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**“BITTEN BY THE ENTREPRENEUR BUG” - CRITIQUING  
DISCOURSES ON WOMEN OWNER-  
MANAGERS/ENTREPRENEURS IN THE KENYAN AND OMANI  
NEWSPAPERS**

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## **“Bitten by the entrepreneur bug” - Critiquing discourses on women owner-managers/entrepreneurs in the Kenyan and Omani newspapers**

### **Introduction**

The number of women owned businesses have been steadily rising over the past years. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Women’s Entrepreneurship Report 2016/17, an estimated 163 million women were starting and running new businesses in 74 economies around the world (Kelley et al., 2017). Women owned businesses play an important role not only for economic development, but also for the growth and well-being of their societies (Kelley et al., 2017; Poggesi et al., 2016). This has led to a greater focus on women’s entrepreneurship by both academics and policymakers. Policy initiatives and research aimed at promoting the activities of women owner-managers/entrepreneurs (OMEs) have mushroomed worldwide (Brush et al., 2009; Jennings and Brush, 2013; Poggesi et al., 2016). Women OMEs have also gained prominence as business leaders and role models in society.

Consequently, stories of women OMEs have become a common feature in the media. Given media’s vital role in influencing what society thinks (Avraham and First, 2010; Entman, 2010; Price Schultz and Achtenhagen, 2013), its portrayal of women OMEs is bound to influence society’s perceptions of their role in society. Media representations in the form of discourses and images play a part in perpetuating societal beliefs regarding gender roles and career choice (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Buysse and Embser-Herbert, 2004). Entrepreneurship has predominantly been constructed as a “manly” pursuit with women OMEs’ activities being depicted as something other than the norm (Ahl, 2007; Smith, 2010). This creates hurdles for women OMEs in gaining social legitimacy to operate within a given context (Carter et al., 2009; Essers and Tedmanson, 2014). [Limited societal legitimacy impacts various managerial and strategic aspects of women owned businesses, such as their ability to access finances, to establish credibility in](#)

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3 existing/new markets, to grow their businesses etc. (Poggesi et al., 2016). Gendered media  
4 representations that subordinate the feminine could further exacerbate this situation by confining  
5 women OMEs to stereotypical roles and positions in society.  
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10 A critical analysis of how media discourses frame women OMEs' activities will therefore  
11 contribute to our understanding of media's role in influencing societal perception of women  
12 OMEs' managerial and leadership roles (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Price Schultz and  
13 Achtenhagen, 2013). However, the majority of current literature on women's representation in the  
14 media is domiciled in the North, with fewer studies being focused on the South (Achtenhagen and  
15 Welter, 2011; Bell and Sinclair, 2016; Cukier et al., 2016; Kapasi et al., 2016; Tijani-Adenle,  
16 2016). As discourses are culturally and temporally specific (Ahl and Nelson, 2015), they vary  
17 across societies and over different periods of time. The scarce research on media representations  
18 in the South could result in mistaken generalizations of research findings in the North as  
19 representative of the realities for all women globally (Tijani-Adenle, 2016). A focus on media  
20 representations in different contexts will therefore allow us to amplify the role of social structures  
21 such as religion, ethnicity, class etc., that women OMEs in these regions contend with in addition  
22 to the systematic prejudices they face as women (Hisrich and Öztürk, 1999; Tijani-Adenle, 2016).  
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40 Our study aims to contribute to the limited knowledge on gendered media representations of  
41 women managers and leaders (Mavin et al., 2016) by carrying out a critical discourse analysis of  
42 media articles on women OMEs in two different contexts, namely Kenya and Oman. It addresses  
43 the following research question: *How do media discourses in Omani and Kenyan newspapers*  
44 *frame women's entrepreneurship and influence societal perceptions of women OMEs' managerial*  
45 *and leadership roles?* These contexts are viewed as appropriate for this study as in both countries,  
46 the governments have implemented several policies/initiatives to improve the business climate,  
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3 and encourage women's entrepreneurial activities as part of their economic agenda (Belwal and  
4 Belwal, 2014; Robb et al., 2014). However, despite these efforts, women OMEs' participation in  
5 the private sector in both contexts is largely constrained by the culture, social norms and gendered  
6 institutional structures, which impose extra burdens on women OMEs trying to start and grow their  
7 businesses (Al-Lamky, 2007; Ellis et al., 2007; Korteweg, 2008; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005).  
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11 Moreover, while the media can play a critical role in influencing societal perceptions of women  
12 OMEs (Lapinski and Rimal, 2005; Price Schultz and Achtenhagen, 2013), studies indicate that in  
13 both contexts women are significantly under-represented in both print and electronic media, with  
14 majority of news stories reinforcing gender stereotypes (WMTN, 2010a, 2010b). Furthermore,  
15 being natives of the two countries, the authors of this study are also viewed as being suited to  
16 undertake this study given their familiarity with the cultural and societal norms prevalent in these  
17 contexts, as well as their ability to play insider/outsider roles with both contexts.  
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21 We analyzed a total of 408 online media articles written during the period 2010 to 2018, and  
22 identified five main categories of media discourses. These were discourses on: *government/*  
23 *institutional initiatives; women OMEs' dependency; women OMEs' femininity, women OMEs'*  
24 *societal impact, and normalization of women OMEs.* Our study makes the following contributions.  
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26 First, we highlight the underlying assumptions in women empowerment and economic  
27 development discourses that subordinate women OMEs' activities and negatively impacts their  
28 social legitimacy. Second, we show how media discourses result in the trivialization of OMEs'  
29 leadership and managerial roles, and the subsequent marginalization of their importance in society.  
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31 Third, we identify media's potential to portray a more diverse and inclusive view of women OMEs'  
32 activities that goes beyond the predominant economic discourses.  
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3 The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In the next section we discuss the theoretical  
4 framework of the study. This is followed by the methodology section where we describe the  
5 context for women's entrepreneurship in Oman and Kenya, as well as the data selection and  
6 analysis procedures. The study's findings and analysis are presented next. In the last section, we  
7 have the discussion, implications and conclusions of the study.  
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### 17 **Gendered media discourses and representations: A review**

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19 Media discourses play a significant role in the transmission of dominant cultural values through  
20 the perpetuation of images of gender differences and inequality (Bruni et al., 2004; Buysse and  
21 Embser-Herbert, 2004). Media representations of women that reinforce gender stereotypes,  
22 therefore play a role in shaping our expectations of women in managerial or leadership roles  
23 (Cukier et al., 2016). Previous studies on media representations of women OMEs indicate that the  
24 media renders them "invisible", and contributes to maintaining the "entrepreneurial myth" as being  
25 male (Baker et al., 1997; Nicholson and Anderson, 2005). According to the Global Media  
26 Monitoring Project (GMMP), the trend of women's invisibility in the media is an enduring one,  
27 with women representing only 20% of news subjects on stories about economics and business  
28 (Skalli, 2011). By creating narratives that promote specific interpretations, media influences what  
29 society thinks, by telling them what to think about (Entman, 2010).  
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44 Analyzing media representations of women OMEs in Germany, Achtenhagen and Welter  
45 (2011) find that the media focuses on women's feminist characteristics and portray their ventures  
46 as domestically centered. Furthermore, women's entrepreneurship is presented as the antithesis of  
47 entrepreneurial norms (i.e. dominance, control, autonomy, aggression), with success in  
48 entrepreneurship being associated with a deterioration of private life (Achtenhagen and Welter,  
49 2011). Lang and Rybnikova (2016) also found that despite the diversity of images of women  
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3 managers in German press, public debates tended to reproduce stereotypical discursive figures  
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5 rather than challenge them.  
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8 Similarly, Eikhof et al. (2013) examining media representations in the UK, find that the  
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10 promotion of women OMEs' activities as centered around traditional female skills and undertaken  
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12 in domestic work locations, assisted in propagating gender inequalities in entrepreneurship. Media  
13  
14 representations have also been found to be ambiguous and ambivalent in their portrayal of women  
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16 OMEs (Iyer, 2009). Analyzing discourses of patriarchy and femininity in representations of Indian  
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18 OMEs in the media, Iyer (2009) finds that they are portrayed as both traditional and modern,  
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20 passive and proactive, dependent and independent. Hegemonic discourses of patriarchy and  
21  
22 femininity illustrate women's achievement as being a result of amicable adjustment of aims with  
23  
24 societal expectations, while discourses of "being" and "becoming" exemplify women as  
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26 empowered through their own resistant positioning, rather than due to societal change in the  
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28 perception of women and their roles (Iyer, 2009).  
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34 Research on media framing of women leaders indicate a similar pattern in gendered  
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36 representations. Tijani-Adele (2016) examines media framing of women leaders, and finds that  
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38 Nigerian press focus on reinforcing traditional gender roles and norms, which detracts from  
39  
40 women's contributions to the country's economy. The assumption that increased female status  
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42 would result in better representation of women does not hold, as media instead focuses on the  
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44 objectification and trivialization of women in order to encourage sales and advertisements (Tijani-  
45  
46 Adenle, 2016). Studies also find that women are equally under-represented in broadcast news, are  
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48 less likely to be framed as leaders or experts, and are more likely to be represented as victims  
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51 (Cukier et al., 2016).  
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3 In addition to the gendered stereotypes produced through factual news media, popular culture,  
4 also plays an important role in creating and perpetuating gendered ways of seeing leadership (Bell  
5 and Sinclair, 2016). Kapasi et al. (2016) analyzing the autobiographies of high profile women  
6 leaders reveal that women construct gender and leadership along familiar and normative lines.  
7 Overall, the authenticity of leadership is crafted by the media rather than the leader (Kapasi et al.,  
8 2016). However, popular culture also provides alternative representations of women leaders as  
9 embodied and agentic, which enables women to resist patriarchal values and to reclaim their  
10 leadership (Bell and Sinclair, 2016).  
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21 Media can therefore be viewed as playing a critical role in influencing public discourse and  
22 societal perceptions of women OMEs' managerial and leadership roles (Lapinski and Rimal, 2005;  
23 Price Schultz and Achtenhagen, 2013). According to the GMMP report, the Middle East media  
24 network is a complicated mix of government-owned and an increasing number of independent  
25 news agencies (Who Makes The News (WMTN), 2010a). On the other hand, mainstream media  
26 in Kenya is privately owned and has consistently enjoyed a great deal of public trust (WMTN,  
27 2010b). However, in both regions, women are significantly under-represented in both print and  
28 electronic media, with majority of news stories tending to reinforce gender stereotypes (WMTN,  
29 2010a, 2010b).  
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## 44 **Methodology**

### 45 ***Context of women's entrepreneurship in Oman***

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47 Several government initiatives have been undertaken to promote women OMEs' activities in  
48 Oman. [This began with the founding of the](#) Omani Women's Association in the 1970s (Khan et  
49 al., 2005). More recently, in a bid to diversify its economy, the government implemented the  
50 Decent Work Country Programme from 2010 to 2013, and established the Directorate for  
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3 Women's and Children's Affairs (Goveas and Aslam, 2011). These initiatives had set priorities to  
4 increase job opportunities for women, and to train women for self-employment respectively  
5 (Goveas and Aslam, 2011). Additionally, the Ministry of Economic Development has the vision  
6 to develop women, to upgrade their status, and to facilitate their integration (Varghese, 2011). A  
7 national policy on women's development was also crafted, and since 2009, October 17 was  
8 designated Omani Women's Day (Bose et al., 2013).  
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10  
11 Efforts to promote women's entrepreneurship have also included decrees by the Sultan during  
12 different symposiums (Varghese, 2011). For example, in 2013 the Sultan gave a directive to create  
13 the Al-Raffd Fund to enable young Omanis establish businesses. These efforts match the country's  
14 strategic goals as laid out in the "Vision for Oman's Economy-2020" under the human resources  
15 development program, which calls for the increase of women's participation in the labor force,  
16 and their enrolment in higher education, technical and vocational training programs (International  
17 Labour Organization, 2010). As a result, compared to other countries in the Gulf, women in Oman  
18 joined the workforce in large numbers (Belwal and Belwal, 2014). The female labor force  
19 participation in Oman rose from 7.6% in 1980 to 30% in 2016 (Ennis, 2019).  
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23 Despite the various policies and initiatives, Omani women's participation in the private sector  
24 is still largely constrained by socio-cultural norms (Belwal and Belwal, 2014). Culture and  
25 religion play a major role in the Omani society (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). The family is at the core  
26 of most Arab societies, and women are especially affected given that family approval is vital for  
27 decisions such as: choice of education, type of employment, place of work, and working hours  
28 (Elnaggar, 2007). However, the Muslim women's agency is also shaped by national, social,  
29 cultural and political struggles that intersect and go beyond religion as such (Korteweg, 2008). A  
30 study by Al-Lamky (2007) on Omani women leaders indicates that despite the support they receive  
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3 from their immediate family, the expectations from society regarding their traditional gender roles  
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5 still presents challenges for them. These expectations spill over to the business sector, where  
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7 traditionally Arab women OMEs establish their ventures in the informal micro-sector that is  
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9 focused on home-based items for local markets (Ghouse et al., 2017).  
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### 14 ***Context of women's entrepreneurship in Kenya***

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17 The Kenyan government began prioritizing small enterprise development as an important part  
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19 of its growth strategy in the mid-1980s (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005). In an effort to address  
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21 unemployment it also introduced compulsory entrepreneurship education courses in all vocational  
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23 and training institutions in the 1990s with initial funding from the United Nations Development  
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25 Programme (Nafukho and Muyia, 2010). However, progress in both arenas has been slower than  
26  
27 expected. The private sector in Kenya accounts for approximately 80% of the GDP and provides  
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29 for more than half of the wage employment (Ellis et al., 2007). As of 2012, the informal sector  
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31 contributed to approximately 20% of the GDP, and 80% of all employment, with women owning  
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33 48% of the micro, small and medium sized enterprises in the informal sector (Cutura, 2006; Robb  
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35 et al., 2014).  
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41 The need to further promote an entrepreneurial culture was reinforced through government  
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43 policy documents in 1992 and 2003-2004 (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005). The government also  
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45 developed the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation for the period  
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47 2003 to 2007, and the Vision 2030 in order to stimulate growth and employment creation through  
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49 the private sector (Ellis et al., 2007; Robb et al., 2014). In a bid to empower women to venture  
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51 into business, the government established the Women Enterprise Fund in 2007 (Nafukho and  
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53 Muyia, 2010). The Fund was to provide financing, as well as support services such as capacity  
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3 building, marketing, and networking, in order to assist women in starting and/or expanding their  
4 ventures (Nafukho and Muya, 2010). Later, the Uwezo fund was also created at the constituency  
5 level in order to provide resources for women, youth, and persons with disability to engage in  
6 business activities (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The government also committed  
7 itself to mainstream gender issues in its development plans through the Gender Strategy (Ellis et  
8 al., 2007).

9  
10 Furthermore, with the implementation of the new Constitution in 2010, the number of women  
11 in political and high-level decision making positions increased to 19% in parliament; the highest  
12 level of women legislators in Kenya's history (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2014).  
13 However, despite the government's efforts to improve the business climate, studies indicate that  
14 the community still lacks a positive view towards entrepreneurship as a respected career path  
15 (Robb et al., 2014). Moreover, the enterprise sector does not offer equal opportunities for both  
16 men and women (Ellis et al., 2007). Women OMEs' ventures were generally smaller in size, less  
17 likely to have employees, less likely to grow, and more likely to be home-based than those run by  
18 men (Cutura, 2006). The patriarchal attitudes and institutional structures that are ingrained in the  
19 culture also impose greater burdens on women OMEs trying to start and grow their businesses  
20 (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005).

21  
22 A critical discourse analysis of media articles on women OMEs in the Omani and Kenyan  
23 contexts, allows us to contribute to the limited research interrogating media representations of  
24 women managers and leaders (Mavin et al., 2016). It also builds on the scarce knowledge  
25 regarding gendered media discourses in these regions.

### **Data selection**

Data was selected from the official online websites of the two largest national newspapers in each country. We focus on mainstream newspapers, rather than tabloids, as these are deemed to be objective, factual and non-sensational (Tijani-Adenle, 2016). Online media articles are gaining a wider readership amongst the urban populations and youth, than traditional print media. In Oman, the articles were selected from the *Al-Watan* - the oldest newspaper established in 1971 and with paper circulation of 32,500 copies; the *Oman Daily* - established in 1981 and with paper circulation of 15,560 copies and 46,707 daily views on the digital platform; the *Oman Observer* - the English version of the *Oman Daily* with a paper circulation of 22,000 copies. The *Al Watan* and *Oman Daily* newspapers target both urban and rural populations and are printed in Arabic, while the *Oman Observer* targets expatriates living in Oman.

In Kenya, the articles were selected from *The Standard* – the oldest newspaper established in 1902, with a paper circulation of 54,000 and 16 million monthly views on its digital platform; the *Daily Nation* – the largest East African newspaper established in 1960, with a paper circulation of 200,000 copies and 103 million monthly views on its platform. These two newspapers command the majority of the market (Gakahu and Mukhongo, 2007), are printed in English, and target the population countrywide.

The terms '*female entrepreneur*', '*woman entrepreneur*', '*female business owner*', '*woman business owner*' were used to search the online media articles. This resulted in a total of 408 articles during the period 2010 to 2018 (174 articles from the Omani newspapers, and 234 articles from the Kenyan newspapers) that were identified as relevant for the study.

### ***Data analysis***

Analyzing media discourses allows us to examine not only how socially produced ideas are created, but also how they are maintained over time (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011). We carry out a critical discourse analysis, which primarily focuses on understanding how social power, dominance or inequality is reproduced and resisted through discourse (Sriwimon and Zilli, 2017). This approach views discourse as one of the many aspects of social practice that plays a role in constructing the social world (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Media discourses regarding women OMEs are therefore viewed as linguistic practices that contribute to both the practicing of gender and the gendering of entrepreneurial practices (Bruni et al., 2004).

In the first phase, framing analysis was carried out to determine the patterns and characterizations of the articles (Price Schultz and Achtenhagen, 2013). To facilitate the framing analysis, we created a spreadsheet and classified the articles based on their overall story and focus. Articles were classified as having a 'positive', 'negative' or 'neutral' frame based on the media's portrayal of the impact of the entrepreneurship phenomenon. For example, articles that viewed entrepreneurship as beneficial for either the female OME, the society, or the economy, were classified as 'positive'. In addition, articles that focused on the woman OME's personal story and experiences were classified as 'focused', while those that treated women OMEs as "sidekicks" to the main story were classified as either 'partially focused' or 'not focused'.

In the second phase, the thematic analysis was carried out using NVivo coding software and involved an abductive coding process. The first order codes were identified inductively from the articles. An iterative process, which involved moving back and forth between the data and prior literature, was then followed to generate the second order analytical themes (Kennedy, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). The framing and coding processes were carried out independently by the authors to

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3 ensure greater reliability of coding. Discussions were then held over any discrepancies in the  
4 findings until an agreement was reached. This procedure was followed for all the English articles,  
5 before the second author carried out a similar analysis of the Arabic articles. In addition, in order  
6 to enhance analytical rigour, a subset of the English articles was shared with a fellow researcher  
7 to thematically analyse and their findings compared to the themes identified by the authors. The  
8 final set of themes agreed upon by the authors were then aggregated into five main categories,  
9 namely: a) discourses surrounding government/institutional initiatives, b) discourses on women  
10 OMEs' dependency, c) discourses on women OMEs' femininity, d) discourses on women OMEs'  
11 societal impact, and e) discourses on normalization of women OMEs.  
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### 26 **Media discourses and framing of women OMEs: Findings and analysis**

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28 Overall, media articles portray a diverse demographic of women OMEs in both contexts. Their  
29 ages range from 12 to 60 years, and they start and manage ventures that are distributed across  
30 different regions and sectors e.g. the service industry, fashion industry, product manufacturing,  
31 agribusiness, IT/mobile sectors etc. The media therefore contributes to painting a diverse picture  
32 of women's entrepreneurship and constructs an identity of the female OME that the wider society  
33 - especially potential women OMEs - can easily identify with (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011).  
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42 In the following sections, we present our findings on media's framing of women's  
43 entrepreneurship, followed by an analysis of media discourses and its influence on societal  
44 perception of women OMEs' managerial and leadership roles.  
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#### 51 ***Media framing***

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53 The majority (88%) of the media articles framed women's entrepreneurship as *positive* in both  
54 contexts. Only one article was classified as *negative*, and this was based on a story about the lack  
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3 of women venture capitalists in the Silicon Valley in the United States (*Oman Observer*, 20 August  
4 2014), and the remaining articles were classified as *neutral*. However, at the same time, we find  
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6 that in more than half the articles (60%) women OMEs were treated as “sidekicks” to the main  
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8 story. Only 30% of the articles were *focused* on women OMEs’ experiences, and 10% were  
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10 *partially focused*.  
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15 The positive framing of media articles reflects a positive societal perception of women’s  
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17 entrepreneurship and women OMEs by extension. The increased attention to women OMEs in the  
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19 media could be viewed as a result of the government’s efforts in both contexts to promote women’s  
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21 entrepreneurship. Women OMEs are therefore deemed “newsworthy” by media (Baker et al.,  
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23 1997). Studies indicate that activities promoted by the government have a greater chance of being  
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25 viewed as socially acceptable (Radu and Redien-Collot, 2008). It also confirms media’s role in  
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27 picking up on political and academic discourses that have focused on the positive portrayal of  
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29 women OMEs’ economic contributions (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Bruni et al., 2004; Brush  
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31 et al., 2009). This positive framing also promotes the construction of an identity that positively  
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33 influences potential women OMEs.  
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38 The increased media focus could equally mirror a shift in societal perception of women’s  
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40 entrepreneurship. In Oman, for example, the increased number of educated women has meant that  
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42 women form a larger part of the labor force (Al-Sharbati et al., 2003). This increased visibility  
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44 could have influenced society’s view of women’s place in society, and the role of women OMEs.  
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46 Additionally, we find that the increased visibility of Kenyan women leaders - who were previously  
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48 involved in the business world - in the new government elected in 2013, may have spillover effect  
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50 in the business sector. The frequent portrayal of women business leaders in the media has been  
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3 shown to impact society's view and acceptance of women OMEs (Price Schultz and Achtenhagen,  
4 2013).

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8 However, the impact of this positive media framing is limited by articles that focus on women's  
9 entrepreneurship as a "public relations tool" to promote the associated government/institutional  
10 initiatives, rather than to promote actual women OMEs (Ennis, 2019). This is especially so in the  
11 Omani newspapers where the majority of that articles are focused on portrayal of initiatives.  
12 Furthermore, while this increased visibility of women OMEs can be viewed as a positive change,  
13 the fact that women are deemed newsworthy mainly due to their economic value implies a limited  
14 social legitimacy and recognition of women OMEs in these contexts (De Vita et al., 2014).  
15 Women OMEs' main value is not in their managerial and leadership skills, but in their ability to  
16 contribute to economic development. The tendency for media to treat women OMEs as  
17 "sidekicks" to the main story, further perpetuates their subordinated identity and positioning.  
18 Representation is a stereotyping force (Avraham and First, 2010), and media therefore plays a role  
19 in reinforcing dominant beliefs of the entrepreneurial myth as being male (Nicholson and  
20 Anderson, 2005; Skalli, 2011).  
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#### 40 ***Media discourses***

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42 Our analysis identified different discourses that were classified under five main categories as  
43 presented next.  
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##### 46 47 48 *"Means to an end"- Discourses surrounding government/institutional initiatives*

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50 The main themes identified in the discourses surrounding government/institutional initiatives  
51 include those on "funding initiatives", "capacity building", "economic growth" and  
52 "empowerment", as highlighted in Table 1 below.  
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The focus of the Kenyan media was on funding initiatives, with conflicting perceptions being portrayed. The limited success of initiatives was blamed either on condescending policies/funding limitations, or on women OMEs' lack of viable business ideas, and apathy towards financing. Such portrayals could imply that the responsibility for funding initiatives' success rests solely on women OMEs. On the other hand, initiatives in Oman not only focused on funding, but also in promoting an entrepreneurial culture, which implies a more holistic approach to promoting women's entrepreneurship. Later, government initiatives in both contexts are focused on the capacity building of women OMEs and articles highlight the provision of training, networking opportunities, mentorship etc.

Discourses on economic growth and empowerment are mainly aimed at encouraging women OMEs' participation in economic activities. This is in line with the government's focus on diversifying the economy in Oman (Goveas and Aslam, 2011), and the prioritizing of small enterprise development in Kenya (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005). While articles portray a wider discourse with emphasis on building networks, providing mentorship and information (e.g. Oman Observer, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2013), and women as catalysts for societal transformation (e.g. Daily Nation, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016), women OMEs' empowerment is mainly portrayed as a means of *championing global economic growth* (e.g. The Standard, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014).

*"In need of a helping hand"- Discourses on women OMEs' dependency*

Media discourses on dependency portray women OME's as "in need of support", as "a category", as "the other" and as "dependent". These themes are highlighted in Table 2 below.

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Insert Table 2 here  
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These discourses portray women OMEs as being in need of support to achieve their goals, and the government, institutions, and society as a whole, as the rescuers who encourage and support women in starting and growing their ventures. For example, articles describe the *female entrepreneur as endangered* (e.g. Daily Nation, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013), with initiatives focused on “making it work for the women and girls” (e.g. The Standard, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2014), “helping them to open their minds” (e.g. Daily Nation, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014), or “helping them to achieve their dreams” (e.g. Oman Observer, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014).

This view of “helplessness” is further reinforced when women OMEs are portrayed as “a category” and characterized as a “special group” together with the youth and/or physically challenged. Such portrayals disregard the fact that women are a cross-cutting category of individuals that overlap other groups (Malhotra and Schuler, 2005). Discourses also portray women OMEs as “the other” by comparing them to their male counterparts and depicting them as being at a disadvantage. For example, women OMEs are described as *second-class entrepreneurs* (e.g. Oman Observer, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2014), or that they need to get *more entrepreneurial and aggressive with their ideas* (The Standard, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010).

Lastly, discourses portray women OMEs as “dependent” on their spouses or immediate family in setting up and running their ventures. While it may be suggested that these portrayals further reinforce the portrayal of women OMEs as “helpless”, considering the collectivist culture in both contexts, these portrayals could also be a reflection of close social ties and the importance of the family as a support group. Given the other cultural barriers faced by women OMEs in these contexts, family support acts as an enabler of entrepreneurship (Azmat, 2013). For example, in

Oman, women OMEs may involve their spouses in the business in order to overcome cultural constraints (e.g. dealing with government officials, getting licenses, paying fees etc.), a practice common amongst women OMEs in the Middle East region (De Vita et al., 2014).

*“Armed with business cards and sweet smiles” – Discourses on women OMEs’ femininity*

Discourses on women OMEs’ femininity focus on their “feminine traits”, their “traditional gender roles” and portray them as OMEs “by chance” or as allowing “emotions to reign over business sense” (see Table 3 below).

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These discourses highlight media’s role in the gendering of entrepreneurship by focusing on women’s physical traits (e.g. ...*she is lovely and playful and childlike* - The Standard, 29 March, 2015) rather than their managerial or leadership skills. These gender stereotypes are further emphasized by articles focused on portraying women as evaluating ventures purely on emotional basis with little regard of the financial implications (e.g. Daily Nation, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014).

Media discourses also depict women OMEs’ social roles as mothers or wives as being intertwined to their roles as entrepreneurs. For example, an article that portrays the decision to start a venture as a direct result of a woman’s marital status (Daily Nation, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013). The importance of successfully managing both the home front and career is also implied in majority of the articles, and further emphasizes women OMEs’ rightful place in the home. Media plays a role in perpetuating the long standing dichotomy applied to women i.e. “good” women adhere to roles scripted for them in patriarchal systems, while “bad” women violate these norms (Richards, 2007). The patriarchal system in both contexts results in the reinforcement of stereotypical gender roles, and the “doing of gender” to conform to these socially accepted roles

(Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013; Kuperberg and Stone, 2008). Women are also portrayed as becoming OMEs “by chance”. Articles describe women as being *born an entrepreneur* (e.g. Omani Observer, 25th March 2014), or as being *bitten by the entrepreneurial bug* (e.g. Daily Nation, 18th August 2012). These discourses further construct an identity of women OMEs that questions their legitimacy as managers and leaders of their ventures.

#### *“Giving back to society” – Discourses on women OMEs’ societal impact*

Discourse focused on women OME’s societal impact portray them as “challenging norms”, as “impacting society”, as “role models” and as “maintaining culture” through their ventures. These discourses mainly portray a positive image of women OMEs (see Table 4 below).

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Insert Table 4 here  
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In both contexts, discourses portray women OMEs as willing to challenge the norms even when faced with opposition from family and peers. For example, women OMEs are portrayed as willing to venture into male-dominated industries despite the obstacles (e.g. Daily Nation, 4th October 2013). They are also portrayed amongst the top-achieving women serving as role models for the wider society (e.g. Omani Observer, 10th December 2013). These discourses result in the portrayal of women OMEs as “heroines” which is a glaring contrast to discourses portraying women as lacking a sense of business or needing help in order to succeed. This could reflect a positive societal perception of women OMEs as a result of women’s active role in the public arena (Al Riyami et al., 2004).

Media discourses also portray women’s ventures as having both a positive economic and social impact (e.g. Daily Nation, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2013; Omani Observer, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013). Entrepreneurship is therefore not solely valued for economic reasons. This diversity in

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2  
3 entrepreneurship discourse is further portrayed in the Omani context, where women OMEs use  
4 their ventures to preserve culture and traditional practices (e.g. Omani Observer, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2014).  
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6 Such discourses portray media's stake in shaping notions about national belonging even though  
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8 their interests may not be identical to the state (Richards, 2007). However, we also find that such  
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10 discourses further emphasize the link between women OMEs and "culturally acceptable" ventures.  
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16 *"The true entrepreneurs" – Discourses on normalization of women OMEs*  
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18 Normalization discourses that portray women OMEs in "gender neutral" terms are solely found  
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20 in the Kenyan media. These are focused on women OMEs in the technology/mobile sectors and  
21  
22 refer to women OMEs as *innovators*, *inventors* or *techies*, without any mention of their social roles  
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24 as mothers, wives, daughters etc. (see Table 5 below).  
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33 These discourses could be as a result of the dominant discourse in academia that links  
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35 entrepreneurship to innovation and technology (Pettersson, 2007).. This results in the portrayal of  
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37 a "true" entrepreneur –who is assumed to be male and thus "gender-neutral" – as one who creates  
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39 ventures in the technology sector. Women OMEs running high-tech ventures are therefore  
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41 perceived and categorized by the media as being different and perhaps more "entrepreneurial" than  
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43 those in other sectors.  
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49 **Discussion**  
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51 Our discourse analysis of the Omani and Kenyan media articles allowed us to highlight the  
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53 ways in which media representations play an important role in perpetuating societal beliefs  
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55 regarding gender relations, gender roles and career choice (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Buysse  
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3 and Embser-Herbert, 2004). Media discourses in both contexts predominantly focus on women  
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5 OME's activities as a means of achieving economic growth and development. Policymakers  
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7 generally promote women's entrepreneurship from the belief that increasing women's market-  
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9 based opportunities will lead to improving their economic status, as well as that of their families  
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11 and communities (Boeri, 2018). Women's empowerment can have a positive impact on society's  
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13 perception of women OMEs' role in developing the economy and thus minimize cultural barriers.  
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15 However, these discourses result in the further subordination of women's entrepreneurship to the  
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17 economic growth agenda and negatively impacts women OMEs' social legitimacy (Ahl and  
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19 Nelson, 2015).  
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24 This is especially the case in our two contexts where media frames women's entrepreneurship  
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26 as a "public relations tool" to promote governmental/institutional initiatives. Women OMEs are  
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28 also mainly framed as being "sidekicks" to the main story which reinforces their subordinate status  
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30 in these societies and reinforces the belief in the male entrepreneur myth (Nicholson and Anderson,  
31  
32 2005). Furthermore, the development discourses emphasize ideals of self-sufficiency through the  
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34 market (Boeri, 2018), which assumes that empowering the individual with necessary skills is  
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36 sufficient for their success. Such assumptions ignore the role of structural factors e.g. institutions,  
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38 regulations, social norms etc. impacting the development of entrepreneurship ecosystems. The  
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40 need to address structural barriers is especially relevant for both contexts where women OMEs'  
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42 activities are still largely encumbered by predominant patriarchal cultures and gendered  
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44 institutional structures (Magd and McCoy, 2014; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005).  
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49 Articles focused on women OMEs portrayed conflicting discourses. On the one hand, media  
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51 plays a role in positively influencing society's perception of women OMEs in the two contexts.  
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53 This is done through the portrayal of women OMEs' agency in challenging norms, preserving  
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3 traditional practices or having a positive social impact through their ventures. Women OMEs' are  
4 also portrayed as successful business leaders and role models in society. On the other hand, media  
5 articles' focus on feminine traits (e.g. emotional, childlike, playful etc.), and traditional gender  
6 roles that extend women OMEs' role in the home to the workplace detracts from society's focus  
7 on their managerial and leadership roles (Omari, 2008). In fact, one glaring omission in the media  
8 discourses is any discussion of how women OMEs' lead or manage their ventures. Media's  
9 trivialization of women OMEs freezes them into stereotypes that render them "invisible" and  
10 marginalize their importance in society (Skalli, 2011).

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22 Media's role in "doing gender" by mirroring gendered practices of entrepreneurship in society  
23 and creating gendered images of entrepreneurship (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013) is further  
24 highlighted in discourses of women as OMEs "by chance" and/or portraying them as "the other"  
25 by constantly comparing them to their male counterparts. Such discourses result in the  
26 construction of a gendered identity of women OMEs that is tied to their femininity and that  
27 eliminates their power as creators and managers of their ventures (Buysse and Embser-Herbert,  
28 2004; Iyer, 2009). The gendered media discourses are further demonstrated in the normalization  
29 discourses of women OMEs in the technology sector. Furthermore, discourses of women OMEs  
30 as "the other" also has a negative impact on their social legitimacy as they assume the male  
31 entrepreneur as the norm against which women entrepreneurs are expected to conform (Ahl and  
32 Nelson, 2015). Media's representation of women OMEs negatively impacts society's perceptions  
33 of women's entrepreneurship and could dissuade potential women OMEs from viewing  
34 entrepreneurship as a viable career choice.

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## Conclusion

Our study builds on the limited research interrogating gendered media representations of women managers and leaders (Mavin et al., 2016) by carrying out a critical discourse of 408 articles on women OMEs in the Omani and Kenyan newspapers during the period 2010 to 2018. Our analysis focused on identifying gender stereotypes, trivializations, and underlying assumptions in media discourses (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2007; Tijani-Adenle, 2016), that could influence societal perceptions of women OMEs' managerial and leadership roles. We identified five main categories of media discourses. These were discourses on: *government/institutional initiatives; women OMEs' dependency; women OMEs' femininity, women OMEs' societal impact, and normalization of women OMEs.*

Our study makes the following contributions. First, we highlight the underlying assumptions in women empowerment and economic development discourses that subordinate women OMEs' activities and negatively impacts their social legitimacy. The need to pay greater attention to structural factors impacting entrepreneurship ecosystems is also indicated. Second, we show how media discourses result in the trivialization of OMEs' leadership and managerial roles, and the subsequent marginalization of their importance in society. This is achieved through media's focus on traditional gender roles, feminine traits, and portrayal of women as OMEs "by chance" and in "need of support" in order to succeed. Discourses on women OMEs' agency are minimal, while those focused on their leadership and managerial skills are totally omitted. Third, we identify media's potential to portray a more diverse and inclusive view of women OMEs' activities that goes beyond the predominant economic discourses.

There are a number of implications for practitioners and policymakers. First, given the potential role of media in influencing societal perceptions of women OMEs, media houses need to pay



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2  
3 greater attention to the subtle mechanisms that reproduce gender stereotyping of women managers  
4 and leaders in the media (Omari, 2008). Second, women OMEs should also be enlightened about  
5 the impact of media discourses on their level of social legitimacy (Tijani-Adenle, 2016), which  
6 would allow them to take a more active role in constructing a more desirable identity. Lastly,  
7 policy initiatives need to alter development discourses that perpetuate stereotypical gendered  
8 identities and inhibit women OMEs' activities.  
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17 One limitation of our study is the focus on online articles published in mainstream national  
18 newspapers. While such a focus was viewed as important due to the growing influence of online  
19 media, it resulted in the exclusion of offline print media and articles from smaller media  
20 distributors. Future research could build on this study by analyzing publications by smaller  
21 regional media houses, tabloids, magazines, as well as other distribution channels such as  
22 television or radio.  
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**Table 1:** Discourses surrounding government/institutional initiatives

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
Focus on funding initiatives	<p>...major complaints by applicants is that the money offered by the fund is not enough to sustain a small business. But Mr Wainaina says the solution is not in the amount allocated, but the viability of an idea. (Daily Nation, 27th May 2011)</p> <p>... more established entrepreneurs feel that it is time the government widened the offering for preferential tenders to include more “serious” stuff. (Daily Nation, 2nd August 2014)</p> <p>Ms Rotich adds that the Women Fund has never been an agenda in their group meetings. “We don’t see it as a highly profitable investment booster,” she says (Daily Nation, 20th March 2014)</p> <p>“the Sh26 billion worth of tenders availed by the government, of which 30 per cent were set aside for women, youth, and persons with disability, have buoyed the financial welfare of women who were previously considered marginalized (Daily Nation, 21 August, 2017)</p>	<p>His Majesty’s visit last January was an eye-opener to Oman’s great attention in SMEs. The symposium helped to promote an entrepreneurship culture among Omani youths... (Oman Observer, 12th November 2013)</p> <p>There are quite a few great private sector initiatives that support the SME eco system, like the OMIFCO “Cell Accelerator Initiative” (Oman Observer, 11th February 2014)</p> <p>Some initiatives have already been launched for developing a more entrepreneurial culture such as the introduction of entrepreneurship education by the Ministry of Education ...the Central Bank of Oman’s allocation of five per cent of the commercial loans to SMEs, ... the launch of a training programme for promoting entrepreneurship among government employees (Oman Observer, 28th January 2014)</p>
Focus on capacity building	<p>“In recognition of the bold steps taken by the government, the Commonwealth Business Women is setting up a regional centre for excellence in procurement in Nairobi that will train women entrepreneurs in certified procurement courses in conjunction with the Certified Institute of Procurement and Supplies” (The Standard, 3 August 2015)</p> <p>“Barclays Bank Kenya and the International Trade Center (ITC) have partnered to help women access international trade opportunities. Through SheTrades Kenya, the institutions will help women access export opportunities. Barclays committed to get 10,000 women into international markets, and has invested Sh70 million into the initiative.” (The Standard, 19 July, 2016)</p> <p>“Through creation of new financing programmes as well as expansion of</p>	<p>Tawasul’s Mulhimat initiative, a national capacity building programme, concluded on Tuesday...Mulhimat, which means ‘inspirational’, is a BP Oman initiative, which gave skills training to 18 women entrepreneurs. “The Mulhimat programme helped them set performance criteria and measures. We are happy to see that the entrepreneurs are well equipped with the skills that would enable each to put their business forward.” (Oman Observer, 2018)</p> <p>The Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) signed between Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) and General Directorate of Social Development in Dhofar are set to boost women entrepreneurs in Dhofar as there has been understanding between both the parties to take care of the challenges of training, exploring market and inculcating business values among them. “It has been noticed that the entrepreneurs</p>

Main Themes	Kenyan newspapers	Omani newspapers
	<p>existing ones, training in entrepreneurship, and creation of more business opportunities, the government is transforming the lives of young people” (Daily Nation, 21 September, 2016)</p>	<p>come out with very good ideas but opt sometimes due to improper accounting, too many entrepreneurs doing same work and coming out with same kind of products. While new enterprises are prone to loss due to bad financial management, the duplication of work causes unnecessary competition,” (Oman Observer, 10 April 2018)</p>
Focus on economic growth	<p>Kenya is not an emerging economy because the female entrepreneur is endangered (Daily nation, 4th October 2013)</p> <p>“Access to cheaper capital is set to energize youth and women entrepreneurs given that 30 per cent of government tenders have been reserved for them. The government is banking on the plan to accelerate the economy towards industrialization with the expected growth in export of value-added goods.” (Daily Nation, 5 June, 2016)</p> <p>“As a major pillar in its development strategy, the government has adopted enterprise development as a policy agenda towards job creation. The creation of productive, decent and sustainable livelihoods for young people and women has become a key objective for the public and private sectors. To achieve this goal, the government is taking key measures to boost enterprise amongst the youth and women” (The Standard, 3 Aug 2015)</p>	<p>Programmes, education and enterprise development. Enhancing skills of the Omani women entrepreneurs will further open doors to more opportunities for sustainable economic growth. (Oman Observer, 2018)</p> <p>The forum, according to her, would work on enhancing the role of women in adding value to entrepreneurship and the business system. (Oman Observer, 8 August, 2018)</p>
Focus on empowerment	<p>“We are empowering women and in turn empowering the community,” says Mr Samuel Wainaina, the fund’s chief executive officer... (Daily Nation, 27th May 2011)</p> <p>...empowerment of women is the new radical shift in championing global economic growth (The Standard, 14th May 2014)</p> <p>The only way women will free their minds is by possessing the sweet power that comes from having money. So how can women access the money? (The Standard, 9th May 2010)</p> <p>Look out for opportunities. Attend empowerment workshops that will</p>	<p>...an important role in filling the gaps and empowering Omani businesswomen to chart successful ventures by providing necessary guidelines, tools etc. (Oman Observer, 10 June 2014)</p> <p>...launched by the bank to encourage and promote women empowerment, especially through business networking among women entrepreneurs (Oman Observer, 28 December 2013)</p> <p>“We are very optimistic about partnering with platforms like Facebook to empower women. We are trying to forge deep partnerships with platforms like Google, Cisco and Intel for the betterment of</p>

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
	<p data-bbox="456 232 871 322">open up your mind and broaden your scope. (Daily nation, 13th December 2014)</p> <p data-bbox="456 353 871 618">“Women are catalysts for societal transformation, therefore, empowering [them] economically has significant gains for their families and society as a whole. They need improved income, which can easily be gained through enterprises,” he said” (Daily Nation, 26 August, 2016)</p>	<p data-bbox="892 232 1300 293">woman’s livelihood through technology,” (Oman Observer, 2018)</p>

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**Table 2:** Discourses on women OMEs' dependency

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
Women in "need of support"	<p>Awale said the society could create an enabling environment for women's empowerment. "We have to get real. We have to make it work, for women and girls (The Standard 9th March 2014)</p> <p>"I hope you will move quickly and transfer the loans to women, especially in this time of drought to help women lift themselves from poverty," (The Standard 10th February 2011)</p> <p>"Men need to wake up and figure out what is it that they need to do to help ladies go up the ladder," said Mr Muganda (Daily Nation, 17 October, 2016)</p>	<p>The Bank from time to time organizes and supports such events with the aim of encouraging Omani women, creating opportunities for them to make a living, as well as helping them become financially independent and self-sustainable (Oman Observer, 21st July 2013)</p> <p>...souq aimed to encourage Omani women, create opportunities for them to build their business, as well as to help them become financially independent and self sustainable (Oman Observer, 13th July 2014)</p> <p>"This is an exciting and promising year for all the new members in Oman. We certainly hope to provide our new members the opportunity of a better life and help them achieve their dreams." (Oman Observer, 23rd June 2014)</p>
Women as a "category"	<p>Most women and youth are not ready for business. (Daily Nation, 11th February 2012)</p> <p>... fears corrupt ministry officials were likely to cash in on the affirmative action to give youth, women and the disabled, 30 per cent of government contracts. (Daily Nation, 10th October 2013)</p> <p>Nonetheless, this 30 per cent public procurement rule that favours women (and other groups) has not been free from challenges. Very telling was the revelation that only two per cent of women, youth and disabled people had applied for the tenders (Daily Nation, 2nd August 2014)</p> <p>"Kenya's affirmative action policy to guarantee women, youth and the disabled access to supply goods and services to the government was roundly applauded" (Daily Nation, 19 March, 2015)</p>	<p>...business offers great opportunities to youths, including women who may feel locked into dead-end jobs, say experts. (Oman Observer, 28th January 2014)</p> <p>Al Rumhy mentioned PDO's previous engagement with women in Dhofar very successful through Banat Oman project, which was meant mainly for housewives. " (Oman Observer, 10 April, 2018)</p>
Women as "the other"	<p>Ms Williams also highlights the networking benefit that businesswomen can gain from playing sport — access to the locker room, that exclusive male space, real or metaphorical, where men are said to seal deals, and make key business decisions (Daily Nation, 16th December 2013)</p>	<p>...the recommendation underscored an attitude in Silicon Valley that women make second-class entrepreneurs. If more women held the purse strings at venture capital firms, the attitude would change, she said. (Oman Observer, 20th August 2014)</p>

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
	<p>While men in general are more savvy in relation to technology ...and know how to network effectively so that they are continuously aware of the changing trends and market outlets, women don't enjoy the same privileges (The Standard, 19th May 2010)</p> <p>Women need to get more entrepreneurial and more aggressive with their ideas... (The Standard, 19th May 2010)</p> <p>"But we normally have personal biases from bank representatives. Some employees profile or stereotype women. So when a woman comes to ask for a loan, this employee will struggle to trust her with, for instance, Sh1 million," he said. (The Standard, 4 August, 2015)</p>	<p>Because they are considered as the other half of the society; efforts should be made to develop their abilities and support them to promote their projects and interests (Oman Observer, 04th September 2013)</p>
<p>Women as "dependent"</p>	<p>"I cannot understate the most important role my life partner played in holding me up unto this point." (Daily Nation, 1st November 2014)</p> <p>My family came to my rescue, cushioning me with their financial and moral support. I needed this to find my footing. (Daily Nation, 29th March 2014)</p> <p>Besides, I had some good supporters, such as my husband and my parents," she says. (Daily Nation, 29th November 2013)</p> <p>"Rather than approach a bank, she opted for a friendlier source. Armed with a business proposal, sales projections and a repayment plan, she made an appointment with her father, a businessman, and made her case just as she would have to any other investor. She convinced him to plough in the Sh1.5 million she needed for stock, and negotiated for further support in securing a office and storage space within one of her father's premises" (The Standard, 21 February, 2018)</p>	<p>Sulaiman, the only wholesale foodstuff businessman in Ruwi, spends more than 12 hours in his shop. His wife, Zainab, assists him in the office work (Oman Observer, 5th December 2013)</p> <p>Along with her husband and co-founder, Rami al Lawati, she opened Ice Cream Mama's first shop in September 2012. It now boasts five stores in Oman, selling their own original ice cream, suited to local tastes and inspired by local flavours (Oman Observer, 12th April 2014)</p>

**Table 3:** Discourses on women OMEs' femininity

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
Women's "feminine" traits	<p>Her fascination with birds is telling; the artist is visibly swathed in tattoos, with that of the humming bird stretched at the back of her neck (Daily Nation, 13th December 2013)</p> <p>Whoops and cheers greet Shavannia, who steps onto the conference floor with an agility unfettered by her 6in (15cm) stilettos. "You can't have that softer, questionable, doubtful sound in your voice. (Daily Nation, 16th December 2013)</p> <p>...dressed smart and armed with business cards and sweet smiles (The Standard, 2nd June 2010)</p> <p>"Uganda was special because that is where I discovered motherhood.... New York; I was single and had a great time. I fell in love with its high energy and its diversity." She is lovely and playful and childlike. (The Standard, 29 March, 2015)</p>	
Women's traditional gender roles	<p>Ms Kinyanjui, a mother of a 14-year-old son, notes that the fact that in her business a deal is struck after making a simple phone call makes it scary especially when she does not know whom she is going to meet (Daily Nation, 11th July 2013)</p> <p>It was not until she got married in 2010 and soon after became a mother that she became certain of the direction she wanted to take (Daily Nation, 29th November 2013)</p> <p>As entrepreneurs, women are faced with challenges that have to do with culture and nature. "If you go for a loan, the bank will most likely be looking for which man is behind you," Mrs Okelo says. (Daily Nation, 7 March 2011)</p> <p>"The unmarried mother of one, who refers to herself as Chief Coffaholic, owns Vava Coffee, a social enterprise that aims to positively impact local communities and contribute to better future prospects for the 30,000 coffee farmers she works with" (The Standard, 21 March, 2016)</p>	<p>On it, she gives advice and helps mothers and entrepreneurs manage their home, careers and life all at the same time. She has no nanny, she gets up at the crack of dawn, is the mother – takes them to school, she has no driver as she is the driver, then she works and then picks them up and returns to being a mother. I have one child and I think that's tiring enough, so excuses aside, we are really capable of things if we put our minds to it and believe. (Oman Observer, 2018)</p> <p>This year we were proud to have more than 200 Omani business women with us, exhibiting various kind of products including food items, clothing, accessories, home decorations and much more (Oman Observer, 13th July 2014)</p> <p>Running your own business is no piece of cake, neither is raising a family. A friend of mine, is a mother of six who is known for having an online business here in the UK. (Oman Observer, 2018)</p> <p>A shop owner in Ladies Mall said, "I always wanted to have my own shop</p>

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
		and do some business but due to traditional boundaries I could not venture out. When I heard about the mall and its features I immediately joined along with other entrepreneurs.”(Oman Observer, 6 April, 2018)
Women as OMEs “by chance”	<p>At only 19, Bilha was bitten by the entrepreneur bug (Daily Nation, 18th August 2012)</p> <p>Is entrepreneurship wired in DNA? (Daily Nation, 29th November 2010)</p> <p>I think if I had known the challenges that lay ahead, I might have backed out before I even began,” (Daily Nation, 27th January 2012)</p>	She was a born entrepreneur and naturally, she was not happy with the conventional way of living. (Oman Observer, 25th March 2014)
Women’s emotion reigning over business sense	<p>Many times, retail trucks are more of a labor of love than a lucrative job. Half of new truck owners — the vast majority of them women — keep their day jobs in order to pay their costs, such as parking and permit fees (Daily Nation, 18th June 2014)</p> <p>Of this, Muthoni says, “I am not getting tangible and quantifiable results from the journals yet... It’s more of the fulfilment of the art — appreciating the handmade products — than of economics.” (Daily Nation, 13th December 2013)</p> <p>“Financially, I am still a long way off from where I want to be, but emotionally, I am greatly fulfilled.” (Daily Nation, 29th March 2014)</p>	

**Table 4:** Discourses on women OMEs' societal impact

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
Women challenging norms	<p>As an "A" student who graduated from Kenya High School, she took the challenge of avoiding traditional careers and decided instead to try to create jobs for other youngsters by venturing into an industry that is still new in the country. (Daily Nation, 1st September 2014)</p> <p>"The Kenyan coffee industry is a man's world and it is always strange when the men have to deal with a young woman or girl, as they call me. I do not take these obstacles to heart. (Daily Nation, 4th October 2013)</p> <p>"Being this young and from a Somali background I feel pressure mounting to show my peers that one can own a profitable business so long as one has determination (Daily Nation, 10th October 2014)</p> <p>"When I started, I quickly realized that people expected me to be either nice or ambitious. (Daily Nation, 10th May 2014)</p>	<p>...business offers great opportunities to youths, including women who may feel locked into dead-end jobs, say experts. (Oman Observer, 28th January 2014)</p> <p>She says 80 per cent of people like to do business with someone they know. This event allows visitors and SME owners to know their local business community and connect with them (Oman Observer, 25th November 2013)</p>
Women impacting society	<p>I established the beauty pageants because I wanted to support children," ... With everything she does or puts her name on, it has to be giving back to the community. (Daily Nation, 17th March 2013)</p> <p>She has employed 56 people, 26 non-teaching staff and 30 lecturers... 20 are on permanent terms (Daily Nation, 29th December 2014)</p>	<p>...the impact that it has on the Omani society, as a whole, is far greater than its estimated growth (Omani Observer, 5th December 2013)</p> <p>EcoPost showed outstanding performance in the first eight months of business. It saved around 500 trees, manufactured more than 5,000 posts and fences converting around 300 tons of plastic waste. Moreover, it created 700 jobs! (Omani Observer, 25th March 2014)</p>
Women as role models	<p>Martha is not your average teenager. While most of her peers are preparing to join tertiary institutions, she is busy running Nairobi Dev School (Daily Nation, 1st September 2014)</p> <p>At just 30 years, Daphine is at the helm of four successful companies. (Daily Nation, 8th August 2014)</p> <p>It is from this basis that Ms. Lizzie has natured her dreams and might soon join the ranks of successful women; those who have gone against the odds and thrived in a competitive turf (Daily Nation, 27th October 2010)</p>	<p>Four Omani women have garnered prestigious rankings in Forbes Middle East's 2014 listing of the 200 Most Powerful Arab Women in the 'Family Business' category (Oman Observer, 20th September 2014)</p> <p>Naashiah al Kharusi won the coveted Woman of the Year Award while Fatma al Hamdani was adjudged the Most Promising Woman of the Year. (Oman Observer, 10th December 2013)</p> <p>...six women with Special Awards. The winners were adjudged on a host of parameters like innovation and creativity, impact of their</p>

	<p>For many people including myself, Tabitha Karanja, the CEO of Keroche Breweries, is like the female version of David taking on Goliath (The Standard, 16th October 2011)</p>	<p>contribution on society, leadership abilities and goals achieved. (Oman Observer, 10th December 2013)</p>
<p>Women maintaining culture through their ventures</p>		<p>Huda's mother-in-law used to make her own ice cream at home...It was a recipe passed down in the Lawati family from one generation to the next... Huda and Rami decided to preserve the culture through the store, lest it fades away (Oman Observer, 12th April 2014)</p> <p>The use of zaree in traditional garments reflects the country's rich customs and heritage linking it directly to the goals of the program which is to promote cultural exchange and develop a deeper understanding ... of local traditional practices (Oman Observer, 25th December 2013)</p> <p>Now with the opening of Ladies Mall in Salalah, local entrepreneurs can rent a shop with a very suitable price. The mall supervisor said, "Our aim and vision is to support entrepreneurs and to be the "Dhofar's face" where the tourists can get to know about our traditional handicrafts and women entrepreneurs in Salalah." (Oman Observer, 6 April, 2018)</p>

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**Table 5:** Discourses on normalization of women OMEs

<i>Main Themes</i>	<i>Kenyan newspapers</i>	<i>Omani newspapers</i>
Women as “gender-neutral”	<p>...says the innovator who is eyeing the larger East African market. (Daily Nation, 6th March 2014)</p> <p>The 27-year-old entrepreneur now employs... (Daily Nation, 18th June 2014)</p> <p>...said the inventor who was born in Taita Taveta County (Daily Nation, 29th August 2013)</p> <p>Tired of calling to know where your field employees are? A young Kenyan techie has designed and developed a mobile application that keeps track of mobile staff and those located in remote sites. (Daily Nation, 6 March 2014)</p> <p>The 48-year-old techie said that her business technology solution targets the mass market to computerize aspects such as accounting, payroll, e-commerce, and customer relationship management (Daily Nation, 27 March 2014)</p>	