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# **Sociocultural Dimensions of Women's Social Media Adoption for Entrepreneurship in Qatar**

*TREO Talk Paper*

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## **Abstract**

The study explores factors that influence women's adoption of social media for entrepreneurship in Qatar from a sociocultural perspective. While women in Qatar have made significant strides in education, there still persists a gender gap in economic participation. Despite government efforts, sociocultural factors continue to ground women's full potential to participate in entrepreneurship. Social media has been shown to provide better opportunities for women entrepreneurs, making it critical to explore this phenomenon in Qatar, an under-researched cultural context. This study proposes a research model extending on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and outline factors that influence social media adoption among women entrepreneurs in Qatar from both technological and cultural perspectives.

The research model is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), literature on social media entrepreneurship, and studies on women and culture in the Middle East and Qatar. The model incorporates two dimensions: technological and sociocultural. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use represent the technological dimension from the original model of TAM, while kinship roles of women, gender segregation, and face saving constitute the extended sociocultural dimension. Women's kinship roles in Qatar is seen as essential for maintaining social cohesion and stability within the family and broader community. The significant value of the family is recognized in Islamic religion which is dominant in the culture. Qatari women feel limited by long working hours and a lack of job opportunities to balance their family responsibilities with a professional career, rather than by their gender roles. Flexibility provided by social media can assist women in balancing their roles as caregivers and entrepreneurs, enabling them to achieve a better balance between work and family obligations. Gender segregation, another socio-cultural factor, that is deeply ingrained in the culture. The physical segregation of gender can limit women's networking opportunities, which can be important for entrepreneurial success. However, the use of social media has the potential to facilitate inclusion for women entrepreneurs by allowing them to interact with stakeholders online regardless of gender norms. Face saving as in maintaining one's reputation and dignity is another cultural norm in Qatar. Women entrepreneurs in Qatar might be subject to strict societal expectations, and their behavior and public perception of their actions are closely monitored. Social media can be a useful tool for women entrepreneurs in this region, as it allows them to conduct business anonymously and exercise autonomy without fear of societal judgment. Thus, we proposes that these three sociocultural factors, along with TAM technological factors influence the adoption of social media among women entrepreneurs in Qatar.

In conclusion, this paper highlights the need to explore the adoption of social media by women entrepreneurs in Qatar from a sociocultural perspective. By way of enriching TAM theoretical framework, we emphasize the role of local culture in shaping women's experiences and opportunities in the region. We propose that – along with technological factors (perceived usefulness and perceived-ease of use) – cultural factors (kinship role, gender segregation, and face saving) will have a significant impact on the adoption of social media among women entrepreneurs in Qatar. The results of this study can help policymakers and other stakeholders design effective programs to promote women's inclusion in entrepreneurship in Qatar.