

Reflections of the Entrepreneurial Knowledge of Iraqi Women on Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

This study explores the entrepreneurial knowledge and lives experiences of Iraqi women entrepreneurs operating both domestically and in European contexts, examining the extent to which varying socioeconomic environments shape these experiences. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining quantitative findings from 160 valid survey responses (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.912$) with qualitative data. The results indicate significant contrasts: women based in Iraq often exhibit risk-taking behaviours driven by necessity in response to challenging conditions, whereas those situated in Europe are supported by more enabling environments that encourage environmental consciousness and are characterised by a stronger tradition of entrepreneurial success. The study identifies a nuanced relationship between education and entrepreneurship, suggesting that formal education may have steered women towards stable employment rather than entrepreneurial paths. Additionally, cultural and social norms emerge as critical factors influencing women's participation in entrepreneurial activities. The paper concludes by recommending that policymakers develop tailored interventions to mitigate the socioeconomic and cultural constraints impeding women's entrepreneurial progress, thereby supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Knowledge, Women Entrepreneurs, European Context, Iraq

Introduction

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) possesses a range of strengths, including scientific knowledge, skilled human resources, advanced technological capabilities, an adaptable institutional framework, and a strong commitment to fostering entrepreneurship education, technological innovation, and the knowledge-based economy. These attributes position the KRI to become a prominent centre for entrepreneurship within both Iraq and the broader region (Mohammadali & Abdulkhaliq, 2019). Despite these advantages, the economies of both the Kurdistan

Regional Government (KRG) and the Government of Iraq (GOI) remain heavily dependent on the public sector. As noted by [Bartnick \(2017\)](#), around 40% of Iraq's labour force is employed in the public sector, a proportion markedly higher than in more economically diverse neighbouring countries such as Turkey (12%), Iran (17%), and Jordan (31%).

Globally, women entrepreneurs represent one of the most rapidly expanding segments within the broader entrepreneurial landscape ([Sajjad et al., 2020](#)). The growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including those established by women, is widely acknowledged for its role in driving economic progress. In developing economies, women-led enterprises are instrumental in creating employment opportunities, facilitating wealth generation, mitigating poverty, enhancing human development, and contributing to improvements in both education and healthcare systems ([Orobia et al., 2020](#)). Nonetheless, women often face distinct challenges that are frequently more intricate than those encountered by men, spanning the entire business lifecycle from inception to long-term financial viability and crisis navigation ([Guzman & Kacperczyk, 2019](#)). To ensure sustainability, entrepreneurial initiatives must develop strategic business models that optimise resource utilisation, maintain internal alignment, and uphold cultural integrity while remaining competitive in the market ([Ponisciakova, 2020](#)). Despite increasing female participation in entrepreneurship at the global level, women remain significantly underrepresented compared to men. Substantial gaps persist regarding institutional mechanisms to support female entrepreneurs, particularly in relation to how women-led networks can strengthen and elevate collective entrepreneurial efforts ([Balachandra & Dublish, 2019](#)).

Over recent decades, contemporary entrepreneurial entities have evolved into dynamic, competitive organisations capable of adapting to long-term shifts in consumer preferences and market conditions. These organisations have increasingly prioritised the identification, development, and retention of individuals with specialised knowledge, recognising that entrepreneurial competencies require sustained cultivation over time ([Popa et al., 2018](#)). Research on women's entrepreneurship education is predominantly empirical and often reflects gender-specific perspectives on training. The existing literature is largely concentrated in countries such as the United States (63 studies), the United Kingdom (38), Spain (34), Canada (33), Germany (30), Italy (29), Malaysia (27), South Africa (24), and Sweden (23), among others. Broadly, female entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital mechanism for job creation and a driver of sustainable economic development, significantly contributing to poverty alleviation and improved societal well-being ([Gaweł & Mroczek-Dąbrowska, 2022](#)). In alignment with these findings, the current study observes that the global rise in female entrepreneurship has prompted policymakers to introduce institutional support mechanisms and promote women's leadership roles ([Muhammad et al., 2021](#)). However, gender-based subordination has

not been eradicated; instead, patriarchal ideologies that reinforce male dominance within the household have been further entrenched ([Abdul Waheed et al., 2025](#); [Agarwal & Lenka, 2018](#)).

Since 2003, women have participated in Iraq's political processes. Nonetheless, they continue to face numerous barriers stemming from the country's deep-rooted ethnic, sectarian, and ideological divisions, which have impeded the work of women's rights organisations (WROs) and limited effective political involvement ([Fischer-Tahir, 2010](#)). The vulnerability to mental health, together with the psychological stress that arises due to gender-based violence and the continuous instability and conflict, have increased the susceptibility of women to mental disorders ([Younis & Khudhiar Lafta, 2021](#)). In the society of Iraq, the socio-cultural aspects that limit the entrepreneurial activity of women are mainly embedded in the patriarchal framework and existing gender perceptions. These structural barriers are major challenges to the success of women run businesses. Empirical evidence suggests that the general view of women in the Middle East including Iraq is that they are at the lower social structure in comparison to their male counterparts ([Radović-Marković & Achakpa, 2018](#)). Accordingly, the opportunities of women entrepreneurship and employment in Iraq are highly limited compared to the more favorable environment that is witnessed in many Western countries. Iraqi society remains profoundly influenced by patriarchal systems that constrain women's access to economic resources and limit their participation in public life ([Sattar et al., 2021](#)).

Whereas existing diaspora research has largely concentrated on political lobbying and homeland engagement, the present study explores a relatively overlooked aspect of the contribution of diaspora communities to the cultivation of democratic values and transnational civil society. Specifically, it focuses on the experiences of the Iraqi diaspora in Sweden ([Kadhum, 2019](#)). This research is structured around two central questions:

1. In what ways does the entrepreneurial knowledge possessed by Iraqi women within Iraq shape their entrepreneurial endeavours?
2. How does exposure to distinct environmental contexts influence the utilisation of entrepreneurial knowledge among Iraqi women residing in Iraq compared to those in the diaspora?

Although academic interest in women's entrepreneurship across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has grown ([Dechant & Lamky, 2005](#)), and the economic significance of diaspora populations has received increased scholarly attention ([Kuznetsov, 2006](#)), a significant gap persists regarding the entrepreneurial knowledge held by Iraqi women. Much of the existing literature either addresses structural challenges confronting women entrepreneurs within the region or offers generalised perspectives on diaspora entrepreneurship. However, few comparative analyses explore variations in market insight, technical expertise, managerial proficiency, and

the formation of support networks between Iraqi women entrepreneurs located domestically and those operating within diaspora communities. A primary shortcoming of the current literature is the tendency to treat Iraqi women entrepreneurs as a uniform group, without adequately considering the influence of context-specific variables. Over the past two decades, Iraq has endured extensive instability, armed conflict, the spread of paramilitary factions, and widespread degradation of social infrastructure. This climate has proven to be harmful to the entrepreneurial pursuits of women, significantly limiting their freedom of movement, market accessibility and personal security, the three variables that are crucial in the successful learning and exercise of entrepreneurial knowledge ([Abdul Waheed et al., 2025](#)). Conversely, the people of the Iraqi diaspora who live in relatively safer political settings benefit by institutional structures and trust systems that assist in the acquisition and utilization of entrepreneurial knowledge ([Radović-Marković & Achakpa, 2018](#)).

Literature Review

The social and cultural limitations that still prevail in Iraq hamper the ability of women to create and build professional networks which in turn limits their access to important sources of information, entrepreneurial prospects, and supportive frameworks ([Al-Ali, 2007](#); [Kandiyoti, 1991](#)). This weakness significantly hinders the cultivation of the so-called know-who knowledge, which is also an indispensable aspect of entrepreneurial competency. On the other hand, the entrepreneurial activities of the Iraqi women in the diaspora are often incorporated into the wide and heterogeneous networks that cuts across their ethnic groups in addition to the host societies. Such networks can help in sharing knowledge as well as accessing new market opportunities. Female entrepreneurs in Iraq have institutional barriers to getting funds, training, or mentoring. These difficulties are frequently rooted in entrenched patriarchal norms, institutional biases, and risk-averse perceptions that systematically hinder women's entrepreneurial advancement ([Vilardo & Bittar, 2018](#)). As a result, rights to necessary skills and experiential knowledge necessary in the initiation and growth of business ventures are limited.

Nonetheless, migration can be associated with such issues as displacement and socio-cultural adjustment but in fallacies of diaspora, women tend to experience increased access to formal financial systems, governmental support, and institutional support through pre-existing networks ([Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015](#); [Portes & Zhou, 1993](#)). These sources provide valuable tacit knowledge and insights into effective market strategies. The continuing socio-cultural limitations within Iraq also undermine women's ability to forge strategic professional alliances, significantly curtailing their access to entrepreneurial resources and further weakening the accumulation of 'know-who' knowledge essential for successful enterprise development ([Al-Ali, 2007](#)). In contrast, diaspora-based entrepreneurs are typically embedded within more interconnected and supportive networks, both within their ethnic circles and the wider host

environment, thereby enhancing their ability to capitalise on market opportunities.

Women's entrepreneurship reflects the capacity of women to initiate, operate, and manage businesses independently and innovatively. It presents an important pathway towards economic autonomy and upward social mobility. By establishing business ventures, women not only secure income but also contribute to employment generation while simultaneously managing familial, societal, and personal responsibilities ([Shadrack & Warsanga, 2021](#)). Although academic interest in female entrepreneurship originated in Western contexts approximately thirty years ago, its significance has been increasingly recognised in non-Western regions owing to its potential for fostering economic development ([Roy et al., 2022](#)). Therefore, the promotion of women's entrepreneurial engagement is critical for achieving sustainable development, particularly in contexts striving for inclusive growth ([Ziyae et al., 2021](#)). Despite women constituting a demographic majority, notable disparities in social standing continue to persist ([Agarwal & Lenka, 2018](#)). Women-led enterprises are also aligned with the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as they not only deliver innovative products and services but also address socio-environmental issues through market-oriented solutions ([Mahajan & Bandyopadhyay, 2021](#)).

A further point of divergence lies in the availability of economic and social safety mechanisms. In Iraq, female entrepreneurs experience substantial obstacles when attempting to engage with formal financial institutions, primarily due to institutional configurations, heightened risk perceptions, and gendered restrictions on property ownership and collateral provision ([Nawafly, 2021](#)). Although microfinance programmes do exist, their reach remains limited, and their impact on broader economic development remains marginal. Iraqi women, on the other hand, when operating in more advanced nations are more likely to access more finances, both conventional banking services, venture capital, and governmental programs targeting start-ups or minority-owned businesses ([Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015](#)). As highlighted by [Portes and Zhou \(1993\)](#), Diaspora networks are also crucial channels of financial assistance and providers of social capital.

Entrepreneurial knowledge is one of the most important resources to individual entrepreneurs and state agencies since it helps to realize opportunities and implement creative strategies. According to [Kamal et al. \(2020\)](#), This body of knowledge involves the tactical use of the available surviving information to cultivate innovation in the corporate practices, which is considered to be indispensable to the viability and success of entrepreneurial projects. Similarly, [Tshikovhi and Shambare \(2015\)](#) This has been defined as an in-depth knowledge of entrepreneurial concepts and skills. Entrepreneurial knowledge can thus play a key role in the creation and survival of new ventures and therefore play an important role in individual growth as well as the overall socio-economic growth of a society ([Ossai & Iwegbu, 2012](#)). The argument that

the presence of knowledge resources is closely correlated with the intensification of entrepreneurial activity and the achievement of competitive advantage is confirmed using empirical evidence (Coulson-Thomas, 2003).

Methodology

Watchravesringkan et al. (2013) It is assumed that entrepreneurial knowledge is divided into the following domains: content knowledge, practical skills, leadership capacity, managerial abilities, communication competence and aptitude in identifying opportunities. Knowledge is a root asset when it comes to innovation which in its turn is a root asset of creation of competitive advantage (Bhardwaj et al., 2011). The acquisition of nonhomogeneous and heterogeneous knowledge by the diverse sources often provides distinctive advantages to the immigrant entrepreneur. The success and sustainability of entrepreneurial initiatives is reliant on this background of understanding (Lemes et al., 2010). Such knowledge is central to not only identifying and leveraging opportunities but also implementing new practices, which are critical requirements to the growth of entrepreneurial activities on an individual and organizational scale. Kamal et al. (2020) Highlights the need to use the available knowledge to drive innovation in business environments. Similarly, Tshikovhi and Shambare (2015) Entrepreneurial knowledge can be said to be a combination of the skills and attitudinal dispositions that are developed through physical experience in entrepreneurial situations. Miswanto et al. (2020) View it as the ability to see the emergent opportunities based on experiential knowledge. Moreover, a distinction can be made between knowledge-based and management-based aspects of entrepreneurial knowledge. The former relates to job-specific competencies, whereas the latter encompasses strategic planning and competitiveness within the broader entrepreneurial process. Ossai and Iwegbu (2012) also emphasise that entrepreneurial knowledge is integral to the design and refinement of new ventures, and it contributes significantly to both personal progress and societal development. Earlier studies affirm that the enhancement of entrepreneurship and the achievement of competitive standing are closely linked to the availability and application of knowledge resources (Ossai & Iwegbu, 2012).

How does the entrepreneurial knowledge of Iraqi women inside Iraq reflect on their entrepreneurial activities?

The entrepreneurial knowledge possessed by Iraqi women within the national setting plays a pivotal role in shaping their participation in business activities, particularly amid the country's complex and restrictive socio-economic conditions. This knowledge is reflected in several core dimensions. A prominent feature is the dominance of necessity-driven entrepreneurship, which often emerges as a response to the scarcity of formal employment opportunities. For many women, initiating small-scale enterprises becomes a practical means of supporting their families under economically strained circumstances (Al Shamy & Abbas, 2021). Empirical data suggests that Iraqi women with secondary or higher education levels are generally

more likely to engage in early-stage entrepreneurial ventures. Nonetheless, other findings indicate that women with advanced education may prefer stable, well-remunerated employment within the public or private sectors. As a result, women with limited formal education are more inclined to pursue self-employment, frequently driven by economic need and largely concentrated within traditional or informal segments of the economy ([Al-Taai, 2021](#)).

Results and Discussion

The level of small-scale entrepreneurial engagement in Iraq remains considerably low, and this can be largely attributed to a lack of entrepreneurial knowledge, which stems in part from diminished confidence among women in participating in public domains. The lack of self-confidence restrains the economic participation and access to the employment opportunities in the labour market. Women in Iraq still face the range of systematic challenges such as widespread unemployment, poverty and insecurity, exile, and unstable conditions. As a result, women are often confined to traditionally feminine occupations, including teaching and nursing, further reducing their representation in the general labour force, and thus limiting economic growth, as reflected in the fact that the proportion of women entrepreneurs in the country is very low. Before 2002, Iraq has witnessed an alarming trend in illiteracy of women with an increase in dropout and non-attainment of compulsory education. [Muhammad et al. \(2021\)](#) When reporting this trend, the highlight is on the educational disparity that is becoming larger. According to statistical data provided by the Ministry of Planning, the rates of female unemployment were extremely high, and they were 93.34 percent during the period between 1986 and 1990 and slightly higher 94.17 percent between 2006 and 2011. These data suggest that less than 1 out of 10 women engaged in formal employment, therefore, suggesting the significant underuse of female human capital.

A comparative analysis of educational attainment and unemployment levels among Iraqi women in 2007 further reveals stark disparities. At that time, 26.4% of women were reported to be illiterate, in contrast to 11.6% of men ([Souza, 2021](#)). Women holding only primary education certificates comprised 28% of the population, slightly below the 30.2% recorded for men. These statistics point to a 30% increase in the number of unemployed, illiterate women, reinforcing the correlation between educational level and joblessness. Among individuals with primary education, 30.2% were female, compared to 28.2% male. The active participation of women in the labour market is essential, as it contributes to reducing poverty, boosting household incomes, and driving national economic development. Evaluating economic activity and unemployment rates thus offers valuable insights into the extent of women's economic contributions and their potential to assume leadership roles in the workforce.

- Maternal mortality increased between 2003 and 2019, primarily due to insufficient healthcare provision. The decline in security conditions following 2003 has also contributed to the erosion of women's roles within society. Unemployment among women remains high, approaching 70%, with a

- substantial number lacking financial independence.
- Cultural and religious influences serve as major barriers to women's participation in entrepreneurial activities. Traditional societal expectations often confine women to domestic responsibilities and childrearing, thereby limiting their engagement in business ventures.

Data from the Global Entrepreneurship Observatory suggest that higher education positively influences entrepreneurial participation by enhancing individuals' self-confidence and sense of autonomy. As a result, those with advanced education are generally better equipped to initiate new business ventures and possess the competencies required to navigate and remain competitive in dynamic labour markets. Figure 1 demonstrates the declining entrepreneurial engagement of women in Iraq. A related study on Jordanian women involved in early-stage entrepreneurial initiatives revealed that 24.5% held university-level qualifications, while 38.4% had attained only secondary education. Most women participating in early entrepreneurial efforts had either completed secondary education or obtained vocational certificates. Few pursued academic qualifications beyond this level. Given the perceived benefits associated with higher education, women who attain such qualifications often pursue formal employment within the public or private sectors. However, when job prospects in these areas are limited, levels of female unemployment tend to rise. In contrast, women with lower levels of education are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship as a practical alternative to continuing formal education.

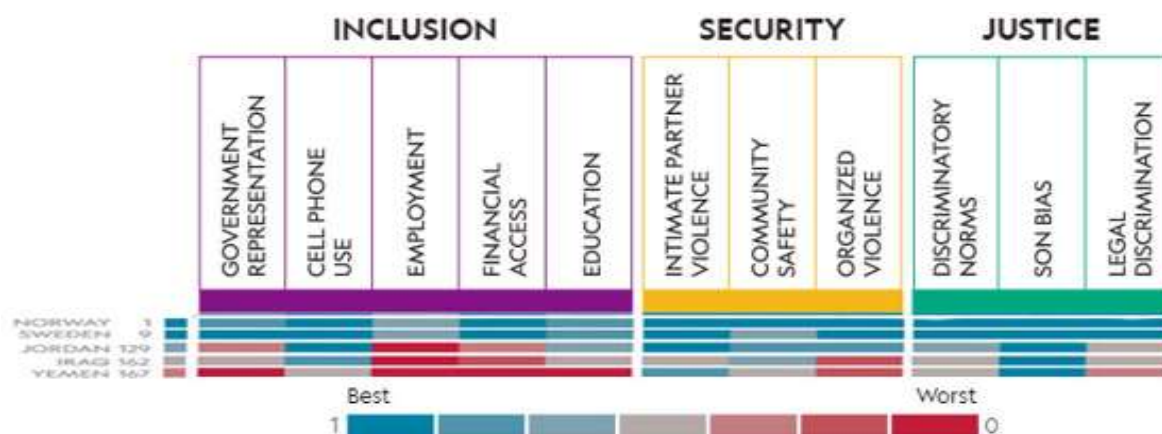


Figure 1: The Women, Peace, and Security Index Ranking.

Source: (Georgetown Institute for Women, 2023).

As a result, women with lower educational attainment are more likely to engage in traditional forms of entrepreneurship, while those with higher education levels tend to pursue employment within the formal public or private sectors. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Observatory, there exists a strong link between educational attainment and entrepreneurial competence. Education is seen not only as a contributing factor to business success but also, in some cases, as an outcome of entrepreneurial experience. The nature of employment and entrepreneurial development within organisations plays a significant role in shaping the quality,

scope, and variety of educational offerings. Education facilitates entrepreneurship by equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in business activities.

Examination and Testing Outcomes for Google Forms

- **Reliability Testing of the Questionnaires:** The internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire scales were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The resulting value of 0.912 indicates a strong degree of reliability. This outcome was statistically significant at the 0.05 threshold, confirming the robustness of the instrument.
- **Sample Description:** The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms and targeted female entrepreneurs residing in both Iraq and Europe. Respondents were selected based on predefined entrepreneurial characteristics, and only those who fulfilled these criteria were included in the final sample. Questionnaires that did not align with these parameters were excluded. Of the 250 forms circulated, 160 were deemed valid, reflecting a response rate of 64%. Specifically, 80 responses were obtained from Iraq and 80 from Europe, with both cohorts meeting the inclusion requirements. In addition, respondents' socioeconomic profiles were assessed according to an established classification system, and each valid response was categorised accordingly. [Figure 2](#) presents the socioeconomic segmentation of the participants based on the verified responses.

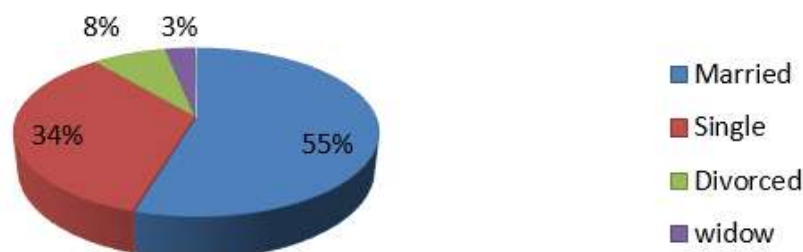


Figure 2: The Social Status of the Female Respondents

Source: Prepared by the Researcher Based on the Results of the Questionnaire

[Figure 3](#) indicates that married women comprise most female entrepreneurs, representing 55% of the sample, while widowed women account for the smallest proportion at just 3%. This outcome prompts reflection, as it challenges prevailing assumptions that married women primarily concentrate on domestic duties and caregiving. This observation aligns with the findings of [Seuneke and Bock \(2015\)](#), who offer a fresh perspective on the entrepreneurial engagement of married women. Their research highlights that pivotal life stages, including marriage and parenthood, significantly influence women's choices regarding employment, career progression, and business ownership. Although these life events are often associated with a retreat from formal employment, they do not appear to hinder women's entrepreneurial pursuits within self-owned ventures. In fact, the data suggest that women with children demonstrate higher levels of entrepreneurial activity compared to those

without, with the likelihood of business initiation increasing after the birth of the first child and continuing to rise with subsequent children. This counterintuitive trend is reflected in the elevated proportion of married women business owners identified in the study. Conversely, the minimal representation of widowed entrepreneurs may be linked to diminished support systems or reduced personal motivation to establish independent enterprises. The age-related distribution of female entrepreneurs is also detailed in [Figure 3](#).

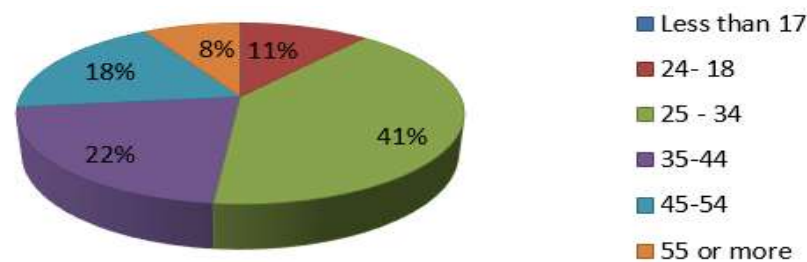


Figure 3: Ages of Respondents

Source: Prepared by the Researcher Based on the Results of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire findings reveal that 41% of the female entrepreneurs surveyed were within the 25 to 34 age brackets, indicating that this younger cohort demonstrated the highest level of entrepreneurial activity compared to other age groups. This trend may be attributed to the perception that younger individuals often exhibit higher levels of creativity, which is a critical component of entrepreneurial success. Such traits are typically associated with a lower sensitivity to risk and a reduced fear of failure when initiating new ventures. More so, the women in this group of the population are not restricted by the rigid education patterns as much as they tend to be oriented toward gaining independence and taking advantage of emerging opportunities. Also, they are more likely to exhibit a better understanding of their career goals. [Özsungur \(2019\)](#) This research paper explores the interaction between the entrepreneurial behaviour of female youths, and their motives and goals in setting up of businesses.

In terms of educational qualifications, [Figure 4](#) illustrates that the largest proportion of participants held a bachelor's degree (46.88%), whereas only a small minority (6.25%) reported holding a doctoral qualification. This distribution can be attributed to the general pattern among Iraqi women whether residing within Iraq or abroad of not pursuing higher academic credentials beyond undergraduate level. Advanced education is frequently perceived as an alternative pathway to entrepreneurship, with highly educated women more likely to seek roles within formal employment sectors, including government or private institutions. Conversely, those with lower educational attainment often engage in more traditional forms of entrepreneurial activity. This pattern accounts for the limited number of respondents with doctoral degrees among the surveyed group of female entrepreneurs.

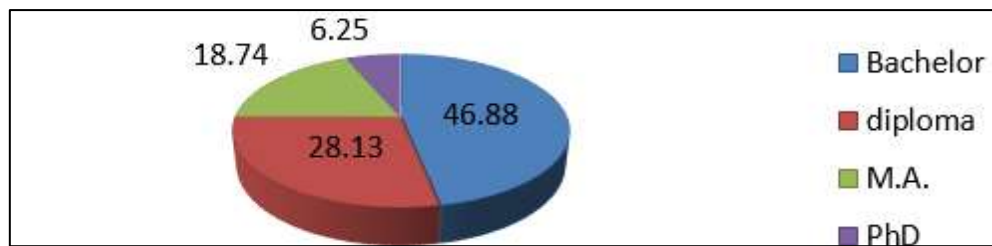


Figure 4: Respondents' Academic Achievement

Source: Prepared by the Researcher Based on the Results of the Questionnaire.

Testing the Study Hypothesis: A chi-squared test was employed to evaluate the entrepreneurial knowledge of women residing in Iraq compared to that of Iraqi women living in Europe. The results of this statistical analysis are summarised in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Chi-Square Test Results for the Entrepreneurial Knowledge Dimensions of Iraqi Women and Women from Iraq Living in Europe.

N	Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Knowledge of Women	X ² Results at the Level of Iraqi Women in Europe		X ² Results at the Level of Iraqi Women in Iraq	
		Chi-Square	A Symp. Sig.	Chi-Square	A Symp. Sig.
1	Environmental Awareness	17.78	0.00	126.837	0.00
2	Analytical Vigilance	141.8	0.00	128.750	0.00
3	Trend towards the Target	154.73	0.00	132.913	0.00
4	Risk Tolerance	150.35	0.00	137.150	0.00
5	Active Communication System	165.16	0.00	133.550	0.00

N=80 df = 2 p ≤0.05

Source: Table Prepared by the Researcher Based on the Results of SPSS Version 25

[Table 2](#) outlines the chi-square test results for different dimensions of entrepreneurial knowledge among Iraqi women residing in Europe and those living in Iraq. In the case of environmental awareness, the chi-square value was 170.78 for women in Europe and 126.837 for their counterparts in Iraq. Both figures exceeded the critical value of 5.991 at a 0.05 significance level with 2 degrees of freedom, indicating a statistically significant association between the two groups in this dimension. For analytical vigilance, the values were recorded at 141.80 for Iraqi women based in Europe and 128.750 for those in Iraq. As with the previous dimension, both results surpassed the threshold of 5.991, confirming a consistent relationship between the samples. In terms of goal orientation, the chi-square values stood at 154.73 for European-based respondents and 132.913 for those in Iraq, again exceeding the critical limit, thereby suggesting a stable association in this domain. With respect to risk-taking, the test yielded values of 150.35 for Iraqi women in Europe and 137.150 for those residing in Iraq, both of which surpassed the tabular value, indicating a steady correlation between the two populations. Lastly, in the dimension of effective communication systems, the chi-square result for women in Iraq was 165.16, which remained above

the critical threshold and was consistent with the value obtained for the European group (133.550). These findings collectively demonstrate a reliable and statistically significant relationship across the examined dimensions of entrepreneurial knowledge in both samples. The study's findings are detailed in [Table 2](#), which presents the relative significance of key entrepreneurial traits among Iraqi women entrepreneurs, both within Iraq and in European settings. The outcomes of the chi-square test applied to various dimensions of entrepreneurial knowledge are displayed, based on a sample size of $N = 80$, with degrees of freedom (df) = 2 and a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. The analysis reveals that all evaluated dimensions of entrepreneurial knowledge produced values exceeding the critical threshold in both groups, although the prioritisation of these attributes varied between the two populations.

Table 2: Dimension of environmental awareness

N	Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Knowledge of Women	X ² Results at the Level of Iraqi Women in Europe		Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Knowledge of Women	X ² Results at the Level of Iraqi Women in Iraq	
		Chi-Square	A Symp. Sig.		Chi-Square	A Symp. Sig.
1	Environmental Awareness	170.78	0.00	Risk Tolerance	137.15	0.00
2	Active Communication System	165.16	0.00	Active Communication System	133.55	0.00
3	Trend towards Target	154.73	0.00	Trend towards the Target	132.913	0.00
4	Risk Tolerance	150.35	0.00	Analytical Vigilance	128.75	0.00
5	Analytical Vigilance	141.8	0.00	Environmental Awareness	126.837	0.00

Among women entrepreneurs in Iraq, risk-taking was identified as the most dominant trait, followed by effective communication, goal orientation, analytical vigilance, and environmental awareness. A pivotal question for these entrepreneurs concerns the type of developmental knowledge required to attain entrepreneurial competence. This inquiry is central to interpreting the present findings. Existing literature underscores the importance of accessing relevant sources of entrepreneurial knowledge to maintain a competitive edge, which is facilitated through the development of effective communication systems. Nevertheless, there is limited scholarly work that specifies the precise types of accessible knowledge, the associated risks, or the initial stages necessary to conceptualise a comprehensive entrepreneurial framework ([Rembiasz & Siemieniak, 2019](#)). Early-stage entrepreneurship, particularly in small-scale ventures, is often marked by uncertainty and risk. It is well established that initiating a small business entails inherent risk, although this perception is frequently shaped more by social relations and personal beliefs than by objective measures of failure. In many cases, ventures are not terminated due to business failure but rather due to shifts in

motivation, changes in personal circumstances, or transitions to new opportunities. Such situations can be better understood as strategic realignments, but not failures (Fletschner et al., 2010).

By contrast, amongst female entrepreneurs of Iraqi heritage who engage in business in the European environment, environmental consciousness has been found as the most likely factor, followed by strong communication skills, orientation towards goals, risk-taking tendencies, and analytical diligence. These women have unique skill sets, which are because of their migratory experiences and personal cosmologies, which make them different compared to counterparts acting in Iraq. The current research paper recognizes both the accrued knowledge of the diaspora entrepreneurs over time and their ability to use that knowledge as an object of development of sustainable competitive advantage in foreign settings. The fact that they have a better understanding of the environmental factors that cannot be overlooked in starting a profitable business in a foreign country also highlights the significance of environmental sensitivity. Additionally, the beneficial institutional frames that can often be found in the host nations form an essential component of the female entrepreneurship development and strengthening of the identified characteristic.

At first, entrepreneurship might bring along motivation and pleasure; but the ongoing stress of long-term dedication, uncertainty and financial unpredictability might bring about emotional burnout and psychological stress. Nevertheless, the female entrepreneurs in Europe continue to find satisfaction in their respective businesses, and their endeavors are in tandem with long-term personal and social goals. Their experiences therefore shed light on the macro social and cultural forces defining host societies where they must work. [Figure 5](#) The figure gives a histogram which illustrates the chi-square values in relation to the dimensions of entrepreneurial knowledge among the women living in Iraq and outside of the country.

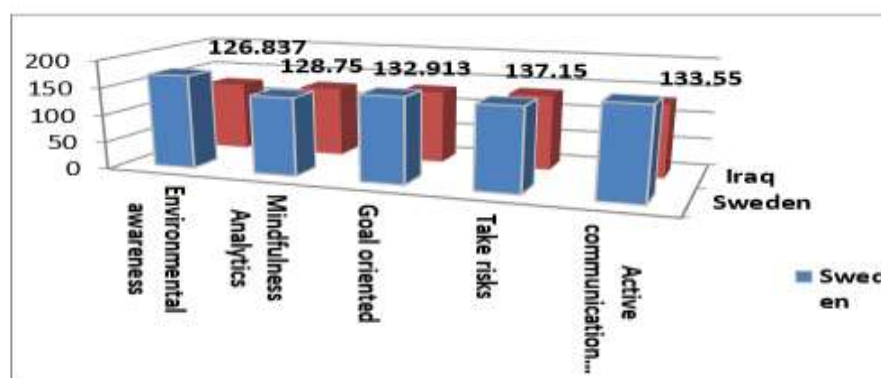


Figure 5: Histogram Results of the Chi-Squared Test Conducted on the Qualities of Entrepreneurial Expertise among Iraqi Women in Iraq and Europe.

Conclusion

The paper will analyze the entrepreneurial knowledge of Iraqi women both in Iraq

and in the European diaspora and identify the major factors that define the level of their entrepreneurial performance. Entrepreneurial knowledge is assumed to be a key resource, which helps women to cope with problematic socioeconomic situations and even to see the chances of development and sustainability. Based on a mixed-method design, the research integrates the quantitative data gathered due to 160 valid answers (64 percent response rate) with qualitative information to compare the entrepreneurial experiences of Iraqi women who exist in different regional settings. This paper finds a strong contextual difference. Iraqi women respondents also had statistically higher risk-taking tendencies, a behaviour that is likely to be propelled by socioeconomic insecurity and poor access to formal job markets. On the other hand, the participants in the European contexts worked in a relatively safe and enabling setting, which promoted a high degree of environmental consciousness and a more disciplined entrepreneurship. Chi-square tests supported the importance of difference between core dimensions of entrepreneurial knowledge, which includes environmental awareness, analytical vigilance, goal orientation, risk propensity, and communication practices. Although it has been established that higher education has the potential of boosting entrepreneurial capability, the deeply rooted patriarchal norms and cultural requirements in Iraq still hinder the full incorporation of women into the economic life. These limitations often force women who are less educated to resort to entrepreneurship as a necessity especially in the informal or traditional sectors. It is important to note that most respondents were married women, but all the gender roles still tend to limit their participation in the wider economy.

Although this study has limitations in terms of sample size and reliance on self-reported information, it forms a basis of future studies. In future research, bigger and more heterogeneous samples, longitudinal designs, and more intense qualitative research should be used. In addition, it is also urgent to question emerging areas like digital entrepreneurship and to analyze the success of policy tools that have been created to assist female entrepreneurs. In general, the present study anticipates the tenacity of Iraqi women to overcome obstacles and challenges, yet it also highlights the idea that pro-enabling factors are a key to successful entrepreneurship. In addition, it means that intersectional variables, digital business model innovations, and institutional support mechanisms are under researched but important areas that deserve further research and policy intervention.

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