm performance may be explained by a myriad of factors. Future research that focuses on targeted industries will strengthen this line of inquiry and shed additional light on customer satisfaction outcomes and entrepreneurial firm performance. The type of education the female entrepreneur brings to the table can make some difference in their performance. For example, a woman trained in business might see the world and challenges such as skilled labor shortage or operations capability differently than one trained in engineering or science. Future research could investigate these possibilities.

Nonetheless, our study extends knowledge of the entrepreneurship literature, especially in the area of gender-based entrepreneurship research in developing countries. As women in the Middle East continue to have a significant impact on job creation, the workplace and entrepreneurship, additional research in this area is warranted.

References

Ahmad, S. (2011a), "Evidence of the characteristics of women entrepreneurs in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia: an empirical investigation", *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 123-143.

Ahmad, S.Z. (2011b), "Businesswomen in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia: characteristics, growth pattern and progression in a regional context", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 30 No. 7, pp. 610-614.

Alzharani, A.M., Che-Ahmad, A. and Aljaadi, K.S. (2012), "Factors associated with firm performance: empirical evidence from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia", *Accounting & Taxation*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 49-56.

Anderson, J.C. and Gerbing, D.W. (1988), "Structural equation modeling in practice: a review and recommended two-step approach", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 103 No. 3, pp. 411-423.

Bardasi, E., Sabarwal, S. and Terrell, K. (2011), "How do female entrepreneurs perform? Evidence from three developing regions", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 417-441.

Barney, J. (1991), "Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 99-120.

Becker, B. and Huselid, M. (2006), "Strategic human resources management: where do we go from here?", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 32 No. 6, pp. 898-925.

Bhuian, S.N. and Habib, M. (2004), "The relationship between entrepreneurship, market orientation and performance: a test in Saudi Arabia", *Journal of Transnational Management*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 79-98.

Blackwell, R.D., Miniard, P.W. and Engel, J.F. (2006), *Consumer Behavior*, South Western, Mason, OH.

Bowen, N.K. and Guo, S. (2012), *Structural Equation Modeling*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

Bruton, G.D., Ahlstrom, D. and Obloj, K. (2008), "Entrepreneurship in emerging economies: where are we today and where should the research go in the future", *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 1-14.

Chamlou, N. (2008), *The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region*, The World Bank, Washington D.C.

Chen, I.J. and Paulraj, A. (2004), "Towards a theory of supply chain management: the constructs and measurements", *Journal of Operations Management*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 119-150.

Colleretta, P. and Aubry, P. (1990), "Socio-economic evolution of women business owners in Quebec", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 417-422.

Dafna, K. (2008), "Managerial performance and business success: gender differences in Canadian and Israeli entrepreneurs", *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 300-331.

Danish, A.Y. and Smith, H.L. (2012), "Female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia: opportunities and challenges", *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 216-235.

Das, M. (2000-2001), "Women entrepreneurs from India: problems, motivations and success factors", *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 67-81.

Day, G. (1994), "The capabilities of market-driven organizations", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58 No. 4, pp. 37-52.

Dechant, K. and Lamky, A.A. (2005), "Toward an understanding of Arab women entrepreneurs in Bahrain and Oman", *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 123-140.

Dess, G.S. and Robinson, R.B. (1984), "Measuring organizational performance in the absence of objective measures", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 265-273.

Dubini, P. (1989), "Motivational and environmental influences on business on start-ups: some hints for public policies", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 11-26.

El-Hamidi, F. (2011), "How do women entrepreneurs perform?", empirical evidence from Egypt, Working Paper 621, The Economic Research Forum.

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. (1981), "Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 39-50.

Garson, G.D. (2012), *Structural Equation Modeling*, G. David Garson and Statistical Associates Publishing, Asheboro, N.C.

Hair, J.F., Jr., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W.C. (1998), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Han, J.K., Kim, N. and Srivastava, R.K. (1998), "Market orientation and organizational performance: is innovation the missing link?", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 30-45.

Hattab, H. (2012), "Towards understanding female entrepreneurship in Middle Eastern and North African countries", *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 171-186.

Heeler, R.M. and Ray, M.L. (1972), "Measure validation in marketing", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 361-370.

Hisrich, R.D. and O'Brien, M. (1981), "The woman entrepreneur from a business and sociological perspective", in Vesper, K.H. (Ed.), *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research 1981*, Babson College, Wellesley, Mass, pp. 21-39.

Hitt, M.A., Bierman, L., Shimizu, K. and Kochhar, R. (2001), "Direct and moderating effects of human capital on strategy and performance in professional service firms: a resource-based perspective", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 13-28.

Hulland, J. (1999), "Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: a review of four recent studies", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 195-202.

Hult, G.T.M., Hurley, R.F. and Knight, G.A. (2004), "Innovativeness: it's antecedents and impact of business performance", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 33 No. 5, pp. 429-438.

Im, S. and Workman, J.P. (2004), "Market orientation, creativity, and product performance in high-technology firms", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 68 No. 2, pp. 114-132.

Ismail, H.C., Shamsudin, F.M. and Chowdhury, M.S. (2012), "An exploratory study of motivational factors on women entrepreneurship venturing in Malaysia", *Business and Economic Research*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 1-13.

Jamal, N. (2016), "Women pin high hopes on national reform plan", *Saudi Gazette*, 25 April 2016, p. 1.

Jimenez, D.J., Sampaio, C.H., Cegarra-Navarro, J.G., Lengler, J.B. and Perin, M.G. (2014), "Entrepreneurial capacities as antecedents of business performance in Brazilian firms", *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 90-103.

Kelly, D.J., Brush, C.G., Green, P.G. and Litovsky, Y. (2011), *GEM 2010 Women's Report*, Babson College, Babson Park, MA.

Kiss, A.N., Danis, W.M. and Cavusgil, S.T. (2012), "International entrepreneurship research in emerging economies: a critical review and research agenda", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 266-290.

Kolvereid, L., Shane, S. and Westhead, P. (1993), "Is it equally difficult for female entrepreneurs to start business in all countries?", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 42-51.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L. (2012), *Marketing Management*, Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Krasnikov, A. and Jayachandran, S. (2008), "The impact of marketing, research-and-development, and operations capabilities on firm performance", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 72 No. 4, pp. 1-11.

Larwin, K.R. and Harvey, M. (2012), "A demonstration of a systematic item-reduction approach using structural equation modeling", *Practical Assessment Research and Evaluation*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 1-19.

Lim, D.S.K., Oh, C.H. and De Clercq, D. (2016), "Engagement in entrepreneurship in emerging economies: interactive effects of individual-level factors and institutional conditions", *International Business Review*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 933-945.

Mackenzie, S.B. and Podsakoff, P.M. (2012), "Common methods bias in marketing: causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 88 No. 4, pp. 542-555.

Menguc, B. and Auh, S. (2006), "Creating a firm-level dynamic capability through capitalizing on market orientation and innovativeness", *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 63-73.

Matsuno, K.J., Mentzer, T. and Ozsomer, A. (2002), "The effects of entrepreneurial proclivity and market orientation on business performance", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 66 No. 3, pp. 18-32.

Minkus-McKenna, D. (2009), "Women entrepreneurs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia", University of Maryland University College, UMUC Working Paper Series-Number 2009-002, January 2009.

Moorman, C. and Rust, R.T. (1999), "The role of marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 63 (Special Issue) 1999, pp. 180-197.

Morgan, R.E., McGuinness, T. and Thorpe, E.R. (2000), "The contribution of marketing to business strategy formation; a perspective on business performance gains", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 341-362.

Murphy, G.B., Trailer, J.W. and Hill, R.C. (1996), "Measuring performance in entrepreneurship research", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 15-23.

Naser, K., Mohammed, R. and Nuseibeh, R. (2009), "Factors that affect women entrepreneurs: evidence from an emerging economy", *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 225-247.

Narver, J.C. and Slater, S.F. (1990), "The effect of a market orientation on business profitability", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54 No. 4, pp. 20-35.

Pallant, J. (2013), *SPSS Survival Manual*, Open University Press, Berkshire.

Pearce, J., Robbins, K.D. and Robinson, R.B. (1987), "The impact of grand strategy and planning formality on financial performance", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 125-134.

Peng, D.S.K., Schroeder, R.G. and Shah, R. (2008), "Linking routines to operations capabilities: a new perspective", *Journal of Operations Management*, Vol. 26 No. 6, pp. 730-748.

Podsakoff, P.M., Mackenzie, S.B., Podsakoff, N.P. and Lee, J. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of literature and recommended remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879-903.

Priem, R.L. and Butler, J.E. (2001), "Is the resource-based "view" a useful perspective for strategic management research?", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 26 No. 1.

Robertson, C.J., Al-Khatib, J.A., Al-Habib, M. and Lanoue, D. (2001), "Beliefs about work in the middle east and the convergence versus divergence of values", *Journal of World Business*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 223-244.

Sadi, M.A. and Al-Ghazali, B.M. (2010), "Doing business with impudence: a focus on women entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia", *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 1-11.

Sadi, M.A. and Al-Ghazali, B.M. (2012), "The dynamics of entrepreneurial motivation among women: a comparative study of businesswomen in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain", *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 97-113.

Segars, A.H. (1997), "Assessing the unidimensionality of measurement: a paradigm and illustration within the context of information system planning", *OMEGA*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 121-167.

Sheth, J.N. (2011), "Impact of emerging markets on marketing: rethinking existing perspectives and practices", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 75 No. 4, pp. 166-182.

Sirakumar, A.D. and Sarkar, S. (2012), "Women entrepreneurs in small and medium scale businesses in Saudi Arabia", *International Journal of Finance and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 25-32.

Soriano, D.R. and Castrogiovanni, G.J. (2012), "The impact of education, experience and inner circle advisors on sale performance: insights from a study of public development centers", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 333-349.

Spiteri, J.M. and Dion, P.A. (2004), "Customer value, overall satisfaction, end-user loyalty, and market performance in detail intensive industries", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 33 No. 8, pp. 675-687.

Tabachnick, B.G. and Fidell, L.S. (2001), *Using Multivariate Statistic*, Harper Collins, New York, NY.

Wang, C.L., Hult, G.T.M., Ketchen, D.J. and Ahmed, P.K. (2009), "Knowledge management orientation, and firm performance: an integration and empirical examination", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 99-122.

Wernerfelt, B. (1984), "A resource-based view of the firm", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 171-180.

Further reading

Jong, H.L., Sohn, S.Y. and Ju, Y.H. (2011), "How effective is government support for Korean women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises?", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 49 No. 4, pp. 599-616.

Klapper, L.F. and Parker, S.C. (2011), "Gender and the business environment for new firm creation", *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 237-257.

About the authors

Tariq M. Khizindar obtained his MS in Marketing and International Business from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA, and PhD in Marketing from the University of Lancaster, UK. He is currently a Professor of Marketing and Head of the Marketing Department at King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia. Also, he served as Chair of the Committee of Business and Economics Consultancy, Jeddah Chamber of Commerce, Saudi Arabia. Khizindar's research interests include entrepreneurship, consumer behavior, tourism, business ethics and corporate social responsibility. His research has appeared in several international journals and proceedings. Tariq M. Khizindar is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: tkhzindr@hotmail.com

William K. Darley obtained his MBA in Marketing from the University of Notre Dame (South Bend), USA, and PhD in Business Administration from Indiana University-Bloomington, USA. He is a Professor of Marketing at King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia. His research interests include management education and development, as well as consumer decision-making, marketing communications and entrepreneurship. His research has appeared in the *Journal of Marketing, Marketing Science, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* and elsewhere.