



DETERMINANTS OF GCC WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' PERFORMANCE: ARE THEY DIFFERENT FROM MEN?



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ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 20 May 2021

Revised: 22 June 2021

Accepted: 30 July 2021

Published: 26 August 2021

Keywords

Women entrepreneurship
Entrepreneurship
GCC
Entrepreneur's performance
Entrepreneur's education
Entrepreneur's training
Entrepreneur's networking
Access to finance.

The study aims to understand the impact of different factors on the performance of GCC entrepreneurs and to what extent this effect is different between women and men. To accomplish the determined aim, the research used quantitative research method. Survey strategy has been implanted to collect the data via structured questionnaire technique. The questionnaire was distributed online for 750 GCC male and female entrepreneurs. 262 responses have been received. The data was analysed using descriptive analysis while ANOVA was implemented to assess the differences between men and women in their reflections towards determinants of their performance. The investigation found that females consider education, training and business networks and access to finance are significant factors impact their performance. GCC women's performance is affected by these determinants more than men counterparts. Both men and women entrepreneurs believe that access to finance as an important determinant for their performance without significant difference between the two genders. This research provides a proper guidance for the policy makers to give more attention to education and training for women entrepreneurs. More focus on entrepreneurship education may foster the women entrepreneurship. Training is also a significant determinant of their performance than men. This may pay the attention to the role of supporting institutions, even formal or informal; to design proper training programmes for women entrepreneurs. Supporting institutions needs also to play more roles towards enforcing the networks for women entrepreneurs.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated the determinants of entrepreneurs' performance in GCC and compared between the factors determine the men and women entrepreneurs in this region.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Research Problem

The development and growth of the GCC countries strived its power from the hydro-carbonic sector which makes them more volatile according to the fluctuations of the oil prices. Having a closer look at all the GCC countries, it can be seen that significantly, although the oil reserves in some GCC countries were very vast, that could not be overgeneralized for all the GCC countries. Based on that fact, GCC countries have been taken

significant steps towards the economic diversification. Although the taken steps were advanced in some economies and still in the beginning for other countries, all given a high attention to entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector which is considered as one of the main generators of income and employment in the economy. Thus, each country did significant effort to have a well-developed entrepreneurship ecosystem able stimulate citizens to start their own businesses (Madbouly, 2017). This effort has been translated into new start-ups by GCC citizens even males or females.

Although the provided support for entrepreneurs in GCC, there is inconsistency between males and females' performance. This sheds the light on the need to identify the determinants of GCC entrepreneurs' performance and to understand the extent of these determinants' impact on both women and men GCC entrepreneurs. From this point, the idea of this research has been generated. It aims at understanding the impact of different determinants on the performance of GCC entrepreneurs and to what extent this effect is different between women and men. To achieve this aim, the research has to answer four questions: i) Does the impact of education on GCC entrepreneurs' performance significantly differ from women to men entrepreneurs? ii) Does the impact of training on GCC entrepreneurs' performance significantly differ from women to men entrepreneurs? iii) Does the impact of networking on GCC entrepreneurs' performance significantly differ from women to men entrepreneurs? And iv) Does the effect of "access to finance" on GCC entrepreneurs' performance significantly differ from women to men entrepreneurs?

This research includes five sections. The first section introduces the study background, problem, aim, questions and the organization of the research. The second section demonstrates the related literature review. The third section focuses on the research methodology. The data analysis has been provided in section four. Finally, the fifth section demonstrates the discussion and conclusion as well.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. To What Extent There the Performance of Women Different from Men Counterparts?

It is worth mentioning that the performance of SMEs has been assessed using many criteria such as: the contribution to job creation, the generated income and achieve the economic growth. On the other hand, there are many factors affect the performance of these SMEs (Fatoki, 2011). It could be noticed that only little research effort has been taken to analyze the differences between the impact of determinants on entrepreneurs' performance for men and women as well.

Some literature evidenced that the performance of women entrepreneurs is less than men counterparts in terms of quantitative indicators, such as number of employees, sales turnover and profits. The main reason is that the purpose of women to start up business is mainly psychological factors (such as being her own boss, being independent, achieve her own vision, obtain the self-confidence) (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Hence, the performance of women entrepreneurs has its own context which is mainly related to their own vision. On the contrary of that, the performance of men entrepreneurs could be measured using quantitative criteria (Buttner & Moore, 1997). Many researches have been conducted to differentiate between the performance based on gender, but very few clear-cut results have been found (Chaganti & Parasuraman, 1997; Miner, 1997). In the same vein, Rosa, Carter, and Hamilton (1996) conducted a study to differentiate between the performance of women and men entrepreneurs. The study found four main differences. *First*: women businesses that employ few core staff face a challenge in low sales turnover, reduction in the value of the company and, in turn, achieve the growth compared to male counterparts. *The second* difference is related to the market, where the main objective of women-owned businesses was to focus on serving the local market, while the men-owned businesses may target to sell products in international markets. However, the differences were not significant in this case. *The third* difference found related to the future anticipation, as women found less optimistic about the expected success of their businesses compared to men. *The*

fourth and last difference found related to the income generated from the business, were the women-owned businesses found generate less income than men-owned businesses.

Many other studies did not identify significant differences between the performance of men and women entrepreneurs, while other investigations found that men business owners are more profit oriented than women (Rosa et al., 1996).

2.2. The Education and the Performance of Entrepreneurs

Having a closer look at the literature and investigating the impact of education on the performance, it was found that education effects on the performance of women entrepreneurs from three different perspectives, they are: i) The level of education; ii) the area of education and iii) the role of entrepreneurship education. The following sub sections shed the light on each of these perspectives.

2.2.1. The Level of Education

Many researchers investigated the impact of education on the entrepreneurs' performance and found it has a significant positive effect (Blumberg & Letterie, 2008; Sluis, Praag, & Vijverberg, 2008) as education can improve the managerial competency of the entrepreneur (Blumberg & Letterie, 2008).

The reason of that may be the higher level of education which enables women entrepreneurs to do the required effort to achieve business sustainability as they become more able to find sources of finance and can submit the required documents to have finance from banks. Meeting the bank requirements needs an educated entrepreneur to can avail and submit the all-proper requirements (Bhardwaj, 2014). On another hand, high level of education enables entrepreneur to sustain more, to grow in the market (Dolinsky, Caputo, Pasumarty, & Quazi, 1993) and being able to explore the opportunities (Figueroa-Armijos & Johnson, 2013).

The reason behind the better performance of highly educated women entrepreneurs might be the higher level of competency entrepreneurs obtain from higher education (Blumberg & Letterie, 2008). Another reason could be that higher level of education makes entrepreneurs more able to improve skills required to launch and sustain businesses (Bowen, Morara, & Mureithi, 2009). On another hand, less educated women entrepreneurs face many challenges even financial or non-financial which negatively impact on their growth and sustainability (Bennett & Dann, 2000).

2.2.2. Area of Education

Group of studies investigated the impact of the area of education on the women entrepreneurs' performance. Majority of the research in this area found a significant impact of the area of education on the performance. It was found that entrepreneurs who have studies in "Business" filed perform in a better way than who have studies in other areas. This result seems logical, as entrepreneurs who studied business will be more familiar with the different aspects of management, consequently, will have better marketing plans, better management for human resources and also more capable in control the financial matters and cash flows. They also will be able to meet the banks' requirements to obtain finance to grow the business. Even in case the entrepreneur faced a failure, business educated entrepreneurs are more likely to have a high post-failure earning capacity than entrepreneurs who studied in other areas (Bennett & Dann, 2000; Blumberg & Letterie, 2008). On another hand, entrepreneurial intentions were found positively influenced for undergraduate business students (Lin, Carsrud, Jagoda, & Shen, 2013).

2.2.3. The Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurs' Performance

Having education related to entrepreneurship has a positive and significant effect on the entrepreneur's performance, especially women entrepreneurs, as it increases their self-efficacy (Wilson, Kickul, Marlino, Barbosa, & Griffiths, 2009) and been able to lead their company to perform better financially (Kyari, 2020) as university

entrepreneurship education is a matter of inculcation of entrepreneurship spirit which led to better high performance for graduates when they start their own businesses (Kyari, 2020).

Entrepreneurship university education might play a vital role for young women as it will foster their “Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy” (ESE). Having curriculum considers the ESE is believed to have an impactful matter on the females’ intention to be entrepreneurs (Jennings & Brush, 2013).

Moreover, the extra-curriculum activities could be designed to foster the women entrepreneurship skills. This might stimulate female students to be entrepreneurs in the future and enable them to perform well from different perspectives (Duval-Couetil, 2013).

2.3. Training and the Performance of Entrepreneurs

Schwartz (1976) stated that the lack of training and the underestimating the cost of sustaining a business are specifically female barriers to business ownership. Hence, the training of entrepreneurs can be a vital matter for having successful entrepreneurs (Brush, De Bruin, & Welter, 2009). The entrepreneurial training becomes essential when the entrepreneurial skills have not been fully obtained via the educational programmes (Brush et al., 2009; Ladzani & Vuuren, 2002). It’s worth nothing to say that training related to financial matters is essential to improve the entrepreneur’s skills, as they need to improve the financial literacy skill to be able to enhance the overall business performance (Usama & Yusoff, 2018).

Education and training can help female entrepreneurs to overcome many challenges, such as: i) lack of information which can be eliminated via improve the business development skills of female entrepreneurs. Then entrepreneurs will be able to achieve growth for their businesses.; ii) lack of self-confidence, therefore, entrepreneurs will be provided with training and education to foster their confidence and iii) inability to conduct research on the industry, hence provision of education and training will enable them to eliminate this challenge and obtain the required skills related to research on all perspectives: industry, consumers, competitors, and network (Bhardwaj, 2014).

2.4. Business Networking and the Entrepreneur’s Performance

It’s worth mentioning that little dedicated literature investigated the effect of gender on different networking activities of the business. On the other hand, there is also debate about the impact of networking activities on the SMEs’ performance in general and on female-owned businesses particularly.

The literature which studied the relationship between networks and the performance of SMEs (men-owned and women-owned business) found that networks play an important role as a determinant of the entrepreneurs’ performance. Networks have an influence on different sides of the management. Networks also improve the access to finance via strengthen the relationships with financial backers. Furthermore, entrepreneurial networks create “external linkages” between the firm and the environment which significantly impacts the success of the business (Aldrich, Reese, & Dubini, 1989; Rosa et al., 1996). The literature found that networks establishment and management are different between men and women entrepreneurs (Aldrich et al., 1989). Starr and Yudkin (1996) stated that “the few studies that compare the networking activities of women and men business owners show differences in the gender composition of the networks of women, but not in how men and women use their networks”. Networks facilitate all information of entrepreneurs to the business community. Moreover, it fosters the connection between entrepreneurs and loan providers which ease the access to finance, especially the loans obtained from banks (Ingrid, Andre, & Thurik, 2006).

With regard to the impact of networking activities on the women entrepreneur’s performance, Aldrich et al. (1989) found women’s networking activities are less than their men counterparts. Furthermore, the level of these activities is lower than men’s networking level. The effect of gender on networking activities was also studied by Jerome and Williams (1997) who found that difference between genders has no significant effect on networking.

They evidenced that the networking activities are affected mainly by employment status. They stated that “Despite the centrality of social networking studies in entrepreneurship research, social networking is not a particularly powerful way of explaining gender differences”. On contrary of that, Rosa et al. (1996) evidenced that networking is more crucial for women entrepreneurs compared to men and it should be more for women compared to men entrepreneurs. Other investigations have been conducted in different countries with different contexts found high level of similarity between men and women entrepreneurs regarding to their behaviour in networking, however they found that gender difference significantly affects the sex composition of networks, as “women are more likely to have networks composed entirely of other women, and men are more likely to have networks composed entirely of other men” (Aldrich et al., 1989; Smeltzer & Fann, 1989).

The literature found men entrepreneurs have more tendencies to be more connected with external parties such as the chambers of commerce rather than family and friends. Contradicting to that, women entrepreneurs found prefer to network with their families and friends rather than external parties. It's important here to refer to the differences of social cultures which have significant effect on the overall behaviour of men and women and, in turn, could affect their networking activities. The composition of networks and the functioning of these networks are also affected by these factors which lead to difference in status positions that inhere in gender relations. Therefore, it can be said that having different social culture between different societies might impact on the pattern of the networks and the accessibility to opportunities by women entrepreneurs (Hanson & Blake, 2009).

Women Business Centres (WBCs) are effective in fostering the women entrepreneurship. An empirical study found that “in spite of serving women who are socially and economically disadvantaged, and chronically underfunded and short-staffed, Women Business Centers (WBCs) in the United States had been successful in helping women start businesses” (Langowitz, Sharpe, & Godwyn, 2006).

2.5. Access to Finance and the Entrepreneur's Performance

Financial capital is considered as one of the most important elements for businesses even to start or to run and grow as well (Isa, Abu Bakar, & Ahmad, 2016). Hence, having enough financial resources is considered as a crucial matter (Brush et al., 2009; Mwobobia, 2012) and facing lack in finance is critical challenge faced by entrepreneurs, even women or men (Barhate & Patgaonkar, 2012; Bhuiyan & Abdullah, 2007).

The access of women entrepreneurs to finance is affected by their ownership to property. Hence, the lack of property ownership restricts the ability of women entrepreneurs to access to finance. For example, this percentage is only 1% in Kenya (Mwobobia, 2012). On another hand, entrepreneurs have limited opportunity to save and, accordingly, grow. This is due to the available finance for entrepreneurs which could be used to support the family members and relatives. Although, these family members or relative provide assistance in the business, like participating in the production process; packing; or the distribution, the value of this contribution is less than the financial fund they receive from entrepreneurs (Mwobobia, 2012).

The challenge of access to finance could be extended to the “lack of knowledge of the procedures related to getting and paying off loans” which push women entrepreneurs to avoid request loans because they are not sure about the required procedures of debt service. Facing discriminatory laws / practices is another challenge face, where some literature found that bank officers reflected negative attitude towards women entrepreneurs as they face a challenge in meeting the requirements of banks and submitting the required documents as smooth as male entrepreneurs. Therefore, this challenge does not reflect a discrimination in laws (from the loans supply side), but it's related to the shortage from women entrepreneurs (demand side) to meet the requirements of the former. Another interpretation to the negative attitude from bank employees towards women entrepreneurs is the later could be considered as dependents on their husbands (Barhate & Patgaonkar, 2012) then their decisions related to business are dependent on social matters, this generates doubts for the bank officers towards economic rationality of the taken decisions made by women and let the former prefer to discuss the details of the funds.

Facing “High cost of finance” is another challenge faces women entrepreneurs. This discourages the later from getting loans (Barhate & Patgaonkar, 2012; Mwobobia, 2012) which, in turn, restricts the expansion of the business (Magri, 2009). Although many changes have been made to reduce the cost of finance, the mentality for male bank officers who provide the loan to the women entrepreneurs have not been changed yet, which does not reflect a practical change in this area (Stevenson & St-Onge, 2005). Access to finance might be also connected with the level of Corporate Governance (CG) in the SME, as the implementation of principles of CG could be considered as a significant matter for companies to have commitments on value creation which enables them to have finance easier than SMEs which don’t implement principles of CG properly (Dwaikat, Madbouly, Queiri, & Qubbaj, 2020).

2.6. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the research is presented in Figure 1.

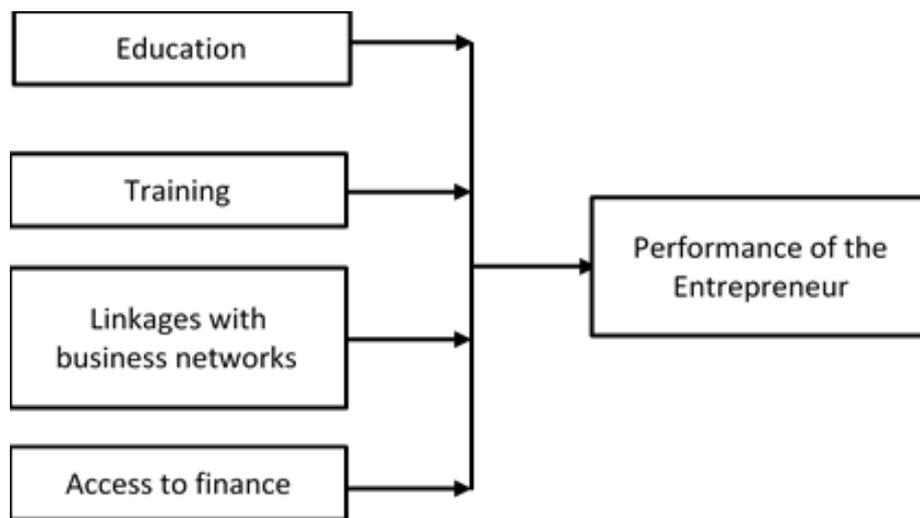


Figure-1. The theoretical framework.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the aim of the research and to answer its’ questions, quantitative method has been implemented in this investigation. The implemented approach is the “Survey approach”. The data was collected via “structured questionnaire”. This technique is considered one of the most common methods to classify the collected data and produce information.

The questionnaire has been distributed on entrepreneurs from all GCC countries. The questionnaire was designed on online mode (using google drive). The link was distributed on men and women entrepreneurs in the six GCC countries. The online distribution of questionnaires ensures the accessibility to more individuals in the population and will save time and costs. The implemented sampling method was the “convenience sampling”, this method was selected to enable researches to access the respondents easily and in full comply with the research criteria (Given & Saumure, 2008).

Likert 5-point scale was used to assess the impact of each factor as determinant for the entrepreneurs’ performance. The scale was ranged from 1 to 5, as follows: 5 (strongly agree); 4 (agree); 3 (neutral); 2 (disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree). Omani higher education students were the population. The link to the questionnaire was shared to them via emails and WhatsApp. The link was sent to 750 entrepreneurs from all the GCC countries where 262 (35%).

Many statistics were used to analyse the collected data. Frequencies used to analyse the basic data. Descriptive statistics used to assess the impact of each factor on the performance of the business. ANOVA test was used to determine if there is any difference between the male and female entrepreneurs towards the different determinant.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. The Profile of Respondents:

4.1.1. Gender

The data was collected from 262 respondents. 138 (53.4%) are men and 124 (46.6%) are women. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by genders.

Table-1. Gender of respondent entrepreneurs.

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage | Valid Percentage | Cumulative Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Men | 138 | 53.4 | 53.4 | 53.4 |
| Women | 124 | 46.6 | 46.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 262 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

4.1.2. Qualifications

Table 2 presents the Qualifications of respondent entrepreneurs.

Table 2 demonstrates that the majority of respondent entrepreneurs (51.5%) are bachelor degrees holders, while 21% have post graduate degrees and 14.5% of have diploma degree. This reflects that 87.4% of respondents have at least high study degree.

Table-2. Qualifications of respondents.

| Qualification | Freq. | Percentage (%) | Cumulative Percentage (%) |
|---|-------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Elementary school or uncompleted primary school | 11 | 4.2 | 4.2 |
| High School (General / vocational) | 22 | 8.4 | 12.6 |
| Diploma | 38 | 14.5 | 27.1 |
| Bachelor | 135 | 51.5 | 78.6 |
| Post Graduate studies | 56 | 21.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 262 | 100.0 | |

4.2. Education and the GCC Entrepreneurs' Performance

The analysis of respondents' rating towards the effect of education on their performance is shown in Table 3.

Table-3. Education & the GCC entrepreneurs' performance - Descriptive statistics.

| | N | Mean | Std. Dvtn. | Std. Err. | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min. | Max. |
|--------|-----|--------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|------|------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Male | 130 | 3.4580 | 1.11121 | 0.09708 | 3.2660 | 3.6502 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Female | 92 | 3.7474 | 1.16992 | 0.12265 | 3.5037 | 3.9908 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Total | 222 | 3.6027 | 1.1405 | 0.1099 | 3.3849 | 3.8205 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

The above results reflect that women entrepreneur in GCC believe that the education has affected their performance more than men. As the mean rating for this factor given by women is 3.75 (out of 5). The mean of responses given by men is 3.46 (out of 5). Table 4 shows the ANOVA analysis for the same. The results evidenced that there is a significant difference between the attitude of both the GCC men and women entrepreneurs towards the effect of education on their performance.

Table-4. Education and the GCC entrepreneurs' performance – ANOVA.

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|--------|
| Between Groups | 4.4912 | 1 | 4.4912 | 3.4828 | 0.0640 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----------|-----|--------|--|--|
| Within Groups | 283.7070 | 220 | 1.2910 | | |
| Total | 288.1982 | 221 | | | |

4.3. Training and the GCC Entrepreneurs' Performance

The analysis of respondents' rating to the effect of "training" on their performance is demonstrated in Table 5.

Table-5. Training and the GCC entrepreneurs' performance - Descriptive statistics.

| | N | Mean | Std. Dvtn. | Std. Err. | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min. | Max. |
|--------|-----|--------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|------|------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Male | 130 | 3.5726 | 1.05998 | .09260 | 3.3892 | 3.7558 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Female | 92 | 3.8021 | 1.20387 | .12621 | 3.5516 | 4.0528 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Total | 222 | 3.6874 | 1.13193 | 0.1094 | 3.4704 | 3.9043 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

Results presented in Table 5 reflect that women entrepreneur in GCC believe that the training has impact on their performance more than men. The mean rating for this factor given by women is 3.80 (out of 5), while the mean of responses given by men is 3.57 (out of 5).

The ANOVA analysis is provided in Table 6, it reflects a significant difference between male and female entrepreneurs towards the impact of training on the performance.

Table-6. Training and the GCC entrepreneurs' performance – ANOVA.

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|
| Between Groups | 2.8330 | 1 | 2.8330 | 2.2553 | 0.1341 |
| Within Groups | 276.5013 | 220 | 1.2571 | | |
| Total | 279.3343 | 221 | | | |

4.4. Business Networking and the GCC Entrepreneurs' Performance

The analysis of respondents' rating related to the impact of business networking on their performance is presented in Table 7.

Table-7. Linkages with business networks and the GCC entrepreneurs' performance - Descriptive statistics.

| | N | Mean | Std. Dvtn. | Std. Err. | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min. | Max. |
|--------|-----|--------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|------|------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Male | 130 | 3.6566 | 1.05078 | 0.09182 | 3.4748 | 3.8382 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Female | 92 | 3.9230 | 1.18539 | 0.12427 | 3.6763 | 4.1698 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Total | 222 | 3.7898 | 1.11809 | 0.1080 | 3.5755 | 4.0040 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

Results presented in Table 7 show that women entrepreneur in GCC believe that the effective networking activities have impact on their performance more than men. The mean rating for this factor given by women is 3.92 (out of 5), while the mean of responses given by men is 3.66 (out of 5). The ANOVA analysis is presented in Table 8, it evidences a significant difference between men and women GCC entrepreneurs towards the effect of business networking activities on their performance.

Table-8. Linkages with business networks and the GCC entrepreneurs' performance – ANOVA.

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|
| Between Groups | 3.8160 | 1 | 3.8161 | 3.1103 | 0.0791 |
| Within Groups | 270.0046 | 220 | 1.2271 | | |
| Total | 273.8206 | 221 | | | |

4.5. Access to Finance and the GCC Entrepreneurs' Performance

Table 9 demonstrates the descriptive statistics related to the rating of entrepreneur respondents towards the access to finance on their performance.

Table-9. Access to finance and the GCC entrepreneurs' performance - Descriptive statistics.

| | N | Mean | Std. Dvtn. | Std. Err. | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min. | Max. |
|--------|-----|--------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|------|------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Male | 130 | 3.6108 | 1.04933 | 0.09167 | 3.4292 | 3.7922 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Female | 92 | 3.6253 | 1.22988 | 0.12894 | 3.4693 | 3.9813 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Total | 222 | 3.6181 | 1.13961 | 0.11031 | 3.4492 | 3.8866 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

Results in Table 9 show that the mean of the score given by men respondents rating is (3.61) while the mean of the score given by women respondents rating is (3.63), this result reflects that both men and women entrepreneurs given the same rate to the impact of access to finance on the their performance. The same result supported by ANOVA test in Table 10.

Table-10. Access to finance and the GCC entrepreneurs' performance - ANOVA.

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Between Groups | 0.7052 | 1 | 0.705 | 0.556 | 0.597 |
| Within Groups | 279.2771 | 220 | 1.269 | | |
| Total | 279.9823 | 221 | | | |

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research aims at understanding the impact of different factors affect the performance of GCC entrepreneurs as a whole and the extent of the difference of this impact between men and women entrepreneurs. The analysis evidenced that women entrepreneurs significantly believe in the impact of education on their performance more than the male counterparts. This means that women GCC entrepreneurs believe more than men that education improves their managerial competency, and that high levels of owner education have a positive impact on their performance (Bhardwaj, 2014; Blumberg & Letterie, 2008). This result is consistent with Bennett and Dann (2000) results who found "less-educated women may face financial or human capital constraints which limit their business pursuits".

It was found that training has more impact on the performance on female entrepreneurs more than males. This means that entrepreneurial training is more essential in building block for successful entrepreneurial activity (Brush et al., 2009) for women rather than men.

It has been found that linkages with business networks have more impact on the performance of GCC women entrepreneurs more than men. This came in the same line with (Rosa & Hamilton, 1994) findings that evidenced that "networking is both more critical and should be greater among female entrepreneurs than male entrepreneurs".

The study found that both men and women entrepreneurs given the same score for the impact of access to finance on their performance, which reflects no significant difference. Although this result contradicting the results of many earlier investigations (Barhate & Patgaonkar, 2012; Mwobobia, 2012) it reflects the fact that banks do not discriminate between men and women in finance provision. This outcome has been evidenced by many other literatures as well.

Research provides a guidance for the policy makers to give more attention to education and training for GCC women entrepreneurs, which foster the women entrepreneurship in GCC countries. Training is also a significant factor affecting the performance of GCC women entrepreneurs than their men counterparts. This may pay the attention of the role supporting institutions, even formal or informal; to design proper training programmes for women entrepreneurs. Supporting institutions need also to play more vital role in enforce the networks for men entrepreneurs.

The main limitation faced researchers in this research was the communication with entrepreneurs in all GCC countries. However, sharing the online link via email enabled the researchers to collect the data from entrepreneurs all around the GCC countries.

In the future, it's suggested to conduct analyses which differentiate between the performances of entrepreneurs in each country than others. This will take the differences between countries into consideration and also will enable to understand the context of each country and the performance of its' their men and women entrepreneurs.

Funding: The article is partially funded by Muscat College, Sultanate of Oman.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Acknowledgement: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

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