



MSc Business
Administration
Research Digest |
2026



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Research Digest

THE IMPACT OF REGULATORY REFORMS UNDER SAUDI VISION 2030 ON THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES IN SAUDI ARABIA

Bshayer Alsubaie | Prof. Maura McAdam | 2026

Abstract

This study examines the impact of regulatory reform under Saudi Vision 2030 on the opportunities and challenges for pharmaceutical firms in Saudi Arabia. The study utilises an interpretivist, qualitative approach to collect data through semi-structured interviews with ten industry experts in regulatory affairs, policy and senior strategy. The study adopts a reflexive thematic analysis approach to understand how companies perceive, react, and strategically navigate the changing regulatory environment. The results show that regulatory reform, characterised by institutional strengthening, digitalisation and localisation policies, has profoundly impacted the pharmaceutical business landscape. Regulatory change has improved the market environment, regulatory efficiency, and global harmonisation, but also created complexity, compliance costs and capability demands. Firms adapt through localisation, regulatory intelligence building, digitalisation and policy, with implications for local and global value chain strategies.

This study contributes to existing knowledge by linking regulation as policy with regulation as practice and offering firm-level insight into how regulatory changes influence strategic adaptation. It also contributes to theoretical discussion on the contradictory role of regulation as both a constraint and an enabler of innovation and competitiveness. In terms of practice, the research offers insights for regulators and industry leaders in achieving a balance between regulatory goals and industry growth.

Keywords: Saudi Vision 2030; Pharmaceutical Regulation; Regulatory Reform; Strategic Adaptation; Qualitative Research; Healthcare Policy



Literature Review

The literature review contextualises Saudi Vision 2030's transformative impact on the pharmaceutical sector, analysing regulatory reforms. It notes prior focus on macro-level policy, identifying a gap in firm-level insights regarding managerial interpretation and adaptation. The review posits regulation's "dual role" as both a constraint (compliance costs) and a catalyst for innovation, aligning with Porter's Hypothesis. It examines challenges like pricing and administrative burdens, alongside strategic adaptations such as localisation. Ultimately, it seeks to bridge the gap between "regulation-as-policy" and "regulation-as-practice" by exploring how firms react to these regulatory shifts.

Objective

- Examine the impact of Saudi Vision 2030 regulatory reforms on pharmaceutical companies' challenges and opportunities in Saudi Arabia.
- Generate qualitative insights into how regulation shapes firm-level behaviour and strategic responses.
- Evaluate the reforms' contribution to national goals such as healthcare development and economic diversification.

Methodology

The study employed an interpretivist, qualitative methodology, adopting a social constructivist philosophy. The research strategy involved conducting semi-structured interviews with ten industry experts in regulatory affairs, policy, and senior strategy roles to gather firm-level experiences and perspectives. Data analysis was performed using reflexive thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2021) framework, to identify recurring themes related to regulatory transformation, market impact, challenges, strategic adaptation, and opportunities. Ethical considerations including informed consent and confidentiality were strictly maintained.

Analysis And Findings

The study found that Saudi Vision 2030 regulatory reforms profoundly impacted the pharmaceutical sector, characterised by institutional strengthening, digitalisation, and localisation.



These changes improved the market environment and regulatory efficiency but also introduced complexity, compliance costs, and capability demands. A key finding is the Saudi Food and Drug Authority's (SFDA) maturation and global recognition. Firms are strategically adapting through localisation, regulatory intelligence, and digitalisation. Regulation emerged as a dual force: both a constraint (e.g., pricing delays, coordination issues) and an enabler of innovation, competitive advantage, and Saudi Arabia's emergence as a regional export center, particularly in biopharmaceuticals.

Conclusions

- **Main Findings:** Saudi Vision 2030 regulatory reforms dualistically impacted the pharmaceutical sector, presenting opportunities like market growth and SFDA maturation, alongside challenges such as compliance costs. Firms are strategically adapting through localisation and digitalisation, leveraging regulation as a competitive enabler.
- **Implications & Recommendations:** Proactive firm adaptation is crucial. Policymakers must improve regulatory implementation and inter-agency coordination. Future studies should conduct quantitative, comparative, and longitudinal research to generalise findings and explore diverse firm types.



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THE IMPACT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN HUMAN RESOURCE PREPAREDNESS FOR EARLY WARNING ON PASSENGER SERVICE QUALITY DURING CRISES: A CASE STUDY OF FLYNAS AIRLINE

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of senior management practices in human resource preparedness for early warning systems on passenger service quality during crises at flynas. The study was developed in response to the increasing importance of crisis management and organizational preparedness within the aviation sector, particularly in low-cost airlines operating under complex and uncertain conditions (Imroz et al., 2023). The research aimed to evaluate the level of managerial preparedness, assess passenger service quality during crises, and determine the relationship between these variables within the Saudi aviation sector.

A quantitative approach was adopted using a structured questionnaire distributed to 155 seniors' managers employees at flynas. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis through spss. The findings revealed that senior management practices related to early warning preparedness were perceived at a moderate level. Communication, managerial support, and monitoring systems represented the strongest dimensions, while training and practical preparedness activities recorded the weakest level. Passenger service quality during crises was also perceived at a moderate level, with airline image and tangible service elements receiving the highest evaluations, whereas empathy and emotional support received the lowest.

The study further identified a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between Hr preparedness for early warning and passenger service quality during crises. The results indicate that enhancing employee readiness, communication systems, and crisis training can improve organizational resilience and service continuity during disruptions (Buhagiar & Anand, 2023). The study contributes to crisis management and service quality literature in aviation and provides practical recommendations for airlines and aviation authorities.



Keywords: crisis management, early warning systems, human resource preparedness, service quality, aviation sector, flynas

Literature Review

The literature review examined crisis management, early warning systems, human resource preparedness, senior management practices, and airline service quality within the aviation sector. Previous studies emphasized that effective crisis management depends on proactive leadership, operational resilience, and organizational preparedness (Taylor, 2017; Abdallah et al., 2025). The review also highlighted the importance of HR readiness, training, communication, and safety management systems in supporting crisis response (ICAO, 2018). The AIRQUAL model was adopted to evaluate passenger service quality during crises (Abdel Rady, 2018). A significant research gap was identified regarding the limited integration between early warning preparedness, HR preparedness, senior management practices, and service quality in low-cost airlines, particularly within the Saudi aviation sector

Objective

The study aimed to examine the extent to which senior management practices in human resource preparedness for early warning systems affect passenger service quality during crises at Flynas. It also sought to evaluate the level of preparedness and service quality and determine the relationship between these variables within the context of crisis management in the aviation sector (Alqahtani, 2019)

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive-analytical design grounded in the positivist research philosophy (Creswell, 2014). Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 155 administrative employees at flynas. The questionnaire measured senior management practices in hr preparedness for early warning and passenger service quality during crises using established frameworks, including airqual and iata guidelines (iata, 2016; Abdel rady, 2018). Data were analysed using spss through descriptive statistics, reliability testing, correlation



analysis, and regression analysis to examine the relationships between the study variables (saunders et al., 2019).

Analysis and Findings

The findings showed that senior management practices in HR preparedness for early warning were implemented at a moderate level. Communication, managerial support, and risk monitoring were the strongest dimensions, while training and crisis preparedness activities were the weakest. Passenger service quality during crises was also perceived at a moderate level, with airline image and tangible services receiving the highest ratings, whereas empathy and emotional support scored the lowest. Regression analysis revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between early warning preparedness and passenger service quality. Communication and managerial support demonstrated the greatest influence on improving service quality during crises.

Conclusions

The study concluded that strengthening HR preparedness for early warning systems significantly enhances passenger service quality during crises in the aviation sector. Improving training programmes, employee readiness, communication systems, and crisis-response mechanisms can increase organizational resilience and operational continuity (Huber & Helm, 2020). The study contributes to aviation crisis management literature and recommends that airlines integrate proactive early warning practices into organizational culture and strategic planning to sustain service quality during disruptions.



Research Digest

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DRIVERS OF SAUDI MOTHERS' TRUST AND PERCEPTIONS IN INFANT FORMULA SELECTION

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Abstract

This research examines how cultural, social and religious factors shape Saudi mothers' trust, decision-making and perceptions across the infant feeding journey, with specific attention to goat milk-based formula (GMF). The study aims to identify the most influential trust sources, understand how reliance on different sources changes from pregnancy through early feeding stages, and assess awareness and perceptions of GMF within the Saudi context. An exploratory quantitative design was adopted, using a self-administered online cross-sectional questionnaire completed by 179 Saudi mothers. The findings show that healthcare professionals are the strongest trust source, followed by religious teachings, while family influence is lower than expected in comparison with prior literature. Decision-making also shifts over time: mothers rely more on doctors and external guidance in earlier stages, then increasingly draw on personal experience and independent judgement. GMF awareness remains mixed, yet attitudes suggest openness, particularly when functional benefits such as digestibility, safety and nutritional value are clearly communicated. The study concludes that Kabrita should strengthen medical credibility, align communication with religious and cultural reassurance, address awareness gaps through accessible education, and position GMF through both functional benefits and emotional confidence.

Keywords: Saudi mothers; infant formula; goat milk-based formula; trust; infant feeding journey; consumer decision-making.

Literature review

The literature positions infant feeding in Saudi Arabia as socially embedded, culturally framed and trust-mediated. It highlights four connected areas: the Saudi socio-cultural context, including family-centred norms, motherhood expectations and religious/moral framing; consumer trust and



information behaviour across healthcare, family and digital sources; the infant feeding journey as a dynamic process that evolves from pregnancy to postpartum and early feeding; and GMF as a nutritionally adequate, safe and tolerable formula option. Key gaps include limited Saudi-specific evidence on GMF perceptions, limited examination of trust prioritisation across sources, and limited treatment of formula feeding as a socially embedded journey.

Objective

The objective of this research was to examine how cultural, social and religious factors influence Saudi mothers' trust, decision-making and perceptions when selecting infant formula, with particular focus on GMF. The study also aimed to identify the main sources of trust, trace how these sources change across the infant feeding journey, assess perceptions of the functional and emotional value of GMF, and explore differences in decision-making patterns among mothers.

Methodology

The study adopted a positivist research philosophy and an exploratory quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional design. Data were collected through a structured self-administered online questionnaire distributed via social media and mothers' support groups. The target population was Saudi mothers who were pregnant or had at least one child aged 0–24 months, using convenience and snowball sampling. The final dataset included 179 valid responses. Analysis relied on descriptive statistics, collapsed categorical response patterns and chi-square tests to examine associations between demographic factors, trust sources, GMF awareness and decision-making characteristics.

Analysis And Findings

The findings show a clear trust hierarchy. Doctors and paediatricians were the most trusted source for infant formula decisions (71.5%), followed by religious teachings (65.4%), social media/online groups (47.5%) and family members (34.1%). Stage-based findings suggest a transition from external guidance to personal experience, especially as mothers gain confidence across the feeding journey. GMF awareness was mixed: (38.0%) had never heard of GMF, (41.9%) had heard of it



and (20.1%) knew it well. Mothers showed openness to GMF, especially around digestibility, nutritional value and safety.

Conclusions

The study concludes that Saudi mothers' infant formula decisions are shaped by a hybrid model combining medical authority, religious reassurance, digital exposure and growing personal autonomy. Family influence appears lower than expected, while lived experience becomes increasingly important over time. For Kabrita, the implications include building healthcare credibility, communicating GMF benefits clearly, aligning messaging with cultural and religious reassurance, and expanding education across healthcare, digital and retail touchpoints.



Research Digest

HOW DO DIGITAL BEHAVIOURS, MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS, AND VALUE PERCEPTIONS SHAPE SAUDI MOTHERS' ENGAGEMENT, PURCHASE, AND ADVOCACY BEHAVIOURS FOR GOAT MILK-BASED INFANT FORMULA?

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Abstract

A mother's selection of her infant's feeding options is directly tied to concerns regarding her infant's health, comfort, and development. Little research has been done examining how Saudi mothers view goat milk formula (GMF), which is significant since GMF has remained a relatively niche segment in Saudi Arabia, with limited research to date concerning the factors influencing Saudi mothers' engagement, purchase, and advocacy behaviours in relation to it. A cross-sectional survey using a quantitative approach was used to assess how Saudi mothers perceive and use digital behaviours, marketing communications, and value perceptions related to engaging with, purchasing and advocating for GMF. In total 220 valid responses were obtained from mothers who completed a survey assessing brand awareness, trust in various sources of information, perception of functional benefits, digital usage, pricing/value perceptions, and willingness to advocate/recommend the product to others.

Overall, the findings indicate that GMF is primarily viewed as a solution rather than the standard method of feeding. Many mothers indicated they would consider GMF when they have specific needs, such as concern about allergies/intolerances, or when breastfeeding is not possible. The findings also indicate that mothers rely heavily on trusted sources (healthcare professionals, families & peers) in developing trust towards these products. Educationally based content, like testimonials, community-based messaging, and other forms of communication, was found to be more successful when they provided mothers with reassurance about the safety and functionality of these products over simply being promotional in nature.



This study supports the need for credible, culturally sensitive and emotionally reassuring messaging within the Saudi infant formula market. Findings show that Kabrita should develop marketing initiatives that clearly show product value to mothers and build trust by providing reliable sources of information to mothers.

Literature review

Infant formula decisions are determined by trust, perceived safety and confidence in the nutritional content (Harison and Lahav, 2024). Digital media also influence how mothers access and evaluate infant nutrition information (Mota-Castillo et al., 2023). In this process, mothers regularly rely on healthcare professionals, family, peers and online communities for guidance and reassurance (Moon et al., 2019; Vogels-Broeke et al., 2022). Perceived value is also important, as mothers evaluate product quality against price and expected benefits (Zeithaml, 1988). However, limited prior research has considered these factors together in the Saudi context, particularly for goat milk infant formula.

Objective

The objective of this study is to examine how digital behaviours, marketing communications, and value perceptions shape Saudi mothers' engagement, purchase, and advocacy behaviours toward goat milk-based infant formula in Saudi Arabia. It also considers how trust, awareness, information sources, and perceived product benefits influence mothers' decision-making in this specialised infant nutrition category.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach to examine how digital behaviour, marketing communication, and value perceptions influenced Saudi mothers' decision-making regarding goat milk-based infant formula (Creswell and Cresswell, 2018). Data were collected through an online survey distributed using purposive and snowball sampling, which targeted Saudi mothers and expectant mothers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The survey examined digital behaviour, information sources, brand perceptions, willingness to pay, and recommendation behaviour of



Saudi mothers. Over 200 responses were collected. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to examine relationships between variables.

Analysis And Findings

223 responses were collected through the online survey, with 220 valid responses included in the final analysis. The findings indicate that goat milk-based infant formula is primarily viewed as a solution rather than the standard method of feeding. Mothers relied heavily upon trusted sources, such as healthcare professionals, families, and peers, in developing trust towards these products. Educational content, testimonials, and community-based messaging were found to be more successful when they provided reassurance about safety and functionality rather than being purely promotional.

Conclusions

Results show that Saudi mothers place strong importance on trust, product safety and infant well-being when considering goat milk infant formula. Trusted sources, such as healthcare professionals, family members and peers, strongly influenced engagement and purchase decisions. Educational and community communication was seen as more credible and reassuring than promotional advertising alone. The study highlights the importance of culturally sensitive, trust-based marketing strategies for improving awareness, engagement and advocacy within the Saudi infant formula market.



Research Digest

WORKPLACE ERGONOMICS AND ITS PRODUCTIVITY IMPACT AMONG WORKERS IN SAUDI ARABIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR AI AND DIGITAL SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of workplace ergonomic exposure on employee productivity in Saudi Arabia and explores organisational readiness for AI-driven ergonomic assessment systems. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected via a structured survey from 287 professionals across diverse sectors, including healthcare, education, public administration, and other sectors. The analyses demonstrated that 94% of respondents experienced work-related musculoskeletal discomfort, primarily affecting the shoulders, lower back, and neck. A significant positive correlation ($\rho = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$) was identified between discomfort frequency and task interference, indicating that physical strain may influence day-to-day work performance. Despite these widespread risks, organisational ergonomic management practices were largely reactive, relying on lagging indicators such as sick leave trends and workers' compensation claims. In contrast, AI-driven ergonomic systems have the potential to support more proactive ergonomic monitoring through indicators such as continuous posture analysis and early-risk identification before the onset of injury. Although respondents generally expressed openness toward AI-based ergonomic monitoring, successful implementation appears to depend on adequate data privacy protections and cultural alignment, both of which are important for maintaining employee trust and acceptance. This includes safeguards such as data anonymisation protocols, controlled access mechanisms, and transparent data governance practices. To navigate these barriers, this study proposes a multi-level stakeholder framework supporting responsible AI-driven ergonomic implementation, including national ergonomic standards, smart ergonomics initiatives, multidisciplinary governance, and employee engagement. Future research should employ



longitudinal and economic evaluation methods to assess the long-term effectiveness and financial viability of AI-driven ergonomic systems across diverse sectors.

Keywords: Workplace Ergonomics, WRMSDs, Productivity, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Ergonomics, Saudi Arabia

Literature review

The evolution of workplace ergonomics has shifted from acute injury prevention to the recognition of cumulative work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs) as critical threats to productivity and organisational performance. Evidence highlights a high prevalence of WRMSDs across Saudi healthcare, administrative, and educational sectors, driving economic burdens through absenteeism and presenteeism. While traditional assessment frameworks provide useful evaluations, their episodic nature makes them lagging indicators in dynamic environments. Moreover, the literature highlights AI-driven ergonomic systems as a proactive approach for continuous biomechanical monitoring. However, adopting these technologies presents socio-technical challenges, requiring organisations to navigate ethical governance and privacy to secure trust.

Objective

This study aimed to examine the relationship between workplace ergonomic exposure and employee productivity across the Saudi workforce. It also evaluated current organisational ergonomics management practices and explored employee and organisational perceptions of adopting AI-driven ergonomic assessment systems.

Methodology

A quantitative cross-sectional study employed convenience and snowball sampling to collect data from the Saudi workforce. The survey, administered via Qualtrics XM, collected individual-level data on ergonomic exposure, musculoskeletal discomfort, and perceptions of AI-driven ergonomic systems, as well as organisational-level data on ergonomic governance and monitoring practices. A total of 287 valid responses were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to examine associations among ergonomic exposure, physical discomfort, and workforce productivity.



Appropriate ethical standards were upheld, including informed consent and the right to withdraw before submission.

Analysis And Findings

Analysis revealed widespread ergonomic risks, with 94% of respondents reporting musculoskeletal discomfort, primarily affecting the shoulders (58%), lower back (53.7%), and neck (47.5%). A significant positive correlation emerged between discomfort frequency and task interference ($\rho = 0.38, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, organisational monitoring remains predominantly reactive, prioritising lagging indicators such as sick leave and workers' compensation claims. While respondents are open to AI-driven ergonomic systems, their adoption appears to depend on governance; 72% considered data privacy critical, and 69% emphasised the need for localisation, specifically Arabic-language support, and alignment with Saudi workplace contexts.

Conclusions

The study demonstrates that workplace ergonomic risks are associated with reduced workforce productivity, as physical strain correlates with impaired task performance. It also highlights limitations in existing reactive management paradigms for ergonomic assessment. Additionally, the study identifies the potential utility of AI-driven monitoring, provided implementation addresses socio-technical barriers through robust governance and cultural localisation. Transitioning to these continuous monitoring frameworks may require a collaborative multi-stakeholder approach to ensure long-term operational viability.



Research Digest

HOW SELF-AWARENESS AND LIFE PURPOSE SHAPE ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY, DECISION-MAKING, AND NON-FINANCIAL DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS AMONG TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Dr. Caroline McGroary & Dr Abaad Alzuman | Industry: Keyss | 2026

Abstract

- Life purpose and self-awareness function as meaningful internal drivers that shape entrepreneurial identity, decision-making, and perceptions of success, particularly within uncertain environments. This study aims to examine how self-awareness and life purpose influence entrepreneurial identity, strategic behavior, and non-financial definitions of success among traditional and social entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia.
- The study adopts a qualitative exploratory research design, utilizing in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight entrepreneurs to capture their experiences and interpretations.
- The findings indicate that self-awareness is a dynamic capability developed through reflection, feedback, and experience, playing a central role in decision-making and resilience. Life purpose emerges as fluid and evolving, shaped by personal values, religious beliefs, and national frameworks such as Vision 2030. Entrepreneurs with a strong sense of purpose tend to prioritize impact, contribution, and alignment with personal values over financial outcomes.
- The study concludes that entrepreneurial success is increasingly defined by value alignment, personal fulfillment, and societal contribution rather than financial performance alone.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, self-awareness, life purpose, social entrepreneurship, traditional entrepreneurs, Saudi entrepreneurs

Literature Review

The literature reframes entrepreneurship as an identity-driven process rather than purely economic activity. Studies highlight self-awareness as a metacognitive process shaped by reflection and feedback, while life purpose is viewed as a future-oriented motivational system. However, existing



research remains fragmented, with limited integration between identity, purpose, and decision-making. Although prior studies acknowledge non-financial definitions of success, they rarely connect these to identity formation. This gap is particularly evident in context-specific environments such as Saudi Arabia, where institutional and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial behavior.

Objective

The study aims to examine how self-awareness and life purpose influence entrepreneurial identity, decision-making, and non-financial definitions of success among traditional and social entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative exploratory research design grounded in an interpretivist paradigm. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight entrepreneurs selected using purposive and convenience sampling. Interviews were conducted via virtual platforms, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following a systematic process of coding, theme development, and interpretation. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and meaning-making processes in relation to self-awareness, life purpose, and entrepreneurial identity.

Analysis And Findings

The findings reveal that self-awareness is an evolving capability developed through experience, reflection, and feedback, supporting emotional regulation, decision-making, and resilience. Life purpose is fluid and shaped by personal, religious, and contextual influences, including alignment with national frameworks such as Vision 2030. Purpose functions as a strategic guide, influencing priorities and encouraging a shift from profit orientation toward impact and contribution. Additionally, entrepreneurs define success in multidimensional terms, including personal fulfillment, team satisfaction, and societal impact rather than financial performance alone.



Conclusions

The study demonstrates that self-awareness and life purpose are central to shaping entrepreneurial identity and behavior. Success is increasingly defined by alignment between values, purpose, and impact rather than financial outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of integrating psychological and contextual perspectives in entrepreneurship research and suggest the need for further studies across broader samples and contexts.



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Research Digest

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

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Abstract

The study focuses on the relationship between career awareness and employability skills and the confidence of final-year university students preparing to enter their career in Saudi Arabia. It focuses on evaluating the roles of career readiness, employability skills and career awareness in relation to career self-efficacy in the higher education to the labour market transition.

It was a cross-sectional and quantitative research design, based on a structured online questionnaire, which was distributed to final-year students of Saudi universities. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression were used to analyse 102 valid responses.

These findings reveal that the students are moderately to highly confident; and that there were strong positive correlations between employability skills, career readiness and self-efficacy. Regression analysis also indicates that employability skills and job search readiness are also important predictors of confidence and variations were found between public and private university students.

The research came to the conclusion that both skill development and career preparedness influence confidence. It suggests the enhancement of career services, the emphasis on employability skills in the curricula, and the expansion of work-based learning to enhance graduate preparedness and match labour market needs.

Keywords: Career self-efficacy, employability skills, career readiness, career awareness, university students, Saudi Arabia



Literature Review

Existing literature identifies career readiness, employability skills, and self-efficacy as key factors influencing successful transition from higher education to employment. Self-efficacy theory highlights the importance of confidence in shaping career behaviour and professional outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Research also shows that students with stronger self-efficacy are more likely to engage in proactive career development activities, including networking, internships, and job-search preparation (Grosemans et al., 2020). Work-related learning experiences and institutional support further contribute to student readiness, particularly within the Saudi Arabian context where social and cultural factors influence career development.

Objective

The main aim of conducting the study is to analyse the relationship between career readiness, career awareness, and employability skills and career self-efficacy among final-year university students in Saudi Arabia. The research is also focused on the analysis of the relations between these variables and determination of the differences in the institutional contexts.

Methodology

The research is based on a quantitative cross-sectional survey design that is grounded on a positivist philosophy and deductive research approach (Saunders et al., 2019). A structured questionnaire that was to be completed using Google Forms was used to collect data by use of the final-year university students in Saudi Arabia. The convenience sampling led to 102 valid responses. Career self-efficacy, career readiness and employability skills have been measured in the study using Likert-scale items. Descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation and regression modelling were all used to analyse data to identify relationships between variables (Bryman, 2016).

Analysis and Findings

The results show that student confidence is moderate to high, and there are positive, high correlations between employability skills ($r = .850$), job search readiness ($r = .823$), career awareness ($r = .771$) and self-efficacy. The findings of regression indicate a high explanatory power ($R^2 = .766$ public; .914 private) which effectively proves that these variables have a significant effect in predicting confidence. The employability skills were the strongest predictor of the public



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university students and job search readiness was for private students. These results highlight the importance of competence and professional training which help in building confidence.

Conclusions

The research shows that student confidence for entering careers depends on their career readiness and their employability skills. It establishes that institutions together with their skill development work create a vital role in their operations. Future studies must be conducted for the longitudinal impacts on a larger population to strengthen existing knowledge on career transitions in different educational and cultural backgrounds.



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Research Digest

DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CHILD ONLINE SAFETY

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Dr. Caroline McGroary | Industry: Mawaddah | 2026

Abstract

This research investigates digital responsibility and child online safety in Saudi Arabia examining how digital businesses balance commercial growth with ethical, regulatory and social responsibilities toward protecting children online. The study explores the extent to which child online safety is embedded within organisational structures, product design and operational processes, while assessing the role of cross-sector collaboration, particularly with social organisations such as Mawaddah Association for Family Stability.

Adopting a quantitative cross-sectional design, the study collected data through a structured online questionnaire administered via Qualtrics to professionals in digital and technology-driven organisations in Saudi Arabia. Using purposive sampling supplemented by snowballing, the survey targeted decision-makers, managers and specialists. A total of 512 responses were recorded with 99 fully completed questionnaires forming the final sample.

Findings reveal that while organisations widely recognise the importance of child online safety this awareness is not consistently translated into formal policies, resource allocation, decision-making or safety-by-design practices. Implementation remains fragmented and largely reactive, influenced indirectly by commercial pressures, with stronger roles played by regulatory expectations, cultural/religious values and Vision 2030 alignment. Collaboration with social organisations is viewed positively but remains underdeveloped.

The study concludes that child online safety constitutes an emerging yet partially institutionalised organisational capability in the Saudi digital economy. Recommendations emphasise embedding safety into governance and product development, adopting proactive safety-by-design approaches, strengthening internal accountability and enhancing structured public-social partnerships to advance consistent implementation.



Keywords: child online safety, digital responsibility, Saudi Digital Economy, safety-by-design, Vision 2030, corporate governance.

Literature Review

The literature review builds upon fundamental studies such as Livingstone et al. (2012), which framed children's online opportunities and risks, and Jang and Ko (2023), who introduced the 4Cs risk framework. Key works by Gorwa (2019) and Owen (2019) advanced platform governance concepts, while Herden et al. (2021) established Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR), and Cortesi and Gasser (2026) advocated safety-by-design principles.

In the Saudi context, Al Ghamdi (2025) and Jabali (2024) highlighted local risks including cyberbullying and cultural influences. These studies collectively reveal a major gap in empirical research on how digital businesses in Saudi Arabia integrate child online safety within commercial operations.

Objective

This study aims to explore how digital businesses in Saudi Arabia address child online safety in a commercially driven environment. The specific objectives are:

- To examine how digital businesses balance commercial growth with ethical and regulatory responsibilities for child online safety.
- To analyse the implementation of child online safety practices across key digital sectors.
- To investigate the role of social organisations, particularly Mawaddah Association, in promoting child online safety.
- To assess the effectiveness of collaboration between digital businesses and social organisations.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine how digital businesses in Saudi Arabia address child online safety. The target population consisted of professionals working in digital and technology-driven organisations in Saudi Arabia. A structured online questionnaire was distributed using Qualtrics through purposive sampling supplemented by snowballing.



In total, 512 responses were received, of which 99 were fully completed. Data collection focused on organisational practices, awareness and implementation levels. Descriptive and comparative analysis was conducted primarily using Qualtrics and Microsoft Excel to identify patterns and relationships across sectors and organisational characteristics.

Analysis and Findings

The study found that while Saudi digital organisations widely recognise the importance of child online safety this awareness is not consistently translated into organisational practices. Child safety remains moderately prioritised but is weakly embedded in policies, decision-making, resource allocation and product design processes. Implementation is largely reactive rather than proactive (safety-by-design). Commercial pressures influence practices indirectly through operational demands. Regulatory awareness and cultural values exert positive influence, yet internal governance, measurement systems and cross-sector collaboration remain underdeveloped. Overall, child online safety exists as an emerging but partially institutionalised organisational capability in the Saudi digital economy.

Conclusions

The study reveals that Saudi digital organisations recognise child online safety as important but fail to fully institutionalise it into policies, product design and operations. Implementation remains reactive and fragmented despite supportive cultural, regulatory and Vision 2030 contexts. This implies a significant gap between awareness and capability.

Recommendations for further research include longitudinal studies, executive-level interviews and the development of standardised measurement frameworks to better understand and advance organisational practices.



Research Digest

UNDERSTANDING VALUE PERCEPTION AND BRAND PERFORMANCE IN THE BABY WIPES MARKET IN KSA

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Dr. Caroline McGroary | Industry: WaterWipes | 2026

Abstract

This practicum examines WaterWipes' reported performance decline in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia following the reduction of its single-pack format from 60 wipes to 48 wipes. It investigates whether purchase-related responses are better understood through consumer value perceptions and sales-channel dynamics than through price alone.

A quantitative cross-sectional online survey was conducted with 78 eligible parents and caregivers in Saudi Arabia who had at least one child aged 0 to 3 years under their care and had purchased baby wipes within the past three months. Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, selected chi-square tests, and Cramér's V were used to examine value perceptions, channel behavior, WaterWipes awareness and usage, and purchase-related responses to the pack-size reduction.

The findings indicate that respondents relied more on visible quantity cues than on explicit price-per-unit calculations, with 47% of respondents prioritizing total wipe count compared to only 6% prioritizing price per wipe. WaterWipes' purity and safety associations remained important, but practical concerns about quantity, price, promotions, and fairness continued to shape purchasing decisions. Consumer value perceptions provided a stronger interpretive basis, while sales-channel dynamics were relevant mainly through online comparison and promotion visibility.

The study concludes that WaterWipes' challenge reflects a tension in perceived value between premium quality positioning and consumers' expectations of transparent, practical household value. The findings suggest that future pack changes should be supported by clearer pack-value communication, the cautious use of tangible promotions, and channel-specific messaging.



Keywords: WaterWipes; perceived value; pack-size reduction; baby wipes; Saudi Arabia; sales-channel dynamics.

Literature Review

The literature frames consumer value as a subjective trade-off between benefits and sacrifices, rather than a direct response to price alone (Zeithaml, 1988). This is reinforced by bounded-rationality and heuristic-decision perspectives, which suggest that consumers often rely on visible cues such as pack size and quantity when detailed evaluation is unlikely (Simon, 1955; Kahneman, 2003). Research on package-size changes shows that consumers may interpret quantity reductions through perceived value and fairness, while channel research highlights how online and offline environments shape the comparison of price, promotions, pack size, and alternatives (Yao, Oppewal and Wang, 2020; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015).

Objective

This project aimed to examine whether consumer value perceptions and sales-channel dynamics help explain purchase-related responses following WaterWipes' 60-to-48 pack-size reduction in Saudi Arabia. It focused on how parents and caregivers evaluate baby wipes, respond to pack-size reduction, perceive WaterWipes' purity positioning, and encounter value cues

Methodology

The study used a quantitative cross-sectional online survey based on non-probability convenience sampling. Eligible respondents were parents or caregivers in Saudi Arabia with at least one child aged 0 to 3 years under their care and recent baby wipes purchase experience. After screening and data cleaning, the final analytical sample comprised 78 respondents. The bilingual questionnaire captured value-related judgements, channel behaviour, WaterWipes awareness and usage, and purchase-related responses. Findings were analysed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, selected chi-square tests, and Cramér's V. They were interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.



Analysis and Findings

The clearest evidence pointed to consumer value perceptions. Total wipe count was selected by 47% as the most frequently reported value cue, while 6% selected price per wipe. Purity and minimal ingredients remained important, indicating that WaterWipes' premium positioning retained value. However, price, promotions, pack quantity, and fairness continued to shape purchase-related responses. Awareness of the actual pack-size change was limited, although 67% of the small aware subgroup perceived worse value. Channel dynamics were relevant, particularly through online comparison and promotion visibility, but the evidence was contextual rather than causal.

Conclusions

WaterWipes' challenge in Saudi Arabia is best understood as a perceived-value tension. Premium purity and safety cues remained important, but did not fully offset consumers' expectations of transparent, practical household value. The findings suggest clearer communication of pack quantity and value-per-pack logic, cautious use of tangible promotions, and channel-specific value communication. Future research should test these patterns with larger samples and qualitative evidence.



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