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**The Use of Social Media Marketing Intention and Reality in Saudi Arabia**

**By: AlJawharah Ahmed Al-Dahash**

**Supervisors: Sarah Fraser and Dalal Alrubaishi**

In recent years, social media has assisted businesses to reach new audiences. It has also opened up opportunities for entrepreneurs around the world, especially female entrepreneurs. In light of this, this research seeks to determine how Saudi consumers are motivated to use social media and how the use of social media marketing by Saudi female entrepreneurs can influence their buying decisions in the food sector.

This study employs a mixed methodology to address the research question. The quantitative data comes from a questionnaire administered to a sample of Saudi consumers; this data was analyzed using IBM SPSS. The qualitative data was gathered through interviews with Saudi female entrepreneurs in the food sector and then subjected to a thematic analysis.

The findings of this research concluded that the factors motivating Saudi consumers to use social media are connecting, socializing, and entertainment. Social media also influences consumers' buying decisions. Additionally, the design of social media ads plays a significant role in attracting Saudi consumers. The findings also indicate that although many female entrepreneurs are using social media (particularly Instagram and WhatsApp) to market their businesses, they are not following a strategy nor systematically measuring its impact. The implication of this research is that food businesses in Saudi Arabia can effectively reach their audience using social media marketing segmenting to target consumers based on their gender and age.

**The Impact of Saudi Culture and the Economy on Women Seeking to Start a Business**

**By: Anwar Saeed Alawbathani**

**Supervisor: Sarah Fraser**

**Purpose:** This study aims to explore the impact of Saudi culture and its economy on women who want to start their own business and become entrepreneurs. In addition, it aims to illustrate the changes in Saudi culture and its economy and how these changes affect female owned businesses.

**Design/methodology/approach:** In this paper the methodology used is explanatory study/ qualitative research. A deductive approach has used non-probability sampling. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews.

**Findings:** This study finds some elements of Saudi culture and its economy that impact women who aim to start their own businesses such as; the nature of the business idea; societal outlook; gender issues; lack of the awareness and financial support; changes in industry regulations.

**Research limitations/implications:** The researcher examined the issue of poor official Saudi economics and the lack of statistics on Saudi entrepreneurs, in addition the lack of a research culture in Saudi society and time limitations.

**Saudi Female Entrepreneurs: The Challenges of the Current Entrepreneurship  
Ecosystem in Relation to Vision 2030**

**By: Haifa Khaled Almalik**

**Supervisors: Florabel Nieva, Rasha Alghafes**

Entrepreneurship has become an increasingly valuable trend in the world and has occupied centre stage in world economics. Saudi Arabia is currently in a period of transition in light of Saudi Vision 2030, and notable new policies have been implemented particularly for females. One of the key targets is to reduce unemployment and move into the non-oil sector. Given this current emphasis, the researcher decided to base this dissertation on female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia, to study the current status and understand the challenges and opportunities for them as compared to before. In addition, this study attempts to analyse the five elements of the entrepreneurial ecosystem i.e. climate, connections, capability, culture and capital along with societal perceptions towards entrepreneurship. The literature review contains an overview of what comprises an entrepreneurship ecosystem within a country. This was followed by findings regarding females in relation to challenges in starting businesses, particularly related to access to easy capital, cultural barriers, limited capability development, limited government support and help availability.

It was discovered that Saudi females carry confidence and ambition and have the desire to succeed. Despite this, their efforts have been restricted and it is only in recent times that positive changes have started to appear. The researcher carried out a survey on females who are already running businesses that focused on the entrepreneurship ecosystem. The findings revealed that capital is still a problem, as with the exception of bank loans, most of females are using their own resources to fund their businesses. The capability of females has been a problem due to the educational system not preparing females with the skills necessary for running a business. One major finding that related to capability and connections was linked to a lack of government-based support and learning organizations to train females. Only now are web-based skill programs and private based companies beginning to support females in their businesses. In relation to climate, results were not positive. Despite low costs, people struggle to acquire permits and licenses and very few official help centres are available to support them. Females mostly must rely on family members to help them negotiate regulatory barriers. On the other hand, the cultural element has been an eye opener and refreshing. The findings have shown that there is more acceptance of females pursuing their ambitions and career goals. Except for risk taking, there is more value and respect for entrepreneurs in society, and encouragement. Overall, the research has shown that the entrepreneurship ecosystem still needs improvement and increased involvement on the part of the government.

**The Impact of Working Capital Management on  
Profitability of Saudi Listed Companies**

**By: Hanan S. Alahmari**

**Supervisors: Rhea Elizabeth George**

This study tests how large non-financial companies listed on the Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul) manage their liquidity, as in the management of working capital to enhance their levels of profitability. A sample of five non-financial companies were chosen for this study for the period from 2007 to 2016. Cash conversion cycle is used as a comprehensive measure for working capital management while return on assets is an indicator in measuring profitability. The methodology for this study aims to investigate the relationship in each company individually. Hence, the findings vary from one company to the other. In some companies there is clear evidence that efficient management of working capital is a factor in increasing profitability.

**Key words:** Working capital management, profitability, accounts payable, accounts receivable, return on asset, cash conversion cycle.



**Authentic Leadership, Work Engagement and  
Retention Intentions in Saudi Arabian Nonprofits**

**By: Hanoof Zamel Alsughayer**

**Supervisor: Caroline McGroary**

**Aim:** To examine if there is a relationship between authentic leadership, work engagement and employees' retention intentions in Saudi Arabian nonprofits.

**Background:** In Saudi Arabia, special attention has been given to the nonprofit sector due to the vital role it plays in creating deep, measurable and sustainable social impact and in contributing to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030. Hence, examining the current situation of nonprofit organizations in Saudi Arabia, especially its leadership, work environment, and its human resources systems becomes extremely crucial. This in turn will inform professionals on the significance of authentic leadership as one style that can be embraced by nonprofit leaders to enhance work engagement and employees' retention.

**Methods:** This study adopted a mixed methodology; a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative data collection, a survey was designed including the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), the retention intention items from the Turnover Cognitions (TC) questionnaire, and a demographic form. For qualitative data collection, semi-structured individual interviews were utilized and a content analysis was conducted separately and collectively via a deductive approach.

**Results:** Saudi nonprofit employees were moderately engaged at work. In terms of authentic leadership, employees had ambivalent feelings about their leaders. Participants' responses regarding their retention intentions were generally neutral indicating that they did not want to disclose whether they would stay or leave their jobs. A significant positive moderate correlation was found between the following: (authentic leadership and work engagement) and (work engagement and retention intentions). However, a significant positive weak correlation was found between authentic leadership and retention intentions.

**Conclusions:** The results of the study confirmed that there is a significantly positive relationship between authentic leadership, work engagement and employees' retention intentions in Saudi Arabian nonprofits.

**Implications for nonprofit leadership:** Nonprofit leaders in Saudi Arabia are encouraged to further explore and understand factors that affect employees' work engagement and their intentions to stay or leave the organization. Considering adopting authentic behaviors and developing context-specific retention strategies are also recommended.

**An Exploration of Engagement and Burnout in Mixed and Unmixed Working Environments in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Khaloud AlHarthi**

**Supervisors: Caroline McGroary and Dalal AlRubaishi**

The research presented in this dissertation assessed the effects of the mixed and unmixed work environment in Saudi Arabia on employees' engagement and employees' burnout. Both qualitative and quantitative data collecting strategies were used to identify factors that affect burnout and engagement of employees who work in Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University and King Saudi University. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model was used as a basis for the construction of the current dissertation. This cross-sectional study was conducted using two strategy methods, the first strategy that was used to collect data involved creating an electronic questionnaire that consisted of a combination of Maslach burnout inventory and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) 9 item questionnaire which was constructed to measure burnout levels which were divided into three dimensions of burnout; emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. Furthermore, the usage of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) 9 item questionnaire has been used to measure the level of work engagement which includes three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The second strategy of the study involved conducting interviews with some of the participants of the electronic questionnaire to understand the reasons behind the findings of the results using the same electronic questionnaire but with further elaborations and examples.

The cooperation of 104 male and female participants who worked in a mixed and unmixed work environment resulted in no significant relationship between total score of engagement and a total score of burnout since p-value more than 0.05 ( $P\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). Furthermore, it was revealed that only the burnout score had an effect on non-Saudi working participants and who are working in a mixed environment. In addition, it was shown that employees with 5-10 years of experience affected burnout. However, there was no significant score on gender, marital status, and type of organization that they are working in. On the other hand, engagement did not show any significant effect on any of the demographics which are gender, nationality, marital status, type of organization they are working in and the environment they are in and lastly years of working in their current organization.

**Mentorship Programs in Saudi Arabia as a Strategy for Female Empowerment in Government Organizations**

**By: Kholoud M. Alyami**

**Supervisor: Florabel Ortega Nieva**

This study was conducted to measure the perceived effects of mentorship programs as a strategy to empower working females in government organizations in Saudi Arabia. This study aspired to outline the required qualifications of an affective mentor, in terms of educational background, work experience and gender.

In this study the different influencing factors of mentorship were addressed, such as cross-gender mentoring and mentoring program participant's personalities. In this study, strategies and a framework are proposed for an efficient implementation of female mentorship programs in government organizations. Therefore, this research looks to question if female mentoring is an effective approach to empower working females in government organizations.

To address this question, a case study methodology was selected utilizing qualitative and quantitative approaches with data collected by way of primary data analysis, semi structured in-depth interviews and surveys. Furthermore, the researcher used a descriptive research design and purposive sampling methods. The data gathered is analyzed through statistical analysis and initial coding, and subsequently categorized and analyzed using a matrix framework.

The findings of this research conclude that female mentorship is required to advance and empower females' careers. Findings also revealed that female mentorship programs can support females to obtain more networking opportunities. This research also showed that required qualifications for an affective mentor are related to their work experience rather than the mentor's educational background. The result of this research also revealed that the mentor's gender is not a barrier for female employees, where the participants confirmed that a mentor's gender is not important to them.

As an outcome of this research, a framework and implementation structure were proposed to ensure an effective implementation of a female mentorship program in government organizations.

**Key Words:** Female empowerment, mentorship program, female mentoring, government organization, Saudi Arabia.

**The Impact of Technological Events on Participants in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Lamyia Ibrahim Aleisa**

**Supervisor: Artemisa Jaramillo**

This paper studies the impact that technological events have on participants in KSA. It evaluates the presence of entrepreneurial traits, intentions, and behaviors of youth in KSA, and the role that entrepreneurial conferences, innovation challenges, hackathons, and tech workshops have to play in this regard.

There is an increase in the popularity of these events. However, it has been noted that the reasons for attending events is not purely for entrepreneurial motives, but also in order to gain both a mentor and improve a participant's resume. It also appears that social networks of support are considered important to participants. It was further identified that whilst the majority considered that they had the right personal attributes and skills to be an entrepreneur, they also indicated a lack of knowledge in how to achieve this. Measures need to be taken in order to correct this among attendees, who should be provided with information regarding the business process of a start-up. This dissertation, concludes that technology events are important in providing exposure to aspiring entrepreneurs. Expectations regarding these events need to be re-evaluated in light of the findings of this study.

The broad applications of this study are that governments and other event organizers can use the results from this study to develop better future events that consider the limitations of the current events and improve on the weaknesses that have been identified here.

**Female Faculty Attitudes Toward the University Role as an Entrepreneurial University**

**By: Latifah Abdullah Al Zaid**

**Supervisors: Raja Clouse, Rasha Al Ghafes**

Increasingly, Saudi universities are contributing to the economic development of the region through traditional channels of academic engagement. However, a key element of the shift in Saudi Arabian policy approach involves a new role for universities that involves the promotion of knowledge spillovers from universities for commercialization and innovative activity, which in turn, should spur economic growth and job creation. The aim of this research is to investigate whether support of the idea of an entrepreneurial university is reflected in faculty members' attitude in a country where the phenomenon is just emerging.

The findings of this research conclude that faculty members in general hold positive attitudes toward the entrepreneurial role. A substantial majority of faculty do not differentiate between the university engagement role and its entrepreneurial role in the form of knowledge commercialization. Also, contradicting the literature that suggests that faculty attitudes may have a relation with faculty disciplines, this research found no relation between faculty attitudes and their school of discipline. Rather an interesting finding was the relation between faculty academic ranks and their attitudes regarding university entrepreneurial activities.

It is recommended that further research be undertaken to broaden the scope of this research. A longitudinal study would allow appreciation of changes in faculty attitudes overtime, especially since Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing economic reforms. Furthermore, incorporating qualitative and quantitative strategies would further address the understanding of how changes in attitudes lead to changes in practice and behavior of faculty members.

**Human Resources Professionals' Perception of Millennials in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Mai Abdulmeneem Almaghlouth**

**Supervisor: Rhea George**

The millennial generation is one of the current generations that are occupying the jobs market and they are considered to be the largest segment of the workforce. The ultimate goal of this study is to focus on evaluating the perception of human resources professionals of millennials in the workplace in Saudi Arabia. The method used to conduct this study is the analytical descriptive method. This method saw the distribution of a questionnaire among human resources professionals, as well as personal interviews. The finding of this research is that companies should pay attention to the millennial generation workforce, because they are unique and different from previous generations. Moreover, millennials share common characteristics, behaviors and attitudes that make them one of the best generations in the workplace and they have high expectations of the organizations they work in.

Keywords: Millennial, generation, human resources, characteristics.

### **Measuring Employee Engagement in the Public and Private Sector in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Manar F. Almehaijeen**

**Supervisor: Raja Clause**

Employee engagement is linked to several desirable outcomes on an organizational level. Little is known about this concept within the Saudi context. The aim of this study is to assess the level of employee engagement in Saudi Arabia and investigate its association with the public and private sector in Saudi Arabia. The researcher explored the association between a number of demographic variables with the level of employee engagement. The study hypothesized that (1) the overall level of employee engagement in Saudi Arabia is high, and (2) the level of employee engagement within the public sector will be lower compared to the private sector in Saudi Arabia. Employee engagement was assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) via a web-based survey. The survey measures three distinct dimensions of employee engagement; vigor, dedication and absorption, according to the UWES test manual. The study included 234 participants from Saudi Arabia, working in the public or private sector. Demographic data has been collected and the relationship with levels of employee engagement has been investigated. The study findings revealed that levels of employee engagement in Saudi Arabia are within average range. The private sector employees exhibited higher levels of employee engagement in comparison to public sector employees. Levels of employee engagement across Saudi Arabia should be further explored to understand the contributing factors to its enhancement.

**Keywords:** Employee engagement, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), vigor, dedication, absorption, Saudi Arabia

**Entrepreneurial Marketing Strategies and its Effect on Firms Performance in the Food Industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**By: Nora Abdulrhman Sheail**

**Supervisor: Florabel Ortega Nieva**

Entrepreneurial marketing is a recent term and there is a demand for more specific studies to comprehend the concept fully. Features of entrepreneurial marketing are more obvious in micro firms and thus offer more productive insights for research. Marketing by micro firms has received more attention in recent years and in some cases innovative characteristics can be recognized despite limitations such as lack of resources. The objective of this research is to determine marketing strategies as a practice among micro food enterprises and its challenges for firms. Furthermore, it measures the level of effectiveness of these entrepreneurial marketing strategies on a firm's performance as well as brand awareness, sales and profitability. Last but not least, it investigates the current entrepreneurial marketing dimensions in terms of proactivity, innovation, opportunity recognition, risk taking and customer intensity in marketing products.

This research was conducted using qualitative research, questionnaires and a semi-structured interview survey which was used to gather data, involving 30 firms. Respondents were chosen from the Maroof application so that more variation and insights could be identified. Based on this study's findings, conventional marketing practices in entrepreneurial firms appear to be unproductive when it comes to gaining competitive advantage among competitors. Moreover, this study has proven that entrepreneurial marketing is a multidimensional concept with a major and positive effect, increasing the performance of micro businesses in the highly competitive marketing environment of the food industry in Saudi Arabia. Entrepreneurial marketing is most applicable to micro firms, as smaller firms are more likely to use entrepreneurial marketing strategies as it assists them in better understanding the practical benefits to their operation (Kilenthong et al., 2010). The empirical results suggest that there are five entrepreneurial dimensions which are vital processes for increasing micro firm performance and this supports previous research. The results of this study support this argument taking into account a micro firm's actions of proactiveness; opportunity focus; innovativeness; risk taking; and customer intensity effect on performance in relation to brand awareness, sales, and profitability. **Keywords:** Entrepreneurial marketing, micro marketing, entrepreneurial marketing dimensions, brand awareness, sale, profitability.



**Students' Perception about the Impact of Introducing Tuition Fees to Higher Education in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Norah Khalid Alfawaz**

**Supervisors: Ann Largey, Hawazen Almugren**

In 2016, Saudi Arabia adopted Vision 2030 which aims to provide prosperity for citizens whether in education, employment, health, housing, entertainment and other advanced services. To achieve this vision, twelve programs were developed including the privatization program which targets many sectors, one of which is the education sector. The privatization of the education sector aims at increasing educational competence and improving students' skills, knowledge and curriculum, in order to match the requirements of the labor market. Since privatization often coincides with the introduction of tuition fees for students, this study aims to measure the perception of students regarding the impact of introducing tuition fees to higher education in Saudi Arabia, both in terms of students' access to education and in terms of the impact of this decision on society and the economy. Students' perceptions were measured via a survey of 416 students from all state universities across Saudi Arabia. The study found that students' perception about access to education is not affected by family size and family income. It also found that students do not see gender as a factor that affects students' access to education. Moreover, the study found a higher tendency among female students to work to fund their education if tuition fees were introduced to higher education. Students also believe that access to education affects the contribution of individuals to society and the level of awareness of society.

Keywords: Higher education, tuition fees, privatization, Saudi Arabia.

**An Investigation of the Enablers and Inhibitors for Saudi Arabian Female Entrepreneurs  
in the Last Two Years: Nine Tenths a Case Study**

**By: Raja Waleed Altaf**

**Supervisor: Audrey Nicholls**

This research aims at investigating enablers and inhibitors for Saudi Arabian female entrepreneurs between 2016 and 2018 and has taken the Nine Tenths entrepreneurship support program as a case study. This research is of interest, as a means to provide insights into some of the success and failure factors for entrepreneurs in the context of Saudi Arabia. These insights could be of benefit to potential female entrepreneurs as well as established entrepreneurs and guide future entrepreneurial infrastructure. This will help female entrepreneurship flourish in the Saudi Arabian context and contribute to the country's economy.

Three main questions will be answered and discussed in order to generate additional knowledge to the field. First, does the Saudi Arabian context affect women's progress and advancement? Second, what are some of the main enablers and success factors for female entrepreneurs around the world? And finally, what are some of the main inhibitors and demotivating factors for female entrepreneurs around the world? This investigation incorporates qualitative research involving female entrepreneurs who are registered with the Nine Tenths accelerator program via semi-structured interview. The interview was divided into four main sections, personal life, work, education and support. Findings revealed that enablers for female entrepreneurs are; a supportive family; non-financial gain; persistence; and leadership. However, inhibitory factors were greater and included; child care responsibilities; gender focused events; low self-efficacy; cultural traditions; stereotyping; and a lack of financial support.

**Islamic Calendar Effect on the Saudi Stock Market (TASI)**

**By: Sada Khaled al Saud**

**Supervisors: Ann Largey, Abeer Aleesa**

This study has examined the impact of Ramadan, Hajj, and Ashoura festivals on the Tadawul All-Share Index (TASI) from 1998-2018 using the GARCH (1, 1) model. It is widely accepted that seasonal effects, such as those caused by major religious ceremonies have a significant impact on the returns and volatility of financial markets. This research has established that there are significant changes in returns of the TASI during Ramadan and Ashoura when compared to non-holiday days of the year, but there are no significant changes in returns during Hajj. There is also no significant differences in volatility in TASI during Ramadan, Ashoura, and Hajj when compared to non-holiday days of the year. Finally, there is no significant changes in volumes during Ashoura and Hajj when compared to other non-holiday periods of the year. However, the research has shown that there are significant changes in volumes during Ramadan when compared to non-holidays of the year.

Keywords: Islamic calendar, TASI, seasonal, financial markets

### **The client's needs in microfinance and the support of the sustainability of micro-entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia: A case study at Jana Institution**

**By: Sarah Abdullah Alfawaz**

**Supervisor: Jaizah Othman**

The number of women using microfinance in Saudi Arabia is increasing in current times. With Vision 2030 supporting female entrepreneurship, employment and empowerment, Saudi women are gradually shifting from their traditional roles by developing enterprises, becoming entrepreneurs and contributing to the growth and change of the Saudi economy. This study pays particular attention to Saudi women, who are of low- income and use microfinance institutions as a means of support and poverty alleviation. This research is a pilot study that focuses on female clients at Jana Institution in Saudi Arabia and attempts to determine their needs. Due to the increased competition among microfinance institutions, there exists a shift from a product-focused institute to a client focused institute, and in order to support sustainability for micro-entrepreneurship, it is vital that the needs of clients are met and supported.

Data-sampling comprised a total of 200 Saudi female microfinance clients. The data was collected through an adaptation of the Customer Client Satisfaction method (Cohen., 2000) and consisted of a questionnaire divided into three sections. The first section collected data on the demographics and types of clients that participate with Jana. The second section aimed to reveal data on the correlation between clients and Jana. The third section used a Matrix table to find the likes, dislikes and areas of improvement for clients by providing 17 factors from the institute's programs, services and staff. SPSS, coding and grouping were all used to draw descriptive analysis and conclusions for the findings. The findings indicated that areas such as educational-training programs, loan amounts, female communities, technical training and a variety of other factors are required in order for Jana to meet the needs of their clients. The researcher concluded by proposing solutions to Jana Institution and paved a pathway for other institutions in Saudi Arabia to consider in order to determine the needs of their clients and enable the positive impact of retention, sustainability, an increase in profits, reputation and promotion.

**Keywords:** Microfinance, client's needs, micro-entrepreneurship, sustainability, women empowerment, SEEP/AIMS, microfinance institutions, Vision 2030, and Saudi Arabia.

**E-Commerce in Saudi Arabia: Relationship between Payment and Delivery Methods**

**By: Sarah Abdullah AlNahdi**

**Supervisor: Sarah Fraser**

Despite the rapidly growing economy, massive internet use, and the high purchasing power of Saudi Arabia compared to other Middle Eastern countries, the evolution and growth of e-commerce has remained slow and inconsistent with other growth factors in the region. This research was conducted to determine how payment and delivery systems in the country have contributed to the slow evolution of e-commerce. Its focus is on the specific attributes that need to be addressed in order to enhance the evolution of e-commerce in Saudi Arabia. It further attempts to propose possible ways of addressing these challenges to promote the growth and evolution of e-commerce in the kingdom. One of the factors responsible for slow growth is internet security and privacy risks associated with the use of credit cards which have made it difficult for Saudi nationals to adopt online shopping. Other inhibiting factors that were identified during the study included lack of trust between retailers and consumers, user readiness, and awareness concerning the payment and delivery methods used in e-commerce. The aim of this research will be to determine the connection between e-commerce payment methods and delivery systems used in Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:** e-commerce, online payments, information security, internet penetration, delivery methods

**The Impact of Guerrilla Marketing Campaigns on Consumer Behavior of Young Women in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Sarah Hamad Alrabeeah**

**Supervisor: Artemisa Jaramillo**

**Purpose:** Guerrilla marketing has gained a lot of popularity over the years as a marketing strategy for most businesses globally. Guerrilla marketing is a marketing strategy that incorporates creativity to produce standard advertisement messages at low cost to influence the behavior and attitude of consumers. The aim of this dissertation is to determine the impact of guerrilla marketing campaigns on the consumer behavior of young women in Saudi Arabia.

**Methodology:** Quantitative measures of study were utilized and an online survey was constructed using Google forms which was subsequently sent to the target group.

**Findings:** Findings from the study revealed that guerrilla marketing does have an effect on the consumer behavior of young women in Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:** Guerrilla marketing, culture, advertising, celebrity marketing, advertising, consumer perception.

**The Relationship of Entrepreneurial Competencies and Performance among Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Sarah Ibrahim Dokhayyel**

**Supervisor: Florabel Ortega Nieva**

Recently, a significant relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and an enterprise's performance has been explored in numerous empirical studies. Through the application of a competency-based approach, researchers assumed that entrepreneurial competency is different from one region to another depending on the ecosystem, and the extent of economic development. The recent interest in knowledge-based economies in Saudi Arabia has resulted in entrepreneurship improvement within Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). However, the country needs to have a better understanding of entrepreneurs in order to design effective development programs. This dissertation investigates the correlation between entrepreneurial competencies and the performance of MSEs. Potentially, this research could enrich scientific research in this field in Saudi Arabia and provide a base of theoretical concept to contribute to the development process. The research questions centre around the entrepreneurial competencies that micro and small-entrepreneurs have, MSEs' performance, and the correlation between the entrepreneurs' competencies and their enterprises' performance.

The literature review explores components, clusters, and outcomes of entrepreneurial competency levels regarding knowledge, skill, and attitude. In addition, it reveals the performance measurements in MSEs regarding competitive scope and organisational capabilities. The applied methodology in this thesis was quantitative, an electronic-based questionnaire had 118 participants from MSEs' entrepreneurs and data collected from a convenience sample. This data was analysed using statistical analysis including descriptive by mean results and inferential analyses by Pearson correlation coefficient. The empirical research showed high environmental scanning and opportunity assessment in terms of knowledge; opportunities seeking in terms of skills; and moderate risk-taking in terms of attitudes. In addition, excellent opportunities for innovation within MSEs' sectors regarding their competitive scope as well as informal relationships for cooperation regarding MSEs' organisational capabilities. This research proved that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and MSEs' performance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Based on these findings, the researcher provided numerous recommendations to policy-makers, MSEs' entrepreneurs, and suggested additional ideas for further research.

Key words: Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial Competency; Performance; MSEs

**The effect of economic determinants on capital structure of non-financial Islamic structured listed companies in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Tahani Al-Khayyal**

**Supervisor: Jaizah Othman**

This study was conducted to examine how macroeconomic factors affect capital structure of non-financial and non-insurance joint stock companies in Saudi Arabia. The research applied three multiple regression models to test the relation between the measures of capital structure (LEV, LTD and STD) and macroeconomic determination (INF, IR, GDPG and unemployment rate). Data was analyzed using a combination of two sources: Financial statements of 15 listed joint stock companies on the main stock market (Tadawul), and the World Bank database in the period from 2009-2016. The findings show there is a relationship between inflation and leverage as well as long-term debt for companies which call for them to finance their investments more. The results indicate an inverse relationship between the GDPG and leverage, short-term debt, and long-term debt. Consequently, corporations in the Saudi Exchange market should keep track of the inflation rate and ensure that their leverage, short-term debt and long-term debt move against inflation. Finally, it is noticeable that capital structure decisions depend on capital structure of the previous year.

**Keywords:** Macroeconomic, capital structure, joint stock company, non-financial companies



### **Health and Wellness Trends and Opportunities for Packaged Food in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Ahlam AlJohar, Alanood Bindrees, Maha AlHugael, Randa AlBakr**

**Advisors: Dalal Al Rubaishi and Jaizah Othman**

The global food market is leaning toward providing healthier product choices for consumers. This is a result of the increased awareness regarding the food industry and its effect on people's lives. This report aims to detect whether the Saudi market is following the global trend and to recommend a product that has the potential to enter the Saudi market. In general, this research is relevant to healthy food, but it is specifically relevant to healthy packaged food. Its contribution to the area of healthy packaged food is limited, and more focused research should be conducted to produce a consistent set of recommendations for manufacturing healthy packaged food. However, we have made a valuable contribution to the overall research by offering primary findings about Saudi consumers' behavior and interests. Also, by applying the research findings to the proposed product, this report introduces a suggested product that has a good prospect for success in the Saudi market.

To accomplish the research objectives, we conducted primary and secondary research. The secondary research took place by means of DCU (A-Z of Databases), which enabled us to access numerous databases and reports of significance, in addition to Almarai's annual reports and other reports that were provided by the client. The primary research was carried out by means of an online survey and several focus groups. The focus group results were used to validate the survey findings.

The secondary research detected that there is a notable trend in the Saudi food market toward adopting healthier eating habits. However, considering modern lifestyle, people do not usually have the time and resources to cook snacks at home. Almost 98 percent of the surveyed sample said they buy their healthy food from supermarkets, local diet shops, websites, and pharmacies, while only 2 percent cook at home. This behavior has made the packaged food market a growing market (McKenzie 2017). Respondents to the survey also expressed their desire to follow healthier habits and pointed out that they go to websites 48 percent of the time and social media 34 percent of the time to get information about healthy packaged food. This helps direct marketing plans to online content rather than traditional marketing.

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The conclusion of this research is that the Saudi food market is showing little indication of embracing healthy packaged food, which creates a hardship for health-conscious consumers. This presents an opportunity to relieve this hardship, given that the majority of the respondents showed a tendency to pay more money for healthier snacks. Moreover, to understand the consumer's mentality, we conducted a survey, the results of which are stated below.

The Saudi population defines healthy food as "well-balanced," "all-natural," and "low-fat." Therefore, it is recommended that healthy packaged food products point out these three qualities clearly on the labels. In support of this, a global annual review by Emma Schofield indicates that the world is returning to "common sense dieting," that is, well-balanced meals including carbs and fats (2018). Moreover, it is suggested that companies use colorful labeling to advertise nutritional facts to highlight the amount of fat and sugar in the product (Global Data 2017) as an indication to the consumer that the item is well-balanced. Based on these findings, some products have been suggested, such as natural protein shakes, protein smoothies, and granola yogurt snacks. The latter is described in detail in the final chapter, including ingredients, labeling, design, portion, shape, and packaging.

### **An Investigation into the Potential Launch of McDonald's Extension Brand, McCafé**

**By: Dalal Alsaif, Lama Alaqil, Arwa Almusharaf, Alanoud Al Yaesh**

**Advisors: Audrey Nicholls, Rasha Alghafes.**

The principal aim of this research is to identify the marketing techniques McCafé need to employ in order for a successful launch in Saudi Arabia. It was essential to study the reasons for the low performance of brewed coffee currently sold by the parent company, McDonald's. It is envisioned that the results of this investigation will offer an enhancement of the marketing strategy that the company applies when introducing their new brand, McCafé. To aid McCafé in their ambition to launch in Saudi Arabia an analysis of the current market and the competition was performed using various models, which provided practical recommendations.

This report reviews literature regarding the consumption of coffee in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it studies the issues related to brand awareness, and how to develop the marketing mix for the McCafé product by considering other regions where the product has been introduced successfully. In addition, it explores marketing strategies and techniques such as the AIDA Model, Blue Ocean strategy, and customer profiling and behavior. The study also examines the effects of brand extension on the performance of the McCafé product.

Primary research that sought to analyze coffee trends included an online quantitative questionnaire and the use of a taste testing stall. The questionnaire which had 447 respondents concentrated on demographics, consumer behavior, including coffee preference and consumption, awareness of the McCafé brand, and loyalty. The taste testing process was conducted in a Riyadh mall. In this case, participants were required to taste three brands of coffee, Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts and McCafé then answer specific questions about their experience. Upon analysis of the results, it was concluded that there is significant competition in the coffee market with Starbucks emerging as the leader. These findings have highlighted the need for McCafé to adopt a new marketing strategy to compete with the existing market leaders.

**Internet of Things, Shopping – Almarai**

**By: Fatima M. Al Hokail, Latifah A. Aldhidan, Nura A. Alamry, Rana S. Bin Dahmash**

**Advisor: Dr. Artemisa Jarmillo**

This study focuses on analyzing online shopping behavior in Saudi Arabia regarding e-commerce and the adoptability of Internet of Things (IoT) technology to e-commerce. Online shopping has evolved globally and continues to become one of the leading driving forces for retailers and businesses, it has also created new businesses which focus on connectivity. IoT technology has increased the potential of e-commerce globally, by creating smart devices which create a personalized and convenient experience for consumers. At the same time, the growth of this technology has increased the need to understand online shopping behavior, as in the future, more and more transactions will happen online as opposed to in store. IoT technology will play an important role in revolutionizing the online shopping experience.

## **Esports in Saudi Arabia**

**By: Hana AlOtaibi, Maha AlKheraiji, Manal AlHarbi, Noura Bin Sultan**

**Advisor: Caroline McGroary**

The following research provides one of the few industry reports conducted around esports in Saudi Arabia. In late 2017, the Saudi Arabia Federation for Electronic and Intellectual Sports (SAFEIS) (see appendix 1) was formed under the General Sports Authority (GSA). As a new entity SAFEIS sought data that would assist their strategy development and suggest where best to focus future efforts. The aim was to explore the esports industry's current status and potential for growth in Saudi Arabia, in particular the potential growth of esports for females within a university ecosystem.

The esports industry in Saudi Arabia is considered to be in its early stages in comparison with other countries. Therefore, it has the potential to become a booming sector providing many possible opportunities for investors, whether local or international. It also encompasses many non-oil based jobs and with the introduction of a new skill set could provide Saudi nationals with future employment. This industry is unique as it combines different sectors within it such as sports, entertainment, and wellbeing. Since it is a new industry in Saudi Arabia, it has unlimited business opportunities with high revenue projections from ventures such as esports clubs and cafes. It is also in line with achieving the Vision 2030 aim to increase female participation in different sport sectors since they represent almost 50% of the Saudi population.

This report has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the research. The second chapter examines the literature pertinent to eSports covering the global trend focusing on four aspects; player engagement, gender diversity, health benefits and career opportunities in eSports. The third chapter focuses on methodology. Next is the primary research chapter which includes two sub-sections, the first section covers the research findings and analysis where an hypothesis is tested with a focus on the four aspects mentioned above. The second sub-section includes an analysis of the GSA eSport Cup event. Next is the fifth chapter which makes recommendations covering the four aspects which were linked to a new model of esports within a university ecosystem. The final concluding chapter summarizes the research stages and provides suggestions for future studies in esports.

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In the report both secondary and primary data was collected. The literature review includes research involving industrial reports, scientific articles, online sources and academic publications. For the primary research, data was collected data using surveys and interviews. For both the secondary literature review and primary research, we examined four aspects in detail, starting with industry background, followed by an examination of global trends in terms of revenues, audiences, and tournaments. Following on from these areas examined included esports engagements; respondents' demographics and game activity levels; popular consoles and games; the level of engagement with esports games. In addition, there is an exploration of gender diversity; emerging/ involving females in eSports; motivators for women playing esports; obstacles facing females in esports; health benefits in relation to physical activity; psychological benefits. Followed by, an examination of career opportunities in the eSports industry when it comes to becoming professional gamers, completing a university degree in eSports or starting a business in this industry. The collected data was then summarized and analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics.

Key recommendations include the suggestion that SAFEIS should consider partnerships with publishers and sponsors and for the SAFEIS website to serve as a platform to engage with fans and players. It is also recommended that SAFEIS work with Twitch to provide educational courses for players to encourage careers related to esports e.g. games developers. A further recommendation is to create two icons and ambassadors for the esports industry to manifest equality for both genders.

### **E-payment Inhibitors and Adoption in the Saudi E- commerce Market: Consumers' Perspectives**

**By: Lama Alissa, Nada Alkhodairi, Sarah Alarifi and Sarah Al-Idriss**

**Advisors: Raja Clouse, Abeer Aleesa**

Electronic commerce, often referred to as e-commerce, is the purchase of goods and services using online channels, and the transactions of the payments that appear either online or on-site. In accordance with Vision 2030 Saudi Arabia is currently shifting toward diversifying its economy by expanding the presence of the e-commerce market and the e-payment methods associated with it. Therefore, this applied research project provides and focuses on a number of deliverables; identifying e-payment inhibitors; recommending ways to overcome those inhibitors; viewing the current opportunities of the Saudi e-commerce market. Previous researchers have stated that the e-commerce market needs further regulations to encourage consumer spending, as consumers lack trust in vendors and e-payment methods.

Primary and secondary research was conducted to answer the research questions. For the primary research a questionnaire was developed which focused on identifying consumer behavior toward e-commerce and the inhibitors that consumers perceive affect their choices either in purchasing or paying online such as; security and privacy; small regulations; difficulty of use; and unavailability. Desk research, focused on the development of the Saudi e-commerce market in comparison to the UAE. Saudi Arabia is facing tremendous growth in the area of e-commerce; even though it has yet to reach the UAE's position. In order to overcome the e-payment inhibitors and lead the Saudi e-commerce market toward its potential improvement, recommendations include involving financial entities in promoting awareness through campaigns to diminish the impact of inhibitors, for both online payments and SADAD Accounts as a Saudi e-payment option. Further up-to-date research about e-commerce and the inhibitors of e-payments is needed, as much of the previous research is outdated.

### **Daa International, King Khalid International Airport, Terminal 5**

**By: Daliah AlMazroa, Maha Abu Yabis, Marah AlOlayan, Wareef AlOmair**

**Advisors: Sarah Fraser, Hawazen AlMugren**

The purpose of this research project is to conduct field studies to conceptualize the Self Service Technology (SST) while taking into consideration passengers' perception and behavioral patterns within Terminal 5 (T5) by emphasizing our findings and analysis based on customers' responses. Additionally, we developed an implementation plan and a list of recommendations to increase utilization of the current SST and suggested SST KIOSKs within the T5 borders which inevitably reflects the passenger experience. Globally, there is an increase of SST utilization in the airport industry.

The introduction of innovation has been considered one of the most important competitive advantages that the airport practices to enhance passenger "experience" and eventually optimize the corresponding functionalities that lead to operational efficiency by reducing operational costs and wasted time. One of the main concerns of possible SST users is time and security. The usage of these connectivity-based services is to fulfill required needs while also enabling opportunities for the development of other services that the consumer is not aware of, or are not aware of their need for.

Addressing the passenger experience is one of the most vital benchmarks within the aviation industry and every airport is moving towards applying a system of continuous improvement to all of its services and facilities to enhance customer satisfaction. Hence, all airports are competing by introducing innovation and technologies to improve the traveler's journey within airport facilities.

This report highlights several significant points; the global success of SSTs; the experience and impact of SSTs in other international airports; the suggested SSTs according to the different research methodologies conducted along with our observations within T5. The research determines the level of passengers' knowledge of SSTs and the different behavioral patterns that stop them from interacting with technology such as demographics, level of education, culture and other factors that play a crucial role in their resistance to change.

Consequent to the collection of both primary and secondary research using methodology which



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included a widely distributed online survey, on-site interviews, focus groups and unbiased passenger experience, the main research findings are as follows. The aviation industry's main concern, much like other consumer-based industries is often related to understanding the population to whom it wishes to serve, how to encourage them to try, use, and adapt to SSTs. Upon completion of the research, it has been found that the willingness to adapt to new innovations is relatively higher than hypothesized by the research team, along with the discovered degree of interaction.

In addition, the customer persona of the passengers and buyers journey has helped establish strategies to introduce SSTs to potential passengers and increase the utilization of the available technologies. Simultaneously, culture is one of the key barriers to technological adaptation; it has a strong influence on public opinion and adaptation to technologies. Similarly, SST and positioning go hand in hand with passenger recognition.

It has been concluded that SST placement within the terminal can substantially increase the utilization of the available SST. Moreover, based on the findings and unbiased experience, an appropriate amendment to the terminal SST placement plan has been suggested. The limitations of this research have drawn attention to the unavailability of references or data on domestic airlines within Saudi Arabia, and any previous data related to passengers' experience in the past. The lack of airport history database availability was a significant barrier as it would have allowed for more localized data analysis. Some other shortcomings include the lack of adaptation to already established SSTs around the world.

Finally, the client has been advised and provided with an implementation plan and a list of SST related recommendations and other terminal suggestions, as well as, a reimagined map of the terminal that repositions the SST in a more user-friendly manner.