

Vision 2030 and Digital Turn in Saudi Handicrafts: A Critical Synthesis of Challenges, Interventions, and Prospects

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Abstract: The article explores the synergy between the digital age and traditional handicrafts in Saudi Arabia in the context of Vision 2030. Handicrafts are a central component of Saudi Arabia's intangible cultural heritage, and their revitalization is central to the Kingdom's economic diversification and heritage preservation goals. Vision 2030 promotes the use of traditional crafts in the digital economy through institutional support, funding and strategic efforts to empower artisans. We examine how digital technology is revolutionizing production, marketing, preservation and education in the crafts sector and identify key challenges to its adoption. Based on current policy and academic evidence, the study recommends effective interventions such as the Saudi Heritage Commission's digital archiving programs, the Cultural Development Fund's support for technology-enabled craft businesses, and the Saudi Artisanal Company's partnerships to develop e-commerce. However, there are other issues, such as the lack of digital literacy among rural artisans, problems with the authenticity of online marketplaces and limited infrastructure for logistics and broadband. In addition, the commercialization of arts and crafts is becoming a problem in terms of cultural sustainability and the environmental impact of expanded production. The argument highlights the inclusive potential of digitization to facilitate interoperability, intergenerational knowledge transfer and global cultural diplomacy. At the same time, it urges caution in preserving the integrity and environmental sustainability of arts and crafts. The study concludes with a recommendation for future research on educational impact, authenticity and sustainable sourcing practices as perceived by consumers. Overall, the report contributes to the emerging debate on how traditional industries can thrive in the digital economy while preserving cultural depth and heritage value.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Saudi Handicrafts, Vision 2030, Cultural Heritage, Handicraft Entrepreneurship