



Coffee & Community: Heritage to Innovation

Kurniawan Arif Maspul*

Al Madinah International University

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*Correspondence: Kurniawan Arif Maspul

Email: ck885@lms.medi.u.edu.my

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Abstrak: Specialty coffee entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia has emerged as a dynamic catalyst for economic diversification, cultural preservation, and sustainable development under Vision 2030. This study examines how youth-led ventures, supported by a \$320 million Public Investment Fund initiative, are revitalizing traditional gahwa rituals while driving a \$1.54 billion market projected to grow at 5.1% annually (Maspul, 2025; Arab News, 2023). Through qualitative analysis of stakeholder interviews, ethnographic case studies, and policy documents, the research reveals a sector where 72% of young Saudis engage weekly with coffeehouses, 37% of the workforce is female, and CRISPR-engineered drought-resistant crops combat climate threats in Jazan. Digital platforms like COFE App bridge heritage and modernity, while UNESCO-recognized Khawlani coffee fosters global soft power. The findings underscore coffee's role in advancing gender equity, circular economies (e.g., 30% waste reduction via biodegradable packaging), and halal-certified exports targeting a \$3.2 trillion market. Policy recommendations prioritize youth training academies, climate-smart agriculture, and strategic global partnerships. This study positions Saudi Arabia's coffee renaissance as a blueprint for reconciling tradition with innovation, offering lessons in community resilience and sustainable growth for economies worldwide.

Keywords: Youth-Led Specialty Coffee; Community Empowerment; Cultural Heritage Coffee; Climate-Smart Agriculture; Saudi Vision 2030

Introduction

In the heart of Saudi Arabia, where ancient trade routes once carried aromatic coffee beans from Yemen to the world, a modern renaissance is unfolding. Specialty coffee entrepreneurship has emerged not merely as a trend but as a transformative force, intertwining economic ambition, cultural pride, and ecological stewardship. This movement is far more than a commercial endeavor—it is a testament to resilience, a bridge between heritage and innovation, and a lifeline for communities navigating the complexities of globalization and climate change. As Saudi Arabia strides toward Vision 2030, its coffee sector has become a microcosm of the nation's aspirations: a thriving, diversified economy rooted in tradition yet boldly reimagined for the future.

The stakes are profound. Coffee, deeply embedded in Saudi identity through rituals like gahwa—a symbol of hospitality recognized by UNESCO in 2015—now faces a dual imperative. It must preserve centuries-old traditions while adapting to a world where youth demand modernity, sustainability, and inclusivity. Consider this: 72% of Saudis aged 18–35 visit coffeehouses weekly, and 94% of households uphold coffee hospitality as a cultural obligation (Maspul, 2025). These numbers are not just statistics; they reflect a generation's yearning to honor their past while scripting a new narrative. The market's explosive growth—valued at \$1.54 billion in 2023 with a 5.1% CAGR—reveals a society in flux, where

a \$3.70 cappuccino symbolizes both economic vitality and shifting social norms (Maspul, 2025).

Yet the significance of this study transcends borders. Saudi Arabia's coffee journey mirrors global challenges: climate change threatens the delicate ecosystems of Jazan's coffee farms, where temperatures now exceed 40°C for 100+ days annually, jeopardizing yields (IFAD, 2024). Meanwhile, the Kingdom's \$320 million investment in the Saudi Coffee Company (SCC) underscores a national commitment to resilience, aiming to domesticate 1.3 million coffee trees by 2030 and reduce reliance on imports (Arab News, 2023). These efforts align with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (decent work) and SDG 12 (responsible consumption), positioning Saudi coffee as a case study in balancing growth with sustainability.

The human dimension is equally compelling. Women like Mariam Hakami, a 22-year-old barista who describes her craft as "pouring heritage into every cup," embody the sector's social revolution. Female workforce participation has surged to 37%, driven by cafés like Sisters' Brew, a Jeddah-based chain founded by siblings who turned cultural taboos into triumphs (Al-Kinani, 2022). Such stories are not anomalies but markers of a society redefining gender roles through entrepreneurship—a shift amplified by SCC's gender-inclusive training academies (Arab News, 2023).

Globally, Saudi Arabia's specialty coffee narrative challenges stereotypes. The UNESCO-listed Khawlani coffee, cultivated in Jazan's terraced highlands, is now a beacon of "glocal" resilience, blending CRISPR-engineered drought resistance with ancestral farming wisdom (Khemira et al., 2024). Partnerships with entities like the Halal Products Development Company (HPDC) aim to export this legacy, targeting a \$3.2 trillion halal market while honoring ethical sourcing (Tea & Coffee Trade Journal, 2025). Here, every bean becomes a diplomat, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and economic diplomacy.

This study matters because it illuminates how a humble crop can catalyze systemic change. It is a story of youth reclaiming their heritage through Instagram-worthy lattes, of farmers combatting desertification with IoT-powered irrigation, and of policymakers weaving coffee into the fabric of national identity. As climate crises escalate and global markets fragment, Saudi Arabia's experiment offers lessons in resilience: how to brew prosperity without boiling away tradition, and how to empower communities without evaporating their soul. The future of coffee is not just about taste—it's about survival, identity, and hope. And in Saudi Arabia, that future is being written one cup at a time.

Methodology

This study employs an integrative literature review, systematically synthesizing insights from multiple, interrelated disciplines to forge a unified understanding of community-driven specialty coffee innovation (Cronin & George, 2023). The approach maps the existing environment while simultaneously revealing unexpected links and reframes established occurrences through a multifaceted lens. On the other hand, a qualitative perspective was required to investigate Saudi Arabia's specialty coffee sector, with a focus on cultural narratives, policy implications, and entrepreneurial resiliency. Data was synthesized from semi-structured interviews and open discussions with 12 stakeholders,

including baristas, Jazan farmers, and Saudi Coffee Company executives. Ethnographic case studies of cafés and coffee roasteries and SCC's training academies provided granular insights into gender inclusion and heritage preservation. Thematic analysis of UNESCO reports and Vision 2030 policy documents contextualized cultural and economic imperatives, while digital ethnography of Instagram revealed youth-driven market behaviors (Maspul, 2025). Moreover, to strengthen validity, findings were triangulated against peer-reviewed literature on glocalization and climate-smart agriculture. Policy alignment was assessed through comparative analysis of EUDR and Fairtrade frameworks, ensuring relevance to global sustainability discussions. This approach bridges micro-level entrepreneurial experiences with macro-level socioeconomic shifts, offering a textured understanding of how coffee entrepreneurship drives Saudi Arabia's resilient future.

Results and Discussion

Specialty coffee entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia represents more than a commercial pursuit; it is a catalyst for deep-seated social change and community revitalization. Drawing on psychological empowerment theory, youth founders engage in a transformative process whereby meaning is forged through the revival of *gahwa* rituals and the valorization of indigenous varieties such as Khawlani, competence is cultivated via immersive training at institutions like the SCC Academy, self-determination is exercised through streamlined e-licensing and incubator support, and impact is realized when success becomes a collective narrative of regional pride and economic renewal (Zimmerman, 1995). This multidimensional framework not only elucidates why young Saudis are drawn to coffee ventures, but also explains how entrepreneurship engenders sustained commitment by aligning personal aspiration with communal heritage and future prosperity.

At the same time, social capital and community resilience theories provide a macro-level lens on how networks and adaptive capacities synergize to fortify the specialty coffee ecosystem. Bonding capital among Jazan and Asir farmers accelerates the diffusion of climate-smart practices—such as drip irrigation and drought-tolerant seedlings—while bridging capital empowers youth entrepreneurs to connect rural producers with urban and global markets via platforms like COFE App, and linking capital emerges through strategic collaborations with PIF, UNDP, and academic partners (Putnam, 2000; Lin, 2002). Moreover, the sector's resilience is manifested in its ability to anticipate and absorb environmental and economic shocks, transforming challenges into innovation—zero-waste café models, digital delivery networks, and seed-bank initiatives—all of which exemplify a community's collective capacity to adapt and thrive (Norris *et al.*, 2008; Magis, 2010).

Together, these theoretical foundations frame Saudi specialty coffee not merely as an industry, but as a dynamic, empowerment-driven movement that harnesses heritage and innovation to build resilient, future-focused communities. Moreover, building on this foundation of collective agency and adaptive capacity, Saudi Vision 2030 further catalyzes youth-led specialty coffee ventures by setting clear targets and providing strategic investments.

Youth Entrepreneurship and Vision 2030

Saudi Vision 2030 frames youth as key drivers of economic transformation. The plan calls for expanding culture and entertainment while preserving heritage, goals directly relevant to specialty coffee. Government targets reinforce this: by 2030 there should be one coffee shop for every 1,000 people and one million coffee plants cultivated (Abid, 2022). Public and private investments have followed suit. For example, the Public Investment Fund (PIF) established the Saudi Coffee Company (SCC) with a SAR 1.2 billion (\$320 million) budget to catalyze the sector (Business News Report, 2022). SCC's agenda includes launching an academy to train Saudi farmers, baristas, and entrepreneurs across the coffee value chain (Arab News, 2023). According to Arab News, the academy will educate over 400 individuals annually in cultivation, roasting, barista skills, and sustainable practices. These programs align with behavioral-economic insights about youth motivation: young Saudis often pursue ventures they "love" and see as community experiences, rather than traditional corporate careers (Abid, 2022). Indeed, many emerging coffee entrepreneurs cite passion for coffee and desire to innovate as their impetus. For instance, Mariam Hakami, a 22-year-old barista, credits the café boom to young people who "do what they love" and share common goals. Research underscores such motivations: autonomy, creativity, and social impact rank highly among Saudi youth business founders (Bruneel *et al.*, 2025).



Figure 1: Youth Engagement in Saudi Coffee Entrepreneurship

Vision 2030's broader commitment to a "vibrant society" also emphasizes cultural heritage. The recent UNESCO listing of Khawlani coffee (2022) and the prior inclusion of Arabic coffee (gahwa) on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list exemplify this focus (Arab News, 2023). Such recognition not only honors tradition but signals support for businesses that sustain it. Many young entrepreneurs see specialty coffee as a way to marry heritage with innovation – e.g. by offering modern cafés that still feature *gahwa* rituals. The narrative of national pride is pervasive: one café owner describes specialty coffee as under the same "umbrella of culture" that the youth strive to honor (Abid, 2022). Combined with targeted education and funding, this social narrative helps reduce entrepreneurial barriers. Studies of Saudi youth entrepreneurship note that policy emphasis on nurturing local talent and

granting access to financing (e.g. Wa'ed incubator programs, priority loans) has boosted youth startup rates by over 35% in the past decade. In sum, youth-led coffee ventures operate at the intersection of passion and policy: they tap into the freedom and community ethos favored by young Saudis, while directly advancing Vision 2030 goals of economic diversification and cultural preservation.

Market Dynamics and Digital Innovation

The Saudi coffee market has experienced rapid growth and professionalization. According to industry data, the market was valued at approximately \$1.54 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at ~5% annually. This reflects both rising domestic demand and broader trends toward specialty consumption. As the economy diversifies, Saudis increasingly view coffee as a lifestyle product rather than a mere commodity. High-end cafés and roasteries have proliferated in Riyadh, Jeddah, and other cities, often leveraging social media to build brand communities. Behavioral trends among consumers are evident: surveys find that around 68% of young Saudis enjoy modern beverages like lattes and cold brews, yet 89% still value traditional *gahwa* rituals (Maspul, 2025). This duality (modern products anchored in cultural identity) drives market segmentation – entrepreneurs offer everything from cardamom-infused cappuccinos to heritage coffee experiences.

Digital innovation is reshaping the value chain. E-commerce and mobile apps are connecting local producers with coffee lovers nationwide. A prime example is COFE App, a Kuwaiti startup that partnered with the Saudi Coffee Company in 2022 to serve as its primary online distribution channel (Elgazzar, 2022). The COFE app was already ranked among the Kingdom's top 10 food delivery platforms in 2021, and its integration with SCC means Saudi-grown beans can now be ordered countrywide via smartphone. Such tech platforms overcome geographical constraints – for instance, Jazan farmers can sell directly to consumers in Riyadh or abroad – and also support transparent supply chains. On the operational side, many coffee entrepreneurs use digital tools to manage production and marketing. Social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok) are popular for showcasing barista craft, promoting new flavors, and engaging young audiences with coffee culture (Maspul, 2025a).

The entrance of global players also influences local market dynamics. Multinationals like Starbucks (with ~187 outlets in Saudi Arabia) bring international standards, while specialty roasters emphasize local flavor profiles. This competition can both challenge and inspire local startups (Maspul, 2025). Some entrepreneurs pursue novel niches (e.g. cold-brew tea coffees, sustainable packaging) to differentiate. Behavioral-economic considerations come into play here: consumers often exhibit brand loyalty and novelty-seeking simultaneously, creating opportunities for small brands to capture niche markets. Policymakers recognize digital transformation as key: the Saudi government has streamlined e-commerce regulations, and programs like the Communications and Information Technology Commission's initiatives encourage start-ups in the digital food sector. Overall, these trends suggest a dynamic ecosystem where traditional social habits (morning coffee with family, *dallah* ceremonies) coexist with app-driven home delivery and

Instagram-famous latte art – a market synergy that youth entrepreneurs are particularly adept at navigating.

Cultural Resilience and Gender Inclusion

Saudi specialty coffee entrepreneurship is deeply entwined with cultural resilience. Coffee rituals such as brewing *gahwa* and serving in traditional finjan cups are not mere formalities but symbols of hospitality and unity (UNESCO, 2015). Modern cafés often incorporate these elements – offering both Arabica espresso and traditional cardamom coffee, for example – to appeal to customers' pride in national heritage. UNESCO's recognition of Arabic coffee (*gahwa*) and Khawlani coffee as Intangible Cultural Heritage underscores this point (Arab News, 2022a). Such designations encourage entrepreneurs to market coffee as a living tradition; many cafés now host *mahjar* (cultural gatherings) and exhibitions to link new coffee experiences with Saudi identity (Maspul, 2025a).

Inclusion and gender equity are also evolving within the industry. Historically conservative norms have limited women's public roles, but specialty coffee has become an unexpected avenue for female empowerment. In recent years, Saudi cafés have started hiring and even being owned by women, with positive reception. As one female barista explained, "This was not accepted in the past, but ... it has become normal to see women working everywhere. Some of my male customers proudly introduce their families to me" (Al-Kinani, 2022). These comments, reported in Arab News, indicate growing societal support for women in hospitality roles. Entrepreneurial women are launching their own coffee ventures, sometimes emphasizing female-friendly spaces. For instance, Sisters' Brew – a Jeddah café chain founded by sisters – has achieved media attention as a women-led brand (S. Al-Ammar, personal communication, 2024). While female coffee professionals still navigate challenges (work pressure, initial skepticism), education programs and even the SCC Academy explicitly welcome "coffee enthusiasts" of all genders (Arab News, 2023).

Cultural resilience also involves balancing globalization with tradition. Many young Saudis grew up during a wave of global coffee culture, so cafés often fuse international trends with local practices. Theories of glocalization apply: menus might include Turkish-style *kahwa* or Yemeni mocha beans alongside Italian-style brews (Maspul, 2025a). Cultural festivals and competitions (e.g. national barista championships) celebrate coffee craftsmanship and Arabic coffee history alike. Moreover, initiatives like UNESCO's cultural routes and Saudi heritage festivals have begun featuring coffee storytelling. In sum, specialty coffee businesses are strengthening Saudi cultural identity by making heritage accessible to new generations, while also challenging social norms through inclusive practices – a synergy that both preserves tradition and modernizes social dynamics.

Sustainability and Climate-Smart Agriculture

Sustainability is a critical concern for the coffee sector, both culturally and economically. Coffee production in Saudi Arabia is concentrated in the southwestern highlands (Jazan and Asir regions) where climate change presents serious challenges. Recent reports highlight increasing drought frequency and heat stress threatening coffee

yields (IFAD, 2024). To address this, farmers and authorities are adopting climate-smart techniques. An IFAD-supported project (RTA) has equipped smallholders with resources like shade nets, water tanks, and drip irrigation systems to conserve scarce water. For example, one Jazan farmer installed a rain-fed water reservoir that enabled him to double his coffee tree count and achieve a 300 kg harvest even after a severe drought year (IFAD, 2024). Such support also includes training in best agronomic practices, which farmers are sharing within their communities. These measures echo findings from botanical studies: scientists stress that the resilience of Saudi coffee relies on preserving genetic diversity and developing adaptive varieties (Khemira *et al.*, 2024). Indeed, recent research documents significant morphological variation among local *Coffea arabica* populations, suggesting potential for breeding climate-tolerant strains.

On the production side, the Saudi Coffee Company and private roasters emphasize sustainable processes. SCC's mission explicitly includes sustainable quality improvement – they are promoting organic practices in southern farms and investing in efficient mills (Arab News, 2023). Entrepreneurs are also mindful of resource use: many urban cafés use solar water heating and recycle coffee grounds as compost or biofuel. For instance, coffee grounds from JURA machine testing are routinely composted for fertilizer (JURA, n.d.). Globally, circular economy principles are gaining traction in coffee (e.g. turning spent grounds into products), and Saudi businesses are beginning to adopt similar ideas: baristas sometimes upcycle used grounds into skincare products, and some chains plan pelletizing grounds for power generation.

Green packaging is another focus. Startups now offer beans in reusable aluminum bags or biodegradable pods to reduce waste. The academic literature supports these directions: recent studies in Saudi coffee shops show that commitment to eco-friendly practices (from sourcing to waste management) correlates strongly with long-term business resilience (Maspul, 2024). In policy terms, Vision 2030's environmental goals (e.g. SDG 12 on responsible consumption) mean that agricultural ministries are promoting sustainable water use and reforestation. In effect, specialty coffee entrepreneurship is aligned with climate adaptation: it incentivizes keeping farmland under coffee cultivation (avoiding land conversion), improves livelihoods so farmers can invest in conservation, and by branding coffee as a premium, may fund re-greening initiatives. Taken together, these strategies aim to ensure that Saudi coffee – a cultural treasure – remains viable under changing climatic conditions.

Strategic Partnerships and Global Integration

Saudi specialty coffee enterprises are increasingly embedded in global networks. The Saudi Coffee Company itself exemplifies state-backed international engagement. In 2025, SCC announced a partnership with the Halal Products Development Company (HPDC, a PIF subsidiary) to jointly promote “halal-certified” Saudi coffee worldwide. This collaboration includes knowledge exchange, market research, and co-branding efforts aimed at leveraging the global halal market. As SCC's marketing chief noted, rising global demand for halal products makes Saudi coffee a natural fit for expansion into new markets

(Tea & Coffee Trade Journal, 2025). Likewise, SCC is executing plans to open 25 Saudi-branded cafés abroad. These moves position Saudi coffee not just as a local heritage product but as an international soft-power ambassador (Elgazzar, 2022).

Beyond corporate strategies, regional and global coalitions matter. Saudi Arabia has co-led joint UNESCO nominations (with UAE and Oman) not only for coffee but also for related traditions (e.g. camel herding songs), which raises global awareness of Saudi culture. On the trade side, Saudis import coffee machinery and beans from established producers (Brazilian, Ethiopian, etc.) while exploring exports of their own specialty beans. Although export volumes are currently small, they grew 23% in 2022 as premium Arabica from Jazan entered specialty markets. Startups have tapped diaspora networks too: a number of Jazan coffee cooperatives report selling directly to Arabian Gulf retailers and gourmet stores in Europe (Maspul, 2025).

Digital platforms facilitate global integration. The COFE App partnership is an example: a Kuwaiti platform now helps Saudi beans reach consumers across the Gulf. Similarly, local e-commerce sites and social media enable brands to ship specialty blends internationally – one Riyadh roaster, for instance, regularly sells to customers in North America and East Asia via online orders. The Saudi Food Show and other expos showcase Saudi coffee to international buyers, and some entrepreneurs collaborate with foreign baristas through franchising or joint ventures.

Comparative cases show similar trends: for example, Ethiopia's Yirgacheffe producers have increased foreign tourism and trade by branding single-origin coffee, while Colombia's youth coffee schools exchange expertise globally. In Saudi Arabia's case, the "glocal" approach appears to be paying off: local tastes (cardamom, saffron-infused coffee) are being introduced in foreign markets, and in turn, foreign roasting techniques improve local quality (Maspul, 2025). All these partnerships and exchanges not only expand market opportunities but also foster cross-cultural learning and sustainable standards in the burgeoning Saudi coffee sector.



Figure 2: Global Integration of Saudi Coffee

Policy Recommendations

Given the rapid evolution of Saudi specialty coffee, policymakers and stakeholders should take a proactive approach to sustain positive trends. First, continued support for youth entrepreneurship is paramount. This includes maintaining or increasing funding for training academies, grants, and incubators focused on agri-business and hospitality. The example of the SCC Academy demonstrates how targeted skill development can multiply industry competencies (Arab News, 2023). Expanding such programs – possibly in partnership with universities and vocational institutes – would empower more young Saudis (both men and women) to innovate in coffee and allied fields (e.g. food tech, tourism). Behavioral insights suggest that reducing red tape, providing mentorship, and celebrating success stories can further motivate aspiring entrepreneurs.

Second, integrating behavioral-economics principles into outreach could boost adoption of best practices. For instance, “nudge” campaigns (e.g. social recognition for using recycled beans) could reinforce sustainable consumer and business behaviors. Efforts to educate consumers about specialty coffee provenance and brewing techniques can strengthen cultural pride while growing demand. Public-private research initiatives, drawing from fields like cognitive science, might study how taste preferences develop to tailor offerings to Saudi palettes.

Third, gender inclusion policies should be actively pursued. The coffee sector already shows female participation increasing; official backing (such as grants for women-led SMEs in hospitality) would accelerate this. Women’s empowerment in coffee can also be framed as cultural advancement, aligning with Vision 2030’s social goals. Ensuring safe, supportive work environments (e.g. “family-friendly” cafés, co-working spaces) will help retain female talent. Highlighting successful women entrepreneurs in media can change norms, as can regulatory measures allowing mixed-gender workplaces under current guidelines.

Fourth, to address sustainability and climate resilience, a multi-level strategy is needed. Water-conservation technologies (shading, drip irrigation, groundwater tanks) proved effective for farmers like Hassan in Jazan (IFAD, 2024); scaling these solutions via subsidies or low-interest loans could safeguard remote farms. Continuing genetic research into drought-resistant coffee varieties and establishing seed banks will help future-proof production. Additionally, integrating coffee into broader environmental programs – for example, linking coffee tree planting to reforestation or agri-tourism grants – would have synergistic benefits. On the urban side, incentivizing “zero-waste” cafés and requiring food-service businesses to compost organic waste could institutionalize the circular economy principle already embraced by some (e.g. composting coffee grounds).

Finally, strategic coordination of partnerships is vital. The SCC–HPDC alliance and the COFE App cooperation illustrate how aligning with international platforms expands Saudi coffee’s reach. Policy can facilitate more such MoUs – for instance, government agencies could broker agreements with coffee-growing nations (for knowledge exchange) or international standards bodies (for halal and sustainability certifications). Maintaining Saudi coffee’s UNESCO cultural listings and possibly applying for more (e.g. coffee rituals in Asir) will also keep global attention on Saudi heritage. Overall, policies should reinforce

the trend that each cup of specialty coffee sold domestically or abroad supports diversification, community development, and cultural continuity.

Table 1: Strategic Framework for Advancing Saudi Specialty Coffee Entrepreneurship

Strategic Area	Key Actions	Success Metrics	Lead Agencies & Partners	Timeline	Risks & Mitigations	References
Youth Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand SCC Academy capacity to train ≥800 youth/year in cultivation, barista, roasting, and sustainability techniques (saudicoffee.com). Co-develop agri-business curricula with universities (KAU, KSU) and Vocational & Technical Training Corp (saudicoffee.com). Simplify business registration for coffee startups (one-stop e-licensing portal via Monsha'at) (eci.monshaat.gov.sa). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of certified graduates; target: 2,400 by 2028. 20% year-on-year increase in youth-founded coffee SMEs. Reduction in average licensing time from 90→30 days. 	Saudi Coffee Company (SCC); Monsha'at; Ministry of Education; KAU, KSU	2025–2028	Risk: Low uptake in remote regions. Mitigation: Deploy mobile training units and scholarships for rural youth.	Access KSA (Vision2030 Coffee) (accessksa.com); SCC Academy Overview (saudicoffee.com); Monsha'at "Future Entrepreneur" (eci.monshaat.gov.sa)
Behavioral-Economics & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch "Green Bean Badge" rewards for cafés adopting recycled grounds and water-saving methods, promoted via UNDP Accelerator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of specialty cafés earn Green Bean Badge by 2027. 1 million video views/quarter on 	Ministry of Culture & Information; UNDP Accelerator Lab; Arab News; King Abdullah University	2025–2027	Risk: Campaign fatigue. Mitigation: Rotate themes quarterly and use data analytics to tailor	UNDP Behavioural Insights (UNDP); Arab News SCC Academy training (Arab News); Vision2030 Annual Report (Vision 2030)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lab campaigns (UNDP). Roll out nationwide “Coffee Stories” media series on provenance & brewing, in partnership with Arab News and YouTube influencers (Arab News). Fund cognitive-science grants to study taste-preference development among Saudis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Coffee Stories”. • ≥3 peer-reviewed studies on Saudi taste-shaping by 2026. 	of Science & Technology (KAUST)		content to regions.			
Gender Inclusion & Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designate SAR 200 million in gender-focused grants for women-led coffee SMEs via WSME program (IDB Events). Establish “Qahwa Hubs” – co-working cafés with family-friendly spaces – across 10 cities (Atlantic Council). Mandate mixed-gender workplace guidelines under Ministry of Human Resources & Social Development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% increase in women-owned coffee ventures by 2027. • ≥5 “Qahwa Hubs” operational by 2026. Employee satisfaction scores ≥85% in gender-inclusive workplaces. 	Ministry of Human Resources & Social Development; Monsha’at ; WSME Forum; Atlantic Council’s WIN Fellowship	2025–2026	Risk: Cultural resistance. Mitigation : Media campaigns featuring success stories; engage tribal leaders as advocates.	IDB (WSMEs) Events); Atlantic Council Fellowship (Atlantic Council); Monsha’at SME Monitor (Monsha’at)	Events (IDB WIN	

Climate Resilience & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale drip-irrigation & shade-net subsidies (70% cost share) for 3,000 smallholder farms in Jazan & Asir (IFAD). Support FAO tissue-culture labs to produce 100,000 drought-resistant seedlings/year (FAOHome). Incentivize zero-waste cafés via tax rebates and mandatory composting for all food-service venues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% of targeted farms adopt water-techniques by 2028. 80,000 resilient seedlings planted annually. 60% reduction in coffee-waste landfilling by 2026. 	Ministry of Environment, Water & Agriculture; IFAD; FAO; SCC Academy; Local municipalities	2025–2030	Risk: Technology maintenance gaps. Mitigation: Train local extension officers; create tech-support hotlines.	IFAD Project FAO Culture Initiative (FAOHome); Drip Irrigation Success (FAOHome)	RTA Tissue
Digital Market Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand App partnership to 15 new regions and integrate blockchain traceability for all SCC beans (cofeapp.com). Simplify e-commerce regulations: eliminate platform fees for 3 years for new entrants (Intelligence Coffee). Host annual “Global Saudi Coffee Expo” to attract buyers/investors, including virtual participation options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200% growth in online sales by 2027. 100% traceability coverage for SCC products by 2026. 5,000 expo attendees (30% international) by 2025. 	COFE App; Ministry of Commerce & Investment; PIF; Riyadh Exhibition & Convention Center (RECC)	2025–2027	Risk: Cybersecurity threats. Mitigation: Implement industry-standard encryption and regular security audits.	COFE SCC Agreement (cofeapp.com); PIF Coffee Strategy (Vision 2030); Intelligence.coffee Report (Intelligence Coffee)	App-Coffee
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain UNESCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNESCO listing 	Ministry of Culture;	2025–2028	Risk: Heritage	UNESCO Khawlani	

Global Promotion	listings for <i>gahwa</i> & Khawlani coffee; submit Asir coffee rituals by 2026 (UNESCO). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch “Coffee Diplomacy” tours in 5 strategic markets (EU, ASEAN, GCC) under HPDC-SCC MoU (PIF). • Fund documentary series on Saudi coffee heritage for global streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix, Al-Jazeera). 	maintain ed with no heritage-status infringe ments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥3 internatio nal Coffee Diplomac y missions/ year. • 10 million global viewers of documen tary series by 2026. 	HPDC; SCC; UNESCO Saudi National Commissi on; Major streaming services (Netflix, Al-Jazeera)	authentici ty dilution. Mitigation : Advisory board of cultural scholars and local elders to vet content.	Profile (UNESCO); Arab News PIF Coffee Global (PIF); Vision2030 Annual Report (Vision 2030)
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Conclusion

The rapid emergence of specialty coffee entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia has proven that a simple bean can carry the weight of history, culture, and economic promise all at once. Youth-led companies that combine ancestral *gahwa* traditions with cutting-edge climate smart agriculture have not only revived regional pride, but also created resilient livelihoods in the face of rising temperatures and shifting markets. This study’s blend of ethnographic case studies, stakeholder interviews, and policy analysis reveals how strategic investments—like the \$320 million Public Investment Fund initiative—and inclusive training academies have empowered women, galvanized rural farmers, and created digital bridges between Jazan’s highland terraces and urban coffeehouses. The result is more than a booming \$1.54 billion industry: it is a living blueprint for how tradition and innovation can coalesce to foster community resilience, gender equity, and sustainable growth in an era of global uncertainty.

Looking forward, future research should deepen our understanding of long term social and environmental impacts by following cohorts of coffee families over multiple harvest cycles, measuring not only yields and incomes but also shifts in cultural identity, gender norms, and ecological health. Participatory action studies—engaging farmers, baristas, and youth entrepreneurs as co investigators—will be essential to refine climate adaptation techniques, digital platform designs, and policy incentives in real time. Comparative analyses with other “glocal” coffee movements (such as Ethiopia’s Yirgacheffe or Colombia’s specialty regions) can uncover universal lessons and context specific nuances.

Scholars and policymakers can ensure that Saudi Arabia's coffee renaissance is not only economically vibrant, but also emotionally meaningful and sustainably anchored for future generations, by constantly listening to the voices of those who pour heritage into every cup.

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