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ROADBLOCKS TO THE ADOPTION OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRACTICES IN SAUDI MANUFACTURING FIRMS

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Abstract

The movement toward a Circular Economy (CE) will be a major factor for sustainable manufacturing as well as the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially for developing countries like Saudi Arabia, where resource-intensive economies exist. While Saudi Arabia has set forth strong policy goals through its Vision 2030, the number of circular economy initiatives being implemented in Saudi manufacturing is very limited. Drawing on expert inputs and an extensive literature review, sixteen barriers are categorized into technological, cultural, financial, and regulatory dimensions and analyzed using the Best–Worst Method (BWM). The results indicate that financial and technological barriers exert the greatest influence, with high initial investment costs and inadequate infrastructure emerging as the most critical impediments. Cultural barriers, particularly low consumer awareness and entrenched societal preferences, further constrain CE uptake, while weak regulatory enforcement undermines policy effectiveness. This study has contributed to the CE body of knowledge by providing a context-specific prioritization of CE barriers and also provides practitioners and policymakers with specific strategies to facilitate the transition of the CE in furthering the objectives of Saudi Arabia's sustainability agenda and Vision 2030 goals.

Key words: circular economy, roadblocks, sustainable development goals, sustainable manufacturing

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