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## Research Digest

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### BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NEURODIVERGENT EMPLOYEES IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Mariam Alhelal | Dr. Gavin Brown | 2025

#### Abstract

This dissertation investigates the barriers and facilitators involved in implementing workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees in Saudi Arabia. Neurodivergence refers to cognitive conditions such as Autism, ADHD, and Dyslexia, which may require environmental, structural, and interpersonal support in the workplace. While inclusive employment practices have been growing globally, Saudi Arabia's frameworks and employer practices remain under-researched, especially regarding cognitive disabilities.

The research aimed to identify what prevents or supports inclusive practices in Saudi organizations. A cross-sectional, mixed-methods survey was conducted with 40 employees across various industries. Quantitative data were analyzed through Excel using descriptive statistics, pivot tables, and illustrated charts, while qualitative insights were coded thematically to reveal emotional experiences and systemic obstacles. Findings identified major barriers such as social stigma, rigid workplace norms, policy ambiguity, and limited awareness among employers and HR professionals (Brînzea, 2019; Almakrob et al., 2024). Facilitators included structured onboarding, assistive technologies, sensory-friendly designs, and leadership that champions inclusion (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Ghanouni & Raphael, 2022). Many participants expressed frustration, burnout, and a desire to stop masking their cognitive differences. Others noted increased confidence and productivity when supported by flexible structures. The study recommends neurodiversity education, strength-based employment practices, flexible job design, and clear legal frameworks to support neurodivergent individuals. While sample size and self-disclosure limitations exist, the research offers a valuable cultural lens for adapting global best practices to the Saudi context. By amplifying lived experiences and offering data-backed insights, this work contributes to the broader goal of equity in the workplace and supports the objectives of Vision 2030. Ultimately, inclusive practices are not just ethical imperatives—they are strategic investments that elevate workplace innovation, retention, and morale.

**Keywords:** Neurodiversity, Workplace Inclusion, Accommodations, Saudi Arabia, Disability Policy, Employment Equity

## Literature Review

The literature reveals widespread global barriers to neurodivergent inclusion, including hiring bias, performance misjudgment, and inaccessible environments (Krzeminska et al., 2019; Singh, 2025). Successful models from companies like Microsoft and SAP highlight structured recruitment and sensory-friendly accommodations (Austin & Pisano, 2017). However, such models are lacking in Saudi Arabia, where public discourse and policy still favor visible disabilities (Almakrob et al., 2024). Few empirical studies address the intersection of neurodivergence and workplace inclusion in this context. This dissertation addresses that gap by analyzing both the structural and emotional experiences of employees within Saudi organizations.

## Objective

This study aims to investigate the barriers and facilitators that influence the implementation of workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees in Saudi Arabia. The research seeks to understand how structural, organizational, and cultural factors affect inclusion, with a particular focus on cognitive and developmental conditions such as Autism, ADHD, and Dyslexia. Key objectives include assessing the effectiveness of existing accommodations, identifying gaps in policy and practice, and exploring how stigma affects disclosure and support. The study also aims to offer practical, evidence-based recommendations to help employers and policymakers create more inclusive, accessible, and equitable work environments.

## Methodology

A mixed-methods, cross-sectional survey was conducted using Qualtrics, targeting neurodivergent employees across sectors in Saudi Arabia. Snowball sampling helped reach a typically under-disclosed population. Quantitative data were analyzed using Excel for descriptive statistics, pivot tables, and visual representations. Qualitative responses were examined using thematic analysis to identify emotional tone and actionable patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This design, grounded in Critical Realism, allowed the study to capture both structural gaps and subjective experiences. The methodology aligns with an inductive approach, generating context-specific insights about inclusivity that are both empirically grounded and culturally relevant to the Saudi employment landscape.

## Analysis And Findings

The analysis revealed four key barriers: lack of policy enforcement, limited managerial training, social stigma, and sensory-unfriendly environments (Brînzea, 2019; Al-Khathami et al., 2023). Facilitators included strength-based employment models, structured onboarding, flexible hours, and assistive technologies (Ghanouni & Raphael, 2022; Weinbaum et al., 2023). Quantitative analysis showed that employees with accommodations reported higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intent (Burrell et al., 2025). Thematic analysis uncovered emotional patterns of



exhaustion, masking, hope, and empowerment. Participants emphasized that leadership support and inclusive design were vital for enabling them to thrive rather than simply survive in workplace environments.

## **Conclusions**

Effective accommodation significantly improves productivity, satisfaction, and employee retention. Yet, inconsistent implementation, policy gaps, and cultural stigma hinder inclusive practices in Saudi workplaces. This study recommends neurodiversity training, participatory policy design, and sensory-inclusive infrastructure. These changes not only uphold ethical standards but align with the economic goals of Vision 2030. Future research should explore longitudinal outcomes, sector-specific adaptations, and intersectional identities to refine inclusive strategies tailored to regional contexts.

## Research Digest

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### AN EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP STYLES IN ENTERPRISES IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Reem Radhi Alotaibi | Dr. Marina Efthymiou & Dr. Raja Clouse | 2025

#### Abstract

This research aims to study the degree of practicing leadership styles among employees in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Also, to investigate the impact of demographic characteristics on the degree of practicing leadership styles among employees in Saudi Arabia. In addition to exploring the challenges faced by managers when applying the different leadership styles, and which leadership style is most effective for employee performance. The research used the descriptive-correlational approach, where the sample included 53 employees working at service organization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The data were collected through a questionnaire. Research Methodology, To achieve the study's objectives according to a scientific vision and to verify the hypotheses, the researcher adopted The descriptive analytical theoretical Methodology The approach: This approach includes a field study within service companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh). The questionnaire, prepared for the study, was distributed to organization leaders and employees. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, V:20) was used to verify the study's hypotheses. The results showed the keenness of employees at service organization in Saudi Arabia to use modern strategies while performing the tasks required, and managers prefer working gradually when applying a new leadership style. The results also showed that leadership styles had an impact of 0.50% on employee performance, and the democratic style had the highest impact. The study recommends important to let the democratic style of leadership prevail in all governmental and private organizations. The study also suggests leaders should apply rules and regulations to everyone without partiality, and hold those who fail to do so after explaining the inadequacies.

**Keywords:** leaderships styles – employee performance – service organization - Saudi Arabia.

#### Literature Review

1. The study of Belkarmi (2013) entitled: “The impact of leadership styles on job performance, a case study of the ETRAG Agricultural Tractors Organization”. The study aimed to know the impact of leadership styles on job performance, the study followed the descriptive approach, and the questionnaire as a tool for data collection, and the study population included employees of the Agricultural Tractors Organization, and the sample amounted to 306 employees, and the study reached results, most notably the existence of an impact of leadership styles on job performance.

2. Abdullah's study (2016) entitled: “The impact of leadership styles on the effectiveness of job performance, a field study on employees in government agencies in the Al-Jouf region”. The study aimed to identify the impact of leadership styles on the performance of employees in the public sector in the Al-Jouf region, and the study followed the analytical descriptive approach, and the questionnaire as a tool for data collection, and the study community included employees in government agencies in the Al-Jouf region, Saudi Arabia, and the sample size was 110 employees, and the study reached results that the most prevalent leadership styles among administrative leaders in government agencies in the Al-Jouf region have a positive impact and a positive impact.
3. Fabian & Others (2016) “Leadership Styles and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Tanzanian Public Secondary Schools”. The study aimed to identify the leadership styles used by school leaders and their impact on teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools in Tanzania, the researchers in this study used the descriptive-analytical approach, where the study relied on the data survey by applying a leadership questionnaire, in which (180) teachers from (10) secondary schools participated. The study reached several findings, the most important of which is that teachers become more comfortable in their jobs when school leaders guide and direct them, and care about their personal well-being. The study showed the importance of using transformational leadership and its behaviors in Tanzanian schools by indicating that good leadership should include transformational leadership styles and behaviors.

Commenting on previous studies:

- The current study is similar to some previous studies in terms of the research method, which is the descriptive survey method, such as the study of Al-Ghamdi (2018).
- The current study is similar to some previous studies in terms of the research tool, the questionnaire, such as Abdullah (2016)
- The current study differs from some previous studies in terms of the research tool, such as Sasheeka (2012), which used the interview tool.
- The current study differs from some previous studies in terms of research methodology, such as Al-Harbi (2021), which used the descriptive-correlational approach.

## Objective

1. To reveal the degree of practicing leadership styles among employees in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
2. To reveal the extent to which there are statistically significant differences in the degree of practicing leadership styles among employees in Saudi Arabia due to the demographic characteristics of the sample members (gender, years of experience, educational qualification).
3. To identify the challenges faced by managers when applying the different leadership styles that are most effective.

4. To identify suggestions to overcome the challenges faced by managers when applying different leadership styles that are more effective.
5. To reveal the impact of leadership styles on employee performance.

### Methodology

To achieve the study's objectives according to a scientific vision and to verify the hypotheses, the researcher adopted the following two approaches:

- The descriptive theoretical approach: This approach begins by clarifying theoretical concepts, drawing on ideas from relevant references that helped us conduct the study. These references include books, recent scientific articles, and websites, in addition to scientific journals and dissertations used by the researcher to reach the desired results of this study.
- The analytical approach: This approach includes a field study within service companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh - Qassim). The questionnaire, prepared for the study, was distributed to company owners and employees. The questionnaire's questions revolve around the main independent axis (strategic leadership practices) and the main dependent axis (employees). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, V:20) was used to verify the study's hypotheses.

### Analysis and Findings

1. The overall mean of the axis is (3.19) with (medium) degree.
2. Democratic style comes in the first rank with (high) degree. The mean is (3.49), Autocratic style come in the second rank with (medium) degree. The mean is (3.24), chaotic style come in the third rank with (medium) degree. The mean is (2.83).
3. There are no statistically significant differences in the responses of study respondents on the axis “Educational leadership styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Chaotic) practiced by managers” due to gender variable
4. There are no statistically significant differences in the responses of study respondents on the axis “Educational leadership styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Chaotic) practiced by managers” due to Years of experience variable
5. There are no statistically significant differences in the responses of study respondents on the axis “Educational leadership styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Chaotic) practiced by managers” due to educational qualification variable

6. There is a variation in the responses of participants on the axis (the challenges faced by managers when applying the different leadership styles that are most effective) as the general mean on the statements of the axis is (3.09), which refers to (medium) degree which implies that the respondents agree with (medium) degree on the challenges faced by managers when applying the different leadership styles that are most effective. The challenges faced by managers when applying the different leadership styles that are most effective include (a high sense of belonging to the organization, lack of empowerment to make some decisions, Poor personal and functional abilities of employees, **Pressure** from senior leaders regarding the manager's work Poor personal and functional abilities of employees.
7. Independent variables of leadership styles (Democratic style, Autocratic style, Chaotic style) had an impact with (0.50%) on employee of performance

## Conclusions

1. In light of the most important findings of study, the researcher recommended the following:
2. It is important to let the democratic style of leadership prevail in all governmental and private organizations.
3. Development, training and caring of working individuals, described as the most important resources at the university, and working individuals should take their managers as their role models.
4. It is important that leaders should encourage employees to be creative and think creatively.
5. It is important for leaders to find a solution to problems and be able to select the best alternative to solve the problem.
6. It is important that leaders have a clear vision for the future, act wisely in challenging work pressures, and insist on implementing the school's plan and goals.
7. It is important for the enterprises leaders to give the employee a space of freedom to develop their performance within the organization, taking care to simplify administrative procedures, and encourage female employee to participate in decision-making.
8. It is important for the enterprises leaders to commitment for organizational regulations and laws in order to ensure applying legal controls before starting at any work so as to contribute in achieving the organization's vision and goals.
9. Enterprises leaders should apply rules and regulations on everyone without partiality, and hold those who fail to do so after explaining the inadequacies.

## Research Digest

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### MARKET ANALYSIS FOR GOAT DAIRY PRODUCTS LAUNCH IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Asal Aleisa, Aseel Alfawaz, Ghadah Alghabba, Sara Althewaibi

Dr. Caroline McGroary & Dr. Renu Sharma | Industry: Ausnutria | 2025

#### Abstract

This research investigates the market readiness and strategic viability for launching Ausnutria's goat dairy product line in Saudi Arabia. With increasing demand for functional dairy alternatives, goat dairy stands out for its digestibility, suitability for lactose-intolerant individuals, and cultural relevance within the region. The research was driven by the central question: How can Ausnutria effectively introduce over 15 goat dairy products within the coming year and secure a leading market position? Through a combination of secondary market analysis and a structured quantitative survey distributed to Saudi consumers, the study obtained 349 complete responses out of 536 total submissions. Results revealed strong potential in younger, health-conscious demographics, particularly in urban centers like Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam. Despite low product awareness and limited availability, openness to trying goat dairy is high when supported by credible health claims and influencer marketing. Key obstacles identified include pricing, taste perceptions, and distribution gaps. Competitive benchmarking against camel dairy brand Noug offered strategic insights into effective cultural branding and diversified product offerings. The study concludes with recommendations for Ausnutria that include trial-based promotional strategies, tiered pricing models, digital-first campaigns, and culturally rooted branding initiatives. These measures, if executed well, position Ausnutria as a pioneer in Saudi's emerging goat dairy segment.

**Keywords:** Goat Dairy, Saudi Arabia, Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Health Trends, Market Entry Strategy

#### Literature review

The literature reveals strong global and regional growth in goat dairy, propelled by rising health awareness and lactose intolerance concerns. Goat milk's digestibility and nutritional profile make it attractive to health-conscious consumers, especially in the Middle East. Brands like Almarai and Noug have succeeded through influencer partnerships and storytelling, highlighting digital marketing as a critical enabler. However, gaps remain in localized studies exploring pricing models, cultural narratives, and influencer effectiveness specific to goat dairy in Saudi Arabia.

## **Objective**

To analyze consumer demand, competitive dynamics, and marketing strategies for the successful launch of Ausnutria's goat dairy products in Saudi Arabia and to provide actionable recommendations for market entry.

## **Methodology**

A quantitative research methodology was adopted, utilizing a structured cross-sectional survey distributed online via SurveyHero. Distribution channels included WhatsApp, email, and personal networks to reach a wide demographic in Saudi Arabia. The survey covered consumer demographics, consumption habits, perception of goat dairy, and digital behavior. From the 536 responses received, 349 were fully completed. Complementary secondary research focused on industry trends, cultural factors, and competitor benchmarking, particularly examining the success of camel dairy brand Noug.

## **Analysis And Findings**

Survey analysis showed that 58.5% of participants consume dairy daily, yet over half had never tried goat dairy. Those familiar with goat dairy appreciated its health benefits but cited limited availability and high prices as key barriers. Over 60% were open to trying goat products if marketed well. Benchmarking highlighted Noug's success through cultural storytelling, product variety, and strategic sponsorships. Consumers also favored brands with strong digital presence and educational content. The data confirmed market readiness, especially among younger Saudis in major cities, for well-positioned goat dairy offerings.

## **Conclusions**

This study confirms that Saudi Arabia presents fertile ground for goat dairy expansion, provided brands address existing barriers. Ausnutria should focus on value-driven education, accessible pricing tiers, and retail partnerships for wider availability. Recommendations include launching influencer-led trial campaigns and embedding cultural narratives into branding to build emotional resonance. Further studies could explore long-term customer retention and the impact of AI- personalized marketing in this niche.

## Research Digest

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### OPTIMIZING SAUDI GOVERNMENT'S L&D REVENUE-SHARING FRAMEWORK

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Bayan AlShebel, Hailah AlMadhi, Raghad AlRashed, Souad AlHowaymel

Dr. Marina Efthymiou, Dr. Noha AlEssa & Dr. Nisa Vinodkumar | Industry: Ministry of Finance  
| 2025

#### Abstract

This study investigates how the Saudi Arabian government can optimize its Revenue-Sharing Framework (RSF) within Learning and Development (L&D) to enhance economic efficiency, stakeholder alignment, and alignment with Vision 2030 objectives. Through a mixed-methods design, anchored in qualitative semi-structured interviews and supported by international benchmarking, the research identifies persistent barriers in public-sector training, such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, fragmented governance, financial rigidity, and limited private sector integration. Drawing on case studies from Germany, the U.S., Morocco, and Singapore, the study highlights the advantages of performance-based funding, cross-sector partnerships, and dynamic revenue-sharing models in driving sustainable workforce development.

Thematic analysis of interviews with Saudi policymakers, training providers, HR officials, and other sector's experts such as Real Estate and Entrepreneurship reveals the importance of centralized procurement, digital platforms, and robust governance mechanisms in overcoming existing structural limitations. The study also underscores the role of clear evaluation frameworks, return-on-investment (ROI) metrics, and modular budgeting in enhancing training impact and accountability. It proposes a scalable RSF model tailored to the Saudi context, informed by global best practices, institutional needs, and sector-specific challenges. Ultimately, the research provides actionable policy recommendations to support a future-ready public sector and sustainable human capital development strategy in line with Vision 2030.

**Keywords:** Revenue Sharing, Public-Private Partnerships, Learning and Development, Vision 2030, Workforce Training, Human Capital Development

#### Literature review

This research builds on literature exploring public sector L&D, its challenges, PPPs in L&D, and revenue-sharing models. Theoretical foundations include Contingency Theory, Role Theory, and Multiple Constituencies Theory, providing insight into the dynamic roles of L&D

professionals and institutional dependencies. Literature highlights the shortcomings of traditional training delivery and the potential of PPP-based and dynamic revenue-sharing models in aligning training outcomes with labor market needs.

### **Objective**

The objective is to design an optimized RSF model for Saudi Arabia's public sector that improves workforce training outcomes, enhances financial sustainability, and fosters collaboration among public, private, and educational stakeholders in alignment with Vision 2030.

### **Methodology**

The methodology of this study adopts a qualitative exploratory approach, integrating semi-structured interviews and international benchmarking to investigate Saudi Arabia's RSF in L&D. Grounded in interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, the research gathers insights from 10 Stakeholders who were interviewed included policymakers, HR professionals, and private training providers through purposive and snowball sampling. Thematic analysis is applied to interview data, ensuring validity through triangulation, inter-coder reliability, and reflexivity. Comparative benchmarking with models from Germany, the U.S., and Singapore strengthens the analysis. This rigorous and context-sensitive methodology provides a foundation for evidence-based policy recommendations tailored to the Saudi public sector.

### **Analysis And Findings**

The analysis and findings reveal critical insights into the challenges and opportunities of implementing the RSF in Saudi Arabia's public sector L&D. Thematic analysis of stakeholder interviews highlights issues such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, procurement delays, limited ROI tracking and rigid budgeting processes. Interviewees emphasized the need for centralized procurement, digital platforms, and standardized evaluation metrics to enhance training effectiveness. Benchmarking with international models, such as Germany's dual system and the U.S. WIOA, demonstrated the value of performance-based funding. The findings underscore the importance of governance reforms, financial flexibility, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to optimize the RSF for Vision 2030 goals.

### **Conclusions**

The study concludes that Saudi Arabia's L&D sector requires a performance-oriented RSF model to address fragmentation and inefficiency. Recommendations include suggesting a framework to utilize RSF, which could potentially lead to adopting international benchmarks, strengthening stakeholder alignment, and institutionalizing PPPs through structured funding and evaluation frameworks.

## Research Digest

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### THE DYNAMICS OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA: SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) AND INNOVATION-DRIVEN ENTERPRISES (IDES) PREFERENCES EXPLORED

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Abeer Almutairi, Afnan Alfhaid, Amani Alanazi, Rasha Alyousef, Youسر Alaqeel

Dr. Caroline McGroary | Industry: MIT | 2025

#### Abstract

**Introduction:** This research studies the entrepreneurial environment of women in Saudi Arabia, exploring whether Saudi women predominantly prefer to own small and medium enterprises (SMEs) instead of Innovation-Driven Enterprises (IDES), in addition to exploring barriers influencing such choices. **Methodology:** Using a structured quantitative questionnaire distributed online, the study collected responses from 101 participants, including current and aspiring female entrepreneurs, as well as a few who are not interested in starting a business. The analysis focused on the impact of financial limitations, socio-cultural norms, and institutional restrictions on women's entrepreneurial choices. **Results:** It was found that 85% of existing women-owned businesses are SMEs, mostly in traditional areas like beauty and clothing, while only 15% operate IDEs. The most critical challenges reported are constrained access to capital, gender biases in financing, poor professional networks, and gaps in technological resources. Despite these challenges, 50% of aspiring entrepreneurs intend to launch IDEs, indicating a future interest in innovation. **Discussion:** The study uses Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and Push-Pull Theory to explain the findings. Although recent reforms have improved access to opportunities, many women still face informal barriers. RBV highlights shortages in skills, technology, and financial resources. The Push-Pull Theory shows that many women are pushed into entrepreneurship by necessity, while policy support is starting to encourage interest in innovation. This research adds to the discussion on gender and entrepreneurship by showing a mismatch between policy goals and the real challenges women face. **Conclusion:** Based on these reflections, holistic reforms are recommended to transform the entrepreneurial landscape in Saudi Arabia into an equally empowering context of women relations between traditional and IDEs.

**Keywords:** Institutional Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV), Push-Pull Theory, SMEs, IDEs, Entrepreneurial Barriers

#### Literature review

The literature review explores the entrepreneurial ecosystem for Saudi female entrepreneurship, where Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) remain more prevalent than Innovation-Driven Enterprises (IDEs). It highlights key barriers faced by female entrepreneurs, including limited access to finance, advanced technology, and professional networks, compounded by cultural norms and infrastructural challenges. Despite reforms under Vision 2030 aimed at empowering women economically, the landscape remains skewed toward SMEs. Research reveals that women's entrepreneurship is often necessity-driven rather than innovation-led. To foster growth in scalable ventures, the review recommends improving financial literacy, expanding digital finance, and increasing access to venture capital and mentorship for women.

### **Objective**

1. Determine whether Saudi women entrepreneurs predominantly choose SMEs over IDEs.
2. Identify the barriers preventing women from entering high-growth, innovative sectors.
3. Assess the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors on women's business choices in Saudi Arabia.

### **Methodology**

The study followed a Mono-method quantitative design approaches based on pragmatic philosophy and abductive reasoning. To collect data, a structured online questionnaire was created on Qualtrics and distributed through social media. Out of the 138 responses collected, 101 were valid and used for analysis. Included participants were Saudi current women entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, and those with no intention of starting a business. Cross-sectional study design was utilized to capture Saudi entrepreneurial activity at a particular moment. Data cleaning, coding, and analysis were performed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive analysis was applied: cross-tabulation, trends and patterns analysis in Likert scale data, and thematic analysis of open-ended.

### **Analysis And Findings**

The study found that 85% of Saudi women entrepreneurs currently operate SMEs, mainly in beauty and clothing, while only 15% lead IDEs. However, 50% of prospective entrepreneurs desire to start IDEs, showcasing a shift towards innovation. They are majorly constrained by inadequate funding, weak socio-professional networks, and institutional bias, as most had to depend on personal or familial resources. Culturally, gendered expectations concerning work-life balance impact business decisions. Despite these constraints, most participants expressed strong ambitions consistent with the Saudi Vision 2030 regarding digital economy evolution. These results support Saudi Arabia's entrepreneurial framework using Institutional Theory, RBV, and Push-Pull Theory.



## Conclusions

The tendency toward SMEs among Saudi women entrepreneurs might not be fully voluntary, considering financial, technological, and cultural constraints restrict to pursue IDEs. Despite the increased interest in high-growth ventures, the entrepreneurial ecosystem remains centered around SMEs. Creating policies that explicitly address these challenges and enhance digital networks will enable women to overcome gender bias as well as limited funding and weak entrepreneurial networks. Thus, enabling greater potential for promoting participation in innovation-driven enterprise development.



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## Research Digest

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# ANALYZING THE SEMICONDUCTOR LANDSCAPE IN SAUDI ARABIA A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO INDUSTRY DYNAMICS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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Dina Alshareef, Futun Alnawfal, Nesrin Alanazi, Nourah Alotaibi

Dr. Caroline McGroary & Dr. Nora Albishri | Industry: NEOM | 2025

### Abstract

This report explores the semiconductor industry in Saudi Arabia, focusing on its potential growth and alignment with Vision 2030's objectives. The purpose of this research was to help NEOM University identify the educational opportunities in the semiconductor sector in Saudi Arabia, so that they can develop education programs, facilities and partnerships which will support the development of a skilled workforce in this vital industry. A qualitative methodology was employed, involving interviews with industry leaders, academic experts, and engineers to learn more about this sector, the current challenges and opportunities being faced in this sector and to determine actionable insights. Findings suggest that while the semiconductor industry in Saudi Arabia presents promising growth opportunities, challenges such as skill shortages and infrastructure development persist. The establishment of the National Semiconductor Hub plays a pivotal role in addressing these challenges and enhancing collaboration among stakeholders. Strategic recommendations include targeted educational initiatives to bridge the skills gap and foster innovation, ultimately positioning Saudi Arabia as a key player in the global semiconductor landscape.

**Keywords:** Semiconductor industry, NEOM, Manufacturing localization, workforce development, National Semiconductor Hub, innovation.

### Literature Review

The semiconductor industry is vital to modern technology, influencing sectors like telecommunications, automotive, healthcare, and industrial automation amongst many more. It enables advanced networking, autonomous vehicle systems, and medical devices. With a global market projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030 (Ozeir, 2025), trends indicate a shift toward specialized firms and the integration of AI and IoT (Macher et al., 2007). However, Saudi Arabia faces significant challenges, including a highly competitive landscape dominated by global

players, a lack of practical, hands-on learning opportunities, and insufficient local fabrication facilities. Addressing these issues through targeted education and investment is crucial for leveraging growth opportunities in the sector.

### **Objective**

The primary objective of this research was to provide NEOM University and the Education, Research, and Innovation foundation with a comprehensive understanding of the semiconductor landscape in Saudi Arabia. This includes identifying strategic opportunities and specialized niches while informing their implementation plans. The study aims to support initiatives that position Saudi Arabia as a competitive player in the semiconductor industry, aligned with Vision 2030.

### **Methodology**

This research employed a qualitative methodology, by conducting interviews with key stakeholders, including representatives from the National Semiconductor Hub, Alat and other key stakeholders. The interviews aimed to gather insights on industry trends, challenges, opportunities, workforce requirements, and educational needs. Furthermore, case studies such as NXP Semiconductor and others were employed as well for further insights. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify key patterns and themes from qualitative data, focusing on skill gaps, effective training methodologies, and collaborations necessary for the growth of the semiconductor industry.

### **Analysis And Findings**

Initially, findings indicated that Saudi Arabia's semiconductor industry holds significant growth potential, particularly through initiatives like the National Semiconductor Hub. However, the analysis revealed critical challenges, including a shortage of engineers skilled in integrated circuit design and fabrication processes, as well as insufficient infrastructure for semiconductor manufacturing. Participants emphasized the urgent need for targeted training programs that focus on practical skills in areas like photolithography and quality control. Existing gaps in educational offerings further highlight the importance of industry-academia collaboration to cultivate both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. Stakeholders believe that leveraging government support and fostering innovation can significantly enhance the local semiconductor ecosystem, helping to meet both current and future market demands.

### **Conclusions**

It is recommended that NEOM University focus on specialized programs in semiconductor fields, enhancing hands-on learning and establishing joint Research and Development hubs with strategic partners. Key niche markets include AI-Optimized Chips for adaptive machine learning



جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبد الرحمن  
Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University



applications, Sustainable Chips designed for energy efficiency in green technologies, and Power Semiconductors for electric vehicles. Additionally, investing in 3D Packaging Technologies can improve chip efficiency, while Quantum Computing Components will position Saudi Arabia at the forefront of advanced technology. By targeting these segments, supporting workforce diversity, and investing in a domestic semiconductor supply chain, Saudi Arabia can strengthen its global position, aligned with Vision 2030's goals for technological advancement.

## Research Digest

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### ADOPTION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN THE SAUDI MICE SECTOR: PERCEIVED BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND IMPACT ON ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE

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Manal Alateeq, Nora Alfariis, Sara Alobaid, Wejdan Aloudah

Dr. Marina Efthymiou & Dr. Ahlam Almusharaf | Industry: SCEGA | 2025

#### Abstract

This research examines the adoption and perception of digital technologies in the Saudi Arabian MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry. A mixed-methods approach was employed, consisting of a quantitative survey conducted at industry events and a qualitative review of relevant academic and sectoral literature. The study investigates which tools are being implemented, how stakeholders perceive their value, and what challenges are encountered. Key tools explored include Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications, CRM systems, IoT devices, hybrid event platforms, and blockchain. The findings reveal high enthusiasm for tools that support engagement, personalization, and operational streamlining. However, significant barriers remain, such as concerns around data security, inadequate digital infrastructure, and limited training. Cross-tab analysis highlights differences across age groups and professional roles in digital readiness and attitudes. The study concludes with practical recommendations aimed at improving the adoption and effective use of digital tools in Saudi MICE events. These include enhancing digital literacy, addressing infrastructure gaps, and prioritizing data privacy. The findings offer actionable insights for organizers seeking to improve attendee experience through technology.

**Keywords:** MICE industry; digital transformation; Artificial Intelligence (AI); Customer Relationship Management (CRM); virtual event platforms; Saudi Arabia; attendee engagement; technology adoption; data privacy and infrastructure

#### Literature Review

The literature highlights the increasing adoption of digital tools in MICE for enhancing personalization, operational efficiency, and attendee experience. AI enables intelligent matchmaking and tailored content delivery, while CRM systems improve loyalty and engagement through predictive analytics. IoT supports real-time tracking, but introduces privacy risks. Hybrid platforms offer flexibility and resilience post-COVID-19, yet adoption barriers remain due to limited digital skills and infrastructure. These studies formed the foundation for evaluating technology use in Saudi Arabia's MICE industry under Vision 2030.

## Objective

**Main Topic:** Adoption of digital tools in the Saudi MICE industry.

**Purpose:** To examine how digital tools are being adopted in MICE events in Saudi Arabia, and to evaluate the perceived benefits, challenges, and impact from the perspective of various stakeholders.

- To assess the current use of digital tools in MICE events across Saudi Arabia.
- To explore stakeholder perceptions regarding the benefits and challenges of these tools.
- To analyze adoption patterns across different user groups and roles.
- To recommend strategies for more effective and inclusive digital tool integration.

## Methodology

This study adopted a pragmatist philosophy and a deductive approach, using a mixed-methods design to explore stakeholder perceptions of digital technologies in Saudi MICE events. Primary data was collected through online and in-person surveys at major events such as LEAP in Riyadh. Secondary data, including academic literature and industry reports, informed the research framework. A cross-sectional time horizon was used, with all data collected at a single point in time. Descriptive statistics—such as mean, mode, and standard deviation—were calculated using Excel to analyze patterns in digital tool usage and perception.

## Analysis and Findings

Survey results from 137 participants revealed high adoption and positive perception of digital tools in Saudi MICE events. CRM systems were reported as the most widely used tools due to their value in organizing participant data and communication. However, when asked about preferences, AI (63%) and QR-based lead retrieval tools (58%) ranked highest, reflecting interest in innovation and efficiency. Hybrid platforms were favored by 72% of respondents. While digital tools improved registration, engagement, and personalization, key concerns remained regarding data privacy (64%) and infrastructure limitations. Cross-tabulations showed generational and industry-based differences in trust, usage, and readiness levels.



## Conclusions

The study found that digital tools—especially AI, CRM systems, and hybrid platforms—are widely used and positively perceived in Saudi MICE events. However, challenges such as data privacy, infrastructure gaps, and uneven readiness persist. The findings emphasize the need for a unified data collection and tracking system, enhanced training, and stronger digital safeguards. Future research could explore regional comparisons and qualitative insights to guide smarter, more inclusive technology adoption across the MICE industry.

## Research Digest

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### DESIGNING A STRATEGIC STAFF REDEPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK: BRIDGING ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY WITH EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

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Alya Alhazaa, Danah Elshebany, Haifa Alqahtani, Morah Alshaibani

Dr. Gavin Brown & Dr Abaad Alzuman | Industry: STC | 2025

#### Abstract

This research investigates how organizations can design a strategic staff redeployment framework that balances organizational agility with employee well-being, responding to dynamic market and internal changes. Building on the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Colbert, 2004), Contingency Theory (Zeffane, 1994), and Person–Environment Fit (Howe-Walsh, 2013), the study addresses how redeployment optimizes internal talent, aligns with contextual pressures, and meets employee needs. Using a qualitative, interpretivist approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), the research combines document analysis of 15 global and local redeployment policies (e.g., Unilever, Falkirk Council, Coursera) with five expert interviews across HR, strategy, academics, and advisory roles. This triangulated method uncovers insights on triggers, planning gaps, resistance, and long-term impacts.

Findings reveal that while literature (Choudhary, 2016; Carldén & Idéhn, 2021) emphasizes redeployment’s strategic potential, real-world practices often fall short due to budget constraints, governance weaknesses, and inconsistent role alignment. Change management models such as ADKAR (Hiatt, 2006) are underutilized, and long-term success metrics are rarely tracked. To address these gaps, the study proposes an 11-step framework combining leadership alignment, workforce analytics, structured role matching, and impact measurement. This framework offers a roadmap for embedding redeployment within organizational systems, supporting both institutional resilience and employee empowerment.

**Keywords:** staff redeployment, workforce agility, employee well-being, Resource-Based View, Contingency Theory, Person–Environment Fit

#### Literature Review

The literature positions staff redeployment as a strategic HR practice that enhances organizational agility, optimizes internal talent, and supports cost savings (Choudhary, 2016; Singh, 2019). Drawing on the Resource-Based View (RBV), redeployment leverages human capital as a key competitive advantage (Colbert, 2004). Contingency Theory emphasizes tailoring redeployment

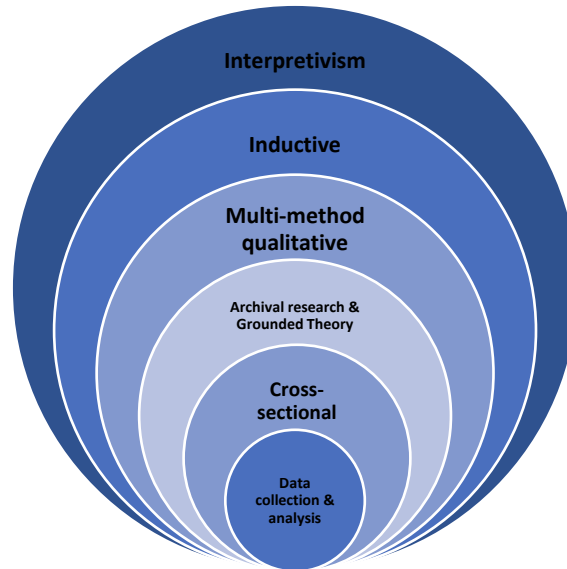
to industry and environmental conditions (Zeffane, 1994), while Person–Environment Fit highlights the importance of aligning employee competencies and preferences with new roles (Howe-Walsh, 2013). Despite its promise, research reveals persistent gaps in implementation, particularly in long-term outcome tracking, employee engagement, and the use of predictive tools (Carldén & Idéhn, 2021; Hajnić & Boshkoska, 2020). Notably, the critical role **of redeployment triggers**—a major part of this research question—was not emphasized in prior literature but emerged strongly from the empirical findings, making it a unique and valuable contribution of this study.

### Objective

The objective of this research is to design a comprehensive staff redeployment framework that aligns organizational goals with employee well-being. Specifically, the study aims to identify key triggers, processes, and challenges in redeployment; integrate theoretical perspectives such as the Resource-Based View, Contingency Theory, and Person–Environment Fit; and develop evidence-based recommendations to guide organizations in implementing fair, strategic, and sustainable redeployment practices.

### Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretivist research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) to explore the complex processes of staff redeployment. Using a multi-method approach (Silverman, 2020), it combines document analysis of 15 global and local redeployment policies (Bowen, 2009) with semi-structured expert interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) across HR, strategy, and advisory roles. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to identify patterns related to triggers, planning, challenges, and outcomes. The document analysis was conducted using nine thematic pillars: triggers, process design, strategic alignment, employee resistance, decision-making, long-term outcomes, contextual factors, process finalization, and theoretical integration. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to identify patterns related to these themes, enabling a deep understanding of how theoretical frameworks such as RBV (Colbert, 2004), Contingency Theory (Zeffane, 1994), and Person–Environment Fit (Howe-Walsh, 2013) are reflected—or neglected—in practice. In line with the research onion model (Saunders et al., 2019), this methodology follows an interpretivist philosophy, employs an inductive approach, and adopts a cross-sectional time horizon. The study utilizes multi-method qualitative techniques, combining archival research and grounded theory for data collection and analysis, as illustrated in the visual below.

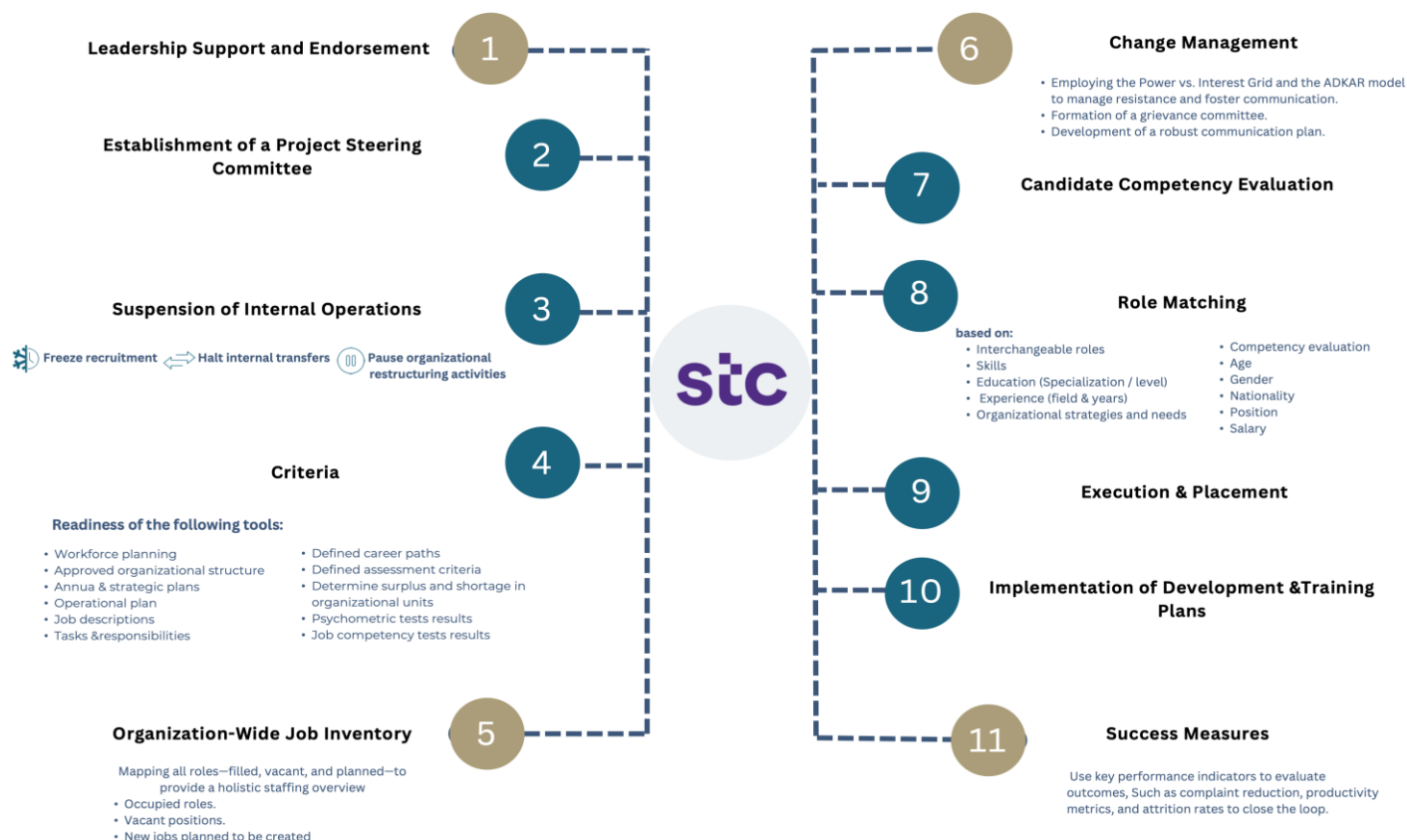


### Analysis and Findings

The analysis revealed that while staff redeployment is widely recognized as a strategic tool (Choudhary, 2016; Carldén & Idéhn, 2021), its real-world application often suffers from fragmented planning, budget-driven decisions, and limited employee engagement. Document analysis and interviews showed that organizations frequently overlook long-term outcomes, with few tracking redeployment's impact on career growth or retention (Oh et al., 2014). While change management models like ADKAR (Hiatt, 2006) improve acceptance, they are underused. The study's findings support the development of an 11-step framework integrating leadership alignment, data-driven role matching, contextual adaptation, and employee-centered practices to enhance fairness and sustainability.



## Redeployment Framework



## Conclusions

This study concludes that staff redeployment, when guided by structured frameworks, predictive analytics, and employee-centered practices, can enhance organizational agility and resilience (Choudhary, 2016; Colbert, 2004). Yet, findings reveal gaps in planning, communication, and long-term impact measurement (Carldén & Idéhn, 2021). By applying Resource-Based View, Contingency Theory, and Person–Environment Fit, the proposed 11-step framework offers a strategic, human-centered approach to redeployment, aligning institutional goals with workforce well-being and adaptive capability. Future studies should explore long-term impacts, emotional well-being, and the role of advanced analytics in redeployment success.

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