



Research Article

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The Social Perception of Saudi Women's Achievements: A Critical Discourse Analysis Study

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Abstract

Women's empowerment has become a national mission in Saudi Arabia as their effective role in growth and development has been emphasized by the government. In order to achieve this mission, it is extremely important to reflect on how society looks at women's participations in different sectors and how empowering women has been translated into great achievements in different domains. This qualitative study explores the Saudis' attitudes towards Saudi women's empowerment on Twitter by analysing 300 responses to ten tweets highlighting women's achievements. The findings showed both positive and negative attitudes towards Saudi women's empowerment. Based on the data, Saudi women have been given full support in economic and political sectors whereas in sports and judiciary sectors they have been rejected by society.

Keywords: Saudi women's empowerment, social perspective, support, oppose

1. Introduction

Women's empowerment has received a specific attention in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In light of Vision 2030, women are considered equal with men in all opportunities, and the government exerts vital efforts "to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy" (Saudi Vision 2030, 2020). Therefore, women's participation in several sectors, including education, economy, and politics, has recently increased in the Kingdom (Almuyidi, 2020).

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an active country on social media making up the largest share of the social media pie, social media plays a decisive role in the rapidly changing Saudi society (Westall & McDowall, 2016). One of the most used social media platforms in Saudi Arabia is Twitter. It is mostly common among 18 to 24-year-old users, followed by users in their late 20s to early 40s. Moreover, men and women use it in roughly equal amounts (Westall & McDowall, 2016). Due to the massive use of Twitter, it has become accessible to explore people's viewpoints on many topics. One of these topics is Saudi women's empowerment and it is the focus of this paper. The main aim of this paper is to answer the following research question:

- How do the Saudis interact with Saudi women's empowerment?

2. Literature Review

Since its foundation in 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia strictly adheres to the Hanbali school of Islam and it is considered “one of the most restrictive countries in the Muslim world” (Alsharif, 2019, p.7). During that time, Saudi women had no right to learn or work, and the only breadwinner for the family was the man. The Kingdom, therefore, has received heavy criticism regarding the deprivation of women’s rights and freedom (Shannon, 2014). It was also criticized for the application of gender-segregating system and the male guardianship policy (Alsubaie & Jones, 2017). Twenty-eight years later, women were allowed to seek public education, but their education was limited to a few subjects, supporting their main roles as wives and mothers (Alsharif, 2019).

Over the last two decades, women’s position has gone through many changes in various aspects. They have gradually left marginalization and asserted their roles as effective members of the Saudi society. In 2005, the launch of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) made a big move in higher education (Alsharif, 2019). It sponsored a huge number of Saudi citizens with outstanding academic achievements to study in the world’s top universities in specific fields meeting the needs of the local labour market. This has led to tremendous growth in the number of women accessing higher education to obtain graduate and postgraduate certifications (Parveen, 2014). In addition to the foundation of KASP, the Nitaqat policy has created more opportunities for Saudi graduates to enter the labor market. In 2011, the country introduced the Nitaqat policy for the purpose of lowering unemployment among Saudi citizens and nationalising jobs in the private sector (Alsharif, 2019). As a result, the number of working women in the Saudi society has increased dramatically. Their presence has been clearly seen in private workplaces such as shops, airports, hotels, cafes, and restaurants and in government jobs such as teachers, doctors and nurses. They have been also allowed to participate in the Shura Council, a legislative body that discusses important matters in the country.

Along with the introduction of Saudi Vision 2030 in 2016, the country has witnessed incredible development at the social, cultural, political and economic levels. The Vision 2030 came with an aim of transforming Saudi Arabia to a strong country with “a vibrant society”, “a thriving economy”, and “an ambitious nation” (Saudi Vision 2030, 2022, p.13). In particular, empowering Saudi women by equipping them with the most required skills in job markets sits at the core of Vision 2030 (Alqahtani 2020). Therefore, the Vision was accompanied with multiple life-changing transformations in the history of Saudi women. In 2017, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman lifted the ban on women driving. In 2018, women were officially allowed for the first time in their lives to drive and get a driving license. These shifts were followed by issuing the harassment law to ensure a sense of security at the workplace and by permitting Saudi women to take part in the Olympic Games globally (Alsoraihi, 2022).

Giving the important role of Saudi Women in the society, many studies have investigated their participation in different sectors. In the education sector, female contribution reached 83% of the total Saudi women working in the public sector in 2005 (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). In the economic sector, the study of Saqib, Aggarwal and Rashid (2016) argued that women’s economic empowerment is fundamental to the realisation of women’s rights and gender equality. It also found a strong relationship between the economic growth of the country and empowering women economically. The study reported that women participation in the work forces has reached a rise from 14 percent in 2011 to 18 percent three years later and the unemployment rate has therefore decreased.

In politics, the study of Al-Ahmadi (2011) has yielded new insights into the dynamics of women’s role and participation in the decision-making process in Saudi Arabia. It showed that despite the efforts made to support women in assuming leadership positions, women leaders face several challenges that limit their contribution as leaders and refrain them from reaching their full potential. These challenges arose from structural policies, lack of resources, lack of empowerment, and other cultural and personal barriers. Similarly, Al-Qahtani and her colleagues (2020) discussed the most significant obstacles that women face in political representation in Saudi Arabia. The study asserted

that female involvement in the political sector is very important in the country to achieve its democracy and societal advancement and therefore the study proposed a future strategy aiming at enhancing the level of political empowerment among Saudi women. On the other hand, the Saudi women's role in the judiciary workforce has not been fully activated, and no female candidate has yet been appointed as judge. Al-Agha (2021) conducted a study to investigate the factors preventing women from working in judiciary authorities based on the opinion of male Saudi judges. There was near agreement among the study participants that there are no legal restrictions on women becoming judges. However, there is a mainstream belief against women's job as a judge, and this belief was based on cultural and Islamic constraints. It is related to the most conservative Islamic schools which extremely disagree with women's employment in the judiciary.

Discourses and opinions about women empowerment have often been expressed on social media, and several studies have addressed these discourses in the Saudi context. For example, the case of women driving used to be extremely debated in Saudi Arabia. A study by Aljarallah (2017) showed how the discourse on women driving was executed, especially between genders. This study was before women driving allowance. Multiple hashtags have been used to show either support or criticism. Aljarallah's study analyzed a great number of tweets as well as their context through linguistic corpora analysis. The two opposing perspectives were inspected at a level of textual analysis. The tweets chosen in her study represent the three hashtags that emerged on the heat of the discourse regarding the issue of women driving in Saudi Arabia: #Women_car_driving, #I_will_drive_my_car_June15, and #I_will_enter_my_kitchen_June15. The results demonstrated that tweets with the hashtag #Women_car_driving presented enormous support towards the movement while strong opposing reactions emerged from the hashtags #I_will_drive_my_car_June15 and #I_will_enter_my_kitchen_June15. This study was followed by Almuyidi's study (2020) that occurred after Saudi Arabia granted women the right to drive. Almuyidi investigated the Kingdom's perception of women's rights by exploring tweets announcing ban lifting on women driving through the lens of Social Identity Theory. Using textual analysis, ten tweets and their replies (891 in total) were chosen. Four were from official government accounts, and six were from national news accounts. From the government tweets, positive attitudes represented 48%, while those with negative attitudes represented 22%. From the national media tweets, comments with positive attitudes represented 24%, while those with negative attitudes represented 43%. Overall, most negative responses came from male users. According to the results, females represented 64% while males had 30% support for women driving. The comments were analyzed based on the gender of the person tweeting, either male, female, or unknown. The replies from female users to the news varied; some tweeted about what kind of car they would own, and others focused on the historic nature of decision and what it would mean for young women in the future. Nevertheless, a considerable number of male users celebrated the news, but most of them mocked it by tweeting insulting jokes or memes, insinuated that women would never be good at driving.

Another study focused on gendered discourses and discursive practices reflected in Twitter-hashtagged debates concerning Saudi-women's issues is Bahammam's study (2018). The study aimed to obtain insights into numerous perspectives to expose the existing tension between tradition and modernity in the context of Saudi Arabia. It specifically examined how the Saudis perceive women's issues in two selected hashtagged debates collected in June 2015. The first is related to the restrictions imposed on Saudi women's travel, and the second is concerned with how women are defined based on their marital status. The data presented an evidence that voices of difference and objection concerning women's rights and role are in a dialogic connection with dominant conservative discourses. The analysis included several contextual factors, and the findings showed that the sampled female-related discussions reflect a broader ideological conversation about change. These studies were able to represent the viewpoints of Saudi people on women-related issues. In fact, social media platforms offer a space for individuals to share their ideas on certain topics. Therefore, the current study will use discourses and opinions expressed on Twitter to examine how women are being empowered in the Saudi society.

3. Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Due to the ever-growing use of social media recently, access to information about vast majority of individuals, households and institutions around the world has become easy. Online communication is now an integral part of the life of the diverse international population (Golder & Macy, 2014). People use social media to express their emotions and thoughts on every aspect of their lives. Social media, therefore, offers a rich environment for academic researchers to examine social attitudes and practices through using such a free digital content.

Twitter is one of the social media platforms with high demand among Saudis and therefore, this study used twitter as a data source. It mainly focused on tweets replies to Twitter posts about Saudi women's empowerment. These tweets were collected from Saudi public accounts. However, they were collected from hashtags and search words, in Arabic namely: #مرأة_#تمكين_المرأة، #سعوديات_مبدعات، #المرأة_#تمكين_المرأة، #السعودية_إنجازات_المرأة_السعودية، #تمكين_المرأة_السعودية، #المرأة_السعودية and in English namely: #Women; #Women_Empowerment; #Creative_SaudiWomen; Saudi Women; Saudi Women Empowerment; Saudi Women Achievements. The data collected were in Arabic then translated into English. The aim of this study to understand Saudis' interaction with Saudi women's empowerment.

The sample included ten tweets related to Saudi women's achievements and empowerment in several areas from different Saudi Twitter accounts. Under each tweet, Saudi users have several positive and negative responses regarding Saudi women's achievements. For each tweet, 30 replies were selected to represent the social attitudes towards the main tweets. The selection criteria were based on the most frequent responses to the main tweet. Figure 1 below shows one example of the tweets regarding Saudi women joining football for the first time, and the first reply presents rejection.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used as a perfect way to investigate meanings as they are developed in society. It has been considered useful for searching the representation of women in the media (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), and it is the focus of this study. According to Bloor and Bloor (2007), researchers using CDA focus on the way in which language and discourse are utilized to reach social goals, rather than examining how language and discourse work together. The thematic analysis method was found suitable for analysing qualitative data (Nowell et al., 2017), concerning people's opinions and views. It helps the researchers explore patterned meaning and identify themes across the data set.

4. Findings

Based on the data analysis, two themes emerged: social support for women empowerment and social rejection for women empowerment.

4.1 *The first theme: social support for women empowerment*

This theme discusses the positive responses among Saudi Twitter users to Saudi women's role in different fields, including economy, politics and science. It includes comments that support, welcome, or praise Saudi women as an integral part of the Saudi society. It presents a considerable use of positive terms supporting Saudi women's empowerment, as Saudi women empowerment takes a huge part of the Kingdom's 2030 Vision (Sabir, 2019). Based on the analysis, seven tweets out of ten had more supportive responses than opposing responses, and they generally received positive comments as can be seen in Table 1, which shows these tweets with three responses (out of 30) for each.

Table 1: Tweets with positive responses

No.	The tweet	Response 1	Response 2	Response 3
1-	<p>رؤية السعودية 2030 وبرنامج التحول الوطني 2020 وضعت تمكين المرأة السعودية ضمن أهم أولوياتها. (The original text) Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program 2020 have placed women's empowerment among its top priorities. (The translation)</p>	<p>بصراحة المرأة لها حق في المجتمع كبير علينا ولولا النساء ما وجدت الرجال من فهم التوظيف ع شهاداتهم خاصة في التعليم مع ان المرأة مشاء الله تبتدع في مجال عملها سوا طيب هندسة تعليم طيران الله يوفق الجميع Honestly, women have a great right in society, and men would not exist without women. They have the right to be employed, especially in education even though women excel in any sector, whether in medicine, engineering, education, or aviation. May God help us, all.</p>	<p>شاكرة لوطني العظيم على دعمهم للمرأة بإذن الله تكون عند حسن الظن وتبقى السعودية قوية في بناتها وشبابها I am thankful for my great country for its support to women. With Allah's permission, we will meet your expectations, and Saudi Arabia remains strong with its daughters and youth.</p>	<p>انا اشهد انها تستاهل ويقره خاصه المرأة السعودية I certify that she deserves it, especially Saudi women.</p>
2-	<p>من هي المرأة الوحيدة التي حضرت جلسة اجمع استراتيحية صندوق الاستثمارات العامة؟ رغم حداثة سنها. شويهاة العزاز الأمين العام لمجلس إدارة صندوق الاستثمارات العامة الذي يتوقع أن يكون أكبر صندوق ريادي في العالم. نالت لقب "صانعة الصفقات" من مجلس فينانس مونثلي بالملكة المتحدة Who is the only woman attending the strategy meeting session of Public Investment Fund? Despite her young age, Shihahah Alazzaz, General Secretary to the Board of Directors at the Public Investment fund, which is expected to be the world's largest sovereign wealth fund. She is awarded the title of "dealmaker" from Finance Monthly magazine in the United Kingdom.</p>	<p>لا ينقص المرأة السعودية شيء ليس هناك شخص عظيم يشكو من نقص الفرص هذا ليس غريبا على بنات الوطن Saudi women lack nothing. A great person does not complain about the lack of opportunities. This is not an unusual thing for our homeland girls.</p>	<p>تعزيز دور المرأة في تنمية المجتمع أحد أهم مرتكزات رؤية المملكة التي وضعها سمو ولي العهد حفظه الله وبما أنها نصف المجتمع تستحق أن تتواجد كشريكة في النجاح Enhancing women's role in developing society is one of the most important pillars of the Kingdom's Vision set by His Highness the Crown Prince, may Allah protect him. Since Saudi women represent half of this community, they deserve to exist as partners in success.</p>	<p>فخر النساء Pride of women.</p>
3-	<p>تشرفت اليوم بتقديم أوراق اعتمادي كسفير مفوض فوق العادة لحادم الحرمين الشريفين في مملكة النرويج حيث تلقت ولي العهد صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير هاكون نيايه عن جلالة الملك هارالد الخامس ملك النرويج. أسأل الله التوفيق والسداد Today, I had the honor to present my credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in the Kingdom of Norway, where I met the Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince Haakon on behalf of His Majesty King Harald V of Norway. I ask Allah for success.</p>	<p>ألف مبروك أسأتة أمال، لطالما كنت واجهة مشرفة لبلادك ومليكك دعواتي لك بالتوفيق والسداد Congratulations, Professor Amal; you have always been an honourable representative of your country and your king. My prayers to you, and good luck.</p>	<p>كلنا فخر فيك سعادة السفيره واجهه مشرفة الدولية في المحافل الدولية We are all proud of you, Ambassador. You are an honourable representative of Saudi Arabia in international forums.</p>	<p>التي اهل لهذا المنصب و فالك التوفيق في خدمة الملك والوطن You are eligible for this position, and I wish you success in serving the king and the country.</p>
4-	<p>أمل البلوي مخترعة سعودية رفضت عروضاً دولية لاحتكار ابتكارها أول تقنية من نوعها لكشف الفيروسات بكبايس الدم التناوبية ووقعت اتفاقية مع وزارة الصحة لتصبح المملكة هي الأولى في تصدير هذه التقنية فخورين فيك يا أمل Amal Albalawi, a Saudi inventor who rejected international offers to monopolize her innovation of the first technology of its kind to detect viruses with nano-cysts of blood. She signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health to make the Kingdom the first in exporting this technology. Proud of you, Amal.</p>	<p>مشاء الله تبارك الله نقخر بكل أبناء الوطن الغالي المبدع في عهد سيدي خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان وولي عهده الأمين محمد بن سلمان Allah bless you; we are proud of all the people of the dear, creative nation during the reign of my lord, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman and his Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman.</p>	<p>بنات وطني عز الوطن نقخر بإنجازاتهم دعواتنا للمبدع أمل البلوي بالتوفيق The girls of my homeland are glory to the country. We are proud of their achievements and our prayers for success to the creative person, Amal Al-Balawi.</p>	<p>هذه مثال مشرف لنا كسعوديين She is an honourable example for us as Saudis.</p>
5-	<p>5 طالبات سعوديات يبتكرن "شريحة نانو" تربط بالهاتف، تزرع في الرقبة وتكتشف السرطان في وقت مبكر قبل انتشاره Five Saudi female students innovate a nano-chip to detect cancer earlier before it spreads.</p>	<p>هذه هي المرأة العربية التي نقدر فيها هذه المساواة الحقيقية بيننا This is the Arab woman we are proud of, and this shows the real equality between us.</p>	<p>افخر بالنساء اللتي يطلعوا عالمات ومخترعات لأمم نحنا معاكم وراح نقدر فيكم حرقيا نول اللي يستحقوا الشهرة مو المشاهير التانيين I am proud of female inventors, and we are with you and we will be celebrating you literally. They are the ones who deserve to be more famous, not the other celebrities.</p>	<p>فيكم فخر ببناتنا We are proud of our daughters.</p>
6-	<p>حصلت د. نجلاء بنت سعد بن عودة الراددي، أستاذ الكيمياء غير العضوية والنانو المشارك بجامعة طيبة في المدينة المنورة، على البراءة الثالثة من الهيئة السعودية للملكية الفكرية في تقنية النانو Dr. Najlaa Saad Oudah Alrdadi, Professor of Inorganic Chemistry and the Nano at Taibah University in AL-Madinah Almonawarah, received the third patent from Saudi Intellectual Property Authority in nanotechnology.</p>	<p>هنا الإنجاز الحقيقي Here is the real achievement.</p>	<p>نقخر بين كسعوديين As Saudis, we are proud of them.</p>	<p>الله يوفقها. عظم وفكر وحسمة وإبداع May Allah guide her ... intellect, decency, and creativity.</p>
7-	<p>مشاعل الشميمري أول مهندسة صواريخ سلمية ومركبات فضائية في السعودية والخليج أستاذة في قسم الهندسة الميكانيكية والفضاء في جامعة ميامي في فلوريدا Mishaal Alshemimri is the first female rocket and spacecraft engineer in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region. She is a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Space at the University of Miami in Florida.</p>	<p>كفو يا بنتنا رفعتي روسنا Good job, our daughter; you made us proud.</p>	<p>تستاهل قصة نجاح ملهمة She is worth it, an inspiring success story.</p>	<p>مشاعل فتوتني بالإصرار She is my role model for persistence.</p>

All the responses (see Table 1) support and praise the decisions to empower women in economic, political and scientific sectors. Regarding the economic sector, the Saudi users celebrated the effective role that Saudi women play in economy. For example, one replied “Saudi women lack nothing. A great person does not complain about the lack of opportunities. This is not an unusual thing for our homeland girls” which emphasizes that Saudi women are ambitious and able to create opportunities for themselves. One of the tweets was about a Saudi woman as an ambassador in the political sector. The replies to this tweet show a positive attitude among Saudi users towards Saudi female leaders. Most these comments expressed pride and honour, such as “We are all proud of you, Ambassador”. The majority also wished her success in serving the king and the Kingdom. Other comments congratulated her on her new position, which shows general acceptance among Saudi users. In the scientific field, women’s participation has also been met with acceptance and support from the Saudis, and was described as “an honourable example” and “an inspiring success story” for them. A sense of pride and belonging is evident in most of the responses (see Table 1) as shown in the repeated use of these phrases: “its daughters”, “our daughter”, “our daughters”, “the girls of my homeland”, “an honourable example for us as Saudis”, “an honourable representative of Saudi Arabia”, “an honourable representative of your country and your king”. The data presented in Table 1 presents a strong evidence of the social consensus among Saudis towards the new roles of women as dealmakers, inventors, scientists and ambassadors.

4.2 The second theme: social rejection for women empowerment

A common theme among responses is opposition to women empowerment. There are three tweets out of ten that received more opposing responses than supportive ones. The role of women in these tweets were largely rejected as the responses include negative attitudes, sarcastic phrases, or derogatory words that clarify that the person who replied was not in favour of women contributions. Table 2 shows these tweets and three replies for each.

Table 2: Tweets with opposing responses

No.	The tweet	Response 1	Response 2	Response 3
1.	وكيلة وزارة الموارد البشرية: الحكومة جادة في ملف تمكين المرأة. قريبا المرأة "قاضية" (The original text) Under-Secretary for Ministry of Human Resources: Government is serious about women empowerment. Soon, Saudi women will be appointed as "judges". (The translation)	مستحيل تكون قاضية There is no way she is becoming a judge.	المرأة عاطفية ما تتفق تكون قاضية Women are emotional; they cannot be judges.	قضيتك حلها بنفسك لا توصلها النصف العقل Solve your case by yourself and do not leave it to someone with half a brain.
2.	وزارة العدل: ارتفاع عدد المحاميات 66% في عام 2020 مقارنة بعام 2019 Ministry of Justice: the number of women lawyers was increased by 66% in 2020 compared to 2019.	محاميات لمطبخ Lawyers for kitchen cases.	مستحيل اوكل شيء عند محامية I would never hire a female lawyer.	ما راح تكون اهل الثقة في هذا المجال She will not be trustworthy in this field.
3.	الدوري النسائي لكرة القدم ينطلق لأول مرة في تاريخ الرياضة السعودية The Women's Football League starts today for the first time in the history of sports.	الكرة وبين وأنتم شمال You know nothing about football.	ماذا يحدث في السعودية What is happening in Saudi Arabia?	ما فلتحوا في المطبخ والبيت تفلحون في الكرة You failed in cooking and in household chores, and you will you succeed in football!

As shown in Table 2, most of the comments reject women's empowerment in certain domains. They rejected the role of a Saudi woman as a judge in the first tweet and the first reply in Table 2 shows a complete denial of a Saudi female judge as clearly conveyed by the use of the phrase “no way”. The rejection was justified in other responses by describing women as “emotional” and “someone with half a brain”. Such description, although widely believed, does not hold any truth and is based on stereotypes and general assumptions. The second “unwelcomed” role by society is Saudi women as lawyers. The majority of responses suggest that being a lawyer is only for men and female lawyers are not “trustworthy” and can only handle “kitchen cases”. The last tweet is about starting the women's football league for the first time in Saudi Arabia. The responses were ironic such as "you know

nothing about football" and " You failed in cooking and in household chores, and you will succeed in football!". Other responses expressed surprise such as "what is happening in Saudi Arabia?". These responses clearly show that Saudi female players were not taken seriously by the society and were not supported. The results show strong opposition to women's empowerment in two fields: sports and judiciary as positions in these fields were considered gender-specific.

5. Discussion

This study is significant in reflecting the attitudes of Saudi Twitter users towards Saudi women's empowerment. It was found that there were different opinions among Saudi Twitter users about empowering Saudi women. The main findings were divided into two parts: supporting and opposing Saudi women's empowerment. Despite these differences, the important finding was that Saudis generally accept Saudi women's empowerment as the majority of the responses expressed praise for Saudi women's achievements.

The current study asks the following question: how do Saudis interact with Saudi women's empowerment? The results showed that women's empowerment received acceptance in the political, economic, and scientific fields. The replies to these specific fields showed support and pride regarding Saudi women's contributions. They expressed that women deserve to be empowered and have inspirational success stories. Furthermore, the word "pride" is repeated many times, confirming society's acceptance to empower women.

On the other hand, there was opposition to empowering Saudi women in two areas, sports and judiciary. The comments were sarcastic and offensive to women for many reasons, reflecting limited confidence in women and their abilities. The most common reason for this was customs and traditions. The set of customs and traditions still entrench the stereotype of Saudi women. The superficial view of women is limited to their role in domestic work and this is in line with the mainstream belief against women's job as a judge based on cultural and Islamic constraints as reported in Al-Agha's study (2021). The cultural beliefs of the Saudi society are mostly based on different interpretations of their Islamic provisions. Moreover, lack of confidence in women's abilities was another reason for opposing Saudi women's empowerment. Al-Ahmadi (2011) similarly argued that conventional images and beliefs about women's abilities are one of the challenges that face Saudi women's leaders. Women are generally perceived as emotional and unable to make decisions. Giving that, empowering Saudi women in these two sectors still receive a backlash from the Saudi society because of the prevailing assumption of gender stereotypes and norms which create cultural barrier for women from working in sports and judiciary.

This study demonstrated a better understanding of Saudi attitudes represented on Twitter towards Saudi women's empowerment. The findings present evidence of general acceptance of Saudi women's empowerment in society. The acceptance of women's empowerment is an indicator for fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 vision. The study however represents the limitations of Saudi women's roles in the judiciary field and in sports. More work needs to be done to enhance women's participation in these two fields.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Women's empowerment has been a major concern for communities worldwide, and governments exerts great efforts to ensure gender equality. The current study aimed to discover Saudis' opinions on Saudi women's empowerment in several sectors by examining Twitter posts through hashtags concerning women's empowerment and achievements. In the study, two themes have emerged. The first theme is supporters of empowering women. The data showed that the majority were proud of Saudi women's achievements and supported them. The second theme is opponents of women's empowerment. After analysing the opposing responses, the results showed that their rejection of women's presence in sports and judiciary is due to the narrow view of women's potential as well as

the dominance of social norms that perceive men as the perfect fit physically and mentally for these specific fields.

The study suggests raising awareness among society to ensure equal opportunities for men and women in all different domains. In addition, encouraging women to increase their participation in private and public workplaces and to take part in discussing women's issues is highly important in order to change their stereotypical image in society. It is also recommended for government to measure women's needs and accordingly provide them with the required training programs and workshops. Moreover, local agencies should advocate for the pivotal role of women in society and highlight their valuable contributions through various media platforms. The study also calls for further future studies regarding Saudi women's empowerment and representation in all aspects of life.

In conclusion, Saudi Arabia has made significant strides towards empowering women economically, socially, and politically. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that women have equal rights and opportunities as men. The government must continue to implement policies that promote gender equality and empower women. It is only through such initiatives that the country can achieve sustainable development and progress.

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